NEGOTIATIONS OF VIOLENCE IN THE MARSHALLESE HOUSEHOLD

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In parts of the Pacific the phrase "domestic violence" conjurs up images of male spouses thrashing their female counterparts into subservience, but the Marshall Islands present quite a different scenario. Indeed, violence is encountered there, but within the domestic sphere it is not necessarily initiated by males. Interpersonal abuse takes place between older and younger siblings and between cousins, it is initiated by females as well as males, and its very presence within the community and its families threatens solidarity to the degree it requires denial. With all these variations, violence within the household must be viewed holistically, as a part of daily life.

A knowledgeable man of about sixty patiently explained to me that violence is not found in local families; it takes place among foreigners only. Yet I had just witnessed a disturbing quarrel between a young couple. I knew that physical violence did occur and that threats of physical abuse were common. He insisted he was correct, however, and in time I came to understand something of the nuanced way he defined foreignness.

The two who had quarreled were married (though not formally wed in the church). They were of the same age and were cross-cousins, a sanctioned union if one traced through the proper family. Naively, I took them to be symbolically united, "one only" in local terms. Indeed, the two were part of one extended family unit and members of a small household that was attached to that larger whole. But these visible sig-

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nifiers of unity did not exhaust the relationship between the young couple. The two were also opposed--as male and female, as younger and older, as insider and outsider to the current residence situation--and these signifiers counterbalanced their sameness with foreignness.

The knowledgeable man attempted to tell me how foreignness could be used in contextually appropriate ways to understand the apparent contradictions between what people said and how they acted. Not only people from other lands or other atolls but also affines and those of different gender and age could be cast as "outsiders" when their actions violated the "codes for conduct" that should be used by group members to represent themselves (Schneider 1968:91-92). As more instances of violence became apparent, I began to understand how foreign violence was to an insider's status, and how otherness expanded and contracted to suit the needs of social control in a setting where improper action itself threatens the solidarity of close and continuous social alliances.

Types of Abuse

On Ujelang and Enewetak, the westernmost of the Marshall Islands, severe abuse is seldom seen, yet talk about violence and threats of abuse are a communal preoccupation. Indigenous terms of violence constitute the daily discourse of social control: *mani,* "strike, hit, beat," *kokurri,* "ruin, damage," *kōmman joraan,* "create harm or damage," even *maniman ñan mij,* "beat to death." Though seldom enforced, threats of inflicting damage are the means older siblings and upper-generation members use to control younger siblings and children. Husbands also use such threats to overtly sanction their wives and, significantly, female-inflicted magical damage is talked about in precisely parallel terms. Thus, violence has a physical form suited to young, warriorlike men and a magical form suited to old, clan-empowered women. Both forms of aggression are dangerous and typify the actions of foreigners. In fact, the physical violence of young men is rapidly contained by members of the extended family and community. Violence inflicted magically is even more threatening because its effects are more lethal and can be dealt with by only a few outsiders with the specialized knowledge to counteract the original magic.

While violence on Ujelang and Enewetak is attributed to others, in fact its roots are deeply anchored in local patterns of childrearing and socialization, Indeed, adults, particularly males, tease children into violence, a pretext for teaching the "natural" propensities of males and females, young and old. Most commonly, children are taught to throw

paving stones *(lā)* in the cookhouse (the floors of which are covered with these pebbles, each one to five centimeters in diameter). Antagonistic stone throwing is laughed at by men, particularly when young boys are the perpetrators, and a young boy's anger is greatly increased by the elders' response. As boys mature, they eventually give up throwing pebbles and adopt other forms of aggressive masculine pursuit. These activities--wrestling, fighting with fists and clubs, and throwing large rocks--are real threats that are appropriate for young male warriors. Adolescent males risk ridicule if they continue childish acts such as pebble throwing, acts that fail to display real physical prowess. Indeed, the one instance of recent suicide (which occurred in 1980) is said to have resulted from a mother's public criticism of her son for actions she considered childlike.

In contrast to males, maturing females are not expected to thwart social constraints but to live within them. Pebble throwing continues throughout adolescence. Not only is it an interactional strategy in sexual liaisons (a strategy also used by males that points to the confrontational nature of the encounters), but for young women, even women who have been married for a number of years, throwing pebbles in a more aggressive fashion signifies underlying frustration. Any man who is the target of the projectiles is apt to respond with the same laughter he uses for children. When this invokes the woman's further wrath, he edges backward into the barrage to grasp her wrists and convince her of the folly of the attack. Wrestling is used by older women, but mainly as a form of joking attack; only the most masculine of Enewetak women fight with their fists. Hurling objects is a woman's main mode of physical recourse--food, cookware, utensils, and a wide array of household items may be thrown by a man's irate spouse.

As a woman becomes an adult and progresses through her mature years, she relies on her tongue to fight her battles. While men are said to be physically strong *(di ben),* women become acid-tongued *(lej).* Vociferous vocalization draws one's neighbors to the scene, of course, and it is with the support of community members (most of whom are relatives) that a physically abusive husband is brought back under society's control. As a woman goes through life she also gains supernatural skills that are both internal and involve private incantations. Magical skills are often transferred from grandmother to granddaughter within the matriclan and are made efficacious by a mature woman's secret vocal incantations.[1] Evil magic is thought to cause the most violent forms of human suffering, and nearly all severe physical or psychological illnesses are believed to be magically induced. Death from natural

causes is almost an enigma, while *ekōbel* (magic) on the part of the living or the dead is the most likely cause, It is said that no Ujelang or Enewetak people control "bad magic," but magic is discussed as a source of danger in all marriages and interactions with outsiders. Many individuals also modify their dealings with fellow islanders to avoid (supposedly nonexistent) acts of sorcery.

Social and Cultural Contexts of Personal Abuse

Enewetak and Ujelang are part of the current-day Republic of the Marshall Islands, a group of atolls in the central Pacific that was granted independence from the United States in October 1986 under a Compact of Free Association with the United States. Enewetak people are renowned in the area as a tightly knit atoll group and see themselves as different from other Marshall Islanders. The population was reduced to around 140 during World War II (Carucci 1989:78) but has expanded rapidly in recent years. The group was exiled to Ujelang Atoll from 1948 until 1980 to allow the United States to conduct nuclear weapons tests, nuclear-related experiments, and missile tests on their atoll. They lived on Ujelang in isolation, with visits from a government supply vessel each two to five months. Since 1980, however, most Enewetak people have returned to their home atoll. Considerable contact is maintained with Majuro and a few other locations in the Marshalls and recent trust funds to compensate for nuclear-related damages have increased the rate at which outsiders marry into the community. In spite of the increasing rate of change, the group still considers itself to be tied together by a strong sense of community.

Relations within the community have always been governed by strong egalitarian ideas and, even though it is ruled by two chiefs, decision making rests with the group. At least since German times chieftainship has been inherited through males, but clan identity is inherited through females. Residence is ambilocal and a person selects which kin ties within one of twelve large bilateral extended families are to be stressed on the basis of residence and the amount of time spent with (and labor dedicated to) a branch of one of those families. Statuses based on age and gender are not very hierarchical, though an elder's position is respected by younger siblings and younger generations. To the degree that overt political affairs are taken as a measure, males dominate females. Rut females have greater access to the magical potency of the clan line than do males and important matters come under greater female control as men and women move through the life cycle and become ancestors (Carucci 1985).

During childhood, minor acts of violence are a matter of course within the household. Most childrearing is performed by older siblings, who seldom use positive reinforcement as a method of socialization. A mother's first warning phrase to deal with undesirable actions, "*nana*" (bad), is followed by "*Inaj mani iok*" (I will beat you), Older siblings use the same phrases in child care, but if the youngsters are tempted to follow through with punishments, adults discourage them from beating young children. Indeed, unless a child commits a serious offense, no punishment is forthcoming: threats of serious violence are followed by inaction. Moreover, when children physically punish younger siblings, adults reprimand the overseer, even in cases where the mischief would not be condoned. Not unlike the structural logic that places parent and child in a relationship of opposition and unites the child's generation with that of the grandparents, older sibling caretakers are admonished by adults who intercede on behalf of the lower ranked and less physically powerful children regardless of the moral justifiability of the punished youngsters' actions. This strategy teaches youngsters a great deal about what Radcliffe-Brown termed the solidarity of the sibling group (1952:66-68). On Ujelang, siblings should support one another against others regardless of the moral judgments about that sibling's character. Indeed, adult siblings may disagree; they may avoid one another, but they do not fight.

On Ujelang Atoll in the late 1970s residents claimed, "The people of Ujelang, we are all one family." While not everyone was part of the same household, the condensed village in the center of the main islet allowed all to participate in the household affairs of this extended group, From the early years of childhood until death, life was lived in this public arena. While residences on Enewetak had been dispersed over three islets prior to World War II, the community became more integrated in its years of exile on Ujelang and, once they returned to Enewetak, most folks complained that they really missed the condensed village arrangement. On Ujelang caring for one another, a core requirement for members of a family, was important in the community as well. On Enewetak being members of one family became an often-unrealized metaphor used to talk about group unity.

Puberty and the Discourse of Gender

Around puberty boys begin a period of unrestrained free license and exploration not unlike the *taure'are'a* time described by Levy for Tahiti (1968:190-208). During this time tensions increase between male cross-cousins, who have learned to protect the reputations of their sisters

against the slanderous stories of their opposite clan age-mates. A similar animosity, though expressed less overtly, develops between female cross-cousins, who are eager to protect their male siblings. The newly found antagonism focuses on tales of the sexual exploits of one's siblings. As children, sexual experimentation is coded as play. At puberty, however, the "play" becomes serious preoccupation and a new metaphor of war becomes equally prominent. These sexual battles (see Carucci 1980: chaps. 2-3) typify the relations between opposite clans, and the youths who formerly interacted as siblings (cross-cousins are considered a type of sibling) begin to recognize the sincerity of their internal opposition as cross-cousins. Sexual adventurism, though, is expected of pubescent males, who, in cultural terms, require sexual release to maintain their health and physical well-being, whereas females cannot be damaged by lack of sexual activity. Therefore, the stories that circulate about males are expected; the tales of female wanderings suggest wrongdoing since premarital sexual activity is coded as a sin in church doctrine and is not required to maintain a woman's good health. Aggressive pubescent males defend their female siblings' reputations, presuming the sexual tales about their sisters to be fabrications meant to boost their opposite clan age-mates' reputations and to incite their own wrath, Physical violence often erupts in these male cross-cousin controversies.

Disputes involving vocal and physical abuse commonly accompany this courtship period. Females, culturally restrained and focused on talk, vocally defend their brothers but do not come to blows in their behalf. Young males, cultural warriors who act rather than talk, force confrontations with their male cross-cousins, Their loud boasting often escalates into physical violence. These disputes take place in the village and usually in someone's household, but the parties to a dispute seldom live together (as McDowell points out for the Bun, elsewhere in this volume, the boundaries of the domestic and public arenas are not clearly separated in small-scale communities). Cross-cousin fights give youths reason to recognize why oppositions are coded in clan differences--distinctions that have not been very significant to them during childhood. (From the time a child is just a baby, adults joke with them about marriage, sex, and householding with their cross-cousins. In other respects, though, prepubescent cross-cousins treat and address one another as siblings.) Significantly, cross-cousin disputes occur between youngsters united by ties of siblingship and sexual identity who feel disappointed with and disowned by their cross-cousins. These ambivalent feelings are worked out in contradictory moments that counterpose the fights and verbal battles of cross-cousins with reconciliatory talk couched in terms

of siblingship (these statements gain emotional force by using respect forms [*le, li,* "male, female person"] singly, or in combination with older or younger sibling designators, as terms of address).

If we look solely at physical violence as Western analytic categories might dictate, we find the perpetrators to be young males facing the value oppositions that separate youths from mature men. Almost certainly seventeen to thirty-five years of age, these fellows are often inebriated, and either married and wishing they were not or unmarried and wishing they were. In other words, they closely approximate the category of which they are not a part at the same time they are distinct from it. The conditions for their symbolic displays of disaffection arise from this contradictory situation.

Ideal Marshallese males are single warriors who travel around winning physical battles with outside males and sexual battles with females (*torinae,* "war, battle," is commonly applied to both domains) (Carucci 1985). *Pojak,* "readiness," typifies a warrior's stance and irresistibility (a sort of machismo-imbued charisma) his demeanor. In the process of moving through the life cycle, however, males give up these ideal characteristics and are "domesticated"--brought within the female domain (village and household) where the responsibilities of providing for a family predominate (Carucci 1985). When performed successfully, these duties help men become village leaders. Leadership positions are valued, but they are limited in number and significantly "tamer" and less intriguing than the role of idyllic war hero. (The mythic heroes Juraan and Niinjuraan are the prototypical Enewetak warriors, invincible superhumans who died in a battle with hundreds of adversaries on a distant atoll. The karate hero Brujli [Bruce Lee] is a modern analogue [Carucci 1980:336-338].)

The young married male, who still possesses the attitude and physical form of the warrior prototype, seeks that which he has sacrificed through marriage. His aggressive, warriorlike actions are displaced onto the symbolic representative of his entrapment, his wife. And, if inebriated, society will forgive his sober self for these actions, since the drink, the prototypical shared male substance, has caused him to revert to his naturally aggressive, socially recalcitrant warrior form (cf. Marshall 1979:97; Carucci 1987a: 11).

Lahren: A Young Married Male

This is precisely the sort of performance embodied in the marital disagreement mentioned at the beginning of this article. The young, mar-

ried, cross-cousin pair were fighting over the husband's accusations that his attractive wife had had sexual intercourse with her recently pubescent cross-cousin, Indeed, she had joked with the young man about his sexual prowess, but such banter is commonplace on Ujelang and Enewetak. There was reason for jealousy but no evidence of an affair. More likely, the young husband's self-image was threatened by questions of his virility. The young couple had no children and, since neither partner to the union had previously borne children, reasons for their infertility were a topic of community discussion.

I did not witness the fight in its infancy but, as it escalated, Lahren and Luela[2] each accused the other of infidelity and each denied the accusations. Lahren insisted his wife was "crazy" and Luela countered that he was the crazy one (both were correct in the sense that "craziness" is used to describe many atypical and asocial states of being). Lahren threatened: "You really want damage (don't you). If you do not throw away that person (her supposed lover), I will beat you; (I will) 'beat you to death.' " The two resided with Luela's grandmother, who had adopted her. Surrounded by close kin, she confidently taunted: "Urr, urr! You are really crazy, aren't you? You think I am a pig or a dog perhaps (both killed as food). Come toward me and beat me." Stepping toward her, he lashed out but drew the blow short of her head as she cringed. Their grandfather hobbled toward them to chase them from his yard: "The two of you together are crazy. Both of you, go. Get out promptly."

They moved toward my house, and I went inside to leave them to their disagreement (and take notes on the content). Accusations and threats were repeated as I wrote. I glanced at them through the rungs on my entryway. "I will beat you," he yelled. Luela reached out to push him away. He shoved her toward my door (out of sight of the main house). Thunk! . . . Whap! He struck her with his right palm on the side of the head and with his left fist on her shoulder.

I leaped out of a large window, yelling: "Go, get off this land. The two of you fight at your own house. Why are the two of you fighting here?" I grabbed Lahren by the arm, upset at his assault on my sister's daughter and upset with his use of force on such a small adversary. Luela taunted him sarcastically: "He thinks he is really *muhtuh* (murder)."

Lahren changed his demeanor as he faced me, perhaps not knowing whether to respond to me as a classificatory father or as a white person. I could smell *yeej,* "yeast, homebrew," on his breath. "Why are the two of you fighting?" I repeated. His voice was calm as he started to ration-

alize his violence. As Luela's grandfather and several neighbors rushed to the scene, he claimed to have seen his wife making love with the cross-cousin. Luela, now with the support of relatives, contradicted him: "Uhh! There is a bad smell here. You are lying. Talk only, I have not (yet) laid hands on that guy."

". . . you see that she lies," he interrupted. "It was on the ocean side of Katioj' land parcel. They were battling (having sex) for a while *(irrei bwajjik).* Just like pigs or cats, in the middle of the bush . . ."

". . . he is lying. You really know how to lie!" Luela supported her defense by alternating the audiences to whom she addressed her claims.

The landowner was there. Others began arriving. "Why are the two of you trying to ruin the peacefulness of the white man?" My adoptive mother's husband, perhaps fearing my ideal images of peaceful Ujelang people would be shattered, wanted to isolate me from the conflict. He reconstructed my status as an outsider to the situation, and the accumulating crowd started to shuffle the pair off toward the main dwelling. I began shaking as the volatility of the situation and the protectiveness of my adoptive father overcame me. Lahren struggled with the older males trying to pacify him. He pushed them away as they attempted to surround him and bring him back within the social context of the household and the neighborhood *(taun).* He shouted insults at them, claiming that they believed his wife's lies. She taunted back, though not loudly, now surrounded by close kinspersons, mainly females. Lahren trundled off toward the windward end of the village, the location of his household of orientation. He spent one night there and another in a young men's hut with an unmarried sibling before returning to Luela's grandmother's house. Luela claimed that the night Lahren spent in the young men's hut he had sex with a young unmarried girl. It could be fodder for a future argument but was not mentioned when Lahren returned to the household.

Later on the day of the dispute, Luela's grandfather and an elder male from a neighboring land parcel came back to visit me. They supported Luela's version of the story (as one would expect, given kin linkages and residence patterns), but condemned her for joking with her cross-cousin. "She will create damage if she continues to sweet-talk *(likoto)* with that child." (The use of "child" here reconfirms their view of the situation as essentially harmless.) Lahren's actions, they claimed, were wrong *(bwōd)* because they would damage the marriage. "His thoughts are still those of a *lekau* (adolescent male). He thinks he is very strong *(di ben),* very manly (macho) *(lukuun emaan),* but he does not know how to care for his own family. . . . He goes on and (gets) drunk

for a while, walks around for a while, and then returns. And then, in his thoughts, he goes right ahead with his family" (facetiously: as if no damage had been done).

This fight represents a core sequence of this couple's ongoing attempt to define themselves as a legitimately married pair and yet hang onto the positively valued attributes of being single. If they were to have a child, it would push them into a more stably defined union, During the fight, Luela and Lahren interactively manipulated each other by claiming the high ground of the adult and by accusing the other of adolescent actions typical of their respective gender identities. Luela's cross-cousin joking is appropriate to an unmarried woman of her age but, in her husband's eyes, is unsuitable behavior for a married woman, evidence of adultery. During the fight, however, she behaved like the ideal married woman while Lahren, somewhat ironically, transformed himself into the irresponsible youth that he accuses her of being. Both are trapped between their desire to be treated as adults and the simultaneous attractions of a single existence, Throughout, the stability and confinement of marriage are opposed to the ideal life-style of a single person. Luela's joking is questioned in talk about her, but her female age-mates are expected to warn her of its dangers. Likewise, little social sanction is forthcoming for Lahren since alcohol is the transformative agent that allows his meanderings as a "single" macho male to become manifest.

Lekau: *Young Unmarried Males*

If these newlyweds have doubts about their married status, why should unmarried males, the living instantiations of ideal men, have equally ambivalent feelings about themselves?

One answer can be found in the contradictions that face maturing males in the Ujelang and Enewetak social order. Young pubescent males, fourteen to eighteen, often practice various aggressive routines--boasting, competing for the largest catch or most copra, drinking, arguing, and fighting on occasion. Seldom, however, are they seriously upset with anyone for very long, since the ambivalence that comes with an attempt to extend their ideal male position is not yet upon them. They are still learning various ways to portray themselves as *lekau*. As unmarried males become older, the disappearance of their cohort into marriage reminds them of the limited social options that they face. Moreover, irresistibility--an important signifier of the *lekau*'s attractiveness visible in physical skills and external characteristics (strength, smooth

and shiny bronzed skin, jet-black "green-highlighted" hair)--is difficult to maintain. As the population of single women in a young man's age bracket diminishes, it is harder to make one's attractiveness manifest. There are always males who are all too resistible, due to physical blemishes or performative quirks, but even the beautiful and sexually skilled may eventually face problems. Increasingly, mature young women become more interested in other types of attractiveness. They may, for example, favor a man with a large land inheritance over one who is physically enticing. Thus, a choice faces the male who pushes adolescence into adulthood: marry and sacrifice one's claim to the masculine persona in favor of a future position in the community hierarchy, or remain single and gradually give up the means to maintain one's symbolic claim to that ideal.

Most young males marry yet--like Lahren--take on the attributes of single young men when they become disillusioned with the confinement of their marriage. Almost inevitably this disillusionment occurs, since it takes years to become a respected elder in the community. In the interim, access to power is limited to regressions back to the idealized attractions of the single male warrior. Single males who enter a household and begin to cause trouble are always drunk. They may argue with anyone except the youngest and oldest members of the community, but if the disagreements escalate into fights they never involve cross-sex relatives of the same generation. If the defendant is a member of ego's own generation, it will be another male, usually an older brother or cousin. In other instances a drunk will attack members of the "plus one" generation, but, while classificatory mothers occasionally receive criticism and complaints, physical aggression is directed against other males only. Often, kinspersons with whom relationships are strictly governed by respect are apt to be attacked by an inebriated single male. A man who is in this state of "mindless disinhibition" (MacAndrew and Edgerton 1969; Marshall 1983:195-197) or *kadek im bwebwe,* "crazy drunk," is not held responsible for his actions since the wild, asocial self is the natural persona of uncontrolled male impulse brought out by alcohol (Carucci 1987a: 11). While close kin gather around to help contain the fighting during these liminal antistructural, or inverted structural, moments (cf. Turner 1969:96-97; Sahlins 1985:43), the *jinen aorek,* "special mother" (father's younger sister), may plead with the perpetrators of serious fights. Her wails, like those at a death, summon the well-socialized spirit of an inebriated young man and, with luck, reunite it with his body.

Mule Outsiders: The Case of Paisen

While the contradictory structural situation of males who are moving through the life cycle on Enewetak and Ujelang creates conditions under which unfulfilled images of one's self arise, the situation faced by in-married young males offers a special opportunity to gain perspective on these ambivalences. This group has all of the symbolic disadvantages of indigenous males who are newly married; additionally, they are without a resident kin network for support and with the added bias of not being *lukuun riānin,* "really a person of this island," In such cases, the actions of the young male are redefined in terms that distinguish "insider" from "outsider," As such, they are always seen as malevolent.

Paisen, a man of about thirty from Saipan, had lived on Ujelang for eight years. Originally a sailor, he--like several others--became enchanted with the friendly demeanor of Ujelang people and failed to board when his ship set sail. He was adopted by a childless Enewetak couple, was respected as a hard worker by Ujelang residents, and married a local woman. During the first months of my residence on Ujelang I spoke with Paisen often as he worked diligently on a sailing canoe with his father-in-law. At times, the majority of the work on the canoe was being done by Paisen. In addition to labor for his wife's extended family, he often went to his adopted parents' land and worked with them or brought goods back to them. Nearly everyone on Ujelang commented on Paisen's hard work, and many wished that he would have married into their family.

Paisen and his wife had four children, one recently born, and it was the infant over whom a controversy arose. Paisen's wife, an attractive woman in her late twenties, was renowned on the islet for her sexual activity, Men and women of different ages and from various families commented on her sexual occupations and, since the couple's bathhouse was not far from my residence, many males theorized that she would visit me and care for my obvious (to them) sexual needs. When I reminded them that she was married to Paisen, they would respond, *"Ejjekok tokjen. Lien lukuun teibol"* (It does not matter. This woman really screws [screws anything]). For months I listened to laudatory comments about Paisen and remarks similar to the above about his wife.

A dispute arose on a day when Paisen was drinking with several agemates on the ocean side of the islet. He came home to discover his baby daughter unattended near the fire in the cookhouse. Since neither his wife nor her younger sisters were around, he took the infant back to the

drinking circle. Somewhat later, Paisen's wife came to claim the child. Paisen left his friends and returned to the cookhouse, where he and his wife began to argue.[3] "He said she (his wife) is going to kill the child, It will die because she is out walking around, not watching the baby." LMC: What is she saying? "She is being mad for a while (i.e., without much cause). . . . There, you heard him, did you not? That man Paisen, he said if she does not stop sleeping around, the child will die anyway (since having sexual relations with a male other than the genitor could introduce foreign sperm that is believed to damage the child through its negative effects on her milk [Carucci 1980: 166-167]). You see, she is really bad. So misguided are her actions she cannot hide (them) from him. Yes, he is correct, . . . if she does not straighten out her path the whore *(teibol eo)*[4] will kill the baby." LMC: But what is she saying? "What can she say. She knows he is straight (correct). Iiooo! You see there, now they are really fighting."

We rushed outside at the sound of loud thumping in the neighboring cookhouse. Paisen had thrown some large pieces of coral at his wife and at least one of them struck her on the shoulder. As she ran from the cookhouse shrieking, her father began yelling at Paisen: "You are really crazy, are you? Leave this place. Just leave, for you are crazy. Are you thinking of killing my daughter? Do you not know the customs of this atoll? Go from this house. Return to your own island and do not think about coming back," Paisen lowered his voice and spoke to his father-in-law in a very deferential, logical manner (as Lahren had with me). Eventually he wandered off to the place where he had been drinking with his age-mates; he then spent several weeks with his adopted family.

When we returned to the cookhouse to review the afternoon's events, the assessment of Paisen had changed. "He is correct, her father. That man (Paisen) is very bad. In just a moment he would have killed his wife." LMC: But, it is as if you were saying she was wrong. "Yes, wrong she is. But him . . . the people of this atoll do not murder *(muhdaik)* their spouses, they do not throw rocks. In a moment she would have died."

Later, speaking with the same neighbor, I suggested that one might draw parallels between Paisen and Lahren. He disagreed. Even though both had been drinking and both abused their wives, for him the two incidents were different. Striking and throwing stones were not equatable, and rock throwing, like the use of knives and guns, was associated with outsiders. Even though there was an indigenous fear that such an event might happen on Ujelang, it never had (according to most). Others claimed that one man had been killed several years ago, but the fact

that most people denied a murder had ever taken place supports the indigenous idea of village harmony and peacefulness as opposed to outside disarray and murder. In the best circumstances, Paisen was proudly accepted as "one of us." Just as easily his actions could transform him into a foreigner very different from Ujelang people. In the above account this occurs at the moment "but him" is radically dissociated from "people of this atoll" who "do not murder spouses."

Females and Violence

Men are typically associated with violent acts that are rooted in inherent qualities that tie "maleness" to men's warrior status. Females, on the other hand, are associated with love and reconciliation, seemingly the antithesis of violence (Carucci 1980:159-160). Nonetheless, women use physical force to discipline children, adolescent girls engage in aggressive sexual play, and aging women use supernatural force to control the acts of others.

Mead noted six decades ago that child socialization in Samoa rests largely with children slightly older than their charges (1928:26-29). On Ujelang and Enewetak, even when a child is nursing its siblings are eager to play with it and take the baby for jaunts away from the mother's breast. They carry babies *jaja*--slung across the hip--at an age so young that they weave under the weight. As soon as weaning takes place, youngsters take over a good deal of child care. Mothers and fathers monitor the process but their role shifts to maintaining some harmony among the sibling set and the play set (which includes extended siblings and other age-mates in the neighborhood}. At either level, child-child or parent-child (including siblings' children), violence may be used.

Small boys and girls both provide child care, but by six or seven years of age girls predominate as boys are allowed to range far from home in an unconstrained fashion that follows them into marriage, Most admonitions of younger siblings begin with phrases like *nana,* "bad," and *kwon jaab kein ne,* "you (command form) do not (do) that of yours." When undesired actions continue, admonitions are repeated with added emphasis but no enforcement. Indeed, physical reactions are so slow in coming that I heard a Peace Corps volunteer with some exposure to Marshallese customs comment: "They do not learn how to obey because they go on and on without . . . ever *doing* something about it." Caretakers do move recalcitrant children away from undesired activities. When infants return to trouble, the overseers throw stones or con-

tinue scolding but do not take decisive action until damage has occurred.

Manita: A Young Caretaker

Manita, a young girl of five, is typical of caretakers I observed. She was placed in charge of overseeing Julita, her biological sister, an infant just over one year of age who could crawl efficiently and was almost able to walk. Her mother's older brother and I watched as we bagged copra in the distance, and her classificatory mother (mother's sister), Tutena, washed clothes about thirty yards away. Other members of the extended family monitored a game of checkers nearby.

Manita played with a cousin as she watched Julita crawl closer to the fire. Tutena's husband, kibitzing the game, warned his wife of the potential danger, telling her to "watch the children," and she turned and transmitted the message in a near-comic parody of her husband:

"Manita eeh!"

". . . Eeh?"

"Watch the child (there by you)."

"*Inei* (Yeah). *Nana* (Bad)," said Manita, continuing with her play.

The infant hesitated as she sat up and looked back at her older sibling. Within a few seconds she refocused on the pot of rice on the fire, Julita began to stand, leaning against the rim of an empty wash tub, then dropped to her knees to trek toward the fire. As she neared, Manita glanced toward her and yelled, "Bad, it is hot." The sequence continued until Julita began crying as she seized a stone heated by the coals. Her mother yelled, "Manita, I will beat you," and, without saying anything, the girl rushed over and placed Julita on her hip, walked her for a couple of minutes, and moved her near the play area. Fifteen minutes later, the sequence repeated itself. Julita was near the fire, Manita chastised her verbally. A few minutes later, she rebuked her again. Then Julita was screeching. She had reached for the rice pot to use it to stand up, pushed over the pot, and scalded herself in the still soupy mixture. Manita ran and dragged her from the fire, then spanked her arms: "Bad, it is hot, that thing by you." Tutena screamed at Manita and began to get up from her crouched washing position: "Manita. You are gone now. Are you crazy? I am really going to hit you now." As she approached, Manita left her sister screaming and began to run. Her mother scooped Julita onto her hip and started to chase the older sister. "Aah, whore *(kokañ).* You are really crazy--throw the baby (away) and run. I will stone you" (picking up a handful of small stones and tossing

them at the child). No further comments were directed at Manita. Tutena returned to the work area and walked about consoling the infant. She tied a piece of cloth around her sister's child's arm and bounced her to get her to stop crying. She chastised Manita by informing her husband (and other listeners) of the girl's transgressions: "Now, do you see the badness of that girl. A real fucker *(teibol),* she is. Misbehaved *(ebōt).* She does not watch the child, and now she runs off in the middle of the bush. She knows nothing of custom."

Mothers who are prime caregivers occasionally swat lower generation members, whether they are true offspring, classificatory children, or children through adoption (co-parenthood), In this instance, however, Tutena simply threatened Manita since the girls only temporarily resided with the household. The most obnoxious *(lej)* mothers beat their children, ring their ears, or drag them by the hair. The latter acts are particularly demeaning since the head is the most highly ranked part of the body. From most women, however, children receive substantial verbal abuse and little physical punishment. This aligns with indigenous stereotypes that categorize outspoken and independent women as *lej,* "disagreeable, mean-tempered," in possession of *ekkōn̄ launin̄,* "sharp mouths (tongues)."

The Violence of Malevolent Magic

Female-instigated violence, in other words, is rooted in thought and talk instead of action. While less obviously violent in its incipient form than the physical responses of males, when extended into the realm of magic it may be more volatile and dangerous. In indigenous terms malevolent magic and physical violence are equatable. Whereas the latter is associated with males, the former is controlled by females.

"The thoughts of that woman, so great is their damaged character, you could never weigh them." With such warnings, the dangers of an Ujelang woman's magic were brought to my attention by an upstanding male in the community. People generally state that malevolent magic, like other hostile behavior, is unknown on Ujelang Atoll. Bad magic is attributed to others, particularly to outsiders from south and east of Enewetak and Ujelang, Solomon Islanders, and New Guinea residents.[5] Nonetheless, I have records of many magically influenced local events and, in most instances, mature Ujelang women were involved.

Magic passes through matriclans and is often manipulated by women. A woman with strong magic either inherited the knowledge from clan elders or purchased it from a magical specialist in the Ralik or

Ratak chains of the Marshalls. Males may also purchase magical knowledge or even receive it from clan elders, but their magic also derives its strength from matrilineal sources. Male magic is often restricted to curing. Young girls likewise use magical knowledge for positive purposes, but as a woman ages "sometimes her thoughts are warped" and it is such women who use magic for manipulative purposes. These are the women who use psychopathic types of love magic and various forms of potentially lethal magic.

On Ujelang, evil magic is never conducted openly since such an act would contradict the contention that magic does not exist, *Ex post facto,* however, people discuss events that were magically caused.[6] Women are held responsible for magical harm, and, as pointed out earlier, the discursive forms used to talk about male physical abuse are also used to describe damage from sorcery. While the blows, destruction, and death threats of mature single men are dangerous, people fear older women's magic *(ekōbel)* far more. Not only are the effects of magic more lethal than physical aggression, but the ability to counteract supernatural damage is far less certain.

Conclusions

A cursory glance at interactions among Marshall Islanders might mislead one into drawing undue parallels with family violence in the West. Because physical aggression may well be directed against women by young men, one may infer that domestic violence is instigated by men and endured by women. A closer look, however, shows this interpretation to be simplistic and naive.

First of all, physically violent activities, while overt and stereotypitally male, typify role prototypes, not persons. Young women most frequently construct their identities using ideal female attributes, but there are also women with the "thoughts of men" who use physical abuse as a mechanism to communicate their chosen social self. Likewise, most men are active manipulators of the world who use physical force to communicate part of their warriorlike identity, but not all men adopt such aggressive personal styles. Identities, therefore, are actively constructed out of cultural signifiers that take on meaning in relation to prototypes of male and female sorts of discourses and practices (cf. Carucci 1980: chap, 2; Carucci 1985: 127-128; Carucci 1987b:21; Shore 1981:206-208; Strathern 1981:175-177; Strathern 1988).

Marshall Islands men and women, however, use these role prototypes to legitimately engage in different types of violence within the domestic

setting. Restricted abuses may be found in interactions between members of adjacent generations or among siblings, but the most dangerous violence, while not common, takes place between wives and husbands and between spouses and in-laws. Small acts of physical or psychological punishment among kin escalate to dangerous forms of abuse among non-kin. Accordingly, Ujelang men may physically "murder" (beat) their spouses, but women legitimately "beat their husbands to death" with magic.

At an ideological level, Ujelang people see both magical and physical violence of any sort as typical of outsiders. Certainly, solidarity, rooted in the ideology of the bilateral extended family but also applied to the entire island community, is the antithesis of violent interactions (Carucci 1980: chaps. 2-3), Severe violent acts are consistently attributed to outsiders: residents of New Guinea or the rest of the Marshall Islands use the most dangerous forms of magic; Trukese are particularly "murderous" because they fight with knives and machetes. Even within the community, the most violent actions are envisioned between spouses and in-laws-those who are outsiders living in a common domestic unit (Fortes 1943-1944). Thus, the violent acts of Paisen are recast into the movements of a foreigner and, at a different contextual level, those of Lahren are attributed to a member of a family who acts "unlike us."

Violent activities are also balanced throughout the life cycle. Ultimately, however, the overt aggressive acts of young men are less threatening than the internal, potentially lethal, magical aggressions of aging women. Physical acts are contained by the group who surround young men and restrain them, while magical acts remain threatening precisely because their parameters cannot be easily delimited and contained by everyday humans. Most importantly, both males and females have ways to express their discontent that line up with the shifting balance of power in the community. The male ideal type, the single roaming warrior, is ultimately replaced by a sedentary male who is always constrained by matrilines he does not control (see Carucci 1985:112-114; Kahn 1986:150); his active, physical aggression, easily controlled by the group, is a metonym of the ambivalent male position. In contrast, females, who initially lack the freedoms young men enjoy, gradually accumulate power within matrilines that expand with the successful transmission of the reproductive force women control. Their use of magical force--overtly passive, vocally incanted, and supernaturally inspired--increases with their own power and age.

To Ujelang residents, the violence of physical and magical forces are inevitable expressions of the inherent capacities of men and women.

While mortals may invert these natural forces for ritual purposes, in joking, or as an expression of personal style, they should not believe that, in so doing, they eliminate the distinctions. For earthly beings, there is only the hope of maintaining balance among them.

NOTES

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1. As indicated below, men also may use magic, but it is primarily used by women and derives its potency from matrilineal sources. As attributes of statuses, things like magical knowledge need not always be controlled by females to be associated with them.

2. In the following case studies, Lahren, Luela, and Paisen are pseudonyms for young Ujelang residents.

3. No one was in the cookhouse with Paisen and his wife, but this "blow-by-blow" summary of the essentials of the controversy was related to me by a neighbor as we overheard the argument from a nearby cookhouse. Only when the encounter became physically threatening did others (ourselves included) rush to the scene. I use "she" and "he," "her" and "him" in the translation for clarity. Marshallese make these distinctions on the basis of contextual cues, not lexical markers.

4. "Whore" fails to capture the nuances of *teibol* (literally, the fucker or the one who screws), since "whore" implies a profession and a stigma. In contrast, *teibol* is a common expression with few negative implications. Its counterpart, *kokañ* (literally, one who exchanges [barters for sex]), is another commonly used form that carries little stigma. As a term of reference, *teibol* may be used as a mild insult with someone who does nothing but pursue sexual encounters, but it is also used as a humorous term when addressing children, I have had age-mates (both male and female) and older men use it as a facetious form of address to joke with me. As a form of address, *kokañ* carries slightly more negative sentiment only because endowing sex with an exchange value depersonalizes it and compromises its communicative value in interpersonal relationships.

5. This is related to ethnohistorical notions of derivation, since Enewetak folks see their source as Kabiliñ, "the back side of Heaven (the Caroline Islands)," where beings are fierce and warlike but lack a knowledge of sorcery. From Enewetak, humans moved by earthly routes to Bikini, then to the Ralik and Ratak chains of the Marshalls and to Kiribati, where chiefs and others "later on" became empowered with potent magic. As I have noted elsewhere, Enewetak people see themselves as the source of Marshall Islands clans. Their precedence is used as a source of power over other Marshall Islands groups (who currently outnumber Enewetak people and look down on them). Even though they have been combined with Marshall Islanders in current political arrangements, Enewetak and Ujelang people see themselves as different from them and deserving a totally independent status (see Carucci n.d.). They use their separate chiefly lines as one indication of their histori-

cally rooted independence. (Other Marshall Islands groups contend they arrived through Ebon in the southern Ralik chain. While they have similar ideas about violence, aging, and gender, they have equally unique interpretations of the derivation and use of magical force.)

6. Most commonly consumers worry that food will be poisoned by women cooks, either by adding a dangerous substance to the fare or by chanting over the food while stirring it. Evil magic can also be infused into objects during other repetitive acts, especially when plates and baskets are woven (formerly clothing pounded or woven from local materials was also potentially dangerous) or when hair is braided. Potions and charms can also be manufactured that carry within them magical force. They gain their potency from incantations as well as from the proper combination of objects.

I have no evidence that women's use of magic actually inhibits men's use of physical force (the statistics for what might happen in the absence of magic are, obviously, unattainable). Indeed, in many senses the audiences and perpetrators do not overlap (young, physically violent males vs. old, supernaturally violent females). Nonetheless, both men and women commonly voice their fear of magical attack and, without doubt, these fears have substantial effects on how people act.

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