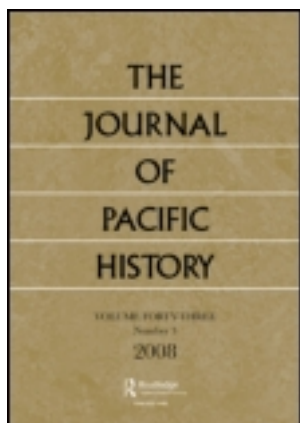


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Gift Exchange and Interpretations of Captain Cook in the Traditional Kingdoms of the Hawaiian Islands

THOMAS S. DYE

ABSTRACT

The relationship between the *kanaka maoli* people of the traditional kingdoms of the Hawaiian Islands and Captain James Cook and his crew is interpreted in the context of a theory of gift exchange. It is argued that interpretations of *kanaka maoli* behaviour based on an implicit assumption that social relations were structured primarily by property rights leads to error. Instead, sense can be made of *kanaka maoli* behaviour only if a logic based on rights of person is taken into account.

JAMES COOK WAS RECOGNISED AS THE GREATEST EUROPEAN NAVIGATOR OF HIS DAY. His ambition, thoroughness, cartographic skill and attention to geographic theory set him apart as one of the finest officers produced by the Royal Navy. He was also a keen observer of human affairs, genuinely curious about the people he met on his voyages. In the ethnocentric words of one of his seamen, Cook 'was born to deal with savages and he was never happier than in association with them'.¹ Cook's unusual curiosity drove him to interact with *kanaka maoli* in ways that his countrymen found blasphemous.² That he let *kanaka maoli* refer to him as Lono and participated in native ceremonies that Europeans interpreted as religious was downplayed in official accounts of the voyage;³ that the heroic

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¹ Frederic William Howay, *Zimmermann's Captain Cook: an account of the third voyage of Captain Cook around the world, 1776-1780* (Toronto 1930), 102.

² The term *kanaka maoli* is used to refer to the native people of the islands we call Hawai'i today. When Cook was visiting the islands in 1778 and 1779, the wars waged by Kamehameha to unite the islands as a single Hawaiian kingdom were still a generation in the future, thus the term Hawaiian is anachronistic in this context.

³ The evidence for this view is provided by Glyn Williams, *The Death of Captain Cook: a hero made and unmade* (Cambridge, MA 2008), 136 ff.

Cook had recognised other gods was not something the home audience was prepared to hear.⁴

Cook's posthumous fame was not solely a product of his seamanship or ethnography. He was also apotheosised in Europe as 'the prototypical hero of European imperialism',⁵ and his life and work were tied to the seemingly inexorable spread of European influence around the world. As his reputation grew, so did his accomplishments. There is undoubtedly some truth in the words of an art historian and student of Cook's Pacific voyages that

Cook developed a technique of culture contact with primitive peoples that proved to be highly successful. By means of friendliness and force, the conventions that were necessary for the maintenance of a free market (such as the European conception of private property) were impressed upon the native mind. Cook must have been the first European to practise successfully on a global scale the use of tolerance for the purpose of domination, an administrative technique that came to play a vital role in the European colonisation of the world during the nineteenth century.⁶

But such a point of view, which ascribes to Cook a dominance later achieved in the islands by European market relations, discounts the difficulties that Cook faced in his dealings with *kanaka maoli*. The idea that Cook and the English dominated *kanaka maoli* was proved false at Kealakekua, where Cook's death at the hands of an angry crowd showed that the English presence in the islands was contingent on the goodwill and hospitality of their hosts, and not their subordination. *Kanaka maoli* chose to welcome the Englishmen, not dominate them, at least not in the way the Englishmen understood domination, as subjection to a superior and hostile force. The Hobbesian logic that the English applied in their attempts to understand *kanaka maoli* behaviour, born of social relations unique to England in the 18th century world,⁷ was not shared by *kanaka maoli*. Instead, *kanaka maoli* appear to have applied a logic rooted in the practice of gift exchange, whose premises yielded interpretations of events different from those drawn by the Englishmen. Unlike commodity exchange, where a choice among things of equivalent value is the focus, gift exchange focuses on the choice of recipient among a pool of potential recipients and on estimations of the value of the social relationship that will result. In commodity exchange, one seeks to maximise the value of the things one receives. In gift exchange, one seeks to maximise the value of the social relationships that are forged.⁸

⁴ See *ibid.*, 81ff. The poet William Cowper's comments that 'the poor man was content to be worshipped' are provided by Nicholas Thomas, *Cook: the extraordinary voyages of Captain James Cook* (New York 2003), 409–10. This moral complaint was later picked up by missionaries in Hawai'i, see Bernard Smith, *Imagining the Pacific: in the wake of the Cook voyages* (New Haven, CT 1992), 239–40; Anne Salmond, *The Trial of the Cannibal Dog: the remarkable story of Captain Cook's encounters in the South Seas* (New Haven 2003), 428–9; Gavin Kennedy, *The Death of Captain Cook* (London 1978), 3.

⁵ Bernard Smith, *European Vision and the South Pacific* (2nd edn, New Haven, CT 1985), 226.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 236.

⁷ C.B. Macpherson, *The Rise and Fall of Economic Justice and Other Papers* (Oxford 1985).

⁸ A key to understanding the logic of gift exchange was to divorce it from the items exchanged, see Duran Bell, *Wealth and Power: survival in a time of global accumulation* (Walnut Creek, CA 2004), 161ff. Theoretical insights on the characteristics assigned to the items in gift exchange are due to the French sociologist Marcel Mauss; see Marcel Mauss, *The Gift: forms and functions of exchange in archaic societies*, tr. Ian Cunnison (London 1966).

The journals of Cook and his crew describe many situations where *kanaka maoli* and Englishmen miscommunicated in ways common to situations of culture contact.⁹ Many of these have received little notice from historians, who have focused from the beginning on Cook's death at Kealakekua.¹⁰ Although Cook's death has often been portrayed as the result of a misunderstanding, it was not. Cook and his party came ashore with the goal of taking hostage Kalani'ōpu'u, the king of Hawai'i Island. *Kanaka maoli* successfully defended their king, but the Englishmen left their captain exposed on the shore, and he was killed before the conflict could be resolved. This appears to be an instance in which *kanaka maoli* and English shared logics, but only *kanaka maoli* were able to achieve their goals.¹¹ In contrast, most of the misunderstandings were resolved without serious injury or loss of life — a happy circumstance that has worked to keep them away from the historian's gaze, with the result that they have passed mostly unrecognised as a kind of background noise to the more dramatic events of the visit.¹²

One challenge for the historian is that the written record of the encounter comes primarily from one side of the cultural divide, the journals and log books of the English officers.¹³ For instance, one need not doubt the general truth of a hyperbolic statement made by David Samwell, the Welsh surgeon's mate aboard the *Resolution* who published his own account of Cook's death shortly after returning to England, that 'thieving . . . was the cause of every misunderstanding

(footnote continued)

These insights have been productively developed by anthropologists who have analysed and described a wide variety of gift exchange systems in the Pacific, e.g., Marshall D. Sahlins, *Stone Age Economics* (Chicago 1972), 149–83; Annette B. Weiner, *Inalienable Possessions: the paradox of keeping-while-giving* (Berkeley, CA 1992); Maurice Godelier, *The Enigma of the Gift*, tr. Nora Scott (Chicago 1999); Chris A. Gregory, *Gifts and Commodities* (London 1982); Marilyn Strathern, *The Gender of the Gift: problems with women and problems with society in Melanesia* (Berkeley, CA 1988); Nicholas Thomas, *Entangled Objects: exchange, material culture, and colonialism in the Pacific* (Cambridge, MA 1991). The anthropological project documents the diversity of cultural behaviours in systems of gift exchange, but has not contributed to the logic of gift exchange, per se.

⁹Serge Tchérékzoff, 'On cloth, gifts, and nudity: regarding some European misunderstandings during early encounters in Polynesia', *Clothing the Pacific* (Oxford 2003), 51–75; Serge Tchérékzoff, 'First Contacts' in Polynesia: the Samoan case (1722–1848): Western misunderstanding about sexuality and divinity (Canberra 2004).

¹⁰An excellent introduction to the topic is provided by Kennedy, *The Death of Captain Cook*. For accounts that deal specifically with Cook's death, see Williams, *The Death of Captain Cook*; David Samwell, *Captain Cook and Hawaii* (San Francisco 1957). The anthropological literature has elaborated on an insight provided by Gavan Daws, 'Kealakekua Bay revisited: a note on the death of Captain Cook', *Journal of Pacific History*, 3 (1968), 21–3; see Marshall Sahlins, *Islands of History* (Chicago 1985), 104–35. This work inspired a debate over the essentialist notion of how natives think; see Gananath Obeyesekere, *The Apotheosis of Captain Cook: European mythmaking in the Pacific* (Princeton, NJ 1992); Marshall D. Sahlins, *How 'Natives' Think: about Captain Cook, for example* (Chicago 1995); Tchérékzoff, 'First Contacts' in Polynesia, 113–58; Thomas, *Cook*, 384; Salmond, *The Trial of the Cannibal Dog*, 403–4.

¹¹In a similar vein, the focus here on misunderstandings means that little notice is taken of sexual relations between *kanaka maoli* women and the Englishmen, a topic that is explored fully in Sahlins, *Islands of History*, 1–31.

¹²See, e.g., John C. Beaglehole (ed.), *The Journals of Captain James Cook on his Voyages of Discovery*, vol. 3: *The Voyage of the Resolution and Discovery, 1776–1780* (Cambridge 1967) pts 1–2; Thomas, *Cook*; Salmond, *The Trial of the Cannibal Dog*.

¹³Tchérékzoff, 'First Contacts' in Polynesia; John Gascoigne, *Captain Cook: voyager between worlds* (London and New York 2007).

that happened between us'.¹⁴ But it would be a mistake to take Samwell's conclusion at face value. Samwell interpreted events from the perspective of commodity exchange; his focus was firmly fixed on the things that were exchanged, and what he called 'thieving' was a culturally determined classification rooted in a logic of property rights and commodity exchange.

There is no corresponding eyewitness record of how *kanaka maoli* characterised the misunderstandings. However, the logic of gift exchange with its focus on social relations rather than things points away from thieving and toward the English practice in those first encounters of what *kanaka maoli* might have termed *mamaua*.¹⁵ The dictionary defines this word as the failure to give a return gift, to receive without giving in return.¹⁶ This is an idea so peripheral to the logic of commodity exchange that the *kanaka maoli* word has no counterpart in the English language.

Lacking a well-defined concept of gift exchange and the vocabulary to talk about it incisively, the English were in a poor position to understand events as they unfolded. Today, with an understanding of the logic of gift exchange, it is possible to go beyond the interpretations of Cook and his officers, and to give content to the suggestion that misunderstandings between European explorers and Pacific Islanders were due, in part, to the Europeans' 'disrespect for the rights of the inhabitants'.¹⁷ At the same time, the fact that societies in which gift exchange plays a large role also emphasise rights of person exposes the colonial genesis of recommendations that the events of culture contact situations be interpreted in terms of property rights.¹⁸ The cultural divide between *kanaka maoli* and English was wide and deep. That it was successfully negotiated with regularity during Cook's visit is a testament to the intellectual acuity of individuals on both sides of the divide and an affirmation of cross-cultural universals in the human condition. Misunderstandings were frequent, however, and sufficiently anxious to make their way into the journals of Cook and his officers. Their value to the historian is the light their analysis shines on philosophical differences at the core of the cultural divide.

Discovering Cook

The *Resolution* was about six miles offshore Kaua'i Island when its crew first spied the *kanaka maoli* canoes and understood that the islands they had come to on the day before were inhabited. Cook wrote in his journal after the meeting that

¹⁴ Samwell, *Captain Cook and Hawaii*, 24; see also I.C. Campbell, 'European–Polynesian encounters: a critique of the Pearson thesis', *Journal of Pacific History*, 29:2 (1994), 222–31, 224.

¹⁵ This general idea, based on interviews and first-hand knowledge of Hawaiian language sources, was formulated by Abraham Fornander, *Ancient History of the Hawaiian People to the Times of Kamehameha I*, 3 vols (Honolulu 1996), II, 186. Further study of Hawaiian language sources, which date from a period after Cook's visit, might yield further insights into the *kanaka maoli* response to Cook and his crew.

¹⁶ Mary Kawena Pukui and Samuel H. Elbert, *Hawaiian Dictionary* (4th edn, Honolulu 1986).

¹⁷ W.H. Pearson, 'The reception of European voyagers on Polynesian Islands, 1568–1797', *Journal de la Société des Océanistes* 26 (1970), 121–53, 140.

¹⁸ See, e.g., Campbell, 'European–Polynesian encounters'.

the canoes were ‘coming off from the shore towards the Ships’, but it is not clear what he meant by this. Tradition remembers the first *kanaka maoli* to see the ships as the fisherman Moapu and his companions who were out fishing at the time.¹⁹ When they made it to the ships, they had a few fish in their canoes, and their position on the fishing grounds would explain why they were the first to make contact with the Englishmen. At first, though, they pulled up short of the *Resolution* and viewed her from a distance.

After this initial hesitation, the two canoes came alongside when the *kanaka maoli* found they could understand the Tahitian words shouted to them by Cook’s crew. They declined invitations to come on board, for reasons that are unclear. When they saw the crew’s interest in the fish they had in their canoes, they readily offered them up, apparently without fear. They were happy to receive things in return, and were not afraid to accept them. They especially liked iron, which does not occur naturally in the islands and was extremely rare on Kaua’i.²⁰ When their fish had all been given away, they offered some stone fishing sinkers they had with them, but the Englishmen declined the sinkers. The English, unaware of the traditional *kūkaula* fishing method in which a sinker stone is attached to the line in such a way that it can be released after it has taken a hook to the bottom,²¹ believed the sinkers were weapons. When the *kanaka maoli* tossed the sinkers overboard — they would have had no desire to fish again before returning home to share the momentous news of their discovery — the Englishmen interpreted the action as a gesture of peace. Such was the tenuous state of communication between *kanaka maoli* and the English, a communication often confounded by different cultural logics and mediated by translation through a language that was native to none of the speakers.

Soon after this, Cook set sail toward Kaua’i, and the *kanaka maoli* men paddled off. This encounter, the first one recorded between *kanaka maoli* and non-Polynesians, was brief. Cook wrote only four sentences about it in his journal, but in this short space he managed to record, unwittingly, the crux of what would become a persistent source of miscommunication between *kanaka maoli* and the Englishmen. In Cook’s eyes, the *kanaka maoli* had ‘exchanged a few fish they had in the Canoes for anything we offered them’.²² The phrase at first seems unremarkable, a simple description of what had occurred, but its pedestrian exterior conceals a deep contradiction. What rational being exchanges what they have for anything a stranger might offer? What, other than his own cultural expectations, led Cook to believe that the *kanaka maoli* men expected an immediate material return for offering up the fish they had with them?

¹⁹ Samuel M. Kamakau, *Ruling Chiefs of Hawaii* (revised edn, Honolulu 1992), 92.

²⁰ Cf. Frank Quimby, ‘The *hierro* commerce: culture contact, appropriation and colonial entanglement in the Marianas, 1521–1668’, *Journal of Pacific History*, 46:1 (2011), 1–26.

²¹ Daniel Kaha’ulelio, *Ka ‘Oihana Lawa’ā: Hawaiian fishing traditions*, tr. Mary Kawena Pukui, ed. M. Puakea Nogelmeier (Honolulu 2006), 47.

²² James Cook, ‘The journal’, in John C. Beaglehole (ed.), *The Journals of Captain James Cook on his Voyages of Discovery*, vol. 3: *The Voyage of the Resolution and Discovery, 1776–1780* (Cambridge 1967) pt 1, 264.

For the rest of the day, the *Resolution* and *Discovery* ranged the southeast side of the island at a distance of about a mile and a half, looking for a sheltered spot to anchor. *Kanaka maoli* came off in canoes with 'roasting pigs and some very fine Potatoes, which they exchanged, as the others had done, for whatever was offered them'.²³ Surprisingly to the English, the pigs were small, many of them 'no bigger than Cats'.²⁴ The Englishmen were looking to provision their ships and were especially desirous of fresh meat. At their last landfall at Christmas Island more than two weeks before, they had captured about 300 green turtles, but most of these had been eaten and the idea of returning to sea rations was unappealing. The sight of the cat-sized pigs made the English 'dubious as to getting any tolerable Supply of Provisions'.²⁵

The next morning, several canoes filled with people came out to the ships. It is difficult to know what changed overnight, but the constraints that kept *kanaka maoli* from coming aboard the day before had been resolved. The first *kanaka maoli* man on board then did something that surprised the Englishmen. As Cook recorded the incident:

the first moveable thing that came in his way was the lead and line, which he without asking any questions took to put in his Canoe and when we stoped him said 'I am only going to put it into my boat' nor would he quit it till some of his countrymen spoke to him.²⁶

Samwell later saw another man try

to get the Clamp that secures the Driver boom loose, having first very cunningly drawn an old Sail over him which happened to be at hand, but notwithstanding all his address he was detected on which he immediately left off seemingly as unconcerned as if he had been doing an indifferent action.²⁷

These attitudes of indifference puzzled the Englishmen, who were products of a society in which rights of property were exerted with uncommon breadth and force. During the 17th century, the idea of an abstract property-rights economy was developed to the point that it was considered part of nature, outside the purview of social engineering and politics.²⁸ In practice, however, promotion of property rights required considerable social engineering and political interference, which can be seen clearly in evolving notions of theft, which were changing at a rapid clip. Between 1688 and 1820, the number of capital statutes governing property relations quadrupled, from about 50 to more than 200.²⁹ The Waltham Black Act of 1723 alone created some 50 new capital

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ David Samwell, 'Samwell's journal', in John C. Beaglehole (ed.), *The Journals of Captain James Cook on his Voyages of Discovery*, vol. 3: *The Voyage of the Resolution and Discovery, 1776-1780* (Cambridge 1967) pt 2, 1082.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Cook, 'The journal', in Beaglehole, *The Journals of James Cook*, vol. 3, pt 1, 265.

²⁷ Samwell, 'Samwell's journal', in Beaglehole, *The Journals of Captain James Cook*, vol. 3, pt 2, 1082.

²⁸ Joyce Oldham Appleby, *Economic Thought and Ideology in Seventeenth-Century England* (Princeton, NJ 1978), 242.

²⁹ Douglas Hay, 'Property, authority and the criminal law', *Albion's Fatal Tree: crime and society in eighteenth-century England* (New York 1975), 17-63, 18.

offences related to private property claims over deer, hares, rabbits, fish, cattle and trees.³⁰ By the last quarter of the 18th century, the crewmen of *Resolution* and *Discovery* would have expected the death sentence if caught in thefts of many kinds. This expansive view of property rights held sway aboard the ships, where petty thefts were punished by flogging at levels commensurate with neglect of duty and insolence, typically six or twelve lashes. The harshest flogging of a crewman during the voyage, 18 lashes, was applied to a Carpenter's mate for theft.³¹ Under these conditions, it is no surprise that the Englishmen responded strongly when *kanaka maoli* acted in ways they classified as thieving. At the same time, it is no surprise that 'theft' meant something different to *kanaka maoli*.³² Their indifference when caught in the act reflected this difference; it could hardly have been the feigned innocence of someone knowingly breaking alien social mores recently developed half a world away.

Sometime after the Englishmen had left Kaua'i, Charles Clerke, commander of the *Discovery* in his mid-thirties, took time to ponder *kanaka maoli* attitudes. He wrote in his journal:

there was once a Number of them on board when we got our Hammocks up; two or three of them immediately laid hold of the first that came in their Way, and were handing them into their Canoes alongside; upon being stop'd by our People they by no means seem'd alarmed, as tho' detected in a Theft, but rather surprised and hurt by our illnature, that we wou'd not spare them a few, of what we apparently had so many.³³

Clerke's insight is important. *Kanaka maoli* were not only unconcerned about what the Englishmen viewed as theft, they were 'surprised and hurt' that the Englishmen would object to their actions. Clerke's intuition that *kanaka maoli* believed the English 'illnatured' when they moved to recover their 'stolen' items gets straight to the heart of the matter. *Kanaka maoli* certainly had their own ideas about theft. Their language includes a word, '*aihue*, which loosely translates to

³⁰ EP. Thompson, *Whigs and Hunters: the origin of the Black Act* (New York 1975).

³¹ Salmond, *The Trial of the Cannibal Dog*, 435–7.

³² *Kanaka maoli* views of theft are to my knowledge unrecorded, but would probably have hinged on whether possession was based on a right of property claim or a right of person claim. Like other Polynesian languages, Hawaiian distinguishes different kinds of possession lexically in the form of its possessive pronouns (William H. Wilson, 'Proto-Polynesian possessive marking', *Pacific Linguistics*, Series B (1982), 85), which in part reflect the distinction between rights of property and person. Polynesian societies appear to have mixed rights of property and rights of person in complex ways that mostly escaped description by anthropologists and other observers (Ron Crocombe, 'An approach to the analysis of land tenure systems', *Land Tenure in Oceania*, ASAO Monograph 2 (Honolulu 1974), 1–17). It is not a matter of private property as opposed to communal ownership. A classic description of theft in Polynesia notes that '[s]ocialization of property does not mean anarchy . . . In practice the line between borrowing and theft is given by the advertisement of the intentions and acts of the person who takes the thing, so that even if the owner's permission is not first obtained there is at least no concealment' (Raymond Firth, *Primitive Polynesian Economy* (2nd edn, London 1965), 286). Attempts to understand the course of exchange between Polynesians and non-Polynesians inevitably run up against this gap in the description and understanding of traditional Polynesian economies (e.g., Pearson, 'The reception of European voyagers on Polynesian Islands, 1568–1797'; Tcherkézoff, '*First Contacts*' in *Polynesia*; Campbell, 'European–Polynesian encounters').

³³ Charles Clerke, journal extract, 'Extracts from officers' journals' in John C. Beaglehole (ed.), *The Journals of Captain James Cook on his Voyages of Discovery*, vol. 3: *The Voyage of the Resolution and Discovery, 1776–1780* (Cambridge 1967), pt 2, 1322.

'theft' in English. The word has its etymological roots in the proto-Polynesian language spoken more than 2,000 years ago, so it is reasonably certain that the Polynesians who discovered Kaua'i several hundred years before Cook visited understood the ideas of robbery, pilfering, filching, cheating and theft. The difference between *kanaka maoli* and English had to do with which actions qualified as theft and why. For the Englishmen, brought up in a world where rights were more or less synonymous with excluding others from the use and enjoyment of things held as private property, walking off with a hammock was indeed theft. For *kanaka maoli*, brought up in a world where many, if not most, rights ensured that others could not exclude one from the use and enjoyment of things, being stopped from using and enjoying a hammock was surprisingly ill-natured behaviour.

Unfortunately, miscommunications were not always resolved without incident. Shortly after *kanaka maoli* came aboard, Cook ordered three small boats overboard to look for a landing place and fresh water. In command was John Williamson, a third lieutenant described as a 'curious and unpopular character',³⁴ whose journal entries display a deep antipathy to *kanaka maoli*. Just as the boats were launched 'an Indian stole the Butcher[']s cleaver, leaped over board with it, got into his canoe and made for the shore'.³⁵ Cook ordered Williamson to give chase. During a brief chase the *kanaka maoli* men paddled upwind to take away the advantage of Williamson's sails, tried to offer up a pig and some sweet potatoes, successfully avoided a volley of gunfire from Williamson and his crew, and swam to shore with the cleaver, frustrating Williamson's attempt to retrieve it.

It is difficult to know what the *kanaka maoli* assembled on the sandy shore nearby thought of the chase and the shots, but it did not sway them from their desire to be present when the Englishmen came ashore. What happened next is not completely clear. Williamson's account is the most detailed, but it is not so much a recounting of events as it is an excuse for his cold-blooded killing of an unarmed man; the cooper and ship's corporal, William Griffin, characterised the act as 'cowardly' and 'dastardly'. All the accounts agree that there were many *kanaka maoli* on the shore and, as Cook later summarised the first-hand accounts, 'that they had no intent to kill or even hurt any of the people in the boat but were excited by mere curiosity to get what they had from them, and were at the same time, ready to give in return any thing they had'.³⁶ Williamson estimates that he was 'surrounded by upwards of an hundred' *kanaka maoli* when he tried to land his boat. *Kanaka maoli* had come out into the shoal waters close to shore and were attempting to haul up Williamson's boat. They were unaware that Williamson, hostile to *kanaka maoli* and afraid of the crowd, had changed his mind about landing and that he was now determined instead to 'seek some place to land

³⁴ Beaglehole, *The Journals of Captain James Cook*, vol. 3, pt 2, 1464.

³⁵ Cook, 'The journal', in Beaglehole, *The Journals of Captain James Cook*, vol. 3, pt 1, 265.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 267.

where the natives were not in such Numbers'.³⁷ There followed a tug of war, with *kanaka maoli* trying to haul out the boat and the Englishmen trying to take her away from the shore. According to Williamson, some punches were thrown, a situation that he thought justified what he would do next. Working at point-blank range, he shot a man with a 'small rifle barrel'd Gun . . . the man that was shot was a tall handsome man about 40 Years of age & seemed to be a Chief, the ball entering under his right pap [nipple], he instantly dropt down dead in ye water'.³⁸ At the sound of the gun and the sight of the man's blood on the water, *kanaka maoli* let go the boat and fled ashore, returning to retrieve the body of the dead man after the Englishmen had pulled a safe distance away.

The confusion in the shoal water near the beach leading to the death of the *kanaka maoli* man centred on a simple question: Why was Williamson coming ashore? For Williamson this question had an easy answer; he was under orders to find a source of fresh water so the ships could resupply. This was standard practice when land was found after a long stretch at sea. *Kanaka maoli* had no way to know this is what the English were up to. There is no indication in the journals of the voyage that *kanaka maoli* had been told what was going on, or that their help had been enlisted on board before Williamson set out. However, in the day since the *Resolution* and *Discovery* had been discovered, *kanaka maoli* had given numerous gifts to the Englishmen, from the fish offered by the fishermen to the numerous canoes that came off with small pigs and other foods. *Kanaka maoli* had chosen to give these gifts to the Englishmen, rather than to someone else, because they preferred to create and strengthen social bonds with them over other possible social relationships they might tend.³⁹ Many of the gifts they brought the Englishmen, such as the cat-sized pigs, were not especially useful, but were clearly freighted with cultural meaning.

Because gift exchange is about social relationships, one expects some ceremony as the wealth of one corporate group is alienated to another.⁴⁰ The ceremonial aspect of the exchange is one way to indicate that the individual giving the gift represents the group as a whole and that the group acts as one in giving the gift. *Kanaka maoli* had no reason to expect that the Englishmen did not understand the logic of gift exchange, or that the bits of iron that they happily received from the Englishmen without ceremony were offered as equivalents and in lieu of any further social relationship. On the contrary, they had every reason to believe that the Englishmen would ceremoniously present them with return gifts. Why should not *kanaka maoli* have believed that Williamson was coming ashore for ceremonial gift giving?

³⁷ John Williamson, journal extract, 'Extracts from officers' journals' in John C. Beaglehole (ed.), *The Journals of Captain James Cook on his Voyages of Discovery*, vol. 3: *The Voyage of the Resolution and Discovery, 1776-1780* (Cambridge 1967), pt 2, 1348.

³⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁹ Bell, *Wealth and Power*.

⁴⁰ Duran Bell, 'Wealth transfers occasioned by marriage: a comparative reconsideration', in Thomas Schweizer and Douglas R. White (eds), *Kinship, Networks, and Exchange* (Cambridge 1998), 187-209.

Consider what happened when Cook went ashore on Kaua'i for the first time, unaware that Williamson had killed the *kanaka maoli* man earlier in the day. If Cook had known about the slaying, he might have expected a hostile reception by *kanaka maoli* seeking revenge, or perhaps no reception at all from a people frightened of the lethal English weapons. Instead, Cook found a welcoming party of several hundred *kanaka maoli* assembled on the shore when he landed. *Kanaka maoli* showed no fear of the Englishmen or their weapons. They prostrated themselves before him, faces to the ground, not out of fear, but to pay Cook the deferential behaviour to which their own *ali'i* were accustomed. Then they

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...⁴¹

By this time, the English were over their anxiety about getting provisions in the islands and the surgeon's second mate Samwell had learned that the small pigs 'are what they always present to Strangers as a token of Friendship at the first Meeting'.⁴² *Kanaka maoli* were clearly giving the English gifts, as they had been the previous day when they came out to the ships.

Pigs were high status gifts in *kanaka maoli* society. *Kanaka maoli* women were forbidden to eat them; the men who did eat them typically did so on ceremonial occasions. But why give gifts of 'Pigs no bigger than Cats' when, as the English soon learned, the people of Kaua'i had at their disposal many grown and well-fattened hogs? And why present them with 'plantain' or banana trees? These are difficult questions and answers to them must be speculative to some degree. The logic of gift exchange, however, suggests some likely possibilities, which centre on the fact that gift exchanges manifest enduring social relations.

In the case of the cat-sized pigs, the receiver might be expected to grow them and fatten them until such time as they could be given to some third party as a gift. In the year or two this is going on, the receiver will be reminded of the gift, and any return that accrues to the receiver on account of the gift is due to two factors: the labour and materials invested in rearing the tiny pig and the generosity shown by the original giver. Clearly, a portion of whatever comes back is due the original giver. In this context, giving a small pig might be seen as an invitation to be part of a group that exchanges gifts over a period of many months — enough time, at least, to grow and fatten a young pig.

The 'plantain trees', or banana plants, are more difficult to interpret. One possibility is that they were offerings of peace, as similar gifts in Tahiti were interpreted by Cook,⁴³ part of the *kanaka maoli* response to the slaying earlier in the day. For *kanaka maoli*, banana trees were symbolic of man and they were sometimes used in circumstances associated with death. In Hawaiian culture,

⁴¹ Cook, 'The journal', in Beaglehole, *The Journals of Captain James Cook*, vol. 3, pt 1, 269; the formula Cook uses here, of giving without thought of return, is the Western ideology of friendship. In a gift economy, giving with indifference to return would be thoughtless and cruel; see Bell, *Wealth and Power*, 169.

⁴² Samwell, 'Samwell's journal', in Beaglehole, *The Journals of Captain James Cook*, vol. 3, pt 2, 1082.

⁴³ Cook, 'The journal', in Beaglehole, *The Journals of Captain James Cook*, vol. 3, pt 2, 216.

a ‘pit or hole (lua-hole) with its reminder of the grave must never be left empty and uncovered. A banana stalk, symbolic of man, was traditionally put in the lua-hole before filling it’.⁴⁴ According to a *kanaka maoli* named Auwae, as part of the ceremony surrounding the death of Kamehameha I, the stalk of a banana plant represented the king’s body in a canoe set out the night he died to be cleansed by the morning dew. Perhaps *kanaka maoli* interpreted Williamson’s act as an indication that the English wanted gifts of men, and so presented them with a symbolic substitute instead.

In the context of gift exchange, the gift of banana plants is potentially significant. Bananas reproduce vegetatively and the root stock, once established in the ground, produces new shoots indefinitely, each shoot growing into a ‘tree’ and producing its own bunch of fruit. Eaten by *kanaka maoli* primarily as a starch, alongside or in place of sweet potato, taro, breadfruit or yam, the banana plant is a gift that keeps on giving. Plant it once and, with some minimal care, it is possible to harvest bunches of fruit for the rest of one’s life. Thus, the timeframe of the exchange network implied by the gift of a banana plant was indefinite. The gift might be seen as an invitation to exchange for life, offered by *kanaka maoli* as a matter of course and as an antidote to the anti-social behaviour earlier in the day. It appears from the nature of these gifts that *kanaka maoli* were unwilling to let a bad incident, even a fatal one, stand in the way of forging social bonds.

For the next three days, the crews of the *Resolution* and *Discovery* spent most of their time provisioning. When they left Kaua’i to head for the Arctic Sea in search of a northern passage back to England, the *Resolution* had taken aboard 11 tons of water, ‘about sixty or eighty Pigs, a few Fowls, a quantity of potatoes and a few plantains and Tara roots’.⁴⁵

Barter and Gift Exchange

In the autumn, with the Arctic weather turning bad, the *Resolution* and *Discovery* sailed south toward Kaua’i. After four weeks at sea, they were in the latitude of the islands and about 40 miles east of Maui when they sighted the peak of Haleakalā. The two ships made their way to Maui’s windward coast, where Second Lieutenant James King, an Englishman in his late twenties aboard the *Resolution*, wrote of the first meeting with Maui *kanaka maoli*. ‘In leaving us in the evening they appeared transport’d with joy on telling them that we should stay a long while among them.’⁴⁶

⁴⁴ Mary Kawena Pukui, E.W. Haertig, and Catherine A. Lee, *Nana I Ke Kumu (Look to the Source)* 2 vols (Honolulu 1979), I, 47.

⁴⁵ Cook, ‘The journal’, in Beaglehole, *The Journals of Captain James Cook*, vol. 3, pt 1, 272.

⁴⁶ James King, journal extract, ‘Supplement to Cook’s journal’, in John C. Beaglehole, *The Journals of Captain James Cook on his Voyages of Discovery*, vol. 3: *The Voyage of the Resolution and Discovery, 1776–1780* (Cambridge 1967), pt 1, 497.

But King's captain had other ideas. *Kanaka maoli* generosity posed a problem for him.

Captain Cook had observ'd that in a harbour, from the impossibility of bringing the natives to a proper understanding of the advantage of a regular supply, it was always either a glut or a Scarcity, particularly in respect to Vegetables, more would be brought to the ship in one day than would serve a Month; if it was purchas'd the greatest part would spoil, & if the people were sent away, they would not return again, both parties were therefore injured; by cruising off he had it in his power to proportion the quantity, & keeping up the Value of his Iron, which began to be a scarce article, & of course getting a more plentifully supply for the length of time we might stay...⁴⁷

It is difficult to imagine a passage that identifies the operation of gift exchange more clearly than this one. The 'impossibility of bringing the natives to a proper understanding of the advantage of a regular supply' speaks both to what the English desired during their stay and to an expectation that *kanaka maoli* should properly keep the supply of hogs and roots at levels near demand in order to maintain prices favourable to themselves. This is indeed the rational behaviour, or as King put it the 'proper understanding', in the logic of commodity exchange. But *kanaka maoli* were not hoping for a large immediate return when they offered a gift. They were looking instead to initiate social relations according to the logic of gift exchange.

Individuals in a gift exchange have three obligations: they must (i) give freely; (ii) receive what they are offered; and (iii) make a return on every gift they receive.⁴⁸ When *kanaka maoli* brought more 'to the ship in one day than would serve a Month', they were reaching out to the English, seeking to fulfil their obligations to give freely. Clearly, they expected the English to accept the gifts that were offered. When Cook sent away *kanaka maoli* bearing gifts, he meant no harm. He was behaving rationally according to the logic of the market economy. In that logic, where the transfer of things completes the exchange and leaves the parties without obligations to one another, the materials received are completely one's own. Thus, having accepted too many gifts to be able to use them all, the English could envision no other outcome than watching the greatest part spoil. Born and raised in a market economy, how could they have known they were passing up an opportunity to receive things, not for use, but to give as presents to other *kanaka maoli* they knew?

From the *kanaka maoli* point of view, being sent away when offering a gift was not a rational action; in the logic of gift exchange, Cook was obliged to accept what they offered. The message Cook sent by refusing to receive must have been interpreted by *kanaka maoli* as highly ambiguous. In the gift exchange, refusing to accept a gift signalled a fear of being unable to return a suitable gift, but the English ships were full of things that would make splendid return gifts, so the Englishmen could not be worried that they lacked the means to make a suitable return. Instead, it seems likely that *kanaka maoli* would have concluded that they

⁴⁷ Ibid., 503.

⁴⁸ Mauss, *The Gift*, 37ff.

had done something to displease the Englishmen or injure them in some way. If so, then they would have agreed with King and Cook that ‘both parties were...injured’ when a gift was offered and refused. But the nature of the perceived injury was certainly different. The English felt the injury in the loss of a barter opportunity and the possibility of having to eat old sea rations in sight of productive land. *Kanaka maoli* felt a loss of dignity, both their own and that of the English. That they did not return after being sent away shows their respect for the Englishmen. It would have been selfish to put the English in a position to lose more dignity by bringing gifts when they felt under no obligation to receive them.

Cook’s coasting strategy worked, at least to moderate his relations with *kanaka maoli*. During the next two months, the ships would periodically pull close to land, and *kanaka maoli* would come off from the shore in canoes with provisions. By making certain that periods of interaction with *kanaka maoli* were brief, Cook immediately frustrated the long-term social relations that were one goal of gift exchange and created a barter situation in which the affective characteristics of the exchange were eliminated.

But by coasting for so long, Cook also frustrated his crew, who were eager to go ashore after such a long and arduous voyage. This is not something Cook would have taken lightly. His ‘mutinous turbulent crew’ were not modern career sailors whose response to frustration might be tempered by considerations of promotion or their next performance review. The 18th-century Royal Navy drew upon the same pool of independent men who ‘used the sea’ that served merchant mariners and privateers, those state-sanctioned pirates active through the 18th century. Cook’s biographer refers to the crew as an ‘almost chance assemblage of men...ignorant, illiterate, irresponsible, conservative — blockish, even, prone to complaint when faced with novelty — ...drunken when opportunity offered, lecherous; capable of tears; capable of cruelty’.⁴⁹ Competition for able-bodied seamen was fierce during America’s war of independence⁵⁰ and 36 men of the ship’s complement of 112 deserted *Resolution*, and 22 of 70 deserted *Discovery* while the crews were being built up in England,⁵¹ presumably because they had better offers elsewhere.⁵²

Matters came to a head when Cook, with an eye to saving grog, served the crew a ‘decoction’ made from sugarcane and hops. Alcoholic beverages were an important part of the seaman’s daily ration, which included a gallon of beer or a half pint of brandy or rum.⁵³ Although Cook thought the decoction made a good beer, at least some among the crew thought otherwise. They wrote a letter, characterised by Lieutenant King as ‘very mutinous’,⁵⁴ complaining about the

⁴⁹ Beaglehole, *The Journals of Captain James Cook*, vol. 3, pt 1, lxxxviii–lxxxix.

⁵⁰ For the Royal Navy increasing its numbers from 15,230 seamen in 1775 to 107,446 in 1783, see Christopher Lloyd, *The British Seaman, 1200–1860: a social survey* (London 1968), 288.

⁵¹ Beaglehole, *The Journals of Captain James Cook*, vol. 3, pt 2, 1457.

⁵² On the rebellious nature of 18th century maritime culture, see Peter Linebaugh and Marcus Rediker, *The Many-Headed Hydra: sailors, slaves, commoners, and the hidden history of the revolutionary Atlantic* (Boston 2000).

⁵³ Lloyd, *The British Seaman, 1200–1860*, 254.

⁵⁴ James King, journal extract, ‘Supplement to Cook’s journal’, in Beaglehole, *The Journals of Captain James Cook*, vol. 3, pt 1, 503.

decoction's injurious effect on their health and the short quantity of food rationed them. Cook had the seamen assembled on the aft deck, where under the watchful eye of the 20 armed marines on board, Cook responded by increasing their rations of food and cutting off the supply of brandy. Two days later, desperate for a drink other than water, the ship's cooper William Griffiths broke into an incompletely fermented cask of decoction, was caught, and received a dozen lashes for his efforts. Cook was paying a price for his inability to engage productively in gift exchange.

After a few weeks of coasting, Cook noted in his journal that *kanaka maoli* behaviour had changed. He wrote that *kanaka maoli* who came out to the ships

understand tradeing as well as most people and seem to have discovered what we are plying upon the coast 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.⁵⁵

In other words, *kanaka maoli* grasped the bargaining logic required by the bartering that Cook insisted on conducting.⁵⁶ Understanding they were not obligated to offer Cook gifts, *kanaka maoli* were shrewd traders, skilled at barter. Still, *kanaka maoli* had been born and raised in a society where gift exchange structured social relations, and even while they bargained shrewdly with the Englishmen *kanaka maoli* behaved in surprising ways. Cook wrote that

[t]hese people trade with the least suspicion of any Indians I ever met with, it is very common for them to send up into the Ship every thing they bring off to despose of: afterwards come in themselves and make their bargins on the quarter deck . . . which shews that these people are . . . faithfull in their dealings one with another . . .⁵⁷

Cook's keen observations make it clear that *kanaka maoli* understood the underlying logic of barter, but found it difficult to rid themselves of the instinct to act according to the logic of gift exchange. The idea that an exchange was an opportunity to foster a beneficial relationship was not yet ready to give way to a view of exchange as a potentially dangerous competition between strangers. It was one thing to barter with the Englishmen, but another to act counter to a foundational principle of *kanaka maoli* society.

Almost two months after finding Maui, the *Resolution* and *Discovery* stopped coasting to windward and sailed around Ka Lae, the southern point of Hawai'i Island, and into the lee of Mauna Loa where the ships might find a road to anchor. After exploring the rugged coast of Ka'u without finding anything suitable, they sailed north to Kona, where they found 'a tolerable shelterd bay'.⁵⁸

⁵⁵ Cook, 'The journal', in Beaglehole, *The Journals of Captain Cook*, vol. 3, pt 1, 483.

⁵⁶ Barter can be analysed by the logics of commodity and gift exchange, see Duran Bell, 'The structure of rights in the context of private property', *Journal of Socio-Economics*, 24:4 (1995), 607–622. That *kanaka maoli* and other Polynesians understood barter does not indicate they practised or understood commodity exchange in ways similar to Europeans, pace Campbell, 'European-Polynesian Encounters'.

⁵⁷ Cook, 'The journal', in Beaglehole, *The Journals of Captain Cook*, vol. 3, pt 1, 483.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 502.

at Kealakekua. It was a happy scene as the two ships dropped anchor. *Kanaka maoli* filled the bay and thronged aboard the ships, where they ‘express’d the greatest Joy & satisfaction, by Sing^g & Jumping, of our coming to Anchor, & to a more intimate & regular connexion with them’.⁵⁹ The great Hawai’i Island *ali’i*, Kalani’ōpu’u, was on Maui at the time, but for the next five days his subordinates provided ‘an unbounded supply of hogs, & Vegetables, from the Priesthood to us who lived on Shore, as well as boat loads sent to the Ship’.⁶⁰ Then, news came that Kalani’ōpu’u had left Maui and had landed on the windward side of the island. He arrived toward evening a few days later, sailing into the bay from the north, at the head of a long line of sailing and paddling canoes. Finally, the English were poised to engage fully in gift exchange with *kanaka maoli*. Although they apparently never drew the connection, they were about to see an example of what *kanaka maoli* at Kaua’i might have expected when Williamson first went ashore.

About noon the next day, Kalani’ōpu’u came off from the shore. The scene was drawn by John Webber, a landscape painter on board *Resolution*; the drawing was subsequently engraved and published in the official account of the voyage.⁶¹ There were three ‘grand and magnificent’⁶² canoes. In the first, powered by a sail and 20 paddlers, were Kalani’ōpu’u and about 40 of his principal men ‘dressed in their rich feathered clokes and helmets, and armed with long spears and daggers’.⁶³ In the second canoe, also with 20 paddlers but no sail, were Koa’a and other priests, along with three idols wrapped in red *kapa* (bark cloth). ‘These idols were busts of a gigantic size, made of wicker-work, and curiously covered with small features of various colours, wrought in the same manner with their cloaks. Their eyes were made of large pearl oysters, with a black nut fixed in the centre’.⁶⁴ The third canoe, with 18 paddlers, ‘was filled with hogs and various sorts of vegetables’.⁶⁵ The canoes circled the ships a few times as the priests chanted, then headed back. Cook followed them to shore. There, Kalani’ōpu’u presented his own feather cloak to Cook and put a feather helmet on his head and a *kahili* (standard) in his hand. Then, he spread out a share of his group’s wealth, five or six feather cloaks, on the ground before Cook and gave them to him. His people brought in ‘four very large hogs, with sugar-canes, cocoa-nuts, and bread-fruit’.⁶⁶ Kalani’ōpu’u gave Cook his name and took Cook’s in return.

⁵⁹ Ibid., 503.

⁶⁰ Ibid., 509.

⁶¹ Reprinted in Eleanor C. Nordyke, *Pacific Images: views from Captain Cook’s third voyage* (Honolulu 1999), plate 45.

⁶² King, journal extract, ‘Supplement to Cook’s journal’, in Beaglehole, *The Journals of Captain James Cook*, vol. 3, pt 1, 503.

⁶³ James Cook and James King, *A Voyage to the Pacific Ocean: undertaken by command of His Majesty for making discoveries in the Northern Hemisphere*, 4 vols (London 1784), III, 16.

⁶⁴ Ibid., III, 17.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

After Kalani'ōpu'u, the *kahuna*, or ritual expert, Kauu made his own presentation to Cook, which he followed with gifts to Kalani'ōpu'u of red feathers and a dozen iron adzes that had been given by the Englishmen to other *kanaka maoli*. The gift of the iron adzes in tandem with the prized red feathers signalled the high esteem in which *kanaka maoli* held their social relationships with the English. Gifts given by the English had entered the gift economy, where they were judged fit to grace social relations reaching all the way to the apex of Hawai'i Island society. The symbolism of Kauu's gift to Kalani'ōpu'u appears to have been lost on the English, who also failed to draw the obvious conclusion that the iron pieces they gave were not the private property of the recipients.

Instead, the Englishmen clung stubbornly to the logic of commodity exchange. This shows clearly in the testimony of Lieutenant King, who noted that it 'would often happen that inferior Chiefs were desirous of mak'g presents'⁶⁷ and that, as a result, the onshore party 'had often a greater number of small pigs present'd to us by diff^t Chiefs than we had any use for'.⁶⁸ Koa'a would sometimes ask for one of the small pigs, of which the English on shore had so many, and his request

was seldom refused; but once when he took away a young pig, it was brought to us by a man who... [Koa'a] introduced as a Chief that wanted to pay his respects to us for we knew both the Pig, & the pretended Chief to be a common fellow, the Cheat was found out...⁶⁹

The motivations for King's assessment of the situation are diverse. The social divide in England between propertied gentlemen and disenfranchised commoners was wide, as was that between the officers and 'people' aboard the *Resolution*; King's sense of aristocratic privilege and rank might have been offended by the approach of the 'common fellow'. But more striking than this is King's inability to interpret the situation outside the logic of commodity exchange. Having given the small pig to Koa'a for nothing in return, it was to King a thing of no worth. But if Koa'a interpreted the action using the logic of gift exchange, then the return gift of a pig was a sign of his relationship with the Englishman. His subsequent gift of the pig to the 'common fellow' created both a debt and an opportunity. The 'common fellow' was indebted to Koa'a for the small pig, and he had the opportunity to give it to someone with whom he preferred a social relation. His choice of Lieutenant King was an honour that would, from the perspective of gift exchange, have brought yet another *kanaka maoli* into the Englishman's social orbit. But rather than be glad of this, the logic of commodity exchange, mixed with peculiarly English ideas of rank and privilege, led King to identify the man as a cheat and turn away from establishing a relationship with him.

⁶⁷ King, journal extract, 'Supplement to Cook's journal', in Beaglehole, *The Journals of Captain James Cook*, vol. 3, pt 1, 510.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 511.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

Tolerance and Domination

In the days following Cook's death, the English vented their rage with shows of force and violence. They saw themselves at war and referred to *kanaka maoli* as the enemy. In four days, they killed at least 30 *kanaka maoli*, twice as many people as they had killed in a decade of exploring the Pacific.⁷⁰ They turned the ships' guns on groups of *kanaka maoli* on shore, burned down a village, and sent ashore armed parties who fired indiscriminately at *kanaka maoli*. In their rage, they committed atrocities. After slaying Mahimoa and Nohona'una'u and capturing Owe, the Englishmen beheaded the two dead men and shook their severed heads in the face of their bound captive.

The *kanaka maoli* response to all this was generally calm and measured, but when the English showed force, *kanaka maoli* responded with contempt, typically by exposing their buttocks, a move that infuriated the already enraged Englishmen, or by throwing stones and spears. When the English made an overture of peace or friendship, *kanaka maoli* gave unequivocally positive responses. The day after Cook was killed, Charles Clerke, who had assumed command, sent Lieutenants King and Burney ashore to demand that Cook's body be returned.

Upon Mr. Kings arrival near the Shore and making known his demands they appear'd quite elate with joy at the prospect of a reconciliation, threw away their Slings and Mats which were their Weapons and Armour, extended their Arms and in short seem'd happy in suggesting every mode of demonstrating their satisfaction.⁷¹

Kanaka maoli continued to provision the ships. Even Owe, who was released sometime after being shown the severed heads of his two friends,

returned to the Ship and brought with him a Canoe full of provisions as a testimony of his Gratitude, for which he would take nothing in return; it had been given to him to present to us by our Friend Kairee-kea, which his people were bringing on their backs from the Country when they were shot at by our people.⁷²

Five days after Cook died, Clerke noted that their supply of provisions had been interrupted for only one day, and by the end of the week he found 'an abundant Market for Hogs and fruit: both Aree's and People now put themselves in our Power without any kind of apprehension; they appear exceedingly desirous of resuming our former confidence & intercourse'.⁷³ War or no, enemy or not, *kanaka maoli* women were on board the two ships almost the entire time, apparently without distress.⁷⁴

Eight days after Cook's death, the sad crews of the *Resolution* and *Discovery* headed out of Kealakekua Bay looking to find an island where they could barter

⁷⁰ Thomas, *Cook*, 401.

⁷¹ Charles Clerke, journal extract, 'Supplement to Cook's journal', in Beaglehole, *The Journals of Captain James Cook*, vol. 3, pt 1, 541.

⁷² Samwell, 'Samwell's journal', in Beaglehole, *The Journals of Captain James Cook*, vol. 3, pt 2, 1214.

⁷³ Clerke, 'Supplement to Cook's journal', in Beaglehole, *The Journals of Captain James Cook*, vol. 3, pt 1, 548.

⁷⁴ Samwell, 'Samwell's journal', in Beaglehole, *The Journals of Captain James Cook*, vol. 3, pt 2, 1213.

for a supply of yams for the journey north and another season in the Arctic Sea. Seven or eight *kanaka maoli* women chose to stay aboard *Resolution* when she shoved off. As they sailed north through the islands many canoes came off to visit the ships, the people aboard them eager to learn what had happened at Kealakekua. From what the Englishmen could understand ‘the Girls told them that we had come off with the worst, having had our Chief killed, & their Numbers being of little consequence when compared with the Loss of so great a Man’.⁷⁵

The conclusion drawn by the women seems obvious — the English lost the skirmish when Cook was killed. But they might have been making a larger point, that *kanaka maoli* had always been in control in their dealings with the Englishmen. When provoked by the attempted kidnapping of their highest *ali'i*, they took steps to defend themselves, but at other times their efforts were directed to establishing and maintaining amicable social relations. That the Englishmen could leave Kealakekua on friendly terms, with earnest invitations to return, is due almost solely to the patience and goodwill of *kanaka maoli*, who by repeated example tried to impress on the Englishmen the logic of gift exchange and the importance of social relations.

There is little evidence that these efforts were rewarded. The Englishmen put the *kanaka maoli* women ashore on O‘ahu amid worries that their stories of English subordination would ‘be the occasion of further quarrels’⁷⁶ as the English clung to the idea that ‘their good behaviour to us proceeds in great Measure from fear and the Idea they have of our Superiority over themselves’.⁷⁷

Conversely, there is no evidence that Cook or his men shook the economic foundations of *kanaka maoli* thought. English behaviour rooted in the logic of commodity exchange was interpreted by *kanaka maoli* as ill-natured, and English attempts to assert private property claims seem to have been viewed as temporary aberrations that might be corrected by the example of offering more gifts. Cook had many accomplishments, but impressing on the native mind ‘conventions that were necessary for maintenance of a free market’ was not one of them, at least in the traditional kingdoms of the Hawaiian Islands. When the *Resolution* and *Discovery* left the islands, the traditional system rooted in rights of person and gift exchange was intact and would continue to structure *kanaka maoli* social life for another four generations. The relationship between *kanaka maoli* and their *ali'i* survived unbroken until the middle of the 19th century,⁷⁸ when the families of the great-great-grandchildren of *kanaka maoli* alive in Cook’s day had to learn to make their way in a society structured by property rights and the alien logic of commodity exchange.

⁷⁵ Ibid., 1219.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ Jonathan Kay Kamakawiwo‘ole Osorio, *Dismembering Lahui: a history of the Hawaiian nation to 1887* (Honolulu 2002).