Exchanges and distributions of goods play a central role in Pacific societies. They express key social relationships, especially in kinship and marriage; they substantiate claims to title and to land; and they manifest the prestige of kingroups and individuals. During and after colonialism ‘traditional’ exchanges have not disappeared, but have been transformed. They involve much wider ranges of participants. They have increased in the volume of wealth involved. They have also been heavily commoditized: money and trade goods have been drawn into exchanges, and indigenous valuables (e.g. Samoan fine mats) have been mass produced and commodified. The heavy investments in ‘traditional’ exchange thus means an increasing involvement in the commodity economy. ‘Gift exchange’ becomes a phase in commodity circulation and consumption. ‘Traditional’ exchanges thus may be seen as specific local forms of global consumerism.