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Barkcloth, Reproduction and the Expansion of Endogamous Polities in Natewa

This is dedicated to the memory of my father, Halsey Colchester and my brother Nico.
Abstract

This thesis presents original data about the management, reproduction and presentation of barkcloth imagery in rituals which have actively extended corporate polities in Natewa. Systems of knowledge management, based upon controlling access to printed imagery which emanates from ceremonial ‘trees’, are shown to be an integral part of life-cycle rites. The material and formal attributes of leaf stencils define the differential relation between the control and release of the knowledge of named imagery. Thus it is revealed that prestige goods systems hinge upon the control of intellectual property.

Three distinct institutions of barkcloth have flourished successively in Natewa over the past 150 years. Research conducted in the Lau islands by Kooijman (1976) and A. M Hocart (1911) provides comparative data of the standardisation and distribution of imagery and knowledge pertaining to one of these institutions. It is proposed that the institution of masi is an historical phenomenon - one of several technical-cum-ritual solutions for consolidating endogamous expansion in a highly competitive milieu. Prior to the ossification of the kovukovu system of land transfer endogamous expansion was achieved through the strategic incorporation of personnel and parcels of land from pre-inhabited territories.

Contemporary observation of rites of divestment, together with oral data and recent ethnohistorical research into pre-colonial polities, suggests that expansion was achieved through the export of women of rank from the main chiefly centres and the import of women from subaltern polities. It is argued that masi enabled the displacement of women to serve the purpose of expansion. Masi was instrumental in both the extension and the rupture of ancestral agency, playing a key part in the conversion of exogamy into endogamy. Why masi serves as a vehicle for the transfer of agency
emerges from the analysis of death rites. The study of contemporary fundraisings shows that *masi* has come to play a new role in endogamous expansion *from* Natewa.
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Preface

There are many people who have helped me to prepare this thesis. But I need to express my thanks first to Dr. Susanne Kuechler who has devoted hours of her life to teaching me ever since I took her masters course in anthropology of art in autumn 1993. She has taught me the value of considering things seriously and she has simultaneously provoked me to think boldly about the way in which objects shape people’s perceptions of the world. I am also grateful to Dr. Allen Abramson who read earlier drafts of this thesis. He helped to clarify problems at moments of confusion. Professor Daniel Miller commented upon work presented at thesis writing up seminars with characteristic perspicuity and imagination.

Between autumn 1995 and spring 1997 I lived in Fiji and for fifteen months of that time the village of Natewa became my base. My research was funded with the generous support of the Economic and Social Research Council. I am grateful to Dr Paul Geraghty, from the Fijian Institute of Language and Culture for having encouraged me to do research in Natewa. He also introduced me to Tupou Tikotikoca who kitted me out for life in the village in a way that set a tone for my research project from the beginning.

However my greatest thanks must go to Ratu Nemani Bukayaro and to his wife Losavati Mana who were my hosts all the time that I was based in the village. Losavati was endlessly supporting and generous and I glowed with health during my stay in Fiji as a result of her support. Nemani supervised my research, selecting people to accompany me to other villages.
and advising me whom to consult on one matter or another. It took me some time before I could appreciate how thoughtful his choices had been. The speeches recorded in this thesis were all translated with his assistance. I am grateful to Dabe Vakadua and Sunia for helping with some important interviews. My thanks also goes to the other members of vinidilo, Ratu Vakacegu and his wife Midra who encouraged me to pay attention to the importance of mats.

My thanks must go to all the members of the Varani family and to Dr Robert Norton, to Dr Ropate Qalo and his wife Salote for their intelligent encouragement, hospitality and interest. They all expressed a keen interest in the progress of my research and encouraged to think about Natewa’s history as well as the contemporary political and social situation in Fiji today. Taito Waqa’s forthright criticism of some of my earlier theories was always modulated by his good humour and generosity and I am very grateful for his support and encouragement during the more difficult phases of my fieldwork. His brother Mosese also made some very pertinent remarks. Maikeli Livani enabled me to appreciate why it was necessary to study Verata in order to reach an understanding of masi. Pauliyasi Toronibau encouraged me to consider the decline of marriage. Di Tukana, Di Milika, Di Sivo, Di Bale, Varitema and Alesi all gave up hours of their time to explaining aspects of masi production and the time that I spent in their company were always entertaining as well informative. Finally I am also grateful to the Reverend Viliame Kamikamica who gave me several clues including a major hint by talking about the Lord of the Rings. Many, many more people helped by giving me clues which started to form a coherent body of ideas after several months in the field. I am grateful to them all for having made my stay in Natewa such an interesting one.
1
Introduction

1.1 Outline of the Problem

The Fijian islands are exceptionally well represented in terms of ethnographic research, historical archival materials as well as historical and ethnohistorical literature. However, I hope to indicate that it is possible to develop a fresh perspective on these data by drawing attention to the changing role of barkcloth in social interaction.

This thesis draws upon the observations that I made whilst I was based in Natewa between December 1995 and April 1997. There are four main aspects of my fieldwork data which seem to merit investigation:

- The decline of traditional marriage ceremonies and formalised marriage alliances, linked to the ongoing phenomenon of elopement (*veidrotaki*) in contemporary Natewa.
- The ongoing transaction of voluminous quantities of mats barkcloth and other forms of cloth wealth at life-cycle rites.
- The degree of outmigration both to and from Natewa and the changes in the flow of wealth and the orientation of the kinship economy that this has brought about during successive phases of Natewa’s history.

I suggest that all three aspects of data can be shown to be logically interconnected to the production of a specific kind of barkcloth called *masi volavola* (lit. ‘marked or figured *masi*’) in Natewa. I propose to explore these logical connections:

a) by developing a twin perspective on the deployment of barkcloth in both pre and post-colonial Natewa.
b) by developing a model which reveals how qualitatively distinct representations of social space-time are embodied and constituted by different kinds of barkcloth.

1.2 The Lay of the Land

An analysis of the issues which emerge from studying the changing deployment of barkcloth in social reproduction needs to take account of the way in which politics and geography of the region has been modified by the expansion of the pre-colonial polities, by colonial occupation, as well as by more recent changes initiated by independence (1971). It is a paradox of Fijian social history that actual trees or representations of trees have played a mediatory role in the cross-cultural encounters which have contributed to the reorganisation of the polity over time. How the representation and constitution of sociality is effected through tree-imagery is a leitmotif that runs through this thesis as a whole. By way of an introduction to the extended discussion of the role of barkcloth in social reproduction I briefly show how two ways of constituting social relations through trees became interrelated in Natewa’s recent past.

Natewa is one of the vanua (lands or polities) in the province of Cakaudrove which embraces the islands of Taveuni and of Vanua Levu (lit. ‘Big Land’). It lies approximately seventy miles to the north east of the main island, Viti Levu. The area which is now demarcated by a fixed boundary as Natewa tikina (district) spans a transverse section of a long arm of land, called the Natewa peninsula, which embraces the bay of Natewa. The villages of Natewa are ranged along the southern and northern coasts of the peninsula, between which lies a range of forested mountains. The villages of Buca and Tukavesi are situated on the south coast, facing out towards the island of Taveuni across the Somosomo straights; these are flanked by the main coastal road running
between the local town of Savusavu and Napuka Point. The villages of Dawa, Vusa, Vusasivo, Nadavaci and Natewa - the official residence of the paramount chief, from which the Tikina takes its name - are located on the north coast and they command a prospect of the bay. An easily navigable road to Natewa and Vusasivo was only completed in the late 1980s.

Geography is the product of interrelationships. Natewa’s boundaries are the legacy of British colonial occupation: Fiji was ceded by Fijian chiefs to the British Crown in 1874. The imposition of this boundary and the mapping of lands has had an enduring impact upon Natewan politics. When the British protectorate began to formulate a systematic model of Fijian sociality, land ownership and patterns of inheritance, they elaborated a model that was in line with a humanist vision of the world. This vision was influenced by anthropological concepts which were in fashion at the time. Accordingly, Fijian social organisation was defined in terms of rules of customary behaviour, such as communal labour in the service of chiefs; and the inheritance of property was inexorably linked to the transmission of blood. Thus, in what has become the classical picture of Fijian social organisation since 1912, extended kin groups - *yavusa* - were described as being the agnate descendants of an apical ancestor whose male offspring subsequently formed smaller kinship groups such as the *mataqali* (clan) or the *tokatoka* (sub clan) as the population expanded over time. Peter France, a former employee of the colonial administration, has argued that the dogma concerning communally owned inalienable rights to land was established and forcefully promulgated by Lorimer Fison, and the then governor of Fiji, Sir Arthur Gordon, who both became influenced by unilinear theories of social evolution; such as those developed by the American anthropologist, Lewis Henry Morgan (France, 1969:124).

By adhering to an anthropological model instead of the evidence gathered by fieldworkers, colonial officials intended to restore Fiji to its ‘true’,
ancient or customary organisation - at the same time as encouraging a model of political organisation amenable to indirect rule. It appears that Sir Arthur Gordon followed the opinions of Wesleyan missionaries, such as James Hunt, who believed that the maritime chiefly polities of Bau, Cakaudrove and Tovata had gained dominion over other regions in the eastern part of the island periphery during the course of the 19th century by having recourse to English weapons and military expertise. Since Gordon held that the expansion of pre-colonial states was merely a reflex to European acculturation, he saw the proper organisation of Fiji as a mosaic of independent and relatively isolated chiefdoms (see Sayes, 1982, 1984). Favouring the institution of chiefship as a means of effecting indirect rule, yet skeptical that the formation of extended organised polities was an indigenous phenomenon, the colonial administration manifested an ambivalent attitude towards the institution of chiefship. This ambivalence contributed to Natawais political history.

The early colonial officials’ rationalised conception of Fijian social organisation were later formalised by a colonial administrator, called Maxwell, who presented a simple stick diagram of ‘classic Fijian social structure’ to the Legislative Council in 1914. Maxwell’s diagram was inspired by the new genealogical models which had been recently developed by the anthropologist, W.H.R Rivers whilst he was working in the Solomon Islands and New Caledonia. His kinship diagrams were an abstract, formalised and inverted version of the older tree diagrams inspired by the Old Testament which had long been used to represent European pedigrees. They conveyed the vertical visual imperative of succession by descent with new force (Rivers, 1910, 1968; Bouquet, 1994).

For the sake of brevity I will restrict myself to saying that a version of this model was used to chart land holdings throughout the archipelago. First, land commissioners were sent out to record na i tukutuku raraba (native
histories). In accordance with the model, the virtue of being there first featured prominently in native accounts. Then, in 1929 'a register of living genealogy' *Na i Vola ni Kawa Bula* was produced for each *yavusa* in Natewa. Land in Natewa was charted and mapped by land surveyors between 1934 and 1935. V.K.B. registers, the offshoots of Maxwell’s tree diagram, were to have an enduring influence on Fijian lived reality. The evidence gathered together by surveyors and commissioners was legally sanctioned under the Native Land Act of 1941. Furthermore, the indigenous system of land holding achieved administrative support through two government institutions, the Native Land Trust Board and the Ministry of Fijian Affairs.

Maxwell’s model of Fijian social organisation presented to the legislative council in 1914.

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  VANUA
    YAVUSA
       |   |
      MATAQALI MATAQALI MATAQALI MATAQALI
            |   |
           tokatoka tokatoka tokatoka tokatoka tokatoka tokatoka tokatoka tokatoka
```
Figure 1. Map of Natewa
FIG. 2 Map of the southwest Pacific
The colonial model of bounded chiefdoms, or *vanua*, enabled the British colonial administrators to impose their will through a system of spatial controls. Initially, Fijians and indentured labourers from Bengal were segregated. On Vanua Levu, Indo-Fijians were employed on the sugar cane fields in north part of the island whilst the indigenous population was encouraged to live in rural villages on their traditional lands. During the course of the nineteenth century Natewans were required to abandon their fortified hill settlements in order to settle permanently in villages, located along the coast for ease of access. Later, a system of permits and other Native Regulations were devised to make the communal service of chiefs binding by law. Everyday life - especially domesticity and agriculture - was strictly regulated by Fijians employed by the administration. Initially, *buli* (administrative chiefs) were appointed. Later, village headman were chosen to supervise planting, household maintenance, communal labour and the collection of provincial taxes. In Natewa, flower gardens and houses were periodically inspected, and a prize was awarded for the one that was best kept. Boys were encouraged to play rugby, and girls netball. Life occurred in a straightjacket of locally administered petty regulations and awards, as if the islands had been transformed into an approximation of an English boarding school.

The colonial occupation had a varying impact upon the regimes of exchange which had hitherto served to incorporate people from different regions of the archipelago. Because they were regarded as a badge of common humanity, life-cycle rites were defined as ‘customary practice’, as opposed to ritual or religion, and they were therefore largely encouraged - insofar as they did not threaten the new status quo. For example, traveling to attend marriage ceremonies in other *vanua* soon became subject to the issue of permits, and the period of visits was restricted because it was feared that this would revive warfare between rival polities (Thomas 1991). Barkcloth had conventionally played an important part in certain marital rites of the nobility, which were
distinguished by the practice of publicly divesting and presenting regionally produced cloth. Yet, in the opinion of colonial administrators and Methodist ministers, barkcloth merely played an incidental role in these rites. Thus, although marriage alliances became subject to certain constraints, the production of barkcloth was actively encouraged, since it was perceived morally improving handicraft. New organisations, such as the Methodist Women’s Institute (soqosoqo vakamarama), were devised which encouraged its production. It was not until the years leading up to independence that, due to the growing influence of economic rationalism, regimes of exchange would come to be regarded as a drain upon the population’s time and economic resources (Spate 1956).

1.3 Cash from Trees: Renewed Mobility

Natewa has practiced a mixed economy for some time. But the rugged terrain of the vanua means that coconut plantations are less extensive than in the western part of the peninsula. Therefore even in the early part of this century, members of some of the chiefly houses in Natewa began to travel to Viti Levu in search of training and employment. A school was established in the late 1930s and, as a result of its success, several Natewans went on to become teachers and to work in other professions. With the decline in the price of copra during the late 1960s, increasing numbers of Natewans went up to the main island of Viti Levu in search of employment. People living in the satellite villages described the eighties as the beginning of na gamua ni i lavo (‘the time of money’): referring to the growing pressure to raise funds for secondary school fees and tertiary education, as well as to the distribution of royalties from logging.

Logging of slow growing hardwoods such as vesi (ironwood), dakua (barringtonia) and native mahogany from the hinterlands of Natewa reached its peak between 1980-1986. The forests were leased to logging companies through
the Native Lands Trustboard (the administrative body established to control the leasing and management of clan lands) and they, together with members of the *mataqali* (clan land holders), the chiefs, and the paramount chief, received set percentages of the royalties in return. At a time when twenty or thirty Fiji dollars was the most that could be expected for a sack of dried copra the royalties were a windfall. After making announcements on Fiji Radio the NLTB would deliver royalties to *mataqali* heads in the form sacks of cash containing as much as F$55,000 at one go.

Anthropologists have long questioned the validity of the colonial model of political organisation and inheritance (see Hocart 1952; Sahlins 1964; Sayes 1982). However, the windfalls from royalties coincided with a mood of introspection and inquiry which had developed in the wake independence (1971). During a number of interviews it emerged that the distribution of royalties had made the fallacy of the status quo based upon the colonial model a public fact.

It was mainly the people living in peripheral villages in Natewa, who were said to be in service to the paramount chiefs and the other houses of the nobility, who had been allocated tracts of forest land. In Natewa *tikina*, certain clans from the outlying villages - of Vusa, Dawa and Buca - gained the lion’s share of the royalties. The distribution of ‘money from trees’ brought about an extraordinary series of reunions: it was a time of joyous, renewed mobility. Long lost relatives from the surrounding region who were dwelling in other *vanua* and villages came to visit once they heard the royalties announced. Some of the chiefs bought motorboats with outboard engines and traveled to Taveuni and even as far south as Vanua Balavu to attend ceremonies of their kin. The following account was given to me by a member of *mataqali* Kama. He describes the distribution of royalties in the village of Buca.

It is written in the book [book of living genealogy] that we each own the earth and the trees. It [the royalties from logging] had to be distributed. At Christmas time all our
houses were packed. There were people sitting in the doors and windows. We made a big vakatunuloa [shelter] so that everyone could eat together. We slaughtered I don’t how many bulumakau [cattle] and we drank tea with sugar and milk.

All the relatives would arrive one after the other. Who are you? I’d ask. I’m so-and-so son of so-and-so he’d say. Good, you sit there then, I’d say.

Then the money would be handed out. I came back to the house and I said, All you fellows standing outside, make a line! And I went down the row dishing out F$20 a piece. I don’t know how many thousands I dished out this way.

We were so happy to see all these people again; some lived far way. Fifteen years later I can say that we have kept up with some of them, not with others, especially not with the ones that are far away.

The distribution of royalties forced kin connections which had remained buried for over sixty years out into the open, revealing the mixed composition of many of Natewa’s mataqali, as well as of the vanua more generally. What emerged was that the clans which made up the yavusa were not exclusively comprised of kin sharing a common male ancestry. Rather, each clan was comprised of an amalgam of peoples, many of whom had been drawn into the service of the vanua’s chiefs through their links through women. For example, mataqali Kama was largely made up of people from the neighbouring regions of Koracau, Tunuloa and elsewhere. Most of these people were related to the Vunivalu’s patriline through affinal connections; they had been incorporated within the clan because they had been willing to demonstrate allegiance at the time that the colonial records were set. Mataqali Kama was said to be an invention, in so far as there were no people from Kama within it. The same pattern applied to many of the clans in other villages in Natewa. Rather than the vanua being a bounded entity based solely upon descent it was comprised of diverse peoples who had been amalgamated together because of history of inter-marriage and military alliances. As the man from Kama put it,

"Before the Lands Commissions we were always fighting one another, after the book we became one people. We, the taukei (indigenous owners) of Natewa are an invented
people. We are members of the vanua according to the book (na i ewe ni vanua eke sa lewe vaka na i vola).

By the time I reached Natewa a row of broken down outboard engines and a new concrete house were visible reminders of this era. However, the distribution of royalties had brought about a sea-change in people’s attitude to the status quo of the vanua outlined in the Native Lands Commission records. It was apparent that this experience was not peculiar to Natewa but was common to many other parts of the islands as well. As a result of growing sensitivity over the records, the Native Land Trust Board had restricted access to the native histories (tukutuku raraba) which had been recorded at the time that the records were set. Talking to Natewans it emerged that there were many reasons why the records were controlled. Although many people believed that the Lands Commission records were ‘a bunch of lies’, they also held that annulling these records would be dangerous, given Indo-Fijians demands for land and the potential political unrest conflict between indigenous Fijians themselves.

In view of these considerations all the people I spoke to were looking for ways in which to rework both the colonial and pre-colonial past in a way that would build a future either for their families, or for the vanua. Apart from general concerns about the future of Natewa - as both a place and a gathering of peoples - there were also questions of leadership to be considered.

1.4 The Investiture Controversy

In contemporary Fiji many indigenous Fijians still think of themselves as belonging to one of the great matanitu (pre-colonial states or maritime polities) such as Verata, Burebasaga (Rewa), Kubuna (Bau and Batiki) or Tovata (now comprised of Cakaudrove, Lau and Macuata but formerly embracing Tonga as well; Tuwere, 1992: 64). However, Natewans proudly announce that they are an independent people. As they put it, Natewa is a vanua tu vakaikoya (lit. ‘a
vanua that stands by itself). In this way, people in Natewa distinguish themselves from the neighbouring vanua of Tunuloa, which is qali (lit. bound or subject) to the chiefly capital of Cakaudrove, Somosomo. I would suggest that these contemporary assertions of independence are as much the result of the colonial era as they are of Natewa’s history.

In the wars between the major maritime polities and the outlying lands in the island periphery, which led up to the cession of the islands to the British in 1874, Natewa was alternatively allied and at war with the matanitu of Bau, Cakaudrove and Tovata. The effects of the power of the former paramount chiefs of Cakaudrove, entitled Tui Cakau, had left an enduring mark upon the maps and geography of the surrounding region. The coastal road, running along the southern coast of the Natewan Peninsula (from the local town of Savusavu to Napuka point) was bordered by coconut plantations and hotel resorts built upon the lands of the former opponents of the Tui Cakau. During the 1860s and 70s they had been sold to planters from overseas both prior to, and immediately after cession. The road to Natewa ran through a large estate, called Valavala, which had been ‘sold’ by the old Tui Cakau to a William Hennings in 1867. During the time that I was doing fieldwork this was bought by the then Prime Minister, Colonel Sitiveni Rabuka (see C-4433 Claims Regarding German Subjects to Land in Fiji 1885).

The vanua was also marked by a history of sexual politics: in particular by the legacy of marital connections with Somosomo, the chiefly capital of the maritime polity of Cakaudrove and by historical connections with the matanitu of Bau. Although it lies almost one hundred miles east of the chiefly capital of Bau, Natewa is one of the few vanua outside Bau to have a paramount entitled Vunivalu, that is, ‘the root of war’. Accordingly, one of the main households of the nobility, Valelevu (now split into several different dwellings), has strong connections with Bau. However, Natewa is one of the
few vanua in the islands where it was recorded in the NLC records that the title should alternate between two main houses: Valelevu and Valenisau.

The Fijian term, tukutuku, translates either as a story or history, but it has more in common with a prose epic since the aim is not merely to provide an objective account to a disinterred reader but rather to render a version of events which will engender allegiance. Although stories of the past are at least nominally transferred by members of the elite, the notion of a single master narrative is a foreign, Western imposition. Whilst doing my own research I was told that most of the stories could not be found in the Fiji National Archives or the NLTB records and I was advised to talk to different people in order to record their different versions of the past. It is therefore hardly surprising that the master narrative of the vanua’s native history recorded by the Lands Commission was a strategic rendition of the past.

The most literate man at the time of the Veitarogi ni Vanua (Official recording of Native History recorded circa 1920) had also just returned from serving in the Fijian civilian forces in the First World War. Ratu Epeli Vakalalabure, had become a champion at shotputter while serving in France, and was made abuli (a chief appointed by the colonial administration) upon his return. Soon after, he was selected to be installed as Vunivalu, by virtue of his travels and prowess, and because the alternative candidate from the Bauan faction in Natewa had been married with a woman from Somosomo, who was believed to be already pregnant. I was told that Ratu Epeli’s election was entirely in keeping with pre-colonial ideas about leadership, where a number of different considerations such as: a decline in the land’s fertility occasioned by drought, or the ability or the military prowess of the individual, tended to override principles of primogeniture, or proximity by descent.

There has been little research into the way in which the apparatuses of colonialism have been compromised or strategically adapted locally (Thomas
Yet this approach is germane for investigating the recent history of Natewa. It is apparent that Ratu Epeli Vakalalabure gave the British an ingenious and convincing model of the *vanua* comprised of his own network of allegiances. The evidence that he provided was in keeping with the colonial administrations vision of indigenous social organisation. They believed that land should revert to its initial indigenous owners, so he provided pedigrees as evidence of his genealogical connection to the earliest remembered settlers of Natewa. His version of the *vanua*, with its emphasis on the importance of prior inhabitation, undermined the authority of later arrivals in Natewa, such as the Bauan nobility. ‘The old Vunivalu was a great one for *verevere* (cunning)’ remarked a relative, with some affection.

By virtue of relocating allegiance to the British Crown, Ratu Epeli’s vision of the *vanua* enabled Natewans’ to reassert their independence from the old maritime polities. Under the aegis of the new Vunivalu Natewa acquired the nickname ‘Londoni’ - a name that was still in use by the time that I came to do fieldwork. It was during the time that Ratu Epeli Vakalalabure was Vunivalu that the system of arranged marriages - an important strategy for the expansion of the pre-colonial states - fell into decline. Furthermore, the twin experiences of conversion and colonial occupation prompted a change of attitude towards the past. I was told that between the First World War and the time of Fijian independence a lot of the elders kept silent about the past; it was a time when many stories were lost.

In 1973, when Ratu Epeli died, the title of Vunivalu should have passed to the Bauan faction but Ratu Epeli’s son, Ratu Tevita, who was determined to prevent this, tried to get himself installed by some of his relatives. As a result of this attempted coup an inquiry was held in front of lawyers appointed by the Native Lands Trustboard. It is interesting to note that the nature of Natewa’s connections to the *matanitu* (pre-colonial chiefly polities) figured prominently in
the ensuing discussion. According to the contemporary account recorded in the
diaries of the former Mai Yautibi, Rt Meli Savubuliti, a leading concern was
whether Natewa should continue to be vakarorogo (lit. owing respect or
allegiance, typically manifested through the presentation of offerings) to Bau or
Cakaudrove, or whether the vanua of Natewa should ‘stand by itself’.

In the event, a Vunivalu from the Bauan faction was installed, but
upon his death in 1985, Ratu Tevita claimed the position once again. By this
time become a member of parliament for the Fijian Nationalist Part (Soqosoqo ni
Vakavulewa ni Taukei) which placed great emphasis on the primacy of
indigenous rights (see the section on the taukei vulagi concept in The
However, certain Natewans felt that Ratu Tevita had forfeited his right to
become Vunivalu; some of the more conservative village members were
concerned that the collapse of traditional leadership was having an adverse effect
upon the prosperity and fertility of the vanua’s people, seas and soil.

As a result of these debates Natewa had experienced a crisis in
leadership. None of the chiefs had been officially installed and most of them had
absented themselves from the village to work in urban centres elsewhere. The
houses of the two main opponents for the title of Vunivalu were kept clean but
uninhabited for most of the year. Certain people spoke about the crisis in
social relations that had ensued. Although issues over electoral process or the
misappropriation of funds often led people to question the validity of leaders in
private, sometimes demonstrated through non cooperation in communal tasks,
the social institution of leadership was deeply entrenched. ‘When I asked my
host why it was necessary to have a Vunivalu in the present day he responded:
‘We would be lost [without one]. A people without a leader is like a body
without a head and a body without a head can’t walk’.
1.5 The Spatial Evidence of the Dispute

The leadership dispute had left its mark upon the relative disposition of houses and yavu (ancestral house foundations) both inside and outside village space. For some time the focal point of the village had been the rara, or ceremonial ground. Houses were arranged around it on all four sides. I was told that the rara was divided into two parts facing each other (vebasai). Valelevu had their main house, Vatulawa, at one end of the ceremonial ground with the sau tabu (chiefs' burial ground) and the abandoned fortified village at their back. According to some informants, the noble houses that showed allegiance to them were meant to be arranged at either side. They were faced by mataqali Dreketi whose leader served the nobles in their role as master of ceremonies, or lord of the rara.

In Fiji, space is organised hierarchically according to a socially relative spatial construct as opposed to a system based upon absolute referents or proximate determinants. The above and below axis refers both to the relative height of house foundations (which are an indicator of rank) and to the hierarchical arrangement of persons in certain quotidian social contexts, as well as more infrequent ceremonial events. By extension, it may also refer to an horizontal axis within household space, or to an external axis governing the disposition houses which may correspond to the rising and setting of the sun (Toren 1990:74; though see Toren 1999 for a more extended discussion of the ramifications of this system and its role in practice and social transmission).

It is apparent that prior to colonial intrusion the disposition of houses in Natewa had once been oriented hierarchically on an axis which corresponded with the rising and setting of the sun. Yet the hierarchical organisation of space was also strategically deployed in political rivalry. The entire vanua had collaborated in building Ratu Epeli a splendid modern timber house called Vale Parisi ('The House of Paris') positioned so that it commanded a prospect of the ceremonial
ground. As a result, the hierarchical orientation of the ceremonial ground was shifted by a 180 degrees. Proximity to the ceremonial ground, also a indicator of prestige, was also modified by building new houses. Money from coconut cooperatives in the 1960s, he built a series of houses for the members of the mataqali Valenisau, flanking the rara. A new house was built, in front of the house of the head of the Bauan faction, for the village headman commanding the prospect of the ceremonial ground.

1.6 Stasis and Mobility

The strategic manipulation of space as a way of effecting social control was therefore common to indigenous practice as well as to the apparatuses (maps, models of land tenure and inheritance) designed to facilitate colonial administration. But it was different in kind. Following the Second World War the strict administration of spatial controls was progressively relaxed by the colonial administration as increasing numbers of Natewans traveled further afield in search of employment. Renewed social mobility had left a variable impact on village life.

Living in Natewa gave one the impression of being in two places at once. In his ethnography of Moala, Marshall Sahlins quotes a woman from this island who describes life in the village as being like living in the ‘yoke in the middle of an egg’. I soon saw what she meant. In the village itself conversation was largely confined to local or village matters - it was difficult to form an impression of other parts of the island, or the Fijian archipelago, let alone of other nearby island groups, such as Tonga. However, just outside the village boundary, in the post office, you could find another Natewa. Here people from the outlying Natewan villages of Vusa, Dawa and Vusasivo, together with people from the village of Natewa itself would foregather to receive postal orders and pension money or to talk to relatives living in other parts of Fiji or the
Pacific on the phone. According to one inhabitant from the village of Vusa as many as 70% of the village population were living outside the village. In the village of Natewa, relatively few of the leading chiefly households could say that three generations of their family had been employed in other parts of Fiji. However, by the time that I came to do fieldwork (95-97) all children were encouraged to go to secondary school and to find professional employment if possible.

Recent social mobility had begun to alter the cultural evaluation of staying and leaving which was once defined by proximity to the ancestors and by the practice of virilocal marriage (Toren 1999). Both boys and girls were increasingly encouraged to find work. Some boys were chosen to help with the planting and to live in the village to maroroya na i yavu (lit. to maintain the ancestral foundations). Those who flunked their exams returned to tend to their parents and raise money for their sibling's education. However, rates outmigration were not evenly distributed throughout the vanua; rank played its part. Although all the villagers in Natewa tikina had relatives living abroad, the numbers were substantially fewer in Buca, Tukavesi, Vusasivo and Nadavaci.

Outmigration meant that even people who stayed in the village were regularly on the move. Throughout the year people would leave the village to visit kin working elsewhere. Life-cycle rites, in particular, provided occasions when Natewans' living in different parts of the islands would foregather. Often the journeys involved were considerable: attending funerals in the capital, Suva, involved a long journey by truck and an overnight journey by boat. Some rites were held further afield still, in the northern parts of Viti Levu where Natewans happened to be working. The effort invested in gathering and transporting offerings and feasts for these events was considerable. Barkcloth and mats were made in the village in anticipation of these events. This activity reached a
crescendo each Christmas when many offspring living elsewhere would return to the vanua for celebrations.

Attending life-cycle rites made me realise that the vanua is an expansive, dynamic and multi-dimensional entity which defies conventional mapping. It is largely that insight which has inspired this piece of work.

1.7 The Question of Marriage

I was instructed by several people that I met in Natewa to discover why ‘no one gets married any more’. This intriguing proposition has a direct bearing on my research since Natewan women told me that the true purpose of masi (barkcloth) was its use in marital rites. Rites which celebrate marital unions have not ceased, instead they have been altered and displaced to several years after cohabitation. Elopement (veidrotaki) has become an acceptable way of side-stepping the rites of displacement which were formerly performed prior to cohabitation, rites in which masi could play a prominent part, depending upon the rank of the people involved. It emerged that Natewan’s had been side-stepping the obligation to make a formal proposal by presenting a whale’s tooth for the past sixty years. Why was it necessary to avoid these rites? Or, looking at the problem another way, why did people still feel obliged to elope when, as often as not, their parents had been obliged to elope themselves?

It is interesting to note that in contemporary Fiji the theme of elopement and the attempt to avoid marital obligations features prominently at regional political events. Every year Cakaudrove Province holds a fundraising event in Suva to augment the money collected from the provincial tax. This event is called ‘Tagimaucia’ after a mythic heroine from the island of Taveuni whose attempted elopement with her lover led to her death. According to the story, her body and her tears were transformed into a flower which was named after her. At the provincial fundraising which took place during my first week in
Suva, *sulu* (sarongs) with the words *Tagimaucia* and *Ma sa atchi!* (roughly, ‘Mmm, that bites!’) printed across them, were presented as reciprocal offerings for donations of cash.

Several ethnographers have also drawn attention to the increase in elopement and the delay and or displacement of marriage rites in Viti Levu (Ravuvu, 1987; Wiliksen Bakker, 1992; Thomas 1991). The Fijian ethnographer, Aseela Ravuvu, has drawn out an interesting aspect of this phenomenon by showing how ‘irregular unions’ (to use his terms) and the ongoing performance of life cycle rites are inter-connected. According to Ravuvu, elopement has altered the motivation for performing life-cycle transactions. He suggests that in contemporary Fiji, many life-cycle transactions are performed, in part, out of the desire to seek atonement for ‘irregular unions’. But Ravuvu also stresses that life-cycle presentations, exchanged between transacting parties, are prospective, forward-looking events. As he puts it,

Ceremonial presentation or *veigaravi vakavanua* involves the *vakacabori* ceremonial dedication of valued objects. The high degree of effort exerted in the quest for a better life is evinced by the offering of *i yau*.

As Ravuvu goes on to argue, the offering of *i yau* is not a gift so much as a form of sacrifice. Once addressed to the ancestors this sacrifice has come to be addressed to the Christian God (Ravuvu, 1987:233).

Solrun Wiliksen Bakker has also drawn attention to the widespread practice of elopement in the capital city of Suva. She has described the subterfuge involved in organising elopement and the feigned ignorance of the parents as ‘a kind of play in which everybody knows the rules of the game’ (Wiliksen-Bakker, 1992: 115). But although elopement is tacitly condoned it nevertheless entails the need for ritual cleansing or atonement. She suggests that
the formation of ‘body imagery’ using assemblages of barkcloth and mats is one of the means by which such cleansing is achieved.

Nicholas Thomas’ research in Noikoro has developed a perspective on exchange which is congruent with this idea of sacrifice. He found that prestations of *yau* were ‘designed to be alienated’, that presentations of barkcloth and other forms of cloth wealth addressed feelings of unease or debt, and that marital transaction sometimes entailed women’s conversion from one church denomination to another, as well as effecting a transfer of allegiance. He also emphasised that in contemporary Noikoro the sacrifice of resources had come to be quantitatively evaluated indicating the cost of kinship had come in part to be culturally evaluated in monetary terms (Thomas, 1991, 1997:225).

1.8 The Relationship Between Brothers and Sisters

The perceived need to address ‘irregular unions’ raises the question of how an ideology concerning the regular performance of marital rites has become so firmly entrenched. Historical accounts of marital rites are markedly less detailed than the accounts of burial and mortuary rites which are often based upon first hand observation. A.M. Hocart’s comparative survey of life-cycle rites, largely based upon oral accounts collected from different parts of Vanua Levu, Taveuni and Lau indicates that the practice of marital rites varied from one region to another. For example, in the inland area of Koroalau, on Vanua Levu - an area remote from the influence of the maritime polities- manufactured goods were not transacted at marital rites. However the situation was different in Natewa:

If a daughter of the war god [vunivalu] marries they have a big festival called *veitasi* that is, the cutting of the hair. If Lady Lydia were to marry into Thakaundrove, the people of Thakaundrove would make a feast when she is taken over there. Then the people of Natewa come home and the “father’s of the bride” i.e. her father and his
generation, prepare stuff (*i yau*). and take them to Thakaundrove. Just before Natewa comes away they are presented with things from winward (Hocart 1952:132).

Hocart’s comments indicate that the practice of marriage rites varied according to region and to the rank or position of the woman in question. Lester and Toganivalu’s descriptions of marital practice in Bau indicates that marriage within Bau and marriage with strangers was performed in a different manner.

Although descriptions of the practice of marriage rites based upon first hand observation are rare, the role of marriage in systems of kinship as a structural feature of social organisation or as an aspect of political alliance has been analysed in detail. Relationships which ensue from marriage have been accorded particular attention. For example, the Fijian *vasu* relationship, which accords obligations or respect to the brother’s sister’s son, has been an enduring topic of interest in the ethnographic literature. Both hypogamous and hypergamous marital alliances, together with the *vasu* relationship, have been shown to be instrumental in the expansion of the pre-colonial *matanitu*. (Sahlins, 1991; Thomas, 1986; 1991). Yet the historical import of this institution has received less attention than it deserves.

Atonement for ‘irregular unions’ in contemporary Fiji intimates that the institution of cross-cousin marriage has a theological dimension which has only been intimated in the ethnohistorical literature so far (Hocart; Sahlins; Toren Ravuvu Wiliksen Bekker). The institution of cross-cousin marriage, which makes the progeny of cross-sex siblings the only marriageable category of kin, indicates that the relationship between brothers and sisters manifests its wider political significance in terms of the union that their separation will provoke in the long run.

In order to consider the longer-term implications of the relationship between brother’s and sisters I have been drawn to Annette Weiner’s celebrated
ethnography of kinship and exchange on the Trobriand Islands. Weiner's ethnography is particularly germane to this thesis since she was also trying to account for the degree of effort invested by women in the production of ephemeral offerings of cloth wealth for life-cycle rites. Annette Weiner inverted Levi Strauss' famous model of alliance. She argued that instead of the incest taboo being the fundamental sexual prohibition which led to exogamous reciprocity (whereby a sister is exchanged in return for a wife) incestuous unity (comprised of the matriline's reproductive wealth) was the ground for other forms of exchange. Her ethnography showed how incestuous unity was repeatedly re-accomplished by women's presentations. By revealing that apparent reciprocity masked deeper strategies of retention based upon withholding, or repatriating, valued cultural resources necessary to ensure the continuity of the matriline, she showed that the incest taboo intimated the cultural value accorded to endogamous reproduction.

Weiner's ethnography and subsequent writings developed a definition of kinship that embraced theology and material culture. In her formulation, rites of kinship and exchange are not simply designed to achieve human reproduction, they involve the reproduction of a wide range of resources including cosmological phenomena, material and intellectual property, ancestral substance and land. Her definition of the concept reproduction can be seen as a sustained critique of the short-term temporal framework of classic exchange theory. In her analysis, exchange relationships are seen as embracing the broader, cyclical movements of life and death. In particular, Weiner's analysis showed how Trobriand women's substantial heaped offerings of dried banana leaves and grass skirts did not engender relationships of debt but rather provided a means of achieving a more complex form of control over the cosmological, material and human resources required for the regeneration and expansion of the matriline. She claimed that the corresponding movements of male and female
wealth over time engendered ‘a cyclical world view in which the processes of reproduction and regeneration [were] perceived as essential cultural concerns’ (Weiner 1980:72).

The expansive view of kinship developed by Weiner has raised new issues for inquiry, specifically the question of loyalty. Since reproduction cannot occur without the active co-operation of successors, longer cycles of reproduction highlight the importance which must be accrued to the maintenance of loyalty. In later work, Weiner has drawn attention to the way in which cloth wealth and other valuables can serve as a focus for devotion and allegiance in kinship economies in the South West Pacific. She has described a particular category of culturally valued artefacts, which she terms ‘inalienable possessions’, which bring the past into the present so that history becomes an intimate part of a person’s identity. Because these artefacts are the focal points of devotion, which enable a group to achieve a measure of immortality, inalienable possessions are the very things which cannot be given away in exchange.

Weiner’s monograph, Inalienable Possessions, features an image of a crown on its cover. However it is surely possible to envisage a different kind of corporateness, achieved by means of sacrifice and the replication of imagery as opposed to a few focal artefacts. Bringing the past into the present cannot simply be reduced to a matter of goods that can be securely possessed or safeguarded - it involves the transmission of knowledge as well. Nor does her model of exchange fit easily with the data on Fijian exchange. First of all, Fijian inheritance is generally organised on a patrilineal basis; it is women who must be displaced in marriage. Secondly Fijian attitudes to ceremonial valuables do not fit easily with Weiner’s formulation of inalienable wealth. As Thomas points out it is unclear from Weiner’s writing whether specific objects are inalienable or whether it is the memory attached to objects which makes them so valuable. As Thomas has shown, neither model appears to be applicable to the Fijian data
which show that exchange artefacts do not carry histories, and that instead they appear to be made to be alienated. Yet objects which are repeatedly produced may provide a means for transmitting knowledge and performing an act of service thereby ensuring loyalty in a particular way.

Recently, Simon Harrison has drawn a distinction between the control of resources of knowledge and the control of artefacts themselves which has made it possible to envisage how imagery which is intended to secure reproduction can be simultaneously offered and kept. His work also reveals that institutions that enable immortality, or the regeneration of life, to be grasped imaginatively often become the target of intense political rivalry. In his analysis, rivalry may either be focused on the control of objects which embody these powers or upon the entitlement to distribute and allocate the assets in regenerative resources (such as rituals) in a particular manner (Harrison 1991, 1995; see also Kuechler 1997). Together, these considerations suggest that the role of material culture in the mediation of attenuated relationships between brothers and sisters in the nobility may need to be rethought.

1.9 The Question of Migration

Ethnographies written about Fijian village life have so often presented an image of stasis and the stability of tradition that migration to town has come to seem like an aberration. But although degrees of out migration vary in the different villages of Natewa tikina the general pattern of migration from the district is by no means unusual. Migration from rural areas to the urban centres for work began in a piecemeal fashion during the 1920s. By the late 60s, when the price of copra fell dramatically, migration to the urban centres for a spell of paid employment had become a characteristic aspect of the social experience of rural Fijians in several areas of the north eastern and eastern island periphery (Unesco/Unfpa Fiji Island Reports. No 5, 1979). Since the 70s, growing numbers of Fijians have travelled overseas to study and work.
Population mobility has meant that the vanua’s economy has altered substantially. In the ‘time of money’ maintaining the loyalty of offspring working in other parts of Fiji as well as in urban centres in other parts of the Pacific has become a pressing concern for people living in rural Natewa. Yet the ethnographic and ethnohistorical literature on Vanua Levu indicates that the current phenomenon of population mobility also has an historical dimension.

A.M. Hocart was a thoughtful, contemporary critic of the colonial model of static social organisation and of the related notion that the emergence of states had merely been a reflex response to the process of acculturation. Yet his provocative critique, *The Northern States of Fiji*, was only published posthumously in 1952. This book has a direct bearing on this thesis since Hocart visited Natewa during his multi-site fieldwork research. Between 1911 and 1914 he compiled a rich body of data regarding the recent history of the migration and interaction of peoples on Lau, Taveuni, Vanua Levu and later in Lomaiviti.

In the first few pages of his thesis on Vanua Levu Hocart posited that there had been series of eastwards migrations from the west coast of Viti Levu to the north eastern and eastern parts of the archipelago. He described these migratory movements as a series of overlapping layers, or strata. These migratory movements included an initial migration of Veratan nobility. Subsequent migrations, from Bau and Somosomo, had been partially achieved by a piecemeal process of inter-marriage and deputation (Hocart, 1952:20). Finally he posited that there had been a counter migration from Tonga to the coastal areas to eastern and central Fiji. He drew attention to the phenomenon of migration and the changes in ritual and kinship organisation which this entailed to highlight his interest in ‘the way culture is built up and destroyed’ (ibid.7).

More recent research has provided a clearer picture of the expansion of the maritime polities from Verata, and later Bau and Somosomo during the course of the 18th and 19th centuries (Sayes 1982, 1984; Thomas, 1986, 1991;
These studies have highlighted the centrality of warfare and tactical marriage alliances in the expansion of the *matanitu*. However the strategies developed by successive polities in order to safeguard allegiance during a period of political instability across a widely dispersed group of islands has not been satisfactorily answered to date.

Whilst thinking about the way in which successive movements of people have extended their political control over lands divided by considerable expanses of sea my attention was attracted to Marshall Sahlins' celebrated paper on the expansion of segmentary lineages across extended regions of southern Sudan. There are some interesting corollaries between his account of the growth of the Dinka and the Nuer and the growth of Verata and later maritime polities in Fiji. Like the pre colonial *matanitu*, the Dinka and the Nuer did not have an hereditary system of leadership based solely upon genealogical principles. Lineality was said to be relatively weakly expressed (as it was in Fiji Nayacakalou 1975:32). The Dinka expanded slowly, by multiplication, and by the progressive segmentation and out migration of the progeny of brothers. But the Dinka were expanding into very sparsely inhabited territory. The Nuer expanded next, and their predatory tactics for achieving expansion had to be different because the Dinka were already there. Sahlins lists some of the tactics that the Nuer employed. They included warfare, the incorporation of different people within the lineage and the development of a more efficacious cultural system. In addition, the integration of lineage segments was achieved by means of complementary opposition between intermarrying bands and by charismatic leadership. Charismatic leadership was said to depend upon fostering allegiance through developing inter-personal relationships based on generosity, through the manifestation of efficacy or magic and through the demonstration of oratorical skills.
The implication of Sahlin's essay is that the institutions of kinship, leadership and ritual organisation developed by secondary invaders may be regarded as socially relative phenomena: adaptive predatory tactics suited to a given social environment. Simon Harrison has also used the concept of layers, or strata of sociality, to develop a critique of alliance theory. His purpose is to demonstrate that ritual may emerge as a functional adaptation to a situation of war. Drawing upon sources mainly taken from the ethnography of the Papua New Guinea Highlands he describes ritual complexes that are designed to counteract aspects of sociality derived from the movement of women in marriage, as well as other cross-cutting ties.

Harrison has questioned a tradition in anthropological thought leading back from Levi-Strauss to Mauss and Tylor which held that groups were the natural or given units for engaging in exogamous exchange. Harrison has argued that this tradition of thought had perceived the problem back to front. Referring to his many examples drawn from Melanesian ethnography he comments:

The basic structures of these societies are not groups but the relations between groups. A political community is intrinsically permeable, it's members have fundamental obligations to outsiders that threaten constantly to subvert and disintegrate its identity. It exists only to the extent that its members act to close off its boundaries. An independent polity is an entity needing constantly to be achieved by counteracting its external ties and dependencies (Harrison, 1993:14).

I have found Harrison's observations useful for trying to understand how sacrifice could have come to be redeployed in systems of kinship in pre-colonial Fiji for strategic advantage. Harrison's second main insight is that in order to foreground the group from a network of competing claims for allegiance violence often has to be performed not upon distant enemies but upon immediate kin. It is interesting to see that in this respect he explains the form that violence takes by describing the strength of feelings of obligation and loyalty which emerges through the early stages of upbringing. He links his
analysis of ritual violence to Marilyn Strathern’s work which has shown that the western concepts of the individual and society are inappropriate for describing the way in which people imagine sociality in the South Pacific. As he puts it:

> Individuals are linked from the very beginning of their existence in inescapable relations of obligation and dependency to outsiders... what creates conflict within groups is the ever present sociality between groups (Harrison, 1993:23).

Thus ritual is perceived as an instrument which can foreground the allegiances of the group that are necessary for war by rupturing cross-cutting ties.

1.10 Sacrifice and Representation

It has been recognised that sacrifice played an integral part in the formation of polities in pre-colonial Fiji (Sahlins, 1983). However the transaction of artefacts at life-cycle ceremonies in contemporary Fiji has been largely analysed under the rubric of gift exchange. If the offering of *i yau* in contemporary Fiji is to be regarded as a sacrifice it is necessary to develop a model which can explain the logic of object sacrifice and its implication for social relations.

Relationships that are initiated through sacrifice cannot be reduced to reciprocity or equivalence since relationships constituted by means of sacrifice are fundamentally hierarchical in character. It is for this reason that Mauss was very careful to distinguish between sacrifice and the gift in his essay on the subject (Sahlins 1974). In an essay on sacrifice Hubert and Mauss listed a number of characteristic features of sacrifice based upon surveying a range of comparative examples. They emphasised that for something to be sacrificed it cannot simply be offered but must be destroyed. Destruction may be designed to achieve a transformation of the state of the person sacrificed. Sacrifice imaginatively translates and repeats experiences that defy
reproduction, such as death and birth, and transposes these experiences in the middle of life. With reference to representation, they note that sacrifice requires that some part of the victim becomes the food of the gods (Hubert and Mauss, 1964:11). Sacrifice is therefore about achieving a relationship with objects of devotion; by means of devotional objects repetitive acts of sacrifice increase the power that these objects have (Miller, 1998:93).

Hocart’s ethnography includes a theory of representation which is helpful for thinking through implications of object sacrifice in Fiji. At the outset of his thesis he made the following proposition: ‘We must take our start from the fundamental principle that the god and his material representation are completely identified’ (Hocart, 1952: 13). He went on to show how the representation of gods in Fiji had undergone a series of changes which loosely corresponded to the migrations of people: in many parts of Vanua Levu local crop gods (stones) had been replaced by chiefs who styled themselves as ‘cloths’. By remaining as true to the local idiom as possible Hocart developed a theory of ritual-cum-political organisation. The ritual-cum-political organisation of peoples in Vanua Levu revolved around asserting control of sacred sites or burial mounds. However it was achieved, the reorientation of sacred topographic sites led to a change in the movements of ceremonial valuables. Hocart stressed that the organisation of the state (matanitu) was ‘Not an administration, but a system of services and offerings, a network of paths followed by feasts, kava, manufactured articles to the central god from the lesser gods and back again’ (Hocart 1952: 21).

In thinking about the possible connections between burial mounds and cloths I have found the lesser known work of the French anthropologist Albert Loisy particularly useful. Loisy highlights that sacrifice is above all a form of action which uses imagery to imitate the effects that it wishes to achieve.
His essay has prompted me to think about the way in which images - assemblages of artefacts - are presented in Fiji.

Christina Toren has also emphasised the centrality of ritual action in Fiji (Toren, 1990). She points out that the division between ritual and everyday life is not applicable to Fiji since many everyday activities, exchanges, everyday kin relations made manifest at mealtimes come under the wider rubric of **cakacaka vakavanua** (lit. 'acting in the manner of the land'). I have found Toren's analysis particularly helpful since it shows how apparently mundane aspects of everyday life such as eating, house decoration, or barkcloth production are concomitant parts of a way of 'acting in the manner of the land'.

In the context of a theory of sacrifice which posits that mimesis and identification are said to play an integral part, the expression 'acting in the manner of the land' assumes new significance - another temporal dimension. In his last book, Alfred Gell adapted Marilyn Strathern's model of the 'partible' or decomposing person whose parts are shed, differentiated, grown and recomposed during the course of life cycle exchanges and used it to analyse Polynesian ritual sculpture (Strathern 1988; Gell 1998). Gell was attempting to explain how artefacts come to play a specific part in social interaction by virtue of being invested with a range of person-like attributes: the animacy of pattern; the capacity to form relationships with other objects; the capacity to effect changes; to sprout new growth, to give off other bits of themselves and to decompose like humans.

As a prime example of his theory of agency or efficacy manifested through artefacts he drew upon Alain Babadzan's recent historical analysis of the divestment and reinvestment of 'staff gods' in Tahiti, prior to their destruction by the mission (Babadzan 1993). Babadzan's central thesis is that wrapping and unwrapping barkcloth from staff gods should be regarded a
sacrificial act because it imitates the process of disincarnation which occurs after death. Through rites of divestment the staff god is sacrificed as he scatters his flesh and blood back into the world (Gell, 1998: 113, Babadzan, 1993: 75-82).

1.11 Sacrifice, History and the Body Politic

The description of the sacrifice of staff gods prompts Gell to discuss how persons are amplified by means of the artefacts and imagery. He arrives at a description of a person who is extended in space and time by means of artefacts which represent, or multiply his person. This description is evocative of the body politic under the French absolutist monarchy where the king’s person could be amplified in the form of mundane artefacts that were housed in the many dwellings of the realm (Auslander, 1996). However, French absolutism is clearly not applicable to Fiji where corporate entities - if they can be shown to have existed - have always been subject to competition from rivals. Furthermore, a characteristic feature of Fijian representation is that forms integration achieved through sacrifice are fleetingly composed and decomposed through assemblages of artefacts.

How do sacrificial artefacts bring past time into the present, facilitating specific ways of developing historical consciousness? In thinking about the relationship between historical consciousness, sacrifice and the body politic I have been drawn to Ernst Kantorowicz masterpiece, The Kings Two Bodies. His work draws out the paradoxical way in which people treat sacrificial artefacts: revering them respecting on the one hand and on the other, adapting and modifying them precisely because they are recognised as being both powerful channels of access and man made things.

Kantorowicz’ book is a remarkable account of the way in which changing perceptions of immortality have lead to qualitatively different ways of
representing social institutions. His subject is the historical emergence, and progressive transformation of the representation of the body politic in early medieval Europe. He traces how the concept of the corpus mysticum, embodied in the circulation of the host at the Eucharist, was successively borrowed, re-borrowed and adapted by the papal institution and the Carolingian empire as they developed rival political theologies to sanction their competitive claims to sanctity and allegiance. His analysis of the way in which shifts in the temporal qualities of material culture are involved in these struggles has been particularly inspiring for thinking through some of the implications of the legacy of cross-cultural interaction in Fiji in relation to issues of representation. He shows how Christian conceptions of immortality and the separation of body and soul were changed, and newly applied to earth by the revival and adaptation of the Aristotelian belief in the eternity of the world. In late medieval thought the eternity of the world came to be seen not as an endless cycle of growth and decay but as linear continuum in which the time of the angels, a sort of timeless continuum, was brought down to earth. As a result, new concerns about the perpetuity of the soul upon earth brought about reformulation of the administrative-cum ritual models of the state qua body politic. In the long term these changes were to lead to fundamental changes in the representation of people and property in the law, as well as in art and in literature in line with the new dogma that 'the king never dies'.

Rather than safeguarding against decay, Fijian sacrificial art shows that the imaginative portrayal of death and decay is central to the promotion and control of reproduction. As I have looked into the way in which barkcloth has been used to rupture, promote and negotiate relationships in changing historical circumstances, some of them produced by the colonial era, I have gradually begun to appreciate some of the wider ramifications which are entailed by using tree to model sociality in different ways. I hope to show that an
ethnography which makes material culture its focus can raise some new questions about the changing character of Fijian social organisation and perceptions of place.

1.12 A Summary of Contents

This thesis is an attempt to convey the active part played by barkcloth in a changing, multilayered economy of sacrifice which has come to embrace new modes of belief. The analysis begins with a description of the transformation of trees into cloth. I assess how the control of human assets in discreet barkcloth complexes is achieved by means of controlling the knowledge of patterned imagery through the manipulation of leaves. In Chapter three I discuss the characteristic composition and spatial relationships of named imagery in the masi and gatu barkcloth complexes.

In Chapter Four the data presented in the first two chapters is interpreted, and this interpretation is used as a basis for presenting a hypothetical model of the use of masi (a particular kind of barkcloth) in the expansion of the precolonial chiefly polities. Drawing upon secondary historical sources I suggest that the use of barkcloth to achieve the growth of chiefly polities can be understood in terms of a specific, socially adaptive and essentially tactical response to a historically specific ritual cum political milieu.

In Chapter five I describe the sequence of sacrificial transactions performed to prompt stages of growth which enable corporate membership of the vanua to become part of embodied experience. Identification with the vanua helps to clarify the logic of the action of divestment that I witnessed at one rite of ‘unfolding’, or separation through marriage in Natewa. In analysing rites of return of progeny I show how layers of barkcloth and other kinds of cloth are manipulated by people and applied to new contexts as a way of
imaginatively grasping the rapidly changing nature of social experience and belief.

In Chapter six I analyse the role of barkcloth and mats in burial rites. Burial rites reveal how a new system of representation based upon multiplication has been developed to serve to create a new sense of corporateness.

In the final chapter I look at another dimension of life-cycle rites - the use of *masi* in domestic displays. The current production and display of barkcloth takes place in circumstances that have been fundamentally altered by the experience of colonial occupation. Yet I suggest that as a result of these altered circumstances barkcloth has come to play an integral part in maintaining a focal point of devotion for endogamous expansion.
The Reproduction of Barkcloth in Natewa

2.1 The Initial Problem: Patterns of Continuity and Discontinuity

To date research into barkcloth production in Polynesia has given rise to an overriding question. Why has the manufacture and ceremonial use of barkcloth continued in Fiji, Samoa and Tonga when, for the most part, its manufacture has ceased in the eastern and central regions of Polynesia? Why should the process of acculturation have produced such differing effects upon the barkcloth institutions in different regions of Polynesia? It has been suggested that the use of barkcloth in central and eastern Polynesia was of a more religious nature. For example, Simon Kooijman, who has published the leading scholarly on barkcloth has argued that:

The ceremonial function of *tapa* [a generic term for barkcloth] - as compared with its other functions - was certainly not less important in western Polynesia than on the eastern and central islands, but there the celebrations and ceremonies in which *tapa* was an indispensable attribute belonged mainly to the sphere of interpersonal relationships. It was personal and group obligations of a political and socioeconomic nature, as well as status considerations, which were the underlying factors in these ceremonies. They belonged to a part of the traditional culture that was barely affected by the foreigners because they did not feel it necessary to interfere with it (Kooijman 1976:156).

As Kooijman’s research has also indicated, the overall picture in Fiji is complex (Kooijman, 1972; 1976). Rather than a single tradition of barkcloth manufacture continuing in Fiji, several distinct kinds of barkcloth have been produced in the islands. Often different kinds of barkcloth have been manufactured simultaneously in the same place. Furthermore, each kind of barkcloth has
enjoyed discreet phases of decline and revival during the course of the last century.

In Natewa there is oral historical evidence that three distinct kinds of barkcloth have been manufactured there at different times. What does this imply? As I shall reveal each of these different kinds of barkcloth can be distinguished in terms of the social organisation of labour and by the control and distribution of knowledge.

2.2 The Supercession on Different Kinds of Barkcloth

Barkcloth has been described as a ‘distinguishing trait of the Austronesian speaking peoples’ who carried and replanted the paper mulberry tree (*Broussonetia papyrifera*) together with the plantain or banana they journeyed across the Pacific, as well as down to Kerala in southern India and to the island of Madagascar, off the east coast of Africa (c.f. Thomas 1999). In many islands of Polynesia barkcloth is called *tapa*, which means ‘the beaten thing’, but the current Fijian term for barkcloth, as well as for the paper mulberry tree from which the bark is taken.

The eastern part of the Fijian archipelago is particularly associated with the supercession of different kinds of barkcloth. Earlier sources, such as the contemporary eyewitness accounts of the Wesleyan missionary Thomas Williams (resident in Lakeba and later in Somosomo in the mid 19th century), suggest that both the tree and the cloth were formerly called *malo* and that *masi* became the generic term for barkcloth in Fiji at a later date (Ewins, 1982:5; Williams, 1982:63). The distinction is confusing because in more recent times *masi* has been used to describe plain as well as patterned cloth. White *malo* were used for clothing in ceremonial contexts as well as everyday use. Prior to conversion *malo* was used as a loin cloth and lengths of fine white cloth called *i sala*, lit. ‘the path’, were used to make head decorations (*usu, tabulua*, lit. ‘that which it is to loosen or remove’), sashes (*i oro, i wa bale*) and scarves (Ewins 1982:5).
It seems that women only wore barkcloth on ceremonial occasions though Ratu Deve Toganivalu reports that a stiff kind of white barkcloth called se yavu, (lit. 'bleached masi'), could be cut into strips and twisted and then used to make women’s skirts (Toganivalu 1917:9).

The supercession of different kinds of barkcloth such as malo and masi is of interest because of assertions regarding the identification between chiefs, gods and their material representation. In his thesis on Vanua Levu Hocart emphasised that a god a chief and his material representation were identified (Hocart, 1952:13). The identification between chiefs and cloths emerges from a number of accounts of the ceremonial installation of chiefs. It suggests that there is a religious aspect to the use of barkcloth in Fiji as Hocart notes:

The whole raison d'être of a chief is the same as of a god of the land, abundance..... It is the same function as that of a god of the land who receives offerings that the land may flourish. In Ndreketi they appoint a ‘cloth’, a receiver of feasts, if food is scarce. A good cloth is not a virtuous chieftain, but one under whom the bananas will ripen and everything will be plentiful (Hocart, 1952:19; see Toren 1999:62 for a more extended discussion of the identification of chiefs and cloths)

In ceremonial speeches in Natewa today the chiefs are still referred to collectively as masi. Sahlins informs us that in many locales the priests who represented the i taukei or indigenous lands people were known as malosivo (lit.‘the abdicated cloth’) whilst the foreigner chiefs or paramounts who supplanted them were given the title masi vou (lit. ‘the new cloth’; Sahlins, 1985:86). In neighbouring Tunuloa the title of the current paramount of Naqaravutu is masi vou whilst the title of the paramount of the island of Moce, in the Lau group, is Ramasi (lit. ‘Sir Cloth’). Thus different kinds of barkcloth may indicate changes in the constitution and ritual organisation of the polity. In Natewa, as in other areas,
malo continue in residual form as the small strips of barkcloth which are tied to the arm of a new paramount during chiefly ceremonies of installation, binding him to the land.

There are also other regional distinctions. In the eastern part of the Fijian island periphery barkcloth is now made and patterned by women, apparently supporting the view that, in common with other Austronesian speaking peoples Fijian cloth wealth is essentially associated with female reproductive capacity (Sahlins, 1985:87; Weiner, 1976). However, according to Kingsley Roth, who documented the processes of barkcloth production in the district of Navatisula, in the highlands of Viti Levu, men coppiced the masi saplings and patterned the cloth using either bamboo or rollers incised with parallel lines, or large staves or logs bound with sennit twine and twigs. Here, women’s role in barkcloth production was restricted to the manufacture of loaloa (a black dye made whilst undergoing sexual taboos) and the beating of the bark to produce cloth. According to Roth, these rollers were placed beneath the cloth which was wound round them. Then kesakesa (a dye from the stain banana) was rubbed back and forth along the rollers through the cloth (Roth, 1934: 229-302).

It is therefore interesting to note that the two printing institutions of barkcloth that are particularly associated with women involve the use leaves for printing imagery. Therefore, although stencils used for printing masi have a distinctive, vulva-like shape - which does suggests that the reproduction of imagery is associated with female reproductive capacity - I suggest that this should be seen as a cultural variable as opposed to an essential feature which is common to all women’s cloth wealth in the region (cf. Weiner 1976).

Both masivolavola (lit. ‘figured masi’) and gatubolabola sometimes called masibolabola (lit. ‘plaited masi or gatu’) are printed with stencils made from leaves. Masi volavola, sometimes now referred to as masi kesa, is particularly associated with the Lau group, but it is also produced in several
other parts of the eastern island periphery. On Vanua Levu it was made in Macuata and in Natewa. *Gatubolabola* has larger more optically dazzling patterns and which is less intricate than *masi* is produced in Cakaudrove, in some of the northern Lauan islands and in Natewa. *Gatu* is especially associated with the chiefly village of Cakaudrove, Somosomo (For the sake of clarity I shall distinguish these cloths hereafter by referring to them by the abbreviated terms *masi* and *gatu*).

2.3 The Introduction of Tongan-style Cloth

As yet there has been no thesis which accounts for the introduction of Tongan institutions of barkcloth production to the Lau islands, to Vanua Levu as well as to parts of Lomaiviti and Cakaudrove. What is clear is that in the eastern part of the archipelago Lau the manufacture of Tongan style cloth had virtually superseded the manufacture of *masi* by the 1930s.

When Laura Thompson did fieldwork research on the island of Namuka in the Lau group (1933-34) she found evidence that *masi* production had gone into decline. Only a few women knew how to make *masi* on the island of Moce, and only two women knew how to make cloth in this manner on the island of Namuka. Instead the production of Tongan-style cloth had taken over, 'practically all the women make *tapa* sheets by the Tongan method' she wrote (Thompson 1940:194).

Kooijman’s ethnography of barkcloth production on the island of Moce reveals that institutions for making Tongan-style barkcloth involved distinct patterns of labour, a distinct technical vocabulary, a different way of processing materials and even different kinds of anvils for beating the cloth (to make Tongan *tapa* the hulls of disused canoes are used as anvils as opposed to the trunks of trees). When Kooijman conducted his ethnographic research into barkcloth soon after Fiji regained independence, he found that a revival of *masi* had taken place. In one village on Moce the cloth was being used and made for
life-cycle ceremonies, in another village which had not produced traditionally a thriving cottage industry, organised under the aegis of the co-operative society, had grown up to supply Fijian style bark-cloth souvenirs to the tourist market (Kooijman 1976).

2.4 Barkcloth Production as Work in the Manner of the Land

These comparative data from Lau are of interest since the decline of Tongan-style barkcloth production appears to have occurred at the same time in Natewa (c.1970). In Natewa, however, barkcloth is never made for tourists, in spite of the proximity of a potential market. Instead, it is produced to mark stages of the life-cycle, to be presented as a remembrance, or as a drying cloth (mamaca) for greeting visiting dignitaries from overseas; it used for domestic display, and also as a way of raising cash at fundraisings for a vanua project. Yet although barkcloth production in Natewa is not a cottage industry it is still produced regularly. Its ongoing production is partly due to the ephemerality of the cloth itself which perishes rapidly in humid conditions. But it also because barkcloth production comes under the rubric of action in the way of the land.

As Toren notes: ‘The Fijian term for tradition and ritual is ‘acting in the way of the land (cakacaka vakavanua); it refers to a way of living and behaving that is culturally appropriate’ (Toren 1999:45). ‘Acting in the way of the land’ may also refer to heavy or difficult work (cakacaka dredre) as well as every day activities such as eating, planting food and making cloth. The significance of this is that what anthropologists term ritual is a pervasive part of life although this does not preclude the performance of specific ceremonies. The production of barkcloth must therefore be seen as part and parcel of the ceremonial complex in which it is used. Depending upon its intended ceremonial use masi production comes under the general rubrics cakacaka vakavanua (‘activity in the way of the land’), or cakacaka vakavuvale (‘activity in the way of the household ancestors’). All such activity is divided according to gender
In Natewa making cloth is regarded as women’s work (they tend and coppice the *masi* saplings, beat and pattern the cloth). Men are responsible for planting and preparing food and *yaqona* (kava) ‘in the way of the land. Neither of these activities requires collaboration between the sexes. In fact women are prevented from coming close to the earth ovens (*lovo*) in which food is cooked for ceremonies by ritual sanction. Likewise men are proscribed from witnessing the production of *gatu* by a specific sanction called *ore*. Masi is not subject to equivalent restrictions. However most mornings women begin to make barkcloth after the men have left for work in the gardens. Thus, the staging of the ceremonies as a whole, often involves the collaboration or transaction of male and female effort.

Women in Natewa could not answer my questions about the meaning of barkcloth. Instead, they told me the technical terms which are used to describe the processes involved in producing and presenting cloth. These are revealing. In Natewa, as in other parts of Fiji, the term for making barkcloth and mats is *ogaoga*, ‘the burden’. The manufacture of barkcloth is also described as an *i tavi* (a duty or an obligation), and as an *i tovo* (a custom or tradition). Fulfilling obligations through undertaking work is said to carry more force than mere words.

**2.5 The Classification of Barkcloth as *I yau***

In Natewa *masi* and *gatu* are classified as *i yau ni vanua*, that is ‘*i yau* belonging to the land’. *I yau* describes a category of things and people presented in ceremonial contexts. It is a category which includes *tabua* (whale’s teeth) and women as well as specific manufactured goods. The term *i yau* has often been glossed into English as ‘ceremonial valuable’, or ‘ceremonial property or goods’. However, Hocart translated the term as ‘that which is carried and transferred’, a phrase which succinctly describes the central role that this artefact plays in life-cycle rites and in the transmission of knowledge.
Ratu Deve Toganivalu says the expression *ai yau* originates from *yaauta* and that the term implies movement 'as it does not stay in one place, but is taken about from place to place' (Toganivalu 1917:4). In Natewa, cars and trucks are sometimes called *i yau*, children and garden plots are called *i yau bula*; the category also includes intellectual property like *meke* (songs accompanied by movements) and chants.

When the term is applied to *masi* in ceremonial contexts the term is typically qualified in one way or another. *Masi* is referred to as *i yau dredre* (lit. 'the difficult thing to carry and transfer'), *i yau bibi* (lit. 'the weighty thing to carry and transfer') *i yau dada* (lit. 'the soft pulpy thing, like an over-ripe fruit, to carry and transfer'), *i yau ni yalewa* (lit. 'the woman's thing to carry and transfer'). As well as these more general terms it is described in a number of different ways according to the effects its presentation is intended to produce.

2.6 Procedures of Commissioning: Paths and Doors

Older women’s stories revealed a great deal about the way that barkcloth was commissioned in the past. Mobilisation was described as responding to *na i rogo ni vanua* ('lit. the call of the land'). Responding to the call of the *vanua*, people from lesser lands or the outlying villages were channeled along a defined network of 'paths and doors' ( *sala, katuba*) assembling on the ceremonial ground ( *rara*) to pattern cloth on tree trunk anvils ( *dutua*) owned by the main chiefly houses. The call to participate in ritual work enabled women from peripheral villages to enter the village of the paramount chief. Normally they would use a path through the woods to bypass the village, 'out of respect'.

The network of paths and doors bound the *vanua* together; thus the *vanua*’s limits were delimited through the circulation of offerings. Di Vuluko, the widow of the brother of the former Vunivalu from the Bauan faction, explained the procedure as follows:
Fig. 3 Beating Masi Beneath Vatulawa in Natewa and in the Village of Dawa
In the old days, Somosomo would say that they required a *tutu* [Tongan-style cloth] of such and such a length and the Vunivalu’s wife would call the ladies of Natewa: the wife of From Dreketi, the wife of From Yautibi, and the wife of the Sauvou. They would all come and she would say there is going to be a *soqo vakavanua* (a great gathering in the way of the land) at such and such a place, and she would tell them what was wanted. Then Valenisau would call (*cavuti*) the people of Vusasivo, Dreketi would call the people from Vusa, Yautibi would call the people from Kama, Valelevu would call the people from Dawa to prepare *masi* and bring it to the village for printing. This happened last when Ratu Rakuita was Vunivalu.

Doors, personified in the person of the leader, were perceived to channel access to the village. Thus the head of Yautibi, Mai Yautibi was said to be ‘the door’ for the Kama peoples from Buca, formerly Tukavesi had gone to Kama, but now they went direct to Valenisau. Mai Dreketi, who was the *matanivanua* (‘the face of the land or the speechmaker’), acted as ‘the door’ for the Vusaratu who lived in the village of Vusa - they are a separate people who have a *vakavanua* connection with Natewa. Yet the system of paths and doors had been modified Vusasivo and Nadavaci used to go direct to the Vunivalu at Valelevu but now they went to the new Vunivalu in Valenisau; the people from Dawa were described as being the planting people for the chiefs of Valelevu. Mai Malima also went to Valelevu.

Because barkcloth patterning was one of the rare occasions which concentrated the female population within the chiefly village it provided an occasion for women to learn about the relationships between households. In the past, the relationship between the chiefly households was demarcated by varying rights of access to the village itself. Each household and its satellites had differing rights of access to specific paths leading across the village. Only members of the *vunivalu*’s household had the right to walk across the ceremonial ground. Before revenue from coconuts enabled people to build their own dwellings (circa 1960) households were larger and women from outlying villages would stay in them when they came to make cloth. They would be expected to
gesture customary respect, by clapping before they raised themselves from their knees and by sitting below household members of higher rank.

During the time that Ratu Rakuita, a member of the Bauan faction, was the incumbent to the title of Vunivalu (1973-87) the vakavanua system had fallen into decline. Offerings were far less frequently commissioned and sent to Somosomo or the other chiefly centres and the vanua was no longer mobilised to produce offerings as a single corporate unit. Now offerings of cash were demanded under the auspices of the Church. When the Methodist Conference was held in Somosomo in the early 90s all the boys of Natewa were sent to do contract labour for the forestry commission and on the sugar cane fields near Labasa where they worked for the Indo-Fijian farmers. The village of Somosomo was entirely rebuilt on the proceeds.

Yet, in spite of these changes, whether the system of paths and doors was fixed or mutable was a matter of contemporary political debate. The nature of vakavanua links was said by some to depend not simply on marriage connection but on older political allegiances, yet in practice this distinction was not always clear cut. Members of Valelevu claimed that the paths and ways of the land were protected by ritual sanction. They argued that since the current pretender to the title of Vunivalu had not legitimated his position through ceremonial he was not empowered to call the vanua using the customary ceremonial protocol.

2.7 The Ritual Work of the Land

Oral historical accounts from women living in the subaltern villages of the vanua gradually built up an image of the changing social organisation of barkcloth production. The following description is derived from the many accounts that I gathered whilst I was in the field.

Up until the 1970s ‘the call of the vanua’ came twice a year on the occasion of some big gathering in Bau or Somosomo, or in preparation for the
vakamisanari, the offerings annually collected for the Church. The production of tutu (Tongan-style cloth) and the masi would take up most of a month. The younger girls would be sent off to catch fish for the women to eat and the older women would work under the supervision of the leading women in Natewa. Each of the chiefly households had its own anvil which was set up in the ceremonial ground.

The production of barkcloth involved a specific division of labour. Women from the outlying villages were charged with beating and preparing the masi and tutu, and the women from Natewa would distribute stencils and patternboards with which to pattern the cloth. Each group of women from outside would have somebody whom they could approach for the production of stencils using either affinal or vakavanua connections. These women would supervise the patterning of the cloth.

The atmosphere was strict. Women from satellite villages were frequently scolded (levu na puku) and they were not allowed to tell stories or crack a joke. Only the leading women from Natewa could alleviate the tedium with ribaldry (lasa). For the most part they worked in concentrated silence. Sometimes meke (songs) were sung.

Typically sheets of tutu several hundred fathoms long would be produced, and masi volavola was made for performers of meke at the chiefly gatherings. Both of these cloths were patterned out in the open in the middle of the ceremonial ground. The third kind of barkcloth, gatu, was always made inside the house, behind closed doors; only women from the chiefly houses were allowed to work on the patterning of these cloths. Thus, the social organisation of work depended upon the kind of barkcloth being produced.

2.8 Felling the Trees and Beating the Cloth
In Natewa, masi saplings are not grown in plantations but around the houses, some of which are built on top of yavu (ancestral foundations where, prior to
colonial intrusion the dead were buried; Toren 1999:80). Saplings grow round the sleeping quarters, which are classified as the most forbidden or honoured part of household space. In terms of the hierarchical evaluation of household space on an above/below axis the plants grow at the apex, above. In the village of Natewa itself most barkcloth saplings grew close to the houses of the Bauan nobility. *Masi* saplings were allowed to grow to about eight or ten feet. After being cut a new sapling would spring up.

The terms used to describe the process of preparing the bark are revealing because they show that the transformation of the bark into cloth is conceptualised in terms of the destruction and reproduction of a living entity. A *masi* sapling is attributed with a range of anthropomorphic features: it has a head (*uluna*), flesh (*lewena*) and blood (*dra*); as well as a tail (*bui*).

To turn trees into cloth the straight, thin saplings are coppiced, a long incision is made along the length of the trunk and the bark is peeled off, then the tough outer bark is removed using a shell or a bit of tin can leaving only the greeny-white inner bark called *lewena*, (lit. ‘the flesh’). The long ribbon of *lewena* is soaked in the river and it is then soaked in a bowl of water overnight. It gives off a pinkish liquid they call *dra*, ‘blood’.

To make *masi* the inner bark is beaten at once - (*koso samu*). To make *tutu* (Tongan-style cloth) the inner bark used to be dried and stored before beating, *waqaqi*. This results in a far stiffer, coarser cloth. I describe the *koso samu* process below:

The soaked inner bark is called *masi qaqa*, (lit. ‘valiant *masi*’). It is said to have a ‘head’ and a ‘tail’; the ‘tail’ is the narrow tip of the *masi* sapling, the tail is the broader end, closer to the roots. The flesh of the *masi* is beaten on a *dutua*, an anvil, often made of the section of a trunk of *vesi*, (ironwood). It is beaten with a long angular club called *ike*, that are made from *nokonoko* wood in Natewa. The beating process is called *samusamu* or *samuta* (lit. ‘to beat’ or ‘to slaughter’, ‘to club to death’, or as Capell records ‘to massacre the
inhabitants of a town': the two are cognate terms Capell 1941:214). Depending upon the size of the cloth required four or more lengths of inner bark are beaten to form two lengths of cloth.

Once each length of bark has been beaten and soaked the strips of bark are assembled together. This stage of masi production is called bika, which translates as ‘to cumber, to press down’ (Capell 1941:3). During this stage the two tail ends of masi are layered on top of each other and are beaten together. Sometimes women stretch out their leg on the tree trunk anvil to steady themselves as they beat the cloth. Often they work side by side. The ‘heads’ of the masi are then folded into the centre and then the cloth is folded lengthways in half, making a packet of four layers, this is beaten yet again and the cloth is then finished and set to dry on the grass (see Kooijman 1976: 22-33 for a more detailed description of this process).

2.9 The Sources of Paint

The paint used to pattern barkcloth is mainly derived from charcoal and red earth (qele) which are suspended in various kinds of tree sap that act as a binding agent, attaching the pigment to the cloth. Although the hills surrounding the village contain brilliant red ochres these are never used and instead red earth is brought from the far side of the Natewa bay and from further north in Macuata. Hocart records that in some parts of Vanua Levu red earth used for patterning masi came from Bau (Hocart, 1952:289). This did not happen any more. The manufacture of paint has responded to the changing economy of the islands and in particular to the growth of the sugar trade. Now black soot is gathered from the chimney stacks of the sugar cane refineries in Labasa and brought back to Natewa to be turned into paint used for printing masi.

In Natewa, dark red binding agent called damudamu is made from tree sap taken from the bark of the vu ni tiri, a guttifera whose bark was formerly
used for staining women’s skirts red (Capell, 1941: 273). Sap is also taken from the aerial roots of mangrove trees (*dogo*). Mangrove sap is specifically used to varnish a cloth called *kumi*, which incorporates *masi* imagery as well as Tongan-style pattern elements. Mangrove sap was used for making Tongan-style cloth in the past giving these cloths their characteristic warm ochre colour. The mangrove trees used for making this varnish come from a specific place. The trees grow either side of a ceremonial path made from white coral which stretches out for a hundred yards into the bay of Natewa. This path is called *na i cibaciba* (‘the jumping off place’). I was told that in the past the dead were believed to split into two: one part remained attached to a particular place, and the soul (*yalo*) was said to travel down the coral path, down to Cikobia off Udu Point before heading back west along the mountain range on the opposite side of the bay towards the island of Viti Levu.

2.10 The *Masivolavola* Complex in Natewa

Barkcloth complexes differ in terms of the ceremonial deployment of barkcloth as well as the technical devices used to pattern cloth which play a key part in knowledge transmission. *Masi* was not only made to commission for large chiefly gatherings it was also required for the correct performance of life cycle rites. However, this cloth can not be made without stencils to print it. These stencils were made from *jaina lekaleka* (the short banana plant) or from *vudi* (plantain) leaves, taken from plants which grew in the village of Natewa.

An old woman in her eighties from the outlying village of Dawa told me that making *masivolavola* was different when she was a young girl. If *masi* was required for a ceremony the women from Dawa would go to Natewa to ask for stencils. Only a few Natewan women knew how to make stencils then. They were called *marama ni draudrau*. They had to be presented with feasts (*i oco*, lit. food which is given in payment for work or during the course of it, Capell 1941: 185) either sweets *lolo* and *drega* (chewing gum) or more weighty
offerings of magiti and yaqona before they would release the stencils. If women were related to one of the chiefly houses they would use that connection; other women had to use the vakavanua links. The women from Dawa had to work with their stencils carefully because they tore easily, and the marama ni draudrau got cross if they were asked to make stencils a second time.

This monopoly of intellectual property which could mean that stencil makers were paid with ceremonial offerings produced by men from satellite villages was based upon managing knowledge released through leaves (cf. Friedman 1981). How the system of knowledge management worked, and the degree of control that the stencil makers could exert hinged upon the material and formal properties of the leaf stencils themselves.

2.11 The Banana Leaf Stencil

Leaf stencils used for printing masi are made from the broad, flat, rubbery leaves of bananas or plantains; a lemon thorn is inserted to remove small strips, typically following the grain of the leaf. I was told that plantains were the principal first fruit offerings before other ceremonial foods, such as taro and yams, were introduced from other parts. However, aside from the possible significance of the former use of these plants in ritual a basic property of leaf stencils is their fragility: they could not be kept because they withered in a day.

Watching the way in which leaf stencils are prepared and used to compose imagery made me realise that the abstract shapes of stencil apertures facilitated knowledge management. The similarity of stencils makes them difficult to remember and use without knowing their names - each stencil is named and the names serve as an important mnemonic during the procedure of patterning cloth. The names also help to provide a guide for the correct positioning of stencil motifs in their designated position. Stencils are difficult to make. For example, of a corpus of approximately fifty stencils, at least ten stencils are simply composed of slits made at varying intervals. Since some of
these stencils have to be rotated or combined with other stencils to produce a motif, it is therefore difficult to gauge the correct spacing of the slits. Names provide an indication of the stencils which have to be used in conjunction with each other. Another group of stencils are made through repeated processes of folding and saving or removing sections of leaf. By smoking the completed stencils over a fire stencil makers could remove traces of the fold marks. Without seeing the folded image stencils were difficult to replicate, since the correct proportion of the motif was difficult to achieve. The following statement reveals that guarding the knowledge of *masi* depended upon protecting the knowledge of the folded image,

Tokasa had moved to Buca as a small girl. Her father was from Vusasivo. She said that the women who made stencils guarded their knowledge. Before, only five women in Buca knew how to make stencils, they were called *taukei ni draudrau* [lit. owners of the stencils']. If the women wanted to make *masi* they would arrive with the stencils ready made, they wouldn’t make them in front of the women. At the end of the day they would gather up the old *draudrau* and tear them into bits.

‘*Sa rawa ni isi na drau ni jaina*’ (*the banana leaf can be torn*) she said, demonstrating with her hands. ‘If you asked to be taught to make *drau* they would say ‘*You do your mother’s draudrau.*’ ‘

‘But most women did not have any *draudrau*’ she added.

*Masi* was made as an offering but the knowledge of pattern was kept.

2.12 Changes in the Ownership of Stencils.

The production and circulation of offerings altered as different Vunivalu came and went, as well as in response to broader political changes. These changes affected each institution of barkcloth differently. Although *masi* imagery remained comparatively stable, the system of controlling access to pattern producing knowledge altered, leading to changes in the character of centre periphery relations characteristic of the old monopoly.
In its second phase stencil management came under the control of deputies. These women were simply called ‘the owners of the leaf stencil’ (taukei ni draudrau). In the village of Buca some of these women acquired the knowledge of stencil making by using their wits. Peniana Veraca’s story comes from this period, her story records the feelings of an outsider who was forced to acquire control of ritual privileges by looking.

Peniana Veraca was the wife of the former Tui Kama, the paramount chief of Buca, she described how she had to consolidate her position by mastering the art of stencil production. Peniana’s mother was born outside the vanua. Like the other women she knew how to kesakesa but not how to make draudrau. Only a few women were taukei ni draudrau in the village at that time. Peniana’s father was the head of a clan who had taken up residence in Buca in the second half of the 19th century after they had been displaced from the island of Rabi when the Tui Cakau sold their island to a European trader. They therefore had a tenuous link in the village and Peniana Veraca’s father was always careful to please the chief by bringing him the best fish from his catch to demonstrate his allegiance and support.

When she was young woman Peniana decided to marry a man in the village so that her widowed mother, who had no sons to support her, would have someone to look after her. Peniana learnt to make stencils by watching the stencil-makers discreetly. In the evenings she would practice making them on her own. She said she learnt these things on her own just by looking. Formerly, being a taukei ni draudrau in Buca still carried certain privileges, (other women were obliged to present gifts of food -lolo or magiti or yaqona if they wished to request stencils); however, these privileges would not have been given to an outsider. Peniana knew, though, that if she became the wife of a chief it would be her duty to lead the masi makers in the village.
Figure 4 A banana leaf stencil called "kumete, 'the yaqona bowl'. Alesi cutting stencils in Natewa.
2.13 Stencils from Used X-ray Film

In the 1970s the system of knowledge management went through a second alteration which facilitated the publication of masi imagery on an unprecedented scale. Stencils became semi-durable, made from rubber sheeting or used X-ray film on which the shadowy images of bones could be seen. Now newcomers and taukei alike kept their own stock of stencils in biscuit tins. The position of taukei ni masi became obsolete and in turn this led to a collapse of the monopoly: hierarchy could no longer be reinforced through the control of ritual patterned imagery. Women who had married into the vanua could now make masi to exchange with their relatives and their acquaintances living in town; masi could be transacted for cash donations at fundraisings and bazaars, in aid of the church or a school or was made as a remembrance, vakananuni for relatives living elsewhere.

In the last decade the old regional divisions for the specialist production of i yau have begun to break down. As women move they take stencils with them; masi is now made in the neighbouring districts of Tunuloa and Navatu. Mats, formerly the i yau ni vanua of Tunuloa and Navatu are now made by women in Natewa as well. More women were learning how to make them. Apart from Natewan women, only a few women, resident at the satellite settlement of Dawa, (said to be the settlement of the planters or household members of the chiefly household of Vatulawa) still know how to make stencils from banana leaves.

The multiplication of leaf stencils and the change in the materials from which they are made has been accompanied by a multiplication of tree trunk anvils. The dutua belonging to the chiefly houses are some of the oldest artefacts in the village, and they are still used by members of the main chiefly households even though the timber had begun to give way from repeated use. But now people in outlying villages have got their own dutua.
2.14 Reproducing Tongan-Style Barkcloth (Tutu)

The manufacture of Tongan-style barkcloth or *tutu* is said to have ceased in the 1970s, at the same time that the production of *masi* would have increased. According to one informant it was in order to produce the long lengths of *tutu* that the entire *vanua* was mobilised to work together, facing each other, in the past.

However, Tongan-style cloth continues to be required for the performance of burial and other life-cycle rites in Natewa. In particular, Tongan-style cloth is a component of the set of offerings called ‘inhaling offerings’ (*reguregu*) which must be presented at burial rites. Lengths of Tongan *tutu* are sometimes bought from markets in Suva, or from pawn shops. They are expensive. A cloth of ten or fifteen *lalaga* (the unit of measure printed on the cloth itself: approximately 30ft) can cost F$250. As a substitute a called *kumi*, is patterned in the Tongan manner, with mangrove sap can be used. This cloth is smaller, it does not require the use of pattern boards and it can be made by women working individually.

2.15 Tongan Pattern Boards: Kupeti

The manufacture of *tutu* apparently involved the control of durable pattern boards (*kupeti*) as opposed to ephemeral leaf stencils. *Kupeti* are made by a variety of techniques (see Kooijman, 1976:112). In one method a pad of panadanus leaves and the fibrous sheath of coconut leaves is oversewn with the midribs of coconut leaves to form a design in relief. The pattern board is then placed beneath the cloth and a mixture of mangrove sap and earth is rubbed across the surface. This technique, which the French call *frottage*, is similar to making a brass rubbing. *Kupeti* are comparatively durable, some lasting a century or more, and they are safeguarded: in Natewa they have been passed down between women who have married into a lineage. There is no record of *kupeti* having been produced in the village - the two I saw appeared to be of
Tongan origin. The most impressive *kupeti* was owned by the family of the Vunivalu, Ratu Epeli Vakalabure. It was a thing of some age, four feet wide and two feet across, embellished with the closely worked geometric patterns made from the midribs of coconut leaves. In contrast to the figurative *kupeti* photographed by Kooijman in Lau of butterflies, birds etc. It resembled the *kupeti* produced by Tongan noble women in the last century (Tamahori 1963; Kooijman 1972). I was not allowed to photograph it, ‘It is forbidden’ said the Vunivalu’s brother Ratu Ruveni Vakalalabure.

Another, smaller *kupeti* was owned by Di Sivo a woman who was descended from Somosomo, the chiefly capital of Cakaudrove. However, acquiring information about the affinal connections which brought *kupeti* to the village proved to be difficult. People were generally unwilling to acknowledge Tongan cultural influence (see Clunie 1986). As Mai Yautibi explained, ‘There is Tongan blood in all the chiefly houses here, but we don’t like to admit it.’

2.16 The Gatubolabola Complex

Large sheets of *gatubolabola* called *gatu* or *taunamu ni Viti* ‘Fijian mosquito curtains’ are still produced in Natewa. In spite of their marketable value (local pawn brokers exchanged the cloth for F$200) they are made for ceremonial use, not to be sold directly. They are used as a focal point for offerings of mats at *tevutevu vakavama* or *tevutevu vakavuvale*, rites at which are transferred from their natal household or from their natal *vanua* as well as the burial of men of rank. They may be presented as a *vakamamaca* (lit. ‘a drying cloth’) for visiting dignitaries from overseas as part of the ceremonies of chiefly welcome. Knowledge of *gatu* patterns was highly restricted: only four women in Natewa and one woman in Vusasivo knew patterning *gatu* using coconut leaves; they were called *taukei ni gatu*. *Gatu* were produced infrequently for key ceremonial events: in one and a half years only six cloths were made in the village.
Knowledge of *gatu* imagery is controlled, and ostensibly only women from the village of Natewa can be involved in printing the cloth. The printing typically takes place inside a house. Only women from the outlying villages who have a blood connection to Somosomo, or to one of the *taukei ni gatu* can commission a cloth. Then they come to the village to prepare meals for the women of Natewa who pattern the *gatu* out of sight, inside the house.

2.17 Coconut Leaf stencils.
The knowledge of *gatu* imagery is also restricted through controlling the knowledge of names; reciting lists of names acts as a mnemonic for performing a series of procedures which result in the reproduction of the correct pattern. Yet although leaves are integral part of both *masi* and *gatu* systems of knowledge management coconut leaf stencils are even more ephemeral. *Gatubolabola*, (lit. plaited *gatu*), gets its name from the way that lengths of coconut leaf are plaited together in order to serve as a temporary stencil for printing imagery. One woman who knew how to make *gatu* highlighted the significance of this. This knowledge could not be given: If women asked for stencils she told them that there was, ‘Nothing to give, only some coconut leaves’. All the women from the village could work on painting a *gatu* with *kesakesa* and afterwards you could simply throw away the coconut leaves. Banana leaf stencils could be picked out of the rubbish and kept.

2.18 Marking the Outlines of Gatu
Prior to beginning the work of stenciling a series of outlines are marked along the edges of the cloth. These serve as guides for arranging the coconut leaves to form motifs and they are therefore vital for the correct replication of the design. When I saw *gatu* being made women used long lengths of wood and marked the lines in biro, but I was told that previously the entire procedure had been done by folding the cloth and marking the fold with tree sap applied with a twig.
Producing *gatu* correctly is said to be difficult because so many outlines have to be marked around the edges of the cloth. They serve as guides for motifs of varying widths which are interspersed with bands of black and white. The outlines combine to form a structure which resembles the frame of a door. This is called a *taba* (lit. ‘branch’). The sequence of motifs and outlines which make up the frame are said to be prescribed. Women in the village of Buca had begun to make *gatu* but they did not know the names of the patterns and thus the sequence of imagery making up the frame was awry.

When the head of the Methodist church came to visit Natewa a *gatu* was commissioned by the acting head of Valelevu, the household of the Bauan nobles. I was told that it was to be a *vakavanua* offering. The production of this *gatu* involved both male and female members of all the main households of Natewa.

Di Sivo led the other women to lay out the pattern on the cloth. Six other Natewan women of rank assisted they would refer to her for guidance before positioning the ruler. Di Sivo judged the distances between the lines by rule of thumb and by reciting the names of the sequence of motifs that had to be used to embellish the border of the cloth. Without knowing the sequence of names by heart it would have been impossible to judge the intervals.

2.19 Painting the *Gatu*

In order to mark the patterns onto the cloth the oldest and largest *dutua* (made from *dakua* - native mahogany- and some twenty feet long) was taken from beneath Vatulawa, the house of the absent chief from Valelevu. It was placed outside on the lawn to one side of the mound of soil which formed the old *yavu*. The cloth was placed over the *dutua* and the senior representatives from all the different households in Natewa sat cross legged on either side of it. Under the supervision of Di Sivo, who sat one end of the *dutua*, the women began to pattern the *masi*. They worked in pairs, one woman holding the coconut leaves
in place, the other dabbing the area in between with paint. By the end of the afternoon twenty-five women were involved in painting the barkcloth.

Whilst the women patterned the cloth by dabbing tree sap and earth through the stencils the men went to their gardens to find taro, yams and coconuts. A lovo (ceremonial earth oven) was dug near the beach and the taro and yams were wrapped in leaves placed on top of heated stones, then covered with leaves and earth and baked. They were then pounded and boiled in freshly squeezed coconut cream and sugar to make sweetmeats (lolo). In the afternoon packets of lolo wrapped in leaves were formally presented to the taukei ni gatu by a representative of the mata ni vanua (village herald).

The younger unmarried women prepared food. Both they and the men were said to be forbidden to enter the house due to an ore, a semi-comic ritual sanction. In the past, cross-cousins (the progeny of true or classificatory siblings of the opposite sex) were led into the printing house on some pretext or other. Breaking an ore was potentially expensive: the taukei ni gatu could request packets of cigarettes and sweets for all the printers. When the cloth was finished at the end of the second day it was folded up on the grass. Mai Malima, mataki to Somosomo (ambassador to Somosomo) and the vanua’s treasurer of i yau (kato ni yau) came forward and formally presented yaqona to the taukei ni gatu and the other senior women in Natewa. This was an exceptional occurrence: the rural based women in Natewa never drank yaqona with men.

2.20 How the knowledge of Gatu came to Natewa

It is interesting to note that the current experts of gatu all have recent affinal connections with Somosomo. The principal taukei ni gatu is Di Sivo. Di Sivo’s grandmother was the only daughter of a former Vunivalu of Natewa from
Figure 6 Preparing a Vakavanua offering of Gatu
Fig. 7 Painting the Gatu
Valelevu, called Adi Lavinia Qativi (b. 1860) who was married to Ratu Isoa Vakadua from Vunibaka in Somosomo.

When Ratu Isoa died Adi Lavinia returned to Natewa with their son, Ratu Netani Maiwaqa, who was vasu levu (honoured nephew) to Natewa. He was presented with a portion of land, a coconut plantation of 700 acres. Later he married a woman from Yautibi (a subdivision of Valelevu). However his offspring remained registered to Somosomo. This affiliation was reinforced through ritual obligations. One of his sons, Ratu Golea, told me that if a feast was held at Somosomo they had to prepare ceremonial food, lolo sweetmeats, with the other members of Vunibaka: they could not form part of the delegation from Natewa. Whilst two of Netani’s daughters were specialists of gatu two of the brothers were specialists in making sweetmeats, lolo.

The precedence of the offspring of the vasu amongst the Natewan nobles was tacitly acknowledged through the place that they occupied at ceremonies or yaqona drinking, where hierarchical social relations is customarily acknowledged through peoples relative disposition in space (Toren 1990: 90-118). When drinking yaqona or at village meetings the eldest brother present would sit above, i cake, beside the senior member of Valalevu. It was my impression that the hierarchical precedence of the vasu levu from Somosomo in Natewa was a source of unease. The wife of Ratu Netani’s eldest son said that it made his position difficult. Once he retired to the village the senior men had fallen silent ‘out of respect’ whenever he attended village gatherings or evening yaqona sessions. As a result, he scarcely appeared from his house at all. However when the gatu was presented to the President of the Methodist Church when he made a rare appearance and sat at the top of the gathering.

2.21 Conclusion

When I visited the village of Buca, I noticed that they were making gatu for a forthcoming marriage presentation. Di Alumita, a woman from the village,
explained that she had worked out how to make *gatu* just ‘by looking and by using her mind and her pen’. She did not know the names *gatu* patterns. When a woman from Natewa came to a church gathering in the village she requested them. The woman from Natewa refused, saying that she did not know the names. ‘They are forbidden to give them away.’ Di Alumita explained; ‘We should share what we have we are Christians now’, she added.

Women in Natewa make a distinction between knowledge that is held inside and knowledge that is visible or shown. This distinction was used to disparage *masi* made in other parts: ‘Women from Vatulele only know what they see, they work from the eyes not the heart’ they said. Initially, I thought that these comments were simply an expression of inter-regional rivalry. Vatulele, a small island off the Sigatoka estuary of Levu is now the main centre of *masi* production for the tourist and indigenous market. However Ateca Williams, a former employee of the Fiji Museum, and the author of a survey of *masi* production in the 1970s, made similar comments. ‘The *masi* is haphazard in Vatulele, they don’t know the names of the stencils’, she said. She explained that the production of *masi* in Vatulele is unusual:

> ‘*Masi* used to be made in Gau, then the wife of a Methodist minister who believed in the moral value of handicrafts, encouraged its production in Vatulele. So Gau and Vatulele swapped *i yau* and instead of *masi* and *tutu* they began to make mats and *kumi* in Gau.’

The knowledge of names does have a visible aspect: the sequence of imagery. These sequences of imagery will be analysed in the next chapter, prior to assessing the distribution of pattern producing knowledge in the outer regions of the Fijian archipelago.
The Spatial Arrangement of Named Imagery

3.1. Introduction

In the last chapter I showed how *masi* and *gatu* patterns emerged from techniques for governing the reproduction of imagery. As well as social prohibitions proscribing the irregular transmission of pattern the process of reproducing long sequences of motifs using ephemeral leaf stencils was itself shown to be difficult to copy. Comments made by women living in outlying villages revealed that the control of pattern served as an instrument of social control, drawing women and ceremonial offerings: pigs, root crops, and *yaqona* into the village of the paramount.

However all these strategies of control raise a conundrum. Similar institutions of *masi*, *gatu* and Tongan-style barkcloth exist in several different areas in the island periphery. How have they been established? How has the knowledge of pattern been spread? Do women in other areas hold the knowledge of named imagery? In order to answer these questions it is necessary to analyse the imagery and composition of *masi* and *gatu* in greater detail and to translate the names which are given to component parts of these patterns.

*Masī* patterns are complex and intricate: the pattern can only emerge if a pre-defined sequence of specific procedures is correctly executed. Small, neatly printed figures are admired. Neatly printed patterns are said to be ‘clean’ (*savasava*). Patterns are also appraised in terms of the relationship between figure and ground. The correct relationship can only be achieved through knowledge of the secret image of the folded stencil. Natewan
women admired patterns in which there was ‘much black’. Patterns in which bands of intricately executed figures appear to emerge from the encompassing darkness are said to make *masi* give off a kind of light called *na rama ni masi*, ‘the light of the *masi*’. 

However, although the terms used to appraise *masi* are highly conventional the classification of stencils is complex. The names of stencils reveal the properties and attributes of leaf-stencil imagery which help to establish certain central features of the *masi* and *gatu* complexes. Furthermore, the names of *masi* and *gatu* use archaic terminology which provides clues about the emergence of these institutions.

### 3.2. The Classification of Named Imagery in the Masivolavola Complex

Although *draudrau* is the generic term for all leaf-stencils, *masi* stencils are further categorised and subdivided. Women in Natewa distinguish between three main types of stencil: *waqa* or *waqani*, for which Capell suggests ‘the outline, that which envelops, the container’; *lewena* which he translates as ‘the flesh, or inner part of a person or thing, the inner bark of a tree’; and *musu* lit. ‘the cut’ (Capell 1941:41, 328). The names used to classify stencils are congruent with the attributes and actions of *i yau* which are described and enacted in ceremonial contexts.

### 3.3 Basic Elements of Masi Composition: Vessels and Flesh.

Each length of *masi* is typically composed of bands of motifs interspersed with white panels both of which are contained within a series of concentric rectangular outlines, or frames. However, although a single piece of *masi* may seem complete, a perfect composition in itself, *masi* are designed to be wrapped with other lengths around the body of the ceremonial participant, who in turn forms a part of a larger performance, or ‘image’, made up of the other participants displays of cloth and food. It is therefore interesting to note
that the core terms used to describe *masi* imagery endorse the view that *masi* forms part of a larger entity since they describe how certain elements of composition operate at a number of different layers or planes.

In *masi* design *waqa* or *waqani* operate at a number of different registers. The composition of motifs which make up a single piece of *masi volavola* is contained within a series of concentric, rectangular outlines called *waqa* which are marked around the perimeter of the cloth. Marking these outlines is the first thing that a *masi* maker will do when she begins to print the cloth. These outlines, and the inner part of the *masi*, are later filled with bands of motifs called *lewena*, ‘flesh’. The bands of motifs that make up ‘the flesh’ are subdivided by more *waqa* outlines. Finally, the figures that make up the flesh are also described as having a container which envelops them; and one could argue that it is the container as opposed to the figure which is printed. Thus, both the motifs and the composition as a whole is said to be made up of inner parts or flesh which is enveloped, just as *masi* serves as analogue of skin which encompasses the person.

Thus the same principle links this corpus of imagery to the body of the wearer. Bands of *waqa* outlines and motifs are the part of *masi* patterns which can be seen when two or three lengths of *masi* are wrapped around the body and superimposed on top of one another for ceremonial presentation of a ceremonial participant. The visible impression is that the wearer becomes ringed with a series of concentric outlines - a whole genealogy of containing containers - in a manner reminiscent of a Russian doll.

*Waqa* is a core concept in Fijian representation and personhood. It indicates a conceptual homology between the composition of imagery, the composition of the person and the composition of features of the surrounding environment. Data collected by lexicographers, missionaries and ethnographers in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries suggests
that *waqa* is a core concept because it is applicable to so many different entities and therefore connects domains of experience together.

*Waqa* is a term with several related uses. It is specifically used to describe dugout canoes, hollowed out of the trunks of trees but the is also used generally to describe containers and envelopes, including the corporeal envelope. The placenta is called the *waqa ni gone* or *waqawaqa* (that which envelops the child). A child’s disposition may be described in terms of the properties of its corporeal envelope, its skin. For example, a child who is quick-witted and lively may be described as a *waqa totolo*, (‘[having]a speedy container’). In the past, the identification between people and vessels seems to have sustained a particular conception of personhood. Resembling vessels or containers, people were held to be open to external influences. For example, they could serve as a conduit, or medium, to bring the dead into the world of the living. It was apparent that this view of personhood still retained some hold. During the time that I was doing fieldwork I heard several stories of spirit possession and exorcism; also people were drawn to make sermons because it was widely believed that lay-readers were granted the power of prophecy in church.

In the past, the *waqawaqa* was the material form, or body, assumed by the ancestors or spirits when visiting the living. Thus the idea of the vessel or container also provided a conceptual link between people and the environment making it an important aspect of Fijian material culture. *Vaka waqa* referred to the process of being incarnated in a variety material forms, whether in plant, stone or person (Hocart, 1952:113).

*Waqa* can also be used to evoke more encompassing social forms. When describing sailing craft the term applies to sacred ancestral canoes - *waqa ni Viti* or *waqa tabu* as opposed to the *takia* or *drua* (double hulled canoes) which were introduced to Fiji from Tonga during the course of the 18th century (Clunie, 1986). Because they evoke the oldest stories of
migration, references to ancestral canoes continue to play a part in Fijian political theology: they provide a particular way of imagining corporateness. In contemporary Natewa, references to the *waqa tabu* are used as a rhetorical device in ceremonial speech; these either describe the sudden appearance of the ancestors or are intended to inspire listeners to follow the ancestral way of collaborative and corporate endeavour.

In recent anthropological theory such non-individualist conceptions of personhood have been described as a recurrent feature of Oceanic culture. Alfred Gell’s concise description of the genealogical person tallies well with the descriptions of imagery outlined above:

‘genealogy is the key trope for making plurality single and singularity plural. Any individual person is ‘multiple’ in the sense of being the precipitate of a multitude of genealogical relationships, each of which is instantiated in his her person; and conversely, an aggregate of persons such as a lineage or a tribe, is one person in consequence of being one genealogy: the original ancestor is now instantiated, not as one body but as the many bodies into which his one body has transformed itself’ (Gell 1998:140).

3.4. Different Types of Cloth : Vakamatairua and Yarabalavu

Whilst staying in the village I saw two different types of *masivolavola* (lit. ‘figured masi’) being made on a regular basis. *Yarabalavu* (lit. ‘long dragging cloths’) are the simplest kind of *masivolavola* produced, they are made to be worn in ritual contexts or used for house decoration, in which case they are hung high up on the transverse beam, which divides the house into spaces for living and sleeping, or in an equivalent position in a concrete house. I was told they are placed there out of respect, because they are *ka vakaturaga*, ‘a chiefly thing’. The main difference between cloths made for display in the house or display in ceremonial contexts is the number of outlines that mark their perimeters. *Yarabalavu* made for household display typically have a single outline, whereas cloths made for ceremonial presentation may have as
many as seven outlines, depending upon their intended position on the body and the height of the ceremonial protagonist.

According to their intended use, *yarabalavu* vary in size. Cloths made for domestic display are approximately twelve feet long, one foot 6 inches wide.

The other kind of *masi* produced in Natewa is called *vaka matairua*, (lit. 'two joined together'), which is made to be worn under two or three lengths of *yarabalavu* and which extends from the waist to above the ankle.

I was told that these cloths had only been made after the arrival of the missionaries. The name, *vakamatairua*, refers to the fact that the design is comprised of two portions. The lower part of the design is identical to *yarabalavu* composition. The upper part of the design, which is typically concealed under several separate layers of *yarabalavu* when worn, can feature different designs. Sometimes *vakamatairua* bore red diagonal outlines called *na baba ni waqa* ('the sides of the boat'), which depicted a transverse section of a boat. These would be wrapped around the hips of the wearer in ceremonial contexts. Other cloths featured a collection of stars. *Yarabalavu* made up the bulk of the *masi* cloths that I saw produced, *vakamatairua* were made exclusively for ceremonial use.

On a couple of occasions I also saw a cloth called *na i sala tivativa* (lit. 'the twisting path') being made. One woman descended from Valelevu and one woman living in Dawa knew how to make it. When it was made for the fundraising at Christmas people talked about it. It was said to be very difficult to make.

Finally, a special kind of *masi* is made as a souvenir, for giving to foreigners. These cloths are smaller, they are printed with masi motifs and coloured with mangrove sap; often they have the word Fiji or Viti printed on them. When the son of Ratu Gasagasa, one of the leading men of Valelevu went abroad to study in Canada the women from Dawa made *masi* for him to wear and they also made *masi* souvenirs of Fiji for him to present. It was the
Figure 9a 'The twisting path'; Figure 9b Outlines of *Vakamatairua*.
Figure 10 Making *Vakamatairua*
only time that I saw cloth being made for foreigners. In spite of the fact that there were a number of luxury resorts on the other end of the Natewa peninsular women had no interest in making masi for sale to tourists. The reason they gave was revealing: ‘If we make masi for them it goes. We can get money for the school fees but then there will be nothing left’ Di Tukana said, implying that masi was presented in anticipation of some return.

However the cash economy had come to play a part in masi production. Masi saplings were sold for cash in Natewa and some women who had retired to the village after working elsewhere, as well as relatives living in town, commissioned village residents to produce masi in return for cash donations which were presented as an offering of thanks.

3.5 Negative Stenciled Imagery
The flesh of the masi is also subdivided. Women in Natewa distinguish between draudrau and tutuki, that is, the stencils for making negative imagery and positive imagery. The first type, draudrau, are used to make negative images, and they form the bulk of Natewan stencils. Draudrau are not used for printing figures so much as the surrounding ground or darkness which envelops them; the printed image is the shape between figures, or ‘that which contains a figure and envelops it’. The process of applying black paint through the apertures of the stencil is therefore similar to the use of negatives to expose the shadows which envelop figures in photographic prints. It is apparent that Fijians have made this association themselves. Draudrau are also called i vakadewa: Dewa describes ‘the spread of information like an infectious disease’, it also means ‘to translate’, that is, ‘to pass from one group or language to another’; finally it is also the term used for photographic negatives (Capell 1941:58). Because shadows reduplicate people and objects they feature in Fijian definitions of imagery in which case they become associated with the transfer of intention. The Fijian term for image is
yaloyalo. As Hocart put it, ‘The word for soul (yalo) also means mind, disposition, intention. Reduplicated yaloyalo means shadow, reflection in the water, image.’ (Hocart, 1929: 185).

3.6 The Flesh of the Vessel: Named Imagery in the Outlines

In appearance stencil imagery is abstract or generic, not in contrast to the figurative, but to particularity and uniqueness. The names reveal that stencil motifs which make up the flesh or ‘inner part’ contained within the outlines of ‘that which envelops’ are themselves the outlines of artefacts, plants and shells, or referents to specific actions or processes which constitute social and ceremonial space: ‘the kava bowl’, ‘the chief’s comb’, ‘the ridge pole of the house’, ‘the chain’, ‘the fish trap’, ‘wooden forks or pins’, ‘the flower of the coconut’, ‘that which envelops the jaws’, ‘the trees bound together’, ‘the teeth of the saw’, ‘that which envelops the caterpillar’, ‘the shell of the mollusc’. The names of these images also serves to guide their position on the cloth. In Natewa only certain named images can be placed in the rectangular outlines (waqa) that frame the edge of the cloth.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Waqa</th>
<th>that which envelops</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vaka sarisari ni bici</td>
<td>the ribs of the bici bird</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waqa ni Sila</td>
<td>that which envelops the jaws</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waqa ni Reveni</td>
<td>the outline of the ribbon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waqa ni pini veisaumaki</td>
<td>that which contains the pins which swap sides</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waqa ni Qele</td>
<td>that which envelops the earth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waqani (musu ni Veitau qaqa)</td>
<td>that which contains the severing of the valiant allies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waqa ni nuve</td>
<td>that which envelops the caterpillar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waqa ni nuqa</td>
<td>that which envelops the nuqa fish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waqa ni seru</td>
<td>that which contains [the chief’s] comb</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lewena</th>
<th>The inner part</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vetauveibuki</td>
<td>the trees knotted together</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vakaivua</td>
<td>the carrying pole</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vua ni vono</td>
<td>the fruit of the vono plant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drali Daimani</td>
<td>ashes [in the shape of a] diamond</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jeini</td>
<td>the chain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bebe</td>
<td>the butterfly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vaka lewe ni waqa ni qele</td>
<td>the inner part of that which envelops the earth</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Restricted Imagery for filling the outline taken from the gatu complex

| Liku Tugi | the grass skirt |
| Dakai    | the shotgun     |
3.7. Draudrau in the Outlines

Whilst the positions of some named images, or draudrau, are fixed, others vary according to the provenance of the wearer and the intended ceremonial context. All masi cloths produced in Natewa have a striped border motif, called 'the ribs of the bici bird' (vakasarisari ni bici), which is printed along the upper and lower perimeters of the cloth, outside the broadest outline. It is cut on the cross to form tassels if the cloth is to be worn. 'Let us work at the ribs of the bici bird' was another way of saying 'Let us go and make masi'.

Furthermore, all cloths have an outline of some kind filled with red earth round their perimeter, and these outlines containing red earth will also be used to mark transverse sections along the length of the cloth.

Other infills can vary. It seemed that those closest to the visible edge of the cloth were especially important. When the women from Dawa made masi for the son of a member of the Bauan nobility who was studying abroad in Canada they used a leaf stencil called seru 'the chiefly comb' to mark the borders of the cloth as a way of indicating his rank. When they made masi for a boy from Dreketi (the clan of the speechmakers), who was marrying a woman of rank from Macuata, they placed vakai vua, 'the carrying pole with a burden hanging from each tip' (used for transporting food and feasts) around the edge of the cloth, 'to remind him of his responsibility'. When a member of the Bauan nobility married into a subaltern village Verata her masi was rimmed with stencils taken from a design of forks called pins (pini veisaumaki: lit. 'the forks, which change sides'); her cloth was also marked with the waqani called 'the carrying stick' as well as the waqani called 'the jaws'.

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3.8 Banded Layers

Other draudrau are printed in rows of vertical bands of motifs to form the infill, or 'flesh'. Older women in Dawa told me that there was a correct way in which to order images on the cloth: younger women thought that motifs could be positioned in any order, they said, but the younger women were wrong. Their masi was full of mistakes. The women in Natewa knew this, too: when one woman printed the motifs out of sequence she was said to have made a mistake (sa cala!). However, there was also room for variation; I was told that there were over fifty different ways of patterning cloth. This added to the complexity. The older women in Natewa and Dawa told me all the names of stencils but they never told me how they remembered the order correctly. I never heard them recite lists of names, as the gatu makers did.

Why should the canonical correctness of pattern have been valued at all? In his analysis of Marquesan decorative art Gell argued that the conservatism of style, that is, relationships between motifs, shared an elective affinity with the relationships between the makers and receivers imagery in that cultural forms might be constrained by the dread of spiritual or political transgression. If this interpretation has come to have any purchase in the Fijian context, a question which will be addressed in greater depth in subsequent chapters, one may suggest that the replication of imagery is therefore an important means by which ancestors are made and remade across the generations. The specific ordering of images therefore merits some attention.

3.9 White Panels and Positive Imagery

In the most basic form of yarabalavu design, vertical bands of motifs are interspersed with white panels called vakararama (lit. 'intervals of light'); these are demarcated by the outlines of red earth. The white panels have positive imagery on them called tutuki (possibly, 'that which stands').
Typically they have one or two black, or positive, floral motifs (senikau) at their centers and are framed with a border of black motifs.

**Tutuki**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fijian Word</th>
<th>English Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vaka sore ni wi</td>
<td>The seed of the wi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senikau daimani</td>
<td>Flower like a diamond</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bui ni Taki/ Seru Vakaviti</td>
<td>Fijian comb, the turkey’s tail</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vaka Rewa</td>
<td>In the manner of Rewa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tu'i tu'i pu</td>
<td>The battle hammers of the ancestors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuituina</td>
<td>Sea water</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seru ni urata</td>
<td>The comb of the prawn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bati ni tadruku</td>
<td>The shell of the mollusc</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bati ni varo</td>
<td>The teeth of the saw</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bati ni toro</td>
<td>The teeth of the razor</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Most motifs are arranged around a vertical or a horizontal axis. However, certain leaf stencils used for marking the inner part of masi are cut at a slant. They carry a special name either: musu (‘the cut’); or musu ni loma ni ba (‘the gash in the middle of the fence/ fish trap’).

**Musu**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fijian Word</th>
<th>English Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pini Vakababa (Musu ni loma ni ba)</td>
<td>Pins on their sides</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bavakababa</td>
<td>Fish trap on it’s side</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.10. The Flesh of the Masi

Masi is described as an i youa dredre, ‘a difficult thing to carry and transfer’. It was my impression that ordering of the flesh, or inner part, of the masi was one of the sources of this difficulty. Trying to order motif bands correctly was like trying to find the right combination on a combination lock. What made finding the combination difficult was that the sequence of images could vary. Certain images were constant: they had to occupy a set position on all yarabalavu; other images could be supplemented if the occasion demanded; some could be substituted for others; and so on. It has been suggested that some of these variations related to the intended use of a particular piece of barkcloth. However, it is possible that controlled variation was a way of increasing complexity, thereby protecting knowledge of the correct permutations.
The following list of named motifs is based upon an analysis of thirty samples of yarabalavu masi that I photographed whilst I was doing fieldwork. I have attempted to translate the names of stencil images, many of which are in archaic Fijian. The list is intended to convey the correct ordering of stencil motifs which make up the infill of the masi. The relationship between constancy and variation is indicated by showing which images can be substituted in each position, which bands of motifs are optional, and which feature in all the samples of masi that I photographed. I should emphasise that this list is a result of my own observations. It is likely that a more accurate list, taken from a larger sample, would contain more permutations than those listed here.

The Flesh of the Masi
Working from left to right all samples of yarabalavu analysed begin with ‘an interval of light’:

VAKARARAMA:
1) Senikau (‘flower’)/ Sore ni wi (‘the seed of the wi’).
2) Tutuki (lit. ‘that which stands’) /seru ni urata (‘the prawn’s comb’) / Vaka bati ni tadruku (‘the shell of the mollusc’)/Tuituina (‘the sea water’).

WAQANI:
3) Waqani damu (‘the [thing] which envelops the red’) waqa ni sila, (‘that which envelops the jaws’) waqa ni nuqa (‘the skin of the nuqa fish’), waqa ni kamiki (that which surrounds the kamiki’).

LEWENA:
4) Seniniu (‘the coconut flower’) /seru (‘the chiefs comb’) /vua ni vono (‘the fruit of the vono [a creeper]’).
5) Sila (‘the jaws’) /Jeini (‘the chain’) /muve (‘the caterpillar’).

MUSU:
6) Pini vakababa (‘pegs on their sides’) /muve (‘caterpillars’) / waqa reveni (‘that which surrounds the ribbon’) /ba vakababa (‘the fish trap on its side [poss. taro stalks on their sides]’).
7) Doka ni vale (‘the ridge pole of the house’) /drali vakaloa (black ash) / drali daimani (diamond ash).
8) Kumete (the ceremonial kava bowl): featured in some samples.

KAMIKI:
9) Kamiki (no translation: a version of this motif was featured in all samples of masi analysed. It contains some, or all, of the following motifs: Ceva vaka bukuniyaro (ceva refers to ‘the removal of the protective covering’; buku means ‘to knot’; yaro refers to a plant with serrated leaves) /muve (caterpillar)/ Tubu ni kamiki (that which
sprouts from the kamiki) *Saga ni kali* (possibly: 'the crotch of the thing which separated from what it adheres to').

**AXIS OF REFLECTION:**

In elaborated *masi* for use in ceremonial contexts the kamiki motifs are typically reduplicated, in which case they will have a band of motifs between them:

10) *Veikauveibuki* (lit. 'the trees that are bound together') *Badodonu* ('the taro stalk standing upright')/*tu'itu'ipu* ('the ancestors’ battle hammers': p is substituted with a v in the Bauan dialect; *tuki* means 'to strike at, hammer or pinch'; *i tukituki* is a battle hammer)/*vakarewa* 'in the Rewan manner'.

11) *Kamiki*

12) *Kumete* ('the kava bowl')

13) *Doka ni vale* ('the ridge pole of the house') and etcetera, in reverse order, to the next ‘interval of light’. After the ‘interval of light’ the entire sequence is repeated again three times along the rest of the length of the cloth.

### 3.11. Spatial Relationships

It should be apparent from the exhaustive analysis provided above that the sequences of motifs within *masi* cloths are congruent with Fijian understandings of producing imagery through folding, reduplication, reflection and cutting. These characteristic motions, together with the charged relationship between figure and ground, give *masi* imagery a degree of animation. More specifically, animation appears to be the property of certain motifs. In the most simple kinds of *yarabalavu* design, two invariant icons (the composite kamiki or ceva icon, and the stencils of the senikau type), whose pattern may be either rotated or reflected, act as pivots, or hinges, of reflection and rotation. In a more complex form of *yarabalavu* design, senikau also act as pivots of rotation, or glide reflection, meaning that the infill of the cloth may be patterned with both vertical and horizontal bands of motifs. These patterns are called *veisautaki*, that is, 'to change sides.' Reflected sequences of motifs, interspersed with ‘intervals of light’ are typically repeated, or translated, four times along the length of the cloth.

### 3.12 Stencils as historical markers

Museum holdings can convey a general impression of the degree of constancy and variation in motif forms and *masi* composition. For example,
photographic evidence and museum holdings can reveal that striations around the perimeter of *masi* is a near ubiquitous feature of *masi* composition. However, only ethnographic research can provide comparative evidence of the spread and transmission of the corpus of knowledge which is carried and transferred through the reproduction of *masi*.

There are three main sources for analysing the distribution of *masi* stencil names in the Fijian island periphery. They are all based upon the separate empirical observation of researchers who visited the Lau islands at different times: in 1910; the 1930s and 1976 respectively (Hocart fn. 1909-1911; Thompson, 1934; Kooijman, 1976). The remoteness of these islands, which are located at the eastern perimeter of the archipelago, approximately 150 miles from the main island of Viti Levu, may have made them attractive to a generation of anthropologists who may have believed, at least initially, that they were therefore remote from foreign influence.

In the mid 1970s Simon Kooijman made a detailed ethnographic study of barkcloth on the island of Moce. This is an invaluable source since it contains a list of nineteen named stencils, as well as detailed descriptions of barkcloth production and ceremonial use. Kooijman’s description reveals that the basic procedures of preparing and patterning cloth were similar to those in Natewa. In the years leading up to Fijian independence (1970), *masi* production had become a cottage industry in one of the villages. In another village *masi* was largely made for ceremonial use and here a stencil making expert received donations of white *masi* from women who requested stencils from her. The *vutu* leaf was used to make stencils, then second-hand X-ray film was imported from Suva.

As well as a substantial inventory of named stencils Kooijman’s ethnography contains the most extensive glossary of the technical vocabulary of *masi* which has been published to date. The degree of consistency provides evidence of a startling degree of cultural homogeneity. Much of the
vocabulary, together with stencil names, is shared in common with Natewa. Over a third of the nineteen named images are common to Moce and Natewa. Another third are similar to Natawan stencils in shape but carry different names. For example, a motif called civeyadra (lit. 'the half opened eyes of the corpse') in Moce, is called seniniu ('the flower of the coconut') in Natewa. A few other named stencils, such as vale siki (lit. 'the ambushed house') appear to be peculiar to the region (1976: 60-72).

Although the names of basic design components tally, they are sometimes attributed differently. For example, Kooijman describes waqa designs as being composite motifs joined together and resembling lace (Kooijman, 1976:68). According to him, stencils for marking outlines along the border of the cloth, which would be called waqa in Natewa, were termed vetau on Moce (Kooijman, 1976:50). Natawan women made dismissive comments about the lacy motifs on Lauan masi. 'They only know what they can see. Lauan women just take their waqani from the hems of their pinafores' they said.

However, Laura Thompson's list of stencils compiled during her fieldwork in Namuka shows that, in the 1930s, the basic components of masi design such as waqa were understood in the same manner in Natewa and Lau (Thompson 1940:197). Hocart's unpublished sketch book, entitled Fijian Drawings, which is held at the Auckland Museum, also corroborates this. It contains his sketches of twenty-two named masi stencil motifs which reveal that many other core stencils such as the design called 'pins or pegs' were also used in Lau - although it carried the name veibaleyaki (which he translates as 'the falling apart').

3.13 Spirits of War from the West

The attempt to track down fluctuations in stencil names or the named components of masi design may suggest that the train of this discussion has
become bogged down in detail. Yet these apparent minutiae are important because they provide evidence of the spread of a corpus of knowledge carried via the reproduction of *masi*, and not merely of *masi* imagery. *Waqa* is not only a key term in *masi* composition it was also a key term for a new form of political theology in Fiji which was introduced from Viti Levu to parts of the island periphery such as Vanua Levu, Lau and Taveuni.

In the *Northern States of Fiji* Hocart argued that the ritual complex based upon the incarnation the worship of war gods who had migrated from overseas had been relatively recently introduced to the island periphery from western, or mainland, Fiji. He argued that this religious institution embraced ‘a cycle of ideas’ that was distinct from an older way of worshipping the gods of the land. As he wrote:

> It cannot however have been an accident that nearly all the gods of the land we have recorded are indigenous, whereas many spirits come from elsewhere, either from a space unspecified or from the West, never from the East...The Natewans oppose the stone god ‘who was here’ to the war god ‘who came.’

The eastwards movements [of peoples] have brought a host of shamanistic gods who eclipsed the old gods of the land when the latter became less important in a warring world... In the shamanistic cycle everything is precise; the mechanism is clear: when the shaman drinks the offered *kava* the spirit comes down the curtain of the temple and ‘jumps’ or ‘embarks’ on him so that he goes into a fit and prophesies... In Lau... the shamanic gods ‘embark on their animals, use them as ‘bodies’ or ‘boats’... The terms ‘boat’ or ‘embark’ never seem to be used in connection with the gods of the land... It is in the new states that have developed in Taveuni and Lau that the gods of the land have been almost completely reduced to mythical personages (Hocart, 1952: 12-13).

Hocart’s reference to ‘the curtain’ suggests that some kind of barkcloth formed an integral part of this system. We find a few echoes of this cycle of ideas in the multiple references to ‘boats’ or ‘vessels’ or ‘that which envelops’ in *masi* design. Hocart argued that the system for worshipping war gods and what he variously called ‘the thing of the land’, ‘state ceremonial’ or the
'prosperity cult' - the system of opposed sides or teams governing life-cycle prestations and the service of the chief - were two fundamentally distinct institutions (Hocart, 1952:25-26). In his opinion this explained why it had been easy to eradicate the shamanic system.

The missionaries recognized in the shamanistic cycle, and part of the prosperity cycle, namely the sacred stones, the religion that they had come to destroy. They succeeded with a rapidity which it is hard to understand ... [Yet], as a matter of fact the shamanistic cycle had very little hold on the Fijians. It was recent or at least its vogue was and it was limited to war and disease.

But the application of the term *waqa* in the *masi* complex may show that the two complexes were interconnected and only became separated later. So the term *waqa* may help us to tentatively position the *masi* complex within a wider sequence involving the gradual modification and reorientation of the ritual polity by means of changes in material culture introduced from other parts.

3.14 The Imagery of Gatu Bolabola

There is considerably less data on *gatu* than on *masi*. However, the names of the component parts of *gatu* composition may possibly indicate that the *gatu* complex is a development, or a modification, of the *masi* system.

*Gatu* are composed in a similar manner to *masi*. Motifs are repeated in rows or strips and these strips are arranged to form an part of an outer 'frame' of concentric rectangular outlines. The frame is then filled with additional strips of motifs. However, instead of forming a single rectangle, *gatu* typically contain two truncated rectangular frames, printed end to end. These frames contain different styles of pattern deriving from Tonga and Taveuni. On the *gatu* I saw, the more substantial section contained black and white patterns printed with plaited coconut leaves while the other section, which was very truncated, was coloured ochre with mangrove sap, and
printed with black dots, called *tukisea*, in the Tongan manner. ‘Why isn’t this section longer?’ I asked. ‘We do not have enough *masi* to make it that way now,’ I was told.

Complex, hybrid objects of this sort are also produced in other parts of the island periphery. In the Lau islands, for instance, mosquito curtains called *gatuvakaviti* (lit. ‘*gatu* in the Fijian manner’) are patterned with a *masi* stencil motifs Tongan patterns; they are also used for marital rites (see Kooijman 1976:92).

The singular composition of *gatubolabola* can be related to their ceremonial use. Although *gatu* are two dimensional graphic objects they are made into three dimensional objects, with a front and a back, by being folded in half over a rope. Displayed in this manner they form the backdrop to marital presentations which take place in domestic space called the ‘unfolding’ (*tevutevu*). More occasionally, they may be used in funeral ceremonies for men or women of rank. In both of these rites the *gatu* presides over a composite image of mats which are arranged beneath it.

Kooijman’s data from Moce shows that *gatuvakaviti* were hung across the upper part of the house dividing the sleeping quarters from the rest of the house; the part of the cloth embellished in the Tongan manner faced ‘inside’, towards the nuptial couch and the Fijian side faced ‘outwards’, towards the assembled gathering of women; the couple sat with their backs to it, facing the assembled guests (Kooijman 1976:89-91). In Natewa, where *gatu* is no longer used for marital rites of this sort the cloth is tied to the wall so that the Tongan section of the design is hidden from sight. Nevertheless, this residual section of Tongan pattern was reproduced on five of the six *gatu* that I saw being made during my stay in the village.
Fig 11 Gatu Composition
Fig 12 Making Gattu in Buca
Fig 13 Printing Gatu in Natewa
Fig 14 Natewan gatubolabola Prepared for tevutevu
3.15 The Names of Gatu Composition

Although there are certain similarities between masi and gatu composition the terms used for describing gatu composition are distinct from those associated with the masi complex, and point towards a different manner of conceptualising space in relation to the body. Thus the outer portion of the design is called uluna ‘the head’. Two flaps of unprinted barkcloth protrude from either side of it, they are called daligana (lit. ‘ears’). The ‘head’ contains two truncated frames called taba, a word which means branch, as in the branch of a tree, or lineage, or a side or party assembled to make a ceremonial exchange, or a wing or an arm. In some pieces of gatu that I saw being made the section of pattern within ‘the branch’ is called tutuna (lit. ‘the edge or border of a thing’).

The tutuna, or infill is overlaid by a diagonal lattice. This lattice is made up of bands of red earth and it features a motif called vavavamuva, (which may be translated as ‘to carry the vanua upon ones back’, vava refers to the way that women carry their children in a sling of cloth’).

Seen in the flat, ‘the head’ is organised on the principle of split-representation, hung on display it forms a janus-faced image. I was told that the mangrove sap is called kesa buta, which refers to ‘the swelling or blistering of the trunk of the kesa tree’ (Capell 1941: 21).

3.16 Motifs Inside the Head

Although the stock of gatu motifs is comparatively small, gatu composition is relatively varied: bands of motifs are superimposed, creating the illusion that they are layered, or plaited- vakabolabola. This way of creating three dimensional space out of two-dimensional imagery is similar to the way in which coconut leaves are plaited to produce the stencil. Using this technique gatu compositions can seem to be made up of four separate layers.
The section referred to as ‘the head’ constitutes the encompassing field against which other components of the design are set. It is invariably painted black and is embellished with white motifs called stars or pins. The names of these motifs are *na kalokalo ni Ranadi*, ‘the stars of the great lady’ or *na pini di adi* ‘the pins or pegs of the lady’; some women said that they were like the stars in crown of the Queen of England; it should noted that *adi* is an honourific from Somosomo.

The ‘branch’ contained within the head is made up of a set sequence of motifs. It is comprised of a red border which has white figures printed upon it: *se ni vutu* (‘the flower of the Barringtonia’); *tukituki pu* (‘the battle hammers of the ancestors’). The red frame contains other bands of motifs interspersed with black and white lines: *dakai* (‘the muzzle of the shotgun’); *vakai vua* (‘the carrying pole for transporting feasts’) *vaka qa ni vasua* (‘the shell of the giant clam’); *bati ni waqa* (‘the prow of the boat’). The *tutuna*, or inner border features these motifs as well as certain others such as: *liku tugi* (‘the grass skirt’); *dali ;dogo loki* (‘the mangrove’); *iri* (‘the fan’); *ceva* (‘the removal of the protective covering’); *liku* (‘the grass skirt’). The infill sometimes has intervals between sections of pattern through which parts of the background can be seen.

*Gatu* patterns have greater animation than *masi*. Dazzling optical effects are created by means of exploiting the perceptual effects of figure ground-reversal or counter-change i.e. the shapes between printed images are identical to the image, meaning that the mind cannot determine which colour to foreground and therefore which part of the pattern to foreground. The appearance of animation is heightened by repeating bands of motifs. Certain motifs, such as the *ceva* motif, literally seem to ‘jump’, or change shape, depending upon one’s position in the room.
3.17 The Stock of Motifs in Somosomo

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Motif</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Drau ni niu musu</td>
<td>the cut leaf of the coconut</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Se ni niu</td>
<td>the flower of the coconut</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ceva Kubutawa</td>
<td>to remove the safety catch of the loaded rifle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vavanl</td>
<td>carrying on the back</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dogoloki</td>
<td>the mangrove</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kubu ni Dakai</td>
<td>the rifle butt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Madrai Ciqiciqi</td>
<td>fermented breadfruit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Walu</td>
<td>a fish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kupeiti</td>
<td>the Tongan pattern board</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vua ni Soni/ Ceva ki soni</td>
<td>the fruit of the soni tree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dakai</td>
<td>shotgun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bati ni Ika</td>
<td>the teeth of the fish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laca vei idre</td>
<td>the stretched sail</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iri</td>
<td>the fan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nadranu</td>
<td>the fresh water</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In contrast to the *masi* complex the stock of motifs used to pattern *gatu* in Natewa comparatively small. Yet this shows that Somosomo women had a more extensive stock of stencil motifs.

3.18 Distribution of Gatu

*Gatu* are only produced in certain villages on Taveuni: Somosomo, Vuna, Bouma, Wainikeli; they are also made on Vanua Balavu, one of the Lau islands. On Vanua Levu, *gatu* are made in Natewa and Wailevu, the village of the new paramount of Tunuloa. Hocart records that *gatu* was also made in Saqani on the other side of Natewa bay, but the quality of work was poor. (Hocart 1952: 288)

It is difficult to determine the origins of this cloth since far less ethnographic work has been conducted on Taveuni. Though museum collections and photographs indicate that *masi* was made during the second half of the 19th century it is noticeable that the Methodist missionary, Rev. Thomas Williams (who was resident in Somosomo from (1843-47)) makes no reference to the manufacture of this distinctive type of barkcloth. This is particularly striking since he provides detailed descriptions of the production of Tongan-style cloth and *masi* (Williams, 1858:66). Furthermore, the specimens of *gatu* in museums, collected in the second half of the 19th century are typically of less complex garments, there is nothing resembling a
gatu head. But in 1912 Hocart visited Somosomo and he photographed the sleeping quarters of the Tui Cakau. His photograph shows that the Tui Cakau had a length of *gatubolabola* suspended above his bed. Another photograph of the Tui Vuna’s house shows a *gatu* on display which resembles Natewan *gatu* in many respects.

Therefore it may be plausible to suggest that *gatu* was developed during the second half of the nineteenth century, a period which witnessed the rise of the confederacy between Cakaudrove and Tonga, the escalation of warfare between rival confederacies, and of course colonial intrusion by the British.
4

Barkcloth and the Endogamous Expansion of the Bauan Matanitu

4.1 Introduction

The data presented in the last two chapters reveals that it may be possible to reconsider the role of women and i yau such as masi and gatu in the expansion of the matanitu of Bau and Cakaudrove during the precolonial era. The data presented in chapter two indicated that the knowledge of manipulating coconut leaves in the gatu complex had been introduced to Natewa from Somosomo. It is therefore possible that by focusing on the control of masi stencils, by the former gatekeepers of masi pattern, it may be possible to develop an hypothesis concerning the introduction of masi to Natewa.

The title of the women who formerly controlled the knowledge of producing stencils, marama ni draudrau, may be roughly translated as ‘ladies of the leafy canopy’ or ‘ladies of the many leaves’. It has an archaic ring to it. The Fijian ethnohistorian, Ratu Deve Toganivalu, said that the title marama, or ramarama, was a Bauan honourific, formerly addressed to Bauan women of rank, but that it’s use had fallen into decline by 1911. Instead, the term Adi, formerly used to address women of rank in Cakaudrove, had come into general use throughout the islands; as is indeed the case today (Toganivalu, 1912). The title ‘ladies of the leafy canopy’ is of interest since ancestors are often simply called vu (‘roots’) and the paramount chief in Bau, as in Natewa, is entitled the vunivalu (‘Root of War’). The use of vudi leaves (a kind of banana or plantain) is also of interest since the myth describing the origins of
the Bauan *matanitu* (Kubuna) describes the act of severing the bunch of bananas from the stem of the plant. As Tuwere has recently noted,

The meaning of the word Kubuna is obscure but information gathered from those who have close links with it refer its meaning back to two ancestors, Tuinayavu of Batiki and Vueti of Bau. It happened that they *dovia* ('break') a fruit of the *vudi* plant between themselves. The *kubuna* (part that is joined to the bunch stalk) went to Tuinayavu and the *matana* (outside part) went to Vueti. As they parted, Vueti told Tuinayavu that he could take with him the name Kubuna but he would have the *vanua* 'land' (Tuwere 1992:15).

Let us reconsider the evidence concerning the imagery of *masi* that was presented in the previous two chapters. *Masi* imagery offers a series of interconnected images of temporality which I shall outline below. Contemporary observation of barkcloth production can help to reveal a hitherto obscured dimension of the growth of chiefly polities in precolonial Fiji. It draws attention to the need to focus on the representation of an ongoing material, or organic *process* 'in the way of the land', rather than upon the exchange of static things. If barkcloth production is itself considered as a representative process it reveals a particular dimension of 'acting and doing in the way of the land': the animation of tree imagery. I suggest that the animated performance of tree images brings about a particular way of apprehending the past. The endlessly repeated actions of barkcloth preparation for the ongoing performance of life-cycle rites, and the stability of stencil imagery, have a particular temporal quality: that of bringing the ancestral past into the present and making it into something that can be handled and worn.

Trees and people also feature in Fijian definitions of the maritime polities. The Fijian term *matanitu* has been translated into English by political terms such as state, confederacy or polity. Hocart also used the term state, however in his comments on the interrelationship between states and clans,
that is, *matanitu* and *mataqali*, he made it clear that these English terms did not adequately convey how the interlinking of political units was envisaged.

The term *matanggali* means a temple, subject or linked to another temple. The clan like all other political units in Fiji is a lineage that owns a shrine or a tumulus. In Vanua Levu the idea of subjection is evidently strong. The people are positive that the nobility does so form a *matanggali*: 'The chief is the stem, the *matanggali* the branch'... The term *matanitu*, which is applied to suzerain states, must now be interpreted as the sacred land of the lord or high chief as opposed to the sacred land of the vassals ... In Vanua Levu the sacred land on which the states and clans are based is the sacred land of the god of the land. Further south these have been displaced by the spirits of war with their temples of Western design. It is quite possible that some of these war gods are gods of the land that have been assimilated to the shamanistic cycle (Hocart, 1952:24, 25).

Drawing upon Hocart's evocative description it is therefore possible to suggest that *matanitu* should be conceptualised as an 'animated tree', whose trunk is the body of the paramount, whose root is the ancestor in the burial mound, whose branches are extended across the archipelago by warriors or deputies and whose intentions are made manifest women carrying leaves which cast their shadows on the barkcloth spread out across the outlying lands.

The processes of *masi* production present a series of images of reproduction that have a characteristic motion. Reproduction is portrayed as being recursive, or folded back on itself, rather than extending outwards in long lines. Watching women with flowers behind their ears preparing *masi* and later printing shadow imagery through leaves gave me an impression of observing an animated ‘tree person’ performing upon itself. Barkcloth production also conveys images of sacrifice. Coppiced saplings growing round the backs of houses are severed, their bark is unwrapped. The inner bark is made to drain its ‘blood’ in water. ‘Branches’ or sticks wielded by women are turned ‘inwards’ and beaten along the length of the trunk to produce smooth lengths of cloth. On certain occasions *masi* emerges from beneath the ancestral foundations of the principal chiefly house (see fig 3).
Women printing masi characteristically spread their legs to steady themselves. Lengths of masi and masi imagery appear to emerge from between their legs (see figs. 3 and 5). The postures women adopt when they make masi are markedly different from the seating positions which are said to be lady-like (vakamamara) i.e. legs folded to one side, or sitting cross-legged, like men. The vulva-like shape of banana leaf stencils, which are pressed against barkcloth spread directly on the surface of the ground, with only a mat for protection, suggests that the reproduction of imagery is conceptually linked to inter-generational process of reproduction and growth which links the people and the land together. Stencils reveal that masi is a printing institution, designed to achieve the controlled publication of patterns; together these two factors suggest that the reproduction of imagery is intended to foster a particular kind of expansion. Masi imagery, portrays a process or duree, in which images are portrayed in sequences that are characteristically recursive and self-contained, as if in anticipation of the fact that the same processes will be perpetuated ad infinitum. The imagery is highly generic and it is arranged in bands that are set in a particular order. Banded sequences of negative images show figures that are welded together by the encompassing ground: ‘that which envelops’. The motifs are iconic and their repeated production conveys a sense of an established ritual topography: the ridge pole of the house; the yaqona bowl; the ancestors’ battle hammers; the chief’s comb. Sequences of draudrau images lead up to an icon marking uncovering (ceva) which provides one of the central axes of reduplication or reflection.

The dark sequences of motifs are typically repeated four times and they are separated by intervals of light and efflorescence. Wrapped around the body of the wearer, possibly with the transverse section of a canoe encircling the hips, banded sequences of motifs form an endless cycle. It may therefore be suggested that masi imagery represents a model of time which appears to be folded back on itself and flattened.
4.2 Barkcloth as an Official Model of Kinship

Long ago the French anthropologist, Albert Loisy, argued that sacrificial action tended to imitate the effects it sought to achieve by means of action and imagery. Where other analysts became preoccupied by the destruction of life in rites of sacrifice he stressed that sacrificial imagery often imitated the process of death through object sacrifice (Loisy 1920:25). Using his insight, it is possible to envisage the growth of the chiefly patrilineages being achieved by means of artifice. Thus the expansion of the polity becomes comprised of two movements: the outmigration of marama ni draudrau from the chiefly capital of Bau to peripheral lands and the counterflow of their daughters whose ritual divestment imitates the process of death and decomposition, thereby decomposing their affiliation to their paternal natal ancestors. If one sees the axis of reflection as providing the axis of an imitative process one can summarise the sequence of masi images running as follows: the sacrifice, or unwrapping, of masi saplings is part of a cycle which leads up to a climactic moment of sacrificial divestment. In turn, sacrificial divestment imitates the process of physical decomposition which contributes to the growth of trees. In turn these trees are sacrificed at a climactic moment of divestment and so on ad infinitum.

I have attempted to envisage how a particular ceremonial artefact could have facilitated the development of a particular a model of kinship. For the sake of clarity I shall outline a summary version of this model below. The rest of the chapter will be devoted to presenting circumstantial data from Natewan oral historical narratives and the ethnohistorical literature of the growth of matanitu. My concern is not to assess whether this model actually produced the effects in the highly simplified way that I describe but rather to reveal why masi might have come to present a plausible ritual-cum-technical solution to some of the problems of achieving the endogamous expansion across a scattered group of islands in highly competitive circumstances.
Written sources and museum collections can only provide some evidence of the effects that the *masi* complex achieved over time. They can reveal certain circumstantial factors, such as changes in material culture, which may have facilitated the development of this complex, but they cannot reveal how the *masi* complex enabled the modification or innovation of kinship relations. Yet, by providing some sketchy indications of the pre-existing social-cum-ritual environment, oral historical narratives suggest that quite substantial modifications may have occurred over time. I suggest that ritual performances involving the ritualised removal of *masi* came to provide a means of achieving the growth of the Bauan nobility through the gradual, piecemeal incorporation of people from pre-inhabited territories. I shall attempt to indicate why the Bauan polity could have achieved success and influence through brute force alone.

The argument presented in this chapter is partly a reconstruction drawn from both contemporary and historical evidence. The earliest collected specimens of *masi* date from the 1840s at a time when the complex was already well established. This raises certain analytical issues. Viewed retrospectively, the *masi* complex intimates a degree of intricacy: of an all encompassing vision of the life-cycle and of a carefully thought out long-term strategy to achieve and secure political advantage in the distant future. Like many things in Fiji, the *masi* complex now presents the illusion that these effects were planned from the start. In ideological terms this illusion may be very important. Yet it seems likely that the *masi* complex developed gradually, through people’s piecemeal attempts to retain positions of authority and to elaborate a ritual form which would enable them to secure political advantages, especially loyalty to the Bauan polity, in highly adverse circumstances.

*Masai* offers a way of representing social relations in a formalised manner. Like other images of kinship the *masi* complex was a means of acting out an animated model of what Pierre Bourdieu has called ‘official kinship’, that is ‘the group’s self representation and almost theatrical presentation it gives of
itself when acting in accordance to that self image’ (Bourdieu 1977:35). By coining the expression official kinship Bourdieu was making a distinction between formal representations of kinship, which serve an ideological purpose by regulating kin relations in a particular manner, and actual kin relations, which may well deviate from the coercive influence of an official model.

His insight is applicable to Natewa today, and it is also applicable to Natewa’s past. Ideology cannot become effective all at once. For an extended period of time certain aspects of the official model of kinship, such as marriage prescription, was only applicable to the Bauan nobility and even they may have chosen not to follow it if it endangered their political position (see Lester, 1940:273). I shall endeavour to show that *masi* was initially instrumental in achieving the reconfiguration of the social hierarchy which had developed in the pre-existing sacrificial economy. But as well as being representing the diverse aspects of an idealised model of of kinship (understood in its broadest sense as religious political economy) in diagrammatic form barkcloth production also helped to create or constitute worlds of hierarchical social relations: through the feasts that were offered to the *marama ni draudrau*; through the cyclical movements of women and their progeny between the major political centres and peripheral *vanua*; through the chiefly ceremonies of installing the new cloths; and through dramatic ceremonies of divestment at *solevu* (gatherings).

The circumstantial evidence strongly suggests that different kinds of barkcloth were used to achieve the expansion of different *matanitu*. In each case barkcloth provided a material support for manifesting knowledge which was held in the mind. I have indicated that there is evidence that *gatu* was spread by women of rank from Somosomo. It follows that it is likely that ranking women from Tonga extended Tongan institutions of barkcloth production in Somosomo, Natewa, as well as Lau and Lomaiviti. These different styles of barkcloth can be visibly traced back to these different sources. By contrast, the *masi* complex seems infinitely more mysterious and cunning because it cannot be
easily traced and provenanced. *Masi* was mainly produced in the island periphery, no chiefly capital was renown for its production. In fact, *i yau ni yalewa* were not manufactured in the chiefly capital of Bau at all. Yet the fact that *i yau*, like *masi* and mats were not manufactured in Bau but only received there may well be logically consistent with the assertion stencil producing knowledge was spread to the outer island periphery by Bauan women of rank.

I must stress that the model that I present below is based upon my own speculations. Most of the women that I spoke to in Natewa believed that *masi* belonged to the *vanua* or that it came from the ancestors. The model that I present is an attempt to imagine how *masi* could have provided a ritual-cum-technical solution for reproducing a system of domination and strategical alliance over an extended period of time (cf. Thomas 1986:64). I suggest that the kinship system, based upon two sides was a sacrificial complex that developed as a socially relative or adaptive and tactical response to a given set of historical circumstances.

4.3 A Model of the Expansion of the Bauan Polity

For the purpose of clarity I have developed a tree diagram of the endogamous expansion of the Bauan lineage by means of the *masi* complex. It illustrates the following features of a possible official model:

1) *Extension and Incorporation by Women of Rank*: Ranking women from the principal chiefly capital of Bau were used as agents of ritual subsumption. The strategic marriages of noblewomen from Bau to leaders in peripheral *vanua* enabled Bau to achieve the gradual reorientation of the ritual polity over time. Leaders in peripheral lands were motivated to marry Bauan *marama* as a means of securing military support. However military support carried a penalty. Bauan *marama* carried the knowledge of leaf stencil imagery in their minds. By means of imagery they could extend the efficacy of their natal ancestor-cum-paramount
to peripheral lands, sometimes several hundred miles from Bau. Just as the leaves could serve as extensions of the root so these women could represent their ancestor god. As representatives or agents of the ancestor-cum-paramount, they were empowered to usurp ritual prerogatives, such as drinking yaqona and cause offerings and feasts usually reserved for chiefs to be brought to them in return for the release of stencils (See Hocart 1952:20; Sahlins 1991:78).

2) The Obligations of Vasu from Regional Lands: By virtue of being sacrificed to Bau at ceremonies of divestment called kau mata ni gone the sons of Bauan marama were not able to represent their fathers' local ancestor god in the chiefly capital. Rather than being able to usurp offerings intended for the ancestors their role was to compliment the role of the marama ni draudrau by conveying offerings from their natal vanua to Bau.

3) The Excorporation of Women from Peripheral Vanua and their Incorporation within the Bauan Polity: Noble women from subaltern vanua, including the daughters of marama ni draudrau, were presented to the Bauan paramount as sacrificial offerings. Using ritual instruments such as tabua and masi their embodied affiliation to their natal vanua were ritually decomposed at ceremonies called i luva ni masi (lit. ‘discarding the cloth’). By decomposing their corporate affiliation with their natal lands women emerged as yalewa vou thereby, ideally, securing the loyalty of their sons to Bau.

4) Extension and Replication: The sons of women who married into Bau enjoyed a series of privileges. Vasu levu (nephews from the greater lands) could serve to extend the agency of the paramount to peripheral vanua. They had a divine right of plunder and they could seize sacrificial offerings intended for the local ancestor god.
The Endogamous Expansion
of the Bauan Matanitu

1. Vunivalu (Bauan paramount)
1A. Marama ni draudrau (ladies of the leafy canopy)
1B. Vasu levu (great nephew)
2A. Vale ni turaga ni taukei (house of the local chief)
2B. New house of the vasu levu and the daughter of the local chief
2C. Sacrifice of the vasu ni taukei (nephew of the indigenous people)
2D. Sacrifice of the yalewa (woman)

Fig 15. The Growth of the Bauan Matanitu
5) Deputation: Having married the daughter of the leader of the indigenous people the *vasu levu* could be installed as a chief through a ceremony called the moulding (*buli*.) or *na i toka ni masi* putting on the *masi*. This was also a ceremony which imitated the process of death and renewal. The chief became identified with the local god and transformed the *vanua* by virtue of being wrapped and invested cloth that was both the product of the land and invested with *mana* from Bau. In some cases the new chiefs were simply called *masi vou*, or 'the new cloth'.

6) Charismatic Leadership: By virtue of his installation in *masi* the chief was said to manifest *mana*: efficacy over life, death and prosperity.

7) The Cyclical Character of the System: 

*masi* imagery served to represent, and therefore promote, an institution of cross-cousin marriage which meant that the progeny of brothers and sisters became divided into intermarrying teams. Ideally, female descendants of *marama ni draudrau* would marry their brothers' progeny in Bau; conversely the progeny of women who became part of the paramount’s retinue were encouraged to marry back in to the Bauan nobility in peripheral *vanua*.

8) The ongoing conversion of exogamy into endogamy through the mutual exchange of sacrifices: The system of cross-cousin marriage enabled the Bauan polity to achieve expansion through the exchange of sacrifices. Efficacious artefacts such as *masi* and *tabua* were used to impersonate the actions of the gods. Through successive acts of decomposition and sacrificial consumption exogamous relations were converted into endogamous ones. Compressed to its logical extreme the model of cross-cousin marriage ideally involved four agents: a Bauan brother and his sister and their son and daughter. By virtue of the use of *masi* and *tabua* the other partners ostensibly ceased to count. They had to be ritually re acknowledged by presenting the face of the child. As a result incestuous unity was accomplished, bringing about the endogamous expansion of the chiefly polity. In its initial stages the reconfiguration of the polity was
achieved by force and violence. The ideological force of the official model of kinship and the *mana*, or efficacy of *masi* increased with time.

9) Protection Against Rivalry From Deputies in Peripheral Vanua: The *masi* complex was developed in response to the endemic problem of fratricidal rivalry. The system may therefore have been developed as a means of controlling Bauan deputies at long range. The control of a system of pattern and a system of offerings would have helped to forestall the fragmentation or devolution of the polity. My own fieldwork suggests that if a member of the Bauan polity was installed as a deputy in a peripheral *vama* he became subject to the same obligations to present his daughters as offerings to Bau.

10) Excorporation and Sacrificial Consumption: *Solevu* (gatherings) were occasions where ancestral representatives met. Offerings of barkcloth were unwrapped from the bodies of warriors and were metaphorically consumed by paramount chiefs in the main chiefly capitals. As these actions became devalued the sacrificial economy became prone to inflation. By the mid nineteenth century the quantity as the quality of imagery had come to reveal the current strategic position of the polity upon the internal ritual politics of peripheral lands. *Masivolavola* could therefore be used to advertise loyalty at long range.

I shall try to describe the features of the particular historical and social milieu which could have fostered the development of such a system.

4.4 The Growth of Polities in Pre-colonial Fiji

In between the sixteenth and the late nineteenth centuries central and eastern Fiji witnessed the rise of successive maritime chiefdoms or confederations (*matanitu*) which either encompassed, or were allied to smaller lands in one way or another.

Both Fijian and European commentators on Fijian political organisation have stressed that the *matanitu* must be seen as emanating from corporate institutions of worship which were organised or subdivided according to the specialised services that they performed in honour of the ancestor gods, or their
living embodiments the chiefs, rather than being defined on the basis of social classification (Sahlins 1983:24 citing Rokowaqa). As Thomas has pointed out, what was distinctive about these maritime ritual polities was the expanse of land and sea which they had to encompass - they were far-flung regional confederations which made use of district personnel to integrate the populations of scattered islands up to a distance of two hundred miles from the eastern coast of Viti Levu (Thomas 1986:).

Many of these polities, including the main ones of Kubuna (Bau), Burebasaga (Rewa) and Verata all emerged from the east coast of Viti Levu. Their concentration in this part of the island has been attributed to the suitability of the terrain for growing swamp taro. Two of these major states, Verata and Bau, spread their influence to the islands to the east, north east and south east of the archipelago. Although the expansion of the Veratan empire has not yet been dated, (Sayes estimates that it took place between the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries) the growth of Kubuna (Bau and Batiki) is said to have started in the 18th century (Sayes 1982: 60; Thomas 1986:13). Sayes ethnohistorical compilation of oral historical narratives regarding the growth of the Veratan polity from Vanua Levu and Taveuni has established that the expansion formation was an autochthonous phenomenon, not the product of European contact (Sayes, 1984). At a later stage (c.1830-1850) the new states of Cakaudrove and later Tovata (a coalition founded between Cakaudrove, Bua and the Tongan warrior, Ma’afu in 1867), emerged from political centres located further east in the group. In different ways each of these confederations attempted to secure allegiance to a ritual centre, typically a village of a couple of hundred people; but the total number of people encompassed within the polity as whole could be far more extensive.
SALA VOLIVOLI ON VANUA LEVU AFTER SAYES 1984

Figure 16. Paths for conveying first fruit sacrifices to Verata
4.5 Verata, the Polity of Blood

If the Bauan system of kinship is to be seen as an adaptive, predatory institution it is necessary to describe the growth of the Veratan polity across Vanua Levu since they spread first. Based upon his research in Vanua Levu, Hocart was the first to describe the fragments of the old ritual polity that he encountered:

The culture of West Central Vanua Levu seems to be made up of fragments, and to lack the consistency which pervades to a great extent the culture of the Koro Sea. It would be an interesting problem for the student of society... to ascertain whether this is a characteristic of peoples in transition from one culture to another. Among the fragments is perhaps to be numbered the system of ‘paths’. The idea of a path of kinship and so of feasts is common to all Fiji, but in Central Vanua Levu it takes the form of long converging lines, like the traffic paths, rather than of teams facing each other (Hocart 1952:51).

More recently the ethnohistorian Shelly Anne Sayes has gathered oral historical evidence on the growth of Verata. Of course evidence regarding specific claims of ancestral affiliation is open to conjecture but the *tukutuku* (‘native histories’) present a logically consistent picture of the way in which the Veratan lineage was organised. The following summary is largely taken from her research (see Sayes 1984).

1) Physical Multiplication and the Outmigration of Noblemen and their Retinues: The Veratan confederacy is described as a *matanitu ni dra*, a ‘polity of the blood’, a title which suggests that the growth and dispersal of the Veratan nobility was the result of their physical multiplication, and the volume of outmigration from the east coast of Viti Levu. Evidence of these migratory movements can be found in the sheer number of peoples in Vanua Levu who trace their ancestry back to Verata and of the number of chiefs in the coastal regions of Vanua Levu who bear the Veratan title, Tui.

In Bua, the migration and settlement of several groups of people is specifically associated with the ancestral canoe journey of a single, semi-mythic
personage - Buatavatava, the eldest son of Rokomautu, the leader and sacerdotal lord, or Ratu, of Verata. Sayes found that many of the peoples located in the region of Natewa bay claimed to be descended from the crew of noblemen who accompanied him in his canoe (Sayes 1984:8)

2) Converging Paths for the Presentation of First Fruit Sacrifices

The Fijian landscape is marked by centuries of ritual activity in as much as it is cross-cut by ritual paths, or conduits, for conveying offerings which run between the villages and the places of burial, and which cross land and sea to connect different lands and polities together. These paths are still referred to in the ceremonial speeches. For example, if someone hopes to foster relations between vanua he will describe the counterflow of reciprocal offerings by saying ‘let the path running between us never become overgrown’. Many of these paths are named. But the ceremonial paths fanning out from Verata are given the specific title, sala volivoli. Maikeli Livani talked to me about them, and the following account is based upon what he said.

Although Tui were installed in many of the settlements recognition that the Ratu of Verata granted prosperity to the land was made manifest through the annual transportation of ai sevu, the first fruits of the banana (vudi), along the extensive ceremonial paths called sala volivoli that stretched along both the arms of land that embrace the large bay of Natewa. The bananas were carried on carrying sticks made from nokonoko (ironwood) trees. Wailevu acted as a resting and sorting place and from there offerings were conveyed to Verata. The journey on foot was so lengthy that the nokonoko carrying sticks sprouted new shoots on the way. Where the people rested, for example in Wailevu or Korolevu, they stuck their sticks in the soil and the nokonoko trees flourished and grew. Maikeli Livani added: ‘There are nokonoko trees growing in many parts of Vanua Levu’.

Sayes estimates that there were two paths for conveying offerings linking the eastern part of Vanua Levu to the main satellite of Veratan political
authority, Wailevu. One path, called *volivoli sawana*, stretched between Wailevu and Udu point along the northern coast of the Natewa bay. A second path, called *volivoli vanua*, stretched along the north coast of Vanua Levu *via* Labasa to Wailevu. The Tui Wailevu conveyed the offerings to Verata (Sayes 1984:10).

It was whilst he was doing research in Natewa that Hocart first heard mention of these ancient paths for conveying offerings.

The transmission of the Lord of Natewa’s word along the coast is called *volivoli*. The word of the chief goes to the clan of Ndreketi which is ‘Envoy to *volivoli*’ and thence it goes along the coast... Thus the word of Verata asking for whale’s teeth and so on can come through Dreketi (Hocart, 1952:123).

When I asked about this path I was told that the elders used to talk about it but that it had been broken by the arrival of the *turaga* (noblemen) from Bau. The evidence of its existence was that there were two positions of envoy in Natewa. Dreketi used to hold the position of *mataki volivoli*, Mai Sovatabua (‘From the Basket of tabua) was envoy, or *mataki* to Bau and Somosomo; formerly Mai Sovatabua was the *vanua*’s guardian of *i yau*.

4.6 The Competition Between Brothers and the Decline of Verata

The break up of Verata is explained in terms of fratricidal rivalry and the collapse of the system for conveying first fruit sacrifices. The following story is from my field notes, partially augmented by the version Sayes recorded a few years before me during her visit to Natewa (see Sayes, 1984:11).

The Tui Vusa told a story of an army which went to Vanua Levu led by a *turaga* called Naboutuiloma (lit. ‘the central house post’) from Ra, one of the Gonesau whose role was to support the Ratu from Verata. The expedition had two names. The first name was Yayalevu (lit: ‘great things’- referring to the tribute they wished to extract). The second name was Torotorosila (lit.
'keep moving further [east]'). When the army reached Bua, on the western tip of Vanua Levu, it split in two. Naboutuiloma took charge of one army and his brother took charge of the other; together they agreed on a password, torotorosila, so that they would not fight each other by mistake when their faces were disguised with war paint. As the armies moved eastwards they sometimes intervened in local disputes (Granting military assistance was an important strategy for consolidating the Veratan colony). It so happened that the Natewans asked one of the brothers to help them to fight their enemies. It was not until Naboutuiloma was wounded that the password was given and the two brothers realised that they had been unwittingly pitted against one another.

This story appears to offer a compressed account a range of factors which may contributed to the collapse of the Veratan polity. The brothers are sent out to exact offerings which are no longer being conveyed to Verata. However their loyalty is founded on their opposition to others, that is they remain united against others for as long as they continue to expand the polity. Hence their motto, 'keep moving further [east]'. Once their expansion further east reaches its natural limit their affiliation to Verata becomes weakened, they become embroiled in local disputes between chiefs and turn against each other in battle.

4.7 Natewan Evidence of the Transition of Authority

Tukutuku from Natewa describe a series of migrations from the mainland. The earliest stories relating to Natewa describe the arrival of men from Verata and Bau. I was told the following story by the late Tui Vusasivo, the chief of the neighbouring village of Vusasivo. It should be noted that in oral narratives turtle nets are sometimes described as 'the net of the polity', because eating turtle was the prerogative of the chiefly representatives of the gods (Hocart, 1952: 140).
First there were two brothers from Verata. They settled at Naqaravutu, ‘the cave where the ancestor dwells’. Their names were Mainaqaraqara (‘from the cave’) and Lutunakarikari (‘lower the mainsail’). One day Nakarikari asked if he could borrow his elder brother’s turtle net. He took it to Laucala and broke it. When he went back to tell his brother they quarreled and Mainaqaraqara left (tewa) Naqaravutu with some of his followers. He went to live in Valebuliti and was made Tu Natewa.

This is how Natewa got its name, for Na tewa means ‘the splitting apart’, like a wound opening up (Capell, 1941:271). Later a deputation led by Ratu Saurara traveled from Bau by canoe and they landed in Nasoga creek. Ratu Saurara married a woman of the land, their son became a sacred nephew to the lands people vasu i taukei and was installed as the first Vunivalu. ‘Before the Flag’, that is, before the arrival of the Union Jack, there were two chiefs in Natewa. There were also different gods. The ancestor god (vu) was a stone. The Bauan nobility brought an immigrant god, Ma Nawiri (Hocart, 1952:129). However, later the title of Tu Natewa fell into disuse and the Vunivalu came to have authority over the land. Some people said that the Bauans established two houses: Big house (Valelevu) and second house (Valenisau) the ancestral foundation (yavu) of the big house was named Vatulawa (‘The stone fishing net’).

4.8 Bau: The Matanitu of Force and Cunning

In Fiji, Bau is described as na matanitu ni kaukauwa, na matanitu ni valu (‘a polity created through force and war’), and accordingly the paramount’s title is the Vunivalu (Root of War). The Bauan nobility are also associated with verevere vaka Bau (‘cunning and plotting in the manner of Bau’). The missionary John Waterhouse, commented that in the early stages of its ascendancy it was the shortage of people loyal to Bau which posed the greatest political challenge. ‘It’s greatest want was men”’the men belonging to Verata and Rewa”’ to use the language of the oral historians’ (Waterhouse, 1866:114; cited in Thomas 1986). Sahlins has recently shed new light upon Bau’s lack of personnel by revealing that, at least according to some accounts, the Bauan
chiefs are descended from the illegitimate son of the older sister of the ancestral brothers of Verata, the result of an irregular union with a local chieftain of no particular standing (Sahlins 1991:75). Indicating that promoting the position of the sister’s son may have been integral to the growth of the Bauan polity from the start.

Ratu Ruveni Vakalalabure drew my attention to the fact that women are never mentioned in any of the oral narratives about Verata. However, women were to play a central part in the expansion of the Bauan lineage, as Sayes has suggested he expansion of Bau appears to have entailed the formation of new paths of the land (Sayes *ibid*). To this day, Fijians distinguish between *sala vakavanua* (customary paths in the manner of the land) and paths derived from former relationships of marital and military alliance *na sala ni yalewa* (‘paths of the woman’) or *na sala ni valu* (the ‘paths of war’) they distinguish these still further from paths which bind polities together called *sala vakaturaga* (chiefly paths, Ravuvu, 1987:21; Sayes 1984:20). The growth of the Bauan polity can therefore be imagined in terms of the formation and extension of a network of paths interconnecting Bau and the island periphery.

4.9 The Exchange Between Branches

The central thesis of *The Northern States of Fiji* is that in the system of kinship which is found from Bau to Lau there must always be ‘two sides’ for engagement in ritual work. From his study of a variety of rites in Vanua Levu Hocart concluded that the ritual system based upon the opposition of two sides (*veiqaravi*) or branches (*veitabani*) was highly specific in character. It was based upon the concept of mutual ministration, that is the principle of ‘two sides’ serving each other’s gods. The specific Fijian verb used to describe this kind of mutual service, *veiqaravi*, is difficult to translate: it means to face or serve each other, or more specifically still, to face and serve each others caves.
(qara) or gods (because in many Veratan traditions the caves housed the ancestors).

Hocart argued that it was the exchanges between intermarrying groups (which become divided into male and female sides -na yasana ni tagane and na yasana ni yalewa on these occasions) provided the prototypical form for the dual organisation of ritual work involved in the prosperity cult more generally. He emphasised that the exchanges between opposing teams at marriage rites were neither social nor civic rites but were always performances at which the protagonists impersonated the actions of the gods:

If each side offers food to the other, it is not merely ‘economic’, the disposing of a surplus, but the offering of a food which, in some way that is obscure belongs to the god... If one side makes gifts for another it is in order to increase the yield of the fields and sea. The two sides are gods to one another, they come with their gods and impersonate them.’ (Hocart, 1952:45-46 emphasis added)

4.10 The Vasu Relationship

The position of the sacred nephew may help to reveal the concept of person that these ritual exchanges entail. Fiji is famous for a particular ritual institution known as the vasu relationship, that is, the obligations and honour accorded to the brother’s sister’s son. This honour consists of the sacred nephew’s residual rights to gardening land and other moveable property in his mother’s brother’s land.

Yet these prerogatives are not birthrights but are conferred through ritual acts of investiture and disinvestiture at a ceremony called kau ni mata ni gone (‘to carry the face of the child’) which will be described in the following chapter. The institution has several ramifications in the system of social organisation which seem to have facilitated its reproduction. For example, Hocart shows how the vasu relationship was connected to cross-cousin relationships called ‘veitavaleni’ which gave license for joking, the mutual
appropriation of goods and sexual innuendo. He stresses that cross-cousin relation was supported by 'a whole theology' (Hocart 1952:237). The license permitted between cross-cousins, that is, descendants of siblings of the opposite sex, was in marked contrast to the strict codes of respect and avoidance governing relationships between real and classificatory siblings descended from siblings of the same sex. As Hocart suggested the political significance of this relationship was that 'the cross-cousin of one generation was the sister’s son to the one before' (Hocart, 1952:44). The marriage of cross-cousins of the opposite sex was ritually sanctioned, indeed as Toren notes, 'they were the only marriageable category of kin' (Toren, 1990:52). By extrapolation, since men imitated the actions of the gods, relationships between distant vanua could use the cross-cousin relations of the ancestors or shared ancestor gods -tauvu to sanction ritual license and hoaxing on a broader scale.

Hocart insisted upon the sacred force of the vasu’s rights. It is here that the significance of images person become apparent. He argued that the nephew’s right to seize offerings dedicated to his uncle was based upon a sacrificial custom: just as the chief and the god were identified, so his son by extension impersonated his father’s god and manifested his agency in his mother’s land (Hocart, 1915). As Hocart put it ‘Every man represents his god on a visit to his ‘other side’( Hocart, 1952-46). As a representative, or an extension of his father’s god, the nephew could, on ceremonial occasions, engage in a contest with the local god by seizing and ‘consuming’ sacrificial offerings intended to the deity/chief.

Yet the vasu’s prerogatives were constrained by the relative status of the two intermarrying vanua. As a vasu from the powerful chiefly capital of Bau, dubbed either vasu levu, or vasu turaga (‘great or chiefly nephew’) could hold a position of authority in his mother’s brother’s vanua of lesser status. Conversely, nephews might bear specific titles which revealed their lesser station, such as vasu vei ira na vanua qali, (‘nephew from the subject land’).
It is also apparent that the sons of Bauan marama who had married elsewhere did not carry equivalent rights, the role of the sons who were vasu to Bau was to bring tribute and not to extract it. (cf. Sahlins 1991).

4.11 Outmigration of Women of Rank.

The outmigration of women of rank has received less attention in the ethnographic and ethnohistorical literature than the outmigration of men from the ritual centres. However, Marshall Sahlins has recently drawn attention to a section from Hocart's unpublished second monograph, *The Heart of Fiji* where he notes:

According to the Suva view of their history, they used to live in a relatively unorganised or dispersed fashion and marry with Rewa, until the ancient land people of Suva brought a noble woman from Bau, chose a man of the chiefly clan to marry her, and made him ruler of Suva. Thereupon the Suva polity was reorganised... Then they all lived in Solia to wait upon the lady of Bau. They gave up intermarrying with Rewa. The lady came with a god (tevoro) Cagawalu. Those who brought her the envoys from Bau are his priests. That is how the nobles of Suva increased.. Bau and Suva have gods in common. (Sahlins, 1991:78; Hocart HF: 374b-374c)

This suggests that, in Suva, the outmigration of a leading Bauan marama led to the assimilation of Suva within the Bauan state and the ritual reorganisation of the entire vanua under a new god. The story is of interest since it shows that changes in the ritual organisation also entailed changes in marriage patterns. Based upon this evidence, Sahlins has suggested that the practice may have been more widespread. As he expresses it:

Bau did not produce many valuables (i yau) for exchange but it did have a lot of noble women, or at least women of important clans - for this purpose one need not be very fussy - who could be accorded to ranking men of lesser lands. This was a major means of Bauan expansion, a classic kind of conspiracy a la Bau (vere vaka Bau). It functioned politically in a double way: the gift of the woman ensured the loyalty of the wife-taking chief, perhaps even canceling the latter's allegiance to another place such as Rewa; plus the Bauan wife could enoble and empower the local chief, bringing to him the backing of her people - support from Bau, which could prove decisive in contests with his own rivals for the rule of the land.
4.12 Incorporation

The example from Suva shows that women who married out of their vanua were not automatically deprived of their birthright or their natal ancestral affiliation but that they could represent or extend the influence of their gods elsewhere. Since a similar concept of personhood pertained to both women and men, women's composite persons had to be ritually decomposed and consumed in order to safeguard the Bauan polity. Rather than acting as agents of ritual subsumption it women from outlying vanua were ritually subsumed. Sahlins has suggested that in 19th century Fiji both the institutions of polygamous marriage and the ritual feasts associated with warfare were integral features of a regime of terror - an economy of sacrificial consumption focused upon the person of the 'people devouring king'. He argues that Bauan expansion was achieved by means of human sacrifice. 'The food of the gods' included women and cannibal victims, (ideally of chief or warrior rivals) or their daughters who would be presented in marriage. Sacrifice and consumption were not ends in themselves but were connected to the growth and prosperity of the vanua indexed through the chief's sexual and reproductive potency and his bounty in redistributing feasts. Thus, ideally, the system was based upon the notion of converting antagonism and violence (warfare with other factions or lineages) into the growth and prosperity of the polity through the reproduction of subjects loyal to the state and through assuaging the hunger of the gods. Thus, as Sahlins puts it, 'the king's cannibal disposition is directed outward, turning royal violence into reproductive benefits through the provision of sacrificial victims to the gods of the land' (Sahlins, 1991: 69).

4.13 The Problems of Expansion

As Thomas has pointed out, the use of poylgamy as a means of establishing regional control carried a penalty. He has pointed out that the variety of considerations which could be brought to bear in chiefly succession (the
tendency for succession to pass to the younger brother before passing to the son; the importance of alliance relationships and military support in determining succession disputes) and the fluidity of concepts of rank and status more generally, meant that factional conflict and fratricide were endemic features of pre-colonial life in Fiji. Maintaining loyalty, demonstrating allegiance and containing factional conflict were the biggest strategic problems faced by the pre-colonial states (Thomas 1986:37). All these problems were the inevitable corollary to one of the main tactics of expansion - the relationship between images of the person and marital politics. *The principle of extension which enabled the seizure of ritual prerogatives could prove fatal if it were to be inverted upon Bau*.

As yet there has been little research into the manner in which these images of the person were constituted in the life-cycle. However Sahlins has drawn attention to the ritual use of whale’s teeth (*tabua*) at rites of betrothal. It appears that the ceremonial use of whale’s teeth in marriage customs varied according to the relationships held between the protagonists *prior* to the marriage rite. The former Roko Tui Bua, Ratu Deve Toganivalu makes a distinction between two kinds of marriage rites: the marriage of cousins within Bau, and rites to mark marriage to a woman who is a stranger. The ceremonies vary in several respects, most notably in the use of *tabua*. In the first case, after the ritualised removal of the bride’s locks (*tobe*) on the ceremonial green *tabua* are exchanged reciprocally between the man’s side and the woman’s side, after the couple have slept together, ‘as a contribution’. It is only in the latter case that *tabua* are used in a ceremonies of *betrothal*. The ceremony, which was used in many parts of Fiji, is called the *duguci* and the *tabua* presented by the man’s side to the woman’s family are called *ai duguci* as Sahlins suggests the presentation holds the power to cut (*musuka*) a woman from her natal kin (Sahlins 1983; Thomas 1991; Toganivalu, 1912).
Certain problems with Sahlins's account of the growth of the precolonial polities have been drawn out by Nicholas Thomas (Thomas, 1986:60-64) They may be briefly summarised as follows:

a) Geopolitics: the geographic isolation of Bau from the northern and eastern island periphery which made it difficult to articulate the chiefly centre by a sacrificial cult. Whilst lands in the immediate vicinity of Bau could perform acts of service (lala) for Bau, this was not a practical solution for vanua further afield.

b) Competition: Competition from rival emergent matanitu from 1830 onwards meant that Bau had to compete to win the allegiance of people. These two factors meant that it was necessary for the remoter parts of the island periphery to advertise allegiance far more frequently.

4.14 Masi as a system of intellectual property

In both Tonga and Samoa the nobles' monopolisation of ceremonial valuables (mats/barkcloth) necessary for the correct or effective performance of life-cycle rites brought the chiefs and their subjects into an hierarchical relationship. In both of these systems life-cycle rites became the occasions for the reproduction of a wider set of relationships than those involved in the immediate kin group and played a vital role in the reproduction of the corporate polity as a whole (Thomas, 1986: 60-61; Friedman, 1975; 1981:281). Marama ni draudrau did not exert their authority by retaining control or yet withholding key ceremonial valuables from circuits of exchange. They controlled the knowledge of pattern which was used to make lengths masi which were intended to be alienated or offered up after the public performance of decomposition.

As we have seen a vital aspect of the Bauan system of kinship was the concept of mutual ministration between regional gods. How did these regional gods come into existence? It should be recalled that the journey for the annual transportation of first fruit offerings was described as being very lengthy. In
fact, the journey proved so arduous and that carrying sticks intended for the transportation of offerings ceased to move and became rooted in place. It seems probable that regional ancestors emerged as a consequence of the decline of Veratan hegemony. In Natewa, it was the chiefs who claimed Veratan ancestry who also made references to the old stone gods, which Hocart claims were at the focus of a local prosperity cult. When he did fieldwork there in 1912 he recorded statements from Natewans who claimed to have originated from this stone. It is interesting to note that the Bauan nobility seem to have encouraged these beliefs, doubtless because it was expedient for them to do so (see Hocart, 1952:129).

The modification of the sacrificial complex may also be detected in the redeployment of the vudi plant. We have seen that vudi (plantains or bananas) were presented as first fruit sacrifices and that myth relates the partitioning of the vudi plant to the rise of Kubana. In this new emergent polity vudi leaf imagery was used to wrap sacrificial offerings for presentation to the Bauan paramount. There are stories about the misappropriation of the first fruits of the vudi in many different parts of Fiji. I suggest that the development of the masi complex may be seen as a version of these accounts. For masi was also instrumental in the development of a sacrificial economy which secured domination by capitalising upon - and possibly serving to encourage - the collapse and fragmentation of the old prosperity cult.

4.15 The Distribution of the Masi Complex

The lands in the island periphery which were politically affiliated to Bau were often at some distance from one another: the result was the variegated distribution of Bauan influence in the eastern part of the archipelago. Bau achieved an active political role in select areas in the island periphery. The genealogies compiled by the Fijian ethnohistorian Toganivalu reveal that early in the eighteenth century Bauan chiefs organised marriage alliances with people
from distant parts in the Fiji group (Sahlins, 1991; Thomas, 1986). It is therefore important that researchers should be able to elucidate the strategies used by the Bauans in their attempt to maintain allegiance and loyalty to Bau over such a long historical period.

Hocart comments that the kinship system of the Lau islands was similar to that of central Fiji, whilst the kinship system in Taveuni had more in common with that of Tonga (Hocart 1952:3). The distribution of practices of kinship shares affinities with the distribution of masi. Lakeba and Nayau were former centres of masi production and it was also produced on Moce and Namuka. Moala was still a celebrated centre for masi production in the nineteenth century. The Lauan islands called Onolevu and Fulaga, which lie closer to Tonga than to Viti Levu, still produced masi when Gale Fox Troxler conducted her research in the 1970s (Scott Troxler, 1971).

In Vanua Levu, masi was one of the i yau ni vanua of Natewa, and as we have seen, the paramount chief the Vunivalu was descended from a Bauan warrior. There are also some records of masi having been produced in Macuata, though this practice had declined by this century. In the region of Lomaiviti, on the island of Ovalau, masi was produced in the village of Levuka which was used in the installation of the Bauan paramounts up until the 1930s. The island of Gau, though formerly allied to Verata became a land owing allegiance to Bau and also became a centre for masi production (Toren 1999:168). As Toren’s ethnography shows, Gau was also a stronghold of the Bauan model of kinship (Toren, 1990).
These data suggest that the practices of kinship which facilitated the expansion of the Bauan polity must be seen as historical phenomena which developed during the course of the eighteenth century. I have attempted to show that seeing masi as a phenomenon of a particular kind of social interaction can raise some interesting questions. However, whether the masi complex was an eighteenth-century innovation is open to speculation. What is clear is that the deployment of masi during the nineteenth century can be connected to changes in material culture that can be more precisely dated. Together with the influence of missionary activity, these changes served to modify existing practices of worship.

Research by Clunie and Thomas has shown that Fijian ritual organisation was substantially transformed during the second half of the eighteenth and in the early nineteenth centuries (Clunie, 1986; Thomas, 1991). For example, it has been argued that large carved wooden kava bowls (tanoa or kumete in the Natewan dialect) and the attendant kava rituals in which they are used, have only a relatively short history in Fiji. Fergus Clunie has assessed much of the archaeological evidence and asserts that tanoa, typically carved from wood called dakua, were introduced to Fiji via Lakeba from Toga and Samoa in the second half of the eighteenth century. He claims they were introduced by the Lamaki craftsmen, who were of Samoan origin. These craftsmen came to the Lau islands with members of the Tongan nobility in search for hardwood timber. Clunie argues that they introduced amphidromous canoes to the islands, considerably improving the versatility of the fleets of the Fijian paramounts. The diffusion of tanoa bowls about the archipelago coincided with the rise of the confederating maritime chiefdoms, such as Bau Cakaudrove and Tovata due to the improved mobility of these craft (Clunie, 1986:173).

Oral traditions associate the introduction of the new kava bowls with Tanoa (1770–1852) the bowl’s namesake who became the Vunivalu of Bau. According to a member of the Methodist mission resident in Fiji from the 1830s
onwards, ‘he received the name Tanoa, it is said, from a large *yaqona* bowl that was being chopped at Rewa at the time of his birth - such a thing being new in Feejee at that time.’ (Rev. Lyth cited in Clunie, 1986: 173)

The introduction of these bowls appears to have accompanied a change in *kava* rites. Clunie makes a distinction between the current Fijian *kava* ceremony, derived from Tongan ceremonial practice, and the *burau* complex which preceded it. *Burau* rites were often conducted in the spirit house and they were restricted to a small circle of intimates: the priests (*bete*) the chiefs and some of their warriors.

*Burau* rites became the target of missionary zeal. It is interesting to note that the *kava* ceremonial, which was performed outside on the village green, was not seen by the missionaries in the same light, but was classified as a custom instead. This was also true of marriage rites, of which the *yaqona* ceremony became an integral component. Thomas Williams recorded that, ‘Matrimony, in Fiji, is a social and civic contract only. Every presentation of property or food is associated with the good wishes or prayers for the long life and happiness of the young couple; but no priest is needed in this, as it is only the observance of a custom used on every occasion that will admit of such forms’ (Williams, 1858 reprinted 1982:171).

Thomas has argued that before the beginning of the nineteenth century whale’s teeth were extremely rare in the islands, the main - and possibly the only - source being whales that were beached in Tonga (Thomas, 1991:110). The substantial increase in the supply of whale’s teeth can be dated and linked to the sandalwood trade. Thomas’ recent research has shown that the growth of European trade in the Pacific - and particularly the coincidence of the trades in sandalwood (c. 1801-1814) and later *seaslugs* (*beche de mer*) in Fiji (c. 1820 onwards)- led to large numbers of whale’s teeth being introduced to the Fiji islands. Yankee sea slug traders leaving from Salem in Massachusetts habitually sailed round Cape Horn to the Bay of Islands in New Zealand to victual whaling
ships there and to obtain supplies of sperm whale teeth before proceeding to Fiji (Clunie, 1986:175). Whale’s teeth were presented in return for informal logging concessions from the 1800s onwards. The quantity of teeth introduced by a single trading vessel should be noted. ‘It appears to have been not uncommon to carry four to six hundred pounds weight of whale teeth, which, at about two pounds each, represented two or three hundred taboo.’ (Thomas, 1991: 116 citing Eagleston).

4.17 Natewa at War

The improved navigability of canoes and the vast influx of powerful ceremonial artefacts during the 19th century suggests that political activity - marital politics and warfare - became possible on a hitherto unimaginable scale. The contemporary written accounts of Wesleyan missionaries resident in Somosomo (1843-47) afford an insight into the complexity of the situation on the ground. What emerges from their accounts is that offerings of barkcloth had to be frequently presented in order to petition for military assistance and in order to preserve the peace.

Prior to 1832 Natewa went to war with the i Sokula (the chiefs of Somosomo) because the Natowans refused to take masi to Somosomo (Sayes, 1982:194). Then trouble flared up once again following the murder of the Tui Tunuloa (1841), the nephew of the Natewan chief, who had absconded with Adi Korodua, one of the wives of the Tui Cakau. His murderer was subsequently installed as the new Tui Tunuloa. That year, Cakaudrove sued for peace with Bau by presenting offerings and later one of the Tui Cakau’s daughter’s, Di Bakola, was presented to Tanoa. Cakaudrove was to court Bau for the next five years with offerings (Williams 1931: 344).

The beachcomber and adventurer, William Diaper provides a vivid description of his encounter with the ‘King of Nateva’ in 1841:
He told me that he was a king of Nateva and its dependencies, and quite independent of all other places in the Feejee; that he always was, and hoped he always should be; although he did not pretend to rank with the Tui Thakau.

The old king observed me looking up overhead at the katodrau ni masi [bales of masi] which were stowed and packed up on top of each other on a kind of strong lattice work loft, and reached to the very roof of the house, and said that they were made purposely to give away to other places for the sake of being at peace with every vanua turaga, chief or ruling government but, notwithstanding all his efforts and maneuvers, it was with great difficulty that he managed to keep himself from being reduced to a qali [subject] (Erskine 1967:431).

We get a glimpse of the uses of barkcloth to request military assistance in the following extract where Bonovindogo, son of the Tui Macuata and great nephew (vasu levu) to Natewa, came to request military assistance from Somosomo:

After I had spent the two first months of the year 1841 with Tui-thakau a chief called Bonovindongo ... came to solicit Tui-thakau to join the army of another chief, Tui Mativata, for the purpose of quelling a disturbance that had lately arisen between Male and Mouta, a neighbouring district...Bonovindongo performed his message from Tui Mativata as ambassador to Somosomo by presenting a great quantity of masi (tapa), which he (Bonavindongo) had formerly supplied to Tui Mativata from Nateva, which place was famous for that article. It was presented in large katodraus (bales) which were bound up with sennet, each bale containing some thousands of fathoms of beautifully marked tapa, and requiring some twenty or thirty men to carry it. They were accepted by Tui Cakau, who, after the usual thanks had been given, told the ambassador he should collect all his qalis, and his ally (Lakemba) with all the foreigners, of whom there were a great many, from Tongatabu and Uea (Wallis Island), as well as some Samoans who had accompanied the Tongans and in a few days take their departure for Mouta.

As we have seen, peace was also established between Natewa and the i-Sokula: a delegation went to Taveuni to request their assistance on Macuata's behalf. But by 1842 the people of Tunuloa were divided, one side maintaining allegiance to Somosomo and the rebels being supported by the Natewans. During this time Cakaudrove was divided in two, with half Macuata, and many
of Natewa’s neighbours: the peoples of Navatu, Tunuloa and Korocau - sided against the i-Sokula. Later in 1843, following a Natewan plot based upon a false offering of allegiance which resulted in the ambush and murder of certain of the i-Sokula at Buca presentations were made by Somosomo to enlist Bau’s support against the Natewans. The Bauans bided their time. In the meantime Macuata had been besieged in 1842 and had offered an i soro, (a sacrificial offering of earth) to Bau. But with the growth of Cakaudrove’s influence on the northern side of the Natewa bay and with the renewed allegiance of Tunuloa to Somosomo it was Natewa’s turn to be anxious for support. In 1845 they traveled to Bau to present a sacrificial offering to the regent, Cakobau, which he refused, telling them that they must wait for Tukilakila, the Tui Cakau. It was not until 1846 that Bau finally agreed to support the i Sokula (see Sayes 182; Thomas 1986 for a fuller account of these events).

The Methodist missionary Thomas Williams, a resident in Somosomo at the time, left several detailed descriptions of the ceremony at Somosomo in June 1946 given as a welcome to Cakobau and his warriors who had come to support the i-Sokula in their battle against the Natewans. The scale of the prestations is staggering.

After five years of seeking help from Bau at an expense not easily calculated - including two or three first rate canoes, several smaller ones, fifty roles of cynet, a hundred and fifty bales of barkcloth, many hundreds of masis averaging thirty yards long, fishing nets, hundred’s of whales teeth, mosquito curtains, fancy articles and women - the King of Tui Laila was told to prepare for the reception of Cakobau and his fighting men. The turtle fishers were sent in various directions and the women were kept close at beating and marking cloth ... On the 19th of June the Tui Laila and about forty of his headmen went on board a canoe and sailed there to perform the ceremony of ‘taking up the anchors’. He and his men danced before the Bau people, threw off their large masis, presented a large bale of cloth and fifty tabua, then invited the Bauans to Somosomo.

The fleet which consisted of sixty-six double canoes and sixteen single ones sailed for Somosomo on the 22nd. There the galove (lifting of the
anchor) was performed. This was done by formally presenting the Bau people with more than a hundred large masis of, a number of smaller one’s and twenty whale’s teeth.

*June 23rd.* The Somosomo people (including Weilagi, Wainieli, Rambi and Nabuta) were all employed in presenting the food. The food when piled up consisted of: a heap of large puddings and ground taro; five piles of baked yams and tarrow covered over with arrowroot puddings and turtles; a wall of yaqona 35 feet long and 7 feet high. On each side of the baked food were the fences enclosing uncooked yams, amounting to 38,000. The food being got together - it had occupied 200 men several hours - a large bail of cloth was brought into the open space opposite the food and the Bau chiefs, and leaving about 200 yards behind them. Twenty other bales were brought in one by one. As they were placed the shouts of the warriors were as thunder, and the trumpet shells were blown.

After a time Ratu Va’alolo, the King’s son came out of the settlement under a load of stained cloth hanging from his shoulders to his knees in folds, his train 20 fathoms long. On reaching the Bau chiefs he threw down the heap of cloth, and returned by the way he had come. This he repeated five times. Each time he threw down the cloth the warriors shouted again.... [Then Ratu na Vu appeared]. His train could not be less than a 100 yards long and his esquire bore his huge masi for him. He was followed by 200 men with large masis from their shoulders. Then came two men carrying a long bamboo with four large masis tied up and hung on it. These again were followed by a 100 men with large masis.

Having seated themselves on and about the bales of cloth, they were joined by 250 other men similarly attired. (Williams, 1931: 347-348).

The attack against Natewa was duly carried out, but once the walls of Natewa had been breached Cakobau insisted that the warriors held back and desisted fighting for the night, a decision which enraged Tuikilakila who had wished to massacre the Natewans on the spot. The delay gave the Natewans time to flee to security -when the village was sacked the following day there were few left inside. After a few more days fighting the Natewans presented an i soro sacrificial offering of submission to Cakobau (an offering which he a chose to accept, to Tui Kilakila’s humiliation). Thereafter Bau returned to Somosomo to
be feasted at the Sokula’s’ expense, having consumed all their provisions they laid waste to the fields of taro and masi.

The land is in a pitiable state, the lowest class of visitors having scoured the country round in search of food and, not satisfied with eating what they could have, wantonly picked up quantities of young taro and threw it in the ways to rot. Yams, bananas and masi plantations also bore sad marks of their mischief. Tui Thakau and Na Mata remarked to me: ‘Our young men have been into the taro gardens; but the sight dispirited them, and they have returned home to weep’ (Williams, 1931: 356).

It seems likely that the wholesale supply of tabua became concentrated in the hands of a few leading paramounts of matanitu, freeing them to command warriors and to consume feasts and to engage in sexual politics on a hitherto unprecedented scale. The following account is of Ratu Seru Cakobau’s installation as Tui Levuka, shortly after his installation as Vunivalu of Bau in 1852. Recounted by a Levukan and recorded by Hocart, it substantiates this point:

The Levukans brought with them to Mbau a big sheet of bark-cloth....At Thakombau’s installation Ndaulakemba and Metuisela’s father each took one end of the sash, folded it and tied it on the Vunivalu’s arm saying “Let the bark cloth be tied, to be the cloth of your food, the cloth of your riches, also reverence him, since he is your lord”. Then those who had made the kava retired. The two of them brought four hundred whales’ teeth; they walked up to the chief carrying them, and half way each crossed over to the other side. The chief held out his arms sideways and they hung whales’ teeth upon them till he could no longer bear the weight; then he put them down; then they loaded his arms again. ‘The nobles of Mbau took off their clothes to those who made the kava; each man got one bale.’ (Hocart, 1927:72)

4.18 Somosomo in Natewa

Although the masi complex did facilitate the endogamous expansion of the Bauan lineage it was soon to be challenged by the emergent powers of Cakaudrove and then Tovata who also attempted to gain control of the circulation of offerings. As Hocart noted:

Of old they made offerings to the spirits. Later a lady of Thakaundrove married into Natewa, and food for feasts was collected and sent to Thakaundrove. As the new nobility infiltrates by intermarriage or deputation, it displaces the stones and other inanimate crop gods of the land (Hocart, 1952:20).
A *meke* from Natewa refers more specifically to the disruptive power of women of rank who marry in from outside. This *meke* called Adi Rarogo (‘the Lady We Honour’) was performed at the church fundraising held during Christmas 1997, one of the most important and widely attended public events that I attended during my stay in the village. It describes a woman who is given the cup of *yaqona* before the Vunivalu as the people of Natewa prepare for battle.

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**Vasa lasa rawa**
We feel easy and contented, close together.

**Sa lutu koto na cagi vinaka - sa rawa**
Then there is a sudden lull in the favourable wind - these things can happen.

**Na moli kula ciri mai wasa - sa rawa**
The orange drifts on the ocean - these things can happen.

**Vivili o luve Dakuwaqa - sa rawa**
Dakuwaqa’s child picks it up - these things can happen.

**Au rabota kini mai Laucala - sa rawa**
He hurls it in the direction of Laucala - these things can happen.

**O na nuku e ciri vakananawa - sa rawa**
The Shifting sands take float - these things can happen.

**O Wailagilala e ciri ki wasa - sa rawa**
Wailagilala (an island) drifts into the ocean - these things can happen.

**Vono ia ya o ike rega e**

---

**Mera solevu i loma ni koro - ia o ia e**
They are preparing a *solevu* at the heart of the village

**Na seyaseya sa dodo koto - ia o ia e**
The dancers line up into position.

**E bola tu o Adi Rarogo - ia o ia e**
‘The Lady we Honour’ leads the weaving of the dance.

**E bola tu o wase vaka ono**
The dancers split into six,

**E sa ikica mai ai na soqo - ia o ia e**
And they turn to face the gathering.

**Na yaqona sa lose e na koro - ia o ia e**
The *yaqona* is being wrung out in the village.

**Ratu Yaqona era rika koto - ia o ia e**
‘Ratu Yaqona’ jumps down from above, he disembarks

Me sa mai gunu o Adi Rarogo - ia o ia e
And invites ‘Lady Fame’ to drink.

E maca a bilo era sa cobo - ia o ia e
She drains the cup and they clap.

Na Vunivalu li’a qai qoro - ia o ia e
The Vunivalu is transfigured with amazement.

Nai taukei tiko a loma ni koro - ia o ia e
[And so are ?] the landspeople who dwell in the heart of the village.

Mai Davetalevu sa soqo - ia o ia e
The people from Davetalevu gather.

A sisi mai a lomani koro - ia o ia e
They penetrate the village causing a land slide.

O Nukutarai e dirigi ka oso.
Nukutarai is thronged with jostling people.

Na iya o iya.

Analysis of the Meke:

This song recounts aspects of Natewan mythic and political history. Dakuwaqa throws an orange at Laucala, a small island off Taveuni which was once an outpost of Verata; feasts and offerings were once gathered and collected before being conveyed to Verata (Sayes, 1984:15; Hocart, 1952:80). The movement of the sand bank off the Natewan coast is always said to augur shifts in the constitution of the polity.

It is also a song about ritual prerogatives. In nineteenth century Fiji meke and the yaqona ceremony were performed in preparation for battle; and both ceremonial activities served to describe the social ordering of the polity. In Fijian dances the performers are typically arranged in lines, the order of the dancers being an indication of their standing in the village. The privilege of ‘weaving the dance’ (na bola ni meke) typically goes to the leading woman among the nobles, the wife of the paramount. In a similar manner, the order in which men are served with a coconut shell filled with yaqona established their precedence within the polity. In many accounts of ceremonies of chiefly
installation the order in which the main chiefs are served with *yaqona* is minutely described since it indicates the ritual organisation of the polity. The chief who drinks the first cup is identified with the god. By seizing the cup and drinking from it first, before the other assembled chiefs, upstart chiefs could lay claim to the position of the paramount.

In this song *Adi Rarogo* does not have an ordinary master of ceremonies (*matanivuma*) to pass her the cup she is served by a supernatural being, Ratu Yaqona. Natewans claim that the use of *yaqona* as a ritual drink first started in Natewa. Yaqona was once a chief of Natewa. He died suddenly in the prime of life. After he was buried two plants grew on his grave (he turned into two plants) a plant of sugar cane and another plant with broad leaves. He asked that this plant should bear his name, ‘Yaqona’. So *Adi Rarogo*’s act of ritual subsumption gains supernatural sanction, but as a consequence enemies encircle and penetrate the village causing the reorganisation of the polity. Yaqona and the kula parrot came to be identified with a third god in Natewa, Ma Nabare who was said to have be a reduplication of a god from Somosomo (Hocart 1952:128-29).

4.19 *Natewa’s Song of Independence*

We have seen that a *meke* describes how noble woman from Cakaudrove usurped ritual prerogatives in Natewa. But in Natewa they also sing a song called ‘the Jiwara’ as proof of their independence. The story and the explanations about its meaning that I was given are of interest since they provide a clue to the rationale underpinning the presentations of *masi* described above. The story suggests that hierarchcical encompassment is achieved through the consumption of the decomposed/sacrificed bodies of the ancestors.

This story and the accompanying explanation was told to me by Ratu Nemani Bukayaro, the Turaga ni Koro (Village Headman) in Natewa. I provide both together:
The first Tui Cakau was a man. He was not a god. Only when they reached Somosomo were they called the i Sokula. That is why Somosomo got its name, it is from Somosomo vou, the new earth that these people fled to after they left Cakaudrove-i-wai on Vanua Levu. Before this happened one of the Tui Cakau from Vanua Levu died on the land of Cakaudrove-i-wai. At the time of his death the people from Korocau, the informers, were there. And, whilst burial was taking place the informers happened across 'Vakalotu', that is the path between Korocau and Natewa, and they said to the people of Natewa 'Come and take the body, they are burying the Tui Cakau!' And the people of Natewa went, and they swam across to the island, and they brought the body from Cakaudrove-i-wai to Natewa. They wanted to eat the body. Even though the body was already four days and four nights old. It must have stunk. But they said, 'Never mind, we want to eat the Tui Cakau's body'. So they carried the body along the path towards Natewa.

At that time the Vunivalu was staying at a place called Koronilaqere which is up on the hill. One day the people there were heard singing:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Jiwara, jiwara, jiwara!} \\
i\text{ ni drau ni balabala} \\
waga tabu e le sawana \\
mata ni de Tui Cakau e topea \\
'avana jiwara!
\end{align*}
\]

Slip and slither, slip and slither
On the leaves of the tree fern.
The sacred canoe is anchored off the beach.
The Tui Cakau's arsehole - an other's morsel - has been filched!
Our legs slip and slither!

And the Vunivalu said to his herald (matanivanua), 'Go and see what the people who are singing are doing.' So he went up there had a look and came back again. He said, 'I have seen the body of the Tui Cakau up there'. And so the Vunivalu said 'You take this whale's tooth (tabua) to them and you give them my thanks.' And the people of Korocau slipped and the body rolled down the hill straight into the earth oven, and once it was cooked he ate it.

[Ratu Nemani explained:]
The meaning of this is: if the Vunivalu eats the Tui Cakau's body the Tui Cakau will have to listen to the Vunivalu. If I eat your body all your family has to listen to me. I have
The story is an inversion of the model that I described at the beginning of this chapter. It provides a clear summary of the principle of hierarchical encompassment and of the composite person that underpins the sacrificial economy of *masi*. From this narrative one can infer that the sacrificial act of discarding flesh through *masi* was understood as a rite of consumption and of the figurative encompassment of the populace by a colossus or a ‘people devouring king’ to use Sahlins’ term. Elsewhere decomposition of the composite person has been shown to be a central feature of regimes of exchange in the region (Strathern 1988). Fragments of these people devouring kings are still in circulation. It is surely no coincidence that the chiefs could command feasts and women to be brought to them by circulating giant teeth, that were died ‘red’ with turmeric.

It seems that Bau may have taken advantage of a specific phase of Verata’s decline. Hocart’s notes on Vanua Levu record that many of the old prosperity gods were localised and this suggests that the Veratan empire had gone through a stage of devolution or fragmentation prior to systematic encroachment from Bau. Bau seems to have drawn upon the experience of having witnessed the growth of Verata as much as it tactically deployed a given set circumstances occasioned by its decline.

We know that sacrificial offerings of earth taken from the burial mounds of chiefs were one of the most weighty sacrifices that could be made, this was the offering that the Natewans presented to the Bauan’s at the end of the war. When the inland people came to request military assistance from Mbatiki in a civil war in Nasavusavu they presented a sacrificial offering of earth (*vakasoro ni qele*), taken from the foundations of their spirit house.
in Naisaniu (Thomas 1986:44). Stories relating to earth offerings in Natewa stressed that these offerings were either re-interred within the recipients’ house foundations, that is, within the sacred burial mound on which the leading chiefly houses were built, or they were buried in the mounds beneath the spirit houses. It appears that the transfer of earth was a means of establishing a path through reorienting the direction in which offerings flowed - it was a means of relocating pivotal centres for the presentation of offerings and the expression of worship or allegiance from one place to another. In the Fijian literature allegiance is often described in terms of turning or facing a particular direction (Hocart 1952:21).

It is possible that masi initially provided a more efficient means of advertising loyalty and thereby securing military support. But by the mid nineteenth century and in reaction to competing regimes the masi complex had become subject to inflation.


The tactics for securing military support were curtailed soon after the islands were ceded to the British in 1874. However the system of cross-cousin marriage was to have a far more enduring influence.

When Hocart visited Natewa in 1912 he recorded some statements which indicated that the system of cross-cousin marriage had formerly been restricted to the nobles. One of Hocart’s informants told him that cross cousin marriage ‘is only possible if it is the chiefs; it is well both should be nobles that the stock may not be lost’. Other informants said that it was not proper to marry cross-cousins at all. However the more general statement was that it was right for the children of a brother and sister to marry. Hocart concluded that influence from the West of Fiji was gradually becoming stronger in Natewa (Hocart 1952:137).
Another oral narrative suggests that a change in the tactical system of marital alliances was brought about by conversion to Christianity. Maikeli Livani told me an account of the way that the god from Somosomo, Ma Nabare, foretold the arrival of Christianity in Natewa:

Ma Nabare said, ‘A god is coming with many eyes. He is a god who sees everything.’ Then he disappeared up the path of sacrifices (vaka cabo i soro) to the rafters of the house. ‘From now on you will marry only amongst yourselves (dou veiwatini vaka veiwekani)’ he said. Then he vanished once and for all.

This story strongly evokes the colonial presence in Fiji but it also may provide a clue to the reorientation of the system of cross-cousin marriage within the vanua.

In the next chapter I shall assess whether it is purely a matter of coincidence that such a forceful expression of Natewa’s independence should been made to the Land’s Commission in 1912.
5

Rites of Growth, Departure and Return

5.1. Introduction

In this chapter I present descriptions of the performance of life-cycle rites in contemporary Natewa. I attempt to address two questions:

1) Why life-cycle rites continue in spite of the mapping of the land.
2) Why the performance of tevutevu has become subject to so much delay.

5.2. Elopement

On my first evening in Natewa I was invited to drink yaqona with the men of Natewa and was asked about my research interests. I explained, in English, that I wanted to see how masi was made and how it was used in marriage ceremonies. I was taken aback when Mai Malima (Pauliyasi Qaqa Toronibau) told me, also in English, that I might find that difficult since ‘No one gets married anymore’. ‘Why?’ I asked. ‘That would make a good topic for a research project’ he said.

Over the next few months I was to find that veidrotaki or veitubataki (elopement) had become the normal way in which to initiate cohabitation for the past two generations. Even elderly men in their eighties said that their relationships had begun with elopement. Over time it became clear that ‘the decline of marriage’ referred:

1) To the decline of cross-cousin marriage and to the increase of unions that were seen as being ‘irregular’ because they did not follow established ‘paths’ between vanua or between households.

2) To the decline of arranged marriages and the delayed ceremonial performance of marriage rites which no longer initiate sexual relations.
Until recently subterfuge had been necessary since deviation from the official model of kinship was punishable with force. A woman from Dreketi, in her late thirties, described a night when she and some other young women from Natewa had been forced to dodge past Natewan boys who had armed themselves with sticks and stones in order to prevent the young women from visiting a visiting group of Methodist trainees, who were drinking yaqona in the neighbouring village of Vusa. Violence was not so common these days. However it was still important that elopement should be a surprise. Why was this still necessary? A woman in her fifties, living in the village of Dawa, shed some light on this matter. The night that she absconded with her lover he took her to his house in the village. The following morning she was physically attacked by his sisters. ‘You should not be ...’s wife, we know who his wife will be! You will not preserve the ways of the house!’ they said.

Natewans who had gone away to work in other parts of Fiji eloped or cohabited with women that they met at work. Some of these partnerships were regarded as ‘unfitting’ because of the households past political relationships. Households that had affinal connections with clans associated with Bau or Somosomo sometimes expressed displeasure when members of their households formed relationships with lower ranking women from outside the vanua. Difficulties encountered in finding a suitable partner were yet more marked in rural areas. Boys who returned to Natewa to plant after a short spell of studying or working elsewhere admitted that it was difficult for them to find a suitable partner. They had formed what was called the ‘knee society’ (the term derives, as Adi Eta Verani explained, from the notion that if you are single the only thing that will keep you warm in bed are your knees, unlike a couple who keep each other warm). The ‘knee society’ drank yaqona until late at night and spent hours composing love letters together to girls they had glimpsed on visits to town or during the course of rugby matches played elsewhere. I was shown some of
them. The letters were often humourous but many of them included serious proposals of marriage. One began:

Madam,

Prophet Isaiah “I will love you with an everlasting love”. If a mother should forget the child of her womb, I could never forget you. I have carved your name on the palm of my hands so I would never forget you.

It was signed Captain Des. (Desperate).

5.3 Kovukovu

One possible cause for the shift in marital practice emerged from studying maps of land holdings. Questions about the precolonial system of land transfer were initially met with the response that they were daku ni kuila, ('behind the flag'), that is, things belonging to another age, the age before the raising of the Union Jack. In fact the official register of land holdings combines two different models of land tenure. The Register of Living Lineages, ostensibly following Maxwell’s model was produced for each yavusa in Natewa in 1929. However, maps produced by land surveyors between 1934 and 1935 contained a number of smaller plots registered to women and their subsequent agnate descendants, called kovukovu plots ('the flower buds or parcels of land').

Although the kovukovu system was known in both the neighbouring districts of Navatu and Tunuloa, the number of kovukovu transfers recorded in Natewa itself (35) shows that the circulation of land within this district was comparatively more extensive than in neighbouring districts. According to the list found in the Index to Registers of Native Lands the total amount of kovukovu land in Natewa appears quite negligible: 1,110 acres out of a total land area of 32,289 acres (Native Land’s Commission Final Report Vol 5.1941). However, since a large proportion of Natewan territory is rugged, mountainous and forested, kovukovu holdings accounted for a significant proportion of the
good quality and easily accessible arable land and coconut plantations along the coast.

The schedule of kovukovu lots revealed that at the end of the 19th century marriage alliances in Natewa had followed a particular pattern. Both gardening land and coconut plantation were presented as kovukovu in Natewa. Small kovukovu plots of gardening land and sometimes bits of coconut plantation were presented as a dowry withuntitled women from outlying villages who married into the main chiefly households of Natewa and the male descendants of vasu from Natewa were entitled to use them. Conversely, both gardening land and larger tracts of coconut plantation were dedicated to women who married outside the vanua to Bau or Somosomo. Other tracts of land were presented to strategic allies, such as Nakobo, and male agnate descendants still registered to Nakobo were allowed to use them.

The ossification of this system of land transfer may have removed an important incentive for arranging strategic marital alliances either within or between vanua. However, in contemporary Natewa kovukovu land holdings continue to have an impact upon patterns of residence as well as patterns of allegiance within vanua. For example, the offspring of a vasu levu from Somosomo are still registered in their home vanua, but have houses in Natewa, the men used their kovukovu land to farm, while their sisters are the guardians of gatu bola. As I shall demonstrate, the kovukovu system therefore enables the vanua to be represented, or presented, in a particular manner at ceremonial events.

Other progeny of vasu from Somosomo live in a settlement on their kovukovu land, and are not integrated into village activities. Their kovukovu was registered to a woman of rank with a Tongan name, Adi Vaciseva Taufa, and this indicates that incoming women of rank could infiltrate the vanua by establishing settlements. The leading households in Natewa own tracts of
coconut plantation in the outlying villages, which enable them to make a better income from copra in comparison with other mataqali members, who must take turns in farming coconut plantations. Conversely, other villages have become hemmed in by kovukovu land holdings. The village of Buca is entirely surrounded by restricted kovukovu land, bequeathed to chiefly households in Natewa, Somosomo and elsewhere. As a result the villagers had been forced to build their houses close together, with open sewers running between them.

According to Rev. Tuwere the kovukovu system was known in many parts of Fiji. His claim is supported, by the fact that when the Fijian landscape was surveyed and mapped during the 1930s in order to produce a detailed record of native land holdings, kovukovu lands were included in the schedule of lots drawn up for many districts (Tuwere, 1992; Native Land Commission Final Report, Vol 5, 1941).

In Natewa, I was told that the kovukovu system was originally Bauan in origin, however my analysis of the records was not sufficiently detailed to corroborate this assertion through comparative analysis. Still, it is clear that the kovukovu system had enabled varying degrees of infiltration in different parts of Fiji. Hocart’s field notes, made on a visit to Rewa, indicate that a considerable proportion of land had been conveyed through this system:

‘The heralds/chieftains hold more land than any other people in Rewa because they are the owners of the country; but much of their land is now in other clans, having been conveyed by the sister’s son... A sister’s son may take a piece of land. The recipient will then bring gifts to make it fall; then the land belongs to him forever and passes to his son. If the land is not caused to fall the owner may take it back at will’ (Hocart, MS, HF: 441)
In his ethnography of Moala, in the Lau islands, Sahlins also referred to ‘a formal method for the assignment of land rights to affinal kin called the presentation of leaves’ (*kaukau ni draudra*). ‘It is said that up to a few decades ago there was a great deal more interpenetrating (*veicurumi*) of different kin groups on the rationale of relationships through women.’ (Sahlins, 1964: 219).

5.4. The imagery of the precolonial system of land transfer.

Although there is no detailed account of the rites performed for the transfer of *kovukovu* the names of land transferred suggest that land transfers were envisaged as the growth or dismemberment of trees. The best source of information on the different names *kovukovu* land transfer is that of the land commissioner, Basil Thomson, who compiled information about the names of *kovukovu* land transfers in Rewa at the turn of the century (Thomson 1908:357-72). However additional information is recorded in Capell’s dictionary as well as in Tuwere’s research.

Gardening land that was either temporarily or permanently alienated was referred to by the generic term *i kovukovu ni vanua*, a term which may be translated as ‘the bud’, or ‘the budding’, or ‘the wrapping and parceling of the land’. Dresses are either called pinafores, *vinivo*; or *kovu*, literally ‘buds’.

Particular kinds of *i kovu kovu ni vanua* were called *i covi*. *I covi* refers to ‘the branches or leaves that are plucked from a tree’ (Capell 1941: 45). Certain land transfers termed *i covi* were connected to warfare. Land called *i covi ni dra*, was presumably ‘plucked from the tree of blood’; it was presented to warriors who had slain the warrior from another *vanua* in battle.

Another group of land transfers, also termed *i covi*, were occasioned by the displacement or loss of members of the ritual polity, in marriage or death. A land parcel called ‘the cut branches of the leaf stencils’ (*na i covicovi ni draudrau*) was presented to a bride who was sent to live in another *vanua* by
her natal kin; it was then passed to her male issue. Land might also be transferred as a reparation for acts of infidelity. Land named ‘the woman’s belly or basket’ (keteniyalewa; the terms ‘basket’ and ‘womb’ are synonymous in Fijian) could be seized as a punishment for adultery. This land was claimed by planting reeds upon it; a practice called ‘the club set in the banana patch’ (ai wau tu i vuni vudi). Normally, land seized in this manner could only be reclaimed by fighting, but after a sufficient time lapse it could also be redeemed by offering a whale’s tooth (tabua), which would cause the land to fall back (vakalutu).

It is important to note that land was also presented to welcome incoming members to the vanua. Indeed, a version of this practice has continued into the present. Land changed hands during the ceremony called ‘to carry the face of the child’ (na kau ni mata ni gone). This ceremony of welcome was performed when the children of a woman who had married in another village, or another vanua, were presented to their maternal kin for the first time. Land parcels were also circulated during death rites, as a return payment for ritual acts of mourning of a sacrificial nature, collectively termed i loloku, which specifically involved the sacrifice of body parts or pieces of skin. Land called ‘the loosening or easing of the shroud wrapping the corpse’ (ai sere ni sole ni mate) was presented by a dying man to members of the tribe who presented him with his burial shroud of masi.

Finally land could be transferred along with other property presented to the kin group in order to request that a child should carry the donor’s name. Such land was called ‘the proclamation of the name’ (i toka ni yaca). The making of gifts of land on such occasions demonstrated the fact that the gift of a name was a weighty thing that was said to solidify and attach the passions and to have the power to transform personhood (Capell, 1941; Thomson, 1908: 357-372; Tuwere, 1992: 20-27).
5.5 The Vanua

There have been many Fijian critics of the colonial model of land tenure. Many indigenous critics have expressed the opinion that problems with the colonial model stem from a failure to understand the term *vanua*. Their comments offer a fresh perspective on the manipulation of images of land and the body in lifecycle rites.

The term *vanua* has often simply been translated as ‘land’ or ‘territory’. But Fijian critics have stressed that it has another dimension. The Fijian anthropologist and one-time manager of the Native Lands Trust Board, Rusiate Nayacakalou, glossed *vanua* as ‘land, place, body politic’ (Nayacakalou, 1975:166). Writing earlier, in the 1930s, another Fijian commentator saw the *vanua* as a more processual and emergent entity: the product of ritual action (Rokowaqa, quoted in Sahlins 1983:24).

In the colonial model of land tenure *vanua* was used as a structural term to describe a particular level of social organisation; the *vanua* was perceived as a territory under the leadership of a paramount which contained one or more segmented tribes. But, as Tuwere has recently pointed out, this designation is incorrect because it fails to convey the nature of part-whole relations which membership of a *vanua* entails. As he explains: ‘The entire social structure from the top to the bottom of the hierarchy is the making of what we call the *vanua*’ (Tuwere 1992:23).

Following this principle (a corollary of the principle of extension discussed in the last chapter) *any person* can represent their chief and their *vanua*, when they are visiting other lands alone. In Natewa, people who had given up drinking *yaqona* and alcohol after joining the Assemblies of God or the Seventh Day Adventists, said that they would nevertheless feel obliged to accept
a *bilo* (coconut shell) of *yaqona* if they were called to represent their *vanua* in a given situation.

In Natewa, references to the *vanua* in ceremonial speeches, sermons and even Methodist publications - where the most conservative collective nouns are expressed - provide some indication of the way in which people are imagined to compose the body politic. Rather than the body politic being comprised of a number of individuals, collective nouns show that the *vanua* is conceptualised as a single, integrated entity - a kind of colossus. Accordingly, the paramount is described as the *ulu ni vanua*, ‘the head of the body politic’; whilst the rest of the *vanua* is called *lewe ni vanua* (lit. ‘the flesh of the body politic’ or ‘the body’s members’). The members are then subdivided by sex. Women are described collectively as the *sucu ni noda vanua*, ‘the breasts of the body politic’; men are referred to as *na liga bula ni noda vanua*, the ‘living hands of the body politic’. Children are described as *na kawa bula ni noda vanua*, ‘the living lineage of the *vanua*’, or *na isausau vou ni noda vanua*, ‘the replacements or the return offering of the *vanua*’. At other times children come under the category of *i yau* being described as *na iy au bula ni noda vanua* ‘the living things of the *vanua* to carry and transfer’. In speeches and sermons the state of the *vanua* was sometimes expressed in sentient terms: *sa wawa tiko na noda vanua* ‘the *vanua* is waiting’, *sa mosi tiko na noda vanua*, ‘the *vanua* is suffering’ *sa bataba na loloma ni noda tou vanua*, ‘the inside of the *vanua* is chilled’, i.e. it is not lusty and valiant.

References to children being the ‘living things of the *vanua* to carry and transfer’ implies that people relate to the *vanua* in a particular way. As Tuwere expresses it:

One does not own land: the land owns him. Man and land are one. He derives his name and therefore his basic constitution as a human being from the *vanua* which means both turf and people. ‘Title’ reverses this: the land belongs to man. He has
According to Tuwere, belonging to a place, or rather being owned by a place, entailed a specific understanding of selfhood, which is non-ego centred, oriented around a point of origin, the cavuti, a term which originally meant ‘the place where the ancestor emerges’ (Tuwere, 1992:35).

5.6 Growing the Flesh

In rural Natewa ritual activity to promote a child’s growth is still regarded as the joint responsibility of na liga ni vei susu, a term which may be translated as ‘the hands of upbringing’, or ‘the hands of mat weaving’. In ceremonial speeches, ‘the hands of upbringing’ is also referred to as na ligadra na i tubutubu, a term embracing both the living and the dead forebears, or na i tubutubu, which implies that the growth and upbringing of children is the result of the collaborative effort of the living and the dead. The ‘hands of upbringing’ differ from the mataqali since they include female siblings who have married out of mataqali’s households but are resident in the village.

In the ritual complex associated with the newborn, the growth of new layers of flesh is said to steady the soul (iyalo); it gives the child an orientation in life. The growth of an infant involved a series transactions between the people and the land. Growth was achieved by feeding the earth and sea with corporeal exuviae and receiving a feast in return. Before the intrusion of colonial regulations the child’s first faeces were stored in a leaf and then thrown into the river, a tabu was set and after this elapsed the river was fished and a feast was made called de ni gone, ‘the child’s dung’ (Hocart 1952: 212). In Natewa, the
waqawaga (placenta) was dedicated to the sea, a tabu was set for a year and then the sea was fished and a feast was held.

*I vicovico* (umbilical cords) are often planted with a sprouting coconut, or sometimes a *kawa ni vudi*, a banana sucker (lit. the offspring of a *vudi*) or a lemon tree, in the gardens. It is important that this should be a fruit bearing tree so that later in life, and as long as the tree flourishes and grows, the family can share the fruit of the tree at a feast called ‘the umbilical cord’. The umbilical cords of girls are sometimes thrown in the sea. Nowadays, because they birth in hospital, many women have to ask for the umbilical cord to be preserved. I saw the specimen bottles containing umbilical cords in a number of houses, awaiting such a time when the ceremony could be performed.

Other outgrowths or indexical manifestations of the person are presented (c.f. Gell 1998 for the prevalence of indexical imagery in the form of body exuviae in Oceania). Offerings of hair are made at ceremony called *na koti ni drau ni uluna* (the [first] cutting of hair). This hair is described as ‘womb hair’ and it is not cut until the child is four years old. Little plastic packets of cut ‘womb hair’ are displayed in people’s houses on top of a piece of *masi* and between photographs of kin. The child could sit on a piece of *kumi* bark-cloth when the hair was cut.

*Kumi* are rectangular pieces of barkcloth which are rubbed with mangrove sap in the Tongan manner but their borders are embellished with *masi* stencil designs. According to Atetha Williams, a former employee of the Fiji museum, *kumi* are a Fijian modification of Tongan-style *gatu*. *Kumi* can also mean ‘the beard’. Although Capell does not specifically relate *kumi*, meaning barkcloth to this other sense of *kumi* I suggest that it may be logical to advance this connection. Many *i yau* either appear as extensions or fractions of persons, or as component parts of larger corporate entities. Barkcloth and mats are both attributed with anthropomorphic features: ears, flesh, teeth, blood; *tabua*
(whale’s teeth) are often simply referred to as ‘this tooth’ (*na batina*); furthermore extensions of the person such as hair and beards are presented during life-cycle rites. In Chapter Seven I will suggest that indexical symbolism appears to feature prominently in Fijian material culture. Furthermore, comparable person-object relations have been extensively documented in the ethnographic literature on Melanesian ceremonial exchange (Strathern 1988).

*Kumi* cloths are typically made for burial rites where they are used to dress the grave but they are also made to mark other transitions of experience. I saw a baptism where the parents stood on the cloth of the grave whilst they held their child out to be baptised. Widows who cut their hair to mark a hundred days of mourning also sit on *kumi*. When the feast is finished the cloth is taken to cover the grave. When a girl is four or five years old she is taken to the forest to collect a small bundle of firewood. The bundle can be hung on the household display of *masi*. Later, if she passes her exams to enter secondary school, for example, the bundle will be used to cook a celebratory feast.

The conceptual analogy between the detachment and distribution of the growing parts of the person (skin and hair) and the detachment and distribution of growing parts of the tree (bark, leaves, branches, buds) is emphasised through ceremonies involving the use of barkcloth. Most of these ceremonies involve a social transition of one kind or another. For example, young girls were invested *masi* for the first time when they performed a *seasea* (dance to accompany a song) with a row of other girls in front of the *vanua*.

The divestment of *masi* could also mark transitions in experience such as becoming a member of a new team or group. I was shown two photos of a girl standing on a piece of *kumi*. In the first picture she was wrapped in a long train of *masi*; in the second picture the *masi* was removed to reveal her games kit and netball bib beneath. The ceremony had been performed prior to her first netball match.
Figure 17 Presenting a child for baptism in Buca.
Tattooing the skin is also used as a way of proclaiming allegiance to new groups, conversion, or protest against the existing status quo. Both boys and girls who attended secondary school often tattooed the name of their school, their form and even their form teachers’s name on their arms. It was explained that these tattoos were often made together, in a gang, to record the novel experience of forming friendships with non-kinsmen or village residents. Other boys were tattooed with either personal texts or biblical tracts to mark stages of personal experience, conversion or resistance. On the day he was sent down from school one man had the words ‘I rise when I fall’ tattooed in large letters on his chest. In another village a boy had ‘You can chain my body and shackle my hands but you can’t enslave my mind because its free’ tattooed on his arm.

5.7 The Circulation of Names
Naming practices are in a state of flux. Names in Natewa are sometimes recycled, both within the vanua and between vanua. I was told that the circulation of names was ‘like reincarnation’. But then my informant immediately added ‘that’s an off the cuff remark, don’t take it too seriously’. Natewans often had two kinds of name: a yaca vakatevoro, a heathen name, and a Christian name. Old Testament names were popular: Moses, Elijah, Isiah, Anna, Tabitha. In certain instances it was the prerogative of the senior male member of the tokatoka or the household to impart names. When Ratu Semisi was a baby his father took a whale’s tooth to Mai Yautibi and asked for a name for his son. The name was meant to influence your future capacity: it was something to live up to.

The eldest born male member of a family (ulumatua) was often given a name that referred to the history of the clan or to the household’s ceremonial role in the vanua. For example, the names of the former Mai Yautibi were Savubuliti (lit. ‘Formed or Shaped in the Waterfall’) and Delauca (lit. ‘Rain
From Above’), and it was their part to take charge of the water in ceremonies of chiefly installation, just as Yautibi (taken from the name of their ancestral foundation) meant ‘The Sparkling Yau’. Mai Yautibi’s modern house was called Wainivatu, ‘the Water From the Stone’. The head of the bati leka (lit. ‘lesser teeth’, or ‘second line of defense’) was called Bativudi, (lit. ‘The Warrior or Teeth of the Banana’). The incumbent of the title Mai Valebasaga, the head of the Bauan faction in Natewa, was then called Ratu Eroni Tawake Veigauna Rakuita, which roughly translated reads as ‘Lord Aaron of the Canoe Pennant and the Everlasting Octopus’.

Although names are full of images they are also allusive, their significance not always explained; they are presented as clues for the bearers and the parents to work out over time. One of the young boys in a household which claimed Veratan ancestry was called Ratu Semisi Lalavolivoli, a name which commemorated the decline of the paths for conveying first fruit offerings to Verata.

The recycling of names means that their bearers become identified have different temporal layers become concatenated together. For example, Ratu Semisi Lalavolivoli was also the name of the boy’s paternal grandfather, as well as of other male forebears. This connection constrained the way the name could be used. One day the grandfather’s sister reprimanded the boy’s mother after she shouted ‘Semisi!’ in the village to call her son back for a meal. She was ticked off for ‘failing to show respect for the name’ i.e. for failing to use the appropriate honourific. Chiefs often had children named after them. There were no less than nine Ratu Tevita Vakalalabure alive at once. Where the names of living relatives were handed on the appropriate kin term was sometimes incorporated with the name. A young boy, aged two, was called Kuku Saeli, ‘Grandpa Saeli’ or simply ‘grandpa’ for short.

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In the past, names were sometimes changed by a ceremony of the ritual undressing of koroi (warriors) in the centre of the rara. In these ceremonies the warrior was given a new name and the old name was ‘shed like a foreskin’ (Tippett 1968:61). Nowadays names tend to stick for life and though some families have adopted the European practice of having a surname in common it is unusual for the names to change at marriage. The transmission of names also marked the history of the vanua through alliance connections. It was a standing joke that many of the names of former Tui Cakau - such as Ratu Golea, Ratu Rabici, Ratu Yavala, as well as the names of the vunivalu and great marama of Bau: Ratu Sauvou, Ratu Tanoa, Ratu Seru, Adi Litia Levulevu - were living on the Natewa peninsula. This showed that names could also be transmitted by women but in recent years the younger women had begun to give their names to illegitimate children born into other households in the village. Some people did not approve of this: ‘The names are not their property, they are not theirs to give’ they would say. It appeared that names were a kind of corporate property, belonging to the household or the vanua. This sense of corporateness appeared to entail a long-term vision of the future. ‘ Didn’t some of the women’s names get lost?’ I asked, ‘They all come back in the end,’ I was told.

5.8 Rites of Departure

In contemporary Natewa life-cycle rites performed on the child’s behalf may be subject to some delay. For example, umbilical cords may not be planted until the child is four or five years old. The sequence of rites marking cohabitation was yet more drawn out. It involved the following sequence: elopement (veidrotaki); the presentation of an i soro, typically a whale’s tooth presented as an offering of reparation to the woman’s kin; and acquiring a marriage certificate. Some years later a tevutevu (lit. a ‘ceremony of unfolding’) involving an exchange of offerings between the side of the woman and the side of the man is performed.
Betrothals and church ceremonies were not unheard of but they were comparatively rare.

Although years can elapse between the elopement and the initial presentation of an isoro the greatest delay is over the ceremony of unfolding. For the woman’s kin group the performance of the tevutevu is seen as na otioti, ‘the last’ of a sequence of ceremonial obligations which have been initiated by the girls birth. Delays in performing ‘the unfolding’ were likened to experiencing an accumulation of dirt, or debt: unfinished obligations were said to ‘crowd the mind’. In the local idiom reshaping ‘irregular marriages’ was likened to ‘cleansing blood relationships of an accumulation of dirt’ through the presentation of offerings. Dispatching these obligations brought a sense of buoyancy, freshness and cleanliness. For a parent the discharge of such obligations towards their offspring was seen as a necessary preparation for their own death (see Wiliksen Bakker, 1991).

In Ravuvu’s PhD thesis, The Fijian Ethos, he describes nearly all the life cycle ceremonies he analyses as rites of ‘restitution’ or ‘atonement’ instead of giving them their conventional titles (Ravuvu, 1987). Ravuvu distinguishes between specific offerings of atonement: isoro or bulubulu and the delayed performance of rites which are themselves an act of atonement that, to use his terms, ‘compensate structurally for those parts of marriage rites which had not been observed previously’ (Ravuvu, 1987: 281). His ethnography contains several references to ‘irregular’ unions of this sort (ibid: 270-276).

References to ‘irregular unions’ reveal the enduring ideological force of an official model of kinship. In Chapter Four I advanced the speculative hypothesis that masi may have been used to effect political change. Here I view masi complex from a different temporal vantage point. I am therefore interested in the social regularities that this category of i yau (together with other forms of cloth wealth that have come to be involved in life-cycle rites) have established
over time. Through the repeated reproduction of life-cycle rites appropriate and inappropriate behaviour have come to provoke an affective response. Expectations regarding the correct performance of life-cycle rites have been offset by the twin experiences of conversion and colonialism. Yet, it is a matter of paradox that the corporate images comprised of barkcloth and mats which are presented by way of atonement are also a means by which an official model of the vanua is both perpetuated and reworked through time. What follows is some attempt to grasp how vanua and personhood are to some extent constituted and imagined through the circulation of imagery.

5.9 Pooling Contributions
The tevutevu involves a division between male and female ritual activity, as well as a division between ‘the side of the woman’ and ‘the side of the man’. Men told me that tevutevu were ‘really a woman’s thing’. It was the mother of the daughter who mobilised na dra vata: referring to female blood relatives in this case, and possibly the weka: a more extended category of kin, in order to procure the necessary offerings of i yau. However, since some tevutevu require the accumulation of many different types of cloth other kinship connections also have to be employed in order to commission the necessary different types of cloth wealth. If gatu was commissioned the gatu makers were presented with meals in return.

In the initial cycle of presentations blue bars of washing soap are presented as a return offering to mark the reception of i yau such as mats, gatu and other types of cloth contributions which make up ‘the woman’s things’. These offerings are received by a high ranking kinswoman on the woman’s side. Sometimes the presentations involve a small group of kin and sometimes the women present their offerings alone. As they present their offerings the donors could make comments like: ‘Veimositi na dra levu na leqa e tu’ (‘Our blood
brings us both pain, it is troubled’). The woman would cobo (clap) as she received the presentations and presented bars of blue washing soap as an ulivaki (return offering), saying: ‘May you flourish. May the weather be fine. Savasava na nodatou veiwekani, (‘May our paths of kinship be clean’).

The term ulivaki describes a specific kind of motion, or flow. It means ‘to steer in such a way that the boat runs before the wind’ and also to convert or ‘to stir things from a state of dryness to a state of liquidity’ (Capell 1941: 290). The term suggests a culturally specific experience that is not entirely captured by the word ‘debt’. It is also worth noticing that the return offering of soap shows that cleanliness is also interpreted literally, as meaning the cleanliness of appearance or the cleanliness of clothes, an example of the way that the inward state and the outward state may have remained conceptually integrated as result of missionaries’ preoccupation with appearances during the experience of conversion.

5.10 Unwrapping Images

I have attempted to intimate the relationship between changes in the life-cycle complex and other changing circumstantial factors. Yet tevutevu rites are performed in a slightly different manner in each case, depending upon the specific social situation of the parties involved. Nevertheless in contemporary Natewa all tevutevu require the unfurling of a composite cloth image in the house of the woman’s husband-to-be. I suggest that anthropologists’ preoccupation with men’s activities in marital rites, which now typically involve the official presentation of the woman to the man’s side outside the house, has obscured the central focus of these rites which is the presentation of a series of sacrificial offerings in the form images. These images are arranged indoors, largely in the presence of other women. The term for these prestations: tevutevu, emphasises that unwrapping, a process which involves the repeated composition and
decomposition of images first on the horizontal plane of the floor of the house (and, occasionally, the public divestment of the female protagonist herself) is the most important action which is performed at these rites.

Why is the action of unwrapping or unfolding emphasised on these occasions? The names of composite cloth images are suggestive. The tevutevu ceremony involves unfurling mats and other forms of clothwealth to form three different composite images. Na i dabedabe, ‘the seat’ and na i solesole, ‘the wrapping or shroud’, are typically unwrapped in the house of a female relative dwelling in the husband’s village; na i davodavo ‘the bed’, is composed in the man’s house. Each image is subsequently redistributed or sold. At some ceremonies ‘the seat’ is presented to the officiating talatala minister or priest, ‘the bed’ is presented to the woman herself. ‘The shroud’ is typically distributed to the woman’s new affinal relatives.

‘The seat’, ‘the shroud’ and ‘the bed’ are all composed by superimposing, layering and arranging different kinds of mats to form a series of images as well as creating a display of wealth. It has been shown that transactions between the person and the vanua are a recurrent feature of the rites of upbringing. It therefore seems logical to suggest that cloth images are intended to present person-vanua relationships through the formation of a miniaturised model of the vanua. These images are highly abstract partly because they are formed from ‘multiples’- a series of almost identical artefacts which are temporarily gathered together- and partly I suspect because this abstraction is a means of interconnecting diverse kinds of imagery together.
Figure 19 Mat images of ‘the bed’ at *tevutevu* in Dawa and Natewa
The composition of the seat and the shroud are identical, while the image of the bed is modified by additional kinds of cloth. They are composed in the following manner. First, large plain pandanus mats simply called coco (grass) are unrolled on the floor. Secondly, two rows of mats called loga vakabati (loga means either ‘mat’ or ‘garden’ in the Natewan dialect thus longer vakabati may be translated as ‘mats with teeth’ or ‘the garden in the manner of the edge, teeth or border’) are arranged in staggered layers so that the brightly coloured ‘teeth’, each made of several rows of fringed wool, made a dense multi-layered coloured carpet of colour; brilliant pink (piqi) and scarlet (kula) are the colours that are admired. I was told that in the past these fringed wool designs (called kula since the kula parakeet’s red feathers were used, a form of sacred currency that was in widespread use in the region; Thompson 1940:202) would have indicated the provenance of the mats, but now all kinds of designs are used such as rainbows, bands of colour in a zigzag pattern and even union jacks. Finally, smaller carpets called delai ni loga, ‘the hill of the garden or the plantation’ are placed on top.

The high point of any tevutevu is the making of ‘the bed’. ‘The bed’ is typically composed in the man’s house, uniquely in the presence of the woman’s female kin. Women and girls transfer mats and bedding from one household to another they form a long procession across the village. The composition of the ‘bed image’ was performed by the most senior member of the woman’s blood relatives. Since the image covered a large proportion of the floor space of the house other female relatives would crowd around the outside of the house peering in through the doors and windows to watch the image being composed.
Figure 20. Diagram to show the composition of the bed
5.11 Making the Bed

‘The bed’ is a more elaborated version of the seat. First, ‘grass’ mats are arranged so that they entirely cover the floor of the main living space. Then two rows of ‘mats with teeth’ are arranged in staggered layers so that their borders, or ‘teeth’ cover most of the room. Two piles of smaller mats called vaka daligana (lit. ‘[mats] with ears’) are placed i cake at the top of the display. Finally a small collection of mats called delaini loga mats (lit. ‘the hill of the garden’) are placed on top, bridging the two piles. On some occasions a length of Tongan-style barkcloth, or tutu, is placed on top. Once the mats are in place a black and white gatu vakabola was sometimes hung up on the wall, above the delai ni loga. It is hung quite low on the wall so that the base of the image merges with the hill of the garden at the top of the display. Finally, a large quantity of contemporary bedding is added. Banks of pillows and acrylic blankets - possibly twenty, but sometimes many more- are arranged on either side of the display. The whole assemblage completed with the addition of nylon mosquito curtains and, depending on the wealth of the participants, a modular bed and other furniture bought from the local Indian wholesalers may be placed to one side.

5.12 Analysing ‘The Bed’

This impressive quantity of bedding suggests that ‘the bed image’ is intended to provoke the effects that it imitates. I suggest that the bed image is not a single bed but a succession of beds that have been compressed or telescoped together: suggesting a continuous chain of reproduction stretching from the past to the future.

The names of the design components of gatu and mats suggests that when these beds are assembled they provide a particular vision of the vanua, or body politic. We have seen that when they are speaking of ceremonial protocol

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people may be described ‘as doors’. Images at *tevutevu* appear to be polysemic, permitting many interpretations because they are telescoped or folded back onto themselves in this manner. I was never told ‘the meaning’ of *tevutevu* images, most probably because no one meaning exists but women went out of their way to point out the names of design elements. By taking the names of design elements into consideration one may suggest that the combined image of mats and *gatu* was of a giant head with a gaping mouth whose lower jaw was comprised of multiple rows of woolen teeth.

The imagery of a *gatu* that I saw presented at one *tevutevu* can be summarised as follows. The head contained a branch or side (*taba*). The branch was telescoped back into itself and formed the frame of the door. The frame of the door, or branch, was comprised of layers of imagery, including the prows of canoes, an entire battery of gun muzzles (*dakai*) and the razor sharp ‘teeth’ of the giant clam (*qa ni vasua*: said to be powerful enough to sever a hand from an arm).

The names suggest that the composite mat image formed a model of a miniaturised model of a hilly garden, or mound, on top of a face with an emphasised border of ‘teeth’. Here it must be emphasised that composite mat images presented at *tevutevu* and those presented at burial rites form an integrated self-referential *oeuvre* which also encompasses the diverse uses of cloth wealth at other rites. We have already seen that one of the mat images is called ‘the shroud’ and that cloths made to cover the grave are typically placed underfoot to mark stages of transition during the growth of progeny. Mat images presented at *tevutevu* follow the same logic. It is not unusual for Fijians to finish speeches with the expression *au vura* - which Ravuvu translates as ‘I have emerged’, that is, I have emerged from the grave. Cloth wealth seems to be an important device for conflating contemporary social action with these moments of emergence and departure.
Figure 21 Detail of *vakabati* mats being prepared for a *tevatevu*
The relationship between ‘the face’ and ‘the burial mound’ has been drawn out by Hocart. He argued that the focal point of the *vamua* was the ‘face of the grave’ around-and as it were through which - the kin revolved (Hocart 1952:24). He likewise drew attention to the warriors who defended the *vamua* and who therefore were the border being described as *bati* (lit. the border, the teeth). I was told that departure from the natal ancestral house foundation- where prior to colonial intrusion the dead were buried, or of the natal *vamua* was once regarded as the central feature of marital rites prior to conversion.

Involving both *gatu* and mats - *i yau* from inside and outside the *vamua* the composite series of multiplied images may depict the spatial and temporal implosion - not of any specific lineage but of specific range of affinal relationships. These relations have transformed the *vamua* in the past and they continue to constitute the *vamua* as a relational entity. It is the image of a head, encompassing the frame of a door that is controlled by a descendant of the *vasu levu* from Somosomo, and which presides over the arrangement of reproductive wealth. *Tevutevu* displays are the occasions where *gatu* imagery becomes complete. Seen together, the conjunction of *gatu*, with its truncated section of Tongan-style cloth at the back, and the mat image of the face of the grave surely evokes the transformation of the *vamua* or body politic of Cakaudrove through time. Tongan marital alliances, so important during ‘the war of the church’ as we have seen, were repudiated by many Fijians in the years leading up to Independence.

By condensing and compacting imagery the bed provides conceptual tools for considering the wider ramifications of an event. What they intimate is that the displacement of women is a concomitant part of the broader transformation of the body politic through time. ‘The bed’ collapses time by revealing the layering, or reduplication of affinal relationships and the expansion of the *vamua* both in the recent, as well as the more distant past. Simultaneously,
it projects the anticipated future that these past relationships will produce as a result of legitimating, or making good, recent irregularities in affinal relations. The series of images which are unfolded in sequence suggests that unwrapping may be interpreted the visual enactment of an extended sequence of social reproduction through inter-generational time. The displays therefore entail both a retrospective and a prospective component. The aim of assembling this image in the woman’s future house was to make a *rairai rakorako* (‘a display of reverence and respect’). I was told that the compass of these images set the frame, or the pitch of *future* relationships. So, in contrast to the image of the *vanua* made up of traditional bedding (though mats are still used for sleeping on), the collection of blankets pillows mosquito nets and other forms of contemporary bedding suggests the continuity of affinal, reproductive relationships in the future.

5.13 Discarding the Masi

*Tevutevu* rites vary according to the protagonists involved. The rites vary according the nature of the relationship - whether they involve parties from different *vanua*, or not, and who the particular parties involved are.

I only witnessed one ceremony where a woman was ritually divested of her *masi* to mark her departure to another *vanua*. The *tevutevu* was performed twenty years after the parties’ initial elopement. The delay, which was quite exceptional even by contemporary norms, may have revealed the gravity of the ‘irregularity’ in question. Adi Mere was descended from Vatulawa, the leading household of the Bauan faction in Natewa; she had eloped with a young man whilst under her paternal uncle’s care. The uncle was a schoolteacher who had been posted to Wailevu and the man she had eloped with was from Navesi: a satellite village, attached to the chiefly village of Wailevu. There could never have been a path between Natewa and Navesi. Yet because Vatulawa was the
leading household of the Bauan faction in Natewa it may have been especially obliged to fulfill the ceremonial obligations regarding the use of *masi*.

Once the composition of the image of the bed was completed, Adi Mere was dressed in four separate lengths of *masi volavola*. With these multiple wrappings of barkcloth her body was amplified and encircled with concentric rings of *waqani* motifs: these included stencil images of the forks formerly used by girls who were forbidden from touching their food during their confinement at puberty prior to their presentation (Hocart 1952: 53), an image called *veisautaki* ‘to change sides’, an image called ‘the jaws’ (*waqa ni sila*) and an image called *vakai vua* (‘like the carrying pole’ -which has a burden suspended from each end and is used to bear feasts and crops back from the garden). Carrying a whale’s tooth in both hands, Adi Mere stepped out of the house and headed the silent procession to the lean to at the front house.

The entire group were seated with Mere sitting in front, facing the main representatives of the man’s side. The mood was sombre, a hush came over the gathering, and many of the women got out their handkerchiefs and began to weep. Behind the man’s side was a small wall of taro with the earth still clinging to the tubers, some drums of kerosene, half a cow and a trussed pig, whose grunts and squeals mingled with the sound of weeping during the speeches that followed.

Mere divested herself of her layers of *masi volavola*. Then, taking the *tabua* from Mere’s hands, Ratu Eroni, the head of the Bauan faction, made the following speech which amplified the significance of the action which had been performed in their presence:
Figure 22. Di Mere dressed in *mav*, immediately prior to her divestment.
RATU ERONI’S SPEECH

Vakaturaga vua na turaga na Tui Wailevu.

A chiefly welcome to you, Gentlemen of the Tui Wailevu.

(Navesi: O wa! wa! wa! Tubua levu ya! iii!)

The cord! The cord! The cord! The great tabua iii!

(After an initial preamble reminiscing upon the time he spent working as a teacher in Wailevu Ratu Eroni continues:)

Kenai ka tolu au kauta voli mai .na taciqu e dabe toka oqo.

The third thing I brought to offer is my sister seated here.

Dou sa vinakata na turaga me talotalo ni memudou wai

Gentlemen, one of you wishes her to be your ‘water carrier’.

Au sa ciqoma na nomudou tabua ena vakavinavinaka kei na vakamudou.

I have accepted your tabua with great honour and privilege.

Jo, ena gauna au sa ciqoma kina na nomudou tabua

Indeed, as you gentlemen are aware, from the time I received your tabua e koto kina e dua na noqu dinau me vakadou sa kila na turaga

I entailed a personal debt

me vaka au sa mai kakava ni kua. Ni bera niu na toso au kerei kemudou a turaga dou

that is the cause of today’s work. Before I proceed any further I request

solia vei au na galala me’u cavuta na vosa vakavanua noqu vanua vei Mere.

your permission, gentlemen, to unearth the voice in the way of the land, the voice of my land, for Mere.

Mere era sa tagi muri mai oqo.

Mere the people who have followed you hither are weeping.

O ira na dauveimu vaka i tekiteki e na vanua o Navesi,

Your [future] in-laws will be the flower in your hair in the vanua of Navesi.

mo kua ni vakasalusalu ena vanua o Navesi,

Don’t wear garlands in the vanua of Navesi,

mo kua ni dara na nomu lawedua ena vanua oqo.

don’t adorn yourself with the single flower [which it was your privilege to wear as a woman of rank] in this vanua.

Me nomui tekiteki na kila na kalou kei na qarava na lotu

May the flower in your hair be to know God and to serve the Church,

me nomu i salusalu na nomu qarava.

May your garland be your service.

na nomu i tavi ena yalo dina ena yavusa oqo.

Perform your duties to this tribe with a true spirit

ko sa mai bubuli kina.
in the way that you promised.

Me nomu i tekiteki na lomana na vanua oqo

The flower in your hair will be your devotion to this vanua,

kei na vakatavuvuli vinaka vei ira na luvemu meratou na tamata vinaka

and to bring up your children in such a way that they become good people

ka bula ena vanua oqo. Navesi vua na turaga Tui Wailevu.

fit to dwell in this land of Navesi, fruit of the chiefs of the Tui Wailevu.

Kemudou na turaga oqo na tabua au kerea mo dou ciqoma na yalewa oqo

Gentlemen, here's the tabua, I ask you to accept this woman.

Oqo na kenai sulu.

Here is her cloth.

Dou yalo vinaka sara dou lomana.

Please treat her compassionately and in a good spirit.

Me vaka au vakaraitaki oti sa mai oti

As I have already stated it is more than twenty odd years

e ruasgavulu vakacaca na yabaki O Mere e nai tikotiko oqo.

that Mere has been living here.

keitou sa qai doudou me keitou yaco mai kina oqo me keitou solia vakadua.

We now come boldly to extend our action to this place to offer this

‘ina oqo vei kemudou o koya kei ira na luvena.

this woman and her children to you once and for all.

Sa na bula wale tu ga vaka ivoli o Mere ena neitou yavusa.

From now on, Mere, only your name will live on in the native register of our yavusa.

O Mere sa nomudou ni kua, ni mataka kei na veigauna sa tu i mada,

Mere belongs to you (three) today, tomorrow and for every future occasion

me yacova na gauna dou sa buliti koya kina.

until such time as you shall bury her.

.... Na vosa sa o ti ni cava sa mai caka na i yaba,

The speech and the work for extending the offering is ended

na vosa ni veikereikerei me lomani na yalewa tiko qo

the words beseeching you to care for this woman dwelling here

qai sosoratu!

[may they be] actions emanating from the Lord of Earth!

Although the event was staged to atone for the past, it was also effective in the immediate context. As Ratu Eroni's speech reveals, the act of divestment marks
a definitive break between Adi Mere and her natal *vanua*, since she is commanded to transfer the focus of her loyalty. She is pledged to bring up her children to be loyal to their father’s *vanua*. She is instructed by a voice of her natal *vanua*, to refrain from wearing the *tekiteki* or *lawedua*, the single flower, which formerly marked her out as a woman of rank. Through this act of divestment and these other prohibitions a transformation in the orientation of her person takes place: all that survives of her formal identity is her name in a colonial register. In contrast to the ceremony performed inside the house which intimates an expectation of sexual relations extending in time, the public ceremony focuses upon the protagonist and emphasises Adi Mere’s personal sacrifice.

Why is the action of divesting the body of barkcloth such a central feature of these rites? In my estimation it is because divestment is an act which imitates the process of death, or more precisely the process of decomposition, which serves to transfer or rededicate all that has been grown through collaborative endeavour to another place. A return sacrifice of pig and cattle is made in acknowledgment. As we have seen, displays of mat images are a means of eliding the imagery of the grave and beds together. The act of divestment may be seen as an act which decomposes the corporate genealogical person who has been composed through the transaction of skin, hair and feasts at earlier life-cycle rites. Through rupturing and offering up the protagonists former ties of allegiance to their *vanua*, and formerly their ancestral connections, a vibrant form of endogamy is enabled to triumph over exogamy. In the case outlined above, Navesi was the beneficiary of Natewa’s sacrifice - which may have accounted for Nathan’s discomfort at this event. Yet, given the patterns of marriage outlined at the beginning of this chapter, it is surely possible to envisage that in the past it would have been the leading chiefly capitals who would have benefited most from this form of endogamous expansion, for the
logic of the relation between brother’s and sisters would involve the continuous flow of sacrifices through time. A recurrent feature of Fijian life-cycle rites is that a situation of endemic warfare is so often recalled by the participants involved: permission must be granted to visiting parties to ‘weigh anchor’, to enter the village. After a hundred and thirty years of peace these remain occasions when the normally open villages appear to become encircled by an invisible fortress. Why should be the case? I suggest that it is because a situation of endemic warfare, concern with loyalty and eminent mistrust is a central aspect of the logic of these rites. Even now these conditions must be recollected to render marital transactions complete.

Discontinuity of the woman’s allegiance was a recognised feature of the rite of divestment. As one woman explained, the ceremony marked, Na tekivu ni bula vou (‘the start of a new life’). As another woman commented, Sa kedra yalewa, sa wase kedra, sa dredre na itovo, too much lusi! (‘It is their woman, they are divided from their own, the obligations are very difficult, [you] lose too much!’). Another male observer who worked as an accountant suggested that economic models of exchange were inadequate to understand these transactions. ‘In real terms they are giving human assets. Nothing that the other side gives will be able to compensate for that.’

We may therefore infer that the decline in the practice of rites of divestment is perhaps one of the more significant aspects of the current changes in the practice of marital rites. However it must be acknowledged that it was difficult to assess whether tevutevu performed without the rites of divestment had an equivalent effect upon the protagonists status. Here my intention has been to present an account of these rites which whilst taking account of changing circumstances also reveals aspects of Natewa’s past. Later I devote more attention to the current situation it will emerge that other considerations were also important (see Chapter Seven).
However it is clear that *tevutevu* are finished once the exchange of sacrifices between the transacting parties has taken place. This point was driven home on another occasion when the main protagonist of another ceremony, Tokalau from Naqaravutu (in the neighbouring *vanua* of Tunuloa), circulated the mats used for ‘the seat’ to her immediate female in-laws and then sold the rest of them, and the *gatu*, to other Natewan women, who flocked to buy them. Although the Methodist minister expressed his disapproval the women were not shocked by the sale at all. I was surprised because Adi Sivo, the principal guardian of *gatu*, had previously told me that since *gatu* was the *i yau dina ni vanua* (‘the true offering of the *vanua*’) it was prohibited to make them for sale. I asked her about this and she said, ‘This is different. The *tevutevu* is finished.’ I labour these points because they suggest that, on these occasions, in the opinion of the women, it is the visual consumption of the offering which is more important than the generation of future social ties based upon the circulation of gifts.

5.14 Rites of Return

The *kau ni mata ni gone*, (lit. ‘to carry the face of the child’) is a rite performed to mark the return of offspring born outside the *vanua*, whether in other *vanua*, or in town, to their mother or father’s natal *yavu*. (ancestral foundation). It is a rite which indicates the enduring continuity of relationships achieved through women. Yet these rites also suggest that this continuity is achieved through a sequence of rites of incorporation in which *masi* and other forms of cloth wealth once again plays a central part. Although the impact of the ceremony has been mitigated by the legal framework of land tenure the *kau ni mata ni gone* ceremony is an example of the way in which usufruct to land is still transferred by *vakavanua* ceremonial. Until this rite is performed it is not possible for children
to enter the land of their maternal - and now also paternal - grandparents for a visit.

*Kau ni mata ni gone* takes place outside the house, sometimes on the *rara*, sometimes in the immediate vicinity of the house in question. They are rites in which men play a predominant role. Again the rites vary according to the protagonists involved and are also subject to delay. It is not unusual for families to wait until their family is complete so that they can present all their children at once. Couples living in Suva may now meet the cost of assembling the offerings, securing the passage on the boat and ordering the truck from their own pockets. So performing these rites has become a way of demonstrating financial independence.

Sometimes *kau ni mata ni gone* rites are performed prior to retirement. A former mayor of Levuka, the illegitimate son of a woman from Natewa, was presented in his sixties. However, the following account is based upon a specific ceremony I witnessed a few days after Christmas in 1995. The ceremony marked the return of Adi Lilieta Malai’s children to her natal household.

As soon as it was announced that the truck carrying the representatives of the men’s side had arrived a man went out onto the dirt track carrying a *tabua* and formally requested that the passengers should ‘disembark’ from the truck. At this point Adi Malai’s kinswomen approached the contingent and presented *vakamamaca*, drying cloths of Natewan *masi* and *waliwali* body oil (wrapping them around the bodies of the children). Carrying a large root of *yaqona*, and several barrels of kerosene the men’s side progressed towards the verandah to where Di Malai’s male kinsmen were seated, with her female kinswomen seated at some distance from the men. A charged silence fell upon the gathering. The men presented a root of *yaqona* and made a speech requesting permission to
enter the village. Their offering was accepted and a return offering of yaqona was presented to indicate that they were being welcomed in the manner of chiefs.

Then the exchange of tabua began. First, Adi Malai’s husband presented a large number of tabua as a reguregu, a funerary offering of reparation to compensate for the irregular nature of his union with Adi Malai. A counter offering was made to acknowledge this. Then the children processed out of the house, dressed in store-bought masi; the eldest son carried a tabua in his hands. A long train of Tongan cloth was born aloft behind them by two women and behind this other women processed in a line carrying quantities of cotton bales that had been unwound to form a single train perhaps fifty yards long. The children divested themselves of their masi and the women passed the long train of cloth from hand to hand, piling it up till it formed a mountainous heap in front of the woman’s side. Then the tabua was presented and speech was given requesting the children’s right of entry. A tabua and feast were presented in return, along with a speech granting them access to the village.

5.15 The Layering of Offerings

Kau ni mata ni gone rites were said to be ‘full of history’. It appears that in Fijian ceremonial practice history is made manifest through the performance of a series of ceremonial ‘pieces’ taken from ceremonial complexes which evolved from discreet phases of Fiji’s ceremonial-cum-political history. The layers are performed sequentially enabling the participant to see how each new complex developed through modifying and altering the way in which cloth was deployed in the pre-existing ceremonial complex. Yet how many layers are performed and the way in which they are presented also depends upon the nature of the relationship that is being negotiated at a given event. I have summarised the sequences of ceremonial layers as follows:
THE DISEMBARKATION: THE PRESENTATION OF DRYING CLOTHS

1) The party are formally invited to disembark. Incoming children are invested with masi from Natewa.

PRESENTATION OF THE YAQONA ROOT TO GAIN THE RIGHT OF ENTRY

2) Presentation of yaqona. Speech requesting right of entry.

3) Return presentation of yaqona, to indicate a chiefly welcome. Speech allowing temporary right of entry.

TABUA PRESENTED AS A REGUREGU

4) Presentation of tabua as a funerary offering of atonement for an irregular marriage

5) Return offering to acknowledge the atonement

THE CEREMONY OF DIVESTMENT

4) Presentation of ka vakaturaga (chiefly things): tabua, ceremonial divestment of masi; presentation of Tongan tutu, mats, 15 bales of calico and 21 barrels of kerosene.

THE PRESENTATION OF THE FEAST OF THE LAND

5) Presentation of tabua and a feast of the things of the land (ka vakavanua): a pig, taro. Speech bequeathing specific rites of vasu.

THE DISTRIBUTION OF CLOTH AND LIGHT

6) Distribution of masi, tutu, cotton sulu lengths and, kerosene to the hands of upbringing

7) Informal investment of members of the women’s side in sulu from the man’s side over the next six months.

I suggest that by layering offerings, diverse rites from different phases of Fiji’s history are shown to form part of a wider continuum. I have indicated that temporal layering is an omnipresent feature of Fijian’s experience, achieved through the transmission of names as well as through the deployment of the ‘cloth of the grave’, mats and barkcloth to mark moments of transition. At kau mata ni gone rites this layering achieves a social and temporal amplification, but the amplified image is also made to relate to a particular event. I was told that
the style in which images are transacted reveals the calibre of the current relationship between the protagonists as representatives of their respective vanua.

Now kau mata ni gone rites may be seen as the rites which negotiate the relative political standing of vanua by defining scope of the vasu’s obligations and prerogatives vis a vis their mother’s vanua. In either case kau mata ni gone rites were of an intensely political and theological nature, in the past, since they could involve the religious conversion of either the incoming nephew or, if the nephew were installed of the mother’s people.

A particularly striking feature of the kau mata ni gone ceremony I witnessed was the variety of different types of cloth that were used. It has been shown that different kinds of barkcloth presented a ritual-cum-technical solution to the problem of achieving the expansion of the precolonial states into preinhabited and hostile territory. The kinds of cloth that were deployed changed over time: malo was displaced by masi, then Tongan style tutu and printed cotton. In kau ni mata ni gone rites a cumulative sequence of successive acts of investment, divestment and reinvestment is portrayed using these different types of cloth. Like tevutevu rites kau ni mata ni gone ceremonies enable both the representation of the changing political theology of the vanua or body politic as well as being effective in the present context.

The Sequence of Rites Presented at Kau Mata ni Gone.

1) Stage One: The Rite of Installation. The first stage of the ceremony is referred to as ‘the invitation to disembark’ and ‘the presentation of vakamamaca - ‘drying cloths’, it is also described as na i toka ni masi which is the term used to describe the installation of a new chief with masi. ‘The presentation of drying cloths’ and the offering of yaqona are two sections from the lengthy, formal ceremony of chiefly welcome which is comprised of a long list of exchange
sequences and speeches commemorating the stage by stage arrival of a foreign chief or a vasu levu by vessel. These stages include: the lowering of the pennant; the lowering of the anchor; the invitation to disembark; the presentation of drying cloths; the presentation of yaqona in a chiefly manner. In contemporary Fiji either truncated or extended versions of this ceremony are still used to welcome chiefs or visiting dignitaries. In this case only two sections of the rite were performed. The masi was referred to as a 'drying cloth' because it was envisaged that the visitors would have disembarked from their chiefly vessel. The prefiguration of the arrival of the current vasu's contingent by the arrival of other contingents in the past is often made explicit by references in speeches to former ancestral journeys undertaken by canoe. As we have seen, the installation of vasu levu could substantially alter the religious orientation of the vanua.

2) Stage Two: Divestment. The next stage of the ceremony, na i luva ni masi 'the discarding of masi' is counterposed against the first. The children being presented are dressed in masi from Suva and a long train of Tongan and store bought cotton which they divest in front of their mother’s kin. This ceremony may represent the equivalent to discarding masi at women's rites of displacement and may indicate that the vasu are now obliged to serve their maternal kin.

3) Stage Three: Incorporation. Yet the long train of introduced cloth may indicate how this rite has come to be modified. I suggest that the third stage of the ceremony is a derivation of rites of mourning, introduced from Tonga to Fiji during the period of conversion. These rites, called vakataraisulu ('the assumption of lawful clothing'), were still being introduced to new vanua at the time that I did my research. In the kau ni mata ni gone Tongan-style cloth, together with European cloth was presented at the same time as the masi but it was subsequently distributed among the women's kin. The sulu lengths (sarongs used for everyday wear) distributed in this manner were markedly
foreign’, apart from Tongan cloth: they included lengths of cotton with a screen printed design featuring the word ‘Samoa’ printed along each length and European-style prints.

These cloth lengths were still being worn by the hands of upbringing and other participants in the ceremony one year after this occasion. Thus the woman’s side were literally physically encompassed by the sulu presented by the man’s representatives. The sulu lengths were accompanied by offerings of kerosene — or ‘light’. I believe that the deployment of these offerings logically connected to the preceding ceremonial layers. The two terms for conversion to Christianity are na vakararama, which may be translated as the ‘enlightenment’ or the ‘illumination’, and tara i sulu which may be translated as ‘taking the cloth’ or ‘the assumption of legally approved clothing’.

5.16 Barkcloth and Conversion

The available evidence suggests that the vakataraisulu became an important feature of the ceremonial complex in Lau, Lomaiviti, Cakaudrove, Macuata and Bau between from the period of conversion up until Fijian independence. The vakataraisulu ceremony may be specifically connected to the valu ni lotu (religious wars). From missionary sources we know that the penetration of Tongan influence in many parts of Fiji was carried out under the pretext of defending the faith. Members of the London Methodist Missionary Society who established bases at Lakeba, in 1835, and later at Somosomo (1839-45) and in Viwa, close to Bau, used Tongan converts to communicate the gospel to Fijians. At Lakeba and Somosomo the missionaries trained Tongan native preachers and these traveled to many of the more remote parts of the islands, including Natewa. Thomas has suggested that Tongan cloth may have been instrumental in conversion (Thomas 1991: 169; 1998).
In the late 19th century dress reform was central to the mission. A suitably demure body wrap, stretching down to the ankles in place of customary native dress, i.e. the short grass skirts called ‘liku’ worn by women or the white loin cloths, or malo, customarily worn by men, was seen by the LMS as material evidence of the progress of the mission. The narrow sash like strips of masi did not lend themselves to this kind of use but the broader lengths of gatu could be cut up to make appropriate, and later legally acceptable clothing. Toganivalu records:

At the time when Christianity reached Fiji they were [tutu or gatu vakatoga] used for clothing: but they are not much used for clothing nowadays, as cloth from abroad is used; they are still used as dresses in great gatherings and at weddings and they are worn by the native ministers when they go up for ordination. (Toganivalu 1917: 4)

During the early phases of the colonial rule resistance to the colonial regime was sometimes signaled by the rejection of the sulu and the resumption of native dress. Hocart indicates, however, that investment with Tongan cloth drew upon earlier uses of cloth in indigenous rites of conversion and that, furthermore, these ceremonies also achieved hierarchical encompassment, consolidating the chiefs position in a new way:

It is as iloloku [i.e. it ids as an act of sacrifice] that all the little children put on clothes for the first time at the death of a chief. It is clear that the Fijian mind associates the clothing of the dead with a boys first assumption of clothes...The fictitious death of the mourners may explain 1 Corinthians xv:29: ‘Else what shall they do which are baptised for the dead if the dead rise not at all? Why are they then baptised for the dead?’ Evidently the baptism of kinsmen was supposed to help the dead to resurrection by the identification of the living with the dead. [But] the death ritual raises the dead to a higher rank than all the preceding consecrations; therefore the living humble themselves before him as vassals before the king (Hocart 1929-32: 24).
The cumulative sequence of presentations at the *kau mata ni gone* ceremony may be seen as both a record of the transformation of the political theology of the body politic and a means of negotiating the current constitution of the *vanua*. In contemporary Fiji the *vasu* system has been constrained by the colonial model of land tenure. However, the deployment of Tongan and Samoan foreign cloth may also indicate how the instrumental efficacy (*mana*) of barkcloth has been muffled by the experience of Christian conversion. As a friend in Suva pointed out, 'Christianity acts as a buffer'.

### 5.17 Conclusion

Several people in Natewa told me that they did not see themselves as individuals. Studying life-cycle rites made me understand why. Children are multiply authored in the sense that they grow as a result of the collaborative effort invested by the ‘hands of upbringing’. The history of the body politic is also comprised of layers. Witnessing *kau ni mata ni gone* rites made me understand why eras are described in terms of paper or cloth, for instance, *na gauna ni i lavo* (‘the time of money’), or *daku ni kuila* (lit. ‘behind the flag’, i.e. prior to the raising of the Union Jack). However, *masi*, *gatu* and Tongan barkcloth do not belong to a fixed historical index, a specific era, but are continuously reworked in the present which marks organic processes of reproduction death and growth.

In rural Fiji time for planting taro and yam, *kakana dina*, or ‘true food’ is still partially marked by the growth and decay of natural indicators. The flowering of the *duruka* (*flagellaria indica*) and the arrival of yellow gossamer (*na wa lutu mai lagi*, lit. the string falls from the sky) are signals for weeding. High tides which blow the fecund stench of a sea algae inland indicate that it is time to plant yams for the Christmas festivities; the signal to dig and the signal
to plant are also indicated by the flowering of the drala and the falling of its leaves.

In the old system of time reckoning they referred to caka yabaki (year making). History is still 'made' in this sense. It is represented as a thickness, comprised of multiple layers representing overlapping cycles of growth, decay and renewal. Kau ni mata ni gone rites, for example, are full of history and they are therefore full of transposed images of death; since reworking the representation of death has been central to the changing political theology of the vanua. Each ritual event that celebrates the stages of a person's life is therefore juxtaposed with the broader cultural and historical context of the transformation of the body politic through time.
6

Images of Death

6.1 The Problem: Discontinuity and Continuity

In *tevutevu* rites rupture and continuity is simultaneously asserted. At burial rites (*veibulu*) the portrayal of discontinuity and continuity is reversed. Whilst the continuity of inter-clan or inter-household relationships is repeatedly asserted in men’s public speeches, female mourners are charged with acknowledging loss. *Masi* was not used in any of the rites I witnessed. Yet burial rites also involve the composition of a series of composite images of mats and cloth. As I shall attempt to indicate, mat images portrayed at burial and at *tevutevu* form self-referential, integrated whole. My concern here will be to suggest how the composition, and decomposition of a series of ephemeral cloth images inside the house enable a particular vision of the continuity of the *vanua* to be drawn in the mind. I also include some sections of funeral speeches made by men because they are reveal how *iyau* are conceptualised.

In Natewa, burial rites (*veibulu*) are occasions which bring the continuity of external relations to the fore, which manifest the persistence of relationships achieved through women’s former acts of sacrifice. According to the rank of the deceased, and the location of burial (there are a growing number of urban burials) funerals bring together the following categories of people:

1) The *weka*: the most encompassing category of kin category of kin including affinal relatives either of the deceased or their spouse, or the descendants of forebears of either who had moved to other clans, villages or *vanua*.

2) *Vakavanua*: ambassadorial connections. For example, at Ratu Eroni’s funeral representatives from Moala in Vanua Balavu visited.

3) *Veitau*: either friends or professional colleagues.
6.2 Burial Rites and Reunion

Pigs and cattle (*puaka*, *bulamakau*) must be presented for funerary offerings, and cash (*sede*). In Natewa, where there are no longer any fishermen or boat builders (*kai wai*, *gone dau*) tinned fish is also presented. The pigs are often brought alive to be slaughtered in the village. At rural funerals the shanks of beef and pork brought by affines or their descendants may be strung up from the branches of trees in the centre of the funeral compound before being chopped up for the feast. In rural Natewa the feast of meat was anticipated: ‘You are going to a burial: you will eat meat,’ they would say.

Funerals were one of the rare occasions when the ‘knee society’, whose members had been forced to return to planting for a livelihood, could meet girls from elsewhere. In a letter to a friend studying at boarding school on a different island, a young man from Natewa wrote:

> Out here in the village there’s a lot of work to be done for the preparation of the funeral of the Mai Dreketi who died this week, 14th September 1995. We are all engaged in various activities, generally in making the *lovo* and the other things included in the funeral... We are expecting more relatives will be arriving tomorrow, or maybe today, we don’t know yet, but we are expecting a lot of GIRLS... Ahhh the boys, the boys here are... maybe a miracle will happen. We don’t know yet... Man, oh man.

As well as being occasions where relationships with external *vanua* can be reasserted, burial rites are also occasions when the *vanua* itself may be reunited. Funerary feasts present the opportunity for transforming past relationships of factional rivalry between different clans or households. I was told that disputes over the succession of *vunivalu* were exceptionally bitter in the 1970s and late 1980s: kegs of drinking water were defiled in the night, acts of arson were performed and natural deaths were seen as the result of ancestral *ore* or *orvele*.

The men worked in isolation on their gardens during the day and in the evenings...
the supporters of different factions gathered to drink *yaqona* in separate houses. Reciprocity between households broke down. A group of men even established ‘a roving grog bowl’ which moved around the village during the course of the evening to prevent hangers on - those who tended to drink at others’ expense - from joining in. In short, Natewa was at war with itself.

However, burial rites were occasions where such disputes might be overcome. For example, when Ratu Tevita Vakalalabure’s wife died in 1996, his rival, Ratu Eroni, was prevailed upon to preside over the reception of funerary offerings. The two men had not spoken directly for a decade, nor had they attended any ceremonial function together for twenty five years. But when Ratu Tevita’s wife died her sons presented Ratu Eroni with a *sevusevu* (an offering of *yaqona*), requesting his presence at the funeral. He felt compelled to attend, as he explained:

> I am obliged to act, these people are my close family, after all the two households are very closely interrelated, and on an occasion like this one must do something to rise above our differences. It is the Christian thing to do.

When the delegation from Valelevu arrived to present their offerings to the mourners at Valenisau the spokesman asserted that there was an underlying unity between the two houses based upon shared food, co-residence and shared faith:

> We have all eaten from the same breadfruit tree. We have all come through the same door. We all originated from one rib. If you should find our gifts small and inadequate please don’t be critical. Remember, if you criticise us you will only be criticising yourselves.

6.3 *The Politics of Burial*

In contemporary Fiji the burial rites of paramounts are politically charged since they are the rare occasions where representatives of the *vanua* or the *matanitu*
are gathered together. Discussions about Natewa’s independence led to
descriptions of the mortuary rites performed at the death of Ratu Penaia Ganilau,
the former Tui Cakau and president of the Fijian islands, who died in 1993.
What emerged from people’s comments about this event was that state funerals
are ceremonial occasions where political rivalry is made manifest through the
deployment of cloth.

Certain comments are congruent with Hocart’s insight into the political
importance of the mortuary rite called *vakataraisulu*. When I asked about
Natewa’s relation to Cakaudrove Ratu Eroni Tawake answered:

Natewa’s independence from Cakaudrove was demonstrated at the funeral of the late
Ratu Penaia Ganilau, Somosomo wanted the whole of Cakaudrove to form a single
*lakolako* (procession). All the men were asked to wrap mats around their waists out of
respect for the dead. But the Natewans said that this was a Tongan practice which had
come from Lau and it had nothing to do with Natewa so they refused to put them on.
The people from Somosomo were very upset.

Speaking about the same topic on another occasion Mataitini, Ratu Tevita’s
eldest son commented:

The Natewan chiefs said, ‘We must make a separate presentation.’ It was decided that
Natewa should make its presentation first. Mai Nakurua, who is Natewa’s ‘door’ to
Somosomo, was nowhere to be seen. It was a big gathering and everybody was waiting
for us to make our presentation. Finally Mai Nakurua arrived and he led our
dелегацию forward.

Occasions like these are a test of strength, you must show that you have the
appropriate knowledge to back your position up. You have to demonstrate that you
know where you stand. A paramount chief knows all the separate ways of his subjects
but he will never admit it. If any of them falter and show that they are no longer steady
in the knowledge of their traditions he will take advantage of the situation and will
bulldoze the people into submission at the next ceremonial occasion.
These stories indicate that, more than a century after the introduction of the vakataraisulu ceremony to Fiji, the manner of presenting and distributing funerary offerings and the mode of funerary dress are still seen as being a means of indicating incorporation or exclusion.

6.4 Burial Rites and Atonement

Like other life-cycle rites, burials are also occasions where offerings of atonement can be made for irregular marriages. Win Jo Ting was the son of a Chinese trader who had come to Fiji when he was nine years old in the 1920s and had married the daughter of a Lauan minister from Vanua Balavu who was based in Vusasivo. Later, his son, Win Ting, married a woman from Buca and they lived in a small farm settlement at a little distance away from the village. At his funeral, delegations from Buca, Natewa, Vusasivo and Tunuloa, Koracau, Bua gathered to make their presentations. Yet towards the end of the ceremony when a feast was presented to thank the main female mourners (tonitoni), the speech referred to ‘the cleansing of blood, and the paths of our interrelationships’. I asked a man about this and I was told,

"Maria married a foreigner, blood should follow the established paths."

‘Is the path clean now?’ I asked.

‘Yes, we hope so,’ he said.

Because they offer a means of addressing ‘aberrant’ relationships which depart from the path, sacrificial offerings can therefore play quite a progressive role, facilitating the growth of new kinds of relationships in the vanua. Both traditional obligations and new aspirations can sometimes be reconciled by delaying the performance of tevutevu and kau ni mata ni gone rites.
6.5 Kerekere and Debt.

Because burial ceremonies have to be performed promptly they cannot be budgeted for in advance they are the ceremonies which bring the ‘opportunity cost’ of choosing between realising contemporary aspirations (e.g. saving for secondary school fees) and fulfilling ceremonial obligations to the fore. Sudden death forces people to turn to their blood relatives for offerings and makes them enter into relationships of mutual obligation or generalised reciprocity (kerekere). However, property relations in Natewa were in a state of flux. Women who had married into Natewa, without having pre-established affinal blood links with the place claimed that it was difficult for them to enter into relationships of kerekere.

The gradual shift from a subsistence to a cash based economy had also had an impact upon the procurement of offerings from men. Even among the men who had grown up in the village new relationships based upon debt (dinau) had begun to supplant the kerekere system of generalised reciprocity between households. One man from Natewa told me that his mother’s repeated requests (kerekere) had become a source of embarrassment:

> When she saw someone coming back from the fields with some yams or taro she would kerekere something. I used to think it was because she was a woman and women are picky eaters but sometimes she would even kerekere a bar of soap. It made me embarrassed, we lived in a big house, built by Ratu Penaia [the former President]. I said, ‘Don’t I give you the things you need?’ But she would say ‘No, it is important to ask these people for things, that way they remember we are interrelated.’ Times have changed, people don’t kerekere so much any more. Now the younger generation of men are more likely to say dinau mada e dua na puaka (‘give me a pig on credit’).

Another man, descended from a wasu who had settled in Vusasivo at the time of the Native Lands Commission also found kerekere difficult. He had acquired a truck on hire purchase from some Indo-Fijian yaqona traders and he
drove passengers in it daily to the nearby town of Savusavu. He tried to protect his finances by making ‘Don’t bring blood into it’ (Kua na dra) his motto. He summed up his attitude by saying:

I think the main thing is to keep working. If you can just keep working you will be a man without worries. Like that, any time somebody dies you’ll be prepared, you’ll have the food or the money or whatever ready. You won’t have to go out and kerekere for things. Some of these men do that and they are just beggars and the others hate them after a while. But if you work you needn’t worry about that.

Debt and kerekere relationships led to entirely different kinds of social experience. Because kerekere involved a more diffuse kind of obligation which could be met at an unspecified time, it did not hang over one in the same way as debt. Only debt made people to avoid one another.

These changing aspects of ceremonial mundane forms of reciprocity may be seen as so many dimensions or side effects of the interrelationship between the pervasive, multi-layered economy of kinship and new aspirations and attitudes. A more detailed analysis of burial rites themselves shows how the connections between the layers that make up lived experience are intimated. It helps to clarify how and why a sacrificial economy has been sustained so that it has come to incorporate new modes of transaction.

6.6 Veibulu: Burial Ceremonies in Natewa.

Deaths and funerals in Fiji are typically announced on the radio to enable relatives to foregather. In the village of Natewa the burial ceremonies of other members of the vanua are the main occasions when the mataqali act collectively. In the hours following the announcement, each household will negotiate whose turn it is to make contributions, or will get them from elsewhere if necessary. Then the clan will gather in the house of the senior male member of the mataqali. As the men arrive they throw down their cash donations on the middle of the mat. Then women arrive with offerings of mats rolled under
their arm, these are unrolled and inspected in front of the men. When everyone is present, the senior man decides what kind of contributions they should bring: a pig; a box of tinned fish; some tapioca; some flour; some sugar; and so on.

6.7 The Men's Side: The Funerary Speeches

In veibulu the initial presentation of funerary offerings is headed by a *tabua* and the return presentation of *tabua* requires six speeches:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Delegation Presenting Offerings</th>
<th>Principle Male Mourners</th>
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<td>1) The speech offering by the arriving delegation (<em>Na vakacabo</em>) -------------&gt;</td>
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<td>2) &lt;-----------------------------The speech of acceptance by the hosts (<em>Na ciqoma</em>)</td>
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<td>3) &lt;-----------------------------The speech of thanks, of slowing (<em>Na vakamalua</em>)</td>
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<td>4) &lt;-----------------------------The speech of offering a return <em>tabua</em> (<em>Na vakacabo</em>)</td>
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<tr>
<td>5) The speech of acceptance for the return offering by the incoming delegation (<em>Na ciqoma</em>) -------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6) The speech of thanks for slowing the offering (<em>Na vakamalua</em>) -----&gt;</td>
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At most funerals the principle male mourners will greet several delegations. At a modest funeral there might be eight delegations, but often there were many more. The endlessness of exchanges was frequently referred to by the speechmakers themselves, who spoke of exchanges continuing into the future.

The following funerary speeches were recorded at the funerary rites held on behalf of Varisila, who was originally from Kadavu. Her husband, Tu Waqa, a member of the *mataqali* Valenisau, was the grandson of a *vasu* to Natewa from Saqani who had been granted *kovukovu* land in the *vamua*. These speeches reveal a great deal about the role of *i yau* in funerary ceremonies and the intended recipients of the offerings. The following sections of speeches

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have been extracted from the typical sequence of six speeches which were made when the delegation from Valelevu came to present their offerings to Valenisau:

Ratu Meli Vakacegu, spokesperson for Valelevu:

Vakaturaga e lomai Sovatabua,

In the chiefly manner proper to Sovatabua ['the basket of tabua’ the ceremonial title of the Bauan yavusa] to you gentlemen of the Vunivalu’s yavusa Valenisau: (O wa! wa! wa! tabua levu ya iii! )

(The cord! the cord! the great tabua !)

vei kemudou na turaga na yavusa na Vunivalu.

[ We come] from the inside of Sovatabua in a chiefly manner...

Eratou bera voli mai na Turaga Valelevu dua ga na madra ni loga,

We, the Lords of Valelevu, are late in coming round the village with only this small, tatty lailai sara, meda mai qaravi kina na lolosi ni leqa sa tu e matada.

mat [with which] to tend to the distress and loss which this trouble has placed before us.

Sa nuitaki ni dau na ciqoma ena yalo vakaturaga eda sa sucu vata mai .

I hope you will receive it in the chiefly spirit which has been bom between us at this

Levu tiko na matamudou meda mai vakaturaga taka tiko na sogo ogo.

gathering which is proceeding in a chiefly manner - that it may appear large to your eyes...

Sa lako vata tiko mai kei na kece you kece.

We’ve come to stay with everything we’ve got, with all the yau.

sa sega na ka e tu e sosogulu

There’s nothing left in the most forbidden part of the house where the offerings are stored...

Qara na kena i muri qai sosora koto. MANA!

May [these yau] serve to extend the exchange of offerings into the future, May this be efficacious!

The speech for receiving the gift: Ratu Savenaca Naroba. Retired Methodist Minister, Spokesperson for Mataqali Valenisau:

Au ciqoma dina na kamunaga, kamunaga vakaturaga.

I sincerely receive treasure, the chiefly treasure.

Gentlemen [we are] of the same path, we are one [people], one.

Du na ucuna dou sa tiko kina, dua na ucuna keitou sa tiko kina

You dwell at one tip [of the ceremonial ground], we dwell at the other tip.

Sa vakaraitaki ni yaco ni veidokai keitou sa marau.

The respectful action of your coming hither brings us pleasure.

Medatou veiboboki ena veiguauna sa tu madu.
We must hold on to each other, like two hands clasped together for all time to come.

Au laveta cake vua na Kalou bula mai lomalagi.

I offer [these things] up to the living God in heaven.

sobuti kemudou na nona veivakalougataki ki bulu

may his blessings descend upon you. And to Bulu [the underworld]

vei ra na vuvanivana meda raici ena mata lomani

to those ancestors of the vanua, so that we may be looked upon with loving eyes.

Maravu tiko na nodatou veiwekani!

May our inter-relationships be like a calm sea!

Sosoko tiko na nodratou veiwekani

May our interrelationships run thick [like strong yaqona]!

da rawata tiko na vakacegu e na gauna sa tu i mada

May we dwell in peace for all time to come!

liutaki kedatou tiko na kalou. MANA!

May God be our leader! May this be efficacious!

The second speech for receiving the offering by Tu Waqa, the widower, Valenisau:

A ciqoma tiko na yau vakaturaga.

I receive the chiefly yaw,

Yau tiko ni bula, dou bula vinaka tiko na turaga

Yau in and of life, by whose actions the chiefs prosper.

Donu tiko na nodatou wa'olo vakavanua.

May our paths in the way of the land run straight.

Saurobo tiko na nodatou vanua.

May our vanua flourish with new growth.

Bara ni savu tiko na tikoitiko vakaturaga

May our chiefly dwelling place be like the brink of a waterfall.

Au sa vakavinakinakataka vakalevu na nomudou yaco mai na turaga ni kua

Gentlemen very many thanks indeed for coming hither today.

Au vakacabora tiko kina nodatou vanua:

I offer up our vanua:

Kau tani tiko na o loaloa e na kedatou veidelanigauna.

May black skies be foreign to us for some time to come.

Sosoku tiko na dra me kua sara ni wai dranu.

May our blood be thick and not watery at all.

Me kua ni viritalawalawa na nodatou gaunisala.

May our paths [stay clean] of cobwebs [may they be in constant use].
Bukidrani tiko na nodatou veiwekani.
May our inter-relationships be tightly knotted together.

Cocona tiko na sala ki na bulubulu.
May the path to the grave become overgrown with grass.

Me noda i liuliu tiko ga o Karisito. MANA!
May Christ be our leader! May this be effective!

Response: O ye dina amudo amudo o e!
It is right, it is true, [ and] according to the power of the heavens, the heavens are here.

Then a return offering of *tabua* was presented with a speech. It was initially received by the Methodist minister, and then was ‘slowed’ by Pauliasi Qaqa, Mai Malima, *mataki* to Valelevu with the following words:

_Au cigoma tiko nai yau vakaturaga_
I receive the chiefly _yau_.

_Yau ni vanua. Yau ni veiwekani_
The _yau_ of the _vanua_, the _yau_ of interrelationships,

_Yau sa qara tiko mai na vanua_
The _yau_ with which we serve the _vanua_

_Yau tiko ni bula, dou bula tiko na turaga,_
_Yau in and of prosperity, by whose actions the chiefs prosper,_

_Yau ni dei, dei tiko na nodatou vanua_
_yau of continuity, [yau ] which achieves the continuity of our _vanua_.

_Qara cake tu nai yau vua na kalou eda dau masuta_
We offer up our prayers and the _yau_ to God,

_Me lako e na vakacegu O Va_
May Va go to rest.

_dau dei tiko mai na vo ni mate_
We who go on, who are the remnant of death, must stand firm

_Dou veicoboi tu ga vaka qa ni vivili._
Clasped together like the two sides of a sea shell

_Tinia tiko ga ni mate MANA_
Until we meet the conclusion of death! May this be efficacious!

_O ye dina amudo, amudo o e_
It is right, it is true, it is according to the power of the heavens, the heavens are here.

In some respects the speeches made at burials are like the speeches made at other life cycle ceremonies. First the donor must indicate that he knows or
recognises the recipient, that he knows the appropriate names by which to address him and is alert to both the historical and contemporary interrelationships between the factions that are represented. How these interrelationships are to be serviced, or shaped, by the current ceremony will also emerge from the description of the offerings presented and their intended ritual use in this ceremony.

At burials i yau are used to offer prayers for the promotion of fertility, they are said to be ‘in and of prosperity’, or things which achieve the endless continuity of the vanua through the continuity of interrelationships. In this respect the many references to the cord of the tabua, which runs in a circle from tip of the whale’s tooth to its base, are of interest. At tevutevu rites designed to achieve rupture, the tooth rather than the cord may receive more emphasis. Speech makers may refer baldly to the tabua they offer as na batina oqo (lit. this tooth). Speech makers at funerals typically emphasise the cord by the way that they hold the tabua in one hand, extending the cord towards the recipients with the other. The cord is comprised of four lengths of coir string, or strips of pandanus which are tightly knotted together. The tooth and the cord may therefore be seen as compactly representing the institution of cross-cousin marriage and sacrifice described in Chapter Four. Yau are at once described as being instruments of action which to serve the vanua and it is simultaneously asserted that they are the vanua. This may be why Tu Waqa can proclaim ‘I offer up our vanua’. I was told that it was a fairly standard practice for members of the older generation to dedicate i yau to the ancestors and to God simultaneously.

6.8. *Inhaling the Dead*

After the initial speeches of welcome, the female participants in the delegation split away from the men and, bearing offerings of mats rolled under their arms, they proceed towards the house of mourning. Once the delegation has come
into the room they seat themselves around the walls of the house, then each woman in turn moves across the floor on her knees carrying the mat to embrace the corpse and the main mourners (*tonitoni*).

The term *reguregu* refers to both the offerings of mats and to the act of embracing the corpse and the main mourners. A *reguregu* offering is ideally comprised of different kinds of *i yau* presented as a set by each delegation. Each *reguregu* is a miniaturised version of the composite image comprised of mats and cloth on which the corpse is laid out which may be interpreted as forming 'the face of the grave'. However, because death catches people unawares it is possible to present mats which do not have their wool borders complete. These mats are called *vaka sasawasewase*. But *reguregu* is also an action. The term has sometimes been translated as 'kissing gift'. But a friend in Suva explained that this was inaccurate.

There's a difference, you foreigners kiss like this (doing a comic take off of 'kissing the air' in a social embrace), it's so superficial. *Reguca* is like this (inhaling deeply through the nose). We take the person right inside.

Although she translates *reguregu* as sniff-kissing Christina Toren description stresses that this action is a means of consuming the dead which imitates (the former) consumption of the dead by the soil of the house foundations:

Consumption by smell is powerfully evoked in mortuary ceremonies or *reguregu*. The corpse is laid out on the floor of a house, in the honoured place above, and just before the coffin is closed and removed for burial the close kin of the dead come one by one, press their noses against the cheek or forehead of the corpse and sniff deeply, taking into themselves its sweet rotting smell. This ceremony implies that, in the past, death as a radical conversion of substance was pivotal to the cycles of consumption and exchange between people and the land. The intangible substance of the dead was consumed by their living kin and their tangible substance became part of the foundation of houses to constitute immanent ancestral efficacy (*mana*; Toren 1999: 80)
6.9 *The House for the Gathering of the Dead*

The ceremony of 'presenting offerings and inhaling the dead' takes place inside the house of the deceased, a place which was referred to as *na vale ni somate* ('the gathering of the dead'), or *na rumi ni mate* ('the room of the dead'), or simply *i loma* ('inside'). Hocart recorded the use of the term *soqona ni mate* in burial ceremonies in Namuka (Vanua Levu) and glossed the expression as 'gathering up the dead' (Hocart, 1952:84). Since burial ceremonies act as points of reunion for women who have been offered to outside *vanua* and may therefore have experienced rites of sacrifice both terms are potentially applicable to Natewan burial rites.

6.10 *The Sufferers*

The principal female mourners are termed *na tonitoni* ('those who suffer pain and endure trouble'), or *na bikabika* ('those who are huddled together and who press down'). It was my impression that the most senior female mourners were classified as the *bikabika*. Whilst the display of male grief is proscribed, the expression of female grief is prescribed and the sound of the women's weeping can be heard outside the house. All the women come equipped with large white handkerchiefs with which to dry their tears. The ongoing sound of ritual clapping and the ceremonial responses which mark the beginning and end of each speech, could be heard from the men seated outside the house. Both sounds acted as a sort of counterfoil to the other.

The principal mourner is typically the most senior woman who has married into the house. When the head of the Bauan faction at Natewa died it was not his elder sister but an older woman from Bau who had married into the family who officiated. When a woman died in the village that she had married into the principal female mourners could include her husband's sisters who had moved elsewhere. The *tonitoni*'s duties were to preside over 'the gathering of the dead' for four nights.
6.11 The First Mat Image: Inhalation

The corpse is always laid out *i cakē* (above), in front of the transverse roof beam which divides the main house space from the sleeping quarters where the head of the house usually sleeps. The principal female mourners (*bikabika*) sit above, behind the coffin; the others sit flanking the walls. Once the corpse is laid out on the composition of mats and barkcloth the room may be sealed with a whale's tooth: the cord hangs inside the room and the tooth without. It is the signal that a ritual sanction had been imposed (*ore*) barring all men from entering the room and all the *tonitoni* from leaving it for the next four days. During this time the *tonitoni* only leave the room to eat; they cannot wash or rest elsewhere.

It has been noted that the sets of mats and *gatu* presented as 'inhaling offerings' are scale models of a series of larger images which are assembled from offerings on the floor of the house. The first mat image is called *na iloloku* (lit. the sacrificial offering). Funerals are also occasions when the austere interiors of Natewan houses are transformed into a blaze of colour. The arrangement of mats varied slightly at the different funerals that I attended. At many of the ceremonies the corpse was dressed in white and both it and the open coffin were wrapped in Tongan style *tapa*.

In a typical arrangement the corpse is laid out on a length of *kumi* (which may be translated as the beard). This cloth is flanked with a rectangular arrangement of 'mats with teeth' *loga vakabati*), sometimes arranged so that the coloured wool borders - 'the teeth' - run up the sides of the coffin. The whole arrangement is placed on top of 'mats with ears' (*vakadaligana*) 'the hill of the garden' (*delainiloga*), and 'grass' (*coco*). So, apart from the inclusion of the corpse the image is composed of similar elements and arranged in a similar manner as the images of the shroud and the bed at *tevutevu*. 
Fig 23 A *reguregu* offering laid out for presentation
1. Loga vakabati (mat/garden with teeth)
2. Deia ni loga (hill of the garden)
3. Loga vakadaligana (mat/garden with ears)
4. Loga vakabati
5. Lautefui (Tongan style barkcloth from Lau)
6. Loga vakabati
7. Heaped offerings of mats
8. Nai bikabika

Fig 24 The first mat image.
At the funeral of Tobe in Vusa the mat images were reduplicated on the floor after the first night. The image of mats nearest the sleeping quarters was arranged around the coffin at the top, whilst a second, identical mat image was arranged below. For the burial of Ratu Eroni Tawake a *gatu* was prepared by the women once news of his death reached the village. The wife of the retired Methodist Minister, Nau Fane Vunamu (a Natewan from birth) explained what it felt like to work on this *gatu* and the mats for the burial of Ratu Eroni, 'We worked as one, we were inside together (*loma vata*),’ she explained. She said that the funerary offerings of mats and *gatu* that they prepared for Ratu Eroni were ‘the true inside of the *vanua*’ (*na lomaloma dina ni vanua*).

I kept watch for part of the night. The dazzling oscillation between the figure and ground of the black and white motifs, which appeared to increase with fatigue, gave the *gatu* a growing presence in the room. The members of the *tonitoni* also looked at it as they awaited the arrival of delegations of kin. On this occasion the central band of motifs, called *vavavanua*, was arranged in the form of a giant arrow pointing towards the floor. Small triangular motifs pointing in the other direction created an impression of counterflow. On the opposite wall another *gatu* from Natewa, that had just been used at a *tevutevu*, was displayed. In between the two heads of *gatu*, long strips of *kumi* had been suspended. The room was literally enveloped in cloth wealth: the accumulation of mats on the floor was such that one’s knees sank into it as one moved across the room.

**6.12 The Wake**

On the first night of the funeral a wake is held and hymns for the dead are sung at intervals throughout the night. In the early hours of the morning the singers lie down on the mats and sleep round the sides of the room. Nowadays the burial of the body often occurs during the second day. Pallbearers dressed in white shirts and white *sulu* come into the room and lift up the coffin in the
display of mats, taking the funerary gatu as well. The moment that the corpse is carried out of the house through the chiefly door is met with the strongest expressions of grief. On some occasions, women beat the floor with the palm of their hands ‘to sweep away the spirits’ (sasayaloyalo) that had got caught in the mats. ‘I am surprised that they are still doing that, it is a very old custom’ someone commented.

6.13 The Second Mat Image: Exhalation

In rural funerals only a few people accompany the corpse for burial. In Natowan burials in town the proportion who witnessed the burial was slightly greater. Nevertheless, even in town, some men were obliged to stay behind drinking yaqona, just the main members of the tonitoni are obliged to remain inside the house.

As the the body is carried up the hill to the grave for burial a new image made from mats and kumi is assembled on the floor of the house. Typically this image is identical to the first mat image, which wraps the coffin for burial in the earth - the reduplication of the same image serves to emphasise the absence of the deceased. This mat image is called tevutevu. Over the next couple of hours gifts of cigarettes and sweets called dromu yaga ('the sinking bellow the horizon') are conveyed to the women sitting inside the house by the men drinking yaqona outside, under the shelter. The cigarettes and sweets are divided up between the women. All the female mourners, sitting cross-legged around the sides of the room smoke and contemplate the mat image. As they exhale, their exhaled breath creates a fug of smoke which hangs above the second mat image. The atmosphere is charged. Much later in the evening the mood begins to lighten, the women stretch their stiff legs out into the centre of the room and they sing songs called ‘songs of the ancestors of the earth’ (meke ni vuniquele).
Outside the house of mourning there would be a scene of considerable activity. More delegations would arrive and the carcasses of newly slaughtered cattle and pigs would pile up on the ground. In one area young men are in charge of slaughtering cattle and pigs: shanks of beef are hung up on the branches of trees to drain. In another area the other female kin of the deceased chop beef ready for cooking. At some funerals a second group of boys prepared a lovo (earth oven) for baking the taro. Each of these tasks would be supervised. In yet another area delegations of mourners are served tea whilst the male mourners gathered under the main shelter to drink yaqona. At many of the funerals I attended people would work through the night, receiving delegations until the early hours of the morning.

At some of the burials which I witnessed the dead were taken first to the church and one of the heralds would make a eulogy. The eulogy makers typically extolled the virtues of a life of service. All the eulogies I heard followed a common formula: the dead were praised for fulfilling their duties towards the vanua and for maintaining its ways. The corpse was buried in a coffin wrapped in the initial mat image. Men were buried in land belonging to the clan. Chiefs in area called the sautabu. However the kin of women and men without blood connection to the vanua sometimes had to negotiate to find a place to bury them. A priest read out the Fijian version of the prayers for the dead. The earth was stamped down by the gravediggers and heaped into a small mound, which was ringed with stones taken from the river bed (qalo) in an arrangement resembling a house foundation. A length of Togon style cloth (tutu), or kumi, was placed on top and was pierced with a stave, though sometimes a fence of staves was made ‘to stop it being stolen’ or ‘to prevent acts of sorcery’, as I was told on different occasions.
Na Dromu Yaga
(Sinking Below the Horizon)

Fig. 26 The second mat image
Fig. 27 Na Burua
Fig 28 Dressing the grave
6.14 Two Feasts: Eating Together and a Distributed Feast

The funerary feast follows immediately after the burial, it is simply called ‘eating together’ (kana vata). The feast is not solemnised. In rural funerals all that is consumed is large servings of meat. Afterwards, a second feast - of beef, pork and taro, and tin fish - called ‘the bursting’ (na burua), is laid out in rows on the grass for distribution.

6.15 The Fourth Night

On the fourth day the principal male mourners present the women with a bowl of yaqona and na wase vaka taratara (‘a feast to be divided up for lifting the tabu’) comprising a pig and some taro baked in the earth oven. Then the jokes and burlesque begin. At Varisila’s funeral, where it was pouring with rain, the middle aged women from the tonitoni put plastic bags on their heads and minced down to the seashore, imitating the movements of very old women doing a take off of the sashaying, provocative walk of younger women. They chased each other, there was a water fight, and they all ended up in the sea. In Buca women who descended to the sea (na lakosobusobu) washed themselves between their legs before going to catch fish for to present to the male mourners.

6.16 Dressing the Grave

After the fourth night the toni toni prepares small bunches of flowers and cut some of the length of tutu from the second funerary image into streamers. At Tobe’s funeral the women walked down the beach towards the grave and the women gathered dead sea coral from the shore. When they reached the grave they peeled back the length of the kumi which had become blotched and spotted with earth and rain to reveal the bare mound of earth beneath. They laid the coral between the rectangle of stones, in a manner reminiscent of the floor of a traditional Fijian house (bure). Then the mouldy piece of kumi was smoothed back into place and a fresh length of kumi was placed on top. Finally they
erected a small wooden frame above the grave. The resulting structure resembled a scale model of the framework of the house. Then they took a long length of cotton cloth which had been lacerated with scissors and stretched it across the top of the frame. The garland was hung around the frame at the top. A wind rose up. The streamers of barkcloth fluttered and shifted in the breeze and, as the cloth caught and ballooned in the wind, the flaps cut into its surface opened and shut.

6.17 Rubbing Away the Dirt

In a recent paper Carlo Ginzburg has distinguished between two main categories of representation. In the first instance representation is understood as providing an enduring substitute for something or someone that is missing. For example, by painting a portrait or by raising a monument, the perpetuity of a person or a larger, corporate entity, such as a city or a state can be represented on earth. According to Ginzburg, this notion of representation has become so dominant in the West that we have all but lost sight of another mode of representation which does not aim to produce inviolate forms but on the contrary seeks to enable continuity of a different order to be drawn in the mind by demolishing the represented image.

Ginzburg’s distinction between these two kinds of representation has helped me to see why successive images are assembled from mats form such a central part of Natewan burial rites. Mats offered at funerals are the same as the mats presented at tevutevu. However, their use in burials brings a different image to the fore. I suggest that successive mat images assembled by the offerings of the weka which mark the presence and absence of the corpse are of a giant face, a garden or burial mound, whose gaping mouth and teeth enables the dead to be figuratively sacrificed and ‘consumed’ by the vanua.

By means of the composition, decomposition and transposition of successive mat images, kumi and cloth the dead are sacrificed twice and are
decomposed into different parts: smell, and a sequence of reduplicated images. These reduplicated images each represents the sacrificial consumption of the corpse by the earth. Decomposition is represented in multiple in the miniaturised simulacra of a house that is at once a person. The lacerated cloth strung above the grave imitates the decomposition of the layers of kumi placed on the surface of the earth, and the corpse wrapped in the mat image beneath. The garlands and fluttering streamers imitate the resulting regenesis which will ensue. These processes are themselves anticipated through another reduplication and transposition: the second mat image ‘the unfolding’ that is arranged in the house of the mourners. The concatenation of this series of cloth images made in the context of death intimates the significance of the process of unwrapping images which as we have seen in the previous chapter is one of the guiding images of the life-cycle complex. Whilst the first mat image decomposes in the earth the second mat image must also be ‘decomposed’ and recirculated in turn.

In Natewa, after a big burial ceremony they hold a ceremony called ‘rubbing away the dirt, or black’ (qusi ni loaloa). A pig or a cow is killed, more taro is baked and there is an exchange of tabua. Some of the mats collected at the burial are distributed: a portion of them are given to the ministers and lay preachers, others are donated to the gravediggers (magiti ni tuva) some are presented to the main women mourners and the rest are put back into circulation for use at other burials or marital tevutevu. Mats cannot be withheld from the cycles of exchange. To hoard (buroburoga) these mats is to be subject to public censure. Cautionary tales are told about the consuming fires which have swept through the houses of legendary hoarders of cloth wealth such as Lady Lala Mara (the wife of the former Lauan Prime Minister, Ratu Mara) or the wife of the Vunivalu of Bau.

The second mat image, called tevutevu, is permeated with the exhaled breath of the tonitoni. Furthermore, vakabati mats all have distinctive wool borders which makes them easily recogniseable and distinguishable. It is not
surprising that widows sometimes find it difficult to rededicate these offerings. At one tevutevu ceremony that I witnessed one of the women began to weep when she saw her mats rearranged to form a new composition, or 'bed', on the floor, ‘Iṣa, iṣa it is difficult for me to offer these mats, they were offered at my husband’s veibulu, this is very hard for me’, she said.

By virtue of circulating mats, which are more durable than masi, discreet rites of displacement and loss become enchained or interconnected. Through successive acts of composing, decomposing, circulating and reassembling composite images, the ‘face of the grave’ emerges as a multidimensional, interconnected entity - a large distributed object - which is momentarily reconfigured at different events, both during funerals and at marital rites. Vanua become conceptually integrated by means of cycles of sacrificial consumption. Through the life-cycle complex both the dead and the living become the objects of consumption, just as the land provides the food for their growth. As Toren has argued, the sacrificial consumption of the dead may have constituted the main source of ancestral mana which rendered yaqona efficacious in the installation of chiefs (Toren 1999: 54, 62, 80). Mats and barkcloth were also attributed with these powers of efficacy. As the funeral speeches indicate, i yau are said to be instruments ‘for serving the vanua’ which are ‘of the vanua’ part of its substance and part of the people’s imagination. I suggest that the dead are not merely divided in two by means of the consumption of their smell they are also divided by means of imagery. Sacrificial consumption, ‘in the manner of the land’, is the most important action that cloth wealth conveys. The circulation and recomposition of mat images enables the imagery of sacrificial consumption to be ‘carried and transferred’ from burial rites to marital rites where the female protagonist becomes consumed or incorporated within a new corporate entity through public divestment.

Mats also enable the vanua, qua body politic, to become integrated with every day life. Once mats become too shabby for ceremonial presentation
they are used to decorate household interiors. ‘Mats with teeth’ are placed underneath the mattresses so that their brightly coloured borders form a decorative valance: providing a constant intimation of mortality. Mats therefore serve to connect different houses and beds together. In this way every house becomes a constitutive part of the polity comprised of distributed imagery. Men use the large mats called ‘the grass’ (coco) for sitting on whilst drinking yaqona either inside or outside the house. When I traveled to Suva to attend a funeral with a delegation from Natewa, mats from Natewa were unrolled on the deck of the ferryboat. In the midst of the throng of people on board the mat demarcated Natewan space, enabling yaqona to be served to the chiefs in the appropriate manner.

Hocart’s ethnography intimates that the burial rites that I witnessed the imagery of the vanua created by mats and barkcloth was implicitly associated with the matanitu of Cakaudrove or Tovata as it is still known in Fiji. Although mats are not Natewa’s i yau ni vanua, and have only been produced there for the last ten years, there are clues which suggest that the use of mats in life-cycle rites started earlier. As you will recall, Hocart indicates that a woman from Somosomo married into Natewa, causing offerings to be redirected towards Somosomo (Hocart, 1952:29). Although he does not relate the two events he also comments on the introduction of an immigrant god from Somosomo to Natewa. This god is the Tui Cakau, the head of the iSokula and the paramount of Cakaudrove - or rather it is his ambassadorial representation in material form (Hocart 1952:100). In Natewa he was called Ma Nawiri and his attributes are rainbows the kula parrot and yaqona (Kula the name of the feathers of the parakeet which used to be used to embellish loga. This name is still applied to wool which is used to embellish mats and wool borders are often of rainbow patterns). In Somosomo the Tui Cakau’s attributes are the same but the name of the god was more evocative. It was O nai Tavasara (‘From-the-cut-up -at-once’).
Since the head is the most sacred part of the body of the paramount chief it is the logical apex of the vanua, or body politic. By reduplicating the head miniaturised versions of the hierarchical corporeal organisation of the vanua can be replicated and represented in many different parts of Cakaudrove. I suggest that the multiplication of heads by means of imagery presented a means of reinforcing the hierarchical organisation of the vanua by manipulating the representation of ritual space. But they may also be seen as a logical modification or reconfiguration of the earlier system of sacrifice developed by the Bauan matanitu. It has been suggested that the members of the Bauan polity discovered that they could extend networks of control to outlying lands by women who carried and transferred the knowledge of pattern production in their heads. The imagery carried by Bauan marama, became mana through being transposed onto barkcloth which was used to imitate acts of decomposition in order to enable the endogamous expansion of the Bauan polity. In Cakaudrove, leaves may also have been used to extend the agency of the matanitu to peripheral vanua. However, the system worked in a different way. Through multiple re-presentations of his head the paramount could have imposed his presence upon the people of the surrounding area, by presiding over life-cycle ceremonies. In Britain, the reduplication of The Crown marks maintains the land as a realm and it is interesting to note that some Natewans referred to the stars that marked the border of ‘the head’ of gatu as na kalokalo ni ranadi mai peritania (i.e. the stars in the crown worn by the British Queen).

It should be emphasised that this my speculative interpretation of the objective data, based upon the hypothesis that displays of imagery have not developed through unconscious piecemeal modification serendipity but because they constituted a means, historically, of gaining control of human resources. It is very difficult to assess peoples’ subjective responses to these distributed objects, or to the formalised speeches that people are required to make. My questions about both were often met with embarrassment. As Toren notes,
attitudes to *mana* may have changed as a result of conversion to Christianity (Toren 1999: 81). Furthermore recent changes in politics and the economy may have reconfigured the extent and reach of the old *matanitu*, changing peoples’ perceptions of the proprietorship of *i yau*.

A characteristic feature of Natewa, as indeed of other parts of Fiji, is that the corporatist order, as opposed to hierarchy itself, has been so often subject to challenge. I have suggested that these challenges enabled *i yau* and paths of exchange to be modified and adapted in the past. The following story, told to me by the younger brother of the current Vunivalu of Natewa, Ratu Kaitu Vakalalabure indicates that these challenges continue today. At the ‘ritual for the removal of dirt’ of the late Ratu George Cakobau the representative of the iSokula directed the great heap of *reguregu* offerings to Ratu Kaitu Vakalalabure, for subdivision amongst the various vassal *vamuas* of Cakaudrove. Tui Nukuloa from Ra was sitting next to the Vunivalu’s brother and, thinking that it would be un-Fijian to have divided up the gifts amongst the people of Cakaudrove, whilst ignoring the Tui Nukuloa, Kaitu spontaneously handed the whole lot over to him. His spontaneous decision was backed by the Tui Wailevu who said, ‘Right you heard what he said, load the mats and *magiti* in the truck.’ Ratu Kaitu added:

I don’t know what gave me the strength to take command of the situation. I was only a young man at the time and it was a very weighty ceremonial occasion. All the Tui’s of Cakaudrove were present. But the point is this: I knew where I stood. I knew I had the right to direct the gifts as I saw fit. Administratively we come under Cakaudrove and in many ways we are interconnected and interrelated but on occasions such as this we assert our independence nevertheless.

This story brings the ambiguity of the ongoing circulation of *i yau* in contemporary Natewa to the fore. On the one hand objectifications of the body politic seem to impose considerable conformity - albeit that this conformity
enables certain kinds of continuity to be drawn in the mind, on the other hand
they provide the means for sudden bursts of imagination and self recognition
which can alter the course of events.

6.18 The Winding Sheet

I never saw masivolavola used at burial rites in Natewa, but I was told that
masi of a specific sort did play a part in the burial ceremonies of the Vunivalu.
I was shown photographs of the burial of the late Vunivalu of Natewa, Ratu
Rakuita. The stories that his youngest daughter, Di Litia, an office worker in
Suva, told me about her father indicated that he was associated with the power
of mana, of working changes,

People tell me stories about my father. If he ate fish for lunch his wife threw the fish
bones out of the window and they turned into butterflies. I don’t know whether that
story is true. These things don’t happen any more.

When he died they tied a special masi called Nai tini Yara to his arm, it went out of
the window of the rumi ni mate and was tied to a coconut tree nearby. When they
took him up to the sau tabu the tini yara was tied to the top of a coconut tree there.

Williams recorded a similar practice in Taveuni in the 1830s:

Many yards of the man’s masi are often left out of the grave, and carried in festoons
over the branches of a neighbouring tree (Williams 1982: 191).

Tying the tini yara to the top of a coconut palm can be counterpoised against
the initial act of burying the umbilical cord beneath the roots of another tree,
bringing the sequence of actions that are carried out ‘in the manner of the land’
full circle. The term tini yara implies this. Tini means ‘to fasten a rope’ or
‘to conclude’ or, as Hocart puts it succinctly, ‘to wind up’; yara has been
glossed as ‘to haul or drag along the ground’ and it also describe the trail, like
the trail that a snake leaves in its wake (Hocart, ms.HF: 298).
But *tini yara* also suggest another kind of 'winding up'. Burial *masi* are for the most part pure white cloths decorated with occasional positive images, that is dark figures of plants seen against the light, like a tree seen against a bright sky, which is, after all, the vision of growing things in the lived world. They stand in stark contrast to the majority of *masi draudrau* motifs which are white, skeletal-like, surrounded by an encompassing ground.

Relationships between images and motifs operate like a winding mechanism through all life cycle ceremonies in which death shown to be the fundamental way in which life itself and the expansion of the *vanua* is constituted and renewed. It is for this reason that life-cycle rites can also be seen as an integrated self-referential oeuvre which achieves the reproduction and prosperity of the *vanua* (cf. Hocart 1952: 25). Death forces people to abstract the essence of life; in Judaism the belief that blood was the essence of life meant that blood became a sacred substance which could be consumed only by God. In the Fijian ritual complex, in common with that of many other Austronesian-speaking peoples, shows that flesh is the entity which carries and transfers life, since it is flesh which is consumed by the earth (Babadzan 1993; Kuechler 1997).
7

Endogamous Expansion from Natewa

7.1. Introduction

This ethnography began with a description of the transformation of saplings of *masi* growing around the sleeping quarters of houses into cloth. There followed a description of the way in which barkcloth was wrapped and unwrapped from the bodies of Natewans and their uterine, or displaced descendants at key moments of growth, departure and arrival. However, life-cycle rites alone cannot explain the continuity of *masi* production in the present day. Due to renewed social mobility, manifested in outmigration from rural Natewa, *masi* has come to play a new part in a changing, multi-layered economy. Before, the system of *masi* pattern facilitated the endogamous expansion and integration of the Bauan *matanitu* in Natewa. Now *masi* has come to facilitate the endogamous expansion and integration of the Natewan *vanua* itself. Renewed social mobility, after a long period of colonial regulation, has given *masi* stenciled patterns a new role in social integration and differentiation. *Masi* has come to be used as a backdrop for domestic displays of photographs and reproductions of religious and political leaders. I suggest that the superimposition of these images along lengths of barkcloth provides a means of gauging peoples’ subjective responses to the past.

Although domestic displays of barkcloth and photographs are by no means ubiquitous they were such a conventional feature of Natewans’ interior decoration that I took these unusual collections of imagery for granted. It is only since returning from the field and compiling my notes on barkcloth and Fijian conceptions of imagery, time and place that I have been able to appreciate
how the heterogeneous collection of images found in domestic displays of masi resonate in terms of inter-linked perceptions of similarity and difference.

Why are reproductions and photographs superimposed in layers? It is suggested that masi patterns and masi as a material entity have generated system of common perceptions around which the other images are arranged on different planes. Analysing displays of masi in the houses of Natewan's reveals a great deal about the way in which masi serves to mediate perceptions of both the past and the future.

7.2. The Use of Masi for Domestic Display

If masi is displayed on a single wall it is hung high up, along the length of the transverse roof beam (or in the equivalent position of a wall of a concrete house) which divides the house into spaces for living and sleeping. It demarcates what, hitherto, was regarded as the most sacred part of the house, called the loqi tabu, where the head of the household slept with his wife and the yams, clubs and tabua were stored (Sahlins 1993: 392). Thus masi in different states - growing saplings and printed cloth - wraps or encircles the living quarters. In the houses I saw, lengths of printed masi often entirely encircled the living space, 'wrapping' the everyday interactions of the household as a corporate entity.

When masi is used for domestic displays it provides the background for an additional layer of heterogeneous artefacts. These assemblages typically include family photographs, square-faced clocks, religious images and sayings, calendars and pictures of political leaders, together with things preserved from ceremonies and from feasts. The religious imagery and texts vary according to the denomination of the household. In Methodist households it is common to see a framed maxim, bordered with masi motifs, which reads, 'Christ is the head of this house he eats with us and overhears us'; Catholics display images of the Sacred Heart (Toren 1999: 45). Reproductions of political figures and national icons also bore witness to various changing political alignments. In the past
images of British royalty were hung on display. The political figures that I saw represented in Fijian houses all bore witness to the changes that had taken place since independence. There were brightly tinted photographic prints of the then prime minister, Colonel Sitiveni Rabuka; of the Lauan president, Ratu Mara; or of newer national icons such as Wesele Serevi, the leader of the Fijian rugby sevens team; or Lucky Dube, a reggae singer from South Africa, whose concert, held in Suva in 1996, was a much discussed event.

7.3. Displays of Masi and Photographs in Domestic Space

Natewan house interiors are, with a few exceptions, very bare and clean. Most of them have little furniture apart from beds with valances formed by the brightly coloured woolen borders of vakabati mats which lie beneath the mattresses. Wooden floorboards are covered with large pandanus mats for sitting on. Aside from the displays, the walls are left unadorned and are mostly painted either dusky pink or sky blue, the three doors of the house being left open to the surrounding village. The lack of furniture means that both quotidian events (mealtimes, kava drinking) as well as more exceptional occasions (life-cycle rites, welcoming strangers, attending political meetings or committees) are marked by the different ways in which people sit on the floor. The plane of the floor and the walls of the house are therefore like a bare canvas upon which these day-to-day social interactions are charted and marked.

In the house of the Turaga ni Koro where I was staying, this was particularly apparent since the house also provided the space for youth and village meetings and the walls were covered with drawings. Menasa, then aged six, had sticks of white chalk which he used to draw floating, iconic diagrams of boats, trucks, birds and sharks with patterns that looked like a cat's cradle between them. One day I asked the Methodist minister about them. ‘It is because he is growing up in the vanua, he has learnt to watch how the birds and fish move,’ he explained.
The austerity of house interiors means that visual displays command attention. I was told that they served to maroroya na itovo vuvala (‘to maintain the manners of the household ancestors’). In fact displays have to be maintained and reworked since masi perishes quickly in the humidity, discolouring and fraying in a matter of months. Furthermore, since displays serve as a kind of album for the household they need to be updated to keep pace with recent family achievements: photographs of offspring at graduation ceremonies; certificates marking the passing of exams, or attendance at Sunday School; or book-keeping courses; group photographs of school or sports teams; all referred to as taba, or ‘sides or teams’, are proudly put on display. In the majority of cases the photographs were of members of the household patriline. Some of the younger women who had married into a household in the village had their own snapshots, they kept them in suitcases under their beds.

Refurbishing displays often takes place before Christmas. This is the time when offspring return to perform the necessary ceremonies and to register their children in the Book of Living Genealogies. Many children bring new photographs with them as gifts and, during their stay, their mothers present them with masi in return. On these occasions both family photographs and masi are classified as i vakananuni (‘remembrances’, or more literally, ‘things for thinking with’). The photographs are typically mounted and framed and hung high up on the wall, tipped at a slight angle towards the floor for greater visibility. They are ‘dressed’, or garlanded with plastic flowers, shell necklaces and dried garlands preserved from recent ceremonial events.

The refurbishment of household displays marks the annual return of offspring, following the tempo of the Christian calendar, but they are also a means of achieving intergenerational processes of growth. The following story, recorded in my field notes, shows that reworking displays is a concomitant part of life-cycle ceremonies, part of the ongoing process of dressing, or addressing,
the absence of kin. It reveals how the dead are remade through layers of cloth and bands of imagery:

Qoli's husband, Tu Mua, died whilst I was staying in the village. I went to see her a couple of months later, just before Christmas. She told me that she was beset with financial worries. How was she to raise money for school fees so that she could send her daughters to secondary school, she did not know whom to ask for assistance. I remarked that she had redecorated the house. She told me that she had had a dream. In her dream she woke up and she saw her husband standing in the doorway. They had the following conversation:

Qoli: *A cava o mai cakava eke? O sa mate oti!* (What are you doing here? You are dead and buried! (lit. your death is finished!))
Tu Mua: I have come to see you, I want a new *sulu*.
Qoli: I don't recognise your voice.

But she gets the *sulu* down off the rail. Then he goes. She hasn't seen him since.

A few days later she redecorates her house. She uses a bit of the *Lautefui* (Tongan-style barkcloth from Lau) that was given to her at her husband's funeral.

I photographed the 'new *sulu*’ at the time of this interview (you can see the clothes rail cutting across in front of the display). In the centre of the display there is a brightly coloured reproduction of Leonardo da Vinci's *Last Supper*. The picture of Jesus and the disciples seated above a table, sharing a meal. The composition of this particular version of the image attracts attention: the scene of the *Last Supper* is superimposed on top of a much larger figure of Christ, though only a small section of his upper torso draped in blue cloth and a portion of his neck and halo can be seen.

To the right of this there is a photograph of Qoli's husband, Tu Mua and his brother; to the left there is a photograph of some of Tu Mua's *affinal* relatives, from Somosomo wrapped in barkcloth for a ceremony. Other photographs show members of the patriline, in the army and on parade, and certificates attesting to their achievements. In his last visit to the village Tu Mua had scribbled a reminder on the wall in chalk, about root *yqona (waka)* and sweets (*bobo*). Qoli had placed cellotape over it in an attempt to preserve a remaining trace of her husband.
Fig. 29 Barkcloth displays at Qoli's house
On either side of the display there were brightly coloured reproductions of the then Prime Minister, Colonel Rabuka. One of these colour reproductions contained a picture of Tu Mua’s son in the Fijian army. Beside this photograph, on the right-hand wall, Qoli had hung a bundle of twigs that her eldest daughter had gathered on her first trip to the forest, below which she had put a plastic packet of her daughter’s ‘womb hair’. In between all these photographs Qoli had hung strips of filmy white masi with tasseled edges called either se yavu (‘bleached masi’) or masi vaka drau, masi (‘in the manner of leaves’), together with a length of masi kuvui, the prerogative of people of rank. She had preserved some of these pieces of masi from her daughter’s first meke, which she had performed a few weeks before for the school fundraising.

In Dawa another woman told me that she was having difficulty conceiving. She had eloped with her husband seven years ago and a couple of years later he had presented her father with a whale’s tooth as an i soro. Then her husband’s elder brother had died and the money from his life insurance enabled them to build a new concrete house. When it was finished they decided to perform their tevutevu. Still no child came. Five weeks after the tevutevu she mounted a display of masi and photographs on the wall of the house. In between the photographs of her husband in the Cakaudrove rugby team, the photographs of her husband’s brother, and other photos of his kin, was a small plastic bag containing her husband’s beard which he had grown as a gesture of mourning to mark his brother’s death.

The juxtaposition of several different points of stoppage along distinct bands of life or life-cycle sequences is a characteristic feature of displays. Often there are the leftovers from feasts or treats which either marked or prompted stages of growth of household members. These vary according to the wealth of the house. In houses that lack easy access to cash empty packets of powdered milk or a malted drink are often stacked in a row along the transverse roof.
beam, in many households coconut midribs are used to construct recyclia: branching structures sprouting ‘flowers’ made from shiny metallic crisp packets (bongos) pleated to form rosettes and lacerated Coca-Cola tins squashed into florate forms.

Other households preserve the evidence of more sumptuous feasts. Mere’s house in Dawa was the most affluent in the village. Here the display of objects addressed a different kind of absence, and suggested her ongoing anticipation of prosperity from another source. Two large turtle shells with stickers of Spiderman on them (cobwebs are often used to describe kin relations in the native idiom) were proudly displayed, reworked leavings from the kau ni mata ki gone feast performed to mark the presentation of Mere’s daughter’s offspring from Sydney. Behind this were sections of discoloured masi preserved from her daughter’s 21st birthday party together with a large plastic golden key presented on this occasion. A painting of a Fijian tourist resort presented by the son-in-law was hung up above it. At the centre of the display was a humorous photograph of the Sydney-based daughter and her family all dressed identically as ‘men’ in pinstripe suits. When I asked Mere about the display she explained that her daughter was good to her and that she sent her a postal order when she could.

7.4. Spatial Co-ordinates in Household Space

How Fijian sociality emerges as a result of the co-ordination of people’s relative movement along an above/ below axis has been brilliantly analysed by Christina Toren (Toren, 1988; 1990). She argues that the horizontal plane of the house floor is categorised on an above/below axis (i cake / i ra) which confers ‘aboveness’ or ‘belowness’ upon people and thereby construes relationships as being hierarchical. As her analysis of drawings made by children at different age groups of Fijian yaqona rites demonstrates, the above/below axis is a conceptual tool which aids children’s ‘cognitive’ construction over time of differential
status, in terms of an interaction between apparently separable constructs of rank, gender and seniority no one of which could be accorded primacy’ (Toren 1993:463).

Toren’s central thesis is that hierarchy is not simply inherent in a rank distinction between chiefs and commoners, but rather that it is the product of artifice, of the hierarchical evaluation of household space.

She argues that the pervasiveness of the above/below axis in both quotidian activities and high ceremony is due to the fact that ritual and every day life are not separable. Instead, the above/below axis is an aspect of action called ‘acting in the manner of the land’, which, far from being isolated in high ceremony or ritual, is an integral part of every day life:

Meals in a Fijian household are always ritualised. The cloth is laid to conform with the above/below axis of the house space, and the household members take their places according to their status: the senior man sits at the pole above and others are below him, males in general being above females ... The best and largest portions of food are placed on the cloth ‘above’, so that one not only sits, but eats according to one’s status... The seating arrangements and the conduct of the meal are a concrete realisation of hierarchical relations within the domestic group (Toren, 1988:701).

In another article Toren has suggested that the hierarchical organisation of domestic space is ‘sanctioned’ by historical phenomena such as lengths of masi which, on Gau, are also typically overlaid with reproductions of Leonardo da Vinci’s Last Supper. (Reproductions of the Last Supper had been brought home by young men who served in the Fijian Army force in the United Nations Interim Forces in the Lebanon from 1978 onwards; Toren, 1988). She argued that the layering of traditional and introduced imagery in domestic displays is characteristic of a cognitive process which makes it possible for Fijians to maintain the seamless continuity and validity of ‘a way of working in the manner of the land’, whilst simultaneously acknowledging the changes occasioned by conversion to Christianity. According to Toren, the appropriation of Leonardo
da Vinci's *Last Supper* can 'be understood as an instance of *cakacaka vakavanua* (‘working, acting, doing in the manner of the land’). As she has suggested, this notion of tradition as culturally appropriate action makes it possible for Fijians at once to transform their culture, in this instance the conception of chiefship, and affirm its dynamic integrity (Toren, 1988: 712).

Toren's description provides evidence that the unusual collections of objects found in *masi* displays are common to different parts of Fiji. However, the data that I have presented in this thesis suggests that *cakacaka vakavanua* extends beyond manners or culturally appropriate embodied behaviour to include the ongoing labour of material transformation. I should therefore like to extend Toren's analysis by arguing that the disposition of *masi* saplings, *masi volavola* and contemporary artefacts and photos around the sleeping quarters which reveals that another dimension of the above/below axis is the transformation of organic processes of growth and decay. Not only does the disposition of *masi* show how the history of social and political relations has entered into the constitution of specific ways of recognising space-time it also challenges taken-for-granted generalisations about the inherent, and therefore cross-cultural, nature of spatio-temporal cognition (cf. Wassmann, 1992: 645).

The relationship between seniority and the above/below axis suggests that this axis may also be regarded as a past/future axis. The Fijian terms for past and future show that it is the *past* which constitutes the prospective view. The Fijian term for future is *na gauna mai muri* (*muri* also means behind, or more precisely, 'over one's shoulder'). Conversely, the head of the house, or the acting paramount, may be described as the *i liuliu* (‘he who goes before’), *na gauna i liu* (lit. ‘the time before, or in front’) is the Fijian term for the past. A friend from Suva explained to me that the idea of 'facing the past' comes from the notion of a ceremonial procession in which the young follow their elders, who in turn follow the way of their original ancestor. I saw these relational spatial categories reinforced at the village meetings or evening *kava*
ceremonies at which village elders and chiefs sat ‘above’, beneath lengths of *masi* whilst the younger *cauravou* (unmarried men) were ranged ‘below’, along the opposite wall.

Seeing the above/below axis as a past/future axis helps to clarify how the arrangement of *masi* plants outside the house, and the displays of *masi* cloth within it, may be seen in terms of a motion, or process, within an extended spatio-temporal field. I suggest that the past /future axis is the corollary to the movements of the life-cycle in relation to the sequences images that are ‘unfurled’ or ‘spread out’ in domestic space. Following one trajectory, that of the progression towards seniority (*i cake*), we see the elders die and ‘vanish through the floor’ in front of the transverse roof beam to the *yavu* at the ceremonies attended by the *tonitoni*. Following the other trajectory, the ‘flesh of the house’ (*na lewe ni vale*) is regenerated, from yet further back in the sleeping quarters, as new saplings of *masi* and as offspring. The first movement (*i cake*) reaches back, via the ‘new cloth (i.e. the layer of *masi* or *gatu*) and down into the ancestral past beneath the surface of the *yavu* (the ancestral foundation). The second movement (*i ra*) rises up from the ancestral past, through the *masi* saplings and into the present or future in the form of intricately patterned *masi* - of *i yau*.

Women’s ‘activity in the way of the land’ (*cakacaka vakavuana*), or women’s ‘activity in the way of the household ancestors’ (*cakacaka vakavuvala*), is comprised of appropriate behaviour and movement - Fijians describe it in English as ‘a way’. But the past /future axis also involves growth or material transformation: it therefore entails a particular understanding of material culture. As a friend in Suva put it, ‘*Cakacaka vakavuana* is about the transfer of energy from one state to another.’ As I have attempted to demonstrate in the preceding chapters the reproduction of successors involves *both* the transformation of *masi* into images and the reproduction of offspring. The names of the processes of folding, beating and marking the bark that I have
listed, the vulva-like shape and provenance of the banana-leaf stencil, all serve to underline these correspondences by drawing attention to both the sexual and sexed nature of the reproduction of social flesh. Growing new household members or, as Fijians put it, growing the lewe ni vale (lit. 'the flesh of the house') is therefore the combined work of the liga ni veisusu. (the hands of upbringing'). Whilst men contribute to the growth of progeny by providing kakana dina, or ‘true food’, of root crops - such as taro, yam and tapioca (food which is valued over and above ‘the fish relish’ that women provide) women are responsible for creating a subsidiary layer of ‘social flesh’ which embraces the household as a corporate entity and which likewise channels its growth along a ‘way’.

7.5. The microcosm and other macroscopic aggregates

The arrangement of domestic displays of imagery provides evidence of model of space-time that is distinct from the model of spatial conception introduced in the West by Renaissance humanism. In Fiji, the focal point for the units of measure ‘above’ and ‘below’ is not ego-centred, relative to the body of the ‘acting subject’ or viewer. Instead, the focal point of the above/below axis is the focus of reproduction itself.

Masi is not merely a material process, it is itself wrapped with a subsidiary layer of leaf-stencil imagery. I was told that the reason that masi was hung so high up on the wall was that it was ka vakaturaga ‘a chiefly thing’. Outside the house, on the space of the rara, the focal point for the above/below axis in yaqona ceremonies is the paramount chief, or the most senior representative of the vanua. In Chapter Four I suggested that the origin point of masi as an aggregate, macroscopic entity of mentally-stored patterned imagery was the Bauan Vunivalu. The focal point of another extended aggregate of mentally retained patterned imagery was the Tui Cakau. Likewise the origin point of the tapestry reproductions of The Last Supper brought home
by Fijian members of the UN peace-keeping force is the Holy Land, perceived as being Jesus Christ’s *vanua* (Natewans always stressed that their reproductions images came from there). The origin point of the multiple photographs of Queen Elizabeth II, Colonel Sitiveni Rabuka, Ratu Mara that I saw hung on display was clearly these people themselves.

Each of these personages/places can be seen to provide the focal points of different macroscopic corporate entities: the household; the Natewan *vanua*, the old *matanitu* (‘chiefly polities’) of Bau, and of Tovata or Cakaudrove; the British Crown; Christendom; and the new *matanitu* or government the Nationalist Fijian Taukei Party or the Fijian Alliance. *Masi* displays appear to be an attempt to bring all, or some, of these ‘imagined communities’, comprised of people and imagery, into alignment by making the house a microcosm comprised of layered and juxtaposed corporate entities. The logic of these arrangements is that these different aggregates become inter-linked conceptually by virtue of being associated with the ongoing work of material transformation required for *masi* production.

I have argued that the relationship between subjects and objects, in this case people and plants, can be understood in terms of the relationship between a corporate entity and a place which slowly unfolds in inter-generational time. It is perhaps not that difficult to see how the ongoing work of wrapping or forming a composite corporate entity, made with fresh layers of cloth, new wrappings of leaf imagery, new beards, new garlands, new blossoms and new badges and certificates of honour should be understood as a propitiatory offering which imitates the kind of growth or reproduction which it seeks to achieve. However, the way in which *masi* ‘carries and transfers’ from one state to the next is not merely by virtue of a material process but because it involves a conceptual, image-based process which enables certain relationships or perceptions (that are unrepresentable in themselves) to be drawn in the mind.
Map to show location of *masi* saplings and *pandanus* in Natewa

1. Vatulawa
2. New Maivalebasaga
3. Son of vasu levu from Somosomo
4. Mai Malima
5. Valenisau
6. Valeparisi
7. Ratu Epeli's grave
8. Seventh Day Adventists
9. Methodist church
10. Wainivatu
11. School
7.6. *Prefiguration Reduplication and the Changing Nature of Aggregates of Imagery*

It is well known that the doctrine of prefiguration was both a guiding concept and a literary device which prompted the selection of events and sayings which make up the narratives of the Christian Gospels. By showing how the events and sayings of the New Testament were foreshadowed, or anticipated, in the Old Testament, the Gospel authors hoped to demonstrate that Christ’s life had been planned from the beginning. Prefiguration by means of imagery, or the re-enactment of biblical scenes, was also a central facet of Renaissance piety and painting where it likewise served in the attempt to reconcile, or overcome, the experience of radical cultural disjunction, comprising a revolution in the representation of social space-time with a pre-existing set of beliefs.

Gell has recently argued that similar phenomena guided cultural change in the Pacific. Although the character, or more specifically the relative strength, of temporal relationships between images has been analysed by Gell under the rubric of style, it is clear that where the relationship between images is governed by a strong retrospective orientation a similar concept to that of prefiguration might occur.

Gell has recently argued that anthropologists’ belief that it is possible to make direct inferences concerning the relationship between style and other aspects of culture such as social organisation, economy, politics and religion have been misfounded. Instead, he has put forward the thesis that style is a semi-autonomous domain which emerges from the relationships between artefacts and other artefacts. For Gell, the aim of style analysis is to study such relationships. More specifically, style analysis must consist of the comparison of related forms to define the typical kinds of transformations which connect a group of artefacts, or images together (Gell, 1998:215).

For example, in his analysis of the elaboration of Marquesan decorative art, based upon the drawings of Marquesan tattoo motifs compiled
by Von den Steinen, Gell found that the morphological transformations of motifs were derived from making minuscule variations to motif shapes, their orientation, their symmetries, and so on (Von den Steinen, 1925; Gell, 1998:168-220). Regarded as a whole, the evidence of a plethora of minuscule variations meant that the elaboration of Marquesan art as an ensemble of artefacts and imagery, could be said to follow the ‘principle of least difference’. Gell argued that ‘the principle of least difference’ governing inter-motif relations corresponded to an equivalent ‘principle of least difference’ governing Marquesan social relations.

There are a number of reasons which made such a correspondence likely. First, Marquesan art, like many traditional and collective arts, was subject to stringent canons of acceptability connected to a belief in the ritual potency of specific forms or motifs. This canon became reinforced, more rule bound than ever before, with the break up of the traditional Marquesan social hierarchy, which made the threat of social dispersal and the dissolution of the ritual institutions immanent. Simultaneously, the collapse of the social hierarchy led to a situation of intense competition that was culturally elaborated, and contained through increasingly stringent rules of social interaction. He therefore argued that the elaboration of Marquesan decorative art corresponded to ‘the relative expression of difference within standard canonical forms that was occurring in social life more generally’ (Gell, 1998: 219).

In certain respects Fijian ritual polities are in an equivalent state of flux. Hierarchical systems of social organisation are in decline and the coherence of ritual institutions have been eroded. However, unlike the Marquesas, renewed social mobility in Fiji has meant that rural ritual centres are attached to a diaspora of wage earners. With these caveats in mind, I nevertheless believe that it is plausible to suggest that Gell’s description of stringent canons of acceptability governing the relationships between images and artefacts may also help us to understand the logic of the apparently idiosyncratic ensembles of
artefacts. Domestic displays indicate that the ongoing production of masi is necessary for modern Fijians because it has come to constitute a core image, or ground, against which recent trends and cultural developments, indicated by the superpositioning of layers of introduced artefacts, can be subjected to perceptual tests and assessed. If Christ’s supervision of the Last Supper was - and is - prefigured by the way in which chiefs supervise the distribution of yaqona and feasts so displays of photographs are themselves foreshadowed in both the past and present in the shadow-imagery of masi (cf. Toren 1999:45-67 for a more extended discussion of the conceptual association between the Last Supper and yaqona ceremony).

7.7 Changing Representations of Time

Given the preceding discussion about changing perceptions of the past it is interesting to note that so many displays of artefacts featured clocks at the centre of the display. In Natewa, clocks tend have square faces and most of them are either white, black or gold. I noticed that black clocks were hung against the darker sections of masi whilst the white ones were hung against the white panels described as ‘the interval of light’.

The most striking thing about these clocks was that none of them worked. When I asked why I was told that the batteries were too expensive - this seemed reasonable enough. However, since money for batteries was available for radios and even for ghetto blasters I was not entirely convinced. In the light of the above analysis I should like to suggest that rather than representing the passage of time, they seemed to represent a qualitatively different way of representing social time - one which many people living in Natewa felt uneasy with. People from Natewa who studied abroad often remarked that it was the abstractness and depersonalisation of the rigid temporal regimen associated with strict schedules which affronted them most since it relegated the importance of relationships. Masi imagery graphically represents
a cyclical continuum of growth, decay, movement and sacrifice that is based on social events and in this respect I was interested to see that the Seventh Day Adventist minister resident in Natewa had a clock with a 3D image of Christ's crucifixion upon it.

Whether *masi* exerts a conservative force on the formation of a ‘Fijian Way’ can be assessed through analysing the relative strength of the temporal relationships binding collections of artefacts together. According to Gell, the relative strength of interartefactual, temporal relationships can be measured in terms of identity. The strong, or highly conservative relationship, is one where successive layers of imagery, or on another level, successive *masi* displays, comes closest to copying or reduplicating a notional original (Gell, 1998: 234). But for conservatism to exert a social and political force the reproduction of imagery must also have a spatial component, reduplication, in order to engender shared or common perceptions of the cultural uniformity of the ‘Fijian Way’.

7.8 *Barkcloth as Indigenous Media*

Printed barkcloth may be regarded as a form of ‘indigenous media’ because it is designed for reproduction. Like other institutions of barkcloth found in the Pacific it is a print institution. In Fiji, the volume of *masi* production and the extent of its circulation has enabled it to sustain a slowly evolving model of reality amongst dispersed population scattered over a group of islands through a process of image saturation. *Masi* production therefore belies Walter Benjamin’s famous dictum that enhanced facilities for reproducing imagery is a defining characteristic of the emergence of modern mechanised society which breaks the aura, that elusive interweaving of space and time, which traditional art exerts by subjecting images to new perceptual tests.

Reduplication is also a feature of the relationships between images within a single display. A striking feature of many *masi* displays is that the photographic reproductions of political figures is so often reduplicated as a
series within a single display. In one house in Natewa there were no less than eight photographs of Colonel Rabuka. A precursor of the use of reduplication can be seen in Hocart’s photograph of the Tui Vuna’s house on the island of Taveuni taken in 1912. Although the backdrop is of gatubolabola, which I never saw displayed in Natewa, there is a clock, a Bauan fan and three identical black and white family photographs printed and framed as a continuous series which are positioned at the top of the cloth and hung at an angle (Hocart, 996 Fiji neg. 555771/2).

What the presence of clocks suggests is that although the old paths of the land have become overgrown and new flows of wealth are beginning to be established, certain members of the older generation of Natewan women remain unwilling to reject a vision of reality which sees the pulse of time in the growing and decaying things about them. ‘Fiji time’, or ‘black time’ (as women sometimes laughingly referred to it) is partly a social phenomenon - of sharing one’s time by waiting upon each other (veiqaravi) - partly a question of temporal orientation (‘facing the past’) and it is also derived from a specific way of perceiving how sociality is mediated by the material environment.

In undergoing conversion Natewans have been forced to reconcile rival conceptions of immortality or continuity. The concept of world-rejecting immortality, instantiated on earth in the static preservation of the past in objects, has been placed in tension with a more world-embracing model of continuity. These rival models of continuity involve a profoundly different relationship to the environment, and a specific kind of material cultural forms. Rather than seeing continuity as eternity on earth manifested in stasis and in the fixed appearance of things displays of barkcloth intimate that Natewans find continuity by endlessly reworking and reconfiguring the past and by showing the ways in which it prefigures, or anticipates, the present.

I have attempted to demonstrate that masi displays in Natewa provide an intimation of a specific vision of reality and of the reproduction of kin
relations in time. These displays imply that new progeny and Christendom itself are attributes of the roots of the *vanua* because they are fed from within by an inherent creative impulse which is carried and transferred by means of the growth, renewal and extension of the flesh of the house, the configuration of tree sap into pattern and the superimposition of photographs of leaders and of kin.

7.9. Spatial Expansion: Natewa Abroad

In contemporary Fiji the use of *masi* as a backdrop for displays of photographs appears to be integrating an increasingly widespread or attenuated population. Many of the houses of urban based Natewans have *masi* displays on the wall. Houses of Natewans who have migrated further afield also featured Natewan *masi*. Di Eta’s house, on the outskirts of Sydney, is decorated with a length of Natewan *masi*. Photographs I saw of the houses of Natewans who had emigrated to America, or to other urban centres in the South Pacific also featured *masi* displays on the wall. *Masi* has come to be used as a backdrop for displays of photographs in the neighbouring districts of Navatu and Tunuloa, places where *masi* was not produced as an *i yau ni vanua* in the past.

The expansion of the use of *masi* to these new areas can partially be explained by the fact that the cloth has become a standardised background which has come to play an important role in the formation of Fijian identity. As well as being used as a background for photographs of political leaders in rural Natewan houses *masi* is also used as a background for political gatherings and for photographs of political leaders reprinted in both the national and the local press. The Fijian Parliament chamber has a large piece of *masi* hung upon the upper wall. I was told that the Ministry of Fijian Affairs had a special division for commissioning and storing *masi* for use as a backdrop at political gatherings and official occasions. According to Inese Koroi, an expert *masi* maker who works at the Fijian Institute of Language and Culture, this *masi* is commissioned
from Vatulele, the principle centre for the production of *masi* for the tourist market.

Today *masi* is instrumental in mediating relationships within and between *vanua*, and within and between different *matanitu*. It also mediates new interpretations of the state, understood as the Fijian administration or the sovereign democratic republic of Fiji. These different perceptions of the *matanitu* are not homogenous, but they continue to coexist and interpenetrate one another. Many Fijians from the central and eastern part of the island periphery still think of themselves as being members of a *matanitu* (Kubuna, Burebasaga, Tovata, Verata), or a specific *vanua* (e.g. Natewa). The relationships that these identities entail (e.g. joking behaviour between members of a *vanua* who have a *tauvu* relationship) have become increasingly marked due to renewed social mobility and urban experience.

Barkcloth integrates many of these layers of identity. It has come to be used as a generic background standing for pan-Fijian identity as well as marking affiliation to regional *matanitu* or *vanua*. A photograph of a political gathering in Sydney for the former leader of the Fijian Labour party, Dr Bavadra, leader from the Western Division of Viti Levu (an area of Fiji that was not historically incorporated within *masi* or *gatu* complexes) is indicative of the way in which *masi* has come to stand for Fijian culture in this wider sense. Conversely, the cover photograph of the installation of the Tui Cakau in one of the Fijian newspapers, *Na Lalaika* shows how the more traditional use of *gatu* in the reproduction of distinct ritual polities has begun to permeate national consciousness through the wider reproduction of imagery in the press.

Tongan-style barkcloth, so important in baptisms and burial ceremonies, and for that reason quite often featured in domestic displays of barkcloth, is noticeably absent from both genres of political photographs. This is in marked opposition to earlier, 19th century photographs of Fijian paramounts such as Cakobau who were often photographed wearing Tongan-
style cloth possibly as a sign of their conversion to Christianity. There is a correspondence in time (1960-1985) between four phenomena: the rapid development of a cottage industry for the production of masi souvenirs in Lau and Vatulele; the decline of the manufacture of Tongan-style cloth in the Fijian archipelago; the achievement of Fijian political independence from Britain; and the appropriation of new cloths, the tapestries of The Last Supper, from the Lebanon.

7.10 Growing Towards the Future: Indian-Fijian Studio Photographs

I have already argued that photographs and masi are both technically and conceptually similar. A photograph and a length of masi are indexical symbols: literal extensions or emanations of the person like shadows, or hair, or skin (Gell, 1998:15)

Photographs in visual displays divide into different categories. Older photographs, dating from the 1960s and 1970s are in black and white. More recent photographs dating, from 1980s and 1990s are in colour. Coloured photos divide into five main types: photos of sons who have joined the Fijian army; studio photographs of Natewans living in town or abroad; photos of Natewans receiving degrees; and group photos of sports teams and training courses.

It was only after I had returned from the field and was looking at my photographs of the photographs on masi displays that I began to pay attention to the composition of portraits of urban-based Natewans taken in Indo-Fijian photographic studios. Indo-Fijian studio photographs show Natewans in informal urban dress as opposed to formal church attire. The images are highly generic. Figures are set against painted or photographic backdrops of landscapes or gardens taken or adapted from stills of Bollywood movies - a park full of tulips in the snow, a painted backdrop of the Taj Mahal- the standard settings for the romantic or religious encounters for which the genre is famous.
Others feature a brightly coloured mock-up of the typical interior of a Fijian house. According to Chris Pinney, the former are the standard stock-in-trade backdrops which are used by Indian studio photographers for making portraits of the Indian diaspora the world over.

Indian Fijian photographs resemble *masi* in so far as they enable a unified conception of imaginary space derived from standard background settings. Both have come to integrate a diaspora of wage earners. A unified conception of imaginary space became ever more important to the Indo-Fijian community in the wake of waves of outmigration to Canada, Australia and Auckland following the political coups led by Rabuka to oust the predominantly Indian party Labour Party in 1986 and 1987.

Mohini Chandra is an artist, now resident in London, who has studied the way in which Indo-Fijian families have circulated photographs in order to maintain a degree of integration across the vast expanse of the Pacific. There appear to be many similarities in the way in which both groups treat these photographs, dressing them in garlands and hanging them high up on the wall. Surprisingly, the painted backdrops which Indo-Fijians prefer are very different. Chandra found that Indo-Fijians resident in Suva send photographs of their children shot against a painted Fijian landscape - a view from the beach of a tropical island reminiscent of fifties films from Hollywood - to their relatives living abroad (Chandra, personal communication). The use of studio photographs by both groups may therefore be seen as a classic example of cultural inversion. Whilst ethnic Fijians prefer backdrops of archetypically Indian settings from Hindi movies Indo-Fijians reminded relatives of their attachment to Fiji. This example of cultural inversion is also significant because it points to indigenous Fijians half-humourous attempts to encompass and calibrate difference - and association in order to arrive at new conceptions of Fijian, or national identity.
It has been said that, in spite of the coups that took place just over a decade ago, and the wave of migration that occurred in their wake, Fiji may be favourably compared to other countries such as Sri Lanka, where the aggressive construction of identity is an oppositional practice that is grounded in the experience of conflict. Trying to explain why Fiji has not collapsed into a state of violence certain political commentators, such as Bob Norton, have argued that the segregation of ethnic Fijian and Indo-Fijian cultural life has been a positive thing which has enabled members of both groups to experience feelings of value and worth in a peaceful, non-competitive and non-antagonistic manner.

The use of Indian studio photographs has excited my attention the lack of national symbols and media compared to the popularity of the specialist Fijian and Hindi press, specialist radio programmes and so on. A celebration of pan-Fijian identity, comprised of overlapping regional differences can also be found in the Fijian souvenirs that Natewan’s liked to hang alongside photographs of masi displays, such as birds made from pandanus, miniature baskets, fans and beads.

On the island where I was working, the old agricultural boundaries established under the colonial regime continued to make their presence felt. The island was broadly divided between Indo-Fijian sugar cane farmers living in the dry plains to the north and the coconut plantations and Fijian villages on the south, although both populations were more mixed than this crude distinction implies a certain degree of cultural segregation remained apparent. As if to demonstrate this difference the bus crossing the hills between one side of the island and the other would switch from playing Fijian calypso music to Hindi pop to indicate as if to mark an invisible boundary.

However, contact between Indo-Fijians and ethnic Fijians has seen a marked increase in recent years, both as a result of outmigration to town and the growth of an international market for kava (yaqona), which has become a primary source of cash for rural Natewans. As a result, the past decade has been
marked by the growth of business and trade between the two groups. In the region where I was working, for example, village boys have started to sell their yaqona themselves to cane farmers and urban dwellers in the Labasa market, for the past two or three years. Simultaneously, the outmigration of rural Fijians to Fijian urban centres has brought the two communities into far closer proximity than before.

7.11 Remittances

Ritual polities or vanua now do not merely experience the loss of members through marriage or death since growing numbers of children and adults have left the vanua in search of education and employment. Some take up residence in Fiji’s urban centres; a few others travel further away still, to Sydney, Auckland, America and even Japan. Since the 1960s, large numbers of Natewans from the villages of Natewa, Vusa and Dawa have migrated to the Fijian urban centres, and a few members from Natewa have traveled further still to study in New Zealand, Sydney and London and Kyoto. In the village of Vusa they estimated that over seventy per cent of their village was living outside the vanua. Some boys were selected to stay behind in order that they might, as one woman put it maroroya na i yavu (lit. maintain the ancestral house foundations) and maroya na i tavi vakavuvale (lit. maintain the duties to the household ancestors).

It is harder for members of satellite villages to secure educational funding than for the members of chiefly household. But increasingly education has become a common goal. When, the village of Buca began to suffer from overcrowding, the local chief, the Tui Kama, took to wearing a sweatshirt from the University of California, as if to signal a new kind of knowledge and a way forward. The village of Vusasivo was plunged into crisis when disaffected youth began to violate traditional codes of respect accorded to the head of the
paramount chief by wearing baseball caps in the village and tattooing messages of protest on their bodies.

7.12 Changes in Centre Periphery Relations

It has been seen that in the past the circulation of offerings or *i yau* followed a number of different paths. By the time that I came to do my field work many of the ‘paths of the woman’ had become ‘overgrown’ and the use of barkcloth to ‘turn’ the flow of offerings towards the principal chiefly centres of Bau and Somosomo had largely fallen into decline. Instead, *masi* and photographs had became a means for growing new branches from ancestral lineages. Photographs of kin are classified as *taba* (‘teams’ or ‘sides’). Before, intermarriage and the exchange of sacrifices was the essential feature of the origin of relationship between branches called *veitabani* (see Chapter 4). The application of this term to photographs indicates how progeny and blood relatives have come to be seen as exchange partners in a new economy of sacrifice which originates from avoiding marriage rites (see Hocart, 1952: 43).

With the decline of the old pivots of federation rural households and the houses of their offspring living in other urban centres have become the twin compass points of a new economy of devotion in which the exchange of cash and remembrances (photographs and *masi*) plays an integral part. Outmigration and employment has begun to alter the gender distinction between staying and leaving - both Natewan women and men are encouraged to be educated and find work elsewhere and both are increasingly expected to send funds home. By sidestepping marriage rites, which formerly effected genealogical decomposition in the interests of political security, women who do migrate to other parts to find work or to accompany working husbands now maintain their affiliation with their natal *vanua* and natal kin. Now the ongoing allegiance of both sons and
daughters is expressed by sending remittances home. Their allegiance may be maintained by their mothers in the work that they do on their behalf: mounting *masi* displays every Christmas in time for the annual visit of offspring; preparing *masi* for life-cycle ceremonies; and sending *masi* ‘remembrances’ or ‘things for thinking with’ to remind their children of the work of the *liga ni veisusu* which has made them what they are.

Rural Natewans have become increasingly dependent on cash donations from their offspring to maintain and develop their houses, or for the school fees. However, the largest unit for pooling cash donations was the *tokatoka*, and never the *mataqali*. In other cases only the recent progeny of a single household was involved.

These new forms of endogamous expansion were in an early phase of its development between 1995-1997. The migration of Natewan-born women in search of work is a recent phenomenon: most working women are in their forties. How the remittance economy will shape the future allocation of usufruct has yet to be decided. However, between 1995-1997 two Natewan women living in Sydney attempted secure land leases to ensure their progeny some right of access to Natewan land. It seemed significant when one of them said to me, ‘I have heard that in Suva they have started to say that money has become the new chief.’

Changes in centre periphery relations are also having an impact upon the traditional Fijian concept of mutual attendance (*veigaravi*) between clans. These changes are becoming manifest in the fragmentation of village and clan-based settlements. In Natewa, *turaga* who return to the village after working elsewhere have begun to build farmsteads on their *kovukovu* plots or *mataqali* land, away from the incessant obligations of village life, so that as one man expressed it, ‘I can use my time as I want’. For the younger generation also, living on a farmstead outside the village was a dream that they longed to be able to realise.
As a result of renewed social mobility the focal points of ritual have begun to alter, leading to a change in centre periphery relations. Chiefs, once the focal point of life-cycle rites had taken up residence in town and, behind their backs, they were sometimes pejoratively called tamata yasa (absentees). But, with the decline of solevu in the chiefly capitals a new ritual economy has come into being whose principle aim is to remobilise the co-operative efforts of the village in its broadest sense: embracing residents and non-residents alike. Soli or fund-raising events for the construction of new churches occur at Christmas, at a time when urban-based progeny are present, and, they also hinge upon the transaction of masi and cash.

7.13 Natewa’s Christmas Fundraising

Church attendance was a focal point of many people’s lives in Natewa. Many people spent as much as seven hours in church on a Sunday. In the Methodist church in Natewa, the morning would be devoted to long extempore prayers for the vanua as well as singing by the choir, but the highlight of the morning was the presentation of the soli or collection. The Eucharist was performed once or twice a year at the end of the service. A sort of cherryade was put in small medicine glasses to represent the wine. Many people spoke to me about their intense experiences of conversion or rather the confirmation of their faith and the dramatic reorientation of their lives that these experiences occasioned. But the church also served an important social and political role. The church was supplanting vakavanua ceremonial for maintaining connections in the vanua. Church meetings for the youth, the men and the women during the week provided important occasions for people in different villages to foregather to worship and to enjoy a meal together.

Politics and religion have always been intermeshed in Fiji. They continue to be so today, though rivalries are expressed through the affiliation to different denominations of the church and through building new churches.
Following the success of the village of Vusa’s church fundraising in 1995, it was decided that the village of Natewa should mount its own fundraising the following Christmas. It was proposed that the new village church should be Methodist. Natewa already had a Methodist church, built of wood in the 1950s but it only seated seventy. The new concrete church in Vusa had a capacity of a hundred; worse still, the village of Drekeniwi, just eight miles to the West in the district of Navatu, had recently built an even larger church. It was felt that unless Natewans responded in kind they would no longer be able to secure their position as principal village of the Methodist district on the peninsular.

When it came to participation in the soli I noticed that even household members who were affiliated to different church denominations also took part. When I asked why, they said ‘The soli is for the vanua.’ Nevertheless, although this was said to be an event ‘for the vanua’, I noticed that only the immediate blood relatives of the Natewan houses took part and the customary protocol, vakavanua connections interlinking Natewa to satellite villages were not used at all.

The weeks leading up to the Christmas soli was a time of frenetic masi production. Masi had to be made for household displays, for the ceremonies to mark the return of offspring, for the school fundraising as well as for the church soli itself. Women devoted several days to learning and practicing the meke for the fundraising event. Yaqona was pulled and dried. At Christmas time itself, this frenetic activity reached a new pitch. As soon as urban based relatives arrived they were mobilised into pulling and preparing root crops or fishing, cooking and washing by day and drinking and talking late into the night. Most had only a couple of hours’ sleep a night.

On Christmas Day itself each extended household held a great feast. On Boxing Day a second feast was prepared for the soli. Then the cash donations were gathered. First the family members of the main chiefly yavu: Vatuwala, Yautibi, Udu, Parisi, Nukumasia etc. made their cash donations to the
head of their household (I was told that this was where the real competition took place). Then each household processed to the ceremonial ground and the envoy announced the total sum of cash collected. In return for these donations women from the village performed traditional meke in front of the assembled urbanites. As they performed the dancers were showered with talcum powder, dollar bills were slipped behind their ears, sweets placed in their mouths and necklaces and garlands were placed round their necks.

The female dancers were to have been dressed in masi which would later have been handed over to the principle donors but they were caught in a downpour and so the masi was removed in case it should spoil. The ‘weaver of the dance’ (bola ni meke) was the wife of the new Maivalebasaga, the new head of the Bauan faction. Several Natewan meke were performed. One described the mobilisation of the vanua to produce long lengths of Tongan-style tapa, coconut oil and sinnet rope required for vakamisanari offerings (the church tithe imposed during the period of conversion). Another described the overthrow of Verata. The final meke was about the woman from Cakaudrove who usurped the Vunivalu’s ritual prerogative (see Chapter four). Then Ratu Gasagasa, recently entitled Maivalebasaga, denoting his appointment as head of Valelevu the Bauan faction in Natewa, made a speech. He had recently been appointed as the lay head of the methodist circuit and had taken control of the church fundraising and by virtue of being nominated as Mai Valebasaga he had also become the new pretender to the title of Vunivalu. His speech was as follows:

Veikeimuni na wekai keimani vaka dra ena vanua o Sovatabua.
Affines and blood relatives of the vanua of The Basket of Tabua.
Sa ka dokai sara vei au ena mataka siga ni kua,
I am honoured to make a speech of welcome and thanks on behalf of the meutuake tukina ena vukuna na turaga na Vunivalu, turaga mai Dreketi, Sauvou,
Vunivalu, of From Dreketi and the New Sau,
kei ira na turaga e na dabeca tiko na loma ni noda vanua.
whose lords dwell in the place of the warriors at the heart of our vanua...

*Eda sa yacova tiko mai nikua mai na 26 Tiseba,*

Now we have reached the 26th of December

*ia e na vinakati me raici lesu tale mada na gauna*

it seems fitting to look back to the time

*a bocini kina mai tuvatuva eda sarava,*

we were developing (*boci* = uncircumcised) the foundations of

*ka raica tu ena siga ni kua.*

*[the event] that you see here today.*

*E dua na gauna dede sa dua na gauna yawa ka bocini kina.*

This *[event] was developed in the distant past: it has been a long time growing

*eda sega ni kila ni vako na kena roka,*

at the time it *[the event] was first planned it was not known what its colours would be.

*eda sega ni kila ni vako na kenai rairai*

No one knew what this *[event] would look like...

*la, nida sa mai sotava ena siga ni kua,*

Now that we have reached today

*eda raica ni sa i koya beka oqo na lewa ni kalo ena vanua o Sovatabua*

we see God’s plan for the *vanua* of the Basket of Whales’ Teeth.

*E raica ni soqo mai ena bogi,*

Since last night’s gathering

*sobuta tu a vanua oqo a uca me yacova mai na gauna oqo.*

rain has poured down upon the *vanua* up until the present time.

*Nida raica lesu tale na matai ni siga ka sucu kina*

When we look back to that first morning when Christ was born

*Jisu era biuta kina na nodra vanua na duidui mataqali,*

we see that many different clans

*duidui tamata, duidui roka*

and different peoples of different hue left their lands

*era tovolea yaco vata mai na vanua ka sucu kina o Jisu.*

to come to the *vanua* where Christ was born.

*Nida donua a siga ni sucu oqo sa via kena i balebale talega*

Truly the meaning of this Christmas is that you

*vei keda sa kauta tale ga mai na draki ni vanua o Sovatabua.*

brought the weather of the many *vanua* in which you dwell to the *vanua* of The Basket of Whales’ Teeth.

*na duidui ni vanua eda tu kina*

Different *vanua* are gathered here,
duidui tale ga na vanua eda vakawati kina
we have married into different vanua,
duidui tale ga na vanua eda cakacaka a kina.
we work in different vanua.

Ka so tale ga vei keda sa qai matai ni gauna me butuka mai kina na noda vanua
It will be the first time that many of you set foot on the soil of your vanua.

Au vakabauta ni sai koya qa e dua na i naki levu ni nona sucu na Karisito,
I believe that the true purpose of Christ's birth was

meda kauti keda vata mai ena vanua eda vola kawa bula kina,
to bring us back together in the vanua where we are registered in The Book of Living Genealogies

meda mai volai meda mai raica.
in order that we should register our names and to see the vanua.

E sega nida volai wale ga se raica sa tu tale ga
But it is not that we just come to look and to register we also

nai tavi se colacola e dodonu meda colata ena noda vanua.
have our duties [to undertake] in order to set right the wrongs of our vanua.

Ia, ena siga ni kua sa baleti keda kei na soqo eda sa mai qarava ni kua
Today, it is because of us that we gather together, our mutual attendance

sa noda kalou, ka noda i tavi sa tu ena usuusu ni domoda.
is our God, since our duty stems from the heat of our [mutual] response.

Na vanua o Sovatabua, se vanua o Natewa, eda sa kena dra eda sa kiea tamata
Vanua of the Basket of Tabua, in other words, vanua of Natewa, we are your blood, we are your people,

sa duidui talega vanua eda bula kina.
[but] we are dwelling in different lands.

Ia nida raica lesu tale na vanua o Sovatabua

When you look back to the land of the Basket of Tabua before
nida raica vei ira na tamata taumada na kena marorio nodra duavata
you will see how the people before us preserved their staying together as a single people.

sa dua ga na domo.
They only heard one voice.

Ia ni kua ni sa yaco na bula veisau
Today, now that life has changed,

eda raica sa levu na ka sa mai tawasei keda kina.
we find that there are many things to separate us.

Sa mai tawasei keda na veivanua eda tu kina, matanitu, yasana.
The land divides us, the *matanitu* divide us, the provincial districts divide us.

*Ia ni kua sa mai tawasei keda tale ga na lotu.*

Today even the church divides us.

*Sa sega ni kena i balebale ni na tawasei tale ga na noda vanua,*

That does not mean that our *vanua*

*noda dra, noda veivekaneni kei na vanua eda vola kawa bula kina*

our blood, our kin, the place in which register our names divides us.

*Sa vakavinavinaka ni sa rogo na domo ni vanua o Sovatabua,*

We thank you for attending to the call of the *vanua* of Sovatabua,

*na domodratou na turoga me mai kemuni e dua nai yau*

the call of the chief for you to bring *i yau*

*me mai Tara cake kina na vale ni kalou ena noda vanua.*

so that we may build up a house for God in our *vanua* ...

*E marautaka tiko o Sovatabua na siga ni kua*

Sovatabua is joyful today

*baleta ni tauyavutaki kina e dua na yavu vinaka*

because we will use these iyau fittingly to build a true and enduring yavu for God’s church.

*ka vakadeitaki keda vua na kalou.*

*E raica na gogodre eda mai qaravi ena siga ni kua*

See, the desire which we are attending to today

*e sega ni keitou bucina wale ga na taba tamata keitou sa mai bula ogo.*

does not stem [from our actions] but from the people who lived here before.

*Era bucina na taba tamata era sa yali yani.*

It stems from our forebears before they were lost

*Sa yali o ira na tubuda,*

Our grandparents are lost to us.

*Sa yali o ira na tamata eda sa bula donua na taba tamata eda sa bula ogo.*

The people who dwelt here, they who dwelt fittingly are absent - are lost to our sight.

*Sai koya ogo na taba tamata se mata ni bika*

That side of people, that gathering of faces

*sa lesia na kalou meda vaka duria kina e dua na nona vale*

raised themselves up by declaring that a house should be built for God,

*Au kila ni na kau tani na duidui kau tani na vakasama eda lomavata kina,*

I know that our differences in thinking and in attitude will be put aside.

*meda tu vata kina,*

We must all work together, as one,

*meda cakacaka taki, me kakua ni basika na duidui,*
to prevent our differences from rising to the surface

se veidre vaka bibi ena i naki eda sa bucina e daidai.

to upset our aims today.

Eda sarava na noda vanua,

When we see our vanua

Sa vua na vuata ni vanua, nai ika ni waitui, na noda vanua sa sautu

we see it flourishes with fruit, [we see] fish in the sea, our land is flourishing.

Sa dua bulu ga nai naki ni noda sota ena siga nikua,

That is the purpose of our gathering together today

meda mai tiko vata, meda veilomani, me rawa ni tara cake kina na noda vanua,

that we may dwell together, and build up our land out of our mutual love

me vakacerevuci kina na noda vanua kei na noda kalou.

so that God's name may be glorified in our land,

Ni sa tiko na turoga kei na marama, na turoga na talatala qase,

where the chiefs and the ladies, the retired Methodist minister

na masi ni vanua o Sovatabua.

and the masi of the Basket of Tabua dwell together.

Following the speeches bundles of masi and coconut oil (waliwali) were distributed to the donors.

7.14 Analysis of the Fundraising.

There is a formal correspondence between the layering of performances and speeches at ceremonies such as this church fundraising and the layering of photographs and masi on the wall. Both use layering to suggest that a new economy of devotion is an outgrowth from the sacrificial economy of the past. However, exchanges of vakamanuni and the church soli I witnessed were themselves inter-linked phenomena in so far as the church fundraising was an appeal to reinvigorate the practice of mutual attendance through a co-operative project for the vanua.

However, the soli also reveals another dimension of masi itself. I you are the vanua in so much as they are the instruments which sanction authority and orchestrate the flow of wealth. The soli was a clear attempt to assert and
demonstrate authority over these ritual instruments and forms of wealth. Notice that Ratu Gasagasa refers to Natewa as Sovatabua ('The Land of the Basket of Tabua') and to the Natewan chiefs as masi. He claims that it is the combined offerings of i yau, in this case masi and cash which will be used to build a foundation for the new church. But for the rain the dancers were to have been dressed in masi. The final meke which the women performed referred to the danger brought to Natewa by a Lady from Somosomo. By layering the performance in this way Ratu Gasagasa posits that masi has a vital contemporary role to play in an exchange of sacrifices which will create a new pivot for an economy of devotion in Natewa itself.

The Christmas soli occurred during the last couple of months that I spent in Natewa. It helped me to see how descendants from Bau had come to redeploy masi in the present day. In the house of Mai Yautibi, the leader of the faction who claimed descent from Verata, masi was grown but only photographs of children receiving degrees and laughing in Suva could be seen on the walls. Like many things in Natewa, the absence of printed masi seemed to represent the dynamic relation between the past and the future.
Figure 32 Sacrificial images of time
Figure 34 Finding similarities? Masi and Indo-Fijian studio photographs.
Figure 33 Masi display in Buca
Figure 35 How *masi* displays portray different levels of corporate identity
Kavoro na Lotu Wesele

Buli na turaga Tui Cakau

Fig 36 Barkcloth in the newspapers
8 Conclusion

8.1 Barkcloth, Sacrifice and Endogamous Expansion

The aim of this thesis has been to account for the ongoing production of barkcloth in Natewa. By developing a twin perspective on the use of barkcloth in pre and post colonial Fiji I have shown that the deployment of barkcloth in life-cycle rites, fundraisings and domestic displays reveals that a multi-layered economy of sacrificial imagery has come to encompass new modes of belief and new kinds of wealth.

I have advanced an hypothesis to account for the particular distribution of the 'masi' complex in the Fijian archipelago. This hypothesis was developed by integrating contemporary fieldwork data, oral historical accounts of 'masi' production and secondary historical sources. There are four main aspects of my data which led me to develop an hypothesis regarding the role played by 'masi' in the endogamous expansion of the Bauan 'matanitu'.

1) Participant observation revealed that barkcloth production is perceived as a form of sacrificial action. Visual analysis of the formal qualities of named stencil motifs on lengths of 'masi' around the bodies of persons revealed a recurrent theme of envelopment played out in positive and negative imagery.

2) Research into both the contemporary and historical use of stencils in the 'masi' and 'gatu' complexes intimated that the knowledge of patterning, and of the names of motifs carried by reproductive wealth was controlled by incoming women of rank. Although the knowledge of stencil production had been restricted the 'masi' complex was shown to be widely distributed.

3) Analysis of contemporary life-cycle rites revealed that people are grown through the collaborative effort and sacrificial work performed by the 'hands
of upbringing’. The analysis of life-cycle rites provided some indication of the way in which identification with the *vanua* became part of people’s experience as a result of a sequence of ritual actions.

4) Identification between people and the *vanua* clarified the use of *masi* in rites of divestment at the ceremonies of ‘unfolding’. The speech recorded at rites intimated that the definitive re-dedication of the loyalties of the main female protagonist was connected to the act of divesting her body of its *masi*. By revealing how displays of cloth wealth, presented at rites of unfolding and at burial, formed an integrated sequence of images it was possible to suggest that rites of divestment intimated processes of physical decomposition.

Based upon these four aspects of my fieldwork data I have developed a hypothetical model which advances a fresh perspective on the tactical expansion of the Bauan *matanitu*. It is evident that this hypothesis is based upon my own conjecture, my interpretation of the circumstantial evidence as well as my reading of secondary historical sources. What I hope to have shown is that if one sees *i ya u* as concomitant parts of ritual-cum-political organisation and as historical phenomena it is possible to raise new questions for research about the way in which kinship may effect historical change. Material culture can therefore provide data which helps to raise questions about the way in which innovation in kinship relations occurs.

In this thesis I have described the expansion of *matanitu* over Vanua Levu as a series of overlapping layers. I have described the expansion of the Veratan polity as the underlying layer. I have shown that the system for conveying first fruit sacrifices which integrated the Veratan polity became fragmented, leading to competitive fighting between brothers. Hocart’s work was used to suggest that the fragmentation of the Veratan polity eventually led to the establishment of local prosperity cults. The expansion and decline of Verata created the geopolitical milieu into which the Bauan’s wished to expand.
Their tactics had to respond to these circumstances, to their lack of personnel, which was, in turn, due to their relationship to the Ratu of Verata via the sister’s son.

I have therefore sketched out how masi might have been carried by Bauan women of rank. By ‘carrying and transferring’ systems of pattern to the outlying territories Bauan women may have played a strategic role in the integration of the Bauan polity. Following Harrison the masi complex can be seen as a pragmatic response to a situation of war which meant that groups had to be foregrounded from a network of competing allegiances. Paradoxically the transposition of sacrificial acts of decomposition from death to life by means of masi may have developed in response to many the features of kinship which enabled the expansion of the masi complex.

I have suggested that the masi complex allowed simulacra of flesh to be figuratively consumed, or encompassed, by the Bauan paramount. Contemporary fieldwork observation shows that Somosomo developed an alternative sacrificial complex to compete with Bau. Leaf stencils were also used to represent the intention of the Tui Cakau in peripheral vanua. Yet whereas the Bauan masi complex appears to have encouraged the centrifugal flow of offerings along newly formed paths towards the person of the paramount Somosomo appears to have developed a centripetal system for multiply representing the paramount’s head. Mats originating from Somosomo were used to create miniaturised models of the vanua in domestic space. I have suggested that successive arrangements of mat images enabled death to be seen as a sacrificial act which was conceptually encompassed by the polity in the shape of women’s i yau.

Contemporary observation of the layering of ritual sequences in rites which mark the return of Natewan’s progeny shows that a history of conversion has repeatedly altered the orientation and character of kinship through time. Yet how these changes are calibrated varies from vanua to vanua, from
household to household and from person to person. I suggest that it is these variations which give life-cycle rites such vital role in the contemporary negotiation of identity in Fiji today.

Changes in centre periphery relations brought about by the decline of the official system of alliances and occasioned by the colonial model of land tenure have given masi a new role in post-independence Natewa. However this new role can be shown to be logically consistent with the deployment of masi in the past. Endogamous expansion from Natewa is now achieved by side-stepping the difficult marital obligations which would require women and their progeny to transfer their allegiance elsewhere. In effect, the ongoing practice of elopement may be seen as a pragmatic response to the changing circumstances occasioned by out migration to urban centres and the concomitant rise of the number of Natewans in full-time paid employment.

Urban life has presented Natewan’s living in town with many new claims for their time as well as their financial resources. The circulation of masi to Natewan’s living in town serves to remind them of the sacrifice and effort that have made them what they are, as well as to commemorate the sacrifice and effort that has gone into the making of Natewa through time. Masi may therefore be seen as a reminder which prompts people to seek atonement and to fulfill their obligations. Thus, since the contemporary circulation of masi serves to attract, or to divert, the resources of urban-based Natewan’s back to vanua, masi has become necessary to the endogamous expansion of households and families in Natewa today. The transaction of sacrifices at church fundraisings is now largely conducted between Natewans themselves. Nevertheless, these fundraisings show that the reproduction of resources which make up the body politic still requires reworking, or rebuilding, a focus, or pivot, for a moral economy of devotion.
Anthropological research has established that the relationship between the past and the present is very dynamic in Fiji, as in other parts of Oceania. In addition I have shown that, far from being outmoded, barkcloth imagery plays a central role in integrating the fragmentary and often contradictory or disjunctive nature of contemporary experience, enabling the dynamic renegotiation of social relations between people in the present day. I have shown that the growth, or renewal, of household members involves the collaborative efforts of women and men. However, the analysis of the composition of cloth images in the interior of houses shows that women's participation in life-cycle rites establishes another dimension to the regeneration of life within household space.

Throughout Fiji's recent history tree imagery has been used to reconfigure the body politic by enabling sacrificial images of death to be redeployed in different ways. All of these representations have enjoyed a degree of influence over social organisation just as they have been adapted and contested over time. Yet it seems revealing that the endless reworking the past in the form of *masi* helps to sustain a spatial and temporal orientation to the world in spite of these changes. This spatial and temporal orientation is a corollary of the system of sacrifice which is intrinsic to life-cycle practices in Natewa today. The ongoing phenomenon of elopement becomes readily understandable when one appreciates the role of *masi* in the formation of the body politic.

What I hope to have demonstrated is that detailed analysis of the material, visual and technical character of artefacts and imagery can show how contemporary relationships are negotiated with reference to a broader social and temporal frame. Yet objects which bring the past into the present are not always preserved as heirlooms. I have attempted to convey how relationships between objects that are endlessly reworked and reproduced enables the
transformation of the body politic to be grasped imaginatively. Style analysis enables notoriously slippery subjects such as cultural interaction or appropriation to achieve greater focus and definition. As the composition of all Fijian life-cycle rites shows the deployment of artefacts and imagery provides an all-important dimension for understanding the implications of what is said.

Sacrifice cannot be achieved by words alone. As Kantorowicz work revealed sacrificial imagery often involves exceptionally condensed representations of social space-time. Sacrificial images have an instrumental part to play in social interaction because they enable social entities such as the body politic to be imagined, and imaginatively transformed. What this ethnography has attempted to demonstrate is that ethnography which makes material culture its focus has the potential to reveal how historically specific and varied representations of sacrifice can contribute to distinct forms of historical consciousness. In turn, this can reveal what may be at stake in reaching some understanding of other people’s points of view.
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