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052165212X - Emerging Class in Papua New Guinea: The Telling of Difference

Deborah B. Gewertz and Frederick K. Errington

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## Emerging Class in Papua New Guinea The Telling of Difference

This accessible and pioneering study of social class in contemporary Papua New Guinea deals with the new elite, its culture and institutions, and its relationship to the broader society. The Papua New Guinea described here is not a place of exotic tribesmen, but a modernizing society, shaped by global forces and increasingly divided on class lines. Focusing on Wewak, a typical commercial centre, the authors describe the lifestyle of those elite who frequent its golf clubs and Rotary gatherings. In so doing, they bring home the ways in which differences of status are created, experienced and justified. In a country with a long tradition of egalitarianism, it has become at once possible and plausible for relatively affluent “nationals” to present themselves in a wide range of contexts as fundamentally superior to “bushy” people, to blame the poor for their misfortunes and to turn their backs on their less successful neighbors and relatives.

DEBORAH B. GEWERTZ is G. Henry Whitcomb Professor of Anthropology at Amherst College, Massachusetts and FREDERICK K. ERRINGTON is Charles A. Dana Professor of Anthropology at Trinity College, Connecticut. They are joint authors of three previous books on Papua New Guinea, *Cultural Alternatives and a Feminist Anthropology* (1987), and *Twisted Histories, Altered Contexts* (1991), both published by Cambridge University Press, and *Articulating Change in the Last “Unknown”* (1995). Professor Gewertz’s other publications include *Sepik River Societies* (1988), and *Myths of Matriarchy Reconsidered* (1988), and numerous articles. Professor Errington’s other publications include *Karavar* (1974), *Manners and Meaning in West Sumatra* (1984), and numerous articles. They are currently engaged in a joint project about changing foodways in Papua New Guinea.

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To Michael Kamban and Godfried Kolly

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