Lisette Josephides, *The Production of Inequality: Gender and Exchange among the Kewa.* London: Tavistock Publications, 1985. Pp. x, 242, glossary, indexes, maps, figures, tables, photographs. US$35.00, cloth.

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The program of this book, as stated by the author, is to analyze inequalities among men, and between men and women among the Papuan Kewa speakers of the Highlands of New Guinea. The source of these inequalities is claimed to be gender and the nature of exchange. The fieldwork on which this study is based was conducted in the 1,800-meter-high Sugu River Valley of the southern Highlands (southwest of Mt. Hagen) for two years, from 1979 to 1981.

The Kewa, who number over fifty thousand, live by horticulture, cultivating in permanent mounds sweet potatoes, and on separate fields bananas, sugarcane, grasses, fruits, nuts, greens, and nowadays also cucumbers, maize, cabbages, pumpkins, and tomatoes. Their main domestic animals are pigs, whose production and exchange, especially during elaborate pig feasts, bring not only economic prosperity but also prestige and power to their breeders. Some breeders, who excel in pig exchange and acquire skills of oratory and persuasion, become the well known "big-men," leaders of their groups. The Kewa are organized into what the author calls tribes, which consist of several agnatic exogamous clans. Marriage is polygynous by preference, residence virilocal in "pulsating settlements," and the society is dominated by egalitarian ethics. This, however, does not mean that the society is de facto egalitarian. Indeed, power through personal wealth enables successful breeders and traders to establish themselves as big-men, the leaders of their people. In their "gift oriented economy" they manipulate the redistribution of wealth (especially pigs and shell and paper money) by selling, loaning, and mortgaging pigs, even by promising delivery of yet-nonexisting animals, so that they accumulate wealth and prestige and thus the power to control to some extent the behavior of their followers. In this general presentation the author is not as naive as many other anthropologists who, following some dogmas of popular doctrines, claim egalitar-

ianism and collectivism for societies in which by any stretch of imagination they cannot exist.

The book is divided into two parts. In part 1 Kewa social organization, historical analysis of group fusion and fission, position of sexes, an agnatic ideology, and basic features of economy are presented to the reader in general terms, often illustrated by a case account, or sometimes by several. Part 2 treats the production of inequality, applying theory to the assembled ethnographic material to "elucidate gender relations and power relations" (10). The first set of relations is characterized by men's domination of women, achieved through alienation of the products of their labor (pigs) and using the pigs for advantage in competition with other men for power. This exploitation of women is possible mainly because of men's ownership of land and pigs and because of virilocality, whereby the local group is composed of permanent males, who define the group and care for its integrity, and of potentially impermanent female members, both local (daughters) and incoming (wives), who may leave the group by marrying outside or by being divorced by their husbands.

The necessary data were obtained through informants and, as the author claims, "participant observation." As usual, the problem of the concept of "participation" crops up. Admittedly one can participate only if one knows the spoken language well, if one understands when two natives talk to each other. No pidgin English or translators can substitute for such knowledge, and no "participation" can result without it. Yet the author's ability to use the native language was, by admission, very limited, so that she "always needed the assistance of pidgin speakers during difficult and intricate conversations" and when data had to be "later translated from the Kewa with the help of pidgin speakers" (viii). Her "learning" the difficult Papuan language for three months in the library and six weeks among the Kewa is hopelessly inadequate.

The matter of getting solid data is further complicated by the fact that those pertaining to precolonial times had to be extracted, usually through interpreters, from the old people's memories, thus rendering them necessarily biased and unreliable. That this is a common practice in anthropology does not make it correct and scientific. The fact is that since 1945 the Kewa have been ruthlessly colonized, their territory "pacified" through elimination of warfare (1950s), their law replaced by an imposed Western court system, their religion and cult houses destroyed by the missionaries (1960s), their leadership--so crucial to this analysis--altered beyond recognition, their economy changed into a Western market type with coffee plantations and migrant labor as its

main features, and this society infused by new, formally superimposed authorities, such as the various government officials, pastors, catechists, interpreters, agricultural experts, district officers, and so forth. In the words of the author, the Kewa culture was "transformed on a revolutionary scale" in the past two decades (90). No wonder then that because of the language and acculturation problems the data and the resulting analysis are rather wanting.

In spite of these limitations the author shows good sense in recognizing the inequality of the sexes and of men and in not taking the native ideology of egalitarianism at its face value, but confronting it with the radically different practice. Thus she can perceive well the subtle wife's power and her informal way of wielding it (especially 197). Nonetheless, the good features such as these cannot compensate for the deficiencies, some of which I will outline below.

The account itself, presented in only 220 pages, is definitely thin. Matters are made even worse by constant references to works and ideas of other authors (especially 18-20, 59-61, 83, 91, 97, 98), some of whose theories, definitions, and even data are presented as relevant to the Kewa analysis without supporting evidence (e.g., the use of Baruya myth, 137). One would expect a solid body of data on the Kewa to be analyzed by a precise method and only afterwards compared, if desirable, with ethnographies of other peoples. With the exception of good data on twenty-three pig killings presented in three short tables (192-193), there is an absence of quantification in the whole book. There is no quantitative account of the market or individual financial transactions: prices, exchange rates, differential wealth of individuals. For a rigorous economic analysis these omissions make the account useless, and certainly the material presented is not "reanalyzable" as the author claims that it ought to be (94). Lacking also is information on work time by sex, description and types of barter exchange, amount of average bride-price, production of households, or quantitative gains of the big-men in their particular transactions. A single case as an illustration is not a substitute for quantifiable data in an economic analysis. Sometimes these examples, like the unnecessary verbatim discussion of a particular exchange that for two pages reads like field notes, appear more as fillers of space than as necessary background for understanding of the transaction (58-59). This feeling is reinforced by the already mentioned constant reference to other people's data on other societies and lengthy quotations of not always pertinent material (e.g., 25-28,216).

Even the qualitative account is tainted by serious problems, including many undocumented generalizations. For example, the discussion of

marriage rules, descent, and kinship is inadequate; time in the presentation is often telescoped; and no sharp distinction is made between rules, preferred behavior, prescribed behavior (law), and actuality (e.g., 53-56). Many terms are misused: an affine is not a father's sister's son or daughter, a father's sister, or a married daughter (192); *ruru* is obviously not a group but a category (e.g., church officials, 15); kinship cannot rest on a story of common origin (18) but descent may; structure is not a simple use of address terms but a relationship (131); and big-man is a concept, not a phenomenon (167). Political power is poorly defined, with no distinction made between it and legal power (99, 110). Aside of these factual criticisms, the style of the writing displays the usual unnecessary, quasi-scientific jargon that obscures rather than clarifies.

Throughout the book many wrong claims are made. For example, has division of labor really "little to do with biology" (97)? Some of it necessarily does (e.g., felling trees, war, hunting, etc.). Does sister exchange, as Godelier claims, really preclude inequality (112)? Not necessarily, as data on Australian aborigines show. The statement that "pigs are not produced for alienation" (209) cannot be correct if pig feasts are planned ahead of time, animals are "mortgaged," and nonexistent pigs promised for future exchange (199). This is an embarrassing contradiction. The author's claim that men only clear the gardens (111) is contradicted by her later acknowledgment of plants cultivated by males (117). The statement that women have no public activities of their own does not ring true either. Among the Kapauku Papuans they had special female dances, exclusive lunches in the fields, segregated fishing, prominence as bride mothers during the public bride-price payments (when they collected a portion), and roles in the wars and as plaintiffs, witnesses, or defendants at public legal trials. Women were also skilled surgeons and shamans with public performances. None of this existed among the Kewa in the old days?

As I have pointed out, the worst comes when an author contradicts himself or herself in the same volume. Additional cases of this fallacy in the text include a claim that men talk of women as sojourners (65) while on page 63 we read: "This is not to say that individual in-married women are treated as outsiders or thought of as sojourners." On page 82 it is claimed that traditional big-men are now elected to leadership, while on the following page leaders are described as a new breed of "boss boys." "Sharing within the group" is regarded as the basic Kewa tenet (172), yet individualism, individual ownership, and preoccupation with personal success in power struggles contradict it (188-189). Finally the sketchy account of precontact law and legal procedure

among the Kewa is false. The author should have become familiar with legal analyses of nonacculturated tribes of New Guinea. Indeed, she assumes that popular old compromise statements by the headmen were the reality, that the big-man had "to find a formula acceptable to all parties" (146). The nonsense of this claim (made by so many ethnographers) is obvious when one contemplates concrete cases. Since when has a man sentenced to death, or to being shot in his thigh (a common punishment in the Highlands), or to being fined heavily accepted these verdicts as a compromise? Needless to say, Josephides herself contradicts the compromise viewpoint when she describes correctly the power of the big-men "whom ordinary people obeyed because they were afraid of them" (157), who consequently needed no compromise. Legal verdicts, whether among the Papuans, Eskimos, or Romans, have never been compromised settlements. Of course, judges and other leaders do make compromises, but outside of the legal arena of their courts (in the West it is done in their "chambers").

I would like to close with a final criticism that is directed not only at the author but generally at many writers on East New Guinea societies. Since when has a political boundary become a legitimate excuse for anthropologists to be ignorant of cultures beyond it? In the whole book I have not found one reference to the numerous works of anthropologists working in West New Guinea (Irian Jaya), where many native societies have been studied in a fairly unacculturated state! My Kapauku material is referred to only through a secondary source, Modjeska (119). In science one should consult all relevant data, not ignore 50 percent just because they come from behind an artificial political line drawn by colonial powers of the past.