Exchanging the Past is an ethnographically rich and theoretically subtle account of what it means to be locally modern. In the post-colonial context of the modern nation-state, the people of Papua New Guinea have been transformed by new social patterns of modernity that both complement and undermine the traditional ways of life. In this book, Bruce Knautt details how the people of the country, in the face of modernity, have been transformed in a way that is both astonishing and accessible. The book provides a powerful account of the social contradictions and personal compromises that multiply as the people of the country struggle to accommodate the social changes that are transforming them. Exchanging the Past is a moving and accessible account of how the cultural sentiments and social patterns of modernity can both transform and diversify the world. It is a remarkable story of cultural transformation.