PEDAGOGICAL PROMISE, DISCIPLINARY PRACTICE, AND THE FASHIONING OF IDENTITIES AMONG MARSHALLESE YOUTH IN PRIMARY SCHOOL

Laurence Marshall Carucci
Montana State University

SCHOOLING IS OFTEN CONSIDERED a primary locus of socialization, a place where children and youth come to control central understandings about the nature of the world, where they become worthy citizens with some comprehension of fundamental moral principles that a culture holds dear, and also a context where young people learn to interact with their age mates with acceptable interactional grace. On the flip-side, these same idealistic propositions are counterbalanced by the view that schooling is a disciplinary regime that inscribes certain dispositions within the bodies of its members. Superficially, these two views seem contradictory but, on closer inspection, they are in large part simply differently situated views of the same extant reality. The socialization view adopts a perspective that posits a normative reality that has significant effects on people's actions to demonstrate the importance of the way in which humans are shaped by social factors; the more recent perspective, following Foucault (1977), points out the differential effects of power relations in causing a common set of social practices to be inculcated into daily routines of all of the members of a particular social group. This complementarity becomes far more complicated, however, when two or more distinct cultural perspectives are juxtaposed to produce a new set of practices and interpretations.

In this paper, I consider two extremes in the schooling of fourth- and fifth-grade students from the Ujelang/Enewetak community: those in

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residence on Ujelang in the 1970s, and the same age students living in Hawai'i in 2002–03.[1] These children are members of a society that has experienced extremely rapid social change yet, at the same time, a group that places very high value on the perpetuation of core elements of their unique cultural and historical identity. Situated on the outermost periphery of the current-day Republic of the Marshall Islands, Enewetak residents remained on the fringes of empire through Spanish, German, and even Japanese colonial regimes, only to be repositioned on center stage in the penultimate phases of World War II and in the years that followed that war. Enewetak people lost over twenty percent of their dwindling population during the Battle of Eniwetok in 1944, leaving fewer than 140 people alive. Their suffering continued in the aftermath of the war when they were forced into exile for thirty-three years on a small, relatively unproductive atoll, Ujelang, to allow the United States to soil their homeland with the radioactive wastes of nuclear testing. The hugely devastating ecological effects of nuclear testing continued to have a radical impact on the community after a partial clean up of Enewetak and the community's return to the atoll in 1980. Life on Enewetak was so substantially altered that less than half of the residents chose to continue their struggle on this "New Enewetak." Large segments of the community have moved to Majuro, governmental center of the Marshall Islands, or to the Big Island of Hawai'i to try to begin life anew without the worries and constraints of living in the direct shadow of nuclear testing. Smaller groups of Enewetak/Ujelang people live in states along the west coast of the United States or in Marshallese settlements in Arizona, Springdale, Arkansas, or Spokane, Washington (Carucci, 2004, 2012).

My interest in schooling derives from members of the Enewetak/Ujelang community themselves, because they see schooling as reformative and revitalizing, as a way for their children to "turn over the ways of their lives," to rid themselves of suffering (*intaan*) and to alter the course of their impoverished lives (*moud eo an di jeramel*; "the life of the unfortunate"). They believe that schooling will help their offspring as they seek to fashion powerful Marshallese identities, images infused with strength (*kajur*) and renown (*bunbun*), in the contemporary world. Indeed, most of those who moved to Majuro during the years of suffering on Ujelang, and virtually all of those who have moved to Majuro or the Big Island since the time of repatriation, rationalize their decisions in terms of better schooling and access to health care. However much schooling is in its Hawaiian–American or Marshall Islands–American guises that may attempt to reshape, pacify, and colonize Marshallese identities, Enewetak/Ujelang people welcome the enterprise with a different vision in mind. As a reformative endeavor, they

imagine that schooling will resuscitate pride for Enewetak/Ujelang youth and provide them with a sense of power they feel they have lost since the First World War. In historical perspective, their disempowerment comes to be felt as the negative imprint of increased colonial and post-colonial interaction.

With the linkages of schooling, identity, and power in mind, I wish to consider two extremes in schooling to see how going to school both posits and, in certain ways, produces differently positioned identities. The products, of course, express differential relations of power and, in the case of Hawai'i, a great deal of shared frustration. Therefore, even though many variant models of schooling have been experienced by Enewetak/Ujelang Marshallese, for purposes of brevity, the second half of this paper traces only the two most distinct varieties—my mid-1970s experiences with schooling on Ujelang, and its regimented antithesis on the Big Island of Hawai'i more recently—although I have also lived extensively with Enewetak/Ujelang on Enewetak during several periods of time from 1982 through 2010 and with Enewetak/Ujelang and other Marshallese families in the government center of Majuro, on Kwajalein, and Utedik (Carucci 2007a). I have worked for shorter periods of time with Enewetak families in Springdale, Arkansas and in Spokane, Washington. These combined field-research experiences have allowed me to come to appreciate the variety of Marshallese children's practical schooling activities in a wide array of comparative circumstances.

The Progressionist Model

While Enewetak/Ujelang people do not perceive themselves as prototypical primitives trapped in an ancient past awaiting enlightenment to progress toward a modern existence, outsiders, including several teachers at Na'alehu Elementary School on Hawai'i, Hawai'i, speak about them using verbal formulations that derive from the primitivist–modernist trope. Education fits nicely within this paradigm as a standard salvation path that leads premodern people into the contemporary world. Enewetak/Ujelang people do not see themselves as either primitive or premodern, and certainly, there is no reason to think that the formulation has any real legitimacy beyond the nineteenth-century notion that Europeans and Americans used to inscribe their own desires to feel superior to others around the world. Nevertheless, the imbalance in power between Germany, Japan, or the United States and local peoples residing on the small atolls and islands that they colonized or actively managed in the Pacific meant that European constructions of the primitive had real effects on others. Certainly, this was

the case for Marshall Islanders. Therefore, Enewetak/Ujelang people presume that some of the assumptions of the European formulation are true. For example, community elders frequently voice the idea that young members of the community in today's world must think about or "prepare for tomorrow and the next day" or to "look to the times in front." Community members also believe that schooling is important if their young members are to be able to adapt to life in the current era (*moud eo ilo raan ke in*). Therefore, although there is neither a discourse of modernization nor of development that accompanies these pronouncements, a significant component of their worldview has changed. Having access to income and to the goods that money can buy is now viewed as an important component of one's identity. Marshallese with no access to money are said to be *jebwabwe* (without direction) and are occasionally said to have no significance (*ejjelok tokjen*; literally "nothing coming from" [that person]). These judgments by Marshallese of their own compatriots are of recent vintage. Certainly, nothing of the sort existed in the 1970s and 1980s when I first began my inquiries into Marshallese social life. At that time, extraordinary skill in fishing, working the land, weaving mats and handicraft, or managing community affairs were the most highly valued attributes of an empowered adult. Money, classed by Marshallese as a "child class possessive," *neji-* (a category that includes toys) had value when it was used wisely, but when frittered away, it was of little consequence. Certainly, having access to money was not central to the construction of a meaningful identity. In addition to the value-added component of money in fashioning a contemporary sense of identity, Big Island Marshallese also have a clear understanding that, although anyone can work and earn some money, education allows some people to hold jobs that pay better and contribute more meaningfully to a person's identity than jobs that require menial labor. However, if more empowered identities are the aim, the educational process itself requires that ambivalence toward one's own identity, if not a straightforward degradation of identity, must take place prior to the moment when those judged most deserving receive their just rewards.

American education, of course, involves practices and procedures that reflect, in their design, elements of the larger milieu of which they are a part. For example, one segment of educational practice typically ranks students vis-à-vis one another and then distributes rewards (in the form of grades, etc.) based on that ranking. As American-educated readers certainly realize, such grades are presumed to reflect a student's knowledge or ability and has real effects on a person's feelings about themselves and their own construction of identity. By repositioning education to occupy a central place in the construction of what it now means to be a productive, money-earning adult, members of the Enewetak/Ujelang community have

accepted a whole array of assumptions about what an American-style institutional education means and how it can enable a certain desirable identity construction. Equally, by entering into a Marshallese–American or Hawaiian–American school, the retinue of everyday practices encountered by each student requires adherence to other ritual routines that have a direct impact on identity construction as well.

The desire for education among Enewetak/Ujelang people has become increasingly central in recent years, particularly as a people who experienced the way of life in the government center, Majuro, in the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s. This was a time when living in exile on Ujelang, the most isolated atoll in the Marshall Islands, required local self-sufficiency and the ability to live off of indigenous resources for extended periods of time. The only option was to move to Majuro and live a life largely separate from the community on Ujelang. Nevertheless, among those who elected to reside in "Ujelang Town," on the small islands of Majuro between Rita and Delap, a few young Ujelang people successfully completed high school and went on to college, thereby positioning themselves as future community leaders. Of course, the bulk of the community did not move to Majuro permanently but simply came to visit, enjoy the attractions of urban life, resupply, and return to Ujelang. In the process, however, they witnessed the alternate lifestyle of their urban compatriots and presumed that, if they were to follow a similar path, their offspring might also reap the benefits that had been obtained by the first-educated members of the community.[2] The centrality of education has been even more accentuated since people began moving to the Big Island in 1991 and to other US mainland locales since that time.[3] In these multi-ethnic locales, feedback about the centrality of education to financial success and personal renown receive constant reinforcement. Nevertheless, the sedimentation of some of the central tenets of education into local ideology is of much longer duration. Initially inspired by nineteenth-century American missionary and German government practices, ideas about the unilineal character of knowledge (fully controlled by Europeans and Americans), and the elevated forms of identity that could be accessed by those who controlled such knowledge, were accepted without critique even though the value of such "ways of thinking of outsiders" (*lomnok ko an rumwaijet*) were minimal for those living on atolls on the outer fringe of the Marshall Islands. Lacking any evident practical value, it took a long time to inspire people to lend significant value to the Euro-American educational enterprise as a whole. Life on Ujelang provided few opportunities for those with high school or college degrees; but with the community's repatriation to the southern-most islets of Enewetak in 1980, with far more frequent contact between Enewetak and

Majuro, and with Marshall Islands' independence in the mid-1980s, pragmatic conditions shifted and the emerging group of young adults began to imagine a new "forward-looking" trajectory for the community. As much as it may have aligned with the ideology of their colonizers, education was identified as a key pathway that would allow the new generation of Enewetak/Ujelang people to realize these new and empowered imagined identities.

Ironically, of course, the work of educational transformation fell on the shoulders of the youth, whereas the imagined accomplishments that were to result from a stress on education were the dreams of adults. During a heated argument at a Council Meeting on Enewetak in 1990, wherein the young adult men challenged the authority of the elder men, Joseph, speaking for the elders, told the young men that, from that time forward, the younger men would be in charge of community decision making. In part, this strategy was simply a ploy to demonstrate that young men did not have the wisdom to lead the community, but it also marked a shift in community priorities. Already an increasing number of young men and women had moved to Majuro to marry men and women from a wide variety of Marshallese atolls. More importantly, within five years of the confrontational meeting, the community, with the support of both elder and younger adults, committed to invest a substantial part of their nuclear claims compensation fund in the Enewetak school program, and yet another segment of the community established a vibrant and growing community of Enewetak/Ujelang residents on the Big Island. In addition to better health care, the stated attraction of the Big Island was access to better schools. Therefore, even if younger community members were not immediately successful in their educational pursuits, the dreams of the adults combined with an increasingly well-traveled populace and a much more cosmopolitan set of social contacts and practices to transform the thinking about education in the worldview of members of the community.

Rethinking the position of education, and placing it as a central focus in the formation of local identities—both at the personal and communal level—has resulted in numerous contradictions both conceptually and in terms of everyday practice. Although Enewetak/Ujelang community members on the Big Island, in Majuro, and on Enewetak all share the assessed value of education, the contradictions that are experienced by each group differ significantly from one another. The specific contours of these contradictions are most apparent when comparing the educational practices on Ujelang in the mid-1970s and the educational encounters of students on the Big Island in 2002 and 2003. First, I present an overview of educational practices on Ujelang where the resident population varied between 265 and 410 people.

Formal Education and Experiential Learning on Ujelang

On Ujelang, all of the teachers as well as the principal were Marshallese who had taught in the school for a number of years. All of these educators were either "true Ujelang/Enewetak people," or they had married into the Ujelang community and had been in residence for at least a decade. The language of instruction was Marshallese although, of course, for classes that required English, the same teachers, each in his own island-inflected English idiolect, provided the role models. Although the Ujelang school was part of the larger Marshall Islands educational system, the atoll's isolation, some 630 miles from the government center, meant that there was little centralized control over the daily functioning of the school. Most decisions about the school were made at the atoll level and, in many senses, it operated as an independent Ujelang school. The most distinctive feature of the Ujelang school, which included students in grades one through eight, was how seldom it was in session. Frequently, the school year began late since many people traveled to the government center for the church conference or to resupply during the summer months. Supply ships only visited the atoll every two to four months; therefore, in 1976, 1977, and 1978, school started from three weeks to nine weeks late because two or more teachers were missing from the staff. Community events and unplanned disasters added more non–school days to the yearly schedule. In the 1976–77 school year, the community decided to rebuild the cookhouse used to prepare meals for the students. Initially, the younger grades were dismissed because their rooms abutted the cooking facilities. Soon, however, the entire school was closed on account of the noise and disruption. The 1977–78 school-year was shortened by the rebuilding of the church adjacent to the school. This all-involving community project became such a distraction that neither students nor teachers could maintain their focus. Then, in the same year, the atoll was struck by a typhoon and a subsequent tropical storm. The school was closed briefly, reopened, and ultimately closed for nearly six weeks to allow families to spread out across the entire atoll to gather foods during the period of famine that followed the typhoon. With all of these closures, it was not surprising that no Ujelang students were admitted to the only public high school in the Marshall Islands, located in Majuro, in 1977 or 1978 although certainly a few select students had been chosen for high school both prior to and after that time.[4]

After living on Ujelang for a few brief months, it seemed imminently clear that a Peace Corpsman's late 1960s assessment of school functioning was largely correct. In his view, in spite of his attempted interventions, schooling on Ujelang was a complete failure.[5] To the degree that there was

a curriculum, it followed the old "3Rs" formula, with a greater stress on reading and arithmetic than on writing.[6] Although most reading took place in Marshallese, students in the upper grades also had a minimal exposure to reading in English. Writing requirements were almost nonexistent and consisted in large part of fill-in-the-blank responses or very short answers to questions posed in the book. Given the pedagogical approach, and the amount of time school was closed, successes were minimal.

However, the longer I resided with Ujelang people (ultimately twenty-five months in the 1970s combined with many subsequent research visits), the clearer it became that most schooling took place outside the walls of the schoolhouse. This alternative pedagogy had little to do with the 3Rs but everything to do with learning to be a skilled and productive member of the local community.[7] Yet, with the exception of bible readings and some basic arithmetic, the community had little use for the 3Rs. Indeed, given the paltry number of complaints about the failings of the school, it became clear that the community had essentially redesigned the official curriculum to fashion a curriculum that fit local needs. When not in school, schooling consisted of learning the gender-, age-, and rank-appropriate activities that were expected of any person on Ujelang. Girls washed clothes, learned to prepare foods, helped with childcare, learned to identify and gather various local foods, and learned to weave mats and fashion handicraft. Boys learned to climb trees and retrieve coconuts, pandanus, and breadfruit; to sail, to capture a wide variety of fish, birds, and turtles; to care for younger siblings; and to build houses, boats, and canoes (Carucci 1980, Ch. 4 et. seq.) The mentors were older siblings if the tasks were relatively simple. With more skilled activities, like weaving mats or canoe building, mentoring shifted its tone to a relationship more reminiscent of apprenticeship.[8] Young girls often apprenticed with one of many grandmothers, a grandmother who was a particularly skilled mat maker and either lived in the house or nearby.[9] Similarly, young boys often apprenticed with a father, grandfather, or matri-clan uncle to learn the complexities of canoe building, sailing, or navigation. Unlike formal schooling, these apprentice relationships involved hands-on applied learning, what in the "new discovery" parlance of current-day education circles might be called "experiential learning." Rather than being confined to the institutional setting of the school, mentoring took place in contexts of ordinary production. Rather than being restricted to the formal hours of the school day, it took place at all hours of the day or night. With one canoe-building site immediately adjacent to my lagoon-side hut, I was often awoken a bit before daybreak when a master canoe builder and one or two young apprentices were gathering materials, reorienting the 36-foot hull of the canoe, or adjusting its moorings. Equally, on many

nights, the canoe builder and two or three of the most dedicated students would be working by lantern long after dark, eager to complete the canoe and race in the communitywide canoe race. Similarly, when word of the imminent arrival of a supply ship reached the community, young women apprenticed to skilled old weavers and handicraft specialists would work late into the night to prepare as many mats and handicraft items as possible prior to the anticipatory, excited cries of *Jeiloo!* (Sail Ho!)[10]

Not surprisingly, an archaeology of the contrast in these educational practices reveals discordant layers. The very first institution that might be considered a European-style school was the mission school on Ebon where literacy in a missionary-inspired local script allowed people to read chapters of the Bible as it was translated chapter by chapter in the 1850s and 1860s. Missionaries took their translational duties seriously, even if their assumptions about translation were somewhat naive, inasmuch as they believed it was part of their duty to give local people access to God's word. The first government-sponsored school was constructed by German colonial administrators in the 1890s with the school on Jaluij (German administrative center of the Marshalls) attended by only two of the most promising young Enewetak scholars around the turn of the century. This selective approach to education was replaced during the Japanese era (1915–44) with a more populist approach to schooling in which three grades were taught locally and then the most skilled local students went from Enewetak to Pohnpei to continue their education at a distance from their home community. After the war, American administrators expanded on the Japanese model, with local schools providing classes through the eighth grade and the most skilled Enewetak scholars continuing their schooling in Majuro, the new government center of the Marshall Islands.[11] On Ujelang, the most distant school from Majuro, local people had clearly indigenized the institutional approach to schooling in large part by discontinuing its active sessions and shifting the burden of education into the experiential heart of the community.

Ironically however, in spite of the success of the Ujelang model in producing the best sailors, fishermen, tree climbers, mat makers, and perhaps even the best cooks in the entire Marshall Islands, the inequalities in power between the colonizers, Marshallese elites, and local outer island people could not escape the purview of community members.[12] The Japanese ideology of dedication and hard work, along with the US ideology of self-improvement through (formal) educational accomplishment, were messages that could be heard interwoven in the discourses of Enewetak/Ujelang people.[13] As much as Ujelang residents highly valued their identities as members of a cohesive family-like group (the people of Ujelang) and as much as they realized that their community-oriented approach to education

promoted this sense of unity (cf., Reagan 1996, 142), they also recognized that others saw them as backward and child-like in relation to any number of powerful groups around the world. Having appropriated components of the discourse of marginality that were part of this colonially inspired imagined identity, they began to feel that they were increasingly marginalized. Equally, they accepted the accompanying premise that education would set them on the course to a better life, a life that was the equivalent of Americans, and many Ujelang people sensed that it was only their physiogeographic marginality that kept them from realizing the benefits of a more modern existence. Therefore, when people became disgruntled with life on the radically transformed Enewetak after their return in 1980, one proposed solution came with a trip to the Big Island of Hawai'i in 1989 to see about the feasibility of setting up a colony in that new land. One central theme of the mantra for those most in favor of setting up the new colony was the increased educational opportunities available in Hawai'i. Even though the community as a whole did not buy the land they had gone to assess, a few young couples made the move to the Big Island on their own. By the mid-1990s, they had been joined by many others, and in 2003, around 400 Enewetak people resided on Kona Coast of Hawai'i, Hawai'i. The size of the community has continued to expand each time I have returned to conduct further research with the Big Island Marshallese community, with subsequent research visits in 2006, 2008, 2010, and 2012. By 2012, well over 800 Ujelang/Enewetak people resided on the Big Island.

Schooling and Disciplinary Practice on the Big Island

In Hawai'i, schooling became far more institutionalized, and of course, it fell out of control of the newly established Marshallese migrants. Indeed, this was by plan, because the new settlers set off the advantages of their educational opportunities by noting that:

> In Hawai'i, the children have real teachers, clothed people [white people], not the false teachers of the Marshall Islands. There you have Marshallese who lie a little bit about knowing English, and knowing mathematics, but when it [the schooling] is completed, you go off and come back and [have only] emptiness (comment by Ijao, LMC Field notes, 1995).[14]

Of course, while the educators in Hawai'i were undoubtedly better prepared than the teachers in the Marshall Islands, what was lost in moving

to the Big Island was control. The community controlled the education system on Ujelang and shaped it to the needs of the community. On the Big Island, Enewetak/Ujelang Marshallese were at the mercy of an educational system far beyond their own control.[15] By 2002, the English-as-a-Second Language (ESL) teacher at one school, who worked with several Enewetak/Ujelang children, said:

> The problem is that these teachers really hate the Marshallese. They see them as the lowest of the low and have the attitude that they don't need to do anything for them. . . . There are lots of negative stereotypes of the Marshallese: a lot of people call them "black, niggers—negroes," and treat them like shit because they don't want to deal with them. The teachers say the Marshallese are really dirty because a lot of them [the teachers] live in the lower part of Ocean View, and they bring their attitudes with them to school. I am always thinking "Here we are [in Ocean View] living without any water; what right do we have to say that they [the Marshallese] are not acting properly?" People come to school saying "What are they doing with their sewage? Where does it go?" Well, where does your own sewage go? I certainly do not know where mine goes. The people down below have to live with it, I guess (LMC Field notes, October, 1 2002).[16]

Although the Enewetak/Ujelang Local Government Council members controlled the teachers on Ujelang (because they were either local people or long-standing in-married spouses who had become an integral part of the community), on the Big Island, the Marshallese community is imagined as the equivalent of the Jews, wandering the landscape without a land of their own, a community that, in some ways, has always been at the mercy of others. Even though Marshall Islanders can live legally in the United States, they live in fear of being thrown out of the country. They deal with these fears by avoiding interactions with any government agencies, and the schools are but one setting where interactions are avoided. An (ESL) teacher at a different school noted: "Well we have tried everything to get the [Marshallese[parents to attend, but they won't come in. I don't expect things will be any different tonight" [when a special presentation by the Marshallese ESL students was being conducted]. Indeed, none of the parents did come for the event, even though it was designed to honor the ESL students. Later, when I asked Joniten, a parent and leader of the community, why he had not been at the event, he said:

> There is no value to going to the school. One time, I went to pick up the children and the person who was high up, the principal, called me over and said, "Niito is causing damage. You need to really watch him, because he is making trouble."[17] Niito! Why did that fellow [the principal] call me? [Niito] is not my child. [He] is not an Enewetak person. But, to that fellow, it is all the same. It is as if all Marshall Islanders are one and the same.

Silence and noninteraction have proven to be a viable adaptive strategy for Ujelang/Enewetak people on the Big Island, but obviously, it does nothing to alter the stereotypes of Marshallese or to confront the imbalance in power relationships that separate people at the school from Marshallese in the area.

The student's perspective differs from that of adults because their range of comparative experience is narrower. Nonetheless, among the Enewetak/Ujelang migrants, students' experiences also vary. Some, like Bilimon, a high school junior in 2002, have spent virtually their entire lives on the Big Island. The entirety of their lived experience is as Big Island Marshallese. Others have attended school in the Marshall Islands as well as in Hawai'i. In this paper, I concentrate mainly on interactions with fifth graders both on Ujelang and on the Big Island, although I also rely on comparisons with older students upon occasion, to discern a few of the outcomes of schooling practices at the primary level. I worked most extensively with fifth graders in Ka'u, meeting with them each week in 2002–03 to help them with issues of translation in math, English, and other topical areas where they struggled to make sense of the material.

Ironically, even though Ujelang/Enewetak people came to the Big Island with education in mind, most students now attend a school that many people consider the least desirable school on the Big Island.[18] Not surprisingly, this relates to residence, economics, and issues of class distinction (Bourdieu 1984, 466 et. seq.). As the bulk of the community migrated from Kailua Kona to the south Kona coast where land was more affordable, so too the quality of the schools declined. Most fifth graders now attend Na'alehu Elementary. The special education teacher at that school notes:

> Na'alehu is one of the poorest schools in the district [on the Big Island]. There is very high turnover and it is hard to keep teachers. That makes it more difficult to provide good programs. . . . This school is very traditional and out of date. It is probably about thirty years behind the times.
>
> There are some really good teachers here, but others believe in the idea that the students must respect authority or else. That

> model of education doesn't work now. Kids aren't like that anymore. They must know that they are respected.... Science is particularly rigid and the Marshallese really hate it. The teacher uses a lecture format and then tests the kids. It is difficult for the kids to follow: totally noninteractive.
>
> ...Even though no one around here wants to deal with the Marshallese kids, they do not want to lose them either, because all of the funding comes as a result of having them here. Trouble is, the funds go into the general fund and never benefit these kids. So, we have a new remote, large screen DVD player, ... not more services.

School children have no difficulty making similar judgments. Bilimon, for example, a high school student who attended Konawa'ena schools (Kealakekua, Hawai'i) for a number of years before moving to Ka'u, says: "Konawa'ena is much better than this (Ka'u), but I could not (go to) school every day because of 'the path' [i.e., I did not have adequate transportation to get to school], so I had to move to this place (near to us)," and one of his younger female siblings, Jenita, notes:

> I wanted to stay at Waimea because it was much better than this school [Na'alehu]. The teachers in the north [Waimea] were much better and there were not so many Marshallese." [LMC: "Why? Are Marshallese bad?] No, but if there are a lot, it is not any good because then they group up and speak Marshallese, and then you don't have to speak in English.... And, if there are a lot of Marshallese, they also make trouble—as if other people then hate ["it" or "you"]. But, as long as it is just one or two, they [others] will befriend you; there is no problem.

Not only do these students have a good grasp of the differential value of schools, they fully recognize the disadvantage of being required to attend a *jikul uaan* "bush school" or "fake school."[19] In addition, Jenita notes the complexities of identity politics on the Big Island. Like many Enewetak/Ujelang students, she knows that, in this setting, non-Marshallese teachers and school children define her as "other" and, equally, she recognizes that Marshallese present no threat to other Big Island residents until some sort of critical mass is reached within local communities. None of these complexities were present on Ujelang where all students were part of the same communal identity: children of Ujelang.

The marking of difference, which constitutes an entire symbolics of judgment and stereotype about Marshallese people, comes to be manifest in a multiplicity of ways on the Big Island where the entire understanding of the pedagogical process is different. In the classrooms on Ujelang, the general noise level was always high. Frequently, a cacophony of children's voices could be heard at some distance from the school. Within classrooms, however, all was not in disarray. Instead, students were frequently talking with one another, some in more animated tones than others, to work on group projects or solve problems communally. The fourth/fifth–grade teacher did not consider the animated student interactions at all untoward when I queried him about the "noise" [LMC: "They're certainly making lots of noise"]. Taiwel (the teacher): "Such is the case [i.e., that's typical]. They are working together and their noise-making is good because they do not know the answer. They are getting very upset [with one another]." Although I considered Taiwel's answer to be a bit unsettling at the time, looking back on this event, it is clear that he considered arguing in an animated way about the answer to be a normal part of the learning process. The students were actively engaged in trying to figure out an agreeable solution to the problem at hand.[20] Indeed, adult council meetings, if somewhat more ordered in terms of turn-taking, are analogous in structure to the interactions in Taiwel's classroom.

On the Big Island, classroom conditions were quite different. Indeed, when I worked at Ka'u High School with many older siblings of the Na'alehu students, the cacophony in the classroom was overwhelming, unlike anything I had experienced in any other rural school. But, unlike Ujelang, the high school students' banter was frequently aimed at disrupting the teacher. Led by the local Hawaiian students, these disruptions were part of a struggle for power aimed at demonstrating that the students, not the instructors, were in control.[21] Because Marshallese students were fighting for their own place in this school, with Hawaiian and Filipino students in particular, they certainly did not attempt to contravene the Hawaiian students' disruptive ploys.[22] Frequently, Marshallese contributed to the disruption to create a domain where their own solidarity and competition with the outspoken Hawaiian students could be demonstrated. The sense of shared Marshallese-ness at Ka'u High School was, perhaps, mildly reminiscent of what Ujelang/Enewetak students experienced when they went to school in Majuro. Their sense of a shared group identity was defined by others—on the Big Island, largely by local Hawaiian students—and their relation to that identity was largely reactive. In other words, in Ka'u, Enewetak/Ujelang students did not feel they shared much with other Marshallese unless they happened to reside nearby, but the Hawaiian

students, the teachers, and ultimately others like the Filipino students imagined them as a unitary group and interacted with them as if they were one. Quite unlike students on Ujelang who were simply born with a shared sense of identity, the result in terms of identity was extremely ambivalent (cf., Gershon 2012, 148). At one level, the sense of a shared Marshallese identity had to be accepted by Ujelang/Enewetak students because others acted toward them in this way. On the other hand, they were not fully invested in their shared Marshallese-ness, because it did not reflect the identities that they imagined for themselves.[23] When combined with a power gradient that was controlled by others, this ambivalent commitment to an other-fashioned identity is critical to an understanding of the sense of insecurity experienced by Ujelang/Enewetak students on the Big Island.

The primary school students were quite different since the significance of group identities was far less ossified at the fourth- and fifth-grade level. Equally, in this setting, periods of classroom instruction were primarily focused on directive instruction with the expectation that students would remain silent as the teacher conveyed the necessary information. Although some teachers in the earlier grades employed more interactive styles, the directive style was certainly the method of choice in the fifth-grade classroom described in this paper. Even in the lower grades, instruction of Marshallese children was often from teacher to student, and always in English, because none of the teachers could speak or understand spoken Marshallese. The method that was shared between the primary school and the high school was a stress on discipline and control, even if that framework was being embedded in student's understanding of how the learning process should proceed at the primary level, and if it was being overtly challenged by cadres of Hawaiian, Filipino, and Marshallese students at the high school level.

A number of structural changes differentiated student–teacher interactions on Ujelang and on the Big Island, and many of the differences focused on identity, group processes, and power or control. With one exception, all of the Ujelang teachers in the mid-1970s were in-married spouses who shared with their students a need to fulfill the desires of community elders who were the power brokers in the community. Dictating to students how the classroom should be run was not their focus, and even though the Ujelang Primary School was, in theory, under the control of educational authorities in Majuro, those authorities asserted little control over what transpired on Ujelang, 630 miles from the government center. Curricular materials were occasionally sent to the atoll, and as mentioned, the teachers attended summer workshops in Majuro, but in the 25 months that I resided

on Ujelang, not once was there a visit from authorities representing the Department of Education in the Marshall Islands. Virtual independence allowed the principal and teachers on Ujelang to set their own curricular design, and even this design was frequently altered by the larger flow of community events.

Enewetak/Ujelang people encountered a very different set of structural parameters on the Big Island where they perceived themselves as *ruamwai-jet* (outsiders/visitors) and where they had virtually no control over the curriculum or the daily interactions that took place in the school. Idealistically, community elders continued to view schooling as a key to success for their offspring and hoped that the success of the students would benefit their own extended families and the broader Marshallese community. Nevertheless, their lack of power, to say nothing of their own strategies of self marginalization, "just hiding out," positioned them solely as bystanders or end users in a much more highly institutionalized system of education that was lending contour to their children's everyday lives as well as to their community's future. The ambivalence of their position as welcome/unwelcome US residents made community elders uncertain of their rights, resulting in near-total disempowerment in relation to the schools.

From the students' perspective, schooling was viewed very differently from the position it occupied for their parents and grandparents. The students were certainly aware of the idealistic, salvation view of education maintained by adult members of the Enewetak/Ujelang community. It was frequently voiced in public and was held over the heads of students to create enough social pressure to try to force them to succeed. From the students' perspective, the risks of unfulfilled community expectations were felt as an added source of stress, or of alienation. At the same time, experiencing the discordant cultural values and the sense of being despised by others when they were at school, students were far more ambivalent than were community elders about the potential advantages offered by schooling. Their concerns were far more immediate, pragmatic, and day-to-day. Completing their work at school and minimizing the effects of school on their lives outside were primary student concerns, ideas that may well have been shared with other students in Ka'u. Avoiding confrontations with teachers and with other students was also a core concern. In this respect, the students were not unlike their parents for whom "hiding out" was a primary means of dealing with others. Other than a shared feeling by the Enewetak/Ujelang students in Ka'u that were receiving an exposure to English that was superior to their siblings and cousins in the Marshall Islands, there was no shared feeling that an extraordinary dedication to

school work would benefit them, either as individuals or as part of the larger community. School was the expected norm, and through their attendance, they were fulfilling the expectations of their elders and the larger Marshallese community. If they showed up, did what they were asked, and remained out of sight, they had accomplished what their elders had asked of them.

Contested Identities and the Positioning of Social Practices in the Classroom

Faced with an approach to pedagogy that placed a high stress on discipline, an approach far beyond their own control, the Big Island Marshallese students employed a strategy that was, for them, both productive and logical. During independent work time, the Marshallese high school students still relied on work-sharing (what Marshallese call *kumiai* "working together as a group" [from Japanese *kumi*, "group"]) to solve problems in math and science. The fifth grade teacher interpreted this as continued disruption and constantly said, "Do your own work," or rhetorically "Can't you do your own work?" The ethic of independence and individuality so typical of the United States is, in this context, being brought into direct confrontation with a very different Marshallese communal approach to problem solving. This proves threatening to the teacher because it contradicts the fundamental precepts of what Lave and Wenger refer to as the schooling model (1991), that is, a place where the intent is to measure the individual appropriation of a set corpus of materials that have no necessary relation to community use values. The teacher's comments point to his own fears: "How will I assess each individual's (so-called) knowledge if each student is not doing independent work?"

Underlying this teacher's fears is an entirely different way of positioning knowledge in relation to models of personal identity. The standard model in the United States posits that knowledge is, and should be, a type of alienable possession with market value that is held by individuals and deployed selectively to demonstrate part of a person's self-worth. In contrast, the Marshallese model presumes relational identities, a construction in which "it is the whole not the part that is thing-like" (Strathern 2005, 120), and for Marshall Islanders, knowledge is the product of group effort oriented toward solving a particular thinking exercise or aimed at completing a shared project. But, in this instance, not only is knowledge task specific, its ownership is viewed as collective. Indeed, although co-ownership is a common feature of Marshallese social action reflected lexically in the use of a wide array of possessive adjectives, it was also highly visible in the

activities of the fifth graders in Ka'u. Unless they were forced to act differently, the group would wait until they had collectively completed worksheets or other pedagogical tasks and then ask: "We [exclusive, four or more] are now finished. May we use the computer?" For students in Ka'u, the computer was seen as a reward for completed class work. But, in the Marshall Islands, and equally among Marshallese on the Big Island, even tasks completed by individuals are commonly reported as the result of labor of two or more persons. Thus, kumiai, or collective work toward completing a task, is a deeply embedded feature of Marshallese practice, and it is certainly evident among students on Ujelang and the Big Island alike.[24] Kumiai makes sense in a society that stresses group labor and shared accomplishments rather than individual achievement and success. In their use of kumiai, fifth graders at Na'alehu were simply being well-socialized Marshallese.

At the same time, a second complementary theme is also worthy of attention because it is critical to understanding how Enewetak/Ujelang students interact with persons in positions of authority. As Gershon suggests for Samoa (2012), this element of demeanor is grounded in the fact that persons in positions of subservience should not question or directly confront other social actors who occupy more highly ranked social positions. Although Marshallese are certainly not identical in this regard to Samoans, their ideas about hierarchical relations are described in ways that make them far more similar to Samoans than to the ideas of personhood that Strathern discusses for Melanesia. In terms of the actions of Marshallese students, like their Samoan counterparts, it would be considered rude for them to suggest to their elders or teachers how they should act, because those in positions of authority are deserving of their rank on account of their ability to foresee the needs of those for whom they are responsible (c.f., Gershon 2012, Ch. IV). However, this does not render Enewetak/Ujelang students silent. Questions of clarification are common; yet statements couched as imperatives or commands are never uttered by those who occupy subservient social positions. Suggested courses of action may also be posited by those who are speaking with others in more empowered positions than they perceived themselves to be. However, those actions are always framed as suggestions, not as declarations of what will occur. With these dual ideas about proper Marshallese action in mind, one focused on relational identities, the second on the local understanding that relational interactions are quite distinct among persons of equal and unequal rank, a much more nuanced theory of the approaches to schooling adopted by Marshallese youth can be posited.

Fifth-Grade Interactions

Unlike the high school, the fifth-grade classroom was highly regimented and the teacher insisted on strict discipline. Little talk was permitted among students in this classroom. Mature Marshallese often recall the strict school discipline instituted by Japanese teachers in Marshall Islands' schools before the war, and the Japanese-Hawaiian teacher in the fifth-grade classroom in Ka'u may well have gained the respect for discipline circuitously from the same source. In spite of the regimented class design, Marshallese students still attempted to engage in group problem solving as a way to make sense of complex questions with which they were unfamiliar. Indeed, as I worked independently with several of these students in the special education resource room, they used the same strategy: *kumiai*. The aim of the strategy was to solve the problem at hand, not to stress an individual's specific skill or his/her contribution to the solution. The resource room group used at least two sub-strategies. First, when everyone was working on the same project, math, for example, each student solved a certain unique set of questions. Then the answers were shared. The more knowledgeable young Marshallese mathematicians readily suggested alternate solutions to the others before the group moved to another subject with its own set of knowledgeable specialists.[25] The young student "specialists" absolutely felt no ownership over their work. Instead, they shared as readily with the least-skilled student mathematicians as with the others to come up with a strategy that was satisfying to the group. Second, when working on different topics—math, history, science—each student began his/her own work, as the resource room teacher had instructed me was what the students had to do, at least initially. However, as soon as difficulties were encountered, a specialist in that field provided answers while another member of the group answered the questions on which the otherwise-occupied specialist was originally working. At other times, a student encountering problems moved on to another worksheet, often in a very different subject. In my small group, Liijen was the "math specialist," an area where Retinal (a pseudonym) and others struggled. As Retinal encountered math difficulties, he moved on to another worksheet, sliding his math toward Liijen. Liijen always completed his own math worksheet, sometimes asking his fellow classmates not to interrupt him. However, as soon as he was done, he reviewed all of the students' math worksheets while Retinal and the others shifted their attention to English or science. The method worked well for the group. Clearly, their aim was to complete all of the work in a short amount of time so that the group could relax and talk or use the computer. Of course, the idea of getting the work done quickly and then shifting to talk or more enjoyable

tasks is hardly restricted to Marshallese, but in this case, the reward scenario was set by the teacher in the resource room who, before leaving me with the kids, would remind them: "O.K., no talking or computer time until all the work is done." The students' kumiai strategy was chosen to meet the requirements that had been set for that particular context.

When I presented a talk on the Ujelang/Enewetak community for the faculty at Na'alehu, the fifth-grade teacher asked about cheating. I described Marshallese kumiai—working in groups with one subgroup working hard and then resting while another subgroup took over. Although this helped a few teachers see through issues that otherwise might be seen as cheating, the fifth grade teacher persisted in his view that students had to do their own work; otherwise they would not learn the material:

> If they continue cheating, they will never learn this stuff. They need to read the book, do the exercises, then take the test to prove that they've actually learned it. If Retinal keeps getting his answers from Liijen, I have to keep sending him to the principal's office because we do not allow cheating.

The Enewetak/Ujelang students saw this very differently. When they came to work with me in the resource room they often positioned me as a friend who could try to help them decode why their teachers acted in a certain way. Some of their comments were:

> Why is it that that fellow [the fifth-grade teacher] keeps "putting our thoughts in jail"? He says "Work on the assignment!" but when we are working then he says "Bad! Why is it that you keep combining your abilities" [working together]? He really hates working together (*kobamaron*). He always sends Retinal to detention because he says "cheat" [in English]. [He] really gets mad.

With seeming irony, it is often math, the subject with which many American students struggle, that is the most straightforward for Marshallese. When they come to the resource room, they frequently begin with math because "we understand," or "it is easy."[26] In contrast, the contextual clues that allow an American to interpret a story by Jack London or John Steinbeck are much more difficult for Marshallese to bring to life. Equally, the value of Social Studies/History texts are not apparent to Enewetak/Ujelang students. Because Enewetak/Ujelang students struggle with these texts, some teachers give up on them and simply want to get them out of the way. Even though the law requires teachers to integrate so-called low-functioning

students into the classroom, often they end up tucked away in the Special Education room. Here Bjorn would be sent with his assigned work. As an example, on December 3, 2003, I wrote:

> Bjorn's work today was at an all time level of lunacy. For his Social Studies [American History] assignment, he was asked [by his teacher] to copy the first line of each paragraph under each subheading in the chapter on which they are working. I see absolutely no pedagogical value in this exercise other than, possibly, teaching him a small amount about spelling. It seems to be the teacher's way of avoiding dealing with a student with whom he does not wish to deal. Under a subsection entitled "Adams Stands Firm," for example, Bjorn, following the directions of his teacher, copied down: "Congress established a Department of"; "During these years, President"; and "In 1800, France and the United States" [etc.].

Even tracking the topic sentences of each paragraph would be a more useful exercise, no matter how limited in value. Needless, to say, it was hard to keep Bjorn on topic once the other boys completed their work and began working on the computer.

Bjorn responded to this assignment with a number of comments, including, "There is no value to these [kinds of] things," "My writing is becoming tiresome," and "Why is it that white people think there is a great deal of value in these things?" When I suggested that Bjorn ask his teacher what he thought the value of the assignment was, he responded: "We [the students] will never respond [ask him] because [he] will be upset."

Of course, on Ujelang, the formal curriculum was far from ideal, often suffering from the limitations of the teacher's own knowledge—a long-standing problem (Hezel 1995, 259, 288). Nevertheless, the school was still attuned to local needs and practices (including kumiai). Local students had no fear of talking with the teachers who were senior members of their own community. However, because the teachers were of an older generation, the students would never tell them what to do. For example, in the autumn of 1977, students in Ijamo's class were reading some Marshallese traditional stories that had been translated into English by the Department of Education. One of the stories was about the primordial trickster, Etao who, in a famous tale staged on Majuro Atoll, was building a fine-looking canoe that he exchanged with a local chief prior to a canoe race. The students were struggling with the English translation and arguing about which canoe parts were being discussed in the story. One student, Etmōn, said "Perhaps

we should go down to the lagoon shoreline and really look at the canoes of the chiefs [respected men] to clarify these things [the parts of the canoe]." Soon, many students were appealing to Ijamo to go to see the canoes. Nevertheless, their appeals were guarded. They were not command forms: "It would be helpful if we looked at the canoes," or "The canoes could be viewed [just] before we eat lunch." If Ijamo had been more flexible, he may have agreed to the visit. For him, however, being "in school" had something to do with being in the school building. He told the students: "School time is now; we will never go play on the seashore because it is time for class." The students continued to suggest, without success, that the impromptu "field trip" would be of value. Ultimately, Ijamo agreed to bring in one of the elder canoe builders to help with the story, and indeed, one of these experts came to the class later in the week to help clarify the lesson.

At the time I recorded this sequence, the written version demonstrated how Ijamo's response to the students may have been less than ideal. The hands-on learning with the canoe builders may have been more useful. Nevertheless, the comparison with the fifth-grade students on the Big Island reveals far more. First, Ijamo did actually bring someone within the official confines of the school who knew a lot about canoes. More important, however, the students acted in a far more empowered manner than their more worldly counterparts on the Big Island nearly thirty years later. They interacted with Ijamo as an elder deserving of respect but not so distant that they were afraid to intervene with their own different ideas. Indeed, Etmon, one of the more outspoken boys voiced the suggestion, but others actively supported the idea of the impromptu field trip. All students used speech forms that were suited to their lesser rank: "perhaps we should . . . ," "it would be helpful," etc. In contrast, none of the Marshallese in Ka'u felt that they could actively engage the fifth-grade teacher in any sort of conversation. In Bjorn's words, "We will never respond [to the teacher's proclamations] because [he] will be upset." Not only were they intimidated, not only did they lack any meaningful control over their own educational process, in Bjorn's case—and he was among the most talented Ujelang/Enewetak students—the teacher's strategy lay somewhere between total marginalization and dismissal. Although not universal, this teaching strategy was obvious to the ESL teacher at Na'alehu. He said (paraphrased):

> The model here [for dealing with the Marshallese students] is antiquated. People want to keep them separate. This will not work. I have seen it fail before. These kids are smart; they are a population that has some behavioral problems, but they are smart.

> [He often talks of them abstractly as "a population"]. They are not special needs kids. To isolate them is not fair to them. They pick up on English fine. Even the youngest ones who just are arriving here for the first time have some skill. Their main problems are with science, math,[27] and maybe social studies.

Later, the ESL teacher noted that "he is worried about the Marshallese boys. They are starting to 'act out'". Given the differences in power, given the disciplinary educational regimes meant not only to indoctrinate but also to fashion Ujelang/Enewetak students as both marginal and "other," it is hardly surprising that the "Marshallese boys" were beginning to seek alternate strategies for gaining recognition.[28]

Conclusion

If we accept Bourdieu's idea that people in a wide variety of social circumstances use the symbolic resources available to them in various self-empowering ways (1991), a great deal can be learned from the experiences of Enewetak/Ujelang students in different school settings. In this paper, we have only gotten a glimpse of two such social arenas. In the 1970s on Ujelang, the community was cohesive and communally "self"-confident. Yet, having settled on the belief that formal educational opportunities would allow them to "move forward," they perhaps under-appreciated the fact that they had, in fact, redesigned the colonially imposed formal education systems and substituted a local, hands-on, active-learning, form of education where the boundaries between school and community remained permeable. The Ujelang school successfully produced citizens who were extremely well versed in activities of critical importance to outer island life.

In an attempt to realize their forward-looking dreams, a sizeable segment of the community migrated to the Big Island where, by their own estimate, better educational opportunities were available. Ironically, if not surprisingly, economic circumstances forced them to recalibrate their Beacon Hill educational aspirations when they relocated in Ka'u, where they encountered some of the least progressive of Hawai'i's schools. In seeking a better education in Hawai'i, Enewetak/Ujelang people also moved from an experiential learning approach toward education locally designed on Ujelang to an educational model "thirty years behind the times" under the full control of outsiders to the Marshallese community in Ka'u. There, students have come to recognize the degree to which new immigrant groups are welcomed with a form of aloha that willingly places them onto

the lowest rung of the social ladder. Discursive and instructional strategies in the Ka'u schools help to ensure marginalization to a far greater degree than they provide students with the educational opportunities required to "move forward" in the United States. Indeed, Bourdieu notes that in contexts of this sort, the symbolics of marginalization form an integral part of the process that legitimates inequalities through the disguised distribution of a variety of forms of violence (1990, Ch. 8). These marginalizing practices are entirely contrary to the experiential learning strategies that were implemented on Ujelang where one principal aim was what Timothy Reagan calls "the development of a *good person*" (Reagan 1996, 144). At this historical juncture, members of the Big Island Marshallese community certainly recognize the signifiers that are aimed at ensuring their marginalization, but they have largely resisted the full internalization of these strategies of defamation by concentrating their energies on Marshallese communal events that extend far beyond the control of the school or of other state agencies. Indeed, in their relations with others, the entire coping strategy within the Enewetak/Ujelang community on the Big Island is to hide out and avoid interactions with others. Although this strategy successfully circumvents negative encounters with people from a variety of institutions including the schools, it also reinforces the marginal condition of students who are left without parental advocates to intervene on their behalf in the school setting. The confident identities of school children on Ujelang are certainly compromised on the Big Island where an identity politics controlled by others repositions Marshall Islands children as peripheral social actors, even as disruptive cheaters and rule breakers, with no understanding of what education is all about. In the eyes of some teachers, Marshallese students are not junior citizens who must come to be socialized as meaningful members of tomorrow's society, nor are they disciplined in a fashion to inscribe within their bodies the practices of the larger social group. Rather, they are the recipients of a form of discipline that marks them as other, as existing outside of an imagined community that counts them as citizens. Given the fact that an increasing number of Marshallese youth are American born, they are positioned in an entirely liminal social stance as the most marginal people who reside in Hawai'i. Indeed, in the imagination of the most judgmental of their teachers, the Marshallese students are, quite simply, the newest "dirty, black niggers" in the land of aloha.

NOTES

1. Research on which this paper is based was funded by the National Science Foundation, the National Endowment for the Humanities, and Montana State University Research and Creativity grants. An earlier version of this paper was presented at the Annual Meetings of the Society for Psychological Anthropology. I am particularly

grateful for the comments of members of that session as well as for the comments of Dr. Aiden Downey. In spite of my indebtedness to these persons, institutions, and agencies, all of the interpretations expressed herein are strictly mine.

2. Although common, this assumption was incorrect. Job options for high school and college educated graduates were extremely limited in the Marshall Islands, and many of the second-generation graduates had to return to a traditional subsistence lifestyle or face long-term unemployment. Nevertheless, these circumstances, a product of the long-term US policy of underdevelopment in Micronesia, were not foreseen by members of the community. Instead, they presumed that all graduates would be able to use their education to advantage and, thus, readily accepted the idea that education would result in success for all graduates and that the families of those graduates would benefit from their increased access to money.

3. As mentioned above, the successful employment of a handful of Enewetak students in the 1970s and 1980s certainly contributed to the community's reframing of education as a venture with substantial promise even though the accomplishments of those students is discussed with great ambivalence by members of that same community. That ambivalence always arises on Ujelang and Enewetak when egalitarian social relations are confronted with practices that result in the unequal distribution of resources. Therefore, although education is perceived as providing something desirable, a route to personal and family success, the unequal outcomes produced by that success are then judged negatively in relation to the strong egalitarian ethos of the Enewetak/Ujelang community.

4. In theory, all students were eligible to go to high school, but because the Marshall Islands High School in Majuro could only enroll a select number of students, in point of fact, only those outer island students whose performance in the primary grades was of the highest quality—and equally, those among them who could arrange to live with a relative in Majuro—actually continued their schooling beyond the eighth grade.

5. The typification of the Ujelang educational program as a total failure (that is, the surface-level analysis with which I begin this paper) largely aligns with the image of Ujelang education in the 1960s as depicted in Asselta (1971; also see footnote 7).

6. Falgout outlines a set of analogous histories of shifting educational values for nearby Pohnpei where, she notes, American style schooling focuses on "literacy, mathematical ability, and scientific understanding" (Falgout 1992, 39). Although scientific understanding may have been part of the published Marshall Islands curriculum, it was certainly under-stressed in Ujelang classrooms.

7. This feature of the Ujelang community's approach to pedagogy aligns with what Timothy Reagan contends is true of all so-called non-Western systems. Reagan refers to such approaches to pedagogy as "civic education," that is, as systems in which "there is a concern with helping the child grow into the kind of adult who will function effectively and appropriately in his or her society" (Reagan 1996, 143). Lumping all non-Western educational traditions together or even lumping all African or Native American approaches to education together—the *modus operandi* in Reagan's *Non-Western Educational Traditions*—risks the creation of a yet another orientalist stereotype (Said 1979). My aim is not to suggest that Reagan's generalization is true of all non-Western educational

systems, only that it is applicable to local educational practices on Ujelang. Even if Regan's hypothesis is true (and the regional stereotypes offered in the book are far too broad to establish the legitimacy of his hypothesis), it seems likely that the detachment of a functional connection between personal identities and the central ethos of any society may only be a logical option in complex societies. Indeed, such a disjunction may well have lead early social theorists like Emile Durkheim to think about psychosocially disruptive conditions like anomie (Durkheim 1966 [1897]). Although useful, Reagan's civic education designation reverses the "markedness" condition that might otherwise point out the ironic uniqueness of societies that are so socially complex that a disjunction between personal and collective identities can be sustained. Only in such societies can a "who cares?" attitude be sustained in relation to the functional outcomes of education at the level of individual identities. It is precisely such a "who cares?" attitude that Ujelang students first encountered in the attitudes of some teachers when they moved to the Big Island. Such a devaluation of personal identities is of central concern in this article.

8. Lave and Wenger's discussion of what they call "legitimate peripheral participation" in the apprenticeship practices of Yucatec Mayan midwives fully aligns with my consideration of the community-embedded learning practices that took place on Ujelang (Lave and Wenger 1991). To shift away from a learning model of this sort, one that is embedded in community practice, the type of schooling model encountered on the Big Island requires a great deal of risk and faith on the part of the community. As Lave and Wenger note, the schooling model relies on a very different set of social practices, "the goal of which is to increase the exchange value of learning independently of its use value" (Lave and Wenger 1991,112). Although Enewetak/Ujelang residents on the Big Island hope to increase their access to power by parlaying the exchange value of schooling into increased opportunities in the job market, as we shall explore in greater depth, they sacrifice control over the entire educational process and its goals, accepting on faith the notion that somehow, increased opportunity will benefit the community rather than contribute to a radical reshaping of the very contours of that community.

9. An elaboration of grandmother/grandchild relationships can be found in Carucci (2007b).

10. In a comparable fashion, Levin notes that Hawaiian children "prefer observation as a method of learning and . . . verbal modes (asking questions and explaining) are rarer and less valued" (1992, 61). She also notes that Hawaiian children "are not asked to display their own increasing but perhaps partial competence." Learning through observation is one core part of the active and contextual learning mode that Ujelang people employed in their apprenticeship strategies although, I would argue that learning through actually doing was equally important. Likewise, as apprentice learners, mat makers or canoe builders often worked on the less demanding parts of a task and were shown the products of the finest artisans, along with a demonstrated method, as examples of what they were trying to accomplish. In other words, they neither had time to perpetuate a culture of youth, nor did they find value in observing the "substandard" products of their children. In Hawai'i, community members found it laughable that *di palle* (white) adults would fawn over the substandard drawings and other products of their offspring. For them, this was a type of false indulgence.

11. A substantial ambivalence accompanied the formal "expansion" of learning opportunities under the Americans. For example, when the Naval administration of the region began after World War II, Pine and Savage note that the underlying attitude was one in which the "ultimate level of formal education should be limited to preclude false expectations" (1989, 85) Following Nevin (1977, 34) they suggest that this attitude was manifest in what can be seen as a simultaneously disciplining and disenfranchising idea that "education is not enough to give them success in the new society [American], [but] is ample to sever them from the old subsistence society." These policies aimed at producing liminal persona were largely maintained through an underfunded educational program until the Kennedy administration developed a more comprehensive approach to education in the 1960s (Nevin 1977).

12. Of course, there are no formal measures of "tree climbing abilities" and the other mentioned specialties. However, there was an understood hierarchy of familial abilities that was shared by members of the community. In 2012, Joniten (a parent and leader of the community) said, "Well, I was never one of those who could climb. But those born to Obet, and Kileon, and Etwot, well, they were extremely highly skilled" (*mokodi*). Ujelang residents were also proud of their regional reputation. Still today, Enewetak/Ujelang people discuss the fact that, in interisland competitions in the Marshall Islands, they frequently won events in these domains in spite of the relatively small population size of the atoll. Their canoe-making and sailing abilities are, perhaps, better marked by the fact that members of the Enewetak/Ujelang community won the Pan Pacific race for outrigger-class vessels in Rarotonga in 1992 (Carucci 1995, 31).

13. The American valuation on schooling was impressed on Ujelang people by Peace Corps volunteers who were sent to the atoll to help with the school. The PCV on Ujelang once said to me, "Well, when they don't go to school, it is only hurting themselves. They are only going to get ahead by going to school and getting an education." Important elements of this view were captured by Benjamin some years later on Enewetak. Benjamin headed one of two families that was most substantially represented by immigrants to the Big Island. In 1993, partly in defense of his children's decision to move to Hawai'i, he said:

> Well, life here on Enewetak has no substance. It is not like former times when Enewetak was an idyllic atoll. And if you stay here now, even if you go to school, what is it all for? Where will you work? Will you become one of the planters (those who were trying to replant the food trees on Enewetak) [facetiously]. There is no value to your burdens [in getting an education]. But, in Hawai'i there are real teachers, and after you graduate [from school] you can get a job and maybe work at a Macadamia nut plantation like that fellow Tobin [one of his sons], and become fairly elevated. Or you can work at a hotel, or in a restaurant. There are lots of jobs. And then you can go ahead and buy a house, and a [piece of] land, and move on still in a forward direction and. . . [thought not completed]. In these days, there is a great distance between Enewetak and the Big Island. It is still a great distance.

14. The Big Island community of Ujelang/Enewetak people has also shifted its feelings about certain components of education since their arrival. Joniten, for example, notes that at first

> in terms of tossing away Marshallese [in daily speaking], there was no speed that was too fast in terms of getting rid of it. But, after only a few months, we thought again and realized this was wrong. If the children did not understand spoken Marshallese, almost all of their knowledge of Marshallese custom would be gone. So around the houses, we then changed so that then, like you know is the case now, we speak only in Marshallese. In all other locations, at school, or walking around or working in Kona, or watching TV, the children will know how to speak English, they will understand, but if they do not speak Marshallese in these houses, well their customary practices will be gone.

Very early on, then, speaking Marshallese was seen as critical to the construction of a Marshallese identity and Ujelang/Enewetak community members worked systematically to have their children retain meaningful Marshallese (and Ujelang/Enewetak) identities. Of course, not all Marshallese families went along with the strategy that emerged among Ujelang-Enewetak residents of the Big Island. Of those from other Marshall Islands, locales who chose to speak English-only in their households Joniten said, "Now, it is as if they are not Marshallese at all. They do not know anything" [*rejaji jabedewot*].

15. Certainly, they were working toward establishing a meaningful presence in Hawai'i. By 2003, two Enewetak Marshallese teachers had gotten at least part-time education positions on the Big Island.

16. Both the ESL teacher and the teachers to whom he refers self-identity as kama'aina Hawaiian [*haole* or Hawaiian Japanese] instructors who have resided on the Big Island for a considerable length of time. The ESL teacher is one of the newest, having moved from Oregon to the Big Island three years prior to the time of his comments. Ocean View, "the World's Largest Subdivision" is well known for having no local source of water, and all Ocean View residents must haul water from Waiohinu to live in this location.

17. Niito is a pseudonym. I use the actual names of students in most instances in this article, but in cases where some negative evaluation of a student is involved, I have replaced the name with a pseudonym.

18. This "on-the-street" assessment of Na'alehu Elementary, of course, reflects a local folk ideology based on people's shared theories about the value of various elementary schools on the Big Island, not a controlled study of educational outcomes. Nevertheless, a ranking of third- through fifth-grade performance from the 2005–06 school year, after the implementation of the Bush-era No Child Left Behind requirements, lists Na'ahelu as 184th of 188 schools in the state of Hawai'i. The four lower-ranked schools are located on Oahu, two of them in Wai'anae, which has its own folkloric reputation for producing under-prepared students on that island (School Digger, 2005–06 Hawai'i Elementary School Rankings, available from: http://www.schooldigger.com/go/HI/schoolrank.aspx). This suggests that folk constructions of a school's value closely align with the culturally valorized outcomes for performance in such things as reading and mathematics that are measured by the Hawai'i State Assessment.

19. *Uaan* refers to a state of aimlessness, or a pretense to be that which something or someone is not—a degenerate "bush" pandanus that pretends to be like a delicious preferred variety of pandanus (*edwaan*); *mijuaan*: a variety of breadfruit that is less

desirable than other highly preferred varieties; *jerbal uaan* (aimless/useless work; without a defined intent). In terms of Marshallese schooling in Hawai'i, Okamoto et al. (who lump the urban Marshallese they surveyed with Chuukese and Pohnpeians as Micronesians [a counterproductive European designation that obliterates culturally distinct communities of significance to local people]) note that many of their survey subjects considered moving a stressful circumstance that, in the eyes of the investigators, may have had a negative effect on educational outcomes (Okamoto et al. 2008, 136). Clearly, Jenita and Bilimon have a much more nuanced approach to mobility. In their view, it is only moving from a better school to a school with a lower reputation, or from a school with a lower critical mass of Marshallese to one with more Marshallese, that is viewed as negative. Much of this "local knowledge" is lost in the survey by Okamoto, et. al., who readily admit that a major limitation of their investigation was created by "language barriers between interviewers and participants" (2008, 146). Although the researchers view this as a problem deriving from their participant's "limited comprehension of the English language" (2008, 146), a more culturally sensitized approach might view this as the *researchers'* lack of knowledge of Chuukese, Marshallese, and Pohnpeian.

20. In a Master's thesis that deals with educational issues on Ujelang in the 1960s, Asselta also notes this sense of disarray in the classroom (1971, 103) although he interprets the disarray as one representation of educational failure. In a sharply bifurcate form, Asselta positions himself as the judge of good educational practice and bad, as being able to ascertain the difference between that which is educationally relevant, and that which is irrelevant—in his judgment, most of the activities that occupy the school day (1971, 105). Yet, the lack of a consistent analytic framework and the slipshod way in which Asselta deals with issues of quotation and translation brings issues of ethnographic legitimacy to the surface. In spite of these shortcomings, Asselta helps clarify certain issues. Among these, it is clear that, in the 1960s, Ujelang people held the amorphous idea that schooling was important even though, as Asselta notes, "nobody is quite sure why." [Without offering supporting evidence, Hezel contends that it was schools under Robert Gibson's educational administration of the 1950s that "fuel[ed] the desire of Micronesians for formal education" (Hezel 1995, 291).] Hezel's idea is, in large part, too generic and mono-causal to explain the local beliefs of Ujelang/Enewetak people; nevertheless, Asselta's observation about the importance of schooling continues to be true today. A large segment of the nuclear compensation fund has been invested in the educational program and school building on Enewetak, and much of the justification for living in Majuro or on the Big Island has to do with the imagined idea among Enewetak/Ujelang people that somehow schooling is important. Why this continues to be true in spite of the fact that so few Enewetak/Ujelang people have used their schooling to significantly shape the careers they pursue as adults, and why this ostensible "success rate" differs so radically from a place like Namoluk (Marshall 2004) could easily form the central thesis for an additional work on the educational practices of the community.

21. Okamoto et al. (2008, 137–39) suggest that what they term "racism" is another source of stress that is disruptive to the educational process. This process, in their idealistic view, is an integral part of the socialization and self-realization. The idea that education may serve as a disciplinary force, contouring personal identities in ways that limit individual choice and lead to the embodiment of certain socially acceptable practices, is not considered by these authors. They identify racism both in relation to the Micronesian

students' interactions with other students and in relation to the teachers' interactions with those same students. It is difficult to know what the Micronesian students actually told the researchers, but it appears that at least one student, responding in English, used the word "racist" to describe other students' interactions with them. The researchers themselves seem to classify the teachers' interactions with Micronesian students as racist: for example, by referring to the high school students' English usage as "third-grade English" (Okamoto et al. 2008, 138). In my own research, conducted in Marshallese, neither students nor parents ever used the terms racism or racist. Nevertheless, as noted, they certainly recognized that the interactions of those around them positioned them as "other," and they realized that these stereotypes were most frequently negative in texture. For this reason, I use "othering strategies" to refer to the types of interactions that students and teachers used when dealing with Marshallese. Clearly, these stereotypes align with what Okamoto et al. (2008) term racism.

22. Enewetak/Ujelang students complained bitterly about the Hawaiian and Filipino students who often ganged up on them and tried to start fights with them. In an urban setting on Oahu, Okamoto et al. note that Micronesian students complained about gangs as well as about other groups who attempted to start fights. In that setting, Samoans appear to be the instigators of the fights (2008, 140).

23. In her analysis of children's interactions in the Marshall Islands, Berman notes that children are defined as "non-adult" and forced by adults to act in ways that demonstrate their lack of an adult persona (2012: 27–28). Similarly, teachers in Ka'u label their students' actions as immature (non-adult) and, thereby, assert that they hold a lower rank. The Ka'u students' attempts to control interactions in the classroom directly contest the teachers' assertions of control. At the same time, the Marshallese students are multiply indexed as marginal, and forced to inhabit Marshallese identities that are made problematic not only by teachers but by the Hawaiian students as well.

24. The term itself, *kumiai*, is of Japanese derivation, but this should not be taken to mean that collective working/thinking/feeling processes were, therefore, introduced to Marshall Islanders during the Japanese colonial era. In all likelihood, the collective sensibilities within this small-scale community are of much greater historical depth. Nevertheless, inasmuch as socio-centric identities of similar sorts have been posited for both Japanese and Marshallese (as well as other Pacific Islands groups), further inquiry into the nature of these similarities (along with close scrutiny of what must separate these different types of identity constructions) would be extremely valuable.

25. Even the corrections involved group work because the math specialists would look through the work and say "it is incorrect there, 11 × 12 is not 128." Not infrequently, discussions and arguments would follow, with the work's author contesting the specialist's claim. Ultimately, the group would agree on an answer and all change their papers to reflect the agreed-upon solution. For the boys, this approach largely replicated the way tasks within their own community were accomplished. A division of labor among age mates was agreed upon with different specialists performing a variety of jobs and then reuniting to put together all of the component elements of a complex task under the leadership of a respected elder who would overview what had been accomplished and request the necessary corrections to fully complete the process.

26. These are Enewetak/Ujelang children's statements and should not be taken to mean that Marshallese students do not struggle with math, particularly at the high school level.

27. Although, as I argue above, this is not universal.

28. Indeed, even the relatively enlightened ESL instructor engaged in his own strategy of identity elision by referring to his students as "the Marshallese boys." By far the bulk of the Na'alehu students were Ujelang/Enewetak students, although there was a smattering of Marshall Islanders from other locations enrolled in the school. However, all of those in the ESL group in 2002–03 were Ujelang/Enewetak offspring, a fact that clearly had no meaning to the ESL teacher. For decades, Ujelang/Enewetak people have argued strongly for their own unique identity, distinct from Marshallese, governed by their own chiefs, and only forced by US desire and United Nations decree to join with the independent Republic of the Marshall Islands in the mid-1980s. Ujelang/Enewetak people in Ka'u still frequently self-identify as part of the Ujelang/Enewetak community although, of course, in certain contexts, they refer to themselves as Marshallese. In contrast, Enewetak/Ujelang residents of Spokane, who constitute a much smaller fragment of the local Marshall Islands community, self-identify as Enewetak/Ujelang people far less frequently.

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