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Unspoken Voices: Captain Cook's Third Voyage, the Lono Question, and the Discourse of Trade

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UNSPOKEN VOICES: CAPTAIN COOK'S THIRD VOYAGE, THE LONO
QUESTION, AND THE DISCOURSE OF TRADE

A Thesis
Presented to
the Graduate School of
Clemson University

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts
English

by
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Accepted by:
Dr. Jonathan Beecher Field, Committee Chair
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Dr. Kimberly Manganelli

ABSTRACT

This thesis examines the polarized debate regarding Captain James Cook’s apotheosis waging on between anthropologists Marshall Sahlins and Gananath Obeyesekere. By illustrating how and why binary interpretations of Cook’s death render a shallow examination of associated travel texts, the thesis re-examines two travel journals resulting from Cook’s third and final voyage—journals from the American, John Ledyard and Captain James Cook—and an account, “Captain Cook’s Visit to Hawaii,” taken from Samuel Mānaiakalani Kamakaua’s (nineteenth-century Hawaiian historian) Ruling Chiefs of Hawaii. Focusing on discussions of trade, this project reconfigures the apotheosis debate in order to highlight the significance of the discourse of trade—both in writing and practice—and how such significance manifests into social, cultural, and political commentary. The documentation of trade in these narratives reveals the communicative properties of trade and how such documentation can be employed as a commentary-based dialogue—one that reconfigures the role of trade into an avenue for criticism. Treating these texts as literary texts, this project offers an understanding as to why each author chose to document trade in the manner that they have, and how such documentation can be situated in the economic, philosophic, and sociologic discussions of trade occurring between the seventeenth and twentieth century.

DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to my parents, whose support of and interest in my academic endeavors over the years has gotten me where I want to be. Thank you.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First and foremost, I would like to thank Dr. Jonathan Beecher Field for his constant guidance while writing this thesis. As both a mentor and scholar, Dr. Field could not have been a more knowledgeable and committed advisor. Moreover, I would like to thank Dr. Lee Morrissey and Dr. Kimberly Manganelli, both of whom provided invaluable criticism of and feedback on my ideas and ultimately, my drafts.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

On a bluff above the North Sea in Whitby, England is a larger-than-life bronze statue of Captain James Cook. It was in Whitby, England that Cook first learned to sail as an apprentice under John Walker, and likewise where both the *Resolution* and *Discovery*—the ships sailed on Cook’s third voyage—were constructed and repaired. Cook’s eyes fixed down at the water below, the statue represents Cook as a stoic, venerable man, one whose accomplishments as an explorer during the eighteenth century are still notable and unsurpassed. But it is the rhetoric of such representation that speaks more to the ongoing academic conversation concerning Cook and his death on the shores of Hawai‘i February 14, 1779.

It was on February 10, 1776 that Cook was commissioned to command the *Resolution* in search of the Northwest Passage—a chimerical western trade route to the East Indies. This voyage was to be his third, and certainly his most famous. On a journey that took him around the Cape of Good Hope, to New Zealand, to the “discovery” of the Hawaiian Islands, up to Alaska and the Bering Sea, Cook’s career as a naval explorer came to an abrupt halt that fateful day in February. Sometime in early February 1779 Cook traded, among other things, an iron dagger to the Hawai‘ians in exchange for provisions.¹ Several days later on February 14 that dagger was *the* dagger with which he was murdered. For a longtime after, the legacy that is Captain Cook became fused with

¹ For purposes of distinction, “Hawai‘i” will refer to the particular island and “Hawaii” will refer to the archipelago.

the idea that Cook was killed because the Hawaiians believed him to be their god Lono; and it was only until recently that such a theory became heavily contested.

With the 1992 publication of The Apotheosis of Captain Cook: European Mythmaking in the Pacific, Princeton anthropologist Gananath Obeyesekere attacked the longstanding notion that Cook was believed by the Hawaiians to be their god Lono, and killed because of such a misconception; more specifically, Obeyesekere attacked University of Chicago anthropologist Marshall Sahlins after the latter presented his case, “Captain James Cook; or the Dying God,” concerning the deification of Cook at Princeton in 1982 as part of the Sir James Frazier Lecture. What exactly the circumstances were preceding, during, and following Cook’s death—those both direct and indirect that led to his murder—may never fully be known. But did the Hawaiians mistakenly perceive Cook to be their god Lono (the god of fertility), or was it the conduct of the sailors, arrogant and disparaging in their dealings with the islanders, that resulted in Cook’s death? It seems asking who is responsible for the death of Cook has too long overshadowed the more important questions of how and why: how can we situate his death in the context of the third voyage and why is his death significant past the fact that he may have or may not have been mistaken for Lono (topics addressed in Chapter 2). When reading eighteenth- and nineteenth-century accounts of Cook’s death, it becomes increasingly evident that how his death and the events leading up to it are explained can reveal much about *why* Cook was murdered, illuminating the circumstances of the third voyage and rendering political, social, and cultural commentary.

Was Cook Lono or not? That question I will leave to the anthropologists. For the purpose of this thesis I have chosen to examine three accounts resulting from Cook's third voyage—Captain Cook's "Journal of the Third Voyage," the American John Ledyard's Journal of Captain Cook's Last Voyage, and nineteenth-century Hawaiian historian Samuel Mānaiakalani Kamakau's "Captain Cook's Visit to Hawaii"—to reveal the problems of constricting Cook's death to a "who killed whom" scenario. Paring off discussions of trade and what these travel accounts say about Cook's death in order to fit the Cook-Lono question fails to reveal how Cook's death, *because* it is enigmatic, can be used as a tool for commentary. Thus, knowing that we must reconfigure our examination of Cook's death and discussions of his death apart from this binary interpretation, the question then becomes how are we to account for the events that transpired and the death of Cook. Treating these texts as literary texts then, in this thesis I offer an understanding as to how such documentation can lend to a re-conceptualization of Cook's death and a reconfiguration of the Lono question, possibly gaining ground on how Cook's death and discussions of trade can be employed as a tool for social, political, and cultural commentary.

In the process of reading for this thesis, I learned that the Hawaiian word for trade is *kū'ai mai*. I do not know Hawaiian, but neither did Captain Cook. True it is that Cook employed Mai as a translator in order to foster communication. But the ability to talk to the islanders did not translate into an interactive, participatory, communicative process. Instead, it was via trade that such communication manifested. For the trading of goods, whatever they may be, is a language in-and-of itself, a conversation concentrated more on

the exchange of the material and the immaterial and less on the exchange of words. By grounding my discussions of trade with the works of Joseph Addison, Adam Smith, and John Locke, I plan to explain the significance of trade as a medium for an understanding of the anthropological, sociological, and cultural barriers inhibiting cultural interaction; and likewise, how such interaction can be condensed into an avenue for discussing Cook's death.

James Cook and James King's official account of the third voyage, Voyage to the Pacific Ocean, undertaken by the command of His Majesty, for making discoveries in the northern hemisphere, to determine the position and extent of the west side of North America, its distance from Asia, and the practicability of a northern passage to Europe, was published in 1784 as the first edition in London. Yet their account, while "official," was neither the first nor the last to be published: John Rickman's Journal of Captain Cook's last voyage to the Pacific Ocean on Discovery was published in London 1781; Heinrich Zimmerman's Reise um die Welt mit Capitain Cook was published in 1781 in Mannheim, Germany; William Ellis's An Authentic narrative of a voyage performed by Captain Cook and Captain Clerke in His Majesty's Ships Resolution and Discovery, during the years 1776, 1777, 1778, 1779 and 1780, in search of a north-west passage between the continents of Asia and America was published in London in 1782; and John Ledyard's Journal of Captain Cook's Last Voyage was published in Philadelphia in 1783.² This abbreviated list illustrates two things: 1) for travel texts Cook's voyage was a prolific one, unique for the eighteenth century given the restrictions on publications and

² For a complete listing of published travel texts resulting from Cook's third voyage, see <<http://www.library.ucla.edu/special/scweb/cookcheck3.htm>>.

the often monarchical control of ships' logs; and 2) that Cook's crew was multicultural, ranging from an American to a German to a Tahitian (Mai [or Omai, as he is often called], who was picked up on Cook's second voyage). When considering how and why Cook's death is discussed in these travel narratives then, highlighting the fact that those who sailed with Cook were not all of British descent does indeed account, at least in part, for why even now we are unsure of how the events transpired.

Cook's journal is an obvious choice for examination. As a text that details the purpose and happenings of the third voyage, his journal is significant for an understanding of the way eighteenth-century British citizens thought about foreign, non-European peoples and cultural interaction (topics addressed in Chapter 3). Moreover, the manner by which Cook characterizes and categorizes various cultures through trade reveals that he was neither the benevolent, victim of circumstance (Sahlins interpretation) nor the unyielding oppressor and aggressor (Obeyesekere's interpretation). Should we grant Cook more leniency and unveil that he was in fact aware of the possible ramifications of his actions but nonetheless a willing participant, we can begin to re-conceptualize the Cook-Lono debate and examine the underlying significance of trade and how this significance relates to his death.

The other two accounts I have chosen—Ledyard's Journal and Kamakau's account—may seem to be more arbitrary choices than Cook's journal. For a voyage that resulted in a significant amount of published material, there was a vast pool to choose from; and yet, these two accounts have one common thread: both accounts try to make

sense of Cook's death by including a rendition of what transpired, neither author being present to personally witness the circumstances.

For nearly two hundred years, John Ledyard was thought to have provided the only eyewitness account of Cook's death in his Journal of Captain Cook's Last Voyage. In the late 1960s, though, the historian Kenneth Mumford established that Ledyard had not in fact witnessed Cook's death. He was over a mile away on a separate beach, out of both the line of sight and hearing. But his account was published as factual. Why did Ledyard go to the trouble of placing himself at the scene of the murder and constructing a fashionable narrative detailing the circumstances of Cook's death? Underlying such plagiarized construction appears to be a socio-political motive, one that speaks to the critical nature of Ledyard's Journal and how he incorporates trade.

Ledyard's Journal is unique *because* of its perspective—because of Ledyard's complicated history and relation to both England and America before, during, and after the American Revolution. He does not merely catalog the happenings of the ship and its crew during the third voyage, but engages in a political, social, and cultural dialogue with the reader—a dialogue in which he explores the significance of trade in the context of Cook's death and subsequently criticizes the British for what he perceives is their long history of cultural exploitation and imperialism (as seen in Chapter 4, Part I).

But perhaps even more intriguing than Ledyard's Journal when considering the social, cultural, and political weight of such narratives and the possible ramifications of trade is S.M. Kamakau's "Captain Cook's Visit to Hawaii," an excerpt taken from his Ruling Chiefs of Hawaii (addressed in Chapter 4, Part II). A compilation of retrospective

accounts published from 1866-1871 in the Hawaiian newspaper *Kū'ōko'a*, Kamakau's Ruling Chiefs of Hawaii is one of the few Hawaiian-authored texts detailing and discussing the circumstances defining Hawaiian history, including Cook's visit to Hawaii. Originally written in Hawaiian by Kamakau the text was translated in 1961 into English, rendering it perhaps one of the most important and comprehensive bodies of writing to be produced about early Hawaiian culture by a Hawaiian. Most apparent in Kamakau's account is his incorporation of Christian imagery and allusion, notable when considering the Christian takeover of Hawaii occurred post-Cook. But it is this unique factor that allows us to reconfigure the Lono question and investigate how and why Kamakau incorporates trade within a Christian framework. What exactly he says regarding Cook's death and how that translates to what he is saying about contemporary Hawaiian culture has been sorely displaced, namely because his account is the only one of the three accounts that directly addresses the Cook-Lono issue.

Not one of these texts was produced by an author who witnessed Cook's death: Cook, as the victim, was unable to write about it; Ledyard's depiction of the events is based on hearsay and speculation; and Kamakau's account (appearing some 100 years after) is a documentation of oral accounts. The question may then be raised: Does it matter that not one of these accounts can concretely say what happened on the shores of Hawai'i?

Quite to the contrary. Not having witnessed Cook's death for whatever reason, these three authors are forced to examine, explain, and make due with the enigma in another fashion. Thus, their accounts are significant not because they answer the

question, “Who killed Cook,” but because they, in writing, explore the rhetoric of trade and the possibilities of the circumstance of Cook’s death as fodder for social, political, and cultural commentary. The attempt by both Ledyard and Kamakau to explain and examine these enigmatic circumstances beyond the Cook-Lono debate, while still documenting the events preceding and following Cook’s death, render texts that are as much analytical as they are informative.

Let us consider for the nonce a John Webber sketching.³ The sketching portrays the moments just prior to Cook’s murder, and is now housed in the Captain Cook Birthplace Museum in Middlesbrough, United Kingdom. At first glance it appears to be self-explanatory: a great number of Hawai‘ians are attacking Cook and his party, the latter attempting to flee the island and return to the safety of their ships. Upon closer inspection however, there is more going on.

In the foreground stands Cook, taller than any other person depicted and lighter in shade. Off the beach are two long boats filled with sailors. The boats have been pushed out to sea and are positioned to return to the ships, the occupants firing their rifles into the crowd in defense of the attack. Cook’s arm is extended out toward the sea—toward the sailors in the longboats—palm up. He appears to be motioning to them to cease firing. The sketching is a black and white piece; thus, the uniform shading of the rest of the drawing, Cook aside, pulls the viewer’s eyes to Cook, making him the central figure. Behind him stands a caped Hawai‘ian chief, shirtless and poised, holding the iron dagger in his right hand, ready to submit the final blow into Cook’s back,. Just to the right of

³ To view the sketching, see < <http://www.captcook-ne.co.uk/ccne/exhibits/56a1981/index.htm>>.

Cook is another British sailor, sitting on the ground facing the crowd, firing toward them with his rifle in a last, desperate act of self-defense. To the right of that sailor is another, one who has been pushed to the beach onto his stomach by the Hawai‘ian who is gripping his hair and preparing to stab him. Total, there are approximately sixteen sailors in this drawing. But there are an uncountable number of Hawai‘ians—so many in fact that they appear to consume the entire beach.

What does this tell us about Cook’s death? Sketched by Webber, the officially appointed British artist for Cook’s third voyage, this depiction is nothing more than one man’s interpretation of the events that transpired on February 14. Viewers of this sketching are inevitably engaging in a monologue, one consequently transcribing the events from an Anglo-centric perspective. Cook and the sailors are the ones under attack, actively seeking to disengage from the confrontation. Cook appears utterly passive, and the Hawai‘ians appear as the aggressors. The rhetoric underlying such a depiction evidences Britain’s historical position as the “storyteller.” Because the Hawai‘ians could not publish their own depiction of Cook’s death in England, viewers of this drawing who are gathering a sense of what transpired on that fateful day are fed one rendition of an event that is still quite an enigma. There is no exchange of ideas, of accounts, of renderings of the same event; there is, for all intents and purposes, a complete *lack of* exchange—telling when we consider the amount of contemporary scholarship devoted in an attempt to figure out exactly why Captain James Cook was murdered.

The problem with this sketching, or the problem of condensing our examination solely to the sketching, is the same problem we encounter in the Cook-Lono debate. By

examining these three narratives and the discussions of trade in the context of Cook's death, we can begin to reconfigure the way in which we perceive the enigmatic circumstances surrounding his death; and we can begin to consider *what* his death teaches us aside from whether or not he was thought to be Lono.

I have long been interested in Cook's murder, in part because it does at times seem unexplainable. Cook's third voyage is unique—unique in its outcome, unique in its legacy, and unique in the apotheosis that has since been accorded to Cook. And should we stop investigating the importance of Cook's murder and the significance of trade, relegating both to the Cook-Lono question, we may fail to understand how and why these authors wrote about and commented on Cook's death—questions that at the moment seem far more pertinent than, “What happened.”

CHAPTER TWO

THE LONO QUESTION: MARSHALL SAHLINS, GANANATH OBEYESEKERE, AND THE PROBLEM WITH BINARY INTERPRETATIONS OF COOK'S DEATH

Did the Hawai'ians mistake Captain Cook for their benevolent god of fertility, Lono, a mistake resulting in Cook's death, or has the apotheosis of Captain Cook been a Western manifestation, Cook's death nothing more than the consequence of a scuffle? Not since Marshall Sahlins presented his case has the debate concerning Cook's death become so polarized. Such polarization, though, is not lucrative when investigating Cook's death, the enigmatic circumstances surrounding his death, and why his death is significant beyond who killed him. We cannot, and should not, only engage Cook's death in the context of this bifurcation (was he or was he not believed to be Lono). Much of the apotheosis is due in part to a failure to explain the enigmatic circumstances of his death: how was he killed; why was he killed; why, after he was killed, was he given a chief's burial, his body dismembered? Indeed it is important to acknowledge and examine how and why Cook was viewed as a manifestation of Lono. But debating the circumstances of his death and whether or not he was killed because the Hawaiians did or did not believe Cook was Lono fails to account for a number of other salient readings of these travel narratives. First and foremost then, a re-examination of the two polar interpretations of Cook's death reveals that relegating our discussions of this event to binaries is erroneous; for by accounting for and acknowledging what Cook's death signifies and how trade is

employed aside from the “Lono question” in these travel narratives we reveal a unique significance of Cook’s death that seems to have been marginalized by our examination of who killed Cook: the rhetoric underlying Cook’s death.

There is little in fact that the two anthropologists agree on. Aside from acknowledging that Cook was indeed present in Hawaii from November 1778-February 1779 and killed on February 14, 1779 by an iron dagger, interpretations of Cook’s death and reasons for believing one case over the other seem as manifold as interpretations of how the Hawaiians actually came to inhabit the Hawaiian Islands.⁴ The primary difference when analyzing the respective texts is on which culture each author places “anthropological blame,” arguing that the particular culture—Hawaiian according to Sahlins and British/European according to Obeyesekere—is predominately responsible for Cook’s death and the deification of Cook that has since transpired. Perhaps, because such a debate is heavily polarized, we should expect no concrete answer. Or perhaps, we have been asking the wrong questions.

It was on February 14, 1779 that Cook, aggressively reacting to a recent theft that had taken place on the *Discovery*, lands on the island of Hawai‘i in order to seek recompense for this illicit act. But this has not been his first time on the island of Hawai‘i. After circling the island for a number of days, gathering much needed provisions by engaging in a relatively fruitful trafficking operation with the islanders, Cook put in at Kealakekua Bay around the middle of January 1779—subsequently the

⁴ For an intriguing examination, though brief, of the migration patterns and distribution of the Lapita peoples (those peoples believed to be the ancestors of the Hawaiians and many of the other island nations throughout the South Pacific), see Smith 106-23.

time his journal ends. And it is often this initial landing and the events that transpire up until Cook's re-docking in early February that is the subject of both anthropologists' scrutiny, namely because the journals depict a ritual in which Cook appears to be acknowledged (and presented) as the god Lono. As can be seen from both Sahlins's and Obeyesekere's examination, the circumstances immediately preceding, during, and following Cook's death are quite vague. His death is, in fact, still quite an enigma, the enigmatic circumstances often fueling this debate and opening the door to such binary interpretation. Whatever these circumstances actually were though seems inconsequential. While answers would undoubtedly shed light on the debate and solve some of anthropology's most pressing "Cook questions," such answers are not necessary when examining the significance of Cook's death beyond who killed him.

What then are the different interpretations of Cook's death; and who, more importantly, is Lono? Lono is "the fertilizing god," "a popular god—the god of the men's domestic cult—and his annual progress around the island is a general fête" (Sahlins, How Natives 23, 36). It was Lono who, according to Sahlins, "effected the regeneration of nature together with the renewal of the kingship and human society" (How Natives 22). Perhaps more importantly though, Lono is recognized as the god of sexual fertility: "It appears, moreover, that the Makahiki image of Lono is born of a symbolic union between the god and the women of the people, just as in some myths Lono descends from the heavens to mate with a beautiful woman of Hawaii" (How Natives 27). But the tradition of Lono and interpretations of how Lono was perceived and worshipped by the Hawaiians are somewhat variable, due in part to the lack of written documentation from

eighteenth-century Hawaii and to the manner by which each scholar seeks to employ such traditions in order to answer the “Who killed Cook?” question. For Sahlins, how the Hawaiians reacted to Cook’s arrival late in the Fall of 1778 correlates with celebrations of Lono’s return during the Makahiki; for Obeyesekere, such reactions do just the opposite, highlighting the distinctions between Cook and Lono not only apparent in the conduct of the British—inadvertently, of course—but apparent in the conduct of the Hawaiians’ reception of the British; furthermore, Obeyesekere views such distinctions as a conscious and explicit acknowledgment that Cook was not the *god* Lono, but a man to whom the name “Lono” should be accorded because of his chiefly status.

“When Sahlins expounded his thesis,” Obeyesekere exclaims, “...I was completely taken aback at his assertion that when Cook arrived in Hawai‘i the natives believed that he was their god Lono and called him Lono” (8). To say the least, it seems Obeyesekere was less than thrilled with Sahlins’s interpretation of the events in Hawai‘i. Aside from taking issue with Sahlins’s central thesis and the supporting evidence he uses to back his claims, Obeyesekere’s book seeks to deconstruct the whole of Western history, asserting (in simple terms) that the deification of explorers speaks to a greater error: the biased and subjective construction of history and historical events that has so long overshadowed and marginalized a non-Western interpretation of these same events. A native Sri Lankan, Obeyesekere employs his unique position when entering into the current academic conversation, believing that because he is himself a “non-Western,” at least by birth, he has insight into the situation of 1779 in Hawai‘i. Sahlins, according to Obeyesekere, is just *too* Western to adequately interpret and account for Cook’s death.

In 1995 Sahlins's published How "Natives" Think: About Captain Cook, for Example to fully account for, and respond to, Obeyesekere's claims. Because his arrival coincided with the December Makahiki festival and because "Lono is the presiding deity of the great Hawaiian thanksgiving festival, the Makahiki" (Obeyesekere 49), Cook was mistaken for the Hawaiian god Lono, so Sahlins maintains. And it was this mistake, compounded by the ceremonial invocations Cook received and the events that took place relatively on cue with the Hawaiian conceptions of Lono's return—such as Cook's circling of the Hawaiian Islands prior to his landing in Kealahou Bay in January of 1779—that led to such a misconception. Cook's death then, according to Sahlins, was a ritualistic death, one by which the Hawai'ians sought to stabilize and reify their cultural perceptions and governing mythological beliefs: "Taken together," Sahlins maintains, "the British and local texts confirm that Hawai'i islanders knew Captain Cook as 'Lono' before they set eyes on him, and that his visit coincided with the (December) Makahiki festival" (How Natives 33). Ultimately, Sahlins asserts, Cook's murder was the result of a misunderstanding on behalf of the Hawai'ians.

"To put it bluntly," Obeyesekere declares, "I doubt that the natives created their European god; the Europeans created him for them. This 'European god' is a myth of conquest, imperialism, and civilization—a triad that cannot be easily separated" (3). In his book Obeyesekere contends that the deification of Captain Cook and the circumstances that led to his murder were the result of a European construct and Cook's misconduct, respectively. Obeyesekere notes that it was "Cook's increasing propensity for violence and his erratic, often irrational, behavior... [that] seem to have engulfed

Cook in a heart of darkness from which there was no escape” (28); and furthermore, that the British/European/Western community post-Cook’s death has portrayed Cook as a benevolent, understanding individual, erroneously resulting in his deification and the hypothesis that Cook was perceived by the Hawaiians as the incarnate Lono. Cook, Obeyesekere explains in his discussion of Cook’s reactive behavior to native theft committed against the British ships and the sailors, believed “The natives were like children. They were to be warned and forgiven for the first time, but no second lapse would be tolerated” (27). Obeyesekere demands it was *his* misconceptions about the islanders, a popular eighteenth-century European misconception, which caused Cook’s death.

Perhaps most important when considering how and why their arguments become so polarized though, is Cook’s initial departure from the island of Hawai‘i in early February and subsequent re-docking—due to a foremast that had sprung during a violent storm—in Kealakekua Bay several days later, a re-docking that not only witnessed an explicit (and implicit) change in the Hawai‘ians’ attitude to the sailors but that ultimately resulted in Cook’s death. Vital to the examination of these two anthropologists’ theories and the bifurcation of interpreting Cook’s death then, is recognizing exactly how each scholar analyzes and interprets such an important event.

Sahlins notes, “On the first of February, and again the next day, the Hawaiians improvised a performance of the kind that marks the departure of Lonomakua [Lono] from one district for the next in its procession round the island” (How Natives 77); for he claims, “the British departure on the night of February 3 was well timed. It was the

sixteenth day of the lunar month (Kā'elo)...the Makahiki was finished" (How Natives 77). Cook, by sheer coincidence it seems, left the island of Hawai'i at exactly the time he should have—at a time when Lono was due to depart and sovereignty would once more return to the king, a man whose ruling god was the not-so-benevolent god of “war and human sacrifice,” Kū (Obeyesekere 52). At this point during the voyage, Sahlins contends that all seemed to be running in sync with Hawaiian mythology. Cook has left, the king has retained his sovereignty, and the Makahiki has ended. The problem then arose when the storm that sprung the foremast on the *Resolution* forced the British ships to return to Kealahou Bay: “Sailing into the bay again on the 11th of February the Great Navigator was now out of phase with the Hawaiian ritual cycle” (Sahlins, How Natives 78). It appears Cook's return to the bay was a tabu: not only did Cook act in an aberrant manner according to Hawaiian mythology, but Cook's return explicitly violated Lono custom. “Cook's return out of season,” Sahlins argues, “would be sinister to the ruling chiefs because it presented a mirror image of Makahiki politics...it could reopen the whole issue of sovereignty” (How Natives 81). According to Sahlins, such inconsistencies and instabilities disrupted any former conceptions about Cook, and it appears “Lono's inexplicable return” disrupted “the social organization” to the point at which Cook was murdered, his death sealed from the moment his ships sailed back into Kealahou Bay. Sahlins bemoans, “Unlike his arrival, his return was generally unintelligible and unwanted, especially by the king and chiefs. And things fell apart” (How Natives 79). The breakdown of Hawaiian mythology evidenced by the ensuing events and culminating with Cook's death on February 14 indicate, Sahlins maintains,

that Cook was in fact perceived by the Hawaiians as their god Lono. Had this not been the case, “the tensions and ambivalences in the social organization of the previous weeks [that] were now revealed” upon Cook’s return to Kealahou Bay may not have manifested into Cook’s death (Sahlins, How Natives 80).

Still, the notion that Cook was Lono and was killed because of this misconception did not cease to be when Cook died, either in Hawaii or the scholarly community. In fact, Sahlins notes, “...from the time of his death until some decades into the next century, Cook continued to figure as a form of Lono in Hawaiian popular belief and ritual practice. Among the numerous reports of this apotheosis there is testimony that Cook’s (purported) bones were carried in the annual Makahiki procession of Lono” (How Natives 86). Long into the nineteenth century and twentieth century scholars and historians accepted the notion that Cook was killed on the shores of Hawai‘i because the Hawai‘ians believed him to be their god Lono. Certainly, there were those who disagreed, but the predominate thread of Cook scholarship fell in line with this train of thought; that is until Obeyesekere’s catalytic text appeared in print.

The Apotheosis of Captain Cook takes pains to decentralize the long-held misconception that simply because the Hawaiians often referred to Cook as Lono they believed him to be their god. Obeyesekere is appalled by Sahlins’s refusal to accord more intelligence and abilities of perception to the Hawaiian peoples: “The idea of the prelogical or childlike native, or one who lives in a ‘cold’ society, or given to unreflective traditional thought, or governed by a rigid cosmic or mythic world picture, is the social scientists’ myth of the Other” (16). The Hawaiians, according to Obeyesekere, could not

possibly have mistaken Cook for their god Lono, no less than they mistook “King Kalani‘opu‘u of Hawai‘i, who is the embodiment of the god Kū... [for] the god Kū who is worshiped in the temple and brings success in war” (21).

Such a misconception is inherently flawed, essentially because Obeyesekere argues, “It is doubtful whether there is a protracted four-month Makahiki cycle, until Kamehameha’s time [beginning in 1795]” (74). A great majority of Sahlins’s argument rests on the fact that the Makahiki was a formalized and uniformly recognized festival in Hawaii long before Cook’s arrival—if at the very least by the time Cook arrived in 1778. Obeyesekere contends that evidence suggesting otherwise, evidence perhaps even insinuating that the Makahiki was not formalized until the Christian missionaries arrived in Hawaii in the nineteenth century, debases Sahlins argument and confirms his position that the Hawaiians could not possibly have mistaken Cook for Lono; for should the Makahiki not have been taking place, there would be no reason for Lono’s return to Hawaii, and Cook’s arrival, though awe-inspiring, would have been perceived as nothing more than the arrival of an unknown people.

Further, Obeyesekere maintains that the constant mention of Cook as Lono in various written sources does not necessarily imply that Cook was believed to be the *god* Lono: “It seems virtually certain that Cook being called Lono can be accounted for without attributing to Hawaiians the belief that he was the god Lono arrived in person during the Makahiki” (77). Addressing the very same ritual ceremony Sahlins examines as the point at which Cook is deified by the Hawai‘ians as Lono the god, Obeyesekere examines this circumstance in another fashion and as evidence for an entirely distinct

interpretation: “What now is happening is the *formal* bestowal of the chiefly name Lono to Cook” (85). Lono, Obeyesekere asserts, was the name Cook was given by the Hawai‘ians to acknowledge his chiefly status, but certainly not to mark him as their god. This ritual of naming, he continues, “[fits] in very nicely with the Hawaiian tradition of having alternative (even multiple) names” (88). Quite simply, Cook was indeed Lono, though only Lono in name and in status as a chief; but he was not, and never has been, the god Lono.

And yet, simply because his case for Cook’s death reveals the inconsistencies in Sahlins’s argument and illustrates an alternative reading of the events that transpired on February 14, Obeyesekere acknowledges that assuming Cook was *never* deified by the Hawai‘ians would be a misconception. He further reveals in his text a pattern of deification in Hawaiian culture that allowed Cook to be deified, though not in the manner Sahlins contends: “deification is a postmortem and not a premortem feature...Because deification at the death of a chief was nothing unusual, one can perhaps assume that Cook was also deified in the Hawaiian manner, so that his mana could be enlisted for the welfare and strength of Kalani‘opu‘u’s kingdom” (91). Cook could very well be deified without being mistaken for Lono: “When the Hawaiians took away Cook’s body and stripped the flesh from the bones, he was nearer deification than he had been in life” (Obeyesekere 75). If such is the case and Cook was not mistaken for Lono by the Hawaiians, his return to Kealakekua Bay in the beginning of February would not be a violation of Lono mythology.

“...the Hawaiians,” Obeyesekere maintains, “flatly deny that Cook was anything but killed in a skirmish” (59). The vexed welcome Cook and his men seemed to venture upon with their return to the Bay was the consequence of a very logical and plausible scenario: the Hawaiians simply did not want the sailors there because they were, as consumers, a threat. Obeyesekere contends:

When Cook returned because of a sprung mast, he found a tabu imposed on the bay, and people were not trading. Perhaps Kalani‘opu‘u was acting according to the ritual schedule of the Makahiki; it also nicely fitted Polynesian strategies since imposing a tabu on the Bay was also an effective way of controlling the food supply and simultaneously controlling Cook. The lack of warmth among ordinary people was expectable: To feed the British for an extended period of time meant starving themselves. People who, under the threat of constant warfare, were aware of the reality of food shortage must surely have been concerned over the demands made by chiefs to provide as many provisions as possible for the foreigners. The return of Cook’s ship was a real threat to them as it was to Polynesian islanders everywhere. (88)

The British ships’ arrival at Hawaii in late 1778 was met with an eager trade, one that continued at length, minus a few incidents of lull, for the duration of their stay until their initial departure in early February 1779. Obeyesekere suggests then that this prolonged and rich trade (on behalf of the Hawaiians) which consequently drained the much needed resources of their islands was the reason for the unwelcome response the

ships witnessed. “Sahlins’s thesis that Cook was killed because he violated a tabu by returning at the inappropriate time,” Obeyesekere argues, “has little merit. Cook and his crew were violating tabus from the very start” (101): firing musket balls over a chief’s head, ignoring any tabu imposed on trading, stealing the wood from the fence of the Morai for use as firewood (this lattermost point being a bit contested). The skirmish that ultimately ensued on the beach as Cook attempted to take the Hawai‘ian chief hostage, the one that resulted in his death, was a byproduct of Cook’s continued and persistent exploitation of and aggression toward the islanders. As Obeyesekere sees it, Cook’s death was nothing more than the consequence of Cook’s misconduct that day, and all days prior, in Hawai‘i. And were there still any discrepancies to the theory that Cook was in fact only a man called Lono and not the god Lono, “The death of Cook proved conclusively to the Hawaiians that Cook was *not* a god, but a mere mortal” (Obeyesekere 56).

One death, two theories—each accounting for trade in the context of the Lono question. Sahlins uses trade to evidence his position that the Makahiki was indeed taking place and that the Hawaiians traded with Cook believing him to be their god Lono. Obeyesekere discusses trade to paint a portrait of an exploitative, vengeful, domineering, belittling man who invites his own murder through his trade-oriented misconduct. But neither scholar discusses trade apart from forcing it through the framework of Cook as Lono or Cook as mortal they have constructed, ignoring the rhetoric underlying trade that renders it a significant component warranting address.

Trade is a dialogue. There are in fact two ways in which one can look at trade as a language: the first, language as a form of trade (such as the English adaptation of the Hawaiian “tabu”); the second, the activities of trade and the objects being traded manifesting into a unique language, one void of speech but nonetheless communicative. Interestingly however, Nicholas Thomas in his Entangled Objects believes trade to be a non-communicative process:

But what is most *telling* about the image of barter is that it does *not* speak: it is a spectacle or silent film in which we see things change hands. We have no sense of what is said or thought, and the image fades before we discover what becomes of the things, what people make of them subsequently. The objects’ properties and uses thus appear to be self-evident, while participants’ motives are either transparent or irrelevant.

(11)

If the “objects’ properties and uses thus appear to be self-evident,” though, can the “participants’ motives...” be “either transparent or irrelevant”? These sentiments seem to ignore the significance of the object. Should Thomas’s contention go uncontested, it must be assumed that the observers of trade are no less informed about the participating parties and the purpose of the trade than the participating members themselves. Aside from errors in the dismissal of non-verbal communication, such an assumption fails based on one thing: Thomas maintains that not knowing what becomes of the objects *after* the trade translates into a “silent film” *during* the trade. This appears not to be the case.

The consequences of trade and the communicative properties of trade are evident in the course of an activity of trade, unveiling the before and after in the keen perception of the now. *How* objects change hands, *what* objects change hands, and *to whose* hands such objects are passed is directly correlated to the *why*. Not only does “the image of barter” speak, but it speaks so loudly and so clearly as to be perhaps one of the most direct and effective means of communicating across—and even within—cultures.

Ironically, it seems even Thomas himself cannot steadfastly hold to his argument for a speechless trade:

While I would insist that the systematic cannot entirely encompass the idiosyncratic, the more important point is that evaluations of particular artifacts will often conflict: a situation of exchange, or one in which one party attempts to impose exchange upon another, is thus inevitably a politicized field entailing compromise, subordination, acquiescence, refusals, and so on. In cross-cultural exchange on colonial peripheries, in particular, the discrepancies between estimations of value are one of the crucial sources of conflict. (31)

“Compromise, subordination, acquiescence, refusal” all evident in situations of trade, according to Thomas, reveal the communicative nature of trade. Though Thomas does tend to relegate such a discourse to situations of imposed trade, he still acknowledges that such emotions and ideals can be unveiled without audible speech.

What must further be noted though is how trade is not only a discourse in practice, but likewise can be reformulated into a discourse between author and reader in a

text. This latter point then is most pertinent to the examination of Cook's, Ledyard's and Kamakau's accounts in subsequent chapters. Just as the communicative properties of trade render it a discourse in practice, so can trade, when documented, become a means of communicating to the reader how, what, and why cultural interaction is significant. The answers to such questions do, of course, vary from author to author. But in the perception, understanding, and documentation of trade, these three authors employ this activity as a figurative tool. By not simply noting what is and is not traded but commenting anthropologically, socially, and historically on various cultures, these three authors incorporate trade in their travel accounts in order to transform the death of Cook into a more socially significant event. Their accounts become much less a mere documentation of the voyage and the visits, and much more a narrative expounding upon how, what about, and why Cook's death is important.

And yet, the importance of trade during Cook's third voyage as a discourse between the sailors and the island cultures would seem to elicit far more investigation, even opening up the significance of Cook's death aside from whether or not he was believed to be Lono. Obeyesekere, with passing sentiment, suggests the greater importance of Cook's death aside from the Lono question: "There is also no true or empirically correct account of Cook's death. Even those who wrote about it soon after it happened could not possibly have ignored the larger, even cosmic, significance of his death to the European consciousness" (110). He is most certainly correct; and yet for a scholar who formidably deconstructs Sahlins's argument and the primary Western thread of "Cook thought," it is ironic that he fails to acknowledge the "larger, even cosmic,

significance of his death” for a *non-European* consciousness—i.e. an American consciousness (quasi-non-European) or a Hawaiian consciousness. Obeyesekere does reveal why the apotheosis of Cook can account for the “significance of his death” to a European consciousness, but he fails to reveal why discussions of Cook’s death, apart from such apotheosis, can operate on a level of social, cultural, and political significance that renders the Lono question nearly inconsequential.

While I do not intend to devise my own interpretation of the Lono question, nor do I intend to speculate one way or another, my reason for engaging this issue is to reveal that such polarization fails to account for and give credence to travel narratives that may in fact be discussing Cook’s death for a reason beyond figuring out his killer.

Obeyesekere and Sahlins, in their treatment of the Lono question, examine both Ledyard and Kamakau’s accounts. But neither scholar, aside from using the accounts as evidence for one interpretation versus the other, seeks to explore, or even consider, why these authors may be examining Cook’s death. The ultimate misconception with contemporary “Cook scholarship” is the notion that figuring out who killed Cook and why he was killed will provide closure to this enigmatic event. On the one hand, should these questions be answered the possibility that this answer could reveal significant aspects of Cook’s third voyage that may have been overlooked is a distinct one. On the other hand, answering these questions may ultimately and inevitably shadow the importance of these travel narratives, tending to influence further investigation as opposed to allowing us to consider why and how these narratives discussed his death when the writers appear to have had as many, if not even more, questions than we do.

CHAPTER THREE

AT ONCE *KŪ'AI MAI* AND TRADE: DISCUSSIONS OF TRADE IN COOK'S "JOURNAL OF THE THIRD VOYAGE" AND THE LONO QUESTION

"I received a Commission to Command His Majestys Sloop the Resolution," Cook writes, "went on board hoisted the Pendant and began to enter men, her Complement [the *Discovery*] being the same as on her late Voyage" (433). It was on February 10th that Cook began to log in his journal the circumstances of the third voyage, circumstances that quickly turn toward trade. On June 10th he notes, "'both Ships were provided with a proper assortment of Iron tools, trinquets &c^a to traffick and cultivate a friendship and an alliance with the Inhabitants of such new Countrys as we might meet with" (434). It is no surprise that Cook devotes a substantial amount of text in his journal to discussing the importance of trade between the sailors and the native peoples. When examining the importance and effect of trade in Britain during the eighteenth century, Joseph Addison declares, "There is no place in the Town I so much love to frequent as the *Royal-Exchange*...to see so rich an Assembly of Country-men and Foreigners consulting together upon the private Business of Mankind, and making this Metropolis a kind of *Emporium* for the whole Earth" (292-93). As noted in his journal, Cook was under explicit trade instructions from the British crown, further highlighting the value of trade for both Cook and Britain in general. The fact that Cook makes note of these instructions, and given that he had previously traded with the island cultures he encountered during his former two voyages, render the circumstances preceding his death in Hawai'i even more unclear. Cook was familiar with and knowledgeable about

interaction between disparate cultures, and it appears he was, for all intents and purposes, an experienced trader. So why was he killed; and how do his discussions of trade in his journal inform us about the circumstances of his death?

Cook's journal stops short of his venture onto the island of Hawai'i, ending on January 17th with his last log reading: "as soon as we landed Touahah took me by the hand and conducted me to a large Morai, the other gentlemen with Parea and four or five more of the Natives followed" (606). At this point in time Cook is being conducted to a ritual ceremony in which he is honored and bestowed the name Lono, that very same ceremony heavily contested by Sahlins and Obeyesekere in light of the Lono question. But what is more telling than this particular circumstance, and aside from the Lono question, is the manner in which Cook accounts for the various activities of trade occurring in Hawai'i and the other islands throughout the South Pacific. Cook's narrative serves as an introduction to the manner in which eighteenth-century British thought accounted for trade and cultural transaction—an introduction that becomes the gateway to an examination of trade in Ledyard and Kamakau's journals and the social, cultural, political commentary that ensues. Moreover, by noting how and why Cook incorporates trade into his travel narrative, we can transcend the Lono question to explore the tangible and intangible circumstances that may have led to his death. But instead of examining the importance *Cook* places on trade (for he most certainly perceives trade to be a primary component of cultural interaction), the Lono question has led to an improper reconfiguration of Cook's narrative. Thus, when examining the enigmatic circumstances of Cook's death and how his journal inadvertently accounts for such circumstances we

must investigate the patterns evident in Cook's discussions of trade—patterns of discussion belying the tolerant, culturally learned individual Cook makes himself out to be, yet patterns that still promote a culturally relativist perspective in British perceptions of “native” cultures. The former is evidenced by the increasing severity with which Cook punishes theft and thieves in Tonga, a degree of severity ranging from the shaving of heads to the mutilation of body parts that is ultimately hard to explain (465-479), and the latter in his initial esteem for the Hawaiian peoples and their knowledge of “proper trading practices” (598).

Following the theft of a pair of goats on Moorea, Cook, being “now convinced that a plan had been laid to Steal what I had refused to give” (515), informs us that the natives failed to abide by his pleas to return the goats. It is then by way of “setting fire to six or eight houses, which were presently consumed, together with two or three War Canoes that lay [in] some of them” that Cook seeks to coerce the natives into returning his livestock (517). Such an aggressive attempt to reconcile the theft that has taken place appears to work: “the goat was brought from the very place I had been the day before” (518). And it is with no subtle tone that Cook bemoans, “Thus this troublesome, and rather unfortunate affair ended, which could not be more regretted on the part of the Natives than it was on mine” (518). Why are Cook's actions so severe? Often intimated in the course of his journal is the notion that natives, should they partake in these illicit activities, must be punished, for the status Cook is afforded when engaging with the island peoples (both because he is a British explorer and because he possesses immense firepower) would be lost otherwise. Such actions suggest that Cook's response to these

incidents are efforts to maintain hold on the power he has; but moreover, such actions are a formidable indication to readers of Cook's perception of the native cultures and the importance of trade. Cook's perceptions of trade and value are not unique to him, though. These perceptions are representative of a long-standing, and ever-growing, discussion of trade in Britain.

It was in 1690 that John Locke published The Second Treatise of Government, covering, among other things, the nature of both property and money, the latter of which Locke ascertains is only valuable due to "the tacit agreement of men to put a value on it" (22). I mention Locke's Treatise because it is important when perceiving the value Cook places upon certain objects, a value assigned by men (like that accorded money) for the sole purpose of barter. Cook often intimates in his journal that the fluctuating value of certain objects is due in part to the geographical locale in which trade is being undertaken and to the variable demand for certain things. For it is by way of objects that Cook identifies and defines differing cultures in his journal: "They however," Cook notes when writing about the inhabitants of Prince William Sound, "esteemed beads of all sorts and gave whatever they had in exchange for them... These people were also desirous of iron, but it must be pieces eight or ten inches long at least" (552). It becomes increasingly evident when reading Cook's journal that he distinguishes the numerous native cultures more so by the objects used in barter than by any other aspect. This is not to say that Cook fails to account for differences in custom, dress, or language—because he does indeed do so—but that he frames such cultural discussions around objects of trade. Readers are more often than not introduced to what the natives do and do not accept from

the British as articles of traffic at the time of arrival—far preceding any discussion of language, custom, dress, or physical appearance. Perhaps it could be argued that this manner of introduction is purely a matter of circumstance—for it is often by way of trade that Cook, and subsequently readers, initially encounter the various native cultures. But such dismissal fails in perceiving the importance of traffic and misrepresents the importance of Cook’s lengthy discussions on objects desired and bartered by chalking up such documentation to circumstance. This manner of cultural cataloguing highlights the political weight trade implicitly, and inevitably, carries. The manner by which trade is undertaken between the native cultures and the British sailors—the amount of thieving that occurs, the objects being traded, and the value placed on certain objects—clearly speaks to how Cook “judges” the native cultures:

They understand tradeing as well as most people and seem to have discovered what we are plying upon the coast [of Hawaii] for, for tho they bring off things in great plenty, particularly pigs, yet they keep up their price and rather than despose of them for less than they demand will take them a shore again. (598)

Cook has led us to believe that such an understanding of these “Western concepts” in Hawaii—the nature of both trade and value—evidences a culture superior to the other South Pacific island cultures he has encountered. The value of the provisions the Hawaiians are utilizing in trade does not waver depending upon particular circumstance—i.e. supply and demand; hence, the real value of such objects is

recognized while trading, and accordingly invariable: “rather than despoise of them for less than they demand [they] will take them a shore again” (Cook 598).

According to Adam Smith in The Wealth of Nations, real value is the value of goods based on “Labour alone...never varying in its own value, is alone the ultimate and real standard by which the value of all commodities can at all times and places be estimated and compared. It is their real price; money is their nominal price” (35). Real value runs contrary to purported value, which is the value of goods based on supply and demand or manifestations of wealth. The Hawaiians had a great supply of provisions, and the British a great demand for them, but the former refused to trade their provisions for less than the value they believed they were worth; and at the same time, refused to raise the value of such objects simply because a great demand had suddenly been placed on them. The fact that Cook makes note of this system of value implicates the British in an incommensurate trade, not necessarily occurring at the present time but retrospectively, albeit inadvertently, blackening the activities of trade that have taken place prior to the *Resolution’s* arrival at Hawaii. Cook declares, “They understand tradeing,” implying the native inhabitants of previously visited islands *did not* understand trade, and for that matter value; thus, the articles those inhabitants used for traffic had no fixed value, indicating two things: 1) Cook believes most natives have no concept of value; and 2) the voyagers capitalized on such an unstable trading system by exploiting the variability of certain objects’ value at any given time.

During the third voyage, material objects (such as iron) were very valuable as a means of traffic. According to Smith, and as it pertains to Cook’s third voyage, an object

(beads, iron, etc.) at any given time and place could be traded for a certain amount of provisions at any given time and place, and as such, the real value of the provisions became equal to the purported value of the given object:

At the same time and place the real and the nominal price of commodities are exactly in proportion to one another. The more or less money you get for any commodity, in the London market...the more or less labour it will at that time and place enable you to purchase or command. At the same time and place, therefore, money is the exact measure of the real exchangeable value of all commodities. (37)

“It is,” Smith further contends, “more natural...to estimate...exchangeable value by the quantity of some other commodity than by that of the labour which it can purchase” (31). No longer do the participants engage in the bartering of objects or provisions based on the real value of such things, but instead they participate in a trade of purported value: so many objects for so many provisions. Even the real value of the provisions is subject to change: as Thomas maintains, “...value thus has no prior or absolute basis but originates in actual or imagined exchange” (27). The bartering of provisions for foreign objects is indeed a unique form of trade, one in which the real value of provisions can vary, however slightly, according to the sailors’ particular wants and the objects they themselves are harboring for trade, and more often than not Cook and his men traded iron spikes to the inhabitants of the Polynesian islands, and in particular to the Hawaiians, for provisions. Iron, however, was not foreign to the Pacific islands prior to Cook’s arrival in the late eighteenth century, nor were European explorers. Particularly in Hawaii the

introduction of iron and previous activities of trade involving iron had permanently altered the methods by which the Hawaiians hunted, engaged in warfare, and constructed tools/weapons. The durability, malleability, and versatility of iron rendered it a much sought after commodity. “That was what...[the Hawaiians],” Kamakau notes, “used in old days for their fighting daggers (*pahoa*)” (93).

The question then is whether or not such trade is incommensurate. According to Smith, trade becomes disadvantageous when one party is trading a “lasting commodity”—i.e. iron—for a number of “perishable commodities”—i.e. provisions— (408). “Consumable [or perishable] commodities...” Smith continues, “are soon destroyed; whereas gold and silver [lasting commodities] are of a more durable nature...Nothing can be more disadvantageous for any country, than the trade which consists in the exchange of such lasting for such perishable commodities” (407-08). It would seem logical to assume then that such trade is proving disadvantageous for the sailors, not the Hawaiians. However, Smith’s theories of disproportionate trade are only applicable to trade between “equal” parties; thus, his theory does not account for the type of trade that takes place during Cook’s third voyage—a trade between disparate cultures, unequal economically and developmentally. For it seems even in situations like that witnessed in Tahiti where “every one in the Ships had some [red feathers so] they fell in their value above five hundred per cent before night...even than the balance of trade was much in our favour...” (Cook 495).

So what does this disproportionate trade have to do with the circumstances of Cook’s death? Perhaps nothing; or perhaps the degree to which the sailors and Cook

exploit the natives through trade indirectly solicits the type of reaction that inevitably led to Cook's murder. As can be illustrated by the reading of Cook's journal, the communicative properties of trade and the manner by which Cook seeks to maintain control during activities of bartering implicate Cook and his failure to "see" the consequences of his actions as partial players in his death, quite ironic when we take into account Cook's own analysis of the events involving Captain Tobias Furneaux's boat.

Cook was no stranger to murder, particularly the murder of European explorers by islanders. Early on in his journal is a long and informative account of the incident in New Zealand involving Furneaux and his sailors during Cook's second voyage:

We next proceeded to Grass Cove, remarkable for being the place where the Natives cut off Captain Furneaux's boat...Whilst we were at this place our curiosity prompt(ed) us to enquire the reason why our country men were killed, and Omai put several questions to...those about him...all of which they answered without reserve, and like people who are under no apprehension of punishment for a crime they are not guilty of, for we already k(n)ew that none of these people had any hand in this unhappy affair. They told us that while our people were at victuals with several of the natives about them some of the latter stole...some bread, & fish for which they were beat this being resented a quarrel insued, in which two Natives were shot dead...Captain Furneaux's black servant...We were afterwards told that he was the cause of the quarrel...one of the Natives stealing some thing out of the boat, he struck him a heavy blow...which

the fellow called out to his country men that he was killed, on this they all rose and fell upon the unhappy suffer(er)s who...fell a sacrifice to savage fury. (453-54)

Cook continues to try and account for the death of the sailors on Furneaux's boat, remarking, "Victims were under no sort of apprehensions of their impending fate" and often implicating poor conduct during trading activities as the catalyst for such quarrels (454-55). The fact then that Sahlins dismisses the death of Cook as the result of a misunderstanding and Obeyesekere believes Cook's journal to illustrate "Cook's...continuing forgetfulness and loss of contact with everyday reality" seems premature (44). Cook was most certainly aware of the possible ramifications of cultural transaction, his death signifying not a breakdown of his mental capacity or a coincidence gone awry, but a consequence of circumstances (foreseen and unforeseen) as much involving trade and conduct during trading activities as any other factor.

The events that occurred on February 14 in Hawai'i are often considered "reactive" (Thomas 35), the end result: a basic cultural misunderstanding.⁵ Such an explanation though is flawed. According to Thomas, "even when struggle and resistance are recognized, the responses of the colonized are taken to be reactive" (35). We can assume that the Hawai'ians' attack on Cook is in part a *reaction* to Cook and the sailor's actions preceding this event. However, dismissing such a display of aggression as merely circumstantial reaction is erroneous. Assuming the Hawai'ians' aggressive behavior is no

⁵ In her book Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation, Mary Louise Pratt notes, "The murder of Cook had shaken the idyllic Polynesian fantasy" (72). Pratt's discussion of what she deems "anti-conquest" in the late eighteenth century accounts for the shift in European thought about imperialism and exploration in the South Pacific, due namely to the violent reciprocation of the islanders witnessed. For a more complete discussion of conquest, contact zones, and anti-conquest, see Pratt 38-85.

more than a reaction to misunderstood intentions—or a misunderstanding of the intentions in giving and taking certain material and immaterial goods—highlights an even greater historical dilemma: cultural hierarchy. Meaning thus: the Hawai‘ians must react to Cook and the sailors as the former does not have the capacity to proactively prevent—i.e. the British ships represent the dominant, rule-establishing entity while the Hawai‘ians appear and operate as the obsequious party. What exactly happened on February 14 may never be known, but the sporadic patterns of cultural mistreatment Cook unveils in his journal speak to his *sometime* inability to see beyond tangible objects and the superiority he places on things. I emphasize “sometime” because the discussions of trade in Cook’s journal, particularly on native trading and how it evidences an understanding (or lack of understanding) of the “rules” of trade, do also unveil that Cook is very perceptive of cultural transaction and how his aggressive behavior will translate to the island peoples—a quality evidenced in his notation that the Hawaiian peoples “understand tradeing” (598).

Perhaps most telling to the aforementioned problem of Cook’s ignorance is his discussion of Mai (or Omai) and the protracted process of returning Mai to the Society Islands. Cook persistently intimates that Mai’s superiority is established by no other means than the fact he is in possession of articles, objects, and trinkets no other individual on the island owns: “but I expected, that the property he was master of would [have] had prudence enough to [have] made himself respected and even courted by the first persons in the island, but instead of that he rejected the advice of those who wished him well and suffered himself to be duped by every designing knave” (494-95). In fact,

witnessing this display of carelessness and believing his “native friend” to be losing the respect and authority he is deserved by losing the objects he harbors, Cook proudly declares, “[Mai’s sister and brother in-law] together with a few more of thier acquaintance ingross’d him intirely to themselves with no other view than to strip him of every thing he had got, and they would have succeeded if I had not put a stop to it in time by taking the most usefull things into my possession” (512).

Mai accompanied Cook on his third voyage as both a passenger and translator, operating as the break in the language barrier between Cook and the inhabitants of various South Pacific islands. But the purpose of depositing him—to speak in callous terms—seems far too similar to Cook’s means for transporting farm animals and plants: “These Cattle were put on board at His Majestys Command and expence with a view of stocking Otahiete and the Neighbouring Islands with these usefull animals” (434). Spending no less than three years in England, Mai’s return to the Society Islands can be interpreted in any number of ways—most of which, in fact, speak to the cultural transformation Mai has undergone. Ironically though, Cook himself does not believe Mai’s return will result in any significant transformation of the island culture:

This kind of inidfferency is the true Character of his Nation, Europeans have visited them at times for these ten years past, yet we find neither new arts nor improvements in the old, nor have they copied after us in any one thing. We are therefore not to expect that Omai will be able to interduce many of our arts and customs amongst them or much improve those they

have got, I think however he will endeavour to bring to perfection the fruits &c^a we planted which will be no small acquisition. (525)

By 1777 when he was left on Huahine, Mai was indeed a changed man; he was “our spokesman,” Cook notes (507). Mai was in fact the one who argued in favor of Britain’s method of punishing criminals in Tahiti (507). But as much remorse and talk is concentrated on the inevitable parting with Mai, transplanting him from Tahiti to Britain and then back to Huahine appears to mirror the trafficking and transplanting of cattle, goats, and plants. Mai is, for all intents and purposes, an object for trade. And still the question remains: how do the circumstances of Mai’s transportation effect the conversation regarding Cook’s death and trade?

Such forms of transplanting often manifest into and essentially represent a unique kind of imperialism—not the familiar form of imperialism undertaken for the expansion of lands and ruling power, but an empire founded on the importation and exportation of goods (material and immaterial). The basics of such an idea, however, are not unique to my thesis. It was Joseph Addison in his The Spectator: #69 who indicates that the activities of trade can often result in a form of imperialism: “Trade, without enlarging *British Territories*, has given us a kind of additional Empire: It has multiplied the Number of the Rich, made our Land Estates infinitely more Valuable than they were formerly, and added to them an Accession of other Estates as Valuable as the Lands themselves” (296). Because the British can “enjoy the remotest Products of North and South” while still “free from those Extremities of Weather which give them Birth” (296), the goods imported and exported from Britain increase the wealth of the country and enhance the

quality of life. The empire that Addison speaks of, though, is a bit different from the empire that results as a consequence of the type of trades taking place with Mai and the animals/plants during Cook's third voyage. According to Addison, trade manifests into an "additional Empire" purely in the increase of British wealth. There is no expansion of territories, as was seen in the colonization of America, or adamant cultural usurpation, as was seen in the British control of India. On the contrary, the imperialism that results from these trades is a different form of imperialism, one born of the idea that the islanders would profit from the introduction of farm animals because it would result in a consistent food source. Explicitly, this gesture appears to be one of good faith. And yet, such a positive glossing of this gesture fails to investigate more thoroughly the consequences, both short-term and long-term. Not only will the introduction of cattle transform the immediate and future environmental conditions of the respective island, result in new types of bacteria and disease, and invariably alter the dietary habits of the inhabitants, but such a "gift" vividly illustrates the underlying rhetoric of this type of exchange—namely, the implication that the island cultures in the South Pacific are inadequate and insufficient simply *because* they have not yet seen, or have failed to see, the benefits of cattle.

Trades such as these do not increase the wealth or lands of Britain. But this lack of increase in wealth and land does not mean that these trades are not a form of imperialism. Cook's voyage was an exploratory voyage, one that brought back an endless breath of knowledge about people, places, and cultures—and left Mai. The increase in such knowledge then does render for Britain an "additional Empire," and the transplanting of Mai signifies attempted colonization, albeit subtle. Indeed, Cook exerts

the power of the British Empire to the fullest extent in his claim, and subsequent naming, of the Prince Edward Islands (441). But aside from such obvious displays of imperialism, the circumstances surrounding Mai and his return do result in a very distinct form of imperialism.

With the *Resolution's* arrival at Hawaii, Cook established instructions for the manner by which trade was to be conducted between the crew and the natives, stipulating:

As it was of the last importance to procure a supply of provisions at these islands and knowing from experience this could not be done if a free trade was allowed, that is every man allowed to trade for what he pleased and as he pleased, I therefore published an order prohibiting all persons from trading but such as should be appoint'd by me or Captain Clerke and these only for provisions and refreshments. Women were also forbid to be admitted into the Ships, but under certain restrictions, but the evil I mean to prevent by this I found had already got amongst them. (592-93)

The prevention of venereal disease was of primary importance to Cook; for he often took means and measures to prevent those sailors who had contracted the venereal from copulating with the native women. The problem that is illustrated by his journal, however, is that the steps he takes prove ultimately ineffective: “and if we did not mistake them they knew of our being there. Indeed it appeared rather too evident as these people had got amongst [them] the Veneral distemper, and I as yet knew of no other way they could come by it” (593). The sexual exchanges that took place and the

subsequent introduction of venereal disease to the islands like Hawai‘i speak far more to the cultural imposition taking place during Cook’s third voyage; for such a lasting alteration of a culture impacts not only the present situation of that culture but the posterity as well. Whether or not this adulteration was recognized by the Hawai‘ians at the time is unclear. But Cook’s meek attempts to prevent the coupling of his sailors with the Hawai‘ian women do not portray a man staunchly committed to cultural preservation.

In returning to Cook’s murder then, it appears one reason why Cook’s death is such an enigma is due in part to the weight trade carries. Cook’s journal is important when trying to reconstruct exactly how things might have gone wrong. Should we conclude that Cook’s death was the result of “bad” trade, the patterns evident in his journal seem to solicit the type of reaction the Hawai‘ians had on February 14. And yet again, “bad” trade is merely a matter of speculation. What the examination of trade in Cook’s journal does reveal are the vulnerabilities of a man who took so many measures to make himself invulnerable; and ironically, it appears these measures—those that belie Cook’s own depiction of himself as tolerant, understanding, communicative, and fair—are the very measures that heighten and inevitably capsize the tension between the native inhabitants and the sailors.

But unlike the picture Obeyesekere paints of Cook, Cook is not *all* bad, nor are his encounters with the islanders founded only on aggression, imperialism, and unfairness. It is evident from the reading of his journal that he does exert, sometime to an overwhelming extent, the force of his wrath on the islanders and their property; and while I certainly do not defend these actions, I reiterate that likewise within his narrative are

instances in which he proves he does understand and can communicate with the islanders during episodes of trade.

To refer back to the Lono question then, it is important to note that nowhere in Cook's journal does he make mention of being called Lono. Cook does indicate with his first arrival in Hawaii an episode which has long been used by Sahlins as evidence for his Cook as Lono hypothesis:

The very instant I leaped ashore, they all fell flat on their faces, and remained in that humble posture till I made signs to them to rise. They then brought a great many small pigs and gave us without regarding whether they got any thing in return or no indeed the most of them were present(ed) to me with plantain trees, in a ceremonious way as is usual on such like occasions...(533)

Sahlins contends, "Then there were the pigs, always small pigs: ceremonially correct perhaps as offering to Lono but not so highly esteemed by the British, who wanted big hogs..." (How Natives 45). Both because of the Hawaiians' reverence of Cook as evidenced by their bowing and the articles they are choosing to present to the British, Sahlins maintains that in Cook's journal we find shreds of evidence linking Cook to Lono. And though true this may be, nowhere in Cook's journal, at least explicitly, does *Cook* make mention of Lono or the Makahiki. There is the chance Cook ceased writing before the Hawaiians began to consistently and verbally refer to him as Lono (though other voyage narratives indicate this is not the case), or perhaps it did not occur to Cook that the actions he witnessed were some part of a ritual ceremony. Most consistent with

Cook's narrative and the manner by which he chooses to explain the circumstances he witnessed though, indicate that Cook makes no mention of Lono or the Makahiki because all of this was inconsequential to him, what both Sahlins and Obeyesekere fail to account for in the Cook-Lono debate. It was via trade that Cook sought to explain and represent the Hawaiian peoples and customs he encountered (and those of the other South Pacific islands). Whether or not the Hawaiians believed him to be their god Lono, then, had no impact. Both Cook and the Hawaiians could engage in and communicate through trade. Thus, we must forgo our discussion of the Cook-Lono debate then if we want to try and examine the enigmatic circumstances of Cook's death in a way that it appears Cook tried to explain and account for a number of the seemingly inexplicable incidents.

CHAPTER FOUR

RECONFIGURING THE LONO QUESTION

Part I: John Ledyard's Journal of Captain Cook's Last Voyage

and the Discourse of Trade

For Obeyesekere, “Ledyard...and others are useful only as far as they describe the actions of the English gossip on board and, with some reservations, what they actually saw or participated in” (67); but moreover Ledyard is useful to Obeyesekere since “The easy dismissal of Ledyard’s account illustrates the power of scholarship in fostering the conventional mythology of Cook” (117). For Sahlins, “Ledyard is not the most reliable of the Cook chroniclers” (How Natives 45), a step up when we consider Sahlins’s initial portrayal of Ledyard in Islands of History, only briefly alluding to Ledyard’s Journal when discussing “the chroniclers...assessment of Hawaiian reactions” to the return of British ships in the middle of February (127). But for the most part, the importance of Ledyard’s Journal and its anti-British commentary have been virtually ignored. Neither Sahlins nor Obeyesekere credit Ledyard to the extent he deserves. According to Sahlins, Ledyard, as an American, is insignificant, his Journal needing no in-depth investigation in either of the two works Sahlins has produced simply because Ledyard’s depiction of Cook’s actions regarding the transaction for the fence of the Morai (examined later in this section of the chapter) is erroneous:

Ledyard’s description would therefore require us to disregard King and Zimmerman’s reports that the transaction had been satisfactorily

negotiated...None of this confirms Ledyard's story that Keli'ikea and the Lono priests who had charge of Hikiau temple were outraged by the removal of the fence and images, or that their anger was instrumental in Cook's death. (269-270)

And according to Obeyesekere, Ledyard, as an American on a British vessel, is significant for his perspective, though insignificant in light of such anthropologically loaded questions as, "Why was Captain Cook murdered"? We must look at Ledyard, Obeyesekere maintains, because he illuminates the fact that Cook was indeed an irrational and irresponsible Captain, one whose actions directly solicited his own murder: "Ledyard's account shows Cook in his destructive persona" (117). But beyond fostering our investigation into Cook's psyche, we can dismiss Ledyard's Journal.

There is a problem apparent in such rash dismissal. Perhaps if we are to only limit our examination of Cook's death to the Cook-Lono question, then using Ledyard's Journal in so far as it is not a credible source or an accurate portrayal of the true, dark nature of Cook can be justified. But even still, it seems the picking and choosing of travel narratives only to evidence claims concerning the Cook-Lono debate is as great an error. What both of these anthropologists are trying to accomplish in their respective texts is exactly what they have inadvertently stymied: opening up the examination of Cook's death in the hopes that answering the long-asked questions may in fact shed light on cultural interactions and transactions.

Spanning from July 1776 to June 1779, John Ledyard's Journal of Captain Cook's Last Voyage documents the activities of trade conducted during Cook's final voyage, his

account comprised of both facts and musings, as James Zug maintains, “on grand concepts like migration, beliefs, and the course of civilization” (Introduction xix); thus, this manner of composition suggests Ledyard’s documentation of trade is not merely circumstantial cataloging. Why, then, does Ledyard detail such incidents in his Journal? It appears Ledyard documents trade in order to construct a cultural critique, a critique that unveils the nature of exchange and criticizes Captain Cook. Such documentation suggests that Cook’s behavior during various activities of trade establishes a pattern of cultural aggression and misconduct that indirectly provokes his own murder. But this documentation does not merely criticize Cook. An investigation of the rhetorical play Ledyard engages in through his documentation of trade highlights the literary significance of his Journal. Operating as a trope to expose what Ledyard perceives is the malicious nature of one of the most famous eighteenth-century British explorers, trade in Ledyard’s Journal constructs a framework through which Ledyard can formulate anti-British commentary by way of criticizing Cook and exploring trade-oriented conduct.

Written from the vantage point of an American, Ledyard’s Journal is distinctive—because it is, as Zug points out, “the only one from the 18th-century age of British circumnavigations written by an American...[and] the only one from the third voyage written in English by a nonofficer” (Introduction xviii). There is no question that Ledyard’s identity and peculiar position in the field of eighteenth-century British travel narratives are significant. In fact, contemporary scholars of Ledyard have a tendency to focus on his identity.

Yet, the issue concerning Ledyard's identity is still a difficult one—particularly when considering the circumstances of his military involvement and loyalties before, during, and after the American Revolution. Bill Gifford acknowledges, “While Ledyard was serving the Crown, his hometown of Groton and neighboring New London had suffered one of the worst British raids of the war” (47). Ledyard was a member of the British forces, both the army and navy, during the Revolution. “In the 1780s [though],” as Zug further points out, “after the American Revolution was completed, Ledyard spoke often of his loyalty and love for the United States” (American Traveler 30).

We cannot overlook the issues surrounding Ledyard's identity. But beyond these vexed questions of authorial identity, Ledyard's Journal is worth considering as a text because it constructs a framework for social commentary through the incorporation of trade and exposes the possible cultural ramifications of eighteenth-century British exploration. Though the social commentary in Ledyard's Journal is both a form of political and cultural critique, the impact of British imperialism on the Polynesian cultures and the ramifications of the disproportionate trades occurring between the British and the Polynesians render the cultural aspects of his critique more important.

In order to understand the importance of Ledyard's documentation though, we must first explore the nature of gift giving. It is important to understand the relationship the islanders had with the objects being traded, but only because such an understanding opens the door to the discussion of the properties of trade as a discourse. The notion of the gift however, is an interesting one, in part because so many factors contribute to the weight of the objects being traded. Thomas states, “A gift is indeed both a thing and a

kind of act, but the emphasis upon the social relation has been almost to the exclusion of the nature of the object” (17). Not only are these objects imparted with social meaning and status, but these objects are often, in the most basic terms, a part of the giver. Thomas declares, “Articles can be significant as markers of other people with whom one does not identify; they can signify difference, contest, and relatedness; they can also be created in order to represent histories or events rather than subjects or can be subsequently seen in those terms” (26). With the presentation of the gift, the cost of which goes beyond real (or even purported) value, it is as if the giver is giving a part of himself. No longer are these gifts perceived as objects, but instead tangible representations of the giver’s intentions, ideals, or expression of emotions.

In his study, The Gift: The Form and Reason for Exchange in Archaic Societies, Marcel Mauss explores the role trade plays in “so-called primitive societies” (3). According to Mauss, “the gift” denotes at the same time the activity of trading in such societies, the object being traded, and what is expected on behalf of both parties when conducting the trades. Further, Mauss examines “the *system of total services*” (5-13), and notes the propensity for trade to be both voluntary and compulsory in such a governing system, a notion harking back to the implication of gift-giving. There is in fact a structure to this gift-giving and the reciprocation that is likewise expected. At the time of the presentation of the gift, both giver and receiver enter into an unspoken contract—the receiver shall receive the gift without immediately reciprocating the favor understanding that he/she must, at some point in the future, return the gift under the same circumstances. What is most interesting, however, is that the passage of the gift does not

necessarily end with the original exchange of the gift from initial giver to initial receiver. The receiver is not bound to keep the gift. Essentially, he/she may just as easily and pass the gift along to another, the same rules of exchange previously indicated coming into play.

In order to better understand this process, let us consider the exchange of a mat. The giver gives the mat as a gift to the receiver, and the receiver is free to do with the mat as he/she chooses. However, the receiver is bound by the “rules” of the gift and gift giving to return the favor in gift-form at some point in time. Thus, should the receiver choose to keep the mat, he/she must then devise some gift of equal or greater value to give to the initial giver; and so the contract is now fulfilled. But should the receiver opt to pass along the gift to another receiver, another contract enters into play; and so on.

The trading or passing of gifts is not one in which objects merely change hands, but one in which the relationship between people and cultures is presented and accepted. It differs from commodity exchange in that commodity exchange is an act of what Thomas deems “reciprocal independence” (14), one in which the actors retire to their separate staging points (physically and mentally speaking) at the culmination of the transaction. On the contrary, the actors participating in a gift exchange engage in both a central and peripheral exchange, one in which the before, during, and after are just as significant to the gift exchange as the physical transference of the object passing hands. There is no return to corners or end-all-be-all once the object passes hands. For, as Mauss declares, “what they exchange is not solely property and wealth, movable and immovable goods, and things economically useful” (5). Essentially, gift exchange translates into a

cultural discourse practiced by both parties. Particularly with regards to the South Pacific, Mauss ascertains “that to make a gift of something to someone is to make a present of some part of oneself” (12). The object of gift exchange is just as important, if not even more so, than the act itself. Thus, the manner by which this act is undertaken and the object that is presented for gift exchange operate as a distinct and purportedly candid representation of the very individual, or group of individuals, conducting the exchange.

The activities of trade in Ledyard’s Journal operate on three distinct levels: gift-giving, an act of beneficence practiced by both the sailors and the native peoples; bartering; and theft, conducted either overtly or surreptitiously, but nevertheless, a misconduct that both the sailors and the natives are described doing. Though both gift-giving and trade must be treated as significant when reading Ledyard’s Journal, neither of these two acts highlight the pertinent cultural ramifications of trade occurring during Cook’s third voyage as much as theft. Moreover, though autonomous on occasion, Ledyard most often describes both gift-giving and trade in the Journal directly preceding or following an instance of theft. Because of this and because theft highlights the deficiencies of a trade-oriented intercultural discourse, Ledyard devotes the bulk of his Journal to the examination of theft and the importance of theft in the context of both the British and Hawaiian cultures/perspectives.

As Rebecca Steinitz asserts in her discussion of theft in nineteenth-century British travel narratives, “Captain Cook’s voyages can be seen as an originary event in the tradition of surveying voyages and voyage narratives” (153). But it appears Steinitz is mistaken in her assertion. Not only is Cook’s third voyage *not* an “originary event in the

tradition of [either] surveying voyages...[or] voyage narratives,” but labeling it as such fails to account for and fails in perceiving how and why the tradition of voyage narratives already established before the advent of Cook’s voyages compounds the significance of our readings of the Cook-voyage narratives, a tradition that Steinitz, ironically, recognizes later in her examination. “These [nineteenth-century narratives],” Steinitz further contends, “refer only to theft by natives, as do nearly all of the theft episodes in other voyage narratives” (158). Essentially, these British narratives, authored by British sailors, present theft as a non-British construct; according to Steinitz, “it seems that just as the British try to maintain the gift as a distinctly non-native activity, so they conceive of theft as a distinctly non-British activity” (158).⁶ Steinitz’s examination is an illuminating one, particularly when considering how Cook talks about trade in his journal; but ultimately, her examination is a limited one. For she only treats those narratives authored by the British in the nineteenth century, not taking into account any eighteenth-century narrative, and certainly not Ledyard’s Journal.

Unlike such aforementioned narratives, Ledyard’s Journal subverts the commonly held ideal “theft equals native peoples and gift-giving equals British.” Instead, it offers a far more accurate portrayal, one that presents both gift-giving and theft as acts both parties are described participating in. Though Ledyard does revert to noting the “pilfering disposition of the inhabitants” (17), he nevertheless undermines such generalizations with accounts of native gift giving: “The inhabitants [of Tongotaboo] who had heard of our

⁶ Steinitz notes that the authors of British narratives supplemented such words like “steal” or “theft” with the word “take” to arguably distance their own actions from the actions of the “thieving natives.” See Steinitz 159-61.

arrival and expecting a visit from us came off to us to the number of two or three hundred canoes bringing large supplies of hogs and the provisions of the country” (16). Even Ledyard’s descriptions of theft depart from the commonly held conception that theft by the native peoples is owing to their own “savagery.” In fact, at the heart of one such lengthy description involving the sailors’ interactions with the natives of Tongotaboo and their chief Phenow, Ledyard questions conceptions of theft in both the British and native cultures and implies that Cook’s conduct toward the natives can be attributed in part to the systematic theft that takes place. Ledyard writes:

At first the interpositions of...Phenow tended partly to alleviate these inconveniences by restoring our purloined property, or by making compensation...by presents of hogs and the fruits of the country, which indeed went a great way with Cook, who...was often influenced more by acquiring a hog from the natives than the fear of losing the friendship of his hospitable allies...but then it must be remembered that the ability of performing the important errand before us depended very much...upon the precarious supplies...but perhaps no considerations will excuse the severity which he [Cook] sometimes used towards the natives on these occasions, and he would perhaps have done better to have considered that the full exertion of extreme power is an argument of extreme weakness.

(24)

Ledyard further contemplates the degree to which British conceptions of theft differ from the conceptions of the native peoples, often insinuating that what the British perceive as

theft is not an illicit activity according to the natives' perceptions of "taking": "But Phenow," Ledyard contends, "...perceiving by the methods Cook had taken in this matter that it was a circumstance of great importance in our estimation for them to make free with our property without our consent...was determined...to throw off the odium of imputation..." (26). Such incorporation departs from Steinitz's examination. It is true that Ledyard rarely describes the British participating in theft. By indirectly implicating Cook in the purloining of British property though, Ledyard clouds the long-held ideals distancing native "savagery" from British "righteousness." Obeyesekere, in his minor treatment of Ledyard's Journal, notes: "This is the kind of thing that ships' officers could *not* possibly put into writing" (117). Thus, Ledyard's Journal, and its obvious insinuations regarding Cook's conduct, seems to present a far more candid account to illuminate, and ultimately stigmatize, British exploration.

However, Obeyesekere does not see it this way. He asserts, "there is not the slightest reference to such [anti-British] feelings in his journal" (116). Obeyesekere further argues, "There is no criticism of Cook in Ledyard's journal prior to their arrival in Hawai'i" (116). What Obeyesekere fails to acknowledge is *how* Ledyard formulates anti-British commentary: constructing implicit "Cook criticism" in the illumination of such trade-oriented misconduct and then subsequently translating this "Cook criticism" into anti-British commentary. Ledyard writes:

Cook confined the son and daughter by marriage, of the chief of the island [Ulietea], on board the *Discovery*, and then published his reason for doing it to the people, and desired them to inform the father of the young

prisoners and other chiefs, that unless they returned the deserters they should never more see their young prince or his partner. (40)

Ledyard continues his critique of Cook's actions by stating, "I would not have been the author of such grief for two deserters" (41). This then seems to be Ledyard's first direct critical remark of Cook, an incident far preceding the *Resolution's* arrival at Hawai'i. Furthermore, Obeyesekere fails in perceiving the nature of Ledyard's "anti-British" sentiments: sentiments apparent in Ledyard's accounts of trade as opposed to sentiments expressed by an outright declaration of a personal abhorrence for all things British. Because trade is a direct representation of the culture the exchanger is employed to stand for and Cook is often the primary trader (or the one dictating the British trading), he is the British representative. Thus, Cook's conduct when exchanging goods becomes *the* conduct of the British people and *the* representation of the British culture. It is very possible for Ledyard as author to construct a cultural critique without adamantly, and personally, defying all things British. It would be a misconception then to dismiss Ledyard's Journal as undeniably pro-British simply because he is not stating sentiments suggesting otherwise. Ledyard's Journal, by implicating Cook in his own murder, constructs a framework through which we can implicate the British in exploitative conduct.

If indeed the documentation of trade can be sculpted into a cultural critique, Ledyard's incorporation of such incidents suggests his Journal operates as a unique discourse between him and the reader—one that consequently seeks to expose British exploitation by blaming Cook as much for his own death as the Hawai'ians. As a literary

text, Ledyard's Journal surpasses the trite documentation of latitude and longitude. It becomes apparent that Ledyard manipulates his diction and "experiences" to construct a text that operates in a relatively linear fashion: first, construct a negative persona of Captain Cook through the documentation of trade prior to the *Resolution's* arrival at Hawai'i; second, use this persona as a trope, one that critiques the whole of British eighteenth-century exploration; and lastly, use these rhetorical devices to examine British exploration and cultural aggression.

The passages beginning when the *Resolution* arrives at Hawai'i and leading up to Cook's death reek with portentous statements. Ledyard acknowledges that "the moment therefore that this supposed superiority of ours should cease to exist or be diminished, our consequences and importance would be at an end, or at least could only be supported the worst of all aids, an appeal to arms, which in our situation would ruin us though we conquered" (72). Ledyard's accounts of trade—ranging from the exchange of iron for provisions, to a "sexual exchange"—supplement such prophetic statements. At the behest of the Hawai'ian chiefs in return for granting Cook permission to erect camp in a section of the Morai (the sacred burial ground of the Hawai'ians), it is "required that Cook's people should never after sun-set proceed without the limits prescribed, and that their own people should at all times be utterly excluded from entering them," an area designated by "a number of the white rods" (Ledyard 71). Ledyard soon informs his readers that Cook acquiesces to these requests, but his inability to prevent his men from going "without the lines...[to] meet their mistresses upon neutral ground...was the beginning of our subsequent misfortunes..." (73). Such a breach in these established

“rules” of exchange, according to Ledyard, “flung temptations in...[the Hawai‘ians] way to theft which they diligently improved and we resented” (73). An increase in theft that is the catalyst ultimately leading to Cook’s murder is as much the fault of Cook’s dereliction of duty as ship’s captain as it is the fault of the “thieving” Hawai‘ians. Furthermore, Cook is no less a perpetrator with his stealing of the wood from the Morai, documented later in Ledyard’s Journal (92-93), an incident that’s credibility is heavily contested by Sahlins in How Natives Think. But whether or not Ledyard was telling the truth about this incident is inconsequential. The real question is: Why has Ledyard devoted so much effort to documenting this incident, or documenting his rendition of this incident?

The circumstance of the Morai fence is perhaps the only instance where Ledyard explicitly implicates the British in “direct” theft—“direct” meaning that Ledyard’s account of British theft at this particular moment is not an indirect consequence of cultural misconduct but an active advance on property that is not rightfully theirs. Ledyard does indeed dilute this instance by reminding his readers that “Cook...offered them [the Hawai‘ian chiefs] two iron hatchets for the fence” (92); however, it remains clear that Cook cares little about the reception of his offer—an offer nonetheless, by which “The chiefs were astonished not only at the inadequate price, but at the proposal and refused [Cook]” (Ledyard 92). For Ledyard intimates that Cook will carry out his intentions regardless of whether or not his offer is accepted. Quite plainly, Ledyard warns us, “We shall soon see the consequence of such conduct” (94).

On February 6 the British set sail from Hawai‘i, all captains intact. Yet, inclement weather necessitated the re-docking of the British ships in Kealahou Bay on February 12. Whether or not Ledyard felt such a return was unfortunate at the moment is uncertain. What is certain is that Ledyard devotes a substantial amount of text to depicting the hostilities now pervading the British-Hawai‘ian relationship. Ledyard’s account reads:

Our return to this bay was as disagreeable to us as it was to the inhabitants, for we were reciprocally tired of each other. They had been oppressed and were weary of our prostituted alliance... Towards night however the canoes came in, but the provisions both in quantity and quality plainly informed us that times were altered, and what was very remarkable was the exorbitant price they asked; and the particular fancy they all at once took to iron daggers or dirks...(95)

Obeyesekere’s contention that Ledyard expresses no “anti-British” sentiments appears not to be the case. Regardless of the fact that Ledyard does not overtly express a disdain for the British, his account of a Hawai‘ian people who have been “oppressed and were weary of our prostituted alliance” is by no means meant to translate as approbation (95). Perhaps Ledyard’s use of the first-person, plural pronoun “we” supports the argument that Ledyard expresses no “anti-British” sentiments; such a choice in diction could read that Ledyard is implicating himself in the oppression. However, as a member of the *Resolution’s* crew, there is no reason to believe Ledyard would not include himself in the doings of the ship and its crew. Nor, for that matter, is there any reason to believe Ledyard consciously or unconsciously implicates himself in the oppression. He was

certainly present for many of the events that transpired during the voyage's tenure, regardless of what the events were, and it would be rash to generalize what he did or did not feel toward the British based on the use of an inclusive pronoun.

Moreover, the above passage illuminates the rhetoric of Ledyard's documentation: one relating to the reader via such trade-oriented discourse that "the provisions both in quantity and quality plainly informed us that times were altered" (95). With such a statement, Ledyard personifies such "provisions" with an informative voice by transforming an act of trade into a direct representation of the Hawai'ians' sentiments toward the British. This display of affections, though, does not remain fixed in a state of trade: "Nor was their passive appearance of disgust all we had to fear," Ledyard states, "nor did it continue long" (96). Ledyard's employment of the trope of trade and the trope's function in providing an overarching statement regarding British conduct is apparent in this mode of representation. In as much as it seems the British refuse to acknowledge the Hawai'ians' voice concerning the effect, and affect, of cultural interaction and transaction, Cook is just as much given a significant voice—one, however, advocating a need to investigate more closely the nature of eighteenth-century British exploration and "harmless" trade.

Prior to the ships' initial departure on February 6 and the subsequent re-docking in Kealakekua bay, Captain Clerke of the *Discovery*—the man second in command to Cook—accused a Hawai'ian chief of stealing his "jolly boat" (Ledyard 94). So insulted by such an erroneous claim, "the chief...desired Clerke to kill him if he would think him so base after all the testimonies of honor and friendship he had made him" (Ledyard 94).

The boat, though, had merely been moved for convenience by the carpenter's mate. Ledyard continues his account of the events leading up to Cook's death with a description of a few Hawai'ians who rowed to the *Discovery* in a canoe "with a determination of mischief" (96). The Hawai'ians, he observes, "snatched two pair of tongs, and other iron tools" as remonstrations for Clerke's mistreatment (96). Ledyard indicates that in response to this incident, Clerke and Cook agreed that the only course of action involved an "attempt to persuade Kireeaboo [the chief]...to come on board upon a visit, and that when he was on board he should be kept prisoner until his subjects should release him by restitution of the cutter..." (97). Cook, owing to Clerke's poor health, was the one chosen to lead such an endeavor—and so begins the falling of the dominoes. Though Cook persuaded Kalani'opu'u to accompany him to the ship, upon reaching the shore the British party is met by no less than "three or four hundred people...[who] cried out that Cook was going to take their king from them and kill him" (Ledyard 98). Ledyard continues his account by noting the increasingly hostile nature of the Hawai'ians whose cries of anger and anxiety soon manifested into an active assault, an assault resulting in Cook's death:

...but the instant they [the British] began to retreat Cook was hit with a stone, and perceiving the man who hove, shot him dead...Cook and Mr. Phillips were together a few paces in the rear of the guard, and perceiving a general fire without orders quitted Kireeaboo, and ran to the shore to put a stop to it...Cook having at length reached the margin of the water...waved with his hat to cease firing and come in, and while he was

doing this a chief from behind stabled him with one of our iron daggers just under the shoulder blade...Cook fell with his face in the water and immediately expired. (99)

Ironically, an article of trade was the weapon that murdered Captain Cook: “one of our iron daggers” killed Cook. Cook’s murder was the result of a long history of trade-oriented aggravation. The manner in which Ledyard constructs his Journal seems to suggest that trade killed Cook, the dagger simply a by-product of such an act. Moreover, through a turn of events saturated with irony, Cook’s dead body became the very object of trade: “we demanded the bodies,” Ledyard notes, “and they refused them, on what was robbed...” (101). In death the legacy that is Captain James Cook is reduced to “fragments of the body” (Ledyard 103), and Cook himself becomes fodder for just another episode of “harmless” trade.

As an author writing for an American reading public in the wake of the American Revolution, Ledyard employs exchange specifically because such incidents can be condensed into a formative representation of cultural mistreatment, misappropriation, and abuse on behalf of the British. However, to be an “American” in 1783, or even 1779 when Ledyard was on board the *Resolution*, was far different than what we now consider “American.” It seems Ledyard was by no means fanatical about American independence—serving in both the British army and navy during the Revolution. In fact, Edward Gray maintains, “But nothing suggests that the news [of the successful American Revolution] brought warm feeling toward his native land or that it aroused some latent revolutionary sentiment. If anything, the record suggests he only grew closer to Britain

and the Royal Navy” (The Making 80). Gray seems to think that because Ledyard petitioned for a promotion to an officer’s commission in the Royal Navy and because Ledyard sailed on at least one more voyage with the Royal Navy post the American Revolution, all of this indicates Ledyard was not keen on American independence, but rather “cast adrift by the uncontrollable winds of history” (The Making 80). There may in fact be some credibility to this line of thought. But I am wary of Gray’s analysis not only because these ensuing incidents do not necessarily mark Ledyard as pro-British, only pro-career. Moreover, had Gray not preceded such statements with a lengthy analysis of Ledyard’s intent to write for fame and money alone, dismissing any sort of social, cultural, or political relevance to Ledyard’s Journal, I would not be so quick to disagree with Gray’s examination of Ledyard and his Journal. For Ledyard’s Journal and its anti-British commentary *also* suggest he was by no means fanatical about British conceptions of imperialism.

How then are we to read Ledyard’s Journal in the context of the American Revolution, American independence, and democracy? Gifford maintains, “[Ledyard] took the principles of the American Revolution literally, and he sought to spread those ideals around the globe, as one of America’s earliest missionaries of democracy” (xviii). The issue of Ledyard’s identity is a complicated one, no less complicated in fact, than the issue of American democracy immediately born out of the American Revolution: “On the one hand,” Gray contends, “the Revolution produced a penetrating critique of the British Empire...On the other hand, it gave rise to a new republican vision of empire...” (“Visions” 347). Ledyard’s account does not operate as propaganda, nor is it meant to

generate animosity between a burgeoning American nation and Britain. Instead, Ledyard's Journal exposes the malicious nature of British exploration, imperialism, and expansion. It seems Ledyard saw in activities of trade a gateway to his social critique; and it seems Ledyard's authorial position outside the blanket of the British crown allowed him to examine the consequences and the possible cultural ramifications of cultural transaction and trade-oriented (mis)conduct. Nevertheless, even for non-American readers, such anti-British commentary is apparent.

And yet, who is responsible for the death of Captain James Cook? The obsession with Cook's murder and the Lono question seems to have overshadowed the significance of cultural transaction in Ledyard's Journal. Even Ledyard's own discussion of the Lono issue seems to be overlooked: virtually ignored by Sahlins because Ledyard's statements "regarding the foreigners' heavenly status" is far more important to his Cook-Lono position (How Natives 173), and only briefly acknowledged by Obeyesekere as evidence for his Cook-Lono position. "The Orono [or Lono]," writes Ledyard, "is a branch I cannot well define, unless I call it the civil part of the corporation....It was said by some of use that the Orono implied royalty, and that those who had the title were the immediate descendants of the supreme chief" (88). Nowhere in the course of his Journal does Ledyard indicate that Cook was referred to as or thought to be the god Lono. Ledyard does seek to explain who Lono is to the Hawaiians (evidenced by the above passage) and does note that the Hawaiians viewed the sailors as heavenly beings. But any discussion of Lono or Cook as Lono is missing. For these reasons then, Ledyard's account is more often than not dismissed as a trivial accumulation of scribblings. Certainly, I am not

insinuating that in Ledyard's Journal a reader shall find what the other British travel narratives are missing, answers to questions that are still being raised. But what I am insinuating—and asserting—is that the relegation of Ledyard's Journal translates, however unfortunate, into that same sense of “voiceless-ness” too long forced on the Hawaiians—for only recently has anthropological scholarship departed from the predominate “Euro-centric” perspective to take another look at the events that transpired during that fateful voyage and how these events fit into the context of eighteenth-century British exploration. Have we as scholars, then, indirectly perpetuated this very same cultural veiling in the relegation of John Ledyard's Journal of Captain Cook's Last Voyage? A fellow victim of British imperialism, Ledyard, and his voice, as an “other,” would seem to elicit far more scrutiny in the scholarly community than has been observed. Must we not then reconfigure the Lono question, perhaps reaching far beyond it when reading these travel narratives?

Part II: Samuel Mānaiakalani Kamakau’s “Captain Cook’s Visit to Hawaii” and
Further Discourses of (and on) Trade

Written and published nearly one hundred years after the death of Cook, Kamakau’s “Captain Cook’s Visit to Hawaii” is perhaps the only of the three journals that explicitly and fully accounts for the Lono question, or at the very least the only one that examines the contemporary Hawaiian discourses taking place concerning Cook and their mythological beliefs. But it relegating the significance of his text *only* to its examination of the Lono question, as both Sahlins and Obeyesekere have done, has resulted in the dismissal of any discussion or examination of what Kamakau has written that falls outside the Lono debate, particularly with regard to trade.

One of the most contested points Obeyesekere and Sahlins engage with Kamakau’s account is the Christian influence on his writing:

Now it is doubtful whether Captain Cook consented to have worship paid him by the priests. He may have thought they were worshiping as in his own land. But he was a Christian and he did wrong to consent to enter an idolator’s place of worship. He did wrong to accept gifts offered before idols and to eat food dedicated to them. Therefore God smote him.

(Kamakau 100)

Such an imposition, according to Obeyesekere, negates Kamakau’s contention that the Hawaiians did indeed perceive Cook to be Lono: “Kamakau sometimes reacted by articulating Hawaiian culture very deliberately within a frame of Christian beliefs...his Evangelical prejudice forces him to translate Hawaiian cosmology into a kind of

pantheism with a supreme being at the top” (163-64). The Christian influence on Kamakau’s writing is an important factor, particularly when considering Hawaii was not Christian—nor had the Christian missionaries yet arrived—by the time Cook landed in 1778. But according to both anthropologists and in the context of the Cook-Lono debate, the incorporation of Christian imagery and allusion in Kamakau’s account seems to dictate how credible we are to read his contention that Cook was perceived as Lono. “This *is* a native history,” Obeyesekere maintains, “but one self-consciously influenced by the Evangelical charter that Kamakau himself, along with other Lahainaluna scholars, helped Dibble to construct” (164). A belief system retrospectively imposed on a mythological discourse that did not at the time have to contend with Christian thought, Christianity and Kamakau’s documentation of the events and discussion of the Lono question within a Christian framework, according to Obeyesekere, render his statements false. An attempt to cope not only with his own Evangelical beliefs but likewise having “to contend with the European statement of that history, including the journals of James Cook,” Kamakau’s account cannot be, should not be, and has erroneously been used by scholars as evidence to support Cook’s apotheosis. This matter of use then Obeyesekere works to debunk, arguing instead, “what they [the content in Kamakau’s account] illustrate is a Hawaiian mode of contentious discourse and multiple interpretation illustrating their capacity to weigh the actuality of myth and event against the pragmatics of common sense” (170). Kamakau’s account, in its illumination of the discursive properties of Hawaiian history and thought, actively re-imagines Western thinking

regarding Cook's apotheosis *simply by* incorporating the ideal of the apotheosis into the narrative.

Or does it? Sahlins disagrees:

...the flexibility of old-time Hawaiian thought was introduced by Kamakau to make a Christian point about the radical difference between the earthly and the heavenly cities; between a corrupt humanity and a perfect Divinity. The Christian tradition that has truly bollixed up the historiography of Captain Cook is not that he allowed himself to be taken for a god, but that he could not possibly have been one. (How Natives 177)

Kamakau writes, "the people said, 'It is true, this is Lono, our god! this is Lono, our god!'" (100). With such a blatant assertion, it is difficult to dismiss Kamakau's statements concerning Cook and the Lono question. "Again," Sahlins argues, "the deduction supposed that up to that moment, the people believed he was Lono" (How Natives 279). The "moment" referenced by Sahlins is Kamakau's description of the events just before Cook's death where Cook is knocked to the ground by a blow from the chief and subsequently, "groaned with pain" (103). Kamakau continues his description: "Then the chief knew that he was a man and not a god, and, that mistake ended, he struck him dead together with four other white men" (103). Sahlins interpretation of Kamakau's text and its pro-Cook-Lono leanings is on the one hand grounded in the literal statements made and referenced by Kamakau, and on the other hand grounded in Sahlins's own

analysis and interpretation of the Hawaiians' understanding and development of their own mythology in the eighteenth century. According to Sahlins:

the Hawaiian mythopraxis cited by Kamakau consistently contradicts the 'commonsense' notion that Cook was too strange in empirical reality to be mistaken for a Hawaiian god. In both Kamakau and the earlier *Mooolelo Hawaii*, on which his account is based, the weirdness of the foreigners' looks and speech were no arguments against their divinity—on the contrary. (How Natives 175)

We can, he continues, see the validity of Obeyesekere's argument only if "we ignore the content of the debate, and above all the conclusion by Hawaiian lights that Cook was Lono, on grounds that the text is riddled with anachronisms and infected with the Hawaiian historian's intense Christianity" (How Natives 176-77). True, Sahlins contends, the incorporation of Christian ideals prevalent in Kamakau's account does highlight the historical differences existing between the time Cook died on the shores of Hawai'i in February of 1779 and the time those events were documented by Kamakau in 1866. But under no circumstances are we as readers to dismiss the statements Kamakau is making and referencing concerning Cook's apotheosis, an error Sahlins believes Obeyesekere has committed.

In all generalities then, Sahlins interpretation appears to be too literal, and Obeyesekere's not literal enough. Believing that Kamakau's statements are the end-all-be-all to the manner in which the eighteenth-century Hawaiians involved in Cook's death perceived Cook in the context of their Lono mythology, as does the former, is certainly a

misconception. But believing Kamakau's statements should only be regarded and examined for the way in which they account for the discursive properties of Hawaiian history and thought and whether or not the Hawaiians in 1778-79 understood the complexities of their own mythology, as does the latter, is as great a misconception. Amidst the entire Lono discussion concerning Kamakau's account, both anthropologists have failed to analyze and examine an aspect of "Captain Cook's Visit" that is equally significant and perhaps even more telling when exploring the social, cultural, and political ramifications of Cook's death; and that aspect is trade.

"[Cook] may have thought they were worshiping as in his own land," Kamakau maintains, "But he was a Christian and he did wrong to consent to enter an idolator's place of worship. *He did wrong to accept gifts offered before idols and to eat food dedicated to them. Therefore God smote him*" (100).⁷ The italicized portion of the passage highlights the significance Kamakau places on trade. According to him, not only did Cook take advantage of the Hawaiians in his actions while trading—"Ka-lani-'opu'u treated Captain Cook hospitably, giving him hogs, taro, potatoes, bananas, and other provisions, as well as feather capes, helmets, *kahili*, feather leis...In return Captain Cook gave Ka-lani-'opu'u some trifles" (101)—but Cook committed an even greater wrong: he violated his Christian principles and sinned against God by participating in "idolatry" activities of trade—"He did wrong to accept gifts offered before idols and to eat food dedicated to them. Therefore God smote him" (100). The Christian integration in Kamakau's narrative then, while bringing into question his assertions regarding the Lono

⁷ Italics mine.

question, also elevates any discussion of trade and Cook's trade-oriented conduct beyond mere human-human activity to a human-higher being activity. Whether or not Kamakau's discussion of Cook and the Hawaiians' perception of him as Lono is credible seems irrelevant. How Kamakau's discussion of trade can be situated in the discussion of Cook's death and the Lono question is the issue at hand.

Though brief, Kamakau's account is dense; and though I do take issue with the narrow investigation undertaken by Obeyesekere, his discussion of the nature and importance of Hawaiian discourse is pertinent to the trade issue. The nature of discourse throughout Hawaiian history and Hawaiian mythology as represented by Kamakau illustrates the importance of debate and discussion when significant social, political, or cultural issues arise—such as whether or not Captain Cook was Lono. Such a quality directly correlates with the Hawaiians' ability to understand the communicative properties of trade. If in fact we accept Obeyesekere's sentiments that there existed “a Hawaiian mode of contentious discourse and multiple interpretation” but expand his statements to engage the whole issue of cultural interaction and transaction beyond the Lono question, we can contend that the trading activities occurring between Cook, the British, and the Hawaiians in late 1778-early 1779 were infused with the same rhetoric, properties of discourse, and multiple interpretations as the ongoing Cook-Lono debate.

Kamakau notes:

The natives took hogs a fathom in length to trade for guns, for they liked the sound of the report. They said, ‘Trade, trade! we will trade the hogs for your shooting-water, your exploding-water; guns, guns, guns!’ The

strangers said, 'No!' 'Trade! trade! guns!' 'No more.' 'The *moa* (fowl) are all gone from Molea in Hamakua.' The natives said, 'Ha! the white men know where the fish are hid. These long-tailed gods know well, for they are taking our women on board.' (100-01)

The discourse concerning trade present in Kamakau's account is both a highly verbal one and an implied non-verbal one, a characteristic the above passage illustrates. The initial communication concerning trade between the Hawaiians and the sailors is verbal, an exchange of words about a desired trade and the objects sought. Quickly though, the communication evolves, moving from a verbal discourse advocating trade to a verbal discourse about the non-verbal activities of trade and what these activities signify. Obeyesekere acknowledges the discourse in Kamakau's account concerning Cook's divinity; but he only acknowledges the verbal discourses, those that explicitly and clearly engage the idea that Cook may or may not have been Lono. What he fails to acknowledge are the non-verbal discourses the Hawaiians engage via trade:

The natives tried to provoke Lono to wrath to see whether he would be angry. They reasoned, 'Perhaps the god will not be angry because he has received offerings of hogs, clothing, red fish, bananas, and coconuts, and the god Lono has been propitiated.' The natives accordingly went on board the ship and took some iron...Palea no longer believed in the divinity of Lono and he plotted to steal a boat. He and his men secretly took a boat from Lono's ship and, conveying it to Onouli, they broke it up

in order to get the iron in it...It was this theft of a boat by Palea that led to the fight in which Captain Cook was killed. (101-02)

Just as “the people brought hogs, taro, potatoes, bananas, fowls, everything he [Cook] wanted, thinking him to be their god Lono,” a non-verbal discourse, so have the Hawai‘ians resorted to theft in order to reveal and “argue” Cook’s mortal status.

There existed in Hawaii during Cook’s visit an “expansive and open-ended contact” (Thomas 90). According to Thomas, the situation in Hawaii was much unlike the relationship resulting from the British encounters on other islands, such as Niue:

In day-to-day exchange [in Niue], as well as on more important occasions (in tribute and in sacrifices) food was—and in general still is—the primary medium for the expression of social and ritual obligations and affiliations throughout the south Pacific, whereas weapons were not generally articles of exchange. (90)

The islanders in Niue did however use weapons as articles of exchange while trading with the British. Because the islanders were not in the habit of trading weapons among themselves or other inhabitants of the neighboring islands, which it seems was the case, the breaking of such “trade rules” when trading with the British could only be due to the fact that foreigners fell outside the limitations the islanders imposed on exchange. Moreover, such a distinction between trading parties illustrates how trade can often operate as a different means of political and social communication between cultures than it is within cultures:

they had a strong interest in articles which could only be got through exchange with the whites, but for some reason they wanted to avoid the social relationship which was almost always an indissociable part of exchange—or the purpose of it—within their own system. (91)

Hawaiians, on the other hand, had no such limitations on trade, either while trading within their culture or between cultures. *Why* these discrepancies between Niue and Hawaii in trading may have existed when considering the social significance of the gift is indeed examined by Thomas. But his discussion of such a discrepancy does leave some questions unanswered. *What* such a discrepancy signifies in the reading of Kamakau's account, and with regards to the "discourse of trade" issue, goes unanswered. Thomas notes, "Much of the openness toward foreigners in Hawaii and elsewhere was clearly connected with the close associations between chiefs and foreignness..." (92). The question then becomes: Does this open attitude disrupt the significance of and the Hawaiians' relationship to the gift?

The embrace of foreignness would seem to discount the importance of the gift. In a very segregated society, like the Hawaiian and the Niue, preserving the gift speaks to an understandable and adequate means of remaining culturally stable. And yet, the Hawaiians were no less culturally stable than the Niue following Cook's visit. Hindsight twenty-twenty, the embrace of foreignness seems to have rendered the Hawaiian culture more susceptible to radical cultural change—perhaps history may not have witnessed such a Christian takeover in Hawaii during the nineteenth century. What seems to be the case then is that the Hawaiians traded as they did for one of two reasons: either 1. they

were unaware of the consequences an open-arms trade would initiate (or to speak in more callous terms, naïve); or 2. the Hawaiians' understanding of the gift relationship and perception of what it means to trade under such a system was not limited to Hawaiian-Hawaiian exchange. The latter appears to be the case. The significance of the gift does not seem to be lost, but is instead latent in the gifts given by the Hawaiians:

‘It is true, this is Lono, our god! this is Lono, our god!’ ... Then the people brought hogs, tar, potatoes, bananas, fowls, everything he wanted, thinking him to be their god Lono... When Captain Cook went ashore at Kealakekua the kahuna, believing him to be a god, led him to the heiau... where sacrifices were offered... He did wrong to accept the gifts offered. (Kamakau 100)

Likewise, the significance of the gift is transmitted to the British gifts of exchange, perhaps unbeknownst to them: “Captain Cook gave Ku-‘ohu a knife, and it was after this incident that Ku-‘ohu named his daughter Changed-into-a-dagger (Ku-a-pahoa) and The-feather-that-went-about-the-ship (Ka-hulu-ka‘a-moku). This was the first gift given by Captain Cook to any native of Hawaii” (93). Reiterating the point Kamakau makes about *Cook* doing “wrong” to accept the gifts illustrates Kamakau’s intention to transfer any amount of blame for Cook’s death from the Hawaiians to Cook, ultimately affirming, “It was not the fault of the Hawaiian people that they held him sacred and paid him honor as a god worshiped by the Hawaiian people” (103).

Not all of the exchanges taking place in Hawaii were gift exchanges, though: “Cook bought hogs with pieces of iron and iron hoops to be used for weapons, hatchets,

knives, and fishhooks. A hog a fathom long was had in exchange for a piece of iron a yard long” (98). There is a difference between a commodity and a gift,⁸ and trades indulging the former occurred just as frequently—if not even more so—than trades indulging the latter. The problem arises when one (or both) of the parties is unable to distinguish between the two acts of trade; and it appears the British fell prey to such misinformation. Much of Kamakau’s account deals with these sorts of misunderstandings, the main one—the Lono question—iterated by Ku-‘ohu: “I do not know whether these are gods or men” (94). But “that mistake ended,” the Hawaiians are vindicated by the death of Cook (103). On the other hand, Cook’s misunderstandings, according to Kamakau, only seem to become greater: “Captain Cook accepted their gifts; it may be that he took them to show the British people what the products of Kauai were like...He may have thought they were worshiping as in his own land...Possibly Captain Cook did not quite understand what Ka-lani-‘opu‘u said” (95, 100, 102). Kamakau intimates that while the Hawaiians may have cleared up any sort of misunderstanding, Cook only falls deeper into the abyss, until eventually, “[Ka-lani-mano-o-ka-ho‘owaha] struck him dead...” (103).

As much as Ledyard indicates that trade killed Cook, Kamakau indicates the same, though more specifically that it was activities of gift giving and misunderstood gift giving that led to Cook’s demise. What is far more telling than this fact when considering the social, political, and cultural motivations for Kamakau’s writing, though, is his final

⁸ Thomas outlines the difference between commodities and gifts: the former are alienable, independent, rated by quantity (price), and objects; while the latter are inalienable, dependent, rated by quality (rank), and subjects (15). For a more complete discussion of such a distinction, see Thomas 14-22.

exclamation, “Such is the end of a transgressor” (104). Kamakau details how and why the British encounters with the Hawaiians in 1778-1779 affected (and continually affect) their culture:

The seeds that he planted here have sprouted, grown, and become the parents of others that have caused the decrease of the native population of these islands. Such are gonorrhoea, and other social disease; prostitution; the illusion of his being a god [which led to] worship of him; fleas and mosquitoes; epidemics. All of these things have led to changes in the air which we breathe; the coming of things which weaken the body; changes in plant life; changes in religion; changes in the art of healing; and changes in the laws by which the land is governed. (104)

And yet, one of the changes not mentioned by Kamakau, and one that was not the result of Cook’s third voyage, was the advent of Christianity—perhaps one of the greatest changes affecting the Hawaiian culture and cultural activities. For it appears Christianity is the driving force of his text, not only a means to an end but *the* end. Kamakau persists in noting that Cook’s death is somehow representative of a divine plan of retribution since Cook allowed himself to be mistaken for a god; thus, his account appears to be a lesson in Christian values and morals—one vindicating the eighteenth-century Hawaiians involved in Cook’s death because they were not at the time Christian but admonishing contemporary Hawaiians about the vengeance God may seek should any of his followers transgress as Cook did. It was via exchange (theft) the Hawaiians believed they would provoke Lono: “The kahuna warned us not to take the god’s property lest there be

trouble,” Kamakau notes (94); “Only do not meddle with the things belonging to the god” the Hawaiians were told (94). It is also via exchange (gift giving and trade) the Hawaiians sought to appease Lono (Cook), and ultimately via exchange (theft) they sought to reveal Cook for whom he actually was. But Cook, who was at the time Christian, failed to abide by the exchange rules established by God, provoked Him through exchange, and was punished accordingly. Essentially, eighteenth-century Hawaiians are absolved of their involvement in Cook’s murder; but like Cook, nineteenth-century Hawaiians, should the same circumstances arise again, will not be.

How then are we to reconfigure the Lono question? It appears Kamakau’s empathy for eighteenth-century non-Christian Hawaiians results in an almost anti-understanding of how we are to account for the enigmatic circumstances of Cook’s death. If Kamakau’s account was written in order to shift the blame of Cook’s death from the Hawaiians to Cook, his acknowledgement that the Hawaiians cannot possibly be held accountable because they were not Christian insinuates the very thing he is seeking to combat: Hawaiian mythology *is* accountable. Regardless of where the misunderstanding is placed then—the Hawaiians or Cook—Kamakau is reconfiguring the Lono question, even if unintentionally. Because he employs the Cook-Lono notion more as evidence for his social, political, and cultural commentary than for the purpose of figuring out who killed Cook, we are led to believe the perpetrator has already been fingered. And though Hawaiian mythology is on some level to blame, that mistake has been remedied by the Christian takeover.

I am curious then as to how both Sahlins and Obeyesekere see Kamakau's account as evidence for their respective hypotheses. The word "Lono" certainly appears often in Kamakau's text—it appearing nowhere in Cook's journal and only twice in Ledyard's. But far from answering any aspect of the Lono question raised by the two anthropologists, "Lono" and what Kamakau says about Lono serve as the stepping stones for his discussions of trade; for it is ultimately exchange that Kamakau implicates in Cook's death and how Cook's visit transformed Hawaii. Post-mortem, "[the Hawaiians] stripped the flesh from the bones of Lono [Cook]" (103), a gesture indicating that Cook, Lono, whatever the Hawaiians call him, broke the law of trade: "Ku-'ohu said... 'I have told you we live under a law; if any man rob or steal, his bones shall be stripped of flesh'" (94). Captain James Cook did, so they did.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION

According to Kamakau, soon after Cook's death relations between the Hawai'ians and the British returned to an amicable state (103). The British pressed on for their second try at the Northwest Passage, Captain Clerke dying along the way from failing health, and then returned to England in October 1780; and the mythmaking commenced.

The implications of the Lono question are great. Along with helping us better understand Hawaiian mythology and Hawaiian mythological practice in the eighteenth century, such examination illuminates Western perceptions of this mythology. Ultimately, it appears both parties—the Hawaiians and the West—are dually responsible for the mythmaking. But as is the case with most murder mysteries, there can only be one culprit—each anthropologist sculpting the circumstances and evidence specifically for their idea (or ideal). And while theoretically solving the problem of Cook's death, or the problem of not knowing exactly how and why he died, the mythmaking, and polarizing the debate about the mythmaking, has resulted in an incomplete examination of Cook's death and associated travel narratives.

All three travel accounts—Cook's, Ledyard's, and Kamakau's—reveal in their discussions of trade a far more complex and significant cultural conversation happening in late 1778-early 1779 that has been ignored. Moreover, it is by way of that conversation that readers can begin to re-examine the enigmatic circumstances surrounding Cook's death and how those circumstances inform us about the social, cultural, and political motivations for writing. The pains both Sahlins and Obeyesekere have taken to discover

how and why Cook died is important—for in light of everything that took place during Cook’s third voyage, the Lono question is a vital one. But it appears their protracted and narrow investigation into how and why Cook died has led to a general dismissal of the what: what does Cook’s death signify in these narratives, both to eighteenth-century audiences and to contemporary audiences; what, if anything, can we attribute to his death aside from the Lono question; and, most importantly, what are we to make of the discussions of trade in the context of Cook’s death.

I am not the first to acknowledge the necessity to open-up the Lono debate, though. Philip Edwards states:

One does not need to share Obeyesekere’s *casus belli*, or accept his reconstruction of the Hawaiian reception of Cook, to feel that his abrasive skepticism has done irretrievable damage to Sahlins’ hypothesis. It simply does not seem necessary to make the assumption that Cook was believed to be a god to account either for the Hawaiians’ homage or for his death.

(611)

Insofar as Edwards indicates the debate is the wrong way to approach the entire circumstance of Cook’s death, he is thorough; but he does little to reflect on how we can begin to re-open the debate beyond acknowledging the necessity for such a process. He does, however, hint at the importance of trade: “The very marked change in the attitude of the Hawaiians to Cook on this second visit is not really difficult to explain. They had given him everything, and he had gone away. Their foodstuff and livestock were seriously depleted. They did not want him back” (613). Certainly, the altered attitudes of

the Hawaiians would be due to a depletion of their natural resources—those they depended on for survival. But examining how they traded, why they traded, and what such trading signifies deepens our reading of these attitudes, attitudes reflecting not just fear for their own prosperity but attitudes reflecting the social, political, and cultural importance of the trading activities and the disrupted process that resulted in Hawaii in the eighteenth century.

But as much as the illumination of trade and trade-oriented discourses—both in practice and writing—has revealed how and why such incorporation is significant, we have only begun to reconfigure the Lono question. The steps taken when examining each travel narrative have led to the opening-up of the debate; ultimately however, a complete reconfiguration of the Lono question can only be accomplished by a comprehensive re-examination of the bulk of travel literature resulting from Cook's final voyage—even those texts produced by the British sailors.

Other than Cook's, the two travel narratives I chose I did so because of the perspective they were written from—an American and a Hawaiian—a perspective that illuminates the rhetoric of documenting trade and how such documentation plays into the circumstances of Cook's death. The significance of and necessity for investigating the British narratives (or even other European narratives) has been pushed aside, in sum because the subtlety with which commentary is often produced is not sufficient for initially highlighting exactly how and why the Lono question falls short. Now however, with the Lono question being reconfigured and the steps taken to decentralize the debate, we can go back and look once more at these British narratives to unveil trade-oriented

discourses and commentary that may not be that removed from those evident in Ledyard and Kamakau's account.

Rebecca Steinitz does do a formidable job of illustrating how nineteenth-century British accounts address trade, but she does not situate her discussion within the trade-oriented conversation that had been taking place long before the nineteenth-century in earlier British travel narratives and literary texts. Apart from Cook's voyage, there is an expansive array of texts that can further illuminate the importance of trade discourses—Aphra Behn's *Oroonoko; or the Royal Slave*, Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe*, William Dampier's *New Voyage Round the World*, Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels*, to name a few. Essentially, the trade question is not one we should relegate to travel accounts, but one we can address across the broad spectrum of literary genres. But it is in travel narratives that we can begin to examine how and why trade evolves into such a loaded form of discourse; and it is ultimately in travel texts that we witness how such commentary manifests.

Had that mast not sprung off the coast of Hawai'i in early February, Cook may have lived to sail again, and the journals produced from his voyage would have been compiled, published, and examined along with the whole of eighteenth-century travel narratives—no particular event warranting scrutiny. But circumstance prevailed, and Cook's death became *the* reason these journals are heavily examined.

Edwards maintains, "The underlying reason why Cook was killed will never be known" (610). True, but that has not yet stopped us from examining the enigmatic circumstances surrounding his death. Instead, not knowing why he was killed has led to a

more fruitful examination of how his death is incorporated and discussed in texts. And though I am not asserting that it was explicitly trade that killed Captain Cook, the discourse of trade implicates Cook in a manner not previously considered. Neither Ledyard nor Kamakau witnessed Cook's death; but by sculpting renditions of an event they were not present for, we can perceive how such "story-telling" is as much a way for them to understand the significance of Cook's death as it is for readers.

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