

Mac Marshall. *Weekend Warriors: Alcohol in a Micronesian Culture*. Palo Alto, California: Mayfield Publishing Company, 1979. Paper. Pp. xiv, 170, illustrations, maps. \$4.95, paper.

Of all forms of drug abuse, abuse of alcohol causes the largest array of social and personal problems in the United States. Pacific islanders were ignorant of this drug until Westerners invaded their world. Therefore, the study of modern alcohol use in these islands is not merely of academic interest, but may provide a needed corrective to ethnocentric notions of what constitutes an "alcohol problem" in any society.

Mac Marshall has already made major contributions to the anthropological study of alcohol use, notably as editor of an invaluable anthology, *Beliefs, Behavior, and Alcoholic Beverages* (University of Michigan Press, 1979). In the book under review, he provides the first monograph treatment of drinking in a modern Pacific community, the village of Peniyesene on Moen Island, Truk. Combining abundant descriptive material with serious consideration of relevant theoretical and comparative literature, *Weekend Warriors* sets a high standard to challenge subsequent researchers.

Peniyesene is fairly described as a "bedroom suburb" of Moen, the District Center. Although most of the population belongs to established village matrilineages, life in 1976 reflected the changes which had affected all of Micronesia in the preceding thirty years. A class structure based on a money economy was emerging, while most residents had lost interest in village politics, expecting instead that the larger island government would fill the vacuum. These changes are especially significant for the kind of drinking behavior Marshall describes in colorful detail.

The "weekend warriors" of the title are young men between the ages of eighteen and thirty whose drinking produces behavior which would be intolerable under conditions of sobriety. Their fighting with fists, feet--"kung fu" movies provide role models for Trukese youth--rocks, knives, firearms and, on one occasion, a can of Mace (!) creates an unwelcome atmosphere of lawlessness. Drunks may also express aggression through insult, destruction of their own or others' property, or attempted suicide. The eleven case-studies in Chapter 4 provide a vivid picture of characteristic 'belligerent carousing" (p. 129) that is an almost daily occurrence in Peniyesene. This reader, for one, was struck by Marshall's tolerance of such a field situation.

However, Marshall is at pains to explain that on Truk, as elsewhere, drunken behavior has its own limits: ". . . when Trukese drunks go crazy, they only go so crazy, and they only go crazy in culturally approved ways" (p. 117). Children, the elderly and, apparently, anthropologists need not fear a drunken attack. Women do not drink, and boisterous

drinking is generally abandoned by the time men reach their mid-thirties (p. 66). What, then, is the dynamic creating a situation which both Trukese and outsiders regard as a serious social problem?

The book carefully traces the history of alcohol following its nineteenth century introduction to Truk, a part of the Pacific remarkable for lacking such traditional drug substances as kava or betel. In this discussion, Marshall begins to develop a major element in his argument: the relation of riotous drinking to traditional patterns of masculine belligerence. Thus, he notes that German pacification of the area was followed by a heavy upsurge in drinking until the Japanese, as the governing power under a League of Nations mandate, established prohibition (p. 40). At the same time, the Japanese, like other nonmissionary aliens, provided many examples of heavy drinking, tolerated as "time-out" behavior in which offensive actions could be expected but overlooked.

Indeed, Marshall demonstrates that on Truk, as widely reported in other anthropological accounts of drinking, people believe that any ingestion of alcohol in any amount produces drunkenness, and thus relieves the individual of responsibility for words or action (p. 53 and elsewhere). Therefore, one is not dealing simply with drug abuse in the sense of excessive consumption of ethanol (as may be the case among white American alcoholics), but a phenomenon which is much more complex.

To unravel this complexity, Marshall attempts in Chapter 6 to apply four influential theories about alcohol consumption to his data. These are: drinking reduces anxiety (whether over precarious subsistence or acculturative stress); drinking is associated with the loosening of traditional social organization; drinking is associated with frustrated dependency needs; drinking is associated with a concern for individual strength and power. Unsurprisingly, there seems to be a "germ of truth" (p. 111) in all these theories to help understand Trukese drinking, but "there is no single, simple answer" (p. 123) to questions about "weekend warrior" behavior. Marshall particularly stresses the continuity between the plight of modern Trukese youth, faced with such new problems as class stratification, and traditional notions that young men are irresponsible, and that one should not normally express aggression. Lacking the traditional outlet of warfare, young men in Peniyesene use drinking as an excuse--ultimately accepted by the entire community--in order to relieve the tensions inherent in *both* basic Trukese culture patterns and the emerging lifestyle of a "bedroom suburb."

Often anthropologists and others, understandably appalled by the effects of ruthless imperialist expansion on traditional societies, write as if the modern scene is simply a product of colonialism. At worst, this stance denies vitality and persistence to indigenous cultures. I believe Marshall's

emphasis on continuity in the face of change is a valuable counter point to such Eurocentrism. However, I feel he may have given insufficient weight to the impact of colonialism on Trukese women with regard to differential drinking. Marshall explains this difference in terms of "basic cultural opposition" between the sexes (p. 127). But surely the colonial situation has also affected the sexes very differently, whether in terms of exposure to models of drinking behavior, or in terms of individual stress produced by the shift to a monetary economy. Imperialism typically *forces* women to be preservers of tradition, and may exaggerate separation of the sexes where a closer complementarity once prevailed.

This criticism notwithstanding, I think *Weekend Warriors* is a book to be highly recommended to a wide variety of readers. Not least interesting is the "Postscript" in which Marshall points up the implications of his study for those concerned with alcohol treatment programs. Written in a lively style and attractively produced, the book is likely to appeal to students, and I will be using it in my own classes this year.

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