

TALKING LIKE CHILDREN

LANGUAGE AND THE PRODUCTION OF AGE IN THE
MARSHALL ISLANDS

Elise Berman

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*Language and the Production of Age
in the Marshall Islands*

ELISE BERMAN



February 2019 (US) | March 2019 (UK)

\$31.95 **\$22.37** | £20.99 **£14.69**

Paperback | 9780190876982 | 224 pages

Children in the Marshall Islands do many things that adults do not. They walk around half naked. They carry and eat food in public without offering it to others. They talk about things they see rather than hiding uncomfortable truths. They explicitly refuse to give. Why do they do these things?

FEATURES

- Argues that age is produced through language and interaction, presenting the first analysis of how age comes to be
- Offers a new theory of language socialization, arguing against the typical view of socialization as an interaction between novices and experts and instead seeing it as the continuous production of age differences
- Research from the Marshall Islands includes a range of methods -- participant observation, video and audio recordings, interviews, and children's drawings
- Transforms transcripts into narrative dialogue through innovative ethnographic writing
- Criticizes traditional anthropological theories of exchange for neglecting the role of age and childhood

Elise Berman is Assistant Professor of Anthropology at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte who earned her PhD in the department of Comparative Human Development at the University of Chicago.

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