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*“The Martial Islands”:  
Making Marshallese Masculinities between  
American and Japanese Militarism*

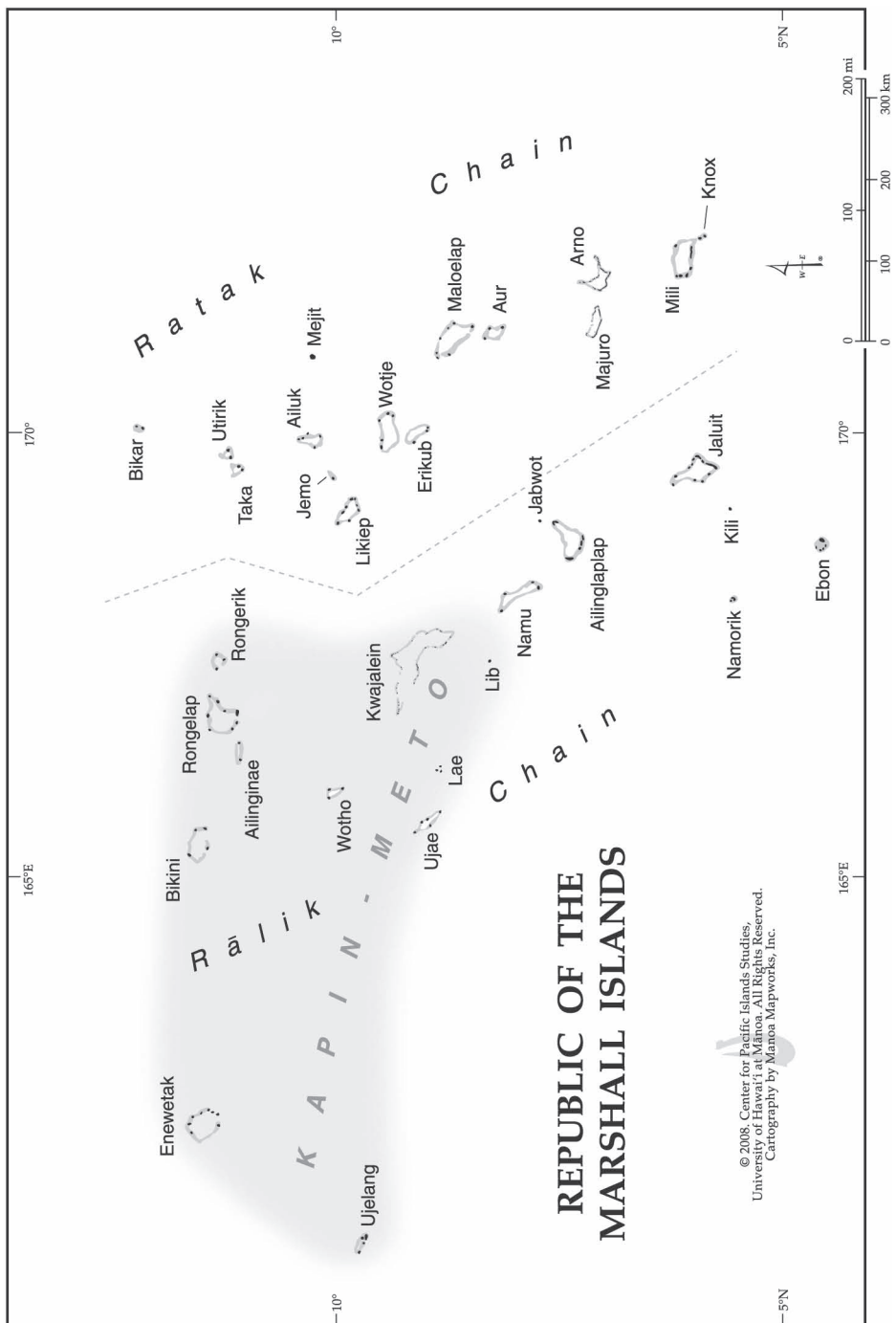
Greg Dvorak

CROSSROADS

I like to imagine a Central Pacific intersection existing at my childhood home, Kwajalein Atoll in the Marshall Islands (see map 1), that epitomizes much about colonialism, militarism, and masculinities in Oceania over the last century.

It is uncanny that the word Marshall—the name of British sea captain John Marshall, after whom the islands were named on European maps in the nineteenth century—should be homophonic with the term “martial.” Indeed, throughout the last century these islands were used as stepping-stones to accomplish the military agendas of world superpowers.

Kwajalein is a “martial” island that has been colonized and militarized by both Japan and the United States. Because the institution of the military has long been deeply encoded with masculinist ideology (see Teaiwa 2000; Enloe 1989), Kwajalein is a meaningful site to explore some of the ways in which different masculinities have encountered and transformed each other in contemporary Oceania. It was largely from Kwajalein that Imperial Japan commanded its Nanyō (South Seas) naval forces during the Pacific War, and partly from its submarine base there that the assault on Pearl Harbor was launched (Peattie 1988, 259). It was on this atoll that more than 8,000 of the Japanese soldiers and civilians, Korean laborers, and Marshallese residents—all defending the atoll for different reasons—were killed by six times that many US troops in 1944, in a turning-point battle of the war.<sup>1</sup> Shortly after, it was the place from which the United States deployed most of its devastating atomic bomb tests at Bikini, Enewetak, and Rongelap—in an operation aptly named “Crossroads.”



MAP I.

Today it is there that the United States maintains a major strategic space surveillance and missile-defense test site. And, as my late father brought our family with him when he worked as a civilian radar engineer for this weapons-testing complex in the 1970s, it was also from Kwajalein that I began my own life, growing up literally between the United States, the Pacific Islands, and Japan (photo 1).

I remember being seven years old and going on a picnic with my father one Saturday, listening to his stories as we bicycled around the island together, the smell of barbecuing hot dogs on the ocean breeze. “See that thing over there?” he points, gesturing toward a mossy concrete mound in the middle of the Kwajalein golf course. The iron reinforcements are protruding, blood-like rust oozing down the sides. “That’s a bunker. It’s where the Japanese soldiers used to hide during the war.” He pats me on the shoulder and waves at one of his work colleagues rolling his golf bag across the grass. We cycle around the runway, pushing hard against the wind. “And see?” he says as we stop our bikes at the tip of the island, “That’s where *our* soldiers came onto the island when we came to free this island from the Japanese,” pointing toward the reef between the southern tip of Kwajalein and the neighboring island of E nubuj.



PHOTO 1. The author (at age three) poses with his mother as he climbs on the ruins of a concrete fortification from the Japanese air base at Roi-Namur Island, Kwajalein Atoll. Photo by Walter Dvorak, 1976.

My dad also shows me the impressive collection of white globes and radar antennae gathered along that end of the island. “I control a radar like this one at my job, too,” he says, as he squints up into the afternoon sunshine with an obvious sense of awe and pride in the technological creature that rotates above our heads.

“What’s that for?” I ask.

“We use these radars so we can see if other countries like Russia are trying to invade us or shoot missiles at us. And we use them to test our own missiles. You know like when we have a mission and I stay at work late so we can shoot one of those rockets into the lagoon?”

“Why do we test missiles?” I ask him.

“It’s not easy, son,” he says. “But there’s always a war going on somewhere in this world, and you or I might have to go and fight someday. And that’s why I work here, so that we don’t have a big war, so that we’re all safe.”

My father and I had conversations like these as I grew up on Kwajalein in the 1970s. The stories he told me seeped into my dreams at night—dreams in which my father was taken away by the Russians or the Japanese. Dreams in which Japanese soldiers pulled me underground into their concrete hideaways. Dreams in which missiles rained down from the sky. I knew what that would look like, after all: We used to sit outside drinking lemonade while watching the missile tests at night once a month. The colorful streaks of unarmed warheads reentering the atmosphere and crisscrossing the sky before they entered the lagoon are imprinted in my mind.

My father’s folksy stories of our island home in the 1970s and 1980s, though well-intentioned, had their roots in the US victory narratives of World War II that have come to dominate most contemporary Pacific history. Innocently they reflected the paternalistic “martial masculinity” emblematic of US power in modern Micronesia. Through his stories, I learned that we all lived perpetually under the threat of an unseen enemy, but that my father and the other American fathers of Kwajalein would use their Buck Rogers-like radar beams and missiles to protect us. I learned that before the Americans came, “the Japanese” were sneaky men who captured and held these islands like fortresses—and that the Americans, for the sake of freedom, came marching onto the island in 1944 just like we Boy Scouts used to march in the annual parade, waving the American flag. I learned to picture Marshallese as happy bystanders, singing and cheering elatedly as these victors arrived, hands outstretched to receive

chocolate bars and cans of SPAM—on the sidelines, watching the real world pass them by. Flattened like the characters of a children’s story, they all sounded like good guys, bad guys, and some extra guys on the side—but guys nonetheless. The drama of Kwajalein, let alone the history of many former US Trust Territory Micronesian islands, is a relentlessly, often exaggeratedly androcentric narrative in which Islanders have been cast as “emasculated” damsels in distress, Japanese as wicked imperialist menaces, and Americans as benevolent bearers of justice and freedom.

Greg Dening has often said that history is a performance, and that historians “make theatre about trivial and everyday things, and about awful and cruel realities” (2004, 326). With the predominance of US military histories in the Marshall Islands, it is no wonder that in the collective memory of most Americans and even Pacific Islanders, the United States should get a starring role in “the Pacific Theater” or take the lead in the Cold War “Ballistic Missile Testing Theater.”

Yet we should not take this history for granted; for just as the pristine landscaping of the present-day US base at Kwajalein belies the tragic loss of life and devastation beneath its surface, such a one-sided drama invites us to dig deeper. I hope to break through these concrete layers of history, looking at what scripts of masculinity were mobilized between Japan, the United States, and the Marshall Islands, and exploring how these have been embodied, re-membered, or resisted by human actors.

## METAMORPHOSIS

The military ferry makes its approach, traveling between the Marshallese laborer community of Ebeye islet to the main islet of Kwajalein. It is loaded heavily with Marshallese workers, both men and women, who have moved from atolls and islands all over the Marshalls to make a living on the US base. As the men disembark and approach the dock security checkpoint, many of them carry work boots, laundry to wash on the base, and empty containers to fill up with drinking water at the end of the day. As they walk onto Kwajalein, I watch the men toughen their stride, hike up their jeans, thrust their chests forward, and go to work. They solemnly flash their military identification badges as they enter the base. They march along quietly, sometimes patting or slapping each other on the back, almost like American men do in the locker room.

The same day I follow those workers home as they disembark from the ferry on Ebeye at sunset. In these surroundings, they walk more easily, calmly, with wider steps, nodding to friends and relatives with heads tilted back confidently, inhabiting more space. Some men joke loudly to each other, calling out and

making high-pitched laughter as they carouse around the crowded streets, arm in arm. (Recollection from author's fieldwork, April 2005)

Observing Marshallese workers as they travel in and out of the American community in contemporary Kwajalein, I notice the way in which the men seem to shift their whole bodies from one context to another. Clearly, there is some degree of performance going on.<sup>2</sup> "It's like I morph between being Marshallese and being American somewhere in the middle of the lagoon," explains one of the workers. "I get to Kwajalein and come off that boat and it's like I start acting like I'm in the States or something."

I would argue, though, that this transformation is also an important code-switching between masculinities. Kwajalein is a proving ground not only for missiles but also for men—a stage on which not only Japanese and American soldiers but also Marshallese men have been put to the test of performing their manhood and perfecting their masculinities.<sup>3</sup> Nowadays, Kwajalein is also a place where young Marshallese males are "tested" as men—they work at the US base, learn "important" skills, and then might be able to move on to live and work in the United States if they do well. This involves not only learning how to assimilate in the United States, but how to behave as an American man.

As Japanese and American men have strived to master and perfect (or, conversely, have "failed" to master) their masculinities within the militarized zone of Kwajalein, Marshallese men have been able to develop masculinities between both indigenous and military-colonial contexts. For instance, an estimated 1,000 or more Micronesians, mostly men, including over one hundred Marshallese men, are currently enlisted in the US military, with many deployed in Iraq (Hezel 2005, 5). This is not a new phenomenon. During the Pacific War, many Marshallese men joined in the Japanese defense of the islands and many, still, secretly worked as "scouts" on behalf of US military intelligence (Poyer, Falgout, and Carucci 2001, 120–129). Tomiyama Ichirō described how Islanders' imperial education instilled in many of them such a desire to qualify as "real Japanese" that they mocked Okinawans for being the "Natives" (Kanaka) of the Japanese homeland (2002, 62–63; see also Higuchi 1993, 17–18).

Cross-reading Denning's evocation of theater as a paradigm for the making and retelling of history with Judith Butler's idea of performativity in which gender is a repetitive enactment or "citation" of a set of social norms (1993, 12–13), it can be said that the drama of Kwajalein is complicated by the performance of cross-culturally historicized gender prac-

tices. I am inclined to read masculinities as embodied discourse produced on the stage of history, almost like *dramatis personae*—the characters or actors in a drama—that are learned and enacted within particular cultural contexts.<sup>4</sup>

This is not to say that masculinities can be chosen or switched as consciously as masks or costumery, and Butler is cautious about how “subversive” and “troublesome” the body can be (1990a, 156). For the most part, a gender practice such as masculinity is so entangled with the male sex and the notion of “being a man” in a particular context that the “performer” often doesn’t even realize the extent to which he is performing. Masculinities, I contend, are nonetheless something externally produced and performed. They are what R W Connell has called “body-reflexive practices” that “form—and are formed by—structures which have historical weight and solidity” (1995, 65). Yet many Marshallese men at Kwajalein—who have lived between the “historical weight” of American and Marshallese worlds, and those who even lived through the Japanese context in their lifetimes—take the fluidity and multiplicity of masculinities for granted.

Both Butler and Connell have dealt with specific gender practices as a sort of manifestation in the body of some sort of larger social or cultural discourse, but their theories have very different agendas. Butler’s work is more concerned with the “citational” practice of performativity and the consequences for sex and gender of such “fictions” creating the body itself. “Gender,” she wrote, “is an act which has been rehearsed, much as a script survives the actors who make use of it, but which requires individual actors in order to be actualized and reproduced as reality once again” (1990b, 272). Connell, meanwhile, has problematized the ideal of hegemonic masculinity by which men are compared and never measure up, in an effort to explore the phenomenon of masculinity itself (1995, 77–78).

Approaching masculinities as *dramatis personae* opens up the possibility of exploring what the “script” is for each masculinity in question, but of course multiple masculinities abound both within and between sociopolitical and class contexts. Connell and Gary Dowsett use the term “hegemonic masculinity” to describe the “always-contestable” masculinity within a particular society that is held up as the yardstick by which all men are judged and other masculinities are marginalized along the lines of class, race, and other criteria (Connell 1995, 76; Dowsett, pers comm, 12 Dec 2005).<sup>5</sup> There is always a hegemonic masculinity that suits the national agenda and has cultural capital within any historical moment



and site, but here I want to ask what happens when different hegemonic masculinities encounter one another.

It would seem as if the answer lies in the structure of drama itself. Roles such as victim, villain, or hero, are unstable constructions, and the effects of any hegemonic masculinity are never quite what they seem. For instance, the informational film presented at the USS *Arizona* Memorial at Pearl Harbor portrays American sailors as innocent, playful, and wholesome, unknowingly playing football in casual attire on the decks of their ships just before the Japanese attack.<sup>6</sup> Their “liberatory” heroism is justified through their victimhood under the perceived villainy of the Japanese, dissociated from the bigger story of the ongoing and aggressive conflict over Pacific domination that was already in progress between the two superpowers. This film’s Japanese counterpart, a documentary shown at Yūshūkan, the war memorial museum at Tokyo’s Yasukuni Shrine, similarly portrays Japanese soldiers as young, pure, dutiful heroic boys who had no choice but to protect their nation from US-imposed starvation and colonialism (see White 2001).<sup>7</sup> Interestingly, both films are narrated with a motherly female voice-over, as if to emphasize the loss of each nation’s “sons.” Alternately taking up the roles of hero and victim in order to postulate the other as villain, the dramatic characters perform a dance that is as simplistic as it is compelling.<sup>8</sup>

I propose that this sort of cultural representation has the historical weight to enforce and delineate the hegemonic masculinity scripts that individual men (and sometimes women) embody by default or design. While the process is complex and, as Connell has implied, always already oppressive in some way for men, clearly the dramaturgy of masculinity is directed from the top down and acted out at the personal level. In essence, I am interested in the ways these different theatrical productions of masculinity have mixed and mingled within the same theater, via bodies that crisscross the same stage.

#### PATRIOT: TESTING THE LIMITS OF FREEDOM

I have already broadly outlined some of the hegemonic American masculinities that are encoded in contemporary Kwajalein, but if I were to name a predominant masculine persona that pervades the contemporary American landscape of Kwajalein, it would have to be that of “the Patriot.” Name of both a US missile model and a post-September 11 act of Con-

gress that endorses racial profiling, the Patriot is a paternalistic sort of heroism that justifies the use of military violence with fatherly protectionism (photo 2).

Of course this masculinity is framed by noble domestic and benevolent, heroic intentions. My father’s descriptions to me as a child, for instance, showed just how much he embodied this persona out of a sincere desire to protect my family. The other side to this masculinity is a fascination with science, a curiosity in technology and “progress” that is dressed up in the heroic posturing of national defense. Hugh Gusterson has described how white, middle-class, male, US nuclear weapons scientists justify their experimentation and impact on the world in terms of “nuclear orientalism,” advancing nuclear know-how in order to thwart the perceived enemy Other (2004, 23–24), or “naturalize” it, describing it as less harmful to the world than the manufacture of McDonald’s food. Kwajalein, where American engineers are served hamburgers by displaced Marshallese in the snack bar, is an uncanny example of this.

Such Star Wars–age heroism not only perpetuates Kwajalein’s role as a battlefield but also justifies ongoing military exploits worldwide. Cynthia Enloe championed the perspective that the US military’s global project is a patriarchal endeavor with the aim of masculinizing the world (1989), which in many respects resonates with my metaphor of the father who lives a double life as both domestic provider for mother and family (constructing and fortifying “home”) and as defender to protect that home and way of life (see Dvorak 2004). His defensive pursuits, however, impose his values on the world and require it to submit to his preemptive advances. In the microcosm of Kwajalein Atoll, this patriarchal mission results simultaneously in the perpetuation of American “national security,” and the subjugation/silencing of Marshallese (and prewar Japanese) masculinities.

It also creates a dynamic that requires perpetual dependency and victimhood. Though the United States has since the Reagan era promoted the idea of self-sustainability and independence in the Marshall Islands, the Compacts of Free Association negotiated thus far between the two countries were written in such a way that the Marshall Islands has little choice but to rely on and participate in US economic and military domination, what the United States refers to as a “special relationship.” Many of the present-day policies surrounding US Army Kwajalein Atoll and the Marshall Islands’ relationship with America still maintain the paternalistic design of the 1960s, in which the US Trust Territory of the islands of



PHOTO 2. Stained glass in Kwajalein chapel commemorates the fiftieth anniversary of the US invasion, depicting a US serviceman kneeling between US and Marshallese flags. Photo by author, 2006.

Micronesia was to be held in a state of perpetual dependency, lest other countries try to take advantage of this “strategic” location.

#### ETAO: “TRICKSTER IN A BOTTLE”

Dependency, however, is not a one-way street, and the United States is much beholden to the Marshall Islands. Aware of this, many Marshallese leaders have been keen to turn the tables of power. Given these “tricky” and adverse circumstances, knowing how to navigate between islands and atolls, but also between fortune and complete devastation, is an essential skill, especially valued among Marshallese men. Both beloved and despised, Etao (or Letao), the liminal trickster of Marshallese cosmology, can be read as an icon of this mediating heroism. He turns the tables of power, balances between good and bad luck, and manages to save the day through his clever wit and intellect. Though he is self-indulgent, mischievous, and has an insatiable sexual appetite, many storytelling sessions in the Marshall Islands celebrate Etao’s troublemaker-turned-Robin-Hood redemptive magic.<sup>9</sup>

Etao’s magical powers are in fact so formidable that the Americans depend on him as well. Laurence M Carucci (and others) have related a well-known Marshallese tale in which Etao journeys the Pacific and finally ends up as a consultant to the US government, where he is ultimately outsmarted by US authorities who trap him in a bottle. In exchange for his release, he agrees to help the United States with its military experiments; thus, “empowerment [of America] maintains a Marshallese heritage” (Carucci 1989, 92).

So while the Marshallese people have been described as victims in many American postwar narratives and Japanese narratives of shared nuclear legacy, the counter-narrative of Etao’s power endows Marshallese with agency, ancestral heroism, and, as Phillip McArthur has argued, a way of “encompassing the ‘other’” (2000, 94). This positive emphasis is echoed in the ways Kwajalein’s history is described, particularly by elderly Marshallese men. Rather than dwell on the misfortune of being relocated from their land or suffering the injustices of colonialism, many local leaders narrate their sacrifices and the role of Kwajalein as being one of “creating world peace” through the testing of missiles and military power.

Calling someone an “Etao” in Marshallese can be an insult meaning “sly” or “deceitful,” and in fact Americans are often associated with this figure in Marshallese storytelling, because of their legacy of being both productive and destructive in the islands (McArthur 2000, 93).<sup>10</sup> How-

ever, the underlying virtue of the Etao persona is his celebrated resourcefulness and knowledge, and his ability to wriggle out of compromising positions. His is trickster knowledge that can turn fate upside down when put to a good use. As in many other Pacific societies, Marshallese place a high value on ambiguous, veiled speech and not divulging one's intentions in public, and this is also often referred to positively as being Etao-like. Know-how, or *jelā*, is a mark of manhood in the Marshall Islands, where men typically occupy spheres of social negotiation, politics, and commerce (Carucci 1987, 5). Though by no means do I insinuate here that Marshallese men aspire to be deceitful like Etao, the strategic use of special knowledge to survive and turn fate to one's advantage is considered a virtue.

Learning the traditional skills of canoe building, navigation, coconut harvesting, and so forth, are examples of ways in which men acquired and transferred knowledge in the past, as well as in rural atoll communities today. In the contemporary Marshall Islands, and even Kwajalein, where these older forms of knowledge are no longer passed down, being a man is still often described in terms of "knowing how" to do something. My conversations with Marshallese men led inevitably to statements like, "You are not a man if you don't know how to . . .," whether that knowledge had to do with making an income on the US military base, repairing cars, or speaking English.

Carucci considered the example of boys learning how to make coconut toddy (*jekaro*) a ritual for becoming a Marshallese man (1987). Drawing on Marshallese narratives and ethnographic fieldwork, he showed how Marshallese liken the male body to tall and phallic coconut trees, and how learning to climb high, tap the appropriate tree, and make toddy to share with other men is emblematic of full-fledged manhood. Bottling the *jekaro*, explained Carucci, is like bottling male essence, and the parallel between coconut sap and semen is ever present: A young man's ability to extract pure and high-quality toddy from a coconut tree is an indication not only of his maturity, but also of his potency (Carucci 1987, 4).

Male potency is also valorized in the aesthetic "dipen," or "strong" person, not only in how one strategically uses knowledge but also with implications for labor, sexuality, and war. Etao and other forms of Marshallese masculinity, like the "Jebro" heroic model for the conduct of chiefs (see McArthur 2004, 62), have long been depicted in local narratives of battle between islands, and the indigenous warrior aesthetic later mixed with Japanese and American martial masculinities in intriguing ways (see also Tengan, this volume).

“Power in a bottle,” like Etao held captive by US militarists, could be an appropriate metaphor for a hegemonic, heroic, warrior-like Marshallese masculinity. Marshallese men learn not to speak or act until the time is right. But unleashed, the potency of Marshallese knowledge can be used to effect enormous change in the world, as it has at Kwajalein. It is a knowledge that can navigate between great extremes and pull together the best of different worlds with tremendous efficacy. McArthur expanded on this, characterizing Etao as a motif of “transnational identity” in an era of increased globalization despite Islanders “remain[ing] peripheral to the centers of power” (2000, 93).

A good example of this is how Etao masculinity functions at the community level. It can be seen in the jebwa, a ceremonial war dance that is the property of the chiefly families of the Western atolls, including Kwajalein. The dance is based on a story about a Ri-Ikjet, an otherworldly spirit who infiltrates the world of humans. The Ri-Ikjet presents himself as an outstandingly beautiful man. He dances so seductively that all the women cannot resist him, his seductions so appealing that the women fall out of rhythm and the community begins to fall apart. This incites the irooj (chief), who orders all the men to single out the Ri-Ikjet. They allow him to join in their dancing, which involves complicated clashing, pointing, and swapping of spears. The dance speeds up and gains intensity, and finally the men outsmart the spirit by pointing their spears down rather than up, contrary to the Ri-Ikjet’s expectations. Then the irooj kills him.

Jebwa is thus a performance by which hegemonic masculinity and chiefly power is maintained, using knowledge and clever negotiation skills to defeat foes and maintain social control. It is difficult to tell who is really the “trickster” in this dance; rather one can see the importance of timing and patience in deploying knowledge appropriately.

What is also significant about jebwa is the way in which women stand on the sidelines, chanting and shouting out to the men, empowering them in the process. Indeed, in the matrilineal power structure of the Marshall Islands, women are the real force behind the maneuverings of men. Marshallese matrilineality dictates that men fill in and “front” for women out of deference to their big sisters. Female power is emphasized by many Marshallese proverbs, including “Wa kiped, jined kiped” (Like a canoe is steered by its oar, one is steered by [his] mother) (Anjain Rowa, pers comm, Ebeye, 20 July 2006).

Marshallese land tenure is based on two important matrilineal principles—that of bwij (the matrilineage itself) and jowi (the matriclan), the

former comprising familial ties and the latter referring to the broader genealogical grouping of *bwij* into networks.<sup>11</sup> These clans extend across islands and atolls and tie the Marshall Islands together (Mason 1987, 9). In this system, customarily men thus had a somewhat peripheral role, and women held a somewhat high status. Succession to the title of clan head (*aļap*) was by seniority, but often, in a practice known as *eṃṃaan maroñroñ*, males spoke on behalf of their higher-ranking sister or mother, thus effectively acting as *aļap*. While men had considerable power granted to them by women, the women always retained some degree of “veto power” over their actions (Tobin 1958, 17; Mason 1987, 9).

Yet Kwajalein’s turbulent twentieth-century history is one punctuated by a masculinist language, a grammar of male power and privilege (Ferguson and Turnbull 1999, 48–49), which has been spelled out in the layering of colonial concrete on the land. The male-coded narratives of imperial expansion, heroism, battle, liberation, and victory have left their marks, from land registration systems to the images of US missiles penetrating the “virgin” lagoon on reentry. Julianne M Walsh emphasized how the contest between two major Ralik Chain *irooj*, Loeak and Kabua, eventually resulted in the latter’s being named “King” by Germany in the treaty of 1885, which ultimately validated a shift to the patriline in Kwajalein Atoll (2003, 166–168). Many local sources contend, however, that this transformation was brought about mostly prior to colonial administration, as the *irooj* of the Kapin-meto (northwestern atolls) ceased to produce female heirs.<sup>12</sup> Nonetheless, land tenure practices that privileged male power in and around Kwajalein were only further enabled by German, Japanese, and US intervention.

Japan systematized landownership for its Nanyō (South Seas) colonies of Micronesia by establishing a local government bureaucracy in which prominent males from *irooj* clans became “village headmen” (*sonchō*) who reported back to Japanese civil authorities, bypassing women altogether (Higuchi 1987). As early as the 1960s, US authorities insisted on using paternal (not maternal) surnames to keep track of Marshallese workers who entered and exited the military base. On a more symbolic level, prior to the “liberation” of Kwajalein in January 1944, one of the very first things the US Navy did was code-name every islet in the atoll. Interestingly, unlike other atolls where female names were used, they named each island alphabetically after American-sounding male names from A through J—names like Abraham, Benson, Burton, or Jacob (Bryan 1965, 32–33). Some of these names, like Carlos or Carlson, are still used by both American and Marshallese residents of the atoll.

The “martializing” and subsequent nuclearization of these islands through US atomic bomb testing in the 1950s and missile testing that began in the 1960s permanently transformed Marshallese genealogies. Symbolically, though, this militarization and nuclearization has also served to “nuclearize” and nucleate the Marshallese family structure,<sup>13</sup> re-centering land and power around patriarchal and capitalist structures.

Over the course of a hundred years, land, once coded as a largely female domain, was symbolically “reassigned” as male, a change that mirrored



PHOTO 3. US Marines PFC Clifford L Mueller and PFC Louis Glowney pose with “Native” children (names not listed) in the Marshall Islands, 1944. Photo by Archie Brown, US National Archives #88469.



the ways in which Marshallese men also gained new power and recognition through the intervention of Japanese and American patriarchal discourses of masculinity. Americanization coincided with masculinization and the beginning of a new era for the Marshall Islands, and it continues to do so now, as in the immediate postwar era.

According to US Embassy Majuro figures for 2005, of the roughly 13,000 or so Marshallese people who live in Kwajalein Atoll, 1,386 currently work at the base on Kwajalein. Access to these jobs and income is another site where men and women compete for a share of over 19 million dollars in wages as construction workers, clerks, repairmen, or domestic helpers. This money not only creates an incentive for upward mobility but at times it also serves to further delegitimize female power and inheritance as people conform to a cash economy not directly based on land.

Separate from this, for the military use of the atoll, the United States currently pays over 15 million dollars to “landowners”—a term that comprises irooj, aḷap, and workers (rijerbal) who hold land rights.<sup>14</sup> As mentioned above, the aḷap role customarily is delegated by the eldest female to her brother or male heir. However, this custom was brought into question in 2005 when a prominent Kwajalein Atoll aḷap died, leaving behind his claim to tens of thousands of dollars in rental payments, and the all-male traditional leadership of Kwajalein decided to automatically install the next male heir in line as aḷap. When the senior female heirs contested the decision, the Traditional Rights Court of the Marshall Islands ruled in their favor, installing the elder sister as the rightful aḷap (*Marshall Islands Journal*, 22 April 2005).

Some Kwajalein traditional leaders hotly contested this ruling in vain, insisting that Marshallese manit (customs) dictate that “the first male heir” (or maan-ḷaddik) is entitled to succession, not the female, and that aḷap is a role that only men can assume (Kabua 2005). The women in this case were immediately granted access to Kwajalein land payments just like the male aḷap throughout the atoll; yet the controversy is nonetheless evidence of the way in which maleness tends to be realigned with power and money in the contemporary Marshall Islands.

With current negotiations for renewal of the US Army Land Use Agreement at Kwajalein at an impasse between landowners and their government, some local leaders have tried to flip the balance of power with their government by engaging in what might be called “Etao heroism.” But remember that the Etao persona is messy in that it can appear either clever or dishonest in its subversion; thus it must be played out tactfully in poli-

tics. For instance, many Kwajalein landowners (predominantly male) are refusing to sign a new land agreement unless the Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI) can secure higher land payments and ensure the welfare of Ebeye residents, insisting that without a favorable renegotiation the United States will have to leave Kwajalein by 2016, when the current lease expires. This stance, however, is apparently seen by many in the central RMI government and the incumbent political party to be “bluffing” in



PHOTO 4. Staff Sergeant Neamon Neamon (right), a Marshallese soldier in the US Army, during his reenlistment ceremony in Iraq, with his unit commander, Captain Semien, 2006. Photo courtesy of Aenet Rowa.

order to leverage a better deal. Since the two nations have already ratified the new Compact of Free Association in 2003, which accounts for the US military use of Kwajalein until at least 2066, landowners may have difficulty renegotiating this “binding” agreement. In the twenty-first century, when the hegemonic model of the Patriot is embodied by young Marshallese soldiers in Iraq (photo 4), and migrant workers are constantly flowing to Hawai‘i and the continental United States, such “clever moves” are losing their salience. And in the current US-influenced neoliberal context of the Compact of Free Association, where funding is contingent on “transparency” and “accountability” rather than political savvy, Etao-like masculinity may look more “tricky” than heroic.

### DANKICHI: DUTIFUL BOY ON A MANDATE

Bōken Dankichi (Dankichi the Adventurous), the beloved comic strip character created by Shimada Keizō in 1931 and published until 1939 in the popular boy’s magazine *Shōnen Kurabu*, was an icon who encapsulated the adventurous and youthful spirit of Imperial Japan (Shimada 1976). Read widely by Japanese boys, this was a simple narrative of a wide-eyed boy who, having set out one fine day on a fishing trip with his trusty mouse friend Karikō, falls asleep and finds himself washed up on a tropical island somewhere in Nanyō Guntō (literally, the South Seas Islands, Micronesia).

Wasting no time on his arrival on this jungle island, Dankichi strips off his shirt and pants, dons a grass skirt, and, still wearing his shoes and a wristwatch, sets out to dethrone the chief of the island kingdom. Easily supplanting the chief with a simple trap, Dankichi places his crown on his head, and designates himself the new chief of “Dankichi Island.” He immediately and busily befriends the former chief and all of the Natives, who happily allow him to paint their chests with numbers (since he cannot remember their names). These Natives—who all look exactly the same, are all male, and are drawn as monkey-like black smiley creatures in the tradition of Little Black Sambo—gladly follow Dankichi and Karikō wherever they go (figure 1).<sup>15</sup>

This is the start of Dankichi’s glorious adventures in the South Seas, where he proceeds to wage wars and conquer other islands, all the while tending to the needs of the Natives under his care. Waving small Japanese flags and shouting “banzai,” Dankichi leads the Natives on a march of progress throughout the comic series that sees Dankichi in the role of

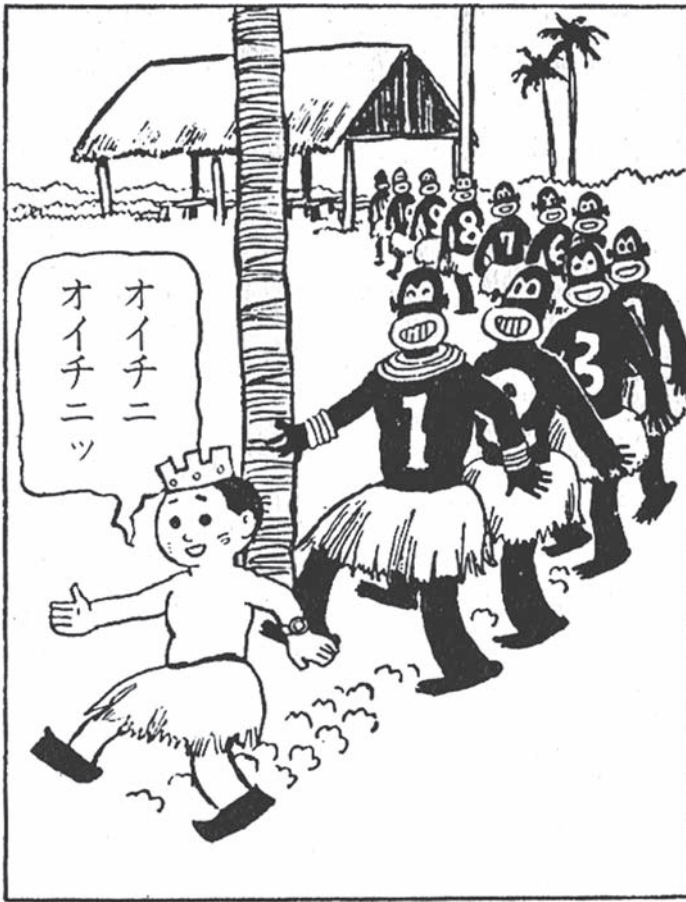


FIGURE 1. Bōken Dankichi leads the “Natives” of his island in a march, shouting “One, two, one, two” (Shimada 1976, 60; reprinted with permission of Kōdansha, Inc).

schoolteacher, chief physician, military general, sports coach, policeman, and various other lead roles.

I read Dankichi as an icon of burgeoning and expanding Japanese Empire. He is a trope for “fishing” for resources for a hungry, economically sanctioned Japan and an emblem of humble good-neighborliness, a representation of a dutiful imperial “son” who selflessly saves the day. Nowadays, when long-distance tuna fishing operations are one of the only ties Japan maintains with its former colonial Marshallese territories, the motif of the stalwart fisherman is also significant.

Kawamura Minato has referred to Japan's 1920s and 1930s wanderlust for the tropics as "Bōken Dankichi Syndrome" (Kawamura 1994, 83). Yet this tropical fantasy genre was obsessed not nearly as much with the image of seductive Islander women as with a Robinson Crusoe—sort of desire for adventure and wilderness (Sudō 2004, 125–127). The narrative of Bōken Dankichi neatly parallels the way Japan saw its imperial project in Micronesia (Kawamura 1994, 85). Blocked off from resources in the early twentieth century, in a sense it was as if the Japanese government was adamant about the need to go out and "fish." Like Dankichi, however, these innocent desires were soon swept up in a massive colonial undertaking that deeply impacted Asia and Oceania.

Around the same time that Bōken Dankichi was being consumed back in Naichi (Mainland) Japan, there had already been a considerable degree of Japanese colonization throughout the Nanyō Guntō. After roughly two centuries of sparse contact with missionaries and beachcombers and a relatively brief period of Spanish and German colonial administration, the Marshall Islands, along with the rest of Micronesia, were taken by Japan in 1914, and in 1920 became a part of Imperial Japan's League of Nations Mandate (Peattie 1988, 53–61; Higuchi 1987, 9–12). Jaluit Atoll, or Yarūto in Japanese, was the center of the Marshalls district, and the main island of Jabor became a small but bustling village that drew from Japan and Okinawa businesspeople and civil servants as well as poorer fishing families, who followed the southeasterly currents of Japan's official out-migration policy (Peattie 1988, 186–187). Away from the racial tensions and forceful relocations that impacted Jabor throughout most of the 1920s and 1930s, nearby Kwajalein Atoll was considered "inaka" (rural) by Japanese, with a Japanese schoolhouse and a small handful of Japanese shops on the main island.

What I am calling the Dankichi masculinity reflected in these colonial endeavors was a heroic, exploratory masculinity that saw itself as more "big-brotherly" than fatherly and was characterized by hard work, dedication, and humanitarianism, combined with deference toward the paternal figure of the emperor. As early as 1927 (Higuchi 1987, 12), civil administrators organized Islander men throughout the Nanyō Guntō into "seinendan," or young men's groups. Marshallese men were regimented into various civic work projects and empowered with a certain degree of responsibility as young leaders. These groups would mobilize in the event of natural disasters, organize community activities, and liaise between the broader Marshallese community and Japanese authorities. In this capac-

ity they also developed their Japanese skills and were accorded respect. Many young men also participated in sports, such as *yakyū* (baseball). They were encouraged to be active participants in the Japanese Empire and to embody the *Dankichi* spirit.

Invoking the same trope of adventure and boyish wonder, the 1939 military song “*Taiheiyō Kōshin Kyoku*” (March of the Pacific) was both a glorification of the Imperial Navy and a theme that sailors sang on ships. Even today many elderly Marshallese can sing it in Japanese:

Umi no tami nara, otoko nara, minna ichido wa akogareta Taiheiyō no Kuroshio o tomo ni isande ikeru hi ga kita zo, kanki no chi ga moeru.

(If you’re a seafarer, if you’re a man, your day has come to sail the Japan Current bravely together, o’er the Pacific of your yearning, with a thrill that makes your blood boil.) (Kingu Male Chorus 1939)

It was this passion, however, that led to the radical militarization of the Marshall Islands. In the early 1940s, Kwajalein was transformed from a quiet atoll when conscripted laborers, referred to as “*ninpu*,”<sup>16</sup> were dispatched to Kwajalein to begin fortifying the atoll. Though most Marshallese were relocated to smaller islands and the civil administration and school was relocated to Namō Atoll (Ato Langkio, pers comm, Ebeye, 20 March 2005), men like Handel Dribo and Manke Konol in Kwajalein were recruited to work with the *ninpu* as teenagers, because of the income and training it would provide them (pers comm, Ebeye, 2 May 2005). They recalled being given Japanese nicknames and proudly described building barracks for soldiers out of wood shipped from Japan, or constructing Japanese-style communal ofuro baths for soldiers to bathe in together.<sup>17</sup>

In the years that followed, thousands more Japanese military personnel, mostly from the Imperial Navy, were deployed to Kwajalein in two waves—one in around 1941, and a second, larger wave in 1943 (Hayashi 1964, 22–23), which came down from other Japanese-held territories via the Philippines. Some of these soldiers had seen intense combat in Manchuria, where new recruits were often initiated into military culture by executing prisoners of war with bayonets (Kawano 1996, 187). Thus a radical shift came about in how Japanese men appeared to local Marshallese at Kwajalein and elsewhere, and many Marshallese were deeply traumatized by witnessing such violence.<sup>18</sup>

Most soldiers had never seen tropical islands before and had no idea how to survive from the land and sea, unlike the earlier colonists who not only knew how to fish and gather local food but also how to speak Mar-

shallese and other local languages. The soldiers were also strictly forbidden from eating most local foods for fear of poisoning, so they relied on Japanese rations, which became scarce as supply routes were blockaded (Hayashi 1964, 12–14). As the Japanese troops became more desperate, further violence and strict martial regulations were implemented on both Marshallese and Japanese populations.

“They weren’t allowed to say anything girly [memeshii],” explained the widow of Shigeru, a civilian engineer who had worked repairing submarines on Kwajalein until 1944 and had even traveled once back to Japan before he died in the invasion of the atoll (Satō family, pers comm, Kamakura, 18 Nov 2005). Reading Shigeru’s self-censored letters of 1943–1944, one gets little sense of his everyday existence. He asked his wife to send a deck of playing cards, inquired whether their baby son had gotten fatter, and mentioned in passing how hot it was. He wrote about the outdoor theater where the soldiers were shown samurai films, but not much else.

Kawazoe Katsuki, captain of the *No. 5 Kyōei Maru* submarine chaser, was transferred back to Japan shortly before the bombardment of Kwajalein Atoll. In his memoirs he reflected nostalgically and sadly that he had to abandon “those boys,” whom he had come to know as brothers and sons. After writing about how he drank for two whole years with those sailors and knew them well, he described the scene of his last bath on board the ship in October 1943, and how surprised he was, while having his back scrubbed, to feel the tears of his subordinate splash on his shoulders (Kawazoe 1990, 223).

Kawazoe’s bittersweet nostalgia is underscored, of course, by the enormous defeat that Japanese forces suffered in Kwajalein lagoon. This sort of brotherhood between men may also have been part of what made it easier for them to die together. While most official narratives describe fallen Japanese soldiers as “crushed jewels” (gyokusai) sacrificed for the emperor, Kawano explained that most men wanted more than anything to take care of each other and come home alive to their mothers and families (1996, 190).

In the immediate postwar period, faced with devastation and the urgency to rebuild Japan, it was easier for the Japanese public to forget the courageous but troublesome martial masculinities of the past. The legacies of Japanese Micronesia were swallowed up in this collective amnesia, with the myriad traces of bodies—including both Marshallese-Japanese genealogies and fallen soldiers—disappearing in the process (Igarashi 2000, 11–18).

But these men have not been completely forgotten, as I discovered when I accompanied several bereaved families of the fallen soldiers on a pilgrimage from Japan to Kwajalein. In their 2005 visit, the group began their journey at the Yasukuni War Shrine in Tokyo, and after two days of flying, they proceeded to the small Japanese memorial on the island, standing near US Army radars as they laid bottles of sake and other offerings to the spirits of the men. Though sixty-two years had passed since the Battle of Kwajalein, their tears were still fresh as they sang songs and read letters of devotion to their deceased fathers, brothers, or husbands. Eighty-six-year-old Esu placed a bouquet of artificial flowers on the memorial to honor the dead, most of whom had only been teenagers at the time, saying, “This is to symbolize all the pretty girlfriends you boys never got to have.”

What was most revealing about this return of Japanese families to Kwajalein was their encounter with the US base commander at that time, the first woman ever assigned to the post. Wearing full camouflage fatigues, boots, and a beret, she walked around the circle of Japanese, shaking hands



PHOTO 5. Japanese soldiers (names not available) pose with a cat on Kwajalein prior to the US invasion, circa 1943. Reproduced courtesy of Marshallese Cultural Center, Kwajalein.



with each of them and passing them a commemorative coin of honor, the sort awarded to local “heroes” of the community. Ayako, an eighty-three-year-old woman whose brother Jōji had been studying abroad in Los Angeles when he was recruited into the Imperial Navy and dispatched to Kwajalein, wept as the commander approached. When she received her coin, she began to sob, and after hesitating for a moment, the commander embraced her. Ayako sobbed on the commander’s shoulder for several seconds—all at once an image of grief over the loss of a brother and a whole generation of Japanese “boys,” and a confession of enormous sadness to a US soldier, the representative of American victory and pride. It is as if she were releasing the sadness and fear these men were forbidden to show.

That the commander was a woman embodying the Patriot, American masculine hegemony in the contemporary Pacific only further underscored the performativity of the moment. In her uniform, she stood on the battlefield where other masculinities were defeated and transformed, but as she sympathized with this sister of the former enemy, she stepped briefly out of character. In a Butlerian moment of “subversion,” she consoled and almost mothered the old woman.<sup>19</sup>

Meanwhile, the group’s Marshallese bus driver observed the ritual from a distance, his arms crossed, a solemn expression on his face. No one else heard the stories he told me later of how his grandparents suffered during the war, nor did they even seem to notice his presence. Uncannily, just as the dramatic script of Kwajalein dictates, he was required to play Marshallese bystander to the Japanese and American performance unfolding before him.

## AN OCEAN OF MASCULINITIES

As the Patriot has transformed Marshallese masculinities, the Dankichi persona also lives on in some ways in the Marshall Islands, embodied proudly by elderly men who remember the Japanese language and conduct themselves with the youthful gentlemanliness learned in their pre-war schooldays. Many male Marshall Islanders strongly identify with a “samurai” or martial arts-inspired warrior image, and young boys aspire to be ninja as they play Japanese video games on Ebeye. Today, Japanese tuna-fishing operatives are another site where the colonial project is perpetuated and the Dankichi spirit resonates.<sup>20</sup>

In and beyond these “Martial Islands,” a dramatic persona-based model of masculinity opens up the option of looking to what fuels, funds, and energizes certain masculinities, and has the potential to suggest new

options for interpersonal and gender relations. By appreciating masculinities as dramatic roles that are performed (or often “mis-performed”) within different social contexts, it becomes possible to see those marginalized masculinities that have been suppressed and overwritten alongside those that have been more dominant and hegemonic.

It also becomes apparent that just like the characters of a drama, masculine roles are *relational* and relative to one another, existing in triangulation between hero, villain, and victim. They require supporting characters—good guys and bad guys, so to speak—in order to exist. When it comes to transnational relationships between men and masculinities, this persona-based model can be read through the multiple historical narratives told from different positions and embedded in popular cultural texts.

In exploring the worlds of Patriot, Etau, and Dankichi masculinities, it is important to remember that each masculinity enlists what it most requires to remain heroic and legitimate. Thus the Patriot has always needed dependent and emasculated victims to rescue (and undemocratic ne’er-do-wells to conquer); Etau requires the empowerment of others (women, money, or foreign endorsement) and some sort of superior adversary to outsmart and overcome; and Dankichi has required “fish” to catch, “Natives” to work, and an approving paternal figure (like the Emperor).

Of course at Kwajalein Atoll today these performances of history are all buried under the American perpetual battlefield of victory and liberation.<sup>21</sup> We are not asked to remember the mass graves where Japanese, Korean, and Okinawan bodies were buried by the thousands, not implored to know where the houses of Marshallese chiefs once stood, and not reminded that this is Marshallese land. When the US Army digs new trenches to repair its water pipes or replace a street lamp, the public does not learn about the bones that lie there. These histories are sanitized and landscaped over by peaceful grassy lawns and idyllic beaches, in a process the army refers to as “beautification.” Indeed, Kwajalein today is beautiful—strikingly so. Amnesia is bliss.

\* \* \*

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*Gary Dowsett, Margaret Jolly, Greg Dening, Byron Bender, and other readers and referees who have provided valuable comments on earlier drafts. Thanks also to Jane Eckelman for creating the map on page 56. All interviews and conversations were conducted in the Republic of the Marshall Islands, Hawai'i, Guam, and Japan. Other than those listed in the text, I have altered or omitted some names in order to protect anonymity. All Japanese names are listed surname first, as is conventional; all translations are my own. Although the spellings of all other Marshallese words in this article follow the new orthography as reflected in the dictionary (Abo and others 1976), I have chosen to use the old-style spellings of common place-names for readers' ease of recognition.*

## Notes

1 While there are significant discrepancies between sources, it is widely agreed that 332 of the 46,670 American troops were killed in action during the conflict, compared to 8,410 of the total 8,782 "Japanese" stationed at Kwajalein Atoll. The total "Japanese" figure, however, included Koreans and Okinawans, as well as numerous Marshallese who were working for the military. Between 750 and 1,000 of the "Japanese" dead were actually Korean men who had been conscripted as military contract laborers under the threat of imprisonment (see Richard 1957; Bōeichō 1973; Walker, Bernstein, and Lang 2004).

2 While beyond the scope of this article, much could also be said about women in the same context adopting a different deportment, which is most noticeable in their attire. Although customarily forbidden from wearing dresses that reveal their thighs on Ebeye, women often wear shorts or athletic gear on Kwajalein to work, attend school, or participate in sporting events.

3 While my larger project situates the construction of masculinities within a context of inter-gender relations (Dvorak 2008), for the purposes of this special issue I am focusing my gaze mainly on this very male-dominated world and its enactment.

4 Goffman also contributed significantly to the study of performance in a sociological frame (1959); however, his study was mainly aimed at exploring issues of self-consciousness in society, while my intention here is to consider narratives of masculinity within an Oceania-based historical framework.

5 The term "hegemonic masculinity" was hotly debated during the November 2005 "Moving Masculinities" conference in Canberra, since many contributors used it to describe competing masculinities between classes within a given society. Gary Dowsett emphasized that positing multiple "hegemonies" in conflict with one another defeated the purpose of the original definition, which was that most men can never "measure up" to the dominant ideal, and most masculinities are thus marginalized. However, in the context of this article, I have chosen to pit contending hegemonic masculinities of different countries against each other,

with the understanding that within each social context these ideals of manhood oppressed or challenged most of the men striving to embody them.

6 Geoffrey M White has done groundbreaking work about American cultures of commemoration with consideration of this and other Pearl Harbor narratives on film (2001).

7 Another interesting comparison can be drawn between Michael Bay’s film *Pearl Harbor* (2001) and Satō Junya’s film about the sinking of the *Yamato*, titled *Otoko-tachi no Yamato* (2005), in which men who are trying to live up to the masculine ideals imposed on them die while forming a strong homosocial bond.

8 Relations between Japan and the United States can be read alternatively as ambivalent camaraderie and romance, where the two countries dance between extreme hatred and nearly sexualized fascination with each other. In her book *Between Men* (1985), Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick described homosocial relations as a drama akin to this sort of romantic dance between men. In a heterosexual dynamic, two men thwart their homoerotic desire for one another by competing for the affection of a woman; yet their alliance is just as strong or stronger than the alliances formed with her. In some respects, it could be said that Japanese and American emasculation of Pacific Islanders in popular culture representations was a fight over a “woman” that had more to do with Japanese and American aspirations for each other than it did with the Pacific Islands.

9 There are many published examples of the figure of Etao used in Marshallese-style storytelling. Jack A Tobin (2002) and Gerald Knight (1982) both transcribed these oral traditions from the original Marshallese, while American author Robert Barclay featured Etao prominently as a character in his novel *Meḷaḷ* (2002). Australian writer Jane Downing also used this motif in her book *The Trickster* (2003).

10 The reticence or veiled speech of male Marshallese workers on Kwajalein frequently elicits the frustration of American supervisors who perceive this behavior as “sneaky.” It is also noteworthy that similar Japanese virtues were regularly characterized as “two-faced” by American commentators before and after the war.

11 Taking into account David M Schneider’s valuable contribution to feminist anthropology by critiquing the ways in which Euro-American models of kinship have been taken for granted in canonical ethnography (1984), I should point out that Marshallese “traditional” culture has been engendered by much of the early exploration literature and postwar anthropological research in Micronesia. Although beyond the scope of this article, there is much debate about the naming and conceptualization of kin groups, not only among anthropologists, but within Marshallese “traditional rights” discourse as well.

12 Some Marshallese female sources explained to me anonymously that prior to the twentieth century, the dominant irooj lineage had long been known for its consolidation of male power.

13 I thank Vicente Diaz for this nuclear metaphor (pers comm, 9 May 2005).

14 This is the actual figure based on the proposed Land Use Agreement of 2003 between the United States and the Republic of the Marshall Islands that would allow American use of Kwajalein through 2086. However, at the time of this writing this agreement has not been signed by Kwajalein landowners, who argue that this is an insufficient amount. Currently landowners receive just the previously negotiated annual payments while the difference goes into an escrow account, accessible only if they sign the new contract before 2008, after which the money can be returned to the US Treasury if the document remains unsigned.

15 See Russell 1991, 11–12, for a more thorough exploration of these images in terms of “the black other” in Japanese popular discourse.

16 “Ninpu” (a Japanese word that elderly Marshallese still use to refer to war-time laborers, though they use the Marshallese version, “niimbu”) carries with it the same connotation as “coolie” or “unskilled laborer,” and it was likely the word used locally by Japanese superiors toward Korean and Marshallese laborers in particular. Marshallese elders say that often these laborers wore only loincloths in the hot sun.

17 The communal bath was a site of homosocial fraternizing in prewar Japan. According to some elders I spoke to, in Jabor it was common for Marshallese boys to make money by gathering firewood for hot water, after which they often got to share a bath as well. These concrete bathtubs remained after the destruction of wooden structures in the bombardment of Kwajalein.

18 Prewar Chief of Staff Hayashi Kōichi claimed that younger soldiers from the Shanghai Special Forces Unit were ordered to conduct an execution of US Marines on Kwajalein on 16 October 1942 (1964, 20–21).

19 The Japanese group later reflected on this encounter by describing the “womanly kindness” of the commander, reflecting their own constructions of femininity.

20 I explore Japanese fisheries and their legacy in both the Marshall Islands and rural Japan in more depth in my larger study (Dvorak 2008).

21 Here I repeat the observation made by Carucci that Marshall Islanders perceive the world war that began in 1939 as a continuous battle that has never ended (1989, 76–77).

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### *Abstract*

For over a century, the Marshall Islands have been entangled between the United States and Japan in their conquest of the Central Pacific; yet because of this, these islands have also been a place where multiple masculinities have converged, competed, and transformed each other. This is especially true around the site of Kwajalein Atoll, where terrain understood in Marshallese terms as female or maternal has been reshaped and masculinized through the semiotics of colonialism and militarization. This article focuses specifically on three local representations of masculinity: the knowledgeable but strategic Marshallese "Etao," symbolized by a creative and resourceful male trickster spirit; the heroic but paternalistic American "Patriot," as enacted via the perpetual battlefield of military and weapons-testing missions; and the adventurous but self-sacrificing "Dankichi," deployed in Japan during the 1930s and echoed nowadays in the long-distance tuna-fishing industry. Cross-reading Judith Butler and R W Connell, this is an exploration of the "theater" of these masculinities in relationship to one another, and the story of how different superpowers strive for domination by emasculating a third colonial site and its subjects.

KEYWORDS: masculinities, Marshall Islands, Kwajalein Atoll, gender, America, Japan, Pacific War