

**SOCIAL AND CULTURAL ANTHROPOLOGY
HIGHER LEVEL
PAPER 1**

Tuesday 19 November 2002 (afternoon)

1 hour

INSTRUCTIONS TO CANDIDATES

- Do not open this examination paper until instructed to do so.
- Read the passage carefully and then answer all the questions.

Texts in this examination paper have been edited: word additions or explanations are shown in square brackets []; substantive deletions of text are indicated by ellipses in square brackets [...]; minor changes are not indicated.

*Extract (pp. 205-208) of Lisette Josephides, “Replacing Cultural Markers: Symbolic Analysis and Political Action in Melanesia,” in **Cosmos and Society in Oceania**. Daniel de Coppet and André Iteanu, eds. pp. 189-211 (Oxford: Berg, 1995)*

5 [Among the Kewa, a polygynous group of the Southern Highlands of Papua New Guinea,] women and men have different claims and expectations of marriage. [...] These different perceptions can be observed clearly when a man attempts to take a co-wife. The trauma sustained by a Kewa woman when her husband takes another wife is so great that it often results in the rupture of one of the two relationships, at least for a time. It is the only occasion I know of when women use knives, which they go out to buy especially, and it is not unusual for all three spouses to end up in hospital. [...]

10 The story of Lapame and Rombola is instructive. Lapame and Rombola had been married for about fifteen years when I met them. [...] Rombola married again in 1982. According to Lapame, he had been carrying on with the woman for some time, when she caught them in the house one day “holding each other tight”. Lapame’s behaviour at the time seemed ambivalent. On the one hand, she said to him that it was inappropriate for a man in his position to be hiding in darkened doors in order to embrace a woman who was herself “no longer young”. The right thing would be for 15 them to marry. [...] On the other hand, she scolded him [...] for showing a lack of appreciation for her, [for her work, and for the fact that she had borne him five children]. This scolding also indicates that women consider poor work and sterility justifiable reasons for polygyny, though no woman I knew ever thought polygyny justified in her own case.

20 In spite of her proud retort that a man should marry instead of engaging in surreptitious love affairs, Lapame did not want to help Rombola when he attempted to collect the bride-price [necessary for his second marriage]. Lapame [...] finally gave way when he wept and threatened in turn, especially when he said that he would go away and she would never see him again. [...] Immediately afterwards she took her children to the 25 garden and cut down all the sugar cane. [...] Following this, they all slept under the same roof for one night. The next day, Wata, the second wife, told Rombola she didn’t like this arrangement, as he looked at his first wife rather too much. So while Lapame was at church they [Rombola and Wata] divided up all the possessions, took the “best things” for themselves, and partitioned the house and the gardens. [...]

30 Rombola told a different story. He had not wanted her to go but was simply angry with her for being so difficult. He claimed that she had refused him food, telling him to go to his new wife for it. He complained that her refusal was contrary to her duties as a wife, and told me that though his new wife gave him food he still felt hungry after finishing it. [...] Peace was not completely restored until Wata finally returned to her natal clan. [...]

35 This story indicates that women consider their husbands' remarriage a repudiation, a
lack of appreciation for themselves and their labour. [...] Yet men will not say that a
second marriage implies a repudiation or even a criticism of the first wife. When they
are faced with their wife's protest, however, they usually try to accuse her of something.
40 Since a divorce or lengthy separation may ensue, they try to pin the blame on her in
order to mitigate the compensation they might have to pay to get her back.

Given these problems, why do men take second wives? Most women say they do it for
sexual reasons, but men claim that their motive is to augment household production.
This would in turn expand their exchange networks and add to the prestige of the group
by enabling them to stage spectacular pig-kills, [a ritual through which men and clans
45 compete for prestige and notoriety]. Thus a concern with prestige and pig-killing is part
of a man's marriage strategies, but not a part of what women consider to define the
relations that create marriage. [...] Women insist that their marriage belongs in one
domain and prestige and pig-killing in another. They say that their husband married
them because they desired them. They see the payment of bride-price as indicative of
50 how much they are desired, and even inflate it in their accounts. [...] Women thus see
their husband's proposal to acquire another wife as [...] a betrayal.

1. Demonstrate how the conflict between Lapame and Rombola can be understood in terms of power and resistance. *[6 marks]*

 2. Explain how marriage practices amongst the Kewa expose the uneasy relationship between material and ideal (or symbolic) aspects of life. *[6 marks]*

 3. Identify, in a society that you have studied in detail, an institution or practice that is subject to the interplay of power and resistance, and compare that situation with the way in which Kewa marriage is subject to the same dynamics. *[8 marks]*
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