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PACIFIC STUDIES

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STYLISTIC CHANGE IN FIJIAN POTTERY

Rosa Rossitto
Siracusa, Italy

IN FIJI THERE HAS BEEN continuous pottery-making activity for the past three thousand years. The archaeological record reflected so prolifically in pottery establishes that change occurred throughout Fijian prehistory. I shall try here to deal with the last period of ceramic activity in Fiji, raising the general question of how Fijian pottery has changed in its distinctive stylistic features since the postcontact period and whether these changes are a direct outcome of postcontact influence or just a reinvigoration of a trend since the dawn of Fiji's occupation.

Having already attempted elsewhere to analyze the relation between developments in the external socioeconomic context and those in the realm of' pottery (Rossitto 1992), I do not tackle this problem in detail here. My chief interest, instead, will be the internal dynamics of stylistic change: the procedures followed by potters striving to innovate, their level of consciousness in the manipulation of the traditional "vocabulary" and set of rules, the tolerance they show towards innovation. In a word, I shall stress the subtle interplay of tradition and creativity as it influences the potters' daily activity. Given the popular image among art historians, archaeologists, and anthropologists of non-Western arts and crafts practitioners being the unthinking and undifferentiated tools of their traditions, as people who are essentially denied the privilege of technical or conceptual creativity, the related question is whether it is possible to speak about creative originality and conscious innovation in a community that focuses extensively on collective action.

However, before studying stylistic change in Fijian postcontact pottery, I set myself a preliminary task, that of recording the exact pottery production in each present-day center, impelled by the fact that Fijian pottery has been inadequately investigated at the ethnographic level.

Historical Context

In the early 1800s, when exploration and colonization by Westerners started, pottery production was widespread throughout Fiji, practiced by women belonging to the piscatorial/nautical communities known as the ***kai wai,*** "people of the sea." With the exception of the Sigatoka Valley, inhabited essentially by farmers, pottery making was the prerogative of these ***kai wai.*** The women made vessels by slab-building in the lower and upper Sigatoka Valley, Yawe, and Levuka; by ring-building in Ra and Tailevu Provinces; and by slab- and ring-building in Vanua Levu, Yanuya, and Nasilai. All over the island group, potters used the paddle-and-anvil technique to knock components into shape and fired their products in an open fire, glazing the still-hot water containers with ***makadre--dakua*** tree ***(Agathis vitienisis)*** gum--to seal and color the outside, and waterproofing cooking pots with vegetable substances because ***makadre*** melted on the fire.

Pottery was made for personal use and household exchange and consumption, as well as for communitywide trade transactions. During ***solevu (so,*** gathering; ***levu,*** large), pots were bartered along with fish for barkcloth, mats, vegetables, and other goods produced by the agricultural communities. Pots were also ***iyau,*** "valuables," and consequently could be offered to chiefs as tribute and presents and could be exchanged for other valuables during ceremonies on the occasion of births, marriages, and deaths. In both trade transactions and ceremonial gift exchanges, pots were important not only in supplying necessary goods, but also in maintaining social relationships, including kinship and political alliances.

With changed economic and social conditions since arrival of the ***vulagi*** (foreigners, whites) and the growing influence of money, pots nowadays are no longer made to meet any real internal demand but primarily for the tourist market. Pottery making is essentially supported by the possibility for monetary income that it allows. Tourism seems to be the only factor that will determine the future of the pottery centers, Tourism affects the numbers of potters employed and, consequently, the degree of vitality of the centers, and also the types and quality of products.

The impact of tourism is but the most recent development in a restless pottery-making tradition. Through the excavations of Gifford at Navatu and Vuda (1951, 1955) and the Birkses at Sigatoka (1966, 1967, 1973), archaeologists have already established a sequence of three very different ceramic traditions. These traditions vary in characteristic forms and decoration, providing a framework for reconstructing the island group's prehistoric period into four broad phases (Green 1963; Shaw 1967).

The Sigatoka Phase is defined by the Lapita tradition, which has been

considered the hallmark of the Proto-Polynesians: closely related, small groups of largely hunter-gatherer and fishing peoples whose eastward voyages more than thirty-five hundred years ago led to Fiji as the outpost for Polynesian colonization, Lapita is a low-fired, sand-textured pottery whose surface is sometimes burnished or slipped with reddish clay. It is represented by a wide range of vessels decorated with elaborate geometric patterns achieved through different techniques, in particular by the use of comblike toothed stamps pressed into the clay before firing, the resultant impressions probably filled with lime or other white substances. In Fiji, however, the Lapita pottery is relatively less sophisticated. There it shows some twenty-five hundred years ago a much more limited range of vessel forms and a degeneration in decoration that led to a coarsely functional plain ware that points to isolation and a lack of contact between the local Lapita people and those in other western island groups. A little more than five hundred years later new forms appeared, predominantly embellished by the imprint of the potters finishing paddle with patterns of diamond, square, or rectangular cross-reliefs; parallel ribs; zigzag lines; and wavy and spot reliefs carved into the paddle's working face. Archaeologists have subsumed this pottery under the Impressed tradition, which distinguishes the Navatu Phase, whose time span has been fixed from about 100 **B.C.** to **A.D.** 1100. From about **A.D.** 1100 to **A.D.** 1600, the archaeological record displays a reduced frequency of impressed motifs, very high frequency of plain ware, and limited quantities of new incised decoration; this stylistic tradition marks the Vuda Phase. The Ra Phase **(A.D.** 1600-1800) is based on a second, significant increase in the use of incising as a decorative technique along with comb and gash incising, shell and tool impressions, applique elements, and combinations of these. Pottery showing such stylistic characteristics has been considered to belong to the Incised tradition.

The four phases and three ceramic traditions still stand as a rough ceramic chronology. However, debate over whether they may denote such events as migrations and cultural discontinuity-- the cultural affiliation of the Impressed tradition has been left undetermined, while the Incised tradition has been associated with Melanesian culture (Birks and Birks 1973; Bellwood 1978; Frost 1974, 1979)-- or gradual change by internal development (Hunt 1980, 1988; Best 1984; Crosby 1988) has recently resulted in a redefinition of the sequence in nonphasal terms.[i]

Research Methodology and the Ethnographic Record

Articles by Roth (1935), Thompson (1938), Palmer and Shaw (1968a, 1968b), and Hunt (1979) provide records of the ceramic technologies in use

in historic times in Ra and Bua, Levuka and Kabara, the lower and upper Sigatoka Valley, and Yawe. These descriptions are more accurate and complete than those left by nineteenth-century Europeans who visited Fiji: their observations were always fortuitous and excited more by the strangeness of what they were seeing than by genuine analytic interest. From the ethnographic literature one can draw data on the ceramic production of the different areas but, with the exception of Palmer's and Shaw's work, these data are mostly fragmentary or incomplete and often concern only a few types of vessels for which the function and a rough description are given.

The first attempts to describe and classify Fijian pottery were made by MacLachlan (1940) and Surridge (1944). Their works, however, are too generic and appear inadequate in the light of Palmers and Shaw's surveys in the Sigatoka Valley. Confirming the results of the archaeological record, their ethnographic work pointed out that vessel form and decoration vary from village to village within the same ceramic area, and that decoration changes both in the decorative units used and in their combination according to the type of vessel and the portion of decorated surface. In consequence, it becomes evident that Fijian pottery can no longer be approached as if it was a homogeneous stylistic tradition. But notwithstanding the achieved awareness of the existence of local traditions and, therefore, of the need to record them in detail, only Palmer (1962) has tried to summarize vessel forms and decoration in each pottery center of historic times. Palmer relied exclusively on vessels belonging to the Fiji Museum collection, though, so it would be illusory to think that the production of each pottery center is represented in all its variety. As Palmer himself expressed, it is necessary to go beyond his first attempt, examining also vessels belonging to other collections and carrying out further fieldwork in the still-active pottery centers.

Clearly then, this field of inquiry must be subjected to two main lines of investigation. The study of typologies is the first, obvious, and necessary one. On one hand, such study may throw more light on the prehistory of the island group, assisting and supplementing any comparative analysis drawn from the archaeological material. On the other hand, it is the preliminary step for the second line of investigation, the study of stylistic change. I have thus first determined the types of vessels traditionally manufactured in each of the still-active pottery centers, namely Nasilai in Rewa Province; Lawai, Nakabuta, Yavulo, and Nayawa in the lower Sigatoka Valley; and Yanuya island in the Mamanuca group. Each group of vessels has then been treated independently as a starting point for my analysis of stylistic change, which has been carried out in two stages both for methodological reasons and facility in reporting the data. In the first stage I analyze how vessel form has changed during the chosen period; in the second, I consider the changes in

decoration. Besides form and decoration, vessel size, glaze, and color as well as possible words incised on surfaces and lightness / heaviness have been considered as distinctive features of style.

The form of a vessel has been considered to be made up of elements that are always, or nearly always, present and that constitute its body: the stand, base, shoulders, neck, rim, and lip, to which have to be added collateral elements such as handles and spouts. According to their characteristics and combination, these elements determine a particular type of vessel, analyzed both independently and in relation to others. Variation over the years has been considered to be indicative of the formal change undergone by each type of vessel.

Following the long tradition of formal analysis--established by Boas (1927) and expanded more recently by Shepard (1956), Mead (1973), Washburn (1978, 1983) and others, mainly under the influence of its success in linguistics and semiotics--decoration has been considered to be a cognitive system or body of organized knowledge that underlies a particular style. This cognitive system has been conceived in terms of four components shared by all decorative art styles: (1) a definition of the decorative problem, (2) the basic units of decoration, (3) a set of techniques through which the basic units acquire a visual reality, and (4) a set of rules governing the use of basic units in solving the decorative problem.

The starting point for this study was the easily accessible Fiji Museum collection. A small percentage of these vessels date back to the last three decades of the nineteenth century, with the remainder manufactured from 1930 onward. This iconographic material has been enriched and supplemented with pictures of specimens belonging to the collections of Sir Arthur Gordon, Lieutenant Charles Wilkes, and Captain John Magrunder and with Miss Constance Gordon-Cumming's and Baron von Hugel's drawings.[1] These collections consist of datable, localized, and particularly representative specimens. They were assembled in a crucial moment of Fiji's history--Wilkes's and Magrunder's collections were made when the first European settlements and missions were installed, the other three when the colonial state power was established--by people deeply interested in local artifacts and competing to have the very best of them.

My own drawings and pictures of vessels manufactured a short time before and during my 1986-1987 stay in the present-day pottery centers complete the documentation. The analysis of the decorative system is also based upon field-note records of decoration while it was being carried out and descriptions from several potters themselves. In consequence, the analysis does not depend only upon formal comparison of representative products; it has also benefited from the complementary joining of my observa-

tions with potters' verbal information. Observation of the ordered steps followed in decorating vessels provided information about structural relations among the various components of decoration. Potters' own statements have provided important clues on how the basic decorative problem is defined and solved.

Typologies and Changes in Form

The main vessel types produced in Fiji in historic times include cooking pots ***(kuro)*** for cooking taro, yams, and so forth ***(kakana dina,*** "true food") and the smaller ***i vakariri*** for cooking meat and vegetables ***(i coi,*** the relish). The second large group is of water and drinking vessels ***(saqa),*** kava bowls, and dishes. The form of each type exhibits a certain degree of standardization and, in general, is consistent with the vessel's practical function. Cooking pots are invariably oval-shaped and wide-mouthed. Two to six of them usually rested on hollow earthenware stands ***(sue)*** used in groups of three, placed in a shallow, rectangular, hardwood-bounded hearth dug in a corner of a dwelling. Water was poured into a pot set with its axis at an angle to the horizontal, food was added, and when the pot began to "sing," its mouth was plugged with a wad of leaves and the food steamed within. Drinking vessels, usually with one or more spouts, vary in form from the symmetrical round or oval shape to bizarre imitations of bunches of fruit, sperm whale's teeth, canoe hulls, turtles, or even combinations of these. Regardless of form, drinking vessels were held high at arm's length and tilted until water streamed down the spout into the drinkers mouth, a practice dictated by a reluctance of Fijians to touch a vessel with their mouths, with the exception of the chiefs, whose drinking vessels were taboo (see Wilkes 1985:349). Vessels used for water carrying and storage were larger and lacked the spouts.

Fijian potters use the general term ***i bulibuli*** (form) in referring to a certain formal configuration, but they also use a particular term for each type of vessel. A description of these vessel types accompanied by the related local term and remarks on changes that have occurred is given below for each pottery center.

Nasilai

Nasilai is a small fishing village near the mouth of the Rewa River, southeast Viti Levu. Thriving until a few years ago, pottery making is now in decline. Although there are nineteen potters and six girls who are learning how to shape small vessels, only four of them continue to work sporadically to fill orders from acquaintances or the Government Handicraft Centre of Suva.

Moreover, certain traditional vessels are no longer made and only a few potters know their names and shapes.

Kuro (Fig. 1, a). It has an oval-shaped body with a concave rim and a rounded lip.

Vakariri (Fig. 1, b-c). Its body can be spherical (Fig. 1, b) or carinated (Fig. 1, c), with or without a pouring spout ***(gaga)*** and a very out-turned rim ***(gusu cevaka).***

Drua vakariri (Fig. 1, d-e). Made up of two equal bowls ***(drua,*** twins),

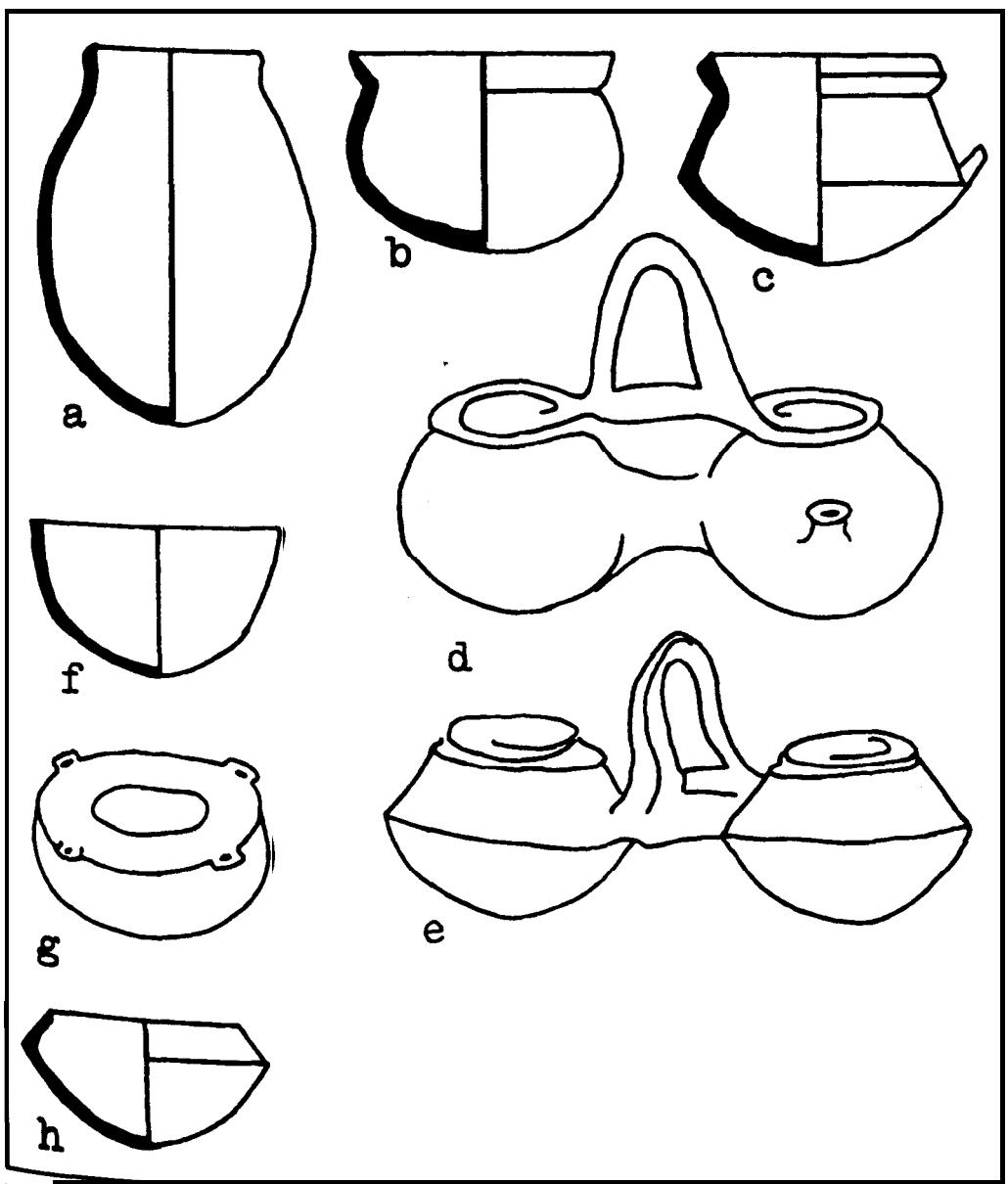

FIGURE 1. Vessels no longer made in Nasilai: *a-e,* cooking pots; *f, yaqona* cup; *g,* bowl; *h,* finger bowl.

these can be spherical (Fig. 1, d) or carinated (Fig. 1, e). The bowls are joined by a single or double central element and a handle attached to the rims or to the element of junction. A pouring spout can be found halfway up the bowls; the rims are usually very out-turned or straight with flanges on the exterior surface.

Takitaki ni wai. A ***drua vakariri*** similar to Figure 1d was recognized by some potters to be a ***takitaki ni wai,*** while Figure 1e was termed a ***drua vakariri.*** The cause of this differentiation in terminology seems to by the presence of the spout, which determines the different function of the vessel: the ***takitaki ni wai*** was used to carry water from river to house and then to pour it into suitable drinking containers. Maybe pots like that in Figure 1d were also used to cook fish, whose broth could easily be drunk from the spouts.

Saqa sokisoki. A water container in the shape of a ballfish ***(soki),*** the form of the vessel was spherical.

Kituqele (Fig. 1, f). A cup in the shape of a half shell of ripe, husked coconut, it was used to drink ***yaqona,***[2] an infusion from the pounded dried roots of the shrub ***Piper methysticum.***

Mamaroi ni bulagi (Fig. 1, g). A bowl, the upper part of which is turned in almost horizontally. Along the carination are small projections with holes to which were tied strings of hibiscus coir to hang the bowl from the house poles for keeping leftover food.

Vuluvulu (Fig. 1, h). In form, the bowl in Figure 1g is a variant of ***vuluvulu,*** a carinated covered bowl with a central aperture and a lesser, inward-sloping rim showing a flat, vertical lip. Once ***vuluvulu*** were filled with water to wash fingers after meals; today they are no longer used, but miniature variants with flat bases are manufactured as ashtrays for the tourist market.

Saqa dina (Fig. 2). When still used as water containers, these were manufactured in two different forms prescribed by the observance of rank distinctions. ***Saqa dina*** manufactured for common people had an oval-shaped body (Fig. 2, a), while those for chiefs were carinated (Fig. 2, b). The rims can be concave with a rounded or flat, oblique to the exterior or interior lip ***(gusu tareba),*** straight with a flat, horizontal lip ***(gusu dodonu),*** or straight with ridges on the exterior surface. No particular relationship seems to bind one type of rim to one type of ***saqa dina.*** The shoulders of the vessel in Figure 2c get narrower in a straight line, losing the softness and slenderness of the shoulder profile of the older specimen drawn by Baron von Hugel (Fig. 2, b). Replicas of the vessel in Figure 2c, smaller in size and with a flat base, are very common today. Vessels contemporary with the one in Figure 2a show a more spherical body. Both the spherical and oval forms are peculiar to ***saqa dina*** dating back to the mid-1800s and to the first three decades

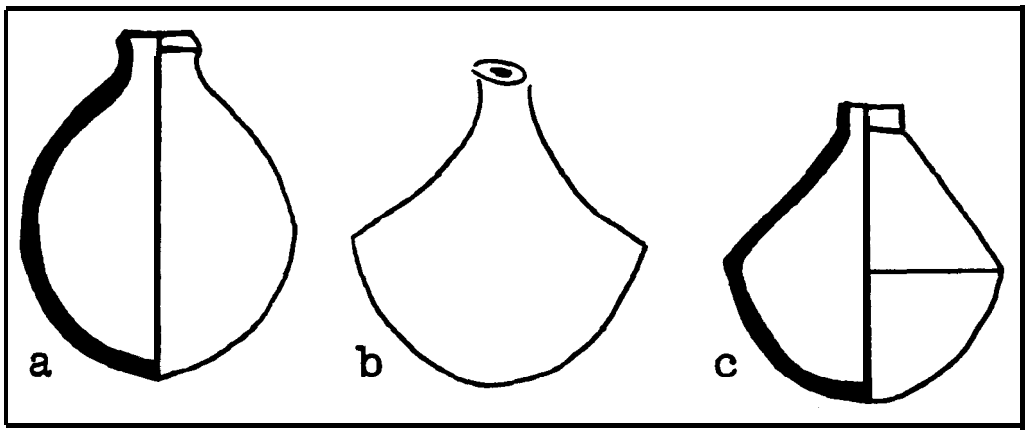

FIGURE 2. ***Saqa dina*** **(water containers), Nasilai.**

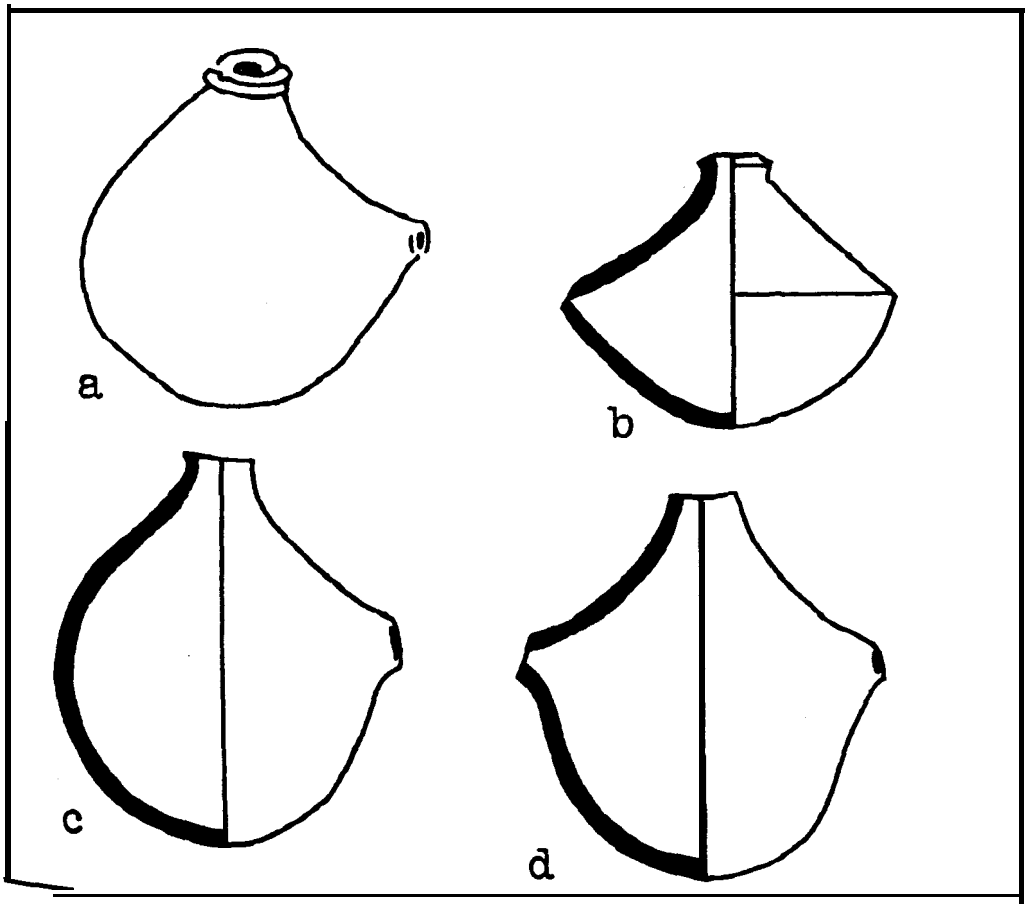

FIGURE 3. ***Gusu i rua, gusu i tolu*** **(many-mouthed drinking-water vessels), Nasilai.**

of the present century, but it seems that the spherical form is older, for the oval form becomes more and more recurrent in vessels manufactured recently. Vessels showing a very elongated form and a flat base, and small-scale replicas of such, are common today.

Gusu i rua-tolu-lima (Fig. 3). One or more pouring spouts can be found halfway up the body of some specimens of drinking-water vessels similar in form to ***saqa dina*** (Fig. 3, a). According to the number of spouts, these vessels are called ***gusu i rua (gusu,*** mouth; ***rua,*** two) or ***gusu i tolu (tolu,*** three). Nasilai potters use the same terms for the vessels in Figures 3c and 3d, which show an oval body and side rims replacing the side spouts, and state that they are a traditional type of vessel; overlooking the formal differences, the potters assimilate them to the type in Figure 3a. This type was already manufactured in 1840, it has been documented, and over the years the form must have slightly changed (Fig. 3, b). In contrast, specimens of types in Figures 3c and 3d are not traceable in museum collections. In spite of other potters' denial, potter Salote must be right in stating that Veniana Tosoqo-soqo started their manufacture about ten years ago. It is said that vessels with five apertures ***(gusu i lima),*** one at the top and four at the side, can be shaped but vessels with a central aperture and three at the side cannot. Multiple side apertures are always placed symmetrically to achieve a visual balancing, which is impossible with three apertures.

Gunugunu (Fig. 4). Drinking-water vessels of this type dating back to the last decades of the nineteenth century show the following features (Fig. 4, a): (1) although the form of the body is roundish, it is not perfectly spherical; the shoulder line is marked and the upper section of the body slopes slightly inward, creating a triangular figure whose apex is a little handle; (2) the handle is invariably made up of one or more arms with a large knob or hole at the top; (3) the filling hole at the base of the handle is small and is not encircled by a rim; and (4) the size is small. The vessel in Figure 4b exhibits all these features except one: the handle has been replaced with a small, roundish knob. Figure 4c shows a more spherical body and a stand imitating European items. In the opinion of the potter who shaped it, the ***gunugunu*** in Figure 4d respects the traditional style, but in effect it is the one departing most from it. The body is perfectly spherical; a straight rim with a flat, horizontal lip replaces the traditional pouring spout; the handle is no longer made up of two or more flattened arms to which applied knobs give the appearance of a starfish but of a long and thick cord of clay; and the hole at the base of the handle is encircled with a short, straight rim with a wide, flat, horizontal lip.

Kitu (Figure 5). Used on canoes during sea voyages, this vessel has a very

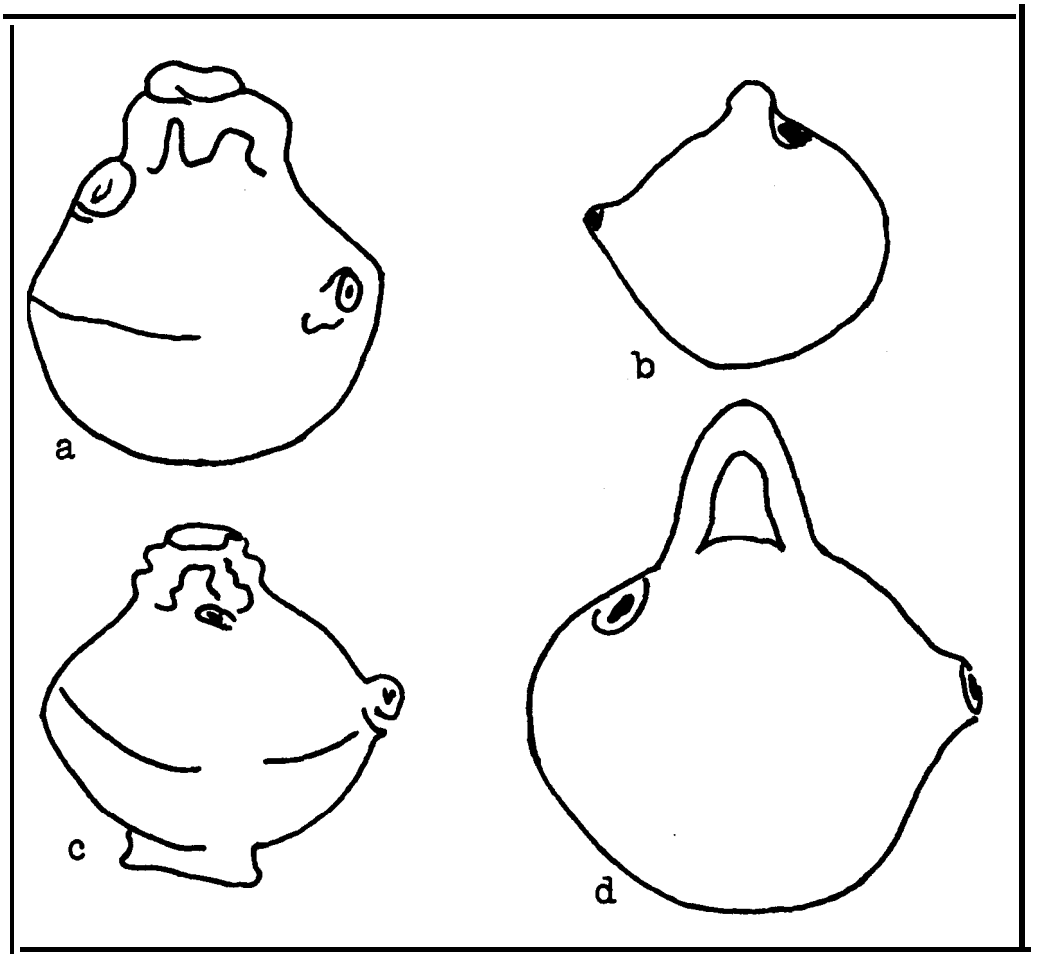

FIGURE 4. ***Gunugunu*** **(drinking-water vessels), Nasilai.**

bellied oval or spherical body a rim surrounded with a multiarmed handle at the top, and one or more pouring spouts halfway up the body (Fig. 5, a). Hung by the handle ***kitu*** had the dual function of containing water and, being slightly sloped, allowing it to pour through one of the spouts into a drinker's mouth. Dating back to the first three decades of this century, another vessel differs from older ones in having a stand (Fig. 5, b), while ***kitu*** manufactured in 1986 (Fig. 5, c-d) differ in the oval form of their bodies and the unusual shape and size of their handles.

Saqa ikabula (Fig. 6). A turtle-shaped vessel ***(ikabula,*** turtle), these have a filling hole at the base of the "head" while the "tail" end acts as a pouring spout (Fig. 6 a). This type of vessel can be single or double. If double, the two units are joined side by side with a connecting pipe and a handle arches across them (Fig. 6, b). One of the two units is usually shaped in the form of a sperm whale's tooth ***(tabua).***

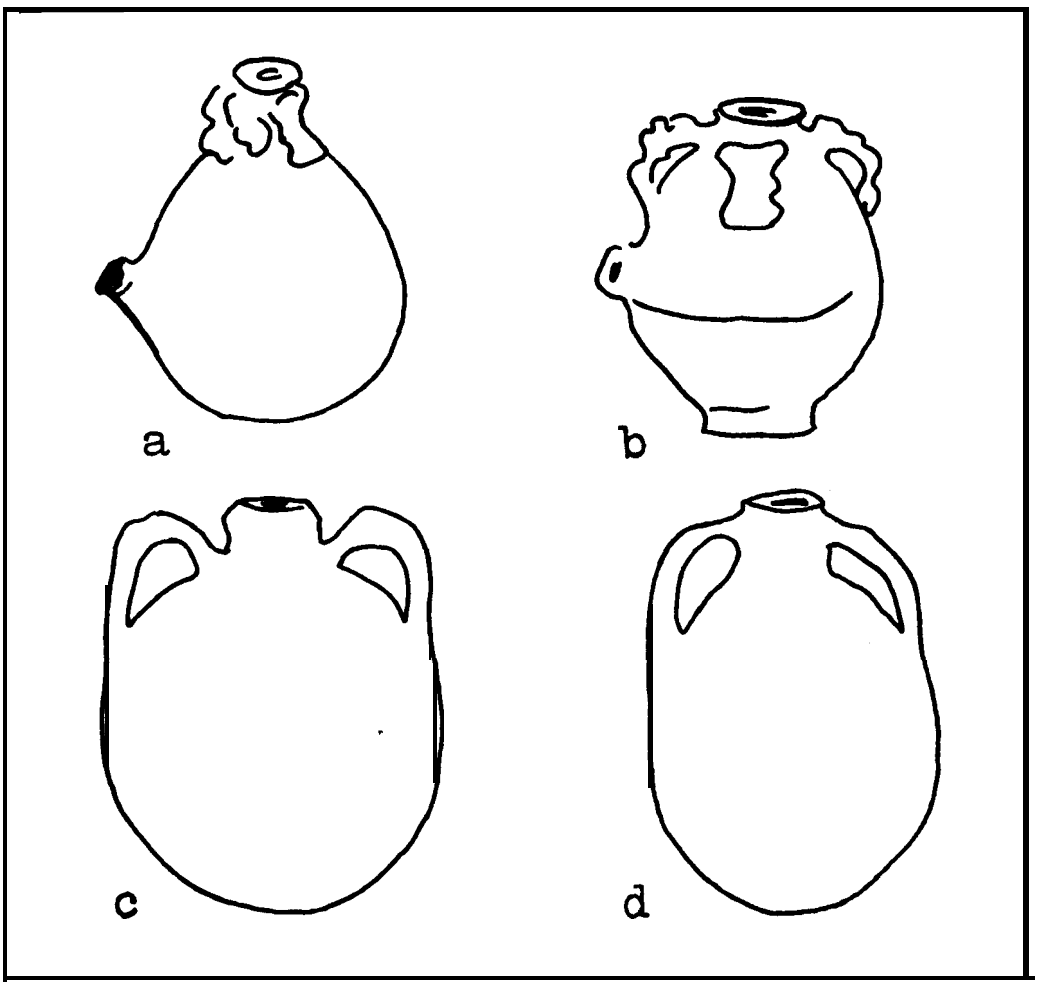

FIGURE 5. *Kitu* (drinking-water vessels), Nasilai.

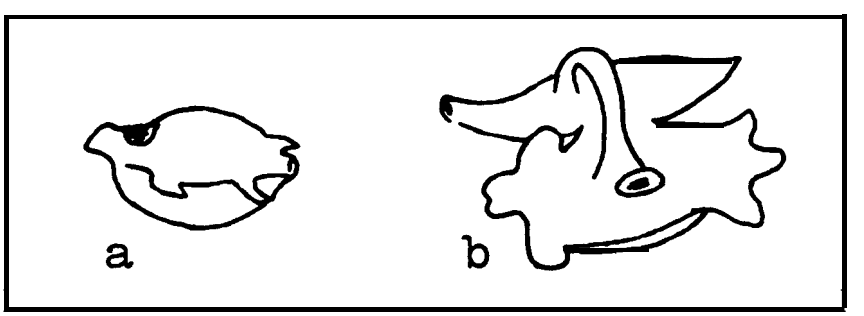

FIGURE 6. *Saqa ikabula* (drinking-water vessels), Nasilai.

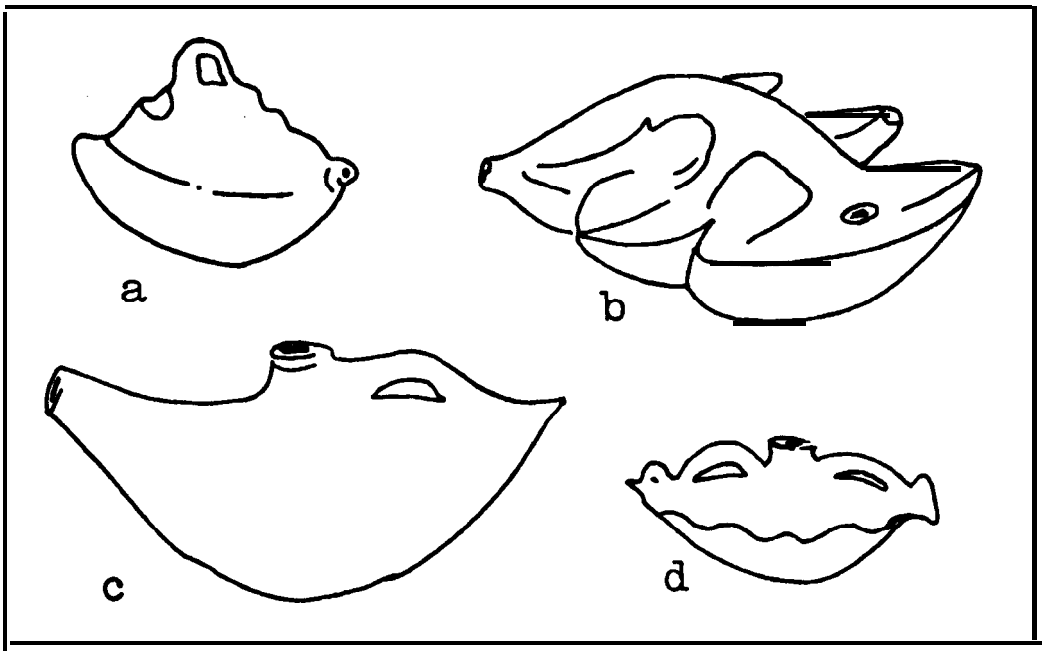

FIGURE 7. ***Saqa tabua*** **(drinking-water vessels), Nasilai.**

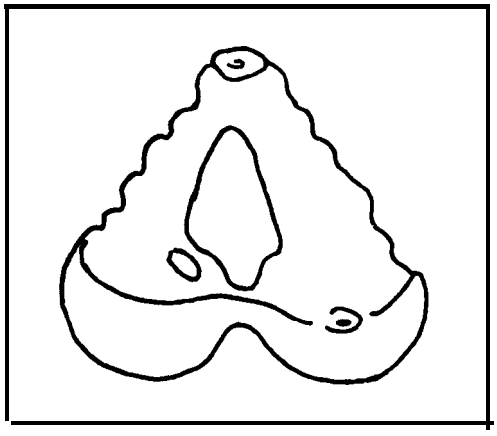

FIGURE 8. ***Saqa moli*** **(drinking-water vessel), Nasilai.**

Saqa tabua (Fig. 7). A drinking-water vessel (Fig. 7, a) that can, as stated above, be joined to a ***saqa ikabula*** or to one or more intercommunicating units of the same type (Fig. 7, b). Figure 7c shows a ***saqa tabua*** with a central aperture and a side one; the former is never found in older specimens while the latter replaces the small pouring spout. A handle has been attached to the side of the central aperture The vessel in Figure 7d is even more different from the traditional type: handles have been placed on both sides of a central spout and a bird's head has replaced the side spout while a tail has been modeled at the opposite extremity.

Saqa moli (Fig. 8). A drinking-water vessel in the shape of a bunch of

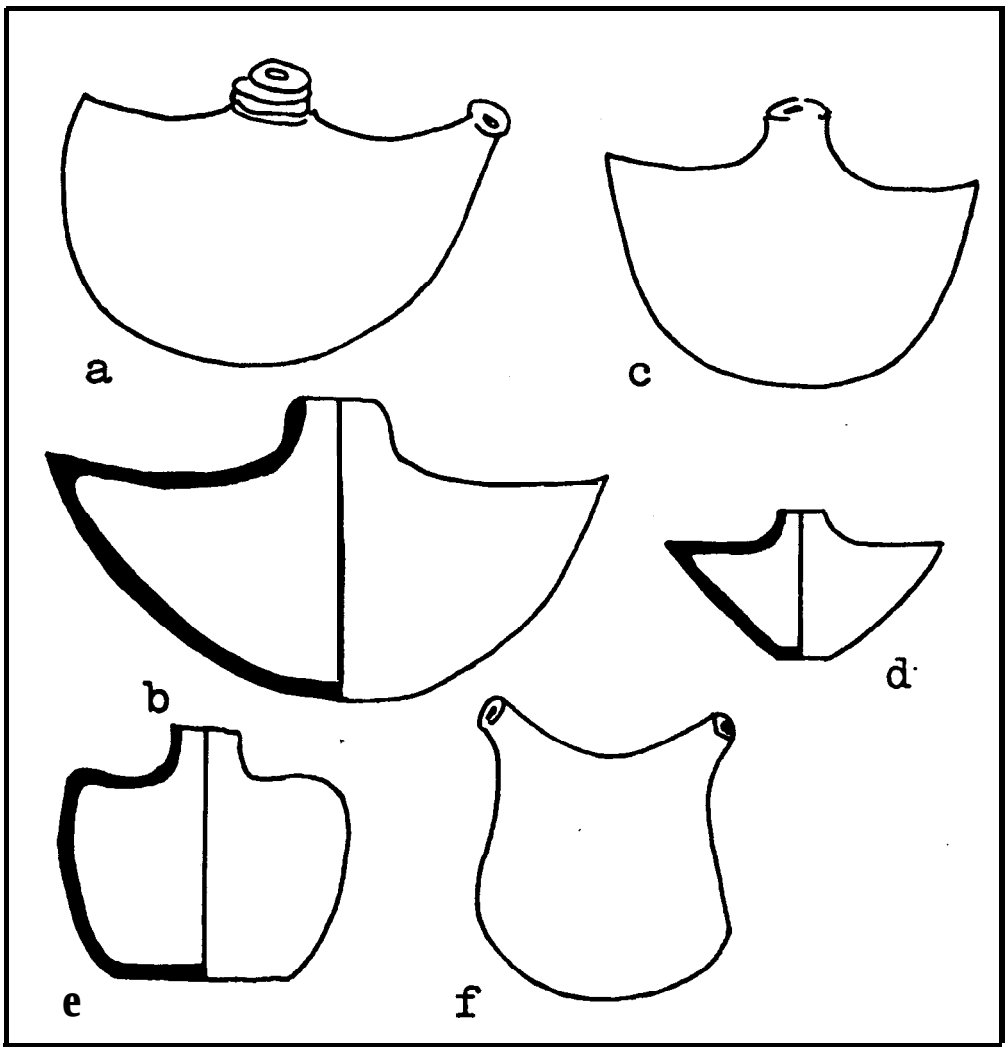

FIGURE 9. ***Mua i rua*** **(drinking-water vessels), Nasilai.**

citrus-type fruit, it consists of two or more spherical, intercommunicating units. A handle, attached at the top of each unit, arches to an apical joint, the top of which is perforated by a round hole or can bear an applied cylindrical knob. A hole is made at the base of the handle while a spout is applied halfway up the body of one or more units.

Mua i rua (Fig. 9). This drinking-water vessel is shaped in the form of the half moon ***(mua,*** tip) (Fig. 9, a). Compared with the traditional design, the most evident change seems to be the loss of the side spout (Fig. 9, b-c). The vessel in Figure 9d is much smaller; moreover, its base is flat and the shoulder line is horizontal. The form of the vessel in Figure 9b is more flattened and elongated than that of older specimens; the shape seems more exactly like a half moon. In contrast, this relationship relaxes (Fig. 9, e) and vanishes

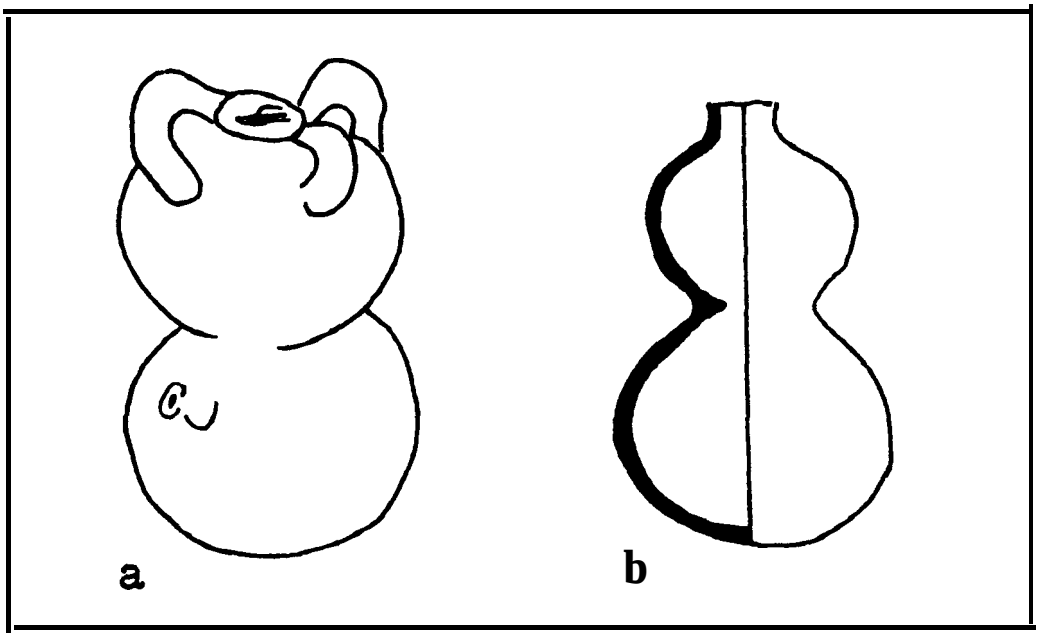

FIGURE 10. ***Tagua rua*** **(drinking-water vessels), Nasilai.**

(Fig. 9, f). The vessel in Figure 9e is square-bodied instead of hemispherical, its base is flat, and its walls rise almost vertically. Another vessel shows an elongated form with its upper section transformed into two side rims (Fig. 9, f).

Tagau rua (Fig. 10). This vessel is made up of two spherical, communicating units placed one upon the other. There is an apical aperture, a pouring spout halfway up the lower unit, and multiple handles attached between the aperture and the upper section of the body (Fig. 10, a). A version of this rare type of vessel, modeled in 1986 by Seru Tosoqosoqo, lacks handle or spout (Fig. 10, b); moreover, the two units differ in size.

Tagau rua as well as carinated ***saqa dina, saqa tubua, saqa moli,*** and ***saqa ikabula*** were chiefly vessels. During the 1800s, ***saqa ikabula*** and ***saqa moli*** in particular were popular in chiefly households in Rewa and Bau, the latter being supplied with earthenware by the former. Gordon-Cumming recorded the favor they found and left us the first drawing of a fruit bunch-shaped vessel (1881:246), while a drawing from the U.S. Exploring Expedition shows single and double ***saqa tabua*** (Wilkes 1985:138). My informants say that turtle- and ***tabua***-shaped vessels were intended for chiefs--turtles and ***tabua*** are in effect male valuables--while fruit bunch-shaped ones were made for women of high rank.

Ramarama (Fig. 11). Once used as an oil lamp, this vessel is a covered-over bowl with a well-marked shoulder angle; its central, narrow aperture

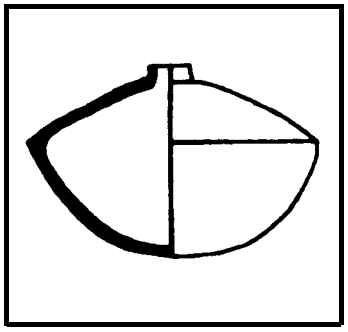

FIGURE 11. ***Ramarama* (oil lamp), Nasilai**

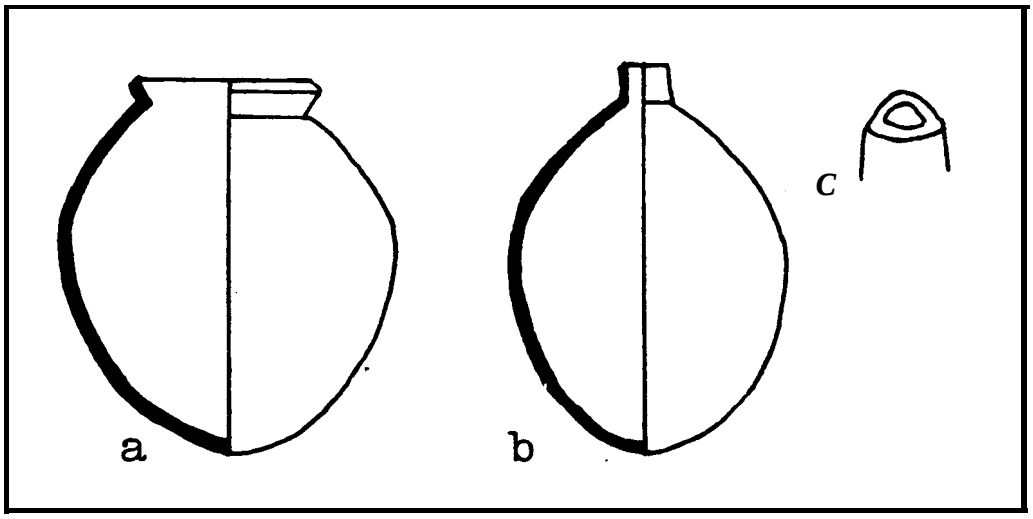

FIGURE 12. ***Kuro* (cooking pots), lower Sigatoka Valley.**

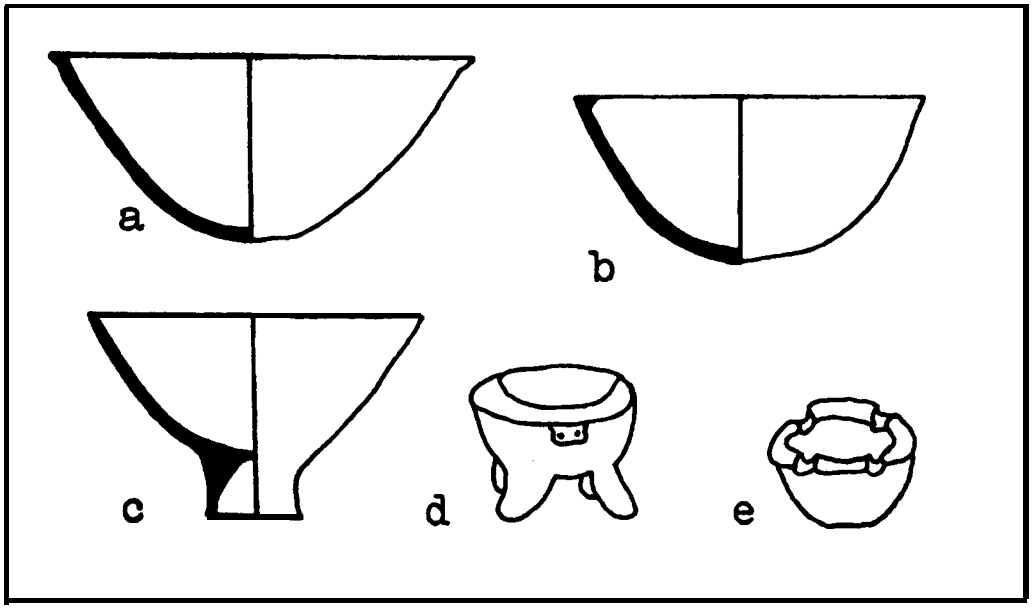

FIGURE 13. ***Dari (yaqona* bowls), lower Sigatoka Valley.**

shows a straight rim with a flat, horizontal lip. The potters maintain that this oil lamp is a Nasilai traditional vessel; according to them, after a very long period of interruption, its manufacture was resumed about 1984 by Veniana Tosoqosoqo, at that time working at the Cultural Centre of Deuba, Pacific Harbour, Suva. Having seen drawings of this type of oil lamp in a publication and having gone vainly to Gau island in search of it, the manager of the center asked Tosoqosoqo to reproduce it, and on returning to Nasilai she did so. The publication was undoubtedly ***Domodomo*** (1983, no. 1); three oil lamps, one from Gau, are drawn on page 160. They are much smaller in size than those manufactured in Nasilai now but are similar in form.

Modern. Production of a completely new type of pottery has been added to the traditional forms and variants. The new pottery consists of vessels that imitate Western items or elements of the local environment. Characteristics of all of the new forms are small size and a linearity of the resting planes achieved by flat bases, stands, and slab supports.

Lower Sigatoka Valley

Eight pottery centers are located along the lower reaches of the Sigatoka River, southwest Viti Levu. Two of them, Laselase and Vunavutu, are inactive now. A similar fate is imminent for Nasama and Nasigatoka, where only a few old potters remain: three in the former, four in the latter. In contrast, a revival of pottery activity has been taking place over the last few years in Yavulo, Nayawa, Nakabuta, and Lawai. Nayawa and Laselase, on the eastern bank of the river, specialized in the manufacture of finger bowls ***(vuluvulu)*** and large ***yaqona*** bowls ***(dari),*** while Yavulo and Nasigatoka, on the opposite bank, manufactured cooking pots ***(kuro).*** Through marriages the manufacture of cooking pots spread to Nakabuta and Lawai, and the manufacture of bowls to Vunavutu, Nakabuta, and Lawai in about 1950. In accordance with this pattern of diffusion, the pottery production of the area shows a certain degree of formal homogeneity.

Kuro (Fig. 12). The body is oval shaped and the rim is concave with a flat, oblique to the exterior lip (Fig. 12, a). Compared with the traditional form, the pot in Figure 12b has a different oval body, which goes with the narrowing of the aperture and the unusual verticality and height of the rim. Figure 12c shows a rim of another pot having the same form as that of the Figure 12b pot; this rim has the atypical features of that one and in addition a triangular mouth. Replicas of the pot in Figure 12b, made on a smaller scale with a flat base and a pouting lip, are common today

Dari (Fig. 13). This is an open bowl with a wide, flat, horizontal lip whose edges protrude both inward and outward (Fig. 13, a). A bowl manufactured

in Nasama (Fig. 13, b) differs from the traditional type by a slight flattening of its base and in the outer edge of the lip, which does not protrude outward. The bowl in Figure 13c is supplied with a high stand that is nothing more than a smaller, upside-down bowl. Another bowl imitates a ***tanoa*** (Fig. 13, d), the huge wooden ***yaqona*** bowl introduced from Tonga and Samoa in the 1700s and in widespread use in eastern Fiji. The bowl in Figure 13e has nothing in common with a ***dari,*** although the ***dari*** has been the Sigatoka potters' starting point for its creation. The base has become flat and the lip has lost the edges protruding inward and outward. The lips of some specimens have been notched at four equidistant points, as for cigarette rests, while two holes have been made below the lip of others to hang them as flower vases.

Vuluvulu (see Fig. 1, h). Bowls with flat bases and scalloped or notched lips are very common today.

Nontraditional (Fig. 14). A remarkable proliferation of pottery forms whose origin cannot be absolutely traced back to the traditional typology has been recorded in Lawai, Nakabuta, and, to a lesser degree, in Yavulo and Nayawa. Like the nontraditional objects of Nasilai, this pottery is of poor artistic quality but deserves attention since it constitutes the bulk of pottery manufactured today. Very common are small objects in the shape of animals, whose manufacture has been inspired by illustrations of the turtle-shaped vessels of the Ra, Tailevu, and Rewa areas. Worth noting is the difference in some element of form among objects of this group, resulting in many variants of the duck, pig, and turtle shapes (Fig. 14, a-c). In these villages as well as in Nasilai, the traditional Fijian house ***(bure)*** has also supplied a model for the potters, but ceramic Sigatoka ***bure*** (Fig. 14, d) cannot be considered a faithful copy of the real model. Masks, shaped in imitation of the carved wooden ones sold at the Sigatoka town market,[3] are constructed of slightly curved slabs (Fig. 14, e). They assume a variety of shapes ranging from oval to the roundish, rectangular, or square. The pierced eyes and the applied eyebrows, noses, and mouths differ considerably in shape as well. Some water containers are copies of the fruit bunch-shaped vessels of Nasilai; they have been derived from illustrations and differ from their models. The bases of the bowls are flat, the spouts have been replaced with wide holes made at the base of the handle and encircled with a high lip, the handles are flat and wide, and the connecting pipe between the two units is disproportionately long and wide (Fig. 14, f). Vessels with two or three rims, manufactured by Loma Mate of Nasilai for the Cultural Centre of Deuba, are a starting point for vessels with multiple rims manufactured by Leone Matalou of Lawai. The formal differences between copies and model are again greater than the similarities. The base of Lawai vessels is flat, the

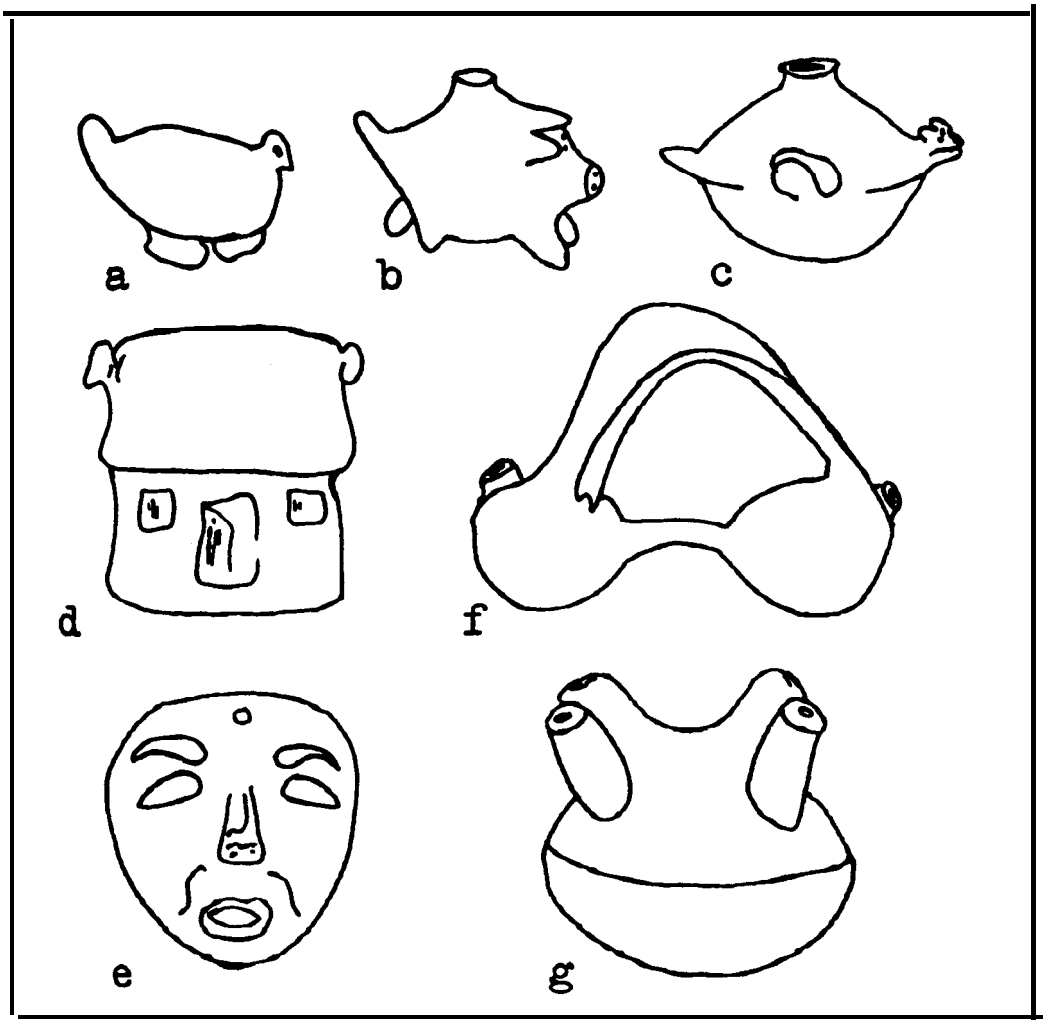

FIGURE 14. **Nontraditional pottery, lower Sigatoka Valley: *a-c,* zoomorphic objects; *d,* Fijian traditional house *(bure); e,* mask; *f-g,* drinking-water vessels.**

shoulder angle is marked and the upper section of the body shows very long, straight rims. Vessels with four apertures, which are not made in Nasilai because they violate the traditional rule of symmetry, are made in Lawai by pairing the four apertures and eliminating the central one (Fig. 14, g).

Yanuya

On this isolated island in the Mamanuca group, off the northwest coast of Viti Levu, only four old potters remain. They undertake work rather seldom, when they receive an order or some tourist arrives on the island to observe the Processes of making pottery. Six types of vessels are made.

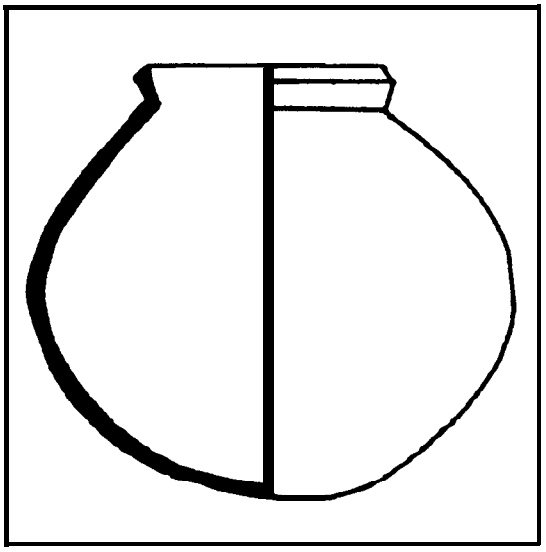

FIGURE 15. *Kuro* (cooking pot). Yanuya.

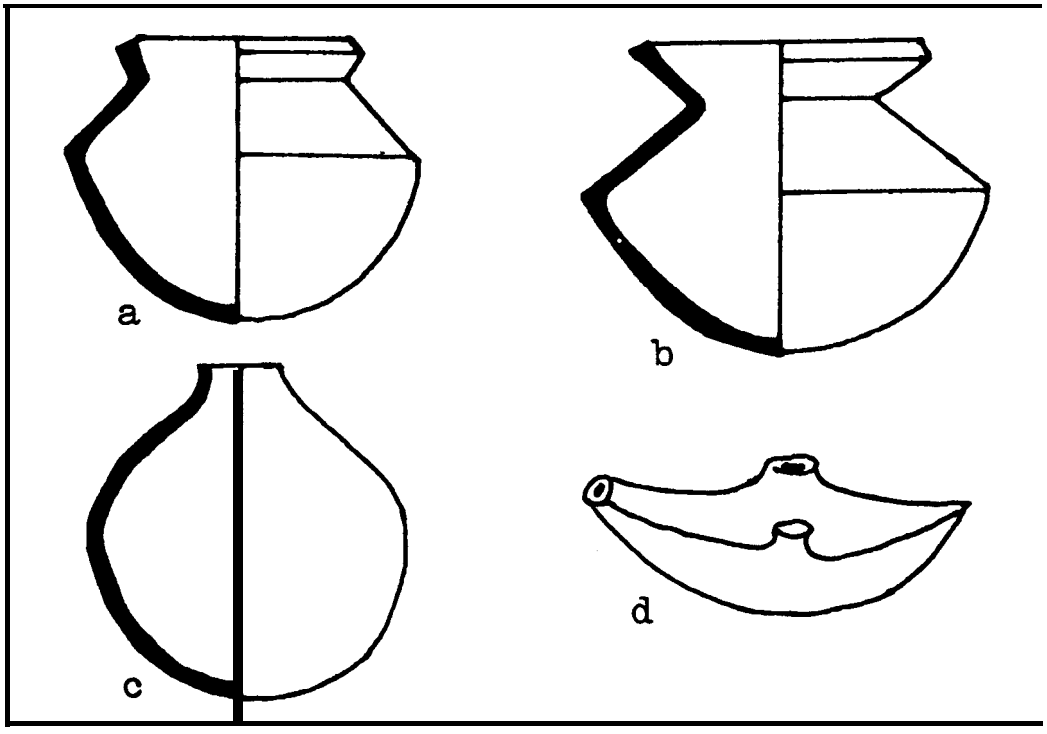

FIGURE 16. Other pottery forms, Yanuya: *a-b, sira* (cooking pots); *c, cubu* (water container); *d, saqa tabua* (drinking-water vessel).

Kuro (Fig. 15). The traditional type has a perfectly spherical body, a concave rim, and a flat, oblique to the exterior lip. More recent pots have a flat base or a more oval body; some show a pouring lip.

Sira, sira deledele (Fig. 16, a-b). This carinated cooking pot for fish and vegetables has a concave rim and a flat, oblique to the exterior lip. The rim

can have two different inclinations, which determine the name of the pot: when the rim has a lesser inclination, the pot is called ***sira deledele.*** Present-day specimens are smaller than traditional vessels.

Cubu (Fig. 16, c). This is a water container with a spherical body; the rim is concave with a flat, horizontal lip. Again, present-day specimens are smaller than older ones.

Saqa tabua (Fig. 16, d). This is a drinking-water vessel in the shape of a sperm whale's tooth. It has a small straight rim, a flat horizontal lip, and a side spout. It differs from the ***saqa tabua*** manufactured in the Ra, Rewa, and Tailevu areas in the marked shoulder angle: the upper section of the body is almost normal to the base axis. Moreover, neither the central rim nor the two cylindrical knobs placed along the carination on both sides of the vessel are typical of ***saqa tabua*** of other areas.

Dari ni vuluvulu (see Fig. 1, h). The rim of many contemporary specimens is scalloped.

The Decorative System and Changes in Decoration

The forms of traditional Fijian vessels are limited in number, and prescriptions dictate they remain unchanged. In contrast, decoration ***(kanukanu)*** must vary from vessel to vessel and, in effect, presents a wide range of variability A potter is forbidden to copy the decoration of another potter and held in low esteem if she does so. As a proof of this, I have not found two vessels of the same type manufactured in the same area that were decorated in exactly the same way. This characteristic, together with a great artistic sensitivity and a good level of technical quality, was also noted with wonder by Europeans who visited the Fiji islands in the mid-1800s (see Williams [1884] 1982:59; Gordon-Cumming 1881:245; MacDonald 1885: 1). However, it is apparent that the decorative variety prescribed to, and shown by, Fijian pottery is not the result of a casual way of proceeding.

Decoration cannot be carried out at random ***(vakaveitalia)*** but, as the Potters state, it must be "thought about" ***(vakasamataka).*** Respect for a scheme that is rigid in theory but flexible in practice is required. The scheme is revealed through a series of fixed technical acts that, once learned and mastered, are performed almost automatically The potters know exactly what type of vessel they are about to shape and how to shape it. In contrast, decoration is a structured process that, on one hand, makes possible the realization of numerous alternatives and on the other, requires respect for the rules governing the stylistic tradition of each pottery center. As I said above, decoration is sustained by a system through which a particular style is produced. This system provides the potters with a means of organizing the

elements needed to create decoration in that style. Now I consider the components that constitute the system and point out changes that have occurred.

The Decorative Problem

Basically, the decorative problem concerns the relation between the form of a vessel and its decoration. To solve the decorative problem, the area to be decorated must first be defined, then a basic procedure for building up decoration must be established.

With the exceptions of certain specimens of ***i vakariri*** from Nasilai and of ***kuro*** and ***sira*** from Yanuya that show thin parallel hatches impressed around their lips, cooking pots were not decorated. Soot accumulation through continual use would inevitably hide any embellishment. In contrast, water containers, drinking vessels, and bowls were decorated. Water and drinking vessels have their surfaces subdivided into two clearly distinct areas, one the lower half of the vessel, which is always plain, and the other the upper half, which is decorated. According to today's potters, this subdivision is imposed by technical and practical factors. When the vessel is molded and decoration started, the lower surface is already too dry. In this condition decoration by impression or incision is impossible, while an applied decoration does not stick perfectly and will sooner or later come off. Moreover, during the molding and soon after, the vessels are handled by the base. Specimens of ***kituqele*** from Nasilai with completely decorated surfaces are an exception, as are certain specimens of ***kituqele*** and other types of open bowls, such as ***vuluvulu*** and ***dari,*** which have smaller than usual decorated areas. Decoration is restricted to a narrow zone below the lip in ***kituqele,*** to the rim in ***vuluvulu,*** and to the lip in ***dari.***

Sections can be distinguished within the decorated area of all the old vessels and of some more-recent specimens from Nasilai. These sections occupy fixed portions of the surface and accomplish different visual functions, which are stressed both by the decorative units used and their combination. First, a narrow section (which I will hereafter call section A) can be isolated between the decorated area and the plain one; on shouldered vessels this section always coincides with carination. It is made up of single or multiple decorative bands--if multiple, the bands are arranged in a field--and has the double function of framing the decorated area and separating it from the plain portion. A wide central section (hereafter called section B) follows; this is the section on which the viewer's attention is usually focused. On the majority of vessels this section is subdivided into several

horizontal, vertical, or oblique decorative fields. On other specimens section B appears as a single field. A third decorative section (hereafter designated section C) can be distinguished on handles and rims. The portion of the handle's surface that is decorated is the upper one, treated as a single field. Two decorative bands often define this section; the bands usually lie along the curvature of the handle and frame an intermediate band. On the rims of water containers and ***i vakariri,*** decoration is nearly always placed on the lip.

Basic procedures are followed in decorating a vessel. Work proceeds from the lower to the upper part and, in the case of a circular area, from left to right. If the decorated area extends onto two faces, the decoration of one face is generally completed first, then the vessel is turned and the other face finished; otherwise, partial decoration of both faces is undertaken alternately. Two procedures have been recorded regarding the arrangement of fields and bands in the decorated area. Almost all the potters build up decoration by delimiting a field and filling it, and so on, until the decorated area is completed. Potter Seru Tosoqosoqo of Nasilai plans the decoration of his vessels in a more systematic way.[4] In the first phase, he divides the decorated area into fields by incising lines with a knife. Halfway up the vessel, where the decoration will start, a string of hibiscus coir is carefully placed to guide the knife blade in incising the first line. Depending on the chosen decoration, one or more lines are then incised parallel or perpendicular to the first. The fields so delimited can be further divided by additional incised lines corresponding to future decorative bands. Having completed the ***toqa-toqa*** (marking, tracing) or arrangement of fields and bands, the potter starts decoration following the traditional process of delimiting and filling.

Decorative Techniques

Fijian potters execute decoration by incision, by impression, and by appliqué work and modeling. With the first technique the smoothed, leather-hard vessel surface is intaglioed with a pointed tool--usually a fine twig of a shrub ***(sasa)***--to obtain the desired hollow decoration. Impressed decoration is achieved by applying pressure with the dentate border of a shell ***(kani koli).*** For the applied technique, small pieces of clay are shaped with the fingers and stuck on the vessel surface, where they are further modeled. More than one technique is usually used in decorating a vessel, each potter being familiar with all of them.

Potters have their own preferences about the distinctive features of the tool used, for instance, its degree of thinness or sharpness, and select their twigs and shells with great care so as to achieve the desired effect, which can

range from a very fine incised or impressed sign with a sharp outline to a marked one opening at the edge. Besides shells and twigs, Nasilai potters have begun to use practically any tool that produces an adequate sign.

Basic Units of Decoration

Decorative elements, motifs, and configurations are the basic units of decoration, comprising visual complexes that represent a particular level of organization. A decorative element is the smallest self-contained component of decoration that is manipulated as a single unit. Motifs are formed by putting one or more decorative elements together in patterned ways. Decorative configurations are arrangements of motifs with sufficient complexity to fill a field. Defining the smallest units of decoration has been problematic; although they need not be the irreducible minimum of decoration, it becomes difficult to separate them from larger decorative units once they are conceived as composites. A way out of this difficulty has been to ask the potters themselves to identify the decorative units on portions of completed vessels. Their answers provided information about the terms used to describe the basic units of decoration as well.

The decorative units used by Fijian potters can be categorized as being either two-dimensional or three-dimensional. Two-dimensional decorative units are ultimately impressed or incised, three-dimensional ones are applied. Decorative units are distinguished also by their practical/visual functions: some are used only as "delimiters," some only as "fillers," others act as either delimiters or fillers, a few act as delimiters and fillers at the same time. Differing orientation of elements was not considered to be a distinguishing characteristic; elements that were similar but not perfectly identical were not distinguished whenever their differences appeared unintentional, the result of a potter's individual touch.

Figure 17 records and describes the decorative units (DUs) found on Nasilai pottery datable to between the second half of the last century and the first decades of the present one (circa 1850 to 1930); Figure 18 focuses on recent pottery.

In its present form, the rope motif (Fig. 18, DU 16), called ***dalidali,*** must be considered a development of a motif found on old specimens (Fig. 17, DU 26). DU 26 as well as DUs 19 and 27 (Fig. 17) were shaped by applying small pieces of clay one after the other and modeling them with the fingers to obtain a very thin band slightly in relief. This thin band is, in itself, a decorative unit (Fig. 17, DU 19), which was further elaborated with impressed and incised hatches (Fig. 17, DUs 26, 27). Nowadays the ***dalidali*** is created

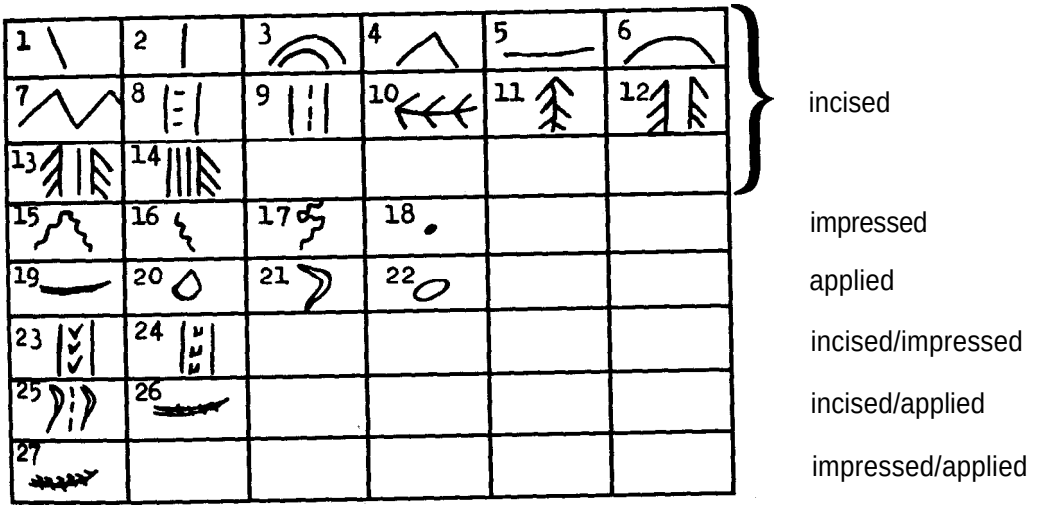

FIGURE 17. Decorative units used on Nasilai pottery circa 1850 to 1930.

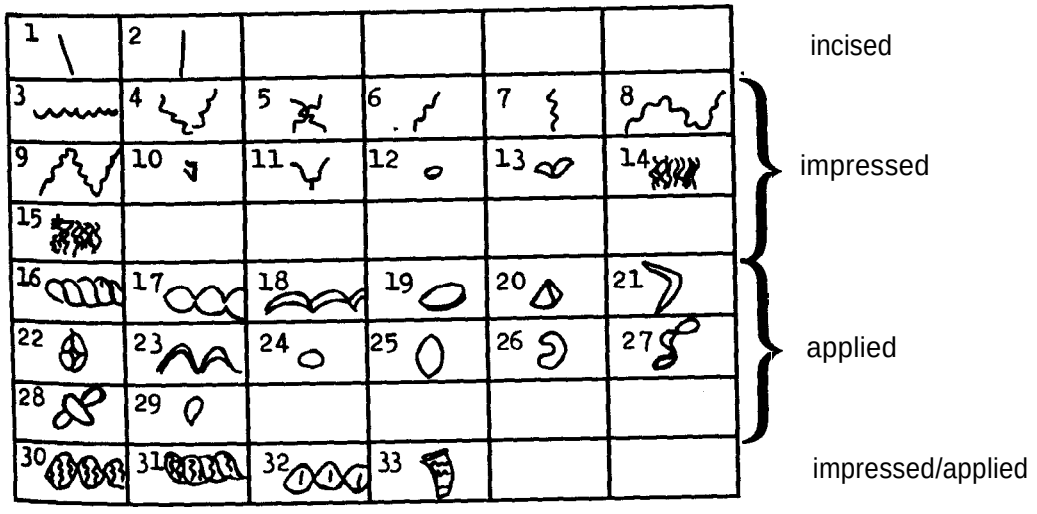

FIGURE 18. Decorative units used on present-day Nasilai pottery.

by applying and flattening a cord of clay; a thin reed ***(gasau)*** or the handle of a knife is then impressed transversely on the sharp edge of the wide band-

The forming of the ***wacodro*** or wave motif (Fig. 18, DU 17) is similar to that of the present-day ***dalidali,*** but the reed or knife handle is impressed vertically to the edge of the band. Both of these decorative units can be enriched with impressed hatches (Fig. 18, DUs 30, 31); if the ***wacodro*** is obtained by impressing the fingertip, the nail imprint is left (Fig. 18, DU 32).

In spite of differing techniques and visual effects, DU 14 (Fig. 18) is terminologically and functionally similar to a motif of incised, oblique hatches

that is found on old specimens (Fig. 17, DU 1 in continuous sequence). Both are called ***banika*** and appear in the same position in section A.

A traditional decorative unit considerably elaborated is the ***soki*** (Fig. 17, DU 20). In the present-day production the small, pointed knob assumes the form of a large tetrahedron (Fig. 18, DU 20). A change in function parallels the change in form: once it was a delimiter or a unit chiefly present in the delimitation section; now the ***soki*** is nearly always used as a filler.

Among modern decorative units (Fig. 18), DU 25 is a stylized banana bunch, while DU 29 is a stylized leaf. DU 12 had been created to replace buttons (Fig. 18, DU 24), which did not stick well on too-dry surfaces. DUs 10 to 14 have been obtained by impressing nontraditional tools on the vessel surface; in order, these are: the triangular end of a small iron bar, the side of a razor frame, the end of a razor handle, the grooved plug of a toothpaste tube, and two variants from a small, grooved plastic wheel.

Rules of Composition

Rules involve knowledge about how to use decoration in solving the decorative problem. Rules are of two types: one specifies the framework within which the basic units of decoration are to be used; the second type governs the occurrence of basic units. As already mentioned, a rigid rule of composition imposes the division of the vessel surface into two parts, only one of which is decorated. Another rule that can be considered rigid, limited to the past Nasilai production, forces division of the decorative area into three sections.

A general principle of harmony between vessel form and decoration influences the potters' work until the choice of each decorative unit is made. The following extracts from conversations with potter Seru Tosoqosoqo of Nasilai show how this principle of harmony is formulated:

> In decorating my vessel, I follow its form. If I have to decorate a spherical vessel, such as the ***gunugunu,*** I will put a decoration which is consistent with its form. . . . The form of a vessel cannot be in disharmony with decoration; if it is so, that vessel will not be beautiful.
>
> . . . The oil lamp has a hemispherical, carinated body. So, when you are about to decorate it, take a ***sasa*** and incise lines on its rim and walls. If you model a cord of clay, apply it on the lamp surface and flatten it; or, if you model knobs, that ***ramarama*** will not be beautiful because such decoration hides its form. Use an incised or

impressed decoration in order that the beautiful profile of the lamp may be well visible.

Decoration impose its own order on form; consequently, harmony between decoration and form is necessary so the form is not hidden or, worse, destroyed. If the form is undermined by decoration, the overall aspect ***(irairai)*** of a vessel is in question. The ***saqa tabua*** shown in Figure 19 (top) may not be considered beautiful because in the arrangement of the decorative area the opposite direction of the two groups of lines is in conflict with the vessel's form, which invites the eye to a single direction of vision focusing on the side rim. Subsequently, some of the lines were erased and incised again in one direction only (Fig. 19, bottom); moreover, the potter thought it better to group the lines in fours with an intervening space to obtain a field where he could arrange additional decorative units. Compared to the first solution with its decorative bands in a continuous sequence, the chosen one allows greater decorative enrichment.

Respecting the principle of harmony, several rules of composition can be

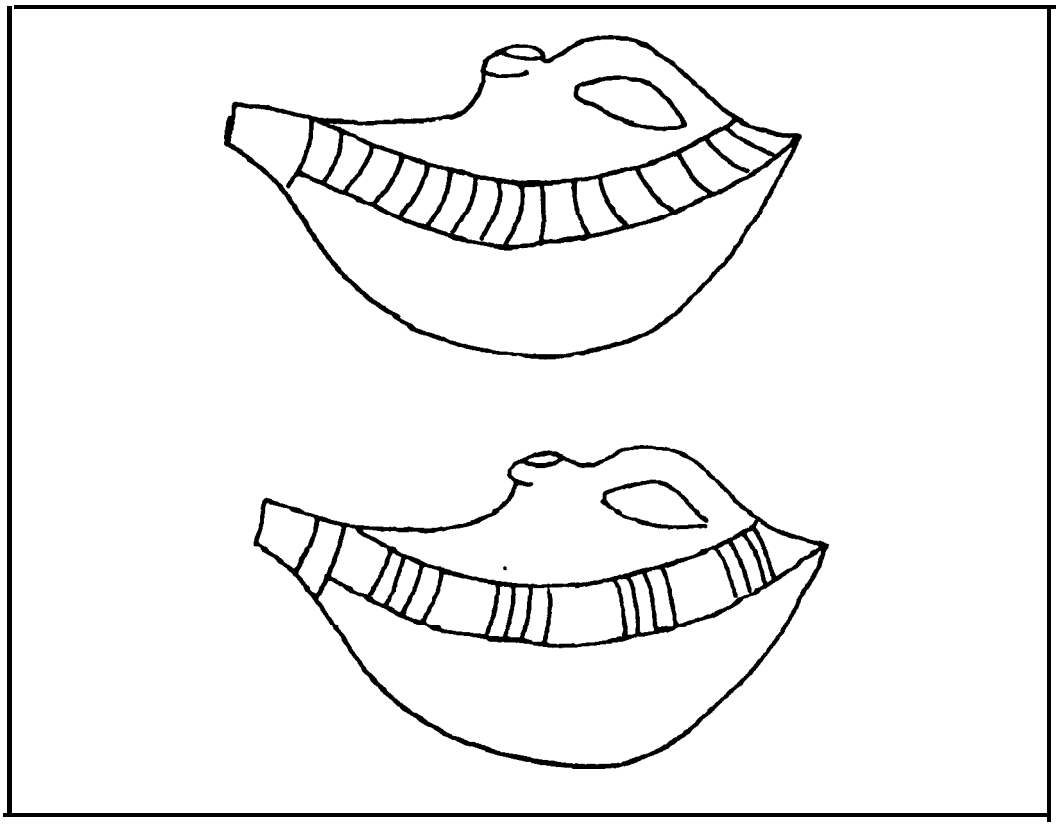

FIGURE 19. Arrangements of the decorative area of a *saqa tabua.*

applied in arranging fields and bands within the three sections, widening the possibilities of combination. Other rules, the ones governing the choice of decorative units and their arrangement in bands, give the potters a real freedom of combination, making the realization of numerous alternatives possible. A range of possible combinations implies a series of choices between alternatives of equal potential, but just because the decorative process follows rules, one choice is not necessarily equal to another.

The differing validity of each choice makes the potters' statements on the difficulty of decoration important and unequivocal, and throws light on their decorative procedure. "Thinking" decoration, as a conscious act prior to starting, consists of a total but nondetailed mental arrangement of the vessel surface. Dividing the vessel surface into two areas--the plain and the decorated--and then dividing the decorated area into fields by incising lines with a knife is a method that reveals and helps the intense work of mental arrangement. The vessel surface is like a sheet of paper and the knife like a pencil: line after line, the surface is organized under the potter's eyes. At any moment, with a single and instantaneous act, the potter can control the result achieved and more easily determine the next lines to incise or erase to attain a satisfying arrangement. The process of delimiting a field and filling it is then extremely helpful in choosing and arranging decorative units. In effect, decoration is a process of gradual enrichment: fields are realized one after another and filled in successive steps with a progressive narrowing of the possible alternatives and an increasing facility in the selection and composition of the decorative units (see Gombrich 1979).

Decorative Units and Rules of Composition in Three Pottery-Making Centers

Nasilai

Considering both the older and more recent Nasilai pottery, I shall try now to see how decorative units are composed in fields and how these fields are arranged in each of the three decorative sections.

Section A. On older vessels, whenever section A consists of a single decorative band, the band is nearly always made up of small pointed knobs in a continuous horizontal sequence (Fig. 17, DU 20). A band of such ***soki*** is always featured prominently even when section A is made up of more than one band. It can be preceded by DU 1 in continuous sequence or by DU 6 or 7 (Fig. 17). It can be followed by a band of DU 6 or 7 in continuous sequence or by single or double band made up of DU 19, 27, or 26 (Fig. 17).

On recently produced specimens, section A shows a different configuration owing to both the different decorative units used and their composition. ***Soki*** have been partly replaced with big knobs and bands of ***wacodro*** and ***dalidali*** used singly or together with other decorative units in well-defined decorative fields. In past production, section A was usually decorated with several bands, but the bands were not delimited or framed to form fields. In the new configuration, ***dalidali*** and ***wacodro*** bands, which could have a decisive visual function of separation, appear flattened. In contrast with a band of ***soki,*** they may also be left out.

Section B. On older vessels, homogeneous fields are formed of parallel vertical lines in continuous sequence of DU 8, 9, 23, 24, 14, or of DU 4, which acts as filler and at the same time as the delimiter of DU 16 (Fig. 17). These fields, alternating with a portion of plain surface, may be rendered over the entire section B following the scheme ***a-a-a-*** . . . (hyphens denote a portion of plain surface). When section B is divided into vertical fields, this scheme forms one of two recurring configurations. The second configuration contains two heterogeneous fields arranged in alternate discontinuous sequence ***(a-b-a-b- . . .***) or in alternate continuous sequence ***(abab*** . . .). More-involved compositions follow the schemes ***ab-a*** and ***ab-a-a-ba.*** One of the two heterogeneous fields is made up of DU 8, 9, 23, or 24 (Fig. 17), which are repeated in continuous, discontinuous, or alternate continuous sequence. The second field may be constructed with DU 18 (Fig. 17) or, more often, with parallel slanting lines.

The differing orientation of fields and decorative units in the second configuration requires explanation. The verticality or horizontality of a field can be stressed by the direction in which decorative motifs wind: vertical fields and vertical bands, horizontal fields and horizontal bands are consonant. But the other alternative is also exploited: section B can be divided into fields conflicting with the orientation of the decorative units that they receive. Vertical fields, arranged in trapezoidal sectors, break the continuity of the decorated area and disguise its circularity, Horizontal fields do not; they present nondelimited fields, that is, fields made up of different decorative bands in continuous, often in alternate, sequence that are combined with delimited fields, that is, fields made up of a framed band. Delimited fields can be repeated in an alternate continuous sequence or in discontinuous sequence.

On some specimens of ***saqa moli,*** section B can be treated as a single field: it can receive a kind of decoration called ***vakasai,*** made up of incised crossed lines arranged in bands of different inclination; it can also be filled with DU 6 or 16 (Fig. 17) in open order. The upper section of a ***saqa ikabula*** is a slightly curved surface treated like a single, nondelimited field, which is

decorated with DU 11 or 12 (Fig. 17). The spaces delimited by the oblique lines are filled with DU 1 or 18 (Fig. 17).

Section B of present-day Nasilai pottery can be divided into homogeneous horizontal bands according to the traditional scheme ***abcd.*** . . . More often the decoration is arranged in horizontal fields in continuous sequence according to the scheme ***abacad*** . . . ; moreover, the bands filling the fields consist of two or more decorative elements arranged in continuous alternate sequence. A variant scheme, ***abab-aba,*** is often adopted in the composition of vertical fields. A more usual rule of composition is that of delimiting section B and filling it with decorative elements, such as fillets in open order, applied bands in continuous sequence, or applied big buttons. On small vessels, the decorative area can be treated as a single, delimited field filled with homogeneous decorative elements in horizontal sequence or with heterogeneous elements in continuous alternate sequence. On other small vessels and on all jars, traditional composition schemes have completely disappeared. The decorated area presents itself as a visually undelimited space whose decorative elements are applied in a single band according to the two last-mentioned sequences. Interestingly, the decorated area is always the upper section of small vessels.

Section C. On concave rims with flat, oblique to the exterior lips, the angle between rim and lip can be underlined with incised or impressed oblique hatches. Lips are decorated with incised parallel lines that can act as delimiters for a band of impressed oblique hatches. Incised parallel lines or parallel bands of impressed hatches are recurrent on straight rims. A band of ***soki*** along the edges or at the center of a handle underlines its curvature. In the first configuration, the band of ***soki*** acts as delimiter of a field that may be filled with parallel hatches, applied buttons in open order, or incised parallel lines. In the second configuration, the ***soki*** band may constitute the only decoration, or it can be delimited with incised hatches or impressed parallel lines. Small handles of ***saqa tabua*** and ***gunugunu*** can be underlined with incised parallel lines, hatches, or dentate impressions in open order. At the top of handles of older specimens of ***gunugunu*** and ***saqa moli,*** a prominent cylindrical applied knob is often found, which acts as a visual element of the junction of the arms.

Lower Sigatoka Valley

The decorative units used by lower Sigatoka Valley potters are limited in number and form. A semicircular impression of a dentate shell appears with the greatest frequency (Fig. 20, a). Arranged in continuous sequence, this

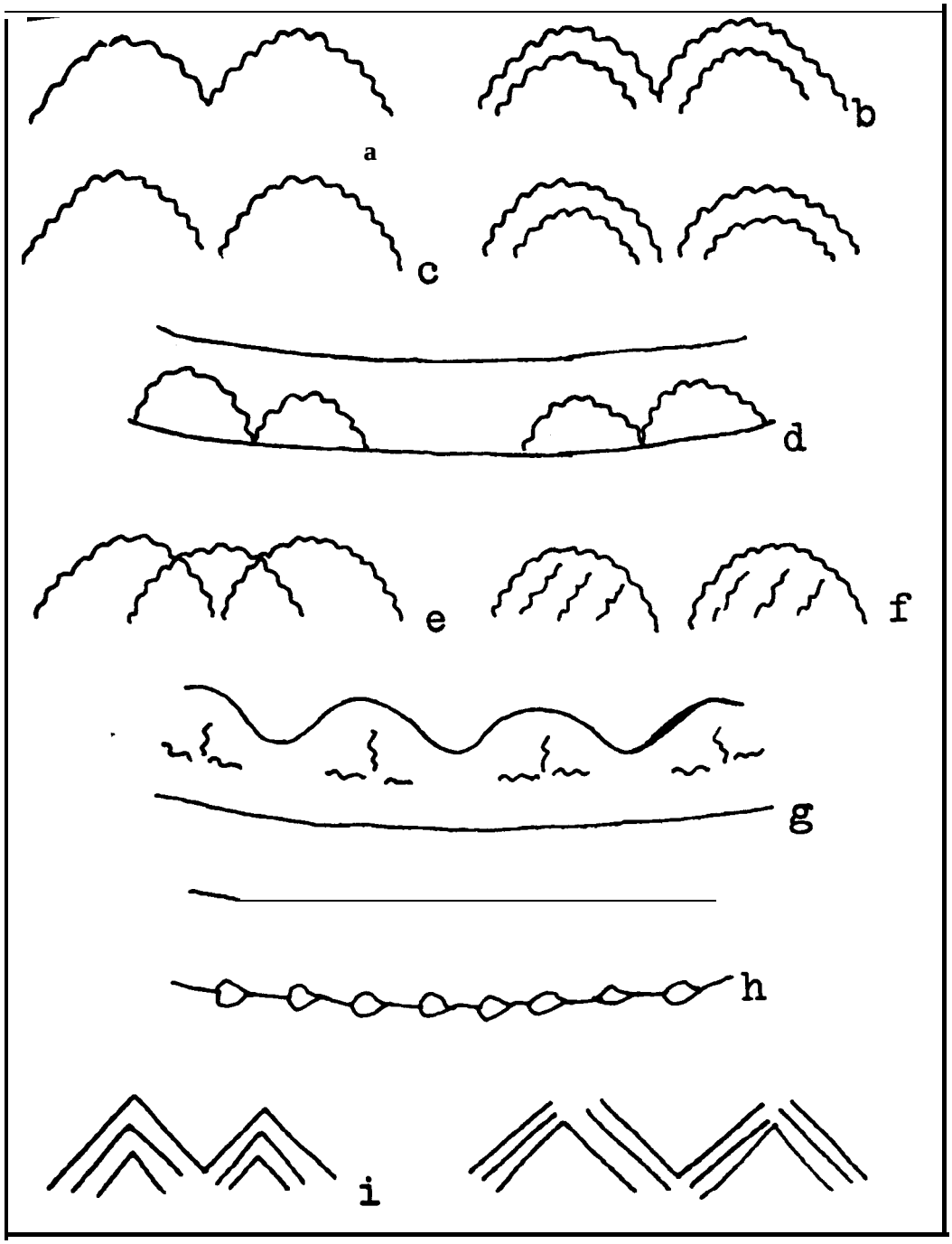

FIGURE 20. Decorative units used in the lower Sigatoka Valley.

unit decorates the lips of traditional and small-scale ***dari,*** the rim of ***vulu-vulu,*** and the shoulders of small vessels. The semicircular impressions can also be paired around the rim of traditional ***dari*** and the shoulders of small vessels and jars (Fig. 20, b). Both single and paired arcs can be arranged in discontinuous sequence around the rim of ***vuluvulu*** and the aperture of pig-

shaped vessels (Fig. 20, c). Around the rim of a ***vuluvulu,*** two single arcs may be grouped in four units separated by a gap of plain surface (Fig. 20, d). On three traditional ***dari,*** the spaces delimited by the arcs are filled with impressed oblique hatches (Fig. 20, f). Single or double wavy lines, impressed with the usual dentate shell, have been found around the shoulders of jars.

A new decorative unit consisting of three impressions, two in a horizontal discontinuous sequence and the third normal to the gap between the first two, is framed by each scallop of the rim of some present-day ***vuluvulu*** (Fig. 20, g). Three ***dari*** manufactured in Nasama show serial notches on the outer edge of the rim, made by impressing the fingertip (Fig. 20, h). Multiple incised triangular units constitute a motif for decorating rims of ***vuluvulu*** and shoulders of small vessels (Fig. 20, i).

The "carapace" of turtle-shaped vessels are decorated with new incised linear motifs (Fig. 21) that are arranged taking as the point of reference the "head," the four "flippers," and the tail end, or the head-tail axis; the carapace can also be treated as an undifferentiated space. New impressed or incised decorative units (arcs, points, lines) are arranged around the central aperture of other specimens of turtle-shaped vessels.

The ***soki*** and the ***wacodro,*** two decorative units borrowed from the Nasilai stylistic tradition, are now used as delimiters of the decorated area of vessels with two, three, or four rims and of fruit-bunch vessels. ***Soki*** act also as fillers. It is of interest to note how these two units differ from the Nasilai forms, the result of potters' copying illustrations and applying entirely new techniques. The Sigatoka Valley ***soki*** are more prominent than the present-day Nasilai ones and have assumed a perfectly conical shape. The ***wacodro*** band is considerably wider since it is shaped by applying a thick cord of clay that is then squared rather than flattened and pointed. Serial notches are made on the rectangular band in relief by impressing the fingertip.

Yanuya

The decorative units found on Yanuya pottery consist of finely incised hatches, zigzag or straight lines, and small applied knobs. The knobs have a cylindrical shape, instead of the hemispherical one typical of those from Nasilai. The lines are arranged in triangular units in continuous or discontinuous sequence and the spaces may be filled with hatches or small knobs (Fig. 22). These motifs are used as single bands to decorate the rims of ***vuluvulu*** and the shoulders of ***cubu.*** The lips of ***vuluvulu*** as well as the lips of other vessel types are decorated with hatches made by impressing a thin twig.

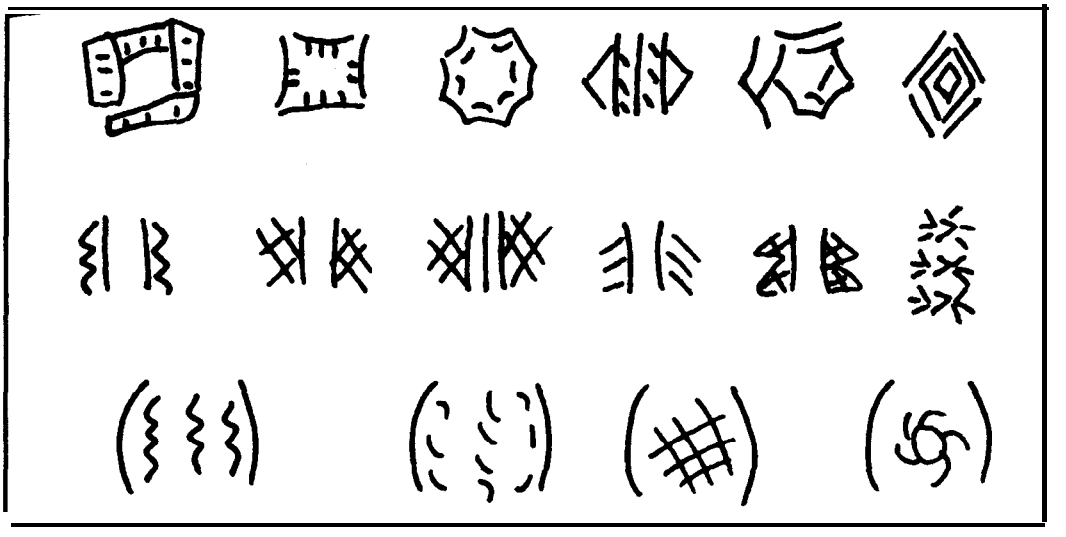

FIGURE 21. Decorative units used on the "carapace" of turtle-shaped vessels, lower Sigatoka Valley.

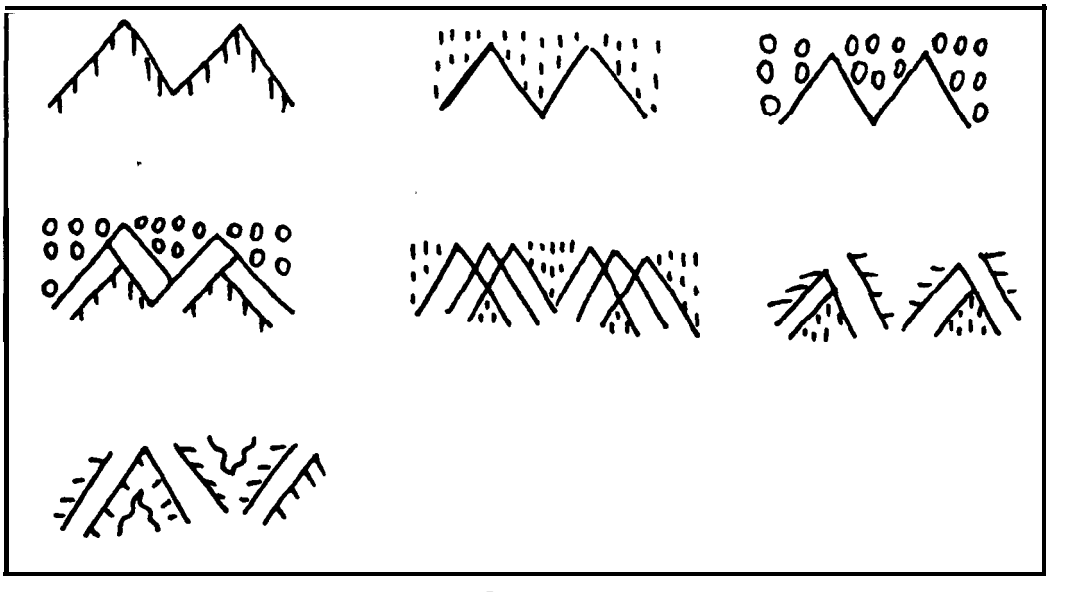

FIGURE 22. Decorative units used in Yanuya.

Decorative units and rules of composition have remained unchanged in Yanuya during the period considered.

Conclusions

From the foregoing, the stylistic changes in postcontact Fijian pottery can be summarized as follows: (1) diversification in production, (2) miniaturization and, in certain cases, increase in size, (3) flat bases and stands, (4) light-

ness, (5) words on vessel surfaces, (6) surface blackening, (7) glaze and decoration on traditionally unglazed and undecorated vessels, and (8) general upset of the decorative system.

These changes are cumulative in effect and all have been induced by the tourist market and the new destination of the vessels. Production has diversified to offer the purchasers--usually conducted-tour tourists but a small number of more-discriminating professional and amateur collectors and such, as well--a greater choice and increase the potters' chances of selling their vessels and thus earning some money.

Two processes have been followed in the creation of new vessel types: varying the form of traditional vessels or imitating vessels that are typical of other areas, Western items, or elements of the local environment. The creation of new objects by variation and by imitation of elements of the local environment can be considered traditional processes. For instance, ***saqa dina, gusu i rua, mua i rua, kitu,*** and ***gunugunu*** of Nasilai are variations of each other. Europeans who visited Fiji last century did not fail to note the similarity of form between cooking pots and the nests of a solitary bee (a species of ***Eumenes)*** that Fijians emblematically call ***"na kuro ni yalewa kalou"*** (the goddess's pot), or between certain water containers and sperm whale's teeth, turtles, and fruit bunches, suggesting that potters drew their inspiration from them (see Smythe 1864:39; Gordon-Cumming 1881:246; Johnston 1883:266).

In contrast, the imitation of Western items or of vessels typical of other pottery centers is a recent practice, which was surely forbidden in the past and which arouses mixed reactions, ranging from the most stubborn refusal in Nasilai and Yanuya and the most eager acceptance in the Sigatoka Valley. Although pottery making is the typical activity of the women belonging to the marine communities, the exchange of stylistic features among the different centers must not have been widespread in the past. First of all, before the arrival of the Europeans, intercommunity contacts were rather scanty and occurred along well-established routes. Moreover, a sort of copyright also acted as a restraint for the borrowing of stylistic features. According to Gordon-Cumming, "under no circumstances the potters of a district will copy a pot brought back from another island or district" (1881:18). This exclusivity was strengthened by endogamous marriage rules and by restrictions according to which a girl could undertake pottery making only after her marriage to a male member of her own community. The isolation of the different pottery centers diminished after the mid-1800s in consequence of the pacification and extension of the Fijian states. Nevertheless, it has not completely disappeared, considering that the potters whom I visited were generally unfamiliar with the output of the other villages, nor did they

know their exact names and locations. I noticed that respect for tradition is stronger in Nasilai and Yanuya; two fishing communities, than in the lower Sigatoka Valley, where I have recorded attempts to copy vessel types and decorations of the Nasilai tradition.

In any case, potters creating a new type of vessel show a need for a concrete starting point from which to explore new formal possibilities. The potters universally justify this process by referring to the difficulty in thinking of and then putting into concrete form an absolutely original object. Conceiving a new object requires considerable concentration; putting a new idea into concrete form might require new technical innovations, the risk of failure, and wasted time. This is particularly true for pottery, whose production process demands a correct execution of well-defined technical methods to achieve the desired result.

In the case of creation by variation, I would particularly stress how a variant may differ by the addition or exclusion of minimal elements of form on the same base form, or in a slight variation of both the base form and another element. This way of working is doubly profitable since it is economical both in the conception and execution; for this reason, it shows itself as the most obvious course to follow. Only when the possibilities of formal elaboration offered by a previously fixed "base type" are exhausted will the potters turn to their environment for inspiration. This is what has been happening in the still-active pottery centers for decades. As an example, potters in Lawai, Nakabuta, and Nayawa have reacted to the necessity to diversify first by varying ***kuro, dari,*** and ***vuluvulu,*** and only then by conceiving new forms and elaborating new techniques to produce them by imitating the production of other centers. Also, new forms and techniques, usually conceived by one potter, quickly diffuse among the other potters of the community and even among those of neighboring centers. The first turtle-shaped vessel manufactured in Lawai had been modeled by Leone Matalou, who copied it from a publication. Displayed in the meetinghouse for sale to tourists, it was copied by other Lawai potters; then its form was gradually modified, resulting in the current variants.

The form or ***i bulibuli*** of a vessel is inherited from the past and is considered to be fixed, constant over the years. A general rule prescribes this invariability. Fijian potters justify it by adducing that their grandmothers achieved a unique perfection that requires no further intervention, only faithful perpetuation. Nevertheless, traditional vessel forms are slowly and more or less consciously varied, accompanied by a general change in function. For the potters, the vessels are no longer utilitarian objects that may also be beautiful but considered primarily decorative, their practical functions disregarded or completely lost. New functions may accord with the dif-

ferent contexts for which the vessels are now intended. So a ***vuluvulu*** is conceived not as a finger bowl but as an ashtray, involving formal changes such as notches around the lip. A preference for the decorative function involves also formal changes, such as the discontinuation of filling-holes and pouring spouts.

At a more general level, all the vessels are conceived by the potters as souvenirs: they remind tourists of their journey, the places visited, the people met. For this reason, words like "Fiji," the village's name, or the potter's name are incised or impressed on the surface. The potters have further adjusted their vessels to meet purchasers' demands. Miniaturization and lightness facilitate direct tourist sales, diminishing problems of space and weight in transport. Flat bases and stands are also a response to tourist preferences, allowing the vessels to stand without using the traditional support ***(toqi)*** made from dried banana leaves twisted into a circle. However, where direct contact with tourists is difficult and the potters have to rely upon the Government Handicraft Centre of Suva to sell their vessels, an increase in size is considered economically preferable--bigger vessels sell for more money--and personally more prestigious--"You must be a ***dau tulituli,*** a master potter, to shape a 40- to 45-cm-high vessel!"

Stylistic changes (1) to (4) have affected technology. In the lower Sigatoka Valley, these changes have given rise to intense experimental work to find suitable techniques. There, the traditional forming technique allows the modeling of large- and medium-size vessels only and requires much time and skill; moreover, the technique is unsuitable for modeling the zoomorphic objects that constitute much of contemporary production. The new technique in use today was designed first to solve the zoomorphic problem; it then was found to be useful in shaping small-size vessels and jugs. In contrast, shaping small vessels has been an easy task in Nasilai, where a secondary tradition of very small vessels has existed since the mid-1800s. Thinning walls and increasing size instead have affected technology there. In the traditional Nasilai forming technique the base was shaped using the knee as a mold, requiring a thick slab of clay that, once hollowed, was difficult to thin. In addition, the potters could not consistently make bases of a certain size and perfectly round shape. Some eighteen years ago, when Seru Tosoqosoqo started to make pottery, he tried to find a solution by using an enameled basin and plastic buoys as molds. Thinning the walls caused an even more radical change in the technique. Instead of adding coils of clay to build them up, Tosoqosoqo started adding rectangular slabs to the base by flattening coils of clay, while his sister Maraya directly flattens a piece of clay and uses a knife to cut out a slab of suitable size. These changes seem to stimulate the potters' technical skill, though producing small-scale vessels has affected it negatively both in Nasilai and the lower Sigatoka Valley.

We have, in effect, the loss of technical knowledge entailed by a tradition. This is true also as regards the blackening of vessel surfaces. The traditional surface is of a uniform reddish color if unglazed and of a light color with different shades of red, pale maroon, green, and grey melting into each other if glazed. The potters' efforts are directed at obtaining the traditional color during firing and glazing, but the last two production phases are the least controllable and the expected result is not always achieved. Moreover, the ***dakua*** tree, which grows in the interior of Viti Levu, is now protected by the Ministry of Forestry. Tapping ***dakua*** sap was declared illegal in 1949 because it damaged the trees. The ***makadre,*** once obtained through relatives and friends living inland or bought at the town markets in Suva, Nausori, and Sigatoka, is now very scarce. Consequently, the potters often have none with which to glaze their vessels, and they substitute industrial varnish. Although giving the same shiny effect as the traditional resin, varnish does not produce those shades of color that are so appreciated. The potters show disappointment when they fail to achieve the desired effect but, since a black object will probably please the tourists, they are not stimulated to improve their skills.

The tourists' preference for glazed and decorated vessels has also led the potters to glaze and decorate traditionally unglazed and plain ware. This is true of cooking pots, which highlights the new attitude that considers the vessels as decorative objects.

As regards the decorative system, we have seen that changes have occurred in the decorative units used and in their composition. For the most part, the decorative units now used fall within the category "three-dimensional" or "applied." These are the only decorative units used on small vessels, that is, on almost all the pottery manufactured in Nasilai today. On other types of vessels applied decorative units are found together with impressed ones, but the applied units predominate both numerically and visually. Incised decorative units are hardly used. The frequency of the three types of decorative units is thus reversed in comparison with the older production.

According to the potters' statements, this change in decoration fits into a general change in taste. Nowadays an applied decoration is preferred since it stands out from the surface of the vessel, producing an effect of richness and profusion conspicuous even at distance, whereas an incised or impressed decoration tends to be lost in the glazing process: the resin, rubbed on the surface while still hot from firing, fills the grooves and produces an effect of flattening and visual darkening.

Although potters stress the ease of ***executing*** an incised or impressed decoration compared to an applied one, they do not dwell on the aspect of ***conceiving.*** Though easier to execute, an incised or impressed decoration is

actually much more difficult to realize because of the greater number of decorative units that must be conceived. Overall, decorating a vessel with applied units requires less concentration and is quicker: it is sufficient to arrange properly only two of them to cover the entire decorated area of a reduced-size vessel. Traditional, more elaborate schemes of composition thus tend to disappear. Such being the case, it would not be wrong to say that the aesthetic justification for preferring applied decoration has grown out of the resolution of a technical problem, that of decorating easily and properly.

According to tradition, decorative units should not be modified but, in effect, they assume new forms with constant use. Their modification can be slow and the potters can be unaware of the changes; instead, an individual can create completely new decorative units that, once adopted by the group, enrich the traditional reserve of forms. The potters can get inspiration from elements of nature or the local environment that usually undergo a considerable process of stylization; sometimes the similarity in form has been the main criterion in the selection of a new decorative unit among the many possible. Nowadays the potters also have a greater number of tools that can be used for expressive purposes. These tools can be chosen by chance: the potter wants a new decorative unit, but she has no idea what type; an iron bar within reach can be impressed on a small piece of clay and, if the mark left is satisfactory, it is used as a decorative unit. At times the potter has a clear idea of the decorative unit she wants to create and she will go intentionally in search of the tool that allows her to execute it. Although permitted by tradition, the creation of new decorative units is not, anyway, very common and equally practiced by all potters. A surface incision or impression or a piece of clay stuck on and modeled does not necessarily turn into a new decorative unit. Either conceived by the potters or suggested to them from the outside, a new sign must appear congruent both on the formal and technical level with the set of decorative units already in use.

Achieving congruence requires competence and creative capabilities that not all potters have or are inclined to put to the test. Therefore the creative work of only a few potters influences the production of all the others. Once adopted by a potter, a new decorative unit enriches her personal “vocabulary”; with the passing of time it will be adopted by others and enrich the traditional reserve of forms.

Before this happens, two contrasting and deeply felt exigencies must be reconciled gradually. On one hand, each potter claims the right to distinguish herself from the others and, consequently, any open attempt at copying is harshly censured. On the other hand, the other potters’ appreciation and their willingness, even if only verbally expressed, to adopt a new decora-

tive unit are expected as signs of affirmation of the "adequacy" of the originator's creative capabilities. Disapproval of copying is totally absent within the household, where, on the contrary, the potters themselves encourage their daughters, sisters, and nieces to use the latest creations. Disapproval rises with. the increase of physical and social distance but, since adoption by others raises self-esteem, new decorative units end up being used sooner or later by all the potters. Use of specific decorative units consequently becomes more or less widespread, although each potter prefers some and not others.

Most of the changes recorded here have been pursued consciously and stubbornly by the potters. This suggests that the artist&rafters, rather than the objects, should be placed at center stage in the task of understanding ethnographic art; that whatever the rules, standards, and conventions of style, whatever purposes and expectations a society may set up for its members, the individual is a central factor in producing innovation. Nevertheless, only some of the changes recorded have been acknowledged by the potters. Their failure to recognize all the changes is due to the fact that the concept of "tradition" that Fijian potters refer to is rather narrow, exclusively based on the range of vessels manufactured by the preceding generation. Individual potters' knowledge of "tradition" lacks historical depth not only because of the limited documentary sources available, but also, and above all, because of the present decay of their craft.

According to the degree of respect for tradition, vessels are divided into three different categories. The first category comprises the greatly valued traditional vessels or ***ka makawa (ka,*** thing; ***makawa,*** ancient). To be recognized as such, a vessel must have the established formal configuration whose general distinctive features are roundness and balance, a rich and harmonious decoration on the proper portion of surface, and the traditional color. A traditional vessel must also be lightweight and give out a metallic sound if tapped. Finally, its surface must not show cracks. These last-mentioned characteristics are technical rather than stylistic, but they have equal importance for Fijian potters in defining a traditional vessel and its intrinsic beauty.

According to the potters, the very common small vessels of today can be included within the traditional category. In effect, water containers in the shape of a turtle, fruit bunch, double canoe, or whale's tooth so small as to appear "of little practical use" were recorded by Roth (1935:226). Earlier, Commander J. E. Erskine of HMS ***Havannah*** wrote of having seen drinking vessels made in Rewa that were "so small as to appear intended for playthings for children" (1853:194). These small vessels were certainly part of a well-defined group that could have been used for storing scented coconut oil; anyway, taking their social destination into account, their intrinsic value

could be more symbolic / decorative than practical. Present-day vessels of small size differ from this group in their merely economic value, in their tourist destination, and in being replicas of full-size traditional vessels; they could be considered traditional only in their faithfulness to their models.

Vessels showing an elongated body form, a flat base, or even a stand--all recurring features in present-day production--continue to fall within the standard types. They are given the traditional names, followed by the expression ***"ka vou,"*** for example, ***saqa dina ka vou, gunugunu ka vou*** (new ***saqa dina,*** new ***gunugunu),*** and so forth. Although the new stylistic features do not destroy the form of the vessel, they do spoil the purity of the roundish line. Vessels with names incised on their surface and black in color are also included in this category. These modified standard types of vessels are accepted more readily in the lower Sigatoka Valley than elsewhere; in valley communities they can be included among the valuables presented during ceremonies on the occasion of births, deaths, marriages, and political meetings. In Nasilai and Yanuya, they are considered the result of the progressive loss of technical skill and cultural control suffered by the potters' community.

A third category, of completely new types of vessels, simply and generically named ***ka vou,*** "new objects," must be considered. The potters assume an ambivalent position towards these vessels: they are prized as a result of lively imagination and' technical skill, yet disparaged for being outside of tradition and undermining its validity as a source of common behavior and identity.

Contrary to the supposed conservation (Foster 1956) or even stagnation during the centuries (Balfet 1965) often attributed to pottery, both the archaeological and historical records emphasize chronic change in Fijian pottery and the rapidity with which it occurred following contact with Western culture and the establishment of colonial rule. Certainly Fijian pottery is one of the category of items that can change easily. The fact that the pace of change in pottery making seems to have accelerated dramatically in the postcontact period can then be ascribed to a greater susceptibility to change provided by the modern socioeconomic context. The contemporary competitive commercial context certainly makes potters more susceptible to innovative influences, and thus provides more impetus to change, than did the traditional noncommercial setting (in times when the status quo prevailed, at least--at other times, such as during the mid-1800s with the increasing power of the Bau and Rewa chiefs, greater attention to rank differences had repercussions for Nasilai potters, encouraging the creation of new types of chiefly vessels). In a general context of innovative influences, however, it must be cautioned that the nature and rate of change may differ from area

to area within Fiji. Compared to the pottery of Nasilai and the lower Sigatoka Valley, Yanuya production has showed itself, in fact, to remain more faithful to traditional canons.

Several scholars have concluded that change in pottery does not reliably and predictably accompany other kinds of cultural change (Charlton 1968; Adams 1979; De Boer 1984). Contrary to this, the developments in Fijian pottery of historic times show how changes in pottery making and socioeconomic changes are closely intertwined. If we categorize the sources of change as either external or internal, it seems that pottery changes have been generated more by external causes; these have stimulated the changes internal to the system, which then have stimulated further pottery changes. Since pottery is not merely an amorphous collection of interchangeable elements, these changes have interacted, and activity in one sector has led to activity in another. All this does not imply that pottery has always, and erroneously, been described in static terms. Rather it reminds us that we must take both local circumstances and historical developments into consideration.

NOTES

This article is based on eight months of field research in Fiji, October 1986 to May 1987. I wish to express here my appreciation to the Fiji Museum staff for their invaluable assistance; my special thanks are due to the then director, Mr. Fergus Clunie, and to his assistant and museum conservator, Miss Gladys Fullman. I also owe a great debt to the many potters and villagers who gave me a friendly welcome and furnished information on pottery.

1. Miss Gordon-Cumming and Baron von Hugel arrived in Fiji in 1875 just as Sir Arthur Gordon, first governor of Fiji, was establishing the British colonial administration. They soon became involved in collecting local artifacts. Gordon-Cumming's and von Hugel's collections are at the University Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, Cambridge; Gordon's collection is at the Anthropological Museum, Marshall College, Aberdeen. Lieutenant Wilkes and Captain Magrunder visited the Fiji Islands with the United States Exploring Expedition, whose elaborate survey resulted in more accurate information on the group, vital to European expansionism in the region. The collections of Fijian pottery that I refer to are at the National Museum of Natural History, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.

2. Only coconut-shell cups are used to drink *yaqona* nowadays. Their use spread through Fiji with the Tongan *tanoa* and its respective *kava* rituals in the 1700s. Until then, Fijian *yaqona* drinking was religious in nature, usually conducted within the spirit house and involving only priests, chiefs, and male elders of a clan. No use was made of a cup, since the drinker sucked *yaqona* directly from an earthenware bowl or dish, or from a vessel of *vesi* tree *(Intsia bijuga)* wood. Earthenware *yaqona* drinking cups are later than coconut-shell cups, most likely connected with the rise of the Rewa and Bau chiefs' power in the mid-1800s.

3. Carved wooden masks are not found in traditional Fijian culture. For Fijian traditional masks, see Clunie and Ligairi 1983.

4. Seru Tosoqosoqo of Nasilai is a young man who learned how to make pots in his adolescence, instructed by his mother. He is proud to be a potter and enjoys general esteem. Leone Matalou of Lawai is another example of a male potter. Although in the past pottery making was practiced strictly by women, men today also undertake it to supplement their families' incomes.

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RABUKA'S REPUBLIC: THE FIJI SNAP ELECTIONS OF 1994

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Fiji went to the polls in February 1994 following the defeat of the Rabuka government's budget in November 1993. Confounding all predictions, Sitiveni Rabuka and his party returned to power with thirty-two of the thirty-seven Fijian seats and formed a coalition government with the General Voters Party. On the Indo-Fijian side, the National Federation Party returned with twenty of the twenty-seven Indo-Fijian seats and the Fiji Labour Party with the remaining seven. This article examines the background to the elections and the role and motives of individuals and interest groups in precipitating the crisis, discusses the issues raised in the campaign, analyzes voting trends, and looks at their implications. Indigenous Fijian unity is increasingly being frayed by provincial and class tensions. Encouraged to some extent by the gradual erosion of the fear of Indo-Fijian dominance, Fijian people are beginning to air doubts about the efficacy and survival of traditional institutions and practices in the modem political arena. Rabuka promised to use his mandate to promote national unity through the politics of inclusion. How he reconciles this with his staunch advocacy of Fijian political paramountcy will test his mettle as a leader.

FIJI WENT TO THE POLLS in February 1994, eighteen months after the first postcoup elections of 1992 and for the seventh time since gaining independence from Great Britain in 1970. The snap election was called after the defeat of the government's budget in November 1993. Sitiveni Rabuka's opponents on the government benches hoped to use the election to oust him from office. They had miscalculated. Rabuka and his party, the Soqosoqo ni Vakavulewa ni Taukei (SVT), returned to power with thirty-two of the thirty-seven seats reserved for ethnic Fijians under the 1990 constitution. His mandate seemingly secure and his personal popularity high,

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Rabuka was unanimously reelected head of his party and reclaimed the prime minister's office, forming a coalition government with the General Voters Party (GVP), which won four of the five seats allocated to that community. On the Indo-Fijian side, the National Federation Party (NFP) increased its representation from fourteen to twenty seats, while the Fiji Labour Party won the remaining seven.

Elections rarely express the full range of issues and concerns of an electorate. This election was conducted under a constitution that segregates the electorates into separate racial compartments, so that issues of national concern such as the review of the constitution, the resolution of the land tenure problem, creeping corruption in public life, and the prospects of a government of national unity were not debated. Forced to appeal to their separate ethnic constituencies, the major political parties had neither opportunity nor incentive to address transracial matters. The campaign, therefore, powerfully reinforced ethnic chauvinism. It also produced unprecedented fragmentation of the Fijian community and audible murmurs of social tensions and regional and provincial rivalries that have distressed and confused a people used to political unity at the national level. Finding solutions to these difficulties remains at the top of Fiji's agenda.

The Constitution and Its Consequences

The elections were held under a controversial constitution decreed by the interim administration in June 1990. It provides for a strong presidency headed by a Fijian chief from one of three traditional Fijian confederacies (Tovata, Kubuna, and Burebasaga), appointed by the all-Fijian Great Council of Chiefs. The president enjoys extensive powers, including the right, acting on his own judgment, to appoint the prime minister. Ratu Sir Penaia Ganilau was the first president, succeeded at his death in December 1993 by the long-term Alliance Party prime minister, Ratu Sir Kamisese Mara. In declining health and lethargic even at the best of times, Ganilau was largely an ineffectual, if reassuring, head of state. Mara, in contrast, is an experienced politician sometimes at odds with Rabuka.

The constitution also provides for a bicameral legislature. The appointed upper house, the Senate, consists of thirty-four members, twenty-four nominated by the Great Council of Chiefs and ten representing other communities. The chiefs' nominees enjoy veto power over any legislation affecting Fijian interests, broadly defined. The House of Representatives consists of seventy members elected by racial constituencies. The ethnic Fijians have thirty-seven seats, Indo-Fijians twenty-seven, General Electors five, and the Council of Rotuma one. While Indo-Fijians and General Electors have

single-member constituencies, thirty-two Fijians are elected from multi-member provincial constituencies and five from single-member urban constituencies. In addition, the constitution also provides for special recognition of and protection for Fijian and Rotuman rights and interests, and enjoins the government to promulgate policies in their favor. In short, the constitution entrenches Fijian political supremacy in the political process, especially the power of the chiefs, which according to its supporters merely acknowledges and reaffirms the long-held principle of the paramountcy of Fijian interests. But numerical supremacy in Parliament did not quell the resurgent provincial and regional tensions among Fijians. On the contrary, it exacerbated them. These tensions contributed to the parliamentary defeat of the Rabuka government.

The first general elections under the 1990 constitution were held in May 1992, when the SVT won thirty of the thirty-seven Fijian seats and formed a government in coalition with the GVP (Lal 1993). Not having an outright majority of seats in Parliament, the SVT was forced to seek the support of other parties. One of them was Labour, which backed Sitiveni Rabuka over his rival in the SVT, Josefata Kamikamica, after Rabuka agreed to undertake a review of the constitution, resolve the land problem posed by the imminent expiry of leases under the Agricultural Landlord and Tenants Act, and reexamine the antilabor legislation and the value-added tax enacted by the interim administration that had governed Fiji from 1987 to 1992. However, once ensconced, Rabuka reneged on the spirit of the agreement. The Labour Party could not continue to support a leader who procrastinated on his promises to them, nor could it withdraw its support without appearing petulant. With its plea for dialogue increasingly unheeded, Labour abandoned Rabuka in June 1993 and walked out of Parliament. By then the party's fortunes were floundering; its milestone decision to back Rabuka had become a millstone.

At the other end of the spectrum, Rabuka had to contend with the demands of Fijian nationalists, with five seats, who had also supported him against Kamikamica. They wanted the government to honor its campaign commitment to "realize the aims of the coup," that is, to achieve the ideal of Fijian paramountcy. On a number of occasions, fringe elements of the movement took to the streets and threatened Rabuka with political reprisals, scorning his efforts to promote multiracialism. The nationalists could not be ignored, since they commanded substantial support in Viti Levu.

In May 1993, a group led by Sakiasi Butadroka and Ratu Osea Gavidi of the Fijian Nationalist United Front launched the Viti Levu Council of Chiefs, demanding recognition of the fourth confederacy, the Yasayasa Vaka Ra, and the rotation of the presidency among all four. They also demanded

conversion of all nonnative land to native titles and that landowners' interests be given priority in the exploitation of resources on their land ***(Fiji Times,*** 22 May 1993). The formation of the Viti Levu Council was the latest of many vain efforts by western Fijians to gain a voice commensurate with their numbers and contribution to the national economy.

Labour and the Fijian nationalists were not Rabuka's only problems. He had powerful dissident elements within his own party and in the Fijian establishment generally, who had never accepted him as a legitimate leader, The circumstances that brought him to power weighed against him. He was not forgiven for defeating the paramount chief of the Burebasaga confederacy, Adi Lala Mara, for the presidency of the SVT. Nor, especially, was he forgiven his startling public criticism of Ratu Mara, calling him a ***baka*** (banyan) tree under which nothing grew, "a ruthless politician who has been allowed to get away with a lot," a man who had the temerity to criticize a constitution that had made him vice-president ***(Daily Post,*** 11 Dec. 1992; ***Pacific Islands Monthly,*** Aug. 1990). Nor, again, was Rabuka's expressed preference for basing social status on achievement rather than birth well received among chiefly Fijians.

For his part, Mara ridiculed Rabuka as an angry, simpleminded colonel. Rabuka's rival, Kamikamica, Mara said, "will make a good prime minister" ***(The Weekender,*** 23 July 1993). Mara was also critical of Rabuka's stewardship of the SVT, blaming him indirectly for poor relations with the Great Council of Chiefs ***(Islands Business,*** Feb. 1994). The tension between the two men was not surprising, for they are similar in temperament: authoritarian, autocratic, emotional, and possessed of a sense of personal destiny as saviors of their people. Mara is also conscious of his chiefly role and responsibilities and seems inclined to regard Rabuka as an upstart commoner. The pro-Mara faction of the SVT not only refused to join Rabuka's cabinet but became vocal critics. Among them were Mara's son, Finau, and Kamikamica, who had refused Rabuka's cabinet offer several times. In the Senate, Adi Finau Tabakaucoro, a minister in Mara's interim administration, championed the anti-Rabuka cause.

Rabuka's own conduct did not help his image or performance. His casual remarks on sensitive subjects and his tendency to think aloud on important policy matters left him open to public ridicule and bewildered his colleagues. His inexperience was apparent. According to critics, Rabuka did not behave in a manner befitting the dignity of the country's highest elected official. One Fijian observer articulated a widely held view: "Rabuka is sometimes unpredictable, tends to be highly emotionally inclined and apparently tries to please everyone. Despite his most valiant efforts, he rushes into important decisions without much consultation or forethought. The end

result of this is more often than not he winds up contradicting himself or his cabinet" ***(Islands Business,*** June 1993). Rabuka came across as a simple man with a decent heart who was locked in a military mind-set of command and obedience, albeit qualified by impulsiveness and at times capriciousness. His openness, accessibility, and eagerness to please, as well as his inability to discipline dissidents, contributed to his parliamentary downfall as much as the machinations of his opponents.

The Rabuka Government: Performance and Problems

On winning office in 1992, the government faced two immediate tasks. One was to consolidate its position among the ***taukei*** (indigenous Fijians), particularly among its potentially explosive fringe. The other was to improve the country's coup-scarred image internationally. The latter was relatively easy. Rabuka made state visits to Australia and New Zealand and represented Fiji at the South Pacific Forum in Honiara. Everywhere he maintained an appropriately low profile. The visits were successful in restoring full diplomatic and defense links with Australia and New Zealand, and reassuring friends in the region. Fiji is still out of the Commonwealth, though rejoining is a long-term goal of the Great Council of Chiefs.[1] Older Fijians also wish to reestablish direct links with the British monarchy, but that is unlikely in the absence of a widely acceptable constitution.

Locally, Rabuka's performance was not as smooth. His power base within the SVT caucus and in the provinces was insecure. To consolidate it, he tried to co-opt potential opponents who had lost in the elections. Many were rewarded with seats in the Senate, diplomatic jobs, or positions on statutory bodies. In cabinet and other appointments, Rabuka worked on the principle of provincial balance. Each province had to be represented in the cabinet and in the higher echelons of government. Indeed, when some members were demoted or dismissed for poor performance, they attacked the prime minister. Viliame Saulekaleka, dismissed assistant minister from Lau, Mara's province, accused Rabuka of being anti-Lauan ***(Daily Post,*** 30 Oct. 1993). Ilai Kuli, mercurial sacked minister of posts and telecommunications, treated his dismissal as a betrayal of the people of Naitasiri. Bua threatened to block the opening of the F$l0 million Nabouwalu Hospital if its representative in the cabinet, Koresi Matatolu, was removed ***(Fiji Times,*** 28 May 1993). Rabuka may have had his mandate, but he had to work with a team whose political loyalties were divided.

In his first few months in office, Rabuka promulgated a number of pro-Fijian policies. In education, the government continued with the special F$3.5 million set aside annually since 1984 for Fijian tertiary education, and

a special Fijian Education Unit was established in the Ministry of Education to monitor progress. The ministry also created special educational media centers in Fijian schools to improve the teaching of science. On the economic front, while continuing its privatization policies, the government proposed measures to propel more Fijians into the commercial sector, where they have been conspicuous by their absence. These included a small business agency to advise and train Fijians, providing loans to provincial councils to increase their shares in Fijian Holdings Limited, giving that investment company priority in buying shares from privatized government enterprises, and proposing income-tax exemption for Fijian-owned businesses for up to twenty years ***(Fiji Times,*** 27 Aug. 1993). The government also set aside a F$2 million fund to provide interest-free loans payable over thirty years to certain ***mataqali*** to buy back freehold land ***(Fiji Times,*** 25 Feb. 1993). Late in 1993, it announced the transfer of the administration of all Crown Schedule A and B lands from the Department of Lands to the Native Lands Trust Board.[2] Eventually, these lands will revert to native title.

Many of the government's pro-Fijian initiatives were cautiously supported by Indo-Fijian members of Parliament, though Labour leader Mahendra Chaudhary asked the government to examine the fundamental reasons why Fijians were not succeeding in certain fields. "There must be something wrong within. the system itself that with all these resources, the results are not forthcoming" ***(Islands Business,*** Aug. 1993). At the same time, they pointed out the blatant discrimination against their community in the public sector. The principle of balance had been ignored, said Chaudhary. Of 9,597 civil servants in 1992, 5,897 or 61.4 percent were ethnic Fijians and only 3,186 or 33.2 percent Indo-Fijians. On the boards of statutory organizations, the paucity of Indo-Fijians was glaring. For instance, there was not a single Indo-Fijian on the board of the Reserve Bank of Fiji, the Fiji Broadcasting Commission, or, incredibly, the Fiji Sugar Corporation.[3] Opposition leader Jai Ram Reddy pleaded with the government for fairness and equity, but the government had no incentive to address concerns of the non-Fijians. Consequently, Indo-Fijian disenchantment grew. Rabuka was indifferent.

No one felt more betrayed than the Fiji Labour Party, whose support had made Rabuka prime minister. The conditions for that support were not observed by the government (Lal 1993). The 10 percent value-added tax on most goods and services was retained as part of the government's progressive tax-reform package. The labor-reform legislation, whose ultimate intention was to cripple trade unions, was unenforced though it remained on the books ***(Fiji Times,*** 14 Apr. 1993). And though there was some talk, there was no action on the pressing issues surrounding the renewal of leases after the

expiry of the Agricultural Landlord and Tenants Act. On his promise to initiate a review of the constitution, Rabuka retorted: "To review means to look at what has been done. It does not mean that we have committed ourselves to making any changes or abolitions" ***(Pacific Report,*** 28 June 1993).

Government of National Unity and Constitutional Review

In fact, the government had commited itself to a review within five years but did not regard it as a matter of any urgency. Then, suddenly in December 1992, Rabuka mooted the idea of a government of national unity. Rabuka's proposal caught the country by surprise. The idea has a long history. Some form of coalition government was mentioned in the negotiations leading to independence, but nothing came of it. In 1977, the Alliance Party mooted the idea, only to withdraw it when the NFP criticized it as the party's effort to bolster its sagging image as a multiracial organization (Lal 1992a:243-245). Rabuka's concept was equally vague and emotional ***(Fiji Times,*** 5 Dec. 1992). In May 1993, Rabuka elaborated:

> What I and those who support my idea envisage is a style of government that brings the communities together, that enables all ethnic groups to cooperate jointly in the affairs of government and the work of legislature. I want the leaders of Fijian, Indian and General voters to define the middle ground, the political centre, where they can pool their wisdom and their abilities in the national interest. I want to see them united in pursuit of defined national objectives--objectives that serve the interests and welfare of us all, Fijians, Indians and General voters. In my vision of what I consider to be the ultimate good of the country, I see very clearly that it is in all our interest to develop a social and political partnership that transcends suspicion and distrust, that elevates us as a nation and gives us a combined sense of common destiny and purpose. ***(The Weekender,*** 21 May 1993)

This statement was hailed as a major declaration by the government, though, in truth, it was much the same as what Rabuka had stated in 1990:

> I would like to have a government of national reconstruction. First we look at what Fiji needs first. You won your seats on these policies, we won our seats on these policies. You have extreme left views, we have extreme right views. Let's forget about these extremities and let's work on this sort of grey areas in our policies

> where they sort of merge. That's where we run Fiji for the next five years. ***(Pacific Islands Monthly,*** Aug. 1990)

Rabuka's national unity government would have eighteen cabinet members, twelve from the ruling all-Fijian SVT, two each from NFP and Labour, and one each from the Nationalists and the GVP. In this respect, Rabuka's offer differed little from the Alliance Party's offer in 1977.

Rabuka's proposal received a mixed response. The SVT caucus complained of not being consulted. The Fijian nationalists supported the concept, but only on condition that their program for Fijian supremacy "will still be maintained through the government of national unity" ***(Fiji Times,*** 11 Dec. 1990). The violence-threatening faction of the Taukei Movement urged all Fijian members of Parliament to "completely reject and throw out of the window with precipated [***sic***] haste the devilish concept of government of national unity" ***(Fiji Times,*** 22 Dec. 1992). They postponed their protest marches only when Rabuka assured them that "promoting national unity should never be misinterpreted or misconstrued by anyone to mean that he and his government were giving away the special position conferred on the Fijians and Rotumans, as the host communities in Fiji, under the 1990 constitution" ***(Fiji Times,*** 19 Feb. 1993).

Many in the opposition treated Rabuka's proposal cynically Labour's Simione Durutalo argued that the unity proposal was nothing more than an attempt "to repackage his 1987 image of an anti-Indian" ***(Fiji Times,*** 19 Feb. 1993). NFP leader Reddy was skeptical but gave Rabuka the benefit of the doubt. Again, as in 1981, he raised probing questions. There had to be some consensus on the basic principles before the proposal could be discussed further. "I am not going to nominate numbers," he said, but "at the end of the day in a government of national unity, Indians should be fairly represented. We should have a figure that bears some resemblance to their numbers, contribution and work, and not just a token number" ***(The Review,*** Mar. 1993).

In March 1993, the government did what it should have done in the first place: it presented a paper to the Great Council of Chiefs, adding that the proposal was not of "paramount importance" ***(Fiji Times,*** 18 Mar. 1993). In the council many chiefs, including Mara, questioned the prospects for a government of national unity under the 1990 constitution. Mara's public doubts and his advice that the government "should not overly make their intention known to others" ***(The Weekender,*** 28 May 1993) sealed the fate of the issue. The council decided on more grass-roots consultation and sent the proposal to the provincial councils. The chiefs' decision was puzzling. A ***Fiji Times*** editorial commented:

> Consultation is a good thing. But somewhere along the line someone has got to be able to make the decision. In this case it is the Great Council of Chiefs. If it cannot deal with the issues that it has been entrusted to deal with, then it should reconsider its role. Why do the chiefs need to refer back to the people? The people have picked their representatives to the Council. The people should have discussed these things before the meeting. ***(Fiji Times,*** 29 May 1993)

At the time of this writing, the proposals are still with the provincial councils.

With these proposals languishing, Rabuka was forced to address the issue of constitutional review sooner than he had anticipated. As the first step, he set up a cabinet subcommittee to draft the terms of reference for an independent constitutional commission. Chaired by Deputy Prime Minister Filipe Bole, the committee was expanded to include four members of the opposition, including Jai Ram Reddy. After several meetings, the committee agreed on a broad set of guidelines. The review would take place before the 1997 general elections, which would be held under a new constitution. Moreover, the review would not be confined to the electoral provisions of the 1990 constitution, "but would be of a broad nature, covering the 1990 constitution as a whole," and it would also include a consideration of the system of government deemed most appropriate for Fiji. The aim would be to produce a homegrown--autochthonous-- constitution that addressed the needs of the country. Finally, the constitution would reflect some basic principles "that would serve as the foundation for the promotion and reinforcement of national unity in Fiji" (Reddy 1993a). The new constitution, Rabuka said, "is to be an agreed statement of our national purpose, an agreed covenant binding all our different communities and citizens of Fiji to a solemn commitment to work for the peace, unity and progress of our country and to promote the welfare and interests of all its people."[4]

After intense private negotiations, the subcommittee prepared draft terms of reference. Bearing in mind the need to promote "racial harmony and national unity and the economic and social advancement of all communities and bearing in mind internationally recognised principles and standards of individual and group rights," the commission would

> Take into account that the Constitution shall guarantee full protection and promotion of the rights, interests and concerns of the indigenous Fijian and Rotuman people . . . Scrutinise and consider the extent to which the Constitution of Fiji meets the present and

> future constitutional needs of the people of Fiji, having full regard for the rights, interests and concerns of all ethnic groups of people in Fiji . . . Facilitate the widest possible debate throughout Fiji on the terms of the Constitution of Fiji and to inquire into and ascertain the variety of views and opinions that may exist in Fiji as to how the provisions of the Fiji Constitution can be improved upon in the context of Fiji's needs as a multi-ethnic and multi-cultural society [and] . . . Report fully on all the above matters and, in particular, to recommend constitutional arrangements likely to achieve the objectives of the Constitutional Review as set out above. (Ministry of Information press release)

These terms caused controversy. Labour thought them too restrictive and called in its campaign literature for specific reference to the "internationally recognised principles and standards of civil, political, cultural, economic and social rights as enshrined in the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights and related covenants." The interests of indigenous Fijians and Rotumans should be protected "without sacrificing the rights, interests and concerns of all other people in Fiji." The 1970 and not the 1990 constitution should form the basis for future constitutional review. The commission, the Labour Party said, should report within twelve months. Labour also argued that the terms of reference should have been drafted by a parliamentary committee, not by a lopsided cabinet subcommittee.[5] The government had, in fact, changed the sequence of the review process and authorized the cabinet subcommittee to draft the terms of reference for and appoint the independent commission. Labour was being effectively marginalized in a process it had helped initiate. The procedures for the review and Reddy's participation in it became an issue in the campaign among the Indo-Fijians.

Strikes, Scandals, and Tony Stephens

Unfortunately for the government, many of its initiatives were overshadowed by scandals conveying the impression of disarray and discord. There was the strike in Fiji Posts and Telecommunications department in 1992 over the sacking of the chief executive, which led to the relegation of Telecommunications Minister Ilai Kuli. Fijian Holdings Limited was facing allegations of insider trading by leading members of its management board. Similar allegations surrounded the awarding of a tender to upgrade the Nadi International Airport to a company, Minsons Limited, in which Rabuka and his wife and Civil Aviation Minister Jonetani Kaukimoce had shares.

The Ports Authority was rocked by a report that uncovered excess expenditure on overseas trips by its board members, irregularities in sales of equipment, personal insurance discrepancies, and misappropriation of funds. And questions were asked about the purchase of the prime minister's new residence (owned by the Ganilau family's Qeleni Holdings) for F$650,000 when the government valuer had estimated its value at F$465,000.

These incidents epitomized a general culture of corruption in public life that seemed to have "reached alarming proportions," made even worse by "the lack of action taken by the authorities on some of the more serious misappropriation cases involving hundreds of thousands of dollars" ***(Fiji Times,*** 21 Aug. 1993). Politicians and civil servants demand bribes openly; greasing the palm is becoming an accepted fact of life in contemporary Fiji. Jai Ram Reddy raised some of these issues in his budget speech in November 1993:

> When a quarter of a million dollars go missing from our police force, when exhibits seized by police from suspects go missing from police stations, when stolen goods exhibited in a court of law disappear; when frauds and dubious political hangers-on can get into key positions in important public sector organisations, then it is time for the people of this country to sit up and think about the rot and it is time 'for this House to do something for this state of affairs. ***(Hansard,*** Nov. 1993)

But these allegations paled into insignificance beside the so-called Stephens affair. Anthony Stephens, adviser to the Fijian nationalists, a businessman with previous brushes with the law, was arrested in 1988 in connection with the importation of pen pistols and detained for forty days. Discharged, he sued the government for F$30 million in damages, but agreed to settle for F$l0 million. Under the terms of a deed of settlement agreed on between him and the attorney general, Stephens was to be paid F$980,000 cash in an out-of-court settlement. For the remaining amount, the government would pay off two mortgages under Stephens's name with the Home Finance Company and the National Bank of Fiji, settle claims with the ANZ Bank for a guarantee to Stephens's company, Economic Enterprises, dismiss a bankruptcy action against him, transfer the Soqulu Plantation in Taveuni, under mortgage control of the National Bank of Fiji, to Stephens, and settle all matters relating to three land titles owned by Stephens's family. According to Stephens and his associates, money from the settlement would be used to arrange a F$200 million loan from a Kuwaiti source to further Fijian business interests.

Astonishingly, the attorney general signed the deed, which was exempt

from income tax, land-sales tax, and the value-added tax. As became clear later, Stephens's connections evidently reached the highest levels of government. But before the deed could be executed, it was exposed in Parliament by Jai Ram Reddy. The deed was merely an attempt to defraud the government, said Reddy. A public uproar greeted the revelations, and people wondered who else, besides the attorney general (Aptaia Seru), was implicated. As a ***Fiji Times*** editorial said, "the sorry mess suggests powerful forces, answerable to no one but themselves, are at work to undermine constituted authority. . . . What remains to be seen now is government's commitment to honest and clean government. Will the Stephens' claims be properly investigated or swept under the carpet?" (1 Oct. 1992). Faced with public pressure, the government agreed to a commission of review. Sir Ronald Kermode, retired Supreme Court justice, was appointed to head the inquiry.

Kermode presented in July 1993 a report that was damaging to anyone even tangentially involved (Kermode 1993). Etuate Tavai in the prime minister's office, the nationalists' contact there, "was not a truthful witness" and had "deliberately misled parliament." Attorney General Seru was a weak man who had strayed from the path of rectitude under pressure. Most seriously, Kermode found Sitiveni Rabuka's conduct wanting. The prime minister had ignored advice from his legal officers and opted for that which supported Stephens's claims; he had interfered in the attorney generals "area of responsibility by sending him a minute which directed him to settle a claim that he must have known was outrageously high"; he "had conspired with Stephens to obtain an overdraft from the National Bank of Fiji by false pretences or by fraud"; and he had deceived Parliament. In a sentence that was widely quoted, Kermode wrote: "In my opinion the Prime Ministers actions as regard the events leading up to the execution of the Deed were not only improper but prima facie illegal" (1993).

The opposition asked Rabuka to step aside until an independent inquiry cleared him. Rabuka refused to act at all on the grounds that Kermode had exceeded his terms of reference, but agreed reluctantly to a judicial review of the commission's findings when some of his backbenchers threatened rebellion. Ilai Kuli, in fact, filed a no-confidence motion in Rabuka's government in September 1993, which he withdrew under pressure from the Methodist Church leader Manasa Lasaro. For its part, the Taukei Movement, or what was left of it, threatened to take to the streets in support of the beleaguered prime minister, only to be told that those who planned to take the law into their own hands should "prepare themselves to face the consequences of their actions" ***(Fiji Times,*** 27 Nov. 1993). The judicial review is still in process, but it is unlikely to be taken seriously now that Rabuka has been returned with a secure mandate. Nonetheless, the whole saga was damaging for Rabuka's personal reputation.

Budget Debate and Rabuka's Defeat

The Stephens affair provided the opportunity to topple Rabuka during the November 1993 budget session, when his opponents voted with the opposition Indo-Fijians. The substance and direction of the budget was consistent with the government's broad philosophy of economic development, which included deregulation of the economy and structural market and labor adjustments to increase Fiji's international competitiveness. The government proposed to reduce duties on most imported goods to 20 percent (from 50 percent in 1989); remove license control on basic food items such as fish, rice, and powdered milk, with butter and panel wood targeted for zero tariff in the near future; increase duty on alcoholic beverages, tobacco, and fuel; and extend tax concessions to companies exporting 30 percent of their products. The defense force would be returned to its pre-1987 levels over two to three years and the public sector pay package kept to 3 percent of the GNP Government expenditure was expected to be F$800 million and revenue to be about F$644 million, providing for a net deficit of F$105 million or 4.8 percent of the GDP This was "an unacceptable level" of government spending, Finance Minister Paul Manueli said. "We must start to control the size of the deficit, early, before it starts to control us" (Manueli 1993).

For Jai Ram Reddy, that was the heart of the problem. "The Government has been strong on rhetoric but weak on action. There is a yawning gap between what this Government says and what it does, raising serious questions both about its competence and ability to manage the nation's economy" (Reddy 1993b). He and others criticized the high level of expenditure and deficit, misguided expenditure priorities, and socially regressive aspects such as higher fiscal duties on basic consumer items and transportation goods. The overall picture of economic management was disturbing. Government expenditure had increased from F$723.4 million in 1992 to F$829.9 in 1993 revised estimates and was projected to increase to F$847.2 million in 1994; the gross deficit had increased from F$120.9 million in 1992 to a F$184.5 million revised estimate in 1993 and was projected to F$150.2 million in 1994; net deficit after loan repayment had increased from F$68.7 million in 1992 to F$105.3 million in 1993 and was projected optimistically to F$84.0 million in 1994. Government expenditure as a percentage of GDP had increased from 35.1 percent in 1992 to 38.0 percent in 1993 and was projected to increase to 36.9 percent in 1994.

Reddy's criticism was not surprising; that of government backbenchers was. Kamikamica led the charge. He did not question the broad direction of government policy, for he had, as the interim finance minister, been the author of many aspects of it.[6] He agreed that government's direct involve-

ment in economic activity should be steadily wound down. And he urged the government to do more to promote specifically Fijian projects in the educational and economic sectors ***(Hansard,*** 17 Nov. 1993). The thrust of his criticism was that the government lacked financial discipline to implement correct policies, At least Kamikamica was consistent. Finau Mara acknowledged that the finance minister had "very little choice in this budget," but he was instrumental in orchestrating the Fijian vote against it though he was away in Australia when the vote was taken. Cabinet minister Ratu Viliame Dreunimisimisi was "not convinced that the budget should be abandoned" ***(Hansard,*** 29 Nov. 1993), but six hours later he voted against it.

Emboldened by mild criticism, the government rejected the opposition's offer to help it revise the budget. Even the prime minister's confidential memorandum to his two deputy prime ministers and the minister of finance to decrease the deficit by F$35 to F$39 million, increase the police allocation by F$2 million, and reduce the duty on basic food items was ignored. The government's complacency was misplaced. Knowing that the twenty-seven Indo-Fijian members of Parliament were going to vote against it, Rabuka's opponents saw their chance. When the budget came up for the second reading on 29 November, it was unexpectedly put to the vote. To the government's consternation, six Fijian members and one GVP member (David Pickering) joined the twenty-seven Indo-Fijians in voting against it. Miscalculation and misplaced trust had cost the government dearly Rabuka accepted part of the blame. "I think my military officer mentality came into focus and led me to believe that once a directive is given, everybody would toe the line, which they did not" ***(Fiji Times,*** 3 Dec. 1993).

The manner of the defeat was surprising. In normal parliamentary practice, the second reading is regarded as procedural. It is followed by the committee stage (in this case 30 November to 3 December), when the whole house would constitute itself a committee and scrutinize the proposed legislation. At this time members of Parliament can propose changes and amendments or seek explanation of particular parts. The substantive vote on a bill then takes place. But in this case, the budget bill was defeated before it reached the committee stage. It seems certain that the Fijian dissidents had not planned to use the budget to bring down the Rabuka government. Their plans materialized only as the debate proceeded and only when the position of the Indo-Fijian parties became clear. They thus seized the second reading of the budget "as their best politically credible opportunity to bring down the government" ***(The Review,*** Dec. 1993).

Rabuka questioned the dissidents' motives in his address to the Great Council of Chiefs on 15 December. Those in his party who voted against the budget could have voted for the government at the second reading,

while warning it to make changes before the bill came up for the substantive vote. This would have been consistent with the decision of the parliamentary caucus meeting of the SVT. The government had been deprived of the opportunity to consider amendments at the third reading (committee stage). Perhaps, Rabuka told the chiefs, "there might have been other considerations that lay behind their determination to vote against their own Government" (Rabuka 1993). Indeed there were. As some Fijian dissidents told Manueli, "they were going to challenge the budget not because they were opposed to it, but because they wanted to change the leadership" (ibid.).

Before informing the SVT caucus, the dissident group had informed Mara of their intention so that "he would have more time to prepare himself for the outcome of the voting" ***(Fiji Times,*** 8 Dec. 1993). How the dissidents wanted Mara to behave is unknown, but this is what the Fiji Labour Party wrote to Mara:

> It is quite evident to us that the defeat of the 1994 Budget had other quite compelling reasons than the unacceptability of the Budget itself. Over a period of last few months, the credibility of the Rabuka Government has been brought [in]to serious question. The government has been rocked by one scandal after another. . . . However Prime Minister Rabuka seems to have cared very little, if at all, about these matters and has carried on in the fashion of business as usual. These incidents have seriously eroded the confidence of the Opposition members and a number of government members of parliament in Prime Minister Rabuka. We feel Prime Minister Rabuka no longer enjoys the confidence of a majority of members of parliament and should therefore be asked to tender his resignation, following which Your Excellency should appoint a new Prime Minister who has majority support. The new Prime Minister should then appoint his cabinet and carry on the task of governing Fiji. We, Sir, would urge you to explore the above suggestion should it be constitutionally possible for you to do so.[7]

Whatever the Fijian dissidents and the Labour Party proposed, the constitution gave the prime minister three options. Within three days of a crisis, he could advise the president to dissolve Parliament and call for fresh general elections. Second, he could tender his and his government's resignation and allow the president to choose another (Fijian) member of Parliament. Only if the prime minister failed to act within the stipulated three days could the president pursue his own initiative.

Rabuka acted expeditiously. At 7:30 on the night on which the budget was defeated, he advised Mara to prorogue the Parliament from 19 January and call for a general election within thirty days. Reddy, himself a lawyer, endorsed Rabuka's decision, which led Mara to say somewhat opportunistically, "Mr Reddy saved my day." The Fiji Labour Party used this comment in the election campaign to hitch Reddy to Rabuka, insinuating that Mara would have replaced Rabuka had it not been for Reddy's contrary advice. In truth, it was not Reddy but the constitution that saved Mara's day, for any other decision would not only have been unconstitutional, but would have implicated him even deeper in the machinations of the anti-Rabuka faction. That said, it was in Reddy's interest to go to the polls to capitalize on his party's strong showing in public opinion polls.

Political Parties and the Campaign

Eight major political parties contested the election, four of them Fijian. These included the SVT, the Fijian and Rotuman Nationalist United Front, Soqosoqo ni Taukei ni Vanua (STV), and the Fijian Association Party. Non-Fijian parties were the General Voters Party and the All National Congress, and, in the Indo-Fijian community, the National Federation Party and the Fiji Labour Party. We will look briefly at the platforms of the various parties, though it is hard to say whether manifestos mattered much in voters' minds.

The SVT was the main Fijian political party, sponsored by the Great Council of Chiefs and formally launched in 1990. Sitiveni Rabuka was its president and parliamentary leader. But although sponsored by the chiefs and intended to be an umbrella organization for Fijians, the SVT was not supported by all, as was evident in the 1992 elections when it got only 66 percent of all the Fijian votes and a substantially lower figure in important regions of Viti Levu. Others disliked Rabuka's leadership of the party and had not forgiven him for his "flagrant flouting of tradition and chiefly protocol" in defeating Mara's wife, herself a high chief, for the post of party president ***(Fiji Times,*** 4 Dec. 1993). There were problems, too, in the party's organization. Theoretically the management board ran the party's affairs, but what was the role and responsibility of the fourteen provinces that subscribed to its coffers? Should not the Great Council of Chiefs have been consulted over major policy decisions before the government embarked upon them? These issues were raised in the campaign. The SVT fielded candidates in all the thirty-seven Fijian constituencies.

Soon after the defeat of the budget, the SVT attempted to forge a coalition with other Fijian parties. It proposed not to contest seats already held by the nationalists "if the favour was reciprocated" ***(Fiji Times,*** 6 Dec. 1993).

Butadroka did not respond. Similar negotiations with the All National Congress also collapsed when the SVT refused to reconsider the Sunday prohibitions and the idea of the fourth confederacy. The SVT then decided to contest the elections alone on a platform that stated, among other things, that cabinet members would be chosen on merit, not on provincial affiliation; there would be a minister of national planning to coordinate developmental activities; shipping to the outer islands would be improved; the value-added tax would be reviewed; deregulation would be balanced against the interests of local manufacturers; there would be more effective support for law and order; efficiency in the public sector would be improved; and an SVT government would give priority to the promotion of national unity. Where the SVT's fortunes looked uncertain, such as in Rewa, Rabuka contradicted himself by promising a seat in his cabinet ***(The Review,*** Mar. 1994). Elsewhere, he hinted that the country could explode if his party was not returned to power.

Rabuka reminded the Fijian electorate of his many pro-Fijian initiatives. He admitted that he had still a lot to learn, and he asked for forgiveness. His opponents had criticized his leadership, Rabuka said, but "no leader could really be effective if from within the ranks of his or her team there were people who were not prepared to show their loyalty to the team leader and commitment to play their role as team members" (Rabuka 1993). Could such people be trusted to safeguard the future of the Fijian people? He may have erred, Rabuka said, but "what I have never been, and what I will never do, is to be disloyal to the Fijian and Rotuman communities, and to give away what I had personally sacrificed myself to achieve in 1987--and that is to secure and to safeguard the interests of the Fijian and Rotuman people." He was astounded at the disloyalty of his colleagues who "almost handed over power of effective control of the national Government of Fiji to the other communities." Fijian people were at the crossroads, and the only way forward for them was to remain united. Loyalty was a virtue that Rabuka emphasized over and over again. "We must be unremitting in our loyalty to each other, to our Chiefs, to this highest of all Fijian councils, the Bose Levu Vakaturaga" (ibid.). And Rabuka, the uncompromising Fijian nationalist, was the people's savior.

The SVT's chief rival for Fijian votes was the Fijian Association, the vehicle of the dissident, anti-Rabuka Fijians, headed by Josefata Kamikamica and quietly supported by Ratu Mara. The idea of reviving the old Fijian Association as an alternative to Rabuka's SVT had been mooted as early as January 1992, two years before this election, though nothing came of that initiative ***(Daily Post,*** 17 Feb. 1992). The Association's founding principles were a mixture of the precoup Alliance Party's platform and that of the

Mara-led interim administration (1988-1992) in which Kamikamica was a key figure. The party would respect multiracialism but in the context of promoting and safeguarding indigenous Fijian interests, it would seek reentry into the Commonwealth, and, following World Bank initiatives, it would pursue privatization and corporatization of profitable enterprises. In truth, the Fijian Association's policies differed little from the SVT's.

On the campaign trail, the Association had only one issue: Rabuka was an unworthy leader. Said Kamikamica: "The SVT leader, over the last 18 months, has followed a path full of broken promises, contradictory statements, reversal of policy, and dishonourable behaviour. Fijian and national unity cannot be achieved through cheap political point scoring just for the sake of rallying together, or for any other selfish vested interest" ***(Fiji Times,*** 21 Jan. 1994). He pointed to Rabuka's involvement in the Stephens affair, his close association with Butadroka's brand of nationalism, his administrative inexperience. "Another five years of this style of leadership and it will be very difficult for the country because the network of interests that feed upon each other in a situation like that will be very difficult to break" ***(The Review,*** Feb. 1994). It was thus in the national interest to stop Rabuka now. The Fijian Association was not disobedient toward the Great Council of Chiefs, as the SVT alleged. It pointed to a number of high chiefs among its party leaders, including Ratu Apenisa Cakobau (son of the late Vunivalu of Bau), Ratu Wili Maivalili of Cakaudrove, and Ratu Aca Silatolu from Rewa. Moreover, it attempted to promote itself as the true servant of the Great Council of Chiefs. If elected to government, the party would work hard to reestablish the chiefs' links to the British monarch. Rabuka appealed to another tradition in Fijian society. "The sooner we realise we are out and out, the better it will be for us rather than crying over spilt milk. We are a proud race. We won't go crawling back to the British and the Commonwealth" ***(The Review,*** Feb. 1994). In this stance, Rabuka echoed the sentiments of ordinary Fijians.

The third Fijian party in the election was Sakiasi Butadroka's newly renamed Fijian and Rotuman Nationalist United Front. Butadroka's fortunes had fallen on hard times. Once an Alliance Party assistant minister dismissed for his anti-Indian remarks--that Fiji's Indian population should be repatriated to India--Butadroka had launched his Fijian Nationalist Party in 1975 and was elected to Parliament on his extremist platform on several occasions. He had formed a coalition, the Fijian Nationalist United Front, with Ratu Osea Gavidi's Soqosoqo ni Taukei ni Vanua (STV), but that coalition collapsed weeks before the 1994 election and contested the elections separately. Butadroka championed his causes in Parliament in his own inimitable style. He opposed any review of the constitution until non-Fijians

unconditionally accepted the principle of Fijian political supremacy. Butadroka had been one of the founders of the Viti Levu Council of Chiefs, but his reputation for integrity had been tarnished by the Stephens affair and his base weakened by the desertion of his former coalition partner. Ratu Osea Gavidi had fallen on hard times, too, his STV a pale shadow of its 1980s counterpart, the Western United Front. Gavidi's platform was identical to Butadroka's, except for the high frequency with which Gavidi invoked God's name. He was an advocate of western Fijian interests and cofounder of the Viti Levu Council of Chiefs.

Apisai Tora's All National Congress, launched in 1992, was a Fijian-based party with a multiracial philosophy. A onetime self-styled "Castro of the Pacific" and coleader of the 1959 strike, Tora had been a strident Fijian nationalist in the 1960s before entering Parliament on a National Federation Party ticket. A decade later, he joined the Alliance Party and served as a minister under Mara. In 1987, he was one of the leaders of the Taukei Movement, orchestrating Fijian support for the coup. Subsequently, he joined Mara's interim administration but was sacked when he founded the All National Congress. Tora's political credibility became an issue for his opponents.

A few key issues characterized the All National Congress platform. One was its repeated view that the Great Council of Chiefs should not endorse any one Fijian party, but should stay above the electoral fray. Unless the disengagement was effected, said Tora, the traditional usefulness of the Great Council of Chiefs would be destroyed: "Their reason for existence will be questioned in an increasingly hostile manner. Their survival will for the first time be a matter of serious conjecture. We foresee that their decline will gather such momentum that they will be unlikely to survive as an institution beyond the next ten years" ***(Fiji Times,*** 11 Jan. 1993). Tora was also a strong, longtime advocate of greater restructuring of power within Fijian society to give western Fijians more voice in national affairs. He made "no secret of his desire to end the political dominance of eastern Fijians" ***(Islands Business,*** Oct. 1991). He was one of the principal architects of the fourth confederacy platform. Before the elections, Tora had explored cooperation with the SVT, but the talks collapsed when the SVT refused to accept his demand, among other things, for the recognition of the fourth confederacy. His multiracial proclamations, coming from a founding member of the Taukei Movement, did not ring true.

These divisions caused much anguish among ordinary Fijians. They were puzzled. How could a constitution that entrenched their political supremacy have produced so much division and bitterness among their leaders? they asked. One answer was obvious. The removal of the threat of Indo-Fijian

dominance had opened up space to debate issues relating to the structure and processes of power within Fijian society that had remained hidden from the public arena. The absence of the once unifying leaders such as Ganilau, Cakobau, and Mara encouraged democratic debate among Fijians. Rabuka was no Mara. He lacked Mara's mana and knowledge of the mantras of national politics. And he was a commoner.

Nonetheless, the extent and significance of the division and discordance should be kept in perspective. In the end, although the Fijian parties may have differed about the formula for the distribution of power and resources among the ***taukei,*** they agreed that Fijians must always retain political control. Kamikamica and Tora espoused multiracialism, but only on terms acceptable to the ***taukei.*** They advocated (token) Indo-Fijian participation in government; none wanted a full partnership.

The Fijians, however, were not the only ones who were politically divided. There was internal friction among the category of General Electors, which includes all non-Fijians and non-Indo-Fijians, though it was not as publicly aired. The General Voters Party had done well as SVT's coalition partner, securing two senior cabinet positions. However, its parliamentary leader, David Pickering, a known Mara supporter and a Rabuka critic, had refused to join Rabuka's cabinet in 1992. He was a vocal critic of Rabuka's "inconsistent statements and indeterminate stance" ***(The Review,*** Aug. 1993). Not surprisingly, Pickering left the GVP to stand, and win, as an All National Congress candidate in the 1994 elections, defeating his former party by 893 votes to 554. The real cause of friction seems to have been the extent of the party's support for Rabuka. Many General Electors were pro-Fijian but not necessarily pro-Rabuka. A faction of the GVP wanted greater independence, while the party leaders, whatever their personal misgivings about Rabuka's character and consistency, supported him. In the end, despite internal differences, the GVP won four of the five General seats and returned once again as the SVT's coalition partner.

Among Indo-Fijians, the divisions were deeper and more public, with both the National Federation and the Fiji Labour parties running fierce campaigns to claim the leadership of a drifting, disillusioned Indo-Fijian community. The NFP was the older of the parties, formed in the early 1960s and the main opposition party in Fiji since 1970. It had been in the vanguard of the anticolonial struggle but had fallen on hard times under Siddiq Koya, whose confrontational style disenchanted supporters. Under Jai Ram Reddy's leadership since 1977, a semblance of party unity returned, though still scarred by deep cultural and religious divisions. The Fiji Labour Party, with democratic socialism as its founding creed, was launched in July 1985 to combat the World Bank-inspired economic policies of the Alliance

government. Led by Dr. Timoci Bavadra as president, Labour joined forces with the NFP in 1987 to defeat the Alliance Party but was deposed by a military coup a month later. Bavadra died from spinal cancer in November 1989 and was succeeded temporarily by his wife, Adi Kuini, who left the party to contest the elections under the All National Congress banner. The former coalition partners had drifted apart since 1987, the rupture coming in 1992 when they fought the election separately. In that election, the NFP had won fourteen seats and the Fiji Labour Party thirteen (Lal 1993). The two parties parted company on a number of issues.

One was disagreement over participating in the 1992 elections. The NFP decided to fight the elections under protest, arguing that boycotting it would be futile. The Indo-Fijian community's future lay in dialogue and discussion with Fijian leaders, and Parliament would provide the forum. Labour favored boycott. How could it participate in an election under a constitution that it had roundly condemned as racist, authoritarian, undemocratic, and feudalistic? To do so would accord legitimacy to that flawed document and undermine the party's credibility internationally. International pressure was the only way to change the constitution. However, a few weeks before the election, the party revoked its decision and took part in the elections.

Another issue was Labour's decision to support Sitiveni Rabuka in his bid to become prime minister; the NFP had backed his rival, Josefata Kamikamica. Labour explained its action as a strategic move. When Rabuka, once in power, disavowed the spirit of the agreement and disclaimed any urgency to address issues Labour had raised, Labour's credibility in the Indo-Fijian community was severely tested. To salvage its reputation, Labour walked out of Parliament in June 1993 only to return in September, using the terms of reference for the review of the constitution as a pretext. The NFP exploited Labour's misfortunes. Chaudhary, it said, had committed the "third coup" by supporting Rabuka in 1992, its agreement with him "neither politically feasible nor legally enforceable" ***(Fiji Times,*** 15 Dec. 1993). Labour had practiced "flip-flop" politics. Labour countered that the "problem with the NFP [is that] it never struggled in its lifetime and buckles under pressure" ***(The Weekender,*** 4 Feb. 1994). For the NFP, the main issue was credibility and integrity. It portrayed itself as a party following a steady course on an even keel. Its trump card was its leader, Jai Ram Reddy. A seasoned politician, Reddy had, especially since the last election, emerged as a responsible, statesmanlike figure. A national poll gave him an astounding 80 percent approval. His moderate yet insistent stance on important issues and his performance in Parliament worked to the party's advantage. Fijian leaders, including Mara and Rabuka, spoke approvingly of him. But that, to his opponents, was the real problem. Conciliation and compromise to what

end? they asked. Reddy's moderation they saw as weakness and timidity, reminiscent of the acquiescent politics of the Indian Alliance. They sought to discredit his political record by blaming him for the years of divisive and factional infighting in the National Federation Party. For the NFP, Chaudhary epitomized "inconsistency, unreliability and unpredictability both in substance and style."[8]

But personalities aside, there were some fundamental differences in approach and political philosophy that remained submerged in the campaign. One important difference between Reddy and Chaudhary lay in their approaches to the pace of political change. Gradualism was Reddy's preferred course of action, the favorite words in his political vocabulary being conciliation, consensus, dialogue, moderation. Expeditious change was Chaudhary's path; sacrifice, struggle, boycott, and agitation the key words in his lexicon. When asked how long Indo-Fijians might have to wait for political equality, Reddy replied: "I don't think time is important in politics; it is what you do." Indo-Fijians had suffered a great deal, but "life goes on because of hope, that somehow, some day things will turn around and everybody will realise that we are all Gods children and we're all meant to live and let live" ***(Islands Business,*** Jan. 1991). Reddy's philosophical, even fatalistic, approach acknowledges the limited options available to his people.

Chaudhary is an intrepid, indefatigable fighter who entered national politics through the trade union movement; he is the long-serving general secretary of the Fiji Public Service Association. He is temperamentally different from Reddy. To him, power concedes nothing without a struggle and time does count for a lot in politics and in the life of a community. Change must come and, for Chaudhary, the sooner the better. "We have to do something about this [racial constitution]," he said, "because if we live under this constitution for the next 5-10 years, then they [Indo-Fijians] will end up as coolies" ***(Islands Business,*** Mar. 1994). The same urgency--recklessness in the opinion of his detractors--informs his approach to the land issue. "I don't believe in transferring the problems of our generation to the next generation," he said. "We should try and resolve this issue. If it is not possible to have long term leases . . . then we better start talking about compensation. And Indians will have to accept the reality that they must move away from the land and find a livelihood elsewhere" ***(The Review,*** Aug. 1993). This militant Chaudhary is an anathema to his opponents, but, in an ironic way, he appeals to the dominant radical tradition in Indo-Fijian politics that has long been the province of the NFP.

The NFP seems to have accepted the realities of communal politics and proposed to work within its framework. Said Jai Ram Reddy in Parliament in July 1992:

> Let us each be in our separate compartments if you like. Let communal solidarity prevail and I do not begrudge Fijian leaders for wanting to see that their community remains united. That is a very natural desire. Let the General Electors be united. Let the Indians be united; let everybody be united, but from our respective positions of unity let us accept that we must co-exist and work together and work with each other. That is a more realistic approach. ***(Hansard,*** 24 July 1992)

Labour's position differs. Today it is only a shadow of its 1987 form, denuded of its multiracial base, its leading Fijian lights having deserted the party, but Labour still seems to subscribe to the philosophy of multiracial politics, as opposed to communally compartmentalized politics of the type entrenched by the present constitution. To that end the party fielded General Elector and Fijian candidates. It was a token gesture, and the Fiji Labour Party's non-Indo-Fijian candidates polled miserably; but it still represented an act of protest against the racial constitution, whereas the NFP contested only Indo-Fijian seats.

In sum, the 1994 campaign was a curiously quiet, uneventful affair, with the ethnic groups locked into racially segregated compartments, debating issues of particular concern to their communities. There were few large rallies and virtually no campaigning through the media. Most people seemed disinterested and disenchanted. This parochial, tunneling vision that rewarded ethnic chauvinism and communalism rather than multiracialism is one of the more deleterious effects of the 1990 constitution.

Voting Figures and Future Trends

Polling occurred from 18 to 27 February. The SVT got 146,901 votes or 64 percent of Fijian votes, a decline of 7 percent from its 1992 figures. Its nearest rival was the Fijian Association with 34,994 votes or 15 percent. The Fijian Association won all three Lau seats and the two in Naitasiri. Butadroka's Nationalists polled poorly, too, capturing only 14,396 votes (6 percent), compared with its 1992 share of 10 percent of all the Fijian votes. The All National Congress, which had won 24,719 votes (10 percent) in 1992, won only 18,259 (8 percent) of Fijian votes. Gavidi's STV also recorded a loss, from 9,308 (4 percent) votes to 6,417 (3 percent) in 1994. Labour, which fielded just a few Fijian candidates, got only 555 Fijian votes in 1994. Independents did poorly, except the SVT-allied Ratu Jo Nacola from Ra, who won his seat comfortably

It is reasonably easy to explain why some Fijian parties did poorly. The

Nationalists' agenda was appropriated by the SVT. Butadroka could claim with some justice that his trademark pro-Fijian policies had been hijacked by the party in power. Butadroka's running mate in the 1992 elections, Ratu Mosese Tuisawau, stood as an independent. But Butadroka had also lost ground and respect in his constituency with his antics in Parliament (he was expelled for his virulent criticism of Mara's administration), his strident and now curiously antiquarian anti-Indianism, and his involvement in the Stephens affair. Gavidi's STV lost ground for similar reasons. His political integrity was in tatters over the Stephens affair, and his pro-western Fijian agenda was silently incorporated into the SVT's program. Tora's loss, and especially his loss of ground since 1992, was a surprise. Tora's sudden conversion to multiracialism was unconvincing, and the SVT fought hard to regain its strength in the west.

The real surprise among Fijians was the poor showing of the Fijian Association, except in Naitasiri (because of Kuli's rapport with his grass-roots supporters, the indifference of Tui Waimaro, Adi Pateresio Vonokula notwithstanding) and Lau. Among those who succumbed to the Fijian Association in Lau was the SVT's Filipe Bole. His support for Rabuka despite Ratu Mara's well-known disregard for the man cost him his seat. Mara is the paramount chief of the region. As president, Mara maintained outward neutrality, but as one Fijian observer put it, "Neither the acting chairman [Tevita Loga, Mara's traditional herald] nor Finau Mara [eldest son and a Fijian Association candidate], nor others would have dared move without prior consultation with Mara in his capacity as paramount chief" ***(Islands Business,*** Feb. 1994). Why did the Fijian Association fail in its birthplace, Tailevu? Traditional politics probably played a part. The SVT lineup included Adi Samanunu Talakuli, the eldest daughter of the late Vunivalu of Bau (Ratu Sir George Cakobau), and Ratu William Toganivalu. The Fijian Association's lineup of chiefs lacked stature and authority. Some Fijians also suggest that Kamikamica was damaged by Mara's endorsement. They believe that Mara harbors dynastic ambitions and will support Kamikamica, or anyone else, only until his son, Finau, is ready to assume the leadership. Others suggest that Tailevu is a traditionally conservative constituency, whose people found it hard to vote against a party sponsored by the chiefs. The SVT's allegation that Kamikamica had engaged in a "calculated act of political sabotage" in his "continuing remorseless and unbending ambition for political power in Fiji" ***(The Weekender,*** 2 Feb. 1994) seems to have stuck.

All this says little about the SVT's strengths, which were considerable. It fielded better or at least better-known candidates and, as the party in government, used the politics of patronage to its great advantage. The support of the Methodist Church in the rural areas proved crucial. But without

doubt, the SVT's trump card was Sitiveni Rabuka, who was returned by his electorate with one of the highest votes among Fijian constituencies. Many ordinary Fijians responded to him as one of their own, a man who had sacrificed much to promote their interests. They forgave him his lapses of judgment and inconsistencies. They saw him as a man who had suffered from disloyalty, bad advice from colleagues, and intrigue from powerful forces outside government. Rabuka asked for a second chance, and the electorate responded.

Among Indo-Fijians, the total number of registered voters was 159,480. The NFP won twenty of the twenty-seven Indo-Fijian seats and captured 65,220 votes or 55.5 percent. The Fiji Labour Party got 51,252 votes or 43.6 percent. In the 1992 elections, the NFP had captured 50 percent of the votes to Labour's 48 percent. The NFP made a clean sweep of all the Vanua Levu seats and the urban seats. It also made gains in the sugar belt of western Viti Levu, to some extent because of the mill strike in September 1993 by the Sugar and General Workers Union, which angered farmers. Other farmers turned to the NFP because they were suspicious of a compulsory insurance scheme proposed by the Labour-allied National Farmers Union. However, Labour managed to retain its core support there. Part of Labour's problem was of its own making, but the NFP increased its support on the strength of its own performance, especially that of its leader. Many Indo-Fijians responded to his quiet tenacity.

The election returned both the NFP and the SVT with stronger mandates. The Indo-Fijians have not renounced Chaudhary's style of agitational politics; they have merely suspended it for the time being in favor of Reddy's more accommodationist approach. In that sense, Reddy's mandate is conditional: if his approach fails to produce timely results, the Indo-Fijians will return to Labour. A similar dilemma confronts Rabuka. The SVT leader told his campaign audiences that he will never compromise on his goals to realize the aims of the coup. At the same time, he promised to promote national unity through the politics of inclusion. How he reconciles these two goals will test his mettle as a leader. And his task is all the greater, for people in his own party will use every opportunity to depose him. Rabuka may have taken his revenge, but will he have the last laugh?

Facing the Future: The Fijian Dilemma

Besides his own political survival, Rabuka will have to address urgent issues. Among these are the land issue and the review of the constitution. The Agricultural Landlord and Tenants Act will have to be renegotiated soon, under conditions more confused than ever before. Some Fijians want to link the

renewal of leases with Indo-Fijian acceptance of the principle of Fijian political dominance. Some landowners want sharecropping to become an integral part of any future lease arrangement. Western Fijian landowners want to dilute the power of the Native Lands Trust Board to enable them to negotiate directly with tenants. There are others completely opposed to renewal of leases. And, at the other end of the spectrum, twelve thousand Indo-Fijian tenants understandably want to escape the tyranny of short-term leases. If leases are renewed, on what basis will rents be assessed? If not, will the tenants be resettled or receive compensation for the improvements they have made? Similarly, difficult questions haunt the constitutional review. Will the Great Council of Chiefs give up the inordinate power they enjoy under the present constitution? Will the Indo-Fijian people accept the principle of Fijian political paramountcy? Will the racially segregated voting structure be maintained or dismantled in favor of some form of multiracial electorate?

The underlying goal of the Rabuka government is the promotion of Fijian interests. The task was once seen as simple: the removal of the fear of Indo-Fijian dominance. That threat no longer exists: Indo-Fijians (343,168) now constitute 45.3 percent of the population, while Fijians (377,234) make up 49.7 percent.[9] With emigration and a lower birth rate in the Indo-Fijian population, Fijians will continue to represent a greater percentage of the population. Ratu William Toganivalu, a longtime Alliance Party politician who died on the eve of the elections, said: "We, the indigenous people of this country, should not be tempted into the notion that by suppressing the Indian people, it would enhance our lot. If you do that, we are all suppressed" ***(Hansard,*** 30 June 1992). The threat to Fijian (chiefly) power comes not so much from the activities of non-Fijians as from the "disintegrating effects of the breakdown of Fijian communal structures in the countryside, the decay of the villages, and the radicalisation of the urban unemployed" (Macnaught 1977:16).

Such comments used to be dismissed as the uninformed and insensitive ravings of unsympathetic outsiders. But in fact, Fijian leaders and intellectuals themselves are now airing doubts about the efficacy of traditional institutions and practices in the modern arena. Here is a small selection:

> ***Sitiveni Rabuka:*** I believe that the dominance of customary chiefs in government is coming to an end and that the role of merit chiefs will eventually overcome those of traditional chiefs: the replacement of traditional aristocracy with meritocracy. ***(Fiji Times,*** 29 Aug. 1991)

> ***Ropate Qalo:*** [Traditional authority] is a farce, because Fijians want the new God, not the old traditional Dakuwaqa or Degei. The new God is money and the new chapel is the World Bank. Like all the rest of the world, traditional authority has to go or be marginalised. ***(Islands Business,*** Jan. 1991)

> ***Asesela Ravuvu:*** The new political system emphasises equal opportunities and individual rights, which diminish the status and authority of chiefs. Equal opportunities in education and equal treatment under the law have further diminished the privileges which chiefs enjoyed under colonial rule and traditional life before. . . . Although village chiefs are still the focus of many ceremonial functions and communal village activities, their roles and positions are increasingly of a ritualistic nature. (Ravuvu 1988:171)

> ***Jale Moala:*** [The Fijian people] are now facing so many issues that challenge the very fabric of traditional and customary life. Things they thought were sacred have become political topics, publicly debated, scrutinised and ridiculed. The Fijians are threatened and this time the threat is coming from within their own communities where the politics of numbers are changing loyalties and alliances, For the first time in modern history, the Fijian community is in danger of fragmentation; democracy is taking its toll. The chiefs are losing their mana and politicians enjoy increasing control. ***(Fiji Times,*** 21 Mar. 1992)

> ***Simione Durutalo:*** If the average Fijian worker doesn't see the bus fare coming down and his son has graduated from USP and doesn't have a job, he's not going to be very amused. No matter how much you talk about tradition and the GCC [Great Council of Chiefs], you can't eat them. ***(The Review,*** Dec. 1993)

The economic policies of the Rabuka government, with its unwavering commitment to a World Bank-inspired belief in the efficacy of market forces, will only compound the problems. The SVT's manifesto aims to encourage greater economic freedom and competition and to allow world market forces to determine prices and production for export and local markets through an efficient and productive private-enterprise sector. Under an SVT government, "incentives to expand energy and take risks in pursuit of business success will be introduced to support Fiji's able and energetic business-

men to produce results." Furthermore, such a government would "direct incentives to focus attention on the pursuit of international competitiveness and international markets which require deregulation so that businessmen respond to world prices." To that end, "a more rapid movement from subsistence activities to commercial enterprises and paid employment will be encouraged."[10] These policies, if successful, will undermine further the structure and ethos of Fijian village life, which is already beginning to disintegrate.

For some the way out of these dilemmas is to return Fijians to their "semi-feudal, semi-self-sufficing society" (Macnaught 1977:24). Ravuvu suggests rejecting democracy in favor of some form of traditional authoritarianism, because "the best decisions come from entrusting the responsibility to make them to a few well-meaning and knowledgeable people" (Ravuvu 1991:x). After all, democracy is a foreign flower unsuited to the Fijian soil. But foreign or not, democracy is there to stay. What ***is*** required is a massive rethinking about the kind of development that is appropriate, that will not come at the expense of culture and tradition. In addition, Fijian leaders need to promulgate policies that seek "to advance those who have missed out somewhere down the line of history but [not] to deprive those who have succeeded of the fruits of their success" (Einfeld 1994). This delicate act of balancing rights and obligations provides Rabuka with his greatest challenge as well as his greatest opportunity.

NOTES

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1. The opposition to Fiji's readmission is led by India, which insists that a constitution acceptable to all communities in Fiji should be in place before the question of admission can be entertained.

2. These lands, which were either unoccupied at the time of Cession in 1874 or whose landowning clan, the *mataqali,* had become extinct, were state property administered by the Department of Lands.

3. The statistics are revealing: two Indo-Fijians on the nine-member Fiji Posts and Telecommunications Board, one of six on the board of the Housing Authority, two of seven on the Fiji Electricity Authority Board, one of eight on the Fiji Development Bank, one of seven on Rewa Rice, one of seven on the National Training Council, five of ten on Air Pacific, two of ten on the Fiji Trade and Investment Board, one of ten on Pacific Fishing Company, and one of nine on the board of the Civil Aviation Authority of Fiji. None of these boards was headed by an Indo-Fijian. Figures provided to me courtesy of Sayyid Khayum, who raised the whole issue in Parliament on 24 November 1993.

4. This quote is from a file of unpublished constitutional review papers in my possession.

5. From Labour campaign literature in my possession

6. Paul Manueli remarked that removing licensing of milk powder, rice, and tinned fish was "a continuation of the deregulation policy instituted by the interim government and the leader of the Fijian Association Party [Kamikamica] was the architect of that." Manueli "was at a loss to understand his criticism" *(The Review,* Mar. 1994).

7. From a copy of the letter in my possession,

8. All this is based on my close observation of the election campaign.

9. These are 1992 figures supplied by the Fiji Bureau of Statistics.

10. These quotes are from the SVT manifesto, a copy of which is in my possession.

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THE FRENCH GOVERNMENT AND THE SOUTH PACIFIC DURING "COHABITATION," 1986-1988

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A French scholar deals with French policy in the South Pacific during 1986 to 1988, critical not only for French politics in general as the years of the first "cohabitation," but also for the French policy in the South Pacific. There were clearly two separate policies led by different actors: the president and prime minister on one side, and the secretary of state for South Pacific problems on the other. The president and the government were mainly concerned with New Caledonia and relations with Australia and New Zealand, including settlement of the *Rainbow Warrior* affair. The secretary of state for South Pacific problems was a Polynesian politician, who traveled widely in the region and was instrumental in establishing better relations with the island states of the Solomon Islands and Vanuatu. A comparison is made with the recent cohabitation period (1993-1995), and the fundamental difference between the two periods is underlined. This article contributes to the study of France in the South Pacific and to the understanding of the complexities of France as an actor in South Pacific international relations.

COHABITATION: THE WORD was coined in the mid-eighties in France to define the simultaneous presence at the head of the government of a president and a prime minister from different and opposing political parties. Cohabitation was present for two years after the legislative elections in March 1986 that gave the parliamentary majority to the conservative parties. Meanwhile President François Mitterrand, who had been elected for a seven-year term in 1981, remained in power. The president named Jacques Chirac, leader of the most prominent conservative party, the Rassemblement pour la République (RPR; Assembly for the Republic) as prime min-

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ister. There was a great potential for them to clash because the 1958 constitution gave each of them substantial but largely ambiguous powers in the management of state affairs.[1]

The main areas of potential dispute related to defense and external policies. These matters have always been considered to belong to the "reserved area" of the president's responsibilities. But Prime Minister Chirac did not intend to renounce any part of his potential power, because defense and external affairs relate in part to domestic conditions.[2] He was adamant in putting forward his point of view in any international forum. He could rely on Minister of Foreign Affairs Jean-Bernard Raimond and Minister of Defense André Giraud, who clearly stood by him from the beginning of the cohabitation period.[3] The fact that the minister of foreign affairs stood fifth in the order of protocolary importance in the government shows in itself the willingness of both the president and the prime minister to handle external policy themselves.[4]

The period of cohabitation was a very active one with respect to French policy in the South Pacific. This policy involved external and defense affairs, because of France's nuclear testing program in French Polynesia, and internal affairs because of the existence of the three French overseas territories (TOM: New Caledonia, French Polynesia, and Wallis-and-Futuna). The external and defense affairs were deemed to be within the scope of the president's responsibilities, the internal affairs within that of the prime ministers. Problems emerged because of the lack of coordination and the personal hostility between the president, on one side, and the prime minister and his government on the other. The profile of French policy in the South Pacific increased when the prime minister created the post of secretary of state for South Pacific problems ***(secrétariat d'état chargé des problèmes du Pacifique sud),*** which was held by a skilled Polynesian politician, Gaston Flosse. This post could have operated mainly as a coordinating mechanism for policy in the region, but it became an active element in shaping French policy. During the two-year cohabitation period, between the legislative elections in March 1986 and the presidential election in May 1988, French policy in the South Pacific had three main dimensions: policy in the TOM, particularly in New Caledonia; the difficult bilateral relations with Australia and New Zealand as well as with the island states of the Solomon Islands and Vanuatu; and the activities of the secretary of state for South Pacific problems. An analysis of cohabitation from 1986 to 1988 with respect to the South Pacific seems especially timely because a new period of cohabitation began in March 1993 with the coming to power of the Balladur government.

In the process of examining tensions over South Pacific policy between the president and the prime minister during the 1986-1988 cohabitation

period, this article seeks to illuminate the nonmonolithic character of French policy making with respect to the South Pacific and the complex interplay of influences and pressures from different political and bureaucratic actors. Although the different actors' divergent views on the course to follow about South Pacific issues may be considered the main cause of errors in French policy in this region, there has yet been no academic literature devoted to this specific topic. It seems all the more necessary to bring a French point of view to a field whose analysis has been dominated by Australian and American authors.[5]

This discussion is mainly based on government and official publications, parliamentary proceedings, and discussions with officials and advisers who were active in the policy of these years and who wish to remain anonymous. The aim is to examine the official debates on French policy in the South Pacific during cohabitation from 1986 to 1988 and to illuminate the relations between the different actors in the shaping of this policy.

The New Caledonian Question

New Caledonia had been a contentious issue in French politics for several years before cohabitation. The Kanaks' determination to attain independence had led to violent conflicts in the mid-eighties. Tensions increased during the cohabitation period of 1986 to 1988 because of the Chirac government's attitude toward New Caledonian affairs.

The RPR's position on New Caledonia was to stress its being part of France: French sovereignty in this territory was not to be questioned. During a January 1982 debate in the National Assembly concerning New Caledonia, Mr. Toubon, a prominent RPR deputy, declared, "This would mean to vote in pitch darkness, a vote that we cannot but oppose . . . because you didn't stress, Mr. Secretary of State, your determination to keep New Caledonia within the French Republic, which is, for us, a fundamental issue."[6] Four years later, this attitude had not changed. The RPR had strongly opposed the so-called Fabius Statute (from the name of Socialist Laurent Fabius, then prime minister), which was passed in 1985 and was to govern relations between the French and the territorial government in New Caledonia. Its promoters and detractors considered it a step toward independence-in-association, a compromise formula favored by some French Socialist politicians in 1984-1985. In July 1986, the Chirac government passed legislation calling for a local referendum on the territory's political status.[7] The proposed electoral body would be limited to citizens who had resided in the territory for at least three years.[8]

Three issues were of particular importance in the legislation: (1) the

replacement of the Land Office (created in 1982) with the ADRAF (Agence pour le développement rural et l'aménagement foncier; Rural Development and Land Planning Agency); (2) the granting of economic aid (development funds, compensation, and damage money) to the victims of the 1984-1985 riots and fiscal deductions for investments in the territory; and (3) the adaptation of the Fabius Statute, in order to reduce the powers of the regional councils and to increase those of the Territorial Council (Congress).

This law showed how eager the government was to stop what it considered an evolution toward independence for New Caledonia. It also revealed its commitment as a whole in this action, since the law was signed by six ministers (besides the president and the prime minister). Two additional laws concerning the elections in New Caledonia were passed in June and July 1987. The general atmosphere in the territory was tense. As an observer put it, "Deaf to criticism, listening only to Jacques Lafleur's and his RPCR friends' opinions,[9] the minister for overseas territories and the high commissioner, Mr. Jean Montpezat, were busy depriving the independentists of the very few powers left to the regions."[10]

In 1987 the Chirac government was mainly preoccupied with the preparation of the referendum. But as early as 30 January, the Convention of the FLNKS (Front de liberation nationale pour une Kanaky socialiste; National Kanak Socialist Liberation Front) called for an unconditional boycott of the referendum, which was planned for late 1987. Tensions in New Caledonia between independentists and loyalists, the latter supported by the police and the French army, increased during the months leading up to the referendum.

French military presence in the territory only increased from 5,303 to 6,425 men between April 1986 and October 1987.[11] But the presence also became more obvious. The French government initiated a "nomadization" program under which troops were temporarily stationed in tribes' territory, where they took part in agricultural or building works and also played a social and medical role. This role was not accepted by the Kanaks. This "nomadization" was considered a military operation against the tribes.[12] If it reassured the Europeans in the bush (the ***broussards),*** it was strongly opposed by the FLNKS militants.[13]

The referendum took place on 13 September 1987. Fifty-nine percent of the electorate voted, and the result was 98.3 percent in favor of keeping New Caledonia within the Republic. But as Melanesians had widely boycotted the vote, the outcome cannot be considered the expression of the majority of the whole New Caledonian electorate. It could not possibly be taken at face value and so was a major setback for its promoters.

One of the last episodes of the cohabitation period was the adoption of

the Pons Statute (from the name of the minister for overseas departments and territories at the time).[14] It was signed by twelve ministers and undersecretaries and thus could be considered the legacy of the soon-to-be-dismissed Chirac government. The new statute had two main characteristics. First, it kept the four self-governing regions (East, West, South, and Islands) that were governed by regional councils whose union formed the Territorial Council. The high commissioner (the state representative in the territory) was still assisted by a ten-member executive council. The Assemblée coutumière and the Institute for Promoting the Kanak Culture were maintained. Second, it was to be the most comprehensive statute New Caledonia ever had. Functions, attributions, and competences of each of the territory's institutions were carefully described. The objective was undoubtedly to prevent any later conflict over competences.

The government legislative effort in New Caledonia was the Chirac government's own effort. It was not supported or approved by the president. François Mitterrand remained silent on the issue, and his silence was interpreted as complete disapproval. He may have wished to use New Caledonia as a card in the conflict of ambitions that developed between himself and the prime minister with regard to the 1988 election: Mitterrand wanted to be the first president of the Fifth Republic to be reelected, whereas Prime Minister Chirac wanted to be elected president (he was a candidate for the second time) and was thus a rival to Mitterrand in all areas.

Mitterrand thus let the situation deteriorate and kept aloof in order to avoid any responsibility for it. He nevertheless sometimes voiced his disagreement with the government's policy in New Caledonia. For example, in the Ministers' Council of 18 February 1987, he was reported as saying, "To reduce the debate to a mere electoral opposition would be a dangerous historical error. I mean less the referendum than the policy that led to it."[15]

In December 1986, New Caledonia was reinscribed on the United Nations list of non-self-governing territories that should be decolonized.[16] This act had no immediate consequence for French policy in the South Pacific but revealed the sympathy for the independentists' cause in the South Pacific and elsewhere. The motion on New Caledonia was introduced by the members of the South Pacific Forum in December 1986 after it had become obvious that French policy under the recently elected conservative party would not evolve in the direction they had hoped.

The arguments developed by the representatives of the South Pacific countries summarized reproaches and claims that had been leveled at France for twenty years. However, they were expressed for the first time in a global forum. It was claimed that a state had a right to oversee what was going on in a neighboring state; Mr. Abisinito, Papua New Guinea represen-

tative, said, "The universal declaration of human rights clearly acknowledges that human rights of everybody are not only a matter of inner policy for sovereign states, but are of common concern for the whole of humankind."[17] Also mentioned was the regional duty of states that have to bear the consequences of the political destabilization of a neighboring territory, as the Western Samoa representative explained: "Our considerations were first determined by the fact that the French government's decisions as regards New Caledonia will not only affect the territory residents, but also all of us who are living in the South Pacific."[18]

The charge of arrogance leveled at France was not new. The PNG representative claimed, "The administrative power showed that it was ready neither to cooperate with the U.N. decolonization committee nor to fulfill its obligations. It must then be condemned not only for arrogance and hypocrisy, but also for ridiculing the terms of the U.N. charter as well as their relevant resolutions."[19] The reproach of incoherence in the French approach to the New Caledonian issue was the newest charge. It was both a criticism for having amalgamated the right to vote to elect a government and the right to vote in a referendum to determine the desired level of self-government, which is an inalienable right in any colony, and a criticism for having organized a so-called referendum on self-determination when Paris kept saying that New Caledonia was part of France.

The New Caledonia question took a dramatic turn in the very last weeks of cohabitation. The Ouvea affair started just before the presidential election in 1988 with the killing of four gendarmes and the abduction of twenty-four others by Kanak rebels and their subsequent detention in a cave on Ouvea island (Loyalty Islands). They were released after a military assault on the cave in which nineteen Kanaks were killed, several of them under yet unexplained circumstances. There was strong evidence that some were killed after surrendering.[20]

This event reveals a great deal about the complexity of the cohabitation between Mitterrand and Chirac and about the depth of their disagreement.

The first bone of contention was the decision to organize the provincial elections on the very day of the presidential election. Bernard Pons has clearly stated that he yielded to RPCR pressure.[21] The president, or at least his closest advisers, was aware of the risks. On 20 April, the Committee on the Future of New Caledonia sent a delegation to the Elysée. Guy Leneouanic, Gabriel Marc, Alain Ruellan, and Michel Tubiana had an interview with Jean-Louis Bianco, the secretary general of the presidency They explicitly voiced their anxieties about a possible outburst of violence in the territory around the date of the provincial and presidential elections, which were set for 24 April.[22] The conservative political parties were not unani-

mous in supporting the government's decision: as early as February, Jean-Pierre Soisson, in charge of overseas territories and departments for the UDF (Union pour la démocratie française; Union for the French Democracy, a center-right political party led by former president Giscard d'Estaing), expressed his fears about having the elections coincide.[23]

The second element of deep disagreement between the president and the government relates to the actual freeing of the hostages. This was a complex military operation organized both in Paris and in Nouméa and was all the more difficult because of time and space discrepancies: the two cities are twenty thousand kilometers and eleven hours apart. The internal rivalries of the military did not make it any easier for the ones in charge of negotiating with the rebels. The decision to assault the cave was made in Paris amid a climate of intense electoral competition between the president and his prime minister. The electoral competition had two effects. First, there is strong evidence that both men had their own channels of information on what actually happened on thespot,[24] but that they did not share the information. Second, there is also strong evidence that negotiations could have continued were both men not in a hurry to influence the electors by giving proof of their ability to command a military operation to restore law and order on a small island at the far end of the world. It is noteworthy that the negotiations to release three Frenchmen kept hostage in Lebanon for three years succeeded during this same electoral fortnight and that the prime minister's collaborators were to be credited for this political success. At the same time, the principal failure in the handling of the Ouvea crisis resided in the resorting to force rather than pursuing peaceful negotiations. Such an offhand approach exemplifies a general French attitude toward South Pacific problems and the difficulty of coordinating the approach of the politicians from the capital with local situations.[25]

Disastrous Bilateral Relations

The internal difficulties in New Caledonia reinforced the dissension between France and neighboring states in the South Pacific. Two issues--decolonization in New Caledonia and the ***Rainbow Warrior*** bombing--particularly exacerbated relations with Australia and New Zealand, respectively, but they also contributed to a negative image of France among the Pacific Islands nations. Continuation of French nuclear testing was another source of strong disagreement between France and South Pacific nations.

Australia was worried at the potential destabilization of its immediate environment (Nouméa is just a two-and-a-half-hour flight from Sydney). Libya's interference in New Caledonian affairs increased its preoccupations. In May

1987, Australia closed the People's Office (the Libyan embassy in Canberra) and expelled the head of the office. On a strict bilateral level, the relations between French Prime Minister Jacques Chirac and the Australian government were at a record low. The Chirac era tended to reinforce the negative stereotypes of France in the region; it helped reinforce claims that the French presence was regionally destabilizing. According to Bill Hayden, the Australian foreign affairs minister, "Real problems started when Mr. Chirac's government gained power. I think some tensions are generated inside this government that must face day-to-day problems because its parliamentary majority is tight and precarious in the coalition. This creates uncertainty."[26]

Relations with France deteriorated so much that on 19 December 1986 the French government took the decision to stop all official visits between Australia and France for an undetermined period. This was due, it said, to the unfriendly attitude of the Australian government during the preceeding months toward French policy in the South Pacific in general and in New Caledonia in particular. The Australian consul general in Nouméa was asked to leave the territory; it was claimed that he had interfered in local affairs. On 5 January 1987, France suspended official visits at the ministerial level between the two countries for an undetermined period. This decision was taken at a time when at least three visits were planned for the following February: visits by Secretary of State for South Pacific Problems Flosse, Agriculture Minister Guillaume, and External Trade Minister Noir.[27]

The two sides vied with one another in terms of nasty comments directed at the other. For example, Bill Hayden was reported saying that "France was very active with what one might call fiscal diplomacy" (among Pacific Islands states).[28] On a visit to New Caledonia in August 1986, Mr. Chirac described Prime Minister Bob Hawke of Australia as "very stupid" for warning that there could be renewed violence in New Caledonia if the issue of self-determination was not carefully handled.[29]

Mr. Chirac's clumsiness in his relations to the South Pacific countries was also considered damaging for the whole Western alliance: "Mr Chirac believes there is an Anglo-Saxon conspiracy to get the French to quit the Pacific: that the dirty digger is speaking not merely for the Australians and the New Zealanders, but also for Britain and the USA. In this belief he is only partly paranoiac. He is partly dead right. There is no conspiracy, but the Americans and the British join the Aussies and Kiwis in thinking that France is hindering their efforts to keep the Pacific states reasonably friendly to the West."[30] This quotation reflects a difference in appreciation of the international impact of the New Caledonia crisis. France clearly underestimated the impact, whereas Australia and New Zealand viewed French policy as a major risk in the context of the cold war and fear of Soviet infiltration in the area.

The animosity of the French government toward Australia was not shared by all its members. Mr. Giraud, the minister of defense, would not take part in it. He retained the presidency of the French committee for the preparation of the Australian bicentenary, to which he was appointed before entering the government. He represented France at the bicentenary ceremonies in February 1988. His visit helped restore senior official visits.[31]

France's relations with New Zealand were also overshadowed by the risk of regional destabilization as perceived by New Zealand. But New Zealand didn't wish to chase France out of the region. On the contrary, it strongly advocated dialogue with France. At the time New Zealand was mostly preoccupied with the settlement of the ***Rainbow Warrior*** affair.[32] This affair provides a most interesting case study of the French presence in the South Pacific, revealing many of its flaws and inadequacies.

The settlement of the ***Rainbow Warrior*** affair became the task of a government that had not been responsible for it, because the bombing took place under the last socialist government before the conservatives came to power. It was an example of the continuity of state policy ***(continuité de l'Etat)*** in this region in everything relating to the defense policy of France. The ***Rainbow Warrior*** question was one of the first issues dealt with by the ministers of defense and foreign affairs after they took office in March 1986. There were in fact three distinct cases: (1) compensation owed by the French Republic to the family of the photographer Fernando Pereira, who was killed in the explosion; it was decided that US$800,000 would be appropriate, and the sum was accepted by the family in November 1985; (2) compensation to Greenpeace for the destruction of its flagship; and (3) the case of the two French officers who were arrested and jailed in New Zealand in July 1985.[33]

The third case was the most difficult since David Lange, the New Zealand prime minister, firmly opposed the release of the officers, and the French ministers made it an absolute condition to the settlement of the whole affair. The prime minister of the Netherlands was then president of the European Council. He took the initiative to call for the mediation of the U.N. secretary-general. The settlement was thus speeded up, and an agreement took the form of an exchange of letters dated 11 July 1986.[34] The agreement included three essential points: (1) apologies from the French government to the New Zealand government and damage money of US$7 million; (2) the release of the French officers involved in the bombing who had been held prisoner in New Zealand since July 1985, under the condition that they would be posted for at least three years in Hao, an atoll in French Polynesia; and (3) commercial concessions by France during the negotiations between the European Economic Community and New Zealand on the importation of New Zealand butter.

In France this agreement was welcomed with relief. It nevertheless raised several questions. Why should France give apologies ***and*** compensation money? Why had officers to pay for having accomplished their duty? Why had France to concede New Zealand some advantages in commercial negotiations involving the European Economic Community? It also showed the weakness of France's policy in the region, since its embassies were not involved in the negotiations.[35]

Mitterrand did not take part in the settlement of this affair.[36] He was kept informed by the prime minister of the evolution of the negotiations. The ***Rainbow Warrior*** affair remains a very sensitive element in the history of the socialist government of Mr. Fabius, since it revealed many dysfunctionings of the state machinery that could not be analyzed and remedied. Mystery still surrounds the origins of this operation by French Intelligence, and there are strong doubts on whether it will be cleared up. Whatever his share of responsibility in the affair, in New Zealand's perspective, Mitterrand appeared more trustworthy than Chirac. Minister of Foreign Affairs Marshall welcomed his reelection with relief: "The French vote brings new expectations for the beginning of new relations [between our two countries]."[37]

Relations between the Paris government and the island country governments were extremely strained during the cohabitation years. These relations illustrate the split image of France with regard to self-determination in the region, since several of the island states entertained excellent relations with the secretary of state for South Pacific problems (see below).

France's relations were most strained with the Melanesian governments, because they held the greatest sympathy for the Kanaks as fellow Melanesians. But the Melanesian governments did not go so far as to break off all relations with France. In October 1987 Vanuatu expelled the French ambassador and the head of the cooperation mission. The Solomon Islands always refused the credentials of the French ambassador (residing in Port-Vila), but it never turned down any development aid from France. None of the South Pacific Forum members would have accepted a breaking of their relations with France. Thus the hostility toward France was in part a way of "lobbying" it to influence a settlement of New Caledonian affairs in a less conservative way.

On the French side, there was a large misunderstanding on the part of the government--with the exception of the secretary of state for South Pacific problems--toward the island states. These states were considered to be of negligible importance to both the president and the prime minister compared to other foreign policy issues: disarmament, East-West relations, Middle East terrorism, the hostages in Lebanon. The government would not permit tiny, remote islands in a faraway ocean to impinge on its policy in

New Caledonia, which was a card in the game it played against the president. The government was anxious to achieve there what its socialist predecessors could not do: to bring peace back to the territory and to lay the basis for a durable settlement of the crisis.

The major flaw of the government's approach was not to listen to those who knew the South Pacific reality. The government cut itself off from the experience of the secretary of state for South Pacific problems, who was hardly regarded as a member of the government. There was little coordination between his activities and the government's diplomacy--or lack of diplomatic skill--in the South Pacific. For example, Gaston Flosse was very active in trying to improve the image of France in the region at the very time (1987) when the government was most repressive in New Caledonia.

The Secretary of State for South Pacific Problems

The post of secretary of state for South Pacific problems (SSSPP) could be set up in March 1986 because the Council for the South Pacific had been established a few weeks before the change of the majority in the National Assembly.[38] Prime Minister Chirac and Secretary of State for South Pacific Problems Gaston Flosse expected that the latter could hold the secretariat of the council, which had been created by Mr. Mitterrand. Flosse would have favored the continuity of the council if he could have been his own master, with Regis Debray (the original secretary of the Council for the South Pacific, who kept this position throughout the cohabitation period) having no decision-making power.[39] Nothing of the kind happened. The SSSPP was hampered both by the place of the post in the government and by other circumstances.

The SSSPP was under the formal authority of the minister for overseas departments and territories. Even before his official designation, the members of Gaston Flosses staff perceived the limits of such a situation. They made the prime minister sign a statement of mission ***(lettre de mission).*** This statement's intentions were broader than the nomination decree. It clarified Flosses mission within the government and stated that he "should be closely associated with France's policy toward the island and coastal states of the region. This association could mean participating in negotiations related to fisheries, air traffic, or broadcasting rights in the South Pacific."[40]

The statement of mission also authorized the SSSPP to establish any relations he thought necessary to fulfill his task with the states of the region. He could also mobilize all the French forces in favor of the development of the territories and cooperation with the neighboring states. Flosse thus became a kind of junior foreign secretary for South Pacific affairs, with an extraordi-

nary liberty of movement. The discrepancy between the original idea of the SSSPP as an assistant to Mr. Pons and the understanding of his mission as interpreted by Flosse himself was thus obvious from the first weeks of the government. In addition, the shifting balance of power between the president and the prime minister reinforced the ambiguity of the SSSPP

The government's policy in New Caledonia was to stress French sover, eignty in the territory. Neither the president nor the SSSPP approved this policy. But the deterioration of relations between François Mitterrand and Jacques Chirac did not help to bring the president and the SSSPP closer. Mitterrand considered Flosse as part of Jacques Chirac's government and not as an independent minister. The twofold split between Flosse and Pons, between Mitterrrand and Chirac, each being opposed on New Caledonian affairs, led to a slumbering of the Council for the South Pacific, which had been created by the preceding socialist government in order to bring conciliation between the different French political entities acting in the South Pacific. This council remained inactive but was never dissolved. It met for only the second time in May 1990.

The SSSPP was based in both Paris and Papeete (Tahiti). The logistics were particularly difficult to manage, as were relations with other ministries. The fact that the SSSPP was dependent on the Ministry for Overseas Departments and Territories was fatal. The SSSPP budget was included in the ministry's, although in practice it was to act outside the ministry's area of competence. This was difficult to accept for civil servants used to the rigidity of public finance accountability. The Quai d'Orsay (the French Foreign Affairs Ministry) considered the SSSPP a rival ministry but this did not have any consequences in fact.

Relations between the minister of defense in Paris and Tahiti-based Admiral Thireault were far from cloudless. Admiral Thireault was commander-in-chief of all French forces in the Pacific (known as ALPACI). He was also COMSUP/Polynésie, that is, responsible for the forces based in Polynesia. He was also COMCEP and as such at the head of the nuclear test program in Mururoa.[41] This laid huge responsibilities on his shoulders. Admiral Thireault fully supported Gaston Flosse when his minister, André Giraud, was rather reluctant to assist the secretary of state and could not understand Admiral Thireault's support.

Moreover, the ALPACI's role was not assessed in the same way in Paris and in Papeete. Admiral Thireault thought it part of his role to accompany Flosse in his visits to South Pacific and Pacific Rim countries and to provide him with the support of the French military forces. He thought that if he made himself more conspicuous in the region, he would dissolve the mystery surrounding the nuclear test program and would become more familiar

to the officials and leaders of the regional states. This approach was not shared at all by the minister of defense, who wanted to maintain a secretiveness about the French defense system in the region.[42]

The difficulty for the secretary of state for South Pacific problems to find a place in the French administrative architecture was not eased by Flosse's complex personality. A "demi," that is, half-Polynesian, half-European, he was fifty-five when appointed. He had been taking part in the politics of Polynesia for almost thirty years. He had been elected mayor of Pirae (a town in the suburbs of Papeete) since 1965. He had also been chairman of the Territorial Assembly from 1973 until 1984. He then became president of the territorial government. He was elected representative for French Polynesia at the National Assembly in 1978 and 1981 as a member of his own Polynesian party, the Tahoeraa Huiraatira (People's Meeting), which was associated with the RPR. Furthermore, he was elected in 1984 as a French deputy to the European Parliament. In the 1980s he tried to promote a peaceful settlement of the New Caledonia conflict. He "seized any opportunity to convince his interlocutors of the efficiency of the government's policy in New Caledonia."[43] This effort immediately set him at odds with his minister.

Flosse was rarely present in Paris. He was trying to juggle the responsibilities of two important positions: secretary of state and president of the territorial government. He dropped the presidency of the French Polynesian government only in February 1987. He also traveled extensively in the South Pacific. His team of collaborators was based in Papeete. This explains why several issues, particularly matters at the border of foreign affairs and national defense, were dealt with in Paris without his opinion being asked. His being left out of decisions reveals that the coordination of French policy in the South Pacific was not yet considered a necessity.

The settlement of the ***Rainbow Warrior*** affair was dealt with between Paris and Wellington, with no involvement of the SSSPP. The reorganization of the military command in the South Pacific was also managed exclusively by the Ministry of Defense. This is not surprising when one understands the administration of a large country, but it shows the limits of Flosse's importance in the French government.

The reorganization originated in a decision taken by Andre Giraud in April 1986. He wanted to dissociate as much as possible the functioning of the nuclear testing program from the stationing of French military forces in Polynesia and the South Pacific. This reorganization was organized step by step and was completed in July 1988. It resulted in a reduction of 750 military men between 1986 and 1989. In August 1987 the territorial government and the French state signed a toll convention that was to take effect in July

1989. The Ministry of Defense would pay a yearly sum of CFPF 100 million (French Pacific francs) for the imports of the nuclear center instead of paying toll rights varying with the actual imports.

Flosse "caused strong irritation in the Foreign Office in Paris insofar as he encroached on their 'reserved area.' "[44] The jealousy of the Quai d'Orsay with regard to its diplomatic prerogatives is well known. This observation was reinforced during these years of strained relations with the South Pacific states.

Flosse's position in the government was also hampered by his difficulties in managing Polynesia. In October 1986 two Polynesians, Emile Vernaudon (mayor of Mahina) and Quito Braun-Ortega, both leaders of the Amuitahiraa Mo Porinesia (Party for the Union of French Polynesia, the principal opponent to the local government led by Flosse), came to Paris. They met with Bernard Pons, Jacques Focart, the prime minister's special adviser for African and overseas affairs, and André Giraud. They wanted to lodge an official charge against Flosse. They stressed "his grip on Polynesia, his affairism, interference, and corruption, and his misuse of his powers."[45] The changes were not entirely new to the two ministers and Mr. Focart. But they could do nothing since no judiciary inquiry had been launched. They were also bound by the prime minister's full support for Flosse. A few months earlier, during a stopover in Papeete, the prime minister had declared: "Gaston Flosse is more than a minister, more than a government's president. He is a brother."[46] It was obvious that Flosse had been given a free hand in the handling of local affairs.

It required several months of local protest before Flosse resigned from his post of president of the Polynesian territorial government, which he did in February 1987. His successor, Jacques Teuira, was his close collaborator. He too had to resign after violent riots erupted in Papeete in October 1987, which led to an unprecedented devastation of the downtown area. Finally, Alexandre Leontieff, the leader of the defectors from Flosses Tahoeraa Party, was elected president of the government in December, two days after Teuira's resignation.

Despite the hostile environment in the French administration, the secretary of state for South Pacific problems contributed to changing France's image in the South Pacific. Flosse was very active in the diplomatic field. He traveled widely: between Paris and Papeete, in the South Pacific, and in the Pacific Rim countries (the United States, Japan, Singapore). He was a skillful orator, able to speak Tahitian and to address Polynesian audiences without an interpreter.[47] This was a considerable asset in his diplomatic tours in the region. He developed his regional policy along several lines.[48]

The first was to accept dialogue with the South Pacific states, which involved information on the Mururoa tests, cooperation with France's Western partners in the region (the United States, Great Britain, Japan), and a permanent dialogue with the island states that he frequently visited. Then there was the granting of aid to the South Pacific states and territories. He set up an aid fund (familiarly called the Flosse Fund), which amounted to several million French francs in 1986, and 59 million francs in 1987. The SSSPP could also give some US$10 million as aid money from the Ministry of Finance. Flosse increased France's contribution to the South Pacific Commission and made France a member of the Pacific Islands Development Program. The third policy line was to emphasize the French presence in the South Pacific in developing two arguments: that the French territories contributed to the development of the region and that the French presence contributed to regional stability.

Gaston Flosse particularly succceeded with respect to Fiji. Fiji was isolated in the Pacific area at large after Colonel Rabuka's coups d'état in May and September 1987. The purpose of these coups was to restore to the Melanesians political power that they allegedly lost after the April general elections gave a legislative majority to a coalition of two Indian-dominated parties. The South Pacific Forum and Commonwealth countries were critical that this was undemocratic and contrary to the Pacific way of living and of resolving conflicts in a consensual way. Australia and New Zealand cut several aid programs to Fiji; they were later greatly irritated to see themselves supplanted by France.

Flosse visited Fiji in August 1987. He was accompanied by Admiral Thireault. He met Colonel Rabuka, President Sir Peter Ganilau, and Prime Minister Ratu Sir Kamisese Mara. He decorated a Fijian soldier from the FINUL (International United Nations Force in Lebanon) with the Legion of Honor and visited the University of the South Pacific and the CCOP/SOPAC (coordinating committee for mineral prospecting in coastal areas of the South Pacific). The least one can say is that his visit did not go unnoticed. Flosse convinced the French prime minister to define a new policy toward Fiji. An interministerial council was devoted to this issue on 22 October 1987. The sum of F 80 million was allocated to Fiji, and SSSPP experts were sent to decide how they would be used.

The Chirac government gave new impetus to the idea of a yearly coordinating meeting of the high military and civil servants acting in the South Pacific. The idea was first voiced by the president in September 1985. The SSSPP organized three meetings, in 1986, 1987, and 1988. These meetings were routine, and nothing came out of them, except the habit of meeting.

This was important, though, for the framework was ready for Mr. Rocard, Chirac's successor, when he decided in 1988-1989 to increase the coordination of French politics in the region.

The SSSPP also oversaw the project of a French University of the South Pacific, created by a decree in May 1987. But its implementation was not easy, as two concepts were opposed: the SSSPP and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs favored a university opened toward the region, whereas the Ministry of Research and Technology and the three territories wanted a more typically French university.[49] This difference lay in the definition of the syllabuses, in the choice of the professors, and in the academic links with other universities. The scientific council of the university could not meet before the 1988 presidential elections, and it was up to Rocard's government to organize its implementation.

Flosse and his team had a clear conception of what French policy in the South Pacific could be. They were the first to try to implement a regional strategy in the Pacific as a whole to make of France a true regional power, accepted as such by its regional partners. This was too ambitious a policy, raising only fears and defiance in Paris because it implied too many changes from the habit of ignorance toward South Pacific affairs.

Few comments are available on Mitterrand's attitude to Flosse. The president never spoke about the SSSPP in public. According to a senior Elysée official, the president kept as low a profile on South Pacific affairs as possible in order not to be considered as condoning the policy in New Caledonia. The president was much more preoccupied with New Caledonia than with Flosse's policy toward the island countries.

Was Flosse a puppet minister? His scope of action was limited in his apparent area of competence because of the involvement of the prime minister and the minister for overseas departments and territories in New Caledonia. He enjoyed, however, much greater freedom of action everywhere else in the South Pacific. He was like a proconsul of the nineteenth century, at which time whole areas of the policy in the South Seas were outside the close control of the government in Paris. He innovated greatly, attracted much criticism, and made some errors (for example, in allowing corruption to develop on a new scale in Tahiti during his term of office).[50] He nonetheless broke the shackles in which French policy in the South Pacific had been confined since the creation of the Mururoa nuclear testing center.

Cohabitation, 1993 Version

The second cohabitation period, which lasted from March 1993 until May 1995, under the Balladur government, has not yet led to the same errors and

passionate debates about the policies and activities of France in the South Pacific. It was unlikely that it will, for both international and national reasons.

The global context has changed greatly since 1986-1988. In particular, East-west relations are fundamentally different. The cold war is over and, with it, the global competition between the two superpowers to gain allies in any part of the world. The emergence of several new independent countries in what was formerly the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe has increased the demand for development aid. The small South Pacific island countries have lost much of their strategic value. Former modest interest in them by the great powers has been replaced by general indifference as many countries are requesting the Western countries' attention and diplomatic skill. The Bosnian crisis arose and worsened during 1992. It has been on the top of Western, and especially European, leaders' priorities for more than a year now. What weight do small and remote islands carry against the possibility of a general war in Europe?

The French national context was also very different in 1993-1995 from that in the late 1980s. The politicians were not the same, nor were their main preoccupations. The nuclear test issue has also taken a new turn in the last two years with the moratorium on nuclear tests agreed on in 1992 by the United States, France, and Russia.

The best one can say of the relations between Mitterrand and Chirac is that they were not excellent. Chirac accepted the prime ministership in 1986 without renouncing his presidential ambitions for 1988. He was thus more a rival for Mitterrand than an ally and a supporter as prime ministers are supposed to be. In contrast, the relations between Mitterrand and Balladur are quite serene. Balladur, who was minister for the economy and finance in Chirac's government, had been unofficially considered the next prime minister for many weeks before the general elections in March 1993. Of a temperate character, he was not deemed to pretend to the presidential mandate in 1995, although some of his ministers have advocated his candidacy. He is bent on conciliation and dialogue, and has shown it in his handling of domestic affairs in his first months in office. He is not in competition with Mitterrand, nor could he be in 1995, since Mitterrand will not be a candidate for the third time because of his age (he will be eighty in 1996). Moreover, Balladur's main concern is to revive economic growth and to prevent unemployment from rising.

There is no secretary of state for the South Pacific in Balladur's government. But the president has made it clear that he will personally see to it that the policy undertaken in 1988 in New Caledonia will continue during the second cohabitation.[51] This policy was initiated by Rocard and his team of close collaborators in their first weeks of office, in May and June 1988. It

is not possible for any government now to ignore what was done in the Rocard era.

Rocard became prime minister in May 1988, in the aftermath of the Ouvea tragedy, and he immediately gave a new impetus to French policy in the South Pacific. The major innovation was to postpone for ten years, until 1998, the ultimate decision concerning the future of New Caledonia. The Matignon Agreements, so-called from the name of the official residence of the prime minister, where they were signed in June 1988, initiated a reconciliation process between the loyalists under Deputy Jacques Lafleur's banner and the independentists, led by Jean-Marie Tjibaou. A referendum is to be organized in 1998 in New Caledonia to decide on whether it stays in the French Republic. The electoral body for the 1998 referendum will be limited to the electors voting in 1988 and their descendants. This framework of action was approved by a nationwide referendum in November 1988.

A flow of investments and experts from the metropole to Nouméa ensued under the Rocard government, and the trend was maintained by his two socialist successors as prime minister, Edith Cresson and Pierre Beregovoy. The objective was to help the Melanesian population share in the modern economy of the territory. A program of training young Melanesians for jobs in the secondary and tertiary sectors (industry and services) was launched in 1988 and 1989. Two succcessive high commissioners were personally involved in the implementation of this program.

Rocard not only maintained the yearly meeting of high-ranking military and civil servants acting in the South Pacific, but also increased its responsibilities in defining the framework of French policy in the region. More people were involved in these meetings, and their participation was aimed at reiterating France's commitment to its regional status. Rocard also set up a Permanent Secretariat for the South Pacific, which supports the Council for the South Pacific and coordinates the government's action in the region.

Balladur has as yet shown little inclination to modify these arrangements. The bodies set up by Rocard provide a convenient framework for the follow-up of the Matignon process. There is no need today to pull apart a whole process that is, if not fully accepted, at least tolerated by all parties. Although much criticized, it has, however, helped to bring peace to the minds of both loyalists and independentists. South Pacific affairs are no longer a priority or a sore point among the government's concerns. In the near future, the main uncertainty with regard to the French presence in the region concerns the nuclear tests.

Nuclear tests were suspended for a year in April 1992. France also agreed then to sign the Nuclear Proliferation Treaty, which it had always refused to do. A year later, the moratorium was prolonged, initially until July

1993 and then indefinitely. In July 1993, the president set up an inquiry commission on the moratorium's impact on the French nuclear weapons program. According to leaks from the report of the commission that was handed to the president on 4 October 1993,[52] supplementary tests may be necessary to modernize several existing weapon systems as well as to validate a surrogate laboratory testing system. France could refrain from testing until at least mid-1995, but would have to resume after that time in order to maintain a viable nuclear deterrent.[53]

A large controversy arose in France following the Chinese nuclear test on 5 October 1993. This explosion interrupted the moratorium observed by the five nuclear powers for a year, even though China's was only a de facto moratorium. Politicians in France were divided on this issue.[54] In general, conservatives supported the resuming of tests, whereas socialists were in favor of the moratorium.[55] The controversy lingers on. On 5 May 1994, the president strongly reaffirmed his commitment to the moratorium, which he considers an important step toward global nuclear disarmament and a major element in the international struggle against nuclear proliferation.[56] The prime minister did not wait long before stating that he did not exclude the possibility of resuming testing.[57]

However, uncertainty about the future of French Polynesia, which is heavily dependent on money spent by the state, remains. French sovereignty in the territory could come under question. The debate will focus on whether it is in France's interests to keep an expensive territorial possession in the region. If the answer is yes, France will be faced with the difficult task of implementing or maintaining development policies it has postponed for thirty years. If the answer is no, it will be equally difficult to achieve a peaceful transition to independence. The debate on France's responsibilities toward the population of the territory may be intense.

Now, at least, it seems that the link between the French presence in French Polynesia and in New Caledonia is no firmer than before. The main argument waged by opponents to the granting of independence to New Caledonia has long been the fear of the chain independences it might trigger among French TOMs. New Caledonia's future is likely to be decided through the Matignon Accord process. There is a widely shared silence on this issue among French officials, except for the minister for overseas departments and territories.

Conclusion

The cohabitation years of 1986-1988 reveal clearly that the French government is by no means a monolithic actor in the South Pacific. This finding is

not unique to the South Pacific, but it has not previously been appreciated with relation to that region. During the period in question, tensions were inevitable between the different actors in the making of French policy in the region. They were due to overlapping responsibilities as well as to the actors' own somewhat diverging political aims, both at a national level and in their dealings with New Caledonia.

These years are also a benchmark in the history of French presence in the South Pacific. From 1988 onward, French policy has been strongly dependent on individual involvement at the highest level of state responsibility.[58] The Rocard era is clear evidence of this policy The prime minister's strong commitment to reestablish law and order in New Caledonia and the personal dedication of the two high commissioners he designated for the territory made it possible to create a climate of confidence beween the Paris government and politicians in Nouméa.

French Polynesia became a somewhat less thorny issue, until the moratorium on nuclear tests brought it back to the fore. The minister for overseas departments and territories had thus to step in and initiate a long-term policy for the territory.

On a more general level, the second cohabitation indicates that cohabitation is not necessarily a recipe for conflict between a prime minister and a president, not even in the South Pacific. It depends on the personalities involved and their ambitions as well as on the global context. Cohabitation was a recipe for conflict in 1986-1988 with respect to the South Pacific because of rival personalities in the two posts and because of a fundamental conflict in the approach of the two main parties to the New Caledonian issue. The 1993 cohabitation is quite different in this respect: the conflict on South Pacific issues has abated, and the Matignon Accord process has the broad endorsement of both major parties. There has been no open conflict between the president and the prime minister. On the contrary, Balladur has benefited from the lessons of the first cohabitation and is not at all keen on repeating the major error of that time, that is, to be in permanent and open conflict with the president. The global context has changed too: the major preoccupation is no more a potential destabilization by the Soviet Union but world economic depression.

NOTES

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1. The constitution of the Fifth Republic provides that the president is the guarantor of national independence, territorial integrity, and the application of Community agree-

ments and treaties (art. 5); the prime minister leads the action of the government, is responsible for national defense, and is in charge of the administration of the law (art. 21). The government determines and applies the policy of the nation (art. 20).

2. Samy Cohen, "La politique étrangère entre l'Elysée et Matignon," *Politique Étrangère* 3 (1989): 489.

3. Ibid.

4. Jean-Bernard Raimond, *Le Quai d'Orsay à l'épreuve de la cohabitation* (Paris: Flammarion, 1989), 25.

5. This is why the author does not refer much to existing writings by S. Henningham, S. Bates, R. Aldrich, J. Connell, or J. Chesneaux, which are well known and easily available to anyone interested in the wider topic of French presence in the South Pacific.

6. *Journal officiel, Débats à l'Assemblée nationale,* 3d séance, 14 Jan. 1982, 129. This was the first debate at the National Assembly on New Caledonian affairs and provided socialists and conservatives the opportunity to air their respective positions.

7. Law 86-844, 17 July 1986.

8. Curiously enough, this restriction was already present in the Fabius Statute and had at the time raised the anger of the conservative opposition. We should note that the French Constitution stresses the unity of the French electorate and makes it difficult to restrict it. The preamble of the constitution of the Fifth Republic reads as follows: "The national sovereignty belongs to the people, which exercises it through its representatives or by means of a referendum. No section of the people nor any individual can boast of its exercise."

9. J. Lafleur is the leader of the conservative RPCR (Rally for Caledonia in the Republic) and is a staunch advocate of maintaining French rule over New Caledonia.

10. In A. Rollat, *Tjibaou le Kanak* (Lyon: La Manufacture, 1990), 206

11. Source: Ministry of Defense.

12. A. Raluy, *La Nouvelle-Calédonie* (Paris: Karthala, 1990), 204-205.

13. Ibid.

14. Law 83-82, 22 Jan. 1988.

15. *Le Monde,* 19 Feb. 1987.

16. This was a setback for French diplomacy, since France has always objected to the interference of the United Nations in its policy toward its colonies and overseas *territories* (as some colonies were renamed after they received a new legal status in 1958 with the advent of the Fifth Republic).

17. Document UNO A 41/PV 92 (2 Dec. 1986), 21.

18. Ibid., 30.

19. Document UNO/l/C.4./42/S.R. 17 (21 Oct. 1987), 1011.

20. See French daily newspapers in May and June, 1988. The results of the military inquiries were never made public.

21. In Rollat, *Tjibaou le Kanak,* 221.

22. *Le Monde,* 22 Apr. 1988.

23. *Le Monde,* 25 Feb. 1988.

24. See P. Legorjus, *La morale et l'action* (Paris: Fixot, 1990), 245. Legorjus was the head of the GIGN (the group in the French gendarmerie specializing in freeing hostages).

25. I. Cordonnier, "La France dans le Pacifique sud, 1962-1988" (Ph.D. diss., Paris, 1991), 199.

26. Interview, *Le Monde,* 23 Apr. 1988.

27. *Le Monde,* 7 Jan. 1987.

28. *International Herald Tribune,* 26 Nov. 1987.

29. *International Herald Tribune,* 6 Apr. 1987.

30. "Tactless Tricolor," *The Economist,* 6 Sept. 1987.

31. *Le Monde,* 5 Mar. 1988.

32. On 10 July 1985, French secret service (DGSE) agents had bombed the Greenpeace flagship in Auckland harbor in order to prevent its imminent departure on a voyage to Mururoa to protest nuclear tests. An unprecedented crisis in French political circles followed the government's initial denial of involvement. It took several months of public and journalistic inquiry before the government acknowledged its responsibility in the bombing. There have been a large number of publications in both French and English on this topic. In particular refer to M. King, *Death of the Rainbow Warrior* (Auckland: Penguin, 1986); R. Shears and I. Gidley, *The Rainbow Warrior Affair* (London: Unwin, 1987); C. Lecomte, *Coulez le Rainbow Warrior* (Paris: Messidor Editions Sociales, 1989).

33. J. Charpentier, *L'Affaire du Rainbow Warrior: Le règlement interétatique* (Paris: Annuaire Français de Droit International, 1986), 873.

34. Decree 85-833, 11 July 1986.

35. The South Pacific states judged that France made out pretty well, essentially by using

its leverage on European Community imports, which were essential to New Zealand. It was also wondered why international terrorists were being released.

36. Raimond, *Le Quai d'Orsay,* 67.

37. *Le Monde,* 11 May 1988.

38. The South Pacific Council was created in December 1985, by a national decree (85-1410, 30 Dec. 1985). The *Rainbow Warrior* affair and the following political crisis led politicians in Paris to realize the danger of the lack of coordination of the French policy in the South Pacific. The South Pacific Council was to be responsible for this coordination.

39. Interview, 20 Nov. 1989.

40. Prime Minister, letter 173/SG, 23 Apr. 1986.

41. ALPACI means *amiral pour le Pacifique* (admiral for the Pacific); COMSUP/Polynésie means *commandant supérieur des forces de Polynésie* (commander-in-chief of the French forces in Polynesia); COMCEP means *commandant du Centre d'expérimentation du pacififique* (commander of the nuclear test center in the Pacific).

42. Private conversations with officers.

43. Answer to a parliamentary question, National Assembly, 15 June 1987.

44. P. De Deckker, "Au sujet de la perception de la France dans le pacifique insulaire: Pour une contribution à l'histoire des temps mal conjugués," *Revue Française d'Histoire de l'Outre Mer,* 76 (284-285): 558.

45. *Le Monde,* 25 Oct. 1986.

46. Ibid.

47. S. Henningham, "France and the South Pacific in the 1980s: An Australian Perspective," *Journal de la Société des Océanistes* 92-93:33.

48. *For France, in the Pacific* (SSSPP document, Sept. 1987), 45-58.

49. Private conversations with university scholars.

50. S. Henningham, *France and the South Pacific: A Contemporary History* (Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1992), 153.

51. President Mitterrand, in *Le Monde,* 6 Feb. 1993.

52. *L'Express,* 7 Oct. 1993, 52-53.

53. *Arms Control Today,* Nov. 1993, 20.

54. See French daily newspapers in October 1993.

55. Pierre Lellouche, Jacques Chirac's diplomatic adviser, voiced particularly strong support for the nuclear tests (see *Le Figaro,* 12 and 13 Oct. 1993).

56. *Le Monde,* 7 May 1994.

57. *Le Monde,* 11 May 1994.

58. For the years 1988-1991, see I. Cordonnier, "La France dans le Pacifique sud: Perspectives pour les années 1990," *Politique Étrangère* 3 (1993): 733-746.

BOOK REVIEW FORUM

Annette B. Weiner, ***Inalienable Possessions: The Paradox of Keeping-While-Giving.*** Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992. Pp. ix, 232, appendixes, notes, bibliography, index, illustrations. US$35 cloth.

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Exchange, Gender, and Inalienable Possessions

DURING THE PRE-WORLD WAR II YEARS, it was fairly common, even with the emphasis on ethnographic particularism, for anthropologists to devote their intellectual energies to generating grand syntheses and overarching theories of social relations. Since then, despite the proliferation of anthropologists, there have been proportionally far fewer synthetic works. Most anthropologists, reacting to criticisms of earlier ethnologists, afraid that critical comment will damage their own careers, and mindful of the exigencies of satisfying grant and manuscript reviewers, dissertation supervisors, and tenure committees, have retreated to the safer havens of narrow topics, narrow areas, and ethnographic analyses of limited sectors of social life.

Annette Weiner's ambitious, challenging, impressively argued book returns to an earlier tradition of broad ethnological analysis and theory building. But this is theory envisioned through intimate knowledge of one place, the Trobriand Islands, over a twenty-year period--plus a shorter period of field research in Western Samoa--and closely grounded in the reinterpretation of cross-cultural ethnographic data.

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Weiner calls her book an anthropological experiment. She asks us to do no less than rethink the received wisdom of Malinowski and Mauss that the principle of reciprocity underlies exchange, and social life more generally. Instead, Weiner focuses on what she calls the paradox of keeping-while-giving and on the inalienable possessions that are hoarded, conserved, and inherited, to a greater or lesser degrees in all societies, while other objects, often symbolic replacements of these heirlooms and sacred relics, are offered in exchange.

Emphasizing the accumulation of wealth rather than its distribution, Weiner also stresses the building rather than the leveling of inequality through exchange. "The motivation for reciprocity is centered not in the gift per se," she argues, "but in the authority vested in keeping inalienable possessions. . . . [T]he authentication of difference rather than the balance of equivalence [is] the fundamental feature of exchange" (p. 40). Control of inalienable possessions generates and sustains rank and hierarchy. Individuals and groups exchange to try to snare what is hoarded and withheld, tokens of power and difference frequently imbued with what Weiner calls the "cosmological authentication" of gods or ancestors, and try to build or alter political hierarchy by capturing the "inalienable" possessions of others.

This is a stimulating and innovative position for rethinking exchange and inequality. It is worth bearing in mind during this rethinking, though, that the freshness of Malinowski's and Mauss's writings on exchange in the 1920s came from their contrast to European "commonsense" cultural assumptions that the accumulation of wealth--land, crown jewels, gold coins, shares of stock--and its conservation through inheritance, primogeniture, and entailment are the natural and logical avenues to power. Weiner's contribution, by emphasizing keeping, without omitting giving, is a valuable corrective for anthropologists who have allowed the brilliant theorizing on gift exchange and reciprocity of our forebears to obscure the need to think more creatively about the role of wealth conservation in the building of social relations and social difference.

As a teacher in an American university, I am reminded yearly of how counterintuitive the Maussian/Malinowskian views of exchange are to Westerners when I begin to explain to a new cohort of puzzled and objecting undergraduates what was explained to me by islanders in southeastern New Guinea: that publicly giving away shell necklaces, greenstone axeblades, and large pigs enriches the givers by putting others into their debt. The original paradox of giving that European observers such as Boas, Malinowski, and Mauss confronted was that you can get rich and powerful by giving things away.

Engendering Wealth and Exchange

Weiner argues that anthropologists should be careful about uncritically accepting theories based on flawed ethnography, particularly ethnographic reports that have ignored the activities of women as producers of wealth and reproducers both of persons and of social relations, as she says theories of exchange have generally done. Weiner especially emphasizes the production and the exchange and conservation--often but not always by women--of fibrous wealth, which she glosses as cloth: banana-leaf skirts and bundles, flax cloaks, barkcloth, feather cloaks and insignias, and so on. These are frequently imbued with sacred power and symbolize group identity and authority. She cautions further that there is a Western cultural bias in assuming that female roles as reproducers are negatively valued, domestic, or profane compared to male productions and forms of wealth.

This key aspect of Weiner's work is part of a larger scholarly trend in the anthropology of gender of the last decade and a half to question received categories, such as nature / culture, sacred / profane, public / domestic, and their associations with male and female. Contemporary anthropological gender studies reanalyze the actions of both women and men. They focus on the ideologies in which those actions are embedded and which they actualize or subvert, stressing their multiple and often contradictory aspects, as Weiner does here.

Weiner's book is likely to introduce, or to emphasize, the gender dimensions to some scholars of economic relations and exchange who may have either ignored or paid minimal attention to women's productive or reproductive activities and their consequences. Weiner's own ethnographic reanalyses of Trobriand Island exchange, which document women's exchanges of skirts and banana-leaf bundles, ritually essential counterpoints to men's famous interisland exchanges of stone and shell valuables, or ***kula,*** are well known, particularly through her first book (1976). Still, a great deal of the anthropological writing on gender and on women, both ethnographic and theoretical, which has burgeoned in the last twenty years, is read with great interest, but mostly within a restricted subset of anthropologists and social theorists, largely female, who already identify themselves as gender scholars. I have heard male colleagues say, "I'm not interested in gender," using a tone and language they would probably not employ publicly to proclaim a lack of interest in, say, political anthropology. By not using the words gender or women in her title, and by writing an important theoretical work addressing core issues in economic anthropology--production, accumulation, exchange--and political anthropology--rank, chiefdoms, the creation

and maintenance of social inequality--Weiner will compel many of her colleagues, whether they ultimately agree with her or not, to consider and take seriously the gendered dimensions of women's and men's actions as they generate and reshape wealth and power.

Like Marilyn Strathern's ***The Gender of the Gift*** (1988), Weiner's ***Inalienable Possessions*** integrates gender into a reexamination of exchange--in Weiner's case with an emphasis on what is not exchanged--and uses a close reading of these aspects of social life--across Oceania for Weiner and in Melanesia for Strathern--as a lens for rethinking social relations more generally in all parts of the world. Weiner argues that anthropologists have paid insufficient attention to the cross-sex sibling bond, or what she calls sibling intimacy; to the productive, exchange, and ritual roles of women as sisters rather than as wives; and to women as actors in social dramas rather than as mere objects--valuable ones to be sure--exchanged between men. The focus on the marital pair and the nuclear family, she reminds us, is part of a European cultural legacy. European anthropologists and those who read their theoretical works, whatever their cultural backgrounds, have uncritically allowed these cultural assumptions to pass unanalyzed, she says, and to be projected onto non-Western societies. "Giving a sibling to a spouse is like giving an inalienable possession to an outsider" (p. 73), Weiner states. Note the gender-neutral language: she sees this as a fundamental principle applying to husbands and wives, sisters and brothers.

Wealth Held and Lost

Weiner uses ethnographic examples from societies in Australia, Melanesia, and Polynesia with varying types of social hierarchy and with matrilineal, patrilineal, and cognatic descent to support her theses: that conserved wealth, imbued with ***mana*** or ancestral power, is key to understanding the meanings of what is exchanged and to the construction of hierarchy and difference; that women's production and exchange are central to social and political formations even in societies usually described by anthropologists as male dominant and excluding women from the prestige economy and ritual; and that a close, continuing bond between adult sister and brother, often extending to their children, is substantiated in exchange and religious practice, authenticating rank or natal lineage identity. She makes briefer comparative excursions into the ethnographic and historical literature on ancient Greece, medieval Europe, and the Pacific Northwest coast in the nineteenth century, among other times and places. ***Inalienable Possessions*** draws together and significantly expands on ideas from a number of Weiner's previously published essays on exchange, cultural reproduction, and women's

wealth, and the book is valuable as a more fully developed and comprehensive treatment of her theoretical positions.

Weiner first traces the concept of reciprocity in European economic history, as in the "reciprocal give and take of the marketplace" (p. 28). She notes that Marx, Morgan, Maine, and other nineteenth-century social theorists, writing in a milieu of industrial capitalism run rampant, envisioned "primitive societies" as characterized by reciprocity and communalism without social inequality This nineteenth-century intellectual legacy, she believes, has been largely unnoticed and unchallenged in anthropology, received as it is through the modernist and ethnographically buttressed exchange theories of Malinowski and Mauss. Weiner uses a brief survey of medieval European legal and philosophical treatments of wealth, especially land, to develop her concept of inalienable possessions as "symbolic repositories of genealogies and historical events" identified with "a particular series of owners through time" (p. 33).

This discussion raises a fundamental question, which can also be asked about the Pacific societies she later analyzes. As Weiner often but briefly notes, the categories of things she calls inalienable possessions do in fact become alienated: by conquest, by lack of issue, by the sale of landed estates, by gift. I will use one of the best-known European examples: the crown of England. Along with the "cosmological authentication" of the divine right of kings, it has passed from Plantagenets to Tudors and Stuarts to Hanoverians and the House of Saxe-Coburg and Gotha, also known as the House of Windsor, along with assorted duchies, castles, and crown jewels. David Cannadine (1990:103) quotes Lord Ailesbury, writing in 1911: **"A** man does not like to go down to posterity as the alienator of old family possessions." But, Cannadine continues, "that was exactly what he and many others of his class were doing." The British royal family and the wealthiest dukes still own significant chunks of the British Isles, as Weiner points out in a footnote. On the other hand, recent historical research shows that one-quarter of all the land in England, about one-third of both Wales and Scotland, and an even-higher fraction of Ireland were sold by the nobility and landed gentry in the years just before and after the First World War, reversing five hundred years' worth of accumulation of land, the premier European inalienable possession, by a tiny handful of privileged families (Cannadine 1990:111).

What does it mean when the "inalienable" is alienated? **It** may be viewed as catastrophic or tragic by certain participants or onlookers and as a great victory against tyranny by others, but disruption of the orderly succession to and inheritance of ***dala*** lands or duchies occurs somewhere in the socially known world in every generation. In my view these disruptions do not

negate Weiner's core concept of "inalienable" possessions, which she carefully explains can be appropriated by outsiders, along with their "cosmological authentication." But pursuing further the political and ritual meanings of these periodic appropriations, which are both material and symbolic, at greater length might lead to fresh perspectives on social change and continuity, equality and hierarchy, just as Weiner's focus on what is kept illuminates what is given and why.

As Weiner points out (p. 23), we anthropologists and our perspectives are shaped by "our" field sites. We forever afterward see the world, at home and elsewhere, not just through the eyes of our natal cultures but through our own bemused version of the worldviews of the people with whom we have lived. It is logical that Weiner looks at the gendered nature of social relations and the accumulation and distribution of wealth cross-culturally through Trobriand as well as Western and anthropological eyes. This has led her to examine the ethnographic accounts of others in search of a female domain of exchange focusing on fibrous wealth and, after living off and on for years with the matrilineal Trobrianders, for evidence of close economic and ritual ties between sisters and brothers. The most striking thing about her reanalyses of the ethnographic literature--and to the rethinking of the ethnographic corpus that her book provokes in the reader--is not that some societies seem to give lesser or little weight to the accumulation of forms of wealth imbued with sacred power, that is, to a separate but ritually essential female domain in which "cloth" is exchanged, or to close sibling relations. It is that so many societies do emphasize these things to some degree, whatever their types of political stratification or descent rules.

In one of her most intriguing chapters, Weiner turns to Polynesia, particularly to the Maori, Samoans, and Hawaiians, for examples of the interrelations of "cloth" wealth, heirlooms and insignias of divine authority, giving and keeping, gender relations and the cross-sex sibling tie, female ***mana,*** and chiefly powers. She relates these to means that vary in each culture and over time for creating and maintaining rank and hierarchy. Chiefs, usually male but occasionally female, give away while preserving their most precious heirlooms, often created by women of an earlier generation. Their gifts are replacements that call attention to what they keep, such as particular, famous cloaks of feathers or flax, or the oldest and finest mats or tapa cloth. These are permeated with ancestral power, may even become divine themselves, and bear political legitimacy to their owners and conservators. Chiefs and rivals build political hierarchy, Weiner argues, by capturing the inalienable possessions of others. As recent ethnographic research in Samoa by Weiner and others shows, the ritual/political use of fibrous wealth and of women's production continues to this day in the independent island nations

of Polynesia. Reading this chapter vividly reminded me of visiting Nuku-'alofa, the capital of Tonga, in 1977 and seeing fifty women sitting cross-legged in the square in the middle of town, opposite the bank and the Morris Hedstrom store, producing piles of tapa cloth for an upcoming wedding in the Tongan royal family.

Weiner's view of Polynesian chiefly keeping (the oldest and rarest wealth objects, imbued with ***mana)*** while giving (valuable goods, paradoxically drawing attention to objects withheld that validate the owner's authority) as the mechanism for creating and maintaining hierarchy differs from, but is still compatible with, earlier, more materialist analyses that emphasize chiefs' responsibilities to give. To avoid being killed and having all their possessions plundered in a mass revolt, chiefs in times of drought or famine were under intense pressure to "give" the surplus food they had previously collected in tribute from others. This noblesse oblige, to use an equivalent European term, simultaneously preserved their authority, displayed their divine power, and safeguarded their most precious possessions, as Weiner would likely observe.

Kula and Inalienable Possessions

Weiner compliments the skills of an array of Oceanic ethnographers by using their rich and detailed accounts to substantiate her own theoretical projects, even when she reaches conclusions those who collected the data may not share. But the chapter of ***Inalienable Possessions*** that will probably be most closely read is the one on ***kula,*** largely based on her own ethnographic research though interwoven with the observations of others, including contemporaries and our distinguished predecessor, Bronislaw Malinowski. Weiner rereads ***kula*** giving as loss and getting (keeping) as fame. She also points out something that is rarely emphasized: in ***kula,*** there are many losers, individuals (almost all ***kula*** players are men) who give shells hoping to open or strengthen particular ***kula*** paths but who get back much less than they hoped, and without gaining fame from their giving. This is the only way a successful few can accumulate large numbers of important armshells and necklaces and then judiciously distribute a few of them to favored partners, hoarding the rest for years or even a generation. ***Kula,*** then, does create difference, as objects of value do in Polynesia. But--with the partial exception of the Kiriwina chiefs, especially in the precolonial era--this difference is individual and comparatively ephemeral, creating personal fame and temporary influence only 'within ***kula,"*** Weiner writes (p. 133), rather than hereditary rank and authority for a group of people and their descendants. ***Kula,*** she argues, is an arena outside of kinship and locality that may lead to spe-

cific kinds of authority and fame. Prized shells are trophies that may be kept. Like Polynesian heirlooms, they attract other valuables to their (temporary) owners, who substitute gifts of lesser valuables of the same type as that which is hoarded, gifts that paradoxically remind the recipients and spectators of the valuable withheld and thus the power of their owner.

Kula armshells and necklaces are not inalienable possessions, then, in **Weiner's** terms. They "lack sacred powers" (p. 133). ***Kula*** does not generate rank "because kula shells lack cosmological authentication and women's participation is minor." Weiner instead sees chiefly shell decorations, insignia of rank worn ceremonially, as inalienable possessions--along with ***dala,*** or matrilineage, land. Women's "cloth wealth" objects, banana-leaf skirts and bundles, signify, despite their brief existence, the cosmological authentication of matrilineal ancestors that ***kula*** shells lack (p. 147).

Here I should explain that my own view of ***kula*** and cognate forms of ceremonial exchange is from the vantage point of Vanatinai (Sudest Island), in the Southern Massim, the largest island in the Louisiade Archipelago. Vanatinai is not part of the ***kula*** ring but connected to it through other exchange links; armshells are not used in exchange, but large numbers of ceremonial shell-disc necklaces are made, and the finest, named ***kula*** necklaces also circulate in the region today (including some mentioned by Malinowski), along with several thousand greenstone axeblades and other ceremonial valuables, Parenthetically, women as well as men ritually exchange these forms of "hard" wealth (to use Weiner's term), associated with men in the Trobriands, in inter-island exchange journeys and at mortuary ritual feasts. At the same feasts, women also participate in limited but ritually essential exchanges of coconut-leaf skirts among the matrilineages of the deceased, widowed spouse, and deceased's father (Lepowsky 1993).

From the perspective of field research in the Southern Massim, I suggest another possible relationship between ***kula*** armshells and necklaces and Weiner's category of inalienable possessions. Following an analysis of Fitz Poole's beautifully detailed studies of the Bimin-Kuskusmin of interior New Guinea, whom Weiner sees as transforming human bones into inalienable possessions embodying ancestors, Weiner writes that bones are a limited medium of exchange. Unlike "cloth," they cannot easily be produced or replicated to provide replacement objects for exchange, while ancestral relics are conserved and venerated (p. 117). But I would argue that ***kula*** armshells and necklaces are just that: symbolic replacements of human bones. I was explicitly told by elders on Vanatinai that shell-disc necklaces, the kind that circulate in ***kula*** as well as in the Louisiade Archipelago, were originally decorated human skulls. The white plate of helmet shell that forms the main part of what is still called the head of the necklace has been substituted for

the skull, and the decorations of reddish shell discs, wild banana seed, pearl shell, and so on have become more elaborate and various (and some ***kula*** necklaces lack this type of pendant altogether).

Decorated ***Conus*** armshells (and the ***Trochus*** shell bracelets worn by a few big-men at Vanatinai feasts), I further suggest, are metaphorical substitutes for human jawbone bracelets. These used to be worn on Vanatinai, according to the diary of a twenty-four-year-old assistant ship's surgeon and assistant naturalist named Thomas Henry Huxley, who arrived in Sudest Lagoon in 1849 on HMS ***Rattlesnake.*** Huxley tried but failed to barter with its owner for one such bracelet, which had only one tooth (the jaw seemed to be lashed to an animal bone), but "the old fellow would not part from it for love or money. Hatchets, looking-glasses, handkerchiefs, all were spumed and he seemed to think our attempts to get it rather absurd, turning to his fellows and jabbering, whereupon they all set up a great clamour, and laughed. Another jaw was seen in one of the canoes, so that it is possibly the custom there to ornament themselves with the memorials of friends or trophies of vanquished foes." The man returned the next day with another "jaw bracelet . . . in fine preservation and [which] evidently belonged to a young person . . . with every tooth being entire" (Huxley 1935:191-192). I presume that the first bracelet was an ancestral relic and the second the relic of a recently slain enemy.

Jawbone bracelets were also observed around 1900 near Milne Bay and Samarai (Monckton 1922). Given the sketchy nature of our information on the precolonial Massim, it is highly possible that jawbone bracelets were customary relics of ancestors or trophies of war on many islands, especially since secondary burial was the norm. Both Vanatinai and Misima Island people tell me that inter-island skull exchange was practiced throughout the Louisiade Archipelago, on Vanatinai until as recently as about 1910 (see Macintyre 1983 for skull exchange on Tubetube Island). The relatives of a slain warrior sometimes demanded the skull of an enemy victim as compensation. The skull of an important defeated enemy might be decorated with face paint, scented resins, flowers, and leaves, and the victorious warrior would present it to his grateful allies in exchange for shell-disc necklaces and greenstone axeblades.

Nineteenth-century European visitors to the Louisiade Archipelago confirm the practice of skull exchange. The skull of bêche-de-mer fisherman Frank Gerret, murdered on Panapompom Island, was exchanged for twenty-five greenstone axeblades in 1885. The skull of the unfortunate John McOrt, murdered at Brooker (Utian) Island, was still circulating seven years after his death in 1878. A man from Motorina Island obtained it in exchange "for several pigs, canoes, white arm-shells, and hatchet-heads" and hung it in his

house rafters (Bevan 1890; see Lepowsky 1993). Note the exchange of one of the primary types of ***kula*** valuables, "white arm-shells," for a skull.

Even in this late precolonial form of skull exchange, ancestral relics do not circulate but are conserved, and retrieved from enemies, as inalienable possessions, to use Weiner's term. Relics today are imbued with ancestral power, as they surely were in the past. Small pieces of a mother's skull, a father's tooth, or a lock of a deceased sisters hair are secreted by many people in their personal baskets as talismans and are used in magic and sorcery. These relics embody both ancestral and personal power and to some extent the power of the deceased's matrilineage. But in the militantly egalitarian society of Vanatinai they do not create or authenticate rank or lineage authority.

Vanatinai elders told me that the exchange of shell-disc necklaces and other valuables began in ancient times as a peacemaking ceremony. Reo Fortune, based on field research on Dobu Island in the 1920s wrote that ***kula*** is "like an annually repeated peacemaking ceremony" ([1932] 1963: 209; see also Young 1971 for similar explanations from Goodenough Island and Macintyre 1983 for Tubetube Island). In the late precolonial period, the two forms, skull exchange and ***kula*** and its cognates, coexisted, just as off-islanders traded in some years and places and raided in others. The actual and metaphorical substitution of decorated shells for the decorated skulls of war victims--formerly ransomed from enemies with shell valuables and greenstone axeblades and reclaimed as ancestors--is entirely logical in an ongoing, increasingly effective and elaborated international peace treaty. If ***kula*** and cognate inter-island exchanges began as peacemaking, the giving and getting of valuables are not intended to validate interlineage difference, authority, or rank. They are instead a ritualized and aggressive form of competition among individuals from different islands that substitutes for warfare and for the wealth and renown that a champion warrior (an exclusively male role) and his home island, district, or hamlet would gain. And this is why, in the Massim as a whole, though not in the southeastern islands, ***kula*** is, as Malinowski put it, "essentially a man's type of activity" (1922:280).

Ancestral relics continue to be guarded in secrecy by individuals and used to make the matrilineal children and gardens of these ancestors fruitful. They are also used in the powerful magic of exchange--in a metaphorical form of sympathetic magic, or like to like--to attract other valuables and to seduce exchange partners, making them dizzy with desire and eager to give away their carefully conserved articles of wealth. Making peace and exchanging symbolic decorated relics in ***kula*** protects the ownership of "inalienable possessions": ancestral matrilineal lands and relics that might otherwise be conquered and plundered.

Keeping While Giving

Annette Weiner's "anthropological experiment" in ***Inalienable Possessions*** successfully challenges the rest of us to rethink our assumptions about exchange, reciprocity, and authority. Not all her readers will agree with her about the universality of her theses, or her conclusions about the local complexities of action and belief in a particular milieu, but they will have to consider them carefully and articulate their own analyses in response. Weiner's call to look afresh at some of our most basic anthropological tenets of social relations is a welcome one. In issuing it she joins an all-too-small group of contemporary anthropological theorists who provoke us to think in new ways about the underlying themes and permutations of human social life instead of sheltering ourselves in received wisdom and our prior assumptions about the meanings of ethnographic data, our own and that of others. Admirably original in concept, this book extends Weiner's views of inalienable possessions, female wealth, siblingship, and the creation of social difference, generated in the ethnographic matrix of the Trobriand Islands, into a variety of social arenas. Although Weiner limits herself primarily to Pacific societies, as she says, variations on the theme of "keeping-while-giving" are found in all societies. No anthropologist will be able to ignore this important book.

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Review: MARC AUGÉ

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The central argument of Annette Weiner in ***Inalienable Possessions,*** if I may summarize it somewhat generally, can be broken down into three affirmations:

1 / Underlying all economic practices described in terms of reciprocity is a more profound reality: preserving the goods that escape reciprocal exchange. These "inalienable possessions," which make up the essence of the paradox of "keeping-while-giving," are markers of identity, difference, and power. Weiner thus distances herself not only from her predecessor in this field, Malinowski, but also from all those who have seen in the pair "gift / counter-gift" an instrument of power neutralization. She 'thus has in her sights Mauss himself ("Even when Mauss described the ambivalence generated by the gift . . . he still avowed that, ultimately, reciprocity neutralized power" [p. 43]), as well as Bataille, who opposes the ideal of "consumption" to capitalistic utilitarianism but does not see that the possibility of simultaneously keeping goods while responding to the demands of expenditure and

display results in the creation of strong hierarchical differences ("It is in the potential threat of violence and destruction that power emerges, transfixed at the center of keeping-while-giving" [p. 41]). Closer to home, she criticizes Sahlins, who "could not integrate the concept of gain with the Maussian (and Hobbesian) belief that exchange made enemies into friends" (p. 43).

2 / Women occupy a distinctive place and play a predominant role in the fabrication of inalienable possessions and, by the same token, in social reproduction. This second affirmation is itself the synthesis of three complementary propositions. First, anthropologists have not, in general, accorded enough importance to the economic and symbolic value of goods of vegetal origin, what she calls ***cloth*** (including "all objects made from threads and fibers," such as Trobriand banana-leaf bundles [p. 157n]). These goods belong nonetheless to the category of those that are destined to be kept as well as to be given away. Second, even if women, in general, have played a larger role than men in cloth production, men are implicated in and dependent on cloth treasures. In a like fashion, women play a role in the circulation and guardianship of hard substances such as jade, shells, or ancestral bones and are thus involved in the political realm. Third, contrary to what certain feminists have affirmed, the role of women in biological reproduction does not condemn them everywhere and always to political nonexistence, and the proof of this assertion can be found in their role in the control and transmission of inalienable possessions, both soft and hard, that are associated with symbolic systems concerning both biological and cultural reproduction.

3 / Sibling intimacy is a fact just as remarkable as the sibling incest taboo. In fact, the existence of the sibling incest taboo does not at all imply the absence of strong ties between brother and sister ("Like inalienable possessions, this ritualized sibling bond remains immovable because in each generation politically salient social identities and possessions are guarded and enhanced through it" [p. 67]). Sibling intimacy is essential in cultural reproduction (from close economic and social dependence to real or virtual incest).

My modest contribution to this forum devoted to the work of Annette Weiner is the product of a double paradox. First of all, I have only a bookish and distant rapport with Oceania. Secondly, my Africanist research has acquainted me with populations that privilege accumulation over exchange and where, by way of parenthesis, weaving activities were essentially masculine.

After having declared my admiration for the remarkably structured and well-argued work of Annette Weiner, I will limit myself to citing a few facts about Africa, some of which may serve as a further demonstration of her

ideas and others of which may serve not as a refutation but as a catalyst for further interrogation.

I will make reference here, for the most part, to the West African societies of Akan tradition that, as common traits, have strong political structures (chieftainships and kingdoms), are matrilineal, and accord a large importance to loincloths, which, with gold objects, figure in the lineal treasures. These societies are display-oriented, with the exhibition of riches highly ritualized, but they do not practice destruction or ritual circulation of goods.

I would like to remark first of all that Akan societies always accord an important place, both symbolically and politically, to the mother or the sister of the chief or king in power. The idea would never occur to anyone (not even to an ethnologist) to deny this role. The accordance of this importance, however, does not appear to me to be linked to a particular function in the activities of production: weaving, once again, was a masculine activity; it seems that the production of sea salt brought the two sexes together; gold extraction was the domain of men. It must be added that in those societies that began commerce with Europe very early, the work force was essentially made up of slaves or descendants of slaves (both men and women).

The continuation of the lineage, which progressively integrated a considerable number of endowed women from outside the community, slaves of both sexes, and descendants of these two groups, required the distinction, within the matrilineage, between the "pure" line and the adjacent branches. From another angle, and despite the existence of a theoretically preferential marriage with the matrilateral cross-cousin, the primary concern was to accumulate men and women, not to circulate them. This condition resulted in a whole series of practices that can be seen as forms of metaphoric incest: the slave wife of a man would call him "father," but, from the point of view of lineal relationships, she was like his sister and he could have children with her who would be, at the same time, both sons and uterine "nephews" (members of the matrilineage). On her side, a woman could, notably if she was the sister of the head of the lineage, marry a slave or have children without allying herself to another lineage. As a general rule, marriage "to the closest" ***(au plus prés),*** whose preeminence in the case of semicomplex systems of alliance was established by Françoise Héritier, was the best assurance of the ideological continuation and the demographic growth of the great lineages. The double obligation, it is quite clear, was achieved by the types of alliances that incontestably evoked the forbidden and fascinating image of the brother/sister couple.

This fascination is more explicitly acted out in the case of royal dynasties, in which the person of the sister appears almost as a component of what one

may call "the triple body of the king." The Agni king has a slave double, called ***ekala*** (from the name given to one of the aspects of his person), and who is considered as the carrier of the royal ***ekala,*** literally doubling the person of the king and thus protecting him by deflecting to himself any attacks that might be made against the king. But the body of the king is not only double: a sister or uterine cousin of the king (the ***balahinma)*** assures, with a man other than the king, the royal descendance. All three (the king, his ***ekala*** slave, and his ***balahinma*** sister) perform a dance from time to time in the courtyard of the palace that is peculiar to them and whose figures highlight the plurality of the sovereign body: because an Agni king would be nothing without the ***ekala*** and the ***balahinma.***

In the kingdom of Abomey, in former Dahomey, a little further east, the king could marry women of the royal clan, notably an agnatic half-sister, but the children resulting from these unions could not pretend to the succession. The crown prince could only be the son of a woman outside the royal couple. The royal couple (the king and his half-sister), in a fashion similar to those of certain kingdoms of East Africa, incarnates the dynasty and is a symbol of its permanence but not the means of its biological reproduction. In the Agni kingdom, the formula is the opposite: the children of the polygynous king do not play any role in the dynastic succession and the "queen-mother" (sister, niece, or uterine cousin of the king) freely chooses her sexual partners and gives birth to the potential successors to royal power. It should be added that among the Ashanti, as Rattray has already pointed out, the possibility of marriage with the patrilateral cross-cousin was reserved to princely families, thus assuring, every other generation, the return of the agnatic line into the matrilineage and the accumulation upon one individual of the principles and substances attributed respectively to each of the two lines of descendances.

These conditions suggest three remarks to me. The first, already formulated, is that, in the African examples I am familiar with, the role of women in the biological and cultural reproduction of the group does not appear to be obviously linked to a specific place in production activities. I would add that the women explicitly invited to exercise an ordinarily masculine function (political among the Lagoon cultures of the Ivory Coast when they fulfill a role of "regent" of the lineage, commercial among the Nuer where a woman could "endow" other women whose children would be hers) were women somewhat older, beyond menopause and thus outside the sphere of biological reproduction.

The second remark would concern the fact that in the matrilinear societies to which I have briefly made reference, the agnatic ideology is very strong (the essential powers are supposed to be transmitted from father to

son, or from paternal grandfather to grandson, while the women are described as "pirogues," assuring the transport of the children to be born without contributing substantially to their composition). The most obvious feminine power is that of the women closely associated with the control of objects that guarantee the perpetuity of the clan and thus of the person of the sovereign.

The third remark is an extension of the second. Everything is organized as if, in the African theories of power, there was a desire to prevent the best-positioned women in the clan or lineal hierarchy from controlling the two modes of reproduction: in the Dahoman model the children of the wife-sister of the king may not pretend to the succession; in the Agni model the sister of the king assures the reproduction of the dynasty, but not through union with her brother. The difference in the filiation principles can in part account for this contrast, but one may consider this difference as actually constitutive of it.

I have put myself in the difficult position of commenting on Weiner's analyses on the basis of examples in which the role of "keeping" is more evident than that of "giving"--the societies I have spoken about having been implicated for a long time in intra- and intercontinental exchange of a decidedly commercial nature (and extending as well to human merchandise). But it seems to me that Weiner's propositions can find, in these "counter-examples," an extension and a verification.

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The Paradox of Keeping-While-Giving

I was excited at the prospect of reading this book. It promised a new perspective and a genuine critique of classical exchange theory in anthropology.' I suspected that an approach based on the concept of reproduction, social reproduction as I would express it, had much to offer. I must confess to disappointment and even to irritation, perhaps because of my anticipation. In any case this has led me to produce a deliberately polemical discussion, in part because I feel it necessary to be provocative in order to clarify important issues, but also because I find that this work is so unclear at critical junctures as to strip the principal argument of much of its force.

Some years ago, a colleague of mine wrote a manuscript called "Vaginal Power," which dealt with the world historical defeat of the female sex (Leleur 1974, 1979). Her argument was that women in fact had complete

and total power over the reproduction of society since they literally had control over the process of biological reproduction, that is, the production of the species. World history was witness to the many and various ways that men had struggled to overcome, negate, and dissolve this power, by force, authority, control over strategic goods, and symbolic discourse. I found her wonderful fantasy quite powerful and there was certainly a great deal of ethnographic material to illustrate her thesis, at least in retrospect, and not least in the ethnography from Melanesia with its menstruating men and male ritual capture of female fertility. The myths of many Amazonian Indian groups recounting the way in which men got hold of female powers, flutes and so forth, the way they broke their vagina dentata with stones to reverse the order of things, and the social practices of shaming bad hunters all seemed quite suitable arguments for a real turnaround in history. Although I did not agree with her argument, she at least was clear enough in her presentation to admit of common interpretations of ethnographic examples.

This book is different. For while it proposes a "new" theory, its contours are vague and often self-contradictory and they do not, in the end, constitute anything particularly new. Weiner sets out to reinterpret the nature of "reciprocity, the incest taboo, and women's roles in reproduction" (p. ix). She continues an argument that has appeared in many of her previous works.

> The theoretical thrust of this book is the development of a theory of exchange that follows the paradox of keeping-while-giving into the social and political relations between women and men with foremost attention to their involvement in human and cultural reproduction. The traditional theories . . . that view men's production as the foundation for political hierarchy are no longer tenable. When women are analytically relegated to the sidelines of history or politics, the emergent view is ethnographically shallow and theoretically distorted. (P. x)

In my opinion this statement of purpose expresses fundamental confusion concerning both the motives and nature of both exchange and the role of women in relation to social power. Although important to consider the nature of "keeping" as she does, I cannot subscribe to the way in which she goes about her analysis. In what follows I shall, in a deliberately provocative way, try to unpack what I see as the triviality of the notion of "keeping-while-giving" and the absurdity of the notion that production, men's or women's, can be the source of anything other than products. The root of the confusion is that the entire argument is constructed around the concept of possession,

a concept that transforms identity and social being into a collection of external objects, whether they be pieces of barkcloth or ritual knowledge.

The book begins by introducing the concept of reproduction, a notion that has been around for quite some time but which is not discussed in any depth. Reference is made to biological reproduction and to the "cosmological resources" that societies draw upon in their reproduction. Here she makes a point that many, even many Marxists and structuralists, would agree with: that cosmology enters or, as others might say, is a constituent of social relations and material processes. The Noh dancer who becomes the god when wearing his mask, rather than simply "playing" the god, exemplifies an issue that is certainly important. Much the same could be said of "money," which after all is nothing but paper, but paper endowed with enormous power, and not merely representative of that power (Friedman 1974b; Castoriadis 1975). Her principal claim at the start of her discussion concerns what she calls "cosmological authentification . . . how material practices link individuals and groups with an authority that transcends present social and political action" (p. 5). Cosmologies, then, "act directly on social life." Power is "constituted through rights and accesses to these cosmological authentications." Finally, since "through exchange the cosmological domain becomes a significant source of power, its ambiguity and precariousness create difference, not homogeneity': (p. 5).

This all sounds quite reasonable except for the idea that cosmology is translated into power in exchange, which presupposes that cosmology exists first and is then incorporated into acts of exchange, like capital. Surely the relation between cosmology and the nature of valuables is more complex.

European history is invoked from the start to discredit the work of Mauss as being based on an oversimplified "orientalist''-style dichotomization. Against this she argues for a more universal dichotomization of alienable and inalienable possessions, a distinction that is taken from Mauss's distinction between ***immeuble*** and ***meuble,*** a somewhat different distinction that, while employing the notion of mobility, does not specify the nature of the relation between person and object. Fixed property, as in "buildings and grounds" are ***immeuble,*** but not because of their inalienability. In any case, this distinction is declared more fundamental than the nature of the relations established in exchange, in the properties of reciprocity. It is, of course, Mauss himself who sought the mystery of the gift in the so-called "spirit," that is, in its attraction to its original owner.[2] The years of comments on Mauss's essay have stressed one or another aspect of the problem of alienability but almost always in the context of the social relation between givers and takers. In ***Inalienable Possessions,*** the relation between partners is played down entirely to the benefit of the function of inalienability. While

Weiner's interpretation is suggestive, it implies a definite motivation as well: that the owners or possessors of such objects want to keep them. But it is precisely such objects that can be the means for the establishment and maintenance of hierarchy The use of goods, their potential power, depends upon the social relations in which they are embedded. In some systems such goods are hoarded; in others they are dispersed even where they "desire" to return to their owners, that is, they are "fertile" in Sahlins's sense (1972). Inalienability suggests unequivocally a possessive desire. This is our category and not theirs, not unless otherwise demonstrated.

But what is the nature of inalienable possessions? Here we are quickly introduced to questions of group identity and the objects that represent that identity. Ancestral valuables or wealth stamped with prestigious names, personal or collective, from heirlooms to sacred knowledge: such are the major objects in this category. Inalienability expresses transcendence as opposed to the transience of exchange. Here we are reminded of Bloch's earlier discussions of the transformation of the dead into ancestors, that is, into permanence as opposed to the impermanence of the everyday and of the life cycle itself. Bloch and Parry carry this into the realm of exchange as well, detailing ritual versus secular exchange as an expression of the basic principle of the long versus the short term. The examples used by Weiner suggest yet another classic distinction, between descent and alliance, as expressed in the structural functionalist literature where descent was about the permanent, about society itself, certainly about social identity, whereas alliance was conceived as accidental and unsystematic. The inalienable here would be equivalent to the existence of submerged descent lines born by people in marital movement from one descent group to another.

I state these parallels because they lead to what I see as the trivial aspect of the argument. The coexistence of alienable and inalienable possessions, of giving and keeping, is a simple deduction from the concept of exchange. Exchange is something that goes on between units, the parties to the exchange. Now, if the inalienable is about identity, it follows, by implication, that such objects cannot be consumed by others without creating a serious loss of identity. If social identity were just as negotiable as other exchangeables, the units of exchange would disappear altogether. Exchange presupposes difference. This is a simple question of logic. And the difference, of course, is the distinction between exchange units. So when Weiner insists on the bold new idea that exchange marks "difference" via that which is not exchanged, she is merely stating the obvious. The triviality of the "paradox of keeping while giving" is that it is merely another way of describing exchange itself. On the other hand, the inalienable is always relatively alienable, the latter being a question of relative power. This is expressed in

numerous Melanesian and other myths that describe a scale of substitution from people to symbols. Those who cannot pay are indebted and must retreat along the scale until they are forced to give up themselves or their children either in debt bondage or even as cannibal victims. If we compare this to the alliance relation, we can see that while marriage establishes lines of affiliation, "enslavement" and cannibalism eradicate such links. The "alienability" of the "inalienable" reveals the nature and extent of relative power and authority.

Weiner seems quite obsessed with the fact that anthropologists, both male and female, have underestimated the real power of women in traditional societies. This may be true, but she does little to provide an alternative understanding. It is claimed that women, as producers of cloth that contains ***mana*** or cosmologically defined life-force, are central to the status of their kin groups, especially their brothers, and that this makes them powerful as well. What is overlooked is that production itself implies nothing about the social relations in which it occurs. Otherwise Inca women who supposedly produced the famed ***cumbi*** cloth (p. 12), industrial workers, plantation slaves, and so forth have the real power in the world. Need I say this? Isn't it obvious? Surely the control over wealth and its distribution, rather than its production, has always been understood to be the major issue. It would appear that this is denied by the author, who has also rediscovered the critical role of cloth in hierarchical societies: "But even with this example [Inca] of cloth produced by women, the production and accumulation of such wealth has never been considered an essential resource in theories of political evolution" (p. 12).[3]

But the role of both cloth and other prestige goods has been central to many years of research on what have been referred to as prestige-good systems and their transformation (Ekholm 1972, 1977; Friedman and Rowlands 1977; Friedberg 1977; Friedman 1981, 1982; Liep 1991).

The apparent importance of women's production launches Weiner into a discussion of the overlooked significance of brother-sister relations and especially incest. If women are an important source of "power," then incest is a means of creating a repository of rank. In comparing the Trobriands with Samoa with Hawai'i, she argues that the brother-sister relation is the core of the emergence of hierarchy. The Trobrianders attempt to procure children for their matrilineages. The Samoans have their sacred sisters to whom access by incest would prove an excellent solution. The Hawaiians institutionalized incest precisely as a means to create rank. The problem with this discussion is that incest can never create rank as such. It can only maintain it. Low-ranked incest does not produce high rank. Gaining access to higher rank is usually related to strategic exogamous marriage combined with suc-

cessful conquest. And being a sacred sister cannot in itself establish the social rank of the person concerned.

It is of course true that women can and do become chiefs, not least in Hawai'i. This is not because of their sex or gender but because of their rank--rank that is probably very often dependent upon the male warrior chiefs in their own groups. That gender is central in the very definition of power is clear for Oceania as for other areas of the world. The dualism of sacred and secular power, common in Indonesia, Africa, and Western Polynesia, is less about the power of women and more about gendered power itself. The male sacred chiefs of the Wehali in Timor, just as the priest-chiefs of the Kongo kingdom, represented fertility and peace, and were defined in female terms, just as the female elite of the Kongo kingdom were defined socially as males in relation to male commoners. The very constitution of the categories of power in many hierarchical societies says a great deal about the importance of female attributes, but this is a question of the gendering of social categories and not an expression of the relative power of women and men. Otherwise any woman can be a chief and no man can occupy a position defined in female terms.

In chapter 4 Weiner argues that the different ways in which inalienable possessions are distributed determine the degree of hierarchy that can be established. The cosmologically authenticated objects, inalienable because they are constitutive of group identity, are either kept inside a restricted group or circulated more widely. The variation runs from the Aranda who circulate such objects within a wider kinship network, thereby creating hierarchy, to the Melpa who circulate objects widely but do not provide them with cosmological authenticity, thus rendering differentiation and thereby hierarchy impossible. Here again the stress on BZ relations and the ideal of incest to avoid the loss of inalienable objects are invoked. That the Melpa maintain an ideal, among many others, of sibling incest to avoid giving need not be interpreted as a desire for inalienable possessions. It might instead be a statement about the conflictual nature of exchange. In chapter 5 this is applied to the Trobriands. Sisters make banana-leaf bundles that authenticate the specificity of their lineages, but there is no way of converting the status attained by the possession of ***kula*** valuables into lineage status. And if such production is meant to differentiate one group from another, some banana-leaf bundles ought to be more valued than others, but this, as I understand, is not the case. On the contrary, the evidence of hierarchy that is patently organized around clientelistic relations to those in control of ***kula*** valuables and the set of transactions that link harvest gifts to such valuables is evidence of the potential for extensive ranking, which has, according to what can be gleaned from archaeology, varied in degree over time. There is

evidence that other societies of the current ***kula*** ring (perhaps not so old) have had more hierarchy in the past. A great deal of male wealth--distributed in relation to mortuary celebrations in which female-produced cloth is given to related lineages--certainly cannot be argued to curb hierarchy in Kiriwina. Even the Melpa are said to have had a great deal more hierarchy in the not-so-distant past when monopoly over the shell trade from the coast still existed. There was apparently a system of ranked shells, the most valuable of which were retained by men of high rank. The fact that certain shells tended to be inalienable is a product of the rank system itself and not its cause. The alternative explanation that suggests itself has to do with the relation between degrees of monopoly, that is, control over such prestige goods and their transformation via alliance relations into ranking among groups. In reading all these examples one is struck by the almost tautological nature of the interpretations. The present state of a social situation is accounted for in terms of one of its elements: the X have no hierarchy because they don't exchange their inalienable objects; the Y ***have*** hierarchy because they don't exchange their inalienable objects. In Hawai'i there is little exchange of inalienable objects but plenty of hierarchy In Tonga there is plenty of both. Something is clearly wrong here.

The argument of keeping-while-giving reflected in the nature of the gift, as well as in the paradox of siblingship combined with exogamy, is simply that what is given is part of the social self, so that it is, in some metaphorical way, identity that is transmitted via the circulation of people and things. The modalities of these transfers have been central to anthropology It is certainly advantageous, in my opinion, to treat such relations in a framework of reproduction, something that has been going on for a great many years (Ekholm 1972, 1977; Friedman 1974a, 1976, 1979; Rey 1971). For my own part, I recall having argued many years ago that social "systems" like that of the Kachin were organized in social reproductive terms in such a way that produced wealth could be transformed into prestige and then rank by couplings between production and the circulation of both goods and people and the way in which such relations were organized cosmologically, and that the form that this took was the formation of ranked lineages linked by generalized exchange. This was all done in Marxist language, of course, no longer fashionable, but the content was perfectly clear. First, cosmology was not to be understood as secondary representation but as directly organizing social processes of reproduction, not all cosmology, but central aspects of that cosmology. Second, the social reproductive process was about the way in which specific distributions of people into categories occurred and was maintained, so that gifts and commodities were always moments in a larger process. These discussions went on for almost a decade, but no mention of them is made.

In her conclusion the author combines the triviality of inalienability with the absurdity of women's supposed power: "In Oceania the development of ranking and hierarchy depends upon the work of women in their economic roles as the producers of wealth and, most important, in the power of their sacredness in confirming historical and cosmological authentication" (p. 153).

Two arguments lie behind this conclusion: (1) that inalienable objects are those most closely associated with group identity and status, and (2) that it is women who produce such goods. My criticism is simple. First, inalienable possessions are a gloss on valuables closely associated with the constitution of social identity and thereby rank, if such is the case. Such possessions are only inalienable because Weiner has labeled them as such. The conceptual apparatus alienable/inalienable is certainly no better than the gift/commodity distinction. Goods that are given to others but possess the identity of the giver and even a history of previous transactions are not simply alienated. Nor are they, obviously, simply inalienable, since they ***are*** given away. The problem is the categories themselves and not the people to whom they refer. The Maussian gift is given away because of what it yields. Weiner argues as if everything were private property at first and then somehow people were forced into exchange. This is just as much a myth as any Maussian distinction. Second, the fact that women produce such valuables does not give them power as such, nor does their toil lead to ranking. No evidence is offered here at all. On the contrary, the origins of hierarchy in Oceania as elsewhere must be located in an accounting for the processes of hierarchization, which I suppose implies an accounting of how specific products come to have such high values that they cannot be easily put into circulation.

I said at the start that the source of the confusion lay in the concept of inalienable possession itself. If so-called gifts were inalienable the fact that they are given can only be understood as a loan. But such gifts embody the life-force of the donor or that to which he has access and the fact that they are relatively inalienable is a function of their status rather than the reverse.

Is there a more congenial interpretation of this work? If we drop the notion of inalienable possessions and concentrate on the specific forms of social reproduction, then we can perhaps connect the processes of accumulation of status with the configuration of mobile and immobile goods over time. That which is given away, especially Maussian gifts, are instruments of the constitution of social relations, establishing lines of affiliation. In the Kongo kingdom, for example, the movement of men downward established a movement of prestige goods, the highest of which were imported, as well as a movement of people. Local matrilines were linked by chains of F-S relations, the latter forming the patrilineal structure that was the political structure of the kingdom (Ekholm 1977). Thus, the kingdom's patrilines were

constituted in the practice of exchange, and their structure was held together by means of a monopoly over imported prestige goods. Cloth and copper and shells (where imports always had the highest value) were the major prestige goods and their control was instrumental in the structure of the kingdom. The vertical flows were also flows of life-force and, consequently, of differential rank. In all of this the establishment of rank is simultaneously the creation of a differentiation of value. Thus gifts are not just about some abstract relation of reciprocity. They are about the constitution of social relations and of cultural forms, not as disembodied objects but as moments in the larger process of social reproduction. I subscribe wholly to the necessity of such claims against an overly reductionist view of exchange as a thing in itself. But this is certainly nothing new.

NOTES

1. For a what I consider a surprisingly interesting critique of the work of Mauss, see Derrida 1991.

2. Mauss is clear enough concerning the relationship between personhood and exchange: "To give something is to give part of oneself. . . one gives away what is in reality a part of one's nature and substance" (1980:10).

3. Weiner goes to extremes here in misrepresenting the work of Murra, who details the work of both men and women in cloth production. Specialized dependent weavers were either *aclla,* women, or *cumbi camayoc,* men, both of whom produced highly ranked cloth (Murra 1980:72-73). And both categories were *dependents,* who could not use the cloth for gaining power. This is no oversight, but a simple falsification of the source material.

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Review: **JAMES** F. **WEINER**
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Beyond the Possession Principle: An Energetics of Massim Exchange

From object to possession: Winnicott began his famous study of object relations with the following words: "I am not specifically studying the first object of object-relationships. I am concerned with the first possession and with the intermediate area between the subjective and that which is objectively perceived" (1971:3). But this is in the way of an origin myth--for the child never comes innocently to the first possession, the frayed woollen effigy, the raveling blanket or cloak, the satin border with its pearl shell-like iridescence (any more than it comes to the breast, the ***dala*** [matrilineal subclan], the mother's skirt), within all of which it is seen to derive such exquisite, enfolding tactile pleasure. Such a field of tactile images is already constituted by a set of signifiers of maternity out of which the mother and the institutions of motherhood are woven, and which mirror a space of subjectivity of a particular and specific kind to the infant.

The "term transitional object . . . gives room for the process of becoming able-to accept difference and similarity" (ibid.:6). So it is with the inalienable possession-- the first possession is that which authenticates and legitimizes group identity, that lends its cosmological validity and stability. In providing an original identity to such a group, it differentiates that group from others. In the enveloping feathered cloaks and the fraying, much handled banana leaves, is not Annette Weiner characterizing the first possession, the transitional object that will make possible the accession to sociality?

In the object-relations theory of psychoanalysis as advocated by such figures as Winnicott and Klein, the ego achieves a sense of itself as a discrete entity by establishing a boundary between what is part of itself, what belongs to it, what it wishes to assimilate or introject, and what is not part of itself, what it wishes to eject, to see as external to itself. Subjectivity is seen as a container of objects, or at least the images of such objects, but it is also defined negatively at the same time, by what it has caused to disappear.

Let me make a case for looking at ***Inalienable Possessions*** as a theory, of sorts, of object relations. This will allow us to contemplate the energetics of such a system--what drives the subject to discriminate among objects within such a field, but more importantly, how the presence of such energy can be measured or ascertained by the ***absence*** of objects. It is this last consideration that poses what I see as a dilemma in Annette Weiner's theory of possessions.

For the source of such energetics, we must first turn to Freud.

Materialism and the Economy of Difference

Freud's ***Project for a Scientific Psychology (SE,*** vol. 1)[1] was his first attempt to provide a materialist theory of psychic function. He conceived of the human psychical apparatus as a system of neurones that store a quantity ***(Q)*** of energy. The neurones are of two types, those that are not physically altered by this exposure to energic charging, the perceptual neurones (phi), and those that are ***(psi).*** The ***psi*** neurones display an inertia to such charging. They always seek to discharge this quantity, to avoid cathexis, to empty themselves of this flux, "to divest themselves of ***Q" (SE,*** 1:296) or resist what Freud called their own "breaching" (German: ***Bahnung,*** literally, the blazing or breaking of a path, ***Bahn).*** In the giving off of ***Q,*** in this ***resistance*** to it, the human organism ***acts:*** "This discharge represents the primary function of the nervous system" (ibid.). In the economics of neuronic energy, primary function refers to the free and spontaneous discharge of cathexis, which keeps the neural system free from stimulus.

The human organism could theoretically withdraw from external sources of ***Q*** and so maintain the inertia of the neurones in this manner. But it cannot withdraw from the body's own endogenous source of ***Q:*** "These have their origin in the cells of the body and give rise to the major needs: hunger, respiration, sexuality" (ibid.: 297). Thus the nervous system must maintain a store of quantity ***(Q*** n')[2] "sufficient to meet the demand for a specific action" (ibid.). This function, to maintain a reservoir of bound, as opposed to free, energy, is the secondary function of the nervous system and it "is made possible by the assumption of resistances which oppose discharge; and the structure of the neurones makes it probable that the resistances are all to be located in the ***contacts*** [between one neurone and another] which in this way assume the value of ***barriers"*** (ibid.:298; emphases in original).

The psi neurones have the capacity to retain an imprint or scar of this contact with Q and "thus afford a ***possibility of representing memory" (SE*** 1:299; emphasis in original). Freud referred to ***Bahnung*** (translated in the ***Standard Edition*** as "facilitation") as the permanent alteration of "contact-barriers" in the ***psi*** neurones. The alteration allows the contact-barriers to become "more capable of conduction, less impermeable" (ibid.:300) and hence more efficient or expeditious in their discharging of ***Q*** n'. But it was also clear to Freud that there must exist differences in the degree of facilitation offered by the neurones. Otherwise, different sensory stimulations would alter the ***psi*** in the same way, and the neurones would present no accurate record of the particularity of the stimulus ("if facilitation were everywhere equal, it would not be possible to see why one pathway would be preferred" [ibid.]). Hence, ***"memory is represented by the differences in the facilitations between the*** psi ***neurones"*** (ibid.; emphasis in original).

Thus, memory cannot be represented as a symmetrical relationship between an external stimulus and internal discharge of ***Q*** n' What is represented in the neurones is a differential in cathecting resistance to ***Q*** n' ***("cathexis is here shown to be equivalent, as regards the passage of Q*** n', ***to facilitation,"*** [ibid.:319]). The repetition of a memory--"that is, its continuing operative power" (ibid.:300)--adds a quantity entirely distinct to the quantity ***(Q*** n') of the stimulus; repetitions act only through the gap that separates them as distinct. Since the initial breaching, the gap between repetitions and the difference between full quantities cannot be represented as distinct ***qualities*** of stimulus, memory cannot be represented as the storing of imprints upon the physiology of the nervous system. "[Facilitation] cannot have its basis in a cathexis that is held back, for that would not produce the differences in facilitations of the contact-barriers of the same neurone" (ibid.:301).

If the quality of a stimulus can only be created as a result of differential in facilitation, which comes first, then, the stimulus or the differences in resistances that allow the stimulus to be facilitated as memory? In considering this apparent paradox created by Freud's hypothetical neuronic landscape, Jacques Derrida concludes: "repetition does not ***happen to*** an initial impression; its possibility is already there, in the resistance offered ***the first time*** by the psychical neurones (1978:202; emphasis in original). Derrida observes that right at the moment of origin of Freud's neuronal system, memory is based on the differences between the traces, rather than the traces themselves. "Trace as memory is not a pure breaching that might be reappropriated at any time as simple presence; it is rather the ungraspable and invisible difference between breaches" (Derrida 1978:201).

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The phrasing of the human perceptual and cognitive mechanism as an ***economy*** of energy invokes some of our most perduring modern Western images of power and value, including the quantifiability of information, its value as unit of meaning and transaction, and the pleasure-pain principle of maximization of satisfaction that Freud was to elaborate upon (and ultimately reject) later in his career. These same Western images, and the same attempts to subject them to critical scrutiny, pervade the history of all Western behavioral sciences. What I would like to do in this comment is nothing as facile as suggest a "psychoanalytic" interpretation of ***Inalienable Possessions.*** I begin rather with a view of sociality as a nexus of relays, paths, and connections between people and objects, and of the energy--productive, psychic, symbolic, or otherwise--that propels, diverts, delays, and reroutes people and objects along such paths. Autonomy and stability, and the sub

jectivity that actors attribute to themselves, are perceptions that arise, after the fact for the most part, within this hodographic arena. They are interpretational moments that provide the perspective necessary for the gauging of the system's limits and efficacy. There is, in other words, a meeting ground, a switching point, here between economics and hermeneutics. I am proposing that both Freud and Annette Weiner (and by implication, psychoanalysis and anthropology more generally) share an interest in a materialist description of human behavior at some level, and that the reasons why Freud ultimately cast doubt upon and reformulated his materialism might be illuminating in this exercise.

* * * * *

With its language of paths, diversions, delays, facilitations, and resistance, Trobriand exchange could well be an expanded version of Freud's neurohodography. The French term for the German ***Bahnung,*** "facilitation," is ***frayage.*** Jeffrey Mehlman, who first translated Derrida's article "Freud and the Scene of Writing," rendered this as "fraying" (1972). But Alan Bass, who later translated the same article for the collection ***Writing and Difference*** (1978), discarded "fraying" in favor of "breaching" because ***frayage*** "has an idiomatic connection to pathbreaking in the expression, ***se frayer un chemin"*** (in Derrida 1978:329n.2). But here I prefer to retain the idea of the fraying of a path, as well as something that opposes that fraying, a binding of energies and messages, a bunching and clogging of objects along a pathway that always threatens to block off the space that fraying creates and that provides the differentiation between alternative routes,

These roads are defined by the traffic of objects and people that keeps them open, the breaches that form them--but do the paths themselves get wider and more free-flowing as the traffic gets heavier and more frequent? Do repetitions alter the amount of differential of cathexis? The recipients at the ends of these paths facilitate them by eliciting prestations. While other paths, if not used, become overgrown or covered over with forest matter and eventually disappear altogether--what then is the Massim world if not a vast array of cathecting pathways along which the tokens of productive energy are dissipated, pooled, protected, and controlled? (And we should recognize that the islands in the ***kula*** chain are linked to each other along efferent and afferent pathways that, like human neurones, are all given at birth--no additional paths are created in the organism's life, only a change in the differential charging along existing paths ["participation in kula does not lead to the creation of anything new except what is already in the system" (Weiner 1983:165)].) It seeks always to maintain a constant level of sociopolitical energic charge by rerouting valuables along different paths, thereby

protecting the paths from overload. (However, the internal system is capable of spontaneous regeneration: "In order to maintain the regeneration of new resource potential via [exchange] relationships, the accumulation of women's wealth, and dala property, new yams must be grown every year" [ibid.:156]--although we should probably read this in reverse: exchange serves to cathect endogenous, internal productive stimulation, to keep the "primary" function fully discharged.) In the external system, however, "stability remains a problem. . . . If high-ranking shells are diverted from one path to another, the shells' names are changed and their former histories lost" (p. 140). The strategy thereby becomes to use the external system, unaffected by magnitude of ***Q*** n', as a reservoir to siphon off excess charging from the "internal" system. "Keeping a kula shell out of [internal] exchange because it is promised in kula allows a person to store wealth in the face of other social and political obligations" (p. 145); "the assignment of the shell to kula may protect it from loss in internal exchanges" (p. 145). The external system is thus capable of homeostatic regulation: "a path may become so encumbered with even one players switches that the other partners decide to let the path 'die"' (p. 142).

Some paths afford better possibilities for replication. How are the differential qualities of the various paths established? What is it that ordains that some shall flourish and get wide and muddy with use, while others dry up and disappear? One answer would be that it is the different characters involved, the different capacities of individuals to persuade, elicit, and compel others. But does this solution not appeal to the idea of sociality emerging from an assumed state of originary nonsociality, a connection being posed between two hitherto unconnected people, making of the exchange the "innovative, inaugurative relationship which 'creates,' " as David Schneider characterized it (1965:58)? Is it not dependent upon the clear distinction between personal traits of individuals ***upon which*** social differences are based but which are logically and developmentally prior to them?

If we are thus compelled to discard the Western notion of the presocial individual, if the self-interested self finds no descriptive currency in the Massim area, what then is our strategy? What if we were to now see our analysis of Melanesian exchange as also dependent upon a preexistent differentiation of value? What if the objects of such exchange were not valuable because of their representational power but because of their ability to defer, to temporize--that is, to articulate such spacing within which the subjectivity necessary to the articulation of social action becomes possible? ("It takes years of work to convince the player to release the shell and this necessitates having many other shells to move along this particular path" [p. 141].) What if such delay was not an accidental and fortuitous breakdown in the

system of exchange but the very integral heart of the temporizing effects by which this system acquires its efficacy?

The exchange is not inaugural or originary; it is always a repetition of an already-existing social differential. The differential, the other, is there at the beginning. The ***kula*** player never merely gives one shell to one player: "The other players who vied for the chance to exchange receive only a return shell for the vaga each one gave the owner" (p. 142). But how much more forceful that description is if we remove the unnecessary word "only." "In these latter cases, reciprocity is used to reject a person. Giving a vaga shell and quickly receiving a return denotes an end to further advances; no kula path for the large shell has been opened" (p. 142). (But what is the precise negative value of rejection in this case, in this system in which nothing can be added or subtracted but only momentarily repressed or delayed?) In other words, there is no ***kula*** without a deferral, a spacing; no ***kula*** without a differential in the timing of response, between immediate and delayed; no ***kula*** without the debt, the hysteresis, that creates the temporal interval of the gift (see Battaglia 1990:76). There can be no simple mapping of magnitude of exchange, or enumerated replications of exchange items onto a corresponding proportion of political or social capital. Such a view would demand that the objects themselves maintain fixed values within a hierarchy of values.

No origin without prevening differentiation, no appeal to the ***ex nihilo,*** the something-out-of-nothing--and yet is this not what Annette Weiner's view of exchange demands? ("In the process of the attachment and separation of artifacts during life, individuals are attracted into relationships, but adverse individual desires and finally death disrupt the continuity" [Weiner 1976:23].) In this view of human sociality, the self is unitary, inviolable. The fact that she accords centrality to the struggle for autonomy in all human societies attests to the necessity to assume such internal unity of the self and its stability through time. The objects manipulated by such selves, on the other hand, always run the risk of becoming alienated from such selves. In the struggle to articulate and retain autonomy, this alienation is resisted by selves. But why do these selves care whether such objects become alienated, if the integrity of the self is not affected by their loss? Because the objects, being something outside the self, allow for a more expanded form of self-permanence, a stability of self that, in being handed down across generations, outlives the self.

In such a view, connectivity becomes a problem, becomes difficult, and under such conditions, a culture looks to symbolize the fragility of the social fabric, And so Annette Weiner suggests that "the very physicality of cloth, its woven-ness, and its potential for fraying and unraveling denote the vulnerability in acts of connectedness and tying, in human and cultural reproduc-

tion, and in decay and death" (p. 59). But the problem for the Trobrianders is not the fragility of connectedness, but its tendency to overcathect, its tenacity and demand--a system of productive consumption that is the internal, endogenous source of stimulation. No doubt, the characteristic ***delays*** in the reclaiming of ***dala*** land from men's sons who are not ***dala*** members (Weiner 1976:159) are the Trobriand productive system's most essential feature. For them, it is how to break connections, how to delay and temporize demand and desire, how to instigate fraying and dissipation, that is the task at hand.

The Object of Death

The consideration of energetics introduces a fundamental ambiguity **into** the understanding of human behavior: Towards what end do organisms strive? Towards the ultimate discharge of energy, or to the maintenance of it at a constant level? What Freud identified as the repetition compulsion seemed, by his description, to both create psychic tension and provide the mechanism of its release at one and the same time. In considering the repetition compulsion, the replication of unpleasant experiences, Freud hypothesized that there was a drive, a pulsion beyond the pleasure principle, more conservative than it, a drive in which the organism attempts "to restore an earlier state of things" ***(SE,*** vol. 18; ***Penguin Freud Library,*** 11:308). The quality of the external world, however, is such that it always works to disturb this drive, to cause delays and diversions on its path towards dissociation.

> Every modification which is thus imposed upon the course of the organism's life is accepted by the conservative organic [drives] and stored up for further repetition. Those [drives] are therefore bound to give a deceptive appearance of being forces tending towards change and progress, whilst in fact they are merely seeking to reach an ancient goal by paths old and new alike. (Ibid.:310)

This was Freud's concept of the death drive ***(Todestrieb)*** and I would like to suggest that because of the implied energetics of her model, there is a central role for it in Annette Weiner's theory too. Freud's formulation of the death drive seems, from a social-science perspective, to confound our received intuition. We feel that sociality is fragile, that the entropic forces of the external world introduce instability to social relations, that these relations must constantly be repaired and revitalized, constantly recathected, to remain viable. But what the "death drive" asks us to consider, phrased in

anthropological terms, is something altogether opposite: What if the dissolution or end of relationship was difficult to attain; what if the external world constantly worked towards ***delaying*** the dissipation of the social self, constantly introduced ***detours*** in the attainment of its death? In the Massim, the dissociation of the person leads not to a cessation or diminution of the deceased but rather a redistribution of the aspects of a person that reside in others. The conservative tendency of Massim exchange is to always seek to return the subjectivity, autonomy, and power of the person to its constituents, to other persons. "The social person of the deceased (the aspect of a person that participates in the personae of others) is not diminished but expanded to the limits of his or her social circle" (Wagner 1986:267). As a result of continuous acts of such local expansion throughout the ***kula*** region, the regional flow of ***kula*** valuables evince a pulsing, a diastemic delay caused by the diversion of valuables into local island economies of death and mourning.

It is clear, thanks to Annette Weiner's meticulous ethnography, that as was the case with Freud's topography, Massim exchange demonstrates that we cannot "immobilize and freeze energy within a naive metaphorics of space" (Derrida 1978:212). Social and political value can never be reposited within objects or structures; it emerges between them, in the space where a differential facilitation and resistance of objects is to be found, a space that is as much a function of the perception of meaning as is language, or a myth, or the beauty, power, and efficacy of a canoe prow. Further, the structure of delay, of deferral, of ***Nachträglichkeit*** that is the essential feature of ***kula*** means that value cannot be similarly reposited within accretable units of time; it prevents us from subjecting the ***kula*** to the dead hand of economics. The valuables create their own timing, their own retroactive historical creditation, and the death they work towards is that which creates the very conduits of life energy.

Weiner's inalienable possession, which stands opposed to the moving gift of reciprocity theory, doesn't so much retain movement as divest itself of it. The more it travels, the more weighty, ponderous, and immovable it becomes, until it finally comes to rest. But it is in that movement that sociality creates its own rhythms and spacings, its own potential for differentiation--difference, as Freud observed, cannot be reposited in held-back, inalienable quantity. The inalienable object, insofar as it thus spells the death of sociality, could only be a hypothetical or imaginary limit to a social world, rather than a literal or material counterweight or anchoring of it. What Annette Weiner has shown so masterfully in her writing on Trobriand exchange is that death is not an accident of social life but the very condi-

tion toward which people labor, through the deferrals that exchange confers upon their social life. In giving, the death of the object is delayed, and in that interval created by delay emerges the temporality that enables social life.

NOTES

1. All references to Freud are taken from the *Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud,* translated by James Strachey (London: The Hogarth Press and the Institute for Psycho-Analysis), and the *Penguin Freud Library.*

2. *Q* is generalized quantity of excitation; *Q* n' is quantity of intercellular discharge of energy.

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Possessions and Persons

These stimulating reviews of ***Inalienable Possessions*** accomplish what I hoped my book would elicit: an ongoing dialogue on new ways of thinking about exchange, gender, kinship, and the role of possessions in human life. I call ***Inalienable Possessions*** an "experiment" because, in working comparatively, I use forms of ethnographic description and interpretation that begin with a society's paradoxes rather than with a society's "norms." My interest is in how social and political systems turn in upon themselves, thereby limiting the degree of hierarchy that might be possible.

What I discovered early on was how easy it is to think about ethnographic comparisons and social theory when one only has to contend with ***men's*** actions and beliefs. But once one includes women--in biological and cultural reproduction, in the production of essential wealth, and in their control over cosmological resources--paradoxes and contradictions abound. Working within these paradoxes, we are much closer to the dynamics of social action and beliefs than we are when women are ignored or described in negative terms that can be discounted by the "real" world of men's actions. What is powerful about women's presence in social life, however, is that in both ethnographic and theoretical studies, the recognition of women's reproductive and productive force takes us to the heart of a society's most perplexing and enigmatic problems. Although these problems can be fruitfully compared from one society to another, the comparisons will rarely have the simple elegance that for so long has been the accepted hallmark of theoretical accountability.

Marc Augé's review clearly exposes this problem when he argues that unlike the Pacific, where women's reproductive and productive roles are significant, in the West African societies with which he is familiar women do not have a role in cloth production because men are the weavers. Yet

women's productive activities are more complex that Augé recognizes. What is significant about cloth throughout the world is its long and detailed production process: from the growing and harvesting of the raw materials to the dyeing, weaving, and decoration of the finished product, as well as its circulation. Although women may not always be the weavers, they may contribute in important ways to the production process, even controlling the technical and cosmological knowledge essential for creating the most sacred textiles. For example, among the Yoruba, men produce cloths used in their initiation rituals, but women produce cloths associated more generally with reproduction, ancestors, and sacred powers. In other West African cases, women spin the cotton that provides the material for men to weave. Conversely, in some Central African societies such as the Kuba, men may be the weavers of raffia cloth, but women are responsible for the elaborate applique embroidery that gives the cloth its value. And in the Lele case, although men do all the weaving, women control some of the most important exchanges of the finest cloths.

Although high-ranking Asante women may not be actively involved in cloth production, they control, as Augé points out, the inalienable possessions that bestow legitimacy on rulers. My point, however, is that retention --the keeping of inalienable possessions--must be considered part of the production process because keeping is as significant in economic and reproductive terms as circulation or giving. Further, these women, as the most esteemed and high-ranking mothers or sisters, were historically powerful in their own right--not necessarily, as Augé would have it--simply because they are "older, beyond menopause and thus outside the sphere of biological reproduction." Wilks (1975) gives numerous examples of Asante "queen" mothers and sisters who, even at young ages, wield supreme authority over land ownership and succession rights, conduct diplomatic encounters with competing rulers and European officials, and who at times also became autonomous rulers in their own right. Finally, Asante women as queen mothers provide political support for their own sons as regents while they also foster the critical political connections between a high-ranking son and his sister. This is what I mean by cultural reproduction. It is not necessarily that a sisters own children become the heirs to the throne, but that the' relationship between a man's child as a possible successor and his sister is critical. It is exactly at the point where succession stops--where women do not biologically reproduce the next heir--that the particular reproductive system turns in on itself and its limitations are exposed.

Articulating these limitations was my goal in the discussion of ***kula,*** where a surrogate chieftaincy is established in which men gain legitimacy in their efforts to be local leaders from their participation in ***kula.*** The presence of

Trobriand chiefs enhances other players' chiefly identity, giving them a connection with rank that legitimates their authority in their own chiefless societies. This view complements Maria Lepowsky's discussion of the interisland skull exchanges that took place in the Massim a hundred or more years ago. The movement from bones to shell exchanges in the Massim has counterparts elsewhere, for example, among the Maori and the Kwakiutl. The problem I see in Lepowsky's insightful analysis is her conclusion that "ritualized and aggressive" competition differs causally from the validation of difference, rank, and authority Clearly, warfare and competition are about cultural and political difference. These goals and actions cannot be easily separated into primary and secondary causes. Further, in ***kula*** exchange as we know it today, the introduction of many lower-ranking shells has allowed the most well-known ***kula*** players to hold the highest-ranking shells for a long period of time. ***Kula*** has always been a changing phenomenon and undoubtedly will continue to be so, but its limitation in terms of developing rank and hierarchy is the loss of ancestral identities in the shells that validate rank at the local level for a lineage or clan. My argument is that ***kula*** is an attempt to ***recreate*** rank at a regional level, which Lepowsky's examples of warfare certainly support.

This point is important in considering James Weiner's cogent essay proposing an energetics of Massim exchange based on psychoanalytic theories. For James Weiner, sociality is "a nexus of relays, paths, and connections between people and objects, and . . . the energy--productive, psychic, symbolic, or otherwise--that propels, diverts, delays, and reroutes people and objects along such paths." The Massim world of ***kula*** is "a vast array of cathecting pathways along which the tokens of productive energy are dissipated, pooled, protected, and controlled." Following Freud and Derrida, James Weiner proposes that these tokens--the ***kula*** shells--are "not valuable because of their representational power but because of their ability to defer, to temporize--that is, to articulate such spacing within which the subjectivity necessary to the articulation of social action becomes possible."

Yet I am left puzzled by several points. James Weiner writes as if ***kula*** exchange were a closed system and he cites my comment that "participation in kula does not lead to the creation of anything new except what is already in the system." My context for this statement was not as a description of an immutable exchange system but regarding the inability for the ***kula*** system to develop more complex hierarchical levels or structures of rank, The dynamics of ***kula*** exchange are always producing new paths, new players, new partners, new participating islands, new shells, and new substitutes for shells, such as axeblades, money, or, as we saw in Lepowsky's review, human bones. Further, ***kula*** shells do assume a fixed value within a hierarchy of

value, if by value we mean the ability of players to categorize and rank shells within an agreed-upon system of value. Thus, there is more here than the "something-out-of-nothing" that James Weiner says my exchange demands.

James Weiner further argues that it is not the fragility of connectivity that is a problem for Trobrianders, as I expressed it, but the tendency for the system to "overcathect" and therefore delays in giving shells, temporizing the demands of one's partners, and personal desire are logically prior to other phenomena. At this point I think our differences are more apparent than real. In my view of sociality, I am not putting forward the claim that the "self is unitary, inviolable" as he states. In my earlier Trobriand work, I showed the way individuals are socially created by others. A person's name, beauty, knowledge, magic, land, yams, ***kula*** shells, and decorations signifying rank--all in varying degrees are loaded onto each self. With each thing given, there are unending obligations--the overcathecting part--but each thing can be lost. A person stops using her higher-ranking name or decorations out of fear of others; the spells given are bogus; the land is forever in dispute. This is the reason that Trobrianders do care about alienation--because "the integrity of the self," contra James Weiner, ***is*** deeply affected by the loss of possessions.

The delay that James Weiner envisions as the source or the origin of exchange obviously is significant. But in his model, following Derrida, does delay allow for differentiation? I would argue that it is ***keeping*** that is logically prior. For keeping allows for the differentiation of the self, as the self is expanded by the possession of objects that give the self a history--a past, present, and future. This is what both ***kula*** and local exchange accomplish, but the difference between the two is critical. In local exchange the self is being built up (and at death taken apart) by objects that signify not only the self, but the group. These possessions give far more weightiness to social identity that the histories of individual exploits that are lodged in ***kula*** shells.

Whatever conclusions the reader draws from James Weiner's essay, his ideas are indeed provocative and certainly give us much to consider, as do Augé's and Lepowsky's comments. Unfortunately, I cannot say the same for Friedman's review, which is arrogant and plagued with patriarchal theories of alliance, structuralism, and plain old-fashioned male dominance. As I said at the beginning of my rejoinder, paradox and contradiction make some people decidedly uncomfortable, especially those who continue to construct simplistically their theoretical positions on male-oriented conceptions of society and culture.

To start with, Friedman unequivocally pronounces that inalienability as a "possessive desire" is "our [my] category and not theirs, not unless otherwise demonstrated." Throughout ***Inalienable Possessions*** I give example upon

example of how people desire these specific objects--how they cry and fight over them, mourn their loss, die for them, surround them with all kinds of rituals, treat their presence with the utmost care and the knowledge associated with them (such as their histories) with great secrecy. Surely, this is "possessive desire." If inalienable possessions exist because ***I*** gave them that gloss, then are we to discount what our informants tell us? If the paradox of keeping-while-giving appears so trivial to Friedman, then why all this fuss over pieces of stone, bone, or cloth? Since ***Inalienable Possessions*** was published, I have had letters from colleagues, telling me that they had information about such valuables, but they did not know how to explain them within traditional exchange theory. Others said that only after questioning their informants about such inalienable possessions did their informants then reveal their hidden caches of such valuables.

When Friedman talks about the productive role of women, he would do well to read more carefully the ethnographies and historical materials that describe the political power that women once had, for example, in the Andean region (to which Friedman refers), where some women had local political authority and owned land in their own right, prior to the rise of the Inca state and Western colonization (see, e.g., Silverblatt 1987). As Jane Schneider and I pointed out in ***Cloth and Human Experience*** (1989), the breakthrough to capitalism challenged cloth as a medium of social power throughout the world and undermined the power that women had in the productive process as well as in the exchange of these objects. But the ethnographic and historical data are complex and must be sifted through carefully. They cannot be reduced to polemics that eliminate the domain of women's control both in production and exchange.

Further, I have ***not*** argued that because women produce cloth, they then have power. What I show is how, in many cases, production gave women partial or full control over retention and circulation. Often this control involved the highest-ranking cloths. And production involved cosmology, Women's controls over ancestral and other cosmological powers were invested in aspects of cloth production--from the spinning or dyeing or weaving to other decorative applications. Cosmology exists first in the knowledge people believe themselves to have. Such knowledge then is transferred through production to symbolic representations in cloth as well as other kinds of possessions. When these objects are kept or exchanged, the cosmology represented by them increases their value and thus, contra Friedman's argument, cosmology enters exchange. And nowhere in my book did I make the claim that cloth was the only inalienable possession. I repeatedly called attention to the importance of bone, stone, shell, and other objects worked by men and defined by them as inalienable.

Finally, Friedman completely misrepresents my discussion of Polynesian women rulers. My point is not that women can become chiefs because they are women, as Friedman states my position, but that rank overrides gender in these cases. Friedman, however, believes that rank is "very often dependent upon the male warrior chiefs in their [women's] own groups." What he ignores, as do so many others, is that women were also "warrior chiefs" and that in many cases men's rank was dependent on women. This is why the brother-sister connection (cultural as well as incestual) is so vital.

Fortunately, there are some interesting points of discussion in Friedman's polemic, especially a further development of a theory of possession. But such a chauvinistic, and at times inaccurate, diatribe does nothing to further our understandings of these complex issues. The time is long past when scholars can banish women to the sidelines of political action by theoretically holding to simple symbolic gender oppositions that define women, if they are not total controllers of a political system, as totally absent from such action. This means that we must be prepared to examine the commingling of symbols and not their gendered separations. Power relations are not separate from gender relations but are inextricably lodged in the paradoxes that all societies promote or attempt to overcome.

Significant among those paradoxes is the problem of keeping-while-giving. The most critical point of my disagreement with Friedman is that he cannot see that certain objects ***are*** about the creation of social identity. This is the root of inalienable possessions--a fact that Mauss and Simmel made very clear. Possession of an object, however, does not mean stasis or inactivity. Just as being relates to becoming, possession must also be characterized as action. But until recently, social theory directed our attention to the objects as they are being exchanged--one "gift" given for one received. What has been missing is the recognition of the actions that are produced because of keeping an object out of circulation, although it may, at some future time, be put into circulation. Ownership is much more unstable than stable. The potential for loss, the need for secrecy and additional wealth, and the lack of appropriate heirs, all demand action and accountability Therefore, the more intense the effort to keep the possession out of circulation, the more determining will be its effect on individual self-identity. As Simmel pointed out, this is only the reverse of the notion that the owner's identity is determined by the effect of the possession upon the possessor. As the objects increase in density, that is, in the cultural and emotional weightiness they assume through their symbolic and economic value, age, and length of inalienability, the relation between self-identity and the possession becomes more significant and the differentiation between individuals is more highly marked, Conversely, as objects decrease in density, the connec-

tion to the self lessens. Thus a chain is forged from being to possessing and from possessing to being, making the connection between persons and objects deeply intimate.

I want to thank the editors for providing such an exceptional forum in which these important issues are given thoughtful and serious attention by the reviewers. For me, what has been most rewarding is the breadth of the reviewers' comments and the many new ideas they developed here. I believe we are embarking on a new way to conceptualize material culture, power, and gender and, as these reviews indicate, we need many voices to effect this change.

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REVIEWS

Serge Dunis, ***Ethnologie d'Hawai'i: "Homme de la petite eau, femme de la grande eau."*** Paris: Presses Universitaires Créole/L'Harmattan, 1990. Pp. 379, maps, drawings, bibliography. FF 200.

Reviewed by Ben Finney, University of Hawai'i

THERE IS NOW a Université Française du Pacifique with two centers separated by thousands of miles of open ocean: one in Noumea, New Caledonia, the other just outside Pape'ete, Tahiti. Teaching at the Tahiti campus is a most ebullient professor of English language and civilization, Serge Dunis, whose passion is the anthropology of Polynesia. Dunis has been able to do his anthropology while teaching languages and civilizations (tightly linked in the French approach) first in Aotearoa, then in Hawai'i, and now in Tahiti. Two years in the early 1970s spent teaching French at the University of Wellington led to his exciting analysis of Maori culture, ***Sans tabou ni totem*** (Paris: Librairie Arthème Fayard, 1984). Ten years ago, while he was teaching French at the Manoa campus of the University of Hawai'i, Dunis revealed in Malo, Kamakau, the ***Kumulipo,*** and the other rich sources we have on Hawaiian culture. The result is the book under review, published when he was teaching at yet another island nation: Martinique.

At first glance, the organization of ***"Ethnology of Hawai'i"*** might seem comfortably prosaic to the Anglophone ethnographer. In the first third of the book, Dunis builds a foundation with chapters on the geology and geography of the chain, on the discovery and colonization of the islands, and on Hawaiian farming, fishing, domestic architecture, and canoes. Then comes the meat of the book: an analysis of the hierarchical structure of Hawaiian

society and its mythological underpinnings. It soon becomes apparent, however, that Dunis is not modeling his work on the old Bishop Museum bulletins on Polynesian cultures. This is a very French work done by a scholar who combines lessons from Lévi-Strauss, Godelier, and various psychoanalytic masters with his own literary background to provide a brilliantly provocative analysis of Hawaiian culture. His focus, after due attention to the material substructure, is on the ideological superstructure of Hawaiian culture as revealed in the writings of Malo, Kamakau, and other ethnographic sources, as well as in the creation chant ***Kumulipo*** and in mythological tales such as those of Maui and the demigod Kamapua'a.

To understand Dunis's Marxist-structuralist-psychoanalytic approach, it is useful to go back to his earlier work on Maori culture cited above. His fascination there is with incest, hierarchy, and the primordial Oedipal situation of Maori cosmogony. Sky-father (Rangi) and Earth-mother (Papa) remain in tight embrace, condemning their children, all male, to perpetual imprisonment until one of their number, Tane, severs his father's arms and separates sky from earth. To initiate human life Tane then proceeds to Te Puke, Earth-mother's mons veneris, and takes a piece of it to mold a female with whom he then mates, begetting a daughter. This sets up another round of incest from which eventually mortal humans appear and multiply, thereafter symbolically reenacting primordial incest by impregnating the land through agriculture.

Hawaiian cosmogony differs in critical aspects from that of the Maori, as Dunis explains in his exploration of the evolution of life from coral to high chiefs presented in the ***Kumulipo*** and the adventures of Kamapua'a from pig sexually rutting in Mother-earth to detumescent fish. His interpretation remains essentially that of culturally informed Freudianism and structuralism and is focused on the male-female chasm (hence the subtitle "man for the narrow stream, woman for the broad stream," a line from the ***Kumulipo),*** in particular on what he calls "royal incest," whereby the ideal mating for the chiefs was between full siblings. To him, therefore, the essential difference between Maori and Hawaiian hierarchy revolves around incest. Whereas the Maori descendants of Tane monopolized power in the ***ariki*** lines gained through primordial incest but thereafter forbidden except symbolically through the insertion of plants into Earth-mother, the Hawaiian ***ali'i*** promoted the mating of close kin within their class. To Dunis, the Hawaiian chiefs did not simply derive their power from ancestral gods; through "royal incest" they could become gods themselves.

Dunis's contribution begs comparison with other recent works on ancient Hawaiian society, such as the pre-European sections of Linnekin's ***Women of Renown*** and Kame'eleihiwa's ***Native Land and Foreign Desires,*** as well as

Valeri's ***Kingship and Sacrifice.*** The different interpretations of Hawaiian culture reflect both the distinctive approaches of the various authors and the richness and complexity of that civilization. Perhaps after Dunis has learned his Tahitian (now intensively taught at the Tahiti campus of the new French University of the Pacific by Professor Louise Pelzer, who is originally from Huahine) and delved into the sources on ancient Tahiti, we can expect yet another distinctively Dunisian interpretation of Polynesian culture.

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Reviewed by Rebecca A. Stephenson, University of Guam

Autobiographies come and go. This one will be around for a while. ***Island Boy*** is the tale of a multifaceted and multitalented gentleman. Sir Tom Davis of the Cook Islands over time has worn many different hats, including (in no particular order) those of physician, surgeon, master seaman, writer, illustrator, scientist, scholar, anthropological researcher, statesman, politician, prime minister, Polynesian high chief, and more. In his recent autobiography, Sir Tom offers readers the opportunity to reflect with him on the myriad twists and turns his life has taken.

Sir Tom's autobiography is lively throughout and offered with balance, humor, and considerable self-reflection. There is something in this book for everyone. You are not particularly interested in a Ranfurly Shield rugby game? Then how about a precarious sail on board the ***Miru,*** when the vessel was "a very naked lady fighting for her life and ours" (pp. 108-110)? Are

research studies on physiological adaptation to cold not your favorite topic? Then would you value some insights into ***akakino*** (make bad, i.e., "bad-mouth") in the context of Cook Islands politics?

The chronological organization of this book helps us to outline the significant events in the life of Sir Tom. After his childhood and youth in Rarotonga ('We were unique in . . . our ability to dance anyone off their feet. It was a good way to grow up" [p. 9]), he was sent to boarding school in New Zealand. Homesickness was an initial hurdle ("The new environment and my having come from an entirely different world, now very far away, made what might have been a simple homesickness into a desperate longing, overlaying a feeling of utter loneliness" [p. 11]). His adjustment included learning to accept the fact that in New Zealand it was not proper to greet people one passed on the street.

Focused and adaptable, Sir Tom persevered. Although he reports that "I seemed to get caned every day" at King's College (p. 12), he committed himself early on to a particular course requiring advanced study, that of medicine. Medical training in Dunedin, New Zealand, followed in the years of the depression. "These were the hard years," he notes (pp. 17-24). "In order to make financial ends meet . . . I worked on the roads, in ditches, in the manure works of Kempthorne and Prosser, on the presses of the wood stores and the wool dumps and for one short time, I was foreman of the gang that tar-sealed the Caledonia Grounds Bicycle Race Track."

Upon the completion of medical studies and several medical apprenticeship positions in New Zealand, Sir Tom returned to the Cook Islands. In spite of some difficulties in convincing the resident commissioner to hire him, Sir Tom took over management of the Cook Islands Government Medical Service. This was a formidable task because considerable upgrading of the system was needed ("May I see the laboratory please, Matron?" "Sorry, Doctor, there is no laboratory" [p. 35]). His new position also necessitated that he be a doctor at sea, sailing for the Northern Cook Islands when medical emergencies there required his expertise. Some of these events are set forth in his 1954 book with Lydia Davis titled ***Doctor to the Islands.***

Sir Tom's chronological tale then is set aside in order to discuss in detail the Polynesians (chapter 4). This chapter is coupled with a lengthy discourse on a lifelong love of Sir Tom's, namely Polynesian navigation (chapter 5). In this portion of the book, Sir Tom presents his anthropological insights in a journalistic manner. He has indicated in other settings as well as in this volume that he is weary of academics, particularly anthropologists, who are inclined to question from the outset the anthropological perspectives of indigenous people who do not have terminal degrees in anthropology. I read Sir Tom's discourse in these chapters with considerable interest and with a great deal of regard.

Sir Tom states that some anthropologists "who had difficulty in believing what Polynesians told them if it differed from their own ideas . . . were led up garden paths of their own making." He explains:

> The practice [by Polynesians] of changing names of people, islands, places, canoes and discussing events a millennium apart as though they were contemporary makes life difficult for anthropologists, historians and students alike. This, along with the missionaries' teaching that Polynesian history was best forgotten, as well as the disbelief of the mobility of Polynesians on the ocean of his home [***sic***], is why the pre-contact history of Polynesia is generally lacking. With these distortions in communications and cultural gaps of understanding, Polynesians learned to be guarded about what they said for fear of ridicule. (P. 55)

Sir Tom indicates that the genealogy of his late wife and himself and their relatives in Eastern Polynesia encompasses 116 generations. How I wish I knew such details of my own Norwegian forebears!

Picking up the chronological account of his life again in chapter 6, after some time in medical service to the Cook Islands, Sir Tom departed Rarotonga for the Boston area in the United States. His destination was the Harvard School of Public Health. Along with earning a Master of Public Health degree at Harvard, some of Sir Tom's singular experiences in the United States included being mistaken for Richard Nixon, experiments with mice that "shivered like crazy," and helping to put a monkey into space for NASA.

Sir Tom's professional training and interests also led him to other projects in faraway places. Among his unforgettable experiences abroad were ten days in a solitary Arctic village, severe altitude sickness in the Himalayas, and overland travel via motorcycle to the Taj Mahal. Sir Tom gives measured consideration to some of his personal traumas throughout this book. He shares difficulties in giving up smoking, fighting and beating cancer, and the challenges of various home, spouse, and family ups and downs.

In 1971, after many years of living overseas, Sir Tom once again returned home to Rarotonga. People he valued were asking him to stand for political office. Now comes an especially interesting part of the book, namely Sir Tom's views of and involvement in the Cook Islands political scene, past and present. (A 1979 publication titled ***Cook Islands Politics,*** edited by Ron Crocombe, tells of significant political events since the Cook Islands gained internal self-government from the point of view of many Cook Islanders.) Sir Tom does not mince words in this section. He names names; he tells tales. Among the more bizarre episodes of the period is that of Milton Byrch. However, we do not find here much on Sir Tom's personal views con-

cerning events in the Cook Islands that drove him from political office. Are the memories too painful for him to retell in detail in this autobiography?

Island Boy is not Sir Tom's first publication. He is the author of over eighty publications, books as well as scientific articles in such prestigious journals as the ***New England Journal of Medicine.*** References to some of his writings can be found in the bibliography at the end of ***Island Boy.*** Since ***Island Boy*** went to press, Sir Tom has completed another publication, titled ***Takitumu,*** that concerns the oceanic voyaging of early Cook Islanders. Sir Tom and a few other local men in Rarotonga are currently building a very large double-hulled canoe called ***Te-Au-O-Tonga.*** They will sail it to the Marquesas Islands in February 1995 to meet the Hawaiian canoes ***Hawai'iloa*** and ***Hokule'a*** and traditional canoes from Tahiti and New Zealand. To reaffirm the cultural, geographical, and historical ties that connect these island nations, the five canoes will travel together back to Hawai'i, with landfall expected in May 1995.

What has Sir Tom not addressed in ***Island Boy*** that begs attention? The topic that immediately comes into my mind is the matter of titles in the Cook Islands, including traditional titles, the more recently created titles, and the meaning of titles in the present-day context. Sir Tom does not go into details about his own title in this volume. The reader cannot help but wonder to what extent Sir Tom's traditional title has influenced his political ambitions and fortunes. Elsewhere I have expressed concern with regard to the matter of titles in the Cook Islands (Stephenson 1991). Mokoroa (1984) explored the traditional titles of Atiu in the Southern Cooks in a way that was very informative. But what of Rarotonga, where Sir Tom's title is housed? Sir Tom does mention status and role in the context of Cook Islands titles. Regarding his young years, for example, he shares the following: "Our reception at the dock [on our return to Rarotonga] was a royal one. The elderly ladies, as was the custom, went down on their knees wailing real tears onto our feet and wiping them off with their long gray hair. For me it was a most unnerving and humbling experience" (p. 14). And also, on the same occasion: "We went to Makea's Palace [in Rarotonga] to be formally welcomed back and to have morning tea with the Paramount Chief and his immediate family The crowd was large and the food was, as was the custom, abundant. But the seating was just for the immediate family, my mother, Mary and I, again as was the custom" (p. 14).

In his next publication, Sir Tom is encouraged to set forth his knowledge concerning the nature of titles and titleholding, both historical and contemporary, in the Cook Islands. Such a writing would be a most valuable contribution to our understanding of Cook Islands society.

Modern anthropologists work very closely together with the subjects of

our research. Key informants of times past now likely serve as co-principal investigators on our projects. In the course of contemporary fieldwork, people we encounter are much more than our translators or cheerleaders. We are reminded of the considerable value of these outsider/insider linkages in Pacific Islands anthropological research (see, for example, Kurashina and Stephenson 1985). In this light, Sir Tom's autobiography merits careful study and thought.

Autobiographies of senior scholars in anthropology seem to be in vogue these days (e.g., Cressman 1988; Thompson 1991; and others). Relatively rare are life histories of and by prominent Pacific Islanders. ***Island Boy*** is a very fine book. It is a significant contribution to contemporary anthropological studies of Polynesia, especially with regard to the Cook Islands. ***Meitaki tikai koe;*** good on you, Sir Tom!

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Maureen Anne MacKenzie, ***Androgynous Objects: String Bags and Gender in Central New Guinea.*** Chur, Switz.: Harwood Academic Publishers, 1991. Pp. xvi, 256, figures, plates, appendixes, bibliography, index.

Reviewed by Terence E. Hays, Rhode Island College

Given the intrinsic glamor of the rituals, ceremonial wealth displays, and dispute settlements that tend to fill ethnographies of New Guinea peoples, it may not be surprising that commonplace activities and objects seldom receive much notice. A case in point is the ***bilum*** (Tok Pisin for the looped string bag). Seemingly ubiquitous, if not truly universal, it is widely appreciated for its utility as a container for transporting almost any conceivable goods. However, this homely object has been largely ignored by scholars except when it becomes a thing of beauty, deemed admirable for a distinctive design, the sheer craft involved in its manufacture, or its service as a badge of group identity--used as such by anthropologists at conventions as well as by local people mingling at a marketplace.

MacKenzie is surely correct in declaring (p. 21) that "discussion" of the ***bilum*** "has been peripheral to the diverse foci of ethnographic research," whether or not for the two reasons she suggests: "Firstly, until recently the mainstream of anthropological inquiry has not been interested in studies of technology and material culture; and secondly it has for too long been male-dominated, focussing almost entirely on what men say and do." In my judgment, the first reason is sufficient; not only does the second entail an unresolvable debate, but with regard to the ***bilum,*** as MacKenzie acknowledges (pp. 108-109; emphasis in original), "in other bilum looping cultures throughout PNG [Papua New Guinea], women are ***not*** solely responsible for ***all*** looping techniques." Moreover, among the Telefol people upon whom her book concentrates, "while women monopolise looping technology and generate the principal form men take the bags produced by women as their 'raw material' creating types of bags which are differentiated from the female product by the additional features [especially bird feathers] which they apply" (p. 111). The ***bilum*** thus figures prominently in "production in the male realm" (chapter 4) and especially in male ritual activities. It seems likely, then, that Telefol string bags have been ignored until now by other Mountain Ok researchers (not all of whom have been male) because ethnographers tend to ignore such things, at least in their scholarly writings.

In any case, in ***Androgynous Objects*** we have a convincing demonstration of what and how much we have been missing, although production of a work as impressive as this one requires more than a simple resolve to pay atten-

tion to "material culture." MacKenzie's arts background combined with postgraduate training in anthropology at the Australian National University under the tutelage of the late doyen of New Guinea art, Anthony Forge, no doubt were essential ingredients in the process. On the basis of fieldwork in the 1980s including considerable "hands-on" experience and subsequent study of museum collections, her "intention is to show how analysis of an item of material culture ***as a complete social object*** can be of significant interest to the wider anthropological endeavour" (p. 1; emphasis added).

Perceiving "a need, in the study of material culture, for an analytic framework which can overcome the emphasis on either function, form or meaning and present more than a reductive partial view" (p. 24), MacKenzie opts to take a

> processual approach to the study of artefacts, and investigate the contexts and processes of manufacture, the ways in which the string bag is variously used and understood within differing social contexts, and the interrelated dimensions of value which this artefact has for the Telefol people. The focus of this study therefore progresses beyond a material inventory of forms to an understanding of the changing nature of objects within different social contexts. This in turn leads to a broader understanding of the complexity and ambiguity inherent in Telefol gender relations. (P. 1)

The result is indeed a portrayal of a ***"complete*** social object."

"Function" and "form" are presented in wondrous detail, with 25 figures and 125 plates complementing MacKenzie's painstaking and lucid description of the processes by which Telefol women, using only their fingers and a simple "tool" (a strip of pandanus leaf), transform natural fibers (plus, nowadays, woolen yarns and nylon thread) into what she calls the "principal form" of the ***bilum.*** The standard, everyday string bag--a product of "between 100 and 160 hours of productive labour" (p. 83)--has clear utilitarian value as a carryall, but in addition a "good bilum enhances the appearance of the carrier, and is essential for a walk to market, into town or a trip to another area to impress onlookers" (p. 133). Also, and perhaps more important to Mac-Kenzie's thesis,

> When a woman wears her finest looped bilum it does more than enhance her appearance. It simultaneously displays her looping skills, and thus indirectly advertises her productive capabilities by indicating the care and energy she is likely to invest in all her activ-

> ities. A well-made bilum must belong to a caring woman who knows how to work hard. Thus, for the Telefol, a good bilum is synonymous with a good woman. (P. 141)

More than "productivity" is symbolized by a well-made ***bilum,*** according to MacKenzie, since "the bilum becomes above all a symbol of nurturance and procreativity" (p. 146), reflected in a male informant's statement that "the bilum is our mother."

In what sense, then, is a ***bilum*** the "androgynous object" of the books title? MacKenzie's main interpretive argument is that "motherhood in Telefolmin is not simply bearing children, It is a question of continuous, protective care and nurturance," activities in which both sexes are involved, just as "completion of the bag involves the reciprocal and complementary efforts of both women and men" (p. 147). Thus the ***bilum*** is a product of "multiple authorship" (p. 158), attributable to neither sex alone.

MacKenzie weaves together various strands of evidence, though not seamlessly, to advance her view of the meaning of the Telefol string bag. "Multiple authorship" of the "principal form" of the ***bilum*** seems somewhat tenuously based: a product of women's exclusive knowledge of looping techniques and their arduous labor, such a bag's "completion" involves men only to the extent that "traditionally, women relied on men for the preferred bast fibres" (p. 192), obtained from the forest or through trade. A better case is made for the "elaborated forms," produced by men using bags received as gifts from kinswomen, to which are added bird feathers in the secrecy and privacy of the men's house, where they also will be bestowed upon younger males in ritual contexts, to be used afterward in everyday life. Men say "that their elaborations augment and improve the principal form by increasing its practical efficiency, for the feathers make their elaborated bilums waterproof," but MacKenzie regards this claim as "an essentially evasive statement" (p. 162), masking the "functional value of concealment which the feathers provide," for example, hiding meat whose revelation would require sharing (p. 167). While, exemplifying a general theme in Telefol society, "the outer appearance of the bird feather bilum overtly reflects a model of sexual opposition and separation, and within male discourse the superior position of the feathers is seen as an analogue of male superiority and women's structural inferiority," MacKenzie stresses its manifestation of complementarity, for "neither woman nor man can make their part without the contribution of the other" (p. 192). Not only is the "principal form" of the bag a product of female labor, but a particular woman's "authorship" is acknowledged continually, since "the bilum is invariably thought of in terms of who made it, for whom, and on what occasion" (p. 151). That is, whatever embellishments

may be added to the bag, everyone knows that the male elaborator is dependent on the gift-giving generosity as well as the hard work of a woman. Thus the elaborated ***bilum*** "cannot be exclusively identified with either producer or recipient, woman or man. A metonym of the ***relation*** between women and men, it is recognised as a product of multiple authorship" (p. 160; emphasis in original).

It is unclear to what degree MacKenzie's interpretations are shared by Telefol themselves, since she tends to adduce direct statements by informants only to qualify or refute them from her wider, schooled perspectives. The results are not always consistent; for example, the "androgynous" ***bilum*** is "a specifically uterine symbol" (p. 177) (as in "the bilum is our mother"?), yet the term ***men,*** which applies to both string bags and looping techniques and processes, "is not extended to refer to natural objects such as the marsupial pouch . . . nor the human placenta or womb" (p. 45).

Interpretive sleight-of-hand is common in ethnography and, so far as the Telefol and their Mountain Ok neighbors are concerned, preferred analytic frameworks have tended to privilege male rhetoric and ideology associated with male cults, both of which often resonate poorly with everyday life. MacKenzie's focus on the quotidian provides an important, if still debatable, alternative view:

> The separation and antithesis of the sexes ***is*** publicly expressed in the physical divisions of the village realm, and enforced by the male cult and the way in which women are artificially kept apart from some of the activities of men. Nevertheless, couples of women and men form the closest unit of cooperation in daily life. . . . The ideal situation is said by both ***sexes to*** be when women use their ***aam bal men*** ["principal form" string bag] to harvest taro and men reciprocate by using their bird feather bilum to bag game meat. It is the combination or integration of their respective contributions which provides the perfect meal. (I? 203; emphasis added)

Vincent Lebot, Mark Merlin, and Lamont Lindstrom, ***Kava: The Pacific Drug.*** New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993. Pp. 255, maps, figures, tables, photos, appendixes, bibliography, index. US$45.

Reviewed by Glenn Petersen, Graduate School and Baruch College, City University of New York

Kava has finally begun to receive some of the same respect from scholars that Pacific peoples have long paid it. Use of this mild drug was once common across a vast portion of Melanesia, Polynesia, and Micronesia; today its distribution has been somewhat circumscribed, but it retains a vital role in many island societies. And now the literature on its use (and abuse) is beginning not only to consider its traditional roles, but also to address the reasons for its dramatic survival and even efflorescence.

This volume makes up part of what we might look upon as a trilogy of comparative works on kava. Ron Brunton's ***The Abandoned Narcotic*** (1989) took up an old thesis of W. H. R. Rivers concerning the rather complementary distribution of kava and betel in Melanesia, and provided an updated account of kava organized around a set of theoretical problems. A special issue of ***Canberra Anthropology*** devoted to kava is about to appear; it comprises a number of essays originally presented at the 1991 Pacific Science Congress in a session on "Kava and Power" organized by Nancy Pollock. Along with these other volumes, then, ***Kava: The Pacific Drug*** demonstrates a resurgent interest in one of the Pacific islands' more important shared cultural traits. (In addition, recent volumes edited by L. Lindstrom [1987] and by J. Prescott and G. McCall [1988] include significant studies of kava.)

Lebot and Merlin, biologists, and Lindstrom, an anthropologist, have done an extraordinary job of weaving together research in the many realms across which a comprehensive study of kava must reach: biochemical, agronomic, ethnological, and sociological. The book is exceptionally well conceived and well executed; the illustrations, photographs, and maps are of consistently high quality, and the tables are easily interpreted. If this volume is not utterly seamless, it nevertheless manages to make chemical analyses and mythological exegeses accessible to the same readers, no mean feat. Careful examination of both the kava plant's wild precursors and the zymotypes (proteins) of modern cultivars enables the authors to arrive at one of their strongest conclusions: kava ***(Piper methysticum)*** was most likely domesticated roughly three thousand years ago from a wild precursor ***(P. wichmannii)*** in what is now northern Vanuatu, whence it diffused as far

west as New Guinea, as far northwest as the Eastern Carolines, and as far north and east as Hawai'i and the Marquesas.

Even though there is enormous local variation in the ways in which kava has traditionally been treated and used, as this work amply documents, it is, nevertheless, consistently regarded as a source of considerable spiritual power. It is diligently cultivated, ritually prepared, and respectfully consumed wherever people still rely upon it. It is consistently employed in social contexts, even as its direct effects are on the physiology of individuals. "Kava consumption evokes feelings of camaraderie--an emotional response that symbolizes within a drinker's body the strength of ongoing social relationships" (p. 119).

The book brings together a great deal of ethnographic material--some of it already considered by Brunton--on kava use. There is a slight bias, however, toward organizing this discussion around the categories that are most important in Vanuatu, where the authors' own experiences and investigations have been most immediate. This experience tends to shade their interpretations of data from other regions, particularly regarding social hierarchies and gender issues (though I hasten to add that this problem must characterize any study conducted by researchers with significant firsthand experience of kava--and who else would mount such a major undertaking?).

This observation does lead me to my one real cavil with an otherwise exemplary work. The problem is in some sense inherent in any large-scale comparative effort: data of many different types, recorded for many different purposes, have to be fit piecemeal together, and in the course of doing so a good many misinterpretations are liable to creep in. I am reminded of Will Rogers, who used to explain that he had no privileged access to information about current events: "I only know what I read in the papers." Robert Murphy, who taught me much of what I learned while I was at Columbia University, was wont to say that he didn't know why he believed anything he read in the ***New York Times.*** "Whenever they write about anything I know, they get it wrong. What makes me think they get it right the rest of the time?" My knowledge of Pohnpei, in the Eastern Carolines, inclines me to a bit of skepticism about the validity of the comparative materials brought together here. Let me cite a few examples.

1 / Drawing from an accurate report that Pohnpeians dislike noise while they are at kava, the authors conclude that on Pohnpei "drinkers normally sit silently" (p. 140). But conversation is absolutely central to Pohnpeian kava sessions; it is only after hours of talk and song that people gradually drift into shared silences.

2 / The authors touch upon Pohnpeians' customary gifts of kava made to their chiefs, speaking of "tribute" payments to "their Micronesian chiefly overlords" (p. 144). In Pohnpei's intensely competitive political economy, however, one of the primary ways to gain and keep a chiefly title is to continually provide one's neighbors with high-quality kava.

3 / Descriptions of kava ceremonies taken from the late Saul Riesenberg's works (pp. 146-149) could be easily misinterpreted as characterizing all kava use, when they in fact refer only to a few important public feasts; most Pohnpeian kava is consumed at small, semiprivate, relatively casual gatherings.

4 / We read here, moreover, that Pohnpeian kava is "feminized" as a consequence of the way in which it is pounded with hammer stones: "Kava preparation on these islands becomes a symbolic copulation." This notion in turn plays a part in generating the conclusion that "to the degree that kava poses as mythologically feminine, women's use of the drug is made to seem to be abnormal and shameful homosexual intercourse" (pp. 134-135). Pohnpeian women do not ordinarily pound kava, but it does happen and draws little if any comment. Breadfruit pounding is a common euphemism for male masturbation, but I have never encountered any signs that kava pounding has sexual connotations (which is not to say that there are none; if they exist, however, they are well disguised). And Pohnpeian women are firmly included in all the rituals of kava consumption--there is absolutely nothing shameful or abnormal about their participation in kava, whether at great feasts or at local get-togethers.

I fear that readers must take all the generalizations in the chapter on comparative ethnology with a grain of salt, although there are points where the authors do acknowledge and confront problems inherent in the data. To cite but one example, following a discussion of reports about kava drinkers becoming comatose or hallucinating, Lebot interjects that his own personal experience "suggests to us that these statements about hallucinogenic or killer kava are either erroneous or dubiously simplistic" (p. 202). There is indeed something about kava's mystique that lends itself to exaggeration. This book goes a long way toward demonstrating that the remarkable realities of contemporary kava are in no need of embroidery.

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BOOKS NOTED

RECENT PACIFIC ISLANDS PUBLICATIONS: SELECTED ACQUISITIONS, JUNE-DECEMBER 1994

THIS LIST of significant new publications relating to the Pacific Islands was selected from new acquisitions lists received from Brigham Young University-Hawai'i, University of Hawai'i at Manoa, Bernice P. Bishop Museum, University of Auckland, East-West Center, University of the South Pacific, National Library of Australia, and the Australian International Development Assistance Bureau's Centre for Pacific Development Training. Other libraries are invited to send contributions to the Books Noted Editor for future issues. Listings reflect the extent of information provided by each institution.

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