In this article I will discuss some of the features of practices of "honor" in a Micronesian society, particularly as they are constructed in language. My aim will be to contribute to previous anthropological discussions of honor, which have primarily centered on societies bordering the Mediterranean (see Abu-Lughod 1986; Blok 1981; Bourdieu 1965, 1990; Brandes 1987; Campbell 1964; Davis 1977; Gilmore 1987; Herzfeld 1980, 1987; Peristiany 1966; Peristiany and Pitt-Rivers 1992; Pitt-Rivers 1966; Stewart 1994; Wilkin 1984). The importance of honor in the Pacific and its possible relation to other discourses about honor was noted by Mauss: "The notion of honor is strong in Polynesia and present in Melanesia" (1954:36). I will propose that a link between Pohnpeian and what are called Mediterranean discourses of honor can be made by singling out stratification as the important underlying logic in both cases. I will also propose that honor be looked at on the Micronesian island of Pohnpei (and perhaps elsewhere) as a set of practices through which people organize certain perceptions of hierarchy and link positive attitudes and affect with stratification (see also Abu-Lughod 1986 for a discussion of the morality of hierarchy in Bedouin society).

Anyone who has looked at the phenomenon of honor is aware of the complex and often apparently contradictory nature of the behaviors described under this term. The paradoxical nature of what we call honor is frequently noted by anthropologists. Stewart, for example, says,

The more closely one looks at honor, the odder it seems... it is perhaps not surprising that the analyses of honor that have been proposed are sometimes so different from each other that one would not suspect, if one did not already know, that they relate to the same concept, or at any rate the same word. [1994:145]

He goes on to say in a footnote that "even analyses given by the same author are not always easy to reconcile with each other" (Stewart 1994:145). One could take the position that explanations of honor result in paradoxes because the scope of comparison is misconstrued. Herzfeld has rightly claimed that honor is an inefficient gloss on a wide variety of indigenous terminological systems, and that these terminological systems should be investigated in their local settings before we proceed to cross-cultural comparisons (1980:339). Peristiany and Pitt-Rivers state that it is "an error to regard honor as a single constant concept rather than a conceptual field within which people find the means to express their self-esteem or their esteem for others" (1992:4). At the same time Abu-Lughod states, "Most would agree that values

This article is an investigation of honor in a Micronesian society, particularly as it is constructed in language. I argue that honor is a set of practices through which people organize positive embodied attitudes about social hierarchy, according particularly high value to acts of self-depletion. A different notion of the self in the Pacific has implications for ideas about the universality of a personal notion of honor and suggests that the common element in Pohnpeian honor and that described for other societies is the link between honor and inequality or stratification. [honor, honorifics, Pohnpei, Pacific Islands, social stratification, language and culture]
associated with the notion of honor, however defined, are at the heart of the social ideologe of various circum-Mediterranean societies" (1986:33, emphasis added). The intertranslatability of terms is certainly an important issue in anthropology, and one not easily resolved. Whether monosemy is even achieved intraculturally is in doubt, since a large proportion of any vocabulary is polysemous in nature. This polysemy appears on the one hand to invite cross-cultural comparison and at the same time to obstruct it, offering challenges to anthropologists seeking to describe pan-cultural behaviors. I nevertheless believe that the enterprise is worthwhile, hope to show that the explicit rendering of honor through grammatical practices in discourse in Pohnpei provides compelling data to examine "honor" (wa`aun in Pohnpeian) and to investigate ways in which it might relate to honor as this concern has been discussed in the anthropological literature, as well as to reexamine the link between honor and hierarchy. I will be looking closely at language in Pohnpei and especially at how honor is constructed through "practical activity" (Bourdieu 1977). As Bourdieu states, "practice always implies a cognitive operation, a practical operation of construction which sets to work, by reference to practical functions, systems of classification (taxonomies) which organize perception and structure practice" (1977:97). The constitution of culture and society through activity involving actors in particular contexts has been a focus of linguistic anthropologists (see, e.g., Duranti 1994; Goodwin 1981; Goodwin 1990; Gumperz 1982; Hanks 1990; Moerman 1988; Ochs 1988; and Schieffelin 1990) sociologists concerned with the ways in which interactants construct a sense of shared reality (e.g., Cicourel 1973; Garfinkel 1967; Goffman 1967; Sacks et al. 1974), and psychologists examining the role of social activities in cognitive development (e.g., Lave 1988; Scribner and Cole 1973; Vygotsky 1978). Language is recognized as an important tool in the constitution of society, as a form of social action (e.g., Austin 1962; Gumperz and Hymes 1972; Scourie 1969) and for its role in mediating intersubjectivity.

In this article I will examine language transcripts from interactional data videotaped in Pohnpei in order to investigate how wa`aun is collaboratively constructed and how it is related both to social stratification and to positive attitude and sentiment through language in oration as well as through feasting practices. I will discuss how linguistic forms contribute to the creation of a homology between getting honor and giving honor, and between honor and humiliation or abasement. On the basis of the resulting analysis of wa`aun in Pohnpei, I propose that honor is a set of practices through which people fundamentally construct, represent, and organize positive embodied attitudes (including affective displays) about individual social difference particularly (1) those in which they positively value and rationalize acts of self- and other-subordination (part of this practice involves discursively construing lateral subordination as depletion, or humiliation as its opposite, symbolic elevation), and (2) those in which they positively value structural hierarchy, including gender hierarchies.

Several authors have already noted and discussed the relationship of honor to stratification. As Abu-Lughod states, most scholars "recognize the link between honor and stratification" (1986:33). She herself shows how the code of honor among the Bedoins of the Egyptian Western Desert provides a means of structuring individual behavior and maintaining hierarchy. Perišiany and Pitt-Rivers (1992) suggest that, among much else, the relative status of participant is relevant in interpretations of what is honorable. Pitt-Rivers states that honor is problematic between equals because it "derives from the domination of persons" (1966:60). Bourdieu (1990) also links honor to social recognition, status, or the accumulation of symbolic capital. A Bourdieu states, "the ethos of honour is fundamentally opposed to a universal and formal morality which affirms the equality in dignity of all men and consequently the equality of their rights and duties" (1965:228, emphasis added).

Davis (1977) argues perhaps most strongly that honor is a function of economic stratification.
hierarchy; it entails acceptance of superordination and subordination. Second, it is an absolute system... each competitor occupies a unique position in the hierarchy. One of the weapons in such discrimination is the distinction between honour-virtue and honour-status. Third, it does not seem to be characteristic of honor that it is associated with integrity; the whole man is contemplated. What a whole man is, though, varies from society to society, [1977:98]

The explicit distinction between "honor-virtue" and "honor-status" that Davis mentions is a recurrent theme in studies of honor. I hope to show here that, at least for Pohnpei, the linkage of honor and virtue is a key to the naturalization, embodiment, and reproduction of the types of behaviors Davis calls "honor-status," or those through which people construct hierarchy.

Although the link between honor and stratification is widely recognized, most authors (with the exception of Davis [1977]) reject stratification as the organizing principle behind honor practices as unable to account for what is called the "egalitarian" (Stewart 1994:12) construal of honor. These authors thus construe the "self as a sacred object" or each member of society as possessing honor to the same degree (Stewart 1994:12); in other words, honor is described as essentially "individual will" (Peristiany and Pitt-Rivers 1992:222), personal integrity (Davis 1977), and a potential or actual moral worth available equally to all. The differentiation between self and society is common in this and other definitions of honor. Stewart, for example, mentions "honor in the public sense and honor in the private sense" (1994:12), and Pitt-Rivers describes honor as esteem in one's own eyes and the eyes of society (1966:503). But this construal is dependent on a culturally relative notion of the self as something that can exist apart from society and that in fact may be an artifact of a particular, regional construal of the self rather than a question of deep differences in what honor is. For example, the Western model of self presents the individual and the social as mutually opposed, whereas Oceania provides evidence for other arrangements. As Lutz (1985) describes for Ifaluk atoll (Micronesia), what Westerners would call individual attitudes are conceptualized as shared. People of Ifaluk talk of "our insides," not those of solitary persons. As White and Kirkpatrick explain about the Pacific, "the person may not map culturally valued units so much as points of potential disjuncture from such units" (1985:11). It also remarks that for Hawaiians the self "is a socially interactive concept tied to correct social behavior (hana pono) between Self and Other" (1985:320), and White says of A'ara speakers in the Solomon Islands that "A'ara descriptions of personal behavioral traits are basically about interpersonal process rather than the characteristics of individuals as social isolates" (1985:341). In Pacific cultures there is no sharp divide between self and society. If, as White (1985) suggests, the individual person maps onto points of social disjuncture one would not expect a notion of personal honor apart from society—but one would expect a notion of personal shame.

If a notion of egalitarian honor co-varies with notions of the individual, the "paradox" of honor experienced as both an autonomous and egalitarian concept and as a societal and hierarchical concept can perhaps be resolved. Honor as an aspect of the self (as opposed to society) can be viewed as constitutive of a culturally specific relation of self to society and as not in conflict with what I am proposing is the more basic underlying relation among honor, stratification, and hierarchy.

Before discussing honor in Pohnpei, let me first provide some cultural background on Pohnpeian society and honorific language.

rendering honor through grammatical practices

The island of Pohnpei, with a population of about 30,000 and a circular land mass about 16 kilometers wide, has traditionally been composed of five independent chiefdoms, each with its own paramount chief, paramount chiefless, secondary chief, and secondary chiefess. Although the island is now united under a form of democracy and is part of the Federated States of
Micronesia, the chieftain system is still vital and remains an important organizing principle in the practices of the island. Pohnpeian society is highly hierarchical, with virtually all adult members ranked according to traditional titles carrying accompanying privileges and responsibilities. No two titles have equal significance because the five chieftaincies are ranked as mutually exclusive grades, and because relationships among clan members are ranked according to seniority of matrilineal descent. Subclans within each clan are considered to be descended from a family of sisters, and are ranked according to the relative age of their respective ancestresses.

Honor is conveyed linguistically through a vocabulary that indexes relative status (see Keating 1998 for a detailed discussion of this phenomena). This honorific speech must be used in referring to and addressing chiefs, chiefesses, and priests, and it is commonly used to mark the relative status of participants in contexts where high-status persons are present. Semantically, honorification clusters around the domains of movement/stasis in space, possessive constructions (which can also be viewed as a form of locative), and certain mental state verbs and verbs of speaking. Honorific speech is juxtaposed to common speech, which is unmarked for status. Within honorific speech, a choice between expressing low status (humiliative) or high status (exaltive) is rendered as a choice between two paired vocabulary items. This is shown below for the verb “to sit,” where a choice between exaltive speech (status-raising) and humiliative speech (status-lowering) can be made (“sit” in common speech is mwohNdId).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Honorific Speech</th>
<th>status-raising (exaltive)</th>
<th>status-lowering (humiliative)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ketki</td>
<td>“sit”</td>
<td>patikdi</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is clear from the above that in Pohnpei honor is built out of two notions, status-raising and status-lowering. Exaltive speech indexes and constitutes the high status of the referent, while humiliative speech indexes and constitutes the low status of the referent.

Mwohndid ketki versus Elizabeth patikdi
the paramount chief sits Elizabeth sits

The use of the term “honorific speech” for speech registers or styles that encode relative social status between participants or about referents is traditional in linguistic anthropology and linguistics (Comrie 1976; Garvin and Reisenberg 1952; Levinson 1983). This term is, I believe, an unfortunate reflection of native speakers’ views about these forms, rather than an accurate description of actual use—which is to lower status in the majority of cases. Pohnpeians refer to honorific language by the phrase lokaun wahu (talk of honor) or meing (honorific speech). Both the English term honorific and the Pohnpeians’ gloss of meing or lokaun wahu as the English phrase “high language” occlude our understanding of these forms as indexes of status deprecation as well as of honor. For example, the status-lowering form of “honorific” speech is unquestionably the most frequent form in interactional data, where verbs and possessive classifiers of high status alternate with verbs and possessive classifiers of low status. Thus, in 51 turns of talk in an interaction at a paramount chief’s home, 26 words lowered participants’ status while only six were status-raising. Six different speakers took turns at talk in the interaction including the chief and chiefess. In the majority of uses honorific language has the effect of subordinating. That a process that subordinates a large majority of speakers is positively valued as “high” or honorific shows the part that language ideology as well as language itself can play in positively perceiving and valuing stratification practices. It is with this surrogate use of honor giving as ennobling of the giver that I am concerned in this article.

As Bascom has reported, wahu literally means “valley,” and refers to the wide gulf that socially separates the chiefs from the others: “It is explained that it is as difficult and dangerous to try to bridge this gap as to jump from one mountain top to another” (Bascom 1965:29). This use of the metaphor of the Pohnpeian topography (which consists of a mountainous interior) to illustrate the notion of wahu or honor and an artificially constructed social divide between members o
society is one of the ways that Pohnpeians construct honor practices through language and metalevel; they render socially divisive discriminations as analogous to natural phenomena in that both are impervious to human intercession.

In looking at Pohnpeian honorific language, we may observe that grammatically “honor” consists of both superordination (status-raising speech is honorific) and subordination (status-lowering speech is honorific). Honor is constructed as two different acts, both called honoring. Calling both these processes honorific (in language) and construing both as honor making creates a homologous relation out of two opposite acts, a practice that reinforces the perception that in honoring others one gains honor (I will discuss this practice in greater detail below as it is performed in oratory):

classification: HONOR
practice: + honor - honor (humiliation)

The term honor acts metonymically to describe both honor and the humiliative practices that form one aspect of the larger concept. In Pohnpeian oratory, strategic uses of status-elevating language refer to those of low status, in acts of praise for their honor giving, explicitly connect the idea of giving honor with reciprocally receiving honor.

organizing positive embodied attitudes about social hierarchy (especially valuing acts of depletion)

As I have discussed in more detail elsewhere (Keating 1995, 1998), posture and body position are important aspects of honor practices in Pohnpei, much as movement and stasis in space are also important sites for honorifics in language; this is true not only in Pohnpei but in other Pacific societies such as Samoa as well (Duranti 1994). Grammatical and postural honoring act in concert in greeting practices, for example; individuals bow or lower themselves when greeting (with honorific forms) those of higher status. Honorable behavior consists of initial self-lowering through the assumption of a low-status seating position, which then permits co-participants to urge the actor to take a higher position.

I have made the claim that honor is a set of practices through which people construct social stratification and through which social inequality is not only naturalized and rendered habituate (as in language and bodily position) but explicitly valued. A significant part of this process in Pohnpei involves organizing positive feelings around honor, which is in turn “made” (waidae) through subordination and self-depletion and the depletion of others. Others have already noted the link between sentiment and honor (Abu-Lughod 1986; Pitt-Rivers 1968) as much as between honor and stratification. In fact, Pitt-Rivers analyzes honor in terms “a sentiment, a manifestation of this sentiment in conduct, and the evaluation of this conduct by others” (1968:503).

But there is a more complex linkage among sentiment, stratification, and honor: affect or sentiment plays a significant role in embodying and naturalizing stratification through linking honorific practices—they themselves largely behaviors through which people construct hierarchical relations—with shared positive attitudes or emotion. As Foucault has suggested, emotions can be “the place in which the most minute and local social practices are linked up with the large scale organization of power” (Dreyfus and Rabinow 1982:xxvi). The “sentiment” described in discussions of honor is an index of a socialized, positive valuation of social inequalities. This valuation is sustained by a continuous socialization process. That grammaticalized honor is linked with affective responses has been shown by Friederich (1972:280) in his discussion of the choice of Russian status-marked pronouns, which can have social as well as affective purposes (see also Irvine 1985).

Emotions or sentiments are cultural rather than natural categories, and cultural beliefs about emotion are linked to broader cultural beliefs about the person (Harrell 1986; Levy 1984; Lutz 1988:82). Western discourses about emotion are distinct from the discourse about emotion in
the Pacific (Gerber 1985; Lutz 1985, 1988) and elsewhere. According to Wittgenstein (1967), Westerners believe that emotions are internal events because of a practice of "perceptual introspectionism" (Coulter 1986). In contrast to Westerners, Pacific Islanders offer very few descriptions of internal sensation, but instead direct their attention externally into the social world (Gerber 1985:137; see also Lutz 1988). Thus I am not claiming to know what Pohnpeians or others feel when they practice honor, but I am interested in what feeling categories or perhaps embodied sensory experiences are linked to honor in discourse. When Pohnpeians link a discourse about honor to a discourse about positively valued affect, specifically limpaak ("love," which I will talk about shortly), this "love" is constructed differently from Western notions about love. Yet in both cases the term describes a positive and valued relation between people. Lutz (1988) compares American and Ialuk Islanders' (Micronesia) concepts of love:

Both emotions entail the desire to see the other person's needs satisfied, although those needs are culturally defined in somewhat different ways. Americans focus primarily on the explicit goal of "making the other happy," while the Ialuk focus on the needs for health, food, and kinship, needs whose fulfillment is not spoken of as having the primary goal of creating happiness. Both are emotions of strength in that the person who experiences them is empowered; that is, each sees him- or herself as capable of fulfilling the other's needs. (1988:146)

It is precisely because emotion is culturally constructed that links between the body and the social world can be drawn (Lyon and Barbalet 1994:48), and the embodiment of sociality and social values can be recognized and analyzed.

A common site for the organization of subordination as "honor," and of positive embodied attitudes about self-depletion, is in the oratorical and tribute practices at public feasts. In Pohnpeian oratory where honor itself is the topic, honor is joined with love, and is characterized as originating from the heart. It is objectified and elevated as an essential ingredient in the continuance of life. Honor is characterized as something that can be made, shown, and even quantified. In the following data segments I will illustrate how grammaticalized honor works together with a metadiscourse about honor to generate (1) an embodied notion of honor linked to positive affect and a valued relation between people, and (2) a homologous relation between status depletion and status elevation, or the giving and receiving of honor.

In the following speech by the paramount chief, wahu is embodied within an organ of each individual. Honor comes "not from the arm, not from the leg, but from only one place in the heart." Honor is the very core or life center of the body, in contrast to legs and arms, which are peripheral.

Excerpt 1:

01  wahu sohite kohsang ni pohn aramas
    honor does not come from the arm of a person

02  wahu sohite kohsang ni nehn aramas
    honor does not come from the leg of a person

03  wahu kohsang wasekas ni moaingiqong
    honor comes from only one place in the heart

Honor in Pohnpei is objectified as something shown, made, and made clear, through practices such as status-marked language and self-depletion of one's possessions in favor of the chief. Words like mwohmwen (appearance of) and sansalada ("evident," as in showing clearly) reappear continuously with wahu, as the following example, a speech by the paramount chief, testifies, shows.

Excerpt 2:

01  choi keaping kalangan, ni duwen dahme sansalada
    how is praise and thanks, according to what is shown by
Those giving honor are raised in status by the chiefess’s use of the high-status possessive classifier sapwellimonwall (line 02) for “your” in the phrase “your honor.” In the next speech by the paramount chief, wahu is “made” (wiada). The suffix -da, “upward,” on the verb wi (to do, make) signifies that an action has been carried through to its logical conclusion. This making of honor is accomplished through acts of self-depletion (such as stripping one’s lands bare for the chief, which will be discussed shortly).

Excerpt 3:

01 diadoak riau wet de mwekid riau wet papeu oh wiada rahnwet.
02 me wiada wahu rahnwet
they are what make honor today.

Displays of honor can be deficient: the quality and quantity of honor shown must not be small, as the chief makes clear:

Excerpt 4:

01 mwahim wio wahu, mawing ko i sohite men piliada
honor has a good appearance, honored people I don’t want to choose
02 menia wahu me mwahui menia wahu me sohite itara
which honor is good and which honor is not enough

Orators frequently relate honor to the feeling of love, using several discourse strategies: explicitly using the verb “with/pain” between the two terms, using the terms in a serial construction, and by defining love and honor as “the most important things in existence.” For example, at a feast the paramount chiefess joins flangaki honor (wahu) with love (limpoak) in line 01.

Excerpt 5:

01 kaiden pil wahu, wahu flangaki limpoak me
not only honor, honor joined with love, that is what
02 alekhi sang kwawal (hen lepiwet)
I take from all you women of this locality

In a speech by the head of a community, the orator uses the two terms love and honor as a couplet, both with the suffix -pene, which means “together” or “toward each other.” He states that “loving together/toward each other” (limpoakpene) and honoring “toward each other/together” (wahupene) are the “most important things” in the continuance of “existence.” The existence mentioned is a high-status one. (Kelin iekas is the exclamatory term for “existence.”) Honor is linked to elevated or high-status feelings in line 02 by means of the status-elevating word for “feeling” (kupkpware).

Excerpt 6:

01 dahme kelihu kesempwa ni dawan ataih pahn
what is the most important thing according to our [inclusive] future
02 kelih iekas, kupkpware
(high status) existence is the [high status] feeling
03 de roson en sapwellimonwall limpoakpene
or the strength of our [of us high status] love together
Specific linguistic choices of honorific speech terms work together with the discussion about embodied honor, objectified honor, and honor as a positive feeling or desire. For example, this speaker uses the inclusive, plural pronoun (taitil) with the honorific (status-raising) term ketin ieiia for “existence” (lines 01–02), linking low- and high-status persons’ existence together taitil pahn ketin ieiia, “our [inclusive] future [high status] existence.” And also in line 03, the status-raising possessive pronoun “our [of us of high status]” (sapwemmataitil), which modifies love and honor, links low- and high-status persons’ loving together and honoring together. The suffix -pene suggests symmetry—a flow of love and honor of high and low status toward each other. A reciprocity is constructed not only about love but about honor. As the speaker continues to talk, he links the arousal of feelings—as in love, desire (inangih), and togetherness—to service (pahpahi) to the chiefs and chiefesses.

Serving the chief and chiefess (which is done through self-depletion and subordination) is characterized as something one does because of desire or feeling:

Excerpt 7 (continuation of Excerpt 6):

07 poin kibh kanemchele oh men each of us [exclusive] by ourselves believes and wants
08 pakech niuwen aht inangh to join according to the arousal of our [exclusive] feelings/desires
09 pahpahi kipwur en kepahi, konakonken in serving the [high status] desires of the paramount chief, the secondary chief

Here there is a switch from inclusive to exclusive pronouns. Immediately before talking about the arousal of feelings and service to the chiefs, the orator switches from inclusive “we” (high and low status) to exclusive “we” and “our” (low status only), in the uses of “us” (kiht), line 07, and “our” (aht), line 08. The chiefs and chiefesses are thus excluded from the linking of love and desire with service. Love and desire are linked only to the subordinating acts of honor. Separate low- and high-status fields are also created when the aroused feelings of the people are expressed as inangih (line 08), whereas the feelings of the chiefs are expressed in high-status form (kipwur, line 09).

In oratory honor is also linked to family values: kin relationships, nurturance, intimacy, sharing, and obligation. It is located inside the family (tan peneiner). High-status forms are used inclusively for everyone by this speaker, too, grammatically raising the status of all those participating in “bringing together” honor.

Excerpt 8:

06 thone kehehu pekh kiiatil en this is what is most important to ask ourselves is to
07 ketipene wahu sang nan peneiner bring together [with high-status] honor from inside the family
08 nan tehmpaskan oh teheng nan kouusawi inside the chiefs’ feast houses and reaching out into the community

In these speeches, honor is traced to its source in a part of the body and linked to the continuance of life itself and with positive sentiments such as love and togetherness, desire, and family values. Desire and feelings are causally linked to service or subordination to the chiefs, and honor is constructed as something shown or made through acts of subordination which are inverted linguistically into acts of superordination by orators choosing high-status pronominal descriptors for actions of low-status persons. The giving of honor is constructed as high and, as
I will show below, those receiving honor are constructed as low. A model of self-depletion as superordination is also constructed through feasting practices.

**honor and self-depletion in feasting practice**

At *kamataipən wahu* or “feasts of honor” and at other feasts, Pohnpeians compete to show the most honor to the chief and chiefess through a process of showing the greatest degree of self-subordination and self-depletion. Agricultural goods (and now also imported goods) are brought as tribute to the chief and chiefess. The goods are presented formally, amassed, and displayed; sometimes the stack of sakau *kava* plants reaches to the roof and hundreds of pigs lie tied to poles in the yard. As Shumizu reports, yams, pigs, and sakau are “given the highest statuses in terms of the social value called honor or *walat*” (1987:132). The goal is to give all one’s possessions; the word *kamataipən* literally means “beat the bushes” and is explained by Pohnpeians as the idea that one should strip one’s lands bare for the chief and chiefess. One honors the chief and chiefess and “wins” praise by “losing” goods. Petersen notes, “A real Pohnpei, I am told, is expected to *luhfa faud,* to ‘lose big’...at feasts (1986:85). Bascom remarks on a categorical separation for Pohnpeians between food for consumption and food for honor value: “not infrequently families go hungry at home when they have large yams in their farms ready for harvest. Only small yams are used at home for subsistence purposes; prize yams are saved for feasts” (1948:212). This practice is similar to honorific speech, in which giving honor to the chief and chiefess involves diminishing oneself. Depleting one’s personal resources to the point of hunger, a positively valued act that is explicitly praised in oratory, increases the resources of the highest-status members of the community—the tribute is redistributed by the chief according to status—just as depleting oneself in honorific speech raises the status of others. Although one could argue that in temporarily depleting themselves, lower-status members of the community could gain status in the long term through the receipt of a higher title from the chief granting them access to more lands (and this is an explanation given by Pohnpeians), such a promotion also increases one’s responsibility to give: the higher one’s title, the more tribute one is expected to give to the chief. Of equal importance is the fact that subordination is construed as its opposite, superiority, and losing or self-depletion is reinterpreted as winning. This dynamic in the reproduction of honor practices in Pohnpei works together with links to positive affect and positively valued relations between people.

When chiefs and chiefesses praise their constituents for the honor rendered to the former by means of the self-depletion practiced by the lower-status members of the society, they use honorific language in a way that inverts the structural status relation (see also excerpt 2). For example, the chiefess uses a humiliative (status-lowering) term for herself (line 04) and an exalative term for the people (line 02):

**Excerpt 9—Paramount Chiefess:**

01 elu kaping kalangan, nin dawen here is another praise and thanks
02 duhume sanakalada sampel inflow sa urahwe according to what has been shown by your [high-status] honor today
03 im pik kaio dawepwe pwe dawen i there is an envelope [of money] because this is the way I
04 kin kaosokason i at tungaoal talate eisiek, “my [low-status] amount of only ten dollars.” The women have indeed given far more than that value in cloth, sugar cane, canned goods, and
perfumed oils, and in their contribution to the raising of pigs and other tribute goods. The status-raising possessive pronoun *sapwellimomwai* for "your [high-status]" is used by the chieftess for the people's showing of honor, raising the status of the honor they have given her, while the humiliative possessive pronoun *ai tangoa* (my [low-status]) is used for the chieftess's own show of praise.

The chief also constructs a discursive relation between high status and self-depletion/self-subordination when he praises a man's history of continued gifts of tribute. The chief uses high-status words for the man who is being praised (and who is to receive a new title) and low-status for himself, again inverting the customary status relationship. To fulfill the increased expectation of tribute to the chief appropriate to his new title, *Luhk* gives the chief a check in the amount of U.S.$1,000.

Excerpt 10—Paramount Chief:

03  oum bu oadok menon laud mehele, e kanaiehene (*...*) your [high-status] work is really very great, it is caretaking (*...*)
05  souhengen paii me loomw sapwelemenk you are fortunate in what you [of high-status] have
06  komw kakehr soupewei iaing you [of high-status] could be already facing the high-status way4
07  sapwellimatifik paii, ah sol komw rahumtengele oh joining our [high-status] luck, but you continue to try hard
08  lel rahwet, e i met ni ozolap oh niwotumwet even until today, so here I summarize briefly
09  me i men wia ai tangoa kaping kalangan ohing that I want to give my [low-status] grateful thanks to
10  Luhk rahwet Luhk today

*Luhk*’s depletion of himself and his resources in favor of the chief is linguistically constructed as status-raising of *Luhk*, not the chief, through the use of a high-status form for *Luhk*’s ownership in lines 03 and 05, and a status-lowering possessive pronoun for the chief in line 09.

Giving honor to the chief and chieftess is an act that, through honorific speech, elevates those giving the honor through self-depletion of goods and in language, and it confers on them a form of superiority over the chief and chieftess themselves. This is one of the ways in which self-subordination can be construed as superordination through language.

**Conclusion**

In this article I have discussed honor in Pohnpei as emergent in a set of practices that organize certain perceptions about social hierarchy, giving special value to acts that deplete the status and resources of the vast majority of the members of the society. Honor is linked literally and figuratively to the body, feelings, love, and the family, and is construed as necessary to existence. I have shown how the explicit rendering of honor through grammatical practices is part of this process, and how strategic linguistic choices by orators (including chiefs and chieftesses) employ this status-marking feature of the language to construct honor reciprocally for the giver of honor, to elevate the status of those who have depleted themselves through the resource available in language. Feasting practices similarly allow persons to build honor out of self-depletion; subordination is interpreted as superordination, or losing as winning. In Pohnpei language and feasting practices that subordinate the donors are positively valued.
The fact that honor practices in Pohnpei are fundamentally made up of subordinating, humiliative, and self-depleting behaviors is occluded in language ideology, with a term that is related only to half of a pair of mutually opposed operations, and in rhetoric, in which the specific behavior of humiliation is valorized through explicit praise and through inventing in language the structural status relation between chief and chiefess on the one hand and the rest of the society on the other. Assigning positive affect to self-subordination and depletion or devitalization, and reinterpreting subordination as superiority are crucial elements in the practice of honor in Pohnpei. The "taxonomy" and practice of honor is a means through which people organize interactional behavior, including language and food distribution; building hierarchy is naturalized, embodied, and perceived as a positively valued relation between people.

notes

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1. I am indebted to Eve Danziger for suggesting the term holonomy.

2. I am aware that Western is a problematic term, but here I mean it in a body of literature that reflects a sense of the hegemony that the term assumes.

3. Although the term humiliative is common in talking about status-lowering speech, there is no general term for referring to the counterpart. I have chosen exative as this term.

4. Inclusive and exclusive pronouns are common in Oceanic and other languages. It is possible, for example, to distinguish between "we" in the sense of "we but not you" and "we" in the sense of "all of us."

5. Saka is a commerci; beverage made from the pounded roots of the pepper plant Piper methysticum and water. It is called kava in many Pacific societies.

6. The faceing relation the chief mentions is one in which high-status people "face down to" low-status people. This is conveyed by the term solopeiti, literally meaning "face downward," and is reproduced physically in the feast house, where chiefs sit in the highest places. Chiefs are often called, collectively and individually, solopeiti.

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