

# Epilogue: Sinuous Objects, Sensuous Bodies: Revaluing 'Women's Wealth' Across Time and Place

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*Sinuous* – 'having many twists and turns, moving and bending in a smooth and attractive way'.

(Merriam Webster Dictionary)

This volume, like the objects of its study, might be read as sinuous. The authors evoke the sensuous processes of Pacific women's creative labour: pandanus being stripped, bleached and softened, plaited into mats or baskets; spun fibres from barks or forest vines, and ochres from the bush or string in vibrant, variegated hues from the store, looped into pliable bags to carry food, babies and other precious things; the bark of the paper mulberry or breadfruit tree made supple with beating and pounding, felted, patterned, dyed or painted; coils of clay twisted in spirals and fired to create fine, hard vessels; banana leaves, cut, scraped on incised boards, bleached in the sun and bundled; banana fibres tied and dyed to form colourful, multi-layered skirts; bolts of cloth fashioned into skirts reinscribing the moving arc of swaying 'grass skirts'; quilts crocheted or sewn with patchworks of cloth, sometimes layered with stuffing, appliqué and embroidery. Cloth artfully draping, protecting and transforming moving bodies; enormous bundles of leaves, baskets, tapa or textiles being exchanged in the complex twists and turns of gifting across time and place; cloth—pandanus, tapa, calico—wrapped around the dead lying still on their last winding journey to the other side.

As well as evoking the sinuous materiality of these different objects and their intimate relation to sensuous, gendered bodies, the editors and authors of this volume trace a more abstract sinuosity in the movement of these things through time and place; they coil through different regimes of value, between what has been dubbed ‘mutuality and the market’ (Horan this volume), often but not always in a ‘smooth and attractive way’. The eight chapters in this volume trace winding paths across the contemporary Pacific, from the Trobriands in Milne Bay to Maisin, Wanigela and Korafe in Oro Province, Papua New Guinea, through the islands of Tonga to diasporic Tongan and Cook Islander communities in New Zealand. They cross over the borders of what has been called Melanesia and Polynesia, between the western and eastern Pacific, a demarcation with colonial origins that has too often segregated both Pacific peoples and scholarly studies of the Pacific (Spriggs 2009). There are also historical twists in time travel as the editors and authors reflect on the changing values and significance of these objects, in the context of colonialism, Christian conversion, collecting and the heightened globalisation of contemporary capitalist economy. Scholarly debates have also taken some radical twists and turns since such objects were dubbed ‘women’s wealth’ by Annette Weiner (1976) 40 years ago. So, before I reflect on this volume’s timely and innovative contributions, let me return to that moment when Annette Weiner and Marilyn Strathern debated ‘women’s wealth’, a debate that continues to haunt contemporary feminist anthropology and this volume of essays, grounded in fine, twenty-first-century ethnography (Weiner 1976, 1980, 1988, 1989, 1992; Strathern 1981).

## The fertility of fibres: *Doba* and ‘women’s wealth’ in the Trobriands

From her first monograph (1976), *doba* were central to Weiner’s revisioning of the Trobriands from ‘a woman’s point of view’. She challenged Bronisław Malinowski’s androcentrism, suggesting that he failed to witness the source of the distinctive power of women, that he was so fixated on men and the exchange of shell valuables in the *kula* that he ignored women’s prominent exchanges of banana leaf bundles and skirts, *doba*, in the crucial *sagali* ceremonies after death (see Lepani and MacCarthy this volume). Weiner pronounced banana leaves ‘women’s wealth’ since they were made, exchanged and controlled by women. For her, they embodied “‘womanness’: sexuality, reproduction, and nurture’ (1976: 119) and intangible, ‘eternal female values, women’s concern

with life, death and regeneration' (Strathern 1981: 673; paraphrasing Weiner 1976: 236). The value of their maternity and of matriliney was materialised in these banana leaf bundles and skirts presented at mortuary ceremonies, through which women reclaimed dead clanspeople from debts to other *dala* (subclans, lineages) accumulated in life. They were a 'cosmic statement of regeneration of pure *dala* substance' (Weiner 1976: 120). In her view, Trobriand women thus exercised power in perpetuity, while men were relegated to a sphere of evanescent power, 'clutching after immortality through objects incapable of regeneration' (236).

Weiner did not ignore Trobriand men, but she de-emphasised the hoary old debates about virgin birth and physiological paternity, about father love versus mother right in matrilineal societies, and rather privileged the brother–sister bond in the intimate synergy between exchanges of yams and of *doba*. Later authors challenged her view of the Trobriand father and gender relations (like Mosko 1992), while some like myself (Jolly 1992a) wondered whether by situating Trobriand women in cyclical or eternal time Weiner had occluded the passage of historical change between Malinowski's season of fieldwork and her own.

Weiner insisted that the Trobriand experience of colonialism was 'rather benign' and that in the 60 years since Malinowski's sojourn, although 'superficially some things had changed (an airstrip, tourists, some western clothing) everything else was as if nothing had changed' (1980: 272). 'Women's wealth' for her assumed a primary place in continuing Trobriand traditions, a strength she characterised as persistence rather than resistance to colonial and Christian influences. She delivered a message to us from Joshua (pseudonym for a young educated health worker who sometimes drove her around): 'We have to get those women to stop throwing their wealth because they take our money' (1980: 274). She interpreted this as a sign of *his* undue western capitalist influence, rather than as suggestive of a broader historical shift in the configuration of the Trobriand exchange system and gender relations. In her first monograph (1976), and in several subsequent publications (1988, 1992), Weiner made broader claims about 'women's wealth' in Oceania—about *bilums* in Papua New Guinea, pandanus textiles in Vanuatu, tapa in Polynesia—critiquing those who, like Malinowski, had failed to see their deep significance. Marilyn Strathern was implicated; she responded in her Malinowski lecture of 1980, 'Culture in a Netbag' (1981).<sup>1</sup>

1 *Bilums* have also been called netbags or string bags in the anthropological and material culture literature.

## Malinowski and feminist anthropology: Shared universals?

In that lecture, Strathern discerned an uncanny link in Weiner's anthropological genealogy with Malinowski: their shared affinity for universalism. Just as Malinowski (1922) was prone to making grandiloquent generalisations from Trobriand Man to Primitive Economic Man, so Weiner was inclined to leap from Trobriand to Universal Woman (Strathern 1981). Strathern challenged the way in which Weiner, like some other feminist anthropologists of the period, assumed a universal woman's point of view—that because of their gender, women had distinctive, even unique, insights not able to be replicated by men. Presuming naturally grounded continuities between female author and female subject suggested a closure in the manufacture of the subdiscipline of feminist anthropology for Strathern (1981: 669). Not only could we not presume universal 'womanness', connecting Trobriand women and the imagined 'we' of the West, we could not presume what 'womanness' meant within Papua New Guinea.

Strathern offered both a trenchant critique of Weiner's premises and her presentation of Trobriand material and a compelling consideration of differences within Papua New Guinea, comparing Trobriand *doba* with netbags/*bilums* amongst both Hagen and Wiru people. For Hagen, she suggested netbags, although receptacles for women's products, pork and shells, of some value as exchange objects, and loosely signifying 'womanness', were not 'women's wealth', they were focal in public exchanges like *doba*. Indeed, 'Hagen women do not publicly transact with netbags because Hagen women do not publicly transact' (Strathern 1981: 675). In Hagen, Strathern asserted, this was a male prerogative.<sup>2</sup> She argued that netbags were *neither* women's wealth nor men's wealth. It was not the product/object that was sexed but the activity:<sup>3</sup> women produced and men transacted (see also Strathern 1972). For her, netbags and pigs were neither exclusively female nor male objects but conjoint products, in which each sex invested and detached part of itself.

2 This distinction is no longer true; Hagen women now publicly transact with *bilums* and other goods sold in the market.

3 In contemporary writing, we might say gendered rather than sexed.

Strathern not only contrasted Trobriand and Hagen contexts, she triangulated them both with Wiru. In this triangulated comparison, the Trobriands were seen as unique in making women's partial contribution to human reproduction a total phenomenon. Strathern concluded:

We are not dealing with refractions of some universal Womanness whose essential attributes some cultures value and others do not. There are differences both in the qualities attributed to womanhood and in the manner in which symbols are generated out of a male-female dichotomy ... the proper focus for analysis becomes not women but the values so assigned. That in the Trobriands women have control over the genesis of life should not be confused with our own biologism (1981: 682).

In this early essay, there is anticipation and prefiguration of the extended comparative argument that Strathern later developed in *The Gender of the Gift* (1988), her influential unravelling of both biological and cultural essentialisms in approaches to gender (see Jolly 1992b); essentialisms that she discerned in Weiner's early writing.<sup>4</sup>

## Forty years on: Revaluing 'women's wealth'

In the 40 years since this debate, many things have changed in the scholarly practice of anthropology, our everyday and scholarly perspectives on gender and sexuality and more broadly in our human experience of a shared but deeply unequal and conflicted world. I reflect on these changes and on the innovative contributions of this volume by focusing on three key concepts: woman, wealth and changing values.

### Woman

The presumption of a universal, eternal 'woman' has been radically challenged since the 1970s. There has been a widespread acknowledgement of the differences and inequalities between women on the basis of race, class, sexuality (and several other parameters) and an associated embrace of intersectionality in thinking about gender (Henne 2013). Today, even the 'strategic essentialism' advocated in feminist movements of the 1970s is far harder to claim or promote in the context of the complex coalitions in global transnational feminisms (Grewal and Kaplan 1994;

<sup>4</sup> We might ponder whether that charge of essentialism can be equally applied to Weiner's later comparative work (1988, 1992).

Hilsdon et al. 2000; Mohanty 2003). And, perhaps more fundamentally, universalist, essentialist presumptions grounded in the 'nature' of women, and in particular their reproductive nature have been constantly exposed as western 'biologism', as Strathern intimated. The very distinction between nature and culture fundamental to twentieth-century distinctions between sex and gender has been challenged not just by Marilyn Strathern (1988; Strathern and MacCormack 1980) and Judith Butler (1990, 2004) but by a host of scholars working across many disciplines. Contemporary scholarship stresses gender fluidity, transcending the heteronormative binary of male and female, embracing the inclusion of transgender and intersex people, and the complex relations between gender identity and sexual orientation (for example, see Besnier and Alexeyeff 2014; Jolly 2016).

What are we to make then of the frequent associations that emerge in these chapters and in the broader literature between women's maternity and these distinctive objects they create? The first female ancestor of the Ómie people of Papua New Guinea, famous for their superb barkcloth, is said to have menstruated, cut bark from a tree and soaked it in red river mud, symbolising her blood and her capacity to bear children (Thomas 2012: 484). In many parts of PNG, the capacious, bulging *bilum* is likened to the expansive, protruding womb of a pregnant woman (but see MacKenzie 1991).<sup>5</sup> The red dye used to decorate pandanus textiles in Vanuatu is implicitly but potently linked to the blood of menstruation and parturition (Bolton 1996, 2003; Walter 1996). And, in the Trobriands, banana leaf bundles and skirts symbolise not just maternity but the preeminent value of matriliney and the cosmic regeneration of matter and spirit inherent therein. But how does this compare with western 'biologism'?

As Emily Martin (1991) demonstrated long ago, both popular and more scientific narratives of the conjunction of eggs and sperm in the West encode masculinist conceptions of procreation and pregnancy.

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5 Unlike *doba*, *bilums* are not preeminently ceremonial valuables but quotidian companions to women, men and children, used for carrying food, firewood, utensils, personal belongings, babies, piglets, puppies and sacred objects (see Gneccchi-Ruscione this volume). A *bilum* is bag, garment, ornament and ritual adornment. As Maureen MacKenzie states, '[T]he bilum is much more than a mundane and useful container ... its imagery is used by both women and men to model, and thus confront, dissonance in the paradoxical nature of their relationship' (1991: 1). So, although women are the primary but not the exclusive creators of *bilums*, they are not 'women's wealth' for MacKenzie but rather 'androgynous objects'. She thus supports Strathern in her debate with Weiner, but does so

More recent narratives based on revolutionary developments in reproductive biology, research on genetics, hormones and stem cells and the radical transformations consequent on assisted reproductive technologies are equally entangled with contemporary questions and contests around gender relations (Strathern 1992; Waldby and Cooper 2008, 2014). Indigenous Pacific notions of conception, pregnancy and birth traverse a vast range—from the Sambia diminution of women's wombs as mere receptacles of potent fertile semen, which generate babies and are later transformed into breast milk (Herdt 1981), to the Trobriands where the baby's blood and spirit is thought to derive exclusively from the mother's *dala* while the father is thought to feed and mould the baby's form through intercourse and nurture (see Lepani 2012; Mosko 1992; Weiner 1976).

Such Pacific concepts and practices differ from western 'biologism' in several ways. First, although they do impinge on the intercourse of individual sexed bodies and the body of the individual woman through pregnancy, birth and breast feeding, these are implicated in collective notions of social reproduction that are grounded in ideas of clan-based descent or extended familial regeneration. Women who do not become biological mothers can, still rather easily in many Pacific places, become social mothers through the adoption of the children of sisters or other kin (see Ping-Ann Addo's life story of Kalo in Chapter 9). Moreover, in ways rather different to contemporary European notions of ancestry and generation, Pacific ideas of collective human regeneration are connected to broader processes of regeneration of the nonhuman world and even the cosmos. There are frequent links made between growing babies and growing crops or nurturing pigs; human fecundity and health (and sickness) are often linked to processes that we might think of as ecological vitality (or decay). It is thus intriguing to see that many of the objects Pacific women create and exchange, and which evoke the value of their maternity, are botanical and organic products that emanate from the land—groves of pandanus trees growing near the ocean or in the

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on the basis of a far more intimate appreciation of the materiality of their making, use and circulation. MacKenzie challenges any exclusive and essentialist association between *bilum* and female fecundity, seeing this as part of a broader conception of fertility. She documents how in Telefol rituals of initiation and death, men transformed *bilums* looped by women into elaborated ritual forms, created in secret but worn in public and used as receptacles for cult objects—they thus signified male sexuality and fertility. It is clear from MacKenzie's analysis that *bilums* do not just signify women's wombs and female fecundity but are drawn into wider models of fertility in which men play an equal, if not privileged, part. Sexual difference is imaged and, through the pliability of the *bilum*, stressed and stretched.

mountains, the bark of paper mulberry or breadfruit trees, the abundant glossy leaves of banana trees, mud and ochres from river and forest, clay from the ground itself. This all suggests that Pacific women are ‘mothers of the land’;<sup>6</sup> regardless of whether descent is matrilineal, patrilineal or cognatic, the link between women’s bodies and these products of the land attaches them to place, country and culture. Below, I ponder what happens when these products of the land are supplemented or even supplanted by materials from elsewhere—*bilums* created from store-bought string already dyed, skirts fashioned not from ‘grass’ but bolts of cloth, vessels made not from local clay but plastic or aluminium, cloth and quilts created not from bark but cotton, silk, polyester.

We might also ask why the notion of ‘womanness’ is equated with maternity. Significantly, in her early conception of Trobriand ‘womanness’, Weiner embraced sexuality alongside maternity (see above). This is understandable given the continuation of sexual practices in the Trobriands, which Lepani (2008, 2012) celebrates as both sex-positive and life-affirming (albeit in a predominantly heterosexual way). This sexual culture persists despite early conversions (from 1894) to a Methodist mode of Christianity and even the spectre of death through transmission of HIV from the 1980s. Katherine Lepani persuasively sees the reciprocal exchange of sex, before and during marriage as integral to broader social reproduction and cultural regeneration (2010, 2012). Other places discussed in this volume—within Papua New Guinea, Tonga and Pacific diasporas in New Zealand—are less celebratory and far more circumspect about, and constraining of, women’s sexuality.

Moreover, some of the questions Serge Tcherkézoff raised about being a ‘woman’ in Samoa are relevant here. Tcherkézoff (1993) argued that the concept and value of ‘woman’ in Samoa was not unitary but split between the celebration of the sacred (and ideally virgin) sister and the devaluation of the sexualised wife. There has been much debate as to how far Christian conversion entailed a shift from a focus on the brother–sister relation to the husband–wife relation as the privileged dyad in male–female relations, particularly apropos Samoa and Tonga (and more generally in the Pacific, see Gailey 1987; James 1988). In his path-breaking research on Samoan missionary women (in the vanguard of the early evangelisation of the London Missionary Society), Latu Latai argues that the sacred covenant

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6 This phrase was coined in relation to Bougainville and especially the predominantly matrilineal regions of that island (Tankunani Siviri and Taleo Havini 2004).

attributed to the brother–sister relation in ancient Samoa, although persisting in diluted form, was transposed onto the relation between the pastor and his wife and the congregation (Latai 2014, 2016).

The chapters dealing with Tongans in the islands and the diaspora raise the equally important question of how far women are distinguished and divided, not just in their dual aspects of sisters and wives/mothers, but on the basis of rank. In her chapter, Wonu Veys makes the important point that the precious Tongan valuables called *koloa* (canonically barkcloth, pandanus mats and coconut oil), which were in the past created and controlled by high-ranking or noble women, are now associated with women in general. The ethnographies of Adrienne Kaeppler amongst the aristocrats and royals of Tongatapu (1995, 2005, 2007), of Heather Young Leslie with commoner women from Kauvai (1999) and of Ping-Ann Addo in the Tongan diaspora (2013) all attest to a democratisation of these Tongan valuables, and their contemporary association with women, regardless of rank. But Wonu Veys, like a number of other authors in this volume, eschews the notion that these objects embody a ‘female essence’, or that they constitute ‘women’s wealth’. For her, these are ‘prestigious objects’ not ‘women’s wealth’. Through a forensic historical examination of the changing meanings of the categories of *koloa* and *ngāue* in Tongan exchange, she argues against a strict demarcation of women’s and men’s valuables and for contextual fluidity. She queries both the gendering of objects per se and the very notion of wealth.<sup>7</sup>

## Wealth

I now turn to this second key concept. In popular English parlance, wealth is usually conceived in monetary terms and implies abundance, or accumulated surplus over what is needed. In contemporary global conversations it is hard to detach ‘wealth’ from capitalist property relations and notions of value. Weiner’s (1976) use of this word to embrace *doaba* in the Trobriands was, in my reading, a provocative subversion of the exclusivity or hegemony of a capitalist logic of value. However, its use poses crucial questions as to how the indigenous systems in which

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7 Her argument echoes a much earlier debate occasioned by Kerry James’s (1988) vigorous critique of Christine Ward Gailey’s book (1987). James disputed Gailey’s translation of *koloa* as ‘all goods made by women’ and her counterpart translation of *ngāue* as ‘men’s goods’. James claims *ngāue* means simply work or employment done by either men or women. Women do not make all Tongan *koloa* and, conversely, not all goods made by women are considered to be *koloa* (1988: 33–34). *Koloa* she

these objects were exchanged have variously encountered, incorporated, accommodated and resisted the goods and the values of the capitalist commodity economy.<sup>8</sup>

As the editors suggest in their Introduction, the voluminous anthropological literature on gifts and commodities constitutes an important background to the chapters of this volume. Without rehearsing the terms of that debate engaging authors such as Gregory (1982, 2015), Strathern (1988), Gell (1998) and Appadurai (1986) (but see Hermkens and Lepani this volume; and Jolly 2015), I stress the *copresence* of both gift and commodity values inherent in these objects and the self-conscious and articulate way in which Pacific women deal with the sinuous paths they and these objects travel. Let me take examples of this from the three successive sections of this volume: the first from the Trobriands, the second from Oro Province and the third from Tonga and Pacific diasporas in New Zealand.

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translates as 'durable goods of value, riches and wealth' (1988: 33), which includes not only decorated *ngatu* (barkcloth), baskets of coiled vine and coconut oil but goods made by men in the past such as ocean-going canoes, store-bought consumer durables and even, metaphorically, children. Conversely, women make many things not considered *koloa*: plain pandanus textiles, coconut-carrying baskets, garlands etc. *Koloa fakatonga*, *koloa* of the highest value, were seen as material manifestations of the gods and their 'earthly descendants and priestly representatives, the *eiki* (usually translated as chiefs), particularly chiefly women' (1988: 34). So, although decorated barkcloth is made by women and as a privileged form of *koloa* might be linked with the sacred power of chiefly women, it cannot simply be construed as 'women's wealth' in Weiner's terms. Similarly, Adrienne Kaeppler has highlighted the prominence of *ngatu* as a 'high art' in Tongan aesthetic and political values. She suggests decorated barkcloth is a visual art form linked with the verbal arts of *lakalaka* or oratory, which enhances hierarchy (2005). Yet Kaeppler also stresses gendered complementarity:

Barkcloth and mats were categorized as *koloa* (valuables) and were made by women ... *Koloa* is the complementary domain to *ngāue*, products derived from agricultural work and animal husbandry ... The *ngāue* of men regenerates people physically, while *koloa* of women regenerates people culturally. Both are necessary, and together regenerate and reproduce society (Kaeppler 2005: 252; see also Kaeppler 2007).

8 In a much earlier paper (Jolly 1992a), I suggested that the difference between Weiner's and Malinowski's analyses of the Trobriands may not just be the difference between a man's and a woman's point of view, but may also reflect differences between their epochs of observation. Weiner (1980) alludes to the holy trinity of foreign influences—colonialism, Christianity and commoditisation—primarily to deny their impact in the Trobriands. The continuing salience of 'women's wealth' is interpreted as persistence rather than self-conscious resistance: 'stability in banana leaves', Weiner proclaimed. Although Weiner constantly laments the alienation and impersonality of western consumer culture, she did not adequately address the question of how the Trobriand gift economy might have been transformed by the experience of a colonising capitalism. I rather suggested (1992a) a sort of celebratory cultural resistance towards commodity values, which I think is evidenced in much recent ethnography that attests to an efflorescence and expansion in Trobriand exchanges (see especially Lepani 2012, and this volume). But, without Trobriand experience, I failed to adequately acknowledge the commensurability of banana leaves and introduced cloth, and the stress on copresence and layering that Lepani discerns (but see Jolly 2008). Ira Bashkow (2011) offers interesting historical insights into a *sagali* in the colonial period witnessed by Alex Rentoul.

Lepani quotes the articulate irony of several Trobriand women who, when presented with the idea that their bundles of banana leaves and skirts were ‘women’s wealth’, chortled and joked—‘Oh yes we are very wealthy’—musing on how, despite an abundance of *doba*, Trobriand women are cash-poor, with few kina. The notion of ‘women’s wealth’ is odd both linguistically and culturally in Kiriwina; *na’esaesa* (female wealth) would entail not a woman with accumulated bounty but with the relational capacity to generate and distribute exchange valuables. On the basis of her long-term affinal relationship with the Trobriands and ethnographic fieldwork from 2003, Lepani highlights the continuity of *doba* in the mourning ceremonies of *sagali*, despite the changes in material form. Continuity has been maintained through the commensurability of banana leaves and introduced cloth (*karekwa* in Kiriwina, from the English calico). She traces the historical origin to a *sagali* held within the white coral fence of the Methodist mission station at Oiabia in the early twentieth century. Foreign missionaries discouraged *sagali* as wasteful of time and effort, and opposed *doba* made from banana leaves as dirty. Local converts innovated by substituting clean calico and introduced clothes, those icons of Christian conversion (see Jolly 2014; Keane 2005).

When *sagali* is performed today, introduced cloth has not so much supplanted as *supplemented* banana leaves. The historical sedimentation of the practice is evoked by the layering of baskets of *doba*—immense bundles of patterned banana leaves manufactured by women, but topped with layers of cloth, skirts, blouses and pillowslips created on their Singer sewing machines. The immense variety of women’s fibre skirts recorded by Ethel Prisk (a missionary woman at the time of Malinowski’s fieldwork c. 1911–1916) has contracted, and flowing, brightly patterned cloth skirts are now becoming more common than the intricate layered and dyed banana fibre *sepwana* skirts worn by close kin of the deceased (clanswomen of the deceased’s father and their spouse if married). Today, *doba* bundles can be topped off with money and kina notes, often earned by men in urban centres like Alotau and Port Moresby, which are now seen as an integral part of *doba*. Still, although *doba* made of banana leaves may be given a cash value, *doba* cannot be directly exchanged for cash (except when women acquire banana leaf bundles by donating to the Women’s Fellowship). Money is now crucial in searching for *doba*, and in particular the huge bolts of store-bought cloth necessary for contemporary *sagali*. But as cash and commodities are transformed into *doba*, they become

valuable gifts in complex systems of exchange, evoking the necessary copresence and complementarity of the indigenous and the introduced, the traditional and the Christian modern.

Lepani stresses that there is no long-term hoarding of *doba* valuables before a funeral, since both indigenous and introduced cloth must be seen as 'fresh'. It is indeed the hard, exhausting *work* of searching for *doba*, of feverishly making banana leaf bundles and sewing cloth that is valued—the process of materialisation rather than the objects themselves, the hard labour of women in giving back to those of other clans/lineages what they have given to the deceased, in neverending spirals of exchange. Thus, Lepani argues for the resilient cultural vitality of *doba* and *sagali*, of changing material forms but the enduring values of maternity and matrilineal regeneration, and of the place of the Trobriands in relation to and *within* a Christian modernity.

Although Michelle MacCarthy starts her chapter with a graphic description of the frenzied vitality, the dazzling display and the decidedly unmournful mourning ceremony of *sagali*, her analysis rather focuses on those villages that for the last two decades have been 'doing away with *doba*'. Echoing those foreign Methodist missionaries who came to the Trobriands in 1894, local evangelical Christians in these villages are critical of the search for *doba* as wasteful. They are either abandoning *sagali* completely or using cash and store-bought goods in lieu of locally manufactured *doba*. For them, Christianity entails a rupture from the 'darkness' of custom and the pursuit of the 'light' through education, individual improvement rather than collective regeneration, and the celebration of cash and the commodity economy as eclipsing the valuables of the past. The present is seen as the time of the 'true church'. Deploying Louis Dumont's model of a hierarchy of values, MacCarthy argues that evangelical Christian values are here hegemonic, and that there has been a radical revaluation of past objects and practices, not just 'satanic' practices like sorcery but even *sagali*, core to Trobriand identity. They criticise the iconic *sepwana* fibre skirts as sexually provocative and sinful. Women like Thelma, a young, devout Pentecostal church member, see such customs as distracting not only from the work needed for daily survival and school fees but also from 'God's work'. They stress the need to look after the living not the dead and to favour the individual and close kin rather than the collectivity of the matriclan. It is clear from the counterpoint between Lepani's and MacCarthy's chapters that there is much flux and contestation not just between tradition and modernity but between those

Trobrianders (usually staunch Catholics and United Church adherents) who think such practices and Christian modernity are compatible and even perforce complementary, and those who assert that these ways of life and values are antithetical. I will return to these questions below in a reflection on changing values.

I now focus on the concept of ‘wealth’ and the relation of gift and commodity economies in Oro Province, Papua New Guinea, as described in the chapters by Anna-Karina Hermkens, Elizabeth Bonshek and Elisabetta Gnechi-Ruscione. None of these authors are comfortable with seeing the several objects here created, exchanged and controlled by women—barkcloth, clay pots, *bilums* and pandanus mats—as ‘women’s wealth’. All offer graphic descriptions of the sensuous, embodied making, wearing, using and exchanging of such things, and attest to their sinuosity as they move between different regimes of value. Indeed, Hermkens argues that preoccupations with imported distinctions between gifts and commodities, subjects and objects have obscured the sensuous materiality linking women’s bodies and their creations across diverse contexts.

Hermkens suggests that there is a merging between the substance of women’s bodies and the fabric of Maisin barkcloth. This is first embodied in the very process of making the cloth from the bark of paper mulberry trees, the endless beating and pounding as women sit with legs firmly held together for protracted periods. It is again embodied in the merging of the skin of women (with cognate tattoos in the past) and the skin of tapa with its distinctive blood-red and black designs—the inner red signifying women’s blood and gender identity, the outer black designs signifying men and patriclan identity (distinctive for each of the 36 Maisin patriclans, these also act as land claims). And there is a merging of barkcloth and women’s identity in the use of barkcloth as a garment in life-cycle ceremonies or church festivals and dances, as a basket for carrying sago, as a protective blanket and as a wrapping to bury the dead.

However, Hermkens insists Maisin barkcloth is not best conceived as ‘women’s wealth’ but as a valuable that is daily used by both men and women, and that traverses both gift and commodity circuits in order to signify various layers of being and identity (age, gender, patriclan and Maisin identity), and to create relationships and connections. In Maisin contexts barkcloth is inalienable; in external and international contexts it is alienable. Barkcloth was in the past bartered for a variety of things from other ethnic groups—shells, feathers, obsidian flakes and most

proximately for clay pots from Wanigela (see below and Bonshek this volume). Today, only the latter trade persists, if in diminished form. But Maisin barkcloth has become a global commodity in the international art market. Prompted first by Anglican missionaries in the 1930s and then vigorously promoted by Greenpeace and the Peace Corps from the 1990s, Maisin barkcloth has been transformed into an ethnic art that celebrates indigeneity, sustainable green development rather than rapacious logging and the creativity of women's labour. But, Hermkens argues, Maisin women's labour has thereby become alienated and objectified, and the main profits have accrued to the men who control this international trade, such as the male executives of a local cooperative. Thus, she suggests, as barkcloth became a global commodity in the art market, emblematic of generic Maisin cultural property, women were disempowered and the particularistic, intimate identification between women and their barkcloth was devalued.

This celebration of Maisin barkcloth also had dramatic consequences for Wanigela women who have long traded their clay pots for barkcloth. As Bonshek observes, there are now only a few older women who make clay pots and the practice if not dying out is in a 'fragile state'; partly as a result of plastic and aluminium vessels supplanting clay for water storage and cooking, but partly because of changing values in the overlapping regional exchange systems of Maisin and Wanigela. Recounting her experience of a trading expedition with several older women from the Anglican Mothers' Union, Bonshek reveals how the exchange values between clay pots and barkcloth have radically shifted in recent times. Wanigela women had to accept not just fewer barkcloths in exchange for their pots but also accepted barkcloth that was not finished, where the red designs were not yet filled in. Maisin barkcloth has recently attained a far higher international value than their clay pots (this has caused some resentment amongst Wanigela women). This differential value dates back to the 1930s when Anglican missionaries collecting for overseas museums preferred the lightweight and less fragile barkcloth to heavy, fragile clay pots. Wanigela clay pots have been sold as flower pots in markets in Popenetta and Port Moresby; they are still regarded as 'craft' or heritage objects rather than art in markets and museums.

Elisabetta Gnechi-Ruscione's chapter focuses on distinct realms of value *within* the Korafe world as she considers the trajectory of string bags and pandanus mats made by women. Like most of the authors in this volume, she eschews the moniker 'women's wealth' since in her view these

are rather clan assets for the patrilineal Korafe. She ponders how such ordinary, everyday objects of use become extraordinary valuables in ritual and interclan exchange. She offers graphic depictions of the making of both *bilums* and pandanus mats, evincing a woman's intimate knowledge and full-bodied interaction with the materials as she cuts, splices, bleaches, softens, spins, sews, plaits or loops. So, 'the intimate, physical actions of the woman's body upon bush pandanus leaves produce an artefact that may be described as creating domesticity'. There is nothing inherent in the materials themselves, but rather matter is transformed through women's intentional creative labour to create things whose differences express different social values. Writing of the nearby Nalik, Graeme Were (2013) observed how two different kinds of pandanus leaf are used for different textiles. The first leaves, the indigenous variant, are sewn together and are seen as protective of persons in life-cycle rituals, and thus have more 'traditional' if evanescent uses. The second, from pandanus plants imported by missionaries from Milne Bay, are plaited and more durable, and are used daily as mundane mats for sitting and sleeping, or in broader individualised exchange networks. Gniecchi-Ruscone observes a similar distinction for the Korafe. Yet both can be seen as creative of safe spaces, as mats are unfolded, rolled out and laid on the ground for family or honoured guests.

In making both string bags (*bilums*) and pandanus textiles, women were/are transforming materials from the bush into objects associated with domesticity, protection and safety. The intentionalities of the women making these objects are embedded in the very transformation of the natural materials. So, for instance, there are string bags of different sizes and textures suitable for carrying tubers from the garden, cloth and pillows and personal things (like money, betel, a knife); for babies and infants, the string bag is both a cradle and a pacifying swing. Women now primarily use imported, dyed string to make string bags, and the colours and designs can reference both clan identity and the individual woman who made it. If women want to stress the values of indigenous practice, or if they have a specific request from kin or tourists for a more 'traditional' *bilum*, they use the far more arduous process of preparing and spinning bark fibres and colouring with resinous black dye or red from mangrove bark. String bags also act as personal adornments, signifying gender and ethnic identities, and are frequently exchanged between kin and friends to express reciprocity, love and attachment. In-marrying wives are often welcomed with string bags by mothers-in-law. But these everyday objects

can also be ostentatiously unfurled and transformed into ritual valuables used in interclan exchanges effected by men, and ceremonial occasions such as marriage and initiation. Women contribute to the gifts presented by their husband's clan (especially in concluding a bride price) and, less prescriptively, their brothers' clan. Thus, in tracing the biographies of both *bilums* and pandanus textiles, Gneccchi-Ruscione argues that they are very ordinary things, which can become extraordinary in ritual and exchange, but are always 'inextricably linked' to the world of women: 'They embody the values of women's work and express their intentionality and agency'. But that does not make them 'women's wealth' since women do not compete for power or prestige in gift exchange using these objects, but rather offer them to men as wives or sisters.<sup>9</sup> They thus project more complex gender identities and relations.

The final trio of chapters by Fanny Wonu Veys, Ping-Ann Addo and Jane Horan move us to Tonga and to both Tongan and Cook Islander diasporic communities in New Zealand. Wonu Veys's critical historical interrogation of the changing meaning of *koloa* in Tonga, discussed above, is pivotal to understanding what is happening in Tonga and in the Tongan diaspora. The original link between chiefly women and *koloa* has now been democratised and the creation and exchange of *koloa* is now potentially the provenance of all Tongan women. As Ping-Ann Addo shows in her book (2013), materials, motifs and meanings have been transformed. Barkcloth has been supplemented by synthetic materials (even if these are seen as less authentic and less valuable); the crowns and rows of pine trees associated with tapa linked to royal genealogies have been joined by motifs linked to new homes as well as the ancestral homeland (in Australia images of kangaroos and emus and the Sydney Harbour Bridge, see Reardon Finney 1999). But cloth of all kinds is crucial in the expression of a Tongan identity today, of this modern transnation (Addo 2013).

This is poignantly clear in the life story of Kalo as told by Addo. The precious *koloa* (both fine pandanus mats and barkcloth), which she brought from Tonga to New Zealand and carefully stored under mattresses and packed up in bedrooms, have been complemented by those she has made herself, often in church-based women's groups or received in exchanges at life-

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9 But, as Katherine Lepani notes, Papua New Guinean women are now selling *bilums* in markets and other commodity circuits, which, as the Introduction evinces so beautifully, is not just an important source of income generation, but contexts in which women display considerable agency and 'entrepreneurial acumen' (personal communication, 22 September 2016).

cycle ceremonies, church or Tongan cultural events. Kalo, like Lepani's interlocutors in the Trobriands, sees herself as cash-poor (her wages from paid work and her pension were mainly donated to the church), but rich in *koloa* valuables. Throughout her life she distributed *koloa* in many contexts, thus raising her commoner status and that of her kin in the Tongan community, and inculcating in her adopted daughters and nieces the value of passing on Tongan values. But, as Addo insists, 'objects, like relationships, are not static' and, as she ages, Kalo divests herself of most of her *koloa*; giving them to her sisters, daughters, nieces and textile-making friends to celebrate births, marriages and even impending maternity outside marriage. She retains only some of her mother's precious *koloa* heirlooms and a couple of pandanus waist mats to wear to church. By redistributing all these valuables, Kalo is expressing not just her love for kin and friends but also her desire that they treasure what she treasures. Although Addo, like all the authors in this volume, interrogates notions of 'wealth', she is more comfortable than most in describing Kalo's *koloa* as women's wealth, insofar as wealth refers to a preeminent value, passed between generations of women. Treasured textiles are for Kalo a way of ensuring that her own traces endure in future sinuous relationships. She has trusted textiles to oblige the Tongan women she knows and loves to live as she did, the Tongan way, the 'straight and narrow way' of the church, to fulfil the destiny she desires for them. Thus, the ultimate value of this 'women's wealth' is, as David Graeber (2001: 142) argues, about the creation of valued persons rather than things (see Introduction this volume).

Jane Horan's chapter on a haircutting ceremony performed by Cook Islanders in Auckland equally exemplifies Graeber's argument. She offers a graphic description of how the seven-year-old who is the focus of this ceremony is transformed from mere boy to a potential Cook Islander man through the dramaturgy of this event. The precious *tivaivai* quilts in which he is enveloped and which adorn his chair, the less precious quilts which drape the stage where he sits, the matching homemade costumes of island fabric in which he and his family reappear after the ceremony, all effect this transformation. The participating audience cut off ribboned locks of his hair and in exchange pass on money (sequestered in envelopes), quilts and store-bought duvets. In the course of this ceremony, cash and commodities are, in Horan's view, moved from the realm of the market to the realm of mutuality. The cash may contribute to the boy's future education, the duvets may be used to warm and cuddle up in during

Auckland winters to come. But, in this context, they, like the precious *tivaivai* cloths, are cultural valuables that materialise the greatest value—the creation and transformation of persons—in a diasporic Cook Islander culture that celebrates kinship and mutual *aro'a*—not just love but the values of kindness, hospitality, compassion and forgiveness.

But, we might ask, why here, as in the Tongan diaspora, are these ultimate values so strongly linked to women, women's creations and abstract notions of womanness (muliebrity, to use Horan's rare term). Clearly other material things or practices can signify being Tongan or Cook Islander—wooden artefacts made by men, tattoos, dance styles. Moreover, the objects that are the precious and efficacious valuables include both textiles that have indigenous origins (barkcloth and pandanus mats) and those that were introduced by Christian missionaries (like *tivaivai* quilts) but which have been thoroughly indigenised (see Jolly 2014). *Tivaivai* quilts, like Papua New Guinean *bilums* made from string imported from Hong Kong, like Trobriand *sepwana* skirts made from bolts of vibrant printed cotton, have through the creative labour of women come to signify place, cultural and national identity alongside barkcloth, bushstring, pandanus and clay. Will they continue to do so in the future alongside store-bought duvets and cash, or will they be replaced by such commodities?

## Changing values: Revaluing things, revaluing persons

Forms of value emerge to regulate a process which is ultimately  
about the creation of people.

(Graeber 2001: 142)

My rhetorical question frames my final focus on changing values. Here, I ponder on how we might think about transformations of value over the *longue durée* in the Pacific, transformations of value that pertain to persons and things and their relation. It is vital to see the changing relations of gender and sexuality in the region, and the changing character of these sinuous objects not just on the scale of local, intimate relations but in relation to the macroprocesses of colonialism, Christianity, commodity economics and globalisation (Besnier and Alexeyeff 2014). But it is equally important to see Pacific peoples, and Pacific women in particular, not as passive victims of agents and processes emanating from 'beyond the horizon' but as active subjects encountering, resisting and incorporating,

rejecting and indigenising. In these historical transformations, have the notions and values of personhood been transformed from more relational to individual modes (see Wardlow 2006)? Has this process been similar or different for men and women? And how has this impinged on the value of those objects created by women?

In their Introduction, the editors point to how the combined effects of various colonial agents—Christian missionaries, traders, collectors, development practitioners, even anthropologists—entailed a devaluation of objects created by women in relation to those of men, and ultimately a difference in whether these were categorised as ‘artefacts’ or ‘art’. By contrast, they suggest the perspective of this volume:

allows us to move beyond classificatory distinctions between art and artefacts—objects of symbolic, creative value, and objects of daily utility—that have been valued differently in time, not only by local and international agents but also by the gendered perspectives of observers (Hermkens and Lepani this volume).

Nicholas Thomas (1995: 132) suggested that most early collectors neglected artefacts produced by women, and that this was perpetuated in the tribal art market. But he has also observed that from the first European exploratory voyages in the Pacific, there was an interest in barkcloth, and especially in the fine white tapa of Tahiti (Thomas 1995, 2012). Analogies were early drawn between Pacific women’s manufacture and decoration of barkcloth and women’s domestic arts in Europe and the Americas—sewing, embroidery and quilting. Still, for most collectors, there was a greater propensity or potential to collect stone and wooden objects made by men (and especially representations of the human form and weapons of war) than objects created by women such as textiles and baskets, which were seen as more mundane, less ritually potent and thus less valuable.

But I suggest there were also important differences *between* colonial agents in relation to objects created by women, and particularly apropos Pacific textiles. Christian missionaries were zealous in condemning the objects men created to manifest divine beings, gods and ancestors, and regularly called for the destruction of such ‘idols’ or conspired to remove them from converts by collecting them and sending them back to metropolitan museums (see Hermkens 2014). By contrast, missionaries often failed to register the divine dimensions of Pacific cloths and how textiles like barkcloth and pandanus not only covered bodies as clothes and blankets

but were used to wrap and protect divine powers inherent in persons and things. Although they promoted new clothes made from introduced cloth as iconic of the acceptance of the new god, they did not attempt to destroy such indigenous textiles but rather eclipse them, perceiving a confluence between them as clothes created by women (see Jolly 1996, 2014).

As the editors argue, the differential valuations and collecting strategies of outsiders laid the historical basis for how objects created by Pacific men were far earlier considered ‘art’ while women’s creations remained ‘artefacts’ or ‘craft’. I will not revisit the protracted and sometimes tedious debates about the problematic universality of the category ‘art’ and whether it is best seen in terms of beauty or efficacy (see Gell 1998; Layton 2003; Morphy 1994; Myers 2002). But we can witness that those Oceanic objects labelled ‘primitive art’ in the western canon, and that influenced prominent western artists from the early twentieth century (like Klee, Picasso, Gauguin, Matisse), were usually wooden and stone objects made by men—sculptures of the human form, of ancestors, animals and birds, masks and headdresses (see Price 1989). By contrast, Pacific textiles and pots made by women continued to be curated as ‘artefacts’ (marking them as nonwestern, of archaeological or anthropological rather than aesthetic interest) or as ‘craft’ (a category that carries both a quotidian, domestic and feminine association in the world of global art). In their Introduction, the editors stress how, in scholarly writing, the first tend to be interpreted in terms of iconic meanings and symbols, while the latter tend to be analysed in terms of form and function.

It has taken far longer for Pacific women’s textiles to be acknowledged as ‘art’ in the context of museums and galleries. In the Australian context, this has only happened in the last decade or so as they were embraced in larger exhibitions or major dedicated displays were mounted. Pacific women’s textiles—tapa, pandanus mats and quilts—were included and celebrated in the Fifth Asia Pacific Triennial in Brisbane in 2006 at the Gallery of Modern Art/Queensland Art Gallery with catalogue essays by Janet Jeffries, Maud Page, Teresia Teaiwa and Nicholas Thomas (Seear and Raffel 2006). Ōmie barkcloths were displayed in Sydney, at the Annandale Galleries and the New Guinea Gallery, promoted by the late David Baker and author Drusilla Modjeska (Modjeska 2009) and in Melbourne as the exhibition *Wisdom of the Mountains*, curated by Sana Balai at the National Gallery of Victoria (NGV) from late 2009 to early 2010. A tapa exhibition was mounted at the Monash University Museum of Art, and another, *Talking Tapa, Pasifika Bark Cloth*, at the

Brisbane Multicultural Arts Centre around the same time. *Paperskin*, a comprehensive exhibition of historical and contemporary barkcloth, was displayed at the Queensland Art Gallery in Brisbane in 2010 (travelling from Te Papa Tongarewa in Wellington in 2009). Significantly, in several of these exhibitions individual women were named as the creators of the cloth, although their collective ethnic or ancestral associations were also highlighted. A more recent exhibition of Tongan *ngatu* (painted tapa), *Sui i Moana* (Reaching across the Ocean), mounted at NGV in mid-2016, celebrates both the creativity of contemporary artists Robin White and Ruha Fifita *and* their collaboration with the women of Havelulotu in Tonga. That display of three monumentally large tapa celebrates the connections across Oceania—between Aotearoa/New Zealand, Tonga and the broader Pacific—tracing the paths of people and culture and the movements of fish and other creatures in this vast ocean (see Hermkens and Treagus 2016).

The distinction between ‘art’ and ‘artefact’ has also often relied on a perception that art is canonically the inspired creation of an individual author, while an artefact is a more mundane, generic and collective creation. This dubious distinction has been imbricated with gender differences, such that much of western art history from the fifteenth century to the present is a genealogy of pre-eminently male individual artists in relation to particular periods, countries, genres and styles. ‘Primitive’ or tribal art rather relies on a suppression of the signature of an individual artist, with a tendency to privilege the collective character of the work and associate its authenticity with greater age and a pristine state (see Jolly 2011; Thomas 1995).

This series of complicit binaries—between art and artefact, western and ‘primitive’ art, individual versus collective authorship—poses the question of how far the values ascribed to objects are in fact materialisations of values pertaining to persons. There has been a prevailing tendency in the anthropology of the Pacific (as in much western social theory) to counterpose the value of western individualism with the value of relationality or collectivism in the Pacific. Even though such binaries have been propounded as ‘heuristic fictions’ (Strathern 1988) rather than a description of lived realities, there has been a vigorous debate in the anthropology of the contemporary Pacific as to whether we are witnessing an increase in the value of individualism, if so what might

be catalysing such changing values and whether such tendencies towards individualisation might be gendered, or different for men and women (see Hermkens, Taylor and Morgain 2015;<sup>10</sup> Jolly 2015; Wardlow 2006).

Several processes have been implicated in arguments about increasing individualism in the Pacific—commodity economics, Christianity (especially evangelical forms), biomedical health systems, state politics, human rights discourses and practice, etc. By far the greatest attention has been paid to the combined influences of the first two—commodity economics and Christianity. Significantly, these emerge as dominant forces in *local* discussions of changing values throughout this volume, both in past and present periods. In the colonial period in the Pacific, Christianity and capitalism were strange bedfellows—both utterly conjugated in terms of the global expansion of European colonialism but also prone to huge fights (for example, about slavery and systems of indenture on plantations) and lesser struggles (for example, in the western Pacific, over the use of indigenous languages in conversion as against lingua franca like pidgins, which emerged from early extractive trade and stabilised through plantation labour systems). But in places where capitalism and Christianity cohabited most harmoniously (as in Hawai‘i), their combined forces entailed land dispossession, conversion to new gods and new goods and, ultimately, the promotion of new laws and western values in a settler colonial state (e.g. Merry 2000).

Throughout this volume, Christianity and commodity economics are coupled in local perceptions of ‘changing values’. In the Trobriands, the coming of the new god in the successive waves of Methodism, Catholicism and now evangelical Christianity is seen as perforce accompanied with new goods (iconically new clothes and cloth). In analysing the latest phase of the ‘coming of the light’ in the last two decades, MacCarthy links conversion to evangelical Christianity, the pursuit of cash and commodities and a heightened individualism (echoing Robbins 2004). Lepani is less persuaded of fundamental changes in the values pertaining to persons—insisting on the persistence of relational personhood and collective regeneration in the face of the challenges of modernity, including that of HIV and the individualist biomedical model promoted to redress it

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10 This volume arose out of research funded by the Australian Research Council, which was dedicated to exploring that question, namely ‘Engendering Persons, Transforming Things: Christianities, Commodities and Individualism in Oceania’ (FL100100196), an ARC Laureate project on which the editors were valued colleagues.

(see Lepani 2008, 2010, 2012, 2015). Like many other authors, she observes how the introduced things and values associated with Christianity have become indigenised so that rather than individualisation we witness new clothes, imported fabrics and quilts signalling a persisting relational moral economy and a reconfigured collective ethnic or national identity (as Trobrianders, Papua New Guineans, Tongans and Cook Islanders). Just as the Hawaiian quilt has been indigenised and has served nationalist, anticolonial purposes (Jolly 2014), so we might see Kalo's *koloa*, or the *tivaivai* quilts made and used by Cook Islanders in Auckland, not just as stressing the persistence of the Tongan or Cook Islander values in the diaspora but as a resistance to the hegemony or even the encompassment of the values of the market and of isolated individuals.

## An elegy for the future?

We might ask then whether the supplanting of 'sinuous objects' made by women (albeit indigenous or introduced) by store-bought commodities like duvets or cash in envelopes (as in Horan's chapter) portends dramatically changing values in the future. The editors suggest not.

Horan's example is an indication of the way that recently introduced commodities *replace* the objects of women's wealth. But does this also mean that the value of gift exchange is rendered gender neutral? Commensurate measures of value continue to frame gift giving in gender-specific ways. Transactions retain the gendered nature of the gift along relational lines and through the work of women in organising and staging ceremonial events. Whether gifts are purchased commodities and envelopes of money, or objects that have come into being through women's creative labour, the coherent value in meaning making is still legitimated by gender [emphasis in original] (Hermkens and Lepani this volume).

and

Throughout this volume is the observation that the relationality at the core of women's gift giving confers commensurate value and meaning in exchanges, whether the objects are created through women's embodied labour or purchased and transacted as commodities (Hermkens and Lepani this volume).

Only time will tell if this supreme value of relationality is perpetuated. Pacific women living both in their home islands and in the diaspora are dealing not just with the powerful forces of globalisation but with a world

facing the perils of dramatic climate change. In Papua New Guinea in particular, extractive industries have already felled huge forests, mined precious ores and tapped the country's expansive reserves of gas and oil. While these industries may have contributed to national wealth measured as gross domestic product, the possibilities of employment in the commodity economy and the consumption of desired things (like trucks and mobile phones), the benefits of such industries have been unevenly distributed, and class and gender inequities are steadily increasing (see Jolly et al. 2015). Moreover, although the islands of the Pacific contribute little to the raised levels of carbon emissions in the atmosphere, compared to countries on the rim like Australia, the effects of climate change are already apparent. As sea levels rise with climate change, groves of pandanus and mangroves growing near the ocean have already sustained damage while the changing patterns of rainfall in the region, the likely increased severity of storms and cyclones, floods and droughts will perhaps imperil ecologies in which paper mulberry, breadfruit and banana trees thrive (as well as the indigenous cultivation of taro, yams, sweet potato and sago). In 2007, gardens across Collingwood Bay were submerged and buried under silt in a devastating flood that affected much of Oro Province. The flood not only forced Maisin people and their neighbours to live on government rations of rice and the contributions of working relatives until the gardens could recover, but it also affected tapa. The paper mulberry saplings would not grow in the boggy soil, and hence tapa was not made and exchanged for some time (Barker and Hermkens 2016: 202). The consequences of climate change if not redressed will perforce affect the whole world, including those overdeveloped countries like the United States, China, India, Europe and Australia, which are the primary source of the problem (see Jolly forthcoming) This, together with more critical attitudes towards free trade and policies favouring protectionism within several major global powers, may stall or even reverse some of the hurtling pace of globalisation. Again, only time will tell.

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This text is taken from *Sinuous Objects: Revaluing Women's Wealth in the Contemporary Pacific*, edited by Anna-Karina Hermkens and Katherine Lepani, published 2017 by ANU Press, The Australian National University, Canberra, Australia.