

THE APOTHEOSIS OF CAPTAIN COOK¹

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When one god vanquishes another, he perpetuates the memory of his victory by the inauguration of a cult.

Hubert and Mauss, Sacrifice

European scholars have sometimes found it difficult to credit the idea that the people of Hawaii took Captain Cook for their own god Lono when he visited the Islands in 1778 and 1779. True, the Hawaiians did kill Cook on February 14, 1779—although why this should strike Christians as casting doubt upon his divinity is hard to say. In any case, within 48 hours of his death they asked when he was coming back. On the night of February 15, two priests of the temple in which Cook had been ritually received as Lono—one was the so-called tabuman, who had "constantly attended Captain Cook with a wand on shore, marching before him and making all the natives bow to him as he passed" — defied death at the hands of their own chief and the English by coming off to the Resolution while the hostilities following Cook's martyrdom were still in course. According to Lieutenant King, one of the priests, "after his fears subsided and he had shed abundance of tears at the loss of the Erono [Lono], told us that he had brought us a part of him. He had a bundle under his arm" (Beaglehole 1967:560). The bundle contained about 10 lbs. of Cook's hind parts. This share of the body had been given the head priest by the ruling chief, Kalaniopu'u — apparently for ritual disposal in the sea, as was normally done with the corruptible parts of a high chief's remains. (Nevertheless, the two priests took the opportunity to inveigh against the paramount; nor was it the first time he had allowed them the posterior end of the many wonderful things the English left on Hawaii.) For Lieutenant King the horror of the occasion was rendered bizarre by the "singular question" the priests asked of him, namely when would Lono return, a question King afterwards heard from other Hawaiians, along with fears about what Cook would do to them then. It is something like Lévi-Strauss's observation on similar incidents in Latin American history, where the Indians killed the Spaniards in order to see if they really were gods, even as the Spaniards were slaughtering Indians because they took them to be less than men — thus posing the question of who did more credit to the human race (Lévi-Strauss 1974:75-76).²

In the published account of the Voyage, King adds that the idea the Hawaiians entertained of Cook's return "agrees with the general tenour of their conduct toward him, which showed that they considered him as a

being of superior nature" (Cook 1784, v.3:39). A later and more skeptical historiography would turn on the equivocation in this phrase, "a being of superior nature." Motivated I believe by a concern to show that Hawaiians are as realistic and rational as anyone else, and could not mistake a man for a god, some scholars have supposed that the homage accorded to Cook, such as the prostration tabu, indicates only that he was conceived a being of superior social nature, like their own titled chiefs. The elaborate deference was merely the kind of hospitality Polynesians afford any visitor of high status. But quite apart from the empirical evidence that must be brought to bear, what this secular interpretation neglects is, first, that the distinction between a tabu chief and a god is not true to Hawaiian thought, and second, that Cook was as immortal in the European view as he was in the Hawaiian.

The Hawaiian view runs parallel to classic concepts of divine kingship (Hocart 1927;1936). Chiefs entitled to prostration were "gods, fire, heat and raging blazes" (Kamakau 1961:4); they were called "divine, akua" (Malo 1951:54). Gods, fire and heat are interrelated — but not simply because people who violated the chief's tabus would be consumed in sacrifice. Like the personified Polynesian notion of brilliance or light from whom they descended (Wakea), these high chiefs represented the heavenly generative powers of form and visibility; like the sun, they caused all things to be seen but could not themselves be gazed upon without injury. It is consistent that one Hawaiian account attributes Cook's murder to a low-born person of the back-country who could not recognize the Captain (Martin 1817,v.2:67). Such commoners were makawela, people of "burnt eyes" — just as the eyes of the transgressor of the chief's tabu, placed in a bowl of kava, were swallowed in sacrificial rites by a ceremonial impersonator of the chief (Malo 1951; Valeri 1976). Prostrating face to the ground, the commoner escaped such a fate, but he arose only to see the earthly traces of the chief's passage. When the great King Kamehameha received the Russian explorer Kotzebue in 1816, he had to explain why he appeared in such simple dress: "'The uniforms which King George wears,'" he said, "'shine very much. But they can be of no service to me, because Kamehameha outshines everything'" (Kotzebue 1821,v.2:193). Later kings and chiefs, less sure of their celestial position, would practically monopolize foreign trade to import for their own use the brightest silks of China and textiles of New England. Exasperated Honolulu traders sent back letters to Boston pleading for "articles of a showy kind" (Marshall Letters: Jones 9/3/1823). "Don't send any more blue," wrote one, "they will not sell" (Marshall Letters: Crocker 16/8/1823). To the extent of the Hawaiian market, the capitalist mode of production was being organized by the Polynesian conception of mana. What was happening in Hawaii may be judged from the observation of an early Christian convert, compelled to disabuse the traders' missionary countrymen by explaining that the people were flocking to the churches not to hear the Word but to see the chiefs (Stewart and Richards 1825:250). Therein lies a tale of why the Hawaiian to this day has an aloha shirt on his back.

In sum, such were chiefs who were gods, akua. Cook likewise had been greeted by prostration from his first moment ashore to the day of his death, and by the god-name Lono ("Orono," "Erono," etc.) throughout his second visit. This did not mean that the divinity of traditional

Hawaiian chiefs was thereby eclipsed. With unconcealed delight, the American merchant Charles Hammatt relates in his diary that on a certain day in June, 1823, when the head missionary Hiram Bingham went to remonstrate with the royally drunk King Liholiho, "and told him God was not pleased with such conduct," Liholiho replied, "'I am God myself. What the hell! Get out of my house; go to your own house. God damn!'" (Hammatt, 1/6/1823). Clearly, to suppose that Cook was to the Hawaiians only a chief and not a god is merely to impose a late and inappropriate set of native European categories.

Besides, the secular interpretation neglects a basic agreement between 18th century European and Hawaiian thought on the divinity in the relation of hierarchy. If Hawaiians did not believe that Cook was truly dead, finished, once they had killed him, neither could many of Cook's own crew. James Trevenan, midshipman of the Resolution, recalled the sentiment in a marginal note penned on his own copy of the published Voyage. In phrases that faithfully echo the Hawaiian reaction, he wrote: "The fact was that I (as well as many others) had been so used to look up to him [Captain Cook] as our good genius, our safe conductor, and as a kind of superior being, that I could not suffer myself, I did not dare, to think he could fall by the hands of Indians, over whose minds and bodies, also, he had been accustomed to rule with uncontrolled sway" (Trevenan, ms., emphasis M.S.). Durkheim might have been pleased with this one well-chosen (if draconic) experiment in support of his thesis that spiritual power is a transfiguration of societal constraint.

Yet more, the inter-cultural agreement on Cook's transfiguration organized historical practice as much as religious theory. In the seven days following Cook's death, the English entered into protracted negotiations, punctuated by hostilities, with a view toward recovery of the body. At one point the English seamen cut off the heads of two Hawaiians and waved them before the assembled savages in order to make them understand the Christian imperatives of revenge and proper burial. People were dying that Cook might live, for among Hawaiians and English alike this struggle over the corpse was motivated by the conviction that only its proper disposition could guarantee the perpetuation of Cook's spirit. True that on the English side it was a matter of whether the remains would rise at Judgment; whereas, for Hawaiians it was more a question of whether they would sit in judgment. All along, the ritual dignities that Cook had enjoyed were designed to encompass his power and appropriate his protection to the Hawaiian chiefs. Now compromised by his murder at the hands of a rival — for such is the fate of all ruling chiefs however they may actually die — this protection would have to be secured through the ceremonial appropriation of his bones. In the strongest form, Hawaiian doctrine required that the long bones and skull, arranged in proper relative position, be set in a sacred effigy casket made of basketwork or sennit (kai'ai) and deposited in an appropriate temple. Ritual defleshment had rendered the dead chief a "true god" (akua maoli), while for his would-be successor, the acquisition of these deified bones, whether by violence or inheritance, was an essential condition of chiefly legitimacy; it was the acquisition of a proper godly ancestry (Malo 1951; Stokes 1930; Valeri 1976). Hence

the proverb, applied to a great paramount of the past, but as we have seen also applicable to Cook, "Keawe returns, his remains bound in the sennit container" (Pukui and Elbert 1965:100).³

The historical accounts of the Hawaiian treatment of Cook's corpse seem ambiguous on the point of whether Cook was also offered in temple sacrifice by the chief — which normally is followed by an ignominious disposition of the corpse — as well as ceremoniously defleshed.⁴ This ambiguity is not altogether critical since it would be in a few years conceptually resolved by the place Cook assumed in the political cult, and in any case the death of a high chief is always testimony to the sacrificial powers of his successor. There is no doubt that the paramount Chief Kalaniopu'u, along with the head priest, went into ritual seclusion after Cook's death, which is the customary behavior of the successor to royal power during this liminal period of twofold corruption: of the corpse and, through temporary suspension of the tabus, of the social organism as well (Cook 1784 v. 3:66; Law,ms.). But a second ambiguity is more intriguing and enduring. From here on out, both the English and the Hawaiians would claim to possess Cook's bones. The historical journals relate that on 20 and 21 February 1779, the Hawaiians ceremoniously surrendered to the English virtually a complete set of remains, said to be Cook's. These consisted mostly of defleshed and partially burnt bones, but the hands, which had been preserved, were indisputably the Captains. The bones were appropriately confined to the deep, full fathom five at least. Yet in the first decade of the nineteenth century, contemporary accounts tell, they reappear, bound in a sennit container and carried by the priests of Lono in the annual rites of fertility, tax collection and chieftainship called the Makahiki.⁵

By the same date at least four different engravings depicting the Assumption of Captain Cook into heaven had been published in European books (Murray-Oliver 1975:199). One, by Louthembourg, was called "The Apotheosis of Cook" (cover). Another, appearing as frontispiece to Bankes's Modern System of Universal Geography bears the legend: "Neptune raising Captⁿ Cook up to Immortality; a Genius introducing him with a wreath of Oak, and Fame introducing him to History. In the Front Ground are the Four Quarters of the World presenting to Brittania their various Stores" (Fig. 1). The front ground thus gives a clue to the tenets of the Faith in which Cook held such exalted position: it was Imperialism.

This being the doctrine, it was inevitable that the Anglo-Saxon cult of Cook should outlast the Hawaiian. By 1819, the Makahiki Festival had been suspended, the ancient tabus abolished, the temples and images of Hawaiian worship largely destroyed. All this happened in the famous "overthrow of the tabus," event reckoned in one Hawaiian source as "the time they tabued the temples." American missionaries arrived in 1820 and began to spread through the Islands. In July 1825, Lord Byron, cousin to the poet and commander of H.M.S. Blonde, visited the Bay of Kealakekua where Cook had fallen. There, in a rite of four days, beginning with a reverential collection of pieces of the true rock where the deed was done, Byron's party administered the coup de grace to the Hawaiian cult. By 1837, incidentally, this rock had been reduced to less than a quarter its original size by various Europeans repeating the



Figure 1: Frontispiece to Bankes's
Modern System of Universal Geography

Byronic ceremonies, including some Spaniards who not only collected relics of the rock but, as an entire ship's company, "knelt upon it, and offered up prayers for the hero's soul" (Taylor 1929:77). By 1846, the rock had entirely disappeared. (See also Taylor 1929, pp. 42-43 for the oration delivered at "this sacred and hallowed spot" at the Sesquicentennial Celebration of Cook's Visit.) Progressing a few miles south, Byron's company, by permission of the reigning chiefs in Honolulu, then penetrated the sacred "house of Keawe" where the bundled remains of Hawaiian kings were still enshrined (Stokes 1930). To the dismay of the guardian priest, they stripped the temple of its images and artifacts on the pretext of taking these "curiosities" for display in Britain. Although the priest resisted any indignities to the royal bones, Byron writes, he "assisted us with civility, although with reluctance, to spoil the morai [temple] of its previous contents [viz., the wooden temple images], and the Blonde soon received on board almost all that remained of the ancient deities of the Islands" (Byron 1826:202). Byron, it should be noted, had come to the Islands to return the remains of the Hawaiian king Liholiho, died of measles in London in 1824. For his part, Liholiho, visiting Westminster Abbey shortly before his death, could on no account whatsoever be induced to enter the Chapel of Henry VII, since upon hearing that the ancient kings of England were buried there, he declared it was much too sacred for him. Although Byron reports this himself (Byron 1826:62, 199-202), he showed not even a decent sense of irony, let alone a reciprocal reverence for the Chapel of Keawe — a building "so sacred," wrote the artist of the Blonde, "that no white man before our arrival had ever by his presence profaned its threshold" (Dampier 1971:67).

Returning after the pillage to Kealakekua, Byron completed the English reformation by erecting "a cross sacred to the memory of Captain Cook on the spot where his body was burnt." This "humble monument" had as its vertical piece a pillar of oak, ten feet high, into which a copper plate was inserted, bearing the following inscription:

Sacred
to the memory of
Capt. James Cook, R.N.
who discovered these Islands
in the year of our Lord 1778.
This humble monument is erected
by his countrymen,
in the year of our Lord, 1825.

The spot was promptly tabued by the local Hawaiian chief; later, to the same effect, it was deeded to the British Government. And although the Hawaiians had by 1825 largely ceased to believe in the divinity of Cook, or at least to ceremonially practice it, it was not (nor will it be) the last time the tribes of Angles and Saxons would piously erect a monument to him at this place (cf. Taylor 1929).⁶

I do not mean to suggest that the Hawaiian concept of Cook's divinity was a simple assimilation of European beliefs. We have to deal

rather with a parallel encoding, of the kind that Laura and Paul Bohannon have described (in the African context) as "a working misunderstanding." It is a sort of symbolic serendipity, or at least a congruent attribution from two different cultural orders of a special meaningful value to the same event, so as to give it a privileged and determining place in history. The process does then raise a fundamental point concerning the role of structure in history, about which I digress for a moment.

At issue is the widespread and profound idea that history unfolds as a physical process, as an expression in the modality of cultural order of the real-material resources and forces in play. Being thus constituted by prevailing material constraints, culture would appear as the self-mediation of nature, the natural world reproduced as social form through the effects of utilitarian interest and empirical rationality. Yet what anthropologists often observe in just such phenomena as "acculturation" is an unaccountable disproportion between the "objective causes" and the "cultural effects" when these are considered simply in terms of physical magnitudes and mechanical relationships. When the first missionaries debarked in Hawaii, they found the traditional religion had already been abolished because, the ex-high priest confided to them, there was but one great god in heaven.⁷ In the same vein, neither could Cook's divinity have been the logical sequitur to the force he exerted, since in his relations with Hawaiians he took great care to keep violence to a minimum — not to mention that it was they who killed him. In all such instances, the disparity between the "real pressures" and the historical outcomes has to be made up from the cultural structures at issue, from the significance they bestow on persons, objects and events. Pragmatic influence and functional efficacy are themselves symbolically constituted. True that if Cook had managed to get back into the ship's boat, everything would have been different. In this sense the event is irreducible. But that particular tide in the affairs of men at Kealakekua Bay cannot demonstrate any sort of ecological determinism or great man theory of history apart from the way it was culturally appropriated. Henceforth, Cook in distinction to all other men and the British as opposed to all other nations were destined for a critical role in Hawaiian history — long after the English imperial presence had in fact been superceded by the Americans. For by virtue of Cook's sacrifice, the mana of the Hawaiian kingship was itself British.

To this day, the Union Jack flies in the upper left-hand corner of the State Flag of Hawaii. King Kamehameha used to have the English colors waving in front of his house and from his canoe before he ever ceded the Island of Hawaii to Vancouver in 1794. By that year, each of the three principal chiefs of Hawaii had named one of their sons "King George." Indeed, the reason why Kamehameha's son Liholiho went to England (and to his untimely death) in 1824 was to secure King George's protection "against the encroachments of his chiefs" (Raquet to Adams, 8/3/1824, AH: Hist. and Misc.). In opposition to Liholiho, whose revenues and authority they were subverting by novel claims of hereditary right, these chiefs had become the party of the Americans. Especially they entered into a convenient religious and political alliance with the New England missionaries. Whereas Liholiho was never to join the American church — nor for that matter did any of his royal successors,

although Kamehameha IV (Alexander Liholiho) was baptized in the Church of England — his rival chiefs showed themselves increasingly susceptible to Puritan tabus. Liholiho accordingly fell back on a received and opposing doctrine of sacred power, choosing to reactivate the protective mana of the English as it had been secured from his father's "good friend" and "brother" King George through the manes of Cook and the machinations of Vancouver.⁸

We begin to see why Byron could exercise such high-handed authority in Hawaii, despite that the English had been out of the running in the Pacific sandalwood and fur trade for decades. The enduring and effective British presence in Hawaiian international relations remained that of Captain James Cook. By going back to the accounts of English captains in the years immediately after Cook's death — when these captains were still considered by Hawaiians to be his sons — we get some idea how his instrumental value was structurally developed. When Meares came into Kealakekua in 1787,

The numbers of them which surrounded the ship, with a view to obtain permission to go to Britanee, to the friends of their beloved Cook, are incredible. . . . Presents were poured in upon us from the chiefs, who were prevented by the multitude from approaching the vessel, and the clamorous cry of Britanee, Britanee, was for a long time vociferated from every part, and without ceasing . . . (Meares 1790:9; cf. p. 388).

James Colnett, at Hawaii as master of the Argonaut in 1791, records in his journal that since Cook's death the Hawaiians had suffered "a great deal of sickness which never before this affected them, which they alleged to having killed him." (Note that in this respect, the Hawaiians' perception of Cook's persisting influence — or is it influenza? — was not empirically unsound.) Colnett continues:

They made strict enquiry of me, if ever he would come back again, and when I saw him last. I told them [that] having been constantly in their part of the world, I could not tell, but this I knew, the Spaniards were coming to take their country from them, and make them slaves. They enquired if C[aptain] Cook had sent them, and how long he would be angry with them, and what they should do to get C[aptain] Cook to entreat his ares [ali'i, 'chiefs'] to send and assist them against the Spanish. Since I was [in Hawaii] in the Prince of Wales [1788], two volcanoes have opened on the sea side of the Isle, which burned night and day with great fury and tremendous explosion, which they say C[aptain] C[ook] has caused (Colnett ms.).

Now Colnett's complicity in Hawaiian ideas about Cook's godliness was something more than "bad faith." It suggests how a given code

of the conjuncture may become the organizing frame of history: functionally encompassing the event and also ordering the further empirical course. Colnett exploits the Hawaiian link to Cook in order to develop the English opposition to the Spanish — who were likewise in the Islands at the time, in a ship recently captured from Colnett. The values thus bestowed on the English and Spanish in Hawaiian eyes thenceforth affect their commercial and other dealings with the two nations. The sacrifice of Cook becomes a meaningful condition of historical praxis. Of course, the finalities as well as the categories involved in this intergroup coding must be sought in the respective cultural orders. Broadly speaking, the Europeans entered into political contact with Hawaiians as a means to economic ends; whereas, for Hawaiians, the trade with Europeans was an economic means to political ends. But within each side of the intercultural equation, internal competition then developed through a motivated engagement of corresponding oppositions on the other side. We have already seen an example in the way the differentiation between Hawaiian chiefs and people was made to turn on a European distinction between "fancy goods" and "plain goods" in the matter of imported cloth. The opposition of indigenous categories is symbolically linked to parallel contrasts within the European *vis-à-vis*, thus mapping the course of history on coordinates of meaningful difference. In the same way, the opposition between the protective Cook and malignant influences, exploited by Colnett and others in the eighteenth century, was built into a structure of political relations that, by Liholiho's time, assumed the familiar form of a Saussurean proportion. Ritual heir to Cook, the young Hawaiian King stood to the chiefs threatening his rule as the British were to the Americans.⁹ In their own struggles, King and chiefs respectively valorized the conflicting interests of English and Americans — and of course vice versa. The dialectic of valuation thus constitutes the relations and changes of the so-called "acculturation." Surely, I have condensed the process, but perhaps not too much to raise doubts about the common conviction that a structural understanding is antithetical to an historical sense.

In arguing against the secular historiography of Cook I may also be guilty of a quixotic exaggeration. The idea that Cook was not really considered a god is actually the minority scholarly opinion. On the other hand, the standard explanation of his deification, common to European and Hawaiian historians alike, may also be exaggerated. The standard explanation is that Cook was taken for Lono because his arrival coincided in time and objective details with the annual rites of this god, the Makahiki. The masts of his ship looked like the image of Lono carried in procession around the island during the Makahiki — in the same clockwise direction, moreover, that Cook took around Hawaii. Kealakekua, "The Road of the God" was supposed to be the home place of Lono, or else of several later chiefly incarnations with whom Cook was also identified; the temple at Kealakekua (Hikiau) where Cook was adored was a temple of Lono; its priesthood was of that cult; and so forth. While we can retain the idea that Cook, arriving appropriately with the rising of the Pleiades during his second visit, was associated with Lono among all other gods, and that the priests in question among all other Hawaiians believed in and promoted his divinity, beyond that the standard opinion needs to be revised. This temple (Hikiau) at

Kealakekua was devoted to the war god Ku, not Lono; it was a temple of human sacrifice, specifically forbidden in the peaceful rites of Lono. When Cook came on his second visit, the Hawaiian ruling chief Kalan-iopu'u was fighting a war on Maui, though the received descriptions of the Makahiki assert that war is interdicted throughout this period. It would take another paper to detail all the empirical objections to the standard theory. Apart from the contradictions to it my subsequent discussion will imply, suffice it to say here that we have no evidence of a protracted four-month Makahiki cycle until Vancouver's voyages of 1793 and 1794, during the reign of Kamehameha on Hawaii. Cook was not considered a god because of empirical resemblances between the events of his voyage and details of the Makahiki rites; rather, these rites were latterly elaborated, primarily by Kamehameha, as an iconic representation of Cook's voyage. The Makahiki as we have come to know it is testimony to Cook's sacrifice as a source of legitimacy of the Hawaiian chieftainship, and at the same time of the transformation of that chieftainship into statehood under a sign of peace, Lono, thereby eclipsing the cult of tribal violence whose focus had been the god Ku.¹⁰

Nor was Cook the only European captain to become the object of veneration. Nathaniel Portlock, also British, landed in Hawaii several times as commander of a fur trading vessel. Of his first visit it is necessary to mark only that he came in May and June, 1786 (rather than the Makahiki period of November-February), that his crew fished up a large shark which was given to the Hawaiians, and that he made a present of an armchair from his cabin to the priest-chief of Kauai named Oponui. On his next visit to Kauai, in February 1787, Oponui escorted him to a certain "house" in Waimea Valley:

I found this house to be very large, commodious and clean, with a new mat on the floor; on the left side of the door was a wooden image of a tolerably large size, seated in a chair which nearly resembled one of our armed chairs. There was a grass-plat all around the image and a small railing made of wood; beside the chair were several to-e's [iron adzes] and other small articles. My friend informed me that this house had been built with the to-e I had given him on my calling at Oneehow [Niihau], and that the other articles were presents that I had made him at different periods, and that the image was in commemoration of my having been amongst them. Few people were admitted into this house. Amongst other articles in it were several drums; one in particular was very large, the head of which was made out of the skin of the large shark I have already mentioned; and I was told these drums were dedicated to their gods (Portlock 1789:192-193; emphasis M.S.).

By what distinction, then, did Cook become a uniquely powerful god? To answer correctly we have to recognize that he was not in the first instance unique. Divinity inhered in the relation the Hawaiians conceived

to all these strangers with "white skin and bright, flashing eyes" come from a far off place. Nothing foreign was merely human to them. Cook's godliness was a specialization of the generalized relationship the Hawaiians more or less widely entertained to all the Europeans, not excluding the ships themselves and the objects carried on them. And whereas the divine status of the general body of Europeans would be eroded in the pragmatic oppositions of trade, and by an arithmetic of pollution that despoiled the white man's tabus by the secularity [noa] of the women with whom they had intercourse, the sacrifice of the body of the Great Commander insured that he lived on as representation of the initial relation of hierarchy.

The very first Hawaiians who came off to Cook's ship at Kauai on January 20, 1778, made a peculiar and pious oration before they dared climb aboard. The prayer was a way of freeing the ship from its tabus, or else of consecrating themselves that they might enter it in the way they would before entering a temple — which, according to one Hawaiian recollection, they took it to be. Coming on deck, they stared at the things about them in indescribable amazement, until one of them, without the least trouble to conceal it, took up the sounding line and proceeded to carry it off. Halted by the sailors' incantations of bourgeois doctrines of private property, he was asked what he thought he was doing. "I am only going to put it in my boat," he said (Beaglehole 1967:265). Clearly the cargo cult that Melanesians would later dream about, these Polynesians for one fleeting moment actually realized. "They thought they had a right to everything they could lay their hands upon," reads the published Voyage. But, "they soon laid aside a conduct which, we convinced them, they could not persevere in with impunity" (Cook 1784, vol. 2:205). Nonetheless the idea persevered and, according to Hawaiian tradition, the good news was spread from island to island: "They have doors in the sides of their bodies (i.e., pockets) . . . into these openings they thrust their hands and take out many valuable things — their bodies are full of treasure" (Dibble 1909:23).

For Hawaiians, the outside place — as the outer parts of the known world or as the sea is to be the inhabited land — is traditionally the site of ultrahuman powers. This distance in space is also remove in time; the far-off is the homeland of the gods and thus the origin of cultural things. At the furthest horizon the ends of the earth meet the limits of the sky; hence, "Kahiki," the distant foreign lands, are also above, "heavenly." That too is the status of ruling chiefs — lani, 'heavenly' — since tradition tells they came from foreign parts to impose by divine powers (mana) the separations (tabus) that constitute the cultural order. Cannibals and sharks, they effected this order through violence: they "ate" the land, a metaphor at once of chiefly rule and of the appropriation of women from the native 'sons of the land' (kamaaina). But as we have already seen, this human world of forms was likewise an act of chiefly impregnation: of generation by the celestial light that renders all things visible. I mention these arcane doctrines to help explain a passage in Lieutenant King's account where he says that, even apart from Cook, "they regarded us generally, as a race of people superior to themselves," saying often that the

great akua (god) "dwelled in our country" and the paramount chief's god likewise "lived among us" (Cook 1784, vol. III:159;160; emphasis M.S.).¹¹ On the Hawaiian side, the kind of cultural coding this entails can be found in the name chant of the great Oahu chief, Kauli'i, whose reputation (asserted by some) as conqueror of the Islands is motivated precisely by his exploits as voyager to foreign lands, to Kahiki:

Kahiki,
 Where the language is strange,
 To Kahiki belong the people who ascend
 To the backbone of heaven;
 And while above they tread,
 And look down below.
 There are none like us in Kahiki:
 Kahiki has but one kind of people, the haole
 'foreigner,' 'white man' .
 They are like unto gods;
 I am like a man.
 A man, indeed,
 Wandering about,
 And the only one who got there.
 (Fornander 1916-1919, V.IV(2):374.)

Now Kauli'i lived several generations before Cook, and it is possible that this reference to the "haole" — a term applied in historic times to the white man exclusively — is a post facto insertion in the traditional chant. But to then dismiss the text for its anachronism would be, paradoxically, to miss its historical sense. Exactly by its retrodiction (or retention) of the haole in the context of indigenous categories, the chant discloses the structural logic in the Hawaiian interpretation of the European experience. Should we also by the same historicist scruples ignore the Hawaiian tradition, recorded in the 19th century, that the Europeans were at first taken to be cannibals? This is again like Lévi-Strauss's remarks on the mutual slaughter of the Indians and the conquistadores. Both the English and the Hawaiians were very anxious to determine if the others ate human flesh — although for different and opposed reasons: the English because they feared the natives were dangerous savages, the Hawaiians because they believed the foreigners were powerful gods. As it turns out, the Hawaiians were not cannibals in practice (that is, apart from the symbolism in rites of chieftainship), but they had good reason to conclude the white men were. Upon seeing Cook's crew devouring red watermelons (from California), they could only exclaim, "Gods, indeed! They eat the flesh of man . . ." (Lanainaluna Students 1839:64). My point, however, is that the divinity which eventually settled upon Cook was not an intellectual mistake, contingent on substantial if accidental analogies between the empirical behavior of the English and the mythical thought of the "natives." The substantialization of reference, this idea of meaning as the naming of objects of observation, is an error of our own thought. The Hawaiian response applies in the first place to the relationship of hierarchy, which for them was an established fact before the first white man from

Kahiki ever stepped on their shores. The supernaturalism, then, was not so much an interpretation of the European experience as it was indistinguishable from the perception itself of that experience.

Analogy then followed from the principle of divinity, rather than vice versa, and it was widely applied to the whole of Cook's people as well as the objects they brought and the actions they took. A pile of coconuts on deck and a heap of bullock hides evoked allusions to legendary sea monsters, presumed to have been slain en route by the powerful strangers. Kamakau records other recollections:

Good-looking gods they were! They spoke rapidly. Red was the mouth of the god. When they saw the strangers letting out ropes the natives called them ~~Ku-of-the-tree-fern~~ (Kupulupulu) and ~~Coverer-of-the-island~~ (Mokuhali'i). These were gods of the canoe builders in the forest. When they saw them painting the ship they said, "There are Ma'ikoha' [a man transformed into the first paper mulberry] and Ehu (Fair-haired) daubing their canoe, and Lanahu (Charcoal) daubing on the black!" When they saw the strangers smoking they said, "There are Lono-pele and his companions [of the volcano family of gods] breathing fire from their mouths! (Kamakau 1961:99).

European fireworks provide another significant anachronism, since Hawaiian tradition alleges they were shot from the ships on the very first night (Kamakau 1961:95), though the Cook sources do not mention them until the second coming, a year later. But the historical displacement of this astonishing mediation between earth and heaven — in the form moreover of the flying sorcery of the chief's god Ku — can be reconciled by the recorded reaction to fireworks displays put on by later visitors, such as Vancouver in 1793:

The first Skyrocket actually staggered them with surprise; as if with one voice a general sound was heard expressive of wonder and amazement. Balloons, Flower Pots, Roman Candles, Mines, and Water Rockets astonished them past conception; they could only express the inferiority of Owhyhee [Hawaii] and **praise** the prodigies of Brittainia (Manby 1929: I(3):43). To Maiha-Maiha [Kamehameha, King of Hawaii] would frequently cry in the midst of his surprise, "poor Owhyhee [Hawaii], you are no more" (Bell 1929:82).

Fear and despair were not the only reactions to the sudden arrival of these beings "of superior nature." It is important that the gods — or what is here the same, chiefs come from Kahiki — were ambiguous in Hawaiian conceptions: usurpers, they were also protectors; by violence,

they established order; blinding, they caused all things to be seen; by sacrifice, they gave life to the kingdom. In brief, the chief holds the power of death — but as ultimate sign of the control of life, including the power to bestow it. Hence the observation repeated over and again in the Cook documents: everywhere the English were greeted with inexpressible joy. I can only allude to the fantastic scene at Kealakekua in 1779, when the ships came to anchor surrounded by a flotilla of 1,000 canoes and thousands of other people swimming in the water and standing on the beaches — singing. Lieutenant Riou's log book entry laconically captures the emotion, "towed and sailed in, amidst an innumerable number of canoes, the people in which were singing and rejoicing all the way." The Hawaiian historian completes the tableau of the same event as viewed from the other side: "Their happiness knew no bounds; they leaped for joy: 'Now shall our bones live; our aumakua [ancestral god] has come back'" (Kamakua 1961:98).

The way the English then behaved at Kealakekua Bay was not calculated to disabuse the Hawaiians of this belief. Quite apart from Cook's own passive acceptance of the dignities of his installation as Lono at the chiefly temple of Hikiau and again at the adjacent "House of Lono," the English generally, if unwittingly, entered into the role the Hawaiians cast for them so as to give "concrete thought" opportunity after opportunity to draw the appropriate metaphoric conclusions. I mention only a few incidents to this working misunderstanding. The astronomical observatory was pitched directly adjacent to Hikiau temple, where it was protected by the tabu sticks of the priests. Asked what they were doing there, the English replied they were looking at the sun — of all things; the Hawaiians promptly dubbed the astronomical instruments "by the name of Etua [gods], and supposed they were our gods and that we worshipped them" (Samwell in Beaglehole 1967:1186). The sacred houses of the temple itself were taken over as an infirmary and by sailmakers to repair the ships' canvas. Since all the while the priests were bringing offerings to the Europeans about the temple, given without the hint of a demand for repayment — and in the manner, form and trembling appropriate to prestations to the gods — there was not even any objection when Lieutenant King asked to have the wooden fence of the shrine for firewood, not even when the sailors thereupon proceeded to carry off the wooden images for the same purpose. As the English understood this temple to be a burying ground, based on previous experiences in Polynesia, it did not **surprise** them either that the ruling chief Kalaniopu'u asked them to bring there the body of a seaman who had died aboard ship. Fact was that Hikiau was a temple of human sacrifice, and the skulls the English saw there were the testimony of the chief's power over those who transgressed his tabus and whose death transformed the central temple image into his "living god." So when Captain Cook and Lieutenant King read the Christian services over poor old William Watman, they had an attentive and "well-behaved" audience in the priests of the temple, who, after the English had finished, proceeded to recite their own prayers and throw offerings of pigs and bananas into the grave. Lieutenant King seems to have been touched and he suffered them to stop, but for the next three nights, "Kao [the high priest] and the rest of them surrounded the grave, killed hogs, sung a

great deal, in which acts of piety and good will," as King deemed them, "they were left undisturbed" (Beaglehole 1967:517).

One need not suppose that all Hawaiians shared the interpretations incident to the cult of the haole that was developing at Kealakekua Bay.¹² Indeed the people's very joy at the Europeans' coming evoked customary practices that could not help but pollute these gods — that eventually would secularize them, even as the martyred Cook was uniquely apotheosized. History reenacted that separation of earth and heaven, men and gods, which gives the famous "evolutionary" character to Polynesian myth. As the structure stood at Cook's arrival, the Europeans were to Hawaiians in general as their own chiefs, likewise godly beings from Kahiki, were to the common people. Still another anachronistic prophecy, said to have applied equally to the conquest of Oahu by Maui chiefs in 1785 and the arrival of Cook, encodes this epigrammatically: "The land is the sea's" (Kamakau 1961:134; Fornander 1916-19, v.6:287n; Thrum 1921:203-204). The meaning can be gauged from a few lines of the Kumulipo origin chant:

Those of the sea take to the land,
Creep this way and that,
The family of creepers multiply,
The ancient line and the new line intermingle,
The new line becomes the genealogy of chiefs.
(Beckwith 1970:294.)

The reference of the last lines is to the taking of women, hence of indigenous fertile powers, by the invading chiefs; as in Western Polynesia, the people of the land are wife-givers to the chiefs. This helps explain the so-called mass prostitution that made of every European voyage a successful observation of the transit of Venus. It is critical, however, that the sexual receptivity of Hawaiian women did not initially have the notorious character of "prostitution" that was destined to transform it into a mode of commoner trade. For the women were "but little influenced by interested motives in their intercourse with us, as they would almost use violence to force you into their embrace regardless whether we gave them anything or not" (Beaglehole 1967:1085; Ellis 1782, v.2:153). The Hawaiian sense is better judged by an incident attending Cook's departure for the last time, thirteen months after his first visit, when a number of men and women came off in canoes, and, under the direction of the women, the men came on the deck and deposited in its crevices the navel cords of newborn children. Behind this lay a whole panoply of custom of which we need only retain wawahi, "to break open." Wawahi was the offering of a commoner woman to a ruling chief (alternatively to a god) in the hope that the first-born child would be sired by the chief. The practice in turn has to be referred to the customary redistribution of land at the accession of a paramount, who thus "acts as a conqueror," threatening to progressively displace and impoverish the people who once held stewardships in favor of the chief's immediate followers. The recognition of kinship with the chief, however, could forestall or reverse this decline in status; then, Hawaiians say, "the bones of the grandparents will live."

Now when the commoner women flocked aboard Cook's and later ships, they did not confine their intercourse to the sexual. Pressed by their sailor consorts to enjoy the civilizational benefits of what one explorer called "social living" (as opposed to natural), they also ate with European men, and of forbidden foods such as pork, thus violating key tabus of the Hawaiian religion. The whole process affords a nice illustration of the fact that the deployment of a received structure to a new context produces no simple or stereotypic reproduction, but rather assigns new functional values to old oppositions and thereby orders an unprecedented course of events. For in the event, the Europeans were polluted. The combination of their tabu status with the secularity (noa) of women generated contamination. So in an extraordinary contrast with the ritual liberties taken by Cook and his crew, when Vancouver came to Kealakekua the English were strictly enjoined, on the strong request of King Kamehameha, from entering the temples or otherwise interfering with Hawaiian observances (Vancouver 1801, vol.3:221-223). When Vancouver left, Kamehameha could not even escort him up the coast, as was his wont, because the king had to go into ritual seclusion, (in part) to purify himself of the consequences of "his having lived in such social intercourse with us, who had eaten and drank in the company of women" (Vancouver 1801, vol.3:275). By 1793, the English had lost their godliness. But the gods had not yet lost their Englishness. And if the functional values accruing to the exchange of goods and women had separated the Hawaiians from the divine power loose upon the land, there remained the sacrificed Cook to mediate between them.

Malinowski (to invoke another ancestral spirit) has left us with mythical ideas insufficient to account for the way Polynesians encompass the present by the past. In his famous notion of myth as "charter," Malinowski understood the legend to be the justification of existing relations, supposing the relations themselves were pragmatically fashioned out of the interests and practices of "real life." A utilitarian praxis is accorded the privileged analytic position, instrumentally shaping the past according to its own project — if not also formally constituting the past as a projection of itself. In the case of Hawaii, we have seen some of these anachronistic tricks the living play on the dead, but it deserves reemphasis that the retrodiction is a secondary formation on a much more fundamental movement from the past into the present. For a people who do not distinguish the genealogical bard from the political counselor, history must always repeat itself, since only the second time is it event. The first time it is myth.¹³

The structure of Polynesian mythical time is logically adapted to this paradigmatic function. The earliest mythical figures are divine personifications of basic cultural categories — as Papa and Wakea, Earth Mother and Sky Father or more generally, surface and light — whose narrative interaction is an active form of the right relationships between these abstract concepts. As myth gives way to legend, divine forces are replaced by heroic chiefs, but the logical continuity between the two is guaranteed by their genealogical connection, since by Polynesian kinship ideas the ancestor is a general class of which his descendants are particular instances. Nor does it merely follow that legendary

chiefs are instantiations of cultural relationships; the present itself reproduces the same code — "life is ours; our ancestors have returned."

There is a story often repeated in early historical texts about various attempts to convince King Kamehameha of the relative superiority of the white man's gods. Usually (but not always) the European protagonist is identified as Vancouver. The American trader, Townsend, for example, heard the following in 1798:

Captain Vancouver was very anxious to Christianize these people, but that can never be done until they are more civilized. The King Amma-amma-kah [Kamehameha] told Capt. Vancouver that he would go with him on to the high mountain Mona Roah [Mauna Loa] and they would both jump off together, each calling on their separate gods for protection, and if Capt. Vancouver's god saved him, but himself was not saved by his god, then his people would believe as Capt. Vancouver did (Townsend 1888:74).

The Russian explorer Golovnin added, in 1818:

This experiment did not appeal to Vancouver, and he not only declined to perform it, he did not even mention it in his Voyage. Thus ended the discussion on religion (Golovnin 1974:49; cf. Cleveland n.d.:211)

Now this story is in fact a legendary allusion to a famous priest, Pa'ao, who arrived from Kahiki (foreign lands) many generations past to overthrow the indigenous ruler and install the line of outside chiefs in which Kamehameha traced his own descent. As the myth goes,

It was said that many gods asked Paa to accept and worship them as his deities. He had built his house on the edge of a precipice from which the koae (Bos'n bird) flew. Whenever any gods came to him Paa told them to fly from that precipice. The one returning alive should be his god and receive his worship. But when they leaped from the cliff they were dashed to pieces at its base. [To abbreviate: such was the fate of Lelekoae and Makuapali, but Makuakaumana flew and became Pa'ao's god (Thrum 1923:46-47).]

It is mainly to their ancient predecessor Pa'ao that the American missionaries owe the wary, if not cool, reception they were given by Hawaiian ruling chiefs in 1820. Even the sacrificial idiom of disapproval later voiced by Hawaiian priest Hewahewa takes inspiration from the cult of Pa'ao: "Hevaheva said," according to the diary of the merchant Stephen Reynolds, "it was good to cut Mr. Bingham's head off, for he was sending people to hell with their eyes shut; but [at least] he sent them there with their eyes open" (Reynolds 4/9/1826).

As it did in fact prove true of the American missionaries, Pa'ao likewise had been the religious harbinger of a novel and more powerful political order. Not only did he impose a new ruling line, but the entire theory of legitimacy through violence that would make of every succeeding paramount a conqueror, including the rites and temples of human sacrifice and the chief's dreadful god, "Ku-snatcher-of-the-island" (Kukailimoku). The victim of Pa'ao's usurpation, one Kapawa, had been the embodiment of a different idea: of rightful rulers installed by birth rather than force, before the **assembled and consenting** multitude at the inland temple of Kukaniloko on Oahu. Recall the prophecy "the land is the sea's." Inland rather than seaward, thus associated with indigenous and natural powers as opposed to foreign cultural sources, this ancient temple often appears in mythical contrast with Pa'ao's as the symbol of a chieftainship that rules through kinship with the people, hence by aloha rather than sacrifice and reciprocity instead of appropriation.

Given the theory of a religiously-effected usurpation, it is not surprising that the first Christian missionaries were greeted with suspicion — the more so as they were Americans not English. Fear was not allayed when the missionaries dug a large cellar for their house in Honolulu, intended, Hawaiians said, to hide American soldiers and their arms, who would emerge to take the kingdom. Rumor after rumor of similar missionary plots against the chiefs fill traders' journals of the 1820s, of which the following is at least faithful to the Hawaiian categorical opposition between food and excrement.

Natives put a story in circulation that the Mission houses were burnt at Mowee [Maui] the Mission sent off. Pitt [Kalaimoku, the "Prime Minister"] gone to Owhyhee [Hawaii] to send them forever from that Island, because the mission gave the young prince [Kauikeaouli, later Kamehameha III] and princess [Nahienaena] shit to eat. It appeared they were at the mission house and were offered bread and butter — the natives who were standing about the Prince not being acquainted with butter raised the report as above (Reynolds, 25/4/1824).¹⁴

Part of the problems the missionaries suffered from Pa'ao were in fact mediated by Cook, since he and English power had forestalled the Americans as initial beneficiaries of the paradigm of foreign usurpation. Lieutenant Peter Puget, commander of HMS Chatham in Vancouver's squadron, had a fascinating interview on theological issues with the high priest of the temple at Kealakekua where Cook had been venerated as Lono fourteen years earlier. The priest told Puget the story of Pa'ao's voyage, ascribing to it the origin and form of the existing religion. In the same context, he made two observations on Captain Cook. He said that Cook had been killed because he carried away the fence and images of the temple for firewood. Secondly,

Their gods he told us were numerous and good. One he distinguished as superior to the rest, that always accompanied the King. It has the same name as that given to Captain Cook, Orono. This Divinity always accompanied the King on his excursions. . . . The memory of Capt. Cook appears on all occasions to be treated with the greatest veneration by all ranks of people, and his name is still mentioned with a sort of enthusiastic respect (Puget:ms.).

Edward Bell, clerk of the Chatham, confirms that the central image of the temple was a "preposterous figure" of Orono (Bell 1929-30, I(6): 78-79). Herein lies one of many curious discrepancies between the Vancouver and Cook reports, and between the two together and the standard scholarly explanations of Cook's deification. In the Cook documents, the central god of this temple was not Lono but Kunuiakea (King in Beaglehole 1967:621) or Kukaohialaka (Samwell in Beaglehole 1967:1159), who are respectively **the** generic and sacrificial versions of the kingdom-snatching god of Hawaiian paramounts, Kukailimoku. This is consistent with the status of the temple as a place of human sacrifice (luakini), even as human sacrifice is inconsistent with the rites of Lono. Moreover, apart from the suspicions of Zimmermann and the allegations of the unreliable Ledyard, none of the Cook chroniclers indicate the Hawaiians took any exception to removing the fence and images; on the contrary, they voluntarily assisted the sailors in carrying them off; so that few historians since have accepted this explanation of Cook's martyrdom (Beaglehole 1967:cxlvi,n). I personally agree that this was not the actual reason Cook was killed. On the other hand, the high priest's assertions to Puget make a good deal of sense within the system of Hawaiian thought. Indeed they resolve all these and other mysteries of Cook's divinity in the following way:

By taking the temple paling and images, Cook was a transgressor of sacred tabus. As a transgressor, he was accordingly sacrificed by the King, Kalaniopu'u — which explains why later accounts have Cook both defleshed as a chief and offered as a sacrifice (see note 4). As a sacrifice, Cook becomes substantially incorporated into the king's god, Ku — this by the well-known logic of identity between sacrificer, victim and god explicated by Hubert and Mauss as well as by the explicit Hawaiian logic that that sacrificial victim, consumed by the deity, transfers life to the image and grows it to adulthood: it becomes a living or true god (akua maoli). Hence the reports by Samwell and Trevenan of the Cook expedition that Hawaiians not only asked when the dead Cook would return, but asserted he would come back soon, in two months' time (Beaglehole 1967:1217; Trevenan: ms.). Two months would make it about mid-April, which is the customary period for placing and giving life to a new image of Ku by the traditional rites of sacrifice (Fornander 1916-1919, v.6:8-9). Also, by the same logic of sacrifice the god Lono/Ku is a spiritual double and protector of the King, which explains why, as the priest told Puget, he "always accompanied the King on his excursions."¹⁵ On the other hand, as chiefly predecessor of the ruler, Cook's own bones ought to have been appropriated and

preserved as the sign of royal legitimacy. And so they were — whatever the English might have confined to the deep on February 21, 1779. Manby of the Vancouver expedition relates that Cook's bones, as of 1793, were under a heap of stones close to a temple about a quarter of a mile from the spot where he was killed (Manby 1929,v.I(3):39) — to which Puget (ms.) adds the politically significant detail that they cohabited there with the remains of Kalaniopu'u, the Hawaiian ruler of Cook's time. As Kamehameha, the current King, had killed Kalaniopu'u's rightful heir and taken the Island by force, and as Kalaniopu'u for his part had sacrificed Cook, the possession of the bones of both fallen chiefs was the sign that Kamehameha had captured their mana and demonstrated his own. At the same time, as heir to a chieftainship that combines Cook with Kalaniopu'u, the foreign ancestry with the indigenous, as well as the god of peace (Lono) with the god of war (Ku), Kamehameha has worked a veritable revolution in Hawaiian polity and cult. Still, it was not the first such revolution: the priest told Puget the story of Pa'ao.

By 1809, we have evidence that Cook's bones are not just lying there; they are the subject of annual rites. Writing of the place of sepulchre (as he was told it was) in Kealakekua, the American seaman George Little observed that the Hawaiians in approaching it, "seemed to be awed into a profound reverence. . . . They also informed us that, once in a year, all the natives assemble here to perform a religious rite in memory of his lamentable death" (Little 1845:132). Such notice of an actual worship is confirmed by several other European reports for this period — as, for example, the missionary Samuel Whitney, whose journal of 1820 records, "They say he was a god, and for a long time worshipped him as such" (Whitney ms.; cf. Von Chamisso in Kotzebue 1821,v.3:239; Tyerman and Bennet 1831,v.1:376; Beaglehole 1967:561n re Dimsdell; Byron 1826:25-28,123,196; Dibble 1909:27). But the specific and critical details come from the famous William Mariner and the Rev. William Ellis. Mariner had it on the authority of Kamehameha's harbor master (John Harbottle) in 1806 at Oahu, and independently later on from several Hawaiians resident in Tonga, that,

The people of the Sandwich Islands, although they actually did kill him [Cook], have paid, and still continue to pay him, higher honours than any other nation of the earth; they esteem him as having been sent by the gods to civilize them, and one to whom they owe the greatest blessings they enjoy. His bones (the greater part of which they have still in their possession!) they devoutly hold sacred; they are deposited in a house consecrated to a god, and are annually carried in procession to many other consecrated houses, before each of which they are laid on the ground, and the priest returns thanks to the gods for having sent them so great a man. . . . [Mr. Harbottle] informed Mr. Mariner that the natives of Owhyhee returned very few of the bones of Captain Cook, but chiefly substituted the bones

of some other Englishman that was killed on that melancholy occasion; and those of Cook were carried annually in procession as above related (Martin 1817,v.2:66-67).

Ellis in 1823 indicates that the bones in question were the ribs and sternum; these bones,

were considered sacred, as part of Rono, and deposited in a heiau (temple) dedicated to Rono . . . There religious homage was paid to them, and from thence they were annually carried in procession to several other heiaus, or borne by priests round the island, to collect the offerings of the people, for the support of the worship of the god Rono. The bones were preserved in a small basket of wicker-work, completely covered over with red feathers . . . (Ellis 1828:120;emphasis M.S.).

Hence, Cook returns, "his remains bound in the ka'ai." But what is more, these notices of the procession of Cook's bones perfectly match the conventional ethnographic descriptions of the Makahiki festival, excepting only that the sacred bundle of Lono (i.e., Lonomakua, Cook) had been replaced in the last years before 1819 by a wooden crosspiece hung with tapa, owing inspiration in part to the indigenous representation of the god of sport, also a feature of the Makahiki — and in part to the mast of a ship in full sail. It is apparently to this image that Mathison alludes, in an account gathered soon after the abolition of the Makahiki and other traditional ceremonies:

It is generally well known, that after the death of Captain Cook the inhabitants repented them of the deed. . . . To perpetuate his memory, therefore, they resolved to deify him; and accordingly made an appropriate image, which for many years was actually carried in procession round the island of Owhyhee, under the appellation of The Wandering God. This image, during the procession, was immediately preceded by a person bearing in his hand a spear, to which was prefixed an instrument containing twenty lashes, each a yard in length, woven with the same sort of feathers that are used in the manufacture of cloaks and idols. He brandished it before the image, as it were to clear the way; and any person who had the misfortune to be touched by it, was summarily put to death as guilty of violating the tabu regulation (Mathison 1825:431-32).

With these new ritual elements in hand, we can rapidly bring the story to a close. Not that the denouement is unworthy of another chapter as long as this, however. The revolution Kamehameha had effected was nothing less than the conquest of the archipelago

and the formation of the state. And the cult of Cook figured decisively in these events. The legitimation of Kamehameha's own power as English had set a policy of submission to the British Crown — recall Kamehameha had ceded the Island of Hawaii to King George through Vancouver in 1794 — and of honorable foreign trade that gave him the military means to vanquish the other islands, whose own chiefs had not had the good fortune of sacrificing Cook. Kamehameha would then play upon the ambiguities of the sacrifice to progressively replace the warlike dimension of the kingdom-snatching Ku by the peaceful aspect of Cook/Lono, initially incorporated in Ku as victim. During the first decade of the 19th century, the Makahiki Festival of Lono in fact completely superceded the sacrificial rites of Ku, which had been the traditional prelude to war. Already in 1794, Kamehameha began to limit human sacrifice; by 1817, it was a rare thing, evidently reserved to capital punishment in criminal cases. But while the customary rites of sacrifice were allowed to fall into disuse, Kamehameha replaced them with the Makahiki, even to some extent incorporated them in the newly elaborated Makahiki that he spread from island to island with the conquest. This circuit of the Lono priests carrying symbols of Cook and collecting tribute, for example, is the transformation of an analogous preliminary of the traditional Ku ceremonies into the central performance of the Makahiki (Malo 1951 and Kelou Kamakau in Fornander 1916-19, v.6). Again, the exchange in salience between Cook and Ku is epitomized by the fact that whereas Kamehameha formally announced his choice of successor by allowing the young Liholiho to offer the human sacrifices during customary Ku rituals in 1803, he formally installed Liholiho as heir in 1809, precisely at the Makahiki (I'i 1959:37; Campbell 1967:130). Thus the ultimate efficacy of the god, Captain James Cook: that he could protect the royal power from the dangers of usurpation and sacrifice to which it had traditionally been vulnerable; and, above all, substitute a cult of internal peace — the hallmark of State — for the indigenous polity of tribal violence.¹⁶

The final act of the drama at once confirmed Cook's supremacy and ritually undermined it. The abolition of all the tabus in 1819 was specifically directed against the old war god, "Ku-snatcher-of-the-island." At Kamehameha's death, Ku had been inherited by a cousin of King Liholiho (Kekuaokalani). But if this presaged a new struggle for power, the King and his chiefs sought to foreclose it by declaring there were no gods anyway, and that they now intended "to live as the white men do." With this, the divine Cook, like his own bones, would disappear from historical sight. Perhaps, then, the most fitting epitaph of the god was that set in doggerel by Anne Seward, in an "Elegy on Captain Cook" composed when the news of his death reached England:

Ye, who ere-while for Cook's illustrious brow
Pluck'd the green laurel, and the oaken bough,
Hung the gay garlands on the trophied oars,
And pour'd his fame along a thousand shores,
Strike the slow death-bell!—weave the sacred verse,
And strew the cypress o'er his honor'd hearse;
In sad procession wander round the shrine,
And weep him mortal, whom ye sung divine!



NOTES

¹This is a somewhat expanded version of the Kroeber Anthropological Society Annual Lecture delivered on May 7, 1977. Aside from standard sources in Hawaiian ethnography, as are cited in the text, the descriptions here rely on manuscript collections, mainly in Hawaii; a more complete exposition and documentation of Hawaiian kinship and polity will appear in a later work.

In citations from older accounts and journals, I have usually modernized spellings, especially of Hawaiian names.

²Trevenan (Beaglehole 1967:561n) and Samwell (Beaglehole 1967:1217) also report Hawaiian assertions that Cook would return in a short time. Only Bligh among contemporary observers denied the Hawaiians believed this, characterizing the idea as absurd in marginal notes to the part of the Voyage published by King — whom Bligh detested (Gould 1928:383).

Apropos of Lévi-Strauss's remarks, there were remarkable parallels between the Hawaiian reception of Cook and the Aztecs' welcome of Cortes, the god Quetzalcoatl returned. These parallels will be developed in another paper.

For recent views on Cook's divinity, see the "Introduction" to Beaglehole (1967), especially p. cxliv. Note that the skepticism of the great Maori anthropologist, Sir Peter Buck, regarding the pre-mortem deification of Cook is rather the opposite of the opinions of the 19th century Hawaiian historians, such as Kamakau. These scholars allowed that Cook was originally taken for Lono, but his death proved him otherwise.

³The concept of a victory over one's predecessor is a common motif in installation rites of divine kings (Hocart 1927). On the ka'ai or sennit caskets, see also Hiroa 1957:573-577. As late as 1829, the caskets of previous rulers figured symbolically in attempts of the Hawaiian king (then Kamehameha III) to restore a traditional authority — this notably includes the ka'ai of Lonoikamakahiki, an instantiation of Lono, as was Cook (I'i 1959:155).

⁴For representative Hawaiian statements on the treatment of Cook's body, see: Lahainaluna Students 1839:66; Dibble 1909:27; Kamakau 1961:103; Westerwelt 1923:112; Ellis 1828:117; Tyerman and Bennet 1831, v.1:376. The book by the Lahainaluna Students (1838), assembled by the missionary Dibble and translated by Tinker (1839), contains information gathered from old Hawaiians in the Lahaina area in the 1830s; much of this is repeated in Dibble's own history (1909; first published in 1843) and in later Hawaiian accounts.

⁵For detailed accounts of Cook's death and the incidents that followed see Beaglehole 1967.

Lieutenant King had also noted that subsequent to the defleshment and before the return of the remains to the English, various parts of the body as well as the skull and long bones had been distributed to

several chiefs (Cook 1784,v.3:78). It is, of course, possible that many of the bones received on the Resolution were not Cook's, since four marines were also killed and carried off in the action at Kealakekua. Nineteenth century histories, Hawaiian and European, often compromise the discrepancies by indicating that the Hawaiians gave some of Cook's bones back and kept some for worship. Ellis (1828:120) is specifically the most consistent with the Cook journalists, since he writes that the ribs and breastbone only were carried in procession by the Lono priests, and these are not mentioned among the remains returned in 1779.

⁶For other versions of Byron's pillage of the Hale o Keawe and related activities at Honaunau and Kealakekua, see Dampier 1971 and Bloxam 1925. In contrast to Byron's language, Dampier describes the priest of the temple as moved to "indignation at this sacriligious rape. . . . He was obliged, however, to submit." Dampier had to interrupt his sketch of the inside of the temple-house (thus doubling the historical losses) as a consequence of the sudden manifestation of "rapacious inclinations" on the part of the English; he thereupon, "and regardless of the divine punishment attending such shameless sacrilege, took ample share in the depopulation of this ancient sanctuary" (Dampier 1971:67).

⁷This vignette appears in the recollections of James Hunnewell (Hunnewell Collection, Box 58), citing a conversation with the high priest Hewahewa (respecting the abolition of the tabus in 1819) on board the Thaddeus before the pioneer missionaries had landed. The belief in Jehovah — "Akahi wale no Akua nui i loko o ka lani," as Hunnewell has it — was not necessarily general among Hawaiians. Nor was it a simple conclusion regarding European power so much as a selective appropriation of that power by certain chiefs — an issue that will be treated at length in a forthcoming work.

⁸Although Kamehameha's cession of Hawaii was not accepted by the British Crown, Kamehameha and, after him, Liholiho conceived themselves and their territories as subordinate to "King George" (cf. Mathison 1825:366-367). Kamehameha continued to refer to the English king as his "brother" at **least** until 1811 (Franchère 1969:63; Bell 1929, v.I(6):83). On Liholiho's struggles with his chiefs, the general situation is described in Kuykendall 1968 and Bradley 1968; excellent political and economic detail is found in papers of New England traders of the period, such as John C. Jones (Marshall Letters), J. Hunnewell, C. Bullard and C. Hammatt.

⁹On another level, the continued opposition between Kamehameha's domain and the quasi-independent chiefdom of Kauai (acknowledging the superiority of the former but itself never conquered) was linked to the opposition of England and America during the War of 1812 (Anon, Atahualpa). Afterwards, the Kauai paramount chief formed an alliance with the Russians, in contrast to Kamehameha and his English (Pierce 1965).

¹⁰Dorothy B. Barrère first suggested to me that the Makahiki ceremonies were developed as a representation of Cook's voyage; it is her genial

idea. This does not mean there was no such ceremony before. First fruit and renewal ceremonies coinciding with the phases of the Pleides cycle are common in Polynesia and Micronesia, often under terms cognate to "Makahiki" — normally the name of the Pleides (cf. Makemson 1941). Various elements of the Hawaiian Makahiki rites as described by Malo (1951) and Kelou Kamakau (Fornander 1916-19, v.6(1):34-45) are analogous to harvest rites on other Polynesian islands; other elements of the Hawaiian ceremonies have clearly been integrated from the local human sacrifice and akua fishing rites (the latter corresponding nearly to the date of Cook's death). Hence the position taken here is not that a Makahiki ceremony was previously lacking, but that it was subject to considerable manipulation and development by Kalaniopu'u and Kamehameha. As we shall see, the appropriation of Cook's death within the Makahiki eventually resumed and replaced the traditional sacrificial rituals sponsored by Hawaiian ruling chiefs.

¹¹Certain Hawaiian categorical distinctions and relations alluded to in this paragraph are exemplified further along in the text. The mythical corpus (e.g., Fornander 1916-19) is a main source of the present analysis, along with commentary such as Beckwith's (1919;1970;1972) and Luomala's (1949). Also valuable in this connection are Mary Kawena Pukui's ethnographic observations (see Handy and Pukui 1972; Pukui, Haertig and Lee 1972). A text particularly germane to the coding of Cook and European power is Kamakau (1845). Above all, I should like to pay tribute to Valerio Valeri's excellent analysis of Hawaiian myth and polity (1976), which has been a source of much useful reflection and inspiration.

¹²King cites one apparently (though not necessarily) secular view that the Europeans had come from a place where food was short (Cook 1784, v.3:26). He also notes that one man put a number of ethnographic questions to him about European customs and beliefs, including "who was our god" — questions attributed in the published Voyage to the priest Kanaina of Kealakekua (Cook 1784, v.3:131), but in King's Journal to the Kauai chief Ka'eo (Beaglehole 1967:625).

¹³I owe the following general ideas on the passage from abstract categories to chiefly instantiations in Hawaiian myth to Mr. Gregory Schrempp, who is presently working comparatively on Hawaiian and Maori folklore.

¹⁴One of the Lahainaluna student compositions, "Mistaken Ideas Concerning the Missionaries," dated April 9, 1842, contains a very similar account of this incident as well as other anecdotes of the early Christian period. This valuable paper and a translation prepared by Mary Kawena Pukui are in the Bishop Museum Library, Honolulu.

¹⁵The incorporation of Lono in Ku, as it were, does not mean that the two would not also be distinctly imaged and worshipped. As John Papa I'i describes the system at ca. 1810 in Honolulu, where Kamehameha and his heir Liholiho were staying, there were three god-houses: the Hale o Lono, or house of Lono; the Hali Hui, "the dwelling for miscellaneous gods;" and the Hale o Kaili, "for the god Kaili, or Kukailimoku" (I'i 1959:58).

¹⁶On the decline of human sacrifice from 1794 onwards, see, among others, Bell 1929-30, v.2(1):90; Lisiansky 1968:120; Shaler 1808:167; Corney 1896:102; Golovnin, ms. On the corresponding changes in ritual, note that the ceremonial calendar given by Kelou Kamakau — a participant in the rites he describes — completely reverses the war and peace periods alleged in standard ethnographic treatments (in Fornander 1916-19, v.6:2-45).

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