EUROPEAN TRANSCULTURISTS IN POLYNESIA,
1789-ca.1840

by

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This thesis is the result of my own work, carried out as a member of the Department of History, University of Adelaide. It contains no material which has been presented for another degree or diploma in any University, and to the best of my knowledge and belief contains no material published or written by any other person except in cases which I have acknowledged.
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SUMMARY

The mainstreams of historical change are almost always accompanied by eddies and minor countercurrents. In the history of European imperial expansion the mainstream may be characterized as a process of territorial acquisition and dispossession, and economic, political and ideological domination and alienation. In the contact of different cultural traditions the onus of adaptation has lain with the non-European partner. The counter-current is represented by individuals on the frontier of expansion who became detached from the European mainstream and became assimilated to the culture of the people who were being colonized. The term 'trans-culturite' or 'transculturist' has been coined to describe these people.

In the Pacific islands, transculturists became known as beachcombers, and were composed mainly of deserters from the commercial shipping which touched at the various islands. To deserters were added a sprinkling of castaways and a leaven of escaped convicts.

Assimilation into island cultures was a difficult process for most beachcombers. Its difficulty was due partly to the fact that thorough assimilation requires a fundamental personality adjustment and is not simply an enormous learning task. Most beachcombers were unable to make the necessary degree of adjustment because of a lack of motivation to do so, and because of an underlying hostility towards Polynesians and Polynesian society. The lack of motivation
is explained by the fact that most beachcombers saw themselves as only short-term residents in island society; the underlying hostility is explained by prevailing European attitudes towards non-European peoples of which the 'Noble Savage' fashion was but one aspect of an ambivalent and complex response.

Because of this lack of complete membership of island societies and also because of the continued independence and integrity of those societies, the beachcombers played no major part in political, social or cultural change during a period which is notable for the extremity of change. In this they were unique: other occupational categories in the Pacific had a vested interest in change and actively fostered it as a matter of policy. In their roles in island society the beachcombers were totally under the control of indigenous authority systems.

As mediators in culture-contact relationships the beachcombers had only a minor role to play, but their performance was subject to other variables over which they had no control. They dominated neither the relationships nor the parties involved. Nor could they enlighten either Polynesians or Europeans to any great extent about the cultural attributes of each other.

This relatively harmless, inactive role for the beachcombers and their inadequate assimilation is contrary to the views of their European contemporaries about them. Such views were in general and almost without exception, derogatory. The gap between contemporaries' attitudes and the reality is attributable to the unconscious repressions and fantasies about life in the 'state of nature' and about civilization which were current at the time.
Imperialism, the most powerful and fastest acting means of cultural (in a very broad sense) change, and at the same time the most respectable of policies in the eyes of members of the expanding society, was therefore almost totally denied by those who appear to have been its vanguard.
PREFACE

My interest in the subject of this thesis is due to H.E. Maude's article 'Beachcombers and Castaways' which for the first time lent academic respectability to the study of those individuals who in the first years of culture contact lived with and adjusted to, the indigenous inhabitants of the Pacific islands. Besides offering academic respectability Maude also indicated the principal sources and the initial questions with which further research needed to be concerned.

This thesis may be thought of as an elaboration of Maude's article and offers some modifications of his interpretations. The modifications are not contradictions of his views; I doubt that there are any serious contradictions between Maude's interpretation and mine which are not embraced by his article. For example, in evaluating the significance of beachcombing it is often assumed from Maude's article that he was making out a case for the importance of beachcombers as agents of political and cultural change. What he did say was that such changes as they did make were unpremeditated. The further research which I have done confirms this interpretation but it also suggests that they did not accomplish profound changes. The difference between Maude's interpretation and mine might be more a problem of semantics than of genuine disagreement, for the perception and assessment of change is a highly relative and subjective thing. The essential compatibility of our interpretations is suggested in

Maude's conclusion: he pointed out that the process of acculturation had only just begun during the beachcomber period. The real agents of major change were the traders, missionaries, settlers and government officials, and that compared with them the beachcombers were relatively impotent:

There was only the beachcomber and the castaway to represent what was to come; often drunken, profligate and quarrelsome, but still essentially human and tolerant and wishing to change no one.²

Maude was faced with a dilemma: as a historian he felt obliged to document, analyse and account for social change, and therefore attribute a role in processes of change to the people about whom he wished to write. As an unabashed 'island monomaniac' well known for his sympathies for island peoples and cultures he seems to have been reluctant to acknowledge the existence of processes of change which had their origins outside the islands - hence a note of ambivalence in his assessment of the beachcombers.

I have experienced a similar dilemma. History is the study of changes and of the mechanisms of change. A changeless society could have no history because the past, present and future would all be identical. There is a tendency in the writing of history therefore to exaggerate change. This is no less the case in Pacific history than in other fields. The contrast between pre-contact society and the present is obvious and dramatic. The transition from the Stone age to the Nuclear age in the space of a few lifetimes is such an overwhelmingly conspicuous and provocative theme that it is likely to conceal continuities and stability and lead one to attribute responsibility

2. Ibid., p.169.
for all change to the Europeans, and by extension of the idea, to assume that all classes of European who came to the Pacific made major contributions towards effecting the transition from cannibal chief to Doctor of Philosophy. It is easy then to attribute to the beachcombers a significance which they did not earn. One of the difficulties in writing about beachcombers is in reconciling the static and dynamic elements, for the beachcombers had no vested interest in change, were not committed to it, and had no conscious ability to bring changes about. Yet at the same time they were involved in cultural and political changes which were profound; some of them originated within the societies of the Pacific islands themselves, others were the products of changes in the wider, more powerful industrial world beyond.

The beachcombers seem to me to be detached from both sources of change; it is almost as if they were a static element in the midst of chaotic change; this observation will be more comprehensible if the beachcombers are looked upon as a counter-current in the mainstream of history. In the social evolutionist views of their contemporaries they were historically retrogressive in living among and adapting to more primitive (i.e. non-European) societies. Adaptation was looked upon not as something positive and dynamic, but as merely degeneration, regression, an abandonment of control, self-discipline and virtue. The idea was crude and inaccurate, but it is useful nevertheless, for the beachcombers were escapists, withdrawing from western civilization and therefore from the treadmill of historical change.

3. The phrase is Maude's. Ibid., p.xvi.
To write the history of a relatively static phenomenon is to invite criticism for being antiquarian, and for being blind to dynamic relationships. Among other things, such criticisms will be based in this case on the frequent absence of a time reference. Processes are described, and examples cited with little respect for time gaps or for developments within those processes. The reason for this is that the beachcomber phenomenon was essentially a timeless one; a person trying the beachcomber venture today would experience the same restrictions, pressures, frustrations and circum- scriptions as was the case in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. In other words, this thesis violates some of the canons of historical writing because in many respects the beachcomber phenomenon was ahistorical.

Among other departures from convention is my approach to the problem of explanation. Conventional historical explanations do not fit comfortably with problems which one feels to be ahistorical, so that although I have applied ordinary methods of historical analysis and reconstruction where these seem to be relevant (which is after all, most of the thesis) it seemed to me to be an insupportable distortion to purport to explain developments in terms which are not adequate to the problems (for example, in Chapter 3 in explaining why people voluntarily became beachcombers). As a supplement to incomplete historical explanations I have turned to the psychological dimension. To perceive the beachcombers as representatives of certain institutions and sub-cultures was not helpful; it did seem help-

4. Relative in the sense that other things were changing much more rapidly and energetically, with the beachcombers making merely minimal reactions to those changes.
ful to see them - as Maude did - as 'essentially human'. The beachcombers were human before they were Europeans, and they approached their hosts on fundamentally human rather than on cultural terms because their object was survival, not profit, nor evangelization, nor dominion.

The value of psychology in history should be to explicate, not to obscure, and I have not used arcane jargon or concepts where they are avoidable. Nor do I see psychological methods and evidence as displacing conventional historical approaches, and I have not offered a psychological explanation where a simpler, more conventional one seems adequate. This policy conforms with the accepted maxim in the physical, mathematical and biological sciences that of two possible and otherwise undifferentiated hypotheses for the same phenomenon the simpler one is to be preferred.

In identifying myself with a particular psychological school I have found the works of Freud and some of his successors to be the most pertinent. The reason is perhaps that in race relations generally, and in late eighteenth and early nineteenth century attitudes to Pacific peoples in particular, there was a very strong element of sexual fantasy. A theory of mental life which gives full place to sexuality and to fantasy of all kinds therefore seems to be the most relevant. My first introduction to the application of Freudian psychology to historical explanation was in the work of Erich Fromm; for this thesis I have drawn most explicitly on the works of Freud, Norman Brown and Herbert Marcuse, and it is their ideas which I have had in mind when suggesting that the beachcomber

phenomenon was not only historically retrogressive (i.e. a counter-current), but psychologically regressive as well.

Two further statements about methodology are apposite. First, I see beachcombing in its 'classic' form as mainly a Polynesian phenomenon, and for this reason and in order to keep the size of the thesis and the comparative observations within manageable limits I have confined myself to the study of the beachcomber in Polynesia. In defining Polynesia, however, I have included Fiji but excluded New Zealand. The strong and important cultural affiliation between Fiji, Tonga and Samoa, and the historical continuities between the three groups makes it unrealistic to exclude Fiji. New Zealand on the other hand, although it shares cultural and historical continuities with tropical Polynesia is excluded for reasons of expediency. The size of New Zealand and the importance of its history makes the Pakeha Maori worthy of separate study.

Second, it has become customary among Pacific historians who have felt it necessary to justify the autonomy of their subject from the broader field of Imperial history to claim to write 'island-oriented' or 'island-centred' history. Such history is said to be, if not history from the islanders' point of view, at least history which gives the islanders their proper place in their own history. I feel bound to make the same claim, and at the same time to stress that my research for this thesis (both documentary and field-work) and my findings have convinced me that the belief that outsiders can faithfully and accurately write island oriented history in anything other than a geographical sense is an arrogance equal to that of an older generation of imperialists. In this thesis I have attempted to focus on the islands in a geographical sense only; if
the reader discerns what appear to be objectionable instances of Eurocentrism it is because of the European cultural background and education of its author. For me to suggest that I can write history 'from the islanders' point of view' - even though I might attempt to explain their perceptions and reactions - would be tantamount to claiming that like Sir Arthur Gordon, first Governor of Fiji, I have a 'talent for understanding natives'. The various indigenous senses of time, tradition, and history in the Pacific are not necessarily identical to the European sense, and this thesis is offered as no more than a European attempt to explain in the European historiographical tradition an aspect of European colonial expansion. It is not written specifically for or on behalf of Pacific islanders for it might be necessary for Pacific islanders to write their own history in terms of their own outlook and according to conventions of their own to supplement or replace the reconstructions of foreigners. The decolonization of the Pacific has taken place so far only at the political institutional level; it needs to go much further. This thesis deals with contact relationships before political colonization began, and it suggests amongst other things that other forms of colonialism - ideational, technological and economic - were at that time scarcely conceivable.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I am pleased to be able to thank the various people who by their interest and co-operation have assisted in the preparation of this thesis. Mr. H.E. Maude not only invented the subject but gave me advice and encouragement when I first proposed that it be investigated further, and whose generosity and interest has continued. For help with sources and in defining the scope and content of the thesis my thanks are due to Dr. Dorothy Shineberg, Mr. Robert Langdon, Dr. Caroline Ralston, and Professor Gavan Daws.

The helpfulness and co-operation of librarians in the various institutions in New Zealand and Hawaii must be experienced to be believed. I am heavily indebted to them for facilitating my work. In Western Samoa Jack Afamasaga Schweger of Nofoalii'i enabled me to arrive at some important insights, and Se Apa of Apia saved me much wasted effort. In Tonga the Hon. Ve'ehala's erudition and helpfulness was valuable to me. A large number of people in Tonga patiently answered my questions and helped the beachcomber experience to make sense to me. My being able to make contact with most of them was due largely to the kindness of David Ngolongolo of Tokomololo. Tavi (Peter Kauffman) discussed his own experiences with me in great detail, and although no acknowledgment has been made to him in the text of the thesis these conversations have been invaluable. In Fiji I owe debts of gratitude to Dr. Tim Bavadra of Lakeba, Mr. Petero Qavena of Labasa, Mr. Laurie Simpson, Mr. David Simpson, Mr. Guy Parr, Mr. Fred Archibald, and Mr. David Whippy of Savusavu, Mrs. Josephine Wise and Mr. Harry
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My being able to do the necessary travelling in the course of the work was made possible by research grants from the Myer Foundation and the University of Adelaide. The University of Adelaide made the project possible by the award of a Commonwealth postgraduate research scholarship, and by providing me with an enthusiastic supervisor in Dr. John Young.

But with all these advantages the *eine qua non* has been the support and interest of my wife, Valerie.
ABBREVIATIONS

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<tr>
<td>H.H.S.</td>
<td>The Annual Report of the Hawaiian Historical Society</td>
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### MAPS

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CHAPTER 1

'GONE NATIVE'

Mainstreams and counter-currents in History - acculturation in colonial history usually seen as a one way process - adaptation by the colonial fringe to indigenous cultures in America, Africa and Australia - transculturists neglected by historians and anthropologists with a few exceptions - the neglect of Pacific transculturists in modern Pacific historiography.

The diffusionist school of anthropologists was, amongst other things, a monument to the fact of timeless and ubiquitous contact between peoples of different cultural traditions, and to the borrowing and transmission of cultural traits which seems inevitably to happen whenever people of one tradition mingle with those of another. To the diffusionist the most spectacular demonstration of his thesis must surely have been the expansion of Europe until western culture seemed to have engulfed the entire world. From the Eurocentric point of view, this spreading of culture was a manifestation of the idea of progress, and to the nineteenth century in particular, 'progress' connoted a moral imperative. Civilization was 'higher' in a moral sense as well as in an evolutionary sense, and so the self-interested export of people and culture carried with it its own high-minded justification.

Historical processes are frequently accompanied, however, by a counter-influence which produces amongst a minority a cultural regression (if the main movement be regarded as progress). In a time of increasing urbanization, some people will be found moving to the rural areas; in a time of economic growth and rising material pros-
perity, some will be found retiring to monasteries. Similarly, in a
time of imperial expansion when the impact of an overwhelming tech-
nology and uncompromising institutions is working radical changes in
the recipient cultures, some individuals from the imperialist culture
can be found living for preference as members of more primitive
societies. Throughout the history of European expansion, the onus has
been generally on the more primitive society to adapt its institu-
tions and way of life to suit the needs and whims of Europeans, and
failure to do so has frequently meant decimation or extinction. A
progress-oriented civilization tends to produce progress-oriented
historians and it was usually later in the day, and after the first
histories of colonies had been written, before any significant
scholarly interest was taken in the victims of imperialism or in
those Europeans who did not participate in the colonial enterprise.

In the period of colonial moral assertiveness from the late
eighteenth to the mid-twentieth centuries it was unusual for anyone
to extoll the virtues of the living conditions and social organiza-
tion of primitives. Any attempt to do so was likely to be met with
derision despite the popularity of the notion of the noble savage.
Those who actually lived with savages (except as missionaries) can
be expected to have been as out of touch with the articulated values
and aspirations of their civilization as they were lacking in physi-
cal contact with its members. Such individuals represent the
opposite of the colonial situation. It was their values and responses
which were inappropriate to their circumstances, and they who had to
adapt to the 'natives'.

Pacific island beachcombing was a nineteenth century
phenomenon but individual instances of cultural adaptation of this
kind were probably more common elsewhere before the nineteenth century. Colonial societies of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries made more concessions to local conditions than was necessary later when technological advances created a more obvious gulf between the cultures, and when improved communications reinforced the separate identity of the colonists. Perhaps the most convenient index of the tolerance of colonists to the indigenous populations, and therefore of the possibility of acculturation by the colonists is found in the attitudes and circumstances surrounding interracial marriage. This important aspect of almost all beachcomber experience can best be understood in the wider context of frontier conditions in the major continents. In seventeenth century North America and in eighteenth century India, for example, mixed marriages were much freer than in later times; Latin America and the African and Australian continents provide further interesting examples and variations of the phenomenon which the beachcomber represents.

In colonial North America social intercourse between Indians and Europeans was fairly free, a fact which may be explained in terms of the considerable resources still owned, and considerable power still exercised by the Indians before the great self-assertive, expansionist era of American history. Yet inter-marriage was comparatively rare. One of the most notable examples was that of English planter John Rolfe of Virginia, and Pocahontas in 1614. Before their marriage Rolfe wrote to the colony's deputy governor, Sir Thomas Dale, explaining his intentions and noting that he expected some settler hostility over the matter. Rolfe pointed out, however, that this marriage was no descent into savage heathenism: he was marrying an Indian princess, not a common squaw, and she would have to become
English, not he Indian.  

It is not, therefore, to the agricultural or maritime settlements that we may look for evidence of reciprocal acculturation, for settlers wanted wives who knew about European domestic matters.  

It was to the itinerant trader that affiliation with the Indians was an asset:

The Indian Traders are those which travel and abide among the Indians for a long space of time; sometimes for a Year, two, or three. These Men have commonly their Indian Wives, whereby they soon learn the Indian Tongue, keep a friendship with the Savages; and besides the Satisfaction of a She-Bed-Fellow, they find the Indian girls very serviceable to them, on Account of dressing their victuals, and instructing them in the Affairs and Customs of the Country. Moreover, such a person gets a great Trade with the Savages; for when a person that lives amongst them, is reserved from the conversation of their Women, tis impossible for him ever to accomplish his Designs amongst that People.

Although the Indian traders as a group were probably not a well-respected class of people, it would be wrong to infer that such close relations with the Indians were confined to men of their kind. Among the officers and traders of the Hudson Bay Company marriage to an Indian woman was the norm, and probably indispensable to good commercial relations. In this case, one's marriage partner was determined by one's rank in the company, a wife being chosen from the scale of the Indian social hierarchy appropriate to one's standing in the Company. In this latter case it was probably the Indian wife who had to adapt more than her English husband. The purpose of the marriages


4. MacLeod, op. cit., p. 359n.
was to serve the interests of the Company at least as much as it was intended to gratify its employees. Indianization is much more likely to have taken place amongst the more independent, so-called "Indian traders". The degree to which this is so is perhaps best seen in the fact that it was the general practice for the half-cast children born to the traders to be brought up in the Indian communities as Indians. Indeed, any alternative was probably out of the question considering that:

English Men, and other Europeans that have been accustomed to the Conversation of these Savage Women and their Way of living, have been so allured with that careless sort of life, as to be constant to their Indian Wife, and her Relations, so long as they lived, without ever desiring to return again amongst the English, although they had very fair Opportunities of Advantages among their Countrymen.

That Europeans who became accustomed to Indian life developed a preference for it over European life ought not to be taken as evidence of any such initial preference, or of a philosophical confidence in the advantages of a 'natural' life over a 'civilized' one, for as was often noticed, white children captured by Indians could not be persuaded to return to their natural parents or to a European life style.

If a segment of the colonizing population preferred Indian life it is no surprise to discover a continued self confidence and self esteem among the Indians, which often had unflattering implications for the Europeans. For example, among the Sioux adultery was

5. Ibid., pp.359-360; Washburn, op. cit., p.46.
regarded as a serious crime - but it was less serious if a white man was concerned for the Indian "does not dream that this rival presumes to think that he is preferred to himself". The Indians were also generally reported as taking pride in white men seeking to learn their languages - but more because such an interest seemed to affirm their own self respect, than because of the supposed high status of the inquirer, for apparently they often resented the manner in which such inquiries were conducted. 

MacLeod's portrayal of early trader-Indian relations suggests that Indian dislike of Europeans was widespread and empirical: the Dutch and Scots were held by them to be mean, dishonest and mercenary, and the English disliked for "cheating, rum-selling, sexual irregularities, kidnapping and slave-raiding". The white man who became an accepted and well integrated member of an Indian community was probably a comparatively rare specimen among the American frontiersmen: relations between the two races were more frequently characterized by bloodshed and hatred.

In Latin America similar phenomena existed, though according to MacLeod, it was the minority who interbred with the Indian population, and whose offspring became an important "middle ground" population between contrasting and contending cultures. For that to be so, however, both the children and their fathers maintained links with the settler population which preclude them from being classed with the


9. Ibid., p.69.


11. Ibid., pp.360-361.
Indian traders and their children. Less noticeable to the conventional historian are the adventurers, outlaws, deserters and dissidents who in small numbers joined Indian communities permanently and with few concessions to their cultural origins apart from a role as small scale traders. For the most part, these 'transfrontiersmen' survived because of their ability to fulfil traditional role expectations, including in some instances that of leadership. These individuals not only removed themselves from white society, they actively resisted its further encroachment.

In Africa it is possible that those Europeans who 'went native' were more influential at a political level than seems to be the case in the Americas, but otherwise they exhibit the same general characteristics. Before large scale colonization by settlers and commercial interests, intercourse with the Africans seems to have been strictly on the Africans' terms. Before the prohibition of the slave trade in 1807 all trading was done from vessels afloat:

1. . . for a factor once settled ashore is absolutely under the command of the king of the country where he lives, and is liable for the least displeasure to lose all the goods he has in his possession, with danger also to his life!14

Opportunities for a white man of unpretentious circumstances to live under the protection of a local potentate may, of course, have been better than this, and Dike gives some hint of the sort of men who might have been found living with the Africans:


... the coast fraternity ... made no pretensions to humanity, Christianity or civilization .... Most of the coast traders were among the abandoned desperadoes of their race and aptly nicknamed 'palm-oil ruffians'. They 'were rude, uneducated men, who prided themselves upon coming in at the "hawse-hole, and going out at the cabin windows". Acts of wanton cruelty to white men, as well as to Negroes, have been handed down by generations of this fraternity.'  

It becomes very difficult to try to distinguish between a man of this sort, who necessarily must have lived in close contact with the Africans, and a man who might have been a well integrated member of an African community and indulged in some small scale trading. It is, moreover, unlikely that contemporary observers would have made much distinction between the two types. A serious attempt to generalize about this early phase of culture contact for the whole of Africa is, of course, impossible; but a few examples from Natal may be taken as representative, not necessarily of the vast diversity of Africa, but of the activities of a minority of European colonizers throughout the world.

The first Europeans to live in Natal were almost certainly the survivors of shipwreck. Some are known from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and these were probably not the first, but their histories are unlikely to be documented. Some English sailors are known to have been shipwrecked near Delagoa Bay in 1683, and returned to Capetown overland. In 1686 the Dutch ship Stavenisse was wrecked in the Bay of Natal. The survivors built a vessel by

15. Ibid., p.60.


which to return to the Cape of Good Hope, but some of their number
preferred to stay. A year later two of them told their rescuers of
their life in the hinterland, and the hospitality of its inhabitants.
These castaways had met a Portuguese, who had been wrecked there
forty years previously. He had become so well established and per-
fectly integrated that he had a family and property; but he had for-
gotten both his language and religion. 18

A refugee from the "visipidity and monotony of the counting
house" 19 was wrecked in the Bay of Natal in the late 1820's. He
seems to have relished neither the prospect, nor in later life the
retrospect of living in African fashion, "an almost solitary European,
wandering occasionally I knew not where, and in search of I knew not
what". 20

Until 1823, most of the contact between black and white in
Natal was the result of shipwreck. Even when settlers with colonial-
ist intentions arrived relations between the two races were close -
even intimate; or as Holden put it, many settlers "were Kaffir chiefs,
in the proper sense of the word, except that their skin was not quite
black". 21 Where survival and prosperity required it, cultural adapta-
tion was a trait much valued, but the later representatives of Euro-
pean cultural and religious evangelism saw it as a weakness rather
than a strength:

18. Ibid., p.38.
19. Nathaniel Isaacs, Travels and Adventures in Eastern Africa,
20. Ibid., p.15.
21. Holden, op. cit., p.44.
It is much more easy for man to descend in the scale of being from the civilized to the savage, than to rise from the savage to the civilized; and in strange lands, surrounded by barbarous life, great care is required in the settler to prevent such a degrading lapse.22

Prominent among the earliest settlers of Natal was Henry Francis Fynn, who was made a chief by Shaka in 1825, and in 1831 declared by Dingaan to be the great chief of the Natal Kaffirs.23

Fynn, however, was no common vagabond who simply 'went native'. The basis of his great influence with Shaka was his tact and adaptability, and his usefulness in the field of medicine. His diary has become a useful source of information about South-East African proto-history; in his time he was equally valuable to the Africans as a source of information about things English, and as an instrument to their ends. His observations further suggest that there were a fair number of others like him, though usually lacking his prominence and influence.24 But the great white chief *par excellence* in colonial Natal was born in the colony after Fynn left there in 1834 - John Dunn. Both Dunn and Fynn were remarkable for the status and influence they acquired in Zulu society, but for both of them that influence was reinforced by their retaining a strong contact with their own European cultural background, and a realization that they were living during a unique phase of culture contact. They were mediators between cultures, not renegades from one to another. As such they are perhaps better seen as instruments of colonialism rather than as its forgotten ones. Dunn eventually had

22. Ibid.
23. Ibid., p.59.
over forty Zulu wives, over one hundred children, and was one of the three great chiefs of Zululand in the later nineteenth century. His huge domain was the largest district in Zululand, and his estate, and his thousands of descendants represent a recurring problem for the Government of Natal.25

The highly selective nature of these fragments of Natal's history lends support to Mannoni's suggestion that:

The man-in-the-street will say instinctively and without experience that if the white man who goes among negroes avoids being eaten, he will become King.26

Fynn in his travels in Zululand met with Europeans who had avoided both fates,27 but popular opinion in the nineteenth century was as Mannoni says. One of the best examples of a man who embodied the counter-experience of colonialism was Robert Drury of Madagascar. The editor of the 1890 edition of Drury's narrative disclaimed belief in Drury's stories, and quoted a French reviewer of 1872:

The truthfulness of the narrator has been affirmed; nevertheless, on several grounds, there is room for doubt. Drury asserts that he was a slave. A European reduced to slavery! that is impossible, say those who know the Malagasy; they might probably kill a European, but they would never degrade him to the lowest rank ... 28

The bare circumstances of Drury's story are almost certainly not


28. S. Pasfield Oliver, Madagascar; or, Robert Drury's Journal, During Fifteen Years' Captivity on that Island, (London, 1890), p.15.
unique for according to Oliver, the editor of the 1890 edition, the Madagascar coast was infested with vagabond Englishmen in the early eighteenth century. Drury was the son of an innkeeper, and was given what he calls a good education. In 1701, at the age of fourteen, being obsessed with going to sea, his father sent him to India. On the way home, in early 1702, the ship was wrecked on the coast of Madagascar. The local 'king' took the castaways under his protection, wanting to use the white men to further his military ambitions, meanwhile distributing them among his sons. A collective attempt by the one hundred and seventy castaways to escape to the coast failed, and as a result most of them were killed. Drury was one of several who was saved. They were separated from each other and lived in a condition of servitude and anxiety, suffering the derision and contempt of their captors.

As a slave, Drury prospered, though he seems to have enjoyed no special privileges by virtue of his skin colour. After some years he graduated to the profession of soldiering, for which white men were much valued - having some talent, it seems, for frightening the enemy. He experienced some changes of ownership as well as changes of role, and came to appreciate the fact that his hosts were a virtuous, well governed people. Eventually he passed into the ownership of a king who appointed him to a high and responsible office. In this position he became a middle man in relations between the Malagasies and the Europeans on the island's fringes. This role enabled him eventually to take a ship back to England.

During his fifteen years in Madagascar Drury met several

29. Ibid., pp.24-25.
Europeans who like himself, had become absorbed. Most of them were, again like himself, in menial positions, although he heard of a Frenchman who had become a king. Those who survived seem to have become reconciled to the way of life and even after opportunities to escape became available preferred to continue to live at least in close association with the Malagasy.

It seems that the only limit to stories about "white men living with natives" is that of documentation. The phenomenon was, clearly, one that was bound to develop in a frontier zone regardless of the circumstances under which differing cultures came into contact. Australia, also, produced its fair share of "white blackfellows". The centuries of Dutch contact with the coast of Western Australia almost certainly produced numbers of unlucky Dutchmen whose only alternatives to death in that graveyard of ships and crews was to live with the Aborigines. It is impossible to estimate how much this happened.

Possibly the earliest recorded, and probably the most well known example in Australian history is the experience of William Buckley. Buckley was a convict member of David Collins' abortive attempt to found a colony at Port Phillip in 1803. After three months Buckley and a few companions absconded. His companions soon gave up the attempt, but Buckley lived alone and destitute for some months, seeing something of the Aborigines, but having no sustained contact with them. One day he came upon a grave marked with a spear. Being by this time weak enough to feel the need of a staff, he took the spear; two days later he was found by a party of Aborigines. In this manner Buckley became perhaps the first known European in Australian history to benefit from the widespread Aboriginal belief
that after a black person dies, he will "jump up whitefellow".  

The appearance of this white man supporting himself with the spear of the recently deceased was taken as prima facie proof of the reincarnation. Buckley was accepted into the group with the dead man's name.  

When John Batman's expedition came to Indented Head in 1835, Buckley created a small sensation. His English had been forgotten, and his appearance was that of an Aborigine. For some months after his renewed contact with civilization Buckley continued to live with the adopted people with whom he had already spent a lifetime, and among whom he had seen his children grow to maturity. He did, however, adopt a mediator's and an interpreter's role between the two peoples, and only gradually returned to life in white society. He was employed variously as a constable, storekeeper, and gatekeeper. He retired in 1850, and in 1852, at the age of 82, the Victorian government awarded him a pension of £40 p.a. He died in 1856.

Buckley had apparently adapted so well to Aboriginal life that return to white society was no easy matter. Generally he was a disappointment to the colonists who had expected him to be an instrument for moulding the Aborigines to their own purposes. As to his usefulness in supplying information about Aboriginal culture and the country generally there were conflicting opinions. Buckley's is a


32. Ibid., pp.88-90.

quotable case. He was a sensation because by 1835 he was a living relic of a past episode in Australian history, having vanished from the main-stream for over three decades, like an Antipodean Rip Van Winkle. He has no claim to uniqueness, however, for "Buckley's chance" was taken by many other convicts: many successfully, many not.

The 'white blackfellows' of Australia can be fitted into two broad categories: convicts who absconded, whether by land or sea; and the victims of shipwreck. There were no doubt, others whose circumstances were less common, such as that of John King, the man who survived the Burke and Wills expedition only through the kindness and compassion of the Aborigines in the vicinity of Coopers Creek.34

Stories of what is probably a representative sample of such men (and occasionally women) were gathered together by Charles Barrett, and published as White Blackfellows in 1948. As is shown even by the great Louis de Rougemont hoax - the fictional but plausible and widely accepted story of the life of a Swiss among the Aborigines of Northern Australia - it is clear from Barrett's stories that contemporaries showed considerable interest in the lives of civilized men and women held captive by savages. Amid the cultural diversity and the variety of historical contact situations a wide range of experience for such people may be taken for granted. Some of the white people were looked on with fear. Some were treated brutally and inhumanly, apparently being used as cheap labour until exhaustion and malnutrition claimed them. Others were evidently regarded as outsiders and excluded from those activities most valued by their hosts.

34. For a popular account, see Alan Moorehead, Cooper's Creek, (London, 1963), pp.146-148.
Others were fully accepted and fully integrated among the Aborigines, and lived in a condition of harmony and equality, and even of prestige, though probably never of authority. The reaction of the Aborigines, however, was probably no less various than that of the displaced Europeans themselves: few actively resisted acculturation for acculturation was the road of survival. (Most, however, claim to have drawn the line at cannibalism). Many indeed probably had their roles cast for them in so far as they owed their acceptance to being taken for reincarnated Aborigines. Periods of residence were from a few months to many years during which time acculturation was a one way process. There was probably little survival value or status value in "rehearsing the deeds of the great Caesar"; far from that indeed, most of the white blackfellows forgot English altogether, or at least had difficulty speaking it on their first return to English-speaking society. Most of the white blackfellows were glad enough to return, though anxiety accompanied a few. Most had to make strenuous efforts to effect their own rescue. In practically all cases, the Aborigines sought to prevent the return of their guests to their own culture, irrespective of whether the guest was in a condition of captivity or freedom, servitude or respect. Rarely did a former white blackfellow continue to live in the same region as his adopted tribesmen, and therefore few opportunities were available for the performance of a role of mediation between two mutually incomprehensible cultures. James Murrells in North Queensland perhaps came the closest to this and even in his case there is doubt.36

36. Ibid., p.40.
At the academic level some of white blackfellows were valuable sources of information about Aboriginal life and culture; others were unable or unwilling to oblige in this manner. There were probably also strict limits on their usefulness to Europeans in the pastoral penetration of Australia, though Richard Craig in Northern New South Wales is one who did make geographical discoveries of value.37

While it is tempting to stress the similarities between the Indian trader and the backwoods pioneer of America, and between the white blackfellow and the Australian pastoral worker on the grounds of contemporaneity, their common origins, their common qualities of resourcefulness and independence, the contrasts are far more important. Similarly the Pacific beachcomber is not the Oceanic counterpart of the continental frontiersman. The difference between the frontiersman and the white blackfellow or beachcomber or Indian trader is more one of historical circumstance than of choice or philosophy or personality. But the contrast is profound nonetheless. The frontiersman was the vanguard, the instrument of colonialism, the human face of the foundations of a new society. The white blackfellow and others of his kind were members of the colonized society, with nothing to offer to their former culture or their compatriots in the enterprise of colonization. Their lives were swept up in a stream which ran counter to the main course of history.

Hitherto, people of this kind - the counter-current in colonial history - have received practically no academic attention, either from historians or from scholars in other fields. The first serious studies appear to have been made by the acculturation school

of American anthropologists, although not until nearly three decades after Herskovits and others had given a strong impetus to the study of acculturation processes. Hallowell, accepting as a definition of acculturation, 'culture change that is initiated by the conjunction of two or more autonomous cultural systems', investigated cases of individuals who came into contact with an alien cultural system, a process already known to his colleagues as "Indianization". This process is distinguished from acculturation:

The fact that the identification of these persons with the group to which they formerly belonged has been broken, or modified, distinguishes them as a class from persons undergoing readjustment who remain functioning members of an organized group undergoing acculturation.

Hallowell therefore coined the word "transculturalization" and defined it as

... the process whereby individuals under a variety of circumstances are temporarily or permanently detached from one group, enter the web of social relations that constitute another society, and come under the influence of its customs, ideas and values to a greater or lesser degree.

An individual in such a position he called a "transculturite". A transculturite who, at one extreme establishes a permanent identification with the adopting culture, undergoes a psychological transformation. At the other extreme little is affected beyond overt manners and speech. The degree of transculturalization is subject

38. See Melville J. Herskovits, Acculturation: The Study of Culture Contact, (Gloucester, Massachusetts, 1958, first published in 1938).


40. Ibid.

41. To me, "transculturalization" and "transculturite" seem to be grammatically illegitimate constructions; I shall use "trans-culturation" and "transculturist" which are more correct, and more euphonious.
to a number of variables, including age at which the process begins, previous attitude towards people of the host culture, period of residence, motivation and nature of the roles played in the host culture. The questions to be asked of this phenomenon should be, according to Hallowell -

What cultural factors were present in Indian societies that made it possible for alien individuals - so often enemies - to become functioning members of them? Why were the Indians motivated to accept them? What social mechanisms and values in Indian societies mediated the acceptance and assimilation of these strangers? What roles did whites and negroes play in Indian cultures? Conversely, what values and attitudes prevailed in American culture that limited the roles which it was possible for Indians to play among us?42

In America, Hallowell suggested, transculturists did not appear to have played a role promoting social change in the adopted society, hypothesizing that such a role:

... may be a function of the degree to which they explicitly reject the culture of their natal group and become identified with the central values of their adopted culture.43

Presumably, the relationship would be an inverse one: the greater the rejection the less one would promote acculturation. The process in American Indian societies fits into a pattern of traditional Indian hospitality, of the custom of adopting captives taken in war, and of the practice of adoption to replace a dead child or other relative. A person adopted by Indians came to a ready-made structure of affective ties where roles and responses were defined by the kinship system and reinforced by kinship terms. The basic receptiveness of Indian society permitted the fullest possible

42. Ibid., p.526.
43. Ibid., p.529.
assimilation so that a transculturist could fulfil any socially defined role. Adoption in white American society, by contrast, according to Hallowell, offers a social situation of narrowly restricted personal contact; offering perhaps formal education, but not total personal acceptance.

Hallowell's challenge to initiate intensive research into the phenomenon of transculturation does not appear to have been taken up either by anthropologists, psychologists or historians, despite the large volume of data being published on acculturation and on the integration of immigrants. The historical study of transculturation seems to be confined to H.E. Maude's article, "Beachcombers and Castaways". As defined by Maude, the beachcombers and castaways were the Pacific islands equivalent of Hallowell's 'American Indians, White and Black'. Maude bases their claim to historical interest on the role they played in island society and the intermediary role they played during the early culture contact phase of Pacific history. They were unique among the invaders of the Pacific in that they became integrated members of island communities, depending for their social and physical survival on their adopted island communities, and participating in the life of the society. The cardinal principle of success as a Pacific transculturist, Maude argued, was to treat

... the islanders with friendship and respect as equals, and their chiefs with the courtesy due to their rank, while taking great pains to avoid any conduct that might

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44. H.E. Maude, "Beachcombers and Castaways", *The Journal of the Polynesian Society*, (Vol. 73, 1964), pp.254-293. A revised version was published in *Of Islands and Men: Studies in Pacific History*, (Melbourne, 1968), pp.134-169. Subsequent references to this article will refer to the latter version. An historical study of the Amazonian variety of the transculturist is being undertaken by Dr. David Sweet, University of California. (Personal communication).
Maude traced the various roles through which the beachcomber passed: as a status symbol; as an economic asset (first as a craftsmen, and later as an agent of trade); and as an instrument of local political and military exigencies - men who by virtue of their character and their technology wrought major changes in island politics. The beachcombers were also agents of social change in the Pacific - partly as dangerous nuisances, partly as the precursors of the irresistible European cultural streams - and thereby began a long process of erosion of indigenous values and institutions. Above all, the beachcomber was in a unique position to be a mediator: a spokesman for western civilization to the islanders and "cushioning . . . the inevitable onset of culture change". Maude concluded his article by assessing the beachcombers as "often drunken, profligate and quarrelsome, but still essentially human and tolerant, and wishing to change no one".

The Pacific beachcomber is clearly a local variant of the world-wide phenomenon of transculturation as a by-product of European expansion. But just as the phenomenon as a whole has received practically no academic attention, so has the Pacific variant been largely ignored despite Maude's efforts to outline its features. Recent Pacific historiography, apart from Maude, has tended to notice the beachcomber during the earliest years of contact, but then to pass quickly on to issues of greater interest to the respective authors.

Kuykendall's *The Hawaiian Kingdom* is a convenient starting

45. Maude, *op. cit.*, p.137.

point for modern Pacific historiography. 47 Kuykendall chronicled very thoroughly the evidence available on the foreign residents in Hawaii during that shadowy period between pre-history and history. Two main points emerge from his discussion: first, that Kamehameha's beachcombers were his assistants and advisers, contributing materially to the foundation of the Hawaiian Kingdom, but that he was always their master; second, that the Hawaiian chiefs from Captain Cook's time appreciated the advantages of having Europeans in their service and encouraged them to settle. 48

Bradley discussed the more prominent Hawaiian beachcombers, apparently for no other reason that they were the first foreign residents involved in the early commercial arrangements between foreigners and the Hawaiian people and practised European skills on shore. 49

Bradley's account is as fair and comprehensive as one would expect for a work which traces American economic activity in Hawaii to 1843. He described the economic and political role of the beachcombers in Kamehameha's service, and repeated the contemporary assessments (both favourable and unfavourable) of these first immigrants.

Davidson, writing at the same time as Bradley, devoted his attention to the islands of the South Pacific, and is generally accepted as inaugurating the study of Pacific History from a local perspective, rather than from the standpoint of European politics. His discussion of beachcombers, however, is largely confined to the


48. Ibid., pp.22-29.

impingement of their activities on those of other Europeans. In Hawaii he gave priority to Kamehameha as the engineer of his own success, though acknowledging the assistance of the beachcombers, and in Tahiti he attributed the mediator role to the missionaries.

For Davidson, the importance of the beachcombers was "the problem of European lawlessness". They were attracted by the life of idleness and ease, and often exercised considerable power, fomenting native wars and endangering other Europeans, although the fear of piracy was never realized. The beginnings of European political intervention in the Pacific are to be traced back to the first efforts of New South Wales governors to control beachcombers and sailors among the islands. Davidson's last comment on the beachcombers is an apt summation. After making allowance for exceptions, he concluded:

... in general, the beachcombers lived in isolation from their fellow Europeans, conformed in large measure to native ways of life and played only a minor part in the advance of western commerce.

It would, of course, be unfair to criticize Davidson for not giving further attention to the beachcombers. They represent very largely a historical by-way; Davidson was delineating the main patterns.

After Davidson there was a long gap in early culture contact

51. Ibid., pp.40n, 43.
52. Ibid., pp.81-82.
53. Ibid., p.98.
54. Ibid., p.160.
historiography terminated in 1959 by Gunson's 'Evangelical Missionaries in the South Seas'. Gunson accepted the missionaries' remarks about the beachcombers at face value, seeing them as generally depraved, and consistently antagonistic to missionaries and peace alike. At the same time he pointed out that the beachcombers were often a considerable help to the missionaries, although this virtue was tainted with self interest.55

The missionary interest was followed up by Latukefu in 1967, who pointed out that Tonga had very few beachcombers, and no settlers of any other sort, implying that their influence in Tongan affairs was negligible, thus leaving a gap for the Wesleyan missionaries to fill. Elsewhere, however, he does attribute important roles to some of them as advisers to chiefs and as artisans. Latukefu noticed that the Tongan beachcombers were a peaceable sort, and in many cases joined the missions; but like Gunson, he accepted the missionary claims that these men strove to make things difficult for them. His final assessment of them is that they contributed nothing to political development, but fostered a general desire for change.56

Young, writing in 1968, gave the label 'beachcomber boom' to early events in Fiji, a development "from which Bau derived the ultimate [political] benefit". Young took a more moderate line in assessing the Fijian variety of beachcombers than most of his predecessors:


They stayed in Fiji, not because they wished to convert its people to new beliefs or to change its social forms, but because they liked it as it was, or at least preferred it to the life they had known in the ship's focsle. What changes they wrought in native society occurred without premeditation, and the changes they made in their own lives were in the interests of survival.57

The Fijian beachcombers initially had a political impact because of the manner in which the Fijian chiefs used them; later this significance became more commercial: this later style beachcomber was the servant of two cultures.58

Hitherto, there was even less controversy in beachcomber historiography than there was interest: they earned a place in most works apparently for no other reason than completeness in that they were the first white residents. France took a more forthright view, and included some reference to them apparently because he felt that the claims being made for their political role - especially in Fiji 59 - were "merely further examples of the ethnocentricity of the white man in reconstructing the past". France further argued that "The beachcombers were ill-equipped and worse situated to herald the tropical dawn of European civilization", but nevertheless attributed to them the "role of interpreters of European culture" to the Fijians.60 This in itself is no inconsiderable claim.

Gilson's detailed study of nineteenth century Samoa scarcely
mentions the beachcombers. He gave them an apt but brief summing up 61 before passing on to develop his theme of political change - a process in which the Samoan beachcombers had no discernable part.

There was, in short, no detailed study of the beachcombers as a Pacific wide phenomenon to complement that of Maude until the completion of Caroline Ralston's thesis in 1970. Ralston's detailed but highly condensed chapter on the beachcomber phase of culture contact in the Pacific is significant because it focusses specifically on the beachcomber experience rather than treating them in passing, on the way to problems of more conventional historiographical interest. In essence, Ralston contributes three hypotheses: first, that throughout the beachcomber phase the island cultures retained their integrity and self confidence, and that the initiative and authority continued to reside with the islanders; second, that the beachcombers' refusal to engage in certain practices, and their immunity to supernatural sanctions began to sow the scepticism which preceded the large scale cultural erosion promoted by later foreign elements; and third, that the influence of the beachcombers on their hosts was minimal. 62

Since 1970, the only major contribution to the study of beachcombers has been the publication of three "beachcomber books". The first of these is a republication of A Residence of Eleven Years in New Holland and the Caroline Islands, by James F. O'Connell, first published in Boston in 1836. 63 The editor's chief interest in

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O'Connell's book is as a source for an ethnographic reconstruction of pre-contact and early post-contact Ponapean society. His lengthy and scholarly introduction is mainly a biography of O'Connell, aimed at correcting O'Connell's own highly selective and flattering version, and offering an evaluation of O'Connell's veracity. The second book combines a not very adequate biography of the Hawaiian beachcomber Marin with the publication for the first time of what survives of his diary and letters.64 The Marquesan Journal of Edward Robarts, 1797-1824, edited by Greg Dening,65 brings this discussion up to date. Robarts, whose journal has never before been published, was one of the first of the Marquesan beachcombers and lived there for seven years. Dening's interest in Robarts' manuscript was, however, primarily ethnographical. His sketch of his career is subordinate to his discussion of Robarts' contribution to a knowledge of the functioning of Marquesan society, and the tracing of the beginnings of a breakdown in the smooth functioning of that society. Here and elsewhere Dening has contributed two important ideas to the study of this aspect of Pacific history: he shows how the residence of a foreigner in a Polynesian community assaulted the values and institutions of that community;66 and he introduced the notion of the 'marginal man'67 to complement Maude's 'transculturite'.

In the light of this survey it seems inappropriate to speak

64. Ross H. Gast and Agnes C. Conrad, Don Francisco de Paula Marin, (Honolulu, 1973).
of gaps in the study of the beachcomber phase in Pacific history; rather, the beachcomber phase is a gap in the study of culture contact. There is as yet no comprehensive social history of the earliest contact relations in the Pacific, while the study of transculturation has scarcely begun. The foregoing studies have outlined the possible directions of inquiry which an investigation of the beachcombers might take. Some insights have been offered and valuable sources brought to light. These contributions are the basis of inquiry, rather than its results.
The Pacific Islands
CHAPTER 2

CONTACT PATTERNS

Beachcombing foreshadowed by Spanish voyagers - slow growth and dissemination of knowledge about the Pacific after the Age of Exploration - inaccuracy of maps - the growth of commerce - provisioning and sandalwood in Hawaii - sporadic contact in Tahiti - missionaries - the pork trade - incidental contacts in Tonga - visited by Fijian sandalwood shipping - decline in Tonga - whaling and second mission period - sandalwood in Fiji a large scale trade - its decline - resurgence of shipping with beche-de-mer - absence of whalers in Fijian waters - The Marquesas - early contacts with ships bound to Hawaii - refuge for whalers and sealers - sandalwood - whalers on larger scale - Samoa - visited on a smaller scale until later whaling period - Rotuma - Wallis Is. - the size of the whaling industry - distribution of hunting - eastern Pacific more favoured by shipping than the west - beachcombers concentrated in Polynesia - numbers and period in Hawaii - Tahiti - Tonga - Fiji - Marquesas - Samoa - beachcombers never present in large concentrations.

Unlike their counterparts on continental frontiers, beachcombers were dependent for their arrival at their new homes on the investment, knowledge and labour of others. As Maude points out commercial shipping was the major prerequisite.¹ The beachcombers did have their precursors, however, in the era of exploration and of Spanish trans-Pacific voyaging. The first resident Europeans in the Pacific were deserters from the expedition of Magellan in 1521, having left La Trinidad in the Mariana Islands. By 1526 the only survivor was rescued by de Loyosa's expedition.² It can be assumed

1. H.E. Maude, Of Islands and Men, (Melbourne, 1968), p.137.

that this was not an isolated incident just as it can be assumed that the conditions of crowding, illness and malnutrition on La Trinidad were not unique. But documentation of the fates of these Spanish prototype beachcombers is sparse. The next case recorded by Burney was in 1600 when the Spanish vessel Santa Margarita was taken by the Mariana islanders. The survivors of the crew were dispersed among the islands. Of these, some were rescued in May, 1601, and others eventually made their own way to Manila. Those unaccounted for presumably lived the rest of their lives in the Marianas.3

After initiating the settlement of the Phillipine Islands in 1565 Spain sent several small ships (of 40 to 80 tons each) across the Pacific each year until 1571. In that year the several annual expeditions were consolidated into one voyage, that of the so-called Manila Galleon. The galleon sailed from Manila each year in June following a route north via the Japan current, and then east across the Northern Pacific taking advantage of the seasonal westerlies. The first landfall was made either at Cape Mendocino (in northern California) or in the vicinity of Monterey. In March each year the return voyage would be made from Acapulco following the north equatorial current and the north-east trade winds. The Spanish navigators preferred to avoid land until they made the Phillipines but the winds and currents upon which they depended could have taken them into the vicinity of the Hawaiian chain, the Line Islands, the Gilberts, the Marshalls, the Marianas and the Caroline Islands. 4 The galleon was a prize rich enough to draw English predators into the Pacific, and the

circumnavigations of Drake and Anson each came about as the means of making a voyage of plunder.

It is not possible to say, however, how much these early voyages gave rise to prototype beachcombing. Spanish missionaries in the Caroline Islands in 1722 suggested that light skinned people among the inhabitants might have been descended from the mutineers of the *San Geronimo* in 1526. Burney, writing early in the nineteenth century discounted this suggestion, adducing the reports of later explorers of light skinned people elsewhere in the Pacific.\(^5\) This evidence could as easily mean the opposite to Burney's interpretation: the possible widespread dispersal of the crews and the descendants of the crews of Spanish ships which sailed but never arrived.\(^6\) In 1818, the year after Burney's last volume was published, the Russian explorer Golovnin reported from Hawaii a legend that on the eastern (windward) side of Hawaii Island several whites had settled and married at an unknown but distant time in the past. Their descendants at the time of Golovnin's visit were still to be identified by the light colour of their skin. Golovnin also mentioned the finding of an old iron anchor.\(^7\)

William Ellis, who toured Hawaii in 1823 recorded three accounts of white visitors before Cook.\(^8\)

The era of exploration - the eighteenth century - was not


free from a foretaste of the "beachcombing boom": even Cook had to pursue deserters in Tahiti (including a midshipman) and in Hawaii Lieutenant King and Cook were both pressed for King to remain behind. 9

The first secular European residents of the islands in modern era of whom there is documentary evidence were the survivors of the La Perouse expedition, wrecked at Vanikoro in 1788. Two survivors were still alive shortly before Dillon's discovery in 1827 of La Perouse's fate. 10

The beachcomber era in the Pacific, however, was not to begin until the ocean became better known following the European explorations of the late eighteenth century and became frequented by commercial voyagers. Throughout the beachcomber era - roughly until 1840 - knowledge of the Pacific grew slowly and was disseminated haphazardly. This ignorance was itself a factor in contributing to beachcombing because of the relatively higher likelihood of shipwreck in partially known waters. By the time of Cook's death in 1779 all the major island groups of the Pacific had been located and their positions accurately recorded. Cook superceded the work of two centuries of his predecessors. He accumulated - or was the means of accumulating - an enormous volume of geographical, ethnological and scientific knowledge much of which was published to edify the public and inform the enterprising. But the gaps that remained were immense. Much of the central Pacific was wholly unknown despite early Spanish discoveries, 11 and nowhere in the Pacific had surveying


11. Maude, op. cit., Chapters 2 and 3.
been done in sufficient detail or scope to make the waters safe for anyone who did not regard himself in some measure at least, as an explorer. This situation remained virtually unchanged for some decades. The numerous and important discoveries made by literally hundreds of navigators for two generations after Cook's death did not become public knowledge, and frequently were not transmitted beyond the log-book and the chart of the discoverer. J.N. Reynolds, the man responsible for goading a reluctant United States government into equipping and despatching the U.S. Exploring Expedition in 1838, had begun in 1828 with the co-operation of ships' captains and owners to collect and collate this unexploited source of geographical data. In 1836 Reynolds, stressing the need for further exploration told the U.S. Congress:

Fegee or Beetee Islands. What is known of them? They were named, but not visited, by Captain Cook, and consist of sixty or more in number. Where shall we find charts of this group, pointing out its harbours and dangers? There are none to be found, for none exist.

There was in fact a chart of Fiji - Arrowsmith's - and was shortly to be brought up to date - by plotting in the track of H.M.S. Victor in 1836. The few token additions of 1836 left the map substantially unaltered; the 1814 edition thus revised had no other information more recent than 1808, so Reynolds' point was still valid. Individual navigators possessed knowledge far superior to this. On Arrowsmith's chart numerous islands and reefs were omitted or were given an inaccurate position or configuration. The map was better than nothing in that it gave the position and the rough shape of the group as a


whole, and sufficient information to warn of partly known danger — but it was insufficient to give the navigator confidence. 14

It was a sad comment on Cook's successors, the Russian, French and English explorers of the nineteenth century, as well as of the scientifically minded mercantile voyagers like Turnbull and Dillon, that although they added considerably to geographical and anthropological knowledge their efforts did not result in accurate charts being made readily available to others. Meanwhile, the information which was being passed around in shipping circles could not be fully relied upon. For example, Lockerby's sailing directions for Fiji gave a position for Bua (Sandalwood Bay) which is approximately ten miles to the South-East of its true location. There is a similar error for the position of Tongatapu. 15 This degree of accuracy was perhaps adequate for a cautious navigator to find his way in this case; but a similar degree of error for small and isolated islands and shoals could have had grave consequences. As Reynolds observed, whalers and others lacked the means and opportunities for accurate measurement; they could neither place themselves accurately on a map nor plot their discoveries with exactness. 16

The American exploring expedition led by Charles Wilkes in the years 1838-1842 was the culmination of Reynolds' agitations. It conducted detailed surveys of the major island groups in the eastern half of the Pacific as well as locating many smaller features more

exactly. Wilkes' expedition rendered a major service to western navigators, although it fell far short of completeness. Captain Worth of H.M.S. Calypso in 1848 found that Wilkes' survey was very accurate in what had been laid down, but that there were sufficient omissions to make sailing around Fiji and Samoa risky. Of Tonga Worth observed that Arrowsmith's chart - still apparently in use - inaccurately placed some islands.17

The commercial shipping of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries came therefore into a mottled ocean of ignorance and knowledge. In 1787, before the final departure from Hawaii of the English explorers Portlock and Dixon, and the year before the settlement at Port Jackson, and over a year before Bligh's arrival in Tahiti on his first breadfruit expedition, the initiators of the North-West American fur trade came to Hawaii to provision their ships and rest their crews.18 These visits of refreshment began the history of culture contact in Hawaii (and in Polynesia as a whole) for they initiated a sustained and continuous contact, and saw the immediate introduction of large quantities of European artifacts.

In the early 'nineties the pace of contact in Hawaii accelerated rapidly under the stimulus of the fur trade, and briefly, Hawaiian pearls and sandalwood.19 The practice of leaving men on the Hawaiian islands to collect these local commodities while their ships spent the summer on the American coast, or the winter in Canton was

quickly adopted. In the early 'nineties there were still perhaps only about half a dozen vessels frequenting Hawaii in this manner; but by 1794 there was an increase to a more intense level which was maintained until the end of the century. Some vessels made only a single visit to Hawaii, as far as the sources indicate. Doubtless there are other visits and other vessels which are unknown. The total volume of shipping is certain to be greater than the actual number of ships involved, for the general practice for ships coming from Britain or the United States was to spend not less than two seasons in the Pacific in order to ensure a full, varied and lucrative cargo. With variations, the pattern was to carry a cargo of western merchandise for sale in Canton, then to sail for the American Pacific coast via Hawaii for furs, and possibly Hawaiian sandalwood; return to Canton during the northern winter to dispose of the sandalwood and store the furs; make a second trans-Pacific voyage before returning to Canton for cargo of Chinese merchandise and the earlier fur haul, and then returning to the North Atlantic. Such a procedure might involve crossing the Pacific as many as six times if the Cape Horn route was used, during a voyage of perhaps three years. An alternative pattern was to spend a winter in Hawaii, the effect of which for the culture contact processes was greater than that of more ships making briefer visits.

By the late 'nineties, Hawaiian pearls and sandalwood had been abandoned, and the need for refreshment remained the sole attraction


to shipping.\textsuperscript{22} There was accordingly probably some decline in the
volume of shipping in the early years of the nineteenth century, for
Iselin noted in 1807 that the only English ship to visit in seven
years had been the Port-au-Prince, in 1806. American fur traders
had continued to call during that time;\textsuperscript{23} as they did for the next
few years. In 1811 and 1812 Hawaii became the last stepping stone
in an effort to colonize the Columbia River area on the American
coast.\textsuperscript{24}

By this time Hawaii's role in Pacific commerce was changing
from being a simple provisioning and staging post to having a place
of its own in the luxury trade as an exporter of sandalwood on a
large scale. The change came with the first voyage of the Winship
brothers in 1811.\textsuperscript{25} At the time of the Anglo-American war of 1812-
1814 the attention of the Royal Navy was directed to Hawaii because
the quantity of American shipping involved in it was said to be
'considerable'.\textsuperscript{26} The trade did suffer from the war: a number of
American vessels were laid up at Oahu until the war ended.\textsuperscript{27}

Two years after the end of the war provisioning had been

\begin{enumerate}
\item John Turnbull, \textit{A Voyage Round the World}, (2nd Edition, London,
\item Isaac Iselin, \textit{Journal of a Trading Voyage}, (New York, n.d.),
p.74.
\item Alexander Ross, \textit{Adventures . . . on the Columbia River}, (London,
1849), pp.30ff; Ross Cox, \textit{Adventures on the Columbia River}, (2
\item The \textit{Hawaiian Gazette}, 5 June, 1896, p.6.
\item Captain Tucker, H.M.S. \textit{Cherub}, to Admiral Dixon, Rio de Janeiro,
(n.d.), 1814, Adm. 1/22.
\item Captain Hillgar to Captain Tucker, 14 April, 1814, Adm.
1/22.
\end{enumerate}
TABLE 1

SHIPPING AT HAWAII, 1787-1812

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vessel</th>
<th>Captain</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Source</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Imperial Eagle</td>
<td>Barclay</td>
<td>1787</td>
<td>Cartwright, (1916), p.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Princess Royal</td>
<td>Duncan</td>
<td>1787-8</td>
<td>Stokes, (1933), p.97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>?</td>
<td>Meares</td>
<td>1788</td>
<td>Meares, (1790)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iphigenia</td>
<td>Douglas</td>
<td>1789</td>
<td>Meares, (1790), passim</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Felice</td>
<td>Meares</td>
<td>1789</td>
<td>Meares, (1790), passim</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mercury</td>
<td>Cox</td>
<td>1789</td>
<td>Mortimer, (1791), pp.50, 54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prince of Wales</td>
<td>Colnett</td>
<td>1788</td>
<td>Meares, (1790), p.350; Cartwright (1916), p.60</td>
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<td>Columbia</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>1789</td>
<td>Mortimer, (1791), pp.50, 54</td>
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<tr>
<td>Washington</td>
<td>Kendrick</td>
<td>1791</td>
<td>Mortimer, (1791), pp.50, 54</td>
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<td>Grace</td>
<td>Douglas</td>
<td>1790</td>
<td>Ingraham, (Ms.), pp.68, 71, 72</td>
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<tr>
<td>Eleanor</td>
<td>Metcalfe (Sr.)</td>
<td>1790</td>
<td>Ingraham, (Ms.), p.69</td>
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<td>Fair American</td>
<td>Metcalfe (Jr.)</td>
<td>1790</td>
<td>Ingraham, (Ms.), p.69</td>
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<td>Hope</td>
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<td>Ingraham, (Ms.), pp.63ff</td>
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<td>Columbia</td>
<td>Boit</td>
<td>1791?</td>
<td>Boit, (1921), p.333</td>
</tr>
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<td>Kendrick</td>
<td>1791</td>
<td>Bell, (Ms.), I, p.150</td>
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<td>Discovery</td>
<td>Vancouver</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Chatham</td>
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<td>1792-4</td>
<td>Vancouver, (1798), passim</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daedalus</td>
<td>New</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eliza</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>1792?</td>
<td>Bell, (Ms.), II, p.93</td>
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<td>Hancock</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>1793</td>
<td>Vancouver, (1798), III, p.67</td>
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<td>Butterworth</td>
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<td>Jackal</td>
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<td>1793</td>
<td>Stokes, (1933), p.61</td>
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<td>Prince Lee Boo</td>
<td>Sharp/Gordon</td>
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<td>Margaret</td>
<td>Magee</td>
<td>1793</td>
<td>Howay, (1929), p.38</td>
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<tr>
<td>Union</td>
<td>Boit</td>
<td>1795</td>
<td>Boit, (Ms.), 14 Oct., 1795 et. seq.</td>
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<tr>
<td>P.W. Henry</td>
<td>Wake</td>
<td>1796</td>
<td>Holmes, (Ms.)</td>
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<td>Providence</td>
<td>Broughton</td>
<td>1796</td>
<td>Broughton, (1804), pp.33ff</td>
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<td>Vessel</td>
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<td>------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ruby</td>
<td>Bishop</td>
<td>1796</td>
<td>Roe, (1967), pp.136ff</td>
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<tr>
<td>Eliza</td>
<td>Gardiner</td>
<td>1797</td>
<td>Bloxam, (Ts.), n.p.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nautilus</td>
<td>Bishop</td>
<td>1798</td>
<td>Roe, (1967), pp.278ff</td>
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<tr>
<td>Neptune</td>
<td>Greene</td>
<td>1798</td>
<td>Townsend, (n.d.), passim</td>
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<td>?</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>1799</td>
<td>Cleveland, (1842), p.25</td>
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<td>Eliza</td>
<td>Rowan</td>
<td>1799</td>
<td>Stokes, (1933), p.97</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dove</td>
<td>Duffin</td>
<td>1799</td>
<td>Stokes, (1933), p.97</td>
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<tr>
<td>Venus</td>
<td>Bass</td>
<td>1802</td>
<td>Youl, 30 Sept. 1802, L.M.S.-S.S.L., Box 1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Margaret</td>
<td>Buyers</td>
<td>1802-3</td>
<td>Turnbull, (1813), pp.199-244</td>
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<td>?</td>
<td>Cleveland</td>
<td>1803</td>
<td>Cleveland, (1842), p.58</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nadezhda</td>
<td>Krusenstern</td>
<td>1804</td>
<td>Langsdorff, (1813), pp.187-188</td>
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<td>Neva</td>
<td>Lisiansky</td>
<td>1804</td>
<td>Langsdorff, (1813), pp.187-188</td>
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<td>?</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>1805</td>
<td>Patterson, (1817), p.65</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hamilton</td>
<td>Porter</td>
<td>1806?</td>
<td>Patterson, (1817), p.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Port-au-Prince</td>
<td>Brown</td>
<td>1806</td>
<td>Martin, (1818), I, pp.36-37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O'Cain</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>1807?</td>
<td>Patterson, (1817), p.76</td>
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<tr>
<td>Maryland</td>
<td></td>
<td>1807</td>
<td>Iselin, (n.d.), pp.65ff. Patterson, (1817),</td>
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<tr>
<td>?</td>
<td></td>
<td>1807</td>
<td>p.79</td>
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<td>Neva</td>
<td>Hagemeister</td>
<td>1809</td>
<td>Campbell, (1822), p.85</td>
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<td>Duke of Portland</td>
<td>Spence</td>
<td>1810</td>
<td>Campbell, (1822), p.105</td>
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<tr>
<td>Beaver?</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>1812</td>
<td>Cox, (1831), pp.27ff</td>
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eclipsed by sandalwood to such an extent that Kamehameha began to invest in it himself. In 1816 he purchased the brig Forester (the first of several such purchases), renamed it Kaahumanu and despatched it to Canton in 1817. Exploration as well as trade revived after the war with Russian expeditions in 1816 (Kotzebue) and 1818 (Golovnin). By 1819 sandalwood was past its peak, and provisioning was again about to become the major economic link between Hawaii and the west, for in that year the first whaling ship discovered Honolulu as a place of refreshment. From that date onwards Honolulu became a major centre of European shipping, and a place of settlement of colonial character.

Although it can be said that the culture contact processes began in Hawaii, it is a claim which can be made in terms of chronological priority only, not with any implication of causality. It might have happened differently however, for the first merchant vessel to call at Tahiti was the Mercury, Captain Cox, en route to Hawaii and the American fur grounds. A few other ships and captains are known to have visited both Hawaii and Tahiti in the early years of contact - the Nautilus (Captain Bishop), the Venus (Bass), and the Margaret (Buyers) - but the histories of the two groups developed separately from each other. Hawaii owed its importance to Europeans to its strategic location between Nootka Sound and Canton, and saw no missionaries until 1820, which was very late in its contact history. Tahiti's trading history was linked to the affairs of the English colony at Port Jackson in New South Wales. In Tahiti, moreover, the missionaries arrived in 1797, before the traders came.

Between 1789 (Bligh's breadfruit expedition) and 1797, (the arrival of the Duff missionaries) a few merchant ships visited Tahiti for provisions. The other visitors were all naval: Bligh, Edwards, Vancouver, Bligh again, and New, seeking respectively, breadfruit trees, mutineers, provisions, breadfruit trees, and provisions. Between 1793 and 1797 Tahiti seems to have been untouched by European shipping, suggesting that perhaps by 1793 better information about the North Pacific trade had become available in Britain and America and that Canton and Hawaii had come to be preferred as bases to the remote and less easily accessible Tahiti. Even after the missionaries came, intercourse did not pick up for a few years, with only one visit between 1797 and 1800. That visitor was Charles Bishop, whose unsuccessful voyages in the North Pacific induced him to try the South for fairer hope of profit.

In 1800 a more intensive phase of contact began, with three ships calling apparently for provisions, presaging the rush of the next few years to be occasioned by the pork trade. After 1801 the pork trade was a firmly established element of the colonial economy, and by 1807 the provisioning and pork trades were so busy that the visit of ships ceased to be a novelty.

When the Duff made its voyage to Tahiti in 1797 the course it followed was in retrospect the prototype for the geographical pattern of culture contact in the South Pacific as it developed over the next decade. The Duff's track took her through the Leeward Islands, past Palmerston Island to Tonga, back east to the Marquesas and via Tahiti again to Tonga. From Tonga the Duff sailed to Fiji, and from there

29. Maude, op. cit., Chapter 5, pp.178-232. See Table 2, p.43.
### TABLE 2

**SHIPPING AT TAHITI, 1788-1801**

<table>
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<th>Vessel</th>
<th>Captain</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Source</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bounty</td>
<td>Bligh</td>
<td>1788-9</td>
<td>Bligh, (1792), <em>passim</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mercury</td>
<td>Cox</td>
<td>1789</td>
<td>Mortimer, (1791), p.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bounty</td>
<td>Christian</td>
<td>1789</td>
<td>Morrison, (1935), p.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pandora</td>
<td>Edwards</td>
<td>1791</td>
<td>Edwards and Hamilton, (1915), pp.30ff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discovery</td>
<td>Vancouver</td>
<td>1791-2</td>
<td>Vancouver, (1798), I, pp.98-150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chatham</td>
<td>Broughton</td>
<td>1791-2</td>
<td>Vancouver, (1798), I, pp.98-150</td>
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<tr>
<td>Matilda</td>
<td>Weatherhead</td>
<td>1792</td>
<td>Wilson, (1799), p.xxxiv</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prince William Henry</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>1792</td>
<td>Wilson, (1799), p.xxxiv</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Providence</td>
<td>Bligh</td>
<td>1792</td>
<td>Wilson, (1799), p.xxxiv</td>
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<tr>
<td>Assistance</td>
<td>Portlock</td>
<td>1792</td>
<td>Wilson, (1799), p.xxxiv</td>
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<td>Daedalus</td>
<td>New</td>
<td>1793</td>
<td>Wilson, (1799), p.xxxv</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jenny</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>1793</td>
<td>Wilson, (1799), p.xxxv</td>
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<td>Britannia</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>1793</td>
<td>Wilson, (1799), p.xxxv</td>
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<td>Duff</td>
<td>Wilson</td>
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<td>Wilson, (1799), p.58</td>
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<tr>
<td>Eliza</td>
<td>Twain</td>
<td>1800</td>
<td>Jefferson, (1800), p.28, L.M.S.-S.S.J., Box 1</td>
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<td>Britannia</td>
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<td>1800</td>
<td>Ellis, (1853), III, p.35</td>
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<td>Albion</td>
<td>Bunker</td>
<td>1800</td>
<td>Ellis, (1853), III, p.35</td>
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<td>Porpoise</td>
<td>Scott</td>
<td>1801</td>
<td>Jefferson, (1801), p.24, L.M.S.-S.S.J., Box 1</td>
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<td>Royal Admiral</td>
<td>Wilson</td>
<td>1801</td>
<td>Jefferson, (1801), p.32, L.M.S.-S.S.J., Box 1</td>
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</table>

For Tahitian shipping after July, 1801, see H.E. Maude, *Of Islands and Men*, (Melbourne, 1968), pp.227-232
north-east past the fringes of Melanesia and through Micronesia to China. The book of the voyage contained charts of Wilson's surveys of Tahiti, the Gambia Islands, the Marquesas, Tongatapu, Fiji and the Duff's group. It was published in 1799, early enough to be familiar to captains engaged in the pork trade. Whether or not later navigators were influenced by knowledge of Wilson's voyage the route for the return voyage from Tahiti to Port Jackson usually took them through the Cooks and close to Tonga, and so it was Tonga and by extension Fiji rather than Samoa which was next brought into the orbit of Port Jackson maritime activity.

Between the explorer La Perouse in 1788 and the Duff in 1797 two vessels are known to have visited Tonga - both in 1796. The purpose of the first was no more than to land some escaped convicts, the second was probably seeking refreshment. After the Duff only two vessels are known to have visited Tonga before the end of the century, and the second of them, the Betsy, Captain Clerk, removed the missionaries; a brief visit by the second missionary vessel the Royal Admiral, was made in 1801.

There were probably other vessels in Tonga during the years around the turn of the century, but their business is not known and their identity can only be guessed at. Vessels which were in Fiji are known to have approached from the east (the Argo and the El Plumier) and therefore probably from Tonga. In the first six years


of the new century, three vessels called and were attacked by the Tongans - two of them successfully. Another vessel, the Hope, went to investigate one of these assaults, and it is likely that other vessels were there from time to time, for when the Port-au-Prince arrived in 1806 it was met by a Hawaiian who had come by an American vessel of which there is no other record. During Mariner's residence in Tonga from November, 1806, until December, 1810, at least nine vessels called at Tonga; an unknown number came after 1810, but Tongan history for the next decade is undocumented. The reason for this steady flow of shipping lay not in Tonga's attractiveness, but in Fijian sandalwood. Most - perhaps all - ships engaged in this trade called at Tonga in order to be able to approach Fiji's hazardous waters from waters which were close at hand and already charted. Rumours of piracy in Tonga brought to Sydney by Seddons in 1808 might have been a counter influence reacting against this trend; at least it kept Seddons from visiting Tongatapu. The pirates were a fantasy; but there was reason to be cautious in Tonga nevertheless.

After the City of Edinburgh called there in 1809 the Sydney Gazette noted that the visitors were well treated by the Tongans,

... which indeed is their custom until they get a vessel within their power ... 35

After 1809 ships were calling perhaps less frequently at Tonga as Fijian waters became better known to the few who frequented them. Mention of Tonga in the Sydney Gazette became very rare after


34. Sydney Gazette, 24 July, 1808.

35. Ibid., 17 September, 1809.
the steady reports of 1808 and 1809. The paucity of reports however is perhaps better explained by the sandalwood vessels sailing direct for Manila or China from Fiji, as did the Favourite which rescued Mariner from Tonga in 1810.36 At the time when visits to Tonga were becoming rare, the Tongans were reported as being friendly in their relations with visitors in contrast to their reputation for ferocity.37

Whalers had possibly been visiting Tonga for some years, but of them there is no direct evidence until the wreck, probably in 1821 of the Ceres.38 With the 1820's shipping and documentation in Tonga both resume: the explorer Bellingshausen came in 1820,39 and in 1822 the Wesleyan Mission made its first attempt to become established.40 At the same time whalers are known to have been frequenting the group;41 but not necessarily stopping there. In at least one case the Captain warned would-be deserters that the Tongans were ferocious and enthusiastic cannibals.42 In 1827 Dillon and Dumont D'Urville both visited Tonga looking for traces of La Perouse. By this time also the Wesleyan Mission had been re-established after

37. Sydney Gazette, 13 December, 1817.
40. Lawry, op. cit., p.102.
41. Henry Ransome, 'Log, Elizabeth, 1832-1834', (Ms.), p.49.
### TABLE 3

**SHIPPING AT TONGA, 1796-1823**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vessel</th>
<th>Captain</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Source</th>
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<td>Earnshaw, (1959), p.73</td>
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<tr>
<td>Duff</td>
<td>Wilson</td>
<td>1797</td>
<td>Wilson, (1799), pp.97, 227</td>
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<td>1797</td>
<td>Buchanan et al. p.3, L.M.S.-S.S.J., Box 1</td>
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<td>Betsy</td>
<td>Clerk</td>
<td>1800</td>
<td>Buchanan et al. p.64, L.M.S.-S.S.J., Box 1</td>
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<tr>
<td>El Plumier</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>1800</td>
<td>Im Thurn and Wharton, (1925), p.xlv</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Royal Admiral</td>
<td>Wilson</td>
<td>1801</td>
<td>Vason (1810), pp.197-198, 203-205.</td>
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<td>Mellon</td>
<td>1802</td>
<td>Im Thurn and Wharton, (1925), p.181</td>
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<td>Union</td>
<td>Pendleton</td>
<td>1804</td>
<td>Im Thurn and Wharton, (1925), pp.182-183</td>
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<td>Hope</td>
<td>Brumby</td>
<td>1804</td>
<td>Fanning, (1924), p.237</td>
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<td>Harrington</td>
<td>Campbell</td>
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<td>Cumpston, (1963), p.53</td>
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<td>Chase</td>
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<td>Brown</td>
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<td>Martin, (1818), I, p.38</td>
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<td>Correy</td>
<td>1808</td>
<td>Patterson, (1817), p.80</td>
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<td><em>Sydney Gazette</em>, 24 July, 23 Oct., 1808</td>
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<td>Stewart</td>
<td>1808</td>
<td><em>Sydney Gazette</em>, 23 Oct. 1808</td>
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<td>Halcyon?</td>
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<td><em>Sydney Gazette</em>, 24 July, 1808</td>
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<td><em>Sydney Gazette</em>, 24 July, 1808</td>
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<td>Jenny</td>
<td>Dorr</td>
<td>1808</td>
<td>Im Thurn and Wharton, (1925), p.lxii</td>
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<td>Vessel</td>
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<td><em>Sydney Gazette</em>, 6 Aug. 1809</td>
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<td>1809</td>
<td><em>Sydney Gazette</em>, 17 Sept. 1809</td>
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<td>1809</td>
<td>Martin, (1818), I, p.304</td>
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<td>1810</td>
<td>Martin, (1818), II, p.20</td>
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<td>1815</td>
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<td>1815</td>
<td><em>Sydney Gazette</em>, 13 Dec. 1817</td>
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<td>Charlotte</td>
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<td>1817</td>
<td><em>Sydney Gazette</em>, 13 Dec. 1817</td>
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<td>Ceres</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>1821</td>
<td><em>Sydney Gazette</em>, 22 Nov. 1822</td>
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<td>Vostok</td>
<td>Bellingshausen</td>
<td>1820</td>
<td>Bellingshausen, (1945), II, pp.306-309</td>
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<td>St. Michael</td>
<td>Beveridge</td>
<td>1822</td>
<td>Lawry, (1818-1825, Ms.), p.102</td>
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<td>Elisabeth</td>
<td>Douglas</td>
<td>1823</td>
<td>Ransome, (Ms.), p.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kent</td>
<td>Gordon</td>
<td>1823</td>
<td>Lawry, (1818-1825, Ms.), p.102</td>
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</table>
Lawry's departure in 1825. By the late 1820's, therefore, Tonga was securely on the itinerary of many Pacific voyagers, and after 1830 became a regular place of call for whalers, while the reefs of the area began collecting their quota of unlucky ships.  

The link between the contact histories of Fiji and Tonga has already been noted. Fiji's situation a few hundred miles to the leeward of Tonga almost ensured that ships seeking one group would come upon the other. After Bligh sailed the Bounty's launch through Fijian waters in 1789, and apart from the voyage of the Pandora's tender in 1792. Fiji's contact history began in 1800 with the wreck of the Argo. The importance of this date is that one of the survivors of the wreck, Oliver Slater, brought news of sandalwood in Fiji to Sydney. Fiji's contact history of this period is most obscure. It is clear, however, that Oliver Slater brought back from Fiji news of sandalwood for which a good market could be found in China or Manila. The ship to initiate the trade sailed from Port Jackson in 1804 (the Marota, Captain James Aicken, employed by Simeon Lord). At about the same time the secret was disclosed to Americans. Because of the regulation protecting the oriental trade monopoly of the British East India Company Aicken could not sail direct for China; the

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Since the sandalwood secret was already out in 1804 it is likely - almost certain - that several voyages had been made before the *Sydney Gazette* began mentioning vessels engaged in the business in 1807. The sandalwood trade was conducted at a brisk pace for the next several years, but seems to have declined after about 1813 despite a substantial cargo taken by Siddons in 1814-1815. This voyage, the last major sandalwood voyage, saw the death of Oliver Slater, the originator of the trade, at the hands of the Fijians.

In the eyes of contemporaries the violence and insecurity of relations with the Fijians had at least as much to do with the termination of the trade as the cutting out of accessible wood. At the same time as the Fijian sandalwood declined the commercial scene shifted back to eastern Polynesia, to Marquesan sandalwood. For several years Fiji experienced a lull in contact with the west until in 1822, the *beche-de-mer* trade was begun. This trade did not begin with a rush; in 1824 a ship from Manila came, and so did the *Calder* (Captain Peter Dillon) leaving David Whippy on shore to procure a cargo. Vanderford returned in 1827, but it was not until

46. James Aicken, letter, 24 May, 1805, N.S.W.C.S., Bundle 1, 1804-1805, (Ms.), pp.84-85. See Table 4, pp.53-55.

47. *Sydney Gazette*, 1 March, 8 March, 1807; 22 May, 1808.


49. J.T. Bigge Report, Minutes of Evidence, evidence of C. Hook, in Bonwick Transcripts, Box 9, p.3842 (Ms.).


1830 that the rush began. Over the next decade and a half there were over twenty vessels engaged in the Fijian beche-de-mer trade, many of them making more than one voyage, and visiting more than one part of the group on each occasion. Few ships not engaged in the trade visited Fiji during these years: the principle exceptions being the missionary vessels, the Active (wrecked in 1836) and the Triton.

The nexus between Fijian and Tongan contact histories had been broken with the decline of the sandalwood trade, and did not resume with the beche-de-mer trade. The vessels engaged in the latter approached Fiji from the south rather than from the east. When Tonga became a haven for whalers in the late 1820's and 1830's, the whalers did not frequent Fiji: the Fijians had too great a reputation for ferocity, and the Fijian waters were too hazardous; with bountiful Tonga in such close proximity the risks of Fiji were unnecessary. In 1836 the American naval captain, Aulick, inquired at Vava'u of two whaling captains about navigation in Fiji. Aulick had no charts of Fiji, and when the whalers told him of over a hundred islands in reef-strewn waters with intricate passages, he decided against going there. When Captain Crozier took H.M.S. Visor through southern Fijian waters (a relatively clear area) in 1836 he was bolder than Aulick, and also bolder than the whalers. The most important single visit to Fiji during the bech-de-mer period was that of the American Exploring Expedition in 1840, commanded by Charles Wilkes. The

52. Ward, loc. cit., p.102.
55. R.B. Lyth, 'Notices of Fijian and Tongan Missions', (Ms.), p.4b.
Expedition spent some months in Fiji undertaking a thorough and painstaking survey.\(^{56}\)

By 1845 the volume of shipping in Fiji was such that J.B. Williams who had been appointed American consul to New Zealand and Commercial Agent to Fiji found it expedient to move his base from New Zealand to Fiji.\(^{57}\) The role of a Commercial Agent, like that of a Consul was to protect the interests of his compatriots and to help those of them who were in distress. A secondary responsibility was to keep a record of shipping. In the first six months of 1846, Williams recorded, nine American vessels called at Levuka, and in the second six months, five. In the first half of 1847 twelve American vessels visited, and during the same period Williams estimated a total of fifty-seven whaling and trading vessels in Fiji and Rotuma. Trade had diversified to embrace tortoise-shell and coconut oil as well as beche-de-mer. As Williams observed, American shipping was fast increasing in Fiji.\(^{58}\) American registrations probably accounted for the bulk of the shipping in Fiji; one need not attempt to guess at the others to infer that by the late 1840's European maritime activity in Fiji had attained a scale comparable with that of Hawaii and Tahiti in the second decade of the century.

The island group most closely connected (in terms of European activity) with the groups already discussed is the Marquesas. The Marquesas islands slip on and off the scene of early European Pacific

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57. See John B. Williams, 'Mss. relating to the History of Fiji', Letter from George N. Cheever, 29 December, 1843. (Ms.). See also Williams, 13 February, 1846, U.S.C.D., Fiji.

### TABLE 4

**SHIPPING AT FIJI, 1800-1838**

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<tr>
<th>Vessel</th>
<th>Captain</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Source</th>
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</thead>
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<tr>
<td>Argo</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>1800</td>
<td>Im Thurn and Wharton, (1925), pp.xxxiii-xxxvii</td>
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<tr>
<td>El Plumier</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>1800</td>
<td>Im Thurn and Wharton, (1925), p.xxxvii</td>
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<td>Marcia</td>
<td>Aicken</td>
<td>1804</td>
<td>Aicken (Ms.) in N.S.W.C.S., Bundle 1, 1804-1806, pp.84-85.</td>
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<td>Fair American</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>1804</td>
<td>Aicken, loc. cit., pp.84-85</td>
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<td>Chase</td>
<td>1806</td>
<td>Cumpston, (1963), p.58</td>
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<tr>
<td>King George</td>
<td>Moody</td>
<td>1806</td>
<td>Cumpston, (1963), p.59</td>
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<td>Reiby</td>
<td>1807</td>
<td>Cumpston, (1963), p.60</td>
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<td>Patterson, (1817), p.80</td>
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<td><em>Sydney Gazette</em>, 24 July, 23 Oct. 1808</td>
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<td><em>Sydney Gazette</em>, 23 Oct. 1808</td>
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<td>?</td>
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<td><em>Sydney Gazette</em>, 23 Oct. 27 Nov. 1808</td>
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<td>Dalrymple</td>
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<td><em>Sydney Gazette</em>, 6 August, 1809</td>
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<td>City of Edinburgh</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>1809</td>
<td><em>Sydney Gazette</em>, 17 Sept. 1809</td>
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<td>Campbell</td>
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<td><em>Sydney Gazette</em>, 11 Dec. 1809</td>
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<td>Martin, (1818), II, pp. 64-67</td>
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# TABLE 4

SHIPPING AT FIJI, 1800-1838 ... continued

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<td><em>Sydney Gazette</em>, 7 July, 1810</td>
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<td>Cumpston, (1963), p.73</td>
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<td>Fisk</td>
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<td>Cumpston, (1963), p.81; Dillon, (1829), I, p.1</td>
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<td>Walker</td>
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<td><em>Sydney Gazette</em>, 8 May, 1813</td>
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<td>Ward, (1972), p.100</td>
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<td>Cary, (1928), p.11</td>
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<td>1829-8</td>
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<td>Archer</td>
<td>1829-31</td>
<td>Endicott, (1923), <em>passim</em></td>
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<td>?</td>
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<td>1830?</td>
<td>Twyning, (1850), pp.80-81</td>
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<td>Quill</td>
<td>Kinsman</td>
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<td>Cary, (1928), p.61; Oliver, (1848), pp.35-38</td>
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<td>Ward, (1972), p.102</td>
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<td>Driver</td>
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<td><em>Charles Doggett</em></td>
<td>Batchelder</td>
<td>1833</td>
<td>Eagelston, 'Emerald' (Ts.), p.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Spy</em></td>
<td>Knights</td>
<td>1833</td>
<td>Knights, (1925),</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Emerald</em></td>
<td>Eagelston</td>
<td>1834</td>
<td>Eagelston, 'Emerald' (Ts.), <em>passim</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>L'Aimable</em></td>
<td>?</td>
<td>1833-4</td>
<td>Twynning, (1850), pp.85ff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Josephine</em></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Eliza</em></td>
<td>Winn</td>
<td>1834</td>
<td>Ward, (1972), p.102</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Consul</em></td>
<td>Chapman</td>
<td>1834</td>
<td>Eagelston, 'Emerald' (Ts.), pp.35, 43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Coral</em></td>
<td>Clark</td>
<td>1834</td>
<td>Eagelston, 'Emerald' (Ts.), p.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Active</em></td>
<td>?</td>
<td>1836</td>
<td>Calvert, (1870), p.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Victor</em></td>
<td>Crozier</td>
<td>1836</td>
<td>Lyth, 'Notices of Fijian and Tongan Missions', (Ms.), p.4b.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Mermaid</em></td>
<td>Eagelston</td>
<td>1837-8</td>
<td>Eagelston, 'Mermaid' (Ts.), <em>passim</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Harriet</em></td>
<td>Christie</td>
<td>1837</td>
<td>Sparshatt, (1837), p.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Jess</em></td>
<td>Dillon</td>
<td>1837</td>
<td>Lyth, 'Notices of Tongan and Fijian Missions', (Ms.), p.101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Sir David Ogilby</em></td>
<td>Hutchings</td>
<td>1838</td>
<td>Eagelston, 'Mermaid' (Ts.), p.98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Conway</em></td>
<td>Bethune</td>
<td>1838</td>
<td>Bethune to Maitland, 16 Sept. 1838, F.O. 58/1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>A lull until 1840's</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
history with remarkable facility: it was visited by ships engaged primarily in the Hawaiian and Tahitian trades; many of the vessels which called at Tonga had been to the Marquesas on the same voyage; whalers frequented the group and missionaries attempted repeatedly to establish themselves there between 1797 and 1840.

After the brief tour of Cook in 1774 the islands appear to have been untouched until the American brig Hope (Captain Joseph Ingraham) came in April, 1791, en route to Hawaii. Ingraham did not go ashore, so the Marquesans came to him. His knowledge of the group was scant (he had Forster's and Cook's accounts with him) and he made no attempt to increase it until after, as he thought, he had departed. He shortly came upon the leeward group which he took to be a new discovery, and named the four islands Washington, Adams, Federal and Lincoln. At Washington Island (Nukuhiva) the people came to the ships, and gave Ingraham no evidence of ever before having been visited by Europeans. 59

Between 1791 and 1794 the Marquesans were shortly to see more Europeans on their way to Hawaii and the North American fur grounds; after 1794 there seems to have been a lull until the London Missionary Society vessel, the Duff, came in June, 1797, to leave William Pascoe Crook on Tahuata. After the Duff's departure four vessels came in the next one and a half years. Until the end of 1798 all the visitors to the Marquesas, apart from the explorers and the Duff had been traders who had called in on their way to other places. In December, 1798, a variation was introduced with the visit of the first whalers. Over the next seven years - or from December,

1798, until February, 1806, the period of the residence of the beachcomber Edward Robarts - more than a dozen ships are known or are thought to have arrived, according to Dening's count. Most of them were whalers or sealers, but two were the Russian ships of exploration commanded by Krusenstern and Lisiansky. Between 1806 and 1812 a few are known, and it is likely that there were many more which called for refreshment. The gap in Marquesan documentation is not closed again until in 1813 when during the Anglo-American war Captain David Porter put in at Nukuhiva and made the island his base after attacking English merchant shipping in the Eastern Pacific. Porter's crew was thinly spread: he had his frigate the Essex to man, a fort on Nukuhiva, and several prize ships with their captive crews to garrison. Eventually, a group of these prisoners rose, recaptured the whaler Seringapatam and sailed for Port Jackson where they arrived late in June, 1814.  

The timing was fortunate: the Essex's career was over and the war was about to end. Fijian sandalwood, moreover, was all but finished, and late in 1814 the Cumberland, (Captain Goodenough), made an unsuccessful attempt to procure sandalwood from Rarotonga. The Marquesas became the next major source of sandalwood, and it seems likely that the Seringapatam brought the news of it, for the Sydney Gazette mentions no other ships from there at that time. Moreover, the Sydney Gazette's remark on 4 March, 1815, that the spirit of adventure had been reawakened, suggests that fear of American

60. Sydney Gazette, 1 July, 1814.

61. The Essex was captured by the Royal Navy in March, 1814. Peace was signed on 24 December, 1814, and ratified in February, 1815.

62. The presence of sandalwood in the Marquesas was known before 1813, and possibly as early as 1810. Intensive efforts to recover it were not made until 1815.
naval power had kept English merchant shipping close to safety, just as Honolulu protected American merchant shipping from the Royal Navy. With recent news of the Marquesas, an unfulfilled demand for sandalwood, and the return of peace, the Governor Macquarie, (Captain Campbell), made an exploratory voyage, and returned to Sydney with fifty tons of Marquesan sandalwood, and a cargo of nautical hardware from wrecked ships, in February, 1815.63

Campbell's example was followed without delay; the vessels involved made a very quick turnaround in Sydney, suggesting that the trade was both lucrative and highly competitive.64 If the Sydney Gazette's record of shipping movements is complete then the New South Wales share of the trade was handled by only six vessels. The risks however were high. The Trial's crew was massacred in New Zealand before reaching the Marquesas,65 the Matilda was cut off and plundered by the Marquesans,66 and the Endeavour nearly met a similar fate at hands of deserters from the King George.67

But colonial vessels were not alone in exploiting the Marquesan discovery. American vessels were, by 1816, also taking their share in larger cargoes than the colonial vessels, and moreover, could sail direct for Canton.68 Late in 1817, when the colonial share


64. Ibid., 8 November, 1815; 18 November, 16 December, 1815; 6 January, 2 March, 1816.

65. Ibid., 8 November, 1815.

66. Ibid.

67. Captain Thomas Hammont, 4 October, 1816, N.S.W.C.S., Bundle 10, 1816, (Ms.), pp.149-150.

had fallen to minute proportions, the trade in the Marquesas was still flourishing. The Marquesans were evidently experiencing the pressures of culture contact to a far greater degree than would be inferred from the Sydney end of the sandalwood trade.

It can be assumed that throughout the 1820's, the Marquesans continued to have regular and frequent contact with European shipping, most of which were probably whalers, and most of these probably to the windward islands. Nukuhiva, by 1829, was known as a well frequented place of call.

Attempts by both American and English missionaries to establish themselves in the Marquesas throughout the 1830's added a little to the volume of shipping, which was becoming substantial. The traffic of the 1820's and 1830's however, was attracted by the capacity of the Marquesas Islands to supply fresh food, water, firewood, for provisioning had succeeded sandalwood, and for decades remained the only trade with the west.

The mercantile exploits which brought Hawaii, Tahiti, Tonga, Fiji and the Marquesas into the orbit of the west seems to have largely by-passed Samoa. After La Perouse's brief visit in 1788, Samoa seems to have been neglected by the west for over thirty years, except for Bass's visit for provisions in 1802. During the 1820's small


71. J. Orlebar, op. cit., p.27.

72. W.P. Alexander, Papers, Folder, 84, (Ms.).
TABLE 5

SHIPPING AT THE MARQUESAS,
1791-1835

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vessel</th>
<th>Captain</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Source</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hope</td>
<td>Ingraham</td>
<td>1791</td>
<td>Ingraham, (Ms.), pp.40-53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Solide</td>
<td>Marchand</td>
<td>1791</td>
<td>Dening, (1971), p.76, Table 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daedalus</td>
<td>New</td>
<td>1792</td>
<td>Menzies, (Ms.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prince William</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>1792</td>
<td>Dening, (1971), Table 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Henry</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Butterworth</td>
<td>Brown</td>
<td>1792</td>
<td>Dening, (1971), Table 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jackal</td>
<td>Stewart</td>
<td>1792</td>
<td>Dening, (1971), Table 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prince Lee Boo</td>
<td>Gordon</td>
<td>1792</td>
<td>Dening, (1971), Table 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jefferson</td>
<td>Roberts</td>
<td>1793-4</td>
<td>[Roberts], (1795), pp.241-242</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Duff</td>
<td>Wilson</td>
<td>1797</td>
<td>Wilson, (1799), pp.129ff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alexander</td>
<td>Dodge</td>
<td>1798</td>
<td>Crook (Ms.), 23 May, 1798, L.M.S.-S.S.L. Box 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Betsy</td>
<td>Fanning</td>
<td>1798</td>
<td>Fanning, (1924), p.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neptune?</td>
<td>Green</td>
<td>1798</td>
<td>Dening, (1971), Table 1, (see Table 1 above)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Butterworth</td>
<td>Fraser</td>
<td>1798</td>
<td>Dening, (1974), pp.44ff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Ships</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>1799-1800</td>
<td>Dening, (1971), Table 1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Minerva ?</td>
<td>Folger</td>
<td>1801</td>
<td>Dening, (1974), pp.112-113</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adeline</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>1801</td>
<td>Dening, (1971), Table 1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Concorde</td>
<td>Coutance</td>
<td>1803</td>
<td>Dening, (1971), Table 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nadeshda</td>
<td>Barney</td>
<td>1803</td>
<td>Dening, (1971), Table 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neva</td>
<td>Krusenstern</td>
<td>1804</td>
<td>Krusenstern, (1813), I, p.111ff</td>
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<td>??</td>
<td>Lisiansky</td>
<td>1804</td>
<td>Lisiansky, (1814), p.66ff</td>
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<tr>
<td>Leviathan</td>
<td>Clerk</td>
<td>1805</td>
<td>Dening, (1971), Table 1</td>
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## TABLE 5

SHIPPING AT THE MARQUESAS ... continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vessel</th>
<th>Captain</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Source</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Maryland</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>1806</td>
<td>Iselin, (n.d.), p.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>?</td>
<td>Rogers</td>
<td>1810</td>
<td>Dening, (1971), Table 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colt</td>
<td>Munson</td>
<td>1812</td>
<td>Dening, (1971), Table 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>?</td>
<td>Downer</td>
<td>1812</td>
<td>Dening, (1971), Table 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>? ?</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>1812</td>
<td>Dening, (1971), Table 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Essex &amp; prize vessels</td>
<td>Porter</td>
<td>1813-14</td>
<td>Porter, (1823), pp.77ff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American ship</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>1814</td>
<td>Sydney Gazette, 9 Nov. 1816</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Governor Macquarie</td>
<td>Campbell</td>
<td>1815</td>
<td>Sydney Gazette, 15 Feb. 1815</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Governor Macquarie</td>
<td>Campbell</td>
<td>1815</td>
<td>Sydney Gazette, 8 Nov. 1815</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Matilda</td>
<td>Fowler</td>
<td>1815</td>
<td>Sydney Gazette, 8 Nov. 1815</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Endeavour</td>
<td>Powell</td>
<td>1815</td>
<td>Sydney Gazette, 2 Dec. 1815</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Queen Charlotte</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>1815</td>
<td>Sydney Gazette, 8 Nov. 1815</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>King George</td>
<td>Walker</td>
<td>1815</td>
<td>Sydney Gazette, 16 Dec. 1815</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Queen Charlotte</td>
<td>Powell</td>
<td>1816</td>
<td>Sydney Gazette, 6 Jan. 1816</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>King George</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>1816</td>
<td>Sydney Gazette, 2 March, 1816</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trial</td>
<td>Burnett</td>
<td>1816</td>
<td>Sydney Gazette, 10 Aug. 1816</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Endeavour</td>
<td>Hammond</td>
<td>1816</td>
<td>Sydney Gazette, 5 Oct. 1816</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Schooner</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>1816</td>
<td>Sydney Gazette, 5 Oct. 1816</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American ship</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>1816</td>
<td>Sydney Gazette, 5 Oct. 1816</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Briton</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>1816</td>
<td>Shillibeer, (1817), p.38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>King George</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>1817</td>
<td>Sydney Gazette, 1 March, 1817</td>
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</table>
TABLE 5

SHIPPING AT THE MARQUESAS ... continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vessel</th>
<th>Captain</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Source</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>?</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>1817</td>
<td>Roquefeuil (1823), p.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daphne</td>
<td>Campbell</td>
<td>1817</td>
<td><em>Sydney Gazette</em>, 13 Dec. 1817</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sultan</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>1817</td>
<td><em>Sydney Gazette</em>, 13 Dec. 1817</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Borneo</td>
<td>Clark</td>
<td>1818</td>
<td>Kuykendall Collection, 1 October, 1817</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>King George</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>1819</td>
<td><em>Sydney Gazette</em>, 5 June, 1819</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whalers</td>
<td></td>
<td>1820's</td>
<td>Sheahan, (Ts.), p.ccix</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[Missionary]</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>1829</td>
<td>Sheahan, (Ts.), p.ccix</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seringapatam</td>
<td>Waldegrave</td>
<td>1829</td>
<td>Orlebar, (1833), p.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vincennes</td>
<td>Finch</td>
<td>1829</td>
<td>Finch (Ms.), Letters to U.S.A. Secretary to the Navy, 1829</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1830's and later, numerous visits by missionaries and whalers, e.g.

26 Whalers           | Feb.-April 1834 | W.P. Alexander, (Ms.).
| Vincennes           | Aulick       | 1835  | Aulick, (Ms.), 6 June, 1836. Estimated 20 Whale ships annually |
| 20 annually          |              |       |                                              |

62.
scale trading seems to have begun. Provisioning of whalers probably developed contemporaneously, parallel with the same development in Tonga. By 1835 regular missionary visits were being made to Samoa, following John Williams' initial voyages in 1830 and 1832, and the group had become a regular resort for whalers.

The record of shipping visiting Samoa in its early years of contact with the west is extremely fragmentary, until J.C. Williams was appointed American consul. In 1843 twenty-three vessels came to Apia, mostly whalers; in 1844, there were 37; 1845, 42; 1846, 72. In 1845 George Pritchard was appointed British Consul. By the time that sustained contact with the west on an official level had been established, commerce with Samoa had not developed beyond the rudimentary provisioning stage.

Whether or not smaller islands with smaller resources became important in the developing commercial pattern of the Pacific, depended largely on their proximity either to the whaling grounds, or to larger centres of trade. The Cook Islands, for example, were largely bypassed. There were two unsuccessful attempts at trading there before the arrival of the missionaries in 1819. After the arrival of the missionaries, whalers seem to have made only occasional visits, and there were few resident traders before about 1840. Occasional stories of castaways contain nothing to suggest other than occasional and in-

73. 'Account of the Navigator Islands', 2 February, 1823, in William Elyard, Papers, (Ms.), Vol. IV, p.47. See Table 6, p.64.
75. J.C. Williams, Despatches, 26 December, 1843, 12 May, 1845, U.S.C.D., Samoa.
### TABLE 6

**SHIPPING AT SAMOA, 1802-1835**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vessel</th>
<th>Captain</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Source</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Venus</td>
<td>Bass</td>
<td>1802</td>
<td>The Naval Chronicle (1814), pp.350-352</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>?</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>1823</td>
<td>Elyard Papers, (Ms.), IV, p.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alliance</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>1829</td>
<td>Davis, (1874), p.340</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Messenger of Peace</td>
<td>Williams</td>
<td>1830</td>
<td>Williams, (1837), p.337</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caledonia</td>
<td>Browning</td>
<td>1832</td>
<td>[Brown], (Ts.), pp.2ff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oldham</td>
<td>Johnstone</td>
<td>1832</td>
<td>[Brown], (Ts.), p.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Olive Branch</td>
<td>Williams</td>
<td>1832</td>
<td>Williams, (Ms.), L.M.S.-S.S.J. Box 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elizabeth</td>
<td>Douglas</td>
<td>1832-33</td>
<td>Ransome, (Ms.), pp.88, 111</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mary Jane</td>
<td>Banks</td>
<td>1833</td>
<td>Ransome, (Ms.), p.111</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>William Penn</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>1834</td>
<td>Reynolds, (1836), p.68n</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emerald</td>
<td>Eagelston</td>
<td>1834</td>
<td>Eagelston, 'Emerald', p.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Missionary)</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>1834</td>
<td>Buzacott and Barff, (Ms.), L.M.S.-S.S.J. Box 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Missionary)</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>1835-6</td>
<td>Platt, (Ms.), L.M.S.-S.S.J. Box 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vincennes</td>
<td>Aulick</td>
<td>1835</td>
<td>Browning, (Ms.), pp.161ff</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
frequent visits by anyone not a missionary.77

Rotuma, in contrast, far smaller than the Cook Islands, but located north of Fiji and south of the Ellice Islands was strategically situated both for whalers and for trans-Pacific voyagers. Apart from two isolated visits in the 1790's78 the history of Rotuma's contact with the west began about 1820 when the first whalers arrived.79 The sporadic visits in the 'twenties blossomed in the 'thirties when whaling increased in scale,80 and when the Fijian beche-de-mer traders made Rotuma a regular stopping place on their way to Manila.81

Wallis Islands (Uvea), like Rotuma, were visited frequently, especially in the 1830's because of their position between the major groups of western Polynesia. There were probably a few visits before that time; but in 1831 there was an attempt to make Wallis the base of a Central Pacific trade empire.82 At the same time, the number of whalers seeking refreshment there was becoming large.83 Late in


78. The Pandora in 1791, and the Duff in 1797.


81. e.g. John B. Knights, 'Journal of a Voyage', in The Sea, the Ship and the Sailor, (Salem, 1925), pp.192-193.

82. The 'Manini Affair'; see John Slade, Old Slade, or . . ., (Boston, 1844), passim.

the decade the volume of shipping had become so great that many of the
islanders spoke a little English.

The commodities which brought merchant shipping to the Pacific
between about 1790 and 1850 were remarkably diverse: American furs,
sandalwood and *beche-de-mer* for China, and pork for New South Wales.
On a smaller scale pearl shell and tortoise-shell were sought after.
These trades were responsible for Europeans and Pacific islanders
having sustained, protracted contacts with each other, as the collect-
ing of a cargo might require a ship to be in one place for months at a
time. But in terms of the volume of shipping and the numbers of Euro-
peans brought to the Pacific, by far the most important industry was
whaling. Pacific whaling was begun by some of the ships of the first
fleet to New South Wales in 1788. In 1791 there were ten whalers in
Port Jackson, and in the same year six American whalers came into
the Pacific. There was steady, but not rapid development during
the first decade of the nineteenth century, which was set back by the
Anglo-American war of 1812-1814, after which it took until the 1820's
for both British and American whaling to get fully into swing; the
ensuing boom lasted more than three decades.

The major grounds were arranged more or less symmetrically in
the four quarters of the ocean, and in the vicinity of its continental
boundaries. Smaller grounds were in the vicinity of the major island
groups. As the whalers traversed various of the grounds successively
during a single voyage, their tracks wove complicated webs which

84. Lillian Keys, *The Life and Times of Bishop Pompallier*, (Christ-
church, 1957), p.64.
covered enormous portions of the ocean. The usual pattern was to leave America in the summer, and enter the Pacific via Cape Horn. Hunting would begin in November in the "off-shore" ground in the South Eastern Pacific. A couple of months might be spent cruising these waters, after which two courses of action might be followed. The first option was to make for the Marquesas, and then follow the equator across to the Marshall Islands, circle the Northern Pacific via Japan to the north-west American coast and Hawaii in time to be in the off-shore grounds again by the following November. The second possibility was to proceed directly to Hawaii for the period February to April, cruise the North West Pacific area, and return to Hawaii in October. An alternative followed by a minority was to leave the North Atlantic in autumn, sail via the Cape of Good Hope, reaching New Zealand by March, cruising towards South America south of the Tropic of Capricorn, to be in the off-shore ground in November, or after leaving New Zealand patrol the Tahiti, Fiji, Samoa, Tasman Sea area, to return to New Zealand in March.

These four alternatives were the most commonly followed, and even without allowing for idiosyncratic behaviour by some whaling captains, these voyages took whalers close to every speck of land in the Pacific. Moreover, the volume of the traffic was immense. In 1828 Reynolds calculated that there were at least 200 American vessels in the Pacific whale fishery, the average voyage lasting two and a half years; by 1835 there were 273 ships, of which only 16 were in American ports. The aggregate tonnage was nearly 100,000, and the crews

87. The industry was dominated by the Americans, but the same remarks apply to whalers sailing from England or France.

numbered about 9,000. By 1844 the American whale fleet totalled 644 vessels, of which all but 73 were engaged in the Pacific. As the number of vessels grew, and the toll of whales rose, the length of the voyages increased: the 1828 average of 29 months had become by the 1840's more than 40. Normally, the number of vessels returning each year (in the 1840's) was between forty and fifty.

The crude numbers of ships and men involved in the Pacific whale fishery is misleading. Because of the turnover of ships brought about by loss, condemnation and replacement, and a similarly high wastage in manpower, the exposure of the Pacific to North America and Europe must have been far greater than these figures imply. Over a period of thirty years of boom conditions, preceded by a similar period of lesser activity it does not seem extravagant to guess that the total number of ships might have been at least one thousand, and the men who manned them thirty thousand. These figures moreover take no account of the very considerable British, and smaller French whaling interest, nor of the volume of the mercantile shipping. The culture contact process in the early nineteenth century therefore takes on the appearance of an onslaught rather than of a gradual abutting and mingling of small island communities with smaller shipboard communities.

The prerequisites for beachcombing were therefore present in abundance: sufficient knowledge about the Pacific to attract the entrepreneur and the indigent; not enough knowledge to deter, nor to make the accident of shipwreck unlikely; and a population on the ships

and in the penal colonies to whom life among the islands would seem attractive. The final factor was an island population sufficiently receptive and tolerant to accept small scale immigration of westerners. The combination of these conditions before about 1840 most favoured the eastern half of the ocean - Polynesia.

The distribution and numbers of beachcombers reflected very closely the distribution and concentration of commercial shipping. Any attempt to estimate the numbers of beachcombers either to give a minimum figure, or to suggest a range within which the probable number might fall is certain to include numerous errors of incalculable magnitude. Among these errors are the obvious ones of not knowing whether individuals are included twice (or more often) in any series of estimates, of not knowing what the rate of turnover was in any area, of not knowing either the information or the informant available to the writer of any source, nor of knowing anything about those beachcombers who remained concealed in areas remote from the main centres. When one adds to these variables the difficulties of identifying an "authentic" beachcomber from those who merely looked like one (such as the missionary William Pascoe Crook, or some of the coconut oil traders), or from those potential beachcombers who did not become acculturated, any such exercise of enumeration would clearly be futile. All that may be given is a descriptive account of the evidence relating to beachcombers' numbers.

In Hawaii the first known beachcomber was there in January, 1789, by early 1793 each of the four major islands of the Hawaiian chain had some resident Europeans. Growth was uncertain, and arrivals

were partly offset by departures, which makes it impossible to calculate total numbers by simply adding up the numbers reported. Contemporary estimation of totals fluctuate widely, and it seems impossible to discriminate with certainty between real fluctuation and inaccurate computations. The large variation between 94 in 1806 and 60 in 1809 probably has at least as much of the former in it as the latter, because Campbell mentioned that the number was declining during his residence.

During the 1812-1814 war when American ships were inactive in Hawaiian harbours, the white population living ashore probably showed a marked increase. After the war European residents became so numerous that their presence was taken for granted, for fewer references to their presence are made. Many of them by 1816 were transients, who had gone ashore in order to change vessels, and who lived in a European fringe community rather than as transculturists. With this suggestion of transience and the implication of concentration around Honolulu it can be inferred that Hawaii's beachcomber era was passing. By 1818, when Golovnin visited Hawaii, Kamehameha had a police force - signalling the end of the beachcomber era (though not of the beachcombers themselves), for with a police force the relationship between an individual and authority becomes institutionalized and impersonal.

92. Roe, op. cit., p.278.
95. 'Golovnin's Visit to Hawaii', The Friend, (Vol. 52, 1894), pp.51, 52.
### TABLE 7

**THE BEACHCOMBER POPULATION OF HAWAI'I**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Source</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jan. 1789</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Kauai</td>
<td>Marco, (1790), pp.350, 356-357</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March, 1790</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Hawaii</td>
<td>Metcalfe, (Ts.), 22 March, 1790</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May, 1791</td>
<td>3?</td>
<td>Maui</td>
<td>Ingraham, (Ms.), p.14; Bell, (Ms.), I, p.150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1791</td>
<td>'a few'</td>
<td>Hawaii</td>
<td>Bell, (Ms.), I, p.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July, 1792</td>
<td>+1</td>
<td>Hawaii</td>
<td>Dimsdell, (Ms.), p.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March, 1793</td>
<td>at least 1</td>
<td>Maui</td>
<td>Bell, (Ms.), II, p.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March, 1793</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Kauai</td>
<td>Menzies, (Ms.), p.290 (i)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1793</td>
<td>+1</td>
<td>Hawaii</td>
<td>Roe, (1967), p.xxxii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1793</td>
<td>at least 1</td>
<td>Oahu</td>
<td>Holmes, (Ms.)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Therefore, by 1794 each of the four major Hawaiian islands had resident Europeans:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Source</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jan. 1794</td>
<td>several</td>
<td>Kauai</td>
<td>Bell, (Ms.), II, pp.317-318</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jan. 1794</td>
<td>several</td>
<td>Oahu</td>
<td>Bell, (Ms.), II, pp.317-318</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jan. 1794</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>Hawaii</td>
<td>Bell, (Ms.), II, pp.317-318</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oct. 1795</td>
<td>'Many'</td>
<td>Kauai/Niihau</td>
<td>Boit, (Ms.), 16 Oct. 1795</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oct. 1795</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>Hawaii/Maui/Oahu</td>
<td>Boit, (Ms.), 16 Oct. 1795</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1795</td>
<td>more than 5</td>
<td>Oahu</td>
<td>Kamakau, (1961), p.174</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1796</td>
<td>16 in Kamehameha's service</td>
<td>Hawaii</td>
<td>Broughton, (1804), p.42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1796</td>
<td>'about 20'</td>
<td>Oahu</td>
<td>Roe, (1967), p.144</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1796</td>
<td>3 or 4</td>
<td>Hawaii</td>
<td>Roe, (1967), p.144</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1798</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Kauai, Niihau</td>
<td>Townsend, (n.d.), p.21</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
TABLE 7

THE BEACHCOMBER POPULATION OF HAWAII ... continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Source</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1802</td>
<td>&quot;very numer-</td>
<td>Kauai, Nii-</td>
<td>Turnbull, (1813), p.213</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ous&quot;</td>
<td>hau</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1804</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Kauai</td>
<td>Lisiansky, (1814), pp.113, 115</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1804</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>&quot;Windward</td>
<td>Lisiansky, (1814), pp.113, 115</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>ls.&quot;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1806</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>Oahu</td>
<td>Martin, (1818), I, p.xlvi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1809</td>
<td>60, declining</td>
<td>Oahu</td>
<td>Campbell, (1822), p.118</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1812</td>
<td>207</td>
<td>Oahu</td>
<td>Cox, (1831), pp.27-41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1816</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>Oahu</td>
<td>Choris, (Ts.), n.p.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Joseph Banks, who probably never lost his sentimental, romantic view of Tahiti, evidently thought that that island's paradisical qualities would be a powerful summons to the footloose, weary and depraved. In 1806 he wrote that there were about 100 such white men living on Tahiti. Banks was a long way from the truth; Tahiti was not to become a beachcomber centre on the same scale as Hawaii. Between 1789 and 1793 the beachcomber population fluctuated dramatically in response to idiosyncratic factors. The handful present in 1793 was still there when the *Duff* came in 1797, and grew slowly and by small additions until the pork trade began in 1801. The pork trade boosted beachcombers numbers, and there were some Europeans working on shore who were not, strictly speaking, beachcombers. Contemporary sources do not distinguish between the two types of foreign residents. By 1802 there were between thirty and forty white men living on shore, not counting missionaries; slightly less than half of these could be classed as beachcombers. During this time also, the "short-term" beachcomber became obvious: men who left their vessel in order to ship on another as soon as possible. With frequent shipping the beachcomber population became very fluid, but for the rest of the decade the number of authentic beachcombers in Tahiti at any given time was probably in the region of twenty to twenty-five. The wars of 1808-1812 are not known to have had any effect on beachcomber populations, but by 1812 when Pomare was converted, the ascendancy of the missionaries was so clearly established

97. e.g. [William House], *Transaction on . . . the Brig Norfolk*, (Ms.), p.7. See Table 8, p.74.
### TABLE 8

THE BEACHCOMBER POPULATION OF TAHITI

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Source</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>23 Aug. 1789</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Mortimer, (1791), p.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22 Sept. 1789</td>
<td>16 (Bounty)</td>
<td>Morrison, (1935), p.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May, 1791</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>Edwards and Hamilton, (1915), pp.30-34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feb. 1792</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>Marriott, (1920), p.127</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mar. 1792</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>Marriott, (1920), p.127</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July, 1792</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Marriott, (1920), p.127</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1793</td>
<td>+1, -1 = 6</td>
<td>Menzies, (Ms.), p.365 (i)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1797</td>
<td>4? 5?</td>
<td>Wilson, (1799), Chs. VI, XIV</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March, 1798</td>
<td>+2</td>
<td>Roe, (1967), pp.xxxiv-xxxv</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1800 onwards: numerous arrivals and departures with a maximum at any one time of perhaps 25
that that date is a convenient one at which to declare the beachcomber
era in Tahiti ended.

Hawaii and Tahiti had acquired their first beachcombers as a
by-product of the American fur trade. Tonga's first beachcombers
were escapees from the penal colony of New South Wales. Arrivals,
departures and violent deaths left a residue of between five and ten
in 1801; by 1807 the figure could have been as high as forty thanks
to the capturing of the Duke of Portland in 1802 and the Port-au-
Prince in 1806. From 1807 until the 1820's departures probably out-
numbered arrivals; when Mariner left in 1810 nine of his comrades
were still there. Few of this generation of beachcombers are known
to have been still alive and in Tonga in the 1820's, by which time
a new generation of men from whalers was arriving. Tonga's beach-
comber hey-day was probably 1796 to 1820. Before the next phase
began in the late 1820's and 1830's, the missionaries had taken up
residence and made great progress. By the 1830's - Tonga's whaling
era - arrivals and departures were numerous, and impossible to keep
track of. The net gain, however, was probably small,98 for despite
the stern complaints of missionaries like John Thomas, specific mention
of beachcombers was rarely made.99 The major factor was probably the
relatively small scale of the shipping compared with a major beach-
comber centre like Hawaii; but the missionaries themselves had too
strong an influence at least by the mid-1830's, for Tonga to be a

98. See J. Orlebar, op. cit., p.52.
W. Waldegrave, 'Extracts from a Private Journal . . .', Journal
Cattlin, op. cit., p.183, 14 March, 1830.
J.H. Aulick, 8 June, 1836, (Ms.), U.S.S.N.. See Table 9, p.76.

1832.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Source</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>March, 1796</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Earnshaw, (1959), p.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1796</td>
<td>-3</td>
<td>Earnshaw, (1959), p.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sept. 1797</td>
<td>-1</td>
<td>Wilson, (1799), p.299</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oct. 1797</td>
<td>+6</td>
<td>Buchanan et al., (Ms.), pp.4, 6, L.M.S.-S.S.J. Box 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1798</td>
<td>+1</td>
<td>Vason's apostasy. Vason, (1810), passim</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1800</td>
<td>+4?</td>
<td>Cooper, (Ms.), in Hassal Correspondence, Vol. 1, pp.65-68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1800</td>
<td>-3</td>
<td>Cooper, (Ms.), in Hassal Correspondence, Vol. 1, pp.65-68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1800?</td>
<td>-2</td>
<td>Vason (1810), p.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1800</td>
<td>-1</td>
<td>Naval Chronicle, (1814), pp.381-382</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1801</td>
<td>-1</td>
<td>Vason, (1810), p.198</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1802</td>
<td>+7</td>
<td>Fanning, (1923), p.237</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1804</td>
<td>-1</td>
<td>Fanning, (1923), p.237</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1806</td>
<td>+26</td>
<td>Martin, (1818), II, p.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1807-1810</td>
<td></td>
<td>Several arrivals and departures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1810</td>
<td></td>
<td>at least 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1810-1820</td>
<td></td>
<td>decline - extent unknown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1819</td>
<td>+3</td>
<td>Arago, (1823), II, p.157</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1821</td>
<td>+21</td>
<td>Lawry, (1818-25, Ms.), p.89; Orlebar, (1833), pp.68-69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1822</td>
<td>-17</td>
<td>Sydney Gazette, 22 Nov. 1822</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1825</td>
<td></td>
<td>at least 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1827</td>
<td></td>
<td>Five known by name from various sources: Read, Halsey, Singleton, Blake, Brown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1827 onwards</td>
<td></td>
<td>numerous arrivals and departures</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
haven for more than a few beachcombers. The paucity of sources for the period 1810 to 1820, and in the later period for the areas not under Taufa'ahau's control, could be partly responsible for this low estimate.

Linked though the histories of Fiji and Tonga are, the beachcomber phases of their histories are in contrast. Having substantial resources which lent themselves to European commercial exploitation, Fiji was the only major beachcombing centre in the central Pacific. As in Tahiti, and contrasting with both Hawaii and Tonga, Fiji's first beachcombers were the victims of shipwreck. By 1810 there were probably two dozen or more living in various parts of Fiji, the principal centres being the sandalwood areas of Bua and Macuata and the politically more powerful states of Bau and Rewa. In the lull between the sandalwood and beche-de-mer booms beachcomber numbers probably declined because of the turbulence of the times. The few arrivals during the 1820's together with the few survivors of the early years, did not amount to many when in 1829 beche-de-mer traders wanted to employ them. The 1830's were the main years of growth, and also saw the concentration of the beachcomber population in two centres (Levuka and Rewa) although there were

100. R.L. Browning, 'Notes on South Sea Islands', (Ms.), pp.131-133.
101. Sir George Gipps, 25 July, 1840, N.S.W.G.D., Vol. 34, 1840, reporting the death of Captain Croker during his intervention in the civil war in Tonga contained the suggestion that two or three white men were with the heathen party. Rev. Stephen Rabone, 'Journal, 1835-1845', (Ms.), 28 April, 1840, p.213.
102. E.J. Turpin, 'Extracts from Diary and Narratives', (Ms.), §115. Im Thurn and Wharton, op. cit., Introduction. See Table 10, p.78.
103. e.g. the affair at Dillon's Rock in 1813 caused the deaths of five beachcombers, Dillon, op. cit., I, p.25.
### TABLE 10

**THE BEACHCOMBER POPULATION OF FIJI**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Source</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1800</td>
<td>several</td>
<td>Thurn and Wharton, (1925), pp.xxxx-1ff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1801-1810</td>
<td>27?</td>
<td>Turpin, (Ms.), § 115; Bonwick Transcripts, Box 9, p.3843</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1808</td>
<td>+25?</td>
<td>Patterson, (1817), pp.82ff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1810</td>
<td>several</td>
<td>Martin, (1818), II, pp.64-67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1811</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Turpin, (Ms.), § 129</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1813</td>
<td>-11</td>
<td>Dillon, (1829), pp.25-27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1824</td>
<td>+1</td>
<td>Cary, (1928), p.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1825</td>
<td>+1</td>
<td>Cary, (1928), pp.17-19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1829</td>
<td>+15?</td>
<td>Twyning, (1850), pp.52ff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1832</td>
<td>a few</td>
<td>Eagelston, 'Peru', p.381</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1834</td>
<td>12 at Levuka</td>
<td>Eagelston, 'Emerald', § § 280-282</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1834</td>
<td>'same' at Viva</td>
<td>Eagelston, 'Emerald', § § 280-282</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1838</td>
<td>15 at Levuka</td>
<td>Bethune, (Ms.), F.0.58/1, pp.133, 169, 170</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1840</td>
<td>12 at Levuka</td>
<td>Wilkes, (1845), III, p.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1842?</td>
<td>25 at Levuka</td>
<td>Jackson, (1853), p.453</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1842?</td>
<td>'several' Rewa</td>
<td>Jackson, (1853), p.460</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1844</td>
<td>30 Levuka</td>
<td>Henderson, (1931), I, p.240</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
probably as many scattered about the group.

The unusual history of the Marquesas is still largely untreated in works on the Pacific - and lacking the richness of historical sources enjoyed by Hawaii and Fiji is likely to remain so. From the sources that are available it can be inferred that the Marquesas Islands passed through a beachcomber phase similar to that of the other groups in the Eastern Pacific. The trickle during the early years of the new century did not reach double figures until 1806, and ten years later during the sandalwood boom, the number must have become relatively large, probably matching Tahiti's peak figure of twenty to twenty-five. By 1833 Nukuhiwa was being described as a "grand rendezvous" for deserters. 104 The erratically reported numbers of the 1830's probably give no accurate indication of the beachcomber population in the Marquesas, for according to Thompson less than one ship in ten which visited did not leave behind part of its crew. 105 The turnover of short-term beachcombers can be presumed to have numbered dozens at any one time, while the valleys less accessible to visitors might have harboured numbers which cannot even be guessed at.

As Samoa did not become a major trading centre until the 1850's, potential beachcombers did not have the ready access which prevailed elsewhere. One is known to have come by canoe in 1798 from Tonga, but between 1802 and 1829 the lack of documentation allows one to suggest merely that there were some by the late 1820's.

104. George C. Russel, 'Journal, ship Bengal', (Ms.), 16 April, 1833. See Table 11, p.80.

# Table 11

## The Beachcomber Population of the Marquesas

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Source</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>May, 1804</td>
<td>Nukuhiva</td>
<td>-1</td>
<td>Langsdorff, (1813), p.181</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dec. 1806</td>
<td>Nukuhiva</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Iselin, (n.d.), pp.38, 44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dec. 1806</td>
<td>Nukuhiva</td>
<td>-3, +2</td>
<td>Iselin, (n.d.), pp.38, 44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1813</td>
<td>Nukuhiva</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Porter, (1823), p.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1816</td>
<td>Hiva Oa</td>
<td>+5</td>
<td>Hammont, (Ms.), 4 Oct. 1816, N.S.W.C.S.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1816</td>
<td>Nukuhiva</td>
<td>+5</td>
<td>Hammont, (Ms.), 4 Oct. 1816, N.S.W.C.S.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1823</td>
<td>Fatu-hiva</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>Ellis, (1853), III, p.312</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1825</td>
<td>Nukuhiva</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Paulding, (1831), p.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1829</td>
<td>Nukuhiva</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Orlebar, (1833), p.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1833</td>
<td>Nukuhiva</td>
<td>many</td>
<td>Russel, 'Bengal', (Ms.), 16 April, 1833</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oct. 1832</td>
<td>Nukuhiva</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Alexander, (1934), pp.116-117</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oct. 1832</td>
<td>Tahuata</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Alexander, (1934), pp.116-117</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sept. 1833</td>
<td>Nukuhiva</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Alexander, (1934), p.146</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mar. 1834</td>
<td>Nukuhiva</td>
<td>several killed</td>
<td>Nightingale, (1835), p.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aug. 1835</td>
<td>Nukuhiva</td>
<td>8 or 10</td>
<td>Browning, (Ms.), p.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1838</td>
<td>Tahuata</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Bruce, (1838), p.586</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1839</td>
<td>Uapou</td>
<td>5 or 6</td>
<td>Sheahan, (Ts.), p.ccv</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1839</td>
<td>Uahuka</td>
<td>1 or 2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1839</td>
<td>Hiva Oa</td>
<td>2 or 3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1839</td>
<td>Fatu-hiva</td>
<td>1 or 2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1839</td>
<td>Tahuata</td>
<td>20</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1839</td>
<td>Nukuhiva</td>
<td>20-30</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Throughout the 1830's there are isolated references to individual beachcombers, but no estimate of numbers or concentration is possible. By 1836 the missionaries were referring to a plurality of beachcombers in some places; the eight or ten on Tutuila in 1840 could be disproportionately high because of Tutuila's small size, or disproportionately low because of the few visits made there. By the 1840's transculturation was not the norm for stray Europeans: they were congregating in the beach town of Apia.

Some of the smaller Pacific islands became beachcomber centres on a scale quite disproportionate to their size. Wallis Islands had a floating population of perhaps a few dozen at various times in the 1830's, with several residing there more or less permanently. Rotuma had several beachcombers during the 1820's. As in the case of Samoa and Wallis Islands, as the year 1830 approached the numbers dramatically increased to hover throughout the next decade between twenty and thirty.

106. G.A. Lundie, Missionary Life in Samoa, (Edinburgh, 1846), p.162. See Table 12, p.82.


111. Cattlin, op. cit., pp.190-191; Smith, op. cit., p.208; Ransome, op. cit., p.59; Browning, op. cit., p.199. One report gives as many as 60-70, but the consensus is the figure given above: Williams, November, 1839, n.p., (Ms.), L.M.S.-S.S.J., Box 9.
## TABLE 12

**THE BEACHCOMBER POPULATION OF SAMOA**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Source</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1798-1802</td>
<td>1</td>
<td><em>Naval Chronicle</em>, (1814), p.381</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1829</td>
<td>at least a few</td>
<td>Grumbrook, (Ms.), and Henry, (Ms.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>9 January, 1829</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1832</td>
<td>several, scattered</td>
<td>Williams, (1837), p.461</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1830's</td>
<td>numerous, scattered</td>
<td>Various: Ransome, (Ms.), p.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>individuals</td>
<td>Jarman, (1838), p.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>P. Turner, (Ms.), II, p.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1831</td>
<td>&quot;many&quot;</td>
<td>Davis, (1874), p.340</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Calkin, (1953), p.63</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
This survey by no means completes the catalogue of beachcombers and beachcomber centres in the Pacific. In the 1830's and later, Nauru and Ponape in Micronesia were notorious for the large and fluctuating numbers of beachcombers which they harboured. In Melanesia San Cristobal was prominent in the 1840's and 1850's and perhaps later. The centres of beachcombing were neither restricted geographically nor confined chronologically; but in response to the movements of other historical variables they tended to move roughly from east to west across the Pacific as the decades of the nineteenth century unfolded. Early in the century beachcombing was predominantly a Polynesian phenomenon, and it passed when the preconditions for its existence disappeared. But because the changes which discouraged beachcombing in Polynesia were also having their influences in Micronesia and Melanesia by mid-century, the latter regions did not experience the development of the 'classic' beachcomber pattern as fully.

The distribution of beachcombers throughout the Pacific and the location of beachcomber concentrations within particular island groups is much more easily arrived at than any estimate of beachcomber numbers. The question of numbers is not only impossible to answer; it is, in addition, an inappropriate question, for the phenomenon of transculturation was not a group process. When a group loses its cultural identity and acquires that of another, the process is called acculturation, and normally takes many generations; transculturation is the analogous process as it happens to a single individual who adopts a set of cultural (and perhaps psychological) traits in substitution for another. The process is most complete and most clearly discerned when a person is isolated from the culture of his upbringing.
The answer to the question of numbers, therefore, is that there was only one beachcomber, or perhaps a few, or several, in any one community at any one time, and that the process was repeated throughout the Pacific thousands of times. Once one gets beyond an indefinably small number of foreigners the beachcomber phenomenon vanishes for assimilation then becomes a matter of group processes. In this latter case it is the islanders who have had to adapt to western codes - the reverse of the beachcomber pattern.

The history of beachcombers is the history of large numbers of individuals.
CHAPTER 3

CHOICE AND FANTASY IN THE INTRODUCTION TO BEACHCOMING

Motives known only by circumstances of arrival - voluntary and involuntary beachcombers in the respective island groups - apparent absence of premeditation - no ideology of escape or romance - personal background information cannot be correlated with beachcomber experiences - sailors fearful of Pacific islanders despite Noble Savage myth - high desertion rates due to shipboard conditions - short-term intentions - majority left island society early - varying circumstances, voluntary and involuntary - departure not due simply to failure to adjust - the example of boat-building beachcombers - many chose to stay despite intentions to leave - no strong indications of widespread beachcomber enchantment with beachcomber life - arrival and departure both determined by random factors - ambivalence the common element - return to civilization painful - beachcombers discontented - non-rational considerations - ambivalence points to psychological repression as a relevant factor - eighteenth and nineteenth century cult of the Noble Savage and sexual fantasies - primitivism a psychological regression - beachcombers seeking unattainable childhood dreams in island society - their sense of betrayal.

Few contemporary observers offered an explanation of why men chose to become beachcombers. When an explanation can be inferred there is usually an assumption of homogeneity: that the beachcombers were all much of a type, that they all behaved the way they did for similar or identical reasons. To educated men in the nineteenth century - and indeed to most in the twentieth century - the world was a rational place, its phenomena capable of rational explanation, and it was rapidly becoming more so. But the assumption of homogeneity went so far that it disguised important differences which invalidate the generalizations. A multiplicity of varying circumstances surrounds
the processes of becoming a beachcomber, the diversity of individual experience was immense, and it is complicated by different patterns of beachcomber behaviour emerging for the various island groups. In addition, many beachcombers sought to depart from the islands after varying periods of residence. Under these circumstances, the beachcomber experience seems so diverse as to appear random, even capricious, and the comfortable explanations of contemporaries inadequate. The alternatives are to leave explanation at the ungeneralized individual level, or to find an explanation which takes account of diversity, irrationality, inconsistency and above all the ambivalence in the behaviour of the men concerned. Only an explanation derived from the theory of psychoanalysis seems comprehensive enough.

One contemporary observer, noticing that beachcombers tended to be found scattered, and in small numbers, concluded that the reason was that an individual beachcomber could thus enjoy greater power and influence. By implication, the assumption was that it was the quest for power that drove men to the islands and to go among their inhabitants. This stereotype was further associated with the idea that most beachcombers were convicts: an assumption made by many contemporaries as a matter of course. Eagelston, a usually balanced observer could write that the Samoan beachcombers were:

Mostly convicts from Sidney [sic] and devils of the blackest stamp.2

As early as 1802 John Turnbull noticed the great problem in New South

1. E.J. Turpin, 'Extracts from Diaries and Narratives', (Ms.), $ 129.
Wales of preventing the escape of convicts: there being an attempt to escape with almost every ship which left; and over forty years later T. Beckford Simpson claimed that it was common-place knowledge that the beachcombers of Nauru were 'doubly-convicted felons' who had escaped.

While there is a considerable amount of truth in this 'convict origin' stereotype, the origins and therefore the motives of beachcombers in becoming island residents was by no means so restricted. Besides being exaggerated, the 'convict origin' view rests upon two assumptions: first, that nobody but a convict could be so degraded as to go to live with natives (or conversely, anyone who could do that would stop at nothing, and therefore must be a convict); and second, only for a convict would such a life be regarded as an improvement over one's present lot. The basic premise of this construction is that becoming a beachcomber was a premeditated, conscious decision of self-interest. If there is any truth at all in this notion, it is applicable only to a minority; the factors of chance and impulse were far more significant. Therefore, although the question of why so many people became beachcombers defies a rational answer, it is not a question which is totally unanswerable.

A distinction can be made between those beachcombers for whom volition played some part, and those for whom it did not. The first category includes deserters, convict escapees, and those who sought a discharge from their ships in the islands. The latter category


includes the victims of shipwreck, those who were left behind unwillingly by their ships, and those who were kidnapped or induced to remain by the islanders. The relative concentration of these categories varies from island group to island group, and over time, and offers a convenient means of looking at beachcomber origins and motivation.

Geographical factors account for one variation in the distribution of beachcomber types, and provide a crude and approximate distinction between eastern and western Polynesia. The "high island" groups of the east, with deep water and clear approaches had very few castaway-beachcombers; the limestone islands of the west, and the high islands with a fringe of reefs, collected large numbers of castaways. In eastern Polynesia, probably more beachcombers were put ashore to facilitate trade than in the west; everywhere men were put ashore sick or for misbehaviour on board; and everywhere deserters appeared in direct ratio to the volume of shipping.

In Hawaii there were probably only two shipwrecks during the classic beachcomber period, so this circumstance can be discounted as an origin for the Hawaiian beachcombers, but other involuntary residents were plentiful enough. Some of these were deserted by their aggrieved captains. In 1789 Captain Douglas put a seaman, Jones ashore from the Iphigenia for insubordination. In January, 1798, Bishop discharged two men on Hawaii island for


mutinous conduct. In 1812 a seaman Emms, suspected by his captain of wanting to desert was left on shore despite his protests. Nor was this treatment suffered only by seamen before the mast: Cox mentions two chief officers and a third mate who had gone on shore after quarrelling with their Captains, one in 1806 and two in 1812. There are others who are difficult to classify - such as Charles Bonwick in 1810 who was left in the care of the high chief William Pitt (Kalanikou) until his captain should return. Though probably on better terms with their captains, those men put ashore to facilitate trade by gathering commodities together during their ship's absence can also be classified as involuntary beachcombers. There were few of this type in Hawaii, most of them in the early 1790's when Hawaii showed some prospects as a source of sandalwood and pearls.

In determining the fates of involuntary beachcombers, however, the initiative frequently lay not with a ship's captain, but with a local chief. Hawaii's most famous and influential beachcombers John Young and Isaac Davis, both became island residents through no choice of their own: Davis was the only survivor of the schooner Fair American, captured in 1790 by Kamehamoku, and Young was the bosun of the companion vessel to the Fair American, the snow

11. Joseph Ingraham, 'Journal ... Hope', (Ms.), p.68.
Young went on shore sightseeing, and was prevented from returning because of the anxiety of Kamehameha to have his own resident whiteman. There were other attempts to capture vessels and men during these years, the most ambitious being made in 1794 by Kalanikupule of Oahu. By this time however, Kamehameha had learnt to use the gentle means of persuasion: he had asked for a carpenter from Vancouver. By the time of Turnbull's visit in 1802, the two rivals for dominion in Hawaii, Kamehameha and Kaumuali'i were actively seeking recruits to their retinues from visiting ships. At the time of Campbell's residence in 1810, Kamehameha was still encouraging seamen to go ashore.

The great majority of Hawaiian beachcombers were in that

12. Ibid., pp.68-70; Edward Bell, 'Log of the Chatham', (Ms.), II, pp.64-66.
position voluntarily - having either deserted or been discharged at their own request. Desertions began with the first commercial shipping in 1789, and in March, 1793, Vancouver formed the opinion that almost all of the white residents at that time were deserters. In September, 1795, the Mercury lost most of its crew, the men having become:

... tired with their voyage, too easily, sunk into the Lap of Pleasures which these islands hold out to thoughtless Seamen and they all left the ship to live with the Natives. Except two officers and two or three men, they had brought from Bottony Bay, transports whose time was expired. [Sic.]

According to another visitor a few months later, at least one of those who left the Mercury was a "Bottony Bay" man. In December, 1802, Turnbull lost his carpenter and observed that without strenuous efforts to retain the crew, they would all have gone. So strong was the appeal of Hawaii, and so numerous the malcontents on board that Turnbull and Buyers allowed the second mate to take away a Hawaiian woman, rather than risk his desertion for her sake. That Turnbull's crew was mostly English or colonial was probably unimportant, for according to one of the Russian explorers, American seamen found the combination of the luxuriance of the Hawaiian islands, and the availability of the Hawaiian women so attractive that almost

24. Ibid., p.265.
every ship which called left one or more of its crew behind. The islands' attractions were not the only significant factor: Ross attributed the 'spirit of desertion' on board his ship to the Captain's behaviour.

A thin line distinguishes desertion from those who seek their discharge - a distinction which the sources often fail to make. In Hawaii's case the difference is easier to discern than elsewhere for Kamehameha learnt to discriminate among white men:

... the king ... will not permit any one to stay who has not a good character from his captain.

This statement is not true in the sense that every settler had Kamehameha's approval - its value is in demonstrating that many of the settlers had their Captain's approval to go ashore, i.e. were not deserters. Of those who went ashore in this manner, most were anonymous, undistinguished and virtually unknown, for the experience of the merchant captain Isaac Iselin was probably typical: in 1807 many of his crew applied for a discharge in Hawaii, a fact attributed by Iselin to the bright sky, beautiful climate, sexual opportunity and the expectation that their wages would acquire for them sufficient land to be independent. Because the value of

money was early appreciated in Hawaii, and because there was a strong and centralized demand for European commodities, the number of 'discharged' beachcombers in proportion to deserters in Hawaii was relatively large: a much higher ratio than occurs elsewhere in the Pacific. In other island groups there was no advantage in a man attempting to collect his pay by seeking a proper discharge but a strong risk that his going ashore would be prevented. Many of the beachcombers in this category moreover, were men who had been to Hawaii before, had had time to think and talk about life there, and therefore were probably moved by some degree of premeditation.30

The voluntary, non-deserter category embraces most of Hawaii's more distinguished beachcombers, such as Oliver Holmes, Captain Stewart, Alexander Adams, Boyd, Harebottle and Don Francisco de Paula Marin,31 as well as the convict element from New South Wales, into which Kamehameha instilled more decorum and industry than the penal system had been able to achieve.32 Into this category also

30. e.g. Joshua Lee Dimsdell, 'Some Acct of the Death & Remains of Capt Cook . . . ', (Ms.), p.1.


must come Archibald Campbell who admits to having had a long standing desire to visit the 'South Seas';³³ if Porteus's imaginative and plausible reconstruction is correct Campbell was one of the few beachcombers who left his homeland with the ambition of becoming an island resident,³⁴ and apparently the only one for whom there is substantial documentary evidence.

Hawaii had probably a higher proportion of voluntary discharged beachcombers than any other island group partly because of the well ordered regime of Kamehameha, and the well defined role and status available to foreigners with skills. As such, it is possible that fewer concessions to island culture were required by beachcombers here than was required elsewhere. With a large volume of shipping, and an ordered foreign community, one was probably less conscious of 'going native' than elsewhere in the Pacific.

In the Marquesas, by contrast, the 'discharged' beachcomber seems to have been almost entirely absent, and such as there were lived there during the sandalwood years. They included a midshipman from the United States Navy, a handful of escaped convicts, and a few sailors who were otherwise undistinguished³⁵ with one exception: a mutineer from a British war ship who preferred exile to detection.³⁶

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³³ Campbell, op. cit., p.18.
Thomas Hammont, Letter, 4 October, 1816, N.S.W.C.S., Bundle 10, (Ms.), pp.148-150.
³⁶ Iselin, op. cit., p.41.
Involuntary beachcombers of both types were also rare; few came to the Marquesas as castaways, and scarcely more were put ashore, or forcibly kept ashore. In the latter category, Edward Robarts apparently told Krusenstern that he was put ashore by mutineers whom he had refused to join; his journal says he deserted before a planned mutiny was due to be executed. One of his contemporaries, Walker, was enticed ashore by a third beachcomber, Cabri, and the ship which took Robarts from Nukuhiva put several mutinous men ashore. These few examples account fairly fully for what is known of the Marquesan involuntary beachcombers: in the next thirty years the pattern was to vary only by the addition of sick men being put ashore to recover.

Years later a novel - but plausible - mode of arrival was claimed by a beachcomber who said that he arrived as a member of the crew of a whale boat, which had become separated from its ship.

The overwhelming majority of Marquesan beachcombers can be accounted for as deserters, beginning in 1798. Robarts' reason for deserting was for fear of the consequences of a planned mutiny, which

37. For exceptions see William Torrey, Torrey's Narrative, (Boston, 1848), pp.106-107, and Anon. 'Six Years Among Cannibals', Household Words, (1853), p.134.


42. The Friend, (XIII, 1856), p.26. Plausible as this tale is, there is some evidence that this man was merely a deserter. Ibid., pp.27-28.
he attributed to the tyranny of the chief officer. He took up residence in spite of and conscious of strong emotional ties calling him back to England. The Leviathan deserters, who joined Robarts in 1805 maintained that the reason for their desertion was "bad usage and short provisions". Robarts could readily believe this explanation:

... it is all too often the case, when ships frequenting remote parts of the globe, that men are treated more like brutes than human beings by their tyrant officers.

There is no evidence to suggest that in the numerous desertions of later years that there was any other motive than this one of shipboard discontent; the islands and the people seem to have exercised little if any positive pull. Crook claimed that all of the able seamen of the Butterworth and New Euphrates in 1798 wanted to desert, and Robarts confirms that they had reason enough. But all went back on board when Crook explained to them the treatment they might expect from the Marquesans. The latter seemed quite indifferent whether the sailors remained or left. The Benjamin Rush which removed the American missionaries in 1834, lost two Spanish convicts by desertion, and would have lost more but for fear of:

... the little chance they had of subsisting among the natives and more than likely afraid of their lives.

Herman Melville, who deserted at Nukuhiiva in 1841 was also motivated


44. Ibid., p.147.


primarily by the desire to escape his present ship, and as soon as possible to re-embark on another; and if quasi-fiction is valid historical evidence, Melville's experience can be taken to stand for that of the majority. 48

With most of its beachcombers deserters, and with relatively little known about them, the Marquesas is the archetypical beachcomber haunt in early Pacific history. In the only major Polynesian island group not to experience either colonial or indigenous efforts at centralization, its beachcombers made the least concessions to western ideas and values. The anonymity and feckless escapism which they sought has clung to them: they mattered only to themselves and their Polynesian and European associates.

Tahiti's beachcomber population was much more mixed in terms of the manner of arrival than were the other major groups in Eastern Polynesia. Tahiti's first beachcomber went ashore voluntarily on 23 August, 1789, with the consent of his captain, and to the relief of his shipmates. 49 The 'Bounty' mutineers must also be regarded in the voluntary, non-deserter category, since they were able to choose the place and terms of their residence: a deserter usually could take only what came his way. The story of the mutiny on the 'Bounty' is too well known to require discussion here: it can be taken for granted that conditions on board, and Bligh's relationship with his officers and crew were important causal factors. Bligh's own published


49. This man, Brown, had recently slashed another man's face with a razor: he was described as troublesome and desperate. George Mortimer, Observations and Remarks . . ., (London, 1791), pp.27, 34.
opinion was:

... that the mutineers had flattered themselves with the hopes of a more happy life among the Otaheiteans, than they could possibly enjoy in England; and this, joined to some female connections, most probably occasioned the whole transaction.

He stated further that the chiefs had encouraged the sailors, most of whom did not have connections, to stay in Tahiti with promises of influence and prosperity. There is more than mere rationalization in this: one of Bligh's men, named Seymour, applied to the (London) Missionary Society to be sent to Tahiti as a missionary. In his interview he said that he had been so charmed by the people and country that he had no greater desire than to live and die there.

Despite the idyllic popular image of Tahiti, relatively few beachcombers came with premeditation, or with their Captains' consent. Pulpit at Huahine was perhaps one, and the convict seamen on the Margaret possibly met the former requirement if not the latter. Tahiti had positive attractions enough, thought Turnbull: a life of indolence, a fertile soil which yielded an abundance and "the facility of the women were irresistible attractions to these wretches."52

By about 1803, by which time the pork trade was flourishing, a few beachcombers of the less equivocally 'discharged' variety were present;53 in 1806, Edward Robarts from the Marquesas, became one, and

mentions several others in a similar situation.\textsuperscript{54} Deserters were however, more common than discharged seamen. Three men attempted to desert from the \textit{Bounty} in January, 1789,\textsuperscript{55} no doubt for the same reasons which Bligh gave for the mutiny; and a steady trickle went ashore clandestinely from naval and merchant ships alike which called during the next few years.\textsuperscript{56} With the increased volume of commercial shipping from 1798 onwards, this trickle became a more consistent stream - probably no ship in these years did not lose at least some it its crew through desertion.\textsuperscript{57} Turnbull observed of Tahiti that the "seduction of that life of indolence and carelessness" made it very difficult to keep a ship's company together, especially when combined with the fatigue of a long voyage.\textsuperscript{58}

Yet the attractions of desertion in Tahiti seem to have been less powerful than in Hawaii. Turnbull describes a meeting at Huahine with a deserter from his own ship, the \textit{Margaret}: the man's appearance was now like that of the islanders, and he met with derision from his former shipmates.\textsuperscript{59} Nor were deserters in Tahiti looked after as well

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{54} Dening, \textit{op. cit.}, pp.163, 166, 169n.
\item \textsuperscript{57} e.g. Roe, \textit{op. cit.}, pp.267, 287.
\hconv:21\hconv:21T. Haweis, 'Papers - Supplement', (Ms.), p.93.
\hconv:21\hconv:21William Wilson to Joseph Hardcastle, 15 March, 1802, L.M.S.-
\hconv:21\hconv:21S.S.J., Box 1.
\hconv:21\hconv:21W.W. Bolton, 'Inter Alia', Papers, (Ts.), Vol. 21, pp.25, 26,
\hconv:21\hconv:2135, 37.
\item \textsuperscript{58} Turnbull, \textit{op. cit.}, p.156.
\item \textsuperscript{59} \textit{Ibid.}, pp.155-156.
\end{itemize}
as were their counterparts in Hawaii:

The condition of these men was by no means enviable; they complained very heavily, and with great reason, of the royal family; who after having tempted them to desert their ship for the sake of their property, had now left them when become poor, to shift for themselves. They were now in the most abject state. . . .

While Tahiti had fewer voluntary beachcombers than Hawaii, it only barely exceeded either Hawaii or the Marquesas as a temporary home for the shipwrecked. In 1792, the Matilda was wrecked in the Tuamotus: the survivors made their way to Tahiti, and some became permanent beachcombers. In 1802 the brig Norfolk was wrecked in Matavai Bay. The Norfolk was a naval vessel, and its commander a naval lieutenant. Accordingly, the 'contract' between crew and captain was not terminated by the loss of the vessel as was the case with merchant shipping. Instead of becoming beachcombers and dispersing therefore, the Norfolk's crew were kept together and governed by Lt. House on shore. In consequence, none of the crew of seventeen became beachcombers. The following year, 1803, Turnbull's vessel, the Margaret followed the fate of the Matilda, being wrecked in the Tuamotus. The survivors sailed to Tahiti, were dispersed and most remained when Turnbull and Captain Buyers were rescued. Only a few of them, however, remained after 1805.

Of other involuntary beachcombers, there is little direct

60. Ibid., p.272.
62. [House], op. cit., pp.30, 38.
63. Turnbull, op. cit., p.300.
64. Ibid., p.393.
evidence. Where the sources refer loosely to a man being "left" by
his Captain, the facts are usually desertion or voluntary discharge.65
Some of the deserters, however, can be regarded as involuntary to
the extent that the initiative in desertion was not theirs:

The seduction of European sailors, indeed, has of late
become the mischievous policy of these petty chiefs .
. . [who] employ every art to seduce seamen to abandon
their ships and reside amongst them.66

The involuntary beachcomber, therefore, was not well represented in
Tahiti during the 'classic' beachcomber period: he was to become
more evident during the 1820's when historical circumstances had so
changed that he was no longer a beachcomber in the sense used here.67
Unlike Hawaii, Tahiti did not become a place of major commercial
importance during the first twenty years or so after the 'Bounty'
affair. Its foreign trade was almost wholly confined to supplying
pork to New South Wales, it did not become a major provisioning or
resting place for vessels engaged in other trades until the 1820's,
the political centralization of the islands was not prosecuted as
successfully by the Pomare family as it was by Kamehameha, and
missionaries were installed in Tahiti very early in the beachcomber
period; in Hawaii not until after its close. All these factors in
Tahiti inhibited its development as a beachcomber centre.

Captain Cook's name for Tonga, 'The Friendly Islands' might
have had something to do with the fact that Tonga provided a home for

65. e.g. Wilson, op. cit., p.xxci, Cf. Mortimer, op. cit., p.34.
February, 1803, L.M.S.-S.S.J., Box 1.
III, pp.207-208, listing the 1826 code of laws; and Ellis's
comments.
the first beachcombers in western Polynesia. These men were convicts from New South Wales who escaped from there on an American vessel, the \textit{Otter}, and who went ashore in Tonga in 1796.\footnote{John Earnshaw, \textit{Thomas Muir, Scottish Martyr}, (Cremorne, 1959), p.32. Wilson, \textit{op. cit.}, p.98.} In 1797, seven men were discharged from the \textit{Mercury};\footnote{Buchanan, Kelso and Wilkinson, \textit{Journal}, 6 October, 1797, pp.4-6, L.M.S.-S.S.J., Box 1.} and within a few months George Vason exchanged his missionary garb and status for those of a Tongan chief. But after this early start, voluntary beachcombers (other than deserters) were rare in Tonga. There were probably no more until in 1823 the two 'pious mechanics' who had accompanied the Rev. Walter Lawry opted to stay in Tonga when Lawry left.\footnote{Rev. Walter Lawry, \textit{Diary, 1818-1825}, (Ts.), p.135.} A few probably came during the whaling era of the 'twenties and 'thirties, but it is difficult from the evidence available to differentiate them from deserters.\footnote{Rev. John Thomas, 'Calendar and Diary, 1827', 7 December, 1827, n.p. \textit{A Tale of Vavaoo}, \textit{The Australian Magazine}, I, 1821, p.208. Rev. D. Cargill, \textit{A Refutation of Chevalier Dillon's ...}, (London, 1842), pp.29-30.} Of the latter there are none known before Tonga became a port of call for ships engaged in the Fijian sandalwood trade, and, at about the same time, for the Tahitian pork traders. There were a number of desertions at this stage - though probably less dramatic than Im Thurn suggests.\footnote{Sir Everard Im Thurn, and L.C. Wharton, \textit{The Journal of William Lockerby}, (London, 1925), p.lxiii. Charles Savage was probably a deserter in Tonga in 1808.} In the absence of specific data one can only assume that the same stimuli were responsible as elsewhere - with perhaps a bit more shipboard 'push' than island 'pull'.

\footnote{69. Buchanan, Kelso and Wilkinson, \textit{Journal}, 6 October, 1797, pp.4-6, L.M.S.-S.S.J., Box 1.}
\footnote{70. Rev. Walter Lawry, \textit{Diary, 1818-1825}, (Ts.), p.135.}
because of the reputation the Tongans were acquiring for ferocity. This observation is probably valid into the 1820's, when desertions were unequivocally taking place, but with no evidence of the motive being Tonga's attractiveness. By the 1830's when shipping was much more frequent, and personal acquaintance with Tonga much more common, more mixed motives probably prevailed.

Despite the extended position of the Tongan islands, their lowness, and the abundance of reefs, there were surprisingly few known shipwrecks in Tonga. The first castaways to arrive were probably the survivors of the Argo, wrecked on Bukatatanoa reefs in Lau. The Ceres was wrecked in 1821 and made a net contribution of three beachcombers to Tonga's population. In 1829 the survivors of the Minerva, wrecked on reefs some three hundred miles to the south-west reached Tonga. None of these men are known to have become Tongan beachcombers. In 1830, the crew of the wrecked Eagle were living on Tongatapu; and in 1840 some of the crew of the Skylark, wrecked on Vatoa in Fiji made Tonga - but left few, if any, as beachcombers in Tonga.

73. The Sydney Gazette, 23 October, 1808; Im Thurn and Wharton, op. cit., p.lxiii.


76. For the Argo and Ceres see Chapter 2 above, pp.47-48, 76.


The better known of Tonga's beachcombers came involuntarily: the earliest of them taken prisoner by the Tongans when attempts were made to capture vessels: the Union in 1802, Duke of Portland in 1804, and the Port-au-Prince in 1806. The largest numbers came from the latter ship, and some of its crew were still alive in the 1830's. In 1827 the Tongans attempted to detain some of the crew of the Astrolabe; a boy who had been stolen from the whaler Elizabeth in 1823, was still living there in 1833. Besides those beachcombers forcibly detained by the Tongans, there were others unwillingly put ashore by their Captains, either sick or for mutinous conduct or other forms of misbehaviour. Most of Tonga's beachcombers therefore, appear to have been involuntary ones, at least until the 1830's: the few voluntary beachcombers could have easily gone to any other island group, for there is no specific evidence of any desire to live in Tonga in preference to other groups. Not having any commodity prized by the west, shipping was less regular than elsewhere. Conse-

79. Captain Waldegrave met one, Brown, in 1830, see Orlebar, op. cit., pp.72, 80; and another, William Singleton, died in 1832. Rev. J. Watkin, 'Journal, 1830-1839', (Ms.), p.76, 12 May, 1832.

80. John Thomas, 'Calendar and Diary 1827', (Ms.), 18 May, 1827.


quentiìy Tonga picked up fewer of the voluntary beachcombers because fewer could get there; and those uncertain about their prospects were probably drawn elsewhere because of the difficulty of getting away again.

Similar remarks apply to Samoa - perhaps with even more force, for the beachcomber period there was so much shorter than elsewhere. Shipwrecks were very rare, so there were practically no castaway-beachcombers. Of other involuntary beachcombers, there were few, and they conform to the pattern already established for other island groups: men were put ashore sick, or for misconduct, or were forcibly detained by the Samoans, the latter victims included the veteran beachcomber William Diaper, who thus made his beachcombing debut.

Voluntary beachcombers were more characteristic of Samoa. The first came from Tonga by canoe in about 1798, and if the sources are to be taken literally, all the remainder came in the

85. e.g. R.W. Robson, *Queen Emma*, (Sydney, 1965), p.12 mentions a shipwreck on Savaii in 1838; in 1850 a British barque was wrecked on Upolu, see Pritchard, 4 December, 1850, G.B.C.D., Samoa, Series III, Vol. I, 1845-1856. If there were any shipwrecks before or early in the missionary era, I have found no evidence of them.


1830's, and made the islands swarm with escaped convicts from New South Wales. Most of these reports are garbled, exaggerated and generalized accounts of two incidents: the first, the arrival in a small boat of a few convicts who had escaped first to the Society Islands in 1828; the second, the arrival in the schooner Caledonia stolen from Moreton Bay, of a group of convicts in 1832. There is no evidence that there is any more to the convict-beachcomber tradition in Samoa than this. Even these, however, had not come to Samoa in preference: the first party had gone first to the Society Islands; the second party had wanted to make Rotuma where they knew shipping to be frequent, and from where they could quickly get a passage. Most of the others labelled "convicts" were probably no more than ordinary deserters, from British and American whalers, and this group makes up the bulk of Samoa's beachcombers. Their reasons for becoming beachcombers are the same as those in other groups: usually a dispute with the Captain or other members of the crew, and in a minority of

Williams, Narrative of Missionary Enterprises, pp.461-462.
Pritchard, op. cit., p.198.

Also Report by Commander Laws, 11 March, 1829, (Ms.), F.O. 58/14.

92. [Rev. George Brown], 'Old Hands and Old Times', (Ts.), pp.6ff.

cases with the connivance of the Samoans; and as elsewhere, as the volume of shipping increased, so did the number of deserters.

Fiji was the principal beachcomber centre in the Central Pacific, and both voluntary and involuntary types were well represented. Castaways became Fiji's first foreign residents. When the Argo was wrecked on Bukatatanoa reefs in 1800, some of the survivors lived in Fiji for a time, others went to Tonga. None seem to have become permanent residents, being either killed in Tonga or Fiji, or escaped on a passing ship. Although the Fijian sandalwood trade began in 1804, there were no known shipwrecks until 1808 when the Eliza struck a reef near Nairai, and thus pitched into Fijian history one of the Pacific's best known beachcombers, Charlie Savage. Most of the Eliza's crew were rescued by sandalwood ships which were in Fiji at the time; some, like Savage became life-time beachcombers; others like Patterson did so for a shorter term. Of those who stayed, all (including Savage) were dead by 1813. Shipwrecks were never as frequent in Fiji as might be expected. None more are known until


95. Ibid., 8 October, 1846.


98. Thomson claims a shipwreck in Lau in 1803, but this was probably the Argo. Basil Thomson, South Sea Yams, (Edinburgh & London, 1894), pp.290-293.

99. Patterson, op. cit., p.82.

100. Dillon, op. cit., I, p.25.
that of the Oeno in 1825 on Vatoa;\textsuperscript{101} in 1828 the Valador was wrecked in Cakaudrove;\textsuperscript{102} in 1831 the Glide and the Niagara were wrecked in the same hurricane,\textsuperscript{103} and at about the same time, the Fawn was wrecked;\textsuperscript{104} in 1837 the ship Harriet came to grief on Providence Shoals in Lau.\textsuperscript{105} These accidents contributed very few long-term beachcombers to Fiji: the crews of the Oeno and the Fawn were massacred, each with only one survivor,\textsuperscript{106} and most of the members of the Glide and Niagara were rescued;\textsuperscript{107} the crew of the Harriet sailed north-east from Lau, and away from Fiji. The beachcomber John P. Twyning came to Fiji with a boatload of survivors from the Minerva, while others from the same shipwreck went to Tonga in 1829;\textsuperscript{108} the crew of the Skylark, wrecked in 1840, divided similarly.\textsuperscript{109} Whatever other ships were wrecked in Fiji, little, if anything is known; if they had contributed significantly to Fiji's beachcomber population

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{101} [William S. Cary], \textit{Wrecked on the Feejees}, (Nantucket, 1928), p.9.
\item \textsuperscript{102} \textit{Ibid.}, p.58.
\item \textsuperscript{103} J. Oliver, \textit{The Wreck of the Glide}, (London and New York, 1848), p.89.
\item \textsuperscript{104} E.J. Turpin, \textit{op. cit.}, \$14 dates the Fawn's wreck at 1834; but it had already happened when Eagelston was in Fiji in 1831. Cary says 1830, [Cary], \textit{op. cit.}, p.67.
\item \textsuperscript{105} Charles Sparshatt, \ldots \textit{Loss of the Ship Harriet} \ldots , (London, 1839), p.6.
\item \textsuperscript{106} [Cary], \textit{op. cit.}, pp.17-18. Turpin, \textit{op. cit.}, \$14-16.
\item \textsuperscript{107} Eagelston, \textit{'Journal of the Peru'}, (Ts.), pp.283-285. Oliver, \textit{op. cit.}, pp.121-124.
\end{itemize}
it is likely that something would be known of them.

Other involuntary beachcombers were probably more numerous in Fiji than in Tonga or Samoa; as early as 1801 a man was left ashore at Bua for mutiny, and in 1808 William Lockerby and several others were left by the Jenny. Others were cut off, or enticed ashore by Fijians, or enticed by other beachcombers. Others were left on shore to trade, like David Whippy in 1824, and stranded. Though two of Fiji's best known beachcombers - Whippy and Lockerby - arrived in this way, this mode of arrival was not typical. Most of Fiji's white residents went ashore voluntarily and on their own initiative - either by requesting their discharge, or by deserting.

The tradition according to Thomas Williams and followed by Turpin that the earliest whites who came willingly to live in Fiji were convicts who escaped in a stolen vessel in 1804 is probably incorrect. Convicts they could well have been, but if so, they came on sandalwood vessels. A substantial proportion of Fiji's sandalwood

110. Im Thurn and Wharton, op. cit., p.xlv.

111. Ibid., p.19, by accident, according to Lockerby, but Munro, 'William Lockerby and His Journal', (unpublished, 1975), has suggested that it was done deliberately and for theft of the gold of the Eliza castaways.


beachcombers were discharged, rather than deserted. A more law-
less element developed in the beach-de-mer era in the 1820's: the
crew of a ship from Manila mutinied and took up residence, and
maintained an unenviable reputation for violence; but nevertheless,
people continued to go ashore voluntarily. As a long-term focus
for trade with the west, as well as a place where missionary activity
and concentrated white settlement were long delayed, Fiji gathered a
substantial number of deserters over a period of half a century, and
longer. It is uncertain, however, whether deserters were ever more
numerous than discharged seamen. One would, indeed, expect to find
more of the latter since relatively few places were frequented by
ships, and such was the nature of the Fiji trades that ships had to
remain in the vicinity for months on end. Many, indeed, were referred
to as deserters who had in fact, come in another fashion. Among
genuine deserters there were, as in Hawaii and elsewhere, ships' officers as well as seamen.

The last major beachcomber centre in this region was Rotuma.

116. Dening, op. cit., p.191; Dillon, op. cit., I, pp.3, 9, 25;
Martin, op. cit., II, pp.64-66.

117. J.H. Eagelston, 'Jnl. of the . . . Peru', (Ts.), p.296; [Cary],

Spencer 194, in Dixon Library; Samuel P. Henry, loc. cit.; Erskine, op. cit., p.273.

119. The sources, when they specify, usually refer to men as dis-
charged, e.g. Thomson, South Sea Yarns, p.312.

120. e.g. Knights, loc. cit., p.184; Cf. Eagelston, 'Journal of the

121. Knights, loc. cit., pp.185-186; Cf. Jackson, loc. cit., pp.417-
418.
Here too, the beachcombers were often thought to have been convicts, and it has already been noted that the convicts who stole the *Caledonia* in 1832 wanted to make Rotuma. The bulk of the reliable evidence suggests that however much they might have looked, sounded and behaved like convicts, most beachcombers either deserted there spontaneously, or were enticed ashore, beginning with the *Rochester* in 1820, and continuing as long as whalers and *beche-de-mer* traders continued to call. Rotuma, indeed, seems to have been more favoured by deserters than other places, possibly because of the attractions of the place, but probably just as importantly, because many ships called and few stayed for long. A small minority were on shore for other reasons: trade, ill-health, voluntary discharge or shipwreck.

This analysis of the manner of the arrival of beachcombers in their island homes contains no evidence to suggest any touch of Romanticism, or enthusiastic Primitivism on the part of beachcombers or would-be beachcombers. Escaping from some facet of western civil-

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ization many of them were, without doubt, but no more than a few (literally) were sufficiently educated to have had a sophisticated philosophical basis for thinking that they might find a haven of harmony, tranquillity and fulfilment among the Noble Savages of the South Seas. ¹²⁹ Castaways, prominent among short-term beachcombers, cannot be expected to have had any positive, prior attitude to beachcombing. Their arrival was totally fortuitous and uncontrolled. For other involuntary beachcombers, the human element made the prospect of becoming a beachcomber perhaps more likely, but not necessarily inevitable or more sought after: illness, the exigencies of the voyage, the personal relationships and behaviour which developed on board make each individual case of a man being put unwillingly ashore intelligible without it being necessary to hypothesize abstract motives.¹³⁰ Similarly, the reasons for a person being kidnapped, or a boat or ship being cut-off project the question of causality into the broader scope of early contact relations between voyagers and islanders.

¹²⁹. The most striking exception to this conclusion is the experience of Captain John McCluer, of the Honourable East India Company. McCluer had been so impressed with the frankness and sincerity of the Palau Islanders, after the experience there of the crew of the wrecked Antelope in 1783, that in February, 1793, he went to spend the rest of his life with them. Yet even he felt that the Noble Savage could be improved in the direction of civilization in the 18th century English pattern. After fifteen months he became so disillusioned that he left the islands. He was lost at sea shortly afterwards. J.P. Hockin, A Supplement to the Account of the Pelew Islands, (London, 1803), pp.24, 50, 51, 54.

¹³⁰. Take for example the notorious and apparently widespread practice of leaving men stranded on shore towards the end of the voyage for the sake of their 'lays', or share of the proceeds of the voyage. On American whalers all participants from owner to cabin boy were paid on the basis of a fixed proportion of the profits. The smaller the number involved, the more there was for the captain and his employer. See E.P. Hohman, The American Whaleman, (New York, 1928), pp.66-67.
Nor for the voluntary beachcombers - the discharged men and the deserters - is there any reason to hypothesize long range premeditation. Most sailors came to the Pacific incidentally: they could as easily have been voyaging in the Indian or Atlantic oceans, as indeed, many of them had before.  

Many of the whalers had been recruited not from the coastal towns from which the whaling vessels sailed, but from the New England hinterland: the recruiters making few concessions to truth when they spoke about shipboard conditions. 

For an explanation of the high rate of desertion one need not look further than the hardship, discomfort and monotony of shipboard life which induced men to desert wherever they got the chance, not simply in islands that had been overglamourized to impress the literate. It is not necessary to invoke a theory which would require the working classes to chase the fantasies of the wealthy and literary regarding the Noble Savage and the possibility of an earthly paradise. As to the distinction which I have made between deserters and discharged seamen, the difference is to be accounted for by the likelihood of individual Captains to allow a man to leave, or by the supposed advantage a man might expect to gain by going ashore with his pay, possessions and discharge certificate. The first two would enhance his acceptability with the islanders; the third would enhance his acceptability with subsequent shipping.

To the suggestion that the unpleasantness of shipboard conditions is sufficient to account for the rise of beachcombing two

131. e.g. Patterson, op. cit., pp.19-41.


objections might be made. First, since conditions on ships and in
the penal settlements were relatively homogeneous, the explanation
fails to discriminate between those who tried beachcombing and those
who did not. Second, that the islands had such positive attractions
of their own that an explanation by negative motivations must be un-
balanced. To meet the first objection one would need to have
detailed life history and personality data to differentiate the
beachcomber types from the non-beachcomber types. To meet the second
objection it is necessary to examine the attitudes among sailors
towards the islands and their peoples. Over-reaching both objec-
tions is the fact that the number of men who deserted or were dis-
charged from their vessels was enormous, and that most of them
shipped again, after only a short spell on shore.

The only beachcombers for whom there is any substantial
biographical data are those who wrote their autobiographies. This
evidence is not as helpful as might be expected, because the beach-
comber books are fairly stereotyped when it comes to providing back-
ground information, offering bald statements about place of birth
and early residence, occupational histories, and schooling. This
sort of information is the kind that establishes one's identity;
it is not sufficient for a personality reconstruction. Nor was this
the writer's aim: the reason for writing was to set out the authors' adventures among primitive peoples in a remote part of the globe.
Editorial conventions of the nineteenth century, moreover, did not permit a great deal of authorial intrusion, especially as in most
cases it was not the author (for all intents and purposes, a quite undistinguished sailor) but the exotic scenes and peoples which were
the main focus of interest. For example, John Jackson (William
Diaper) tells us only that his father was a yeoman, that he was born in Ardleigh, Sussex, and left school when he was fourteen. Campbell, that his father was a soldier, who died during his early infancy, that he received a basic education and was apprenticed to a weaver at the age of 10. Robarts gives away nothing at all; Mariner was the son of a naval captain, was well educated and intended for a professional career. Patterson was a farm boy, the son of a sailor. The examples could be multiplied - but not to any great number - and to do so would in any case exaggerate a bias which already exists in the evidence towards the unusual beachcomber, the one who attracted the attention of a voyager, and who offered a writer an interesting subject: men such as the university-educated, ex-clergyman Howells in Hawaii or the ex-Royal Navy lieutenant at Nukuhiwa; even skilled tradesmen were noticed in the literature far more than their numbers alone would justify. The best one can do therefore, is to make tenuous, subjective observations. Some beachcombers had come from a position in life above that of the common man: a few professional men were represented, a fair sprinkling of ships officers, a handful from high status families in Britain or America; a large number had had at least an elementary education, but only one had attended a university. A considerable number had served in the army or navy; more came from country areas than from cities; and the overwhelming, vast majority were nondescript, uneducated sailors, ignorant and unpretentious.

No clear categories which correlate with beachcomber experiences are discernable in the data relating to personal and social backgrounds of beachcombers; nor is there any clue to distinguish them from those who did not become beachcombers. The relationship
between personal background and beachcombing is to all appearances, purely random, as if the beachcomber had no control over his experiences, i.e. as if beachcombing is something that happened to one.

Of sailors' attitudes towards the prospect of living in the Pacific, the evidence offers little to support the view put forward by, for example, Dodge, that sailors "jumped ship" because of their captivation with:

... tropical islands that were nearer to paradise than any of the weary whalen men could possibly imagine ... 134

After Meares in 1788, told a fatigued and mutinous crew that they were to visit Hawaii, he wrote that "the eyes of everyone sparkled at the thought". 135 This sort of reaction ought not to be taken as evidence of Romantic sentiment about the Isles of Glamour: the same reaction could doubtless have been evoked by the offer of a run ashore in Vladivostok or the Amazon delta to a weary crew working in the North American fur trade; the beche-de-mer sailor, Oliver, provides a reminder of the typical sailor reaction to the prospect of land. In September, 1829, he sighted New Zealand,

... which had ever been associated in our minds with all that is barbarous and inhuman in savage life.

but which was nevertheless, "by no means an unwelcome sight". 136

References to the islanders as being savage and treacherous cannibals occur in a ratio to views of them as something akin to hospitable children of nature, of almost 6:1; and if cautious and ambiguous statements such as Oliver's are taken into account the ratio rises

to about 6.5:1. This is a very crude assessment of contemporary attitudes towards the Pacific islanders among sailors, but it in no sense exaggerates the fear and suspicion with which sailors viewed the islanders. Krusenstern, for example, (whose own perceptions fall into the 'children of nature' category) reports that his assessment of the character and habits of the Marquesans would have been most favourable to judge from his own dealings with them, but information from the beachcombers Cabri and Robarts showed them to be cruel and intractable. 137 Far more representative of sailors than Krusenstern was the view of the shipwrecked captain who preferred a rough sea in an overloaded boat with no provisions, to taking a chance with the reputedly savage cannibals. 138 Calkin in 1836 characterized the inhabitants of the various island groups in a manner which suggests he was merely reflecting a general opinion: the Marquesans, Samoans and Tongans he described as warlike; the Fijians as treacherous, the Society, Cook and Hawaiian Islanders as more intelligent and less offensive; and all are marked by an immense depravity and ignorance. 139 This view is remarkably consistent with that of McKonachie, published nearly twenty years before Calkin's voyage. McKonachie labelled all Polynesians except those of the Society Islands as fierce and aggressive. 140


138. Twyning, op. cit., pp.41-42. Cf. Horace Holden, A Narrative of the Shipwreck . . ., (Boston, 1836), pp.27, 33. These two references refer respectively to Lau (Fiji) and the Palau Islands. The former is marginally Polynesian, the latter is Micronesian. As the following discussion shows, Polynesia was not regarded more favourably than Melanesia or Micronesia.


The difference in Calkin's and McKonachie's views in regard to Hawaii was as one would expect from the changed historical circumstances between 1818 and 1836. But even in the 1790's when the Hawaiians were most dangerous to strangers, only people who knew them wrote delightedly about the happiness and harmony which prevailed among them: suspicion was the norm. In the Society Islands too, Calkin and McKonachie gave a more optimistic picture of society than earlier visitors. Wilson wrote of wars on Huahine and Tahiti, and nearby in the Tuamotus the crew of the Margaret preferred the hazards of going to sea in an improvised punt to the hazards of life with the islanders. In the Marquesas, Robarts showed no apprehension about living with the inhabitants, but by the time that large-scale beachcombing was beginning there, stories were current about the ferocity and cannibalism of the Marquesans. Even where personal experience belied the stereotype, however, an ambivalent note was apparent: the people with whom one was dealing might be friendly - but one should always be careful, for cannibals were not far away.


142. James Wilson, op. cit., p.228.

143. Turnbull, op. cit., p.304.

144. Dening, op. cit., pp.43-52.


William Mariner's surviving the massacre of the Port-au-Prince's crew "was by no means a consolation to him" as he pondered his fate in Tonga in 1806. By 1822, when there were several beachcombers in Tonga, the evidence is unequivocal that ships' captains and crews were in dread of the place — reputedly in "a most barbarous state of cannibalism". Samoa's reputation for savagery was so great that one missionary thought that no white men had lived there until Christian teachers had shown the place to be safe.

If the principal areas of Polynesia were thought of in this manner, then "the Feejees" were the cannibal isles par excellence in the popular view, an image which remained remarkably constant from the time of the sandalwood traders, who feared to sleep on shore, into the beche-de-mer period, and beyond into the 1850's when there were relatively large numbers of resident white men in Fiji.

147. Martin, op. cit., I, pp.46-47.
149. Smith, op. cit., p.191. The currency of this fear is confirmed by Bays, op. cit., pp.26, 82; the Minerva castaways sailed to Tonga knowing that missionaries were there, but still apprehensive of Tongan hostility to strangers.
152. Im Thurn and Wharton, op. cit., p.19.
153. Oliver, op. cit., pp.29-34, describes the Fijians as dangerous, treacherous and bloodthirsty; See also William Endicott, Wrecked Among Cannibals, (Salem, 1923), pp.39-40.
154. Robert Coffin, The Last of the Logan, (Ithaca, 1941), p.78. Coffin, lying awake at night after being shipwrecked in Fiji, "Finally reflecting that if they meant to kill us it wouldn't matter whether we were asleep or awake; so I slept".
Throughout the early contact period, whalers avoided Fiji, partly because of the uncertainty of navigation, as outlined in Chapter 2, but also because of the Fijian reputation as "bloody cannibals". 155

If these were the views which were most commonly held among sailors in the Pacific before mid-century, then one cannot look to such views in an attempt to explain why sailors became temporarily or permanently - island residents. One might expect a small minority to hold opinions contrary to those most generally accepted, but we are not here concerned with a minority, and the problem was not restricted by place of origin or by years. Of his voyages between 1800 and 1804 Turnbull wrote of the great difficulty of keeping a ship's company together in the Pacific; 156 a quarter of a century later a Russian explorer was informed that whalers kept at sea for many months on end because desertion rates were so high, 157 and forty years after Turnbull's time, Melville confirmed the latter observation: the Julia had lost twelve of its crew of 32 (over 36%), and explained:

It may seem strange that with such a state of affairs the captain should be willing to keep the sea with his ship. But the truth was, that by lying in harbour, he ran the risk of losing the remainder of his crew by desertion; and as it was, he still feared that, in some outlandish bay or other, he might one day find his anchor down, and no crew to weigh it. 158

The problem of why men left their ships to become beach-

156. Turnbull, op. cit., p.156.
combers is therefore not to be solved by reference to the sociological categories into which potential beachcombers fell, nor is it to be explained by reference to premeditated romantic notions of the Pacific Islands as earthly paradises whither men were anxious to find their way. The Friend in 1846 recognized the problem when it offered no more by way of explanation than the observation that there was a class of seaman ever ready to desert a ship. Beachcomber motivations therefore must be either considerably more complex than has been thought, or else were almost totally impulsive, actuated by the immediate, perceived contrast between the familiar shipboard conditions and the apparent tranquillity, happiness and subsistence abundance of the island being visited at the time.

This problem of motivation is partly illuminated by an examination of the length of island residence of most beachcombers and the circumstances of their departure. Of those beachcombers who were offered a passage from the islands, and declined, their reasons for staying are also helpful. Of those who left, some were forcibly and unwillingly removed, and the voluntary departure of others can be simply explained. There remains a substantial residue, however, of those who sought a speedy removal from the islands. For those men one can only postulate that the dominant reason for their going ashore was either simply to change ships, expecting (naively, perhaps) that the next would be better than the last, or that the islands offered some unknown promise which did not bear even a superficial scrutiny.

Of those beachcombers who sought to leave the islands a sub-

stantial minority did so because they felt that they were being driven away by unpleasant circumstances. In some cases these circumstances were relatively innocuous. For example, Dimsdell left Hawaii after ten years because of the deaths of his wife and two of his three children.\textsuperscript{160} There were a few for whom their fellow beachcombers made life intolerable, especially on Nauru where the beachcomber era was especially turbulent.\textsuperscript{161} As the culture contact process developed other foreigners used their greater influence and resources to make the islands less attractive to beachcombers. As early as 1823 in Tonga, Singleton (one of the \textit{Port-au-Prince} survivors) voiced fears that the missionaries might oblige him to leave Tonga, and for that reason wanted to move to a more remote part of the group.\textsuperscript{162} In Samoa, a beachcomber source and a missionary source both suggest that the coming of the latter made life less agreeable for the former.\textsuperscript{163}

More frequently, however, those who felt compelled to leave did so because of pressures from within island society, not from outsiders. As early as 1791 in Hawaii the first white residents had been anxious to leave because of the ill-treatment they had received.\textsuperscript{164} As the political and commercial importance of beachcombers in Hawaii came to be appreciated, the treatment of them improved but did not

\textsuperscript{160} Dimsdell, \textit{loa. cit.}, p.4.

\textsuperscript{161} R.C. Morgan, \textit{'Journal, 1836-1838'}, (Ms.), n.p., 18 May, 1837. \textit{'A Roving Printer'}, \textit{op. cit.}, p.117.

\textsuperscript{162} Lawry, \textit{'Diary, 1818-1825'}, p.121, 3 July, 1823.

\textsuperscript{163} Jackson, \textit{loa. cit.}, p.416, Cf. A.W. Murray, \textit{ Forty Yeare Mission Work . . . }, (London, 1876), p.33. In the first case Jackson left Tutuila not because he objected to the missionaries, but because they would not let him marry. In the second Murray claims that the rumour of a missionary was enough to send a beachcomber away - as naturally as the sun dismisses the night.

\textsuperscript{164} J. Ingraham, \textit{'Journal . . . Hope'}, (Ms.), pp.68, 72.
become conditional. Hence in 1815 two men sought a passage from Oahu because, they said, they were unable to pay the customary tribute to the king, and therefore must leave. Failure to observe local norms was also said to be responsible in the case of Robert Mills in the Marquesas. A later refugee from there complained of being:

... a complete slave to this black nigger ... and in momentary fear of his life.

Diaper had to flee Cakaudrove in Fiji because of his sacrilege and contempt, and later had to flee Fiji altogether because of Cakobau's anger at his interference in Fijian politics.

But it was more usual for beachcombers to have to flee because of the vagaries of island politics. Vason in Tonga in 1801, Connor in Huahine in 1797, Twyning and Jones on Wallis Island in about 1835; and Robarts in the Marquesas in 1806 all left because the turbulence of island politics made continued residence unsafe for them. Others, for reasons not given, seem to have fallen foul of the local power elite and therefore had to escape. There is no reason to assume that these circumstances were exceptional; on


the contrary this degree of turbulence was characteristic of the first generation or so of culture contact and therefore of the beachcomber era. The experience of those who fled is indicative of the sort of situation to which most beachcombers had to adapt.

It is not easy to discern the line between the beachcombers who felt compelled to leave because of adverse circumstances and those who left because of their failure to adjust to island society. In this context one can include those survivors of the Margaret wrecked in 1802 who did not leave Tahiti at the first opportunity, but in 1805, when they were "heartily sick of their Otaheitean tayoes".171 This category also embraces Young and Davis in Hawaii at the time of their unsuccessful attempt to escape with Captain Colnett.172 In the Marquesas Robarts said of Walker that he left because he was unable to pick up the language, a disability which would make life almost impossible.173 Others were disadvantaged by other personal factors: Lamont was bored; Carlton in Tonga moped for his English fiancee; Endicott found Wallis Island "tedious"; and Oliver explained that:

... the necessity of conforming, in many respects, to the manners of the natives, made us, beside other reasons, desirous of leaving the island.174

There were a few for whom successful adaptation did not enter into

171. Turnbull, op. cit., p.393.


173. Dening, op. cit., pp.5, 113. A person unable to speak the language would be a social non-person, like Crook had been on Tahuata.

174. Oliver, op. cit., p.150; Lamont, op. cit., p.306; Martin, op. cit., II, pp.53-54; Endicott, op. cit., p.50.
the question: they had to leave for reasons of health. This was a secondary consideration for Twyning and Patterson; it was given as a reason *ex post facto* by Campbell in Hawaii, and as a prime reason by Melville in the Marquesas, and was probably instrumental in several other cases as well.

But the majority of those beachcombers (or potential beachcombers) who left the islands are less easy to account for in any clear-cut manner because their motives or apparent motives were more subjective. At least a few appear to have been moved by nothing more than a whim; they left suddenly and apparently without premeditation. Campbell, for example, apart from his need for medical assistance, had everything to lose by leaving Hawaii in 1810. He felt no urge to leave until he learnt that a ship in the harbour was bound for England.

When I learned this, I felt the wish to see my native country and friends once more so strong, that I could not resist the opportunity that now offered.

He asked Kamehameha's permission to leave:

He inquired my reason for wishing to quit the island, and whether I had any cause of complaint. I told him I had none; that I was sensible I was much better here than I could be anywhere else, but that I was desirous to see my friends once more. He said, if his belly told him to go, he would do it; and that if mine told me so, I was at liberty.

178. e.g. Oliver, *op. cit.* p.75; Wilson, *op. cit.* p.82; [Joseph Smith], 'Tahitian Reminiscences', (Ts.), Part II, p.32; Anon., 'Six Years Among Cannibals', *Household Words*, (1853), p.32.
Boredom and homesickness must also be taken into account as motivational factors, even among men who had been resident in the islands for a relatively long period. Jackson wanted to leave Cakaudrove because "I could not bear the idea of being stopped against my will". Numerous other beachcombers gave no other reason than bald statements about being tired of island life, or conversely, wanting to get back to civilization, or wanting to be among Europeans. Some of these men had been island residents for three years, or eight years; the romantically inclined Captain McCluer was tired of island life after fifteen months.

Homesickness was probably active in Mariner's case in his first (and unsuccessful) attempt to leave Tonga. He explained to Finau:

... that he had no other wish to leave the islands but what was prompted by the natural desire of returning to his native country, and the bosom of his friends.

In Fiji William Cary passed up several opportunities to return to America before he finally shipped in 1832 after seven years in Fiji, and after having received letters from his family and met men from his home town of Nantucket.

182. Hockin, op. cit., p.54.
184. [Cary], op. cit., pp.62, 64, 72.
In all the foregoing departure situations the reasons given are plausible; one can empathize with men who were so well off that they did not want to leave; one can appreciate that men might be compelled to leave; boredom, homesickness, ill-health, or a fundamental distaste for an alien life style strike one as valid motivations for wanting a change of scene, even if one cannot explain why a person might feel bored, or might not like island life. Two important inferences, however, may be drawn. The first is that most beach-combers appear to have regarded themselves as temporary residents; the second is that most of them appear to have been positively waiting for a chance to escape, or in some case actively trying to get away by their own means.

In the beachcomber narratives there are seven accounts of attempts to build boats in which to escape from the islands. With one exception - that of Horace Holden and his companions in the Palau islands 185 - these accounts all involve beachcombers who were remarkably successful in adapting to the demands of island society. The earliest was that of Captain Henry Wilson and the crew of the Antelope, who though not beachcombers, strictly speaking, participated in some aspects of Palauan life. 186 Wilson and his men built a vessel from the wreck of the Antelope and sailed it to Macao. Lockerby and his companions on Vanua Levu (Fiji) lengthened a ship's boat and decked it, and Lamont on Penrhyn Island (Tongareva) did the

185. H. Holden, A Narrative of the Shipwreck ..., (Boston, 1836), pp.60-68.
186. George Keate, An Account of the Pelew Islands, (London, 1789), passim. Living together as a group and separately from the Palauans the castaways do not in my opinion qualify as beach-combers.
Mariner and the Port-au-Prince men in Tonga asked first for an ocean-going canoe which they could modify, and second for permission to build a vessel. The work on this vessel ceased when it was forbidden by Finau. Morrison and the Bounty's men in Tahiti, and Twynning and his friend Jones in Lau both built substantial vessels from local materials and with limited tools. Both vessels subsequently made ocean voyages. "Daniel Dash" and a companion in the Marquesas began building a schooner in which they planned to sail to California; "Dash" escaped on a visiting ship before completing the schooner.

To build, or even to modify a vessel in the conditions of isolation and deprivation experienced in all these cases, required a high degree of co-operation from the islanders. This could not be secured except by men who had the sort of talents and personalities which enabled them to adapt to the demands of island society. In other words some of the Pacific's most successful beachcombers were those who were so anxious to depart the islands that they built vessels for themselves in which they intended to cross thousands of

189. Morrison, op. cit., pp.80, 81, 84, 90, 96-97; Twynning, op. cit., pp.82, 84, 85, 101.
191. Anon., 'Six Years Among Cannibals', loc. cit., p.137.
192. See Morrison, op. cit., pp.84, 96, 98 and Cf. the effect of Finau's prohibition in Tonga.
miles of open ocean. It is not, therefore, possible to make any
reliable inference from the successful adaptation of a beachcomber
to his motivations or to his attitudes to life in the islands; and
one is driven back to the position of having to suggest a random
relationship between the variables of personal background, circum-
stances of arrival, success of adaptation, and desire to escape.

The same conclusion is suggested from an examination of
the evidence concerning beachcombers who declined offers of removal
from the islands, and of beachcombers who were removed against their
will. First there is the case of Isaac Davis and John Young in
Hawaii. Having been kept on shore initially against their wills in
1790, both lived in Hawaii until their deaths, respectively twenty
years and forty-five years later. Kamehameha kept them away from
the coast for many months after their capture to prevent their
attempts at escape. The first opportunity which came their way was
in 1791 with Captain Colnett.\(^{193}\) Their anxious attempts to escape
on this occasion were prevented by the close watch kept on them by
the Hawaiians. It was not until Vancouver's first visit in February,
1793, after a residence of nearly three years that another opportun-
ity presented itself. By this time, however, they were not willing
to leave, being, as Vancouver noted:

\[\ldots\text{ destitute of resources, on their return home \ldots} \]
\[\text{they must be again exposed to the vicissitudes of a life of}\]
\[\text{hard labour, for the purpose of merely acquiring a}\]
\[\text{precarious supply of the most common necessaries of life}\]
\[\ldots\text{ Here they lived happily and in the greatest plenty}\]
\[\ldots\]\(^{194}\)


Various versions are given by other sources from the 1790's - all except one making the same general argument that their high status and affluence in Hawaii contrasted with hard labour and poverty elsewhere. In Tahiti those of the Matilda's crew who did not accept passages with Bligh are said to have been motivated by the desire to gather pearls: that is, to carry on an activity which had a European meaning, and which would facilitate a later but more advantageous return to European society. The veteran beachcomber Peter Hagerstein ("the Swede") "dreaded nothing more" than the prospect of leaving Tahiti for his health would prevent him from earning a living in Europe. In the Marquesas there are several reports of beachcombers declining offers of removal, but with no reasons given except for Robarts whose unusual distinction is to have claimed to be impelled by the self-less and self-appointed task of being of service to European shipping in one case, and not wanting to be a burden to his rescuers in another.

In western Polynesia the situation is virtually identical. Men stayed as beachcombers despite strong desires to leave either because of emotional ties which had been formed in the islands.

195. The exception is in Menzies, 'Journal . . .', (Ms.), p.271: Young and Davis gave a polite but specious excuse in answer to what must have become an irritating or even embarrassing question. See also Bolt, op. cit., 16 October, 1795; Townsend, op. cit., pp.13, 19.

196. Menzies, op. cit., p.365(i).

197. Turnbull, op. cit., p.296.


or for reasons of health, age and the lack of economically useful skills in Europe.\textsuperscript{200} Most give no reasons,\textsuperscript{201} but it requires little reflection to infer that they considered themselves to be happier and more secure in the islands than in Europe.\textsuperscript{202}

Besides those who chose to remain on the islands, there was a significant number who were removed against their will. Frequently this was effected with the willing co-operation of the islanders, who for a reward, would catch and surrender deserters, or others whom (for one reason or another) a visiting captain wished to apprehend.\textsuperscript{203} Most of those who were taken unwillingly from the islands were taken at the request of missionaries. This service could not legally be done by merchant captains who lacked the authority,\textsuperscript{204} and it usually fell to the naval commanders on their periodical visits.\textsuperscript{205} During the Fiji beche-de-mer trade Eagelston and Knights both removed beachcombers who had attempted to upset their trade.\textsuperscript{206}

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{200} Twynin, \emph{op. cit.}, pp.115-116.  
Martin, \emph{op. cit.}, II, p.30.

\textsuperscript{201} \emph{Ibid.}, p.55; Wilkes, \emph{op. cit.}, III, p.381.


\textsuperscript{203} Melville, \textit{Omoo}, p.21; Wilkes, \emph{op. cit.}, II, p.58; Wilson, \emph{op. cit.}, p.xxxii, give specific examples. Diaper, \emph{op. cit.}, p.59, suggests it was a widespread practice.

\textsuperscript{204} Dillon, \emph{op. cit.}, II, p.345. Some, however, did: [Vason], \emph{op. cit.}, p.85.

Capt. Bethune to Adm. Maitland, 5 October, 1838, F.O. 58/1.

\textsuperscript{206} Eagelston, 'Journals (5)', pp.11, 14-15, (Ms.).
\end{flushleft}
Not all of those who were removed in this manner were necessarily unwilling to go, but some at least would have preferred another means, especially those of convict origin. Morgan, Connelly and Ambler, for example, in Tonga in 1797 when the Duff missionaries arrived, had planned to take a passage to China in the Duff. As events transpired, Connelly was taken on board by force, and the other two escaped.

Perhaps the smallest group of those who were taken from their islands unwillingly are those who were accidentally carried away, being on a ship at the time of sailing, and weather conditions making it impossible to get ashore. Cabri in the Marquesas can be placed in this category, though some ambiguity clouds his case. The most well known of beachcombers carried away in this fashion were Martin Bushart and 'Joe', whom Dillon took from Fiji to Tikopia; and who, sixteen years later, were instrumental in helping Dillon find the secret of La Perouse's disappearance.

In none of these cases of refusal to depart, or of forcible removal is there any indication of enchantment with island life. Young and Davis are known to be unwilling beachcombers, and to have attempted escape; the others have nothing in common which is at all remarkable, except an aversion or incapacity to live the sort of

207. Erskine, op. cit., p.309.


life which they had left. These incidents carry no implication of strong attraction to Polynesian culture at any time: their arrival, staying and/or departure appear to be determined by forces beyond the control of each beachcomber.

The apparent randomness of the beachcomber arrival and departure evidence is partly due to the fact that enormous numbers of men qualify for inclusion. It seems that not only did almost every ship leave some of its crew on various islands, but at least as many ships must have made up some of the loss at the same or similar places. If Melville's testimony is to be accepted, many ships would have been unable to complete their voyages without fairly heavy recruitment from sailors already in the islands. From time to time in various places - especially in Fiji in the late 1820's and early 1830's - there were concentrations of castaways anxious to ship; but by far the vast majority of beachcombers or apparent beachcombers who sought a passage on passing vessels were deserters, whose principal motivation seems to have been merely a desire to change ships. This was certainly the case with such literary beachcombers as Patterson in Hawaii, Melville in the Marquesas, and Torrey at "Rohanah in the Friendly Islands" [Rotuma?]. Cattlin's experience with the fast foot-work of his crew in the Solomons is explicit

211. Melville, Omoo, pp.7, 13. See above pp.120-121. See also Torrey, op. cit., p.102; Pritchard, op. cit., p.199.

212. Endicott, op. cit., p.49; Orlebar, op. cit., pp.64, 70; Turnbull, op. cit., p.393.

213. Cattlin, op. cit., p.307. Hohman's figures on the turnover of crews in Pacific area illuminating. Of a sample of 15 voyages between 1843 and 1862, 29.2% of original crews deserted and 33.9% were discharged during the voyage - i.e. 63.1% left their ships. The average crew size for these 15 voyages was 32.6. Of a sample of 23 voyages between 1839 and 1879 total crews
evidence that most people went ashore not because of any strong or lasting attraction which the beach had for them, but because it was the most convenient way of changing ships. A minority were more adventurous, or more curious, and were prepared to stay for periods of varying length; but even in these cases the initial motivation seems to have been negative, and a reaction to local and immediate circumstances.\textsuperscript{214} It was concerned neither with a generalized discontent with western civilization, nor with any positive attraction to the putative advantages and pleasures of life in primitive societies.\textsuperscript{215} Nor was the anxiety of so many beachcombers to leave the islands necessarily evidence of disillusionment with island life: it was merely a consequence of never having desired to live in such circumstances.\textsuperscript{216} It cannot, moreover, be suggested that the fact that some beachcombers did settle down to a life time with the islanders invalidates the general applicability of the foregoing argument; many of those who stayed only did so because having per-force to stay they came to prefer the life.\textsuperscript{217} Most of the Pacific's best known beachcombers were anxious to escape until they became

\textsuperscript{213} (i.e. counting replacements as well as original crews) the average was 81.7 indicating that many of those who were shipped to replace men discharged or deserted, themselves had to be replaced, frequently more than once, before the voyage ended. See Hohman, \textit{op. cit.}, Appendix B, Tables 1 and 2, pp.316-317.

\textsuperscript{214} Diapea, \textit{op. cit.}, p.56. "The same old story! This ship had been commanded by one of those Yankee tyrants which was at that time so very prevalent in the whaling trade".


\textsuperscript{217} \textit{Ibid.}
accustomed to the life - for example, John Young in Hawaii. Even David Whippy, though he never left Fiji, reverted as he grew old to a European manner of living, and to Eurocentric values, as did Marin in Hawaii. Other long-term beachcombers kept in mind the goal of returning ultimately to their homelands - for example, William Cary and John Twyning. Once these aspects of beachcombers' lives are taken into consideration, there are few beachcombers who cannot be considered as transients.

The randomness of the relationships between the variables of personal background circumstances of arrival, success of adaptation and desire to escape is further reinforced by the expressions of sentiment made by beachcombers on leaving the islands: a mixture of aversion and affection which implies that if the randomness is only apparent, then the real relationship is one of ambivalence. Lockerby, who had lengthened his boat and anxiously watched for a sail, left Fiji recalling the Fijians' kindness to him. Cary left Vatoa where his companions had been slaughtered with "a pang of regret". In Tonga, Mariner on leaving a place of captivity and slaughter "felt all the sweet bitterness of parting from much loved friends to visit his native country: he bade a long adieu." Oliver, the castaway in Fiji mentions his indescribable joy at the sight of a distant sail, but also felt "a pang of regret" and even sorrow on leaving. Robarts voluntarily left Nukuhiva, but in

218. For Whippy see Chapter 5, p.248, fn.264 below. For Marin see Gast, op. cit., passim.
220. [Cary], op. cit., p.21.
221. Martin, op. cit., II, p.34.
222. J. Oliver, op. cit., pp.123, 125.
deep distress.  

The experience of beachcombers who returned to civilized life compounds the evidence of ambivalence. While there is little or no evidence to suggest marked discontent with civilization before the beachcombing experience, and whereas discontent with the beachcomber life might imply a positive attitude to civilized life, many returned beachcombers found that this return was accompanied by discomfort and discontent. Some of them had been broken in health by their experiences, and were thus prevented from entering fully into the kind of life they had led formerly - for example, Twyning, Sparshatt, Patterson and Campbell. But even the healthy sometimes had difficulty in finding employment, and of supporting themselves with the security they had possessed in the islands. Robarts, for example, lived on the edge of poverty by his wits and at many trades first in Tahiti and later in Calcutta and Penang; Cabri tried the stage before becoming a swimming instructor; the Port-au-Prince men who left Tonga with Mariner found it not easy to work their way from China to Britain. Except for the disabled, however, this problem was usually only temporary, and probably not experienced by the majority.

Few first hand accounts express much delight at being back

223. Dening, op. cit., p.159.


225. Dening, op. cit., Chapters 6, 7.


in the bosom of civilization;\textsuperscript{228} on the contrary there is enough evidence to suggest that any such statements would be conventional rather than sincere. This is certainly the case with Vason, in whose book the editor's pious and tendentious conventionalities contrast jarringly with Vason's warmth and enthusiasm in the less rigorously censored parts of his book.\textsuperscript{229} At the superficial level, there is the loss of status of a return to civilization. Even a beachcomber who did not attain great heights in island society was "something special"; after his return to civilization he was no-one, even though he might have enjoyed a temporary notoriety.\textsuperscript{230} This slide from notice might well have caused some pain, but the discomfort (if any) probably had a deeper seat. At the time of his rescue Torrey discovered that to wear clothes again and eat western food did not offer him the joy one might expect from what one has long missed. He not only felt awkward (as one might expect), but, he says, he acted awkwardly as well.\textsuperscript{231} One can readily appreciate his sense of unfamiliarity; but to act awkwardly as well is less easy to understand. Other returned beachcombers mention symptoms which have the appearance of nervous disorders. Slade presents a remarkable contrast between his early life and his post-Wallis Island life. Formerly he was quick witted, bold and self confident; later, people remarked on his nervousness and sleeplessness, and scorned "my mental sufferings".

\textit{From my soul, I had rather go back to those far-off islands, and dwell among the solitudes of those specks in the sea.}

\textsuperscript{228} [Cary], \textit{op. cit.}, pp.71, 73. Twynning, \textit{op. cit.}, p.173.
\textsuperscript{229} [Vason], \textit{op. cit.}, pp.199-201, Cf. p.221, pp.93-106, 108, 112.
\textsuperscript{230} Dening, \textit{op. cit.}, p.15.
\textsuperscript{231} Torrey, \textit{op. cit.}, p.161.
than to be among civilized men, who act like the worst of all cannibals - the cannibals of the human heart!

And elsewhere,

I sometimes feel lost among civilized men. Everything seems so different - so strange - among the crowds of houses, vehicles and signs of commerce, that I am led to sigh . . .232

Patterson did not offer a similarly evocative complaint, but his editor explained that his experiences had affected his nerves in such a way that he was not able to write.233 Andrew Lind, who had been taken from Tahiti by Wilson in the *Duff* in 1797 asked to be put ashore when the *Duff* was passing through the Carolines234 - perhaps because he felt like Slade. On Vason's return voyage from Tonga (having narrowly escaped a violent death), the prospect of returning to civilization depressed him so much that he thought twice of asking Captain Wilson to put him ashore on the first island they came to.235 Two more sources use the word "shame" to describe the feelings of a person confronted again by the civilized: including such a hard-bitten, uncompromising person as William Diaper.236

Some years after his return Vason found himself placed by Providence:

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234. Wilson, *op. cit.*, pp.300-301.

235. [Vason], *op. cit.*, pp.205, 208.

... in a situation of responsibility, trial and exertion.
... The toils of it are great, and often make me sigh for some solitary hut where I might end my days in a tranquil resignation to the will of Heaven.237

The road to this position, for Vason, was that of religion, to which he returned some time after his restoration to European society. His religious re-initiation was apparently long and painful, driven by a powerful sense of guilt,238 which in the light of the above quotation was probably never assuaged. The religious experience was not unique to Vason, and in all cases was probably rooted in the sense of insecurity and mental conflict occasioned by the return to civilization.239

The sense of alienation felt by the returned beachcomber was felt also by George Westbrook. After spending years on small islands with no company but that of islanders he looked forward to being able to become acquainted with white girls in Auckland. He found the experience disillusioning, and described them as pallid, puny, sickly, and disliked their "simpering artificiality".240 After a few years of beachcombing, Diaper tried out the ports of China and India, and found that they could offer neither amusement nor contentment.241 His disillusionment was similar to that of Westbrook's over a generation later, and their response was the same: to return to

237. [Vason], op. cit., p.224.
238. Ibid., p.221.
239. Holden, op. cit., p.119; Patterson, op. cit., Chapter XXV, pp.121ff. Rowland Hassall, 'Correspondence, Vol. 1', p.317, (Ms.). In case it be thought that the piety expressed in these cases was merely conventional, it is worth noting that not all beachcomber narratives contain such references. Nor am I suggesting that all, or even most, returned beachcombers became religious; that some of them did is evidence of the tensions and conflicts which most of them probably experienced.
241. Diaper, op. cit., p.54.
the islands as George Vason wanted to do.

The great majority of beachcombers after their return to civilized life can be presumed to have followed similar forms of employment to that which they had enjoyed before their beachcombing period. To leave their islands at all it was usually necessary to ship as seamen and complete the voyage as one of the crew; but after the initial return voyage, the subsequent careers of beachcombers are not easily traced. As most of them were uneducated sailors with only sea-faring skills, they probably mostly took to the sea again. A surprising number, however, changed their occupations altogether. For example, Melville never sailed again; Vason became a seaman after leaving Tonga, later returned to bricklaying and eventually became Governor of Nottingham Gaol; Mariner became a stock-broker; Lockerby returned to commerce, Robarts found various shore jobs. Of Mariner's companions one became a hairdresser, and another took to agriculture. If this slender evidence means anything, it suggests that insofar as beachcombers were making any sort of protest at all, it was a protest against the seafaring profession (to which some of them did not return) rather than a protest against the structure of western society (to which many of them did return).

The state of mind of the inarticulate is not easily recon-

242. e.g. Aulick, 6 June, 1836, U.S.S.N..


    Im Thurn and Wharton, op. cit., p.xiii.
    Dening, op. cit., Chapters 6 and 7.
structured, and very few beachcombers left any account of their reflections on the pros and cons of the beachcomber life. Of those who did give of their thoughts few expressed any nostalgia for civilized life. Lamont was their chief spokesman, and his complaint goes beyond ordinary homesickness:

Living in peace and plenty 'monarch of all I surveyed', I should have been perfectly content, but for the constant yearning for home. Thoughts of absent friends, of my business, and of my future in the world, carried my mind away in discontent from a lot often envied...

One hard-bitten ex-convict in Fiji spent an unhappy Christmas day comparing the cannibal feasting with the practices he was accustomed to celebrating on the 25th December. Among the literary beachcombers, however, such malcontents were rare. Emery in Rotuma, for example, lived happily and comfortably, having escaped from the worries caused him by his wife whom he had been unable to divorce.

But Diaper was possessed both of greater insights and of greater rhetoric than his fellows, and observed that neither contentment nor amusement could be gained in more civilized places, the ways and alleged virtues of Europeans being in his view 'all a farce, a boast and a lie'. But such expressions of distaste have no philosophical content: they are the expressions of an emotional reaction, and do not pretend to be anything more than Diaper's face-value claim that he did not enjoy the life of civilized places. The most specific criticism of civilization comes not from the tropical

245. Lamont, op. cit., p.306.
246. Turpin, op. cit., § 97-98.
Pacific islands but from New Zealand; and even this criticism is specific only in the superficial sense that individual institutions are chosen for criticism. Again, the basis of the attack is an emotional aversion:

A dull sort of world this now. The very sun does not seem to me to shine as bright as it used . . . everything seems 'flat, stale, and unprofitable'. But those were the times! - the 'good old times' - before Governors were invented, and law, and justice, and all that. When everyone did as he liked . . . when there were no taxes, or duties, or public works, or public to require them. Who cared then whether he owned a coat? . . . Little did I think in those days that I should ever see here towns and villages, banks and insurance offices, prime ministers and bishops; and hear sermons preached, and see men hung, and all the other plagues of civilization . . .

There is no philosophy in these remarks, only a complaint about restrictions on individual freedom, the inconvenience of which the author was not aware until after he had experienced a pre-colonial alternative.

Praise and justification of island life are both more common and more positive, but again are ex post facto and concrete. They are reducible to a preference based on the personal happiness to be found by some. For Vason this was to be found in the pleasures and entertainments of the Tongans; some of the early Hawaiian beachcombers found it in their children; others refer simply to 'good treatment'. But when Boit offered John Young a passage from Hawaii in

250. [Vason], *op. cit.*, p.112.
October, 1795, Young explained that the advantages of living in Hawaii were not only privileges and pleasures, but peace, contentment, cooperation, and the absence of poverty and slavery. Half a century and more later, Diaper frequently remarked on the generous, tolerant nature of the islanders with whom he lived, in contrast to the "artificial, craving, envious, selfish, and greedy life of civilization". Probably no beachcombers had the education or the insight to anticipate island life as a medium in which:

... my dreams of island felicity were to be realized. Here, if anywhere, my youthful fantasies were to find a fulfillment.

But this writer's insights were limited to such introspection: he soon became bored with the "bareness and poverty of savage life"; and it took another, and later, educated tourist to see beyond the boredom and poverty to the harmony and tranquillity of an uneventful, routine existence. Whatever the beachcombers' preferences were, and whether they took them towards civilization or towards island life, there was no cognitive, rational basis to them; no substructure of carefully thought-out ideas, and no intellectual tradition based on the doctrine of the Noble Savage. Those of them who could write sought some other way to explain the attraction to the islands.

Westbrook found that:

Knocking about Auckland palled my restless spirit... the lure of the fringed atolls was in my blood and it drew me back...  

253. Diapea, op. cit., p.82.  
Mariner, (or Martin), with typical nineteenth century optimism, thought that it was mental activity which made all things, including involuntary residence in Tonga, tolerable. Pritchard evaded the issue in the subjective and relativistic slogan "so much for taste and habit". Only Diaper, a beachcomber, and Sterndale, a trader, get close to the real question of why some men were happy to live with the islanders, and (by implication) others were not. And even their remarks are descriptive, not analytical. Both use the same phrase, an 'elasticity of spirits' being responsible, which, according to Sterndale:

... the dweller in the Babel of civilization might be at a loss to comprehend...

Diaper tried to describe the 'elasticity of spirits'. It was what made a man laugh because he was alive; it enabled a man to enjoy

... a fascination in this kind of life, not only in the youthful and green portion of it, but lasting into and through the yellow and sere; and even now that I am verging on the allotted period... of threescore and ten, ... I still have a yearning, even at this age for the sweets of that exhilarating wild, natural life...

Diaper, the reflective, literary beachcomber, still bubbling with enthusiasm for life with his hair white, and few years left to him, is a specimen rarely found in any cultural context. But again, he offers no rationalization (though they can be inferred from his narrative); he offers only exuberance. It was the presence or absence of this feeling which made one a life long beachcomber; but

259. H.B. Sterndale, Memoranda... (Wellington, 1874), p.48.
260. Diapera, op. cit., pp.7-8, 81-82.
one had to try the beachcombing life first, and for reasons which are not implied in these remarks of Diaper's.

There is, then, a range of reactions, and no small amount of inconsistency in the data relating to men's motivations in becoming beachcombers. There was a mixture of involuntary and voluntary motives; they seem to have been temporary, immediate and concrete; and for no obvious, rational reason, some beachcombers became life long island residents, others stayed for as short a time as possible. These variations seem to be independent of patterns involving earlier life experiences.

If the beachcomber phenomenon is to be explained these inconsistencies need to be resolved. To deny them, and fabricate generalizations purporting to cover the range of beachcomber experience, would be to distort the reality as the evidence shows it. To try to cover the variations by numerous generalizations would be to offer no meaningful explanation at all. The inconsistencies can be resolved by recognising them, not as contradictions, but as differing surface facets of a unitary phenomenon. Just as black and white are not contradictory phenomena (one the absence of light, the other its presence), but both evidence of the existence of light (in one case all light rays are absorbed, in the other case they are reflected), so in the case of beachcombers the apparent inconsistencies point to a fundamental reality. Inconsistencies are not alternative realities, they are not contradictory, incompatible or mutually exclusive. This can be seen, for example, in the fact that the life of one beachcomber, William Diaper, exhibits several of the inconsistencies which are apparent for the beachcombers as a whole. He began his beachcombing career involuntarily when he was kidnapped in Samoa.
Not liking it he escaped, and then voluntarily tried it again because he was afraid of his new shipmates. He was violent and compassionate, miserly and dissolute, profane and pious, rebellious and insolent, but co-operative and respectful. He worked for a living at respectable European employments, and was a bum on the beach. He returned to civilized haunts, but died in the islands. He identified with island peoples, praised their qualities, and abused the traits of white folk; yet he held himself to be superior to island peoples by virtue of his being white. Perhaps strangest of all for a dissolute wanderer, he was an inveterate writer. These inconsistencies epitomize the differences to be found among the class of beachcombers and potential beach-combers; and yet they were part of the personality of one man. In such a case 'inconsistencies', or 'contradictions' are the wrong words. The beachcomber phenomenon was a phenomenon of ambivalence; and it was ambivalent because of the character of the culture from which the beachcombers came. This ambivalence is clearly seen in European attitudes to the non-European world during the era of expansion. On the one hand non-Europeans were idealized as un contaminated by the taint of civilization; on the other hand Europe felt repelled and disgusted and saw ample scope for improvement in savage life. In the eighteenth century this aspect of the ambivalence took the form of a contrast between a Romantic back-to-nature movement, which saw the savage as a noble being living in (or not far from) an earthly paradise, and an impulse to Christianize and civilize. The first was a symptom of attraction; the second expresses the revulsion, though disguised as solicitude and loving responsibility. Eighteenth century eroticism showed a marked affinity for the contemporary primitive, whereas in earlier centuries the idealism for the primitive state
of existence had frequently been projected into the distant past.  

The key to this enthusiasm does not lie in the fact that eighteenth century Europe was better acquainted with the primitive through the spate of travel books and plethora of Robinson Crusoe stories; these books are less useful as evidence of primitive life than as evidence of the current European conception of primitive life. This fact was noticed but not fully elaborated by Henri Baudet when he seized on the references to sexual behaviour in eighteenth century literature.

... the improper held an inordinate fascination for the eighteenth century. Sexual licentiousness must have been a factor of extraordinary significance in the whole complex of exoticism and primitivism. One is inclined to believe that the exotic nakedness and sexual freedom reported by so many travelers must from the outset have fascinated a Christian Europe hemmed in by so many strict moral rules.

Baudet's observation appears almost trite because it does in fact contain a profound truth: the fascination of the forbidden. That Europe was fascinated by the apparent (and often fanciful) sexual freedom of non-Europeans is probably not only symptomatic of European attitudes, but symbolizes a pervasive longing. This is the sense in which Mannoni wrote of Robinson Crusoe that Defoe was his own model, in that the story came from his own unconscious; the experiences of Alexander Selkirk were merely incidental. Crusoe "improved" his Man Friday, but as Mannoni also observes, civilized man identifies primitive man with his own unconscious, that is, with the realm of instinctual forces; and thus identifies himself with aspects of primitive life. Hence the fascination with the sexual life of

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261. Cf. the Greek's Golden Age.
primitives. Civilized man in the late eighteenth century was divided between desires to make primitive man like his own (ideal) self, and to revert, himself, to the condition of the primitive. In primitive man, the eighteenth century European saw the embodiment of his own unfulfilled wishes. His view that primitive man lived without the repressions from which he himself suffered was a fantasy; but the fantasy identified primitive life with the period of uninhibited hedonism known in infancy. His interest in the primitive was an attempt to participate vicariously in those long missed pleasures. However much the unconscious might yearn for those pleasures, however, not only was their fulfilment denied, but so was their vicarious enjoyment. Even in fantasy the mechanisms of repression came into operation and insisted to civilized man that primitive man was degraded and damned. The ambivalent attitude to primitive man, therefore was a direct result of the repression of childish desires.

That civilization and the pursuit of pleasure make conflicting demands, was one of the fundamental (though not original) premises of Freud. The eighteenth century interest in primitive sexuality was both symbolic and misleading; symbolic because civilization is founded on the repression of sexuality; misleading because the repressed sexuality is the "polymorphously perverse", infantile sexuality.

264. Ibid., p.21.
265. Cf. Norman O. Brown, *Life Against Death*, (London, 1968), pp.38, 44. See also p.82: 'Psychoanalysis is nothing without the doctrine that Mankind is that species of animal which has the immortal project of recovering its own childhood'.
The eighteenth century cult of the Noble Savage was an intellectual analogue of the unattainable desire to return to childhood. The enthusiasm for primitive society was but one aspect of a much wider fascination with the bucolic and exotic. Whichever form this interest took, it evinced a belief that in less urbanized, less sophisticated, less populous cultures, people were freer, happier, healthier, more sincere and living a life more in tune with that intended by nature. The element of escape was dominant: escape from artificiality and sophistication, from ill-health, dirt and squalor; an escape from art and artifice to purity and simplicity. All these images evoke the idea not only of idealized pre-urban society, but also of childhood within one's own society. The late eighteenth century in developing its fantasies so elaborately, came close to making the unconscious conscious: it developed an enthusiastic cult of the child at the same time as it developed a cult of the savage and even used child/savage imagery interchangeably, as when non-European people were called "children of nature", or lived in "child-like simplicity". It was no accident, for example, that Jean Jacques Rousseau, the author of *Le Contrat Social* and an enthusiast for primitive cultures, was also the author of *Emile* in


269. This is not to say, of course, that conditions of children made any notable progress at this time, any more than the Noble Savage cultists packed up and went into the forests; but people did begin to talk about children in different ways, and some amelioration of traditional European brutal, sadistic child-rearing methods were foreshadowed. See Lloyd DeMause, 'The Evolution of Childhood', in *The History of Childhood Quarterly: The Journal of Psychohistory*, (1974), Vol. 1, No. 4, pp.554, 544; See also Bogna W. Lorence, 'Parents and Children in Eighteenth Century Europe', *History of Childhood Quarterly: The Journal of Psychohistory*, (1974), Vol. 2, No. 1, pp.1-30, passim.
which he advocated child-oriented methods of up-bringing and education.

In espousing a cult of the primitive therefore, eighteenth century Europe was seeking in a thinly disguised but vicarious form, a return to childhood. The cult was, however, of the intelligentsia, of the rich and pampered; and when historians of ideas are describing its development, ascribing a period to it, and relating it to the development of other intellectual phenomena, and social, political and economic changes, they are describing its currency among a tiny minority of the population. Often, but probably not always, the ideas with which the intelligentsia play filter through to the less educated and ill-educated. Such a process is slow: Darwin's ideas on evolution for example were foreshadowed in the eighteenth century; and resistance to his ideas at the popular level was still strong in the early twentieth century. It cannot be assumed therefore that the cult of the primitive was a popular idea in the eighteenth century, or even in the early nineteenth. Indeed, as has been suggested above, the illiterate and ill-educated people of the lower classes were unacquainted with it, but were fearful of or hostile towards primitive peoples. It is not without significance that Defoe's Man Friday was quite a different sort of person to those from whom Crusoe rescued him.

In explaining the beachcomber phenomenon therefore, one can discount any supposed influence of a belief in the myth of the Noble Savage. But those Europeans (including Americans) unacquainted with the myth were subject to the same repressions, anxieties and fantasies as the more sophisticated members of their society, and they too had an unconscious which could respond to some prospect of recapturing their childhood. This prospect was not presented to them until after
their arrival in the Pacific, and upon making a landfall. The contrast between their lives so far and the apparent harmony, contentment and relaxation of the spectacle before them did not simply present itself as an inviting exchange. Something more powerful was required to override the deeply-seated fear and suspicion of primitive peoples, and to overcome the penalties and disadvantages of leaving their present circumstances. This powerful call was an irrational response from the unconscious to what appeared to be a spectacle of childhood felicity, of unlimited gratification, where life and death would become as one, where man could rest content to Be, instead of perennially and restlessly Becoming.  

The principal difficulty with any explanation of why men became beachcombers is that of explaining why so many gave the life up so quickly. An explanation which is applied to one must contain the explanation for the other; two separate explanations deny the unity and homogeneity of the phenomena. Two-thirds of the whalers went ashore because their unconscious fantasies drove them; they returned driven in the same manner. The restless pleasure principle is not remodelled into a Nirvana principle by a change of external circumstances; the repressions of childhood were not lifted simply by changing one's social environment. Nor was life in the Polynesian islands really one of "child like felicity". Contrary to popular belief, "natives" were not children, and the ego, born of betrayal, fled from this new betrayal of the promise of bliss. At the same time, those for whom island pleasures could live up to expectations were driven away by an inability to face the fullness of such pleasures as were offered - for as Brown argues, once the instincts have

been repressed, an ego is created which is not only not strong enough
to face death, it is not strong enough to face life. In the
absence of a reconstruction of an ego in which the dialectic of
life and death is reconstituted into its original unity, no solution
offered by one's circumstances could satisfy. It was this dissatis-
faction, rooted in the repression of infantile, exuberant, polymor-
phously perverse sexuality, which first attracted the beachcombers
to island society, and then repelled them from it.

271. Ibid., pp.155-156. See also Chapter VIII, pp.84-102.
CHAPTER 4

THE BEACHCOMBER IDENTITY

Beachcombers fail to develop a sense of common identity despite some spectacular friendships and some co-operation - beachcombers dispersed by islanders - beachcombers prefer this isolation - their quarrelsomeness - probably caused by personality disturbance occasioned by island experiences - Apollonian and Dionysian egos - beachcomber ambivalence towards and failure to identify with island society - their adaptation and conformity superficial and rational - unconsciously repressed hostility to island cultures - indifference to western society - apparent lack of identification with any groups or cultures - beachcomber restlessness - fatalism - carelessness - exuberance - giving - receiving - attitudes to work - to time - weak sense of guilt - lack of dignity - authority - property - the beachcomber personality the antithesis of the western industrial stereotype - seeking escape from psychological repression and thus escape from historical notice.

In that the perennial pursuit and inevitably repeated loss of childhood was the driving force behind the beachcombers' wanderings they may be thought of as being psychologically regressive. In the eyes of their contemporaries they were historically retrogressive in their apparent preference for primitive society over civilization. Two two concepts - psychological regression and historical retrogression - fit together with a convenient neatness which might be misleading, for although the words imply a harmony of interest with each other, and a similarity of outlook between beachcombers and islanders, the sense of betrayal which most beachcombers experienced suggests that it is vain to look for a common beachcomber identity. 'Historical retrogression', moreover, is no more than a social Darwinist figure of speech, and offers no substantial suggestion of an acquired Polynesian identity for the
beachcombers. The evidence relating to a beachcomber identity or a beachcomber personality is replete with suggestions of divisiveness and personal disharmony which lacks both consistency and integrity unless viewed in terms of the psychoanalytical theory of society.

When a beachcomber or potential beachcomber stepped from his vessel onto an island shore he became an outcast to his home culture and an alien among his hosts. European observers looked on him with scorn and disgust, and the islanders wavered between hostility and indifference. The beachcombers themselves, having no strong attachment to their homelands, lacking a critique of western civilization, and having no ideology in which the Pacific islanders had a place, viewed the world with an insouciance which was modified only by an ambivalence towards their fellow beachcombers. Unlike the experience to be found on the Australian or American frontier, which frontiersmen believed to have made them what they were, a stereotype of the beachcombers appears only in the literature of the non-beachcomber observers. Beachcombers made no attempt to assert their group identity either in their writing or in their behaviour.

Since they were aliens in an environment where there were few of their own kind, where life was uncertain and where elementary comforts could not be taken for granted it could be readily understood had beachcombers sought each others' company and taken advantage of opportunities for companionship and mutual support. It is commonly thought that the sharing of common risks and hardships establishes a bond between people. Although some remarkable friendships did develop, relationships between beachcombers were more characterized by the lack of a common identity and by an extreme
The beachcomber literature contains sagas of extraordinary friendships which persisted despite great difficulties. Such friendships are rare in any human context and few are known from the beachcomber era. The most spectacular and well known are those between John Young and Isaac Davis in Hawaii, and of John Twyning and John Jones in Fiji. Davis and Young's friendship began when Young was marooned and Davis was an invalid from the severe injuries he received when he was captured by the Hawaiians in 1790. Later Kamehameha was able to thwart their attempts to escape merely by keeping them separate when the opportunity to escape arose. Davis died prematurely in 1810 and his children were taken into Young's family as though they were Young's own children. The first fruit of the Jones-Twyning friendship was the construction of two small vessels. The partnership was not diminished in the eyes of either by Twyning's protracted and debilitating illness. Jones saved Twyning's life on this occasion, and again in more dramatic circumstances at considerable risk to his own.

Long lasting and devoted friendships of this kind are rare, and they were atypical among beachcombers. More common was the kind of friendship between Torrey and Noyce in the Marquesas in the 1830's. They were shipmates, were close friends during their two years' residence.


2. Ibid., pp.142-143.


dence in that they co-operated, shared experiences and helped each other in time of stress or difficulty. Yet when an opportunity to escape offered, it was each man for himself. In Tonga, Read and an unnamed friend were mistaken for father and son. Their relationship was one of friendship and mutual support, and they lived up to the Tongans' error; but when the time was ready, they went their separate ways: Read stayed in Tonga; his 'father' left.

Instances of friendship like this can be pointed to in all island groups at all times in the beachcomber era. Their characteristic feature was that they were brought into being by circumstances, and were terminated when circumstances made it appear appropriate to one or all parties. That it was a community of circumstance rather than a community of interest or sense of common identity is further suggested by the relationship between Cary and Whippy in Fiji in the late 1820's and early 1830's. Cary and Whippy had been boyhood friends in Nantucket, and their revived friendship in Fiji was evidently cordial, yet they saw each other infrequently - on at least one occasion a year elapsed between meetings.

Friendship on a more casual level was also common: what might be called an amicable acquaintance, which enabled beachcombers who usually lived apart from each other, to get together when occasion called, such as the availability of a keg of rum or gin.

These occasions require no greater commitment to or interest in each other than an occasional desire for company in circumstances characteristic of their pre-island days. There is little pleasure in drinking a keg of rum by oneself.

Hospitality was practised between beachcombers on other occasions than these, but it should be distinguished from that practised by the contemporaries and counterparts of the beachcombers, the frontiersman of Australia and America. On the continental frontier it was a symptom of a feeling of unity, and it promoted a sense of belonging to a group which was developing unique and distinguishing characteristics. Hospitality as such between beachcombers was little commented on until late in the beachcomber era. Diaper, visiting Rewa in Fiji in about 1844, at a time when the beachcomber phase was merging into the beach-community phase, described what he regarded as the norm:

Some of those seeing immediately left their work to conduct me into their house, and prepare me something to eat, it being customary with the Europeans that are naturalized, as it were, through their long abode in the Feejees to be hospitable, a practice which they have adopted through the example of these savages.

In other words, hospitality was offered not because of a shared beachcomber identity, but because of an acquired Fijian identity. The same should be said, for example, of Robarts' offering food and other civilities to his bitter enemy Cabri in the Marquesas, and probably also


to Robarts' being offered hospitality in Tahiti after fleeing from Nukuhiva.  

Mundane acts of helpfulness and co-operation - of which there were a great many - cannot be explained so simply. Some of these acts of mutual aid were processes of major diplomacy and risk, such as the ransoming of Magoun in Fiji by Whippy and his companions at Levuka. Also in Fiji and at about the same time (1831), but on the other side of Vanua Levu, the Glide castaways were a well united group, living together, co-operating in sustaining and entertaining themselves, and in reciprocating Fijian favours. The Glide castaways, however, were resident for only a few weeks, and were endeavouring to arrange their rescue. Their closeness would inevitably have evaporated had the period of residence been longer - perhaps they would have become absorbed in an oscillating process of fragmentation and co-operation such as happened to the Bounty's men in Tahiti in 1789-1791. Frequently, co-operation was defined simply and totally in terms of transient self-interest which fluctuated according to circumstances and changing perceptions of self-interest. This was certainly the case on Tongareva (Penrhyn) between Lamont and his companions - first as they built a vessel in which to escape from the

12. Ibid., pp.164-168.

13. Magoun was the pawn in considerations of power in Fijian politics, and Whippy merely an instrument. See E.J. Turpin, 'Extracts from Diary and Narratives', (Ms.), §§ 23-24, and see below Chapter 6, pp.271, 275.


Atoll, and second as they dabbled in local politics. 16

The imperative of survival was perhaps the most frequent stimulus to mutual aid on the part of beachcombers and potential beachcombers, 17 and yet there were a number of interesting cases which cannot be easily explained by positing an ulterior motive. Among these may be included Robarts' generous assistance to Walker on Nukuhiva in 1805. Robarts by a stratagem rescued Walker from a tribe with whom he was unhappy and unsafe, and enabled him to get a passage on the next ship which called. 18 Similar acts of personal risk and inconvenience for the benefit of one's fellows occurred among the Port-au-Prince men in Tonga, in 1810 when Captain Fisk in the Favorite was able to rescue them. One of the castaways, Robert Brown, risked his life and his chances of rescue in attempting to bring other castaways to the Favorite; and Mariner also tried to effect the rescue of as many as possible. 19 These actions by Robarts, Robert Brown, and Mariner, appear on the evidence available, to be nothing other than actions of sympathy or charity. According to Robarts, his mercy errand was already being organized when war made it expedient that Walker's musket be prevented from being of use to the enemy of an ally of Robarts' people. There is only Robarts' word for this. In the case of Brown and Mariner, all of their fellow


17. e.g. Twynning, op. cit., pp.134-136; Samuel Patterson, Narrative of the Adventures ..., (Palmer, 1817), pp.84-85, 87; R.L. Browning, 'Notes on the South Sea Islands', (Ms.), p.50.


beachcombers about whom they were concerned were former shipmates of the *Port-au-Prince*. This fact perhaps gave them a common sympathy; but what opportunity there was for close friendship between the beachcombers during their time in Tonga is not clear from Martin's account.

The common inference which emerges from a consideration of the relationships between beachcombers - even from relationships of friendship and charity - is that they did not so act because of a common beachcomber feeling. They acted from self-interest, from compassion, or because they had been comrades, but not because there was any common feeling which was part of the essence of being a beachcomber. There appears to be no firm evidence that a beachcomber ever looked at himself as being one of a type of similar men whose similarity was their relatively isolated residence in a Polynesian community, of ever having a type-concept by reference to which he identified himself.

The concept of a beachcomber as recent historiography has defined it incorporates the idea of a European living in isolation from his fellow Europeans, at least to the extent of having better than sporadic contact with no more than perhaps two or three of them. Separation, therefore, and not co-operation was one of the hallmarks of beachcombing. This isolation was partly enforced by the circumstances of living in island communities. For considerations of resource allocation, prestige or politics, castaways and deserters and the like were separated by their hosts into different households, different villages, and over different islands. This dispersal seems to have been universal, and was usually arranged on the wishes of the Islanders, not the Europeans: Torrey in the Marquesas describes his
great anxiety at being compulsorily separated;\textsuperscript{20} and so did Lay in the Marshall Islands in 1824.\textsuperscript{21} At least as often however, although the initiative was still taken by the islanders, there is no indication that the beachcombers were unhappy with the arrangement.\textsuperscript{22} Indeed, on other evidence it seems likely that the beachcombers themselves preferred it that way. Twyning indicates a strong element of volition in the dispersal of beachcombers:

\ldots had we been wise enough to have remained united amongst ourselves, we might have been tolerably comfortable. But instead of this we attached ourselves to different petty chiefs, got jealous of each other, which often produced quarrels that ended in blows.\textsuperscript{23}

From the experience of other beachcombers it seems that this fragmentation came about less from a drifting disposition than from a positive aversion to living in close relationships with each other. The Harriet castaways on Wallis Island, for instance, learned of a French beachcomber there who moved to a more distant place on their arrival in order that he might have nothing to do with them.\textsuperscript{24} Robarts' relationship with Cabri on Nukuheiva was of the same order: deliberate avoidance.\textsuperscript{25} Quarrelsomeness, mutual jealousy and mistrust were so common – or at least so widely and consistently

\begin{itemize}
  \item 20. Torrey, \textit{op. cit.}, pp.122-123.
  \item James Wilson, \textit{A Missionary Voyage ...}, (London, 1799), p.xxxv.
  \item Thomas Nightingale, \textit{Oceanic Sketches}, (London, 1835), pp.74-75.
  \item 23. Twyning, \textit{op. cit.}, pp.72-73.
  \item 24. Sparshatt, \textit{op. cit.}, p.16.
\end{itemize}
reported - in beachcombers' relationships with each other, that one must infer that the inability to get on with each other was one of the essential characteristics of beachcombers. Even in situations of hospitality between beachcombers, there was a latent hostility which was incompletely suppressed. All the major beachcomber centres offer evidence of fragmentation - except Tonga, where the evidence of beachcomber activity is slender. Even in Hawaii where Kamehameha kept very firm control of the resident white-men, efforts at the end of the beachcomber era to expel whites were attributed to quarrels between them; while an undated document in the Archives of Hawaii arguing for annexation to the United States of America makes a claim that:

Ever since white people have been at the Islands, there has been constant friction between the different nationalities.

On a less than universal scale, but still very frequently, the quarrelsomeness bubbled over into violence and murder. Nauru, Rotuma, and Fiji during its first beachcomber era were especially prone. Savage's contemporaries largely killed each other off until only Paddy Connor remained; in the 1830's and later Rotuma had an evil reputation which lasted longer than the quarrelling and murdering. Nauru, outside the culture area of Polynesia, became the

26. e.g. Dening, op. cit., pp.167-169, 173.
27. Maria Loomis, 'Journal, 1819-1824', (Ts.), p.49.
28. Hawaii, F.O. & Ex., 'Undated Documents', Item 78, (Ms.).
paradigm for the violence which beachcombers committed on each other. There, it was not only extreme, but was sustained for several beach-comber-generations. Murder and the fear of murder were being reported between the late 1830's and the early 1850's; according to one source, Nauru simply was not big enough for more than three or four beach-combers. 31 Samoa in the 1830's, though not especially turbulent, also witnessed the spectacle of beachcombers killing each other off for no discernable reason which one normally associates with murder. 32 There is no indication of affairs going to this extreme in Tahiti or Hawaii, except perhaps in the earliest years. 33 But as if to redress the balance, the Marquesan beachcombers were said to be so violent that they always went armed, and that strangers were unsafe among them. 34

Quarrelsomeness and violence appear therefore to be more a part of the essential attributes of beachcombers than the ability to live together peacefully. Even the well regulated settlement dominated by Whippy in Fiji had its quarrels. 35 People living to-


gether usually quarrel at some stage, but for an abnormally large number of beachcombers, quarrels seemed endemic, and frequently ended in violence and death. Adversity, common experiences and shared risks and anxieties instead of drawing them together to be better able to cope with their situation seems to have driven them to self - or mutual - destruction, occasionally on an orgiastic scale. There seems no reason to conclude that the beachcomber selection process singled out the psychopathic, or the unduly quarrelsome, although in some cases this is known to have been the case - for example, that of Brown, put ashore from the Mercury in Tahiti in 1789, and Brown's is not an isolated case. On the whole, however, unless sailors in the period roughly 1780-1840 can be shown to have been a particularly and notoriously criminal class then another explanation must be found for the behaviour of the beachcombers towards each other. There are two reasons for this claim. First, the beachcombers had to live on good terms with the islanders if they wanted to survive; it was violence against each other which killed them off, not against their hosts. Second, the process of selection of potential beachcombers was a random one, and the further process of determining which of them left the islands after a short time and which stayed for longer, also possessed a very strong accidental element.

The alternative explanation is that the process of becoming and being a beachcomber itself engendered the tendency to quarrel and fight with one's fellow-beachcombers. General disorientation is un-

38. See Chapter 3 above, pp.133-135.
likely to be the explanation here because if it were one would expect the quarrelsomeness to pass as they became accustomed to their new circumstances. In the absence of any immediate rational explanation it may be inferred that living in the islands brought about a personality disruption which in a large number of cases was not resolved: that is, instead of resulting in a re-integration of the personality, it brought about a partial disintegration. Some degree of disintegration of the personality could be expected from the stresses of culture-shock or of transculturation. \(^{39}\) In this context the case of George Vason is important. He was able to cope with the necessary adjustments posed by Tongan life (i.e. achieved a re-integration of the ego) but was only partially successful in making the next adjustment to the way of life of the English evangelicals - thereby showing that there were strict limits to the flexibility of personality in coping with successive changes. In the case of violent, apparently maladaptive beachcombers successful adaptation to island culture was possible, at least to the extent of not coming into direct confrontation with island cultures. Even this degree of adaptation is indicative of partial reintegration of the personality.

In looking for the dynamics of personality most likely to be involved in these processes the most striking feature is the contrast between the repression, restraint and discipline on board ship, and the apparent licence of island life. The abolition of repression - the dream of radical political philosophers, and especially of the so-called 'sexual radicals' since Freud - has rarely been achieved even in theory. Freud described and explained the feelings of frustration and unhappiness which seem to be characteristic of civilized

\(^{39}\) As suggested in Chapter 3, pp.135-139.
life, but could see no solution. Marcuse offered a hypothesis which at least postulated the possibility of a society not based on repression. Many beachcombers probably thought - at least initially - that they had found a society not based on repression.

Marcuse in his optimism did not address himself to the problem of whether, or how, an individual can cope with the lifting of repression after living with it for a life time. His contemporary, and an equally influential 'sexual radical', Norman Brown argued that the abolition of repression was chimerical, because it was self-imposed and rooted in the human biological datum. Nevertheless he constructed an image of what life without repression might be like, and described it as playful: narcissistic and erotically exuberant. But for those who seek escape from an existing condition of repression as the beachcombers did - or to put it in Brown's imagery - those who seek to abolish the Apollonian ego and replace it with a Dionysian ego mix for themselves a volatile witch's brew. The life of a sailor was fundamentally Apollonian: disciplined, controlled, ordered, regulated, abstemious; that of the beachcomber-ideal was Dionysian: exuberant, ecstatic, unrestrained. Yet the beachcombers could not wholly jettison the Apollonian ego - even if it were theoretically possible - for life with the Polynesians also


43. Ibid., p.269.
demanded restraint, control, obedience, co-operation.

The quest for Dionysian experience without constructing a Dionysian ego results in a "horrible mixture of sensuality and cruelty" (Brown quoting Nietzsche) an ambivalent mixture of the instincts of Life and Death. Brown's hypothesizing thus ends in an apt description of the behaviour of the beachcombers towards each other: sensuality, cruelty, ambivalence. The only alternative to the witch's brew, he says, is psychoanalytical consciousness. The beachcombers manifestly did not have the latter; the former was at least known; the implication is, therefore, that the beachcombers could not live together because of the results of partial personality disintegration; nor would they be able to until they ceased to seek the impossible in island society: the abolition of repression, the recovery of childhood.

The suggestion that beachcombers could not relate to each other because they were unconsciously seeking the unattainable in island society also helps to account for the failure of the beachcombers to identify themselves with their island hosts. The remarks which they made about island society reveal an ambivalence which denies thorough assimilation and identification. Diaper, for example, showed such a marked lack of sympathy for the Fijians as to deliberately violate and thus discredit a variety of cherished and reverential practices. But at the same time he was sufficiently sympathetic or curious to consult the Reverend John Hunt about Fijian religion.

44. Ibid., pp.157-158.
45. Ibid., p.159.
When Hunt dismissed it all as the work of the Devil Diaper admitted that he himself was uncertain. On occasions, he comes close to expressing contempt and loathing for the Fijians:

You can't wash the Ethiopian white! ... these are some of the gentlemen which some missionaries crack up as saints.

The brutality which Diaper suffered and which evoked these remarks was, by local criteria, thoroughly deserved, but was less than a Fijian committing the same offences would have received. Later, describing his flight from Cakobau's ire, Diaper shows a shrewd understanding of Cakobau's position and thereby implies a fair degree of sympathetic insight, for he concludes that the greater fault was his.

Herman Melville, whose own experience as a beachcomber was very brief, but who was well acquainted with other men who tried it, describes a variety of personal reactions to living in island society: fear and distrust initially, but later a dynamic mixture of admiration, sentimental patronizing, revulsion, contempt and hostility.

To make out a case for the identification of beachcombers with island society would be relatively easy, as every beachcomber who survived in uncertain situations must have been able to recognise an identity of interest with his hosts. There is an enormous difference, however, between the "when in Rome . . ." attitude of Diaper

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and Melville\textsuperscript{51} and the degree of sympathy which Vason developed for island life.\textsuperscript{52} On close examination the Vasons of the beachcomber era were extremely rare, as the case of Lamont shows. To an external observer, Lamont would have appeared to be well integrated into island society. His own introspective account demonstrates otherwise.

Lamont was wrecked on Tongareva (or Penrhyn Island) in 1853. His early response to his situation showed respect for local sensitivities,\textsuperscript{53} but at the same time he was arrogant and condescending in his relationships with the inhabitants,\textsuperscript{54} and was suspicious of and hostile towards them when they showed him hospitality.\textsuperscript{55} As time passed, he adapted himself to his situation remarkably well, and showed many signs of successful integration: adoption by various families, marriage, participation in ceremonies, and the making of close friendships with the islanders.\textsuperscript{56} That these signs of identification were only apparent, however, is revealed when Lamont points out that certain external indications of integration or identification - such as observing tabu, and joining marauding parties - and which would have been seen as such by an outside observer, were merely obligations incurred by adoption, protection and support. At the

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{51} \textit{Ibid.}, p.261; Diapea, \textit{op. cit.}, p.172. \\
\item \textsuperscript{52} [George Vason], \textit{An Authentic Narrative . . .}, (London, 1810), pp.93-106, 111, 154. \\
\item \textsuperscript{53} E.H. Lamont, \textit{Wild Life Among the Pacific Islands}, (London, 1867), p.112. \\
\item \textsuperscript{54} \textit{Ibid.}, pp.112-113, 115. \\
\item \textsuperscript{55} \textit{Ibid.}, p.129. \\
\item \textsuperscript{56} e.g. \textit{Ibid.}, pp.180, 183, 296.
\end{itemize}
same time as he tolerated and participated in religious ceremonial he could plan the evangelization of the people, and could dismiss their beliefs as superstition with the patronizing remark that:

We were working off their prejudices by degrees, and it was policy to yield to them in trifling matters.

Towards the end of his residence on Tongareva Lamont recalled having planned to bring about a new, white-dominated political order on the atoll, and at the same time hoped for rescue from there as passionately as he had on his arrival.

Lamont's introspection is almost unique among beachcomber writings; in its detail and relative sophistication his book stands alone. Perhaps more clearly than any other he shows the ambivalence of the feelings of beachcombers towards island society. Identification with island society was present, but it was neither exclusive nor profound, but narrowly superficial and derived from universal needs for sustenance, companionship and activity. The resentment which clearly underlay some of the acts of apparent conformity, and the overt hostility and acknowledged desire to escape were not contradictions of the feeling of identity with island society, but a very realistic response to a situation which was infinitely frustrating. Expectations of life in island society, absorbed as part of the European cultural background were as far removed from reality as they were an irrational formulation for an idyll. Owing to the

57. Ibid., p.162.
58. Ibid., p.262.
59. Ibid., pp.299-300.
60. Ibid., p.306.
strength of this irrational quest, it could not be ignored or abolished, and consequently most beachcombers could not achieve other than a superficial adaptation to island society. For every admirable trait which they found, they discovered another which struck them as offensive. The boredom which Lamont fought with, and which many other beachcombers experienced was the result of a diffusion of the effects of the conflict of attraction and repulsion. In this disguised form the hostility towards one's circumstances and the frustration of the island promise was neutralized, thus enabling important concessions to the reality of the situation: concessions which took the form of a superficial sympathy and identification with island life. William Singleton, the Port-au-Prince survivor who lived the rest of his life in Tonga, and died in 1832 after a residence of twenty-five years and six months is as good an example of identification with his Polynesian hosts as one is likely to find. Aptly, his dying words offer the key to the relationship between a beachcomber and his adopted society: his last words were Tongan, but their meaning was European. They were, "I believe firmly in Christ".61

Of their attitudes towards western society the beachcombers left little direct evidence. As it was argued in Chapter 3 there was no beachcomber ideology, and no considered assessment of western culture. In the refusal of beachcombers to accept a passage back to Europe or America one can infer the failure of a beachcomber to identify strongly with his original home society.62 In some cases

the inference seems valid, for example Hagerstein reportedly preferred eating with Tahitians than with Europeans. But at the same time, although Young and Davis in Hawaii refused repatriation on the grounds that they could not be as happy nor secure in England as they could be in Hawaii, they gave strong indications of their continued attachment to, and identification with England, and indeed, with western society generally.

If no firm attitude can be inferred from the refusal of some beachcombers to return to Western Society, then similarly nothing concrete is implied by the action of beachcombers who made a practice of visiting ships which called. Such visits were made probably for social intercourse as much as for trade, or to interpret, or to gain status in the eyes of the islanders, and imply nothing about the moral or psychological support which the beachcomber might have drawn from such contact.

That some beachcombers did continue to identify themselves by reference to their place in European society, or by reference to their relationship with European visitors is beyond question. Robarts and Whippy are the most quotable examples, but there were many others.

63. There is another possible explanation here: Wilson says that Hagerstein claimed that he only did so because Tahitian custom obliged him to. Wilson did not believe this reason. Wilson, op. cit., p.197.


65. Ibid., I, p.65.


67. e.g. Lamont, op. cit., p.41.

who shared this characteristic to a greater or lesser degree. It seems likely, however, that most of the more typical beachcombers simply turned their backs on the west, notwithstanding their failure to identify with island society. To some extent they became a-cultural, in that they affiliated themselves closely with no society. Diaper was one such, and his strictures about European society probably had wide currency. He blamed the conventionality, the hypocrisy, the arrogance and the selfishness of Europeans, but was careful not to cut himself off from them entirely.69

In an attempt to define the beachcomber identity, therefore, one is struck most by the lack of any clear identification with island society, with European (and American) society, or with themselves as a separate sub-culture. Rather, the beachcombers seem in this important aspect to be as pragmatic and as nondescript as they were in all other aspects of their history. When Sterndale observed of them that they had burst all bonds of habit70 he was probably closer to the truth than he realized, for when they had done so they failed to form new connections. This suggests that the beachcombers were people of an independent outlook, and a lack of emotional dependence. That this characteristic should have been one of the attributes which selected people for the beachcombing life is unlikely for reasons which have been discussed in another context.71 The alternative explanation is that the beachcomber experience itself fostered the development of

70. H.B. Sterndale, 'Memoranda . . .', (Wellington, 1874), p.47.
71. i.e. randomness of selection, the elements of chance in survival, the motives for desertion, the high turnover among crews etc. See above, pp.164-165, and Chapter 3.
what might be called a tough-mindedness which served as a protection against disappointment, betrayal, frustration, and insecurity in its many forms.

As an indication of the development of what might be called a beachcomber personality two things are particularly noticeable. The first is the development of a capacity for enjoying the mundane, for extracting pleasure from trivial circumstances. The second is the freedom from many of the concerns of western man: concerns which revolve around the concepts of time, giving, receiving, work, companionship, the ownership of property, and the future. In these concerns, and others, the beginnings of a pattern can be discerned. The pattern is not one of descriptive truth, but one of possibility or even fantasy. A description of all, or most, or even of the average beachcomber is impossible to give, but a hazy sketch of the more dominant beachcombers, or of what might be called the typical beachcomber is possible. This composite beachcomber image - for that is all such a portrait can be - is in some respects a caricature of western industrial Man. In other respects the picture is a negation of industrial Man. The resulting ambivalence between the two images was probably true of every beachcomber, just as it is true of every other product of western society. For each individual, however, the proportions of the mixture varied; but it seems that among beachcombers there was a noticeably high incidence of deviance from the western norm. Whether this was because most beachcombers came from non-urban backgrounds in Europe and America, or because of years of monotonous, dreary ship-board life, or because of experiences as beachcombers, probably cannot be answered with certainty, nor is it as important as the fact of contrast itself.
One of the characteristics most commonly noticed in beach-combers by their contemporaries was their restlessness: an inability or reluctance to spend much time in any one place or at any one activity. Whether it was a questing after novelty or excitement is not evident, but it was probably associated with the adoption first of a seafaring life, and later of the beachcombing life. Diaper described it simply, as something which could not be further analysed:

You know, Sir, no matter how good the chief was we could not always stop in one place, and after a while the desire for change was simply irresistible.72

Diaper's words imply that his experience was a common one, and certainly, many beachcombers who are known as individuals shared this trait - Mariner, Patterson, Torrey, and Brown (of Tahiti)73 - along with the anonymous.74 It is difficult to dissociate this restlessness with a careless unconcern or recklessness, which Diaper displayed in abundance, and to which Cary, Melville and Erskine all drew attention.75 To the Tongans, it was so common among beachcombers that they thought it was an invariable characteristic of Europeans.76

Sterndale wrote of beachcomber types that they were "a sort of natural philosophers".77 If by this he meant that they possessed

72. [Rev. George Brown], 'Old Hands and Old Times', (Ms.), p.25.
76. Martin, op. cit., I, p.220.
77. Sterndale, loc. cit., p.47.
a fatalistic acceptance of whatever happened to come their way, his
observation was apt. There seems no other way of describing a man
like Ross, who lived in the Marquesas for some years during its
sandalwood era. He was later Dillon's chief mate on the Calder.
Bayly, a young officer on the same vessel, described him as quiet
and unassuming, and whose principal ambition was to get through life
with as little difficulty as possible. To this man Dillon's ragings
had no effect. To be imperturbable in the face of Dillon was to be
a standard of measurement on one's own.\textsuperscript{78} As a sailor, it made
Ross unique, but other beachcombers accepted the hazards and abuses
of their way of life with as little struggle, and as much disregard.\textsuperscript{79}
But equally noticeable are those cases of beachcombers who seemed
never to accept their fate, who were always striving to manufacture
an alternative for themselves. Such men were those whose assimila-
tion to the islanders was the most superficial, like Robarts, Lamont,
and Lockerby.\textsuperscript{80}

The fatalistic beachcombers were better able to accept the
good, as well as the bad, than were the resisters like Robarts.
Robarts and Lamont had limited appetites for pleasure; the fatalists
had an exuberant approach to life, they exulted in what they had
while it was available. Diaper\textsuperscript{81} - again the archetype - expressed


\textsuperscript{79.} e.g. Twyning, \textit{op. cit.}, pp.52, 121-122, 134-138, 153. Mortimer,
\textit{op. cit.}, p.34.

\textsuperscript{80.} Dening, \textit{op. cit.}, p.120; G.H. von Langsdorff, \textit{Voyages and
Travels . . .}, (London, 1813), pp.121-122; Lamont, \textit{op. cit.},
pp.339-343; Sir Everard Im Thurn and L.C. Wharton, \textit{The Journal

\textsuperscript{81.} Diaper was a fatalist. He sometimes strove to change his circum-
stances but did so with cunning and circumspection; he never
fretted over the unlikely or remote the way Robarts did.
this in a number of evocative passages, such as when he describes himself as running round the world for sport. He was:

... like an Irish shipmate of mine on board a tyrannical Yankee whaler, when the skin and grief 'Old Man' asked him 'what he was grinning at', conceiving in the smallness of his pinched soul, that he had no business to look pleasant, but Pat told him that he was laughing because he was alive!

It was this unconcerned approach to life which the Russian naturalist Chamisso tried to describe when he called the Hawaiians and those who lived with them childlike; and which perhaps also embraced David Whippy when he was described as being of a playful disposition.

Perhaps as another aspect of the same sort of personality, rather than a contrast to it, was the peacefulness, the quietness which some observers noticed in beachcombers. Ross, mentioned above, is a case in point; so is Mariner. A remark by Sterndale suggests the coincidence of exuberance and peace:

There is a sort of charm about this kind of occupation which the dwellers in the Babel of civilization might be at a loss to comprehend - an elasticity of spirits and entire exemption from any form of mental anxiety.

With freedom from mental anxiety went freedom from various forms of compulsive behaviour - like giving, for example. Notwithstanding

82. Diapea, op. cit., p.7.

83. Ibid., p.8.


85. Correspondence relative to David Whippy, Letter, 28 December, 186 - , p.3, (Ms.).


Sterndale's statement that beachcombers and others who lived among the islanders were of necessity hospitable and generous, they were impelled by no conviction that giving was the road to inner peace. Diaper, early in his career, said he delighted in doing small technical jobs for his hosts; Robarts, consistently an exception, enjoyed being able to give. Diaper early gave up the practice of gratuitously giving either goods or services, and at one stage at least seems to have recognized that such giving had an unconscious motivation: when he was prospering as a trader in Vava'u he frequently threw handfuls of money away

. . . in a violent passion, scattering it in all directions, and often never recovering it again, cursing it with that degree of exasperation that any one perceiving me, would have pronounced me stark, staring, raving mad, and I believe I was, at that time . . . .

The counterpart of giving - receiving - was something else over which beachcombers experienced no anxiety. Robarts is again an exception: he always felt uncomfortable about receiving a gift if he did not feel that he had earned it, just as it rankled with him if he received nothing when he thought he had deserved a gift. Most other beachcombers felt no anxiety about receiving charity; on the contrary, they did not even perceive it as charity but merely a right they had to whatever was available. It would be misleading

to dismiss this trait as mere uncouthness or selfishness. It was exactly this sort of behaviour in the islanders which contemporaries branded as 'ingratitude'. As Mannoni points out, this sort of behaviour - and the European reaction - is culturally defined and is the expression of a particular personality type which most beach-combers possibly shared with their hosts, and which is characteristic of living in a non-competitive social environment which fosters a sense of security rather than a sense of independence and performance.

Giving and receiving are linked to work because they refer to exchange of the products of work. By this standard too the beach-combers hint that their personalities rather than their circumstances freed them. Work to many, is an ambivalent thing: it is associated with irksome drudgery, with unrelenting discipline; most profess to hate it, but few sincerely want to give it up. Some beachcombers were compulsive workers, like William Davis in Hawaii, or the boat building beachcombers like Twyning, and Morrison. Among other "compulsive" workers were Diaper (during his self-styled "madness" period), Vason, Lamont and Robarts. More common, however, was the disinclination to do more work than was necessary - such as Brown in Tahiti whose addiction to work was early cured, or the majority of


97. Mortimer, op. cit., p.35; Cf. Morrison, op. cit., p.79.
the Hawaiian beachcombers whom visitors distinguished from the more respectable. The criterion of work discriminates beachcombers from other men less clearly than do other characteristics, because even the least active needed to provide something; but the sort of beachcomber like Davis, or a man like Slade who was half-beachcomber, half-trader, for whom work and productivity was an obsession, was comparatively rare.

More distinctive than their attitude to work was their attitude to time. They exhibited a lack of awareness of time which cannot be explained merely by pointing to the losing track of time which inevitably happens when one cannot measure - such as was the case with Danford, who could not tell Seemann whether he had been sixteen, eighteen or twenty years in Fiji - for some beachcombers kept an accurate record of time with no instruments: Patterson tied knots in lengths of grass, Mariner notched trees so carefully that he was only one day in error after four years; and Twynning felt that it mattered that a certain event took place at one o'clock, though it is unimportant in his narrative. Other beachcombers, however, possessed a time sense which was so unrealistic that it cannot be explained merely in terms of the absence of a calendar. Robarts refers to a three year famine which appears from his narrative


100. Seemann, *op. cit.*, p.100.


to have lasted only several months. Elsewhere he claims having lived with "his tribe" for ten years. 103 In fact he lived in the Marquesas only seven years, and with "his tribe" for probably no more than five. Again, he speaks of a lapse of "several years" in a context which implies a very much shorter period. 104 Similarly Diaper is quoted as describing events in his life of sixteen years before in terms which imply the very recent past. 105 More definite than these hints of an unawareness of time is Erskine's description of the re-union of two beachcombers, former shipmates, after an eighteen years separation.

Having greeted each other,

... they seemed to have no incidents of interest to relate or recall, [sic], and might have been supposed to have lived together ever since. The want of curiosity about passing events, and indifference to the past and future, seem to be the necessary conditions of the adoption of a half-civilised style of life by Europeans, of whom Read was, for the class to which he belonged, a very good specimen. 106

Time was meaningless; but not because there was no way of measuring it. It passed unmeasured and uncounted because it had no meaning.

Consequently, anticipation of the future was absent from the concerns of beachcombers, except for those who, like Twynning and Lamont, clung to their European identity. 107

103. Ibid., p.113.

104. Ibid., p.157.

105. [Brown], op. cit., p.24. According to Brown, Diaper when relating his experiences in the Solomons used the words, "The beggars scoffed (i.e. ate) a priest whilst I was there. They seem to have quite a fancy for priests, for that's the third they have scoffed". The event probably happened in 1847; the conversation took place in 1863. H.M. Laracy, 'Catholic Missions in the Solomon Islands, 1845-1966', (Ph.D Thesis, A.N.U., 1969), pp.36-37.

106. Erskine, op. cit., p.146.

107. e.g. Lamont, op. cit., p.306.
A distinction is sometimes drawn between cultures which use guilt as a means of social control, and those which use shame. The difference is that sanctions in a "shame" culture are external; in a "guilt" culture they are internalized with the conscience as the monitor of behaviour. In a "shame culture" public opinion is the individual's conscience. The beachcombers - as a type - were apparently "shame" people. The early Hawaiian beachcombers dressed in European clothes when ships visited; the rest of the time they dressed like Hawaiians. It was obviously not expedient for them to dress like Europeans all the time; but similarly, there was no need to become "respectable" when ships arrived. Patterson in Fiji made no objection to the confiscation of his clothes, "for all around me were in the same condition".

Dignity and the veneer of respectability troubled most beachcombers very little during the prime of their beachcomber days. Older men, and short-term beachcombers were more affected by it. Lamont, for instance, was worried about his dignity in the eyes of the islanders; Bays floundered in an orgy of religious fundamentalism; and the Levuka beachcombers imposed respectability upon themselves as soon as their numbers became large enough for them to think of themselves as a community, while Whippy, its

109. Patterson, op. cit., p.83.
110. Lamont, op. cit., p.132.
111. Peter Bays, *A Narrative of the Wreck of the Minerva . . .* (Cambridge, 1831), pp.6, 9, 32-33.
leader, grew from a young man of playful disposition into a stern New 
England *paterfamilias*. Marin, as he grew older, became a voyeur 
who disguised his prurience with a religious veneer. The anxiety, 
sense of insecurity, and need for various comforts ranging from 
religion to self-deception shown by some beachcombers were strongly 
contrasted with their independence and fecklessness in other circum-
stances. These changes which reverse the openness and sense of freedom exhibited by many beachcombers suggest a return to a more repress-
ive frame of mind, more characteristic of the sort of life which the 
beachcombers had left behind them. Perhaps this change was due to 
changing circumstances; more often it seems to be associated with 
growing older, as if the personality pattern which had been altered 
by becoming a beachcomber eventually reasserted itself.

In two other characteristics beachcombers differed from the 
western norm. The first was their intolerance of authority; the last, 
their indifference to property and its accumulation. Diaper is again 
the paradigm of disrespectfulness for authority, whatever form it

113. Field notes 9, January, 1974. See also his remorse in unidentified letter, 28 December, 186-, in Whippy Letters, (Ms.).


115. e.g. W.W. Gill, *Jottings from the Pacific*, (London, 1885), p.34.

116. The psychoanalytically inclined will recognise in the foregoing a description of people unusually lacking in neurotic symptoms as they are known in the west. The reversionary changes in later life can be identified as the resurgence of neurotic symptoms known as the return of the repressed. Such a development underlines the fact that escape to island life offered some escape from the anxieties of western life, but offered no cure. A fundamental tenet of psychoanalysis is that there can be no cure without understanding.
took; Torrey's defiance of authority was probably even more uncompromising. Even Robarts who seemed to be in quest of an authority figure, and who enjoyed the ego-boost of exercising authority, was not over-awed by it when it suited him to be defiant.

The fatalistic approach to life seems to be the link between such attributes as indifference to authority and carelessness of property. The latter characteristic is, indeed, more widely documented and easily observed than most others. Few beachcombers acquired much property. Marin was said to be worth $30,000 or $40,000 in his old age; Whippy by the time he was middle-aged began to show an interest in being a man of substance, and died a man of property. But such accumulation was not typical. Diaper accumulated wealth, but never kept it for long. Vason gave his property away when he left the L.M.S. in 1797, and thereafter interested himself only in Tongan forms of wealth. The ownership of possessions had ceased to have meaning or value to him.

121. Whippy's letter of resignation as Vice Commercial Agent, 22 August, 1856. See also letter from Whippy to Williams, 14 April, 1858, U.S.C.D., Fiji.
122. For the extent of David Whippy's property, including Whippy's will, see Fiji Land Claims Commission, R.588, 19 November, 1878.
123. Diapea, op. cit., p.236.
124. [Vason], op. cit., pp.85-86.
Possessions for most beachcombers were a means to an end: they were important because they passed through their hands, not because they could be hoarded. Such an attitude was essential to one's well-being in island society; but carelessness of other things seems likely to have been more deeply rooted in the beachcomber personality.

These many, disparate, but not arbitrarily selected traits present an incomplete, and less than coherent portrait of the 'typical' beachcomber. Such a portrait is possible only at the expense of accuracy because of the numbers of beachcombers, their different circumstances, and the incompleteness of the evidence. The traits chosen for description, however, are those which are basic to the concept of industrial, urban man as known in the west: Man to whom time is money. Money is a measure of value and a means of accumulation and a standard of false dignity; accumulation can only take place by concern for the future, for organization, discipline, authority, work; and all of which are symptoms and causes of anxiety. If these things are the signs of repression - and they are the symptoms attacked by social critics and reformers from Marx to the latest disciples of Freud - then the beachcombers offer some indications of having had at least a vision of an escape from repression. Repression is - as both Freud and Marx recognized, and few would deny - the basis of organized society, and therefore of historical change, of progress, of civilization. It may be that the beachcombers in turning their backs on civilization, were making a fumbling, incomplete and probably unconscious escape from repression. At least, if time, accumulation, dignity, and so on, are symptoms of

125. e.g. Twyning, op. cit., p.73.
repression, then their absence might conceivably indicate a lesser degree of repression than was usual - if not its absence. If so, the beachcombers can be said to have escaped from the historical process. They have no other claim to historical significance. Their impact on the course of Pacific history or on the expansion of Europe and America is by conventional standards, infinitesimal. In ordinary terms, they have no historical role. But this very conclusion supports the inference that they escaped from the historical process. If they thereby presaged the end of historical processes - that is the absence of real social and political change, as distinct from a cyclical, repetitive motion of events - then their significance can be assessed only in historicist or metaphysical terms. Such an escape from the historical treadmill was the dream of Marx and Freud, and of some of their successors. The beachcombers were prototype anarchists. Their lack of ideology, lack of achievement, and lack of respectability therefore becomes their claim to historical notice.
CHAPTER 5

BECOMING AN ISLANDER

The possibility of complete integration - a learning theory of acculturation - emotional adjustment - stresses - the island side of the assimilation relationship - Polynesian hospitality - reception and treatment of beachcombers in the various island groups - indigenous attitudes to beachcombers' property - the importance of property - acquired kinship by adoption and marriage - importance of relationships with women - status of beachcombers - beachcombers' attitudes a factor in assimilation - boredom and hostility - resistance to assimilation - conformity - its superficiality - five rules of survival and success in island society - conclusion.

In the beachcombers' failure to identify with island society, and in their feelings of betrayal of promised felicity, practically impassable limits were set to the task of adaptation to island society. With the possibility of the development of psychological union with the islanders virtually ruled out, only a superficial adjustment by adopting the external forms of Polynesian society was possible. Attempts at adjustment therefore were difficult and bound to compound the beachcombers' sense of frustration. This sense of frustration was likely to jeopardize a beachcomber's chances of survival. Yet there was a common belief among contemporaries that one could become so thoroughly assimilated to island life as actually to be an islander in all things except place of origin. Paddy Connor in Fiji, for example, was described as being a thorough Fijian;¹ and according to The Friend:

It is an undoubted fact that when a white man becomes an outcast, lives with savages, and adopts their manner of life, he soon sinks into such a state of barbarism that he becomes the greater savage of the two.²

One might suspect the accuracy of The Friend’s assessment on the grounds of its pious and quasi-evangelical character. But an experienced and shrewd observer like Sterndale could remark of the men who succeeded the beachcombers, that they became:

... so deeply indoctrinated with barbarian ideas as to be sometimes apparently in doubt as to whether they had ever lived in civilized land.³

Such remarks were made with a confidence which implied that such a thorough sousing in 'savagery' was a simple function of time of residence, and therefore a relatively simple matter of learning. This idea is still adhered to. For example, an anthropologist, Alan Howard, writing of his experiences while conducting research in Rotuma suggests that his task in seeking to become a productive and accepted member of Rotuman society was an enormous learning problem. He had to learn the language, which involved not only vocabulary and grammar, but different concepts and different rules of classification, new gestures, intonations, the connotations as well as the literal meanings of words. He had to learn the customary manner of behaviour for innumerable situations, to the extent that appropriate behaviour became automatic. Abstracting from his experience, Howard suggested that:

In the most general sense, to fit into a culture inconspicuously one must learn to anticipate the rhythm of life - the normal arrangement and movements of people.

2. The Friend, 1 March, 1853, p.17.
and things. Not knowing these things is apt to lead to awkwardness and embarrassment.⁴

Although implying a learning theory of acculturation, Howard doubted that one could become (in his case) a Rotuman except in a superficial way: one might behave correctly, but one can never feel the same way as a Rotuman about the symbols of life which have an affective connotation:

Perhaps after living among them for a long enough time, if he were a sensitive and empathetic person, he might come to anticipate their responses, but unless he were extremely unusual it is unlikely that he would ever be able to respond likewise in a completely unselfconscious way.⁵

It is questionable, furthermore, that the process of adaptation to an alien society is a matter of simply learning a vast range of stimuli and responses. Freilich suggests that the field anthropologist (and presumably anyone else in an analogous situation) faces four types of problems: physical survival, psychological comfort, everyday pragmatics and moral dilemmas.⁶ Learning might solve the first and third. The second and fourth are far more acute and cause mental distress similar to that experienced by a psychiatric patient during psychotherapy.⁷

The results of anthropologists' introspection are similar to those found by Stonequist in his study of immigrants. Stonequist pointed to the high suicide rates among immigrant populations as evi-

⁵. Ibid., p.6. The view that one can 'never become a native' is stressed also by Nancie L. Gonzalez, in M. Freilich, (ed.), Marginal Natives, (New York, 1970), p.175.
⁷. Ibid., p.24.
dence that personality disorganization is typical of cultural trans-
plantation. The title of Stonequist's book implies that one can
never become assimilated to the extent of "becoming a native". The
basis of his analysis is a premise that emotional adjustment rather
than learning is the key to the problems of immigrants. He found
among immigrants in the U.S.A. that the process of adjustment
beginning with the "fading of emotional tones" to the return of emo-
tional normality took about twenty years, and is revealed only by the non-
recurrence of dreams of oneself 'back home'. It is not an immutable
law that everyone follows a twenty year cycle of adjustment; what is
important in Stonequist's work is the suggestion that the process of
adaptation to an alien culture requires a personality reconstruction.
The completeness and the time required depends on the previous degree
of mental health of the subject. If successful integration into an
alien culture is a matter of personality development and growth, then
it is not possible to account for the outcome in particular cases,
though it might be possible to explain in abstract terms how extreme
cases of adaptation developed. Gullahorn and Gullahorn suggest that
differences in adjustment to alien cultures is an identity problem:
some people find "the resolution of their identity conflict abroad";
such people have the greatest difficulty readjusting on their return
home. A similar observation about beachcombers was made in Chapter
3, but beyond introducing the term "identity conflict" these statements

8. Everett V. Stonequist, The Marginal Man, (New York, 1937),
p.203.

9. Ibid., pp.93-94.

10. Ibid., pp.68, 121, 139, 201-202.

amount to no more than the assertion that some people are more prone to experience cognitive dissonance than others. 12 'Culture shock' studies generally seem to stress the problems of returning home, and are still groping around an explanation of what intrapsychic mechanisms are involved in culture shock, rather than explaining why some people experience it less (or more) than others, and what personality types are most (or least) likely to adjust to a new cultural environment. 13

The whole field of culture and personality studies, and of personality and acculturation seems to have failed to provide solid findings for application to other disciplines. Most scholars would probably agree that a man who functions effectively and happily at home is most likely to adjust satisfactorily abroad, apparently on the assumption that flexibility enhances learning potential; but it is also admitted that occasionally a new environment favours an individual with a particular emotional difficulty, 14 a view which implies some validity in Ruth Benedict's much criticized analogy between individual personality and culture, and her suggestion that the neurotic in one culture might be the normal in another. 15 The experiences of beachcombers in adjusting to island communities are


more intelligible if seen as a problem of personality reconstruction rather than one of learning behaviour. George Vason, the apostate missionary in Tonga is a case in point. He took to Tongan life with enthusiasm and delight; neither the L.M.S. journals nor his autobiography reveal any of the evidence of strain or culture shock that one might expect. This in itself is inconclusive. One would expect, however, that his return to England and to the way of life he had led formerly would be at least as easy, on the grounds that he was returning to scenes and activities familiar to him from infancy. On the contrary, the return was far more painful than his apostacy had been. He felt remorse, and guilt, and apparently went through an extended period of mental distress. The culture shock had been in going home, not in living among aliens. It is not assumed that in most cases 'going native' was less painful than 'going home' as in Vason's case; what is of importance is that returning to the familiar was painful at all. The implication is that while living among the Pacific islanders deep personality changes had taken place which rendered one less able to cope with the facts of Western life, despite their familiarity.

The nature of these personality changes, and therefore of the process of adjustment to island life, is not immediately clear. As clues, three beachcomber sources use the word "elasticity" to describe the feeling of being at home among the islanders. This

17. [Vason], op. cit., pp.205, 221. The discomfort of going home has been discussed in Chapter 3.
feeling was not attained, however, until after one had passed through a period of anxiety and distress which few beachcombers were capable of writing about fully or clearly. There was probably no beachcomber (or potential beachcomber) who did not know anxiety on first arrival on an island.\(^\text{19}\) This was the anxiety of uncertainty of survival, of ignorance about the immediate future, the uncertainty of gambling. But beyond and deeper than this was an anxiety which persisted after initial survival and acceptance was assured. It is to this that Choris was probably referring when he wrote of John Young in Hawaii that he was "sorely grieved and downhearted" at having to stay in Hawaii.\(^\text{20}\) Cooper's anecdote about the Samoan beachcomber who used to sit on the rocks by the shore and weep for his home and friends is probably another example of the same kind.\(^\text{21}\) Diaper's description of his own experience in Samoa is more exact: after an unsuccessful attempt to escape,

> I gave way to melancholy, and lost all appetite, and was disagreeable and morose . . . . The natives seemed to be very much concerned for me, and continually asked me if I was recovering from my sickness, which they thought it was, as they had no idea of mental sickness . . . . This soon wore off, and my natural buoyancy of spirit returned . . . .\(^\text{22}\)

Even after several years of island experience, and being apparently


well adapted to island circumstances, Diaper revealed an underlying hostility in his proneness to paroxysms of rage, and his occasional capricious refusals to conform or co-operate with his hosts.²³

A learning theory of acculturation therefore, is less than adequate in accounting for the degree to which beachcombers succeeded or failed in making themselves at home in island society. To a large extent one must look to the beachcombers themselves for an explanation of the processes of adaptation. It has been shown in Chapters 3 and 4 that the beachcombers lacked the necessary motivation for becoming islanders, and this was due to the fact that the onus of adaptation was theirs by dint of circumstances, not of ideology or disposition.

Equally, however, the adjustment and well-being of the beachcombers in island society was due to the nature and particular circumstances of the various host societies. The prospects for successful adaptation varied widely, both from place to place, and over time.

In order to understand the adaptation of beachcombers, therefore, it is necessary to consider two separate but interlocking sets of variables: first, the provision made by Polynesian and Fijian societies for the acceptance of strangers; and second, the efforts made by the beachcombers themselves to fit into island norms.

The tradition of hospitality in Polynesia has been taken

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²³. Diapea, op. cit., pp.179-182, 238. Practically the whole of the Tongan part of Cannibal Jack is relevant to this statement. Also Jackson, loc. cit., pp.441, 449-450.
for granted by most scholarly writers and popular writers alike, and has been the subject of very little serious investigation. Caroline Ralston concluded that "the generosity and hospitality of the Polynesians were established cultural habits"; 24 H.E. Maude argued that although modified by a reasonable and understandable caution, both Melanesia and Polynesia were more hospitable to strangers than they were otherwise. "The island world had never been a closed one", he wrote, and the islanders would treat new arrivals hospitably unless they had good reason to behave otherwise. 25 W.H. Pearson, however, has shown that at least as far as large groups of visitors were concerned, hospitality to strangers was surrounded by regulations, conditions, ceremonies, and agreements. The "spontaneous" hospitality reported by the eighteenth century visitors to Tahiti, and which was seen as the Polynesian norm, was in fact pursued by the Tahitians as a deliberate matter of policy, and as a result of a European policy of intimidation. 26 The hospitality accorded to individual beachcombers was not necessarily governed by the same considerations as Pearson suggests for voyagers. While it can be thought of as being determined as much by indigenous experience of and expectations of Europeans, or by traditional norms of behaviour, the experiences of individual beachcombers before the contact process became intense, confirms the general impression of Polynesian hospitality.


When John Young was stranded in Hawaii in 1790 a kapu kept the Hawaiians indoors and inactive in order to prevent Captain Metcalf learning of the capture of the Fair American and the massacre of its crew. Young had only to knock on a door at random to be invited in and offered refreshment, despite the critical state of contact relations at the time. William Crook in the Marquesas in 1797 was welcomed with feasting and sympathy, and generously provided with comfortable accommodation. Crook's experience was confirmed by Robarts, not once, but many times as he travelled through the island group. He was invariably met with kindness and generosity, which he described as unrivalled. Those of the Bounty mutineers who remained in Tahiti were probably treated with more spontaneity than were the explorers (of Pearson's account). Morrison wrote of being treated like one of the family, but with more respect and attention, and gives numerous instances of apparently unconditional generosity.

In western Polynesia similar evidence is available. According to the missionary George Turner, Samoan hospitality was famous, for the Samoans were inveterate travellers. Every village had a house for the reception of travellers, where food and entertainment were provided liberally. Turner's observations apply to inter-village

visiting by Samoans, yet the same habits of generosity applied to the earliest foreign visitors and residents according to contemporary accounts.\textsuperscript{32} The hospitality of Tongans to strangers was also well known, although the missionary Thomas thought that it was putative rather than real.\textsuperscript{33} According to Pritchard, however, the Tongans in former times had actively encouraged Fijians to settle amongst them.\textsuperscript{34} Vason and his beachcomber contemporaries were the recipients of assiduous kindness while their status was still that of strangers.\textsuperscript{35}

Elsewhere in Polynesia and related island groups, there are grounds for accepting the tradition of island hospitality. The experience of the Tongan chief 'Cow Mooala' in about 1808 on Futuna and Rotuma\textsuperscript{36} was confirmed decades later by several visitors.\textsuperscript{37} The same can be said of nearby Wallis Islands.\textsuperscript{38} From the Cook Islands, and from various parts of Micronesia come numerous stories all


\textsuperscript{33} Rev. John Thomas, 'History of the Friendly Islands', (Ms.), p.97.


\textsuperscript{35} Rowland Hassall, 'Correspondence, Vol. 1', (Ms.), p.68. [Vason], \textit{op. cit.}, p.111.


\textsuperscript{38} Charles Sparshatt, \ldots \textit{Loss of the Ship Harriet ...}, (London, 1839), pp.16-17. 
supporting the same general belief.³⁹

For Fiji the evidence is more equivocal, being under strong influences of both Polynesian and Melanesian cultural traits. The ambivalence in the Fijian attitude to strangers was pointed out by a number of writers. Pritchard offers two contrasting anecdotes: one concerning a boat load of "green" hands who met with unstinting hospitality; the other concerns a boat load of whites of long experience in Fiji. The latter narrowly escaped with their lives.⁴⁰ Thomas Williams in attempting to account for this sort of contrast said that Fijian hospitality and good manners was an undeniable fact, but that it was not spontaneous, but was impelled by fear.⁴¹ Eagelston put the contrast down to Fijian sensitivity to insult, real or imagined.⁴² Pritchard thought he had found a historical explanation: one of his informants said that in former times strangers who were brought to Fiji by chance were not only allowed to live, but were considered to be members of the family of the local chief. But after a period of instability and warfare in which strangers were prominent, people became suspicious of strangers, and so the belief was fostered that they were sent by the gods to be eaten.⁴³

The practice of "knocking the salt water from the eyes" of a stranger in Fiji is well attested; but it is as well to notice that many castaways, deserters and other chance arrivals met with great kindness from their hosts — including Tongan political refugees, the castaway Samuel Patterson, the marooned sandalwood trader William Lockerby, the castaways Cary, Bays and Oliver. The explorer Wilkes, the missionary Cargill, and the beachcomber Diaper all insist on the hospitality and generosity of the Fijians towards strangers, particularly in Polynesian-influenced Lau. 44

There is ample evidence then to support the traditional belief that Polynesian hospitality to strangers was a deep seated and consistent cultural trait. But it would be naive to think of the Polynesians (or other islanders) as being indiscriminately generous to all comers, under all circumstances, and irrespective of changing contact situations. At no time did their hospitality prevent them from waging war, or prevent them from attacking visiting ships, or prevent them from acting in any way which they considered served their interests best. During a generation of sustained contact the islanders' reactions to foreigners showed considerable variation, and this variation cannot be considered to be anything other than pragmatic. The induction of beachcombers into island communities also

44. Martin, op. cit., I, pp.264, 276.
   Samuel Patterson, Narrative of the Adventures . . ., (Palmer, 1817), p.86.
   Peter Bays, . . . the Wreck of the Minerva . . ., (Cambridge, 1831), pp.57-58, 63, 71.
   Oliver, op. cit., pp.89, 90, 104-106.
   Rev. David Cargill, 'Diary', (Ms.), Vol. 2, p.6, 29 April, 1839.
societies, therefore, was not necessarily an easy, gentle process.

Events in Hawaii probably demonstrate more clearly than do events in any other island group, that the reception and treatment offered to beachcombers on their arrival reflected changing historical circumstances. The period during which Hawaii emerges from prehistory into history (to use a totally Eurocentric figure of speech) was one of turbulence. According to the Hawaiian historian, Kamakau, it was a time of wars, sorcery and infanticide, when the rights of refugees were denied. The state of affairs was described as being so parlous that "even castaways were slain".45

Although having begun their residence in Hawaii at the time of the *Fair American* massacre in 1790, Young and Davis told Vancouver three years later that Kamehameha had always treated them with humanity and kindness.46 The story which Young told to Charles Barnard many years later, does not minimize the anxieties or tensions of the first days and weeks ashore, and is, perhaps less cheery than Vancouver's version, but Young could still say, "neither of us [Young nor Davis] had any particular reason to complain of the treatment we received from the natives after that fatal night".47 Young and Davis, however, appear to have been treated particularly well; in retrospect their good fortune can be seen to have been a shrewd matter of policy on the part of Kamehameha who could see the political advantages of 'owning' some white men. Other powerful


chiefs, for example Kaiana, disagreed with Kamehameha in this matter. According to Ingraham, the Fair American affair made it clear to the men left ashore by Kendrick to collect sandalwood, that their welcome had depended on their ability to attract European artifacts. The capture of the schooner made this role redundant, and so their position became perilous. On Kauai hospitable treatment lasted only as long as the Hawaiians thought that the white men's captain would return. Mistreatment was unquestionably widespread, but there were other chiefs besides Kamehameha who saw the advantages of cultivating beachcombers, and at least as early as 1792 white retainers who owed a personal loyalty to their chiefs were to be found. One at least had attained such high status as to be surrounded by prohibitions and restrictions on his behaviour. His violently expressed frustrations at these irksome kapus provoked no greater reaction from the Hawaiians than extreme agitation.

By 1795 when Kamehameha extended his conquest of the Hawaiian chain to what proved to be its limits, he had several white retainers to whom he had given property, rank and high-born wives. By 1802 beachcombers in Hawaii had become so accustomed to being treated well and given land that the question of reception had become transformed into a question of how well the beachcombers

49. Ibid., pp.18, 19.
51. Ibid., pp.261-262.
were treating the Hawaiians. When Kamehameha thought that they were becoming too overbearing, he took appropriate action,\(^5^3\) the justice of which no one ever seemed to query. Kamehameha never ceased to be highly selective in the types of men he encouraged to settle in his islands. He became in time, wary of men who did not have proof of good character; and to those of skill or wealth, he was exceptionally generous.\(^5^4\) Those who could not recommend themselves to him had to take their chances with the commoners.\(^5^5\) Just as hospitality from the monarch had a utilitarian aspect, so did hospitality from his subjects - as Patterson discovered on an excursion to the supposedly less sophisticated mountain areas.\(^5^6\)

By about 1810 it can be inferred that the supply of useful beachcombers was sufficiently strong for a degree of sentimentality to creep into the Hawaiian treatment of resident foreigners: Jean Rives is said to have owed his success to his youth, and boyish manner; he was adopted into a chiefly house.\(^5^7\) At the same time it is clear that Kamehameha was able to pick and choose his beachcombers from the ample number offering, for he promised at least one captain that he would return any deserters.\(^5^8\)


\(^5^6\) Patterson, *op. cit.*, p.66.


\(^5^8\) Ross, *op. cit.*, p.36.
It has been frequently alleged in the literature of the Hawaiian beachcomber era that Kamehameha encouraged foreigners to settle there. He did offer inducements, but he cannot be assumed to have been speaking for his people. It is as well, therefore, to keep in mind the complaints of a beachcomber in the early 1820's. The Hawaiians, he said, did all they could to injure or annoy him; they refused to help him, except for payment; and he was unable to keep any personal property because of the tyranny of the chiefs who were as oppressive to Europeans as to their native subjects.\(^5^9\)

The pragmatic character of Hawaiian reception of beachcombers was carried a stage further in Tahiti. Whereas in Hawaii the treatment of beachcombers varied according to circumstances, in Tahiti it was a thinly disguised exploitation by the ambitious and powerful. The unfailing courtesy to strangers required reciprocation, and was in any case usually ephemeral.\(^6^0\) The case of Tahiti's first beachcomber, Brown, illustrates this interpretation. On going ashore he was well received by the Tahitians;\(^6^1\) but within a few weeks little notice was being taken of him.\(^6^2\) The experience of the \textit{Bounty} mutineers themselves, and of Morrison in particular, is instructive. They had an advantage over the generality of beachcombers in that they were fairly well endowed with material possessions from the \textit{Bounty}'s store, and had already experienced months of

\begin{footnotes}

\item 60. Turnbull, \textit{op. cit.}, p.372.


\item 62. Morrison, \textit{op. cit.}, pp.81, 240.
\end{footnotes}
close contact with the Tahitians. They made presents to the king on their taking up residence, and were able to communicate with the Tahitians sufficiently well to come to agreement about their relationship. Following this agreement land was made available for their use, and they were supplied with whatever local produce they required. Morrison and his companions therefore, were able from the beginning to enter into the network of indigenous social and political relationships. The prerequisites for the establishment and maintenance of this relationship was an understanding of the principal of reciprocity, combined with sufficient subtlety to see what a service received from a Tahitian would require of them in future favours. At this stage of contact relations it is reasonable to infer that the Tahitians were behaving towards the foreigners in a manner informed largely by their traditional concepts rather than by detailed knowledge of European habits. That their relationship was a dynamic one, and was as early as 1790, undergoing some change, is suggested by Hamilton's remark that the Chief 'Oedidy', who was "perfectly devoted to our interest" in helping to apprehend the Bounty men, thus betrayed a taio. The act horrified him; but his horror did not prevent him.

Early in 1792 the crew of the wrecked whaler, Matilda, made its way to Tahiti. On arrival the castaways' property was confiscated, but otherwise they were well treated, and dispersed

63. Ibid., pp.77-78.

64. The best examples concern the arrangements made for building their boat and the supply of materials for it; and the requests by the Tahitians for military support. Ibid., pp.84-86, 89-90, 92, 95, 96, 98, 100.

among various families and localities. Most of these castaways left Tahiti within two months.\textsuperscript{66} Twelve months later the remainder were reported to be comfortably settled, enjoying considerable freedom and some authority.\textsuperscript{67} By the late 1790's the Tahitians had recognised the material advantages of having white men reside among them. Two deserters from the \textit{Nautilus} in 1798 "were caressed & hid, as usual, by the Natives" under circumstances which suggest that the beachcombers were becoming pawns in the politics of power which was by that time developing between the major factions.\textsuperscript{68} The political needs of the Tahitians did not, however, ensure a continuation of this sympathetic treatment. Turnbull, (though a pork trader not a beachcomber), was resident in Tahiti during 1803, and claimed that his warm welcome was due almost entirely to his material wealth. He was able to conduct his trading only by keeping a steady supply of gifts flowing to Pomare.\textsuperscript{69} By this time the treatment given to the beachcombers (at least by the chief) can be seen to have become a ploy in a strictly exploitative relationship. Peter Hagerstein ("Peter the Swede") had performed so many martial services for Pomare in exchange for nothing but broken promises that during Turnbull's residence he made arrangements to change his allegiance to Pomare's opponents.\textsuperscript{70} Pomare's subsequently generous and pro-

\begin{enumerate}
\item Dr. T. Hawes, 'Papers - Supplement', (Ms.), p.275.
\item Ibid., p.93.
\item Turnbull, \textit{op. cit.}, pp.269-270.
\item Ibid., p.293. " . . . he was laid aside as a tool no longer wanted. He had thus very reasonably become dissatisfied . . . ." Cf. Pulpit's plight on Huahine, \textit{Ibid.}, pp.164-165.
\end{enumerate}
tective aid to the *Margaret* castaways\(^{71}\) can therefore be seen not as an expression of traditional Polynesian hospitality (though he might have behaved in that manner ten or fifteen years before) but as a stratagem to acquire the property and loyalty of the *Margaret*'s crew in the service of his political ambitions.

This change in the motivation behind a hospitable reception to strangers probably occurred faster among the Tahitian aristocracy than among the commoners; the missionaries Elder and Wilson commented in 1803 that two deserters in the remoter parts of the island were becoming unpopular with the people for eating their food and giving nothing in return.\(^{72}\) Hospitality therefore was still freely given, but as always, it incurred an obligation. It was another year and a half before Tahitian exasperation led to violence against beach-combers.\(^{73}\)

The transition from conditional hospitality to exploitation which can be so clearly seen in Tahiti; and the transition from hospitality to suspicion to selective hospitality which characterized the case of Hawaii, are not paralleled in the Marquesas. As far as one can tell from the fragmentary Marquesan evidence there were no attempts at political centralization, nor was contact with Europeans as intensive as in Hawaii or Tahiti. It can be inferred therefore, that there was less change in the reception given to strangers.

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73. William Henry, 4 December, 1804, L.M.S.-S.S.L., Box 1. On this occasion two beachcombers were beaten for refusing to join a proposed attack on the missionaries.
Crook's welcome of feasting with inquisitive attention\textsuperscript{74} accords with Robarts' account of the treatment which he received. The unhappy time which Crook suffered during his residence on Tahuata was not therefore a failure of the Marquesans to treat him as a stranger should be treated; it was due to his failure to adapt to his new role as a member of Marquesan society. When he went to Nukuhiwa he had some knowledge of his situation and no property; and his relations there with the Marquesans were perfectly harmonious.

Robarts' narrative reveals that the Marquesans were consistent in their reception and treatment of strangers, and that the variation from person to person is attributable to the personal idiosyncrasies of the beachcombers. Robarts' own sensitivity to the manners of his hosts contrasts with the inability of Walker and the Leviathan deserters either to communicate with the Marquesans or to anticipate and meet their expectations.\textsuperscript{75} In 1818, twelve years after Robarts left the Marquesas Islands, Roquefeuil noticed an American living on Hiva Oa and remarked that he had reason to praise his hosts.\textsuperscript{76} In the 1820's kindness and hospitality was still "characteristic" according to Paulding;\textsuperscript{77} and in 1829 Orlebar declared this hospitality to be proverbial.\textsuperscript{78} The several accounts of Europeans living among the Marquesans in the 1830's continue to reflect an absence of change in the treatment of foreign residents.

\textsuperscript{74} Crook, \textit{loc. cit.}, pp.cl-cli.

\textsuperscript{75} Dening, \textit{op. cit.}, pp.99-100, 106, 113, 145-147.

\textsuperscript{76} C. de Roquefeuil, \textit{A Voyage Round the World}, (London, 1823), p.44.


\textsuperscript{78} J. Orlebar, \textit{A Midshipman's Journal . . .}, (London, 1833), p.28.
These accounts are all compatible with Herman Melville's eulogy of life there in 1841. 79

The smaller islands of Eastern Polynesia present further contrasts. While generous, hospitable treatment again appears to be the norm, it varied under circumstances of which full knowledge is unobtainable. For example the Margaret castaways in the Tuamotus in 1802 were assaulted during their preparations to sail to Tahiti. Whether this was because they denied the local islanders' salvage rights or for some other reason, is not clear. 80 On Manuae, an atoll in the Cook Islands, strangers appear to have been killed more often than they were succoured, although some American castaways got special attention there in 1828. 81 Rarotonga, however, a high island in the same group, received at least one group of Polynesian refugees kindly. 82 The hypothesis which might be drawn from this evidence that the generous reception of strangers was a feature of the high islands which had greater food resources, whereas the low islands could not afford kindness, breaks down in the case of Penrhyn (or Tongareva) where Lamont was wrecked in 1853. The attack on the ship which Lamont alleges, was probably only an attempt to claim salvage, for the castaways received extremely generous treatment despite the island's current food shortage. 83 But whereas in the Marquesas (for


80. Turnbull, op. cit., p.303.


82. J.B. Stair, 'Early Samoan Voyagers and Settlement', (Ms.), p.15.

example) the only form of initiation which Crook and Robarts had undergone were activities which were unequivocally hospitable (i.e. feasting and the like), Lamont and his companions were put through a ceremony of purification and adoption analogous to the procedure reported from the Ellice Islands. 84

Turning to Western Polynesia, the pattern of reception discernable in Tahiti and Hawaii can be seen also in Samoa. The precontact practice was said to have been to confiscate the property but to spare the lives of castaways. 85 When contact became relatively frequent it became a matter of chiefly prestige to have a resident white man, 86 and so generosity was the rule. Thomas Trood, a resident of the post-beachcomber era had detected a touch of cynicism in Samoan-beachcomber relations, reflecting perhaps a change from the earlier hospitality. Distressed seamen, he wrote, were treated with great deference and politeness while their property lasted. When the supply of goods was exhausted the politeness became sarcastic, and attention was turned to a man's skills, to see how best he might be useful. 87 Among the earliest Samoan beachcomber accounts no such calculating attitude is evident, although according to the Elyard manuscript the enthusiasm for the people to own a white man did not override the fact that "the more homely he is dressed the safer he will be". 88 The unceremonious but gentle

85. Murray, op. cit., p.179.
86. [Brown], op. cit., p.29; Turner, op. cit., p.103.
kindness which Browning experienced in the early 1830's appears to have been typical. What *quid pro quo* Browning had to make is unknown, but other beachcombers in Samoa reciprocated by meeting the Samoan demand for instruction and guidance in religion, or as warriors. That there is some truth in Trood's estimate, however, is shown in the case of the wreck of the *Mary Jane* in 1833: the castaways' property was of greater value to the Samoans than the castaways themselves. One man was killed for attempting to deny a Samoan chief's claim to salvage. After the matter of property was settled, however, the Samoans were unwilling to lose the castaways. Apart from misunderstandings and brutalities on arrival the reception and treatment offered to castaways in Samoa was consistently praised.

If there was any significant change in the Samoan treatment of foreign residents, it probably came after 1840; in 1840 Diaper (alias John Jackson) though forcibly kept on Manua was given the best of everything. Manua was something of a contact backwater compared with the more frequently visited Upolu. In the same year

89. [Brown], *op. cit.*, p.15; Cf. J.W. Osborn, 'Journal, ship Emerald', (Ts.), 7 June, 1835, in Eagelston's Journals.

90. The so-called 'sailor religions' in Samoa developed thus. See below, Chapter 7, pp.341-346.


that Diaper lived on Manua, there is a report of disputes between resident whites and their Samoan hosts. In 1846 the Samoans were reported to be reluctant to allow foreigners to live on shore, having heard of events in Tahiti. More complaints by Europeans mark the consular correspondence of the late 1840's, so it can be inferred that the spontaneity in Samoan hospitality had diminished.

Tonga's treatment of its earliest beachcombers cannot be ascertained with certainty. The effusive friendship shown to the L.M.S. missionaries in 1797 was not long-lived; if the same warm reception was given to the convicts who landed from the Otter in 1796 then it was probably equally short-lived in their case. Of these first beachcombers some of them left as soon as possible, one was removed by the Duff, and the remainder met early deaths from the Tongans for having transgressed the norms too often. For Vason (the ex-missionary), however, the Tongans were perfect hosts. As the guest of one of Tonga's most senior chiefs, Mulikiha'amea, Vason's induction into Tongan society was as gentle and harmonious as one could wish for; but by the same token it was not necessarily representative. As a foreigner of rank, Vason was exempted from paying tribute for his land to the Tui Kanokupolu (as was Mariner later), but on the other hand he was jeered at for lacking the tattoo. Vason eventually became the governor of a small island in the Ha'apai group,

98. e.g. see British Consulate, Samoa, General Inwards Correspondence, Series 2, Vol. 1. Deposition by Thomas White, 18 February, 1847.
99. [Vason], op. cit., p.90.
not simply because of his good land management, but because:

... such were the national ideas of hospitality and forbearance towards strangers, that this very consideration would preserve the young chiefs, as well as the other natives, from plundering the fruits.101

This rationale, however, did not perfectly accord with Tongan practice. 102

The civil wars of the time can partly be held responsible for the harsh treatment given to foreign residents, for the men thought to be the survivors of the Argo wrecked in Lau in 1800 met with mixed treatment. 103 The case of William Mariner demonstrates the contrasting treatment which a foreigner could receive in Tonga when there were no obviously extenuating circumstances. Before he was taken into Finau's family he was subjected to malicious and brutal treatment for which no other explanation than xenophobia is apparent. When Finau summoned him he received at least as much kindness as would have been offered to a member of the family.104 Some of the apparently callous treatment was due to the ignorance of the castaways: they went hungry because they did not know that Tongan ideas of hospitality required them to invite themselves to eat with whoever had food. The Tongan chiefs and matapule moreover were compassionate enough to spare two boys, survivors of the Port-au-Prince, the customary death penalty for a serious offence on the grounds that they were merely ignorant foreigners.105

101. [Vason], op. cit., p.191.
102. Ibid., pp.191-192.
105. Ibid., I, p.163.
The same ambiguity of treatment of foreigners is seen in the story of James Read. Read was one of the crew of the Ceres wrecked in 1821. The castaways were greeted with what appears from the limited evidence to have been a bizarre and volatile mixture of compassion and hatred. The situation might be more complex than appears, or have a less sinister explanation: the castaways were greeted in an unnecessarily and unusually friendly manner; and then massacred. Read for some reason, was spared the massacre, and like Mariner, received the most gentle and considerate attention.

In later years, most beachcomber stories attest kind and privileged treatment from the Tongans. Whether this change was due to the influence of missionaries or to a deliberately revised policy towards strangers on the part of the Tongans cannot be answered with certainty. The latter alternative seems more likely in view of the facts that the beachcomber whom Dillon met on Eua in 1827 had come there in 1825, while in 1827 the Rev. John Thomas complained that he hoped to be able to make an early departure from Tonga's unfriendly people. An alternative explanation is that Tongan hostility to strangers was a temporary phenomenon, concomitant with the political turbulence of the late eighteenth and early

109. Ibid.
110. Rev. John Thomas, 'Calendar and Diary, 1827', (Ms.), 23 June, 1827.
nineteenth centuries. The evidence relating to the receptivity of strangers is however, fragmentary, and it is possible that the contrasts and changes which appear in the literary sources are illusory; Tongan hospitality was most probably pragmatic, and the treatment meted out to individuals could have varied for specific reasons not recorded. For example, when James Norris (or Jimmy the Devil) arrived in Tonga, probably in the 1830's, he came in a ship's boat the other occupants of which were killed on landing. Jimmy was spared because for his hoped-for usefulness. Fortunately for him, he was a blacksmith, and therefore was able to satisfy his hosts' expectations. Had he failed he would probably have been killed.\[111\] The idea that hospitality was conditional on usefulness did not necessarily mean that foreigners needed to have esoteric skills: it has been suggested that the Tongans were hospitable to all strangers regardless of skin colour because being outside kinship and tapu systems they could be used for a multiplicity of mundane tasks which no Tongan could safely do.\[112\] As a final alternative, a violent reception could be given to a stranger in retaliation for some misdeed of an earlier visitor (in such cases the fact of a person being a foreigner was the important factor, not his skin colour).\[113\]

One would expect Fiji to differ markedly from Tonga and Samoa despite the close contacts because of the predominant tradition that a stranger arriving with "salt water in his eyes" was a gift from the gods to be killed and eaten.\[114\] Pritchard's suggestion that

this practice was a relatively recent development has already been mentioned. Thomson cites cases of Polynesian castaways in Fiji being honoured, and founding chiefly families.\(^{115}\) As far as most nineteenth century observers were concerned, however, "knocking the salt water from his eyes" was the invariable reception given to a castaway - whether brown or white in colour.\(^ {116}\) The treatment given to newly arrived beachcombers suggests that this custom was indeed widespread in Fiji during the early nineteenth century; but even from the earliest contact, however, it was frequently not observed. During the first phase of Fiji's beachcombing boom (i.e. the sandalwood era), there are no recorded cases of Europeans being killed on arrival. This is not necessarily to say that it did not happen, for Fijians visiting Tonga in 1800 told the missionaries there that if they had been put ashore in Fiji in the same manner as they had been put ashore in Tonga, they would have been killed instantly.\(^ {117}\) The survivors of the wreck of the Argo in 1800, however, were not killed - it has been suggested possibly because of the awe which the apparently supernatural beings invoked in the Fijians;\(^ {118}\) and nor were the crew of the Eliza, wrecked in 1808.

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118. Im Thurn and Wharton, *op. cit.*, p.xli. Hunt, writing a little over forty years after the event says that some were killed and eaten, but because of the scourge that followed, subsequent arrivals were treated more generously until their own overbearing conduct brought about their deaths. This course of events proved that Europeans were not supernatural, and after discovering this fact, the Fijians reverted to the more normal practice of killing strangers. See J. Hunt, *Memoirs of the Rev. William Cross*, (London, 1846), p.80. Cf. Basil Thomson, *South Sea Yarns*, (Edinburgh and London, 1894), pp.290-293.
By 1808, however, the sandalwood boom had begun, and the Fijians had to some extent become familiar with white people, and were aware of the commercial and political advantages of having resident white men. The story of Charlie Savage\textsuperscript{119} and that of Paddy Connor\textsuperscript{120} have sufficient in common to suggest some degree of conflation of two or more beachcomber arrivals. The common features of these accounts were the withholding of both lavish hospitality and consignment to the ovens, until the credentials of the newcomers had been established. Once the strangers had shown that patronage of them would be profitable (i.e., by demonstrating the power of musketry), then a lavish welcome, high status and extreme deference and respect were theirs. It is worth noting, for comparison, that Connor came ashore from a ship; Savage came ashore from a shipwreck. The treatment given to them was similar, and in both cases, tolerant. Samuel Patterson, a ship-mate of Savage's, provides the only first person account of the wreck of the \textit{Eliza} in 1808.\textsuperscript{121} The treatment he received as an invalid was certainly less than one would desire under the circumstances, but it was not without compassion or tolerance.\textsuperscript{122} When Patterson was well enough, he and his friend Steere repeatedly gave offence with their irreverence or misbehaviour. On each occasion they were nearly killed, and on each occasion were saved by the intercession of a well disposed chief.\textsuperscript{123} The presence

\textsuperscript{119} In the version of Pita Tatawaqa, 'Charlie Savage', \textit{The Transactions of the Fijian Society for 1912 and 1913}, (Suva).

\textsuperscript{120} As given by Turpin, \textit{op. cit.}, §§127-128.

\textsuperscript{121} Patterson, \textit{op. cit.}, pp.82-84.

\textsuperscript{122} \textit{Ibid.}, pp.93-96.

\textsuperscript{123} \textit{Ibid.}, pp.93-94, 97.
of both hostility and tolerance in each of these situations confirms that despite the Fijian hostility towards strangers, the actual fate of beachcombers was determined not by any inflexible adherence to custom, but by the pragmatic interaction of situation and personality. It can be assumed that this worked to the advantage of a beachcomber at least as often as it brought about a premature and violent death.

Most of the beachcombers of the sandalwood period, however, were not castaways. The case of William Lockerby and his companions is instructive, for they were no longer strangers when their enforced residence began. Lockerby had been the first mate of a sandalwood vessel, the Jenny in 1808. As part of his duties he had taken up residence on shore under the protection of Tui Bua to facilitate trade and supervise the cutting and loading of sandalwood. When the Jenny sailed, leaving Lockerby and his men behind, Lockerby already had an identity, a reason for being there, and status as a ship's officer. Past trade and the anticipation of trade helped to guarantee his security. Consequently Tui Bua granted him high status and wide privileges as his guest. Lockerby's men did not fare so well - being often short of food and apparently disliked by the Fijians. Even Lockerby himself discovered that he enjoyed his position on sufferance. The common people were not well disposed towards him, despite his claim that "I was generally respected even by the lower class".

124. Im Thurn and Wharton, op. cit., passim.
125. Ibid., p.20.
126. Ibid., p.25.
127. Ibid., p.72.
The importance of having credentials - whether local or foreign - is seen in the case of David Whippy at the beginning of the *beche-de-mer* period. Whippy was left at Bau by Dillon in 1824 to collect tortoise shell.\(^{128}\) The mode of arrival guaranteed his initial well being, and gave him sufficient status on which to build considerable personal influence. But beachcombers who arrived with less ceremony also had credentials once they had overcome the initial risks of arrival, as the experiences of Cary and Twynning show.\(^{129}\) Cary and Twynning arrived early in Fiji's second beachcomber phase, both by shipwreck, and both spent their first weeks in Fiji on Vatoa, in southern Lau. In the earlier case (Cary's) the Vatoans received the castaways in friendship, though they were more interested in the property than the persons of the castaways. In the later case (Twynning's) they were more suspicious, and plundered the castaways, before providing food and accommodation. Cary, (to whom these things happened in 1825) says that they were treated very kindly by the islanders. After a couple of weeks a party from Ono arrived and massacred all of them except Cary. When the Ono people had departed Cary came out of hiding, was received by the Vatoans with compassion and kindness, and given to understand that the chief looked on him as his son.\(^{130}\) Twynning suggests that when he was there in 1829 the Vatoans were less hospitable.\(^{131}\) Nevertheless they gave the help that was needed, though the casta-

\(^{128}\) [Cary], *op. cit.*, p.28.

\(^{129}\) *Ibid.*, *passim.*


\(^{130}\) [Cary], *op. cit.*, pp.12-20.

\(^{131}\) Twynning, *op. cit.*, pp.50-54.
ways' welcome looked as if it was wearing thin fairly quickly, Twynning's assessment in retrospect was that rough as their treatment on Vatoa was, it was considerably better than could usually be expected from Fijians.¹³² Like Cary, Twynning and his party were taken to Lakeba, the hegemon of Lau, and en route were paraded like prisoners of war, or perhaps like circus wonders. When Cary arrived at Lakeba he was a member of a chiefly party, and therefore could claim protection from the chief who had befriended him.¹³³ When he was introduced to the King of Lakeba (Tui Layau) the latter's first concern was to ascertain if Cary could service and use muskets. After giving satisfaction in that respect, Cary was then welcomed as a personage of importance.¹³⁴ Four years later when Twynning trod the same path he and his fellows were treated like chiefs without the preliminary demonstration of usefulness.¹³⁵ Twynning pronounced the chief of Lakeba to be kind, generous and hospitable - but not without the qualification that he was also avaricious and selfish. Two statements of Twynning's, that "he would condemn the innocent or free the guilty where he could gain by it", and that "our lives were not only spared, but we were received into his service"¹³⁶ when juxtaposed suggest that survival was not the customary fate of strangers, but that in their case they were the beneficiaries of a powerful man's self interest.

Twynning spent the next few years in Lau; his safety was

¹³². Ibid., pp.56-57.
¹³³. [Cary], op. cit., p.21.
¹³⁶. Ibid., pp.69, 70.
sometimes called in question, but always guaranteed by his relationship with the Tui Nayau's family.  
Cary, in contrast, travelled more widely, and chose to live in the western part of Fiji. His travelling to Rewa, Bau, and Levuka was facilitated and his safety assured by the fact that his relationships with successive Fijian potentates gave him an identity which compelled the respect of those among whom he moved. 
Receipt of foreigners as such followed no fixed rules, as was explained to Cary when he visited Beqa. A few years previously, he was told, any canoe which landed would have had its occupants killed. The fact that this no longer prevailed must be attributed to changes within Fijian society, or to Fijian sensitivity to changing circumstances, rather than the diffusion into Fiji of ideas from outside. Cary's comment of the Fijian character suggests a disposition to clemency, unless there seemed good reasons to act otherwise:

The natural disposition of these people is good, and they possess kind feelings for those whom they like; they also possess strong passions and when enraged are savage beyond description . . .  

In the accounts of most European observers of the early contact processes, the savagery was given more attention than the kindness - and yet the kindness was probably more frequently experienced by strangers than was the savagery. Between 1829 and 1831 there were four known shipwrecks in Fiji: the Glide, the Wanm, the Niagara and the Valador. These incidents shift the focus of attention away from

137. Ibid., pp.77-79.
138. [Cary], op. cit., pp.29-30, 33, 37.
139. Ibid., p.38.
140. Ibid., p.29.
Lau, back to the main islands of Fiji. The Valador struck a reef off the coast of Cakaudrove in 1829. On reaching shore the castaways were threatened with death, but were saved by the intercession of a well disposed chief.\textsuperscript{141} In 1830 the brig Fawn (or Faun) was wrecked on Somosomo.\textsuperscript{142} The crew were roughly herded to a nearby settlement where a debate took place. In this debate the senior chiefs and priests favoured the traditional reception. It was argued that whatever was cast ashore belonged to the gods and it was not for men to alter what had been ordained. One minor chief spoke for clemency using as arguments that no good would come of killing them, as they already had their property; that there was no shortage of "long pig" and therefore they did not need to eat these men; that they were good mechanics and would be useful; and that they would be of value in war; and finally, that if they were enslaved, they would eventually fetch a good ransom. These arguments did not prevail - except to save the life of one, James Magoun (or McGoon). The others were slaughtered and cooked without delay. Magoun himself was treated with the greatest respect and consideration, and as his usefulness became more apparent, so did his status rise.\textsuperscript{143}

The Niagara and the Glide were lost in the same hurricane on 20 March, 1831;\textsuperscript{144} the former near Bau, the latter on the Macuata.

141. \textit{Ibid.}, p.57.


143. Turpin, \textit{op. cit.}, S S 14-20. Turpin dates the wreck at 1834, but this is incorrect; Eagelston indicates that it was before June, 1831, J.H. Eagelston, 'Journal of the Peru', p.284; Cary's date of 1830 is indisputable, for he bought the \textit{Fawn}'s anchors in November of that year,[Cary],\textit{op. cit.}, p.67.

144. \textit{Ibid.}, pp.69, 70.
coast. Bau was probably the most frequented contact zone in Fiji at the time; Eagelston says that Tanoa of Bau had been a good friend to the castaways, though they had been stripped of their possessions, and "... in their nakedness, with long heavy beards and sunburnt skins, they bore the show of suffering and want". The Glide was immediately plundered when it went ashore, and towards the crew the Fijians were roughly indifferent in their impatience to get to the loot. The good treatment which they subsequently received seems to have been due to the influence of a chief who was on board. The fact that the Glide had been trading in the immediate vicinity until the time of the wreck may have contributed to the "greatest kindness" which Cary says they received.

In these four shipwrecks, the treatment given to the crews was hospitality shown to a temporarily resident group of foreigners, and does not necessarily shed much light on the reception of beachcombers, except to show that castaways were not automatically slaughtered on landing - although there was a good chance that they might have been. Magoun's story is the most instructive; in it can be seen the grain of truth in stories about the 'natives' debating over a castaway whether to make of him their meal or their chief. Magoun was spared because it was hoped that he could be useful, without being as expensive to keep as a whole shipload of skilled foreigners. One man, moreover, could be monopolized by one community

to their great advantage; twenty-five or thirty must inevitably be distributed among other communities, and their skills and usefulness with them. But having decided to spare Magoun, he was immediately built a large house (60 feet long), given wives (eight, allegedly) and land for gardens. The people were predisposed to look up to him - all he had to do was to meet their expectations in order to be looked upon as a chief. 148 This sort of treatment reconciled Magoun to life in Fiji, and he lived out his life there; it was the sort of treatment which facilitated one's adaptation to a strange culture. This adaptation was easier where one was alone with one's hosts, but even in the case of the Glide castaways, with twenty or so living together after an initially uncertain reception, the way was open for these Americans to become life long beachcombers. Their relations with the Fijians improved when they helped to repair and teach the use of the tools and weapons salvaged from the wreck. When they visited the Fijians in their homes they were always welcomed. 149

In view of this treatment, an observation such as that by the Reverend James Calvert that before 1836 all castaways in Fiji were killed and eaten, but that after 1836, due to the influence of the mission, this was no longer the case, is nonsense. 150 Conditions were not so bad before 1836 as they might have been, nor was 1836 in any way a turning point, as is shown by the adventures of William Diaper in Vanua Levu, Viti Levu and Lau. Diaper made his Fijian

149. Endicott, op. cit., p.45.
debut in 1840 at Somosomo. After a reception which would easily have ended in his death, he secured the protection and friendship of the most powerful chiefs of the region. Even at this late stage of Fiji's contact history people asked him if he was a real man or a spirit; and he felt that he was treated and respected more because he was a novelty than because of his humanity. The chiefs looked on him and treated him like a favourite pet, and the common people:

... evinced much curiosity at seeing me, some of them scarcely believing their own senses, putting forth their hands towards me to prove whether I was tangible or not; while others would come and shake their hands before my eyes to ascertain if I was blind, and then say I was not blind but had eyes like a cat. Others would say I was a leper, or like one, which others would contradict, by saying I resembled a pig with all hair scorched off more than anything I knew of. The young girls would not come nigh at all, and if any of the young men laid hold of them to force them close to me, they would scream as though they were going into fits.151

Early in 1842 Diaper was at Bau where people were better acquainted with the humanity of whites. He was useful to Cakobau, and well received;152 but a few years later he was travelling through Lau fleeing Cakobau's wrath, and learnt on the island of Komo (about 30 miles south of Calvert's station on Lakeba) that the risks of being a "friendless child" with "salt water in his eyes" were grave indeed,153 notwithstanding Calvert's claim about missionary influence.

The Fijians then, were as pragmatic and rational about the reception of strangers as the peoples of the island groups further east. It is likely that nowhere were beachcombers received and

152. Ibid., p.461.
153. Diapea, op. cit., pp.139-140, 163.
treated invariably in the manner dictated by an abstraction called custom. On the contrary, if custom is an abstraction of observed behaviour then the Pan-Pacific custom in relation to strangers was to treat them as circumstances and self interest directed. The pattern of pragmatism in Fiji, however, exhibits no such unilinear progression from one form of behaviour to another, as one sees in Tahiti or Hawaii. In the 1840's one can see the same range of behaviour and attitudes as existed in the first decade of the century. In this respect Fiji has more in common with the Marquesas, although in the range of behaviour it is more like Tonga and Samoa.

In all island groups in the eastern Pacific a potential beachcomber arriving on an island shore was of interest in two ways: first there was the fact that he was a stranger of a particular and often unusual kind; second, there were the material objects which came ashore with him - ranging from the wreckage and stores of an entire vessel in the case of a shipwreck, to a meagre assortment of clothing in the case of the poorest deserters. Because property was of greater value than human life - especially if that life belonged to a person who had no identity in the local community - the fate of the beachcomber was closely related to his attitudes and the islanders' attitudes towards the property which came ashore with him.

The universal experience of beachcombers landing in Polynesia and Fiji was that they no longer had any rights respecting their own property. It was either taken from them forcibly on arrival or shortly afterwards, or else they were expected to redistribute it without undue delay. Normally, any property which came ashore either as flotsam or as the personal possessions of a foreigner was liable
to be appropriated by the man with the highest rank. Instances of such appropriation occurring in the case of shipwreck are to be found throughout the literature;\textsuperscript{154} that it happened in the case of property brought ashore by human means is suggested by Wilson for Tonga, and implied for Hawaii by Mathison.\textsuperscript{155} That this confiscation happened throughout Polynesia can be inferred from Sahlins' observation that:

Everywhere in Polynesia, the chief is the agent of general, tribal-wide distribution. The chief derives prestige from his generosity. In turn his prestige permits him to exercise control over social processes . . . \textsuperscript{156}

Not only was it the prerogative therefore of the chief to assume control over property coming ashore, but if anyone else, stranger or subject, presumed to exercise such control then that person would be seen to be aspiring to rival status.\textsuperscript{157} Two Tongan visitors to Port Jackson had discovered that money makes a man a chief;\textsuperscript{158} it was the same in Polynesia.

The link between status and the ownership of property was the ability to redistribute the property. Distribution established one's wealth and created obligations. Since property existed to be redistributed not hoarded, it was inevitable that a castaway or immigrant would not be able to monopolise his possessions. It was

\textsuperscript{154} For two examples see Turnbull, \textit{op. cit.}, pp.302-305, and Oliver, \textit{op. cit.}, pp.89ff.

\textsuperscript{155} Wilson, \textit{op. cit.}, p.99. Mathison, \textit{op. cit.}, pp.412-413.

\textsuperscript{156} M.D. Sahlins, \textit{Social Stratification in Polynesia}, (Seattle, 1958), p.xi.

\textsuperscript{157} This is true even for highly stratified Polynesian societies: the precedence of adjacent ranks was not clearly defined, while the status of a stranger was not known at all.

\textsuperscript{158} Martin, \textit{op. cit.}, I, p.248.
imperative therefore that property coming ashore be kept in the hands of those traditionally responsible for its distribution. This imperative was sometimes rationalized as a religious duty - as temporal exigencies often are - as in the case of Kau Moala's landing at Futuna. Mariner's account of Kau Moala's experience at Futuna has been taken as typical (by, for example, Pearson) of Polynesian practice. On landing, canoe and possessions alike were confiscated, and the expedition fitted out anew by the Futuna chiefs so that the voyage could continue. That Futuna was not unique is shown by Thomas's remark that when a white man goes to live with a Tongan chief the latter assumes all his property and resupplies the newcomer with anything he needs, as he needs it. On Rotuma the Rochester deserters in 1820 were stripped of everything they had, and immediately given mats; the same happened to the Glide castaways in Fiji. Patterson and Turnbull (in Hawaii and Tahiti respectively) discovered that wealth gave a man status, and conversely hospitality and deference depended upon one's ability to reciprocate.

It is probable that flotsam and jetsam (if such they may

159. Ibid., 1, pp.308-309.
162. Eason, op. cit., p.33.
163. Endicott, op. cit., p.41.
164. Patterson, op. cit., pp.66-68; Turnbull, op. cit., pp.269, 272, 305-308. According to the missionary Cover, the Tahitians de- rided the Captain of a wrecked vessel for claiming ariti status. They said that he could not be an ariti if he no longer had a ship. Examinations of Mr. Cover by the Directors, 12 September, 1800, L.M.S.-S.S.L., Box 1.
be called) not only belonged to recognised indigenous categories of thought, but that a positive demand developed for European goods in the exchange and distribution system. This seems likely for Tahiti from Turnbull's account, and in Hawaii it was ruthlessly centralized by Kamehameha. The evidence is less clear for western Polynesia but the cutting off of boats from the William Penn on Savaii in Samoa in the mid-1830's was possibly motivated by a demand in the Samoan system of distribution and exchange for European commodities, for the captured boats' crews were compelled to pull the boats to another part of Savaii. 165

Resistance on the part of beachcombers to the confiscation of their property was frequently punished by instant death 166 or injury, as Maude pointed out. Maude quoted a writer advising his readers that if ever wrecked in the Gilbert Islands, to:

... never think of disputing possession of the property cast ashore; it is their sole right ... all waifs or strays cast upon their portion are theirs by right ... 167

This advice was sound for Polynesia at large, and Fiji, as well as for the Gilberts, but nevertheless, there were numerous exceptions. In Tonga, Mulikiha'amea refused Vason's gifts, "telling me he did not want my property, but me"; 168 Morrison stressed that the possessions of the Bounty men in Tahiti were not stolen, 169 and the Oeno

165. This is not a 'castaway' incident; the boats were sent ashore for provisions. J.H. Aulick, 6 June, 1836, enclosure, U.S.S.N.
166. Wilson, op. cit., p.99; Sparshatt, op. cit., p.15; Ransome, op. cit., p.137.
167. Quoted in Maude, op. cit., p.150.
168. [Vason], op. cit., p.85.
169. Morrison, op. cit., p.98. A case of theft had occurred, but the item was recovered. Ibid., pp.85ff.
castaways on Vatoa were allowed to keep their personal property though the wreck was plundered. Trood's observation that in Samoa a sailor with a full sea-chest was treated with excessive deference and politeness until the chest was empty, suggests that in Samoa not everyone who landed was robbed even though one could not expect to keep one's goods, and it has already been mentioned that Turnbull's wealth made him a man of consequence in Tahiti. In addition it should be mentioned that on Vatoa the islanders regarded the Captain of the Minerva as a chief (even though he had lost his ship, cf. Tahiti, above) and allowed him to keep his personal possessions. There are a few other minor exceptions for which no explanation can be offered - it can only be concluded (as before) that pragmatism or politeness sometimes overrode tradition.

The moral is that the beachcomber who insisted on European property rights was likely to be shortlived, as Twynning discovered on Lakeba, and as Cary apparently knew without being taught. The reason was probably twofold. Initially it was a matter of traditional chiefly prerogatives intermingled with religious ideas; later as the culture contact processes developed, it became a matter of excessive demand for a limited supply of European commodities.

170. [Cary], op. cit., p.13.
172. They had, since Cary's stay a few years before, learnt to show less restraint where the property of the crew was concerned. Twynning, op. cit., pp.55, Cf. p.51.
173. Twynning, op. cit., p.73.
174. [Cary], op. cit., p.53.
These two factors cannot at any time be clearly distinguished, because the latter had obvious political implications; and the former reason was not alone in its influence for long, for the islanders were quick to perceive the utility of European artifacts. Attitudes to property, therefore, could mean the difference between survival and death for a beachcomber. The reason was simply that in all island groups the reception and treatment of beachcombers was directed by islanders, aware of island circumstances and interests. The traditional island authority figures were still very much in control of their affairs, and they looked on contact with the West as something which they could accept and deal with on their own terms. The self confidence and integrity of indigenous society shows no sign of having been called into question during the decades of beachcomber arrival, nor were the beachcombers themselves allowed to acquire the status or influence which would allow them to assume the direction of events. Contrary to the implications of the "chief or dinner" formula mentioned earlier, and discussed by Mannoni,\(^{175}\) the islanders were not over-awed by the supernatural character, or superiority with which white people are sometimes thought to have been viewed. If the islanders did entertain such ideas, their powers of observation, deduction and control were not thereby weakened, and the erroneous beliefs were, therefore, shortlived. It follows, in addition, that the successful adaptation of a beachcomber to island society and the status he achieved and role he performed depended very much on the disposition of his hosts.

The gap between being received into island society, and being accepted as a member of it was usually bridged - and probably

\(^{175}\) See Chapter 1, above, p.11.
could only be bridged - by the forging of kinship relationships, either of adoption or marriage. To become a member of society, therefore, one had to become a member of a family.  

The essential element of this formula was the development of a relationship with a woman: either a filial relationship or a conjugal relationship. Relationships with women were an important aspect of a beachcomber's life, from arrival to death or departure.

In the first place, the intervention of women was often responsible for the survival of beachcombers at the time of arrival in an island community. This almost certainly seems to have been the case with Read in Tonga in 1821, and it saved Diaper in Lau in about 1844, and Whippy's son David, on Vanua Levu at about the same time. This feminine patronage only accounts for a small minority of beachcombers (as far as can be known), but in a larger number of cases, the attention of women saved beachcombers from early deaths, or made life for them less uncomfortable. Among the more notable examples are the cases of Patterson on Batiki in Fiji during his illnesses, that of Oliver on Vanua Levu after the wreck of the Glide in 1831; in the Marquesas Torrey was saved more than once from death inflicted by his enemies by the warnings

176. Cf. the anthropological dictum that in primitive societies social organization is kinship organization.


179. Patterson, op. cit., p.96.

180. Oliver, op. cit., p.123.
of his wife and other women. In making life more agreeable and in facilitating the integration process, women were again prominent, especially in cases where a beachcomber was adopted by a woman of high status, such as Jean Rives in Hawaii in 1810 or William Mariner in Tonga in 1806. In these cases the relationship between the beachcomber and the island woman was usually a maternalistic one (though in the foregoing examples Diaper and Torrey are obvious exceptions). Most beachcombers were induced to marry island women, if not through their own motivation then through pressure from their hosts. Torrey married a Marquesan woman in order, he said, to allay his hosts' suspicions about him. Their suspicions, which were fully justified, were frustrating his efforts to leave. This reason is unusual - few beachcombers rationalized their actions to that extent. But social pressure to take a wife (or more) was common. In Hawaii Kamehameha bade his white men to "bind themselves to the soil" by taking wives after the conquest of Oahu in May, 1795. He was probably concerned equally with thus allying his men to himself as with promoting their comfort and well-being. It was normal for beachcombers who rendered valuable services (or who were expected to do so) to be given a wife, or a

182. II, op. cit., p.86.
183. Martin, op. cit., I, p.84, II, p.94.
186. He thereby sought to ensure their continued loyalty to himself since traditional constraints and obligations would have been inoperative with the white men, as they were outside the kinship and tapu systems.
plurality of wives. This trend was most marked in Fiji, where Magoun was given eight wives before he had done anything, and one of Erskine's officers was offered six wives to be Tui Levuka's leader of the host, or ten if he proved capable. Polygamy was perhaps practised on a larger scale in Fiji than in the Polynesian islands, but Holmes was said to have been free to choose several wives in Hawaii, and 'Daniel Dash' in the Marquesas found himself with more than he had expected. 'Dash' presents this information in the context of being inducted into the society, as if acquiring wives was one of the ways in which a complete social identity and acceptance was established: a view supported by Melville's account of Lem Hardy at Hanamanu. Western Polynesia does not differ significantly in this respect from the East, for both Tonga and Samoa provide stories of beachcombers being secured to their communities by marriage.

That some beachcombers did not marry (or seem not to have married) is surprising, considering the strong pressures in favour of marriage. Robarts did not marry until he had lived in the Marquesas four years, and had refused several offers. On one occasion the reason he gave was that he was still young, and planned to

188. Erskine, op. cit., p.219.
189. Cartwright, 'Genealogy', n.p. Cox, op. cit., pp.37, 38, also mentions wives being offered as an inducement to men to settle in Hawaii.
191. Melville, Omoo, (London, 1924), p.27. See also Melville's remark about "taboo men" having a wife in every valley, implying that that was an essential aspect of one's status. Melville, Typee, p.334.
192. [Vason], op. cit., p.111; Trood, op. cit., p.135.
return to his homeland; on another occasion that he wanted to continue travelling. It seems that he eventually married partly at least to secure himself against starving during periods of food shortage.\textsuperscript{193}

The case of Young, Davis and Holmes in Hawaii who were encouraged by Kamehameha to marry in 1795 is equally curious. Young and Davis had been resident in Hawaii since 1790 and during that time had received many favours and much property, and yet had remained unmarried. Holmes had been in a similar situation for two years, though marriage and divorce were said to be easily arranged.\textsuperscript{194} Hairbottle had not delayed marriage on his arrival, but when his wife died, did not re-marry.\textsuperscript{195} In Tonga William Mariner remained unmarried, throughout his four year residence, although the marriage of young men of similar age was not unknown.\textsuperscript{196} Mariner's contemporary in Fiji, Lockerby, claims to have made an agreement with his marooned fellows which included an undertaking to form no connections with Fijian women.\textsuperscript{197} While an explanation for Lockerby can be posited,\textsuperscript{198} none can be suggested for the others. As Robson suggested in Coe's case (Samoa), the best way to learn a language was to sleep with it;\textsuperscript{199} similarly marriage was the fastest and easiest way to assimilation in a broader

\textsuperscript{193} Dening, \textit{op. cit.}, pp.76, 91, 122-123.

\textsuperscript{194} e.g. Boit, 'Journal of a Voyage', (Ms.), 16 October, 1795; Cox, \textit{op. cit.}, I, p.37.

\textsuperscript{195} Cox, \textit{op. cit.}, I, p.37.

\textsuperscript{196} e.g. Read, also a Tongan resident - described himself as a boy in 1821, but had three children by 1829. Orlebar, \textit{op. cit.}, pp.55-56, 69.

\textsuperscript{197} Im Thurn and Wharton, \textit{op. cit.}, pp.25-26.

\textsuperscript{198} i.e. shortness of residence, combined with an urgent desire to escape.

sense for it provided one with an identity founded on kinship. Wives moreover were an economic asset, and their productivity was not without influence on a man's social status.

Marriage was frequently involved with status without account being taken of productivity, however. The Russian explorers Krusenstern, Lisiansky and Langsdorff assumed that the influence a beachcomber enjoyed was due to the status of his wife - thus they explained Robarts' greater influence than Cabrè's. Most of the evidence suggests the reverse relationship: that the more influence one acquired then the higher in the social hierarchy could one marry. Young's second wife was of higher status than his first, just as his fame was greater at the time of his second marriage. The practice of a beachcomber acquiring a chief's daughter or sister as a wife more or less immediately on landing, is not well attested, and if it was at all widespread is unlikely to have been continued for long. Diaper, for example, one of the first resident beachcombers in his part of Cakaudrove (Vanua Levu) was scorned when he suggested that he might marry a chiefly woman. Magoun's adventures in Cakaudrove ten years earlier carry no suggestion that any of his eight wives were highborn. For the average run of beachcombers

200. While Fiji demonstrates this most clearly, it is also true of Polynesia.


202. Cartwright, 'Genealogy', n.p. Young's first marriage was in 1795 to Namakalua, who was of chiefly descent. His second marriage in 1805 was to Kaoanaeha, a daughter of one of Kamehameha's brothers, Keliimakal, and Kalikookalani, a high chiefess.


204. Turpin, op. cit., $20.
a wife from the common people was the best they could expect, for of
the well known beachcombers whose wives were chiefly, all had resided
long enough to establish their status, or to have performed some ser-
vice which gave them a claim to marry a relation of a chief. Among
these may be cited the Bounty mutineers and Hagerstein in Tahiti,
Vason and Read in Tonga, Lamont in Tongareva, Hardy in the Marquesas,
Coe in Samoa (if he can be called a beachcomber), Diaper, Savage,
Whippy and Danford in Fiji, and Twyning in Futuna,205 in addition to
the well known Hawaiian cases.

While it has been suggested that the role of women might
have been to facilitate the adjustment of beachcombers to island
society, that was not necessarily their intention, for as the dis-
cussion above implies, the interests of women were subordinated to
other considerations such as those of political power and social
status. The consideration of status however, motivated women as
well as men. The suggestion that island women preferred European
men to their compatriots could be dismissed as a piece of European
male ego-ism, as it seems to be in the case of Melville.206 But to
do so would be to ignore the diversity of the evidence. Turpin says
of the first beachcomber era in Fiji that Fijian women at that time

205. See respectively Edwards and Hamilton, op. cit., p.106 (Bounty
men).
   Turnbull, op. cit., p.295 (Hagerstein).
   [Vason], op. cit., p.111.
   Orlebar, op. cit., p.69 (Read).
   Lamont, op. cit., p.197 and passim.
   Melville, Omoo, p.27 (Hardy).
   Diapúa, op. cit., p.102.
   Thomson, South Sea Yarne, pp.307-308 (Savage).
   e.g. Coffin, op. cit., p.80 (Whippy).
   Field notes, 20, 9 February, 1974 (Danford).

felt their status to be enhanced by living with a white man, implying that that was no longer the case.\textsuperscript{207} The most insistent evidence for the preference for Europeans comes from Samoa. Broadly, two reasons were given: first that it was part of the rivalry between villages to 'own' a white man; second, that a European husband treated his wife more kindly and worked her less hard than a Samoan husband.\textsuperscript{208} Hamilton's account of the wives of the \textit{Bounty} men in Tahiti as faithful and affectionate also supports this interpretation.

Paradoxically, evidence to the contrary also supports the claim, in that it suggests that nineteenth century European male fantasies were not distorting the evidence. There is Cox's story of William Davis's adulterous Hawaiian wife,\textsuperscript{209} and 'Dash's' story about the Marquesan women attacking him,\textsuperscript{210} and there is consistent evidence from Tonga of an aversion among the women to foreign men.\textsuperscript{211}

Just as there was a range of attitudes of island women to foreign men, so did the foreigners exhibit a variety of attitudes from utter devotion to extreme brutality. A rigid geographical demarcation would be misleading, but most of the evidence relating to beachcomber brutality towards women comes from Fiji; to the east relations seem to have been more placid. But for Fiji the allega-

\textsuperscript{207} Turpin, \textit{op. cit.}, $128.$


\textsuperscript{209} Cox, \textit{op. cit.}, I, p.37.

\textsuperscript{210} Anon., 'Six Years ... ', \textit{loc. cit.}, p.136.

\textsuperscript{211} Orlebar, \textit{op. cit.}, p.80; Diapea, \textit{op. cit.}, pp.214, 237-238. Oral evidence is contradictory, Field Notes, 96, 80. 12, 13 December, 1974.
tions of beachcomber brutality towards women are repeated in a variety of sources, and range from the purchase or abduction of women to the beating and mutilation of them.\textsuperscript{212} It was also suggested in Fiji that a husband had proprietorial rights over his wife, being at liberty to sell, exchange, kill, eat or flog her; the beachcombers offered in their defence that they merely conformed to local custom. As to flogging, for instance, it was alleged that "The women would never do without" and "They are used to it, and would do no work without occasional beatings".\textsuperscript{213} Erskine was of the opinion that the Fijian beachcombers kept large numbers of women to use mainly as slaves.\textsuperscript{214} It is therefore possible that the scornful attitude of Connor and Diaper towards their numerous women companions was not unrepresentative.\textsuperscript{215} Similar stories of brutality from Samoa and Tonga are not unknown,\textsuperscript{216} but it was extremely rare. According to Brown; the great grief of an escaped convict beachcomber for his dead Samoan wife gave rise to a Samoan proverb:\textsuperscript{217} In eastern Polynesia


\textsuperscript{214} Erskine, \textit{op. cit.}, p.199.

\textsuperscript{215} Turpin, \textit{op. cit.}, §128, Diapea, \textit{op. cit.}, pp.45, 171; [Brown], \textit{op. cit.}, p.28.

\textsuperscript{216} T. Haweis, 'Papers - Supplement', (Ms.), p.323. [Vason], \textit{op. cit.}, pp.70, 90. F.T. Bishop, 'Narrative of a Voyage', (Ts.), II, pp.117-118. The incident described by Bishop took place in Samoa, though he places it in the Hervey [Cook] Islands. See Williams, 'Voyage of the Olive Branch', 1832, L.M.S.-S.S.J., Box 7.

\textsuperscript{217} [Brown], \textit{op. cit.}, p.20. The beachcomber is known only by his Samoan name, Ulupuao. On the death of his wife he expressed his grief by saying, 'Pela ou te toe maua se isi. Ai ua pau ai', or 'It is not as if I could ever get another. I suppose this finishes it'. The Samoans found the reason amusing, and the saying 'O le pau ai o Ulupuao' became a way of expressing the final word on a subject.
beachcombers seem to have had more harmonious relationships with their wives. One reads occasionally of indifference or anger, but also of a beachcomber who was so attached to his Hawaiian wife, that although she was 'a most incontinent jade' he would not exchange her for another.

The role of island women in beachcombers' lives was an important one as far as their adaptation to and success in island society was concerned. But apart from a small number of cases of matronly women interceding to save or ease a beachcomber's life, their role was a subordinate one, as indeed it was in Polynesian and Fijian society generally. As such they can be said to have facilitated the assimilation of beachcombers, and in some cases (though here there are numerous exceptions) to have been a major influence when beachcombers decided not to leave their islands. At the same time the rank of one's wife might (but not necessarily) indicate the degree of status and influence one attained in island society. Nevertheless, it is not possible to infer from a beachcomber's relationships with island women the completeness or ease of his assimilation to island norms.

Although the aspects of island society discussed in this chapter provide the sine qua non first for the survival and then for the assimilation of a beachcomber, favourable island circumstances were not in themselves sufficient, the ultimate fate of each beach-

218. Wilson, op. cit., p.228.
220. e.g. Wilson, op. cit., p.228; Dillon, op. cit., Vol. 1, p.290.
comber was an individual matter. With the high rates of departure and mortality among newly arrived beachcombers it is necessary to look to individual beachcombers for a description and explanation of the process of assimilation.

It has been noted earlier in this chapter that the happiness of a beachcomber in island society was independent of his ability to learn the ways of his host society. Among the more important obstacles to the mental well-being of beachcombers was the apparently superficial experience of boredom which was not uncommon during the adaptive phase. It was a feeling which became at times overpowering, and was probably responsible for the desire of many beachcombers to ship as quickly as possible. As Diaper put it:

If these savages require variety for the sake of passing away a monotonous life it is no wonder that I embraced every opportunity of change that offered.222

Diaper, though a beachcomber *par excellence*, never identified himself closely with the islanders, a fact which linked with the boredom which he experienced, suggests a clue to the major difficulty of assimilation. In the combination of Diaper's life-long beachcombing, the boredom and the hostility referred to above can be seen the ambivalence which motivated the beachcomber enterprise. The psychoanalytical interpretation of boredom is hostility directed towards oneself.223


223. See Otto Fenichel, *The Psychoanalytic Theory of Neurosis*, (New York, 1945), p.15. "The displeasure of boredom turns out, on closer inspection, not to correspond to a lack of tension but rather to an excitement whose aim is unconscious". At least in its chronic forms the apathy and lack of initiative associated with boredom "represent defences against aggressive and sadistic impulses", p.186.
The unconscious object of the hostility is the external environment, or in the beachcombers' case, island society. The reason for beachcombers' hostility towards island society was suggested in Chapter 3. If the unconscious motivation for becoming a beachcomber was an attempt to recover repressed aspects of childhood then the experience was bound to be fraught with anxiety, because any attempt to unlock repression provokes a violent psychological reaction. The tragedy of psychological repression is that one is condemned always to seek, but never to find: one prevents oneself from finding.  

The necessary defence against finding what was looked for in island society was to reject that society, that is, to develop hostility towards it at the unconscious level. At a more conscious level the fact that Polynesian society was not a state of childlike felicity as the eighteenth century Romantics thought, was also capable of provoking a reaction which took the form of hostility. The strength of that hostility is the measure of the expectations held for Polynesian society. In both cases, the hostility towards the Polynesians could not be expressed, for to do so was to invite death. The boredom therefore could not pass until some personality adjustment had been made; the passing of boredom indicated that Polynesian society had been accepted, and that the beachcomber would probably be able to live out his life satisfactorily in the island environment.

Boredom did pass, but its presence indicates that the major obstacle to a beachcomber's becoming assimilated into island society was his own unconscious perception. The passing of boredom was des-


225. A person who because of repression cannot accept and enjoy life, is also not able to accept death. *Ibid.*, pp.145-146.
cribbed by Forbes in this way:

Monotony . . . is so complete and profound that it neutralizes itself. There is so little to mark the lapse of time, that it passes away noiselessly and swiftly, and in the end the sum of all the impressions is decidedly pleasant.226

It was this adjustment rather than simply learning new forms of behaviour which enabled beachcombers to live for years:

... all quite contented with nothing to do - the vegetating animals!227

The resistance towards assimilation which lay behind the feeling of boredom was sometimes allowed conscious expression such as in the deliberate effort by some to prevent themselves from "going native".228 The resentment which Torrey consciously concealed in the Marquesas and the way he and his companion Noyce harboured and nurtured their desire to escape suggests that their concessions to assimilation were simply a means to this end. In many cases the beachcombers clung to evidence of their Europeanness: Lamont to his books,229 the Bounty mutineers to their Sunday observances,230 David Whippy in his penitent letters to his mother,231 Oliver Holmes and Edward Robarts in their emphasis on monogamy and chastity,232 and

227. Browning, op. cit., p.175.
228. e.g. Lay and Hussey, op. cit., pp.50-51. Lay and Hussey were in Micronesia not Polynesia, but that is irrelevant to the claim being made here.
231. David Whippy, 'Letters relative to . . .', (Ms.), p.4.
Brown in Tonga with his door latch and European kitchen ware. Sometimes this characteristic became exaggerated into a strongly independent, nonconformist stance common among the first beachcombers in Fiji - notably Savage and his comrades; but also present in less dramatic cases such as that of Samuel Patterson who with his friend Steere celebrated Christmas, 1808, on one of their chief's fowls. This escapade nearly cost Patterson and Steere their lives, as it eventually did Savage's companions on Bau, and - it can be assumed - others of similar disposition whose lives were too short for their fame to become known to posterity.

As in these last examples, beachcombers who had access to their compatriots were the least assimilated, because they could through contact with each other, continue and reinforce their European identity, and could find companionship without having to fumble with alien concepts and norms in an unfamiliar language.

Eventually, all beachcombers who survived conformed to the ways of their hosts with reasonable consistency. Some did so after making a conscious, rational decision that that was the way to happiness and security; for others it can only be assumed that they fell into the patterns of behaviour which were most rewarding and less conducive to stress without rationalizing about it. The conformity of beachcombers to island practices is well attested - many sources, indeed, seem to make a point of noticing it either in

234. [Cary], op. cit., p.31; Dillon, op. cit., I, pp.4-5.
235. Patterson, op. cit., p.97.
236. Lamont, op. cit., pp.262, 303; Im Thurn and Wharton, op. cit., p.23.
wonder, or in order to pass a moral judgment, or (in first person accounts) in order to justify it.237

Conformity to internal patterns of behaviour was the first step towards assimilation. Perhaps the earliest attempts at conformity were in the matter of dress and language. Native dress was adopted as an attempt to please one's hosts,238 or in an attempt to conserve the clothes until they were needed,239 or because the clothes were confiscated by the islanders.240 Cary found it expedient to dress like the Fijians because he found that if he was conspicuous in battle he seemed to become everyone's target.241

The need to conform in language is self-evident and epitomises the problem of adjustment generally: one learnt it more quickly alone than with companions,242 and the more quickly it was mastered the easier life became. Most beachcombers seem to have been able to communicate at a fairly basic level within several weeks;243 but proficiency in the language took much longer - from a few months to a year or so. Dimsdell in Hawaii said he had a working knowledge of Hawaiian in about six months;244 Robarts seems

237. Turpin, op. cit., § 2.
Sparshatt, op. cit., p.17.
239. Turpin, op. cit., § 129.
240. Patterson, op. cit., p.83.
241. [Cary], op. cit., p.52.
242. Vide the experience of the L.M.S. missionaries in Tonga, [Vason], op. cit., pp.81-82.
243. e.g. Diaper in Samoa, interpreting only three months after his arrival. Jackson, loc. cit., p.414.
to have had an adequate mastery of Marquesan within a few months, although after years of residence he was never as fluent as the Marquesans. Robarts said of his companion, Walker, that he was unable to get hold of the language, and gave that as a principal reason for his unhappiness. 'Daniel Dash' who was in the Marquesas a generation later said that he could communicate within a few months, but proficiency in the language took ten. In Tonga one of the L.M.S. missionaries claimed that his knowledge of Tongan was superior to that of the beachcombers who had preceded them there, and one of their Wesleyan successors decades later commented on the inadequate mastery of Tongan by foreign residents.

Since effective mastery of the language was the sine qua non of assimilation, as Howard pointed out, it is doubtful that many beachcombers did 'go native' thoroughly. Those who did achieve a high degree of assimilation probably did so with the assistance of formal adoption and deliberate tutelage, as happened to Mariner in Tonga. In some cases, being tattooed was an indispensable preliminary to total acceptance - as Robarts found only after years of residence at Nukuhiva. Robarts' rival, Cabri, was extensively...

245. Langsdorff, *op. cit.*, p.98. Cabri, Robarts rival and contemporary, spoke Marquesan better, but had forgotten his native French.


250. See above, pp.188-189.


tattooed, and was judged by Langsdorff to be more thoroughly assimilated.253 Melville also observed the association between tattooing and total acceptance, and so did Torrey.254 In Tonga Vason was subjected to social pressure to be tattooed, as if he had progressed further than his clean skin justified.255

The net result of the multifarious factors promoting and inhibiting assimilation was a fairly high degree of conformity with island practices. But conformity in itself was no measure of the degree of assimilation: witness Diaper's injunction "When in Rome to do as Romans do".256 There are numerous instances of beachcombers conforming to a certain point, but no further. Most claim to have drawn the line at cannibalism,257 others at being tattooed.258 A number refused to conform to local sexual practices.259 Other practices less central to island life were also the subject of beachcombers' non-compliance: such as the indiscriminate killing of prisoners, taken in war.260 The Bounty mutineers in Tahiti possessing both numbers and bargaining power refused to conform to practices

253. Langsdorff, op. cit., p.98.
255. [Vason], op. cit., pp.178-179.
257. Turpin, op. cit., § 95; Martin, op. cit., Vol. 1, p.109; Im Thurn and Wharton, op. cit., p.45.
259. e.g. Im Thurn and Wharton, op. cit., pp.25-26; Dening, op. cit., p.150.
260. Catholic Church, Tonga, Miscellaneous Papers, P.M.B. 191 - the story of Charles Simmonet; also Jackson, loc. cit., p.437.
which conflicted with their prior allegiance to the king of England. 261

Although in cases of consistent conformity one cannot with
certainty claim to be able to distinguish thorough assimilation from
a conformity which was merely external, it is possible to identify a
continuum on which some beachcombers appear to be more thoroughly
integrated than others. Among the most thoroughly assimilated may
be numbered those who lost the use of their mother tongue, such as
Vason in Tonga, Cabri in the Marquesas and Connor in Tahiti. 262
Others who appear more Polynesian than European (though not by the
criterion of language) were those who continued to prefer a predom-
inantly Polynesian (or, where appropriate, Fijian) style of life
long after an alternative became available to them in island local-
ities. Among these may be counted John Young in Hawaii, Paddy
Connor in Fiji, James Read in Tonga, and Tom Franklin in Samoa. 263
David Whippy in Fiji could be thought to belong to this group, but
he adhered to (or reverted to) practices which accorded more with

261. Morrison, op. cit., p.78.

262. [Vason], op. cit., p.197; Langsdorff, op. cit., p.98; Wilson,
op. cit., p.227. The extent of Vason's integration into Tongan
life shows clearly despite the heavy censorship of the Church;
in Cabri's case the association of forgetting French and being
well integrated is inferred from Langsdorff's comparison of
Cabri with Robarts.

263. Young: received European visitors in Hawaiian chiefly style,
and "is now more Indian than white man" in 1811 according to
Ross, op. cit., p.33.
Connor (or Connel) prided himself on his Fijianness as late as
1840 - see Wilkes, op. cit., III, p.69.
James Read had left and returned twice to Tonga between 1821
and 1829, Orlebar, op. cit., p.69.
Franklin in the 1850's, well endowed with kava, mats and friends,
"He is contented, and while others look on him with pity and call
him a miserable being, he is a happy old man". Pritchard, op.
cit., p.203.
his New England upbringing than with the ways of his adopted home.264

Distinguished from this group are those who became thoroughly familiar with island society and functioned as effective members of it, but who identified themselves and judged themselves by standards external to the island environment. Among these were Isaac Davis and Alexander Adams in Hawaii, Robarts in the Marquesas, Cary in Fiji and John Twyning. In these cases nonconformity was covert and one wonders what mental conflicts these men must have suffered. Davis, Young's friend and companion, disapproved of teaching the Hawaiians too much lest they rise above their station;265 Adams' journal contains Scottish songs and other reminders of his pre-island life.266 Robarts was proud of his services to commerce, and claimed that this calling was a factor in his choice of residence.267 Cary's willingness to work for beche-de-mer vessels, and various remarks imply that he never looked on his residence in Fiji as anything other than temporary; nor did Twyning - hence the lateness of his marriage.268

264. For example, according to family traditions he governed his family in a patriarchal, New England fashion (Field Notes, 9, January, 1974); at least from the late 1840's he was firmly involved in Fiji's inchoate money economy as an entrepreneur, and later associated himself with J.B. Williams' claims for compensation from Cakobau implying that at least as early as 1855 he was again identifying himself as an American. Letter, Boutwell to Waterhouse, 19 October, 1855, U.S.C.D., Fiji.

265. Campbell, op. cit., p.100.

266. Alexander Adams, 'Journal', (Ms.). Adams, indeed seems to be more like a public servant of foreign origin than a beach-comber in any strict sense. His only employments were as ship's captain, and harbour master, and though he married a Hawaiian, does not seem to have 'gone native'.


A third grouping on the integration continuum seems to form with people whose standards are neither Polynesian nor European. These men were marked by forceful and independent personalities who seem to have understood the relativity of cultures, and had no more attachment to one set of arbitrary rules than to another. There were few representatives of this type - perhaps because men of this type ran more chances of premature death than their more malleable contemporaries - which includes Diaper, Savage and perhaps Lockerby, Lamont, Marin and Melville. These men show a strong anarchical element in their character; and in their behaviour they pleased themselves, recognising few obligations to anyone. Lamont, for example, manipulated the politics of Tongareva for no other reason, and governed by no other consideration, than his own entertainment. The numerous escapades through which Diaper passed cry out for mention, but he was himself able to abstract from the particular:

As I was thrown, in the first place, by untoward circumstances, wholly unsought by myself, into these outlandish countries, and being considerably disgusted at the usage I had frequently received at the hands of my own colour... and perceiving without being gifted with any great amount of penetration, that it was all a farce, a boast and a lie, I naturally concluded to myself to make the best of a bad bargain, and especially as I had been sent into this world, if not exactly against my will, at any rate without having a vote on the subject, to get through it as easy as practicable. 270

In addition to these three categories were the larger numbers of beachcombers whose assimilation was at the level of adequacy rather than effectiveness, and those who functioned at various degrees of

271. A distinction made by Howard, op. cit., p.5.
inadequacy. Why individual beachcombers fell into one category rather than another probably cannot be explained with certainty. Any explanation related to the duration of residence or to learning ability is inadequate. In the latter case no other criterion for assessing learning ability is available; in the former some short-term beachcombers assimilated more thoroughly than did some long-term residents. A clear example of this contrast is presented by Vason (Tonga, 1797-1801), whose beachcombing was completed in four years, and Alexander Adams, who lived in Hawaii from 1816 until his death in 1871. Adams never achieved the same degree of absorption in island life as Vason. Nor can the answer be found wholly in terms of island life, as can be seen by contrasting the fates of the survivors of the Port-au-Prince in Tonga. 272 The attitudes and life histories of Young and Davis show contrasts although they can be considered to have shared identical experiences during their early years in Hawaii. 273

The novice beachcomber then, had a reasonably good chance of receiving a generous and hospitable welcome on his arrival. Whether he was able to capitalize on this favourable situation depended on two things. The first was his ability to perceive and conform to island ways. The second was to make himself indispensable. Working from conventional historical sources, the distinction between a successful beachcomber and an unsuccessful one is capricious. It

272. Martin, op. cit., II, pp.72-73. Cf. Orlebar, op. cit., p.80. Some of the survivors became life long residents, others left at the first opportunities; some gained rank and favour, others remained nonentities.

273. Davis's suspicion about allowing the Hawaiians to learn too much would seem out of character with Young; Davis was murdered in about 1810 by some chiefs who resented his political influence, whereas Young died of natural causes in 1835.
does not yield to analysis because it was a function of personality. If it is assumed that the personality factor was constant (or irrelevant) there were a number of other factors which were important. Foremost among these were the question of personal property, the beachcomber's relationship with island women, and his ability to meet the islanders' demands for skills and services.

Successful assimilation into an alien society is probably best measured by the extent to which one's foreignness is unnoticed. The more one blends with the social and cultural scenery, the better one has adapted. Success for beachcombers in island society, however, frequently did not consist in being chameleon-like in character. If that was all that was necessary for acceptance, then one must posit a host society that had absolutely no objections to receiving adult strangers among them as residents. Such a society would be curiously tolerant, static and simple. Polynesian and Fijian societies in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries were none of those things. As has been shown above, they would not absorb undefined numbers of strangers without taking their own interests into account. Consequently, the security and happiness of beachcombers frequently depended less on their being thoroughly and indistinguishably integrated, than on their being able to serve the interests of the local hierarchy. This requirement often meant that the most valued traits of a beachcomber were those which were in contrast (though not necessarily in conflict) with local practices. In short, success for a beachcomber usually consisted in being able to make himself useful. "Usefulness" could take a variety of forms, ranging between the performance of traditional tasks in traditional ways, to the application of European skills and technology to the
economic and political needs of one's hosts.

When beachcombers were still a novelty the requirements were more simple than they were to become with closer acquaintance. As long as simply having a white man enhanced the status of a chief, it was sufficient for a beachcomber to be only a pet. If the beachcomber behaved himself and was content with his circumstances then that was enough to ensure his well-being. As the supply of beachcombers increased, and as acquaintance became closer, the chiefly desires became more complicated. The beachcombers who could discharge their obligations by occupying an existing status and occupational position were few. On the one hand was a man who performed as an authentic pagan priest; on the other hand were those who were the personal attendants of chiefs. In the first case the role was too specialized and arcane for foreigners to become adept at it; in the latter case it was an under utilization of beachcombers' skills.

The skills which a beachcomber was usually called upon to perform were those which were commonly found among eighteenth and nineteenth century seamen: the ability to work wood and metal, the ability to use and maintain muskets and small cannon, and the ability to entertain with stories of the world beyond the Pacific. The roles which beachcombers were called upon to fill are the subject of later chapters. For this chapter it is important to stress that survival

274. Jackson, loc. cit., p.419.
276. Cyclopaedia of Fiji, (Sydney, 1907), pp.71-72.
of beachcombers depended on their willingness and ability to perform the tasks demanded of them. Co-operation and conformity therefore can be regarded as the first rule of success. On the need to co-operate, Diaper was said to have found that the oven was "a good talker and persuader". Conformity was a matter of appearances, and there was room for individual variation, from polygamy, to tattooing, to observing local manners, and keeping or ignoring the tapu, depending on local conventions. Lockerby went perhaps further than was necessary in painting his body and staining his hair in the local fashion, as well as adopting local dress. Vason and Twynning were two beachcombers whose conscious efforts at conformity were most sustained, and least superficial than those of most. Vason sedulously set himself to learn and practice the niceties of polite society, being moved by an ambition to be distinguished among Tongan chiefs. Twynning twice had to back down in a confrontation which nearly ended in his death. In each case Twynning, acting on the basis of European values, was in the right; in local terms he had acted insultingly and even criminally, and could only extricate himself by a conscious effort to think like a local. The superficiality of conformity and co-operation was tacitly recognised by both islanders and foreigners: for example, as Turpin inferred from the experiences of the first Fijian beachcombers, even though one might possess chiefly status it was unwise to interfere in politics on one's own initiative.

279. [Vason], op. cit., p.154.
281. Turpin, op. cit., §128.
The second rule of success was closely related to the first: to respect the authority of the chiefs. To Young and Davis in Hawaii this was phrased as acting from a sense of obligation towards a benefactor; Browning in Samoa claimed to have been motivated by gratitude. Lockerby dealing directly with a Fijian commoner in a dispute was warned by Tui Bua that the safest course was for him to work through his authority. The danger of failing to respect the rights which a chief felt he had over a beachcomber was referred to by Diaper in the context of wanting to leave one place and live in another.

The third rule was to take positive steps to ensure one's popularity. A leading exponent of this rule was Lamont in Tongareva who practised as a raconteur, and found that the popularity thus earned was a solid basis for political action. An ability to entertain was an asset, but it had to be accompanied by what Langsdorff called "a good character", and by Sterndale's prerequisites, hospitality and generosity.

If these three rules helped one to gain a place in island society, then two further rules helped to keep one there. Both Campbell and Mariner found that it was a widespread opinion among the Hawaiian beachcombers "that the natives be taught nothing that

283. [Brown], op. cit., p.16.
284. Im Thurn and Wharton, op. cit., p.72.
285. [Brown], op. cit., p.25.
288. Sterndale, op. cit., p.47.
would render them independent of strangers".\(^{289}\) That this determination not to outlive one's usefulness was widespread can be seen in the stratagem of beachcombers like Torrey and Cary who each overloaded his musket when an islander wanted to borrow it, causing a powerful recoil and a superstitious wariness.\(^{290}\) If one's skills could be readily stolen then one's life was as valueless as that of a man of property - for the fifth rule was to possess "nothing whatever to lose or to be murdered for".\(^{291}\) Endicott pointed out the validity of the same rule in Fiji:\(^{292}\) Macrae noticed in Hawaii, and Diaper experienced in Tonga, that a man who by initiative and industry acquired wealth locally was just as vulnerable as one who landed with a full chest.\(^{293}\)

Complete integration into island society, then, is a chimerical quality to look for in the experience of beachcombers. It was unlikely to occur because it was fundamentally a matter of personality, not learning; if it did occur, then *ipso facto* one could not detect it. At the same time total integration was usually unnecessary, as a beachcomber could be carried by the customary tolerant behaviour towards strangers, or by the fortunate concatenation of events and ideas in island society. Given a reasonable willingness of islanders to tolerate for reasons of their own, foreigners living amongst them, if a beachcomber observed the five basic rules

\(^{290}\) Torrey, *op. cit.*, pp.145-146. [Cary], *op. cit.*, p.42.
\(^{291}\) Coulter, *Adventures on the Western Coast of South America* . . ., I, p.192.
\(^{292}\) Endicott, *op. cit.*, p.38.
\(^{293}\) Macrae, *op. cit.*, pp.30-31; Diapéa, *op. cit.*, p.238.
of success, his prospects were good. It scarcely seems simplistic then to suggest, as the Samoans did to Diaper that "If I would only try and make up my mind to live altogether among them", 294 then all else would follow.

CHAPTER 6

BEACHCOMBERS IN ISLAND SOCIETY

Introduction - goodwill towards beachcombers and their supposed divinity - attitudes to Europeans normally less favourable - contemptuous tolerance - beachcomber unruliness not great - chiefs' and commoners' attitudes contrasted - owning a beachcomber a point of prestige and more tangible utility - the value placed on them depended on circumstances - possessiveness pragmatic - ransom - beachcombers' relationships with chiefs - initially institutional, became personal - influence with chiefs limited - beachcombers firmly under chiefly control - exemption from tapu - chiefly authority undiminished - beachcombers as advisers - their roles in war and politics - in the Marquesas - in Tahiti - in Hawaii - in Samoa - in Tonga - in Fiji - firearms and indigenous warfare - Fiji continued - other beachcomber occupations in island society - conclusion.

Although the reception of beachcombers in island communities can be described as qualified and uncertain, and the process of assimilation not without difficulties, it is probably true that beachcombers in Polynesia enjoyed a greater degree of security and regard than they had any reason to expect. Few societies in history have made special efforts to accommodate immigrants, and it has been unusual for immigrants not to be allocated a scape-goat role. Even in recent nineteenth and twentieth century history, countries with a heavy dependence on immigration, and even with a policy of attracting immigrants, have done little or nothing to promote the material or psychological well-being of their new citizens.1 Measured by this

criterion, the beachcombers in the Pacific were fortunate. Partial and conditional though their acceptance was, and despite the apparent impossibility of becoming assimilated to a degree of 'invisibility', the fact of being an outsider was not a great disability. Nevertheless, indigenous attitudes towards beachcombers were not automatically favourable, and as suggested in Chapter 5 it was necessary for a beachcomber to assume most of the responsibility for his well-being.

Ernest and Pearl Beaglehole with reference to their anthropological fieldwork in Pangai, Tonga, described their arrival as being met with a mixture of suspicion and curiosity, which was eventually succeeded by an artless acceptance of them with their skills and services. In the beachcomber era however, a newcomer's skills and services were the means by which suspicion and hostility were overcome, they were the means by which his membership of the society was validated. That such validation was necessary is evident from the diversity and character of the islanders' attitudes towards beachcombers.

Initially there was a certain amount of goodwill and even deference generated by the confusion of Europeans with the supernatural. Fijian traditions related by Im Thurn attest that the

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were thought to be gods, while over thirty years later on Bau, Cary was asked if he was a spirit. As an example of the Eastern Polynesian reaction Krusenstern claimed that the Europeans were called 'Etua' (spirits) by the Marquesans and were thought to come from the sky. During Porter's visit in 1813 Europeans were still called by the same name, but were by then known to be human - albeit superior humans.

After the earliest contacts, however, the deference in which one sometimes finds beachcombers being held by the Polynesians and Fijians was probably an aberration from the normal reaction, brought about by a combination of novelty and awe of European technology. The populations at large were not inclined to make 'out-group' people the objects of their admiration indefinitely. When beachcombers behaved in a way which brought opprobrium on them, they caused no disillusionment to anyone - they merely confirmed existing prejudices. Two examples may be given of this. The first is the


5. [William S. Cary], Wrecked on the Feejees, (Nantucket, 1928), pp.51-52. Cf. Samuel Patterson, Narrative of the Adventures . . . , (Palmer, 1817), p.96. The identification of Europeans with the supernatural was not necessarily complimentary. Diaper frequently was asked in Cakaudrove whether he was a "real man" or an "incarnate devil with a tail", John Jackson, 'Narrative', in J.E. Erskine, Narrative of a Cruise . . . , (London, 1853), p.434.


fact that stories of beachcombers were used by adults to frighten small children. The second which comes again from Fiji, but is probably not unrepresentative of prevailing attitudes and behaviour, is worth quoting in full. At a masquerade in Ra, Viti Levu:

An individual took the character of a white man, and performed it so well, that he caused great mirth. He was clothed like a sailor, armed with a cutlass, and as a substitute for bad teeth (which is a proverbial characteristic of white men among these people), he had short pieces of black pipe-stems placed irregularly, which answered very well. The nose of his mask was of disproportionate length (which they also say is another prominent feature, adding nothing to the beauty of white men). His hat was cocked on three hairs, in the sailor fashion, and made from banana leaves. In his mouth was a short black pipe, which he was puffing away as he strolled about, cutting the tops of any tender herb that happened to grow on either side. This masquerade is carried on by the slaves when they bring in the first fruits and offer them to the king; and even at such times, when allowance is made for not being over scrupulous in paying the accustomed deference to superiors, they nevertheless keep a little guard over themselves, and behave with more or less decorum. But this mimicking sailor acted his part cleverly, and paid no attention whatever to decorum, but strutted about puffing away at his pipe as unconcerned as though he was walking the forecastle. He detached himself from the crowd, flourishing his cutlass about and gaping alternately in all quarters, as though he was a stranger just arrived, when some of the masqueraders reminded him that he was in the presence of Tui Dreketi. He immediately asked who Tui Dreketi was, and could not be made to understand, till some of them looked in the direction the king was sitting, when he pointed (which is greatly against the rules), and asked if that was the "old bloke", walking up to him bolt upright and offering his hand, which the king smilingly shook. The sailor then told him that he had better take a whiff or two with him, as it was the best tobacco he had smoked for many a day. The king, willing to make the best of the amusement, took the pipe, the spectators making the air ring again with their shouts and laughter, "Vavalagi dina, dina sara" (a real white man, a real white man).  

A dislike of Europeans is evident in this incident. In addition, the audience's concern on this occasion at the indecorous behaviour of

the actor is indicative of the strength of their feelings of outrage at similar behaviour by foreigners. At the same time their enthusiasm for the actor's conduct, and the chief's suspension of the usual code of behaviour attests to the faithfulness of the portrayal of a new arrival's conduct.

More broadly the beachcomber experience suggests that, the tradition of hospitality notwithstanding, the peoples of Polynesia and Fiji were more likely to be predisposed against foreigners, than in their favour. An anecdote about a Fijian who bought a monkey from a sandalwood trader and later dismissed his purchase as being "on account of his uselessness, only fit for chiefs" is strongly suggestive of the prevailing popular attitude towards beachcombers who were initially chiefly 'pets'. A similarly contemptuous attitude can be perceived among the peoples of most of the island groups. It is possible to attribute these unfavourable attitudes to the behaviour of the beachcombers themselves: their failure to pay due observance to local sensibilities earning them a bad name. The contemptuous tolerance of transgressing beachcombers is well attested. For example, Diaper's frequent sins of neglect and the insults which would have earned death for a Fijian were "summed up in his [Tui Cakau's] usual way by saying 'what could be expected from a papalangi (foreigner)?' There were, moreover, a series of insults which seemed to be especially applicable to Europeans. Diaper's being

compared in Fiji to a leper or a singed pig has been quoted in
Chapter 5. Mariner's skin was compared in Tonga to that of a
scraped hog in circumstances which suggest that the comparison
was not made simply to express the unfamiliar in familiar terms.
A Tongan 'queen' in Fiji once abused Diaper as:

... excrement that had been thrown away as not only use-
less but detestable and pernicious; that I had drifted un-
noticed and unregarded about the ocean, and had partaken
of the qualities of a sea-monster ... .

Diaper seems not to have been the most agreeable of people, and
perhaps deserved such insults as these; Mariner probably did not.
An example from Fiji confirms the derogatory attitude which lay
behind such insults. On one occasion when a beachcomber joined
in a conversation between Cakobau and a beche-de-mer captain:

The chief turned to him, exhibiting in his whole bearing
the utmost 'hauteur', and said, 'Who are you? - nothing
but a runaway sailor, who has no riches but what he earns.
You are not to say your own words. When Mr. Wallis tells
you to speak, then you may speak.'

These examples all come from the region of western Polynesia, a bias
which might represent either a bias in the evidence or might point
to a cultural contrast between east and west, especially since a
light coloured skin seems to have been prized among the peoples of
the east, but not in the west. There are however, sufficient cases

13. Ibid., p.429.
14. J. Martin, An Account of the Natives of the Tonga Islands, (2
of prejudice against foreigners even in Eastern Polynesia\textsuperscript{18} to suggest that biased sources are the more likely explanation for the discrepancy.

There is some validity in the notion that the beachcombers were an unruly class, disrespectful of chiefly authority. The unruly, however, either did not stay long, or did not live long. But it should not be assumed that such nonconformity was unjustified, or unprovoked, or one-sided. Given the underlying hostility or indifference among island populations towards beachcombers and the exploitative nature of the relationship between the two peoples, a certain amount of overt hostility, deliberate nonconformity or disrespect was to be expected. Considered in this light, the examples of beachcomber recalcitrance are surprisingly few. The most significant examples which had some political importance (or potential importance) were the attempted defection of Peter Hagerstein from Pomare in Tahiti in 1803,\textsuperscript{19} and the obscure opposition of Charles Pickering to Cakobau in Fiji in the early 1840's, which had repercussions on the Fijian power struggles in the early 1850's.\textsuperscript{20}

The example of the Ra masquerade, quoted above, is evidence also of contrasting attitude between chiefs and commoners towards foreigners. In the first place, it was the commoners who felt anxious


about the actor's infringement of the norms; second, it is clear that
the suspension of norms and the toleration of deviance were chiefly
prerogatives.\textsuperscript{21} It was the chiefs, not the commoners who devised
the escape clause that a man who was ignorant of local norms ought
not to be held responsible for violating them.\textsuperscript{22} In Hawaii this
escape clause appears not to have developed (although it did in
closely related Tahiti\textsuperscript{23}) and xenophobia was often allowed expres-
sion without chiefly restraint until the rise of Kamehameha, when the
political expediency of a beachcomber retinue became well recognised
by chiefs and commoners alike.\textsuperscript{24}

The fact that this escape clause was developed - and
developed so widely - suggests that the bad name which beachcombers
had among the indigenous inhabitants was not due simply to the mis-
conduct of the beachcombers. Toleration indicates two things: first
that the beachcombers were not a seriously disruptive influence in
island society, and second that there were good reasons for making
allowances for their peculiarities.

For a time the novelty value of having a tame white man
carried the beachcombers through the difficulties of acceptance and
of indigenous hostility. Owning a white man was frequently a point
of prestige,\textsuperscript{25} much as a person might find his social status enhanced

\textsuperscript{21} See also, John P. Twynning, \textit{The Shipwreck and Adventures} ..., (London, 1850), pp.73-74.
\textsuperscript{22} Martin, \textit{op. cit.}, I, pp.163-164.
\hphantom{22} John Williams, 'Voyage of the Olive Branch', [20 October ?], 1832, L.M.S.-S.S.J., Box 7.
\textsuperscript{23} Morrison, \textit{op. cit.}, pp.81, 240.
\textsuperscript{24} George Vancouver, \textit{A Voyage of Discovery}, (3 Vols., London, 1798), II., pp.142, 159.
\textsuperscript{25} [Brown], \textit{op. cit.}, p.29.
by owning a rare breed of bird or dog. This attitude was most characteristic of the 'pet' phase of culture contact — as when Diaper was appropriated by Tui Cakau in 1840. Diaper's having just stabbed a man was not only ignored, but Tui Cakau turned down a ransom offer of a musket and powder, saying that Diaper must stay and be his manu-manu (literally a bird, in context a pet).  

At the "pet" stage a beachcomber could satisfy a chief's need (or a community's need) for a status symbol which distinguished him from other chiefs. But even a manu-manu could become a nuisance or even a liability especially if ownership of them became common. Accordingly, and because of the limits which existed on Polynesian tolerance and hospitality, a utilitarian element crept into the situation. Two men who were enticed to desert the Peacock (one of the vessels of Wilkes' expedition) in Samoa in 1840 had been intended by the chiefs to become harbour pilots.  

Samoan enthusiasm for foreign learning, religion and utensils was almost certainly behind their attachment to individual beachcombers, for "being white men they must know". In Tonga an identical transition can be seen — from a chief coveting a European merely for the sake of possession, to keeping those who could be most useful, and killing off the surplus.  

30. e.g. the story of 'Jimmy the Devil', which in basic facts parallels that of Magoun in Fiji, Field Notes, 90, 12 December, 1973.
sensitivity of the Fijian chiefs to the utilitarian value of Europeans developed early and quickly, and is well known through the stories of Charlie Savage and his comrades, as well as the adventures of later beachcombers like Cary and Diaper.\textsuperscript{31}

In Eastern Polynesia the same pragmatism is evident. Pomare in Tahiti was anxious to take steps to stop his white men leaving him;\textsuperscript{32} but when he was not threatened by the possibility of their departure paid little attention to them.\textsuperscript{33} Hawaii appears to be an exception. Archibald Campbell though potentially of great value to Kamehameha's naval ambitions, was offered no discouragement to leave once he felt the urge to go in 1810;\textsuperscript{34} and in the same year Franchere had no difficulty obtaining his release from the king.\textsuperscript{35} The contrast, however, is superficial. Hawaii attracted more beachcombers than any other centre in the Pacific, and by 1810 Kamehameha could afford to choose whom he wanted, and could anticipate replacing even a man with unusual skills. The only occasion when he seems to have needed to use even gentle coercion was early in his career to prevent the departure of Young and Davis. His reasons for wanting to keep them at that time are only too obvious.\textsuperscript{36}

In the Marquesas, the statement by Browning in 1835 that the chiefs desire resident white men must be qualified by Torrey's

\textsuperscript{31} e.g. [Cary], \textit{op. cit.}, pp.28, 30, 37, 44.

\textsuperscript{32} Morrison, \textit{op. cit.}, p.119; T. Hawels, 'Papers-Supplement', (Ms.), p.94.

\textsuperscript{33} Turnbull, \textit{op. cit.}, p.294.

\textsuperscript{34} Archibald Campbell, \textit{A Voyage Round the World . . .}, (Honolulu, 1967), pp.105-106.

\textsuperscript{35} G. Franchere, \textit{Adventure at Astoria}, (Norman, 1967), p.36.

\textsuperscript{36} Vancouver, \textit{op. cit.}, II, pp.137, 141, 142.
testimony. In the early 1830's when Torrey was one of a boat load of castaways, the Marquesans enthusiastically assisted their departure. Torrey and two companions stayed behind, not wanting to undertake the risks of a long voyage in an overloaded, open boat. With the beachcombers thus reduced to a manageable number, their chief clung to them so tenaciously that Torrey escaped only by deceit and stealth. But Browning qualifies his own observation about the chiefs wanting white men: their purpose being to attract ships seeking provisions, "which results to their benefit".

The Polynesians therefore were willing to modify their reactions towards resident foreigners according to utilitarian considerations; indeed, it would not be an exaggeration to call the relationship exploitative for it is difficult to isolate instances of popular favour towards beachcombers from the accompanying circumstances. For example, when Vancouver wrote of the popularity of Young and Davis in Hawaii it is as well to remember that they enjoyed the protection and respect of Kamehameha, and had rendered valuable services. Or when Robarts boasted of the respectful attention with which he was received in his travels among the Marquesans, that he was probably the first European ever seen and was the guest of the chiefs. Erskine noted that in Fiji Europeans were generally respected, but added that there was an element of fear also.

37. William Torrey, Torrey's Narrative, (Boston, 1848), p.130.
more, when the Tongan chiefs expressed their admiration for a
"papalangi mind", and European superiority in knowledge, or remarked
upon European clemency (which was not necessarily thought to be a
virtue) it cannot be assumed either that these views indicate gen-
eral indigenous respect for beachcombers or that all Europeans were
thought to share in those attributes.

In all island groups a strong feeling of possessiveness for
a beachcomber became common, but the feeling was conditional. In the
Marquesas early in Robarts' residence (1799-1806) he was so highly
regarded that an insult to him nearly brought on bloodshed between
two communities. But when he moved to Nukuhiva where two Europeans
were already living, much less notice was taken of him. In
more isolated parts of the group jealousy between tribes for the possess-
ion of a white man persisted at least as late as the 1830's. In
Tahiti in 1798 the Tahitians refused to surrender deserters, and
assaulted a deputation sent from the Nautilus to ask for their
return. Similar accounts of jealous "ownership" of a beachcomber,
or of refusal to ransom a beachcomber, or of the obligation to avenge
an insult to "our white man" exist for Fiji, Tonga and Samoa.

Even in those island groups where aversion to Europeans is

44. Torrey, op. cit., p.143.
45. Michael Roe, (ed.), The Journals and Letters of Captain Charles
46. See William Diapea, Cannibal Jack, (London, 1928), p.39; Martin,
op. cit., I, pp.303-304, II, p.16; W.T. Pritchard, Polynesian
Reminiscences, (London, 1968), p.94; Wilkes, op. cit., III,
p.187.
most firmly documented - notably Tonga and Samoa - contrary evidence for their attachment to beachcombers is unequivocal. In Tonga, the Argo survivors in about 1800 were killed while trying to leave. In 1823 at Vava'u a boy was stolen from the whaler Elizabeth and his captors would not surrender him; and in 1827 Dillon and Dumont D'Urville both noticed the anxiety of the Tongan chiefs to possess white men. Similarly in Samoa, voyagers, missionaries and later residents agree that to possess a white man was a point of honour and that intense rivalry existed between chiefs and between villages on that count. The classic beachcomber sources for Fiji offer ample evidence of the same kind - Cary, Patterson, Jackson, Eagelston, Pritchard. In all of these cases however, the attachment to beachcombers was a privilege of the chiefs.

The fact that a high degree of possessiveness came to be characteristic of islanders' attitudes towards their beachcombers is not, however, evidence of an unthinking and naive admiration of the islanders for stray sailors, or even of boundless Polynesian hospitality. Nor is it in contradiction with the earlier discussion of Polynesian xenophobia. In Hawaii, for example, when white men were still a novelty people would gather to look at them. But as early as Vancouver's visits in 1791-1793, the novelty had worn off

47. Turnbull, op. cit., p.392.
and the Hawaiians had become more interested in European artifacts.51 Perhaps the clearest demonstration of Polynesian pragmatism in regard to the beachcombers was their propensity to view beachcombers and potential beachcombers in hard economic terms. The practice of ransoming would-be beachcombers developed rapidly. At least as early as 1802 in Ulietea and Tahiti, and possibly as early as 1789 in Hawaii,52 the chiefs were not only prepared to surrender their white men at a price of a musket each, but were enticing men ashore for no other purpose than obtaining a ransom for them.53 In the Marquesas the demand for beachcombers was greater and there is no evidence of ransoms before the 1830's when the price stabilized at a musket and a quantity of powder per man.54 A musket was the price further west.55 In New Zealand the ransom value of a white man between 1820 and 1840 was a fairly stable £20 worth of goods.56 That Pacific islanders were willing to exchange a man for commodities at all suggests that he was of less intrinsic value than his purchasing power. It is indicative that they did not feel that they needed beachcombers; their presence offered an opportunity either for en-

richment or for some other form of self-enhancement, and if a ship's captain was willing to pay well for a man's return, then that was their advantage and opportunity. Only in one known case was a ransom negotiated for a beachcomber whom his people did not want to lose. In this case the beachcomber - Magoun, in Cakaudrove, Fiji - was a well established resident and enjoyed high esteem for the work which he did as armourer and blacksmith. The negotiations took several months, and the ransom was paid in 1835 by the beach community at Levuka. The price for this valuable man was far beyond that paid for any other beachcomber, a fact which further confirms that once the novelty of owning a white man had passed, the islanders did not usually place a high value on them.\(^5\) The tenacity which the islanders showed in retaining their beachcombers even after their divinity and novelty had worn off is directly related to the ability of beachcombers to satisfy certain needs in island society. This ability was in turn a function of the capacity of island societies to adapt to changing circumstances and to take advantage of the opportunities which offered.

Stated simply, a positive attitude towards the beachcombers was conditional on his being able to serve the needs or interests of the receiving society; and those needs and interests were defined by the chiefs. The fact that there are instances of what appear to be open, unconditional acceptance and friendship between individual

\(^5\) E.J. Turpin, 'Diary and Narratives, 1870-1894', (Ms.), § 24. Magoun's ransom was six muskets, two kegs of powder, two rolls of lead, one bundle of hoop iron, one dozen knives, one dozen axes, two bolts of red cloth, twenty pounds of beads, twenty pounds of red paint, two iron pots, and one Tongan girl. In the Solomons a generation later the people of San Cristobal were unwilling and unlikely to allow a white man to be ransomed, though a coloured man could be easily released. See F.J. Bradford, letter, 7 September, 1861, British Consulate, Tahiti, Papers Vol. 5.
islanders and individual beachcombers does not alter the overall mercenary character of indigenous attitudes to foreigners. As Pearson has shown, tolerance of foreigners' deviance was circumscribed, and apt to expire even in the case of short-term visitors.58

The beachcombers' acceptance by the people at large was a consequence of the toleration and protection of the chiefs. For most beachcombers, and in most places, therefore, the history of beachcombers' relationships with island society is largely that of their relationships with island chiefs. This is especially true of the earliest years of European contact in the Pacific, and of the earliest years in the experience of individual beachcombers late in the beachcomber era. It was the chiefs of Hawaii who solicited Cook to leave Lt. King with them in 1779,59 just as it was the chiefs of Fiji who sought Erskine in 1849 to allow three of his officers to leave the Havannah.60

Those beachcombers who are most well known - for example, Robarts, Mariner, Young, Whippy, Cary etc. - were all the guests of the chiefs in whose communities they lived. During the phase in which a resident European was automatically a celebrity it was the chief's prerogative to offer hospitality. Although there is some evidence of beachcombers being looked after by commoners,61 this

60. Erskine, op. cit., p.219.
61. e.g. Patterson, op. cit., p.66. Alexander Ross, Adventures ... on the Columbia River, (London, 1849), pp.46-47.
was usually after the beachcomber era had passed its peak, and when chiefly demand had been saturated. Even in these cases however, a chief's knowledge and at least tacit approval for the beachcomber's residence was necessary.

In a great many cases the beachcomber was not only a member of a chief's community and household, but a member of his family through either adoption or marriage. Common though this practice was, it was by no means universal. Even such a prominent and favoured beachcomber as Young in Hawaii, for example, was not adopted into Kamehameha's family, and it was not until his second marriage fifteen years after his arrival in Hawaii, that he married a member of his patron's family (a niece in Western terminology).

It can be inferred that incorporation into a chief's family by adoption or marriage was a token of the high regard in which a beachcomber was held, as is suggested by the experience of the Bounty's men in Tahiti who as a body seem to have been highly thought of, and most of whom married the daughters of chiefs. 62

In addition, however, we know that in Mariner's case he was adopted by one of Finau's wives in order that he might be properly tutored and cared for. 63 Marriage was probably the surest tie which a chief could effect with a man whose company he valued and whose services he coveted. Marriage within the chiefly family intensified the personal obligation a beachcomber owed to his chief. Numerous though the examples are of beachcombers marrying thus, there are numerous instances of beachcombers enjoying high favour

with their chiefs but having to marry low born wives - such as Jimmy the Devil in Tonga, Magoun in Fiji, and Cabri in the Marquesas. The rejection of Diaper's application for the hand of a Fijian "maramei" is also relevant and has been cited in Chapter 5. The example of Charlie Savage in Fiji - reputed to have had one hundred wives, and who certainly had a plurality of well-born wives, was exceptional by any standards and reflects the extraordinary respect and influence which he enjoyed. But even the more modest achievement of the uxorious ex-missionary, Vason, was paralleled by no more than a handful of beachcombers, if any.

The strong and widespread desire on the part of island chiefs to 'own' a beachcomber retainer early in the beachcomber era defines the relationship between chief and beachcomber as an institutional one. What the chiefs were seeking in a beachcomber was a status symbol and an instrument. So intense was the wish for beachcombers that they became pawns in indigenous politics, and in the politics of contact after consuls were appointed and British and American warships began touring the islands. Magoun's case offers a good example of the internal politics of beachcomber patronage. His acceptance by the Fijians was preceded by a protracted debate between the chiefs. The chief spokesman for clemency towards castaways was a minor chief, perhaps motivated by ambition and aware of the potentialities of the situation. A compromise was found in the inspired words of a priest who directed that one be saved and the

64. The number of Vason's wives is unclear from his book. He had at least three, and probably more. Two are known to have been of high birth. [Vason], op. cit., pp.111, 131, 140, 182.

65. e.g. J.C. Williams, 26 December, 1843, U.S.C.D., Samoa.
others killed. The relevance of the intertribal political situation became apparent when Magoun's ransom was being negotiated. Magoun was resident in Cakaudrove, a powerful state not subject to Bau, but adjacent to Bua and Macuata which were. The negotiations were conducted at the highest level, through the Tui Cakau (the paramount chief of Cakaudrove). Tanoa, the Vunivalu of Bau, was applying some sort of pressure to secure Magoun's removal from Cakaudrove.

The intervention of the Levuka whites enabled Bau to extricate Magoun from Cakaudrove; by the same token, Cakaudrove could surrender Magoun without losing him to Bau. This face-saving compromise was made possible by the fact that Levuka was a tributary state to Bau, but without the Levuka whites being immediately at Bau's disposal. This interplay of regional politics helps to account for the extraordinarily high ransom which Magoun fetched.

In Hawaii and Tahiti Kamehameha and Pomare actively recruited beachcombers - especially when war was looming. Kamehameha's liberality in allowing beachcombers to leave at will was a later policy, in marked contrast to his actions of the early 1790's. There are however, innumerable examples which cannot be fitted into a known pattern of political behaviour, but which in their ubiquity point to a Pan Polynesian characteristic as the underlying motivation. The intensity of the rivalry between chiefs in Samoa, for example, mentioned by Trood and by John Williams is

67. Ibid., § 22.
68. For Tahiti see Morrison, op. cit., p.89; Turnbull, op. cit., p.319.
unlikely not to have implications (direct or indirect) for the concept of *mana*. That is, it can be inferred that chiefs sought resident white men not only to enhance *mana* but to demonstrate that their power and efficacy as chiefs was not diminishing in absolute terms, or being eclipsed by other chiefs. The divine association made with Europeans in the earliest contact stages almost certainly reinforced a connection between a chief's *mana* and his possessing a white man. The secularization of attitudes towards Europeans is unlikely to have had a counter-effect, for even a mortal white man could command awe, especially if he was skilled. To own one was a clear demonstration of power, of the vitality of one's *mana*, of one's favour with the gods.

So closely were the interests of chiefs and beachcombers connected that the relationship between them which began as an institutional one, developed into a personal one. The direction in which the relationship developed from that common starting point depended both on the prevailing island circumstances and on the personalities of the men concerned. Companionship, and what appears to be close friendship frequently developed between chiefs and beachcombers - the most famous examples being from Fiji, Hawaii and Tonga. The need of the chiefs for companionship and friendship was one which beachcombers could meet probably better than anyone else. They provided an opportunity to escape the isolation of high status. Some chiefs at least relished the opportunity for friendship unimpeded by the implications of *mana*, *tapu*, kinship or power, as is evident in Cary's departure from the Tui Nayau in Fiji in 1827:

... he took me by the hand and said, 'William, I am very sorry you are going to leave me. I shall be very lonesome
when I go home without you, but I shall always be your friend and you will know where to find me'.

Similar relationships of what might be real friendship are not difficult to discern in the beachcomber literature. It might have occurred in Tonga in the 1790's with the convict beachcombers, and it certainly did between Mariner and Finau a decade later, and between Kamehameha and his earliest European companions, Young, Davis and Holmes. The chiefs derived other benefits from their close association with beachcombers. These included formal entertainments, conversations about distant places and foreign institutions and ways of life, as well as companionship on expeditions both of pleasure and of state. Such relationships were founded on mutual need, and the reason why it developed between some individuals and not between others when the respective needs remained constant, is not open to analysis.

The need for friendship seems not to have been a primary, conscious aim when patronage was being dispensed. Affection developed out of mutual respect for the skills and other attributes of the men concerned. The friendship which men like Tui Levuka were said to

69. [Cary], *op. cit.*, p.30.
74. Ibid., I, p.57.
hold for whites at large\textsuperscript{76} would seem to be of questionable sincerity simply by virtue of its comprehensiveness; a better term than 'friendship' would therefore be 'good-will' - a term which admits more readily of ulterior motives. That these were present is implied by the apparent military and commercial advantage which Tui Levuka reaped from his tolerance. Kamehameha's 'friendliness' to whites in general is also well known; but equally well known is his discrimination between those who could serve his ambitions and those who could not. Pomare's ephemeral favours further suggest that it was the skills of white men, not their companionship which he respected most. The personal interest which a chief took in his beachcomber, probably never became divorced from potential interests - \textit{vide} Kamehameha's injunction to his white men to bind themselves to the land.

As personal retainers, beachcombers were also in demand to judge from a report of Housman officiating at yaqona ceremonies in Rewa, Fiji.\textsuperscript{77} The reason for this is uncertain: it might have been because of a beachcomber's individual loyalty to his chief, or due to his freedom from the complicated questions of relative status, or conversely to the status he had attained, or to his immunity from \textit{tapu}, or simply a reflection of the personal regard between the two men.

Because their alienness gave them special immunity, and because of their absence of ties with the community generally, or with factions within it or with rivals for power, the intimacy of the relationship between a chief and his beachcomber developed to

\textsuperscript{76} e.g. Wilkes, \textit{op. cit.}, Vol. III, p.60.
\textsuperscript{77} \textit{Ibid.}, Vol. III, p.115.
the point where the latter could become an influential adviser and trusted confidant in political matters. Extravagant claims have sometimes been made for the power exercised by the beachcombers over their chiefs. Brewster used the term "prime minister" in reference to one of them; Oliver used the term "beachcomber privy counsellors". Both of these terms, and others like them are inappropriate because they misconstrue and exaggerate the influence which an alien can come to exercise in a self-sufficient, hierarchical society.

The limitations on a beachcomber's powers may be shown by referring to the argument above that a beachcomber was a demonstration and instrument of his chief's mana. If this was true, then his status and authority could never be more than an extension or appendage to the status and authority of another who possessed mana in his own right. This suggestion accounts for the fact that a beachcomber could never become a major chief except as a vassal of another chief. He could never become the chief because his mana was derivative. There is an interesting exception to this rule in the case of John Churchill, one of the Bounty men in Tahiti, who as taio to Vehiatua III, inherited his title and prerogatives in the district of Taiarapu. Vehiatua died without issue, and by virtue of the taio relationship Churchill had become his kinsman. The example of Churchill therefore, affirms rather than denies that his mana was derived, though it was real enough. It also shows that circumstances


80. Morrison, op. cit., p.91.
in which a beachcomber became his own chief were in all probability, 
unique. Lamont, for example, who lived on Tongareva (Penrhyn Island) 
for about a year in 1853 admitted having aimed at absolute control of 
the atoll, thinking that an educated mind could easily subordinate the 
uneducated. He failed.81

Nor did the high regard in which many chiefs held their 
beachcombers extend to allowing them to possess much influence over 
affairs of state. In Tonga in 1797 for example, the attempts by 
Ambler to manipulate the relationship between the L.M.S. missionaries 
and the Tongan hierarchy was resented and curbed by the Tui Kanokupolu.82

For Hawaii there are some extravagant claims made for the power of 
white men83 - but it is as well to keep in mind Golovnin's remarks 
of his visit there in 1818. There were two obstacles to the intro-
duction of European civilization to the Hawaiians: Kamehameha's 
failure to appreciate its benefits, and the inability of the Euro-
peans to induce him to allow it.84 Of Kamehameha's six most influ-
tential counsellors only one was a beachcomber (John Young).85 In 
Fiji, according to Thomson, "Savage had ... the government of the

81. E.H. Lamont, *Wild Life Among the Pacific Islanders*, (London, 

82. Wilson, *op. cit.*, p.263.

83. e.g. Turnbull, *op. cit.*, p.228; 
Louis Choris, 'Voyage Around the World', (transl. extract, Ts.), 
n.p.; 
Abraham Fornander, *An Account of the Polynesian Race*, (3 Vols., 

84. 'Golovnin's Visit to Hawaii in 1818', *The Friend*, Vol. 52, 
(1894), p.60. Note also Golovnin's observation that although 
Europeans trained Kamehameha's army, they were never appointed 

85. W.D. Westervelt, 'Kamehameha's Method of Government', in 
*Hawaiian Historical Society, Thirtieth Annual Report*, (Honolulu, 
1922), p.25.
group in his own hands" - a claim which is quite false and which in any case conflicts with the more typical welcome Connor was given in Rewa at about the same time: he was offered friendship, rank, and anything else that he wanted, as long as he did not interfere in Fijian politics. Thomson attributed to the Levuka whites some responsibility for dictating the course of Fijian politics in the 1850's, but by that time they were, as a community (not as individuals) able to influence affairs on their own account rather than through their influence over a powerful chief. The areas in which beachcombers were able to change the opinions of chiefs were politically and sociologically trivial.

On the contrary, most beachcombers were kept firmly in a position of subservience, even if the status allowed them was high. Even Vason, who seems to have been better off than most, looked forward hopefully to "being freed from the many inconveniences of dependence, as a resident with a chief". Twyning, who lived in Wallis, Futuna and Lau three to four decades after Vason's residence in Tonga offers ample evidence of the sufferance on which beachcombers lived. On one occasion Twyning and his companions were scapegoated for some political disturbances in Futuna. In preparing to defend

87. Turpin, *op. cit.*, §129.
89. For example, Diaper's saving the life of a prisoner of war in Fiji. Bonaveidogo's stated opinion "that the Fiji custom was all a lie, and that all Fijians ... were fools, compared with Europeans" ought not, as Diaper shortly discovered, to be taken at face value. Diaper, *op. cit.*, pp.15-18.
90. [Vason], *op. cit.*, p.193.
themselves against persecution they were regarded as behaving treasonably, for which they were required to seek pardon and make obeisance. If such a well-entrenched and long accepted beachcomber as Twyning could find himself in such an awkward position, then there is no room for speculation about the freedom of political movement which a beachcomber had. His position as a member of island society was in this respect not different from that of any islander: he was subject to the will and whim of the chiefs, who exercised absolute power. The indulgences permitted to beachcombers merely accentuates this fact - by the paradoxical principle of affirmation by negation: the fact that special dispensations had to be made to cover the inappropriate behaviour suggests that the normal expectation was that beachcombers would conform. For a chief to refuse to exercise his power in a given situation is ipso facto to affirm that the power is his to exercise by his own choice.

Most indulgences allowed to beachcombers amounted to an exemption from tapu. Tapu was a foundation stone of social and political organization, and exemption from it was therefore the most important aspect of the beachcombers' place in island society.

Exemption from the tapu probably evolved from the early confusion over the supernatural or natural identity of Europeans: foreigners who were god-like, or at least subject to different gods were immune from the effects of, and exempt from the observance of the tapu, and in some places from tribute as well. Whatever its


92. For a description of the authority exercised by chiefs in Tonga see S. Latukefu, Church and State in Tonga, (Canberra, 1974), pp.9-10. See also Marshall D. Sahlins, Social Stratification in Polynesia, (Seattle and London, 1958), passim.
origins, it was a very convenient rationalization of the exemption from local norms of all kinds which has been referred to earlier. The privilege is well documented in Western Polynesia. In Eastern Polynesia the situation is less clear: Golovnin, who visited Hawaii in 1818 mentioned that foreigners while not being obliged to follow local customs, were prohibited from entering sacred places. Elliot de Castro, a later beachcomber, being considered naturalized, was allowed the latter privilege, but was required to observe all the usual tapus. Immunity from the tapu was a device of both personal and political advantage to the chiefs. Twyning offers the example of beachcombers being employed for such delicate tasks as shaving a chief - ostensibly because of the Europeans' superior dexterity with a razor. That dexterity was only important because of the tapu attached to the head. If a beachcomber drew blood, the incident could be passed off; if an islander did it the consequence would be fatal to the barber. A more sinister application of the immunity from tapu is described by Vason. During the civil war in Tonga in 1799 some fugitives of the party of the assassinated Tui Kanokupolu took refuge in a sacred place demarcated by a reed fence. The sanctity of the place made the refugees inviolable. Because of his immunity from the sanctions of the tapu, Vason was ordered to burn

94. V.M. Golovnin, 'Chapters on Hawaii', (Ts.), pp.12, 14. Cf. Morrison, op. cit., p.118 - the entry of a king into a house would make it tapu to Tahitians, but not, by implication, to foreigners.
95. Twyning, op. cit., p.70; also Diapea, op. cit., p.176.
the fence. He complied, and the refugees were massacred. 96

Twyning's experience on Futuna above implies that dispensations such as the tapu immunity were only allowed when there was sufficient confidence that the standing and authority of the chief would not thereby be threatened. 97

That beachcombers were subject to the same chiefly authority as indigenous islanders is attested by examples of beachcomber unruliness, or of disputes between beachcombers and islanders. The exercise of chiefly authority in such cases casts into proper perspective the claims made for Connor and Savage in Fiji, and Hitchcock in Hawaii that their most capricious whims were gratified. 98 Fiji and Hawaii also offer examples of chiefs re-affirming their authority over beachcombers. When Lockerby pursued a man who had stolen his razor, the Tui Bua intervened personally and instructed Lockerby to refer all complaints to him. 99 In Hawaii Kamehameha intervened in 1810 in a quarrel between an Englishman and a Hawaiian at the point where the former drew a pistol. 100 Several years earlier Kamehameha had curbed the drunken and anti-social revels of some escaped N.S.W. convicts by

96. [Vason], op. cit., p.173.

97. Cf. the importance of status differentials and dispensations available to islanders was informal but consistent in the highly stratified societies of Polynesia. In the less stratified societies there was not the same need because the chiefs exercised less personal and political power. Sahlin, op. cit., passim.


99. Im Thurn and Wharton, op. cit., p.72.

offering to join their next debauch. ¹⁰¹ Even in the less hierarchi-
cal Marquesas where the chiefs' powers were considerably less than
in Hawaii and Fiji, steps were taken to keep beachcombers in control.¹⁰²
Most examples of hostility or disrespect were of no such importance,
and remained at the same personal level from which the Hagerstein
and Pickering affairs developed. These examples concern cases of
conflicting personal interest;¹⁰³ personal insult - deliberate ¹⁰⁴ or
unwitting;¹⁰⁵ or a dispute over a beachcomber's relationship with a
woman of chiefly family.¹⁰⁶ They are, in short, the kind of matters
which cause conflict between people whether of similar or contrasting
status in many societies regardless of period or circumstance. Their
significance in this context is that despite the dependence of beach-
combers on the goodwill of the chiefs, and the advantages which the
chiefs saw in patronizing beachcombers, there was room in the rela-
tionship for tensions, disagreements and quarrels. That beachcombers
were members of island societies by virtue of the mediation of chiefs
placed certain constraints on them, and required the performance of
reciprocal services. But the relationship remained essentially a
personal one, not an institutional one, and consequently retained an


¹⁰². R.L. Browning, 'Notes on the South Sea Islands', (Ms.), p.47.
Cf. Rev. Thomas Slatyer, 'Journal', (Ms.), p.118, for an example
of the exercise of Samoan jurisdiction.

Lamont, op. cit., pp.249-250.


element of fluidity and unpredictability which defies rigid classification and generalization.

The principle of subservience to indigenous authority was not confined to issues of the maintenance of law and order: it extended to the same exactions as chiefs made of their indigenous subjects, 107 (notwithstanding the exemptions which some beachcombers were able by virtue of their rank, to obtain 108 ) and also to the same need to seek chiefly permission to travel or to marry. 109

Reference has already been made to the role of beachcombers as political advisers. Some beachcombers occupied influential and responsible positions, but this was always in the service of their patrons, not on their own initiative. The most spectacular known cases of such a relationship between chief and beachcomber is that between Mariner and Finau, and that between Kamehameha and Young, Davis and Holmes. Mariner is a clear example of an adviser whose advice was not always taken; 110 Young, Davis and Holmes all at various times were island Governors, and the sources for early Hawaiian contact history are unanimous that they influenced Kamehameha. But considering that Kamehameha's reforms in government were only slight modifications of existing Hawaiian institutions, 111 and his ambitions were


108. e.g. Martin, op. cit., I, p.296.

109. This is so well documented in the beachcomber literature that to select cases for citation is entirely arbitrary. See Rev. W. Lawry, 'Diary, 1818-1825', (Ms.), p.121; Joseph Ingraham, 'Journal . . . Hope', (Ms.), p.72; Twynning, op. cit., p.116.

110. e.g. Martin, op. cit., Vol. I, p.183.

111. Westervelt, loc. cit.
in no way unique, it is not credible that beachcombers influenced their chief to the point of manipulation. Beachcombers had their greatest influence with their chiefs in matters of little or no consequence. Williams' assertion that Connor's influence with the chief of Rewa in Fiji was so great that his most inhuman desires were gratified, even if true, is evidence (in context) only of inhumanity and cruelty on a personal scale, not political, and of the desire of the chief to secure Connor's services by allowing trivial freedoms. There were cases in which chiefs needed to rely on the advice of beachcombers, but in such cases there is no reason to think that chiefs were having matters decided for them; rather they were striving to make informed decisions, in place of decisions from a position of disadvantage in situations such as trading, or in deciding policy towards missionaries. Their attempts to learn English from beachcombers reinforce this interpretation.

The adviser role, therefore, was much valued by the island chiefs; but probably more important in their eyes was the ability of beachcombers to perform tangible services. The services for which beachcombers were recruited and patronized fall into two main categories: military and technical. Some chiefs were more alive to one than to the other: Kamehameha was the archetype of the chief who sought craftsmen, whereas the slender evidence from the Marquesas reveals no demand in that direction at all: beachcombers there were


prized more for their warrior prowess or their ability to attract trade. 115 Tahiti seems to share this characteristic. 116 There was, however, a point at which the military and technical blended - in the maintenance of firearms and other weapons. This is what happened in Fiji - and the blending of the two categories can be seen in the experiences of Diaper, Cary, Savage and Magoun, and the demand for beachcombers with skills is well documented for Tonga and Samoa. 117 Twynning offers the essence of the value of beachcombers to island dignitaries, but failed to see the causal relationship: "Our lives were not only spared, but we were received into his service". 118 Beachcombers, therefore, were a chiefly luxury. They were protected and patronized by the chiefs in order to advance the interests of the chiefs and their communities. Validation of their presence was essential, and it had to be in terms meaningful to their hosts.

The terms most meaningful to their hosts were politico-military. The use of beachcombers as armourers, warriors and tacticians appears to have been almost universal in the Eastern Pacific. War and politics was a sustained and absorbing interest for the hierarchies in all island groups, so it was perhaps inevitable that any foreign element would be scrutinized with a view to being able to serve those interests. This was especially the case when the martial prowess and technology of the foreigners became

115. e.g. Torrey, _op. cit._, pp.113-120, 123-126, 131-132.
118. Twynning, _op. cit._, p.70.
apparent, and this, in most cases, was immediately. The politico-
military role required of beachcombers shows a marked uniformity
for all island groups, but with considerable differences of scale.

In Eastern Polynesia the small end of the scale is repre-

tsed by the Marquesas Islands, where no major attempt at political
centralization was made. The smaller scale of war and of political
turmoil in the Marquesas may be attributed to a relative lack of
status differentiation and of the practically total degree of autonomy
possessed by the inhabitants of each valley. Lacking coastal plains,
in contrast to Hawaii and Tahiti, the development of larger political
units was impeded by the obstacles to mundane communication.

A remark by Coulter, a relatively late observer, suggests
that the warrior role was the major consideration in the accommodation
of a beachcomber. Europeans were valued for their proficiency with
firearms and for their coolness in battle, and were expected to fight
for their community as readily as any other male member of appropriate
age. To refuse to do so was to forfeit protection and hospitality.119
Coulter's formula is consistent with the experience of the missionary
Crook, who took up residence on Tahuata in June, 1797. After the
enthusiasm of his early welcome declined he found life there very
tenuous. He was soon eclipsed by a new arrival called Tom whose
warrior prowess proved to be the path to popularity, respect and
security.120 Despite Crook's accusation about his increasing the


120. This man, a Hawaiian, arrived in February, 1798, from the
 Alexander, Captain Dodge, according to Crook, Letter, 23 May,
1798, in G.M. Sheahan, 'Marquesan Source Material', (Ts.),
p.L. He is almost certainly the same man called by Fanning
"an Italian renegade", and was still there when Robarts
arrived in December, 1798. Fanning, Voyages and Discoveries,
(Salem, 1924), p.91.
flow of human blood, fancifully elaborated by Fanning into instigating wars, and having "become a prominent director of the affairs of the island", Tom seems from Robarts' testimony to have had no lasting effect on the polity of Tahuata: he was merely an accomplished warrior who died at an early age.\footnote{121}

Robarts described in some detail his own role in the wars and politics of the Marquesans. That role was primarily a tactical one - he modified the deployment of warriors, he chose fighting positions contrary to the traditional ones chosen by the Marquesans themselves and he turned defeat into victory by quickness of thought and boldness of action.\footnote{122} But at the same time it is clear that the strategy of inter-tribal relations, or even the prosecution of wars (as distinct from the battles) was far removed from Robarts' influence. During his residence at Nukuhiva where he became a man of consequence, he began to exert greater dominance over events: directing strategy, and composing quarrels between tribes.\footnote{123} The significance of his political and military activity, however, was no greater than its influence on the lives of the individuals with whom he lived and against whom he fought. It was of importance on a day to day basis, but made no lasting impact. In the end Robarts had to leave Nukuhiva because of his inability to exercise any lasting influence on Marquesan politics.\footnote{124}

\footnote{121. According to Dening his status was that of \textit{toa}, or chief warrior, and during 1798 "had considerable impact on the tribal politics of Tahuata and Hiva Oa". Dening, \textit{op. cit.}, p.47n. Such impact however, was certainly ephemeral. Robarts recorded Tom's death, early in 1799, \textit{Ibid.}, p.94.}

\footnote{122. \textit{Ibid.}, pp.78-85.}

\footnote{123. \textit{Ibid.}, pp.114-115, 120-121, 152-157.}

\footnote{124. \textit{Ibid.}, pp.157-159.}
Robarts, besides being the Marquesan beachcomber whose experiences are most completely known, probably also played as dynamic and influential a role as any beachcomber in the group. Melville's romanticized account of the Hanamanu beachcomber Lem Hardy is to a large extent misleading, without actually being false.

He had gone ashore as a sovereign power, armed with a musket and a bag of ammunition, and ready, if need were, to prosecute war on his own account. The country was divided by the hostile kings of several large valleys. With one of them, from whom he first received overtures, he formed an alliance, and became what he now was, the military leader of the tribe, and war-god of the empire island.

His campaigns beat Napoleon's. In one night attack . . . vanquished two clans, and the next morning brought all the others at the feet of his royal ally.125

Melville's portrait is correct to the extent that a beachcomber could win battles for his patron; but he could not build empires, for as Shillibeer pointed out a quarter of a century before Melville's brief excursion among the Taipi: wars between the valleys were frequent, but the battles were neither general nor sanguinary.126

Torrey's account of the exploits of himself and Noyce in the early 1830's confirm the - by then - long established practice: they influenced the events of days or weeks, but few lives were materially altered by their residence, while the lives of communities seem scarcely to have been affected at all.127 The claims by visitors therefore, about the pernicious influence of beachcomber

advisers¹²⁸ are either untrue or inconsequential.

In Tahiti, intercourse with Europeans of all kinds brought about Tahitian-inspired changes of great magnitude. The backing of the Pomare family by a succession of explorers, missionaries and other visitors was not, as they thought, a bolstering of traditional, accepted authority, but support of an ambitious family intent on superceding the old, balanced tribal system. Whereas in the Marquesas, the islanders insisted on local autonomy almost to the point of extinction, the Tahitians opted for centralization. This contrasting pattern of political change created a demand for beachcombers' services which was of the same character for both island groups, but of contrasting consequences. The contrast however, is to be explained by the broad pattern of culture contact, not simply by the activities of beachcombers.

As early as 1790 Tahitian beachcombers - in this case the men from H.M.S. Bounty responded to demands for help of a military kind. On the first occasion they lent their weapons; subsequently they attended in person; on all occasions victory accompanied them.¹²⁹ The contribution of the Europeans to the success of their faction is ambiguous at best. In the skirmish of 13 September, 1791, between the forces of the districts of Tetaha and Pare, the Tetaha people fled on realizing that the Bounty men were with the Pare warriors, without them having to strike a blow or fire a shot. The castaways however, attempted to ensure they would be of more use in future.

¹²⁹ Morrison, op. cit., pp.92, 100-101.
We Now informed the Chiefs that they must alter their mode of Fighting, and bring their people under some Command, in Case they should have occasion to go to war again which they promised to do; ... 130

A week later the castaways were again called upon, and insisted that the fighting be conducted as they directed. Their tactics and musketry resulted in victory for the Pare forces, 131 and the surrendering of the symbols of sovereignty to the "Young King" (Pomare II). 132 Morrison himself, however, was sceptical of the permanence of the victory which he had helped to bring about, for although the symbols of sovereignty were acknowledged, Pomare I (Matte of Morrison) was insulted. Morrison also reported that it appeared that only for fear of the Englishmen were the symbols acknowledged, and that respect for Pomare II was never present. 133 This admission makes it clear that Morrison thought that events without the Englishmen would not have been the same; but it implies also that continued involvement of foreigners would be necessary to give their contribution any lasting quality. Before the Pomares had consolidated the gains made in 1790, H.M.S. Pandora arrived and carried the Bounty mutineers away.

Between 1791 and 1797 when the Duff missionaries arrived, the Matilda castaways and Peter Hagerstein from the Daedalus were available to the factions. These men participated in the wars of those six years, but were not all ranged on the one side. The Tahitians recruited them eagerly and appear to have regarded the

130. Ibid., p.101.
131. Ibid., pp.102-106.
132. Ibid., p.114.
133. Ibid., p.114.
presence of white men as the guarantee of victory - a belief which, since it was commonly shared, was likely to become self-fulfilling.\textsuperscript{134} The balance of the advantage of a beachcomber retinue appears to have gone to the Pomares who were consistently supported in battle by Hagerstein, Lind and Pollend.\textsuperscript{135} Though their power had increased, it seems to have been as tenuous as before, and the role of beachcombers in enhancing or weakening it would therefore appear to be marginal, and certainly less important than the changes of allegiance and the deaths of various Tahitian chiefs.\textsuperscript{136} In the wars of 1797 and 1798, a beachcomber retinue was insufficient to save Pomare from reverses, but their presence probably saved him from political defeat at this time.\textsuperscript{137} It was intervention by Captain Bishop and the crew of the Nautilus - not beachcombers - who kept Pomare in the political running at this time.\textsuperscript{138} In the stalemate which appears to have existed after 1798 it may be inferred that the political and military importance of beachcombers in Tahitian affairs had declined to a negligible degree. Sought after, and recruited they still were, but being by now in the employ of several factions their questionable influence cancelled itself out. Neither the Bounty castaways nor their successors had even modified Tahitian concepts of battle or tactics, as House noticed when the presence of Captain Bishop's men deterred the anti-Pomare forces from attacking

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\textsuperscript{134} Wilson, \textit{op. cit.}, pp.182, 184.
\textsuperscript{135} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{136} e.g. the death of Temarii, W.W. Bolton, 'Old Time Tahiti', Bolton Papers, (Ts.), Vol. 17, pp.75-76.
\textsuperscript{138} Bolton, \textit{loc. cit.}, p.81.
\end{flushleft}
Pomare. The Englishmen, says House, were unable to persuade their friends to pursue the fleeing enemy, for they were satisfied with token successes. This attitude to war was the principal limiting factor on the beachcombers' role in war and politics in Tahiti. Even when their help was required therefore, they were required to conform to local conventions. It was as if participation was the important thing; influencing the outcome was not.

In 1815, the last Tahitian war, Pomare II had a swivel mounted on a large canoe, operated by a European named Joe who was apparently responsible for many casualties. This incident, however, proves not that the use of beachcombers in island wars was decisive, but that wars kept up the demand for 'ownership' and use of beachcombers. Contemporaries thought otherwise in their Eurocentric observations. Hagerstein's death notice in the Evangelical Magazine described him as the Tahitians'

... old general, who had so often led the royal party on to battle and to victory, [whose loss] would be severely felt upon this occasion [Pomare's reverses in 1810], for he was himself an host! The natives from his savage fierceness, dreaded his very name; and in all cases of emergency, Pomarre's [sic] party looked up to him as a deliverer.

Even if Hagerstein ('Peter the Swede') was the one man army the missionaries portrayed him to be, it can hardly be said that he alone shaped Tahiti's history in the period 1790-1810. The explorers, missionaries, traders and the Tahitians themselves deserve that reputation; Hagerstein and his fellows were merely warriors of note, who performed that role in order to validate their position.

in Tahitian society.

The same formula applies to the role of beachcombers in Hawaii, but with significant differences in its practical application. The differences stem from the absence of missionaries and resident traders during the beachcomber period (roughly 1790-1812), and the centralized nature of power even before political unification. Whereas in Tahiti early chroniclers were quick to attribute the changes and instability to the derogatory influence of the beachcombers, in Hawaii it was Kamehameha who almost always commanded the centre stage; frequently the history of Hawaii's contact phase was recounted with scarcely a mention of the role of Europeans. \(^{141}\)

Kamehameha, however, was more consistent in his patronage of beachcombers than were the Pomares, and more single minded in the pursuit of his ambitions. He was moreover, aided by a more steady stream of merchant vessels whose willingness to trade he turned to advantage. \(^{142}\)

Kamehameha's spectacular progress of conquest and usurpation did not begin until he had some beachcombers in his service - Young and Davis. The speed with which he brought the island of Hawaii under his control might have been due to the military impact of these men, \(^{143}\) but it is not clear that beachcombers were not in the service of his rivals even at that early time, nor is it certain

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141. e.g. F.W. Beechey, *Narrative of a Voyage to the Pacific*, (New York and Amsterdam, 1968), Ch. III; Ellis, op. cit., IV, pp.16-17.

142. These statements do not pretend to be a complete explanation of Kamehameha's success. Not least in importance was the fact that he was one man; the Pomare's were a dynasty.

143. e.g. Charles H. Barnard, *A Narrative . . .*, (New York, 1829), p.229, in retelling what purports to be Young's version of events.
that Kamehameha had a monopoly of firearms. What is clear in Hawaii's history after 1790 was that if any balance of power was to be maintained, then all the major chiefs needed to have beachcombers and firearms. The possession of firearms, and of men skilled in their use probably gave an advantage, (provided that all other factors were equal) - for Kamakau, the nineteenth century Hawaiian historian records Kamehameha's anxiety to possess these assets. 144 But that these assets were not in themselves sufficient to topple kings and subdue kingdoms is suggested by the Hawaiians' claim that the battle for the island of Maui fought between Kamehameha and Kalanikupule at Wailuku in 1790, was one of the hardest fought on record. 145 Both sides possessed firearms and beachcombers, so the outcome must have been determined by a combination of relative sizes of the armies, and by other tactical considerations. Beachcombers and their weapons, therefore, had become essential - if only to keep up militarily with one's rivals. 146

Maui had barely been conquered, however, when rebellion broke out on Hawaii - the rebellion of Keoua. Kamehameha's forces evidently had whatever advantage beachcombers and firearms gave, for according to Kamakau:

It was said that without the foreigners the fight would never have ended; no one could have told which side was victorious.147


146. According to Barnard, in the war with Maui Kamehameha had at first had to retreat because the musket flints were too worn to be reliable, Barnard, op. cit., p.230.

Kamakau, however, lived under the regime of the victor. Elsewhere he shows that even with that advantage, Kamehameha's side was the weaker. It was the murder of Keoua, and the timely co-operation of the volcano Kilauea which saved the conqueror from early annihilation.

As early as 1791 foreigners and their artifacts appear to have become naturalized into Hawaiian warfare - but without apparently making any major impact on existing concepts of war or on tactics. In the joint Kauai-Oahu invasion of Hawaii in 1791 both sides used muskets and small cannon, operated by Europeans, and met at the battle of Kepuwha'ula. As in the battle of Wailuke the year before, the slaughter was immense. The battle was, according to Kamakau, indecisive, but in that it caused the invaders to retreat without changing the status quo, the war may be said to have gone to Kamehameha. Doubtless, had either side won a decisive victory it would have been attributed to the foreigners and their machines of war.

Instability and rebellion were not confined to the areas of Kamehameha's immediate influence. In 1793 there was rebellion on Kauai. Europeans again were said to have been active on the side of established authority, and to have played a role which was perhaps decisive - for by now they were allegedly not simply fighting, but advising on tactics. But beachcombers were also on the side of


149. Fornander, *op. cit.*, II, pp.241, 243-244.


the rebels,\textsuperscript{153} which implies that their presence seems to have been self-neutralizing in its effects, and \textit{ipso facto}, to have been essential (but not a sufficient factor) in avoiding defeat. This view was certainly that of the Hawaiian chiefs, and they told Vancouver that they favoured the presence of Europeans because of their knowledge and management of firearms.\textsuperscript{154}

Civil war on Oahu in 1794 exhibited the same features as seen on Hawaii and Kauai.\textsuperscript{155}

The major military event of the decade was the conquest of Oahu by Kamehameha in 1795. Kamehameha himself told his people after this success that victory was due to the white men - for their having carried off the enemy's weapons.\textsuperscript{156} This role was not one which apparently required specifically European attributes, and therefore says little for the influence of foreigners. Indeed, neither in the planning stages nor execution of the invasion of Oahu do the beachcombers appear to have been anything more than "extras". Despite Vancouver's views about the influence which Young and Davis had over Kamehameha as his principal advisers, they appear to have played no major part in the planning of the invasion of Oahu. Kamakau says that this was done in the traditional way, on the advice of the native chiefs; foreigners are not mentioned at all.\textsuperscript{157} European sources make much of the role of Young and

\textsuperscript{153} Vancouver, \textit{op. cit.}, III, pp.67, 74.
\textsuperscript{154} \textit{Ibid.}, III, p.68.
\textsuperscript{155} Kamakau, \textit{op. cit.}, p.168.
\textsuperscript{156} \textit{Ibid.}, p.173.
Davis in particular, and no doubt their use of firearms made a vivid impression on witnesses. But beachcombers with reputations no less than those of Young and Davis fought with firearms with the Oahu forces, for example Oliver Holmes. There are, moreover, inconsistencies in the European accounts which lead one to doubt their reliability generally. According to Macrae, Davis contributed materially to Kamehameha's victory by shooting the Oahu leader (unnamed) with the swivel early in the battle of Nu'uanu, as well as having command of a large part of the invading army. Bishop on the other hand says that Davis was left on Hawaii as co-regent during the invasion. All that one can say with certainty about the role of beachcombers in the political and military developments of the time is that they were required to participate. This requirement implies no special contribution which they made to the outcome of events, but simply that their hosts regarded them as valuable assets, and that they were not excused from the obligation of every member of the community to support his chief's enterprises.

From 1795 to 1810 the projected invasion of Kauai was one of the most absorbing concerns of Kamehameha's administration and it was in the preparation for this invasion that most of his beachcombers were employed. As early as October, 1795, Kamehameha was said to have 5,000 prime muskets, plus swivels and cannon. But since many of the Hawaiians were by this time very proficient in

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158. e.g. James Macrae, With Lord Byron . . . in 1825, (Honolulu, 1922), pp.39, 50.

159. Ibid.

their use (and presumably their maintenance) the indispensibility of beachcombers was thereby limited. In the business of governing the newly united kingdom a selected few beachcombers did occupy positions of authority and prestige - as island governors and members of Kamehameha's council of advisers. Young was appointed to govern Hawaii, and in later years Davis and Holmes were successively governors of Oahu. Seen in perspective, however, this says little about the role of beachcombers as a class. First, Young's appointment as governor of Hawaii was a substitute measure. A Hawaiian, Mokuhiia was to have been appointed, but was murdered first. Second, Kamehameha made a practice of appointing commoners rather than chiefs to high office, because he feared that the chiefs would be more likely to foment rebellion. Beachcombers and commoners had two things in common: they owed their loyalty directly and personally to Kamehameha, who gave them their positions, and they had no existing ties or conflicting loyalties, or likelihood of ambition on which rebellion could be based. Third, Kamehameha's officers and advisers were overwhelmingly Hawaiian. Even in their crafts, Europeans worked under the authority of Hawaiians. The reverse situation, in which Europeans were appointed to positions of authority over Hawaiians were extremely rare. The examples

161. John Boit, 'Journal of a Voyage Round the Globe', (Ms.), 16 October, 1795. This number of firearms seems incredible. Nine years later he was said to have 600 muskets, 8 four pounders, 5 three pounders, 1 six pounder, 40 swivels and six mortars. See U. Lisiansky, A Voyage Round the World, (London, 1814), p.133.


163. Ibid.

164. Ibid., pp.175-177.
of Young, Davis and Holmes were exceptional, not typical.

This argument in no way minimizes the very great authority, responsibility or privilege which rested with these prominent Europeans. As late as 1807 Young was still governing Hawaii at a time when Kamehameha kept all the powerful chiefs in his own company; and when Kamehameha sought a peaceful settlement with Kaumuali'i chief of Kauai, Davis was one of three ambassadors sent to negotiate.

There is no need further to chronicle the events of Kamehameha's reign in order to show that beachcombers were used, but not relied upon exclusively. Individual tasks and responsibilities continued to be allocated to particular beachcombers, but apparently because of their suitability for the job over any other likely person. Thus when in 1812 Kamehameha confiscated all firearms in his kingdom, he deposited some of them with Young, some with Kemakau; in 1816 George Beckley was given command of the fort to overlook Honolulu harbour; John Harebottle was the harbour pilot; Alexander Adams was captain of one of the king's ships, and Holmes was charged with being the medium of contact with foreign

166. Kamakau, *op. cit.*, p.194. The other two were Keawe-opu and Nahili.
In the political changes which took place in the early decades of European contact the three major island groups of Eastern Polynesia may be thought of as occupying different places on a continuum. Towards one end is the Marquesas; towards the other end is Hawaii; in between but closer to Hawaii lies Tahiti. This contrast between the three groups belies the uniformity of their experiences as felt by the beachcombers who participated in their early contact histories. The feats of battle and organization of the Marquesan beachcombers were not substantially different from those performed by the Hawaiian and Tahitian beachcombers. Such contrasts as developed emerged from existing contrasts of scale and organization in island society. From the point of view of the life-course of individual beachcombers the difference was negligible. Each was required to serve his chief in the expected manner because of the obligations under which he had been placed as a member of island society.

In western Polynesia the situation was broadly similar but with variations in detail. In Tonga where political unification and centralization was most successful the role of beachcombers was more confined; in Fiji it was most elaborated although the attempts at unification did not succeed; and in Samoa, where unification seemed to be a possibility, the pattern resembles that of the Marquesas.

In Samoa the fortunes of politics and war favoured no faction consistently during the beachcomber period. Beachcombers participated in the wars, as numerous anecdotes testify, but none

171. Ibid., p.182.
of them emerges into individuality like a Hagerstein, Young or Robarts. None of them appears as a man whose value was any greater than that of a wielder of clubs or firer of muskets. Yet during the 1830's individual beachcombers evidently possessed personal notoriety as warriors, according to various accounts of visiting missionaries sent there by the L.M.S. There is a considerable element of fantasy and exaggeration in these accounts. Williams for example wrote of one group.

... they entered with savage delight into the native wars, having Muskets and blunderbusses with powder and shot... they made fearful slaughter of the poor indians who had nothing but clubs and spears to defend themselves.172

No beachcomber had as much freedom of action as this passage implies, and certainly there was no group of beachcombers able to act on their own initiative as an independent force in Samoan politics. Nor were the Samoans the innocent and defenceless 'Indians' which Williams sought to portray to the British public. Browning's account as a resident and participator "from the inside" reveals a situation which differs little if at all from that prevailing in the eastern groups. That is, beachcombers survived in island society as members of a chief's retinue. As such they were required to serve the interests of the chief as and when occasion demanded. Beachcombers in Samoa and elsewhere had a reputation as fearless and effective warriors, and their use of firearms was thought by the islanders to endow their side with considerable advantages. Browning's principal job with the chief Tangaloa on Savai was to make ball cartridges and to clean and

repair old muskets. When war was brewing with a neighbouring chief, Browning told other beachcombers that he felt obliged to fight for his patron. When knowledge of this willingness was spread around, it was possible for Tangaloa to negotiate a favourable peace with his rival. Negotiation became possible because of Browning's reputation as a marksman, but also because the issue between the chiefs was one of dignity not of power. The politico-military role of this beachcomber then was on this occasion to preserve peace. But the occasion was a trivial one, of ephemeral importance and no more than local significance. In the major Samoan wars of the nineteenth century no beachcomber's influence, and no fear of his marksmanship was sufficient to alter the course of events.

In Tonga the beachcombers - never very numerous - were kept even more in the background than in Samoa, in line with the greater Tongan ambivalence towards foreigners. The early convict beachcombers in Tonga are not known to have played any role in war or politics. This is due partly to the fact that they had mostly left Tonga or died before the civil wars began. Of those who remained after 1799, they possessed no firearms and therefore had nothing unique or novel to offer in battle. It is unlikely that they would have possessed any skill with traditional Tongan weapons (although Sherlock boasted to the missionaries of his exploits in the first battles of 1799). Vason was prevented from going forward in battle by a Tongan who seized him from behind saying, 'Come here, you do not know your danger'. He stayed on the scene of


battle but without courting danger, and remained undistinguished.\textsuperscript{175}

For his proven ability as a farmer and organizer Vason shortly afterwards was appointed to govern an island in the Ha'apai group.\textsuperscript{176}

But this appointment was a token of his successful integration rather than an indication of his political stature or influence. Vason does not tell us which island was his, but none in Ha'apai are large or populous, and had it been one of the more important ones, he almost certainly would have mentioned it. Shortly afterwards Vason almost fell victim to the same dilemma which drove his contemporary, Robarts, from the Marquesas. He had to choose between two patrons at enmity with each other, and was appointed by one to govern an island within the other's sphere of influence.\textsuperscript{177} His promotion, therefore, looks like an attempt to get rid of him, rather than evidence of the role a beachcomber might play in island affairs.

No European performed an act of distinction - or a distinctively European act of note - in Tongan affairs until Finau recruited to his cause the survivors of the \textit{Port-au-Prince}, which was cut off in November, 1806. By 1806 the Tongans had become acquainted with the efficacy of European arms, and the seizure of the \textit{Port-au-Prince} was at least the third attempt to acquire foreign weapons and men to operate them,\textsuperscript{178} in anticipation of their useful-

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\textsuperscript{175} [Vason], \textit{op. cit.}, p.165. Except for the act of burning the sanctuary, narrated above.

\textsuperscript{176} \textit{Ibid.}, p.191.

\textsuperscript{177} \textit{Ibid.}, p.193.

\textsuperscript{178} Attacks had been made on the \textit{Duke of Portland} in 1802, and the \textit{Union} in 1804, both at Tongatapu. Wilson reported that the Tongans had planned to take the \textit{Duff} in 1797. Wilson, \textit{op. cit.}, p.105.
\end{flushleft}
ness in breaking the political deadlock.

The first task given to the *Port-au-Prince* survivors was to prepare four twelve pounder carronades to be shipped from Lifuka to Tongatapu. Sixteen Europeans, eight of them with muskets, accompanied this expedition which landed at Nuku'alofa under cover of musket fire. Within an hour the carronades had caused so much damage and slaughter that the fortress was easily taken. The significance of this victory may be guessed at when it is considered that the fortress had withstood successive sieges for many years. This example is a particularly instructive one. It is one of the few in early nineteenth century Pacific warfare in which the outcome of a major battle can unequivocally and directly be attributed to the role of foreigners. The recruitment of the *Port-au-Prince* men might have permanently altered Tonga's history. They were not, however, free agents. They could not act on their own initiative. They were required to act in a manner determined by a man accustomed to making his own decisions and conducting his own affairs. Sometimes they were permitted to offer advice. On this occasion Mariner offered Finau the advice that he should press home his present advantage with a full scale invasion of Tongatapu. Finau rejected his advice. He rebuilt the fortress and garrisoned it with allies who betrayed him almost immediately. The triumph

179. Martin, *op. cit.*, I, p.82.

180. Ibid., I, p.93.

181. Ibid., I, p.96. Mariner says eleven years, but this event took place early in 1807, and the civil war had not begun until the murder of the Tui Kanokupolu in 1799.

182. Ibid. The unfaithful ally burned the fortress after Finau departed from Tongatapu, but while still close enough to see the blaze.
foreign technology was lost.

Back in Hal'apai, Finau prepared for an assault on Vava'u in which his white men were to be employed as before. During the preparations he showed that Mariner's views on warfare had not gone unheeded. He advised his men that the traditional Tongan mode of warfare of rapid advances and equally rapid withdrawals according to the capricious fortunes of battle was to be avoided. This time the warriors were to keep a solid formation, not retreat, but stand their ground, and push forward steadily:

... for such he had heard was the way of fighting in England ... and it claimed his highest admiration.\textsuperscript{183}

The siege of Neiafu began with a bombardment from the carronades. This fortress, in contrast to that at Nuku'alofa, was built of clay, and was on high ground, so the artillery had little effect. After the bombardment ceased, the Vava'u people made an assault on their invaders. As they advanced towards Finau's army Mariner suggested turning the carronades on them:

... but the king objected, stating, that as they ventured forward in an open body, he would receive their attack, and fight them upon equal terms; that these guns gave him too great an advantage, such as he scorned to take; that it was more honourable to fight them man to man, than to use against them arms that were rather fitted for the hostilities of spirits than of men; at the same time he returned his thanks for the advantages formerly derived from the use of these weapons, which he thought well calculated for the destruction of forts.\textsuperscript{184}

But as the weapons had no major impact on the earthen fort of Neiafu no speedy end to the siege was possible. Finau therefore negotiated

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\textsuperscript{183} \textit{Ibid.}, I, pp.160-161.
\textsuperscript{184} \textit{Ibid.}, I, pp.183-184.
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a peace which satisfied the honour of both parties.\textsuperscript{185} For the
remainder of Mariner's residence in Tonga there was a lull in the
protracted political turmoil. The Europeans and their weapons had
had no discernible effect, although the Tongans had expected that
they would. The limitations of European influence were imposed by
the Tongans themselves in determining the application of foreign
techniques, in accordance with their own views of war, politics and
ethics. They were indeed highly critical of some aspects of the
European manner of operation.\textsuperscript{186}

As a Tongan chief Mariner continued to be involved in
events which had a bearing on the evolution of Tongan politics, or
which were likely to provoke short-term crises. It should be
emphasized however, that on these occasions Mariner was involved
as a member of the family of the Hau; his foreignness, though not
unimportant, was very much a secondary consideration.\textsuperscript{187} Intermittent disturbances continued on Tongatapu, and in these Europeans
were required to participate,\textsuperscript{188} as in the other groups, but a
unique role was out of the question.

For fifteen years nothing more is known of the role of the
beachcombers in Tongan affairs; but with the lull in European shipp-
ing until the 1820's they lacked the resources to make any kind of
impact of their own. The next hint that Tonga was sharing the same

\textsuperscript{185} Mariner claimed to have been able easily to destroy the fortress
by other means, but felt that since the Vava'u cause was as good
as Finau's he did not want to cause the deaths of innocent women

\textsuperscript{186} \textit{Ibid.}, I, p.220.

\textsuperscript{187} e.g. \textit{Ibid.}, I, pp.277-278, 372, II, pp.3-4, 13-14.

\textsuperscript{188} \textit{Ibid.}, II, pp.53-54.
experiences as the Marquesas and Samoa was given by the Rev. Walter Lawry in 1823. The chiefs of Tongatapu in July, 1823, restrained William Singleton's freedom of movement on military grounds. They did not try to keep him with them, but they sought to prevent him taking up residence with a potentially hostile chief, because the marksmanship of white men was generally feared. The continuing tension in Tongan affairs maintained a small demand for resident white men, specifically for their ability with muskets. How much use these men actually got is uncertain, for Waldegrave, who visited Tonga in 1829, specifically mentions two as not having participated in recent warfare. The statement by Orlebar (one of Waldegrave's midshipmen) that the beachcomber Brown was Finau's prime minister ought not to be taken at face value. A supposed position of such influence is incompatible with Tongan experience and experience elsewhere in Polynesia, and Orlebar witnessed only a discussion between Finau and Waldegrave in which Brown was the interpreter. That Brown's advice might have been sought in this unusual and difficult interview implies nothing about his status or influence.

By the 1830's missionary influence was easily greater than that of any other foreigners in Tonga, and although some Europeans are known to have been involved in the civil war of 1840-1853, there is no evidence to suggest any variation on the already established

190. Dumont D'Urville, op. cit., pp.15, 60.
pattern. The missionary inspired histories however, offer another view of which the death of Captain Croker in 1840 provides a good example. Croker was encouraged by the Wesleyan missionaries to intervene in Tongan affairs to the extent of leading a party from his vessel, H.M.S. *Favorite* in an assault on the Ha'a Havea (heathen) fortress of Pe'a. The position was well fortified, leading Croker's second lieutenant in his ignorance to believe that it must be the work of Europeans, since it demonstrated a knowledge of the principles of military defence. Croker was killed in his ill-considered attack. It was said by the missionaries, that he died of a musket shot, fired by Jimmy the Devil. This version of events is still taught to children in Tongan schools. The grandson of Jimmy's patron, however, now an old man, insisted in 1973 that although Jimmy took part in the war of Pe'a, Croker died of a spear wound, inflicted by a Tongan called Maukivaka. If Jimmy had killed Croker, and if one assumed - on slender grounds - that the assault on Pe'a failed for that reason, then one could claim an impact of some importance of the beachcombers on Tongan history. But if a Tongan killed him then one cannot make even that tenuous claim for the role of beachcombers in Tongan politics.

It was in Fiji with a history of political turbulence, a relatively large number of powerful and hostile - or potentially hostile - states and two periods of relatively large scale trading


with the West that the greatest scope for European involvement in indigenous war and politics existed. And it seems that from the beginning of European contact, resident white men were warriors. Their only work, Turpin says, was to use the musket; and if one chief had insufficient work for his white-man-and-musket, he would lend him to a friend. Fiji's earliest historiographers were inclined to see Fijian affairs in terms of the exploits and prowess of these prototype beachcombers. Had their ambitions been greater than a "life of indolence, and unrestrained gratification of vile passions" they might have subjugated the whole group, wrote the missionary Thomas Williams, with the naive Eurocentrism and moral righteousness typical of his contemporaries.

The first beachcombers came to Fiji during a time of turbulence in which Bau was seeking to establish a hegemony. The arrival of white men during the first decade of the nineteenth century with novel and intimidating weapons, and a willingness to use them, was an opportunity which no warrior aristocracy would allow to pass by. The warrior aristocracy, however, recognized that it was an opportunity to exploit, not an opportunity to renounce its prerogatives. Turpin makes it clear that even the first beachcombers were given to understand that they were servants, not independent political agents - a qualification which immediately challenges the extravagant allegations about the highhandedness of Charlie Savage. Beachcomber subservience is also implied by Turpin's statement that

196. Turpin, op. cit., § 2.
whites were always placed in the van in battle.\footnote{199}

Despite the considerable volume of evidence relating to Fiji's beachcomber era there is a paucity of first hand data relating to the involvement of beachcombers in the power struggles of the time. The lives of Charlie Savage and Paddy Connor and their contemporaries have been distorted and romanticized to such a degree that it is difficult to give a reliable evaluation. France's uncompromising reconstruction of the rise of Bau and the beachcombers' involvement is consistent with the beachcomber experience in other island groups. The rise of Bau, he argued, was not contingent upon the invincibility and chance patronage of beachcombers and their muskets. The survival and exploits of the beachcombers, on the contrary, was due to the existing pre-eminence of Bau\footnote{200} - a pre-eminence which is well attested and now indisputable. There is no evidence of any major change in the balance of power as a result of

\footnote{199} \textit{Ibid.}, \§ 128.

\footnote{200} P. France, \textit{The Charter of the Land}, (Melbourne, 1969), pp.20-22. France in attacking European ethnocentricity in the reconstruction of Fijian history wrote, 'it is a European reading of history that makes Savage solely responsible for elevating Bau to a position of superiority in the group', (\textit{Ibid.}, p.21), and corrected the record by drawing on oral tradition. While I agree broadly with France's views, it ought to be pointed out that the 'Eurocentric' view which emphasises Savage's role is also based on oral tradition - e.g. Pita Tatawaqa 'Charlie Savage', \textit{Transactions of the Fijian Society for the years 1912 and 1913}, n.p. Earlier, European, sources all cite Fijian authorities in their version of events: T.J. Jaggar, 'Journal, 1837-43', (Ms.), n.p.; Thomson, \textit{South Sea Yarne}, p.289; [Cary], \textit{op. cit.}, p.30; and Wilkes, \textit{op. cit.}, III, p.62. Wilkes does not specifically cite his authority, but in 1840 he can only have had the story of Savage from the Fijians directly, or indirectly through beachcombers or missionaries. A less extravagant claim comes from Cargill - whose version Shineberg (see below) obliquely discounts - who simply says that the \textit{Eliza} survivors all helped the Fijians with their wars, and that Savage usually carried a rifle. See Rev. David Cargill, 'Diary', (Ms.), Vol. 2, p.117, 17 December, 1839.
the advent of beachcombers.

It seems worth pointing out, however, that had the beachcombers possessed any potential for effecting political change it would have been perceived by the Fijians, and that faction with the most to lose would have been foremost in recruiting the newcomers. This in fact seems to have been the case.201 France's iconoclastic argument is pushed even further by Dorothy Shineberg,202 who demonstrated the limitations of firearms in combat in the Pacific, and with specific reference to Savage casts almost conclusive scepticism on the ability of beachcombers to influence the course of battle.203 The basis of this scepticism is two-fold; first, the extravagant claims for the great slaughter done by Savage's musket which are certainly exaggerated; and second, the incredible degree of marksmanship implied in the stories of his sniping. Shineberg's success at putting the stories of Savage into their proper perspective is salutary, but do not constitute sufficient grounds for dismissing the Savage stories altogether. In the first place as Shineberg herself points out, there is the psychological effect of a novel and noisy weapon, emitting flame and smoke, and able to kill at a distance. The possession of such a weapon was not unlikely to have an effect on the morale of antagonists - perhaps enough to alter the outcome of the battle. Such an influence, however, was probably ephemeral. Second, Savage and others like him rarely were shooting at a single target, but at the mass target of a fortress or group of

201. Turpin, *op. cit.*, § § 2, 127.


warriors, well within the effective range of a musket. According to Peter Dillon in his account of the affair at Dillon's Rock on the Macuata coast in which Savage lost his life, the beachcomber Martin Bushart killed twenty-seven men with twenty-eight shots. There is no reason to suspect Dillon of lying; he admitted that Bushart was an exceptionally good shot. Moreover, this situation was more analogous to the usual Fijian combat situation than were the British army tests referred to by Shineberg. That is, his opponents formed a mass target, and the range was short - within easy calling distance. There are moreover other individual cases of marksmanship which there seems no reason to challenge. Mariner relates two cases of a Hawaiian killing an individual target with a musket, while Mariner himself performed similar feats. Turpin alleges that when Connor and his comrades arrived in Fiji he had to demonstrate by shooting a man - though we do not know under what conditions. Without being able to say for certain what mortality could be inflicted by muskets in island battles, the fact remains that there was a sustained demand by the Fijians (and other islanders) for Europeans and muskets for bellicose purposes. Within a very few years they appear to have become indispensable. It is hard to accept that this was so had not the Fijians (and others) good reason to believe that their interests were being thus advanced. Cary documented the Fijian attitude in 1829:


205. Shineberg, loc. cit., p.79.


207. Turpin, op. cit., §127.
The king of Ambow valued the white men highly, as they had previously been troubled very much by the mountaineers coming down and committing depredations on the sea-coast villages. They were very much afraid of the white men's muskets, however, and had not troubled them since they had been with them.208

From the beginning beachcombers in Fiji gravitated to Bau. There are two reasons for this tendency. First, in a place of insecurity one's prospects are greater with the more powerful patron than with the lesser. Second, the lesser states were in a tributary relationship to more powerful states; most states were tribute-paying states, and it was therefore more or less inevitable that a prized novelty like a beachcomber would be passed up the ladder of power until he came into hands of the Vunivalu of Bau or Rewa or one of the other rivals for hegemony.209 The first Bauan beachcombers had their first experience of Fijian warfare against Verata210 - probably the same mountain people referred to by Cary above. Bau was victorious, and Verata became less of a threat as time passed; but whether if, as Naulivou told Cary, this was due to the white men and their muskets, cannot be known with certainty.211

The major threat to the balance of power in early nineteenth century Fiji came not with the advent of beachcombers, but with the growth of the sandalwood trade, from which Bua received the principal

208. [Cary], op. cit., p.28.
209. Such in fact was the case with Savage, according to Tatawaqa, loc. cit., n.p.
211. Tatawaqa, loc. cit., n.p. According to Tatawaqa Verata had beachcombers before Bau did, but they were persuaded to come to Bau by Savage before the Bau-Verata war. Eagelston, Journals, Part 6, 'Voyage of the Emerald', (Ts.), §523 says that there were white men at Verata before 1810.
political and commercial advantages. The marginal effect which beachcombers and firearms had on island affairs can be clearly seen in the transience and uncertainty of Bua's attempt to free itself from Bauan domination during this period.212

Patterson, the hapless ship-mate of Savage and who left Fiji at the earliest opportunity, makes only a brief remark on the involvement of beachcombers in Fijian wars: most of them participated, which pleased their hosts immensely, for they killed many in battle. The Fijians, he added, were very much afraid of muskets.213 This sort of statement, indeed, appears to be universal,214 and yet it implies nothing to suggest any permanent change in military procedures or political alignments.

Lockerby lent his services in battle to the Tui Bua during his residence onVanua Levu,215 but he knew that neither his skin colour nor his weapons guaranteed him invincibility or security.216 Many of the wars in which beachcombers took part were petty affairs between minor and obscure tribes. Their outcome - indeed their fighting - had no influence on the overall pattern of Fijian history. Their importance went no further than the individual lives of the people involved.217 Consequently, the role played by beachcombers


213. Patterson, op. cit., p.102.


217. See, for example, Danford's career at Namosi - he was in local terms, a great man. Fijian Land Claims Commission, No. 1021; B. Seeman, Viti . . ., (Cambridge, 1862), pp.101-106.
in those battles, and whether or not they influenced their outcome is of no consequence. At the same time, if it could be established that there was a consistent and positive correlation between the presence of beachcombers and the outcome of these battles, that in itself would be a finding of some note for its implications about accul-

turation in the Pacific. Such evidence does not exist, and such a situation - in the light of other evidence - is extremely unlikely.

It would be pointless to chronicle the stories of beach-
comber exploits in the wars of the second beachcomber phase - the beche-de-mer period - for they offer nothing which alters the general picture of the beachcomber's role. Beachcombers continued to be in demand as warriors, they enjoyed high status for the work they did, which included the manufacture and maintenance of metal weapons, as well as the maintenance and use of firearms, and extravagant tributes were paid to them for their prowess. But it was not until the beachcomber period in Fiji began to close - in the 1840's - that resident white began to change the course of Fijian history. That was when they began to act as an independent political force, and it was in politics rather than in the narrower field of warfare that their impact was felt.

218. e.g. [Cary], op. cit., pp.31, 53; Turpin, op. cit., §§ 20-23; Diapea, op. cit., p.105. For most of the beche-de-mer period Levuka was the centre of trade, and Tui Levuka harboured what was perhaps the largest and potentially most powerful beach-
comber community outside Hawaii. But he never challenged the authority of his Bauan suzerain, nor became a chief of great importance.

219. e.g. Henderson, op. cit., p.28a.

220. An exception might be made of David Whippy as holder of the office mata kū Bau. This however, was a traditional Fijian role, which Whippy filled - successfully - in a typically Fijian way, not in his capacity as a foreigner.
The area of warfare, and its related activities, was the principal field in which beachcombers had to justify their existence to their island hosts. To the warrior-aristocracies of Polynesia (including Fiji) war and politics were the activities for which life was intended, and by which life was celebrated. At the time when contact with the west was accelerating warfare was endemic in all major groups. Even in Tahiti and Tonga which had in the eighteenth century - and perhaps before - been at peace, there were warrior traditions, and prominent warriors enjoyed a status all on their own. Warfare seems to have been part of the Polynesian way of life, an everyday possibility. It was therefore the most obvious and most prominent way in which the presence of foreigners in a society might be validated. Moreover, it did not require an extended preliminary time of acculturation, it required no esoteric knowledge or skill (though specialized expertise was obviously an advantage) and it possessed a universal language. Accordingly it was the occupation most prominent in the lives of beachcombers. But because they were foreigners, and came from a society with different traditions and different skills, techniques and specializations, and also because war - though endemic - was not being constantly engaged in, the beachcombers did perform other roles in island society. In practically all cases it can be assumed that beachcombers performed functions which did not differentiate them from other members of their host community - they were required to join in the usual mundane activities of food production and the provision of shelter.\footnote{221} Beachcombers who enjoyed chiefly status, or who became members of chiefly families, did only as much of this sort of work as anyone\footnote{221. e.g. Im Thurn and Wharton, op. cit., p.25.}.
else in the same position. The loafer of nineteenth century public imagery could not survive long as a beachcomber.222

The striking feature about beachcombers' occupations in island society is the rapidity with which the islanders recognized and developed needs which only beachcombers were able to meet. In many cases these needs were modifications of existing needs, or required skills which were not radically different from existing island skills. For example, the demand for carpenters in most island groups, and the demand for ropemakers in Hawaii represent not novel demands,223 but novel solutions to demands for which there were existing solutions. On a much smaller scale beachcombers were expected to fill roles of physician, sailor, teacher, priest: traditional roles for traditional needs, but to be met in a new way.224 In addition there were fewer cases in which beachcombers occupied traditional roles in a personal or ceremonial manner, as in being personal attendants upon chiefs.225

Overwhelmingly noticed by contemporaries, however, was the employment of beachcombers in European crafts in the service of their patrons. In this respect Hawaii is the archetypical case. Whereas most island chiefs never passed beyond the use of beachcomber- artisans

222. Lamont, op. cit., p.265.

   Franchere, op. cit., p.29.

224. e.g. Ingraham, 'Journal ...', p.70.
   George Turner, Nineteen Yeare in Polynesia, p.103.

   Twynning, op. cit., p.70.
to repair and maintain muskets, Kamehameha actively recruited blacksmiths, carpenters and shipwrights, ropemakers and sailmakers, clerks, armourers, sailors, pilots, navigators, and gardeners, as well as other highly specialized craftsmen. So extensive and highly organized was Kamehameha in his patronage that his workshops constituted a naval yard of no mean proportions:

... a long narrow range of buildings, where a number of artisans were at work, making ship, sloop and boat tackling, ropes, blocks, and all the other et cetera required for his majesty's fleet; while others again, in a wing of the same buildings, were employed in building single and double canoes; the former for pleasure, the latter for commercial purposes. At the far end of the buildings was erected a blacksmith's forge; and beyond that, in a side-room, lay the masts, spars, and rigging of a new schooner. The tools used by the different workmen were very simple, slender, few and ill-made, and yet the work done by them surprised us... They made their own cloth, cordage, salt, sugar and whisky.

Kamehameha was unique in his utilization of foreign labour and technology. No other islander used beachcombers to build vessels for him. The other boat-builder beachcombers - such as the Bounty men in Tahiti in 1790, Twyning and Jones in Lau in the 1820's and 1830's, and Whippy and Simpson amongst others elsewhere in Fiji - were all working on their own account, to provide themselves with vessels for their own use. Many of the occupations followed under Kamehameha's

226. See, for example, the following:
   Turnbull, op. cit., p.203.
   Delano, op. cit., p.395.
   Iselin, op. cit., p.78.
   Martin, op. cit., I, pp.xxxix - xli.
   Cox, op. cit., I, p.43.


228. Ross, op. cit., p.38.
rule were never heard of in the other island groups where the very healthy and sustained demand was for armourers, blacksmiths and carpenters. It has already been pointed out that usefulness in these skills was usually what islanders sought in a beachcomber, and that some such skill was often necessary for survival. The respect shown all over the Pacific for tradesmen's skills is vividly illustrated by an anecdote from Fiji. A beachcomber was fishing with his wife and children, when they were blown out of reach of home. They made land in the Yasawas, in the west of Fiji. They were declared to have "salt water in their eyes", and preparations were made for their being killed and eaten. The youngest child was killed first whereupon its mother called out in anguish, "'Matai, look what they have done to the child!'" The chief, arrested by the term matai (skilled person, carpenter) stopped the proceedings, and - according to Forbes - they all lived happily ever after.\textsuperscript{229}

To acquire a skilled foreigner, most chiefs were more than willing to make exceptions to normal practices.\textsuperscript{230}

Tangible, mechanical skills were unquestionably the most in demand. The few 'physician'-beachcombers were probably not as

\textsuperscript{229} Forbes, \textit{op. cit.}, p.207.

\textsuperscript{230} For examples of beachcombers being valued apparently solely for their skills see:

Eagelston, \textit{Journal (5)}, p.66.
Franchere, \textit{op. cit.}, p.30.

For a man's warrior prowess making a difference in the way he was regarded, see e.g.:

Turnbull, \textit{op. cit.}, p.168.
Im Thurn and Wharton, \textit{op. cit.}, pp.40-41.
good at their art as their indigenous counterparts, and in any case none of them relied on that specialization exclusively.\textsuperscript{231} The ability to entertain with stories of the wider world was always a valuable asset, but it is doubtful that this was ever sufficient in itself.\textsuperscript{232} The most fully developed examples of beachcombers earning a living other than by the sweat of their brows were in Samoa during the 1830's, during the height of the "sailor-religion" boom. If the missionary testimony is accurate, there was scarcely a beachcomber in Samoa who did not live off the Samoans by preaching spurious religions and teaching a comfortable morality. The initiative in the establishment of this speciality - as in all the others - came unequivocally from the specific demands of the Samoans.\textsuperscript{233}

It was thus in their efforts to conform, to make themselves acceptable, even to modify themselves, that the beachcombers provided a minor stimulus to the process of acculturation. Fiji and Hawaii enabled Europeans to become very important to their communities; Tahiti and Tonga did not; and Samoa and the Marquesas gave their beachcomber's high status but kept their influence limited and localized. In the demands made upon beachcombers can be seen the strength and scope of the demands of the people of the Pacific for the things of the West. Scarcely more than a bare acquaintance with European artifacts was necessary to set in process a sustained demand

\textsuperscript{231} Seemann,\textit{ op. cit.}, p.102.

\textsuperscript{232} e.g. Lamont,\textit{ op. cit.}, p.248; Wilkes,\textit{ op. cit.}, III, p.69.

\textsuperscript{233} Peter Turner, 'Letters and Journal extracts, 1835-1838',\textit{ (Ms.)},\textit{ passim}, Methodist Missionary Society Inwards Correspondence. Also John Williams, 'Voyage of the Olive Branch,1832', n.p., L.M.S.-S.S.J., Box 7.
both for those artifacts, and for a new range of needs which they represented. Paradoxically, therefore, the way to acceptance in island society was not necessarily assimilation to the point of invisibility; at the same time, beachcombers, who on the face of it, had less interest than any other foreigners in social and cultural change in the Pacific, became agents of change. The explanation of the paradox is found not in an analysis of the characteristics of the beachcombers as such, but in the conscious and deliberate demands of Polynesian society - still flexible, dynamic and conscious of its control over its own affairs, and aware of the areas in which it wanted change to occur.
CHAPTER 7

AGENTS OF ACCULTURATION?

Castaways as agents of change - Polynesian interest in the exotic - this interest not related to cultural change - limitations on beachcombers' attempts to communicate information - islanders learning English - Hawaiians exceptional in their acquisition of European skills - respect for the confidentiality of skills in Polynesia - beachcombers' role in dramatic religious change in Samoa as an example - beachcomber reluctance to teach their skills - no marked changes in island society during the beachcomber era despite contemporary allegations of beachcombers corrupting the islanders - beachcomber evangelizing - encourage scepticism - attempts to discourage cannibalism fail - scope for introducing change limited by the need to conform - beachcombers as intermediaries in contact situations - incipient traders but not yet on own account - their presence gives both parties confidence - introduction of disease? - trivial impact of beachcombers on island society.

The need for a beachcomber to be useful to his hosts - whether in a material or non-material way - opened the possibility of their exerting an influence on the fabric or technology of island society in such a way that their presence would always be visible. Contemporary observers, intrigued by social change and whose business was change, found it impossible to believe that white men of whatever calibre would fail to leave an indelible cultural imprint. Many of the contemporary attacks on beachcombers derived superficially from this belief, which was expressed as a concern that the beachcombers were "corrupting the natives". Historically, the fallacy of this view is apparent, and the perpetrators of important changes are more clearly identifiable now than they were in the early nineteenth century. The beachcombers'
capacity for effecting changes in island society was limited not only by their own characteristics, but by powerful influences within island society, in the same way that their political and military role was circumscribed.

Robert Langdon's recent book, The Lost Caravel\textsuperscript{1} makes out a strong case for the influence of 16th century Spanish castaways on the cultures of some of the islands of the Pacific. In a well documented and forcefully argued case Langdon suggested that in some respects, in some islands, the indigenous culture at the time of modern contact varied from what might be considered to be the Polynesian norm, in a manner which could be accounted for by hypothesizing earlier European influence. Langdon's book was given a mixed reception by reviewers, yet his case is not implausible. He did not deny the creativity, adaptability or integrity of island cultures, nor did he attribute everything which a European might admire in Polynesian culture to European castaways. Indeed, he distinguished between island societies which appear to have absorbed alien elements without significant cultural modification, and those societies whose cultures do appear to have been influenced by castaways. The influence of castaways on language, cosmogony and technology is most clearly seen in islands where the population was always small, or on larger islands, before the population became large. In such cases, Langdon points out, it is not inconceivable that under certain circumstances a small number of aliens might substantially modify a culture if their personalities and abilities were sufficiently forceful. That the variable of individual human characteristics

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{1} Robert Langdon, \textit{The Lost Caravel}, (Sydney, 1975).
\end{itemize}
is important is shown by the comparison with islands which appear to have been influenced only genetically.

The conclusions to be drawn from Langdon’s work are that immigration can be an important mechanism of cultural change; that change does not automatically follow from the arrival of foreigners; and that the islanders were selective in what they chose to accept and preserve of alien cultures with which they came into contact. Paradoxically, the smaller number of Spanish castaways in the sixteenth century appear to have had a greater influence on island cultures than did the larger numbers of British and American castaways and deserters in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The reason for this contrast is three-fold. First, the beachcomber centres of the later period had larger indigenous populations than did the castaway islands of the earlier period, and therefore were less likely to be influenced by a few foreigners. Second, the beachcomber era is not easily disentangled from that of the explorers, whalers, traders, missionaries and consuls, and the influence which they had on the histories of the Pacific islands. Third, and hypothetically, there is the possibility of unknown forces at work in some island societies which might have made them more receptive of innovation at one time than at another.

Compared with Langdon’s Spanish castaways and with their own contemporaries, the beachcombers had only a minor impact on the culture of the various Polynesian communities. As agents of acculturation their main importance is that they began the process, or if already begun, made small contributions. The most important of these contributions was to make the island elites aware of certain facets of western civilization: to provide information in an academic
sense, to enlarge their view of the world. Their role was not one of changing the behaviour or beliefs of the islanders.

Superficially, the opportunity for beachcombers to foster changes in island society was very great, for the enthusiasm with which the islanders sought information about Europe and America, and with which they discussed the foreigners in conversations among themselves, is widely attested. Vason, for example, mentions that his accounts of European life were a favourite topic of conversation in Tonga as early as the late 1790's, and ten years later, during Mariner's residence, it was apparently no less popular. According to Patterson's account of his residence in Fiji in 1808, the women frequently came to see him when he was sick to talk about America; and on the tiny atoll of Tongareva [Penrhyn Island] more than forty years later, Lamont capitalized on the great popularity of stories about the wider world.

The discovery of the universal popularity in conversation of the strange, unique and sensational, is of course not especially noteworthy. But it was through the highly developed Polynesian art of conversation that the beachcombers had such great scope for fostering acculturation. But these conversations also indicate that the interest taken in the west by the Polynesians was in a sense, idle. They were anxious for information, delighted in receiving it,


and held the knowledge as an end in itself. They were not interested in cultural change, and contrary to the beliefs of contemporary European evangelicals, did not feel that knowledge of Europe was an adequate reason for emulating European ways. At the same time, their interest in things European was more eclectic than selective, though the interests of the particular speakers were reflected. Thus Vason mentions the Tongans talking about European articles, dress, customs, and events. Finau's conversations with Mariner seem most frequently to have concerned English government and warfare, and in particular, King George III; writing and money were eagerly inquired after when circumstances introduced these concepts. Finau's son and successor, however was a man of more refined interests: Mariner discussed with him (amongst other things) the laws of the solar system, and human physiology. Finau the younger wanted to accompany Mariner back to England where he might study history and astronomy and "acquire a papalangi mind", saying that "if he could but learn to read and write, and think like a Papalangi, that a state of poverty with such high accomplishments, was far superior to regal authority in a state of ignorance".

Patterson's conversations with the Fijian women likewise reflect idiosyncratic interests: whether there were women in America, and - on Patterson's part - religion. Lamont's stories on Tongareva were wide-ranging, being tailored by Lamont to either suit his own

7. Ibid., I, pp.112-120, II, pp.246-251.
8. Ibid., II, pp.41-42.
9. Ibid., II, p.25.
10. Patterson, op. cit., p.96.
needs, or simply to entertain his audience.\footnote{11}

Demand for discourse about Europe and America took two forms: a popular form, and a private one. Lamont's expositions were more usually of the former variety. Diaper reports a similar phenomenon in Vanua Levu, Fiji, when white men were known only by hearsay in some places. On one occasion Diaper's host, Bonaveidogo took him on a tribute-collecting expedition. At each stopping place a public narrative was delivered telling the people about Diaper and the country he came from. The knowledge transmitted in this fashion must have been garbled and piecemeal, as it was delivered by speakers who themselves knew practically nothing, and none of what they did know was from first hand experience. The interest aroused by these orations was considerable,\footnote{12} but opportunities for direct, intimate and leisured conversation with a beachcomber did not frequently present themselves to commoners in the hierarchical societies of Polynesia, especially during the early part of the beachcomber era. Detailed and interesting conversations can only take place among limited numbers of participants, under leisured circumstances. Consequently, the opportunities to learn about distant places and ways of life were a chiefly prerogative. So Mariner's private conversations with Finau on the nature and function of money, for instance, or the discourse of a shipwrecked officer in Fiji in 1834 on astronomy and navigation\footnote{13} probably had no chance of filtering through to the

\footnote{11. Lamont, \textit{op. cit.}, pp.149, 248, 304.}


\footnote{13. J. Oliver, \textit{The Wreck of the Glide}, (London and New York, 1848), p.59. In this case, the navigator's astronomy was disbelieved, and he was ridiculed.
people at large, and could have had no impact even on minor cultural details.

Even in private conversation, where the optimum conditions prevailed for the explanation of the unfamiliar, the imparting of ideas was difficult. To refer again to Mariner's conversations with Finau, Mariner was confined in his translation of European concepts (e.g. money, writing) into Tongan both by his own incomplete (at that time) knowledge of the Tongan language, and more importantly by the absence of equivalent concepts in Tongan by which the unfamiliar could be explained.\(^{14}\) The significance of this difficulty is reflected in an observation Wilson made in Tahiti. He noticed that the Tahitians were far more interested in hearing about Tonga and the Marquesas, than about Europe. The former were different from Tahiti, but sufficiently alike for there to be a basis for comparison. Europe was totally alien.\(^ {15}\) The fundamental problem facing the beachcomber as an interpreter and expositor of European culture to Polynesians was this lack of conceptual common ground, which is perfectly illustrated by two anecdotes relating to religion. In both cases the beachcomber concerned had been talking about the Christian doctrine of hell. In the first case - in Tonga between 1806 and 1810 - the listener replied that it was "very bad indeed for the Papalangies".\(^ {16}\) In the second case - in Fiji in the early

\(^{14}\) Martin, *op. cit.*, I, pp.117-120.

\(^{15}\) James Wilson, *A Missionary Voyage* . . ., (London, 1799), p.203. See also W.P. Crook, 'An Account of the Marquesas Isles', in G.M. Sheahan, 'Marquesan Source Material', (Ts.), p.c liv. Tama the Hawaiian, drew bigger audiences than Crook the Englishman. Lamont, *op. cit.*, p.149, found that the truth about the outside world was inconceivable.

\(^{16}\) Martin, *op. cit.*, II, p.131.
1840's - the reply was that hell was only for white people; Fijians were not allowed in. 17

Not only therefore, were the attempts by beachcombers to meet the vigorous island demand for tales of Europe and America not a means of cultural change, it seems unlikely that the beachcombers were ever able to make the listeners fully understand what they were hearing. This was not altogether due to the cultural limitations of the listeners, for there are indications that the beachcombers' understanding and intentions, as well as their expression was suspect. 18

And yet the beachcombers were not without influence in contributing something useful to the islanders' knowledge about the world. But this was not done by conversation or public address. It is safe to assume that what they could not impart by demonstration, they could not communicate at all. A Marquesan example makes the point: in 1799 Robarts was asked by some who had never before seen white men if he was a ghost, or if he had come from the sky. He tried to explain, but it was only by their feeling him that they accepted him as a human being. 19 In Tonga a matapule in a debate on "the European problem" said that he had been awed by Europeans' technology, and was fearful of them. But on reflection he noticed


that they too had two eyes, two feet, ten fingers...

Learning that white people were human was a major conceptual breakthrough in early contact relations in the Pacific, and was perhaps the most important single discovery, for it made possible a continuing developing relationship between the two peoples. The same technique of discovery through exposure applied to learning about western culture. Morrison, for instance, records the amazement of the Tahitians in watching the fashion in which the Bounty men worked wood, and through example made more progress towards religious conversion than the missionaries made in many years. The Tahitians, having noticed the religious observances of the Englishmen, behaved similarly when present, learnt their prayers, and refrained from work or entertainment on Sundays. It is not being suggested here that communication of this kind amounted to cultural change; but it did represent learning by the Tahitians about certain facets of European life far beyond what was achieved by talking. Similar inferences may be drawn from the demonstration of military drill by the Glide castaways in Fiji, or the attitude to human life implied when Twynings friend Jones refused to allow a chief to commit euthanasia on Twynings.

It was, therefore, the way in which beachcombers behaved, not the way they talked, which counts in assessing the influence of

22. Ibid.
beachcombers in acculturation. Actions spoke more forcefully and were more readily comprehended. Consequently, the scope for acculturation depends on what beachcombers did in island society, and since they were concerned to conform before anything else, the scope for acculturation was limited. In addition the work of acculturation - such as it was - was being carried out not only by beachcombers. From a very early time the islanders took an active part in the process. In 1792 Vancouver was able to employ a Hawaiian, Jack, as an interpreter. Jack performed the "beachcomber" role of informing the islanders about the nature of Vancouver's expedition, and how it differed from the more familiar merchant voyages.²⁴ As time passed, and more islanders acquired competence in European skills, the more they were used as information gatherers and disseminators²⁵ - a testimony to the fact of acculturation, to its limitations, and to the marginal role of beachcombers in it.

The beachcomber role in acculturation operated principally as a direct response to a demand from the islanders for the use of European skills. The skills demanded, and the fulfilment of that demand is best considered in two categories: the demand for the skill of speaking English; and the demand that the technical skills of beachcombers be made available to islanders, either by teaching the skills, or making things as required. These skills include the


²⁵. e.g. V.M. Golovnin, 'Chapters on Hawaii', (Ts. translated extracts), p.51.
craft skills of a general kind, specifically maritime skills, and religious skills, which owed their appeal to the belief that religion was an efficacious system of achieving material ends.

The reported use of the English language by Pacific islanders during the beachcomber era is surprisingly frequent. The earliest is that of Vancouver in Hawaii mentioned above. Browning, an American naval officer who sailed through the Pacific in 1835 wrote of Rotuma that the inhabitants had learnt English. A large number of islanders from all groups learnt English while serving as sailors - a practice which developed from the earliest times. Whether most of them learnt English in this way, or from resident Europeans, cannot be determined, but the Rotuman case is verified by a variety of sources: for example, the whaler Robert Jarman says that most of the Rotumans spoke broken English which they learnt from white residents. English caught on quickly in Hawaii as well. As early as 1802, the king of Kauai, Kaumuali'i, could speak English sufficiently well to be able to converse directly with Turnbull, and several years later some members of Kamehameha's family attended a school conducted by the French beachcomber Jean Rives where they were taught English, and reading and writing.

26. Browning also says that the Rotumans had learnt something of the West from the beachcombers, but the example he gives shows this knowledge to be most superficial: when an American ship visited they called their chief "president" in deference to the Americans; when an English vessel came they called him "king". R.L. Browning, 'Notes on the South Sea Islands', (Ms.), pp.197-199.


Nothing much came of Rives' school, but the learning of English continued in the principal places of cultural contact nevertheless.\(^{30}\)

In the Marquesas a similar process was in train, at least by the 1830's.\(^{31}\) Returning to western Polynesia, the most prominent example is that of Tupou (later King George) who when he first approached the Wesleyan mission in 1826, could already speak some English, and had made a start with reading and writing. His teacher was a lifelong beachcomber, the Port-au-Prince survivor, William Brown.\(^{32}\)

The ability of islanders to speak English must in most cases have been deliberately sought, since as has already been suggested, the onus of cultural adaptation was overwhelmingly with the beachcomber. The possibility of islanders picking up English incidentally from the conversation of beachcombers may be discounted in the majority of cases, since the exposure of islanders to spoken English was only a tiny portion of the total cultural stimuli. Moreover, it may be inferred from the cases of beachcombers losing their command of English,\(^{33}\) that many beachcombers used the local language even when conversing with each other.\(^{34}\)

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33. See Chapter 5, p.247, above.

34. Cf. W. Lay and C.M. Hussey, ... *Mutiny on the Globe . . .*, (New York, 1963), pp.43, 45, 52, 54. Lay and Hussey were separated whenever they attempted to speak together; Lamont reports similar jealousy, Lamont, *op. cit.*, p.129.
In the utilization of European technical skills the paradigm is Hawaii. In the early 1790's the distinction had perhaps not been fully made between the workman and his work; by 1793 it was noticed that the Hawaiians were anxious to learn European skills, but that so far the wish remained unfulfilled. Within ten years the scene was transformed. Turnbull mentioned Hawaiians working as blacksmiths with improvised tools: a pig of iron for an anvil, and bellows made locally from goatskin. These smiths were able with much ingenuity to satisfy native Hawaiian demand for iron implements.35 The Hawaiians generally (not just their chiefs) looked beyond the immediate acquisition of a white man in their relations with the West, to the white man specifically as an importer of new skills.36 It was not part of the Hawaiian dream that they should become increasingly dependent on foreigners for the satisfaction of their growing wants, but that their capacity to meet their own needs should be enlarged; hence Archibald Campbell could write after his residence in 1809:

It is astonishing how soon they acquire the useful arts from their visitors. Many of the natives are employed as carpenters, coopers, blacksmiths, and tailors, and do their work as perfectly as Europeans.

In the king's forge there were none but native blacksmiths . . .37

Within a few years of Campbell's residence (1809-1810) the trades were so well established that it can be readily understood that by about 1810 or shortly after, would-be beachcombers were readily


returned to their ships if their captains wanted them back.\(^{38}\)

Hawaii, however, in this as in many other aspects of its history, is not representative of the general Polynesian experience. Although Pomare had a Tahitian blacksmith,\(^ {39}\) the more usual pattern was for the islanders simply to use the beachcomber-craftsman as a skilled person - as an end in himself, not as a means to multiplying the number of craftsmen.\(^ {40}\) This majority reaction was, if anything, more in keeping with pan-Polynesian traditions than was the more dynamic Hawaiian reaction. The possession of technical skills was a manifestation of mana and was jealously guarded. The skills and knowledge were transmitted only to selected recipients within families, and were not disseminated to anyone who happened to be interested. If one lacked mana it was vain to seek skills of a high order which belonged to another even had social pressures allowed it. To do so was perhaps to encroach not simply on another's prerogatives but to challenge his mana as well. This restriction on the openness of knowledge was probably the strongest single impediment to the beachcombers becoming agents of cultural change. Even in areas less specialized, opportunities for change and innovation appear to have been ignored - as Robarts and Vason both attest in their accounts of their activity as farmers. Vason's reputation as a food producer was high, yet his innovations in trawling for fish

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40. e.g. J. Oliver, op. cit., p.149.
and in cane growing seem to have been ephemeral.\textsuperscript{41}

The same pattern of response - an extreme form from Hawaii, with utilization but not adoption elsewhere - may be seen in the specifically maritime arts of shipbuilding, seamanship and navigation. In Hawaii during the 1790's - the decade of warfare and conquest - shipbuilders and men capable of navigation were in strong demand, and during this time a number of ships' officers - such as Stewart and Harebottle - were induced to settle. By 1801 when Delano visited Hawaii, his former carpenter, George McClay, was said to have built the extraordinary number of nearly twenty small vessels, some up to fifty tons.\textsuperscript{42} During the 'nineties this art remained in European hands. But at the end of the decade a Hawaiian chief succeeded in building a ship along western lines.\textsuperscript{43} By 1811 Hawaiians were still shipbuilding - Franchere saw a Hawaiian building a thirty ton sloop with improvised tools: a worn-out axe, an adze with a two-inch blade, and a hot iron rod as an augur. But more importantly than shipbuilding was the skill to handle the vessels: Turnbull noticed that in Hawaii the islanders were excelling in many foreign skills, but

\ldots particularly in that of navigation \ldots so that many of the inhabitants have thus become brave, hardy, and not inexperienced sailors.\textsuperscript{44}

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{41} [Vason], \textit{op. cit.}, pp.137, 147. For Robarts see Greg Dening, \textit{The Marquesan Journal of Edward Robarts}, (Canberra, 1974), p.118.
  \item \textsuperscript{42} Amasa Delano, \textit{A Narrative of Voyages}, (Boston, 1817), p.395.
  \item \textsuperscript{43} S.M. Kamakau, \textit{The Ruling Chiefs of Hawaii}, (Honolulu, 1961), p.187.
  \item \textsuperscript{44} Turnbull, \textit{op. cit.}, p.236. Their skill as sailors obviously predates European contact. Turnbull was referring to their handling of European-style craft.
\end{itemize}
Evidence for similar processes elsewhere is noticeably lacking. Only in Fiji is a local shipbuilding industry known to have developed in the beachcomber era, and it remained in the hands of the beachcombers or their part-Fijian off-spring. Diaper described a technique of canoe sailing known as 'faka papalangi' (European fashion) in which the sails were set in a manner to allow sailing close to the wind. It seems inconceivable that Fijians needed to be taught by Europeans how to sail close to the wind, but if it is assumed that they did, then this technique could well have been learned from beachcombers, as Maude assumed. But it is just as likely to have been copied from the practice used by visiting traders, who by the 1840's had been numerous. This innovation - if such it was - was an important one; but it does not prove that whoever introduced it exercised much influence on Fijian culture.

Closely related to the question of changes in techniques and technology is the possibility of the beachcombers having some influence on religious change. It was not unusual for beachcombers to make some attempt to alter the religious thinking of their hosts, but because of the happy eclecticism characteristic of polytheistic religions the self-made evangelists were usually told simply to mind their own business - that different peoples have different gods. Nevertheless, throughout Oceania the relationship between the natural and supernatural, between ritual and secular efficacy, was dynamic and close. Admittedly, this relationship is more clearly

47. e.g. Jackson, loc. cit., p.428, and see below pp.351-353.
discerned in the more 'closed societies', as Jarvie calls them, of Melanesia, than of Polynesia. Nevertheless the applicability of the concept to Polynesia is clearly seen in the similarity of the operation of the idea of *mana*. The conversion experiences of the Polynesian societies supports the idea that religion in these relatively 'open societies' was in some sense, a technology: an instrument for achieving certain secular and material ends.

Steps to acquire this technology of religion were not taken by the islanders during the beachcomber phase. This failure is in itself further evidence that the beachcombers were neither innovators nor seen to be innovators; they were merely the obliging possessors of alien skills. It was not until the missionary phase (and even then not immediately) that the islanders recognized the possibilities of securing certain advantages and skills by changing their religious identity.

There is one major exception to this formulation: the case of the - to western eyes - curiously adaptive yet conservative society of Samoa, in its vigorous and insistent demand during the 1830's for religious change. In response to this demand - sparked off probably by Samoan knowledge of Wesleyan evangelism in Tonga -

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49. i.e. a person's skills and achievements were related to his religious beliefs and ritual observances. The greater one's potency in secular things then the greater must be one's religious stature, for the former depends on the latter.

50. The movement began in the 1820's, according to a report from the Rev. Nathaniel Turner in Tonga, who first became aware of it in 1828. N. Turner, 'Personal Narrative, 1793-1846', (Ms.), Vol. 1, p.251, [239], 4 October, 1828, (dual pagination).

many beachcombers became religious teachers, purveying a product whose only intended merit was acceptability. The Siovili cult, described by Freeman, 52 may be regarded as one of the broader class of 'sailor religions'. Certainly the missionaries viewed it that way, referring to Siovili as 'the Samoan imposter'. 53 Freeman, however, who makes no reference to the other cults, regards it as a genuine case of a misguided spirit-medium, sincerely believing in the religion that he taught. Comparing the Siovili cult with other contact-phase cults such as the Tahitian Mamaia heresy, he argued that:

Siovilism . . . was demonstrably a movement of this kind and must be included in the same genus as Melanesian cults of more recent years. 54

Yet not all Samoans who wanted an exotic religion were either Siovilites or followers of the missionaries and their Tahitian teachers. Such was the demand for the foreign religion that the Samoans appealed to their beachcombers for instruction. Brown attributed the popularity of the new religion to the prestige of having a resident white man; 55 but the reverse relationship is more likely to be true, for as Brown himself said:

The consequence was that any chief who had a white man living with him could have a 'lotu' of his own 'just


54. Freeman, loc. cit., p.194.

55. [Rev. George Brown], 'Old Hands and Old Times . . .', (Ts.), p.30.
The eagerness of the Samoans for the foreign religion is attested by many sources. Peter Turner wrote of them boarding every whaler which called for refreshment asking if it brought missionaries. A demand so great could only be disappointed. During Williams' second visit to Samoa, in 1832, the chief of Satupaitea on Savai'i sent a message that he had turned Christian, abandoned the 'bad' practices of polygamy and dancing, had built a chapel, and now asked Williams to visit him. Williams refused, but sent him some presents.

It is not to be wondered at therefore, that resident white men were appealed to to teach the religion in which they were supposed to have been reared.

The religions of these sailor-preachers were localized, in contrast to the Siovili cult which had numerous followers in the three larger islands of Samoa; nevertheless, they had certain fundamental features in common: a sacred building, a code of rules, a claim to spiritual knowledge through personal revelation, and the abolition of certain practices or restraints of the fa'a Samoa.

The priests took advantage of their position as holy spokesmen to make life more easy and pleasant for themselves.

56. Ibid.


59. [Brown], op. cit., p.31.

Some of these men were no doubt, unprincipled and deliberately deceitful; others were certainly sincere. But in both cases they were meeting a clearly expressed demand from the Samoans, which they dared not thwart. Williams quoted a conversation he had with one such man as an excellent specimen of the type. The beachcomber explained to Williams how he had made two to three hundred converts:

"Why, Sir, I goes about and talks to the people, and tells 'em that our God is good, and theirs is bad; and when they listens to me, I makes 'em religion, and baptizes 'em."
"Sure", I exclaimed, "you baptize them, do you? how do you perform that?" "Why, Sir", he answered, "I takes water, and dips my hands in it, and crosses them on their foreheads and in their breasts, and then I reads a bit of a prayer to 'em in English". "Of course", I said, "they understand you". "No", he rejoined, "but they says they knows it does 'em good".

In addition to this, I found that these two individuals had pretended to heal the sick, by reading a "bit of prayer" over them, for which they extorted property from the people. I remonstrated with them upon the fearful wickedness of their conduct . . . .61

It was not uncharacteristic of the beachcomber priests that like Williams' men, their prayers, hymns and exhortations were in English, and not understood by the Samoans. The fact underlines the view that the initiative for the new religion came from the Samoans, that the beachcombers could have practically no influence on Samoan beliefs, and that the Samoans did not need to understand what was being said. The important thing was that they had a foreign religion, and that in itself was meeting a need which sprang from within Samoan society.


This latter point is one which the missionaries usually overlooked when they denounced their beachcomber rivals, 62 assuming, in accordance with contemporary ethno-centric preconceptions, that the beachcomber was an ingenious servant of the Devil, imposing upon the gullible, ignorant and innocent Samoans. 63 The reality of the situation was not one of either party imposing on the other, but one of a convenient coincidence of interests. Only such a hypothesis of mutual interest can explain both the resentment of the beachcombers at missionary interference, and the tenacity of Samoans to retain the cults which they had acquired. 64 The view that all foreign cults were, if not the same, then at least equal is summed up in a Samoan's reply to George Turner's condemnation of the heresy:

Don't speak to me. I have got a foreign religion as well as you. Mine is as good as yours. Attend to your own soul, I am attending to mine. 65

A similar statement could have been made by a Samoan practising the old religion; and indeed similar statements were made by pre-Christian Polynesians elsewhere. 66 The important point was that the Samoan in


63. Rev. John Thomas, 'Draft Letter Book', (Ms.), p.163, 20 January, 1835. Rev. Peter Turner, 'Letters', 10 February, 15 July, 1836, Methodist Missionary Society, Inwards Correspondence, Samoa, 1834-1870. There were a few exceptions to this condemnatory reaction, such as the case of the escaped convict Norval, known to the Samoans as Salima. But as in other cases, the initiative was assumed to lie with the white men. See Horatio Hale, 'The Navigator Isles', (Ms.), p.2; John Williams, 'Journal of the "Olive Branch", 1832', (Ms.), L.M.S.-S.S.J., Box 7; A.W. Murray, Forty Years Mission Work . . ., (London, 1876), pp.33-34.

64. Rev. Peter Turner, letter, 4 March, 1837, loc. cit.


66. See below, p.352.
this case had sought and acquired a religion which suited his own circumstances. One Samoan, looking back after some years recalled:

I never prayed at home, merely when we met once a year. I contented myself with the thought that I was of the white man's religion, and under the protection of the white man's God.  

Even in the extraordinary case of Samoa, therefore, where beachcombers appeared to have had a major influence on indigenous culture - in this case religion, attracting literally hundreds of converts, and whole communities - it is evident that the actual beachcomber influence was negligible. It is also clear that such change which had taken place occurred before and without the intervention of beachcombers. The analogy Freeman made between the Siovili cult and the twentieth century Melanesian cargo cults may be invoked and extended further: in the religious changes in Samoa it was the superficial verbalizations and periodical observances which changed. The basic manner of thinking and probably the basic beliefs remained as before. Indeed, the changes seem to have been an affirmation of the continuity of Samoan beliefs.  

One of the most peculiar aspects of the Samoan sailor religions is that in contrast to other island groups the demand for a foreign religion preceded intensive contact with the West. Elsewhere in the Pacific the demand for religious change lagged considerably behind the other processes. Even in Tonga, Samoa's closest relation culturally and geographically (excluding of course

67. Ibid., p.105.

68. Cf. the explanation of cargo cults offered in Peter Lawrence, Road Belong Cargo, (Manchester and Melbourne, 1967), passim, and especially Chapter IX, pp.222-273.
the small islands of the region) there are only two references to ex-sailors teaching religion, and only one of these resembles the Samoan situation. 69 The other situation was more of a conversational one between beachcomber and chief. In this case the result was that the chief, Finau Ulukalala of Vava'u (Mariner's Finau Fiji) had the sailor write to Nathaniel Turner in 1828 asking for a missionary for Vava'u. 70

The restrictions on the influence which beachcombers might have had as agents of acculturation was then, limited by the nature of their relationships with the islanders, problems of language, the conceptual limitations of both islanders and beachcombers, and finally by the expectations, aspirations, events and processes going on within island society. There was in addition another factor which emphasises the beachcomber-side of the culture contact relationship. As argued in Chapters 5 and 6 the beachcomber was a member of island society on sufferance. His security depended on the viability of a reciprocal relationship with the islanders. As has been pointed out earlier, his best guarantee of safety and respect was the specialized skill which was his. That specialized skills should not be widely divulged was already clearly understood by the islanders, 71 and it is likely that most beachcombers realized that fact early in their careers. But even if they did not, their sense of survival was sufficiently acute for them to realize that the surest


71. See above, pp.338-339.
way in which they could make themselves necessary to the host societies, and to maintain the need, was to keep their skills to themselves.

This reaction was most clearly articulated – appropriately – in Hawaii, where the beachcombers' monopoly of western skills had been broken by about 1800. In 1809 Archibald Campbell, the footless weaver-cum-sail-maker wanted a loom on which to weave some cloth. The ingenious carpenter, Boyd, claimed not to be able to make one:

... from an illiberal notion held by many of the white people, that the natives should be taught nothing that would render them independent of strangers ... [Thereupon] I undertook to make one myself; although, by so doing, I incurred the displeasure of many of my countrymen ... [Jack] showed much anxiety to observe how I proceeded; but his master told me by no means to allow him as he was so quick he would soon learn to make a loom himself.72

On another occasion Campbell was prevented from teaching a chief to read, on the grounds that "they will soon know more than ourselves".73

Direct evidence as unequivocal as this is absent from other island groups, although Mariner noticed the same thing in Hawaii three years before Campbell's residence there.74 It is probable that similar ideas prevailed elsewhere; for example distilling was practised in Tahiti in 1806 by a man who left before any Tahitians had learnt the art.75 In other cases where beachcombers lived in the same community for many years practising their skills without

73. Ibid., p.100.
74. Martin, op. cit., I, p.xlii.
indigenous rivals, it seems safe to infer that a similar kind of trade-confidentiality was practised. 76

In trying to trace the process of acculturation, it is often difficult to distinguish the subtle diffusion of western skills and attitudes from outright efforts to impose behaviour and attitudes on an alien population. The difference is, however, an important one, for the contrast represents a vast difference in the relationship between the members of the two cultures. In the first case, it is entirely up to the members of the 'receiving' culture whether they adopt any foreign characteristics; the initiative lies with them. In the second case a more aggressive stance and proselytising ambition is required of the newcomers, and is likely to be met with an overtly defensive response.

During the beachcomber era in Polynesia the islanders did not adopt very much of the material culture of the newcomers, and, it can be inferred, nothing of their non-material culture. This is not to say that the island cultures went entirely unmodified during the period in question - only that the island cultures did not even begin to look like tropical versions of European culture. In the opinion of contemporaries, however, the beachcombers had a marked and deleterious influence on their hosts, the implication being that the beachcombers had mounted a massive and gratuitous cultural assault to inculcate all that was depraved and vicious in the convict/sailor subculture. But details are practically never offered.

The Rotumans were described by Waterhouse as 'awfully corrupted' by

76. e.g. Peter Dillon, Narrative . . . , (2 Vols., London, 1829), Vol. 1, p.262.
    Erskine, op. cit., p.151.
    B. Seemann, Viti, (Cambridge, 1862), pp.105-106.
their beachcombers; the Hawaiians according to an American clergyman were corrupted by "the very dregs and outcasts of civilized life"; Marquesan mildness and humanity was said to have given way to savagery under the influence of the west. The examples could be multiplied, and most of them are fairly represented by the indignant protest of Hugh Carleton to the Colonial Secretary of New South Wales:

These islands [in particular, Fiji] are infested by Europeans of the very worst description; runaway sailors and convicts, idle and reckless, leading lives of unrestrained licentiousness without remorse or shame, some among the number being even so degraded as to make a boast of cannibalism.

The pernicious influence which these men have exercised cannot be overstated. They are fast engraving the acquired vice of civilisation upon the natural imperfections of savage life . . . .

The Colonial Secretary was, very properly, not impressed, and asked Carleton if he wished to make specific allegations which could be investigated. Carleton did so, but when Captain Worth inquired into them in 1849 he found that there were no grounds on which he could take action.

Similarly, when one examines beachcombers' activities in search of justification of the general remarks of men like Waterhouse,

78. C.S. Stewart, A Residence in the Sandwich Is., (Boston, 1832), p.123.
80. Hugh Carleton to N.S.W. Colonial Secretary, 1 March, 1849, in Pacific Islands Papers, 1822-1875. (Ms. Spencer 194, Dixson Library, Sydney).
Stewart and Carleton, the evidence is notably deficient. Their accusations exaggerate the degree of acculturation which took place during the beachcomber era; and their views were founded not on observation but on two false assumptions: the assumption of the passive malleability of island peoples; and the assumption of the inherent superiority of white people over dark even where the former were ignorant, stupid and depraved. The truth is that the beachcombers were neither capable nor willing on the whole to bring about changes in island cultures and that in the last resort the islanders reserved their right to choose. The demonstration of this claim is the efforts of those few beachcombers who, like missionaries, sought overtly to modify island religion and to abolish cannibalism.

The first beachcomber to attempt to bring about religious change was probably Howell, the university educated ex-minister who lived briefly in Hawaii in 1794. He tried to impress Kamehameha with the falseness of pagan gods, and with the strengths and virtues of Christianity, but abandoned the scheme when Kamehameha challenged him to test his religion by ordeal.82 Howell's attempt was probably the only sustained effort at conversion by a beachcomber. Others made only token efforts - like Michael Donald in Tahiti who told a chief that the sudden death of one of his men was God's punishment for having made a human sacrifice.83 The chief rejoined that the man had broken a tabu, and had been punished by the Tahitian

In Tonga in the late 1820's, after missionaries had begun work for the third time, James Read was frequently asked about Christianity. The Tongan motive was merely to provoke Read, who always responded with passionate arguments, but without effect. At about the same time Finau Ulukalala was learning something of Christianity from a beachcomber—but it seems that the initiative had come from Finau, who in July, 1828, asked Nathaniel Turner to send him a missionary. Other beachcombers thought of converting their hosts, but perhaps the most persistent was Diaper, during his early years in Fiji.

I told him that his gods were all false, and that it was the wicked god (the devil) that put these things into their heads, because he was an enemy of the true God. I went on to explain to him these things, but he said, "different countries, different fashions, and, in like manner, different gods." Later when he stole consecrated pork from a temple he confessed his crime in order to demonstrate the falseness of the pagan gods. The Fijians were not convinced, and Diaper had to flee for his life. His most spectacular attempt came a few years later (in 1845) when he did not attempt personal evangelizing, but sponsored a Fijian preacher on the island of Komo.

Beachcomber evangelizing, then, seems always to have been

84. Orlebar, op. cit., p.48.
87. Ibid., pp.449-450.
ineffective. It was only in incidental ways that beachcombers might have contributed to the decline of indigenous religion. This attack was by accidentally or deliberately violating, evading, and subverting the *tapu* and other practices which had religious associations. Examples of behaviour which might have facilitated the indigenous questioning of beliefs include Brown in Tahiti carrying things on his head; Diaper in Fiji, eloping with a woman due to be strangled at the funeral of her dead husband, or his eating of a crop before the 'first fruits' ceremony. Both Mariner (in Tonga) and Cary (in Fiji) wilfully shot birds which they had been told were *tapu*. The obvious immunity of the Europeans to supernatural punishment for their transgressions was explained everywhere - whether as an attempt to prevent the obvious conclusion from being drawn, or simply to account for the unthinkable - as being due to the fact that Europeans were governed by different gods, and therefore by different conventions. Nevertheless as the islanders came to see that Europeans were not exempt from natural phenomena it seems likely that some scepticism did result from their sacrilege. Amid all this profanity the islanders were not impassive observers, and must have wondered about the implications of beachcomber sacrilege, if as

94. Take for example, the abolition of the *kapu* in Hawai'i in 1819. See R.S. Kuykendall, *The Hawaiian Kingdom, 1778-1854*, (Honolulu, 1957), pp.66-67.
Turpin claimed decades later, quoting from Hunt's Journal, the Fijians used to get very angry with the missionaries for their interference in local customs and traditions.95

The second spectacular area of beachcomber interference was in the matter of cannibalism - a practice which has not ceased to have a powerful and morbid fascination to the people of European origin who denounce it in the strongest terms. The beachcombers themselves were not free from this attraction-repulsion, and contrary to the popular belief of contemporaries, there is only the slenderest evidence of their indulging in cannibalism. Most beachcombers claimed to have refused to eat human flesh, and a few claimed to have attempted to prevent their hosts from eating it. The avoidance of cannibalism is well documented from both east and west;96 while Diaper, Whippy, Savage and company, Danford, Robarts and Patterson all claimed to have or were said to have attempted to dissuade their hosts from cannibalism. Of these, only Danford had any success.97

95. E.J. Turpin, 'Extracts from Diary and Narratives', (Ms.), § 35-36.
   Turpin, op. cit., § 130-131.
   Seemann, op. cit., p.175.
   Patterson, op. cit., p.100.
   As the paucity of these examples suggest, the issue of cannibalism was not a major one in the lives of beachcombers: it was not widely practised in Polynesia. In Hawaii, the Marquesas and Tahiti it was practised on a small scale as a sacred ritual; in Samoa it was probably unknown, and in Tonga it was practised briefly and only after about 1800 by a few people regarded as
Beachcomber interference in other local practices was perhaps less emotional, but no less justifiable from the standpoint of western morality. As with cannibalism, however, most of the known cases are from Fiji, and concern the taking of human life, in such forms as widow-strangling, euthanasia and the killing of prisoners taken in war. These attempts were sometimes successful on specific occasions; more often they were resented, even by the supposed beneficiaries. In Tonga Mariner's merciful attempts to intercede failed; and in Eastern Polynesia there is the example of John Young trying and failing to take some of the apparent caprice out of Hawaiian justice.

Other areas in which beachcombers sought to modify their host cultures include that of recreation. It has already been suggested that the science of distilling seems to have been kept a secret for a time, but there was probably no such secrecy about the use of the product, or the use of tobacco, or of cards. Even an athletics carnival with betting on the events took place in Hawaii in 1812, and appears to have been a fusion of local and daredevils. Only in Fiji was it a frequent practice shared in by the population at large. The hold which cannibalism held on the European mind in relation to Polynesia was therefore grossly exaggerated.

98. e.g. Im Thurn and Wharton, op. cit., pp.57, 63-64.
Twynings, op. cit., pp.92-93.
Wilkes, op. cit., III, pp.96-97.


101. e.g. Kamakau, op. cit., p.193; 11, op. cit., p.85.

alien practices. 103

It might also be claimed that beachcombers had an influence on food production - both in methods and commodities. The success of Vason's innovations in Tonga, however, has already been seen to have been shortlived; while the successful introduction of foreign animals and plants seems to have occurred only in Hawaii, and at the hands of Francisco de Paula Marin 104 - at least during the 'classic' beachcomber era. 105

Beachcombers were alleged to have interfered in indigenous society in that they instigated the islanders to raise their prices for provisions, or not to pay for their purchases, or to sell only for selected commodities, like muskets. 106 There is no reason to think, however, that the islanders were incapable of recognizing and acting upon an opportunity in commerce without being prompted


105. For unsuccessful attempts to introduce foreign plants see: Lamont, op. cit., p.288.
Langsdorff, op. cit., p.107.
Patterson, op. cit., p.86.

In 1800 cayenne pepper was found growing in Tonga to the great annoyance of the Tongans who blamed the missionaries who had some plants of cayenne. The missionaries held the beachcombers responsible. Buchanan, et al., 'Journal', p.62, 2 January, 1800, L.M.S.-S.S.J., Box 1.

John Boit, 'Journal of a Voyage...', (Ms.), 16 October, 1795.
John H. Kemble, To California and the South Seas, (San Marino, 1966), p.147.
by a foreigner. To suggest the contrary one need only point to the
rapid rise in prices in Tahiti during Cook's visits, when there were
no beachcombers to blame. 107 It is apparent, therefore, that the
volume of evidence, and the range of activities to which it applies,
for beachcombers being the immediate and prime cause of large scale
modifications in island cultures, is extremely slender. Moreover,
it is apparent that even these paltry attempts failed at least as
often as they succeeded; and even in the case of success, there is
no reason to suppose that the changes were always long lasting or
pervasive.

Direct evidence of the islanders' views is scant, but there
is the example of the two Tongan chiefs who were interviewed in
Sydney by the Governor of N.S.W. on 26 March, 1823. In answer to
his offer to give them anything they asked, they replied that all
they wanted was "a bit of print". 108 Had beachcombers been causing
changes in society which had got out of control they might have
asked that something be done about them, or have made more sophisti-
cated requests. They did not because there was no need, and because
of their continuing confidence in being able to deal with foreigners
in their own way. In the beachcomber literature itself conscious
non-interference by many beachcombers appears to have been common.

Twyning, for example, "determined not to oppose any of the customs.
of the people"; 109 and the Rev. Lawry in Tonga complained of beach-

107. J.C. Beaglehole, (ed.), The Voyage of the Resolution and the

108. Bonwick Transcripts, Box 52, p.1310. Extract from the Journal
of R. Mansfield, (Ms.).

109. Twynng, op. cit., p.117.
comber Singleton's refusal to interpret spiritual matters into Tongan.\textsuperscript{110} On the more positive side Diaper remarked of the Rewa beachcombers in Fiji that their courtesy to strangers was a practice "which they have adopted through the example of these savages".\textsuperscript{111}

Since the allegations that the beachcombers played a dominant role in degrading and perverting island society were more frequently (perhaps always) made by missionaries and mission sympathizers, the exaggeration and inaccuracy of the charge is perhaps best shown by the testimony of two missionaries who felt less obliged to blame their compatriots for their troubles. Reflecting on the lack of real success of the mission at Vava'u in 1843 Cargill wrote:

The declension and lowness of religious knowledge and feeling are mainly attributable to the pernicious influence of the distracting civil wars at the island of Tongatabu.\textsuperscript{112}

Five years later West complained of how badly things were for the mission in Tonga, attributing the evil to the "social and civil state of the Tongans".\textsuperscript{113} Here, if anywhere, the beachcombers might have been blamed for the parlous state of Tongan affairs; the fact that they were not suggests that the generalized allegations of their contemporaries should be treated with scepticism.

As active and deliberate agents of cultural change, there-

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{110} Rev. Walter Lawry, 'Diary, 1818-1825', (Ms.), p.101, 1 January, 1823.
  \item \textsuperscript{111} Jackson, loc. cit., p.460.
  \item \textsuperscript{112} Rev. David Cargill, 'Journal, 1842-43', (Ms.), 12 March, 1843.
  \item \textsuperscript{113} Rev. Thomas West, to Rev. Thomas Buddle, Auckland, 1 May, 1848, in 'Wesleyan Missionary Letters', item 62, (Ms. in Alexander Turnbull Library).
\end{itemize}
fore, the role of the beachcombers was negligible. Put simply this was due to two complementary factors. The first was a combination of the unwillingness or inability of the beachcombers to initiate change; the second was the refusal of the islanders to modify their cultures in any substantial way while the foreign influences were so marginal. This statement, however, does not exhaust the possibilities for beachcombers contributing to cultural change by diffusion. They had a passive role, as well as an active one.

At the most elementary level, to possess a white man was seen as a way of attracting ships; and conversely, the presence of a white man was seen by ships' captains as being an indication of safety. This was as true of Hawaii in the 1790's as it was of Samoa and Rotuma in the 1830's. As an American naval visitor to Rotuma in 1835 put it:

... their residence offers some inducements for vessels to resort there, and are generally a preventive to violence from either party, by giving confidence to both.115

As a direct corollary of this function, the beachcombers were a means by which foreign goods became available to the islanders - even before beachcombers began to operate as traders, dealing separately with buyers and sellers. That a beachcomber was expected to acquire foreign articles for his hosts is seen in the disappoint-

114. e.g. W.R. Broughton, *A Voyage of Discovery in the North Pacific Ocean*, (Amsterdam and New York, 1967), p.34.

ment on the Tongans at Mariner's failure to bring presents from the Hope in 1809, a failure he made up for when he did eventually leave Tonga. It has already been shown that the islanders were often keen to exchange a beachcomber for western artifacts. The obligation on a beachcomber to surrender his possessions on arrival on an island has also been discussed. On numerous occasions during the course of an island residence beachcombers were called upon to acquire and distribute foreign goods. Marriage was perhaps the most important such occasion, but opportunity was a sufficient imperative.

With the increasing frequency of contact, and with the growing demand for island produce which was matched by a reciprocal demand for Western goods, the stage developed at which a clear role as intermediary can be discerned. The beachcomber in these cases may be looked upon as an incipient trader, but the initiative in trade remained in the hands of the principals: a captain or supercargo on the one hand, an island chief on the other. Initially the beachcomber in this role was no more than an interpreter - a task requiring minimal language skills, and no finesse in organization or negotiation. Diaper, for example, mentions having done this at

117. Ibid., II, p.20.
118. See Chapter 6, p.270; e.g. Turnbull, op. cit., p.371.
121. Buchanan, et al., 'Journal', 10 September, 1799, 23 September, 1799, pp.56-59 [50-53] (dual pagination), L.M.S.-S.S.J., Box 1. See also, e.g. Oliver, op. cit., p.149; Patterson, op. cit., pp.107-108.
the beginning of his beachcomber career in Samoa, after a residence of only three months.\textsuperscript{122} This elementary role was also what visitors looked for in a beachcomber in the early years of Pacific trade. But it has already been mentioned that as early as 1802 Kaumuali'i at Kauai (Hawaii) could speak English well enough to do the job himself.\textsuperscript{123}

As the time of residence of beachcombers became more extended, and the demands of both parties in trade became more elaborate, the beachcombers took over a more responsible role. The circumstances under which this more advanced role developed can be seen in the Tahitian pork trade, in the early 1800's and in the Fijian beche-de-mer trade in the late 1820's and early 1830's. The purchasing of pork in Tahiti (after the initial flush) required protracted negotiations with many vendors over an extended territory. The purchasing was politically sensitive because of the instability of Tahitian affairs at the time, the fact that arms were demanded as the price of hogs, and that there was competition among a number of buyers. Hence the reliance of the traders on beachcombers like Connor and Hagerstein, and the complimentary way in which these traders wrote of their beachcomber assistants.\textsuperscript{124}

In Fiji Cary performed an analogous role: steering trade in the direction of his Fijian patron, and negotiating purchases of trading commodities and supplies which the beche-de-mer captains would

\textsuperscript{122} Jackson, \textit{op. cit.}, p.414.

\textsuperscript{123} Turnbull, \textit{op. cit.}, p.211. See also Lisiansky, \textit{op. cit.}, pp.112-113.

\textsuperscript{124} House, \textit{op. cit.}, pp.7, 20-21; Turnbull, \textit{op. cit.}, pp.272, 273. The pork traders had initially hoped that the missionaries could perform this role. See Jefferson, 'Journal', p.25, 26 June, 1801, L.M.S.-S.S.J., Box 1.
have been unable to procure unaided. 125

The same development took place all over the Pacific in the provisioning trade 126 with beachcombers assuming responsibility for piloting, and furnishing wood and water, and any other supplies which seemed appropriate. 127 In Hawaii where trade during the beachcomber era developed on a much greater scale than elsewhere, with a larger indigenous demand for ships and ships' supplies, the beachcombers' role as intermediary in trade was more noticeable. On deeds of sale of ships, for example, the signature of John Young appeared frequently, signing on behalf of Kamehameha who relied on Young's advice whenever making such purchases. 128

Gradually the control of trade passed more and more from the hands of the principals into the hands of the beachcomber middlemen: Read, who began life in Tonga as a shipwrecked boy in 1821 was described by Erskine in 1849 as supporting himself as a trader; 129 Mills in the Marquesas in the 1850's claimed to have had all the trade on his island in his own hands, 130 and the Hawaiian beachcombers with whom the Russians had to deal in 1816 and 1817 (the Schaffer affair) appear to have had considerable freedom to foster

125. [Cary], op. cit., pp.43-45, 61-63, 66-67. See also Wallis, op. cit., p.100.

126. For an extra-Polynesian example see J.J. Mahlmann, Reminiscences of an Ancient Mariner, (Yokohama, 1918), p.58.


128. See Peter Corney, Voyages in the Northern Pacific . . . (Honolulu, 1896), p.83A; Hawaii, F.O. & Ex., Folder 2, 1801-1816, (Ms. Archives of Hawaii), receipt and deed of sale dated respectively 4 March, 1814, and 16 October, 1816.

129. Erskine, op. cit., p.147.

or obstruct trade as they wished. All island groups reached the point at which beachcombers could act independently as traders. At this point however, the beachcomber era can generally be considered over, and the traders can be identified as beachcombers less by their style of life at the time than by knowledge of their earlier life.

The clearest case of one beachcomber bridging this transitional stage is that of William Diaper in Fiji and Tonga in 1845. He began by collecting tortoiseshell to sell to visiting traders, and later moved into provisioning, and other forms of sailors' supplies. Marin in Hawaii made the same transition during his long residence beginning in 1794. He differed from Diaper however, in that whereas Diaper was primarily a middleman, Marin became a farmer, and sold his own produce to visiting ships. Thus his role in disseminating foreign goods among the Hawaiians was much less than one might infer from the scale of his operations.

These are, however, spectacular examples. Most lived lives which had changed markedly from the 'classic' beachcomber pattern, and were probably more dependent on people of their own colour than they were on the islanders. By the time this pattern had emerged, the 'classic' beachcomber era had passed. In all groups the missionaries had become well established and surpassed the beachcombers as the dominant foreign factor in culture contact. New style traders and consuls were frequently a part of the new formula, but not always.

133. Wyllie, loc. cit., pp.46-49.
The decline of the beachcomber era may thus be dated by the transition of people of what might be called a 'beachcomber type' from dependence on a subsistence economy to dependence on a money economy. In Tonga, Samoa and Fiji this stage was reached during the 1840's; in Tahiti it was reached somewhere in the period 1808-1810; in Hawaii, about 1812-1815; and in the Marquesas probably not until sometime after 1860.\(^{134}\)

The beachcomber phenomenon, therefore, or at least, its beginning and end - can be seen to be the result of economic processes as they developed on the European\(^{135}\) side of the culture-contact relationship. But the beachcombers themselves were simply a by-product of the western economic processes; they were not its agents.

Although it is apparent that beachcombers had scarcely any influence on indigenous cultural change, and had no active role to play in initiating change, a role in the processes of change might still be found in the influence they had on the contact-relationships between islanders and visitors. Their role in directing ship-shore relations belongs to that point in the developing economic relationship between ship and shore at which the beachcomber was an intermediary of a semi-independent kind - before he became a trader.\(^{136}\) But as a mediator the beachcomber's role went beyond being an economic agent acting in the interests of either or both

\(^{134}\) It should be borne in mind that in all island groups isolated areas remained after these dates, in which the 'classic' beachcomber patterns continued.

\(^{135}\) i.e. concerning people of European origin, and therefore including Americans.

\(^{136}\) See p.362 above.
sides. His prime role was to keep order, prevent misunderstandings, and to lubricate the ship-shore relationship so that the islanders and sailors could carry on their business with each other in a manner satisfactory to both. It would be wrong, however, to see the beachcomber acting thus as an instrument of western economic imperialism, for as much as he was acting in the interests of the western trader, he was acting from an obligation to his island hosts. In some cases he was acting from a sense of loyalty to both parties. Of this last kind, those who saw themselves as having a dual responsibility, one of the best examples is Edward Robarts in the Marquesas, who enjoyed the status of a chief with the islanders, and revelled in the temporary status of a man of authority, sagacity and consequence with people of his own culture, among whom he had previously been a non-entity.

With the objective of serving both sides Robarts surveyed the harbour and marked the channel at Taiohae on Nukuhiva and as he later explained:

I had the pleasure of making myself particularly usefull to several ships that touched at this place; for ships touching at any of these islands in the south sea frequently meet with accidents, sometimes through their own misconduct, and sometimes thro the hostile behavour of the natives [sic].

Robarts contrasted a few such incidents with his own management of ships' visits. When the Russian explorer Krusenstern arrived in 1804, Robarts recorded part of their conversation as follows:

I then begd leave to make one observation: That was, as I could speak but very little of the Rushian Language, I could

137. Dening, op. cit., p.103.
138. Ibid., pp.104-106, 128.
Robarts took his self imposed duties seriously, and was able to claim:

By these pascive means I allways maintained good order. I never had any accident or Quarrell with any ships crew & my tribe in the course of ten years [sic].

Robarts' case is an eminently quotable one. Few beachcombers were as conscientious or self righteous as he was, and many, no doubt, did not trouble themselves at all. Yet the number of ships which called at the major stopping places in the major island groups in Polynesia and were not able to take advantage of the services of a resident white man must be very few indeed. For example, Robarts left Nukuhiva early in 1806; and the deserters from the Leviathan left not long after. Few ships called in the next few years, but in 1812 when Captain David Porter made Taiohae his refuge the beachcomber Wilson was well established.

He proved indispensably necessary to us; and without his aid I should have succeeded badly on the island.

Wilson's fate is unknown, but by 1818 Ross, who later became an officer of Dillon's was doing the job of protecting islanders and foreigners from each other.

139. Ibid., p.131.
140. Ibid., p.113. "Ten years" is an exaggeration, but the rest of Robarts' claim is probably true.
141. Porter, op. cit., p.81.
The advice given by these beachcomber-mediators seems generally to have been sound, for there is no complaint of failure or conspiracy, though the suspicion of it was common enough. Coulter, for example, (who belongs to "the vagabond white man is a greater savage than the native" school) alleged that:

... they [beachcombers] are frequently a source of great mischief, as they apply their superior intelligence to arrange plans for the capture and plunder of ships ... Visitors cannot be too much upon their guard; for instances have occurred at the Feejee Islands, Navigators and other Islands, where the white man turned savage has thrown even his own countrymen ... off their guard ... and left them exposed to the murderous attack of the infuriated native.\(^{143}\)

Allegations of this kind were made about the assaults in Tonga on the Union and the Duke of Portland in 1802 and 1804,\(^{144}\) but these are the only known cases. On the other hand the reverse phenomenon, of beachcombers preventing attacks, or helping the European victims of an attack are well documented. For example, in Fiji there are the attacks on the Charles Doggett in 1833, L'Aimable Josephine in 1834 and on the Sir David Ogilby in 1838 as well as other instances of planned assaults which were foiled.\(^{145}\) Torrey in the Marquesas in the 1830's discouraged his chief from attempting to capture a ship;\(^ {146}\) in 1816 the beachcombers quieted Kamehameha's suspicions.

\(^{143}\) John Coulter, Adventures on the Western Coast of South America, (London, 1847), II, p.182. See also Captain Siddons' suspicions of the Tongan beachcombers in 1808 above, p.45.

\(^{144}\) Edmund Fanning, Voyages and Discoveries . . ., (Salem, 1924), pp.234-237.


\(^{146}\) William Torrey, Torrey's Narrative, (Boston, 1848), pp.155-156.
of a Russian scientific expedition.\textsuperscript{147}

These examples do not exhaust the subject but are sufficient to establish that to the largely peaceful record of culture contact in Polynesia the beachcombers made a useful contribution as mediators when neither islanders nor other Europeans were available. Their achievement, however, consisted more in being there, than "in actually doing" anything for to recall the words of Browning quoted earlier, they gave confidence to both sides, and thereby prevented suspicion giving rise to violence.

The only area in which beachcombers had any marked effect on island society was in the modification of island attitudes and behaviour towards the beachcombers themselves. The islanders' adaptation to the beachcombers is best illustrated by a number of examples. During the sandalwood phase in Fiji beachcombers were killed off, or spared, without much ceremony, according to the immediate convenience of their hosts.\textsuperscript{148} The beche-de-mer era shows an attitude of ambivalence,\textsuperscript{149} with councils being held to discuss the fate of castaways.\textsuperscript{150} By the end of the beachcomber period Fijians would sell land in order that they might have a white man living near them, and who would become a supplier of their new needs.\textsuperscript{151}

\textsuperscript{147} Louis Choris, \textit{Voyage Around the World}, (translated extract, Ts.), n.p., dated 24 November, 1816.

\textsuperscript{148} e.g. Dillon, \textit{op. cit.}, I, p.3.

\textsuperscript{149} [Cary], \textit{op. cit.}, p.20.

\textsuperscript{150} Oliver, \textit{op. cit.}, pp.102-103.

\textsuperscript{151} Pritchard, \textit{op. cit.}, p.250.
In Hawaii one can see a transition from wide freedoms and privileges in the early years to, by 1812, Kamehameha returning deserters,\(^{152}\) by 1815 expelling foreigners who could not pay tribute, and restricting privileges in other ways,\(^{153}\) to the situation in the 1820's when poor whites were of no special interest, and if deserters, were liable to imprisonment.\(^{154}\)

On Rotuma a whaler noticed in 1833 that traditional hospitality to strangers had been debased by the love of tobacco, and by the excess of resident whites to supply it.\(^{155}\)

These adaptations, however, represent no great changes in island societies. It would be more surprising if the behaviour of islanders towards beachcombers showed no evolution. The fact that it did is merely a corollary of the on-going dynamism and independence of island societies at the time.

The introduction of diseases though not a cultural influence was potentially a factor of radical change, and for that reason deserves some consideration. If the resulting mortality had been heavy changes in political structure and patterns of dominance could have followed; had the mortality been both heavy and uniformly distributed equally serious political consequences could have resulted, as well as disruption of food and craft production, and the weakening of patterns of marriage by the elimination of definably eligible partners. That extra-regional diseases were introduced into the Pacific

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152. Ross, *op. cit.*, p.36.
during the beachcomber period is unquestionable. But beachcombers themselves were probably neither more nor less responsible than other visitors - take for example the debate on whether it was the crew of Bougainville or Wallis who introduced venereal disease to Tahiti long before any whites were resident. Most of the diseases introduced during the beachcomber period do not appear to have caused the extreme results posited above. Of those diseases introduced at this very early period, most are impossible to identify though scrofula, and venereal diseases were frequently mentioned. Usually it is referred to simply as 'disease', and its ephemeral effects simply forgotten. For example, in Tonga in 1798 a strange disease carried off many chiefs shortly after both missionaries and beachcombers arrived, but the disease itself seems to have been shortlived, as Mariner makes no mention of it except in the same context. On Tongareva Lamont and his companions were blamed for a new disease which caused a small number of deaths. It was possible, of course, for disease to be introduced by people who were not themselves ill; and it was also possible for a diseased person not to transmit his malady.


160. e.g. in Tahiti, Hagerstein had a disease which sounds like elephantiasis, (W.W. Bolton, 'Inter Alia', (Ms.), p.23), which is not directly infectious, but is spread by a species
The islanders themselves were alive to the fact that diseases could be and had been introduced. The Port-au-Prince was prohibited from coming close into Honolulu harbour in 1806 because an earlier ship had introduced a disease. On Tongareva Lamont and company had to go through a ceremony which he described as one of purification - probably with no distinction drawn between moral and physical pollution. How widespread this ceremony was is unknown: no one from the major beachcombing centres mentions it, though descriptions of ceremonies performed on visitors in the Ellice Islands are similar to Lamont's experience. Henry Pease, who gave the most detailed description said its purpose was to prevent calamities falling upon the people in consequence of the visit; Whitmee specifically says it was to ward off any disease being carried by the visitors. If that was the case, then it might be taken as evidence of a devastating epidemic having once been brought from abroad - but by whom cannot even be guessed at.

All that can be said with certainty is that serious epidemics struck some of the major beachcombing centres during the beachcomber hey-day.

of mosquito. It was, in any case, probably indigenous. In Tonga, Mariner believed that three men who were suffering from gonorrhoea at the time of their arrival, did not transmit it to anyone. Martin, op. cit., II, pp.256-257; many of the alleged cases of syphilis were probably yaws, the similarity of which is described by Smith, loc. cit., p.39.


164. e.g. see Norma McArthur, Island Populations of the Pacific, (Canberra, 1967), pp.6, 71, 102-103, 245-246.
The impact which beachcombers had on island society, therefore, can be said to have been virtually non-existent. As an interpreter of cultures, a middle-man, or mediator, the beachcomber could offer scarcely anything. As the monster of iniquity peddling depravity to the innocent or vile savage of missionary-inspired fiction (and semi-fiction) the beachcomber again was impotent. As far as his role in acculturation goes, he was a middleman only in a chronological sense: he came after the explorers, and before the missionaries, traders and consuls. As the missionaries themselves were to discover, the medium of cultural diffusion and social change was commerce.
CHAPTER 8

ON THE FRINGES OF EUROPEAN EXPANSION

Beachcombers not the vanguard of European expansion in a causal sense - generally poor reputation of beachcombers among contemporary Europeans - disdain - suspicion - not unjustified, but marked by a strong element of prejudice - beachcombers' relationships with Europeans better than prevailing hostile attitudes imply - their role in mediating between visitors and islanders useful but not necessary or always successful - their inability to control the contact situation - N.S.W. government attempts to control beachcombers - British and American naval patrols in the Pacific - British and American policies contrasted - Island codes of law and Port Regulations - missionaries' antagonism to beachcombers - their complaints of beachcomber hostility - these accusations suspect - misrepresentation - beachcombers' assistance for missionaries - some missionaries attempt to Christianize the beachcombers - but offer them little secular help and do them some injury - European attitudes to beachcombers examined in more detail in the light of related ideas about man and society through the example of the missionaries - missionaries' psychological insecurity - Vason's 'fall' - Europeans' psychological security threatened by the beachcomber example - hence their hostility.

It is probable that there was a causal relationship between the idea that the beachcombers were agents of social change, and the idea that they were vile specimens of humanity, each one a scatological Midas, soiling everything with which he came into contact. In the writings of the beachcombers' contemporaries the notion of corruption and its contagion is remarkable for its consistency, and especially so because the reality of the beachcombers' role in island society and their relationships with the more respectable Europeans does not justify all the hostile comment. On the contrary, the statements and behaviour of missionaries and other visitors seem in almost every case to be the product of an uneasy Unconscious, and
tell more about the writer than about his subject.

Viewed from an island standpoint the beachcombers, arriving sporadically, did not seem to be the harbingers of change, nor even to foreshadow any new tension in island society. Viewed from Europe or America, western society seemed to be spawning: casting the seeds of acculturation and expropriation all over the globe, densely in parts, sparsely in others, but reaching even the remotest places. It appeared to contemporary observers that the beachcombers were like the stray seeds which carried furthest and landed erratically, but which nevertheless were bound to modify the environment in which they grounded. Few observers took joy in this observation, for they did not see the beachcombers as furthering the causes of civilization, commerce and Christianity.

There were those, remote from the Pacific, who could take a generous and romantic view - like R.K. Porter's sentimental and largely fictional account of Jean Cabri the French beachcomber in the Marquesas.¹ According to this account Cabri abolished endemic cannibalism; and that was the least of his achievements:

I have no doubt that could we have visited the islands during the sway of our young hero, we should have found a rude civilization amongst the people, rendering them far superior to the neighbouring natives.²

Not only Cabri's circumstances, but also his person reached romantic perfection:

The animation with which he recited these circumstances, strongly marked the fearless independence of his former

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¹ 1799-1804, Contemporary with Edward Robarts.

life. He spoke with the decision of one whose commands had been unappealable, and all the chieftain commanded in his eyes. But when he talked of his domestic happiness, still true to the expression of unrestrained nature his sighs penetrated the heart.  

It is clear from these passages that Porter never got closer to the Pacific than Moscow where he picked up this fantastic tale. Romanticism of this kind did not touch those who had first-hand acquaintance with the Pacific. Their views of beachcombers were anything but complimentary, for those living in a state of nature were not innocent but depraved. The drawing-room philosophers in Europe might lament the corruption of civilization; those who carried it abroad saw it as an uplifting force. Consequently beachcombers were not looked upon as instruments of improvement, but as creatures of degradation. When beachcombers were referred to in general terms, the tone was almost always derogatory, and the abusive terms were remarkably uniform despite the changes of time and location—uniformity indeed was more notable than colour.

In 1794 Vancouver, referred to the beachcombers on Hawaii as a "banditti of renegadoes"; a term recalled in a letter from Fiji in 1848 of the American Commercial Agent. Sometimes the abuse was mild—"indifferent characters", "Stragling white men", but

3. Ibid., p.44.
more often it was in the vein of "wicked, worthless, run-away sailors", "devils of the blackest stamp", "vile", "degraded", "monsters", and frequently branded automatically as escaped convicts. Occasional Biblical imagery - "these sons of Belial" - was more evocative, but not essentially different. The indiscriminate use of such language made possible, eventually, the use of the term "beachcomber" to convey similar ideas and feelings - as when a journalist attributed the unpopularity of Shirley Baker in Tonga to beachcombers at a time when there were none.

The attitudes conveyed by these uncomplimentary terms are elaborated in anecdotes which share a theme of contempt, disdain, ridicule, horror. An ill-disguised animosity was revealed by Lt. House during his residence in Tahiti in 1802. The Swedish beachcomber Hagerstein ("Peter the Swede") accompanied a war party of Pomare. House assumed that his motive was to plunder, when it is probable that there was a more complex reason based on Hagerstein's position as a foreigner and noted warrior. Plunder was not to be had however, "so that Mr. Swede was disappointed for once".

Evidently, Hagerstein usually got what he wanted in Tahiti: a

R.C. Morgan, 'Journal, 1836-8', (Ms.), 17 May, 1837.
Thomas Williams, Fiji and the Fijians, (London, 1870), p.3.
E.J. Turpin, 'Diary and Narratives', (Ms.), S1.
[Rev. George Brown], 'Old Hands and Old Times, (Ts.), p.2.

9. Or at least, if there were, it was not they who organized opposition to the Prime Minister. J.S. James, Holy Tonga, (Melbourne, 1889), p.13.

10. [William House], 'Transactions . . . brig Norfolk', (Ms.), p.48.
success which House, a naval officer seeking pork for the settlement at Port Jackson probably both envied and resented. At the same time he possibly felt affronted by the high status and influence enjoyed by a lowly sailor, while he himself remained an outsider.11

Turnbull, Melville and W.W. Gill, to take three authors who were chronologically well spaced, wrote of beachcombers being derided or looked upon with horror when they visited ships.12 This adverse reaction was not a response to anything specific which the beachcombers had done, but simply to their being what they were; everyone seemed to share the view that:

They had remained in these islands because of idleness, or drunkenness, or debauchery,13

and therefore could be assumed to be lacking "character", and therefore to be worthy of the contempt of honest and industrious men.

This jump from "living among natives" to being contemptible was the result of a complex series of ideas which are best exposed through a more detailed examination of attitudes to beachcombers. The relationship was seldom direct; Dillon typifies the manner in which it might be disguised. At Rotuma in 1827 he was "obliged" to make use of two beachcombers whom he knew to be bad characters. He tolerated their presence on board the Research because of the local geographical and ethnographical information

11. Hagerstein was a deserter from the Daedalus, on which he and House had been serving at the same time. Ibid., p.19.
he could get from them. But the information they could give him about winds, weather and tides was, he said, scant. Whether or not Dillon did have prior knowledge of these two men is open to question, but his way of referring to them disguises the fact of their usefulness to him: a distortion for which there is no apparent motive.

In other cases the *prima facie* contemptibility of beach-combers was put forcefully and directly. There is the case of a beachcomber going aboard the *Porpoise*, one of the vessels of the Wilkes Expedition. The commander, Ringgold, pitied him, gave him a knife and some tobacco, explaining that he felt sorry for him as he was a Scot and came from a crowded country and therefore had no choice. But had he been an American he would have flogged him:

> I should have counted you a disgrace to humanity for letting yourself run wild among a lot of scalping savages.

The assumption that living with the islanders was a forthright admission of depravity was so strong that people reacted adversely to beachcombers in spite of their personal experiences. For example, when some beachcombers in Tonga taught Finau Ulukalala some elements of Christianity, it had to be qualified as "amid all their ignorance and vice". Frequently, the claim that they were


dangerous both to shipping and to individual visitors was added. \(^{17}\)

To some extent the unsavoury stereotype which was applied to beachcombers was not unreasonable. After all, it was widely known that occasionally convicts escaped from New South Wales, and were as likely to settle in the islands as to return to more civilized parts. And with a better foundation of fact, every captain knew something of the character of men whom he left on island shores, and of those whom he recruited from the same places. It seemed a fair assumption as well as a prudent one, that all were as bad as the most memorable of one's acquaintance. For example, in Tonga in 1797 the disappointed L.M.S. representatives asked Captain Gardiner of the *Mercury* to remove Ambler and Morgan. Gardiner refused:

... saying he knew them too well to have anything to do with them & that they were well known to several on board who had sailed with him from Botany Bay ... Ambler had been recognized as soon as he came alongside ... by one whom he had since turned ashore ... for bad behaviour.\(^{18}\)

An analogous anecdote of over thirty years later suggests that the same attitudes and reactions were justified by similar experiences. In April, 1832, the whaler *Elizabeth* was at Rotuma. On the 11th, three men were shipped to replace those who had left there; three days later one of them absconded, having received an advance payment. On the 18th another sailor absconded, was retaken, but put on shore

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because the crew said that he was not liked. Another man was shipped
to replace him. 19

With this continual interchange between ship and shore,
those who lived on the ocean can be understood in forming unfavour-
able stereotypes about those unsettled whites who were to be found
on the islands. Nevertheless the imagery and associations used in
connection with the beachcombers suggests that this argument though
valid, does not tell the whole truth. There seems to be more than
mere descriptive truth at hand when a man can write that there are
two Pacifics: the one bright, indolent, romantic; the other dark,
indolent, aimless. The first was that of the islanders; the second
that of the beachcombers. 20 This author was undisguisedly express-
ing his preconceptions; more frequently a figurative association with
the islanders was expressed as a comparison rather than as a contrast,
so that the beachcomber became subject to the same racist and social
revolutionist notions as were applied to the Polynesians.

The basis of the evil was the beachcombers' lack of res-
traint. "Unrestrained by any religious, or even mere moral prin-
ciple, those abandoned men . . .", 21 "those misanthropists . . . the
avowed enemies of everything which has the slightest tendency to
bring them gain within the restraint of civilized life"; 22 these
were the attributes of the dissipated, the idle about whom it was

20. J.W. Boddam-Whetham, Pearls of the Pacific, (London, 1876),
21. Robert Fitzroy, Narrative of the Surveying Voyages . . .,
22. Robert Thomson, 'The Marquesan Isles', in G.M. Sheahan,
'Marquesan Source Material', (Ts.), p.ccvi.
sufficient condemnation to note that they preferred a life of indolence among savages to earning an honest livelihood among their own kind. Remarks of this kind express the aversion which was felt by many Europeans who frequented the Pacific towards the indigenous inhabitants themselves; an aversion which often was not overtly admitted. There can be no doubt that a comparison with "the natives" was the strongest means of expressing disapproval of the beachcombers' mode of life. Captain Hudson, a member of Wilkes' expedition, wrote in a description of a yaqona ceremony at Rewa in Fiji:

... a worthless Englishman by the name of James Housman officiated. Few would have distinguished him from a native, so closely was he assimilated to them in ideas and feelings, as well as in his crouching before the chiefs, his mode of sitting, and slovenly walk.

"Worthlessness" in Hudson's eyes, was equivalent to being "like the natives". Turpin, a settler in Fiji during the precession decade was, like his fellows, an unashamed racist, and his generalization of hostility from the Fijians to the beachcombers was clear. Connor, he wrote:

... lived exactly as a native and if possible exceeded them in their bestiality.

Turpin was not a contemporary of the beachcombers, but his remarks differed little from those who were. Lawry, the first Wesleyan missionary in Tonga wrote of one beachcomber that he "has wholly


abandoned himself to the manners of the Indians", and dismissed him with a generalization about "the base, degraded and licentious lives of such characters". 26

In Eastern Polynesia the situation was identical. Thomson in the Marquesas listed the vices of the beachcombers, and juxtaposed it with a reference to "their fellow savages". 27 In Hawaii those who ran "naked and wild" among the Hawaiians were "wretched unprincipled vagabonds". 28

Although the equation of degradation and living with "savages" was a standard assumption during the decades of the beachcomber hey-day there was a considerable weight of opinion that the beachcombers were in fact worse than the islanders. Such comparisons were usually made to accentuate the depravity of renegade whites, but the device varied. Sometimes the technique was to imply the relative innocence and gentleness of Polynesian life; on other occasions to underline the extremity of the beachcombers' characters. To quote Lawry again:

... preaching to men so idle and dissolute, is ploughing on a rock. The spirit and tone of the natives is evangelical and affectionate; but these English runaways [sic] display neither affection nor feeling. 29

Statements like this however were less usual than those of the type "their conduct is worse than that of the uncivilized natives", or


29. Lawry, 'Diary 1851', (Ms.), p.78. When Lawry was a resident missionary in Tonga, twenty-nine years before, he was unable to find as much praise for the Tongans.
"more debased than the heathen". 30

The notion that the beachcombers had a lower place in the hierarchical scale of humanity than the uncivilized and heathen was not without ambiguity. On the one hand the white renegades were still credited with sufficient superiority to be able to lead the islanders into greater corruption and vice than they could find for themselves. On the other hand this concept of superiority in degradation was ameliorated by the attachment which respectable people had to the idea that vice was contagious: its mere presence won converts from virtue. But it does not appear that any clear distinction was recognized between the "contagion" theory and the "leadership" theory, just as no distinction was made between a disease and the sufferer. The result of the ambiguity, however, is not in doubt: that is that the beachcombers made the islanders worse - in a moral sense - than they were before contact, presupposing as usual, a one-way influence in the dynamics of culture contact. Perhaps the most thorough, and uncompromising (and at the same time one of the most temperate) statements of the influence of beachcombers on the islanders is in the Report to the House of Commons of the Select Committee on Aborigines, in 1836. 31 In contrast the more informative and useful observations were exclusively local:

There is reason to distrust the whites who are met with in these islands, most of them are deserted sailors, who have all the vices of civilization, though without the advantages


31. See Great Britain, House of Commons, Report from the Select Committee on Aborigines, Minutes of Evidence, (London, 1836), p.503. The witnesses were missionaries, or officials of missionary societies.
of education. Notwithstanding their small number, they do not a little contribute to make the Indians lose the good qualities which distinguished them at the close of the last century . . . .32

More specific was Sterndale's condemnation that:

Drunkenness, licentiousness, piracy, and murder have been the lessons inculcated among them [the islanders] . . . by deserters from ships or escaped convicts . . . to whom they extended the most generous hospitality.33

Such views are not necessarily either true or false, and the quotation of them does not amount to an indictment either of the beachcombers or their critics. What is of interest is the consistency of such observations. In content, geographical distribution, and date the critical remarks made about beachcombers are virtually interchangeable, with little to betray the background or occupation of the author. The observations, of course, all purport to be statements of fact, of objective observation, and the attitudes and opinions which they encapsulate were part of a living world of human behaviour and interaction. The way in which visitors to the islands behaved towards the beachcombers is consistent with the opinions which they wrote down.

Suspicion and lack of charity were characteristic of travellers' behaviour towards beachcombers, even in circumstances which seemed innocent of risk. Both Eagelston and Arago, for example, ignored signals which they interpreted as being made by castaways.34


Most white men found on the islands were assumed to be deserters or escaped convicts rather than, say, castaways. The crew of the wrecked whaler, *Independence* had to supply proof to their rescuer that they were genuine castaways and not mutineers before he would help them.35 Dillon's inflexible policy was not to allow on board his ship - even temporarily - any man whom he suspected of having deserted; and one was presumed to have deserted unless there was good reason to think otherwise.36 This exclusion was probably widely practised;37 and even captains who were less inflexible took precautions which betray not only suspicion but censoriousness as well.38

Caution in relation to the stray whites which were found in the Pacific islands was, of course, a laudable trait. A captain had heavy responsibilities for the crew and vessel under his command and there were good reasons to be suspicious of nautical vagrants. Many contemporaries assumed or feared that the Pacific islands would become havens for pirates and wreckers on the pattern of the Caribbean in the seventeenth century.39 That in itself was sufficient reason to beware; moreover, it would be idle to deny that among the beachcombers there were many dangerous and vicious men. The problem for shipping was how to discriminate between the dangerous and the


37. e.g. Ransome, op. cit., p.109, 24 April, 1833.


harmless. Clearly the sensible course of action was to be wary of all. The suspicion therefore is understandable. What is less easily understood is the censoriousness of captains like Dillon and the almost hysterical fear of captains like Knights.

Even early in the beachcomber era before fears of convicts and pirates became widespread, captains were often disinclined to give a passage to a seaman who claimed to be in distress. There is the example of Arago, quoted above, and the case of Mariner, who was turned away from the Hope after some of his companions had been taken on. The Captain told him that he had a full complement, and no room for Mariner. Captain Fisk, who did rescue Mariner in 1810 turned away a man in Fiji for the same reason. In later years it became more difficult to get a passage, even for a man able to pay his way in pigs and goats.

So although there was reason to be wary of the stray whites, the suspicion and animosity shown towards the beachcombers does appear to be exaggerated. There was in fact, a powerful _a priori_ element operating, and this can be seen in the response people made to superficialities. In 1793 Bell, a member of Vancouver's expedition wrote of a beachcomber:

> From this man's appearance and manners I should conceive him the most unfit man in the world to be left among Indians . . .

40. Martin, _op. cit._, I, p.304.
41. _Ibid._, II, pp.64-66. In this case, however, it was implied that the man would have been more sympathetically received had he been in Fiji involuntarily.
Appearance accounted for much in determining one's response. When the Duff missionaries arrived in Tonga in 1797 they had:

... the unspeakable pleasure of hearing our own language spoken [by the beachcombers, Ambler and Connelly].

The pleasure was short-lived:

... for in their countenance, one of them especially, there was so much of the villain marked, that in England a well-disposed person would shun them as he would a swindler or pickpocket.44

It was but rarely admitted that a man's appearance bore little relationship to his actions:

The looks of Wilson had strongly prejudiced me against him; but I soon discovered him to be an inoffensive, honest, good-hearted fellow, well disposed to render every service in his power... Wilson soon became a great favourite with me, as well as every other person. He proved indispensably necessary to us; and without his aid I should have succeeded badly on the island.

And yet at a greater distance appearances again overrode experience:

I have since had occasion to be satisfied that he was a consummate hypocrite and villain.45

Conversely, a pleasant appearance was the key to instant success:

... although I entertained always much suspicion of the vagabonds who frequent the different islands, Tom's countenance was so very prepossessing and his modesty as to his capabilities as a pilot such as to satisfy me that he was not one of the runaways or convicts... Tom was, therefore taken on board...46

Examples of beachcombers being prejudged in this fashion could be multiplied; but the basis of the prejudice against beachcombers was

44. James Wilson, A Missionary Voyage... (London, 1799), p.98.
45. David Porter, A Voyage in the South Seas... (London, 1823), p.81.
greater than confusion between features and character. Many other vices were automatically attached to them. For example, it was rumoured among later European residents in Fiji that Charles Savage had been killed (in 1813) because of his unreasonable demands for women. The Reverend Thomas Williams repeated this gossip, and added the gratuitous comment, "and most likely that is true". 47 Hood, a naval officer, would have agreed, with no greater evidence; for he wrote of the beachcombers:

... most of whom in these islands may safely be assumed to be rogues, unless proved to be respectable. 48

Others excelled even these judgments by constructing elaborate fantasies which were offered to the reading public as objective accounts of life in the Pacific. 49

If further proof is needed of the fact that the judgments passed on beachcombers by their contemporaries were arbitrary and a priori one need only contrast some of the statements that were made about specific beachcombers. Levuka, the beachcomber settlement in Fiji, was condemned by Coffin and D'Ewes; 50 practically all other accounts remark on their respectability, peacefulness and hos-


49. e.g. Calkin, op. cit., pp.64-66; 'A Roving Printer', Life and Adventures in the South Pacific, (New York, 1861), pp.204-205, 262.

pitality. The most prominent of Levuka's residents was David Whippy, about whom most visitors were lavish in their praise and who was unquestionably widely respected. Yet slighting and ambiguous remarks were published about him. In Hawaii John Young's standing and good name exceeded even that of Whippy in Fiji: yet one description stresses his poverty and filth, and his having more Hawaiian characteristics than European, while an avowedly hostile source called him "vile", "low", and "cruel". In the Marquesas the missionary Alexander reported the beachcomber William Morrison to be wicked and dangerous; a U.S. naval officer called him "a very decent, well behaved man".

This lengthy catalogue of opinions and reactions demonstrates that one cannot believe everything one reads about beach-


52. J. Oliver, The Wreck of the Glide, (London and New York, 1848), p.74. Alexander Starbuck, History of the American Whale Fishery, (Washington, 1878), p.98n. Starbuck's statement though inaccurate seems relatively inoffensive. People who knew him, however, took exception to his statement which was described as "a cruel and malicious slander". See Correspondence Relative to David Whippy, Correspondence between Mrs. Brown and Captain Dunn, June and July, 1878, (Ms.).


54. Ross, op. cit., p.33. In fairness to Ross, he did not condemn Young, but seems to have found him a strange mixture of attractive and repulsive attributes.


combers. Their reputation was far worse than the reality; one is indeed led to agree with Wall, writing in 1911, that as the beachcomber:

... never had many friends, so he was a fair target for everyone who tried to draw attention to his own virtues by denouncing other people's vices.57

Excessive though the criticisms were, the beachcombers' press was not all one-sided. On the contrary there is a considerable body of comment favourable to them, as some of the evidence cited above implies. This is not simply a case, however, of some of the evidence being pro, and some being anti. The critical or hostile comment as shown above was usually of a non-specific kind: the beachcombers as a class were being labelled and condemned. The positive comment, on the other hand, is highly specific, referring to individual beachcombers, or specific communities of them, in connection with a particular virtue or with a particular service rendered by them. This contrast is significant, for it supports the suggestion that hostile comment was the result of preconceived attitudes. Favourable comment was made in response to personal experience, but the preconceptions were too powerful to allow personal experience to give rise to new, more realistic generalizations to take account of both extremes in the beachcomber population.

As a consequence of this habit of thinking and writing, some beachcombers such as Young in Hawaii and Whippy in Fiji were mentioned by dozens of voyagers. Yet others, less prominent and many of them nameless, received favourable notice. Even with the

general suspicion of beachcombers, ships' commanders preferred to stop where they could be found;58 whole crews would vote in favour of taking stray sailors on board;59 victims of shipwreck would be offered all they needed;60 and individuals described as "decent", "well-behaved", "hospitable", "useful";61 Young even received letters which began "Dear Sir".62 To put such remarks as well as the hostile comments into perspective, however, it is worth examining the actual transactions which took place between beachcombers and the members of the societies they had left: traders and explorers, representatives of government, and missionaries.

The relationship between beachcombers and other visitors was rarely of a casual, social kind. Even if a contact began that way it inevitably took on a utilitarian character because of the essential complementarity of the needs and assets of both parties: the visitor could supply European artifacts in demand; the beachcomber could provide information, procure supplies, and avoid the almost inevitable misunderstandings which were a part of the culture contact process. The mutual dependence which thus developed

60. Samuel Patterson, Narrative of the Adventures ..., (Palmer, 1817), p.107.
62. Hawaii, F.O. & Ex., Folder No. 2, 1801-1816, Magee to Young, 10 February, 1804, Archives of Hawaii.
fostered a harmonious relationship between beachcombers and commanders which was frequently egalitarian and affable notwithstan-ding the backgrounds of the beachcombers or the authoritarianism of commanders. What visitors wrote about beachcombers as a class therefore is not a reliable guide to their personal experiences of them.

The most intense contact between beachcombers and other whites was, naturally, in those island groups and at those periods when the successive trades were flourishing: many men became beachcombers by being landed on the Islands so that they could perform the roles that one associates with a mediator. Many of the early Hawaiian beachcombers are in this category; so is Ross in the Marquesas and Whippy in Fiji. Consequently there is an abundance of evidence testifying to the usefulness of beachcombers as pilots, interpreters and procurers of supplies of wood, water and trade commodities (i.e. sandalwood and beche-de-mer).

The fact that beachcombers were useful to traders, whalers and explorers is well documented, easily established, and does not need to be supported in detail. The scale and significance of their contribution is less easily evaluated. It is readily assumed that beachcombers, because of their knowledge of both cultures and both languages, and personal acquaintance with local natural resources were ideal, unique and therefore indispensable human buffers in the contact zone. Their real value can be evaluated only by taking into

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Eagelston, 'Journals, Part 5', (Ts.), p.9.

Roquefeuil, *op. cit.*, pp.53-54.
account their failures, their limitations, and whether or not their presence was always needed.

In Hawaii the presence of beachcombers seems not to have been absolutely essential throughout the period of Kamehameha's rise and reign. Meares recorded that during his visit in October, 1788, (before there were any beachcombers) amicable relations and the exchange of goods was able to take place satisfactorily. Even by 1795 when Hawaii's beachcomber phase was flourishing, trade was conducted directly between foreigners and Hawaiians. Sometimes a Hawaiian was specifically described performing the role which is usually attributed to beachcombers - that is, acting as a broker and keeping order, and performing the duties of a pilot. By 1804 when the Russian exploration expedition arrived it was found that English served satisfactorily as a *lingua franca* in direct dealing with the Hawaiians; in 1807 Kalanimoku ("William Pitt") is recorded as negotiating personally with traders. By 1818 when Golovnin came to Hawaii the use of Hawaiians as pilots had become normal, and on Kauai at least, there was difficulty finding a white man who could speak Hawaiian.

In the Marquesas, Robarts pointed out how easy it was to satisfy one's needs when dealing directly with the Marquesans—
even in spite of misunderstandings and bloodshed; though things were more certain if a beachcomber was on hand. Even during Robarts' residence and when he kept a close control over events, Langsdorff could mention having been well served not only by Robarts and Cabri, but also by a number of Marquesans. Well into the Marquesan beachcomber period there was no decline in the ability of the Marquesans to conduct business with strangers; if anything, this ability improved with time: Paulding in 1825 was able to take his choice of interpreters from Marquesan-speaking Englishmen, and English-speaking Marquesans. Several years later the beachcomber Torrey, though useful as a mediator, occupied no commanding position like that of Robarts thirty years before: he described himself as gathering fruit and bartering in the same way as the Marquesans did.

In western Polynesia a similar pattern is evident: far from the use of beachcombers creating a dependence upon them, the islanders became less dependent. For example in Fiji by the 1830's Eagelston was conducting business directly with local chiefs, even though he usually employed beachcombers.

71. Denning, op. cit., p.104. See also pp.365-366 above.
72. Langsdorff, op. cit., p.178.
75. Torrey, op. cit., p.132.
Just as contact could take place without the mediation of beachcombers, so it could also happen that beachcombers when present were sometimes powerless to control the behaviour of the parties concerned. To return to Hawaii again, the beachcombers on the island of Hawaii in 1790 were powerless to return John Young to his ship the *Eleanora.* Later, although the more respectable beachcombers were credited with making Hawaii safe for shipping, even as late as 1801 Delano formed the opinion that it was only Kamehameha's ascendency which did so. In the event of a change of regime the safety would be gone, and the supposed beneficent influence of the beachcombers would have been seen to be ethereal. The testimony of earlier visitors supports Delano's inference. Vancouver in 1793 found one beachcomber whom, he said, impeded rather than facilitated communication; Ingraham in 1791 was met on Maui by a beachcomber whose first words were 'By G-d! I'm glad you've come. These fellows have taken one vessel already'. His warning to Ingraham implied his powerlessness to influence the contact relationship. In the Marquesas in 1804, when a misunderstanding developed between the Russians and the Marquesans not even Robarts could smooth things over. The Tahitian pork trade offers examples of the inability of beachcombers to arrange matters to suit the traders if the Tahitians

decided otherwise, nor could James Read in Tonga prevent conflict between Dumont D'Urville and the Tongans, even though he explained the respective points of view of the parties.

Fiji offers perhaps the clearest example of the limitations facing a beachcomber in his relations with other Europeans. The fact that the latter's expectations could not be met was due to two factors: first that the islanders retained control over their own affairs, and confidence in their own aspirations and methods at least until the end of the beachcomber era; second, that the Europeans did not always heed the advice of beachcombers. Failure to act on a Fijian beachcomber's advice resulted in the fatal attack on, and near loss of the Charles Doggett in September, 1833; in an attack on the tender of the brig L'Aimable Josephine in 1834, and later the loss of the brig itself. In these cases the best that the beachcombers could do was to warn the victims. They were powerless to dissuade the Fijians from planning or executing the attacks. Wilkes found that even Whippy was unable to protect him outside Tui Levuka's territory (a fact which made Whippy more anxious than it did Wilkes); and beachcomber Cary had to resort to the stratagem of taking a chiefly hostage to be able to conduct trade.

82. Turnbull, op. cit., p.370; [House], op. cit., p.28.
83. Rev. John Thomas, 'Calendar and Diary, 1827', (Ms.), 18 May, 1827.
84. Wilkes, op. cit., III, p.104; Twyning, op. cit., p.86; Eagelston, 'Journals, 5', p.34. Wilkes gives August, 1834, as the date of the attack on the Charles Doggett. Eagelston's date, September, 1833, is more likely to be correct. Eagelston, 'Journals, 5', p.9.
86. [Cary], op. cit., pp.67-68.
clear therefore that although the beachcombers had a useful role to play in mediating between the respective parties in the culture contact situation they were neither indispensable nor infallible.

Having thus stressed the beachcombers' shortcomings as cultural mediators, it ought not be forgotten that the beachcombers were extremely useful to visitors to the Pacific islanders. They composed quarrels, explained misunderstandings, supplied ethnographic and geographical information and facilitated the exchange of goods. The regular traders in sandalwood, pork and beche-de-mer were able to make a more rapid turn-around with a lower risk; and whalers, sealers and fur traders could be more confident of procuring the supplies they needed. The function of the beachcombers was therefore to promote certainty, reduce risks and eliminate misunderstandings. They did fall short of perfection but the fact that they were not able always to satisfy the expectations of both parties to whom they had responsibilities is due to, and symptomatic of their lack of real authority in island society. There was no possibility of their changing the intentions or dispositions of the people on one side or the other; what they could do was to reduce the possibility of ill-will developing.

For all the ill-feeling which voyagers felt towards beachcombers as a class there was nothing they could do except perpetrate acts of petty discrimination and write ill of them. As Dillon observed in 1827, he had no authority to coerce British subjects not under his command, even if they were escaped convicts. And, of course, most were not escaped convicts, and a large proportion

were not even British subjects. The nearest European government - that of the Colony of New South Wales - was itself impotent to deal with what it regarded as the menace of vagrant whites in the Pacific. Government impotence was due to a combination of three factors: legislative lacunae, administrative tangles and the lack of the physical power to enforce its wishes. In an attempt to make good the last of these three difficulties Governor King in 1805 suggested that two or three sloops of war be made available for police work in the Pacific. 88 The suggestion was not accepted by the Admiralty; but whenever an adequate naval force was present in Sydney, the administrative tangle prevented the governor from using them, for the ships were under Admiralty orders, and the governor - even a naval governor and Vice Admiral like Bligh - could not issue orders to them. He could make a request of the ship's commander, but this request could be refused - as happened in 1831 when Captain Sandilands was requested by Governor Darling to sail to Rotuma to remove some beachcombers. 89 But even if it had been possible for governors to command their own naval forces, the use to which they could have put them was severely circumscribed by the lack of clear authority to act outside the defined territorial limits of the colony of New South Wales. The commissions issued to Governor Phillip and his successors gave jurisdiction over "all the islands adjacent in the Pacific Ocean" between 10°37'S and 43°39'S, with no eastern boundary. This formula confused governors and settlers alike, many believing

89. Darling to Goderich, 25 May, 1831, in 'Transcripts of the Missing Despatches of the Governor of N.S.W., 1823-1832', (Ts.), p.409.
that it made such places as Fiji a part of New South Wales. The contemporary - and historiographical - debate about the nature and scope of these powers missed the point, for as Ward pointed out, the intention was merely to give the governor civil authority over British subjects in the islands of the South Pacific. Faced with growing reports of illegality and violence in relations between Europeans and islanders successive governors resorted to two expedients of doubtful legality. The first was to require that the captains of ships clearing for the Pacific islands should enter into a good behaviour bond; the second was the appointment of Justices of the Peace in the islands. The first of these Justices was the Rev. John Jefferson, one of the L.M.S. missionaries in Tahiti, appointed in 1802. Both of these measures proved inadequate to regulate the conduct of Europeans in the Pacific, or even to effect punishment of criminal behaviour.

In 1801 at the beginning of the Tahitian pork trade, Lt. Scott was ordered to apprehend stray whites - both seamen and escaped convicts - in Tahiti. This attempt was of limited effect, and was in any case on too small a scale to achieve the desired end. The frustration of the governors, and their inability to achieve anything constructive was reflected in the issuing of a Government and General Order in 1805 to cope with the "perplexing and unwarrantable conduct of the Owners in the South Fishery and their Men", which

imposed a good behaviour bond on ships clearing from Sydney. This order was easily evaded however, and was in any case ineffective because of the impossibility of gathering evidence from remote places and laying charges.

Further efforts by Governor Macquarie in 1813 and 1814 were equally unsuccessful, not least because the courts of New South Wales had no jurisdiction over crimes committed outside the colony. So uncertain was the legal situation that a Mr. Mansell, whose vessel was stolen by escaping convicts in 1815 was refused compensation by the British Government. In 1817 an Act of Parliament was passed which purported to make crimes committed by British subjects in the Pacific islands (that is, such places as were not part of a territory of a European power or of the U.S.A.) cognizable by courts as though they were crimes committed on the High Seas. Such crimes could be tried in certain courts under the provisions of an Act of 1806 (46 Geo. III, c.54). This Act applied only to crimes of murder and manslaughter, and was therefore less than adequate to the needs of time and place; but a more serious inadequacy was that the N.S.W. Courts did not possess the authority granted by the Act of 1806: the nearest such courts were in Ceylon. Attempts to plug this loophole and some others were made in the New South Wales Act of 1823, and the Australian Courts Act of 1828. But


94. Lord Bathurst to Macquarie, 4 December, 1815, N.S.W. Colonial Secretary, In-Letters, 1815, p.112. Bathurst explained to Macquarie that he did not want to create a precedent, and thus encourage property owners to relax their security: an admission that once an escape was made there could be no catching the convicts.

95. Ward, op. cit., p.52.
practical and legal difficulties continued to make the three Acts inoperative.

Because of the impotence of the only western government in the region during most of the beachcomber era, the beachcombers - whether escaped convicts or not - had very little contact with government functionaries. Vancouver's was the only major Royal Navy expedition of exploration during the beachcomber era,96 and his dealings with the Hawaiian beachcombers were like those of a trader rather than a government representative. Vancouver, of course, possessed naval not civil authority, so that any authority which he might have assumed over beachcombers would have been highly questionable. In contrast the purpose of the voyage of the Pandora (Capt. Edwards) to Tahiti in 1791 was to enforce naval authority over members of the Royal Navy, and dealings with civilians did not enter into it - except that Edwards was instructed to seek the co-operation of the beachcomber Brown.97

Similarly, during the Anglo-American war of 1812-1814 ships from the Royal Navy's South American station visited islands in Eastern Polynesia looking for American shipping. They paid no attention at all to the presence or activities of beachcombers.98 The initiative that the navy should take steps to clear the islands of the allegedly pestilential beachcombers came not from government

96. There were subsequently voyages of exploration and survey involving single ships - e.g. those commanded by Belcher, Beechey, and Fitzroy - but they had minimal contact with beachcombers.


98. Adm. 1/22. Black to Croker, 30 August, 1814; Hillyar to Tucker, 14 April, 1814.
After 1801 when the pork-trading Lt. Scott was ordered to apprehend convicts and deserters in Tahiti, the exercise was not repeated until 1829. Late in 1828 or early in 1829 Governor Darling received a letter from the Queen of Huahine advising that some escaped convicts had recently arrived there and were causing trouble. Darling, aware both of his responsibility for the convicts and his impotence to recapture them suggested to Commander Laws of H.M.S. Satellite that if it did not conflict with his duties, he might pursue them. Laws, unlike his successor Sandilands in 1830-1831, obliged.

Laws visited Tahiti as well as Huahine and received complaints about men from whale and trading ships who stayed in the islands. About such men even Laws could of course do nothing, except leave copies of the unworkable Acts of 1806 and 1817 with the chiefs and advise them to write to the British Government. In 1830, Captain Waldegrave crossed the Pacific in H.M.S. Serigapatam apprehending a number of beachcombers in the process. Waldegrave favoured regular naval tours of the islands to control the lawless whites and protect traders and missionaries; and his recommendations might have had some influence on Sandilands (Laws' successor in maintaining a sloop of the East India squadron off the coast of New South Wales) being ordered to make an annual visit of the Society and Tongan Islands.

99. Complaints directly from the missionaries were common enough: the occasional complaints from island chiefs were probably instigated by the missionaries, who certainly wrote them.

100. Darling to Murray, 5 May, 1829, N.S.W. G.D., Vol. 15, pp.779-780.

During the 1830's therefore, routine visits by vessels of
the Royal Navy were made to the major groups in the South Pacific. Theoretically the vessel stationed in Sydney patrolled as far east as 170°W (i.e. as far as Samoa), and the ships of the Pacific Station at Valparaiso visited the groups in the Eastern Pacific. But the authority which their captains were expected to exercise - especially with most of the disreputable looking men in the Pacific being free men of uncertain nationality - was neither explained nor even formulated. The hapless captains were to act at their own discretion, and were warned about using their power too much rather than too little. 102 In 1848, for example, the Foreign Office informed the Admiralty that if British subjects in the islands had been wronged, a captain should demand redress from the responsible chief on his behalf. If the British subject had performed a wrong, the captain should try to persuade him to make reparation. If he refused, the captain should advise the chiefs that if, on their own authority, they should expel the man, then he would remove him. If there was a dispute between a British subject and the subject of another state, then the captain could interfere only with the consent of both parties. 103 It is clear from these guidelines that even as late as 1848 - roughly the end of the beachcomber hey-day in Polynesia - the commanders of naval vessels still had no clear authority for positive action, no authority to enforce their wishes.

tour came from Sandilands' superior. Darling was still unable to instruct him - merely to make a request that Sandilands arrest convicts on Rotuma, which was not acted upon.


103. F.O. Instructions to Ward, 4 February, 1848, Adm. 172/3.
The guidelines indeed served to limit their authority, rather than to empower them.

The problem of the behaviour of its citizens in the Pacific was less acute for the United States, for until very late in the beachcomber era it did not possess any territory bordering on the Pacific. Its only citizens in the Pacific were engaged in the more-or-less legitimate activities of trading, beachcombing and evangelizing. The question of law enforcement did not arise until after the notorious *Globe* mutiny in 1824 and that of protecting the interests of United States' citizens was not really a concern until the 1830's. Consuls were appointed by Britain, France and the United States in the 1820's to Hawaii, in the late 1830's to Tahiti and in the 1840's by Britain and the United States to Fiji and Samoa. The emphasis in all these appointments, however, was the protection of European interests against other European interests and against the interests of the islanders, whereas the early concern of successive Governors of New South Wales and the missionaries had been the protection of the islanders from the vicious and depraved whites who strayed amongst them.

The police work performed by naval officers at the expense of beachcombers was not great either in volume or severity if one excludes the special case of the treatment of the survivors of the *Bounty* who were apprehended in Tahiti in 1791.

104. In 1825 Lt. Hiram Paulding in the *Dolphin* was sent to apprehend any surviving mutineers. See H. Paulding, *Journal of a Cruise*..., (Sydney, 1970), *passim*.


before 1829 to recapture escaped convicts had little effect on beachcombers in the tropical Pacific because their efforts were confined largely to New Zealand.\textsuperscript{107} The first official action known to have been taken against beachcombers after these incidents was the expedition of Laws in 1829; some of them evaded recapture, but the remainder were taken back to Port Jackson after a very short-lived spell of freedom.\textsuperscript{108} By coincidence and without all the legislative preambles and tangles which bothered the British authorities, the United States Navy took its first action against beachcombers in the same year, 1829. Captain Finch of U.S.S. \textit{Vincennes} visited the eastern Polynesian groups. His orders were less humanitarian in origin than were those of his British counterpart: to reclaim deserters from merchant vessels, and dissuade island chiefs and governments from harbouring them. Finch however, does not seem to have made contact with any beachcombers.\textsuperscript{109} In 1830, Waldegrave in H.M.S. \textit{Seringapatam} rounded up a few beachcombers from various places between the Marquesas and Tonga; but for the few he seized, he left as many dozens untouched.\textsuperscript{110} It is significant, however, that he seized the men only on the request of the Wesleyan missionaries in Tonga.\textsuperscript{111} Three years later when the missionary Thomas sought to influence the navy in the same way, Captain Blackwood (H.M.S. \textit{Imogene})

\textsuperscript{107} e.g. Dening, \textit{op. cit.}, pp.185-186.


\textsuperscript{109} Finch's report, July, August, 1829; Finch to Jones, 19 October, 1829, U.S.S.N.

\textsuperscript{110} See Bach, \textit{loa. cit.}, p.6n.

\textsuperscript{111} Rev. John Thomas, 'Draft Letter Book', (Ms.), p.129, 5 August, 1830.
informed him that he would neither remove nor aid deserters. 112

There was evidently a strong feeling among R.N. officers that it was not their business to interfere, and indeed their orders did restrain them. Those who took more forthright action were clearly in a minority. The most outstanding of the bolder captains was Bethune, (H.M.S. Conway) who was sent to Samoa and Fiji in 1837-38 not on a routine patrol, but specifically to investigate the Fijian attack on the Sir David Ogilby, a beche-de-mer trader, and to recapture a party of convicts in Samoa who had escaped from Moreton Bay in a stolen schooner. 113

The U.S. navy was more explicitly instructed to relieve American seamen in distress and to get deserters back into circulation, 114 and was even less willing to play the policeman for missionaries at beachcombers' expense. 115 The beachcombers' reactions to the presence of the navy varied according to circumstances. Those who had something to fear took to the hills; others came aboard asking for a passage from their tarnished paradise. 116

Diaper summed up the behaviour of naval officers towards the subjects of their respective nations. The Americans, he said, were more inclined to protect their own, and in the shadowy time zone between the beachcombing and trading and planting eras, to


113. [Brown], *op. cit.*, p.2. Bethune to Maitland, 16 September, 1838; Bethune to Gipps, 4 October, 1838, F.O. 58/1.

114. J.H. Aulick, 6 January, 1836, U.S.S.N.


make generous awards for the destruction of property by the islanders - awards which were never enforced. "Nothing but wind with the Yankees", he noted. But John Bull seldom made such awards; he

... generally settled against the poor unfortunate, who perhaps has succeeded in getting clear by the skin of his teeth with his bare life ... and then Mr. Bull awards him, perhaps, with ten years' penal servitude, and the only wonder is that he was not hanged.117

Diaper was exaggerating, but the contrast in attitude was real enough. Beachcombers could not expect charity from the Royal Navy, but sympathy was the most they could expect from the U.S. Navy. Given the prevailing attitudes, however, they were fortunate that positive action against them was not taken more frequently: evidence perhaps that most of them were in fact free men, not convicts, and that in their dependent role in island society they were relatively peaceable and law-abiding.

One of the limiting factors on the freedom of naval officers to coerce beachcombers was the fact - little realized by contemporaries - that island authorities were more than capable of, and confident in, dealing with the occasional beachcomber who gave trouble. The relative harmlessness of most beachcombers was due partly at least to a social process analogous to that of the biological principle of natural selection: the dangerous ones rarely survived long enough to cause much trouble.118 Late in the beachcomber era as the scale and complexity of European contact with the islands became greater, the problem of controlling European residents and visitors became


118. Williams, 'Voyage of the Olive Branch, 1832', L.M.S.-S.S.J., Box 7, (anecdotes of Samoa).
acute. A major reason for this was that the island authorities became hamstrung by the efforts of missionaries and consuls to have them observe western norms of procedure.\textsuperscript{119} Accordingly, and usually under the pressure of naval units, attempts were made by islanders to establish western-style machinery for coping with vagrants and deserters. In Hawaii in 1825 Kalanimoku issued Port Regulations for Oahu which decreed \textit{inter alia} that deserters were liable to six months hard labour, and that commanders should give immediate notification of any of their crew deserting.\textsuperscript{120} In the Society Islands a code of port regulations was drawn up by Commander Laws in 1829 with special sanctions against escaping convicts, deserters and captains who put men ashore.\textsuperscript{121}

Since the pace of culture contact was more retarded in Western Polynesia than in the east, the equivalent of these regulations did not appear until 1838, when Captain Bethune advised the Samoan chiefs to draw up laws,\textsuperscript{122} and himself provided Port Regulations for Samoa and Tonga.\textsuperscript{123} The Tongan code was very similar to (but also more comprehensive than) the Huaheinian one drawn up by Laws: deserters to be captured and returned, and a reward paid; if a deserter can not be returned he was to be put to work on the

\textsuperscript{119} Consul-General William Miller, 'Letter to Seru of Bau ...', 4 October, 1844, argued that if a chief allowed a foreigner to reside he thereby incurred the obligation of protecting him. (Ms.).

\textsuperscript{120} Richard Charlton, 2 June, 1825, F.O. 58/4.


\textsuperscript{122} Rev. Peter Turner, Letter, January, 1838, Methodist Missionary Society, Inwards Correspondence, Samoa, 1834-70.

\textsuperscript{123} Capt. Bethune, 4, 5 October, 1838, F.O. 58/1.
roads until deportation; no-one may reside without the King's permission; Captains who leave men ashore sick must support them; and Captains violating the regulations were to be reported to their own governments.

Wilkes drew up regulations for Fiji during his survey there in 1840, and had them signed by the principal chiefs in the various provinces. To the Reverend John Hunt, who interpreted them on one occasion the prime aim was the protection of American shipping and citizens in Fiji. 124 Whereas the problem of deserters disrupting island society had been the principal object of Laws' Huaheinean regulations in 1829, Wilkes' code treated that problem as one of lesser importance. 125

All these efforts were of limited effect, and their failure is largely due to the fact that the initiative for them came from European not island sources. Consequently, when in 1834 Eagelston handed over to the government at Papeete a man who had attempted to capture his ship in Fiji, the man was freed; 126 and similarly in Samoa in 1843 the chiefs, if they were not to use their own methods had to complain to the British government - vainly. 127

It is impossible to escape the conclusion from the few and brief contacts there were between beachcombers and the representatives of western governments, that the latter supported and helped beach-combers more consistently than they injured them, beginning with

126. Eagelston, 'Journals (5)', p.25, 31 August, 1834.
127. 'The Chiefs of Manono to the Queen . . .', (undated), Items 72, 75, F.O. 58/23.
Vancouver who thanked Kamehameha for looking after foreigners.  

After regular cruises began in the 1830's naval captains made a practice of giving shiproom to seamen in distress, or at least of attempting to make alternative arrangements to help them. This assistance however, was almost always confined to providing a passage away from the islands, rather than moral or material support in any other way. From such close identification with the disreputable, the navy stood aloof. Avenging apparent wrongs suffered by beachcombers during the classic beachcomber era seems to have been never practised – unless it was the death of the beachcomber that was being avenged. That form of justice seems to have been an exclusively American practice, and its purpose was the protection of American interests at large rather than blind revenge.  

During the 1840's commanders began to concern themselves more explicitly with the protection of the lives and property of British and American residents in the islands. These activities do not concern the beachcombers proper even though men who had been beachcombers were involved. The reliance of resident Europeans on visiting naval units and upon resident consuls to solve their problems marks the end of this dependence upon and full membership of, island society, and therefore helps to mark the end of the beach-

130. R.L. Browning, 'Notes on the South Sea Islands ...', (Ms.), p.47.  
comber era in the respective island groups. 132

Throughout, beachcombers performed the same acts of service and co-operation for naval ships as they did for vessels of other kinds, whether the business was pork-trading, 133 refreshments, or discussions with island chiefs. 134 Brown's co-operation with Captain Edwards in the Bounty affair has already been mentioned. Similar acts of co-operation were not uncommon. 135 They seem to have been made quite freely and voluntarily - not from any sense of obligation to formal authority, nor from identification with a potential aggressor, but merely because the situation called for liaison which a beachcomber was able to provide.

A few beachcombers went much further than this in their co-operation with western governments: Matthew Hunkin in Samoa made the transition from beachcomber, to lay-missionary, to British Consular Agent at Tutuila, 136 and David Whippy's role in Fiji as U.S. Vice-Commercial Agent, and later his part in negotiations between the U.S. navy, the British missionaries and the Fijian chiefs in the 1840's and 1850's are well known and well documented. 137 Hunkin

132. For examples see Adm. 172/3 Item 4, 29 June, 1847; Correspondence, April, May and August between Worth and Pritchard, In British Consulate, Samoa, General Inwards Correspondence, Series 2, Vol. 1; J.B. Williams, Despatch, 10 July, 1848, U.S.C.D., Fiji.

133. [House], op. cit., passim.


135. e.g. Browning, op. cit., pp.162-164.


and Whippy were the only old-style beachcombers who attained the eminence of a government appointment. It is therefore important to stress that this degree of identification with their former homelands is exceptional. Both Whippy and Hunkin thus experienced a return from the beachcomber life without leaving their adoptive homes; they moved out of the small orbit of the island communities in which they had spent many years and performed services which went far beyond providing a cultural buffer in the culture contact processes. Theirs was a position which symbolized and marked the end of the beachcomber phase, because in status, allegiance and responsibility they again depended on western society. This change represents for them a new transition - not simply a bridging of cultural barriers: no beachcomber succeeded in living in two societies.

Living in two societies was an option which the missionaries - on the wrong premise - had denied to the beachcombers, and it is among the missionaries that the discontinuity between attitude towards beachcombers and experience of beachcombers is most clearly seen. Most visitors to the Pacific were appalled and horrified at the thought of white men voluntarily living among savages, although their dealings with them did not justify their feelings of revulsion. The consuls and naval officers had felt the beachcombers to be an untidy nuisance which had to be dealt with, yet they showed them tolerance. The case of the missionaries was more extraordinary because their vocation required compassion and tolerance of them but their writings are the most readily accepted in their expressed hostility to the beachcombers.

When the first missionaries came to the Pacific the presence of Europeans living among the islands and speaking the local languages seemed like a blessing. The Duff missionaries in Tahiti and Tonga both hoped and expected to receive assistance from the beachcombers who had preceded them. A quarter of a century later when the American missionaries arrived in Hawaii (in April, 1820), among the first people they sought contact with were Young and Marin. The hoped-for spirit of co-operation however, soon turned sour, and the adverse remarks which missionaries were accustomed to make about beachcombers is largely responsible for later historical criticism of them.

The Report of the House of Commons Select Committee on Aborigines contains a representative distillation of missionaries' views.

Our runaway convicts are the pests of savage as well as of civilized society; so are our runaway sailors . . . In proof of this we need only refer to the evidence of the missionaries.

And the evidence of the missionaries was unanimous that contact with Europeans was responsible for the universal and inevitable demoralization, degradation and numerical diminution of the island peoples.

That most authoritative and highly regarded witness, John Williams


142. Ibid., Minutes of Evidence, pp.492, 503, 512.
spoke for all his colleagues when he said:

\[\ldots \text{it is the common sailors, and the lowest order of them, the very vilest of the whole alone, that will leave their ship and go and live among the savages; and they take with them all their low habits and all their vices.}^{143}\]

To remove any possibility of ambiguity Williams stressed that he would ten times prefer to go to an island which had not had intercourse with Europeans, than to go to one which had.\(^{144}\)

These strong remarks were made in the comfort and security of London, but distance and recollection neither reinforced nor diminished the feelings the missionaries had shared in the field. As far back as 1797 the L.M.S. missionaries in Tonga decided to avoid contact with newly arrived beachcombers;\(^ {145}\) the Tahitian missionaries looked upon half-caste children as a contaminant;\(^ {146}\) and the Hawaiian missionaries pre-supposed that some of the Europeans living with the king would try to prejudice him against them.\(^ {147}\)

The missionaries' journals and letters offer not only a great many examples of this sort of hostile comment, but numerous accounts of behaviour which appear to justify such suspicion and hostility. The reception which missionaries received from beachcombers was as ambivalent as it was pragmatic. John Williams, on his fatal voyage to Eromanga in 1839 called at Rotuma. On the beach he was met by three Europeans. One offered to trade for the vessel,\

\(^{143}\) Ibid., Minutes, p.663.  
\(^{144}\) Ibid.  
\(^{146}\) Wilkes, op. cit., II, p.57.  
\(^{147}\) Mercy P. Whitney, 'Journal, 1819-20', (Ms.), 4 April, 1820.
the second offered to do "linguisting", and the third, learning that
the visitors were missionaries turned away. According to Murray,
an L.M.S. missionary in Samoa, his landing on Tutuila was opposed by
the beachcombers; most of the whites in Hawaii opposed the land-
ing of the missionaries, and in the Marquesas, when the Reverend
Alexander was met by the beachcomber William Morrison in 1832,
Alexander was sure Morrison would be an obstacle, despite his appa-ent friendliness.

As the relationships between missionaries and beachcombers
developed the missionaries found reason to complain frequently of
beachcomber opposition and hostility to them. A considerable pro-
portion (perhaps a majority) of the accusations made by the mission-
aries were of a non-specific and unsupported kind. In Tahiti, for
instance, the missionaries complained that the local beachcombers
were attempting to foment trouble, and that they were a greater
menace than the Tahitians. No analysis was offered. Turnbull
supported this claim with the assertion that the beachcombers were
stirring the Tahitians to outrage and violence: a statement which
is not only non-specific but is at variance with known specific
facts. In Hawaii Bingham alleged that the white residents were pro-

149. Murray, op. cit., p.35.
150. C.S. Stewart, A Residence in the Sandwich Isles, (Boston, 1839),
151. Alexander, op. cit., p.117.
152. Jefferson, 'Journal', 31 December, 1800, pp.30-31, L.M.S.-
S.S.J., Box 1.
153. Turnbull, op. cit., p.242; Cf. below, p.422.
pagating unfriendly sentiments - a claim which was picked up and repeated by a visitor, but also lacked concrete allegations. 154

In Tonga the beachcombers were blamed for turning the Tongans against the missionaries at a time when the beachcombers themselves were being most helpful. 155 The so-called "specimens of . . . awful depravity and wickedness" of which the beachcombers were said to be guilty were not specified, 156 nor were the malice, lies and misrepresentation. 157 The second generation of missionaries in Tonga made similar statements: Thomas called the ungodly seamen there the agents of the devil - but did not elaborate. 158 Fiji offers similar examples, 159 and so does Samoa where complaints about foreigners obstructing the word of God can be found in practically every source. 160

It would be idle to deny these accusations simply because they are generalized. Their consistency and frequency alone suggests that they may not be ignored. It is necessary, however, to put them


into context by examining in detail the specific charges made against
the beachcombers. Their paucity is itself significant. John Williams
used the same favourite examples in various places to make his point
about the beachcomber menace. In his Narrative of Missionary Enter-
prises he told of one beachcomber on Taha'a who spoiled the trade in
provisions and made things difficult for the missionaries by explain-
ing to the islanders that the pork they were selling was worth in
England five to ten times the amount they were being paid; accord-
ingly the local price rose. When Williams had told the same story
to the sympathetic, attentive and Influential Select Committee on
Aborigines, however, he embellished it in three ways:

... those fellows will poison the minds of the natives by
telling them that in England they would get 10 and 20 times
as much for their produce; not describing all the expenses
that are incurred ... 162

From these two versions of the same story one learns two things.
First, that when islanders were informed of the value of their pro-
duce in European terms they very naturally increased its price.
This was bad luck for the traders and missionaries, but prices rose
and fell according to supply and demand in any case; the islanders
rarely needed tuition when it came to getting the maximum possible
price for their products. Moreover, such increases were not nec-
essarily a bad thing. Second, it is apparent that Williams' testi-
mony was flexible, according to circumstances, and while that inval-
idates neither his evidence nor that of his colleagues, it demonstrates
that the testimony of missionaries should be treated with as much

161. Williams, op. cit., p.222.

162. Select Committee on Aborigines, Minutes of Evidence, p.665.
scepticism as that of other sources.

An example where scepticism is justified is the case of the Reverend William Pascoe Crook, who claimed that when he landed in the Marquesas Hagerstein misrepresented him because he had reproofed Hagerstein for his "heathenish" ways. Without denying that Hagerstein might have harboured resentment, it is open to question whether it was possible for him not to misrepresent Crook: the concept of evangelization did not exist in late eighteenth century Polynesia any more than did the concept of exclusivist monotheism; moreover, Hagerstein spoke Tahitian, not the closely related language of the windward Marquesas. Innocent misunderstanding was surely highly probable. Finally, since at that time Crook spoke neither Marquesan nor Tahitian himself, one wonders how he could know whether or not Hagerstein had misrepresented him - either deliberately or otherwise. It is hard to escape the conclusion, therefore, that Crook was making a perfectly human and natural error in blaming his mediator for his own subsequent failings in Marquesan society.

After several months of frustration and danger Crook was rescued from Tahuata and taken to Nukuhiva by Edmund Fanning, whose account (by virtue of its availability) has become the received version of Crook's ordeal. According to Fanning, Crook told him he had been persecuted by an "Italian renegade", from whose wrath he was lucky to escape with his life onto Fanning's ship. According to Crook's own account, his only danger was from starving to death


164. e.g. see Alexander, op. cit., p.114.
because of the Marquesans' indifference to him; and the "Italian renegade" was in fact a Hawaiian, who became a warrior of note, but was otherwise of a gentle and generous disposition.

If Crook is the origin of both accounts (his own and Fanning's) then, like Williams, he was guilty of falsification. If, however, the fiction was Fanning's work then he propagated a version which missionary sympathizers have readily accepted. Mary Alexander accepted it and retold it in her biography of W.P. Alexander. In this work she claims that William Morrison plotted to capture the vessel upon which Alexander arrived; but on the same page reports Morrison hewing timber for Alexander's house: a contrast which ought not be taken at face value.

The best known and most sensational case of beachcombers being held responsible for the troubles of missionaries concerns the L.M.S. missionaries in Tonga between 1797 and 1800. Over the years, the unhappy story of the antagonism between beachcombers and missionaries had become highly adulterated: Robert Fitzroy, on a surveying expedition, wrote that in Tonga a runaway convict had instigated the murder of the first missionaries. Im Thurn, citing the L.M.S.'s official history wrote that when Captain Clark rescued the missionaries from Tonga they were in grave danger:

... owing to the hostility of the natives and more espec-

165. Crook, loc. cit., p.cliii.
166. Ibid., pp.cii-cliv; Dening, op. cit., pp.51, 52, 54, 55.
167. Alexander, op. cit., p.147. She relied for this information on W.P. Alexander's own manuscripts.
ially, of the 'beachcombers' who had acquired great influence among the natives.\textsuperscript{169}

In fact the departure of the missionaries had become necessary because they were identified with one side in the civil war which broke out in Tonga in 1799, and the deaths of three of them had come about in that way. Yet the construction which Fitzroy and Im Thurn put on events could be inferred from the contemporary writings. Quarrels between the beachcombers and the L.M.S. representatives certainly took place, and probably started - as Harper's Journal suggests - because of the missionaries' refusal to grant repeated requests of the beachcombers for tools and clothing.\textsuperscript{170}

From their own point of view, the missionaries' refusal was justified: their goods were limited, and they had their own interests to consider. Yet the beachcombers had been placed in an awkward position: their standing with the Tongans required that they be able to supply novelties as well - hence their demands on the missionaries. The strongly emotional nature of the motives on both sides (amounting possibly to desperation) could easily account for the harshness of the verbal exchanges between the two groups.

According to the missionary sources, the beachcombers began to denounce the missionaries to the Tongans as early as June, 1797;\textsuperscript{171} yet the Tongan version\textsuperscript{172} suggests that it was the missionaries who began the propaganda war. That the fault was not all on

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{170} Harper's Journal, 9 May, 1797, \textit{loc. cit.}, p.325.
\item \textsuperscript{171} Wilson, \textit{op. cit.}, p.255.
\item \textsuperscript{172} As recorded by a later missionary - Lawry, '\textit{Diary, 1818-25}', (Ms.), 30 June, 1823, p.120.
\end{itemize}
one side can be seen even in the L.M.S. version: Wilson shows that
one of the major steps in the worsening feud occurred when Ambler
and Morgan, the beachcombers, learned that the missionaries sus-
ppected them of stealing their hogs. Ambler's and Morgan's indig-
nation led to a brawl, abuse and threats. The beachcombers,
doubtless, over-reacted; but they had been very helpful to the
missionaries, who were now undermining them, and their exasperation
was not unjustified. The missionaries, on their part, seem to have
been more than ready to suppose that the beachcombers were the
cause of all their difficulties. Vason, writing of the period
when he was still part of the mission, claims that Ambler and
Morgan came one day to murder him. A potential, unattempted murder
is difficult to evaluate: Vason was not even assaulted; and he
does not give his reasons for his suspicion; nor, significantly,
does he mention their probable motive.

These examples do not exhaust the cases of specific
charges against the beachcombers in their dealings with the
missionaries; but they do embrace a very large proportion of the
known cases. It is clear that in the great bulk of hostile mission-
ary comment there is no solid foundation, or obvious justification
for this hostility. Where specific complaints about particular
injuries were made, the missionaries' assertions can be shown to
be exaggerated, false, or misleadingly one-sided.

Moreover, when the missionaries summarize the range of
difficulties they experienced, it is surprising, and significant,
how frequently they omit beachcombers from their lists. In Tahiti,
for example, Jefferson had complained in 1800 that the beachcombers

173. Wilson, op. cit., p.255.
were a greater menace than the Tahitians - and Turnbull supported him a few years later. But in 1798 the missionaries who retired to Sydney reported that the Tahitians frequently molested them, and plotted further assaults; in 1799 Henry made five observations on the failure (so far) of the Tahitian mission. Beachcombers did not appear in this list. In December, 1799, Jefferson, writing for his colleagues concluded a letter in which he made no mention of beachcombers:

We have stated our present situation and circumstances as concisely as we can.

In such a letter brevity was not intended to be misleading. Even after beachcomber numbers rose with the flourishing of the pork trade Shelley could in 1806 enumerate the mission's difficulties - making no mention of beachcombers, complaining only of the indifference of the Tahitians.

In the Marquesas the A.B.C.F.M. missionaries abandoned the field in 1834 because, according to Alexander, English missionaries were on their way, and duplication of effort was unwise.

The letter which Alexander's colleague wrote to the L.M.S. in Tahiti blamed the Marquesan topographical and political fragmenta-

174. See above, p.415.
175. Main, et al., 1 September, 1798, in Sydney, L.M.S.-S.S.L., Box 1.
176. The observations were confined to features of Tahitian society, and the inadequacy of missionary numbers. William Henry, 29 August, 1799, Parramatta, L.M.S.-S.S.L., Box 1.
179. W.P. Alexander, 'Account of Events in his Life', Papers, Folder 81 (Ms.).
tion, the proportionately large expense of maintaining a small station, and the need for them in Hawaii. In their groping for specious reasons they would, surely, have blamed the beachcombers had there been any grounds for so doing. The fact that they did not cast into doubt the previous complaints made about them. A generation later Titus Coan reported on obstacles to mission work in the Marquesas, listing: Marquesan natural depravity and degradation; their isolation in deep, impenetrable valleys; their lack of law and government; their deep-rooted superstitions; their clannish jealousies and wars; their cannibalism, and lastly, "the steady and uncertain influence of a large proportion of whaleships and other foreigners who visit them". The absence of European residents from this list is telling.

The situation was the same in Western Polynesia: Wilkes noted in Samoa that Siovili was the worst antagonist with whom the missionaries had to deal: but he was only a rival, not an opponent. In Tonga, Cargill looked at the hollowness of the Wesleyan triumph and concluded that:

The declension and lowness of the religious knowledge and feeling are mainly attributable to the pernicious influence of the distracting civil wars at the island of Tongatabu.

The verbal attacks of the missionaries on the beachcombers appear to be not only insubstantial and unsubstantiated, but even appear to be deceptive. The most that can be conceded to their point of view was

admitted by a younger contemporary:

A few abandoned white men, in connection with their heathen chiefs, have endeavoured to counteract their efforts; but they have never been injured or insulted.184

There is, on the contrary, a considerable body of evidence of the converse - of beachcombers assisting missionaries. The assistance given was not indispensable; it did not mean the difference between success and failure for the missionaries. But at the time - and everywhere during the initial stages of missionary activity - it must have made the task facing the missionaries seem enormously less difficult. When the Duff missionaries arrived in Tahiti in 1797 Hagerstein and Lind were particularly useful supplying local political information, providing food, arranging transport, interpreting in negotiations with Tu, interpreting religious services.185 Far from plotting to harm the missionaries - as was subsequently said of them - they gave warning of a planned Tahitian attack;186 and when the Duff left Tahiti for the voyage to Tonga and the Marquesas, Hagerstein volunteered to go along to try to interpret in those places as well.187 At a time when the missionaries were beginning to look askance at the two Swedes, Wilson noted that it was by their policy that the muskets in Tahitian hands were all bent;188 a letter wishing "health, unity and concord

185. Wilson, op. cit., pp.58, 61, 68, 70, 76, etc.
186. Ibid., p.76.
187. Ibid., p.81.
188. Ibid., p.164.
among yourselves, and peace with the natives . . . your friend and well wisher, Andrew Cornelius Lind, drew a very cool and formal response. For years the missionaries relied on the beachcombers in Tahiti for protection; and far from threatening the missionaries, two of them were on one occasion beaten by the Tahitians for refusing to join a planned raid on the missionaries.

In the Marquesas American and English missionaries alike benefitted from the services of beachcombers as linguists, guides and providers, while in Hawaii the efforts of John Young in particular were instrumental in gaining permission for the missionaries to land. While the Hawaiian authorities prevaricated about how to treat the newcomers, accommodation, food, and moral support came from the older, long-time European residents.

Even in Tonga, where the feud between missionaries and beachcombers became most notorious, Ambler and Connelly from the beginning acted as interpreters, provided information on current politics, advised on life in Tonga generally, and warned them in


191. Henry, 4 December, 1804, L.M.S.-S.S.L., Box 1.


advance of pitfalls: in short provided many pre-requisites for success.\textsuperscript{195} This assistance, moreover, was not merely ephemeral. After the Duff's departure they continued to mediate: providing transport, being guides and messengers;\textsuperscript{196} this assistance continued even after the quarrel between the two parties began\textsuperscript{197} in May, 1797. The second attempt to evangelize Tonga - that by the Wesleyans - beginning with Lawry in 1822 was similarly fortunate. Indeed, until Lawry alienated the beachcomber Singleton, he described his presence as a great blessing.\textsuperscript{198} Lawry's successors had similar cause for gratitude.\textsuperscript{199}

The usefulness of the beachcombers to the missionaries in all the island groups of the Eastern Pacific (i.e. from Fiji eastward) was such that to detail more of it would be repetitious. In addition to the services already mentioned, however, reference should be made of the use of beachcombers like Twyning for inter-island communication,\textsuperscript{200} in the Tonga-Wallis-Futuna area, and of Pickering, Simpson and Whippy and others for the same services within Fiji.\textsuperscript{201} In Samoa, the missionaries very largely cut them-

\textsuperscript{195} Wilson, \textit{op. cit.}, pp.99-106.
\textsuperscript{196} Ibid, pp.231-237.
\textsuperscript{197} Ibid., pp.275, 247, 248. See also Harper's Journal, 5 May - 31 May, 1797, in Haweis, 'Papers - Supplement', (Ms.), pp.323-329.
\textsuperscript{198} Lawry, 'Diary, 1818-1825', 9 October, 1822, p.88.
\textsuperscript{199} e.g. Rev. Nathaniel Turner, 'Personal Narrative, 1793-1846', (Ms.), Vol. 1, p.196 [189]. Orlebar, \textit{op. cit.}, p.70.
\textsuperscript{200} Twyning, \textit{op. cit.}, pp.113, 119.
\textsuperscript{201} e.g. Henderson, \textit{op. cit.}, Vol. 1, p.192; Hunt, 'Private Journal', Vol. 1, p.37.
selves off from help from the beachcombers because of their censorious views of the 'sailor religions' episode. Yet even this work, which the missionaries condemned so summarily, in fact made their own work easier: the Samoans were little concerned about the differences between one foreign religion and another, which meant that the change of allegiance from a sailor-preacher to a missionary caused little heart-searching amid the enthusiasm to have a foreign religion. Moreover, the beachcombers had accustomed the Samoans to religious change, and had encouraged the necessary prerequisite to Christianization: the violation of tapu and the dishonouring of old gods. The extraordinarily rapid transition to Christianity in Samoa owes as much to the beachcombers as it did to the missionaries.

In the relationships between missionaries and beachcombers, therefore, the beachcombers offered a combination of trivial opposition and considerable help. At the same time, the missionaries were harsh in their condemnation of their compatriots. It is appropriate therefore to ask of the missionaries the same questions as are asked of beachcombers, and examine the treatment they gave them. To begin

204. Rev. Peter Turner, 14 February, 1836, 28 February, 1837. M.M.S. Inwards Correspondence, Samoa, 1834-70.
206. This passage does not purport to account for the rapid Christianization of Samoa: the Samoans initiated religious change, not the beachcombers. The beachcombers were called on to give it direction and substance, and that is what the missionaries did. See Chapter 7 above, pp.341-345.
with, perhaps it should be borne in mind that the missionaries did not consider themselves to have specific responsibilities towards white men in the mission field. The instructions of the L.M.S. to Wilson, Captain of the Duff made it clear that evangelization of the heathen was the object, and Europeans were mentioned only to warn against them or suggest ways of using them. But the Wesleyans were instructed, vaguely, "you are sent to do good to all men", and the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions told its representatives to Christianize, and be an example to all men.

Some of the missionaries in the various mission fields accepted a broad interpretation of their duties, and sought to evangelize the beachcombers - notably the Wesleyans in Fiji and Tonga. In Tahiti, a beachcomber who attended Sunday services was not spurned; and the American missionaries in the Marquesas encouraged attendance at their services, and got some response. The Wesleyans in Tonga and Fiji, however, and their L.M.S. contemporaries in Samoa went out of their way to make special efforts for the stray whites they came across. Peter Turner in 1834 described an English class as "a rich feast of love to our souls". Special classes and ser-

208. 'Instructions . . . to Mr. Leigh and Mr. Morgan . . .', January 17, 1821, Wesleyan Missionary Letters, (Ms.).
209. Hawaii, F.O. & Ex. Folder No. 3, 'Instructions from the Prudential Committee of the A.B.C.F.M. to the Revd Hiram Bingham . . .', (Ms.).
vices were held for the foreigners - often two or more each week, as well as the special visits made to individuals. Some of the beachcombers responded in the intended manner, but even for these successes, the process was slow, and generally the missionaries had reason to express disappointment. Similar efforts in Fiji produced perhaps greater results because of the centralization of beachcombers at Levuka and Rewa, and - at least at Levuka - because of Whippy's influence. For a time at least, in the early 1840's, something like co-operation or partnership developed between the missionaries and beachcombers. Samoa's beachcomber population was more scattered, so missionary efforts on their behalf were less noticeable - but such conversions as were made were more spectacular than elsewhere; two beachcombers became lay-preachers, and a few others undertook other useful work for the mission.

This concern for the souls of wayward white men was not matched by an equal concern for their condition in human society. The beachcombers were the recipients of a grudging charity - and there was not much even of that. In Tahiti one beachcomber is known


to have received support during illness; and a child of Hagerstein was cared for by missionaries. Trivial gifts and temporary accommodation, and some occasional employment was the norm in Tonga, as indeed, it was elsewhere, except perhaps in Fiji, where it was added to political support at times.

These small favours were in themselves neither considerable nor niggardly, but when compared with the scale of refusals of missionaries to lend help when it was needed, or further, when they took action which was of detriment to beachcombers, then one must raise questions about the missionaries themselves.

The action taken by missionaries at the expense of beachcombers was rarely trivial: or at least the trivial has left less evidence than the more serious actions. The least direct - but not the less serious of these actions was the spreading of reports among the islanders designed to turn them against beachcombers. The most notable case of this was in Tonga by the Duff missionaries, but forty years later in Tonga Thomas was conducting a major anti-beachcomber propaganda campaign. By thus making life in island society difficult to support, the missionaries were only one step short of

that more direct action which is more widely known: that of engineering the removal of beachcombers from their island homes. This was managed - not always successfully - sometimes by applying to the local authorities, or more frequently by applying directly to ships' captains to perform the favour for them. Ordinary hospitality was denied even in circumstances where one would expect the ceaseless suspicions of the missionaries to have been suspended, and small favours were denied in circumstances which were potentially dangerous to the life and well-being of the beachcomber concerned. Missionary vessels not infrequently refused beachcombers' requests for a passage even in circumstances where a beachcomber's life was at risk. Other actions of interference were relatively frequent, and though less serious in their possible consequences were nevertheless as damaging as they were gratuitous.

It is difficult to escape the conclusion, therefore, that not only did the missionaries pose a greater threat to the beachcombers than vice versa, but that moreover, the relative threats were disproportionate to each other. Beachcombers never threatened

225. e.g. Rev. Thomas Slatyer, 'Journal', (Ms.), 13 October, 1841, p.118.


to thwart or injure the prospects or life of missionaries, as the latter did to them. At the same time, beachcombers were on occasion, a very considerable help to missionaries, despite the missionary propaganda to the contrary. Not only did the missionaries malign beachcombers at the time, but they continued the exercise for decades: Moss, writing late in the 1880's noticed that reports about the depravity of such men were still revived for, he thought, political purposes.231

The beachcombers were unluckier in their relationships with others of their race and cultures than they deserved. Although they were, on balance, either helpful or merely harmless, their reputation and situation was consistently damaged by other foreigners in the Pacific - with the paradoxical exception of naval officers. An explanation for the discrepancy between personal experience and recorded attitudes has been tentatively offered by two sources already quoted: Moss suggested a political motive, and Wall,232 looking more deeply at human motivation, suggested that it was in order to emphasise the writer's virtues by offering a vivid contrast. Two questions may be asked of Wall's suggestion. First, why did people wish to emphasise their own virtues? Second, why (as must have been the case) could they have been so sure that the bad name which they gave to beachcombers would be readily accepted by their readers? The consistency of the remarks made about beachcombers233 suggests that the answer to these questions lies not with

232. Quoted above, p.390.
233. See above, p.384.
the beachcombers, nor in the Pacific, but in aspects of the culture of late eighteenth and early nineteenth century Europe. Since the missionaries were those most committed to the propagation of that culture, and were so uncompromising in their criticism of beachcombers, it is through them that the network of ideas linking beachcombers, "living-among-natives", and western culture should be explored.

The link between beachcombers and the horror associated with "going native" was the notion of sin. The islanders were living in a state of natural depravity; the beachcombers had sunk to that level; and the missionaries themselves, conscious of their virtue, striving to be virtuous, were at the same time conscious of its unattainability. Conviction of one's own sinfulness was a prerequisite for becoming a missionary. The powerful sense of personal guilt which the missionaries shared was what they laboured so indefatigably to inculcate into the islanders. Their horror at the nakedness and dancing of the islanders, and of the acquiescence of the beachcombers in these and more objectionable practices is indicative of the strength of their own sense of sin. It seems likely, therefore, that though they did not sin themselves, they saw in the behaviour of those around them their own potential sinfulness. Such sinfulness should have caused no anxiety or outrage to the missionaries had they felt secure in their own purity. The "sins" of the beachcombers, therefore, probably aroused in the

234. The conventional autobiographies required of mission applicants contained a stereotyped description of their "fall", their torments of growing awareness, and their redemption through grace.

235. e.g. Rev. Peter Turner, 'Journal', (Ms.), Vol. 4, p.27.
missionaries a fear of their own likelihood to sin. This was not an unrealistic fear; for in addition to the "prerequisite" of being a reclaimed sinner, the missionaries had before them the examples of their colleagues who deviated from the path of rectitude: Thomas Kendall in New Zealand, Broomhall and Lewis in Tahiti, Vason in Tonga, Jaggar in Fiji. The missionary journals, diaries and letters, moreover, are replete with statements attesting the missionaries' sense of inadequacy and unworthiness for the great and pious responsibilities which they had assumed. The hostility of the missionaries to the beachcombers, therefore, may be recognized as a product of the missionaries' own overactive imaginations in that they felt in the errors of their compatriots a call to err. In the unconscious the desire to act wrongfully is not distinguished from actually having done so, and invokes the same reaction from the conscience which was hypersensitive in the case of missionaries.

The presence of beachcombers therefore, made the missionaries feel guilty and insecure. The typical way of combatting this inner threat, was to be excessively critical of the beachcombers, and to project onto them their own feelings of guilt, which were then expressed as hostility. Hence the vague and generalized character of the missionaries' charges against the beachcombers - there were few specific charges to make, except that the latter made them feel uncomfortable.

The same feeling of insecurity possibly accounts for the reaction of the missionaries to the 'sailor religions' in Samoa. The activities of those beachcombers who founded religions in Samoa - all of them a travesty of Christianity - were described by the missionaries as nothing more nor less than a specimen of the
wickedness and depravity of evil-minded runaway sailors, who had little purpose in life but leading astray the relatively innocent savages. On their own terms such remarks by the missionaries make little sense. The "vile savages" surely were already well astray, doomed to perdition unless properly ordained men of God went forth to gather them in. In fact, as noted above, the work of the beachcomber-priests made the "gathering in" a simpler and more rapid process than was the case in any other earlier or contemporary mission field in the Pacific. Missionary disapproval of the beachcombers in this context looks very much like jealousy, or alternatively, to be able to attack another person for doing what one does oneself, is a psychologically safe way of admitting one's own guilt, and allowing one to continue without modifying one's own behaviour.

The cases of apostate missionaries - or of those missionaries who yielded to the seductiveness of the beachcomber way of life - show more clearly the conflict in the missionary mind aroused by the exposure to the beachcomber example. Of the "fallen missionaries" only one, George Vason, became a thorough beachcomber. Thomas Kendall's love and sympathy for the Maori way of life never eradicated his desire to serve the missionary cause in general, or the Church Missionary Society in particular. Lewis never seems


to have thought of "going native", despite his determination to marry a Tahitian woman,\textsuperscript{239} for this breach of principle his brethren excommunicated him. He did not live long afterwards. Benjamin Broomhall's heresy was a very intellectualized affair, and after breaking off from the missionaries he continued to consult them from time to time on the effect one course of action or another might have on them, or affect their interests.\textsuperscript{240} Moreover, although he cohabited with a Tahitian woman for a time, she soon left him, and his social intercourse was with the other beachcombers rather than with the Tahitians. He left the island at the earliest opportunity.

George Vason was the only missionary-beachcomber in any strict sense. He was a thorough apostate, an uncompromising transculturist: in thought and behaviour, aspirations and loyalty, language and sympathy, he became a Tongan.\textsuperscript{241} Of the four ex-missionaries, Vason was the only one who did not need nor try to shelter behind a smokescreen of righteousness, self-justification, or sophistry. Broomhall, Lewis and Kendall all suffered terrible mental anguish and tormented themselves continually over their positions; Vason was troubled not at all - changing his identity seems to have been no more trouble than removing his clothes. He seems to have experienced no conflict between what he wanted and what he thought he ought to do. Faced with alternative ways of life - alien missionary, or member of a chiefly family, the question of loyalty, sympathy or identity was

\textsuperscript{239} Lewis' papers, in Haweis, 'Papers - Supplement', pp.137-161.


\textsuperscript{241} [George Vason], op. cit., passim.
never in doubt. The interesting feature of Vason's apostasy is that the anguish was experienced by his erstwhile colleagues, who discussed his case repeatedly and at length, sent him ultimata, besought him to look to the condition of his soul - all in vain.

Just as the conflict within the soul was not Vason's, but his colleagues, similarly the extent that the missionaries went forth as a brotherhood shows that Vason's fall was their fall. His failure to stand was their failure to support and guide him; his going off alone to live with the Tongans when the remainder went off in twos and threes was their responsibility. Yet the attitude of the brethren to Vason was never one of sympathy: rather, it was cold and punitive. The need to admonish him seems to have overridden the need to pray for his rehabilitation.

Later, the brethren observed that:

... he seemed ... to be making a sad progress in the evil course which inclined most of the Brethren to think of excluding him from our number.

To exclude him was their impulse: to pray for him only a rational, collective decision - which was presumably open to debate. A month later his failure to meet their demands evoked not more sympathy but a letter of dismissal. It is significant that the brethren should have felt it necessary to make dismissal a formal step: it made no difference to Vason's position, state of mind, or behaviour, nor


244. *Ibid.*, 18 October, 1797.


could the brethren have expected it to. The letter of dismissal seems to have been more for their benefit - it was a cleansing, a washing of hands, a relieving of responsibility. When Vason was informed of his dismissal, he was asked two questions: first, how he felt about it; second, whether he would be an enemy and persecute the missionaries' cause. His response, on the contrary, was to wish them well. He was then asked to return the mission property in his possession. When he promised to return such as he still had - books and stationery - Kelso (who conveyed the message) seemed to be discomforted by his charity, and 'entreated' Vason to retain them for his own use and to construct a calendar, that he might know and observe the Sabbath. This sudden about-face by Kelso, which apparently had the acquiescence of his colleagues is in such marked contrast to the tone, implications, and content of the questions immediately preceding that it should not be ignored. The reaction was provoked by an act of charity and humility on the part of the apostate which would have been more congruent with the vocation of his former colleagues. The most likely explanation for their change of tone was that a sense of guilt or shame had been aroused in them.

This charitableness did not last long. A few months later Buchanan and his beachcomber companion received a message that Vason was ill and wanted to see them. They refused to go. A fortnight later it was confirmed that Vason was indeed ill, and this time some of the brethren did go to see him. The writer of the mission journal remarked with evident bitterness that they found Vason recovered not

247. Ibid., 14 February, 1798.

248. Ibid., 20 April, 1798.
only from the illness but also from any good impression it might have made on him. As if in justification of their neglect and lack of charity he recorded that when Vason was informed that it was the Sabbath day, he replied that he had not known, and seemed to treat the knowledge with contempt. The tone of the journal conveys a sense of relief that Vason should be so unworthy, so unrepentant. The journalist seemed to find relief in being able to report the further progress of Vason in degradation and apostasy, as if such progress relieved them of the obligation to be compassionate and charitable. For this lack of compassion and charity there seems to be only one explanation: Vason had broken their solidarity, he had shown them something in themselves that they hated and feared, and they felt a personal guilt for this failure.

The record of Vason's break with his colleagues offers the only intimate picture of the subjective relationship between missionaries and beachcombers, and that because Vason was both. On the subjective level, however, it may be inferred that similar reactions took place every time that beachcomber and missionary paths crossed. Historically, the missionaries - and the traders, voyagers, consuls and the like - were on the offensive against the beachcombers. Psychologically, they reacted as if on the defensive. Since the beachcombers were virtually powerless, the contrast suggests that the other foreigners were on the defensive against themselves, implying that in some way the beachcombers and their way of life aroused impulses in the foreigners of which they were afraid, but which were nevertheless powerfully attractive. It was suggested in Chapter 3 that would-be beachcombers were seeking the

249. Ibid., 6 May, 1798.
lost delights of early childhood. Their more respectable compatriots had more successfully quelled such aspirations, which paradoxically, via the principle of affirmation by negation, made them the more attractive. Early in this chapter attention was drawn to the imagery of beachcomber description: the equation of contemptibility with "living with natives", the association of beachcombers with the racist and social-evolutionist ideas about non-European peoples, the lack of restraint, the laziness, and moral looseness; in short with the attraction-repulsion complex which existed - and exists - with many of the cardinal virtues and vices of western society.

The consistently hostile propaganda about beachcombers then, ought not to be taken as evidence of the attributes of beachcombers; its dimension of reality is that of the culture of the colonizers which sought by destroying others, to destroy a part of itself.
Beachcombers eclipsed by later arrivals who could meet island needs more fully - more intense contact made beachcombing less viable and reduced involuntary beachcombing - the beachcomber progeny - their number - identify with island cultures in early period - identity confusion of later beachcomber children - marriage preferences - their social and political influence - changing attitudes to beachcombers as their era passes - indicative of the European ambivalence to both beachcombers and Polynesians - the significance of beachcombing is the evocation of the European unconscious.

Like so much else of the beachcombers' experience, their decline was something that happened to them, and over which they had little, if any, control. Just as the beginning of beachcombing was made possible by events of wider significance, so was its decline brought about by events on a larger stage. Beachcombing did not come to a sudden end - indeed it is possible that it has not come to an end even yet - but the numbers of beachcombers and their opportunities have been in decline since before the middle of the nineteenth century. The reason for this decline was simply that the processes of culture contact overtook it. Beachcombing was the precursor of colonialism in its various forms, and once colonialism (by virtue of events outside the Pacific region) became established in the various island groups, the position of the beachcomber became untenable.

In the first place, the successive waves of foreigners were intolerant of beachcombers. The hostile actions and attitudes of missionaries, traders and settlers was a discouraging factor;
but the greater power and economic strength of the later arrivals gave them an influence with the islanders by which their own low opinion of the beachcombers was transmitted.¹ The appearance of these more powerful Europeans did not change the nature of the contact relationship, but created a more intense level of involvement between the foreign and the indigenous cultures. At this new level the skills and usefulness of the beachcombers became obsolete. The islanders' perception of their needs changed with the greater availability of western products, and those people who could meet those needs became more valued than those who could not. The old-style beachcombers, clearly, could not compete without re-establishing themselves in a money economy on a regular basis. If they did compete in this way, they were no longer beachcombers in the old sense. They could not remain the same by adapting: survival was a question of changing with the times.

Some beachcombers sought a conservative form of adaptation - by retreating before the advancing lines of economic, political and religious colonialism and seeking more isolated places where they could preserve their seclusion from western civilization.² For Diaper Fiji was becoming too civilized in 1876 when he told the Governor, Sir Arthur Gordon, that he thought Fiji was "played out", and that he planned to go to New Guinea.³ The beachcomber frontier thus moved from east to west across the Pacific: the Gilbert islands and more westerly parts of Micro-

1. e.g. A.W. Murray, *Forty Years' Mission Work . . .*, (London, 1876), p.38.  
nesia were experiencing their beachcomber hey-day in the middle of, and during the second half of, the nineteenth century, years after - in some cases decades after - the era had closed in the east. Beachcombing in the west however, was not simply replication of beachcombing in the eastern Pacific because the Melanesian sandalwood trade, the coconut oil trade, and the whaling industry ensured a more intensive and consistent level of contact than was the case during the beachcomber hey-day in the Eastern Pacific.

The increasing scale of European activity throughout the Pacific effectively reduced the numbers of men who were likely to become beachcombers. When consuls were appointed, and regular ports of call established, with more shipping passing all the time, shipwrecked sailors were more certain of a speedy return to civilization. Similarly, deserters whose main motive had been a change of circumstances rather than a life in the islands, were able to get to a European community (in any case, a more likely place for them to desert) or to ship again on one of the more frequently visiting vessels. During the beachcomber hey-day in the Eastern Pacific, most beachcombers were involuntary beachcombers in the sense that they had to stay longer than they had planned. Once the risk of being stranded was significantly reduced then the number of long-term beachcombers can be assumed to have declined also.

In his seminal article, 'Beachcombers and Castaways' H.E. Maude might be thought to have given the beachcombers credit for greater influence in the history of the Pacific islands than I have done. Yet Maude recognized that they pre-dated the period of major and rapid change, and his conclusion implies that they
were living in a period of change rather than contributing greatly to it. In the long-term, he suggested, the beachcombers had a dual importance. They left behind them a valuable and interesting literature documenting island life at a critical period.

Second, they left an indelible mark on the genetics of island peoples. 4

Norma McArthur, using Maude's estimate of beachcomber numbers and the length of the beachcomber era adopted as a basis of calculation the figure of 2,500 beachcomber years. This figure is more likely to be an underestimate than an overestimate because it is a conservative interpretation of an attempt to count known beachcombers, and the estimate of the number of beachcombers made by Maude was itself extremely conservative. McArthur calculated that by 1960 the number of beachcomber descendants in Polynesia was perhaps 200,000 out of a total population (excluding New Zealand) of about 400,000. 5 Influencing this estimate is not only the number of beachcombers initially, but whether their children married "native", "white" or "mixed". The question is of interest mainly to demographers and geneticists, for a characteristic cultural impact of the people of mixed ancestry in the nineteenth century cannot be identified while the contribution of more casual visitors than beachcombers to the modern Polynesian genetic pool was so great that to attempt to discuss specifically beachcomber descendants beyond the first generation


The beachcomber progeny were undoubtedly very numerous. Diaper acknowledged thirty-eight known children, and ninety-nine grandchildren; Connor had forty-eight children; and Maude referred to one man in the Gilbert Islands who had fifty children and possibly more. These cases however, were so exceptional as to be sensational; the norm was a very different story. Savage, after five years residence in Fiji, and with many wives, left only one surviving daughter. Of Connor's forty-eight, the maximum number alive at any one time was thirty-four, and only about a dozen survived him. Other beachcombers are known to have one or two children. In Hawaii Isaac Davis had three children, John Young had six, and John Harbottle eight. Dimsdell, during a ten year residence (1792-1801) had three children only one of whom was alive when he left Hawaii. Fanshawe who visited Levuka in


9. E.J. Turpin, 'Extracts from Diary and Narratives', (Ms.), $129.


1849 (a bit late for the beachcomber era, to be sure) estimated that the 30 or so Europeans there had about 100 children between them.  

The beachcomber progeny, therefore, did not represent as large a population as might at first be expected, and it seems likely that the population was not concentrated nor identifiable as being separate from the surrounding population. The children of peripatetic progenitors like Diaper were almost inevitably reared by their mothers in their mothers' culture, and considering the negligible effect which the beachcombers had on island culture generally it is not likely that they interfered much in local child-rearing practices. Their children, therefore, became little islanders. There were, of course, exceptions to this rule, and the exceptions became more numerous as contact with the west intensified. Read in Tonga wanted his children to be brought up as Christians. In Hawaii many beachcomber children were enrolled in the school begun by the missionaries in 1820. A few beachcombers in other places attempted to bring up their children along western lines (or at least some approximation thereto), but the evidence does not suggest that they were anything but a tiny minority.

In those places where people of mixed parentage were both


numerous and visible some problems of identity did arise late in, or after the end of, the beachcomber period. Some of the beachcomber children identified themselves as, and were accepted as, whites: especially in Hawaii where "respectability" was more easily maintained.\(^{18}\) As contact intensified, however, it is clear that there were identity problems for this generation. It was said of them that:

'They hate their fathers for being white, and despise their mothers for being dark'.\(^{19}\)

Feeling estranged in the early colonial phase from their mothers' culture, they were themselves cut off from their fathers' culture: the whites called them "niggers" in Fiji, and they replied by reviling their fathers' kind as "outcasts, without home or country".\(^{20}\)

Any statement about the mixed-blood population is likely to be inaccurate to an unknown degree for there were undoubtedly, and at all times, a large number who were invisible members of island cultures. But at least in Fiji the "half-castes" had an identity as a separate class,\(^{21}\) and for a few years before cession sought the legal status of British subjects, feeling perhaps that


they were outcasts from Fijian culture. British citizenship however, was denied them.22

The position and feelings of the part-Europeans is perhaps best illustrated through their marriage patterns. The marriage choice of the earliest of the beachcomber children was more restricted than it was for their younger contemporaries, and undoubtedly the great majority of them married people of their mothers' race. Very early, however, the tendency developed for the women to marry white men (i.e. later beachcombers); white women were not available to these men and it is likely that their preference was for women of mixed parentage rather than for the "pure native". Diaper mentions that in Fiji Charlie Pickering's daughters married white men, and that their daughters in turn were much sought by whites, but that their own preference was for part-Europeans like themselves.23

Culturally, however, the beachcomber progeny had no greater impact than did their fathers. Their occupations were much as one would expect of people who had some knowledge of their island culture and of European culture: that is, as agents and interpreters.24 To some extent they adopted their fathers' occupations and became boat-builders, traders, sailors, or labourers engaged in building or trading but this seems not to have been on a large or even spec-

22. Im Thurn Papers, 14 August, 1867; 9 July, 1872.
23. Diaper, op. cit., pp.94-95. For other cases of beachcombers' daughters marrying Europeans see Hawaiian Gazette, 5 June, 1896, p.6; M.D. Wallis, Life in Feejee, (Ridgwood, 1967), p.76.
24. e.g. Fiji Land Claims Commission Records, passim.
tacularly successful scale. Even as interpreters their value was limited, according to Mrs. Smythe, for their English vocabularies were restricted to what their fathers' spoke, and their fathers' English was limited to that of their class, and further attenuated by years of limited use.

Expectations of them, indeed, were more optimistic than the reality was to justify. The "foot in both camps" school was as strong among early nineteenth century travellers as it has been among historians since. Thus, in 1818, Golovnin believed of the part-Hawaiians that they would be a valuable asset to their country, combining their fathers' knowledge, with their mothers' attachment to the land. Eighteen years later Daniel Wheeler expressed a similar belief in their potential influence arising from their knowledge of both cultures. At that stage, however, their influence seemed to Wheeler to be for ill rather than good. Hawaii, in fact, was the only major beachcomber centre where beachcombers' children and grandchildren did attain prominence and influence. One may point to John Young's children as an example: intimates of the Kings of Hawaii, and ministers in the Hawaiian government; one of his granddaughters was Kamehameha IV's queen. The prominence of the beachcomber progeny in Hawaii, however, was probably due at least as much to the high status of their mothers and their


descent from chiefs as to their descent from Europeans. Prominence was attained only by the children of those beachcombers who themselves enjoyed unusually high status, and married well: like Young, and Holmes. If there was any special advantage in being of mixed parentage in Polynesia it ought to have manifested itself in other island groups as well. There is no evidence that it did. It is in any case unlikely that in rigidly stratified Polynesia special recognition or opportunities would be made available to part-Europeans on the basis of their special talents (if any) unless their birth warranted it.

By the time that the younger of the beachcomber progeny were adults, and were wondering whether they were European or Polynesian, the beachcomber era as a distinctive phase of Pacific history was over. As European settlement in the Pacific took on a character of respectability people began to look upon beachcombing as something which was almost regretfully past. Litton Forbes, a resident of Fiji in the early 1870's described and explained the beachcombers' passing in nostalgic - even romantic - terms. 29 The beginnings of a beachcomber historiography date from this time; and as a historiography developed with the growing rarity of beachcombers, so did attitudes towards them change. For example, in the border-zone between direct observation and early historiography both Ellis and Wilkes in their outlines of Hawaiian history fail to mention beachcombers at all. 30 Yet by 1850, one beachcomber at least, Marin, was


beginning to look like a national hero in the historical sketches
of the time; early in the twentieth century rehabilitation of the
first Hawaiian beachcombers was complete:

In any account of the social and political development of
these islands, a distinct place must be made for the influ-
ence exerted by . . . Young and Davis . . .32

With the moral rehabilitation of beachcombers in the eyes of later
writers went a retrospectively increased influence in local affairs:
doing good, changing the political destinies of states, and
becoming figures of romance.35

With the removal of beachcombers from the scene, the
symbolism which dominated European perceptions of them changed.
Symbolically the beachcombers came to represent escape, freedom,
honesty and cleanliness in contrast to the restrictions and con-
ventionality of civilization; and personal influence and recogni-
tion in a small, simple society in contrast to anonymity and

31. R.C. Wyllie, 'Address', Transactions of the Royal Hawaiian
Agricultural Society, I, 1850, p.47.

32. Henry B. Restarick, 'John Young of Hawaii, An American', 22nd
See also, 'John Young : Companion of Kamehameha', Hawaiian
Annual, (Honolulu, 1911), pp.93ff. The reputation of Young
and Davis was admittedly always high, but neither Wilkes nor
Ellis saw fit to mention their role.

33. Frederick J. Moss, Through the Atolls and Islands . . .,

34. 'A Recent Visitor', [F.J. Moss], A Month in Fiji, (Melbourne,
1868), p.6. Basil Thomson, South Sea Yarns, (Edinburgh and

35. A.B. Brewster, King of the Cannibal Isles, (London, 1937),
pp.24-26. Colman Wall, in 'Beachcombing' in Transactions of the Fijian
Society for the year 1911, (Suva), offers a more realistic and
balanced view of the beachcombers, but until the 'new histor-
ography' of the 1940's and later, he was alone.
impotence in a mass society. The journalist John Stanley James, for example, regarded Danford ("Harry the Jew") as a respectable old man. Danford in his old age had become a family man of property. But for an equally authentic but totally uncompromising beachcomber like Diaper, he had nothing but contempt. Yet when he wrote of beachcombers in general in a historical context there is no sign of distaste for men like Diaper:

The natural history of the beachcomber is a strange one. He has never been thoroughly investigated. In the early days he was a runaway sailor or convict from New South Wales. He had a good time of it in the Pacific until he was killed and eaten. But the records of his most interesting subject are as faint as those of Pliocene or Pleistocene man. The missionaries have dismissed them contemptuously, and we have no autobiographies. We know that occasionally he rose to power and wealth with the natives amongst whom he lived. Individual strength of character, of course, asserted itself in the "beachcomber" as in civilised walks of life . . . 36

This change in attitudes towards beachcombers over time is significant because it confirms the role of ambivalence and fantasy in the perception of beachcombing. 37 When confronted with beachcombers, or even to be in the islands at a time when beachcombing was a viable proposition, the reaction was an ambivalent one of attraction and repulsion. The emotional censor, prohibiting a surrender to longed for desires of childish delights, sought reinforcement by denying the desires and projecting them onto someone else who thereby became a hated object. The externalization of the desires and the consciously felt hatred for them was an effective means of reducing temptation. A similar process

37. See above, Chapters 3 and 8.
can be seen in the common case of a person convincing himself that he really does not want something which is desirable but forbidden. When beachcombers and beachcombing were things of the past it became possible to admit one's unconscious attractions in less disguised form, rationalizing that fulfilment was simply not available. Idealization and romanticization were the ways of expressing these longings in a psychologically safe, non-threatening, manner. The desire for escape to the romantic Pacific therefore was not an ephemeral phenomenon of the 'Noble Savage' era, but a continuing one, and one which is still sufficiently alive for the modern tourist industry to exploit. To a limited extent the beachcomber became an heir to the long tradition of exoticism of which the Noble Savage Cult was but one manifestation. The fact that in the eighteenth century the unconscious ideals of civilized man were being projected onto the exotic savage rendered the beachcomber ineligible for idealization. Instead he became the scapegoat for civilization's impurities. But ambivalence was the hallmark of racial attitudes, and as well as being a scapegoat the beachcomber was reviled as being a renegade because he seemed to pursue the lost pleasures which others did not dare to indulge.

The significance of the beachcomber then was not as a Polynesian parallel to the frontiersman of Australia or North America. The frontiersman became a focus for nationalist feeling and national identification for new nations of white settlement. Except for the possible exception of Hawaii none of the island groups under consideration became colonies of settlement. In Hawaii the beachcomber era was too brief to have any meaning in a later, remote period of incipient nationalism which in any case
became absorbed in an identification with the United States of America. In having merged with the islanders, moreover, the beachcombers would have been a most inappropriate model for a colonizing population which sought to set itself apart from the original inhabitants.

In other words, the beachcombers were not a vanguard of colonization; they were its antithesis, and consequently are of minimal historical significance in conventional terms. But in thus moving against the trend of the historical process (and therefore against the norms in historical explanation) they show in a clearer light some of the characteristics of the main-stream process. Despite the hostility of contemporaries towards the beachcomber he was to them a symbol of the escape for which they themselves yearned but would not allow themselves to admit.38

From the point of view of the islanders the beachcombers show the extent to which islands' history was made by the islanders themselves. Other than that their significance cannot be assessed by a foreigner. The beachcombers seem to have had a limited, temporary role to play; they taught the islanders something about European man; they came and lived, and are all but forgotten. In the long-term the islanders created their own history before and during the colonial era, as if the beachcombers had never existed.

38. The psychoanalytical analogue is obvious: the repressed - in this case childish delights and pleasures - are passionately yearned for, but the closer one gets to attaining them, the stronger the anxiety, resistances and ultimately avoidance of them.
APPENDIX

THE WORD 'BEACHCOMBER'

In Chapter 1 several words were introduced to convey the idea of the subject of this thesis: "Indian trader", "white-blackfellow", "beachcomber", "transculturist", and "marginal man". I have usually used the word "beachcomber" in this thesis although exception might be taken to the application of this term indiscriminately to the more respectable, sober and affluent characters and to the drunken, dissolute and violent alike. "Indian trader" and "white-blackfellow" are terms with a strictly regional application; beachcomber is as characteristically Pacific as the other two are American and Australian. "Marginal man" implies a degree of maladjustment which prejudges the data, although Stonequist himself used the word in the context of contact situations between Western and non-Western cultures.¹ Hallowell's definition of "transculturite" or "transculturist" is sufficiently flexible to cover most cases. Both marginal man and transculturist are clumsy to use, and beachcomber has the advantage of currency. It is generally used by historians of the Pacific, and if inquiry and definition are not pushed far, it is generally understood to mean much the same thing.

"Beachcomber" has the advantage of distinguishing the Pacific variety of transculturist from other local forms and as Maude points out is probable a neologism of Pacific origin.² Its

literary usages are few; Maude suggested that the earliest was by
Herman Melville in 1847. I have found none earlier. But Melville
explained the term as he understood it from its usage as referring
to people of feckless, roving dispositions, sailors by trade but
who engaged on any particular ship for only short periods, and
apparently shipped only for a change of scene. They were "wedded
to the Pacific". Maude's quotation of an 1852 usage suggests a
rather more sinister disposition than Melville implies, but in
1857 The Friend used the verb "beachcombing" as a way of getting
ashore during a heavy sea. Perhaps the word derived from "comber"
meaning a wave approaching the shore foaming, and was generalized
to embrace one who habitually went ashore in an irregular fashion
via the combers - a deserter. In 1861 'A Roving Printer' [John
D. Jones] used the term to apply to a class of able-bodied but
lazy men who lived by trespassing on the generosity and hospitality
of the ingenuous inhabitants of the Pacific islands. This writer
refined Melville's very broad definition by depicting the beach-
comber as living within existing social networks of the island
communities. Forbes, a resident in Fiji in the early 1870's,
applied the term to the very old settlers of the days of lawlessness
and cannibalism who lived hard, degenerate lives, more native than
civilized. To Forbes, "beachcomber" seems to have been synonymous
with "loafer", "old hand" or "Pakeha Maori" (the New Zealand

3. Herman Melville, Omoo, (London, 1924), p.84. (First published
   in 1847).


5. 'A Roving Printer', [John D. Jones], Life and Adventure in the
   South Pacific, (New York, 1861), pp.204-205.
variant), the "veritable waifs and strays of humanity". Cooper restricted the term to men engaged in the pearl-fisheries - which is where most of the next generation had gone by 1880 - and this is the sense used by the Oxford English Dictionary. Cooper had hopes of their being "improved off the face of the earth" and evidently had not known any of the earlier kind. The veteran missionary George Brown late in life addressed himself to the origin of the term "beachcomber" without success, finding that it was widely used by people ignorant of its correct meaning. Brown himself, however, did not provide the "correct meaning" except by distinguishing "beachcomber" from "trader", and described the former as being not entirely lacking in good points, though unable to settle down to regular employment: unscrupulous, idle, immoral, generally living among the natives and exploiting his knowledge of the language when ships were in port. To Brown, the beachcomber was a denizen of "the beach" - the sea front of ports such as Noumea, Levuka, Honolulu, etc. - probably a fair description of those whom Brown knew, for he first went to the Pacific in 1862. Banfield gave a more popular image - "a potentate in pyjamas", "bullying guileless natives", but who usually ended his days by "a whack on his hardened head by a jealous native . . ." Banfield also used the term in the sense of one who "combs the beaches" for flotsam and jetsam for a meagre living.

In the usages of Banfield, and 'A Roving Printer' can be seen the image described by Mannoni, and referred to in Chapter 1. Among the other authors the variety of usage reflects perhaps a change in meaning as the typical European vagrant in the Pacific responded to changing economic, social and political circumstances. The most important contrast is between the sense of a man living on the fringes of the port-towns, and of the man who had to some extent "gone native", whether permanently or temporarily. In both senses, however, the word carried connotations of reprobation, and was used for a wider purpose than simply identifying people who lived a particular way of life.

10. See above, p.11.
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Official sources which are American in origin are all located in Washington. State Department records were read in the Mitchell Library, Sydney. Microfilm relating to the United States navy are located in the Department of Pacific and South East Asian History, Australian National University, and were read there.

The manuscripts of the London and Methodist Missionary Societies were, like the Public Records Office material, read on microfilms obtained under the Joint Copying Project. These were read in the Mitchell Library, Sydney; other copies exist elsewhere.

Reference has been made in several places in the text of the thesis to my field notes. These references appear as 'Field Notes', followed by a number and a date. The number is that of the card entry; the date is that of the conversation referred to. It is planned to deposit these notes in the Barr-Smith Library,
University of Adelaide, when I have finished with them. In citing my notes I have not included the names of any of my informants. Some of them requested this confidentiality. Moreover, it was sometimes explained to me that some informants objected to and were embarrassed by the use which others had made of their information, and that the resulting resentment made the work of subsequent researchers difficult. I have therefore thought it better to identify none of my informants than to identify some of them.

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