ABUSE AND DISCIPLINE: THE CREATION OF MORAL COMMUNITY IN DOMESTIC VIOLENCE GROUPS ON THE WAIʻANAE COAST (HAWAIʻI)

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This article discusses the creation of moral community in two self-help groups on the Waiʻanae Coast of Oʻahu in the state of Hawaiʻi. One is a women's domestic violence group and the other a men's anger management group. Both groups use freely constructed narratives from the participants as the foundation for establishing rules of conduct and standards of the "good person." In each case, facilitators bring the lessons and the doctrine of a state agency to informal proceedings. The article argues that out of the intersection of participant interpretations of experiences and state-sanctioned forms of discipline come the lineaments of a moral community. In self-help groups, residents of the predominantly Hawaiian Waiʻanae Coast confront a discourse whose references to "wrong" do not accord with customary discourse about making things right. The development of "moral community," then, involves a continual negotiation between apparently distant representations of proper conduct, ethical behavior, and the virtuous self.

In this essay, I discuss the creation of moral community in self-help groups on the Waiʻanae Coast of Oʻahu in the state of Hawaiʻi.[1] The groups are part of a state system for dealing with victims and perpetrators of domestic violence. One is a women's group for victims of abuse and the other a men's group for those accused of committing domestic violence. The women's group used consciousness-raising techniques to persuade participants to change their circumstances. The men's group borrowed more explicitly pedagogical methods to teach men new ways of interacting in their relationships.

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Both groups encouraged the exchange of freely constructed narratives from participants.

Participation in each group was partly a matter of choice and partly a matter of coercion. The men's case is clear. Brought before Family Court, they were offered the choice of a jail term or attending an anger management group. Behind the choice lay the power of the court to restrain or incarcerate a man. The women's case is a bit different. The women chose to come to the group, using it as a resource against the abuse they were experiencing in a relationship. Behind their choice, however, lay the threat that the state, through Child Protective Services, would remove any children they had; the state argued that violence against a mother threatened the children in her household. Voluntary self-discipline took place in the context of state punishment.

As my remarks imply, group discussions focused on modes of discipline and punishment. Participants responded to the subject in narratives and in nonverbal performances, manipulating the official messages in creative and playful ways. Out of the intersection of participant interpretations and state-mandated forms of discipline came the lineaments of a moral community.

I will show that that community is grounded in shared ideas about the person and that these ideas evolve from a consideration of the meaning of self, autonomy, responsibility, and relationship. In self-help groups, residents of the predominantly Hawaiian Wai'anae Coast confronted a discourse whose references to "wrong" did not accord with the local discourse about making things right. I develop the point that for participants an emphasis on self, extracted from group, is wrong.

My essay measures the distance between urban and local in terms of the means of instituting right behavior—in other words, discipline. Urban notions of discipline appear in doctrines diffused from an American legal, judicial, and therapeutic system. These doctrines are effectively represented in the "self-help" principles presented at the women's and the men's groups. The local notion of discipline appears in the narratives, in the gestures and behaviors of the participants, and in the expressed interpretations of self-help messages. Each time a group meets, participants and audience compose a "master" story that contains the lineaments of a moral community. The community is moral not only in the sense of judging, sanctioning, and approving behavior, but also in the "shared faith" confirmed at each morning's end. The form and content of the meetings serve as a "collective representation," a symbol of solidarity in the Durkheimian sense. As I show, the representation joins the urban and the local.

My essay is organized in the following way. First, I explain the relevance

of my site and my argument to a volume that focuses on processes of accommodating to a complex modern world. Next I outline the theoretical framework for my analysis of the discourses of discipline evident in the meetings I attended. The bulk of the essay concentrates on those meetings, showing how a juxtaposition of traditional forms of Hawaiian conflict resolution with modern programs of personal transformation embody collective representations of community in domestic violence groups.[2]

In the conclusion, I explore the significance of ongoing constructions of moral communities—for the process occurs weekly and varies with the vagaries of attendance, court interventions, and the presence of outsiders. Little is given in the situation: The participants at, the content of, and the personal and social impact of the gatherings shift and change, even within the three-hour period of a meeting. More than those who sit around a *marae* or attend church in Enid, Oklahoma, or quarrel over space in Honiara, the individuals who go to self-help groups follow their own devices. At the same time, no one removes herself or himself from the competing pressures writ large in a domestic violence group: the metropolitan emphasis on the individual as agent of her and his own acts, the local emphasis on the individual embedded, often entangled, in a nest of other individuals.

Why Urban?

Anyone who has seen the Waiʻanae Coast might consider it odd to include the area in a volume that uses "urbanism" as the primary setting for the activities and experiences of individuals. The dry leeward side of Oʻahu, the Waiʻanae Coast looks like a sequence of rural towns, wandering between mountainsides and beaches. The impression is somewhat belied by the heavy traffic on Farrington Highway, the main route along that coast. For my purposes, what lies behind the visual landscape scene is what urbanizes the residents of this part of Hawaiʻi. The towns of the Waiʻanae Coast are fully encircled by the political, structural, and cultural institutions of a metropolitan world.

Residents of these towns daily confront the administrative bureaucracies characteristic of a city and prominent in Honolulu. "Urban social relations are conducted within and contextualized by state and state-regulated institutions concerned with education, communication, transportation, production, commerce, welfare, worship, civic order, housing, and land use" (Sanjek 1990: 154). The relevant bureaucratic institutions for my research project include social service agencies, Child Protective Services, Family Court, and the Department of Health. These institutions perform functions that, as I learned,

Wai'anae Coast residents both appreciate and resent. Manifestations of state authority, such institutions perpetuate a history of colonialism; they are also resources for individuals who experience dire poverty and discrimination. Individuals turn to agencies of the state for help in emergencies, like uncontrollable abuse or violence in a household, while simultaneously resisting the premises of that help. Each encounter with an agency exposes a resident to the diversity of ideologies and practices typical of an urbanized environment, casting into sharp light his or her own understandings of crisis and solution. Each encounter demonstrates the swing between "metropolitan" and "local" described in other essays in this volume.

The domestic violence groups I attended were sponsored by a downtown Honolulu agency. Policies established in the central office were translated into practices in towns radiating out from the city through the county of Honolulu.[3] The practices had an efficient, impersonal quality, evidently constructed in order to accomplish a goal systematically and predictably (in this particular case, to discipline the men into controlling anger and the women into resisting abuse). What actually happened in the groups shows the vitality of a local discourse of discipline constantly confronting a mandated, state-authorized, and urbanized discourse—either of which any person might voice. To anticipate my fuller discussion, the local evoked notions of generosity, harmony, and affiliation—*moral* to the urban environment's *technocratic* order.[4]

In modern cities, of which Honolulu is exemplary, "prevailing understandings and relationships would have to do with the technical rather than the moral order, which is to say that administrative regulation, business, and technical convenience would be dominant; and the cities in question were populated by inhabitants of diverse cultural origins, removed from the indigenous loci of their cultures" (Hannerz 1990:1). Honolulu is a typical modern city, and the institutions that implement state law develop strategies to deal efficiently with diversity, disorder, and disjunctive cultural systems. Through social service agencies, the arm of the central city extends to "peripheral" spaces like the towns on the Wai'anae Coast. I put peripheral in quotation marks, since one of the points of my essay is that such designations are constructed, circumstantial, and contested by individuals and by institutions.

It follows that the local is neither opposite to nor replaced by the urban. At times denizens of a city are removed from the "indigenous loci of their cultures," at times they are not. Sometimes they distance themselves by choice—flying toward the glow on the horizon—and sometimes they have no choice but to leave home and resettle.

I want to add another characteristic of urbanism, or "the social and cultural characteristics that are the result of the urban" (Mayo 1987:100).[5] A city is characterized by the availability of spaces in which heterogeneity and

its counterpart homogeneity can be negotiated. "And, as in the well-ordered home, the spatial distribution of activities and persons in the city is more complex than might first appear," a sociologist of the city writes, and different spaces serve different functions depending on the moment of use and the intentions of the people who are using the space (Lofland [1973] 1985:67). The same space may be the site for different kinds of activities and discourses.

In the instance I am describing, significant spaces included the downtown agency, where, in stiff and formal offices, group facilitators were trained for their job; the small community building on the Waiʻanae Coast in which the groups gathered for weekly meetings; and an open and beautiful beach, across Farrington Highway from the community building. Symbolically if not geographically, the community building lay between the downtown offices and the beach, and inside its spaces activities were up for grabs.[6] Regimented at the agency and playful on the beach, the facilitators constantly renegotiated organization and roles in the small building mountainside of Farrington Highway.

By definition, a city offers multiple sites for activities, celebrations, and performances (Mayo 1987:101). Among those activities are historically constituted and contested means of maintaining order. The instance I observed can be described in terms of concentric circles: The outer ring is constituted by social service agencies whose practices implement state policy; the next ring consists of facilitators or "messengers" of the state to individuals; the inner ring is composed of the women and men who participated in domestic violence groups.[7] My story is not one of rigid (or unidirectional) encompassment but of flow from circumference to center and back, a version of the "cultural flows in space" Hannerz attributes to an urbanizing world (1990:1).

Disciplining and Disentangling

I was teaching Greg Dening's *Mr Bligh's Bad Language* when I began drafting this essay. The book is about many things, but one of its main themes is the nature of discipline on a British naval ship and the alternation between hierarchy and egalitarianism, rule and riot under a good commander (which Bligh was not). Dening's analysis of discipline on the *Bounty* modifies the classic account in Foucault's *Discipline and Punish,* and Dening's version shapes what I say below. I link the theoretical position set forth in *Bligh* to the specifics of Hawaiian modes of disciplining or "setting things right" (Pukui, Haertig, and Lee 1979:17).

In the introduction to a volume on conflict resolution in Pacific Island societies, White and Watson-Gegeo call the process "disentangling." "Disen-

tangling refers to cultural activities in which people attempt to 'straighten out' their 'tangled' relations" (White and Watson-Gegeo 1990:3). The customary mode of disentangling in Hawai'i is *ho'oponopono,* a group meeting within the *'ohana,* or extended family household. *Ho'oponopono* is structured, with a leader, who facilitates the movement of the discussions, guiding individual narratives to a final resolution. Individuals give their accounts to bring into the open a conflict or disagreement to be arbitrated through the wisdom of the leader (Pukui, Haertig, and Lee 1972:61).

The structure of *ho'oponopono* contrasts with the loose conversational style known as "talk-story" (Ito 1985). In gatherings, participants often sit around telling stories in an easygoing, undirected manner. These stories tend to be anecdotal, digressive, and meandering. In my experience, frequently one story piles on another so that a kind of composite script appears at the end, not a summary but an accumulation of viewpoints and interpretations. Talk-story is egalitarian compared with *ho'oponopono,* but, as my observations indicate, the two forms are not always distinct. A major problem for the three facilitators I knew on the Wai'anae Coast was to balance their appreciation of talk-story with an obligation to lead the group.

Ho'oponopono and talk-story represent complementary styles of effecting a discipline of behavior. Each style differs from the self-help programs through which the downtown agency imposes discipline on participants in domestic violence groups. As local forms, *ho'oponopono* and talk-story share an emphasis on the group rather than the individual, on community harmony rather than personal transformation. "People talk about their troubles, and in seeking solutions through talk, they create valued images of self and community," White and Watson-Gegeo write about Pacific Island styles of disentangling (1990:3). The value of these images propels the movement toward setting things right. I claim that disentangling represents a moral order of discipline compared with the technocratic order agencies espouse. I argue, too, that a moral order has a playful structure—it is a kind of theater that gives actors a chance to show off. In theater, as Dening writes, lies the opportunity for an active engagement with rather than a passive acceptance of state authority.

Foucault argues that with modernization, state forms of punishment infiltrate all aspects of individual lives. Dening qualifies this view with his complex and playful account of Captain Bligh's ambiguous authority over the *Bounty* crew. If the ship is taken as an analog for an urban setting, Captain Bligh's story reveals the limits on a state's infiltration. "The Ship," Dening writes, "in all its spaces, in all its relationships, in all its theatre—was always being re-made, was always in process" (Dening 1992:27). There was much theater in the women's and men's groups I attended and a constant staging of interpretation in stories, gestures, and, in one wonderful instance, charades

on the beach. I will discuss the impact of these local performances on the discipline officially expected of participants at the end of the sessions.

As the *Bounty* sailed into the Pacific, distance from the urban sources of authority (the British Admiralty) increased. The "space" of the ship attained an autonomy of its own, into which Bligh came with his clumsiness and uncertainties. The domestic violence groups on the coast were similarly a distance from the downtown agency. Like Bligh, facilitators of the groups at once represented an urban institution and constructed their own discourse of discipline out there on the coast. As representatives of the agency, facilitators were supposed to impose a technocratic order, but there were many a slip between official strictures of command and actual events in the groups.[8] The performance of the three facilitators I knew best reveals how tangled their task was—in history, culture, and personality.

Participants in domestic violence groups are not as captive as a ship's crew or a prison population. The groups met in a community building that was across the highway from the open beach; a quick walk—or, more likely, a dash—brought us to the shores of the Pacific. In addition, there was a yard around the little building into which women and men wandered during breaks and before and after the formal meetings. These spaces became alternatives to the "public space" designated for meetings, providing the opportunity for individuals to transform practices and subvert rules of order (Lofland [1973] 1985:ix).

If the spaces I observed were not as fortified as the *Bounty* or a prison, the central site was equally institutionalized—locked in by the premises of an American social service system. Alternative spaces do not provide immunity from "the authority that sentences" (Foucault 1979:303), but the availability of such spaces modifies the absolute infiltration on which a state depends.

Group Meetings: Disentangling Discourses

Data come from three summers of fieldwork, in 1989, 1990, and 1991. In addition to participating in several women's and men's groups sponsored by a downtown Honolulu agency, I interviewed participants and facilitators outside the group setting. Furthermore, in 1991 I became a member of the women's group run by Gloria and Karen, attending all sessions and graduating with the women at the end. That summer as well, I attended anger management group meetings held by Paul for men under court order to attend.

I also spent time hanging out with the women in my group, sitting around their houses, going to the beach, and eating at the local McDonald's. In all

the groups I attended, the facilitators were local—born and brought up in the islands—though not necessarily Hawaiian or part-Hawaiian. A majority of participants in the domestic violence groups were Hawaiian or part-Hawaiian.[9]

I will briefly describe what happens at weekly meetings of the groups, with the women's group run by Gloria and Karen my main source of data. The form and content of meetings reflected a combination of pressures: the principles imposed by the sponsoring agency, social and economic conditions along the Waiʻanae Coast, and some degree of self-consciousness about "traditional" Hawaiian culture.[10]

Group meetings began with a round of narratives, stories about the past week's occurrences. "Understanding," Greg Dening writes in *Bligh,* "comes from narrative, from sailors' yarns, if you will" (1992:124). Essentially, everyone's understanding comes from yarns: mine, the facilitators', and that of the women themselves. Loosely constructed, digressive, and anecdotal, these narratives exemplified the Hawaiian talk-story mode of discourse; the initially unimpeded exchange of narratives among the women established an egalitarian format. Like sailors' yarns, the narratives demanded audience response, and those who were listening later offered a chorus of comment and confirmation through their own stories.

The beginning of a meeting, then, was casual and undirected. Story piled upon story, as the women summarized their weeks in narratives full of joking, banter, anecdotes, innuendoes, and laughter.[11] The stories were not independent of one another, exactly, but an accumulation of shared experiences that implied shared values—and reactions. At this point in the meeting, Karen and Gloria were exclusively listeners, not directors of the script as it unfolded from woman to woman. The hierarchical direction characteristic of *hoʻoponopono* gatherings did not appear, though the sense of entanglements and "knots" was certainly evident in the women's presentations. Yet in their official roles, Karen and Gloria were charged with "untangling" the knots in the women's lives. Had they accepted the *hoʻoponopono* model (as other group facilitators did), they would have directed the meetings with strength, insight, and expressed knowledge (Pukui, Haertig, and Lee 1972: 61). In their urban personae, Gloria and Karen were supposed to be leaders; they had been trained by the agency to alter the women's behaviors and not just hear them out.[12]

But Karen and Gloria were caught by two strands of local discourse, *hoʻoponopono* and talk-story. In addition, they were responsible for implementing the goals of an American self-help group, in which change comes from a personal transformation on one's own. Such a concept of self-improvement contradicts both modes of local discourse. In these, the individual is thoroughly embedded in and never alienated from social networks. Karen and

Gloria could not direct *hoʻoponopono* style and still be faithful to the self-help agenda of domestic violence groups sponsored by a modern agency. For personal and professional reasons, they also could not let the group drift through the casual course of talk-story exchanges.

How these tensions played themselves out in the sessions I attended can best be illustrated through one character. I have chosen Lindsay to highlight the issues and frame my analysis of urban and local discourses, technocratic and moral practices. Lindsay was a center of attention in the group as well, since the imminent birth of her baby inspired a good deal of talk and ultimately a shower at the end of our season together. I supplement her story with those of others I heard in men's and women's groups on the Waiʻanae Coast.

Every Friday morning during check-in, the initial exchange of stories, Lindsay described her interactions with Clarence. She reported both her entrancement with him and the beatings he subjected her to for one reason or another.[13] She also talked a lot about her pregnancy and the baby she was about to have.

Clarence was the father. In Lindsay's accounts, Clarence wanted the baby and wanted to be a father. She also reported his rejection of her four other children, telling an anecdote to show how she resolved the problem. One morning, she said, she was standing at a bus stop with the four children when her former boyfriend drove by. He stopped and offered her a ride wherever she was going. She packed the children into the back seat and climbed in next to him. He looked over at the children and abruptly announced that he would like to "keep them." And, as Lindsay put it: "I just gave them to him." According to Lindsay, the gesture, an idiosyncratic version of *hānai*, the Hawaiian custom of informal adoption, also appeased Clarence.[14] Significantly, too, the gesture was Lindsay's own; no social worker or Child Protective Services official had forced her to give up her children. Her autonomy is underlined by the space in which the transaction took place, the privacy of a car. Or I might say, adapting Lofland's point, the car distanced Lindsay from a "city" setting. The anecdote conveyed her devotion to Clarence, the usefulness of Hawaiian custom in times of crisis, and the independent spirit Lindsay brought to the travails she faced.

She returned persistently to the heart of her story: She wanted desperately to have and keep Clarence's baby. Adopting language the facilitators brought to the meetings, Lindsay said a baby would give her "a sense of self-worth" and would "make" Clarence treat her "with respect." Lindsay assured the group: "This one [baby] I am going to keep. So I can have something of my own, something worthwhile."

The other women in the group showed their appreciation of Lindsay's

presentation both in direct responses and in the stories they subsequently told. Their tales, alternating with hers from week to week (depending on who sat where on the two large couches in the room), played through their behavior as mothers, their interactions with a sexual partner, and their roles in an *'ohana.* The stories contained a cast of characters, and in none that I heard did the narrator appear as sole actor—sometimes, in my experience, hardly appearing at all, so "tangled" were the incidents being reported.

From one week to the next, the gathering of stories integrated children, men, sex, working, and partying. From one week to the next, too, alternatives appeared in anecdotal references to better relationships than the one Clarence offered Lindsay. One morning, for example, with tears in her eyes, Janie described a man "with a good heart," who "took care of me and my boys." "He never hits." She contrasted Melvin with the other men in her life, especially other sexual partners she had had. Although all the women who attended the meetings gave a meaning to the concept of abuse—experience of abuse was why they came—each interpreted its presence in her own life differently. Reminiscences, reconstructions, and reviews of a past week introduced an elaborate array of relationships, personal interactions, and styles of intimacy.

Those in attendance also took turns commenting on everyone else's story. The flow of anecdotes, commentary, analysis, and silent signs of sympathy constituted a wave of feelings, opinions, and judgments that created a basis for community. The facilitators were not as free as the women to enter the process, holding themselves back in an obligation to agency principles. Karen and Gloria checked in narratively, too, but their accounts of the week differed from those the women provided in content and, more significantly, in style. Less the meandering, anecdotal talk-story style, their check-ins incorporated through metaphor and structure a more individualized (self-help) approach to the problems at hand. But their stories did not range far from the other women's in content, ultimately establishing an unmistakable identification with local values. Gloria and Karen spoke pidgin when they referred to men and sex, they did not hesitate to tell "dirty" jokes, and they freely described their own desires to the gathered group.

For Gloria and Karen, as I observed, the consequence was a deadlock, a betwixt and between where they never quite entered the city and never quite left behind the "atoll" of the local. This deadlock showed up in a couple of ways. First, the facilitators did not orchestrate the storytelling or correct anyone's mode of presentation. A woman could, for instance, joke her way through the check-in—though I rarely saw anyone do that in Karen and Gloria's group. Second, Karen and Gloria did not (in my time with them) ever succumb completely to the talk-story style the participants created; they drew

lines at entering a complete free-for-all of narrative presentations, and they did not make direct commentary on someone's report of the week. During the time I attended, I expected that the official role they held would compel one or the other to intervene in Lindsay's understanding of her life with Clarence. The conviction Lindsay voiced, that having a baby would "please" Clarence enough to make him stop beating her, seemed to violate agency scripture on abuse. Lindsay herself had cited enough evidence of Clarence's violent temper to tempt even the most neutral observer (which I wasn't) to advise her to leave. Gloria and Karen did not offer the advice. Instead, they dwelt on the attachment between the two, on the impact of Lindsay's generosity *(aloha)* on Clarence, and on the loving ties potentially activated by the birth of a baby. In other words, they summoned local values.

Not naive, Karen and Gloria also clearly considered the consequences if Lindsay stayed and Clarence kept beating her. Here the weight of the "metropolitan" made itself felt, in their reminders of the official punishment waiting for a woman who tolerated abuse. They did not harp on what women in domestic violence groups knew all too well: If a woman stayed with an abusive partner, Child Protective Services took her children away.[15] From the point of view of professional social workers in an American state, such action is reasonable. According to the "best interests of the child" dictum, children are in danger in a household where violence occurs, especially if the child's mother is the primary victim.[16]

Karen and Gloria did not use the threat posed by Child Protective Services policy to discipline Lindsay, partly because the institution had already made an impact in the group. As I observed at meetings, the three initials "CPS" worked talismanically to evoke a foreign social order—and one that easily intruded into local lives. Partly, Karen and Gloria accepted Lindsay's own view, in which affiliative attachments effectively disciplined the individual.

Like Karen and Gloria, in his group Paul negotiated the distance between urban and local discourses. He, too, expressed his identification with local values, occasionally bringing up his own experiences of having battered a partner. During group discussions, he was loose and easygoing, rarely criticizing a man's report of the week's events. But Paul, more than Gloria and Karen, intervened in the men's voiced interpretations of their behaviors. To return to Captain Bligh for a moment: Paul had the confidence that the unfortunate Bligh lacked, that he could play with the men and still command. Paul realized that joining the "crew" increased his ability to direct their actions. As Dening writes about a good captain: "There was mutual engagement of commander and men in the discipline. There was a sense of sporting realism and gamesmanship" (1992:127).

I am not sure why there was a difference between Paul and the two

women facilitators in the form of their engagement. In a Hawaiian context, gender is not the explanation, since women have as strong a role as men in both *ho'oponopono* and talk-story-style discipline (Pukui, Haertig, and Lee 1972:61). Possibly Paul's training and ambition encouraged him to exert leadership more definitively. The nature of his personality, too, made a difference in events, as did the personalities of Karen and of Gloria. In the end, Paul was disciplining men who abused their partners, and Karen and Gloria were working with women who had been (and still were being) abused. The "subjects" called for different methods. But like a good captain, Paul never forgot to be playful, at once eroding and reinforcing his position by expressing his equality with the men in the group. The style and content of his check-in stories attached him closely to the participants, a boundary blurring that was more evident to me than the one in the women's group. In the end, Paul's playfulness lost him his position, and the agency removed him from the Wai'anae Coast groups.

The next step in my analysis concerns the impact of differing styles of discipline in the two self-help groups I attended. Were the techniques used by Paul more effective—were the men more thoroughly disciplined than the women? In posing the question, I take note of the reciprocal nature of a discipline/punish technique: Those who receive the commands, the insults, and the lashes (borrowing again from Dening) are not passive. Neither the women in the "victims" group nor the men in the "abusers" group received the word of the agency, its nonlocal vocabulary of redressing wrong, without restructuring, revising, and resisting the messages. To return to language I used earlier, in both groups a constantly created moral order limited the effectiveness of a rigid technocratic order.

I explore this segment of my argument by turning to the lavish shower the women made for Lindsay just before our sessions ended. From that account, I move directly to a concluding section in which I broaden the discussion of discipline, self-help groups, and moral communities.

On the Beach

The shower was held on the beach, across Farrington Highway from where we usually met. It was a surprise party; we all arrived early in the morning to set things up, hanging gifts on a nearby tree and setting the table with huge amounts of food.

Sandy had been designated to bring Lindsay to the shower, and when they drove up, Lindsay expressed perfect surprise and pleasure. We bustled around, planning an agenda: when the gifts would be opened, when the food would be served, when the games would start. At that moment Karen,

Gloria, and I were given no more attention than anyone else, and the decision about the morning's activities was entirely consensual. After several distractions, like sexual banter with two young soldiers who wandered by and a check of the beach for boyfriends, we sat down for the opening of presents. The gifts were interesting to me, half for the baby and half for Lindsay, including perfumes, powders, soaps, and jewelry. As a disciplined anthropologist might say: the shower prestations acknowledged Lindsay's sexuality along with her imminent motherhood. Gift opening was followed by a feast, after which we organized for charades.

Before the games began, I noticed several women disappearing one after another into Sandy's car, each coming back exuding the smell of marijuana. Eight months pregnant, Lindsay did not hesitate to take her turn along with everyone else. This event ended, the woman arranged themselves into two teams, leaving the facilitators and me out of the selection. Forcefully and unmistakably, we were turned into an audience, spectators for the play they were about to perform. We sat on the sand, not three feet away from the women, but there was no confusion of boundaries or collapse of the (figurative) proscenium. The actors took over, and we waited for the show.

It was a carefully orchestrated work, in which titles of films and names of television stars were offered to us full of sexual innuendo and reference: a finger pushed into the palm of a hand, gestures of mock striptease dancing, and the like. The performance wrapped us in its illusions: Once we caught on, the actors did not have to play very hard to make the point. There was no director; in an important sense, the common purpose of those performing the charades unified the action. The competition between teams was visibly less present than an ebullient showing off of talents and preoccupations. Karen, Gloria, and I laughed and applauded, thoroughly caught by the entertainment and disciplined in the right ways of responding.[17]

Charades was the last event of the shower, and gradually the women drifted away from the beach, alone or in pairs. The charades were not the end of group sessions, however, and they were the beginning of my insight into discourses of discipline on the Waiʻanae Coast.

Dening emphasizes the significance of the spaces used for discipline on the bounded area of a ship. Locating Lindsay's shower across Farrington Highway and on the beach may have seemed natural; after all, what better place for a party than a beach? But choice of space has profound social and cultural implications, particularly in a dense urban setting where every inch of space is contested. Setting the party on the beach rather than at the community building (or someone's house), the women also made a decision about the form and content of activities. A beach epitomizes free play, and the women emphasized that with the decorations and the catcalls to soldiers

through which they framed the party. At the shower, participants modified the structure of official meetings while reiterating in gestures and symbols the gist of the stories they told over there.

Gloria and Karen were rarely directive, not even in the official space for agency-sponsored activities. On the beach, they were even more completely spectators, expected to suspend disbelief when an invisible but evident curtain rose on the charades. Holding the stage, the women displayed values that had been implicit in their check-ins—in Dening's words, "the presentation of self in louder and slower charade, the reduction of the other to some nuance in voice and gesture" (1992:288). As Dening suggests, charades are revisionary, not oppositional; neither, in my as-yet-unfinished argument, are urban and local oppositional.

The shower was not a rite of reversal. On the beach, the participants presented an alternative discourse of discipline in which they did not reject but played with the idea of discipline presented to them on the other side of the highway. Like a carnival almost anywhere in the world, the charades, gift giving, and feasting on the beach absorbed, satirized, and (stage-) managed the views associated with the sponsoring agency and carried in by Gloria and Karen in their professional capacity.

Details of the shower, supplemented by observations at weekly meetings, expose the lineaments of a moral community. The riotous celebration contained a "yarn" about right action or, in the context of my essay, about disciplining wrong action. In the women's performance on the beach, discipline focused on social interaction rather than on the self-improvement prescribed by state programs. The exchange of gifts and the mixture of sex, parenthood, maleness, femaleness, order, and disorder in the charades suggest a complex conjoining of bodies and a complex integration of the body missing from the principles the agency conveyed in its practices.

The Implications of Self-Help

"Moral" refers to acting in a proper and approved manner. Prescriptions for acting properly entwine with notions of the person, though no one I met would have used such pompous language. What became clear to me on the beach was the distance between a state view of self and the women's view of themselves—a difference that provides an elaboration of the distinction between urban and local, "metropolis" and "atoll" that runs through all the essays in this volume.

Every gesture and every joke at the beach linked sexuality with motherhood and pleasure in one's body with responsible parenthood. Explicit at the shower and implicit at weekly meetings, such links revised the official dis-

course of discipline. For the state's purposes, components of the individual body are broken down in order to be efficiently disciplined (Foucault 1979). In an American state, sexual activity is one measure of disorder—and the legacy is long in Hawaiʻi, where colonialists early on saw sex as a sign of recalcitrance.[18] To control "sex" is to produce order and, as well, to separate sexual activity from other behaviors. The women I knew constructed another discipline, premised on the integrity of the body. In their discourse, woman as sexual partner was inseparable from woman as mother.

At first glance, this also appears to be true of the state's discourse. After all, the punishment for a woman who tolerates abuse from a sexual partner is removal of her child; the practice seems to link sexuality to motherhood. But that is only a superficial reading. In actuality, state practices separate the child's well-being from the social-sexual universe of the woman, subjecting the child to special rules and reasons for intervention. I do not doubt that a child may be at risk when adults are abusive. I am arguing that the state interpretation of the situation breaks down the woman's body, using one aspect to control another. If a woman is deprived of her child, then she will manage her sexual relationships. Alternatively, if a woman does not control her sexuality, then she will be punished by losing her child. The logic can only exist if the elements are distinct. To the women I met on the Waiʻanae Coast, this was absurd.

Their casual conversations and check-in stories proclaimed the integrity of the body and denied the state interpretation of body-in-parts. I was initially puzzled when the women in my group brought their children to meetings; I knew they had kin and friends who would happily take the children. After a while, I realized that the inclusion of children in a domestic violence group was a version of the local discourse. Bringing a child announced an aspect of themselves the women considered inseparable from the sexual sides of who they were. This was not the discourse of the downtown agency—or, at least, it had a different grammar. In local discourse, the intersection of roles of mother, partner, nurturer, and lover embed a person in a community. Furthermore, I would argue, the intersection embodies symbols of solidarity, not only establishing but also activating the "common faith" that, according to Durkheim, constitutes a moral community. The apparent naïveté of Lindsay's confidence that being a father would "make Clarence act right" vanishes when put in the context of local understandings of discipline. By contrast, in the downtown grammar Clarence's fatherhood bore no meaningful or structural connection to his abusive behavior.

The attitude toward drug use in the women's and men's groups provides another perspective on the distance between state and local disciplines. At the shower, Gloria and Karen said nothing about Lindsay's smoking pot. In a

private conversation with me, they admitted they were worried about her baby's health and about the possible perception by a Child Protective Services worker that Lindsay's child was threatened with imminent harm, grounds for removal. But they said this to me and not to Lindsay. Resisting state mechanisms themselves, Karen and Gloria refused to intrude onto Lindsay's body through a proscription of pot smoking. Although the purpose of the women's group was to provide Lindsay with the resources to resist abuse, for the facilitators this purpose did not justify subjecting her body to their surveillance and control.

It was even more surprising to me, at first, that Paul did not mention drug use at the meetings he ran. A number of men came to those meetings quite visibly high—a fact Paul and I discussed later on. Paul, however, refused to intrude on this behavior as staunchly as Karen and Gloria turned the other cheek to the trips to Sandy's car during the shower. Unlike Karen and Gloria, Paul had the backing of both metropolitan and local discourses of discipline in ignoring the evident lack of sobriety in his group.

Mainland self-help groups established to help individuals manage anger often leave the treatment of alcohol and drug abuse to other groups. The intention is to treat one, presumably separable, problem at a time.[19] Characteristic of a modern political and economic order, the technique reiterates the divisibility of the subject: The "self" who abuses a partner is separated from the "self" who uses drugs. For Paul, then, the "foreign" and the "familiar" discourses came together. He did not transgress the downtown agency agenda by ignoring the "problem" occurring right before his eyes, nor did he violate the (self) integrity of the men who sat with him week after week. From one point of view, Paul respected the rules of classic self-help groups; from another point of view, like Karen and Gloria he resisted turning the "body" into a site of instrumentalized discipline.

The model for the women's group and the men's group was the same: self-help groups developed in mainland American society. And the principles of such groups certainly influenced the content and method evident in the Waiʻanae Coast groups, through an emphasis on outlining, discussing, describing, and confronting troublesome issues. Paul accommodated to the model in one way, Gloria and Karen in another. But neither group embraced the American cultural concepts of the "self" that guide classic self-help programs. I saw no signs, for instance, of an extraction of "self" from networks and no indication of a view of self as divisible into parts. Instead, a local conceptualization of self reigned at the weekly meetings, embedded in social context and integral, not instrumental, in nature.

Gloria, Karen, and Paul carried the language of self-help to the Waiʻanae Coast, but there they transformed its meanings by using local dialect. On

the one hand, haole style, the three facilitators insisted that a person could manage the circumstances of her or his life. On the other hand, Hawaiian style, they encouraged management, or resolution, to emerge from a conglomeration of stories that reimmersed the narrator into a community. Responses to Lindsay's weekly, often painful, tales and her joyful participation in the shower for her baby illustrate the manifold maneuvering of a local discipline into the heart of an urban agency's well-constructed program.

Sam's performance in the men's group offers another variation on the negotiation of discourses in a self-help group. He challenged Paul more directly than Lindsay challenged Gloria and Karen; Sam challenged us all with his wise, witty, and wicked "play" with agency prescripts, the lessons transmitted by Paul, and his own finely honed ethnography of Hawaiian "custom." Sam did a lot of work to bridge the distance between urban and local traditions, technocratic and moral orders, and he left us somewhat breathless at the brilliance of the show.

During check-in, Sam enticed his audience into the "conspiracy" he created.[20] He cunningly exploited Paul's sympathy for local conditions and cultural values by constantly portraying himself as "one hundred percent Hawaiian" and the descendant of a royal lineage. Supporting these identifications, Sam displayed a vast knowledge of Hawaiian history and legend. In his check-in stories, he professed contrition for his outbursts of uncontrolled anger while remarking on the legacy of male aggressiveness in his family and his *ʻohana.* "What else can I do?" he would ask Paul. "That's all I learned at home." This was subtle teasing, on several levels. Sam teased about the cultural reason for his actions, about the significance of role models (a sly stab at professional discourse), and about the difficulties of altering his personal behavior when he was "loyal" to "old ways." His grins, jokes, and verbal punches indicate he knew he was teasing. But the self-consciousness does not minimize the significance of his intentions, any more than the carefully constructed charade on the beach detracts from the "resistance" in that play.

Sam's performance entertained his audience and placed Paul in a dilemma similar to the one faced by Karen and Gloria on the beach. In his local persona, Paul agreed that culture and circumstances contributed to a man's actions in his household and with his partner; in his urban persona, Paul had to teach Sam (and the others) that violence was absolutely bad—that there were no justificatory circumstances. Sam exploited Paul's efforts to be egalitarian and embrace local values; this appeared most obviously in his use of talk-story strategies to explain his actions, for example, drawing on Hawaiian "custom" and "legend" to elaborate an incident in his week. The other men followed Sam's lead as best they could, until a cacophony of (presumably genuine) Hawaiian customs filled the air during check-in. Like me, Paul was

spectator to the performance, enticed and amused, yet always off the stage, deciding whether to applaud or to criticize.

In all the weeks I attended the men's group, however, I never heard Paul completely pan a performance. Or, to put it more precisely, I never saw him intrude in a heavy-handed way to correct the story a man was telling. He did not bring state authority to bear any more adamantly than Gloria and Karen did in the women's group. Paul could have: He had a powerful weapon for disciplining the men had he chosen to use it. His reports on their performances determined the court's decision about whether a participant had successfully completed his anger management training. His comments could cause the court to lift or reimpose a restraining order, to forgive a jail sentence or not. Paul, then, had the leverage to discipline a man into complete obedience, into toeing the line, and into being faithful to the nonlocal prescriptions he carried from downtown. He resisted the temptation to fall into such "bad language" and to risk the mutiny of his men. Comparable "bad language" for Gloria and Karen would have been mention of Child Protective Services and its right to remove children. But, in my weeks with them, I never saw either one use that strategy to bring state authority to bear on a woman's actions.[21]

At the same time, Paul did direct the men's group more forcefully than Gloria and Karen directed the women's group. His own check-in stories were less anecdotal, loosely constructed, and humorous than instructive and pointed.[22] He often read passages from standard psychological studies of anger, and he occasionally showed films about abuse prepared by mainland anger management groups. Watching these, I wondered whether images of blonde, blue-eyed middle-class couples—in films from, for instance, Duluth, Minnesota—made a dent on the largely Hawaiian audience. Paul showed the films in order to demonstrate that violence was not attached to culture or class: Anyone anywhere might batter a spouse or a partner.[23] Like other aspects of conventional self-help discourse, the films attributed a person's violent expression of anger to a lack of self-control, not to his (or her) social, cultural, or economic conditions. By portraying violence as an individual phenomenon, extracted from historical and political contexts, the films participate in the technocratic, instrumentalized discipline of an urban/metropolitan world. Paul showed the films, but he encouraged yarning among his men—and the import of the yarns subverted the message of the films. "Yarning exchanged the politics of experience. It enlarged the boundaries of interpretation by giving a measure of what was exceptional and what was usual. Yarning was a very political thing. It educated participants in the language and the signs of institutions" (Dening 1992:73).

The women's charades and the men's flamboyant talk-stories were all

"yarns" in this sense. Through yarns, the women and men in the Waiʻanae Coast domestic violence groups constructed a commentary on the institutions of the state and on the conditions of their own "ships." Through yarns, the women and men I met established a world of right and wrong that differed from the discipline officially mandated by the downtown agency.

Elements of local discipline are the basis for a moral community. On the Waiʻanae Coast, these elements appeared in the yarns told by men and by women. Like the women, the men did not portray their own behaviors apart from or outside of a changing network of social relationships and affiliative attachments. The men did link the quality of their social and affiliative attachments to a political and economic order more than the women did. The men in Paul's group talked about being "marginalized" by a modern capitalist system. They talked about their distinctive situation: They were not, the stories claimed, just like men "anywhere" who battered their wives. From the men's (seemingly shared) perspective, acts of violence were not transcultural and the routes to altering violent behavior were not neutral, value-free, and nonhistorical. They were local.

By localizing the sources and the solutions to abusive behavior, the men and women in the Waiʻanae Coast groups were not excusing anything. They were not condoning violence or lack of self-control. They were creating a moral community in which the methods for restraining battering drew on a concept of the self whose premises stretched far from the self a self-help program offered. They replaced an atomistic, instrumental view with a holistic view in which act and actor are "one" and are one with others.

This kind of integrative and integrating view challenges the terms of a modern discipline. Its very language contradicts the discourse of a technocratic order in which acts can be categorized as absolutely wrong and individuals as unambiguously self-determined. Paul, Karen, and Gloria negotiated the challenge at every meeting they ran, the more skillfully the more they joined the "crew."

My analysis of Waiʻanae Coast domestic violence groups leaves two major questions for a conclusion: (1) Can local discourse prevail against an urban discourse backed by the careening forces of modernization and globalization? (2) Does the discipline of a localized moral community effectively address the substantial (and growing) dangers of battering and being battered?

Discipline, Person, and Moral Community

In this essay I measure the distance between urban and local in terms of discipline, not space or time. I have indicated how in domestic violence groups the distance is mediated by facilitators whose role is to implement state poli-

cies by imposing agency practices. I have also shown that participants in the groups constructed a local discourse of discipline through stories, gestures, and performances. Finally, I have suggested that local discourses establish a notion of self distinctly different from the "self" presented in self-help programs. In this last section I want to move back a step from the descriptive account to consider modes of discipline as a way of refining the links between urban and local as well as between (the not necessarily isomorphic) "technocratic" and "moral."

I have treated self-help groups as a site for strategies of discipline that can be called urban, in the sense of being efficient, subjectivizing, and noncontextualized. Alcoholics Anonymous is the classic model of a self-help group, and its principles influence programs established by social service agencies throughout Hawai'i. A discussion of a collapse of the model in the groups run by Gloria, Karen, and Paul extends my argument that urban and local, metropolitan and "atoll" (borrowing the metaphor of the introductory essay) are distinguished by the interpretation and implementation of discipline. A self-help agenda hinges on the conviction that an individual is responsible for his or her own acts and that alteration in behavior comes about through transformation of the self. Embraced by state institutions in Hawai'i, such an agenda represents a primary (technocratic) means of enforcing discipline.

Gloria, Karen, and Paul could not stick with the agenda and also present themselves to participants as having local values and affiliations. In the training sessions I attended, I never saw a facilitator encourage the scrutiny of self that is part of Alcoholics Anonymous or introduce a hint of a twelve-step program, or put pressure on members to confess their flaws. They did encourage contrition for bad behavior—the men's abuse, the women's tolerance of abuse—without accusing anyone of being a weak or incompetent person. In his work on alcohol problems, the sociologist Joseph Gusfield distinguishes between the delinquent, whose act is punished, and the deviant, whose character is stigmatized. In a classic self-help program like Alcoholics Anonymous, the individual has to erase the stigma and reconstitute his or her character. The self is transformed. In adapting the Alcoholics Anonymous model, the two Wai'anae Coast domestic violence groups I observed came closer to the other option, designating the abuser and the abused as delinquent. The goal was not transformation of self but rejection of a behavior. As Gusfield puts it, with penance the individual is redeemed and restored to life (1996:206–207).

Yet "delinquency" does not fully reflect the local discourse created at the meetings I attended. The way the term is used in classic self-help groups, "delinquency" refers to an autonomous self. The American-based canon

considers the individual, whether delinquent or deviant, as the focus of discipline. Transformation and redemption are equally self-oriented. By contrast, customary Hawaiian modes of discipline are directed toward restoring harmony, not recomposing the self, on creating community rather than constituting a "right" person. The question for outside observers, including Paul, Karen, Gloria, and me, is whether local discipline works well enough to deal with battering and being battered. That is, can a local discourse of discipline serve to prevent problems of abuse that intertwine so closely with nonlocal economic and political conditions? The answer depends on whether Hawaiian-style disentangling can prevail against the forces of modernization loosed upon residents of the Waiʻanae Coast by an (Americanized) global political economy.

Hoʻoponopono, a traditional method for resolving conflict and calming anger, has evolved to meet the conditions Hawaiians face in an American state. In both the customary and the revised forms of *hoʻoponopono,* setting things right begins with exposing the sources of conflict—bringing distress into the open (Pukui, Haertig, and Lee 1979; Ito 1985; Boggs and Chun 1990). In the process, the statements made by participants are juxtaposed to a narrative of ideal social relationships. Such juxtaposition resolves the conflict: "Talk in *hoʻoponopono* reinstates by reenactment the social relationships that are to be maintained ideally in the culture" (Boggs and Chun 1990:131). At the end of *hoʻoponopono,* disturbances are smoothed over and order is restored to the group. *Hoʻoponopono* can only work if participants acknowledge the importance of acting with *aloha* and affection. Success depends on loyalty to shared values: "The goal [of disentangling] inevitably involves the reconstruction of a collective vision of social reality through the mutual involvement of community members" (White and Watson-Gegeo 1990:8). In a word, the success of *hoʻoponopono* depends on the ongoing creation of moral communities.

Can domestic violence groups discipline abuse, the abuser and the abused, by reconstructing a collective vision of social reality—by creating a moral community? Several features of *hoʻoponopono* are missing from domestic violence groups, primarily a leader who deliberately moves the discussion toward a goal and the presence of all those involved in the conflict: Abusers do not meet with the abused. Moreover, one could argue that the methods of *hoʻoponopono* are not discipline so much as persuasion and that persuasion is never adequate when the health and well-being of a person are at risk.

The point is that in the Waiʻanae Coast self-help groups I observed the local and urban work together. Hawaiian modes of discipline, exerted either through a formalized *hoʻoponopono* or a less formalized talk-story inter-

change, feed on the proffered urban discourse. The energy of building up a local discourse in the context of the metropolitan leads to a situation in which discipline has a chance of success. To clarify the point further, I return to the inspiration I find in *Mr Bligh's Bad Language.* Dening's account of misbehavior and its (mis)handling on the *Bounty* provides a paradigm for occurrences far away in twentieth-century Hawai'i. Bligh's mistaken way of attending to sailors' yarns and sailors' mischief resulted in the complete undoing of discipline. Paul, Karen, and Gloria did better than Bligh.

Dening writes of the gap between stern British naval rules and the sassy trivia retailed in the stories, dances, and "duckings" (dunkings) of the *Bounty* crew. The account modifies Foucault's thesis in *Discipline and Punish* in the direction of the "subject" response to an imposed authority. The concocted sociability on the *Bounty* denies the absolute power of state authority and distresses Bligh no end. If the state possesses powerful mechanisms of discipline, the *Bounty* shows there are many ways of scoffing at the state.

I am taking the *Bounty* and its story as a parable for the relations between urban and local, the strange and the familiar, the faraway and home. Dening thickly describes the "culture" of the ship, delineating its faithfulness to Admiralty regulations and its simultaneous fostering of locally created moral communities. In a space that was urban in its density and heterogeneity, the residents yarned and performed a distinctive social solidarity. Packed into floating confinement, the officers and the crew of the *Bounty* captured and redid elements that were pliable, like rituals, watches, and their own bodies. Nor does Dening forget the private ticks and idiosyncrasies that emerge whenever there is space and scope for play. Those, too, are part of the social solidarity.

His word "play" insists on the creativity and the subversiveness possible in —indeed, endemic to—settings encircled by the state. Like the *Bounty,* the groups I studied demonstrate that one mark of an urbanized, or metropolitan, context are the chinks that let in and the circumstances that nurture the local.

Poor Mr. Bligh was not able to play between the urban and the local. For personal and professional reasons (the ship was not easy to captain), he repressed the flow of creativity and cultural construction going on endlessly on the *Bounty.* His discipline had no flexibility or nuance—the "bad language" of the title—the very qualities that would have ensured effectiveness. "Bligh spoke badly to them [sailors] in not allowing them to find their own levels of authority independent of his" (Dening 1992:73). On board ship, as elsewhere, discipline is most successful when it emerges from a consensus between those who impose and those who submit. This is not to say that the sailors cooperate in their own subjugation but rather to claim they have an impact on the "community" of rules—on the collective vision of

social reality, as it were. On good ships, according to Dening, things did not work in a totalitarian fashion. "For commanders, discipline could be improved if they played it as a game won and lost. Bligh did not play it as a game" (ibid.:119). Other captains did. "There was a mutual engagement of commander and men in the discipline. There was a sense of sporting realism and gamesmanship" (ibid.:127).

Karen, Gloria, and Paul knew how to play it as a game—too well for their own good, as it turned out. In the end, domestic violence groups do not have the leeway of a *Bounty* far from home in the middle of the Pacific Ocean. Closely anchored to an urban agency, the self-help groups were themselves subjected to an order of discipline—the efficient, nonplayful legislation of social service institutions in a large American city. Karen, Gloria, Paul, and the participants in their groups struggled against this order, rejecting the inappropriate, foreign-dialect message of self-determination and subverting the chain of command from state to agency to individual.

Gloria, Karen, and Paul were more playful than Bligh was, and while his performance resulted in the mutiny of a crew, their performances brought the disapproval of the state. Karen and Gloria were fired at the end of the sessions I attended, and I later learned that Paul had been pressured into leaving his position at the agency.[24] Stepping in, the downtown agency inserted a trained social worker into the women's group—"an uptight haole lady," my friends reported. Through the agency, the state had asserted its power to classify and control, efficiently.

Meanwhile, however, something had been created during the meetings, and its value should be noted in an otherwise not entirely cheerful tale. A community emerged in the space and time of the training sessions, definably a moral community inasmuch as it was characterized by modes of "setting things right." The modes were local, drawing on a (perceived) tradition of Hawaiian conflict resolution in *hoʻoponopono* counsel and talk-story style. And they are "moral" in that they persuade a person to proper conduct, in this case proper conduct vis-à-vis others. This is not discipline in Foucault's sense of the state's authoritarian intrusion into a subject's interests. It is disciplining, in Dening's sense of controlling conduct by playing (in all seriousness) with the rules of sociability.

Within a moral community, disciplining depends on a shared notion of the "self." I have made the point that the "self" in the self-help groups I attended had a local interpretation, set against the autonomous individual the agency's prescriptions presented. The local self, I suggested, is integral and integrated; the idea of a separate self and separable aspects of the self was missing from the discourse I heard at the women's and the men's groups on the Waiʻanae Coast. From this perspective, the body is a crucial element

of self. In groups designed to prevent abuse and battering, the body is an especially important site of meanings.[25] As the stories I heard and the many performances at which I was spectator showed, the body gained meaning from its "wholeness," so that sexuality, sustenance, and attachment were considered inseparable.

By contrast, state authority divides the body and the bodies of its citizens into manageable segments. Foucault writes of the modern state: "The human body was entering a machinery of power that explores it, breaks it down and rearranges it. A 'political anatomy', which was also a 'mechanics of power', was being born; it defined how one may have a hold over others' bodies, not only so that they may do what one wishes, but so that they may operate as one wishes, with the techniques, the speed and the efficiency that one determines" (1979:138). Is the end of my story of self-help on the Waiʻanae Coast fated to be a victory of the state over the local, the technocratic over the moral?

The three facilitators eventually lost their jobs. Charades and comedies on the beach were intolerable and the yarns of inebriated men not easy to wink at. The women and men I knew had a hard time escaping the strong arm of state institutions, including Family Court, Child Protective Services, and still other self-help groups. Community on the Waiʻanae Coast was to be organized efficiently, it seemed.

The end of the groups as I knew them does not mean the silencing of the discourse created in those groups. The situation I observed ended in a draw, a victory for neither the downtown agency nor the local groups. Fortified by the community they had constructed, the women of Karen and Gloria's group continued their stories outside the space now supervised by a new haole facilitator. The outcome, however, was tragic for Lindsay: She had her baby and stayed with Clarence, who continued to beat her badly. One evening he shoved her head in the toilet and flushed. The last news I heard was that Child Protective Services had removed the child from Lindsay's care, and, though no one talked about Clarence, I assume he was hauled into Family Court.

Yet an analysis of process—of the circulation between urban and local—cannot end with one individual, and Lindsay's failure does not doom the process I observed in the self-help groups. On the one hand, she had the opportunity to play her own game and run her own risks. On the other hand, she was hurt both by her loyalty to local ways and by her immersion in a state system of family supervision. Recalling the two questions I posed several pages ago: Lindsay's case suggests that the local discourse did not prevent battering, but this must be qualified by the abundance of state pressure in the situation she shared with Clarence. Discrimination and poverty are

part of the picture on the Waiʻanae Coast. At the same time, Lindsay's case also demonstrates that a local discourse has vitality and maintains a community at a distance from the encircling metropolitan world.

The example can be turned in another direction as well. I have described a situation of "movement," as it were, between urban and local. Following the remarks of students of the city, like Simmel and Lofland, I see "freedom" in moving away from the ties that bind—just as the sailors on the *Bounty* did and redid their worlds as they sailed from island to island. But the ties that bind are not broken either, as Bligh reminded his crew and as Lindsay and the other women reminded the messengers of the state-sponsored program. A vigorous moral community comes not from maintaining ties to the local (or to home) but from the adaptation of old ties to new spaces and structures.

At the moment, women and men on the Waiʻanae Coast are in a vulnerable position, economically and politically. The very site of the moral communities I have described underlines the restrictive conditions for solidarity and the assertion of values: Self-help groups are founded on problems and response to crises. Moreover, self-help groups fit into a pattern; they are only one example of ongoing struggles to create community within an encircling state. The groups were interesting to me because of the particular toughness of the issue: Battering and being battered are life-threatening.

Let me try out a paradox. Lindsay was beaten but not subjugated. That is, while Clarence hit her and hurt her, Lindsay did not succumb to an authority that was "foreign" and that violated the integrity of her self. She clung to the affiliative relations that, the language at the women's group made clear, defined without rigidifying a moral community. That Clarence did not improve his behavior does not render community creation futile. Rather, Clarence's failure to manage his anger indicates that some persons always escape the discipline of any community.

I reach my concluding points by once again borrowing from Dening. One of the primary lessons of the mutiny on the *Bounty* is that authority cannot be absolute as long as there is "play." The sailors on the *Bounty* were good at playing, but the captain unfortunately was not. The sailors were "institutional men," Dening tells his readers, alienated "by their sense of powerlessness over the structures they know they create by their own deferences." Then he adds the crucial sentence: "But their alienation can be their defence. The institution does not touch them in their souls" (Dening 1992:28). The freedom to yarn and duck saves a crew from total subjugation; granting that freedom saves a captain from the threat of a mutiny. The line between cutting absolute authority and mutinous resistance with "play" and developing techniques of co-optation is fine. It is not therefore nonexistent.

The process of creating moral communities in urban settings, in other

words, partakes of the dangers of succumbing too thoroughly and, as well, the dangers of resisting too hard. The self-help groups I observed show that residents pulled into a metropolitan world can walk a tightrope line.

As students of the city maintain, its anonymous and chaotic quality offers residents the freedom to make their own communities. City-ness, diversely represented at the beginning of the twenty-first century, offers residents of a modern world a refuge from the increasingly mechanistic and technocratic state. Multiple spaces and loosely constructed ties mean the local can "play" with the urban, as I witnessed in the women's and men's groups. "And yet, residents of home territories and those of urban villages have much in common: they have both created personal worlds in the midst of urban anonymity" (Lofland [1973] 1985:32). But these worlds are more than personal, my example shows; based on the personal, they are moral—and moral, they are a ground for conduct, solidarity, and "common faith," as Durkheim put it.

From one perspective it is sad that self-help groups are the forums for community creation, inasmuch as these groups are stereotypically associated with vulnerability and dysfunction. From another perspective, however, the life-threatening bases for participation in these groups makes the task of "yarning" fraught with significance. The groups I joined were blessed with good captains, good for them though not for the state. Under playful leadership, the elements for constructing a moral community flourished in the women's group and the men's group. The elements I described are not limited to those groups but rather are something to be looked for in other domains and something to be noted as anthropologists continue their analyses of urbanization, globalization, and modernization. Those big words we use, our discourse, should not also deafen us to the importance of small talk—in stories, yarns, and conferences. Only by being playful with talk can we, like the members of Karen's, Gloria's, and Paul's groups, open up the possibility of new "takes" on seemingly unstoppable movements.

NOTES

1. "Self-help groups are voluntary, small group structures for mutual aid and the accomplishment of a special purpose. They are usually formed by peers who have come together for mutual assistance in satisfying a common need, overcoming a common handicap or life-disrupting problems, and bringing about desired social and/or personal change." In Lee and Swenson 1994:421.

2. I have been influenced by Abner Cohen's discussion: Community consists of a manipulation of symbols, a way of drawing boundaries to separate one entity from another (Cohen 1985:12–13).

3. The City and County of Honolulu is coterminous with the island of Oʻahu and includes many kinds of settlements, including suburbs that look like those in virtually any American state.

4. See Howard's fine discussion of affiliative values in *Ain't No Big Thing* (1974).

5. Mayo (1987) provides three useful differentiating terms: urban, urbanism, and urbanization.

6. Lofland provides an excellent account of the uses of space in a city, arguing that location and appearance (self-presentation) are keys to survival in an urban environment ([1973] 1985).

7. I use "domestic violence" to cover both the women's abuse group and the men's anger management group.

8. As far as I could tell, there was no way of ensuring regular attendance at meetings. Failure to attend had greater consequences for the men than for the women, but that did not seem to make the men more conscientious about attending—though it did make them more creative in their excuses. Only two or three of the women in the group in which I participated (a total of about twelve women) had perfect attendance.

9. The reasons are both geographical and socioeconomic. The groups were located in Hawaiian Homelands areas and thus tended to draw people of Hawaiian descent. In addition, the Waiʻanae Coast is plagued by unemployment, poverty, and drug use, all of which contributed to the situations the women and the men found themselves in.

10. Publicity about the Hawaiian sovereignty movement undoubtedly influenced groups like the ones I attended, but since no one specifically mentioned sovereignty, I will leave that complicated subject out of this essay.

11. Boggs and Chun write that talk-story "consists of narratives of personal experience, banter, joking, and word play of a friendly sort intended to suggest sentiments and feelings which can then be shared" (1990:142).

12. The ambiguity of Gloria and Karen's position appeared in their relationship with me. Sometimes they identified with me, taking on the role of outsiders to local culture, and sometimes they distanced themselves from me, considering me the outsider—too thin, too pale, and too stingy in my appetites. By the end of the sessions, we were close friends but only after a good amount of teasing, testing, and talking. Paul had an easier time with me, because, I think, he had an easier time in general with his role as mediator between local and urban cultures.

13. Clarence was in an anger management group, by complete coincidence the one I attended. In my experience, he was a charming and persuasive person.

14. *Hānai* refers to the practice of giving a child to the person who requests it to solidify bonds between adults. Retaining some of its historical connotations, as Lindsay's anecdote illustrates, it has also changed to meet modern conditions on the Waiʻanae Coast (Modell 1996).

15. According to Hawai'i state law, a child must be removed if he or she is at risk of *imminent* harm.

16. In every state of the union, the "best interests of the child" principle—vague as it is—sets the criteria for a child's well-being.

17. Dening's discussion of theater and the "pull" between performer and audience is elaborate, and I am making just a pass over it in my text.

18. See Merry, this volume.

19. The theoretical premise is clear in statements like the following, chosen from a manual on self-help groups. "That is why with many men [who batter women] it is important at the early stage to decrease guilt to some extent through inclusion in the group and increase acknowledgment through each man's description of what he did. It is very important this be done without editing or blaming the victim or other factors such as alcohol" (quoted in Trimble 1994:263).

20. The phrases are adapted from Dening 1992:3.

21. I do not mean to simplify either Family Court's decision-making process or the burdens Child Protective Services has to bear in protecting children. To discuss those at length would require another essay.

22. Once he came to the women's group, and there he did a wonderful talk-story performance, full of sexual innuendo and quite different from what he did at the men's group meetings. He could be very playful!

23. At the women's group, I also learned how many women battered their partners.

24. I read this in a newspaper article that implied Paul had transgressed agency rules.

25. All three facilitators also talked about mental and emotional abuse, but physical violence took primary place for them and for the participants.

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