I have said that I would try to convey what an indigenous visual theory might look like for people who produce objects to be seen. Recall that what is seen is often in deliberate (not incidental) antithesis to what is not to be seen—so [the issue is] not just what is seen but what is being revealed that before was hidden. What is hidden will have its own effect; what is revealed needs a witness.

For this second session, I consider the role of the spectator. In the Mt. Hagen example of ceremonial display accompanying the handover of gifts, on the face of it, the role of the spectator doesn’t seem so different from what we find in Euro-American [understandings of] aesthetics—it is how we might consider any performance when interactions produce spectators and artists produce performances. However, there is a bit more to say than that.

The Hagen material provides us with quite an extreme case where performers on one occasion are among the spectators on the next, and vice versa. This is an alternation constructed through the logic of ceremonial exchange—exchange because of the alternating relationship between donors and recipients, and ceremonial because it is in public and focused on a display. I shall stay initially with Hagen as my principal inspiration and then turn briefly to a rather different location for some similar ideas, Sabarl in the Massim, a region [of Papua New Guinea] made familiar through the Trobriands; the readings relate to that region. The material from Sabarl Island is from the 1970s. [It will become evident why this last part gives the title to the whole, i.e. whole lecture.]
We proceed with an analysis of the role of the spectator by appreciating the way things move between persons. Is there an analogy or parallel between the act of witnessing, where vision “moves” between performer and spectator, and the act of exchange, where gifts “move” between donor and recipient?

The aims of this lecture are twofold.

A. To ask what effects the switches in position:

(1) One way gaze. Each [actor] apparently looks at the other, but in Hagen it is the recipient / spectator who is being invited or lured to look—the donor / displayer is not looking back at them. That is reversed [that is, the reverse happens] when the roles reverse.

(2) At any one time, there is a one-way direction to the flow of items between them. As valuables go back and forth, their roles [the positions of donor and recipient] change. In the Massim that movement is depicted by the valuables themselves.

So [the question is] how is this achieved visually?

B. A commentary on the place of artifacts in all this.

Euro-American anthropologists are interested in making visible “culture” or “society” [including technology], that is, they are interested in the effects of cultural constructions or social institutions. But why should these people—Melanesians—“see” social practice / culture? What they do seem to see are persons, and they see the objects persons produce or create. They don’t theorize social process: that is what the anthropologist does. However, the anthropologist can also imagine those objects or productions or creations working as a kind of analogy to theoretical models [of such process].

Melanesian people manipulate objects as things or artifacts—and I want to show you how models of social process, as the anthropologist would call them, are contained within the artifacts they produce. They use objects to make relationships visible. But they don’t think of these relationships as aspects of “society” [or culture or technology]: they are aspects of persons.

And from this premise we have to understand how people can turn themselves into objects. This is exactly what the Mt. Hagen dancers on
display were doing—the person is made into an entity to be seen. We could thus say that the way in which persons draw others’ attention onto themselves makes themselves the object of other persons’ regard. It is deliberate. They want others to look at them (at certain times, not other times). The person is objectified: in the regard of others [he or she] is turned into an object. Now you see why I can’t use [the term] “objects” interchangeably with “things”: “persons” can be objects. [Kirk’s account—Lecture One—was very sympathetic on this score.] In fact, they may reify themselves—present themselves as things—in doing so, but I come to that later.

And what is implied when people make objects to be seen and those objects are themselves? I want to expand what was sketchily claimed last time, namely that persons decorated are persons transformed: the very act of being seen by a spectator contributes to the transformative effect of the decorations, and to the role of the body as carrier of them.
Exchange and travel in Hagen

[This section was compressed in speaking, since it went over some of the ground covered in Lecture One.]

Let’s start with the implications of decorating as such. Once again, the focus is largely [but not exclusively] on men and adopts a male viewpoint [a construction of group relations with which women largely, but not entirely, concur]. There are two ways of not decorating.

Figure 24. Turned inwards and not outwards, men pull their hair, deliberately unkempt, to greet new mourners (clansmen of the deceased’s sister’s husband). The funeral of Minembi Rying, Mt. Hagen, Western Highlands. 1965. Photograph: Marilyn Strathern.

Funeral: deliberate anti-decoration, like anti-fashion. People are trying to convey an effect contrary to that emblazoned by splendid decorations, and uncovering the hair or smearing the body with dull clay is very opposite of attention to health and bulk.

However, non-decoration [see next figure] is something else.
Figure 25. Kawelka Pundukl and his wife Tipuka Kukile prepare a sweet potato garden at Mbukl. Mt. Hagen, Western Highlands (he is cutting the ditches, she is attending to the soil for planting). Seen in public, Kukile would always have something covering her head and back. 1964. Photograph: Marilyn Strathern.

Husband and wife gardening. Non-decoration.

It was the case [at that time] in Hagen that people went around with little covering, although this [figure 25] is a particularly private moment. To European eyes it seems they often wore next to nothing. And gave nothing away! They concealed everything about themselves.
The way the man in the garden is dressed tells you nothing about himself. Because [regardless of whether you are an outsider or a neighbor] you can’t see the publicly significant things: his political standing, the size of the clan he belongs to, the relationships he has with others, and least of all his wealth.

Unlike the Trobriands, and Massim generally, where food is also an item of wealth and where to see a man in his garden is to see his wealth, here one has to turn garden resources into wealth. This is done, first of all, via (1) food fed to pigs, since household pigs can be turned into exchange pigs, [and thus into] shells, money. A second way of turning garden resources into wealth is via (2) one’s connections with others—especially affines and maternal kin, whom a man assists in assisting his wife (sometimes).

So, when they do decorate, what are people telling you about themselves? They tell you what they are made of [initially, this is what they contain within]. And it is when men decorate that they are said to feel vulnerable; this is the vulnerability of dancers before an audience. They bring to the outside of the body everything that they have within—literally from their house / metaphorically from their insides on to
their skin. When you look at a decorated dancer you see an everted person: what was formerly inside, hidden, is now on display. Hence the conundrum [to the Euro-American observer], that to have little covering is to be hidden, to be decorated is to be exposed.

Figure 27. One of the many groups of decorated men at the 1967 Kuli moka. On their chests, the omak tally records wealth given to others in the past. Mt. Hagen, Western Highlands. Photograph: Marilyn Strathern.

Dancing at a large-scale moka to celebrate the handing over of wealth.

And when you look at a decorated dancer, there are two elements to notice.
First element: the decorated dancer is there in person; it is the body that is presented. Yet why is the body decorated? Why the body idioms? One answer: it is the body’s capacities that are on display—the work that goes into producing pigs / the strength with which a man persuades others to part with their wealth. The pigs or shells exchanged, the feathers worn: they are all seen to be “on the skin” [the body], and make visible a person’s capacities. The first element then is to do with internal growth, and it shows in the strength and renown of clans, in big men. . . . Size of the clan, health of the man, fatness of the pigs, all speak to ancestral support for their well-being. Growth is a sign of ancestral favor. All the spectators will be potential recipients of the image or vision, that is, be witnesses to this accomplishment.
Figure 28. Waiting impassively as the dancing proceeds, a spectator-recipient has come attired in “second best” decorations (darkened face, striped wig covering, cassowary plumage). Ndika, Mt. Hagen, Western Highlands. 1967. Photograph: Marilyn Strathern.
(b) The second element: decorated persons are persons transformed, but this isn’t a transformation that they do alone. The role of certain spectators is also to draw these things [signs of growth] out. Here the spectator [is present] as recipient: recipients in ceremonial exchange have to draw the wealth out of the place where it is hidden—not just hidden in people’s houses, but also in their minds, since recipients have to persuade donors to give to them. The dancers’ diverse relationships with the spectator-witnesses are being tested at the point of display; only certain spectators will be [put in the further relationship of being] recipients of the wealth. This second element, then, is to do with exchange: with [its elicitation of] the external flow of wealth between donors and recipients, and the importance of allies, partners. Donors [in turn] depend on their partners to receive the display.

Understanding this will get us a bit nearer to understanding why these things [decorations, wealth] are carried on the body. It is as though people had turned their skins inside out. Hageners draw on body metaphors to convey this, coded to some extent in the decorations themselves. All the emphasis men put on shine, for instance, on the shells that gleam: it is as though one sees the shiny fat that lies beneath the skin (as with the white fat of pigs, quite startling when cooked) and the blood in the flesh. I shall focus on color as a coding device. We can go through these images quickly.
Figure 29. A newly ornamented moka donor, a bit apprehensive perhaps. Ndika, Mt. Hagen, Western Highlands. 1967. Photograph: Marilyn Strathern.

Through the organization of the decorative items, claims are being made for clan growth and the size of its wealth. Deliberate play on contrasts of light and dark tones points to [the relation between] the inner and outer: outside black: protective / aggressive; inside red: source of fertility / danger.
Figure 30. The top of a particular kind of headdress worn by donors at major events is called “bird bilum [bag]” (koi wal). Ndika, Mt. Hagen, Western Highlands. 1967. Photograph: Marilyn Strathern.

This particular element of a donor’s headdress is only worn on the occasion of prestations to clans of other major groups. Note the red center (incorporating other light colors) enclosed by a dark surround.
The light / dark contrast is basic to the overall decorative effect: figure 31 shows a dancer on the day before a final showing.

Exaggerating a dark / light contrast increases [the perception of] height, size. Blackness: charcoal, like the inside of a men’s house blackened with smoke, signals inward protection, outward aggression. (Black is the color of warfare.) Also a double value for red: red simultaneously points to fertility and danger; see figure 29.
Figure 32. This returns us to an earlier event (figure 21). We are now looking at the stream of shells from the position of the men’s house. Minembi, Mt. Hagen, Western Highlands. 1964. Photograph: Marilyn Strathern.

Wealth streaming out of a house’s interior (see figure 21)—suddenly one can imagine the reverse image too: wealth streaming into the house of the recipients! (Though it never takes this overt form—pigs, shells, money are always deposited furtively.)
So the wealth that was in the donors’ house in the first place came from somewhere else—from other donors. Men take into themselves the wealth of other groups, in same way as in marriage a clan takes into itself women from other clans. What is at the very center of the clan, then, is also fertility and wealth that has come from other clans [and that, correspondingly, one gives away to them, see below]. Let’s see how this works out visually.

Figure 33. Wives of donors at a Kuli moka, lavishly decorated, with ochre-streaked bailer shells in front, and individual variations on the bright facial designs. Mt. Hagen, Western Highlands. 1967. Photograph: Marilyn Strathern.

Decorated and drumming, these women have synchronized their decorations.

When women decorate for a major event the underlying color of face decoration is not black but red. Their faces form red centers to the whole attire, such a motif being specifically associated with women’s contributions to clan prosperity and continuity.
Figure 34. A little girl at the end of a line of female dancers. Kuli, Mt. Hagen, Western Highlands. 1967. Photograph: Marilyn Strathern.

Similarly with boys and girls (here a girl).
Figure 35. The brilliant effect of female decoration in detail (a close-up of one of the woman dancers). Kuli, Mt. Hagen, Western Highlands. 1967. Photograph: Marilyn Strathern.
Women only dance formally on major occasions, but when they do so are decorated more lavishly than men, indeed without restraint as men see it.

In effect [from men’s point of view], the women and children are being brought out as part of men’s display: aspects of themselves, their energies. It is what [in this form] men have created or produced.
Woman and children. Persons come out of persons: the child from the mother.

In presenting them in public, men transform women and children, re-produce them as though the body were the body of the clan. From the interior of their clan come girls who will marry elsewhere, just as women came as wives to them [the resident men] from elsewhere in the first place, and boys who will make sure the clan endures.
Figure 38. The decorations women wear at their back may include the heavy mounted pearshells themselves. Kuli, Mt. Hagen, Western Highlands. 1967. Photograph: Marilyn Strathern.

Less so than men, women are elaborately decorated on the back (see Figure 36): they have [Hagen people say] “kin at their back” when they move in marriage.

Under patrilineal rubrics it is the women who travel. They face in two directions: towards their own kin and their husband’s kin. Wearing shells [that travel in exchange] front and back indicates the exchange partnerships [between men] that follow marriage.

Whenever you look at a husband and wife pair you are looking at two clans, and whether enemies or allies, the two clans are affines. Like men, women become objects. Where men objectify the clan and its inward / outward orientations, women objectify the relationships that exist between clans, between male partners, and objectify the wealth that travels between affines. They carry on their person on such occasions the very wealth—signified in the shells—whose flow they have also helped cause.
Bailer shells pick out the length of the line of donors’ wives.

So [if we imagine them wanting this] what do these Hagen [male and female] dancers want you to see? They want you to see that (1) they have inner resources, and that (2) what they are composed of is persons, that is, their relations with persons. What they also want you to see is the way things flow back and forth between persons and make the relations concrete and visible. Ultimately the capacity at issue is the capacity to make / mobilize relationships. The person is both composed of relationships and decomposed by them, since it is other persons who draw out the exposed wealth. Hagen people use the body surface (the outer body) as something to which they can attach the inside of the body and make it visible: the inside is everted. What comes to the surface of the body is evidence of the body’s capacity—and they deploy bodily idioms of flesh and fat to refer to this inner capacity.

More than that, they make the body both visible and invisible. The body is restructured, so to speak, insofar as the ordinary body becomes invisible: where it is not meant to be “seen,” it conveys nothing; the ob-
served, visible body is observed in terms of a two-way flow—observation is elicited, an audience is asked to see. Now what the person has “attached” to the body has come from [partners / kin / acquaintances] elsewhere, because [relations with] these are the relations contained within. To put it briefly, one conceals the person (moral, domestic, non-public person) in order to reveal the person (political actor, source of wealth, exchange partner). Two types of persons, the one “produced” out of the other. In other words, persons are concealed inside persons. Does this sound nonsense?

Think of a Euro-American counterpart. Think about the photographer’s gallery again. In effect the theory of the body informing it [see Lecture One] belongs to a Euro-American tradition of also thinking about persons as inside other entities. It considers persons as individuals who are thought to be “inside” society. They are members of society [and society produces them]. So you look at the person and you can see their social context (in this view).

Figure 40. Chorus girls from the Crazy Horse Saloon, Paris. What I have selected as examples of a team in “uniform,” the caption in Fashion and anti-fashion from which this is taken [see Acknowledgments to Publishers and Authors] reads otherwise: it focuses on “personal expression through the display of an individual’s name” (Polhemus and Proctor 1978: 48). 1970s. Photograph: unknown.
The “socialized” body: individual girls underneath or behind it—or, as the original caption notes, in the names on their tops. So you can show the individual and the society at the same time. Remember the portraits. You get closer and closer looking into people’s faces to find the individual: that was a perspectivalist view implying receding distance from the observer. (The body is a surface for ornamentation, and the observer can look behind the surface to the real nature of the individual beneath.) But while the body surface is modified [in this theory], showing the impact of society on the person, as in uniforms [“costumes”], the individual can show through in different ways. “Style” also reflects individual taste, and personal names may be exhibited on the surface.

Figure 41. The original caption to this picture of Hells Angels from the USA refers to clothing and adornment “to express membership of and identification with social groups” (Polhemus and Proctor 1978: 49). Subcultures in effect enact collective individuality. 1970s. Photograph: unknown.
The “socialized” individual, either as a member of a subculture, or else as an internal commentator on mainstream society turned outwards. Or [in this view] one can see the subculture [to use a term of the period] as an enactment of collective individuality against the mainstream, or the enactment of individual choice being given public expression. Figure 41 is an American example, same period.

Sounds similar to Hagen? Bringing the inside out (aggression, taste), abstract qualities of personality that are then hung around the person, the body surface modified by decoration? But it is not. The difference is a visual one: that is, it lies in the way this [process] is effected between displayer and spectator. In the French or American case, there is a sense in which one looks at the body and then at the person: the (perspectivalist) viewer is located outside—and then sees the impact of society or culture on the individual. I am not supposed to be looking at a reflection of me. Unless I am part of the same subculture, I am supposed to be looking at a reflection of them—their inner intentions, and so on. Only Hageners don’t see a person inside society! (To repeat the point: they don’t require any theory or model of society.) And, on the contrary, in the case of men, exactly what male Hagen spectators see are themselves: generally in the case of all the witnesses, specifically in the case of exchange partners or recipients who are also among the spectators. It is they who have produced the display, in the sense that a recipient has forced / created the donor to become a donor. Men are looking at reflections of themselves.

Donor and recipient: dancer and spectator: the one to be seen, the other to see. Seeing has an impact—the audience is equally supposed to ‘feel’ the stunning effect of the display. The eye of the Euro-American observer supposedly has no effect on what is being presented. By contrast [members of] the Hagen audience don’t occupy a removed, distant position but rather are supposed to take into themselves the impact of what they see. A successful display will affect the spectator's inner state of being. Judgment [on the display] they hold within themselves. It will only show later, become apparent later, whether or not the right effect has been achieved. What the spectators think [about the display] is concealed and will be revealed at some later time. Their opinion in turn will be an index of the displayer’s success.

Display makes a bodily impact. Should the audience be moved there and then to express emotion, then the dancers must pay—open admiration has been elicited and the dancers must compensate the
spectator(s) for the expression of emotion they have caused him or her [to reveal]. We come back to the asymmetry of the fact that at any one time the gaze is one-way: the person displaying looks nowhere, for he (or she) is there to be seen, not to see. To the contrary, the recipient / spectator looks at the person on display and, in the case of the male exchange partner, he is looking at a transformed image of himself. Over time, however, and iconically, the recipient becomes the donor—the spectator becomes the displayer: we may imagine this as an exchange of perspectives. What the dancers strive for is other persons’ perspective on themselves. Maybe we can say that perspectives are like a “road” [to borrow a] local idiom): shells and feathers are put on persons, and thus create a “body” for persons who carry these things along the roads.

Figure 42. Hagen men carrying mounted pearlshell valuables on their person as they enter the ceremonial ground. Ndika, Mt. Hagen, Western Highlands. 1967. Photograph: Marilyn Strathern.

Now, so far I have talked of persons making themselves into objects. They draw attention to certain properties of their [carrying] bodies, their capacities, as we have seen. At the same time, since persons are relational entities—as persons, always in relationships with others—they also objectify specific relationships, the specificity of the ties giving each their individuality. I asserted that men objectify clanship, women links between clans.
Figure 43. The body assembled from the attention and ambitions of others. A woman on her way to join a dancing line (a full length portrait of the dancer in figure 35). Kuli, Mt. Hagen, Western Highlands. 1967. Photograph: Marilyn Strathern.
How do they do this visually? As we have seen, performers offer themselves for view in a particular form and I call this process \textit{reification}. They take on the form of “things” by attaching “things” to themselves. Values, qualities, powers whose form is [aesthetically] definitive or recognizable [as in coded]. Objects appear as things. Hence we can talk of them as creating a “body.”

However, there is a second technique of objectification that I call \textit{personification}, where people make objects appear as persons. That is, as effective in relationships, evocative of them, summoning them. We are not talking of subjects (agency) but of two types of objects—objects may appear as things or as persons. This latter appearance is very dramatic in the Massim.

\textbf{Travel and exchange in the Massim}

[Added note: At this pivotal point—from here to the end of the four lectures—I turn to consider other writings from Papua New Guinea. It must be emphasized, very strongly, that by and large the voice continues to be mine. I pursue issues to do with relations and persons in my own idiom, even where this ignores the analysis of the specific anthropologists on whose work I draw or cuts across their own interests (for example in personhood, as in some of the material that follows directly here). The lectures were never intended as an exposition of anthropological writing and arguments. This was a challenge to the students, although they did of course have access to the original sources. My apologies to the reader, nonetheless, who might have expected something different from a text-like format.]

It was suggested that in Hagen display, observation is elicited, an audience is asked to see: what the person has attached to their body has simultaneously (1) been brought forth from inside and (2) come from elsewhere, because these are the relations the donor-dancer contains within. Relations are kept up, as a two-way flow between persons, as objects are detached and reattached in gifts. I move now to a situation that also makes very explicit the flow of objects between people. In the Massim area, the passage of valuables is visible across seas, in canoes, with people literally moving long distances. Does the idiom of travel [also along “paths”] also point to a flow of vision?
Figure 44. One of Malinowski’s photographs of a Trobriand canoe—laden down and low in the water—from *Argonauts of the Western Pacific* (taken between 1915–18). The caption reads: “Canoe under sail. This illustrates the rigging, the tilt of the canoe—the raised outrigger—and the carrying capacity of a canoe” (Malinowski 1922: 97). There are eighteen men on board. Photograph: Bronislaw Malinowski. [Reproduced with publisher’s permission.]

Hagen people carry their valuables to and fro; this is true of Massim, but [in the Massim there may also be] another mediator: canoes carry the people who carry the valuables. Yet, then again, canoes are like another kind of person, as are valuables themselves. Thus, spelled out, we may say that persons carry persons who carry persons. . . . Anyway, in the manner in which people decorate the canoes, these artifacts are personified, endowed with the attributes of persons.
Gawa islanders participate in the ring of exchange relations known as kula. I have signaled a reference to Nancy Munn’s (1986) book because you will find that Gawans decorate canoes [quite explicitly] as though they were persons, and use personal body imagery to do so. The decorated canoe is thought of equally as a beautiful young man [in his finery] or, with reference to the produce in its interior, as a mother with her children inside. Above all, the canoe’s adornments stimulate vision, drawing attention to itself in the same way as one person might come to visit another.
A canoe prow from Kitava, near the Trobriands. [Added note: Figures 46–48, reproduced here to show the coloring, do not come from Gawa but from elsewhere in the northern Massim; I project Gawan iconography onto them.]

The canoe stimulates vision in three ways: (1) The canoe’s surface is what must be seen. It is made visible in being decorated, in same way as the Gawan father’s contribution to his child is made visible—ideally he is seen in the child’s external features. In this matrilineal context, the appearance of the child elicits the gaze of its paternal kin who care for it. (One Gawan woman said that the father’s kin “go to visit” his child after his death in order to gaze on the child and remember him in the
child’s face.) (2) Youthful men and boys decorate the canoe and, like the child, the canoe’s outward form appears as the result of male work. And (3) in its travels the canoe that sets forth destined for exchange partners is elicited by these potential recipients of the wealth it carries—it is they who will make it appear before them.

Figure 47. Details of a decorated prowboard (tabuva and lagín) from Vakuta, southern Trobriand Islands. Roughly similar period, mid-1970s. The boards are not complete until paint has been applied. The coloring has life-cycle connotations, though none without ambiguity: the surface white points to a new born state, red to maturation and sexual activity, and black, the most deeply set, to ripeness, old age, and magic. Photograph: Shirley Campbell. [Reproduced with author’s permission.]
What are the visual techniques here? On Gawa, there is a specific connection between canoe and human body. A canoe is made from a red tree, and the red hull evokes matrilineal blood, which is the material from which a fetus comes. The canoe is owned by a matrilineal group, and fills up with the men of the matriline who sail in her. But the redness of the wood is concealed by a whitewash on its exterior, a protective surface. [Munn says she knew of no gender connotation for the whitewash, though one man explained the maleness of the canoe by pointing to its capacity to make a path—sail away—and find valuables.] The white outrigger wood is explicitly male. A visual impression is that the canoe’s external features evoke the individuating paternal appearance of people, for the decorations as a whole give the canoe a male gender marking, while its interior is female.
Figure 48. The decorated prowboard shown in figure 47, seen in full from another angle. The different parts of the canoe prow are clearly visible in this larger version. From Vakuta, southern Trobriand Islands. Mid-1970s. Photograph: Shirley Campbell. [Reproduced with author’s permission.]
If the bonds between clan members are those of blood and land, each person also has their own spectrum of relations with others (notably with paternal kin). When these are [male] exchange partners, their eyes draw the canoe towards them.

In terms of the exchange logic of the *kula*, there is a one-way relationship between those who wish to be seen and those who do the seeing—but in reverse direction from Hagen *moka* [ceremonial exchange]. Hagen donors draw recipients to them (recipients travel to the ceremonial ground only partly decorated—in “second best”—if at all). In Massim overseas voyages, those who travel are still the recipients—the donors draw them in—but it is the *recipients* who display themselves [decorate or make themselves attractive] to entice wealth from the donors. Very anxious, although they have to appear indifferent, [the issue is] how to get the donors to see them and give. It is the Trobriand or Gawan donors, then, who will be looking at them [the travelling recipients] and weighing them up. The donors remain quite impassive—resisting the allurement; they are not on display at all. On the contrary, it is the travelling recipients who are on display. So the donors are spectators in a rather special sense, having caused the recipients to decorate themselves (they elicit the canoes).

This is a preamble to considering travel and exchange on Sabarl Island. Sabarl lies to the south of the *kula* ring [and ceremonial life has a somewhat different focus, namely in mortuary feasts and rituals], but I remain with the voyaging that people undertake to sustain exchange networks, at which vital [life cycle] pathways are renewed. The preceding account enables me to switch the focus of attention, and dwell on the valuables [wealth items] that circulate. We find that valuables can be visualized as persons in movement.

Just to repeat, I say a “person” insofar as a person is a social category, defined by a nexus of relationships, and what is made visible about these persons are their relationships with others. And relationships are seemingly imagined as a journey between points [persons], with an outward and backward motion, like a canoe journey. As on Gawa, the Sabarl recognize complementary relations between paternal and maternal kin, with emphasis given to male nurture as coming from outside the matriclan (the clan draws reproductive energy towards itself). Women as well as men represent their clans and may sail in search of wealth. Off-island trading partners include paternal kin.
Two Sabarl valuables [are considered here]: black greenstone axe blades and red shell necklaces.

[To put it at its simplest] axes given by a father to his children form part of his paternal nurture [towards them], and have to be acknowledged on the part of the children, whose clan is prompted by final prestations of blades to make returns (of diverse items including matching blades) to his clan at their death. That movement can be taken as movement between two “sides” of a person, between his or her maternal and paternal kin [typically acted out by designated “cousins” on each side]. Thus the axe blade (paternal relations / individual energy) and the handle or support (maternal relations / the person as clan member) sustain each other. When the maternal shaft forms a carved red wood support for the paternal blade, which is shiny or greasy, the image is of a clan and its individual members (a person with relations attached). At the same time, the “leg” of the axe is both support for the blade, Sabarl people say, and complementary to it, as husbands and wives.
complement each other. While the whole axe may be given ceremonially, it is above all the blade that circulates as a valuable, which is (so to speak) detachable and mobile in exchange relationships. The blade has reproductive power (sexual heat). Matrilineal strength is partible, and paternal potency is a male version of it.

If the axe blade is a “representation” of a relationship, it is also the relationship itself in one of its moments. When the axe blade moves, it will reproduce relationships [between kin]. Thus the blade evokes the paternal nurture that the child has earlier had from its father and is [on the child’s death] now due in return to paternal kin [father's descendants]. The child [the child’s clan] detaches the axe blade from him or herself and sends it back to its source. At the same time, the hafted axe as a whole, with a crucial turning point at its elbow, is an image of action and movement. The axe is a visualization of the paths along which persons and wealth move. What goes away comes back again.

* * *

[The amount of preliminary detail given on the second valuable would depend a bit on time. I return to the two items briefly in Lecture Three.]

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Figure 50. Drawing of a ceremonial shell necklace (bak) from Sabarl, an island in the southern Massim area outside the kula ring. Late 1970s. This bridewealth necklace is likened to women’s wealth; women use such wealth to reclaim matrilineage land or canoes and in mortuary payments to reciprocate paternal nurture. The necklace may be viewed as an out / back path, at whose extremity is a clasp, a turning point, one of whose forms is that of a canoe-shaped pearlshell. Drawing: Debbora Battaglia. [Reproduced with publisher’s permission.]

Necklaces (bak) used in bridewealth. As gifts between affines, they initiate counter flows to paternal kin. Given by husband’s (father’s) kin to wife’s (child’s) kin / by the groom to the bride’s mother, they figure the joining of two sides of the future child’s kin: maternal and paternal matrilines. Two flows of blood (red mother’s blood) (flow of relations). (1) The male donor obtains the “right” to direct the marriages of his children; (2) female recipients use the wealth to reclaim matrilineage land or canoes, for example, and in mortuary payments to reciprocate paternal nurture. The bridewealth necklace is likened to women’s wealth. Bak are thus obtained by senior women through their daughters, so it travels from daughter [via the son-in-law] to mother when the
daughter marries, and the mother may also use it for a son’s bridewealth.

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According to Debbora Battaglia, the necklace itself encodes that joining of the two clans in the body of the child [imagined as the subject of mortuary ceremonies], which is also imagined as a journey. The strands are divided into an “out” and a “back” side that meet at a terminus connoting death that is also a turning point, a clasp that turns the direction of the small red shells from flowing out to flowing back. There has to be that [turning point]—there is fear that otherwise what travels will wander away and never come back. The necklace is thereby viewed as a circular path, broken at the top by a clasp, one of whose forms is that of a canoe-shaped pearlshell. [The out and back movements in the necklace are in fact doubled, referring to different modalities of relationship, but I do not go into that here.] In short, the strands point to matrilines / clans bridged by the returns that death and the associated mortuary payments effect.

Now imagine the figure the other way up [Euro-American iconography commonly requires a head to be positioned at the “top” of a standing body]. The necklace is animated with a head, the head also having voice (its chimes). The head is specifically said to make the object like a person, and is added when the shells are converted from a women’s ornament into an item for exchange (valuable, wealth), that is, when it will mobilize relationships. The intertwined strands are like the out / back flow of things and persons, the clasp turning the rope to reverse the direction of the path. Indeed, trade pathways are likened to shells on a string—like a necklace. [Necklaces can break of course and the sequence of valuables can be shattered.] The strands are red, the head white. The ethnographer conjectures that the head of a necklace is like the blade of an axe. But there is movement associated with the red legs too, if one imagines the shells as different points of a woman’s “life-path” traveled between [away from home at] marriage and [back towards home at] death.

In summary. First, these valuables that travel in the Massim are simultaneously many persons and one person. They are both two matrilines or matriclans (maternal and paternal kin [from a child’s perspective]), and one person (the child who is the outcome of these
transactions [and at death the focus for more]), as well as the movement (relationship) between them. Second, these objects are designed to effect what they are: the axe blade will travel back and forth on the back of matrilineal support; like the necklace, valuables will supposedly return. There is anxiety about return: revelation / visibility is hazardous, for it invites the possibility of non-return. In short, when it is artifacts that move and create relationships, the question they seemingly raise is how to effect the return perspective from the other party, and thus to get them to come back again. [In the axe and necklace] the work of elicitation, to get valuables to travel in the opposite direction, is visually imagined as [already] accomplished.

Are there some elements of a visual theory here?

(1) An exchange of perspectives. A spectator’s viewpoint implies a relationship in which the positions of performer and spectator (donor and recipient) can always be reversed. At any one moment, like sending out valuables in gift exchange, one-way: but the demand for return [however it is worked out] guarantees that it becomes two-way, in terms for example of what each can extract from other.

(2) The one-way gaze. Kula recipients elicit valuables from donors by decorating and travelling to them: they coerce the donors into being spectators and being moved to give. Hagen moka recipients elicit valuables from donors by appearing at the donors’ display; the donors claim to have “attracted” them, but it is equally they [the recipients] as spectators who have coerced the donors to decorate and move them to give.

(3) Objectification. The person is objectified (decorated) and transformed as the object of people’s attention. One visual technique is reification [“things” appearing in appropriate form]. But there is another: objects can be personified, like the Sabarl axe, made like a person, whether through corporeal form or through animate qualities. Visual technique: personification.

(4) Travel and flow. There is something further to learn from the Massim with its basic paradigm of matrilineal reproduction [it was not elaborated earlier]: a kind of split representation of what “belonging” means. On the one hand people belong to a place, land, where they grow food, where they attach themselves; on the
other hand they belong to what they detach from themselves. Visually this becomes a relationship between what is hidden / grows / stays in one place (the matrilineal body) and what is brought into the open / travels / is to be seen (vitality, wealth, individual renown).

(5) Appearance as an act. That objects are produced for people to see means that people wishing to see elicit these objects. When an item is with someone else it is “hidden” within that person / partner. How do you get to “appear” again? Kula Ring partners are constantly waiting to “see” the shells that will appear [on their way back to them] over the horizon. [Hence the kula decorations to make the voyager seductive.]

(6) The witness. Getting objects to appear requires work from the spectator. Valuables that are the focus of exchange aren’t visible by themselves. We could say that the capacity to see is part of what makes things and persons appear.