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Mortgaging the bridewealth
Problems with brothers and problems with value

Karen SYKES, *University of Manchester*

In this article I raise some questions about the nature of value, largely as these arise from a situation in which the implicit value of the brother-sister relationship is foregrounded and questioned as a challenge to the dignity of Papua New Guinean women living in North Queensland, Australia. In analyses of several case studies of how husbands and wives finance bridewealth payments with new personal financial arrangements, it is possible to identify the outline of a moral economy of risk and interest that has arisen in the last generation. Papua New Guinean women's esteem for their clansmen (as well as their lack of it) is a measure that insures the persistence of their marital households against the risks and interests posed by their brothers. Following the theoretical arguments of Chris Gregory and of Anna Tsing (part one of this special issue), I show how anthropologists, like their informants, must always repose old questions about the nature of value as they sort out issues that arise in contemporary ethnography, and in matters of concern for their own lives.

Keywords: Bridewealth, siblingship, household, dignity, finance, money

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Rosalind felt sorry for her brother when she looked at an old photograph that displayed many kina shells arranged for a bridewealth payment. She said her brother had no shells, but in days gone past her father had many because of the gifts for his many sisters. Now, nobody wanted useless shells but only forty years ago everybody wanted kina shells and they could not get enough of them. Rosalind explained to me, "We marry with money, and with pigs, that's all. Although I feel sorry for all younger men now, I feel sorriest for my brother; he gets neither of these (money nor pigs). Sometimes he comes to my husband to borrow money, but we have to say no. He should remember that he has less work to do for my parents because of when my husband sent them the brid prais (Tok Pisin: bride price) to them, and cared so well for them in their old age. You see, my husband took out a mortgage to build a house for my parents. This was my brid prais to my mother and father, who hold it all. He built a house for them so they could have comfort in their old age. The kina shells my father once used can be found inside my parent's new house, just lying around like paper or rubbish."

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A place in the value debate

Valuable kinship relations are often problematic because they require a great deal of thought; paradoxically, relations between brothers and sisters require special care in order for these to appear to operate without too much thought. Understanding this paradox raises new questions about the nature of value; questions that I explore ethnographically in this article. My approach draws inspiration from Chris Gregory (part one of this special issue), who shows that value entails a human judgment about what is *good* about specific forms of association. For anthropological theory, the value question is not only shaped by human experiences of creative ways of living together but must be continually reposed in the light of new ethnographic evidence of these. I pose some new questions about value, and like Anna Tsing (part one of this special issue) I argue that what we thought we understood about the nature of value under capitalism is no longer the case, especially in years when capital is less concerned with the management of labor and more concerned with the reorganization of human relationships and with the restructuring of finance and debt. The cases I discuss show people coming to terms with social conditions in which market, domestic, and moral values converge. I argue it is a situation in which women's esteem comes to the foreground and dignity becomes a key issue in posing the value question.

By setting out questions about how to study valuable relations, I aim to contribute to the anthropological study of the nature of value, which Gregory (1997: 23) defines as "an invisible chain linking persons, things, and the relations between persons and things." Gregory's definition of value is meant to capture an anthropological puzzle; that is, what is the nature of value given that it is inescap-ably social? The answer to that question begins with acknowledging that value is the effect or outcome of the judgment of people, as these are expressed in their social actions. Accordingly, Gregory (2009) argues that "value" is not an abstract, nonhuman entity; value has valuers who judge what is good about specific ways of living together, a claim that honors Mauss's observations on the social nature of morality. I take that claim here to show that the value of siblingship is often negotiated by husbands and wives who value "brothers-in-law" as collateral kin, even as they dispense with bridewealth payments that traditionally fell to the hands of the wife's brothers and redirect them to her father. As valuers, husbands and wives aim to limit all risks to the solidarity of their marriage and household. Their aim entails the mediation of wider social and economic interests of wife's brothers, whether they make payments of bridewealth or not. In the light of the following cases, Papua New Guinean women are creating a new moral economy that shapes the financialization of bridewealth and ultimately leads to the revaluation of the worth of siblingship in the transnational family. I conclude that in the new moral economy the contemporary Papua New Guinean woman's dignity falls beyond price or worth, as I build on this ethnographic claim and draw on select ethnographic examples from other locales.

Among Papua New Guineans in North Queensland, where Rosalind lives, most recent arrivals in the twenty-first century are those families that are relocating from the national capital to establish permanent residence in Australia. Many also keep houses in Papua New Guinea (PNG) that support key members of their wide networks of kin. They usually have married by traditional or customary law before they emigrate, and have used new financial arrangements to complete the payment

of their bridewealth obligations, with mortgages, insurance policies, and special savings accounts commonly part of the matrimonial exchanges. The loss of traditional or customary currencies for bridewealth means that men and women largely marry without the transfer of money between brothers-in-law, and hence without the extension of money, shells, or pigs to the wider net of collateral kin, uncles, aunts, and cousins. Most payments are made only to the households of the wife's parents, meaning that the loss of an exchange between a woman's husband and her brother can be especially fraught with worries. This article describes how members of these transnational Papua New Guinean households, composed of multiple residences, are creating a new moral economy of limiting risks and extending interests for the management of relations between women's husbands and her brothers, in which brother sister relations are key.

I have chosen Rosalind's comments as an epigraph to this article. She highlights the more widely felt history but poses it in terms that are particular to those indigenous women who negotiate the contemporary relations of personal finance. The specificity of her experiences is not as narrow as it first appears. Not only Rosalind but also many others—who sustain households in different locales around the world—report that financial arrangements have converged intricately with everyday domestic life during the last forty years. Householders, including others like Rosalind whose family members are extended over long and short distances, must cope with the mutability of valued kinship relations in a world where personal finance brings global capitalism into family affairs and challenges the persistence of particular forms of social relationship while fortifying others. More narrowly then, for Rosalind and for other women whose domestic livelihoods entail many complex matrimonial exchanges, the nature of siblingship that is expressed in relations between married women and their brothers comes into central focus. In this article I raise some questions about the nature of value, largely as these arise from a situation in which the implicit value of the brother-sister relationship is foregrounded and questioned as a challenge to the dignity of Papua New Guinean women living in North Queensland.

I show that the value of a woman—her esteem—is composed of these many imponderable transactions of everyday life by which she sorts out her relationships, as in the sense of *sorting* as an act of valuing (a metaphor taken from the literal sorting, which is described by Tsing, part one of this special issue). Brothers and sisters are a little less sure of what value they hold for each other as siblings and especially now that a wife's brother has no duty to redistribute bridewealth to the extended relatives and enhance the dignity of his sister. Hence, their uncertainty about siblingship reverberates into the definition of the women's dignity, a "value beyond price." Here, the specificity of Papua New Guinean women's experience offers insights from which other analyses of value can draw. In the opening vignette, although Rosalind says much about valuable *things*, she also says she is most concerned with the value of her relationship to her brother, especially now that she is living outside PNG and he resides within their homeland. I draw from this married Papua New Guinean woman's point of view that value is usually expressed from a position within its chains; that is, an entangled position once described by Gregory in the mixed-faith Indian household that, once exposed, unsettles its patriarchy (1997). In this article I discuss value from the point of view of the entangled valuer; the perspective of married women migrants from PNG to Cairns

who are dutifully sorting out their relations with kin around the world and declaring which relationships really matter.

It is fair to say that the fact that people make selective judgments about what relations are valuable is not a new idea; its obviousness makes it significant to posing the value question anew. Some anthropologists have shown that selective judgment is instrumental to reproducing the ways of living that matter to them, such as their households if not their societies as a whole (Sahlins 1972; Gregory 1980). Earlier studies largely understand most value judgments as evidence of either the practical economic reason of Euro-Americans (see Carrier 1992; Thomas 1991, 1993), or *others* culture and counter to practical reason (Sahlins 1976). In a related but critical argument, Jonathan Parry and Maurice Bloch (1989) and Stephen Hugh-Jones and Caroline Humphrey (1992) argue that money and other valuables are not acidic to social relations, and do not have the power to dissolve them or to destroy cultural values. Parry and Bloch (1989) are concerned with duration and distances of exchange processes (the time and space of any exchange), qualities of social relations that can be found in either kinship or labor relations of the colonial and postcolonial eras in the Pacific and elsewhere. This is less an argument about the resilience of culture than it is a challenge raised to the concept of value. Marking the differences between monetary and nonmonetary objects of wealth is almost a distraction from the main question about the very nature of valuable relationships. It is an old anthropological wisdom that the nature of value might be found within social relations, in their morality of the exchange that can be compared according to how these distinct forms of association enable the exchangeability of things as gifts, commodities, or goods.

The following cases are concerned with a somewhat different problematic of kinship and economy that are suited to concerns with the new moral economy of money (Gregory 1997) that arose after the failure of the Bretton Woods agreement, which makes risk and interest issues of concern for the continuation of the household as a desirable form of association. Personal mortgages certainly link national and international economies to the values of home ownership and family life, yet as much as this is so it does not follow that what is deemed to be cultural value has been transformed into financial value. If anything, new negotiations over the value of kin—in the tensions in the relationships of sisters and brothers—suggest a sociological development wherein some relations in women's lives are negatively valued. Ongoing negotiations between sisters and their brothers about debt, interest, and risk shape the new moral economy in which financial products such as mortgages are increasingly common in matrimonial transactions and are known as goods for artful ways of living together. In order to better understand the key issues of the new moral economy, I examine two cases in which financial arrangements feature in bridewealth gifts, and seemingly create a challenge to the brother-sister relations in bridewealth exchanges. I raise some questions about value that are highlighted by concepts of risk and interest in moral economy of personal debt that have arisen over the last generation.

The value of a relationship with a brother in transnational PNG households

Two longer cases describe the marriages of PNG women who are living in Australia; in each case the couple were married in PNG and migrated after the

marriage was completed. The first case is a marriage between a man from Goroka and a woman from New Ireland who now work in Northern Queensland for the health department. The second case is a marriage between a man from West New Britain and a woman from the South Coast who now live in Cairns, from where he commutes to his work as a civil servant in Port Moresby where he is responsible to the government treasury.[1] The cases are similar insofar as they demonstrate a new trend in bridewealth among educated migrants from PNG to Northern Australia, where they are using financial products such as mortgages to make bridewealth payments, often to pay for a new house for the bride's parents in Papua New Guinea. The mortgages I describe are held by one or the other of the marriage partners living in Northern Queensland, while the houses that these marital partners finance stand in Kavieng and Port Moresby and are occupied by the parents of the marital couple, as is often typical in transnational kin relations. One couple uses a bank in Port Moresby, the other a bank in Queensland. Although these are examples of the monetization of matrimonial exchange, they do not provide evidence that marriage is emerging as a way of generating economic value. Instead, I show that the value of siblingship lay in its place in the human condition and informed the ethos of dignity. Each of these two cases raised larger questions about the relations of the sister to her brother, whether he was recipient of some of the bridewealth or not: "the value question" in this article is specific, namely, how does a sister value her relationship with her brother in the transnational PNG family?

At the very least, how Papua New Guinean women value their brothers is central to understanding the PNG household as a transnational entity, whether or not they sustain the men financially. For the purpose of this article, I am making a three-way comparative interrogation of the categories of analysis used to analyze the role of women in society, using a strategy introduced in Marilyn Strathern's *The gender of the gift* (1988). Strathern interrogated ethnocentric assumptions of scholarship that focused on problems with women and problems with society, alternating her criticisms first from the perspective of Melanesian ethnography, then from the theory of political economy, and finally from the ideological concerns of late twentieth century feminist politics.[2] However, I aim to understand the role of a wife's brothers in new forms of bridewealth, and how problems with brothers and problems with value can be raised in the early twenty-first century in a triadic interrogation. First a caution: many scholars have read Strathern's aforementioned book as if it sat on a hinge of a Melanesian / Western comparison, in the way that Louis Dumont's (1970) project interrogated the relation of religion and economy in the respective constitution of the hierarchies of values underlying caste and class. However, Strathern does not believe that an ideological system of value hierarchy subsumes kinship. Instead, her critique of social science as

1. The names used in these cases are pseudonyms and the details of their employment are fictional. They are indicative accounts of transnational households, and do not describe individual persons and their households.

2. Strathern's *The gender of the gift* (1988) transformed the terms of scholarly debate over reproduction, changing the structural functionalist concerns with inheritance, legal rights to land, and reproduction of these, as well as the structuralist concern with the substantive and formal qualities of *woman* and of *the relation*.

ideology deploys a comparative approach that unmoors *human nature* as the ark or ship to carry society (see also Bamford 2006), and thereby enters into a long debate about the value of women in social-economic reproduction (for examples, see Strathern 1987, 1981). Of course, the breadth of the scholarly foray made by Strathern (1988)—or its extension by Sandra Bamford (2006) to the study of human biology—is beyond the scope of this article in which I narrow my focus to look at how sisters value their relations to their brothers in contemporary bride-wealth exchanges.

The value of a relationship with a brother lies in its key role in establishing conditions of social solidarity, which women experience as a sense of uniformity with their siblings of their natal clan. Accordingly, sisters might substitute for each other, whereas brothers might replicate sisters (Strathern 1988, but also 1999). The importance that women see in their relations with their brothers might be a bit clearer if I return to the legacy of that older debate in Melanesian ethnography that now stirs anew among transnational Papua New Guinean households stretching between contemporary Queensland and their homeland. The old debate among structuralists and structural functionalists displaced most commonplace assumptions that bridewealth measured the value of woman as a gift of ceremonial valuables for a wife, by highlighting, as does Lévi-Strauss (1969), that matrimonial exchange was always the exchange of sisters, whether in the short or long cycle of the reciprocity between clans as the most significant social group. However, it is not enough to simply point to Lévi-Strauss's astute observation that the importance of defining matrimonial exchange lies with the discussion of the exchange of sisters by their brothers. A secondary debate has fresh resonance in these new times. The difference between matrilineal and patrilineal clans is often misunderstood to be grounded in how they seem to mirror each other, as if descent groups recruited members by marking social uniformity following either the mother or the father. Strathern and Annette Weiner dramatically rethought these distinctions by asking what is the form of social uniformity in matrilineal and patrilineal societies, with somewhat surprising results for social analysis. In the cases I will discuss, the clan has become a significant group that expresses its uniformity by men acting in concert with the support of their wives, whose interests are divided between their clan of birth and their clan of marriage, or by women acting in tandem with their brothers, with whom they hold a sense of identity as children of the same mother.

In all cases of transnational households of Papua New Guineans settled in North Queensland, the value of a brother is his work replicating the identity of his sister's (another man's wife's) natal clan. In the cases of the migrant community of Papua New Guineans living in the cities of Cairns, Townsville, or Brisbane Cairns, identity is established through creating uniformity in one of two ways: clanship or siblingship. Two cases follow that show how these valuable relations—the uniformity of clanship and of siblingship—are each expressed through new financial arrangements of the bridewealth. On the one hand, women feel at one with the uniformity of their husbands' clan relations, as when the clan of the husband is recognized to be an internally cohesive social group that women as wives of its members genuinely support but sometimes challenge in order to assert their personal interests (such might be the case in marriages between members of patrilineal clans). Accordingly, uniformity is expressed by the husband's patrilineal clan, which subsumes women as the wives of its members into it as "dividuals"

(Strathern 1980). On the other hand, women feel a bond of identity or of uniformity in brother-sister relations and recognize they belong to one clan, when they express that clan's interests as one in the same with their shared interest in their sibling relationships (as might be the case between members of matrilineal clans). Uniformity is thereby achieved through recognition of mutuality of affection and respect within the sister-brother relationship, which subsumes individual women into siblingship with brothers (Weiner 1976, 1980, 1992). Sometimes this feeling of identity with kin in home villages and towns moves Papua New Guineans in Cairns to sustain ceremonial transactions with their kin back home. We can ask how a woman's feeling of identity is bonded to her brothers, such that it moves women in Australia to finance and worry about their brothers in PNG.

The value of a married woman's relationship to her brother is ever present in contemporary bridewealth discussions in Northern Queensland.[3] It is important to point out that in earlier years, traditional marriage gifts were almost absent in mixed cultural marriages between Australians and Papua New Guineans.[4] It is largely the case that few marriages between PNG women and Australian men rely on bridewealth to solemnize them. Papua New Guinean women often say that a wife's closest male relatives "lose out." With the arrival of PNG men in Australia and new knowledge of the responsibilities they each carry to their wife's family, a few Australian men have modified the custom of bridewealth as an idiomatic expression of respect for their wife and her kin / his in-laws. They say they continue to send generous gifts home to their wives' villages because they want to show their in-laws in the provinces of PNG that they are grateful for such a wonderful wife. One couple who organized a large gift of undamaged desks to a south coast province using goods from a Queensland school said as much when they presented a whole classroom of equipment to a small school in the wife's village. At the ceremony, the husband stayed in the background, and like most Australian men I have met, had little to say to his wife's brothers. These are men who typically go about their business of making a home in suburban Cairns, and try to live quiet lives.

However, the more recent migration of PNG couples and their families have kept the traditional practice of paying bridewealth, which in PNG is recognized by the constitution as legal marriage. These contemporary bridewealth arrangements can be discussed for what they show us about the value of the relationships between the wife and her brother, as well as between the husband and his brothers. For some people of this most recent migration, the relationship with family in PNG becomes a feature of weekly life, as the brothers of each wife make ongoing demands on the household. Sometimes the men are testing what they now call their brother-in-law's clan, as a resource for wealth that might be accessed by them. Other brothers test the new Cairns household's obligations to them, and wonder if

3. While the migration from PNG to Australia has a long history beginning in the late nineteenth century with indentured labor for the sugar plantations, the descendants of those early migrants, recognized as the South Sea Islanders in Queensland, are not the principal concern of this article.

4. Marriages between highland and islands, or coastal peoples made bridewealth arrangements with nondescript or even ubiquitous currencies, such as money and pigs.

their sister's husband feels a general commitment to the spirit of equality.[5] In either case, the recognition of kinship relations holds significance to political life in PNG, as the major feature of PNG identity for determining citizenship and access to land there. Hence, Cairns residents' ongoing contribution to the lives they share with kin in PNG is the key way that they identify as Papua New Guineans in Australia and in their homelands.

In the twenty-first century, ever greater numbers of PNG couples are migrating to Northern Queensland each year while maintaining work in Port Moresby, in mining in PNG, or while finding job transfers to businesses in Queensland, winning visas on the basis of their expertise. In order to create their own most important connections to PNG, men and women use bride price to signal traditional marriage and to insist on their cross cutting commitments to claims to ground, investment in social projects "up there," and to social projects "down here," which they launch in order to do something to help their mothers, or younger sisters, or other relatives who still live in the village or settlement. Among overseas Papua New Guineans, the distance and location are not barriers to these arrangements, but the thoughtfulness about the uses of bridewealth is central to their work. Indeed, I have recently been corrected and told to use the Tok Pisin (TP) word "brid prais" instead of bridewealth, because the women I know argue that maintaining the use of the TP term also signals that it should never have been translated from the vernacular, as a social form deeply embedded in their society. I do not think that they are showing me that this problem can be explained as a reinscription, or an example of how that tradition is more strongly marked in the future than in the past, but their concerns show a need to find a language to talk about revaluations of a relationship that are far from obvious or finalized. They are exploring a way to discuss how new marriages among Papua New Guineans require a renegotiation of the relationships to brothers. Clearly, the importance of holding onto it as a social form requires some thought about the shape of the revaluation of siblingship.

What is the significance of the new relations that women have with their brothers? Certainly, they all give a great deal of thought to their relationships with them, as a specific kin relation that has long been managed through terms of address that communicate respect, if they do not simply avoid brothers regularly. Women say they feel the absence of the traditional habit of sustaining asymmetrical relations with male siblings, a form of relationship that emerged for sisters in the past, when a woman left her brothers and was subsumed into the husband's clan. These were asymmetrical relations in the sense that she retained her clan

5. Not only is this a new question to ask about the process of making interactions with brothers into valuable relationships for migrants, it should also be emphasized just how under-examined the importance of fraternal relations in most studies of international migration have been. Most discussions of the relationship between migrants and their brothers tend to focus on those migrants who come together as brothers of a migrating family, and compare their different career trajectories. Most scholars of international kinship are concerned with generational relations, wherein cultural changes are mapped as the loss of traditional values over the generations rather than on the revaluation of the relations of siblingship.

identity, but could not express it as a wife or sister except by honoring and acknowledging her brother as her husband's brother-in-law.

A sister's relations with her brother engender a new kind of politics of kinship and economy in Cairns, where the problem associated with financial risk comes to the center stage of kinship relations and threatens social reproduction. In the past, most attempts to establish ideological unity through contemporary marriage exchanges existed in tension with asymmetrical relations between brothers and sisters; but this is not so in the present. There is no harmony in the flow of wealth from the husband's clan to that of the brothers. At the least, a man's demands on his sister's husband risks the brother-sister relationship itself, and hence the success of the sister's marriage, too. They have taken steps as well to refigure risk, as part of the debt relations in which they are embedded in a post–global financial crisis world. In many ways PNG women in Cairns have taken leadership roles in negotiating the moral terrain of their node of social relations by redistributing the risk of debt, in the absence of the ethos of respect that would normally govern risk in the asymmetrical relations between brother and sister. As a result, the two case studies that follow demonstrate the increasingly paradoxical conditions of the lives of contemporary Papua New Guinean women. Each woman knows that they hold long-term obligations to sustain mutual respect with their brothers. However, seldom do these women see their children benefit from their efforts to sustain relations with their brothers, as in the first case study I discuss. PNG men sometimes meet their duties to their sisters' sons if they choose to do so when the youth return to the homeland; a fact that might constitute the loss of asymmetrical reciprocity, and the ethos of respect in gender and in kinship more generally, despite the strongest wishes of a sister to sustain it with her brothers.

In the interest of a wife's brothers

Not so long ago, Annie and her husband James moved to Cairns when he took up a job as a doctor in a local practice. Annie, a woman from New Ireland, had married James, a man from Goroka, where they both worked as doctors in the same hospital before they moved to Australia. Long geographic distances between natal villages are not the only condition that challenged the professional couple: they have made a complex set of arrangements to establish a legitimate marriage between a Highlander and an Islander of Papua New Guinea. They are also challenged to find a common currency for the marriage of two socially distinct villages—one matrilineal the other patrilineal—and each party to the union possessed a distinctive form of currency. Such complex marital arrangements bound husband and wife in networks of exchange of shell wealth that were not mutually convertible.

When Annie married she arranged a mortgage from a bank for a house and a plot of land, using her salary to ensure the repayment of the bank's loan. The house was to be built in her home village in central New Ireland and the plot of land was surveyed and registered with the courts in order to legally secure the site that her father claimed as his customary garden, having been in the very same place that his father had gardened many years ago. The mortgage was of considerable size, and the expenses incurred included a land survey, a title purchase, and the labor and material costs of building a very modern house with glass windows, indoor plumbing, and electric indoor lighting run by a generator. This house and

the land it stood on allegedly completed the bridewealth due to her matrilineal clan, specifically Annie's six brothers and her mother's only brother. However, the land was formerly a garden that her father's father had cultivated and had used the harvested taro to host his own father's funeral. Annie's father had ceded his usury land rights over one of his gardens to her so that she could claim full, uncontested ownership of that garden that had been made on a plot of land that was fundamentally found within her own clan's larger grounds. The importance of this decision was that Annie was able to build a house on land that no one would challenge her ownership over, and therefore she could dispose of it as she desired. Now the house, and the land it stands on, are legally the property of Annie, who is described as head of her matrilineal clan on the land registration documents because she had been able to negotiate the land registration and the mortgage against that registered land by showing her claim was unimpeded by any cross cutting claim, such as that her father had held there. The land is collateral for the loan for the house that stands on it, and at the time of Annie's bridewealth arrangements it was transferred to her mother, who received it so that she might live well with Annie's father into their old age. Annie anticipated that her parents would be buried there—a fact that obliged her brothers to care for the graves in the men's house enclosure so that sorcerers would not steal the bones, and in the future challenge the access to the ground by way of debating their traditional knowledge of the site.

It took most of Annie's doctor's salary to complete the payments, which were spread over a decade, and her income was potentially lost to it insofar as she and her husband were unable to meet requests for contributions to her relative's school fees and funeral arrangements, as would normally be the case in the matrilineal villages of Annie's home. Making the house payments excused her from giving her salary into the hands of many individual people, and she kept the large, single (perhaps emblematic) debt of the house and land in the foreground of her conversations with them, highlighting it as her gift to her father and mother. When asked if she were able to make such contributions, she told her relatives to enjoy the house, or to rent it to backpackers to secure a little extra cash. (Backpackers and other tourists do not typically visit the area.) Later, on advice from Annie's husband, her father and her brothers used the property as collateral to take out a bank loan to start a small trucking business. In effect, the payment of her mortgage allowed her to extend her bridewealth gifts to her matrilineal clan over many years, as was generally the social norm in New Ireland, but to restrict the gift to her father and mother, who managed it in negotiations with her brothers.

Annie's husband James came from a patrilineal clan near Goroka, in the highlands, and their one-off gift of a house as a bridewealth arrangement suited his need to complete the series of matrimonial exchanges in one fell swoop, as his own patrilineal clansmen expected him to do. The bank had expected a down payment against the property as a condition of the mortgage, and so the first 20 percent down payment for the mortgage was gathered from his patrilineal clansmen. Even deep investigations of the specifics always seem to make the arrangements appear more prescriptive that descriptive, but it is generally safe to say that his own clan brothers and his father's clan brothers contributed to this house by arranging the bridewealth as down payment on a mortgage. Hence, the patrilineal clan of the husband arranged a bridewealth gift to be transmitted to the matrilineal clansmen

of the new wife. Mortgage arrangements were then made possible by this harnessing of kinship obligations to meet the bank rules for lending.

How can we see this most clearly? A diagram of the flow of the money used in the bridewealth arrangements does not really complete the account but here is one that begins that work of summarizing the situation wherein Annie emerges fully as a moral actor, compelled of her own accord to measure the value of some relations against others, while grand scale transactions complete the bridewealth arrangements for her brothers, who are sometimes known as the matrilineal clan, and made in her name.

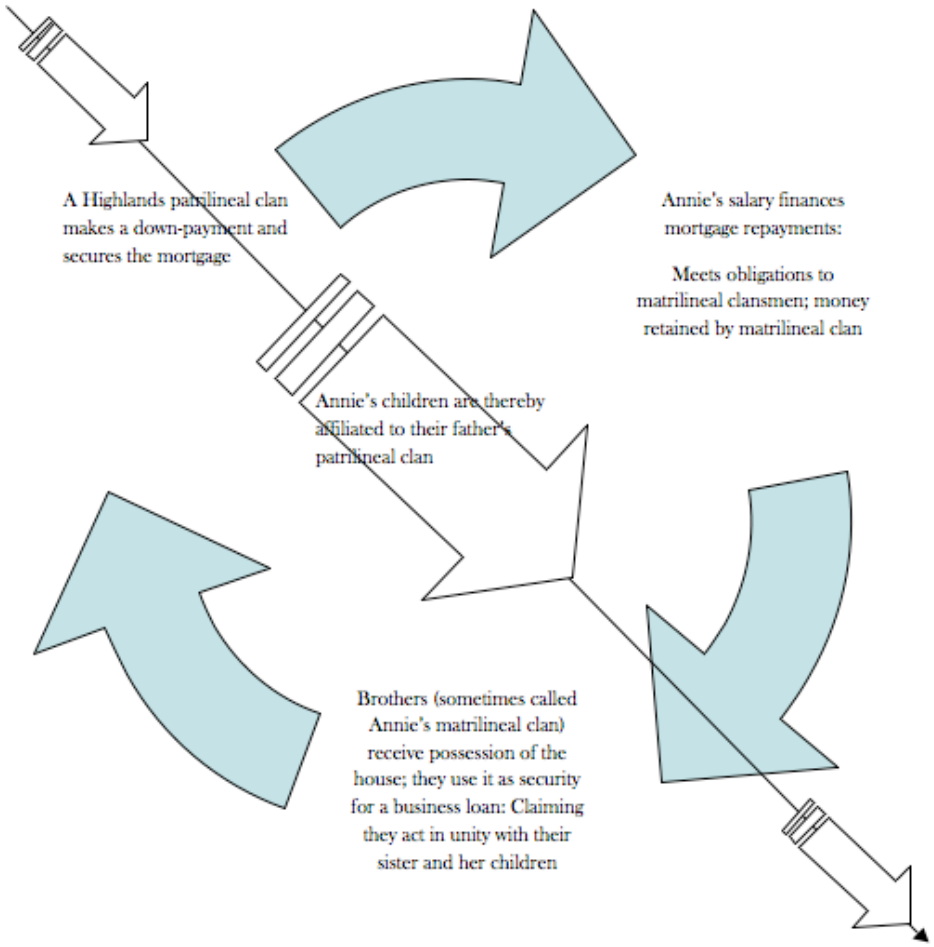

Figure 1: The single cash down payment by Highlander patrilineal kin is represented by the arrow that cuts through the diagram. The payment assures the affiliation of the children to the highlands clan. The Islands financial support of the mortgage is ongoing, as represented by the cyclical arrows. The financial cycles include benefits for the wife's brothers, who lose daily access to the children born to their clan.

In this case, how brother-sister relationships are being revalued in the new transnational kinship connections made by PNG residents in Australia, or across

PNG, entails judging the quality of the relationships and measuring their importance to other relations. The Highlanders' down payment was an investment in future care for themselves; care that they expected to receive from the children of the marriage of their clansman, James. The arrangement of mortgage for the house—and its ownership by Annie in trust for her matrilineal clan—meant that it was used as collateral for her brothers to draw down business development loans. They bought a truck and purchased an old copra company. The brothers enjoyed these as business developments, with no obligation to their sister's children, as significant kin. Annie's brothers gave very little thought to their sister's sons while they pursued their own economic activities. They hoped only that in practicing their trade that they would successfully keep their customers and secure the company a small profit so that they could repay their business loan. They enjoyed being on the road, conducting their business, and had only to pay off the business development loan in order to meet their mixed obligations to the bank and to their sister who had backed the loan (in order to assure her respect for them as worthy brothers). Looking back at the story, it would appear that Annie had managed to arrange respectful relationships around her while her brothers were able to focus on their financial obligations to her and the bank, and divested themselves of responsibility for care for their sister's children.

Putting limits on risks

A second case raises questions about how to limit the economic risk that a wife's brothers seemingly pose to the conjugal household. More precisely, it shows how limiting this risk means the traditional ethos of respect between siblings of different sex (relations of brothers and sisters) now finds fraught expression in financial arrangements for home ownership. One couple, Mary and Fred, studiously restricted their financial relations with brothers when they moved to Cairns. Previously cohabiting in Moresby, Fred completed his bridewealth payments before they migrated, and made a major gift to his wife's parents when he built a new house for them in their home village, not far from Port Moresby. In contrast to the wider network of kin that James and Annie had created with the arrangements of a mortgage, Fred made the gift of bridewealth for Mary entirely on his own directly to Mary's natal mother and father.

Fred made no further gift that could be used by Mary's brothers. Together Mary and Fred told her brothers that the home would provide the elderly couple with a better standard of living in their old age, and would thereby reduce the costs for their care that Mary's brothers would have otherwise shouldered. Such arrangements for the bridewealth created debate and expressions of dissatisfaction. Like in Annie's case, the brothers expressed some anxiety about the fair measure of their bridewealth share, but unlike Annie's brothers whose interests in the exchange were satisfied, these brothers were not. Even a decade after the bridewealth was completed, the brothers insisted that something should come directly to each of them in order to show respect for the relationship that they each had with their sister. Fred refused.

Fred had already paid the bridewealth to Mary's parents well before the brothers even knew he had completed the arrangements. He then negotiated the exclusion of his own brothers from any "late" contribution to the bridewealth, explaining the work was complete and Mary's parents were happy. Although his

brothers had enthusiastically offered to contribute to the arrangements—even after Fred refused their offers—no new contributions were accepted from them. Fred knew that his brothers were like him: they were the children of parents from different parts of PNG. Their father was from a matrilineal clan and their mother from a patrilineal clan; each parent had limited claims on their clan resources and very few entitlements as a result of their heritage, which did not include access to clan grounds. Their mother did not access significant clan lands through her father's clan and their father could not pass on access to his clan grounds to his children. The specific complications of this marriage between Fred's parents made the children landless, a case that was not altogether unfamiliar in contemporary Papua New Guinea. Further, they were dependent on the opportunities offered to them by education and work to make their way in the world. The brothers had long expected to be economically independent of their father and mother given the restrictions on their entitlements to land through kinship. With all of that history in mind, Fred diplomatically refused his brother's contributions on the grounds that they had other demands on their money, and he could manage by himself.[6]

By examining the limits of risk in Mary's and Annie's cases, it is possible to show how the parents of both women have become nonpaying permanent tenants in homes owned by their children, who are the new generation of property owners. Mary's case appears to isolate her from relatives. The house is registered in her husband's name, and her parents are listed with the local government as the inhabitants, and it is paid for by her husband. However, it is not Mary's house in any way, as was the case for Annie. If we look closer, it seems clear that Annie owns her home by keeping her brother's interests in the foreground, whereas Mary protects her home with her husband by surrendering her interests in land in her natal village to her husband, the homeowner for her parents.

In both cases, social and economic risk is minimized by managing the brother-sister relationship through a show of respect in some form of traditional

6. Not all cases are so clearly about the protection of the household against demands of economic risk, some entail agonizing about moral dilemmas. In Cairns, Mary's friend Linda had a different story to tell about the ways that "tradition" was used to limit risks to the household. Linda's youngest brother left one day without a word of advice about his plans or destination. A rumor circulated that he had moved to a coastal oil palm plantation. At home, his best means of making a living had been horticulture and cash cropping coffee, but these were no longer viable, so he upped roots and went into business as a small-hold producer of oil palm in the villages near Kimbe, West New Britain. He left his wife behind in the care of his elder brother, who was responsible as the jural authority in his small family's daily life. While not quite a second wife to her husband's brother because her husband had not died (but left for distant shores), the young woman was in an awkward position. Her husband had abandoned his customary role as provider. Her husband's eldest brother complained he was not a Big Man, in the sense that he was not wealthy and did not have money for the care of his brother's wife. At his personal expense, he hired a car to drive her to the nearest port and paid the fare for the family to travel by ship to Kimbe. To this day, Mary's friend Linda has had no word from her youngest brother and his wife. It is true that the traditional responsibility was fulfilled because the elder brother met his responsibility to the younger brother. However, the effects of that custom played out ambiguously as a failure of the ethos of respect, in the effort to fulfill the ethos itself.

bridewealth exchange. As the political relations of contemporary PNG society are characterized, Annie emerges as a very interesting political figure. She stands as a woman in between households, as she both holds them together from the inside and joins them to each other by standing in between them. While this appears to be very similar to many traditional PNG households, in which women were first thought to stand "in between" (Strathern 1972), later literature shows that has long been a false conceptualization of the problems of being a woman in Melanesian society. As I discussed in the earlier pages, women's position cannot be understood unless their sense of identity with uniform groups is better analyzed, too. Most typically, the nature of a woman's sense of solidarity lies with her husband's kin groups or with her brother, as the key relationship wherein she feels a sense of uniformity with her natal clan. Annie is somewhat different than the traditional woman, who seeks to identify as a sister with her brother's clan by valuing the uniformity of their relationship, or to identify as a wife with her husband's clan by valuing it through giving support to its collective work. Consider Annie as the woman in-between the highlands and the islands, both elite wife and village sister. Annie is a financier rather than a producer of pigs, a skilled doctor rather than a gardener, and she is an example of the contemporary young woman as "boss," as Papua New Guineans say with a grin. If she is a boss, then she is both a political cypher and a fully developed moral character, able to sort out the relationships of others during this contemporary period of PNG history.

Respect and the politics of dignity; some final thoughts on the nature of value

My comparison of each of these ways of arranging bridewealth shows that traditional respect covers the new measure of immaterial/intangible forms of value, and its authentic expression matters as much as a vendor's possession of true and trustworthy scales for trading in goods. The women I have known have each been specifically concerned with showing respect as rule or measure of the risk and the interest they hold in relations with brothers. As a rule, or a social norm governing behavior, respect matters in those relations where the jural authority of the Australian state does not take precedence over traditional matrimonial exchange, leaving women to become the adjudicators of the value of their relations with their brothers. In Annie's case, a woman can arrange bridewealth for herself and her brothers, because she values her relations with her brothers and she hopes for closer relations between her children and them. Where no bridewealth is paid to the brothers, as in Mary's case, then a sister can only manage the moral tenor of her relation with her brother in order to convey respect to him. She explains the justice to be found in the decision to not pay bridewealth to him and instead give it to their parents. In neither case is the rule of respect in measuring brothers' relations with their sisters to be considered the evocation of a false ideology, it is merely a rule or social norm. Respect is an ideological measure of behavior that marks a confrontation between wider extended relations of kinship created with bridewealth and the restricted and more narrowly held value of a brother in the new economy.

Gregory (1997) defines value as an invisible chain, and in so doing preseves some issues about its puzzling nature: How does the nature of value hold men's and women's interest in creating the stable social form known as bridewealth,

whether those are mortgages or shells and pigs? In order to consider this value question more fully, I have raised several problems about how it is considered and analyzed, which the women in each case study are now pondering. In these two cases, both Mary and Annie manage their brothers' interests in the bridewealth. Their brothers had either received, or not received, wealth from their new brothers-in-law (the women's husbands). Why so? The ways in which kinship and economy embed each other in an era of personal finance—and thereby up-end the meanings of risk and interest as they are deployed in such economic decisions as arranging mortgages—gives respect a new purchase on the invisible chains that join persons to things and insight on the relations between persons and things.

The second question about the nature of value explores how it is tied into interests in the work carried out by each marital partner, as if this household labor existed apart from the morality of its enactment. Each spouse measured the other's interest in the marriage by judging the value of his or her contribution to it, including their shared work, in financial terms; such that the Papua New Guinean woman had been reconfigured as a "trade store" instead of a daughter (Jorgensen 1993). Trade stores, for those who don't know Melanesia very well, are often spoken of as akin to village piggeries and the wealth kept therein was a source of material security. A daughter was a business to be managed by her father and brothers who envisioned the wealth that they would acquire at the time of her marriage. By contrast to the men's imagined role for their daughters and sisters as resources, Holly Wardlow (2006) wrote of the women's critical perspective on this. She showed that Huli women sought conventional arrangements of bridewealth for their marriages because they wanted to be addressed as human beings, not as the "daughters of pigs," without human relatives and without the dignity of clan affiliations.

Third, in order to understand the nature of value, it helps to ask how interest appears as a natural desire for material worth. The new transnational PNG household emerged from disjuncture in networks of kinship and economy that now stretch across the Pacific, at the same time matrimonial gifts became known as the wealth of the conjugal household throughout Asia. However, the case of the mortgage as bridewealth in transnational PNG kinship relations does not compare easily with more contemporary studies of changing interests in the economization of the Asian dowry, where the wealth of matrimonial exchange is consolidated and controlled by the younger generation as their conjugal property. Arguably, new intimacies express the changing relationships within the family, and the clan as a corporate form gives way to the conjugal relation as a private economic agreement (Yan 2004; Mody 2009). Changing the form of dowry gifts, from gold and gemstones to finance, has led to the delimitation of the interests of the clan into those of the conjugal household. As in the Asian example, the cases described in this article show that sometimes people refused to extend matrimonial gifts to elder generations or to the extended clan, and thereby restricted the financial arrangements to the best interests of the marital household. Other times, a commitment to a larger corporate gift (as when clansmen collaborate to make a down payment on a house) enabled the conjugal household to expand the financial arrangements for their own interests as well as for those of kinsmen's households.

Allied to the changes that restrict some social relations and expand others, there is a related shift in the moral economy that recognized a woman's dignity as a wife

and a sister. Consider details of the Asian example again (Yan 2004), where the younger generation's interests in household wealth are separated from those of the older members, the ancestral spirits no longer lay claims in the interest of clan solidarity and the household shrines become no more than ornamental installations. The new moral economy of the Asian household records a loss of respect, with the demand to rethink relations of prestige in new urban Asian households, where residents now grumble that modern young women have become household bosses. New questions might now be asked about the ways that Rosalind seems to enjoy a new dignity for her ability to respond to her brother's woes, ones that Jack Goody and Stanley Tambiah (1983) might have predicted on the basis of their much earlier comparative study of matrimonial exchanges in Africa and India.

Despite the earlier prediction, it is not quite clear that bridewealth in PNG can be increasingly claimed as part of the conjugal property in distinct socioeconomic strata or groups of society, or in too many ways that are similar to the Asian example. It is true that my cases show that the members of the conjugal household have protected it from the claims of both the husband's and the wife's parents by making it into their own property, as new, educated Papua New Guinean spouses who deal as adeptly with aspects of mortgage arrangement as they do with traditional marriage. Although Maurice Godelier (2012) recently argued that the preferential marriage rules do not extend across societies, he points out that humans everywhere seemingly wish to adapt themselves to new societies rather than resist resettlement by retrenching their own beliefs in the rules of honor, shame, and respect that govern them. In this case it appears that the social norms persist, while people change the forms of value that are best known as goods (mortgages versus pigs and shells). For Godelier, values are malleable; only if by value one means sociocultural norms, such as the obligation to return what has been given. However, if value is explored as an invisible chain that links persons, things, and relations between persons and things, then even value's most intangible aspects—in this case risk and interest—can be known in its social expression. Is the *good* known by what form of social action it takes, perhaps as respect, as readily as it is known by how it is materialized as an object of wealth, such as the mortgage? In recent research, Martha MacIntyre (2011) shows that some women avoid marriage in order to win respect, and thereby enjoy their own lives as the outcome of participation in many human relationships, which is valuable in its own right. As they begin to rethink the value of bridewealth in transnational contexts, which do not always recognize it as the fabric of Melanesian society as even the PNG constitution does, MacIntyre (2011)[7] tells us that they sometimes challenge even the traditional exchange of bridewealth as a breach of Human Rights protocols.

7. These studies are not concerned with the nature of kinship—that is a given—but about the value of specific kin relations. Different from Louis Dumont's study of the value of affinity (Dumont 1983), which is written as if it were possible to analyze the value of kinship relations from the outside looking in, I attend to how the world appears from the perspective of those who view it while deeply embedded within relations with kin. I can explore the nature of value as it is deeply embedded in a complex network of kin, true to long standing feminist principles of scholarship, which interrogated relationships of subject and object and overthrew epistemic beliefs underpinning apparently mundane, normal behavior by writing from a gendered perspective.

Finally, interrogating the nature of value shows that something odd happens to human interests when these are risked in social actions undertaken as duties to others. The transnational PNG household compels us to ask, how do risk and interest come to appear as if they are forces external to valuable social relations and then come to be measured psychological features of individuals? Rosalind's story in the introduction provided a departure point in this article for the critique of the ideology of risk and interest as human universals that inform the nature of value. At the beginning of this article, I cited a critical commentary on that ideology by a real woman named Rosalind, who lives in Cairns and was born in PNG. But, at the end of this article, I pause to consider a fictional Rosalind, one who is found in seventeenth-century literature, in the story of a Shakespearean theatrical script, whose narrative has been standardized. I consider how the fictional character now seems to inform the legacy of historical sociology that traces the transformation of kinship relations from the late Renaissance period into the modern families of the twentieth century. Shakespeare's play, *As you like it* is entitled enigmatically, as much to show that the audience might interpret the story according to their interests, as to show how shifting social norms now supported the development of an early modern subjectivity expressed by moral character and personal prestige. For Shakespeare's Rosalind, who was separated from her father's protection and threatened by her uncle's political ambition, moral character mattered as much, or more than, the honor of the extended kin of a family. Correlate studies in historical sociology describe the end of a moral economy of kinship, in which values are expressed for and by kin in order to reproduce kinship relations, and the rise of a new moral economy of labor, in which human creativity is organized as a system of production. In the new moral economy, money is traded for things and persons without concern for the importance of the moral character or personal dignity, and the new moral sentiments become private concerns of individuals (Goody 2005; Bellah et. al. 1985; Giddens 2002). In such a world the wealth used in matrimonial exchange becomes morally ambiguous, and where sisters become familiar as sources of material goods, bridewealth is a challenge to the wellbeing of family and kin.

The popular account of the commodification of sisters by their brothers, and its correlate story about the end of either the invisible chains of clan identity, or the uniformity felt in the brother-sister relationship is probably truer for Rosalind's fictional namesake than it is for Rosalind of PNG.[8] An English volunteer nurse named Rosalind after Shakespeare's most renowned heroine. The nurse attended her birth and perceived the baby's future as a strong moral actor in a changing world. By naming the baby girl after that famous Shakespearean character, the volunteer English nurse established a subtle comparison between in the new nation of PNG and early modern England. This article has not addressed the new expression of human sentiments in the Shakespearean drama, and how these strongly felt interests and passions were thought to transform the ontological conditions of one society into another, during a period of moral torment,

8. Namesake is first used in the early to middle seventeenth century (noted in 1635) to refer to the use of a name of an older person for a child, whose life is understood as a tribute to the elder. Place names in the new world relied on many places in the old world to announce namesakes.

dramatized on stage. Neither has it sought the ontological argument that makes it possible to mistake new insight for historical shift (Sahlins 2013), or the rise of romantic love as an emblem of the complex value systems of modernity (Mody 2009; Hirsch and Wardlow 2006; Traweek 1992; Yan 2004). It is the simple case that each of the fictional and the real cases raise new questions in kinship and economy. In particular, members of the domestic moral economy aimed to underline this article's aim to unsettle some conventional wisdom about the nature of value as raised by women about their relations with their brothers, just as did each Rosalind in each era.

The transnational PNG household challenges anthropologists to rethink the nature of value, and has been generating intense discussions about the moral conditions of its provenience; both in the fairness of trade, and the dignity of the partners to it. Oddly, such questions are more or less familiar to that earlier Shakespearean period, when a world in transformation from mercantilism to capitalism linked people and things in trade with gold as a common currency that was to ensure fairness in exchanges and a just price for goods around the globe (Hart, Laville, and Cattani 2011; Gregory 1997). That period also raised some questions about the politics by which fair standards of value came into being at the grass roots of households, as well as in the elite chambers. The contemporary transnational PNG family has raised some similar questions about the ephemeral nature of value standards. For them, human dignity rather than fair exchange is at stake in matrimonial exchange as a set of moral relationships that are only materialized in complex economic agreements on papers—mortgages and property registers—and not seen as shells, pigs, or even national currency as *brid prais*. In circumstances where interests are extended and risks are limited (as is the case in the transnational PNG family), there has been much discussion around the ethics of securing the household wealth for the conjugal partners of a new generation, and the differential nature of the respect given to family members. Arranging matrimonial exchanges entails risks for the transnational family who do not recognize the value of their kin, and especially the value of a wife's brother. This more holistic definition of the nature of value would (possibly) include accounts of the provenience of the wealth and speculations about its misuse. Such a study in the nature of value exceeds economic accounts of a just price for the exchange of sisters, as the case of the transnational Papua New Guinean household shows.

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Hypothéquer la dot. Problèmes de frères et problèmes de valeur

Résumé : Dans cet article, j'interroge la nature de la valeur à partir d'une situation où la valeur implicite de la relation frère-sœur est placée au premier plan et remise en question comme un défi à la dignité des femmes de Papouasie-Nouvelle-Guinée qui vivent dans le nord du Queensland en Australie. Plusieurs études de cas montrent comment les maris et les épouses financent le paiement des dots avec de nouveaux arrangements financiers personnels, et permettent de définir les grandes lignes d'une économie morale du risque et de l'intérêt qui a surgi au cours de la dernière génération. L'estime qu'ont, ou n'ont pas, les femmes de Papouasie-Nouvelle-Guinée pour les membres de leur clan est une mesure qui assure la persistance de leurs foyers conjugaux contre les risques et les intérêts posés par leurs frères. Suivant les arguments théoriques de Chris Gregory (ce volume) et Anna Tsing (ce volume), je montre comment les anthropologues, comme leurs informateurs, doivent toujours reposer de vieilles questions sur la nature de la valeur lorsqu'ils sont confrontés aux problèmes posés par l'ethnographie contemporaine comme aux sujets de préoccupation de leur propre vie.

Karen SYKES is Professor of Anthropology at the University of Manchester. She is the author of *Ethnographies of moral reasoning: Living paradoxes of a global age* (Palgrave 2009) and *Arguing with anthropology: A critical introduction to theories of the gift* (2005). Along with Chris Gregory (ANU/Manchester) and Fiona Magowan (QUB), she holds a research grant from the ESRC-UK (2011–2015) entitled *The domestic moral economy: An ethnographic study of value in the Asia Pacific region.*

Department of Social Anthropology
School of Social Sciences
Arthur Lewis Building-2.057
University of Manchester
Manchester M13 9PL
United Kingdom
karen.sykes@manchester.ac.uk