Message in a Bottle : Paradox, Irony and Parable in the South Seas, 1767-1797

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Ⅰ. Introduction

On April 28, 1789, the captain and eighteen crew members of His Majesty's Ship *Bounty* were forced into a 23-foot-long open boat in a spontaneous act of mutiny. All but one survived their grueling 41-day, 4,000-mile voyage from the South Pacific to Timor. Sixteen of those who remained on the ship chose to stay on Tahiti; eight left for parts unknown, eventually settling on Pitcairn Island. H.M.S. *Pandora* was sent to bring the mutineers to justice. Ten finally faced court-martial in England; three were hanged. Of the eight who fled to Pitcairn, only one survived to old age.

Greg Dening (1992) builds a convincing case for the role of language in shaping the events of the period. "Mr. Bligh's Bad Language" does not refer to his salty vocabulary, although there was plenty of that. By today's standards calling his men "scoundrels," "rascals," "beasts" or "hounds" seems like schoolboy talk. What Dening meant by "bad language" was that in the eighteenth century, a new social class was emerging in British institutions of coercion. The "officer-gentlemen" of the navy needed to apply a rigid set of rules, i.e. the Articles of War, to particular circumstances. They had the social skills necessary to deal with surly crewmen, many of whom had been pressed into service. They were able to sustain the "presence" of the king by maintaining a delicate balance of discipline and play on board the ship, drawing every man's gaze unto the quarterdeck as the focal point of absolute authority. William Bligh, with all his "bad language," was not able to do this.

Dening's theory as to the cause of the *Bounty* mutiny, that a ship's captain needed to act out a kind of drama in disciplining his men, and that William Bligh did not understand how to play his role, was only one of many theories put forth, either by participants in the actual event, or by those concerned in one way or another with future representations of that drama. John Fryer, the *Bounty's* sailing-master, thought that the mutiny occurred as a result of Bligh's mismanagement of the ship's economy. Edward Christian, brother and champion of Bligh's nemesis, believed that

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) Readers unfamiliar with the details of this episode should refer to *The Bounty Mutiny*, by William Bligh and Edward Christian, with its excellent introduction by Robert D. Madison (Penguin Books, 2001).

) Compare William Bligh's "bad language" with the lyrics of background music heard in many shopping centers today.

Fletcher Christian had been subjected to unbearable psychological pressure. Marlon Brando, an actor who portrayed Fletcher in the 1964 film version of the story, concluded that the mutiny took place because Bligh was not "a gentleman." The social implications of that statement notwithstanding, Dening's communicative evaluation goes much further. Bligh himself opined that his crew's loyalties had been alienated by their five months' stay on Tahiti (oh, for five months on Tahiti!), and that the mutiny had probably occurred partly because there had been no marines aboard.

My own thesis, which I will expound upon in this paper, is that there was no single cause of the mutiny: all factors came into play in one single, extraordinary moment of historical chiaroscuro. If Dening's interpretation of Bligh's mismanagement of discipline, or more aptly, his mismanagement of leniency, as constituting "bad language" is correct, and if a captain's use (or implied use) of language was actually written into the British Articles of War, as we shall see below, then the *Bounty* mutiny can be regarded as a remarkable instance of language planning gone awry. As for the specific cause, I cannot add anything to the several aforementioned theories. It was probably just a case of "akuma ex machina," so to speak: "The devil made me do it."

This paper covers the period from 1767, when Europeans first "discovered" Tahiti, to 1797, when the London Missionary Society first began sustained missionary efforts there. I will focus on the activities of four ships: His Majesty's Armed Ships *Dolphin* (Samuel Wallis), *Resolution* (James Cook), *Bounty* (William Bligh), and *Pandora* (Edward Edwards). In the course of this latter-day "voyage of discovery," I will demonstrate how the good and bad use of language motivated men and precipitated events during a period of radical technological and social change.

II. Sugar and Spice, and Everything Nice

From about 1400 A.D. to 1700 A.D., Portugal, Spain, France, Holland and England competed fiercely for control of the spice routes. English sea power finally gained Britain control of commerce from India; the Dutch became masters of the trade in the East Indies. Meanwhile raw sugar production in tropical America had become the largest industry in the world. By the end of the 17th century, the mounting value of duties on sugar made possession of West Indian territory the chief aim of the European colonial powers. Every major war in the 18th century saw heavy fighting in the Caribbean. Every peace treaty included transfers of West Indian islands.

In one sense, the "voyages of discovery" were a board game, like Monopoly, played by England, France, Holland, Spain and Portugal. Each nation had its own symbols of "possessing" the islands that they found. England planted a flag and said three cheers to the king. France buried the names of sailors along with a message in a bottle. Spain set up a wooden cross, inscribed with the

name of their king. The spirit of competition caused adventurers like Captain James Cook to write his own message on the back of the French parchment he found, to leave some English coins in the bottle, and to write the name of King George on the Spanish cross. To the dismay of the natives, the Europeans then went their merry ways. There was no physical "possession" at all: the flag, the bottle, the cross, these were merely symbols of possession.

Up until the time that the Europeans arrived, the Polynesian islands had had a history of conquests. The conquerors came from the sea, and took possession of the land. The Polynesians' ritual of possession included a clockwise procession around the island, their priests carrying the symbols of the land-god, a square cloth suspended from a wooden cross. During the four-month festival of the land-god, the chiefs who came from the sea gave the land back to the common people, symbolically "dispossessing" the land in a counter-clockwise procession. In both rituals there was sacrifice.

Greg Dening, in his fine evaluation of the *Bounty* mutiny (1992), refers to the act of usurpation, that is, its venue, its interaction, its parole, as the Beach. The Beach is that place where the Land and the Sea intersect. It is that marginal place where Stranger meets Native. It is intercultural communication at its most critical moment, where cannon meets canoe, where the plantain branch is offered. Though Dening suggests there is a "Grammar of the Beach," he does not exemplify his statement. Let me do that for him in Figure 1.

Figure 1. The Beach
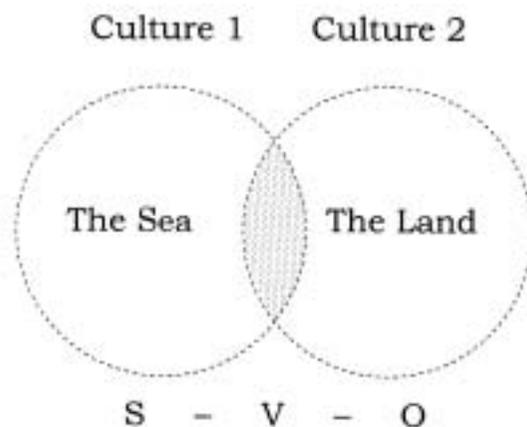
The "Grammar of the Beach" follows the Subject-Verb-Object paradigm. Culture 1 (the Stranger from the Sea) conquers Culture 2 (the Native of the Land). "I hereby possess you" (S-V-O), he says. However, cultural imperatives also enter into the equation. From the eighteenth-century European point of view (Culture 1), the paradigm included a "civilizing" element, viz, "I will teach you to work" (S-V-O-Infinitive).

Displays of force caused the Polynesians to accede, as they had done many times throughout their history, but the Polynesian culture (Culture 2) included a condition, expressed in the passive: "I will be possessed by you... provided that there is a sacrifice." Thus the "Grammar of the Beach" is predicated upon sacrifice.

European sailors were no strangers to sacrifice. When a ship crossed the Equatorial line, those sailors who had crossed before (known as "Shellbacks") initiated those who had not (known as "Pollywogs"). The Shellbacks put on costumes and played the roles of characters such as King Neptune, his assistant Davy Jones, his consort (Amphitrite), the Barber, and various other characters. In the British navy of the eighteenth century, initiates endured a series of duckings in the sea, also known as "baptism," before paying Neptune's fine (part of their allowance of grog). Such rituals of symbolic sacrifice, though varying according to nationality, size of the ship, and personalities of its constituent crew, continue to the present day (see Figure 2 below). It is the drama of the Beach played out at sea: Culture 1 is the Northern Hemisphere; the Southern Hemisphere is Culture 2. The requisite sacrifice takes the form of ritual cleansing of the victim, followed by the propitiation (or ransoming the victim by replacing him with inanimate valuables).

Figure 2. "Crossing the Line" Aboard a U.S. Navy Ship, March, 2000

Captain James Cook, on his third visit to Tahiti (August, 1777), described in some detail the local custom of human sacrifice, but also expressed his objection to it. Mostly, however, his log treats of the everyday life and politics of Otoo, a tribal chief of Tahiti. By his own account, we can readily see that Cook played the role of "officer and gentleman" with panache. He was generally loved by everyone who knew him. The Tahitian chiefs even kept an oil painting of him among their national treasures, and took it with them on royal excursions.

Cook's men loved him, as well. After all, his second voyage to the Pacific had been one of the greatest journeys on record. Realizing that this third trip would take a year longer than originally planned, Cook set forth the proposal that his crew drink coconut milk while it was in abundant supply, in order to save the grog for tougher times at sea. He also hinted at the ongoing problem of worldliness that would later contribute to the *Bounty* mutiny:

> As I knew that Otaheite and the neighbouring islands could furnish us with a plentiful supply of cocoa-nuts, the liquor of which is an excellent succedaneum for any artificial beverage, I was desirous of prevailing upon my people to consent to be abridged, during our stay here, of their stated allowance of spirits to mix with water... Accordingly, we stopped serving grog, except on Saturday nights, when the companies of both ships had full allowance of it, that they might drink the healths of their female friends in England; lest these, amongst the pretty girls of Otaheite, should be wholly forgotten.

Joseph Banks, an "experimental gentleman" who accompanied James Cook on his first voyage (May 1769), was one who seemed to have "wholly forgotten" his fiancee, Harriet Blosset, whom he jilted some time after his return to England. He too kept a journal of daily life in Tahiti, though for the journal of a "naturalist," it seems oddly lacking in descriptions of the flora and fauna of the island. Unlike Cook's log, which also describes the livestock the Englishmen brought along, Banks' account reads more like *The Discreet Charm of the Bourgeoisie*. When "Queen" Purea seemingly approaches him on the rebound of another failed liaison, Banks writes:

> 12 May In the evening Oborea [Purea] and her favourite attendant Otheothea pay us a visit, much to my satisfaction as the latter (my flame) has for some days been reported either ill or dead.

> 21 May Sunday, Divine service performd, at which was present Oborea, Otheothea, Obadee, &c. all behav'd very decently. After dinner Obadee who had been for some time absent returnd to the fort.   Oborea desird he might not be let in, his countenance was

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) Davy Jones was first mentioned by Daniel Defoe in his 1726 book, *The Four Years Voyages of Capt. George Roberts.*   The earliest known reference to Davy Jones' Locker as a euphemism for death at sea occurs in *The Adventures of Peregrine Pickle* by Tobias Smollett, published in 1751. Davy Jones plays a major role in the 2006 Disney movie, *Pirates of the Caribbean: Dead Man's Chest*, as captain of the ghost ship *Flying Dutchman.*

however so melancholy that we could not but admit him.   He lookd most piteously at Oborea, she most disdainfully at him; she seems to us to act in the character of a Ninon d'Enclos who satiated with her lover resolves to change him at all Events, the more so as I am offerd if I please to supply his place, but I am at present otherwise engag'd; indeed was I free as air her majesties person is not the most desireable.

The wiles of Tahiti extended to all classes of officers and men. Captain Samuel Wallis, who was said to have found "her majesties person" a bit more desirable than did Banks, wrote (July, 1767):

> Several of these friendly Indians came on board in our boat, and seemed, both by their dress and behaviour, to be of a superior rank. To these people I paid a particular attention, and to discover what present would most gratify them, I laid down before them a Johannes, a guinea, a crown piece, a Spanish dollar, a few shillings, some new halfpence, and two large nails, making signs that they should take what they liked best. The nails were first seized, with great eagerness, and then a few of the halfpence, but the silver and gold lay neglected. Having presented them, therefore, with some nails and halfpence, I sent them on shore superlatively happy.

> The commerce which our men had found means to establish with the women of the island rendered them much less obedient to the orders that had been given for the regulation of their conduct on shore, than they were at first. I found it necessary, therefore, to read the articles of war, and I punished James Proctor, the corporal of marines, who had not only quitted his station and insulted the officer, but struck the Master at Arms such a blow as brought him to the ground [see Appendix, #16, #22].

From these descriptions we get a picture of life on Tahiti, an island of lotus eaters and sirens who tempted English sailors on their several odysseys. Perhaps Bligh's theory concerning the mutiny was not wholly incorrect. Perhaps this eighteenth-century version of Temptation Island played havoc on his men's imaginations, not such a far-fetched theory, considering Byron's (1822) representation of the affair in his last poem, *The Island*. What we do know is that passion, possession, and position the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life all brought to bear

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) Several years later Mr. Edward Lamb, commander of the *Adventure* in the Jamaica trade, wrote to William Bligh concerning the character of Fletcher Christian, midshipman of the *Bounty*, and chief mutineer: "In the Appendix [to the Proceedings of the *Bounty* Court-martial] it is said, that Mr. Fletcher Christian had no attachment amongst the women at Otaheite; if that was the case, he must have been much altered since he was with you in the Britannia; he was then one of the most foolish young men I ever knew..."

on the life of sailors in the eighteenth-century "wooden world." This new class of "officer-managers" had their work cut out for them.

III. "Good" and "Bad" Language

At the end of the 18th century the upper classes, fearing a revolution, became wary of politics entering into their armed forces. Force and law, always in delicate balance, were now being forged in a new spirit of management. Now commanders of ships were expected to be managers of men under discipline.

The officers' behavior can hardly be understood without a knowledge of the British Articles of War which governed them. The pertinent points are summarized in the Appendix. Whereas the Articles, enacted by Parliament, brought all naval men under one law, different forms of punishment were detailed by the Regulations and Instructions Relating to His Majesty's Service at Sea, formulated by the admiralty, on direct authority of the king. Thus a "balance of power" came into play in the navy's management of itself. It could change its own policies without having to change other institutions of society.

As a matter of interest, John Adams, generally regarded as father of the United States Navy, undertook to combine the British Articles and Regulations, along with some other innovations, in designing an American document in 1775. The result, however, was to create an elite class of "gentleman" officers, confusing the British navy's notion of management with the social aspects of privilege and education. In the American articles, there was no balance of power - policies of discipline were defined by law; officers could be punished only by court-martial. Circumstantial management was nonexistent.

Another American naval officer, John Paul Jones ("I have not yet begun to fight"), wrote that "none other than a gentleman… is qualified to support the character of a commissioned officer in the navy, nor is any man fit to command a ship of war, who is not also capable of communicating his ideas on paper in language that becomes his rank" (cited in Dening, p. 152).

The issue of discipline was central to the *Bounty* mutiny. It lingers in our collective memory of the event, a shroud of cultural literacy, so to speak, shaping our image of Captain Bligh as a tyrant, a draconian menace who beat his men mercilessly for trivial reasons. Harsh discipline was common in the eighteenth century, but as Dening has pointed out Bligh was not the most severe disciplinarian of his day; it was the management of that discipline, his "non-gentlemanly" application

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) Dening's Index mistakenly refers to this John Adams as John *Quincy* Adams (his son, the sixth president), in an attempt to distinguish the American patriot from Briton John Adams (a.k.a. Alexander Smith) of Pitcairn.

of physical violence, that made the difference.

Captain Samuel Wallis describes a moment of discipline that took place when the *Dolphin* first visited Tahiti in July, 1767:

> ...our market was very ill supplied, the Indians refusing to sell provisions at the usual price, and making signs for large nails. It was now thought necessary to look more diligently about the ship, to discover what nails had been drawn; and it was soon found that all the belaying cleats had been ripped off, and that there was scarcely one of the hammock nails left. All hands were now ordered up, and I practised every artifice I could think of to discover the thieves, but without success. I then told them that till the thieves were discovered, not a single man should go on shore: this, however, produced no effect, except that Proctor, the corporal, behaved in a mutinous manner, for which he was instantly punished.

The thief was finally discovered by eavesdropping in the galley. Captain Wallis ordered seaman Francis Pinkney to run the gauntlet three times until he offered up the names of his accomplices. Pinkney held his tongue and received light blows the first time around. Then he began to show signs of confessing, so his punishment the second time around was most severe, leading the master, George Robertson, to excuse him from going a third round.

During the time the *Bounty* anchored at Tahiti, three of its seamen stole some muskets from the arms chest and deserted to a nearby resort for several weeks. The punishment for such an act could have been the death penalty, but Bligh had the men flogged (120 lashes - the Regulations specified 36), and extracted from them a letter thanking him for not sending them to court-martial. This type of feigned leniency (in fact it served to cover up Bligh's own excesses in flogging them) left the crewmen with an ongoing obligation to their captain. Whereas Wallis' punishment of Francis Pinkney was clean, clinical, and conclusive, Bligh's had a way of penetrating, wounding, and festering. Wallis, in his punishment of Pinkney, absolved his entire crew of guilt. Bligh, in his supposed leniency, reckoned his entire crew to be guilty. This was "Mr. Bligh's bad language."

Besides his mismanagement of leniency in dealing with the deserters, Bligh fell short of "gentleman" status in a number of other ways. He devalued the ritual of Crossing the Line by forbidding ducking, and replacing forfeited grog with measures of wine. He ordered his men not to take back anything the Tahitians had stolen from the ship, yet he deducted the value of those stolen articles from the men's wages. He flogged his men in front of the Tahitian chiefs and commoners, humiliating them. Serving as his own purser, he withheld an eighth of all provisions as his own profit (a custom which, though illegal, was common among pursers in the British navy). He replaced two pounds of bread with one pound of pumpkin. Compared with Captain Cook's

democratic approach to withholding allowances, Bligh appeared to his men to be a cheapskate extortionist, withholding provisions for his own personal benefit. Such overuse of power thrust his own person into the limelight, over-shadowing the king's commission in him, undermining his authority.

Even the Tahitians practiced good and bad language. "Queen" Purea imposed a prohibition of eating certain foods to commemorate the building of a sacred temple. To obey it was to acknowledge her superiority as queen. However Purea's sister and sister-in-law challenged her by paying formal visits to her. A formal visit demanded hospitality, which would mean lifting the fast. Purea refused to acknowledge the women's equality (by allowing them to eat), thus causing a battle which led to her own defeat. It was good language (or good politics) on the part of the sisters; bad language on the part of Purea.

After the Bounty mutiny, two-thirds of those who remained on board decided to stay on Tahiti, even though they knew the Navy would come looking for them eventually. The Tahitians used the Mutineers, their arms, and their newly built ship (*Resolution* II) to help solidify the power of Pomare, the boy-king who succeeded instead of Purea's son. Yet the mutineers would not bow to the Tahitian custom of stripping to the waist and removing their hats in the king's (Pomare's) presence. They protested that they would be expected to wear headgear and jackets in the presence of their own King George. The Tahitians, demonstrating "good language," invented a solution. They put a piece of cloth on the shoulders of each Englishman, and invited them to remove these articles of clothing in the presence of the Tahitian king. Good language has no international boundaries.

In November 1778 Captain James Cook had been welcomed on Hawaii as the land god, Lono. HMS *Resolution* and HMS *Discovery* had sailed clockwise around the island, taking symbolic "possession" of the land, at about the beginning of the festivities in which the sea chiefs returned the land to the commoners. Just before the English ships left, gunner William Watman had a stroke and died, serving in the eyes of the Hawaiians as the "sacrifice" required to bring the festival of Lono to an end, and return the island to the sea-chiefs of Ku. The ships left on February 4, the setting of the Pleiades, the end of the festival. More by accident than by design, James Cook played the role of Lono perfectly. His was the "good language" of the Beach.

The only problem for Cook had been with the Deptford Ship Yard, which sold the navy a bad mast. Just off Hawaii, the *Resolution's* foremast broke; within ten days they returned to Hawaii. The irony was, in the Grammar of the Beach, Cook and his men had played the part of "The Land" the first time around. This won them great acclaim, and many friends. When they returned, they were out of season, out of character. This time they played the part of "The Sea," and it brought calamity. Nothing could have been considered "worse" language.

Another stroke of irony was that William Bligh, then serving as sailing-master, was left to guard the mast, and fired and killed a hostile native against the orders of Lt. Rickman. It may have been the "Shot Heard Round the Island," so to speak. When Cook attempted to take a local chief hostage in order to exact the return of a stolen boat, one of the chief's relatives mentioned events on the other side of the bay, leading the natives to distrust the intentions of the Englishmen, so the chief simply sat down. In the ensuing struggle, Cook and five marines were killed. That Bligh's actions may have contributed to Cook's death rested heavily upon him throughout his life.

IV. Management of the Sublime

Unfortunately, Cook's death cast a pall over Bligh's prospects for a brilliant career in the navy. Cook's death was one of those rare instances of the "sublime," occurrences that, while producing dread and fear, also tend to produce outcomes that carry great personal, public or historical significance. For Cook, a violent hero's death led to his "apotheosis" and long-lasting fame. However it led Bligh a few rungs down the ladder of success.

Back from the ill-fated voyage of the *Resolution,* Bligh was assigned the unglamorous task of transporting breadfruit plants to the West Indies. On the morning of April 28, 1789, HMS *Bounty* was three and a half weeks out of Tahiti, laden with 1015 breadfruit plants. The crew had spent the previous night watching a display of volcanic activity on the nearby island of Tofoa (Tonga). Everything seemed to be in order, until at about five o'clock in the morning, acting Lieutenant Fletcher Christian and several others mutinied.

It was William Bligh's lucky day. Drama creates history, and history makes legend. Now he finally had his chance to live up to Cook's reputation. It was his chance to leave a "message in a bottle," to write his name on the other side of Cook's "parchment." Bligh and eighteen men were about to embark on the greatest open-boat voyage ever taken.

Paradoxically Bligh, while inept at communicating orders orally, was superbly capable of communicating his ideas on paper. Bligh micromanaged not only the trip to Timor, but also the account of the mutiny and its aftermath. He sailed into Portsmouth on the very same day that news of the mutiny reached England by other means. The admiralty would hear the story from the horse's mouth. His narrative of the launch voyage was carefully planned, as was his strategy for managing the post-mutiny public relations campaign, the court-martial, and the post-court-martial publicity campaign. His reputation, his legacy, his soulful struggle against the ghost of Captain Cook de-

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) In fact William Bligh made Thor Heyerdahl look like a Sea Scout. He managed what little food they had, keeping eighteen men alive for more than a month on a regimen of 345 calories each per day.

pended on it.

Indeed, Bligh's career received but a scratch as a result of the mutiny. During his lifetime he advanced from servant to able seaman to sailing-master to lieutenant to captain to commodore to vice-admiral, serving also as governor of New South Wales along the way.

As for the mutineers who were apprehended, it was plain that the authorities meant to make a sacrifice out of them, to slay them ritualistically. Midshipman Peter Heywood's naval connections knew that he was innocent and would appear innocent, but that innocence in this case would not win an acquittal. He would have to endure the death sentence, howbeit with the knowledge that King George would almost certainly offer him mercy. In his innocence he was the perfect sacrificial victim. His "death and resurrection" made for a perfect ending, sanctifying the authority of the king.

As for Flecher Christian, a proverb seems apropos: "There is a way that seems right unto man, but the end thereof is death." His own fate seemed to have been sealed the moment that he scuttled the *Bounty* and settled on Pitcairn['s] Island, having swindled the Tahitians out of some four hundred pigs, supposedly to give to Bligh, who had "gone to be with Captain Cook." In a sense, Fletcher became his own "Captain Bligh," as he dealt out blows to the Tahitian men that he and the other mutineers had brought along as servants, and withheld women and land owner-ship from them. A succession of revolts left only one man, John Adams, alive on Pitcairn.

V. Conclusion

Was the *Bounty* mutiny just an 18th-century version of the San Francisco student takeover? Was Fletcher Christian just another misguided liberal, come face to face with the conservative poli-tics of King George III, of Joseph Banks, and of William Bligh? Or was he a hero, like the lone student in Tianenmen (Tiananmen) Square, facing down a column of tanks that threatened him ominously? Because we know so little about Christian and his motivation, we are able to invent so much.

The story of the *Bounty* mutiny is filled with paradoxes. In the first place there was the para-dox between Bligh as commander of the merchant ship *Britannia*, with his ability to get along with Fletcher Christian on their voyage to Jamaica, and the change that came over him as naval com-mander, with the tensions that arose between Bligh and Christian on board the *Bounty*. Then there was the paradox of the breadfruit tree, the very symbol of a free and unencumbered life, and the ship that would transport it from the island of freedom, Tahiti, to the islands of bondage, the West Indies, and their slave plantations. There was the paradox between Bligh's written skills ("gentle-manship") and his verbal mismanagement of discipline. Finally, that the British navy should not

have prosecuted mutineer John Adams when they found him on Pitcairn years later is a paradox almost beyond belief.

The story is also filled with irony. There is the irony that Bligh, by surviving his ordeal, achieved lasting fame (or notoriety), while Cook achieved "apotheosis" by dying a hero's death, with daggers he himself had given the "Indians." There is irony in Fletcher Christian's statement, "I am in Hell," inasmuch as he took his tiny band of settlers to their own version of Heaven, which he himself turned into Hell once more for the four Tahitian men they took with them. It is also ironic that Pitcairn Island became the first true English settlement in the South Seas, whereas Tahiti, Hawaii and other islands remained "possessed" by Europeans only by the power of symbols such as flags and crosses and bottles. There is irony in the fact that John Adams, not a gentleman by any standard, outlived Fletcher Christian ("the sailor who fell from grace with the sea"), and turned Pitcairn Island into a Garden of Eden whose people truly worshiped God, though not entirely according to the liturgy of the Church of England. The final irony came one hundred years later, when Pitcairn converted to Adventism, and all of the pigs were killed: the Grammar of the Beach is predicated upon sacrifice.

The *Bounty* mutiny is also a parable, a parable of the malpractice of authority. In twentieth-century films, it has been variously portrayed as a parable of the triumph of a just cause over tyranny, of legitimate authority betrayed by self-serving liberals without loyalties to institutions, of life in a world that is already made for us, but a world which is also of our own making. There is much parable about ourselves in these twentieth-century representations of the past of the *Bounty*.

The *Bounty* is also a parable of language and power in a changing world, of language planning and social change, of men affected by the human frailties of passion, possession, and position. It is a "message in a bottle" from the past to the present. Will we accept what is written on the obverse of that parchment, complete with its indigenous economy, or will we inscribe our own message on the reverse, putting in our own two cents, to boot?

References

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Appendix

The British Articles of War
(1661, 1749, 1886)

Number	Summary
1	Concerning the public worship of God, according to the liturgy of the Church of England.
2	Concerning profane oaths, cursing, execrations, drunkenness, uncleanness, or other scandalous actions.
16	Concerning desertion.
19	Concerning mutiny.
21	The proper way to complain about the food.
22	Concerning striking superior officers, or quarreling with them.
23	Concerning fighting, reproachful or provoking speeches or gestures.
30	Concerning robbery.
33	Concerning scandalous, infamous, cruel, oppressive, or fraudulent behavior, unbecoming of an officer.