University of Nevada, Reno

The Identity of Place:
Pitcairn Island in Cultural and Historical Geography

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Geography

by

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ABSTRACT

THE IDENTITY OF PLACE: PITCAIRN ISLAND IN CULTURAL AND HISTORICAL GEOGRAPHY

CHRISTINE K. JOHNSON

Pitcairn Island is a small, remote Pacific island in southeastern Polynesia. Although the archaeological record shows traces of human habitation in the island's prehistory, Pitcairn is more famous for its contemporary history derived from a notorious maritime adventure: the mutiny on the *Bounty* in 1789. Pitcairn Island is both a home to forty-eight permanent residents and a sort of living museum, with endemic species of plants and birds, *Bounty*-era artifacts moved into a small museum, and scattered across the landscape, and a landscape that itself has innate historical points of interest. With 224 years of recorded history, Pitcairn has a living legacy from the *Bounty* saga, and is a place of interest for seafaring captains, tourists, historians, filmmakers, and authors.

Polynesia markets itself as Paradise, with tourism a primary industry for the last thirty years. However, if "Paradise" is a place of the imagination, Pitcairn Island is very real, subject to the ideals and perceptions of an increasingly globalized world intent on exploiting island history, perhaps to the detriment of the residents of Pitcairn. Neither wholly Polynesian nor British in culture, the Pitcairners live in an island landscape with challenges but also benefits housed within a paradisiacal region, and work daily to counteract a negative image as a haven for deviance and misbehavior that has developed beyond their control. The impact of a negative image externally imposed on a place as small as Pitcairn is telling, and will require changes to attain economic sustainability in the future.

This work is dedicated to the people of Pitcairn Island.

"The life of the land is the life of the people" ~ Tahitian proverb

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To my husband, daughter, and parents who supported this endeavor, I thank you for your support, your belief in the seemingly impossible, and the eyes and ears you lent for a decade. To quote a Tahitian proverb, "The well trod path is not always the right path." This phrase exemplifies my life.

To my committee, I extend deep thanks and everlasting gratitude for any guidance and every assistance and suggestion ever given. When literally adrift at sea, there are times when a student needs a lighthouse, and I thank you for the efforts.

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Gary's long-time friend and colleague that I have made him proud. This is my greatest wish.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

The Impact of the Identity of Place on Pitcairn Island's Cultural and Historical Geography

> *One must continually move back and forth between the past and the present... The historical and its consequences... the 'etymology' of locations in the sense of what happened at a particular spot or place and thereby changed it — all of this becomes inscribed in space. The past leaves its traces; time has its own script.* (Lefebvre 1991, 37)

Pitcairn Island, known to many as home to the descendants of the mutiny on the *Bounty*, has suffered devastating impacts to its place-image as its culture and history evolved over the last 224 years. Widely reported coverage of recent social issues, built on a mutinous foundation, skews the view of the island as place for a worldwide public. In reality, the Pitcairn Island landscape is as lush, verdant, and alluring as many another Pacific island. Its remoteness, coupled by the legacy of the mutiny on the *Bounty,* adds to Pitcairn's image and notoriety. A contentious history puts Pitcairn at odds with the definition of paradise, thus its identity and image conflict with the stereotype of their geography.

The Pacific, and specifically Polynesia, was the last region on Earth to be populated, some islands settled as recently as 1200 CE[1] (Hunt and Lipo 2011). Although there were islands previously untouched by humans until the Age of Discovery,[2] many of the tens of thousands of islands in Oceania reflect traces of human habitation, if not substantial cultural impact, though most of those sites are now long abandoned (Diamond 2005). Within the Pacific, Polynesia is defined generally as the region within the "Polynesian

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[1] New research at the University of Hawai'i depicts Easter Island settled as recently as 1200 CE, rather than 400 CE, as earlier suggested by Heyerdahl (1953).

[2] Commonly referred to as the period of European exploration between the fifteenth and seventeenth centuries.

Triangle" — extending from Hawai'i in the northern hemisphere to New Zealand, and Easter Island in the western and eastern sides of the triangle. With regard to regional pre-history, researchers associate Pitcairn with Polynesia (Weisler 1996; Diamond 2005). The present settlement is more closely affiliated with a British identity, although the Tahitian culture via maternal heritage has never been entirely absent[3] (Shapiro 1936).

While the Polynesian people share a general area of origin,[4] the vast space and island insularity within the region of Polynesia allows for the development of language variants, socio-political systems, and cultural practices determined by an inherent variation in island-to-island and island-chain-to-chain geography.[5] The anthropologist Douglas Oliver (1989) describes Polynesians as unique, possessing a "unity of physique," yet he tallies at least fifty language groups and cultures spread throughout this region (119). Among many sources, Oliver's Oceania ethnography references eighteenth-century Pacific explorer, Captain James Cook. Although Cook was among the first to note connections and differences between the people and cultures of the Pacific, he vastly underestimates these populations and cultures within Polynesia.[6] "Differences in topography, history, and language are far greater than indicated in the early explorers' accounts or tourists' contemporary visions" (Kahn 2011, 8). The variety extends beyond the human element; great landscape variations exist throughout Polynesia, though most all of

[3] The females of the founding population of Pitcairn beginning in 1790 were from Tahiti.

[4] Polynesians originated in the islands at the western border of Polynesia, out of Fiji and into Tonga and Samoa. Tonga is considered the first populated Polynesian island (Oliver 1989).

[5] Pottery, fishing hooks, weapons, boats, and tools are both similar in construct yet varied by locale (Oliver 1989).

[6] See Cook 2007 and Kirch 2008.

them fit within the early explorers' conceptions of Paradise, as discussed in detail in Chapter 2.

Although varied, eighteenth-century accounts from Cook and Wallis to Bougainville and Bustamante describe Polynesian landscapes collectively as "Paradise." Thereafter, Polynesia became a commodity for the Western world,[7] as a supplier of the exotic in imagery and resources. As time passed, Polynesia became a destination for business ventures, adventure-seekers, and tourists. Those with money and power constructed its image: "Places are politicized, culturally relative, historically specific, local and multiple constructions" (Rodman 1992, 641).

Edward Chamberlin (2013) questions whether the identity of an island is defined by its natural history or its human history. In the case of the Pitcairn Island group, while there is both a natural[8] and prehistoric human element that might lend to the formation of an identity, it is the contemporary human history that attracts the most attention from the outside world, a feature that largely establishes the identity of Pitcairn today.

Alicia Barber (2008) discusses the impact of external forces on place identity and contends that in considering various components of place identity (sense of place, promoted image, reputation and place); it is the place itself that is ultimately prone to the most permanent (physical) alteration. Pitcairn Island does not experience the level of

---

[7] Commonly known as Europe and countries of European colonial origins.

[8] One of the four islands in the group, Henderson, is a World Heritage site, established as the world's only forested atoll and notable endemic species of plants and birds. Pitcairn is a volcanic island and Ducie and Oeno are atolls.

physical alteration that most industrial nation-states do, due to its relatively recent inhabitation, size, and topography.[9]

Geographer-physiologist Jared Diamond at UCLA calls Easter Island "the most remote habitable scrap of island in the world," although Pitcairn Island better fits this label (2005, 79). Pitcairn is two square miles in area and has no air access, no breakwater, nor a developed harbor (Figures 1.1 and 1.2). It is at the mercy of the weather for any ships bringing supplies or tourists. Easter Island, with sixty-three square miles of land, accessible by a five-hour flight from Chile, with a runway long enough to serve as an emergency landing location for the Space Shuttle, has a developed harbor (Figure 1.3), thirty-one hotels, cars to rent, and attracts approximately 1,200 tourists per week (Carroll 2009). Easter has a local population of five thousand people (the ethnic group of indigenous Rapa Nui included among them) versus a population of forty-eight on Pitcairn (2013).

Figure 1.1: Harbor of Pitcairn Island. Photo by author, 2004.

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[9] Pitcairn is unable to develop an airstrip that would accommodate planes large enough to make the journey from the nearest populated islands and still be able to land on a small island with limited space. Due to the physical location of the island, tourism is difficult and infrequent, and keeps development for this industry comparatively at a minimum.

Figure 1.2: Boat in harbor of Pitcairn Island. Photo by author, 2004.

Figure 1.3: Harbor at Hanga Roa, Easter Island. Courtesy: wikicommons.com

Where Diamond's vision of the demise of Easter Island's early landscape and culture involves a growing population with increasing cultural investments that devastated the landscape and ecology of the island, Pitcairn's landscape was only ever minimally modified over the course of two centuries, to accommodate tools and equipment deemed necessary in recent years (off-road vehicles, tractors, etc.), for gardens, public venues and private homes.

Geographer Yi-Fu Tuan (1990) writes "no two social groups view their environment in the same way" (5). Those arriving in 1790 on the *Bounty* faced blending Polynesian (predominantly female) and British (male) cultures; Pitcairn Island suffers from a crisis of identity. The West governed Pitcairn after 1808[10] but began imposing its ideals twenty years earlier when the first settlers arrived in 1790. These ideals included the development of rudimentary laws, a land tenure system, defined gender roles, and religion (Shapiro 1936). After settlement, inhabitants kept Polynesian methods of fishing, agriculture, cooking, child rearing, and elements of language. Pitcairn Islanders cannot be categorized within the United Nations' definition of "indigenous peoples"; they are neither Polynesians (Polynesians are officially considered indigenous), nor are they an entirely Western culture, although modern politics and legal issues mold them into one. While a Polynesian Island in geographic location, Pitcairn now reflects a largely British heritage in culture and landscape.

"Places are centers of felt value where biological needs are satisfied" (Tuan 1977, 4). Understanding the landscape of Pitcairn Island is essential to the assessment of its im-

[10] John Adams raised the second generation to consider England as their mother country, and upon Folger's arrival in 1808, expressed his desire to submit to the British Crown (Shapiro 1936, 70).

agery and its impact on Pitcairn as place. As historical geography and island environment expert David Lowenthal (1999) writes, "Landscape's continuing vital roles—nature as fundamental heritage, environment as the setting of human action, sense of place for local difference and ancestral roots — reflect three public concerns: safeguarding legacies of nature and culture, enhancing everyday settings, and sustaining distinctive communities" (184). Pitcairn Island can be viewed as a model of Lowenthal's distinctive community.

Pitcairn Islanders have a somewhat singular, and certainly an independent culture, to the extent that anyplace can claim such separation, apart from the broader Polynesian culture of the region. Where most other island groups are pluralist,[11] Pitcairn is neither Western nor Polynesian, yet is defined by each, politically and geographically. Tahiti, New Zealand, and Hawai‘i, among other island groups, are examples of cultural pluralism existing where interconnectivity of indigenous people, Western cultures, and international immigrants living in a distinctly Polynesian territory operate under the political system of the United States, in the case of Hawai‘i, or of France, with Tahiti (Grillo 1998). Although governed by British authority and located within Polynesian borders, Pitcairn bears a unique, cohesive, event-shaped culture, and sets them distinctly apart from the two more dominant cultures they are affiliated with.

Pitcairn's Geography

Pitcairn is noteworthy for a number of reasons. The island nation was one of the first places to officially grant women universal suffrage in 1838, almost a century before the United States of America, as a whole (Weisler 1996). It shares membership in a group of

[11] Cultural pluralism allows for a distinct culture to exist and be accepted by a larger culture group (Grillo 1998).

islands spread throughout central Polynesia, now known as the Mystery Islands, as one of twenty-five islands displaying evidence of ancient Polynesians whose fate is not known or recorded in the archaeological record (Weisler 1996). Pitcairn is not famous for its prehistory; rather, the heritage of the contemporary population of *Bounty* descendants connects infamy to this remote island.

Four islands comprise the Pitcairn Island group: Ducie, Oeno, Henderson and Pitcairn (Figure 1.4). The largest, Pitcairn, is a high, volcanic island with a top elevation of 1,100 feet, almost entirely cliff-bound. It lies 1,350 miles southeast of Tahiti, 1,400 miles west/northwest of Easter Island, and 3,300 miles away from its administering country, presently New Zealand (Ford 2012).[12] The Pitcairn Islands are today Great Britain's only overseas territory in the Pacific, and part of the British Commonwealth of Nations. Of the islands in this group, only Pitcairn is capable of sustaining a permanent population, although Henderson Island was inhabited prehistorically, and was named a World Heritage Site by UNESCO in 1988 as "the world's only forested atoll with its ecology virtually intact" (UNESCO).

Brief History of the Island

The mutiny on the British ship, Her Majesty's Armed Vessel (H.M.A.V.) *Bounty,* occurred in April 1789. Fletcher Christian led the *Bounty's* crew to revolt against its overbearing, if not incapable captain, Lieutenant William Bligh (Alexander 2003). The ship was at sea, dispatched on a mission from England to Tahiti to acquire breadfruit tree seedlings, and was meant to transport these specimens as an inexpensive food source for

[12] Pitcairn was under the jurisdiction of the British High Commission for the Pacific from 1898-1952, under Fiji from 1952-71, and New Zealand since 1971 (Marks 2008; World Health Organization 2011).

slaves in the West Indies. Many factors ultimately led to the final act of mutiny, but the mutineers ultimately banished Captain Bligh and those faithful to him to the *Bounty*'s cutter. Remarkably, Bligh survived a more than 3,600-mile journey across the Pacific (considered to be one of the most amazing nautical feats in history), returned to England, and continued to lead a public and political life.

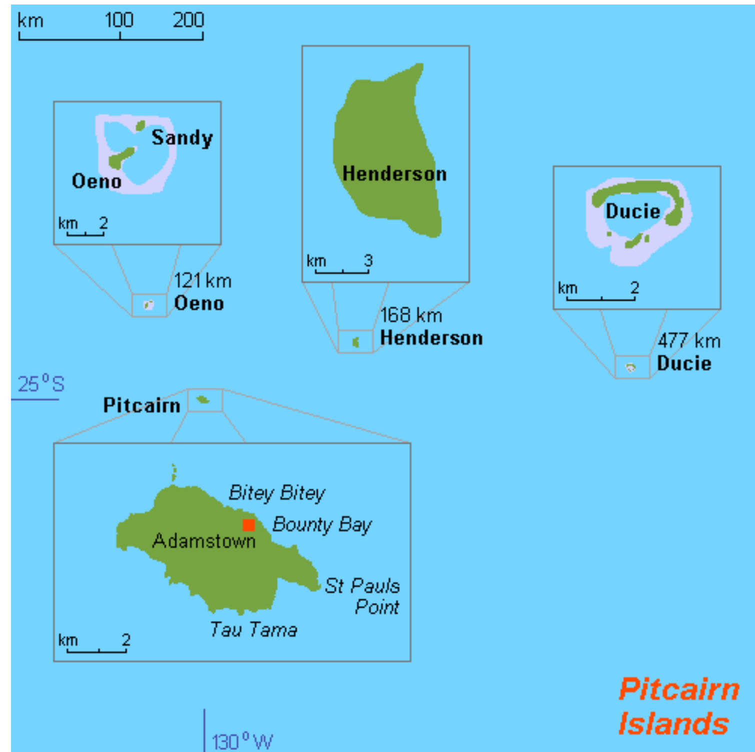

Figure 1.4: Expanded view of the Pitcairn Island Group, South Pacific Ocean. Courtesy: wikicommons.com

In contrast, Christian returned to Tahiti on the *Bounty* to resupply the ship, but left behind several crewmembers that wished to remain on the island. He set off seeking a hiding place, one capable of sustaining himself and his twenty-seven fellow travelers — nine British mutineers, their Tahitian "wives," six Polynesian men, and three additional Tahitian women and a child (Alexander 2003). The group reached Pitcairn in January

1790, and deemed Pitcairn uninhabited and environmentally suited to their needs. Additionally, Christian knew Pitcairn to be mischarted, affording at least some notion of invisibility.[13] After successfully locating and landing on Pitcairn, the group set about their task of forming a community. A high island with thick and lush foliage, Pitcairn concealed the community from the world for decades.

Visiting ship captains' accounts and Pitcairners' simple publications and retellings of the mutiny on the *Bounty* comprise early historical records of Pitcairn. Authors subsequently romanticized and fictionalized versions of Pitcairners' early history, resulting in their audience's skewed, if not mistaken, sense of place.

This elaborately constructed image has resulted in the negative reputation attached to the island and its people. A single moment in history defines the Pitcairn people, who live in a relatively isolated environment that outsider's legends have tainted. Pitcairn is forced to compete for tourism with island groups in their geographic realm whose images are based largely on paradisiacal constructs. Worldwide press coverage of the "sex trials" beginning in 2004 exacerbated Pitcairn's image problems after the media revealed an alleged debauchery that had gone on for decades on the island. "Malicious speech has the power to destroy a place's reputation and thereby its visibility" (Tuan 1991, 684). That Pitcairn Island faces a destroyed reputation is evident, in images portrayed in artistic and literary venues and its visibility as a place of worth is diminished daily as a result of external perspectives.

[13] Fletcher Christian found a notation in Bligh's copy of Hawkesworth's *Voyages* (1773) after the mutiny demonstrating the charting error (Salmond 2011).

Dissertation Overview

The impact of Western world's ideals and values on the image of Pitcairn as place is the central focus of this work. The outside world has its own influence on the image of the island. Where "Paradise" is an imagined place, Pitcairn Island is very real, subject to its residents' ideals and perceptions and the effects of its isolated location. Pitcairners struggle to counteract an increasingly negative image that has developed beyond their control. Understanding the impact of a negative, constructed image on a place as small as Pitcairn is vital when considering its future economic sustainability.

While it is not unusual to cater to perceived expectations in Polynesia,[14] it seems that the identity and culture of the Pitcairners was never part of a larger agenda but rather a result of cultural values established early in their settlement. In this way, Pitcairners represent a somewhat Lamarckian model of existence, shifting ever so slightly across generations to best sustain within their environment while attempting to develop interconnectivity with the outside world. Complete understanding of origins of the Pitcairn identity may be impossible, even for Pitcairners. Subject to control and administration over the centuries by authorities in England, Australia, Fiji, and New Zealand, inhabitants were originally born of British and (primarily) Tahitian blended cultures, choosing to employ elements of each to guarantee survival and a cohesive social unit, never knowing when or if contact with the outside world would come.

The main theme of this dissertation is image. Image is a social construct, and with regard to Pitcairn, there is disparity; image constructed as a product of the external,

[14] For instance, modification of beaches and natural landscapes to better accommodate tourist expectations and native symbolic traditions such as a luau (in Hawai'i) are now performed as major tourist attractions.

Western ideals is different than the image the islanders struggle to promote. The following three chapters address the concept of place, the underlying theme of image.

- "Pitcairn Island: A Dystopia in a Geographic Utopia," discusses the prospects of a once-ideal model of society that has endured literary and social attacks that forced the image and sense of place of the island from one end of the spectrum to the other, moving from a definition of a stable island community housed in a paradisiacal geography to the definition of chaos and disorder, as well as competing with other geographies for economic sustainability.
- "Pigs, Culture, and Identity on Pitcairn Island: The Discovery of a Pig Mandible and its Significance," discusses an archaeological find and explores the deeper meaning behind the artifact that allowed for the specimen to be extracted in the first place. This represents a shift in cultural values belonging to a past that denotes a huge shift in ideals (religious conversion). Questioning and embracing their past through artifacts is paramount to an evolving ethnic identity.
- "Image of an Island Through Art, Film and Literature: A Mutiny against Pitcairn Island," illustrates the various ways that the image of Pitcairn is portrayed in various venues, and the skewed sense of place that projects. This chapter examines the impacts of external artistic representation on Pitcairn's image and speculates on the prospects of survival in this vastly changing world.

A commonality in the aforementioned works is in image and place; Pitcairn as place was not romanticized in the same way most of the rest of the Pacific was. This place would not be of interest or have value were it not for the people in the place. What recent works in popular venues share are an oversight, if not blatant disregard for the im-

pact of globalization and Western ideals on the contemporary people and culture of Pitcairn. Moreover, Pitcairn's culture was born of necessity. The acceptance of, and acclimation to, a new space afforded the subsequent creation of a place that endures in spite of many attempts to change or end it altogether.

Methodology

Geographic location, transportation methods, and statistics identify Pitcairn Island as the most remote inhabited place on Earth. As such, access to the island for site study is difficult. Communication with the islanders is intermittent, although methods and frequency of contact have increased exponentially in the last decade.[15]

Only six known nations possess official collections pertaining to Pitcairn Island. Of these, five were visited, which include Pitcairn Island, Australia, New Zealand, Great Britain, and the United States, represented by Pacific Union College, which houses the Pitcairn Island Study Center. The sixth location, Fiji, was not visited. Prime opportunities conflicted with political upheavals and periods of tension made the islands unsafe,[16] but contact was made via email with the national museum in Suva (Fiji Museum) pertaining to Pitcairn materials in their permanent collection.

Deep affinity for Pacific cultures and specific interest in Pitcairn's history and particular systems drove initial efforts to contact and request licensing and permission to

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[15] At the time of initial fieldwork in 2004, one satellite phone was available on the island, and although several homes and the school had computers, Internet connectivity was extremely slow and cumbersome. Today, each home has a landline telephone, fast Internet connections, and communications are taking place via websites and social media platforms. Television stations (BBC, CNN, Discovery Channel and several others) are available (Pitcairn Islands Tourism 2014).

[16] The coup d'état of 2006 and political tensions again in 2009 being the most recent concerns, and significant enough to warrant removal from the Commonwealth of Nations in September 2009, but is gaining support presently to be reinstated by mid-2014 (ABC 2012).

"land and reside" on Pitcairn, which was granted in 2004. Three months of fieldwork, nine years of continued research in archives and communication with the islanders themselves has built a foundation for this dissertation. Distance between the site of focus and study, 4,492 miles (7,230 km) made multiple trips and frequent communications difficult. Initial fieldwork required twenty-two days on transport ships and more than 20,000 miles (32,276 km) of round-trip travel to New Zealand to be able to perform fieldwork on Pitcairn. Infrequent transportation options and unpredictable weather made a second visit to the island impossible prior to the completion of this dissertation. Islanders must approve visitors to Pitcairn, which was granted in 2004 and again for 2013, however the 2013 proposed trip was cancelled due to academic scheduling conflicts. The opportunities granted to me by the Pitcairners continue to be appreciated, and plans to revisit the island for continued research will be made in the future.

Study methods include an ongoing literature review and reference to original fieldwork conducted on Pitcairn in 2004, and in Tahiti, Hawai'i, the Marquesas, and Tuamotu islands in 2006. Background information and data developed from scholarly and popular literature, media reports, newspapers, maps, films, photographs and ethnography were collected. The Pitcairn Island Study Center, part of the Pacific Union College Library in Angwin (Napa County) California, was of vital importance, and provided access to images, additional data, and statistics. Contact with various government personnel in New Zealand relating to the governance of Pitcairn Island proved helpful in the clarifying details and answering questions. Supplemental materials gathered at the British Museum in June 2013 include photographs and historical records in archived collections used in

the construction of the chapter on identity, as were materials (images) obtained from the National Maritime Museum in Greenwich.

Attendance to various Pacific conferences has afforded additional networking opportunities and exposure to resources and updated research. The biennial Pitcairn Island Conference proved useful. Held in August 2012 at Pacific Union College in Angwin, this conference, although primarily attended by nonprofessional historians and individuals with personal interest, was attended by two professors from Australia who are conducting research on the island. Their research pertains to history and linguistics, and although not immediately helpful to this analysis, was a vehicle for communicating with other researchers presently working on Pitcairn-related academic projects. The conference allowed for visual communication with the islanders via Skype in a professional setting, and afforded opportunities to view private collections of Pitcairn's historical memorabilia and artifacts.

Photos and images cited in this research are primarily sketches and paintings of the island and inhabitants throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. All photographs are by the author of this work unless otherwise noted. These source materials provide insight into Pitcairn's history and the Western world's influence over the course of two centuries on Pitcairn and its residents. In its early years, Pitcairn was a colony. Recently, the island experienced a variety of socio-political challenges and may appear in 2014 to be struggling. The West is responsible for much of Pitcairn's negative imagery: "Those who control the way a place is represented can control the place itself" (Borsay 2000, 7 quoted in Barber 2008, 5). Pitcairn's reputation and subsequent image has evolved over two centuries and is a result of an ever-changing cultural context.

Literature

Literary sources used for the compilation of this dissertation were selected from a broad spectrum of genres; literature from studies in identity, geographical theory, anthropological/ethnographic material and other Pacific-based literature offered a broad context. Excepting various retellings of the *Mutiny on the Bounty*, in the genre of historical fiction, the literature pertaining to Pitcairn Island is limited compared to other Pacific regions. There are several recent popular publications, focusing on specific social or travel/adventure issues and are not necessarily useful to consider with regard to geographical or anthropological studies. The genres of material used in compiling this dissertation include: historical fiction, scientific reports, ethnographic works, contemporary journalistic and media reports, and historical records dating back to 1767.

Given the limited academic literature pertaining to Pitcairn Island, the material considered for this dissertation is divided into two categories: historical, anthropological, and geographical publications on Pitcairn and island societies, and scholarly works on identity through an image's landscape.

Historical documents pertaining to Pitcairn Island came primarily from eighteenth and nineteenth century records and logs archived or published by a number of ship captains visiting the island after 1808.[17] The materials authors produced after 1808 include accounts of visits, conditions of the society on Pitcairn, and artistic representations of both landscapes and people. These materials are of primary interest when considering the original composition of an image of Pitcairn as place and a foundation to compare later

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[17] Pitcairn Island was mischarted on earlier maps, and thought to be uninhabited. Landing at the island in 1808, Captain Mayhew Folger of the Topaz became the first (recorded) person to make contact with the Pitcairners, eighteen years after they were last seen in Tahiti (Salmond 2011).

writings and categorization of the island, and the impact on the sense of place. Folger's account of his visit in 1808 is significant as a primary source because it relays the discovery of the contemporary population of Pitcairners. His logs provide a first-hand account of the state of the community, including sketches of the homes and people as well as narrative opinions revealing that the people were in good health and had formed a functional society.

Captain F.W. Beechey of the H.M.S. *Blossom* in 1825 gives detailed accounts of the landscape and conditions of the Pitcairners and Captain Fanshawe's later visit in 1849 on the *Daphne* provides more detailed depictions of Pitcairn as place, seen in the watercolor depictions of the landscape and in sketches of the people, including the last living Tahitian woman to have arrived in 1790 (Beechey 2011; Shapiro 1936). While these three sources provide the most comprehensive account of the conditions and observations of the island from discovery through the mid-nineteenth century, not all the images and artistic representations match the narratives, or later historical records describing place. These sources bring to light the possible failings in both art and literature, subject to the cultural constructions and perceptions of their authors, ultimately contributing to the construction of the identity of the Pitcairners, discussed largely in Chapters 3 and 4.

Anthropological studies of island societies are varied; Captain James Cook is considered among many to have been the first Pacific anthropologist, and provides in the publication of his eighteenth century journals primary source observations and ethnographic details of many Polynesian cultures, including Australia, New Zealand, Tahiti, and Hawai‘i, including early cross-cultural comparisons, referenced for example by Kirch (1986), Oliver (1989) and Diamond (2005). Academic works like Margaret Mead's pio-

neering anthropological study in Samoa, *Coming of Age in Samoa*, is still widely regarded as an anthropological classic, despite its methodology being challenged. Anthropologist Derek Freeman published his critique of Mead's work,[18] suggesting that Mead had been a victim of a hoax; deceived by the very subjects she was studying. This bias is a main consideration of this dissertation; images presented in art, literature, film, or in person are subject to interpretation. Questioning the impacts of such constructed images on a place, and Pitcairn Island in particular is of primary interest, as discussed in Chapter 2.

Landscape and culture have been long tied together. Mead's mentor, anthropologist Franz Boas, championed the idea that 'landscape is a clue to culture' (Taylor 2008). Mead's work, originally published in 1928,[19] was a foundation for later ethnographic work in the Pacific. Subsequent anthropological works from Peter Bellwood (1979) and Douglas Oliver (1989) are still highly regarded anthropological readings. Douglas Oliver composed perhaps the most comprehensive anthropological work on Pacific cultures, in his two-volume work, *Oceania: The Native Cultures of Australia and the Pacific Islands.* Oliver tackles the challenge of presenting entire ethnographies of the peoples of the Pacific, grouping cultures by region.[20] Despite its date, this work remains a comprehensive resource for ethnographic information.

Only one official anthropological study was composed on the Pitcairn Islanders. Harry L. Shapiro's (1936) *Heritage of the Bounty: The Pitcairn Islanders* was the result of his year-long fieldwork on the island and includes vivid descriptions of landscapes, the

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[18] *Margaret Mead: The Making and Unmaking of an Anthropological Myth* (Freeman 1986).

[19] See reprint edition, 2001.

[20] Australia, Polynesia, Micronesia, Melanesia and Fiji.

community and his interactions with the people of Pitcairn, providing a valuable insight to compare present day conditions and experiences. Shapiro observed and collected data regarding physical features of the islanders, but his detailed notes on his own experiences and observations on landscape and environment are most useful to this study.

A variety of historical ethnographies and anthropological works pertain to cultures on a variety of Pacific islands, including Australia, the Solomon Islands, Samoa, Tokelau, Hawai‘i, Tikopia, Easter Island and Tahiti among others. However, declining populations and increased globalization is providing a challenge to glean insight into the true identities of these cultures, the images of the places associated with these cultures perhaps then skewed by authors' particular agendas (Kahn 2011). Huntsman and Hooper (1996) demonstrate that ethnographies of the present have "even frailer connections with ethnographies of the past" simply because the linkages between past and present have been broken by depopulation. "Historians of the Pacific had been concerned with larger, more populous and significant places" (Huntsman & Hooper 1996, x).

Despite this, Ian Ball (1973) produced a "historical review" of Pitcairn's history in *Pitcairn: Children of Mutiny*, having conducted a one-month study on the island in 1972. Many of Shapiro's earlier observations are mirrored in Ball's work; his frustration in the lack of materials available to supplement his research are mentioned, but this extensive work provides insight into the community on Pitcairn forty years after Shapiro versus later *Bounty*-related historic publications (as with Alexander 2003).

Jared Diamond, a professor of geography at the University of California, Los Angeles, in his 2005 book, *Collapse: How Societies Choose to Fail or Succeed* includes a chapter on Pitcairn Island, discussing what he believes caused the demise of the first

population that disappeared prior to 1400 CE. Diamond connects Pitcairn's population to a larger island network, and suggests that with the collapse of the larger societies' economy, Pitcairn's population subsequently vanished, subject to the loss of an economic support system. Diamond opposes possibilism[21] and supports instead environmental determinism.[22] According to Diamond, Pitcairn Island, like many other failed societies, follows a recipe for collapse: a marginal landscape, an isolated location, and a change in prevailing climate. Diamond does not discuss the contemporary population on Pitcairn, which is significant because the two settlements are not entirely dissimilar in size or known resources. However, Pitcairn's affiliation with the outside world likely groups it into Diamond's prophecy of impending collapse of present societies. While some of his points are valid, his point that social collapse is inevitable due to the slow rate of culture change is most poignant. Diamond points out that our assumptions about time and space are shaped by cultures themselves, and that our geographies and environments craft culture, in an opinion likely to be opposed by most current-day anthropologists and geographers.

In contrast, the anthropologist Marshall Sahlins (1996) conducted extensive research on Pacific cultures for more than thirty years, focusing on the power that culture has to shape perceptions and actions, and on the way different cultures understand and make history. His work is focused primarily on Fiji and Hawai'i, and Sahlins is remembered in particular for his inspiring debate over the true meaning and intentions of the

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[21] The possibilism theory allows that the physical environment may set limits on human actions, but allows for the ability of people to adjust and choose a course of action (Rubenstein 2008).

[22] The theory that the physical environment causes human actions, largely supported by geographers of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries (Rubenstein 2008).

Hawaiians in the murder of Captain Cook. As Cook's ethnographic efforts throughout the Pacific formed the foundation for future work in the Pacific, contemplating the reasons behind his death are of interest, specifically due to Sahlins' argument that the Hawaiians did not possess the same rationale as Western cultures did; he promotes the notion each culture has a different way of organizing the human experience, and idea fundamental to considering constructed images of place.

Following Sahlins, the body of work published by Patrick V. Kirch (1986, 1994, 2000, and 2008) is perhaps the most comprehensive work pertaining to Pacific islands since Oliver's work of 1989. Kirch, an award-winning Pacific researcher,[23] is a specialist in prehistory and ethnography of Oceania and provides a comprehensive study on island ecosystems. He is known for inter-disciplinary collaboration with ecologists and has worked in many areas of the Pacific. Kirch's 2008 book, *The Growth and Collapse of Pacific Island Societies: Archaeological and Demographic Perspectives,* is a rebuttal to Diamond's 2005 publication. In his 2000 book, *On the Road of the Winds: An Archaeological History of the Pacific Islands before European Contact,* Kirch suggests that even Pacific prehistory is distorted by "indigenous myths" as well as Western efforts to seek the romanticized images the European explorers described, noting the presence of romanticism across disciplines.

David Quammen's (1996) *Song of the Dodo* looks at the biogeography of islands on a global scale and questions the extinction rates of island ecosystems. Quammen states, "Islands are breeding grounds for the unique and anomalous. They are natural la-

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[23] Kirch was awarded the 2011 Herbert Gregory Medal for Pacific Research (www.anthropology.berkeley.edu).

boratories of extravagant evolutionary experimentation." By definition, culture must be included in this assessment, as humans (and therefore their cultures) are part of the ecosystems they inhabit. In this way, each island culture possesses unique and independent cultures, and applying this thought to the evolving culture and identity of the Pitcairners is paramount.

Looking at landscapes is a window to the culture living there. "Landscape and identity are inherent components of our culture" (Taylor 2008). The evolution of the landscape in art began in the seventeenth century and was subject to the interpretations and imaginations of European artists; places became idealized and infused with Western interpretations.

Image, landscapes, and sense of place are two primary themes throughout this dissertation. Both Yi-Fu Tuan and J.B. Jackson consider these themes in their writings. In *Space and Place: The Perspective of Experience,* Tuan's (1977) notions of human experience, "the modes by which a person knows and constructs reality," is at the backbone of the construction of image and sense of place regarding this work (8). Additionally, in *Landscapes of Fear,* Tuan addresses the "many distinctive types of fearsome landscapes" (1979, 7), useful when considering the evolving image of Pitcairn as fearsome. Particular thoughts on how humans form attachments to home and nation is relevant considering the long-time attachment to place demonstrated by the Pitcairners.

In *Landscape in Sight: Looking at America*, John Brinkerhoff (J.B.) Jackson (2000) contends that landscapes are an expression of a cultural process. Jackson's work is grounded in vernacular, with an interest in the commonplace or everyday landscape. This book discusses forces that shape land. Jackson states that the beauty of landscapes derive

from the human presence (2000, xxxi). Jackson believes landscapes ought to remain frozen in time to preserve historical memory, and questions the meaning of the word landscape itself. It is his ability to study landscapes considering the perspective of the outsider that is of primary importance to this dissertation.

Tahiti beyond the Postcard: Power, Place, and Everyday Life, published in 2011 by anthropologist Miriam Kahn, discusses the imagined landscape and sense of place constructed as a product of Western romanticism, and presents a realistic image of Tahiti. This book investigates the image of Tahiti (and the Society Islands) from an anthropological viewpoint, and exposes a contrast between what is real and what is imagined about images of Tahiti. Kahn deconstructs these images, and offers a clear-eyed and authentic view of the islands, in contrast to what is constructed from dross and drama in order to support island tourism. The false images she constructs are vital to the economic health of not only Tahiti, but also all Polynesian islands relying on tourism as their primary source of income. Kahn's work as an anthropologist in the Pacific is both relevant and illuminating. It is a call to action for understanding the impacts of nineteenth and twentieth century colonialism that can be applied to other landscapes in the Pacific.

In *Pacific Romanticism: Tahiti and the European Imagination*, Alexander Bolyanatz (2004) addresses the romanticizing of the Pacific, considering the writings of Samuel Wallis and Louis Bougainville. Considering the materials brought back from Cook and the early explorers and their vivid descriptions of the landscapes, people and their behavior (often including sexual escapades that would have stiffened Victorian sensibilities), the romanticizing of the Pacific is clearly a product of anthropological ventures. Bolyanatz believes Romanticism has done anthropology more harm than good, and as

with Kahn, deconstructs the romanticized images. “Dystopian epiphany” is the notion of experiencing the ‘natives’ in their present (and real) state, not in the imagined way: sunglasses vs. grass skirts (Brunt 1999, 261). Bolyanatz highlights the reemergence of an emphasis on human universals and states, “we need to take into consideration the “agenda, interests, capabilities and personality” with which an author views the world” (2004, 6).

Likewise, *Kon-Tiki* crew member and Polynesian anthropologist Bengt Danielsson’s (1956) *Love in the South Seas* is a study of love and relationships in Polynesia before Western imperialism corrupted what he calls “earthly paradise” (9). Published in 1956, his depictions of some of the baser realities of Polynesia and gender relationships detract from his initial descriptions of paradise, and contradict his statement that “the South Seas are associated with love” and his comparisons that Tahitian life in the late nineteenth century artistic representations of Gauguin were “as true today” (1956, 11). Ironically, Gauguin’s art is classified as post-Impressionist, the products of this period defined as “implying distortion for dramatic effect” (Voorhies 2004).

Finally, a variety of literature pertaining to struggles of indigenous people, native identities, and impacts of colonialism was used for this work. In *Yankees in Paradise: The Pacific Basin Frontier*, Arrell Gibson (1999) describes the Pacific as a ‘frontier’ and associates the notion of frontier being fodder for exploration and domination — an unadulterated distillation of the Turnerian “Frontier Hypothesis,” redirected toward the Pacific Ocean. This is reminiscent of Olson’s argument that the Pacific experienced the same expansionary process that took place in continental North America (Olson 1958). As such, the word frontier alone is associated with Westward expansion and subject to

Western ideals. Because a frontier is a space not previously dominated, expansion into this space exposes the places within to the Western imperialists' notions that came with expansion. This overlooks the frontier aspect that the Pacific islanders held, having expanded eastward throughout the Pacific. Gibson connects Frederick Jackson Turner's 1893 "Frontier thesis" to the expansion into the Pacific, calling the Pacific America's last frontier. His discussion of the imperial process, and the effects of adopting a nationalistic stance, is of considerable use in evaluating the early twenty-first-century identity of the Pitcairners.

David E. Stannard published two books depicting tensions between cultures in Hawai‘i. *Before the Horror: The Population of Hawai‘i on the Eve of Western Contact* (1989) estimates population numbers and discusses the colonial impact on the indigenous population of Hawai‘i at first contact. This is not dissimilar (though published fully a decade earlier) to the discussion in Diamond's (1999) Pulitzer prize-winning book, *Guns, Germs and Steel: the Fates of Human Societies,* wherein he asserts that although Europeans contacted virtually every island in the exploration and pursuit of the Pacific, only the largest and most temperate islands (Hawai‘i, New Caledonia, and New Zealand) were suitable enough to sustain large numbers of Western settlers, and the subsequent impact on these islands. However, it is Stannard's (2005) book, *Honor Killings: How the Infamous "Massie Affair" Transformed Hawai‘i*, that is of most interest in comparing struggles with image. Stannard illustrates the notion that Hawai‘i was considered the "Paradise of the Pacific" and an incident (the "Massie Affair" of 1931) exacerbated ethnic tensions on the island and altered the image of the island from then on. Stannard discusses the dark issues surrounding this event and the ironic setting of "Paradise," which is not un-

like recent issues Pitcairn Island is facing. Stannard has strong views of the living conditions of native people, mentioning Hawaiians being “like indigenous peoples everywhere–the most ill housed and impoverished people in the islands” (422).

Considering indigenous or native people in film, *Native Americans on Film: Conversations, Teaching and Theory*, (Elise Marubbio and Eric Buffalohead, editors) adds a new perspective on native productions of film and images and identities constructed of native peoples, stating “it remains more profitable for Hollywood to continue reproducing the stereotypical images of Native people found in Blockbuster period films set in the colonial period or the mid-to-late nineteenth century” (2013, 4). Discussion of idyllic imagery in the journals of explorers as far back as the fifteenth century (Columbus, Vespucci) reveals the notion that the images constructed fit the political and social needs of the colonizing forces. Additionally, this book mentions the image of the “noble savage” on film; while this construction is most evident in the movie western, the same can be said of the filmic representations of the native people of the Pacific seen in films such as *South Pacific*, and the *Mutiny on the Bounty*. While this book is focused on Native American issues, the theories presented are equally applicable to Pacific Islanders having a voice in telling their own stories (2013, 5).

Similarly, the recent work of Paul Cheng in transpacific identities reveals among other things images constructed of Asians and Asian Americans on film, using the idea of transnationalism to question the ideas filmmakers present. Having a relocated culture–as Pitcairners might be considered to have–Cheng asserts it is impossible to gauge identity in light of stereotypes, and contends that we “must find a way to grapple with the consequences of increased globalization” (2012, 28). With the actual identity of Pitcairners in

question, Cheng's concern for transnationalism and resulting identities is relevant, but in opposition to Diamond's thoughts that cultures change slowly. Cheng states if current trends in globalization continue, the "transpacific" world will only become more inter-twined and displays the impact on place as a result of ever-increasing globalization.

In conclusion, there is an abundance of material on image and identity construction and a substantial amount of anthropological and geographical work on the Pacific region in a variety of subfields. The materials discussed herein are worthy of note for their academic value. Nevertheless, there is a shortage in existing materials related specifically to Pitcairn Island. As such, this reveals a need for additional research across many disciplines in the future.

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Figures

1.1 Photo of boat dock and harbor at Pitcairn Island, 2004. Photo by author.

1.2 Photo of boat being taken out at boat dock, Pitcairn Island, 2004. Photo by author.

1.3 Photo of harbor at Hanga Roa, Easter Island. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Hanga_Roa_Harbour.jpg

1.4 Map, expanded view of the Pitcairn Island Group, South Pacific Ocean. Source: http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:PN_-A.png

Chapter 2: Pitcairn Island:

A Dystopia in a Geographic Utopia

“The Life of the Land is the Life of the People” ~ Tahitian Proverb

Introduction

Humans categorize and classify places as either good or bad based on their own spatial knowledge (Merriman et al 2012). The notion of paradise, or utopia, each a constructed space, fueled humans for centuries to seek and explore the world. As such, “paradise is a place determined to be conceptually better than our own, yet remains classified as a mythical space” (Tuan 1977, 86). From 1790 to approximately 1850, Pitcairn Island was regarded by both islanders and visitors as a sort of Paradise—a tiny island haven in the remote South Pacific—an image largely constructed by ship captains and crews[24] who began visiting in 1808. After 1850, based on visitor concerns about available space and resources on the island, descriptions of Pitcairn began to change. These views were not necessarily shared by the islanders, depicted in historical records as being generally satisfied with their conditions. However, historical records show an increasingly negative image of Pitcairn forming after this time, and media publications of the last decade have almost solidified this image.

Once established as a British overseas territory in 1838, Pitcairn Island and its residents were largely left alone, the greatest influence on the community being their religious conversion to Seventh-day Adventism in 1887 (Shapiro 1936). Passing ships only

[24] The crews of early explorations often included botanists, artists and other scientists that helped document and process the information observed on the voyages (e.g. Sir Joseph Banks, botanist on Captain Cook’s first voyage and later President of the Royal Society.

visited Pitcairn infrequently during the eighteenth century, and after the opening of the Panama Canal in 1914, slightly more often by ships on direct route to New Zealand (Allen 2013). Pitcairn was not subject to traditional colonization practices, and did not experience the impacts of contact with the West during the nineteenth- and twentieth-centuries, as did many other islands in the Pacific.[25] As a result, Pitcairn is a significant case study for the impact of time on an image, as evidenced by historical literature and contemporary publications.

"To be livable, nature and society must show order and display a harmonious relationship," writes geographer Yi-Fu Tuan (1977, 88). "Livable" and "paradise" are disparate terms in considering spaces. The writings of early Pacific explorers described the Pacific as a paradise and early observations of Pitcairn Island by visiting ship captains were commensurate. Yet these idyllic images of the island began to vacate literary sources after 1850. This article offers an argument that Pitcairn was once viewed as paradise or utopia, and makes use of historical and contemporary literature used to illustrate a shift in the image of Pitcairn from a western perspective.

Paradise in the Pacific

Compared to continental or arctic environments, the tropical and subtropical zones experience minimal environmental stress, and the Polynesian landscapes, although varied in some regard, appeared in general to be constantly "lush and verdant" to early western visitors (Fischer 2012). These include the landscapes found on most of the high, volcanic

[25] Pitcairn, although viewed as a British colony, never experienced the typical impacts of colonial activities (physical transformations of the landscape, installation of government, language shifts); rather, they self-colonized and organized their community based on the expertise of the founding population. They were so geographically remote that the island was not seen as useful in any capacity during WWII, an event that would change the landscapes of many other more accessible Pacific islands forever.

islands throughout the Pacific. Polynesia, with scores of endemic flora and fauna species present, were novel landscapes to western explorers and later, tourists. Therefore, an exotic image of paradise was not difficult to construct.

In the heart of the Pacific, Polynesia as a culture region is geographically definitive. It exists within the parameters and points of its triangular boundary between and including Hawaiʻi, New Zealand, and Easter Island[26] (Figure 2.1). The extremely varied individual geographies, climates, and land formations are rarely considered when speaking of Polynesia in general. Rather, the various nations, cultures, languages and landscapes tend to be grouped for the sake of imagery into a single (now) stereotyped image of Polynesia. It is this stereotype of paradise that comes to mind most often; Tahiti was "invented as a tourists' paradise" (Kahn 2011). Modification of the Polynesian landscapes to pander to expectations is not new. For instance, the import of non-native white sand to beaches in Tahiti is for tourist appeal alone, and tourism companies constructing new campaigns to market Tahiti as "the most romantic place on earth" use postcards and film commercials filmed on modified native landscapes, marketing an image that is not necessarily real (Kahn 2011). This constructed vision of Tahiti (and other Pacific islands) is being maintained in order to propagate constructed images begun three centuries earlier with the accounts of early explorers of the region including Wallis, Cook and Bougainville.

Paradise as a place in the Pacific was established largely in the eighteenth century as a result of the Romantic Movement (Day 1987). Explorers and voyagers published

[26] The lesser known and little used Polynesian names New Zealand and Easter Island being Aotearoa and Rapa Nui, respectively.

highly descriptive accounts of their adventures and worldly travels (e.g. Wallis 1767; Cook 1769; Bougainville 1771; Bustamante 1798), and paradise later began to materialize in various documentary and popular artworks (e.g. Hawkesworth 1773; Fanshawe 1849; Gauguin 1899[27]). British explorer Samuel Wallis, the first European to reach Tahiti, is credited with making the image of this island a "permanent part of the Western imagination" (Herman 2004, 299). As Carolyn White (2005) discusses, journals reflect individual perceptions. As such, the journal writings of the various ship captains and scientists of the day and later artistic representations of landscapes and native people can be assumed to have attempted accuracy, but it is impossible to know the true image versus invented image at the time. For instance, John Hawkesworth's narratives were criticized[28] in the nineteenth century for "preparing as interesting a narrative as possible and for attempting to please 'home parties' as flatteringly as circumstances permitted (Carter 1988). However, these early texts must be considered (whether embellished or not) as primary sources containing valuable insight into new landscapes; "These texts said something new or differently and influentially at the time and cast a new beam of light on their subject matter that illuminated the path of later explorers" (Munro and Lal 2006, 7).

The conceptual origin of the "Noble Savage," is used as early as 1670 in the English play "The Conquest of Grenada," (Pagden 1982). J.J. Rousseau's publication of the *Discourse on Inequality* in 1754 described a utopian Pacific, and his writings later accompanied both Bougainville and Cook during their explorations (Ryan 2002; Rousseau

[27] Fanshawe's works are property of the National Maritime Museum in Greenwich, England and represent landscapes he sketched during his Pacific voyages in the mid-19th century; French born artist Paul Gauguin famously painted Polynesian landscapes and women.

[28] Hawkesworth criticized by "self-made" historian, archivist and student of Aborigines James Bonwick (Carter 1988, 10).

et al 2009). The term "savage" with regard to humans was taken to mean "wild" versus "hostile" at that time, and began to include the Polynesian after the publication of Captain James Cook's journals in the late eighteenth century. French explorer Louis-Antoine de Bougainville built on these images, as seen in his publications after 1771, "giving rise to the eighteenth century craze for the 'noble savage" (McLynn 2011).

In contrast, however, to the idyllic images being constructed, there were several incidents of attacks by natives and violence recorded by these same explorers during the same era. For instance, Samuel Wallis in 1767 recorded while in Tahiti: "I observed, with some concern, that they appeared to be furnished rather for war than trade, having very little on board except round pebble stones" (Hawkesworth 2013). The event Wallis speaks of intensified to the point of defensive gunfire by the British, and is represented by artwork produced in 1773 (Figure 2.1).

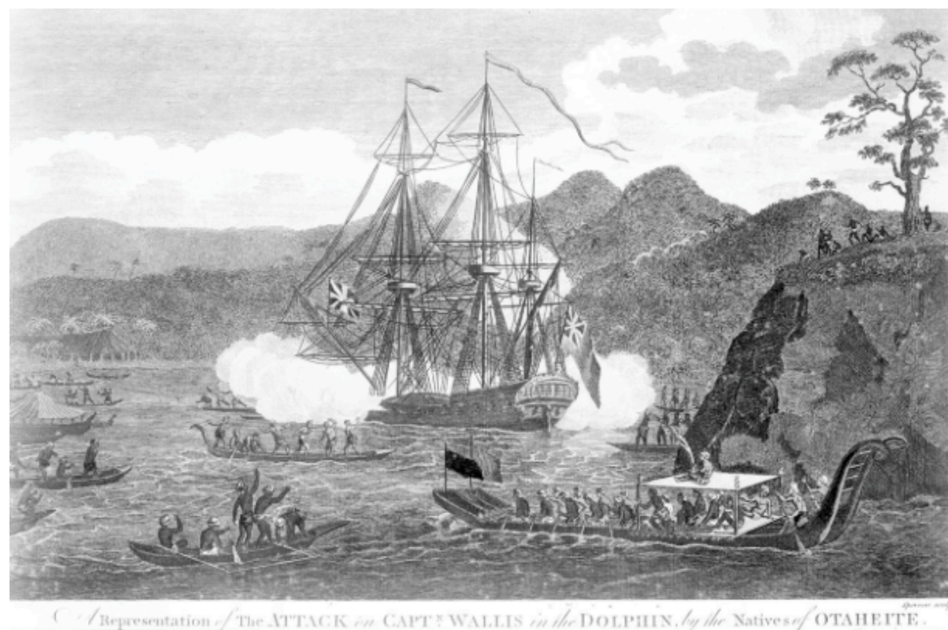

Figure 2.1: "A Representation of the Attack on Captain Wallis in the *Dolphin* by the Natives of Otaheite" (Hawkesworth 1773). Courtesy, National Maritime Museum, Greenwich.

Similarly, James Cook explored the Pacific over the course of three voyages and nine years, not long after Wallis. Cook took great care to note details of the people and places he visited. He was generally well received with “enthusiastic welcomes” and was offered food for trade (McLynn 2011). Cook’s efforts to respectfully interact with the indigenous populations were seen in written directives to his crew: “Rules to be observed ... with the Inhabitants... to endeavour by every fair means to Cultivate a Friendship with the Natives, and to treat them with all imaginable humanity”[29] (Cook 2007). However, Cook’s journals also reflect increasing frustration with native populations, in various thieving incidents and conflict over trade. Increasing tensions between Cook and the Polynesians in his last years of explorations culminated in Hawai‘i, with the attack on and ultimate death of Cook in 1779[30] (Figure 2.2).

Figure 2.2: “The Death of Captain Cook” (Johan Zoffany 1795). Courtesy: National Maritime Museum, Greenwich.

[29] Spelled and capitalized as originally printed.

[30] Captain Cook was commander of the H.M.S. *Resolution* when he was killed on February 14, 1779 in Hawai‘i. William Bligh (later Captain of the H.M.A.V *Bounty)* was Cook’s sailing master at the time, and survived the attack and returned with the Resolution to England in 1780 to deliver the news of Cook’s death. Bligh was known to have ‘revered Cook’ and credited Cook with his own vast knowledge of navigation, which would become of use following the mutiny on the *Bounty* in 1789 (McLynn 2011).

Although these incidents were recorded, the power of the place as constructed by the descriptions of romantic landscapes seems to have overshadowed these unfortunate events. Polynesia continued to be depicted in literature and art (Figure 2.3) suggesting a geographic paradise inhabited by mysterious, generally happy, beautiful natives, exhibiting great sensuality and sexual freedom that even occasional violence masked. Polynesia was alluring to the Western, "moral" society (Day 1987; McLynn 2011). With continued explorations and detailed descriptions of Polynesian islands by various ship captains and crew, there continued to be a fascination with island peoples and their environments, whose remoteness and inaccessibility essentially solidified Polynesia's image in Western minds. Throughout history, adjectives used to help form this image included: "beautiful," "graceful harmony," "delightful and even more: "marvels of nature,"[31] "Paradise,"[32] and "New Cythera."[33]

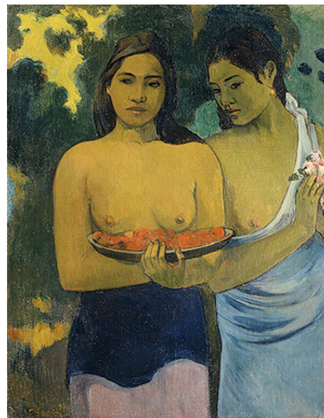

Figure 2.3: "Two Tahitian Women" (Gauguin 1899). Courtesy, Metropolitan Museum of Art.

[31] Spanish Explorer José de Bustamante y Guerra, 1798.

[32] "I thought I had been transported to Paradise" (Bougainville 1771).

[33] Coined by Bougainville (1768), with Cythera being the place where Aphrodite rose from the waves. It is perhaps Bougainville who gave the most credence to the existence of paradise in the Pacific, being known for his sharp and critical descriptions and not known for embellishments. He was considered by many to be the most accurate reporter of his time.

To expand on early descriptions of various Polynesian landscapes, those pertaining specifically to Tahiti include: "...the island to be one of the most healthy as well as delightful spots in the world" (Wallis 1767 in Hawkesworth 2013), "Nothing can compare to the beautiful variety of scenery... their tranquil existence in the midst of abundance and pleasure" (Bustamante 1798 in Williams 2013, 193), "the diversity of feature of the romantic Island of Otaheite...." (Beechey 1825, 175), and "...an island on which Nature has lavished so many of her bounteous gifts with which neither Cyprus nor Cythera, nor the fanciful island of Calypso can compete in splendid and luxuriant beauties..." (Barrow 1831, 39). Because Tahiti (in the Society Islands) is geographically almost centrally located within the region of Polynesia (Figure 2.4), it was an obvious destination for early Pacific explorers seeking to restock their ships and to trade with natives. Tahiti was the cultural and economic center of the Pacific as well as the definition of paradise to Europeans, early images being embellished by Wallis, Bougainville, and Cook (Kahn 2011, 33). In this way, Tahiti became an island to compare against, for the purposes of both resources and landscape.

Modern Paradise

The primary twentieth and twenty-first century industry of Polynesia is, in fact, tourism,[34] supported by millions seeking Paradise as a vacation destination each year. For example, Easter Island attracts approximately 1,200 tourists per week (Carroll 2009); visitors spent more than one billion dollars in Hawaiʻi in May 2013 alone,[35] and the territory of French Polynesia welcomed more than 14,000 people per month throughout 2012, an increase of

[34] Central Intelligence Agency 2014.

[35] According to Hawaiʻi Travel Authority (McCartney 2013).

more than 3.8% over 2011 (Worldbank). Beaches, activities, entertainment, and the environment are attractants, all parts of the larger image of paradise. If this is paradise, what does that make Pitcairn? With few tourists reaching the island, no beaches, and a rugged landscape, Pitcairn is far from the stereotypical island vacation idyll, but fits more into an adventurer's destination.[36] The hopes of establishing a marine reserve in the waters surrounding the Pitcairn Island group may boost interest in eco-tourism, as the area was recently deemed to have "global biological value" for marine science (National Geographic 2012).

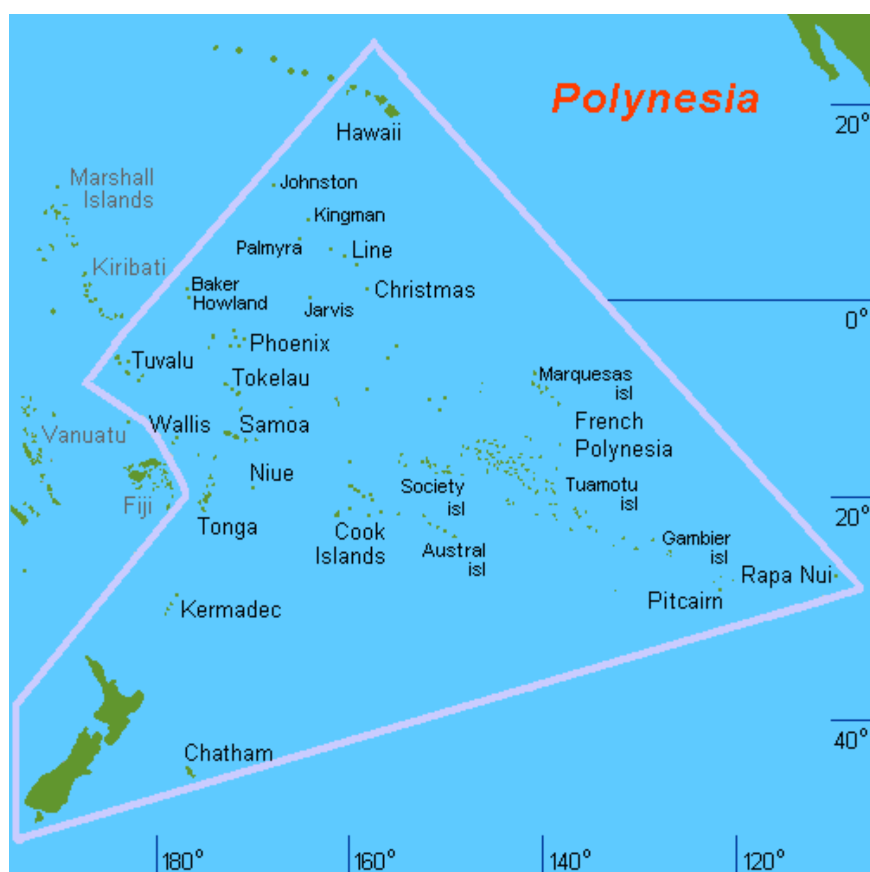

Figure 2.4: Polynesian Triangle. Courtesy: wikicommons.com

[36] Pitcairn rises out of the ocean with an elevation range of sea level to 1,100 feet on just two square miles, and National Geographic's "Adventurer" magazine listed Pitcairn as a dream destination for extreme rock-climbing (Synott 2007).

Searching the Internet for the terms "Hawai'i" and "Paradise" returns more than 43.5 million hits. The PBS television series "Living Edens" lists the island of Palau as the "Paradise of the Pacific," and Easter Island was recently described as "South America's Polynesian Paradise" (Balsom 2009). But favorable terms such as these were applied for centuries to various island landscapes, for instance Captain Cook described Tonga as the "Friendly Islands," a slogan they have kept to this day. There are several islands bearing the brand of "the Happy Islands" — the Canary Islands, Tahiti,[37] and sometimes the island of Aruba. When searching the terms "Pitcairn" and "Paradise" on the Internet, the only hits that appear pertain to previously published materials, specifically book titles (most of them negative), including *Paradise Lost* (Marks 2008). In fact, the only positive reference found in any print title or Web publication is on the tourism website maintained by the Pitcairners themselves, which include descriptive narratives of their landscape on the homepage as:

> Untouched subtropical island environments, pristine waters, endemic flora, bird and marine life, an unforgettable sea voyage, incredible hospitality, lasting friendships and firsthand insight into the living history and culture of the people of Pitcairn Island. (Pitcairn Islands Tourism 2013)

This description alone should warrant membership in the exclusive club that is a vacationer's paradise; however Pitcairn's physical features are more suited to the adventurer, with rock climbing, swimming, hiking, and ocean fishing to consider, each an element of daily life for the Pitcairners.

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[37] British explorer Sir John Barrow called Tahiti the "Happy Island" (1831).

Defining Paradise

In *The Story of Utopias*, Lewis Mumford dates the concept of an earthly Utopia to the sixteenth century (1922, 60). Coined by Sir Thomas More in 1516, Utopia has many definitions, most meaning "a most ideal place, filled with excitement and optimism" (Jacoby 2005, 6). Utopia, equated in the past with the biblical Garden of Eden and therefore the concept of paradise, has been discussed, pondered, and sought for almost three millennia[38] (Delumeau 1995). Pitcairn Island was a refuge to a small group of nine British men, their Tahitian wives and several additional Polynesians who made the journey following the mutiny on the *Bounty* in 1790. Having committed the crime of mutiny, any place they landed might have been their utopia, and Pitcairn afforded physical benefits in being mischarted (making the island more difficult to find for the British admiralty[39] searching the Pacific for the mutineers in subsequent years), in addition to being a high island with abundant natural resources.

How long the island could sustain a long-term population would not have been known to the settlers, however, and it is this variable, the infusion of humans into the landscape, that Jared Diamond asks about in *Collapse: How Societies Choose to Fail or Succeed* (2005), questioning the ecological sustainability of the prehistoric population of Pitcairn. Humans and transplanted faunal species strained resources and "inflicted heavy damage" on the environment in Pitcairn's prehistory, which Diamond claims led to social and political chaos (Diamond 2005, 134). Several ship captains later mentioned the same

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[38] Delumeau discussed the parallels between the concepts of Paradise stemming back to the garden in the biblical "Eden."

[39] British Admiralty were historically powerful and respected naval officers. The early eighteenth century British parliament members included thirty-eight naval officers (Herman 2004).

concern in the nineteenth century charged with reporting on the welfare of the secondary Pitcairn community, these accounts ultimately supporting the decision by the British government to depopulate the island in 1856. The balance between human-environment interactions is what allows for the image of place to be perceived as good or bad; the fulfulcrum must be identified in order to differentiate between Utopia and Dystopia (Starrs and Wright 2005). In the case of nineteenth century Pitcairn, the fulcrum was population versus space,[40] where the modern-day tipping point leans toward financial concern fueled by social perspective.[41]

The idea that people are deeply rooted and tied to their lands is not novel; historical records more than 2,500 years old illustrate emotional attachment to place dating back to ancient Greece and Rome (Tuan 1977). However, understanding or defining a utopia is perhaps more difficult; one person's definition of utopia may not be that of another. At the fundamental level is the notion that utopia is a place that offers a better life and/or a better social order (Sargent 2001).

Utopian Pitcairn

> *We shall be happy in this place, said Moetua. See! There are pandanus trees and the aito and purau everywhere. Almost it might be Tahiti itself.*[42]

During fieldwork in 2004, the response of a Pitcairner to the question of whether she felt she lived in Paradise, the answer was "No, this is just home." The earliest writings re-

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[40] Nineteenth century Pitcairn peaked at a population of 187 on the tiny two-square mile island, versus the present population of just 51.

[41] 2012/13 fiscal year costs to Britain were $5.1 million in aid to Pitcairn (Allen 2013). An economic concern and the "Sex Trials" of 2004 brought global focus to social issues on the island, which resulted in discussion of depopulating the island from a variety of sources (Appendix A).

[42] From *Pitcairn's Island* (Nordhoff and Hall 1934, 18).

garding Pitcairn and its tiny community do not use or reference terms such as “paradise” or “utopia”; however, many publications of the twentieth century use “paradise” or “eden” in the titles (e.g., *Lost Paradise (*1987), *Paradise Lost* (2009), *Fragile Paradise* (1982), and *Pitcairn Island: Life and Death in Eden* (1997)), which offer the idea that Pitcairn was once considered a paradise. The inferred loss of this paradise in the titles might appeal to a sense of nostalgia in the reader, yet the books focus on less than romantic topics, ranging from a dark history involving early struggles to recent issues surrounding sex crimes. This shift to a darker image of Pitcairn over time and the continual focus by external participants on the heritage of the *Bounty* kept Pitcairn in many ways stuck in time, attached forever to a literary legacy.

Nostalgia allows each generation to reshape its past to support the needs of the present (Lowenthal 1985). This idea was mentioned in several ship captains’ logs, wherein they began to notice that the story of the mutiny, the accounts of the murders on the islands, and the fates of the crew began to shift and change over time, either out of the simplification of a very elaborate story or due to the perceived potential for judgment by outsiders of the true version of a particular story. These shifts likely gave rise to myths that remain today,[43] including the actual date and manner in which Fletcher Christian was killed on the island,[44] reasons for an early rebellion on the island[45] and names of women attached to this incident (Shapiro 1936). Today, the site of Christian’s final resting place

[43] For instance, there are at least three geographies affiliated with the ultimate fate of Fletcher Christian, leading mutineer.

[44] Three dates for the death of Fletcher Christian and several other mutineers at the hands of the Polynesian men are given, seen in the accounts given to early visiting ships of Captain Folger (1808), Staines (1814) and Beechey (1825).

[45] Including jealousy, brutal treatment, and dispute over the acquisition of wives (Shapiro 1936).

also remains a mystery; Pitcairners believe Christian is buried somewhere on the island, *Bounty* crewman Peter Heywood who returned to England reported to have seen Fletcher Christian in 1809 on the streets of London, and in 1795 a magazine in London (*True Briton*) reported to have received word from Christian that he was in "lucrative establishment under the Spanish government in South America"[46] (Ball 1973).

Ian Ball (1973) produced a "historical review" of Pitcairn's history in *Pitcairn: Children of Mutiny*, the result of fifteen months' research and a one-month stay on Pitcairn in 1972. Ball supports Harry Shapiro's statements in 1936 that there are great gaps of time in the historical information available, noting "frustrations in my research gathering.... in the historical area" and suggests that the history of Pitcairn is more accurately preserved off the island in libraries and museums around the world. He mentions an "appalling gap" of knowledge regarding the island knowledge of the *Bounty* saga, and suggests that it is a result of the guilt felt by the founding mutineers that the details of their history were largely avoided (1973, 349).

Despite the conflicting stories surrounding the early years of the community, early observers provide detailed accounts of the social conditions, the landscape, and environment on the island. The first known historical description of Pitcairn appears in the records of British navigator/explorer Philip Carteret, who passed the island in 1767:

> …it appeared like a great rock rising out of the sea: it was not more than five miles in circumference, and seemed to be uninhabited ... I would have landed upon it, but the surf, which at this season broke upon it with great violence, rendered it impossible... It is so high that we saw it at a distance of more than fifteen leagues, and it having been discovered by a young gentleman, son to Major Pit-

[46] These journals are now thought to have been written by the Christian family back in England to help better Fletcher's image, having committed mutiny, and there are no further accounts of Christian being seen in England.

> cairn of the marines, we called it Pitcairn's Island (Carteret, quoted in Silverman 1967, 29)

Although this initial image of Pitcairn offers good detail, Carteret incorrectly charted Pitcairn Island in initial logs and maps, offsetting the island's location more than 200 miles from its actual geographic position. This became paramount to Pitcairn's history, as after the mutiny on the *Bounty*, Fletcher Christian found Bligh's set of Hawkesworth's *Voyages* (1773) and discovered the notation that Pitcairn Island had been previously mischarted (Salmond 2011). Christian was thus afforded a largely invisible island to escape to.[47] Based on Carteret's description, it is understandable why Christian sought Pitcairn as a refuge, since it is described as an isolated, uninhabited high-island, which often suggests abundance in vegetation and water,[48] all desired components of an eventual destination.

Captains of visiting ships, beginning in 1808 with Mayhew Folger on the *Topaz*, gathered the first documented account of the fate of the mutineers and subsequent Pitcairn community. Stopping to refuel his whaling ship with fresh water and supplies, Folger was surprised to find the island populated at all, let alone settled with the last missing mutineer—most of the women and twenty-five of the descendants from the event of 1789 (Shapiro 1936). Folger recorded the location of the island, the names of the people then living there, the fates of the mutineers, and the name of the last living mutineer (John Adams). Other details provided in his observations of the state of the tiny community in-

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[47] The knowledge of the charting error appears in most early accounts of the mutiny related by John Adams after 1808.

[48] See Mueller-Dombois 1998.

clude: "...they all speak English and have been educated by [Adams][49] in a religious and moral way" (Folger, quoted in Alexander 2003, 351).

The observations from subsequent ship captains include:

> Staines: John Adams is the only surviving Englishman...whose exemplary conduct and fatherly care of the whole of the little colony could not but command admiration. The pious manner in which all those born on the island have been reared, the correct sense of religion... It is abundant in yams, plantains, hogs, goats and fowls. It is well worthy the attention of our laudable religious societies. (Staines 1814, quoted in Mead 2007).

> Pipon: Their habitations are extremely neat. The little village of Pitcairn forms a pretty square, the houses at the upper end of which are occupied by the patriarch John Adams and his family... On the opposite side is the dwelling of Thursday October Christian; and in the centre is a smooth verdant lawn, on which the poultry are let loose, fenced in so as to prevent the intrusion of the domestic quadrupeds. All that was done was obviously undertaken on a settled plan, unlike any thing to be met with on the other islands. In their houses too they had a good deal of decent furniture, consisting of beds laid upon bedsteads, with neat covering; they had also tables, and large chests to contain their valuables and clothing, which is made from the bark of a certain tree, prepared chiefly by the elder Otaheitan females. Adam's house consisted of two rooms, and the windows had shutters to pull to at night. (Pipon 1814).[50]

> Beechey: The mutineers now bade adieu to all the world.... and reached [Pitcairn] not many days afterwards ... They soon traversed the island sufficiently to be satisfied that it was exactly suited to their wishes. It possessed water, wood, a good soil and some fruits...The mountains were so difficult of access that they might be maintained by a few persons against an army. (Beechey 1825)[51]

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[49] Adams was formerly "Alexander Smith" on the *Bounty* roster and the last living mutineer on the island at the arrival of the *Topaz* in 1808.

[50] British Royal Navy officers Captain (Sir) Thomas Staines of the HMS *Briton* and Captain Philip Pipon of the HMS *Tagus,* arriving in 1814 with Captain Staines, were the first British to reach the island and interact with Adams on behalf of the crown.

[51] British Royal Navy officer and geographer Captain Frederick W. Beechey of the HMS *Blossom.* Beechey was elected President of the Royal Geographic Society in 1855, his explorations of the Pacific and geographic studies are renowned.

With regard to the condition of the residents, Captain Pipon's notes and logs from 1814, and Captain (Sir) John Barrow in his reevaluation of the mutiny on the *Bounty* in 1831 ascertained:

> Captain Pipon thinks that from such a race of people, consisting of fine young men and handsome, well-formed women, there may be expected to arise hereafter, in this little colony, a race of people possessing in a high degree the physical qualifications of great strength, united with symmetry of form and regularity of feature" and ".. Adams gave [an account] of their virtuous conduct. He assured his visiters[52] that not one instance of debauchery or immoral conduct had occurred among these young people, since their settlement on the island. (Barrow 1831, 295)

In accounts to this point, Pitcairn and its community were well suited. The place served residents well, and they thrived within their space. The Naval Chronicle for 1816 for the British Royal Navy described Pitcairn: "Small [as] Pitcairn's island may appear, there can be little doubt that it is capable of supporting many inhabitants, and the present stock being of so good [a] description, we trust they will not be neglected" (1816, 21).

Harry L. Shapiro wrote the only major anthropological work regarding the Pitcairn Islanders published to date. His 1936 book *The Pitcairn Islanders: formerly the Heritage of the Bounty* depicts islanders in 1934, during his ten-day visit, and he documents aspects of the Pitcairn culture and the physical environment:

> Only slightly more than two miles in length, it seemed Lilliputian on the vast plain of the Pacific. No wonder the mutineers of the *Bounty* who landed here in 1790 had been lost to the world. It was a lump of an island, but its associations cast a glamour about it that made me forget its insignificance in a rapidly increasing anxiety to reach the shore, to make the famed perilous landing and to see the children of Christian, Adams and Young… (1936, 4)

Shapiro's work provides an invaluable base in time and space to contrast with present day life on the island. He conveyed through his research that there was missing

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[52] Original spelling from Barrow's publication, 1831.

information before he began his own work there in 1934, noting that few historical records existed for years between 1859 and 1934. Aside from that eighty-year gap, Shapiro's work is comprehensive, which allows a snapshot view of the culture on Pitcairn including details on the social structure of the community, human physical traits, cultural materials, and architectural methods. Similarly, Ball's work in 1973 provides insight into the community on Pitcairn forty years after Shapiro; the simplistic lifestyle, religious devotion and unity in community are among the details noted during his visit (1973). The work of both Ball and Shapiro demonstrates that with the exception of a few modern conveniences[53] and the specific religious shift in the 1880s,[54] little changed on Pitcairn during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

Shift to Dystopia

J. Max Patrick coined the term "dystopia" in the mid-twentieth century to mean the opposite of utopia (Jacoby 2005, 7). In this way, dystopia is an unhappy, degraded, or presumably undesirable place. Degradation of image is what Pitcairn began to experience beginning in the middle nineteenth century, a shift from paradisiacal to a darker image. This trend continues to the present day.

A 1983 *National Geographic* article by Ed Howard describes Pitcairn as "a remote Pacific Island" with a landscape described as "a craggy, forbidding place… almost lost from the world.... [it] loomed up like a tattered gray ruin of a fortress." Howard continues with a notable change in tone when describing the cultural landscape:

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[53] Tools, fishing equipment, clothing, medical assistance and teachers are just some of the modern amenities that made their way to the island before 1930.

[54] Missionary efforts of the Seventh Day Adventist Church resulted in a conversion of the entire population of Pitcairn in 1886 (Shapiro 1936).

> The buildings are painted and orderly. They give the neat impression of a small colonial outpost. The people of Pitcairn work almost continuously, from the start of day until nearly time to go to bed, gardening, cooking, getting firewood, mending something, carving curios, weaving baskets and hats, washing, ironing, sweeping, weeding the little cemetery, planting... (Howard 1983)

This description presents the Pitcairn people in a favorable light—a busy, engaged and interactive community, comparable to descriptions of the earlier Polynesian cultures of the eighteenth century. This despite a seemingly dark, harsh environment to live in described earlier in the article regarding the rugged, steep, and small island landscape. Howard's view of the island is not unlike the images that began to appear in mid-nineteenth century records, wherein several ship captains mentioned concern for space and resources on the island, despite resistance from the islanders. For instance, 1849 records reflect the offer from a Captain Wood to move the islanders,[55] an offer that was declined. Captain Fanshawe of the H.M.S *Daphne* during the same year reported:

> I could not trace in any of them the slightest desire to remove elsewhere. On the contrary, they expressed the greatest repugnance to do so, whilst a sweet potato remained to them. (Fanshawe 1849, quoted in Shapiro 1936).

However, this was not the first concern for relocating the Pitcairners. In 1830, over concerns for drought by British authorities, the entire population of Pitcairn was removed to a "rich tract of land" in Tahiti (Shapiro 1936, 75). Granted the land by King Pomare of Tahiti, Captain Sandilands of the H.M.S. *Comet* representing the British admiralty arrived to remove the eighty-seven Pitcairners, despite his observations that half the islanders expressed reluctance to leave Pitcairn; Shapiro writes that the islanders finally

[55] Wood's exact reason is not listed, however a landslide occurred on the island during the year prior that demolished a significant portion of the plantains and yams, creating cause for concern on food supplies amongst the islanders (Shapiro 1936) and can be assumed to have been conveyed to Wood during his visit not long after.

agreed to removal for fear of displeasing the British government (77). In any event, the Pitcairners were taken to Tahiti on the *Comet*, but soon after arrival were “taken sick,” resulting in the death of seventeen, twenty percent of the Pitcairn population. (Shapiro 1936). The remaining population returned to “their haven on Pitcairn” within six months. (Shapiro 1936, 76). Captain Freemantle noted in 1833 that the Pitcairners affirmed their intentions to never leave Pitcairn again (Shapiro 1936, 76).

Although British explorers had visited most island groups in the Pacific throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries (Herman 2004), the notable colonies in the Pacific during the mid-nineteenth century were Australia and New Zealand.[56] The native populations were greatly reduced by contact with the Europeans as a result of disease, conflict, and being driven out of their lands due to mass European immigration (Diamond 1999; McDermott et al. 1980; Luscombe 2012). Concerns were voiced during this same time by visiting British ship captains regarding Pitcairners’ welfare, reports reflecting not sickness but observations of drought and famine (Shapiro 1936). The population on Pitcairn had more than doubled the population numbers that brought concern in 1830, increasing from twenty-six to 187. Captains Staines and Pipon noted as early as 1814 that the Pitcairners “considered [them] their countrymen” (Alexander 2003, 353). Declared a British colony in 1838, it may be that the Pitcairners’s British affiliation (via paternal lineage) drew greater concern for their welfare by the Admiralty, versus native Polynesian populations in other British controlled areas of the Pacific.

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[56] For example, earlier and later protectorates or colonies of Britain U.K. included Fiji (1874-1970), the Gilbert and Ellice Islands (1892-1979), Tokelau (1898-1949), the Solomon Islands (1889-1976) Tonga (1889-1970), Norfolk Island (1889-1901), Fiji (1877-1970), and several other small islands (Britannica 2014; CIA).

In 1856, and with hesitant support of the Pitcairners, the British Government again arranged for the islanders to be relocated in 1856 to Norfolk Island, approximately 1,000 miles northwest of Australia (Shapiro 1936). Norfolk afforded much more space; each family was allocated fifty acres of land of the more than 8,500 acres that comprise Norfolk, compared to the small plots available to them on Pitcairn, which total just over 1,200 acres in area (Hinz and Howard 2006). However, Norfolk wasn't the place they had envisioned; the space was too vast, and in this way, "uncomfortable" (Shapiro 1936, 107). Shapiro writes:

> They missed the rugged beauty of Pitcairn and their cozy little houses embowered in a rich foliage; they wanted the snug security that their own island gave them. The park-like tranquility of Norfolk seemed immense. It lacked the dramatic beauty of their wild and romantic Pitcairn. (Shapiro 1936, 106).

It is evident that nostalgia weighed heavily enough on at least some Pitcairners that by 1859, two families totaling sixteen people returned to the island, followed in 1864 by another twenty-seven people equally overcome with a longing for place (Shapiro 1936).[57] Each depopulation event resulted in a return to the island within a fairly short timeframe, and after the 1856 depopulation effort, no official attempts to depopulate the island have occurred. "Cultural identity for Pacific Islanders is most always tied to land" (Kahn 2011, 63). This idea is most evident by the actions of these Pitcairners between 1859 and 1864. Other than island records kept of occasional visiting ships over the following decades, not until Harry Shapiro arrived in 1934 is there any substantial official or academic writings regarding the state of the Pitcairn community. A medical report filed

[57] It should be noted that only twenty-five percent of the original population returned to Pitcairn between 1859-64, and the reasons for choices made to remain on Norfolk are undocumented. Factors might include age, contentment, or a more than month-long journey to face on the return voyage across approximately 4,000 miles.

on the state of the islanders and their community in 1937 states: “Though the material requirements of the islanders have been met in more or less a Polynesian manner, the social and religious life has been predominantly European in nature” (Cook 1937, 53). The community on Pitcairn continues to work to sustain their community, obtaining additional supplies and resources from interactions with chance visiting vessels and in recent decades, scheduled supply ships from New Zealand.

Lasting Images

A New Zealand-initiated Pitcairn revitalization program was begun in 2006, essentially an effort to attract the return of Pitcairners who have left in past years and simultaneously boost tourism. The last Commissioner of the Pitcairn Island Group[58] began this endeavor, hoping to build the population and bring new services to Pitcairn, which may in turn have benefitted tourism; that is until the commencement of the “Pitcairn Sex Trials” which began in 2004.

The trials conducted on Pitcairn Island focused on several men who were prosecuted for crimes of a sexual nature. Sixty-four charges including rape, sexual and indecent assault, and child molestation stemming back as far as 1964 were placed against seven island men[59] (Marks 2008). Following lengthy appeals, six men were made to serve prison sentences on Pitcairn Island, in a bespoke jail they were obliged to build for themselves (this some-time British colonial tradition was described by Eleanor Catton in her 2013 Booker Prize-winning novel *The Luminaries,* set in Hokitika, on the South Is-

[58] The last commissioner left his post in 2010 and now resides on the island. The island is administered ultimately by the Governor of New Zealand (offices in Wellington) via the Pitcairn Island Office in Auckland, confirmed in personal communications.

[59] Six additional Pitcairn men were tried for their crimes in New Zealand.

land of New Zealand). Media coverage of this event was extraordinary, given a location so difficult of access, and the population of Pitcairn doubled for the duration of the trials with the import of lawyers, police and journalists who were housed in a very few administrative or government buildings in the heart of the community they were prosecuting.[60] What remained at the conclusion of the trials was a series of website postings, emails, blogs, magazine articles and books, none of which painted Pitcairn as anything but a shambles of a community housed in an isolated, dark, desolate location. For instance, “Evil under the sun: The dark side of the Pitcairn Island” (Marks 2008), *Trouble in Paradise* (Marks 2008), and “Pitcairn Island, an Idyll Haunted by its Past” (Allen 2013), are but three examples of the multitude of publications surrounding this event. Descriptions such as: “craggy and menaced by choppy seas” (Allen 2013), a “shattered, shocked — and defiant — community” (Marks 2008), and illustrations of a “secret sex culture” (Prochnau and Parker 2008) found in such publications greatly add to a dystopian view of Pitcairn as place.

Legal requirements were updated as a result of the trials; an age restriction for tourism was enacted. As of February 2014, the official tourism website for Pitcairn warns:

> Important Notice: There are currently restrictions in place regarding visits and settlement by children under sixteen years of age. If you wish to apply on behalf of a child you should contact the Governor’s Office.[61]

[60] Toilets were shipped for the convenience and use of the government officials and other outside visitors on the island for the trials, but were unable to be delivered due to rough seas. They had to make use of “long-drops” (outhouses) like the rest of the islanders for the duration of their stay.

[61] Pitcairn Island Tourism; www.visitpitcairn.pn

After the trials, additional comments by journalists and politicians made their way into the global media outlets, once again questioning the sustainability of the island, this time from a social perspective. A 2008 article published in *Vanity Fair* by William Prochnau and Laura Parker described Pitcairn's new governor as having "pointedly warned ... [about] that which Pitcairn feared most: 'It is hard to exaggerate how damaging this is to those trying to persuade a wider world that Pitcairn's community can be sustainable.'" Similarly, a 2008 memo from Britain's Minister for International Development leaked to the press revealed her sentiments: "The Pitcairn community is probably so socially dysfunctional that we should cease to plan to support and sustain it," adding that she thought the best course of action was "voluntary depopulation." These sentiments, voiced by a British official, are reminiscent of Stannard's discussion of ethnic tensions on Hawai'i following the Massie Affair (2005). Furthermore, after such a powerful prosecution, it is unlikely Pitcairners would arrive at any conclusion but that the British were (and may still be) seeking inevitable depopulation of Pitcairn (Prochnau and Parker 2008).

Pitcairn Island was declared bankrupt in 2004, although the island received $5.1 million in aid from Britain in fiscal year 2012–2013 (Allen 2013). The men convicted of crimes were imprisoned for as little as no time to as many as four years in prison on the island. The impact of the loss of these men to the community as wage earners and active participants in the upkeep and promotion of the island had considerable emotional strain and physical impact on the rest of the island community, as the prisoners represented a significant fraction of the active, working population (Marks 2008). The lasting legacy of

the trials may have long-term significance as well, with regard to future tourism, and hopes to boost population on the island.

To Be or Not To Be?

Resident Pitcairners are moving forward to project a positive image. Beautiful photographs of flowers and landscapes are uploaded to various websites maintained by islanders, and a variety of publications are produced, including island guides and cookbooks to sell. Maps of the island's place names are quite common, printed off-island but sold as souvenirs on the island. Place names are abundant on the island, ranging from marking the location of a particular incident that occurred to some with deeper, more historically significant meanings.[62]

Additional promotion of the island is found on websites. The official tourism website for Pitcairn Island is now maintained from the island by a resident, (Figure 2.5), and offers detailed visitor information, photographs of beautiful landscapes, and promotes the island as a tourist destination. The website lists Pitcairn tourism development as based on "environmental, economic and socio-cultural aspects of tourism" with a focus on "long-term sustainability" by "making optimal use of the islands' environmental resources" and maintaining conservation efforts of "natural heritage.... and the socio-cultural authenticity of the Legendary Pitcairn Island community" (Pitcairn Islands Tourism). Additionally, private efforts by individuals or families on Pitcairn to market tourism on independent Websites are being made, depicting pictures of Polynesian flora, beautiful

[62] Place names reflect many historical events (e.g. "Robert Fall," "Headache Stone" or "Broken Hip"), landscape observations (e.g. "White Rocks," "Highest Ridge" or "Big Ground") or remembrances of their heritage ("McCoy's Valley," "John Mills Valley" or "Christian's Cave").

landscapes, and accommodations, prices, and other information in hopes of attracting visitors (Figure 2.6).

Figure 2.5: Screenshot of Pitcairn Island Tourism website.

Figure 2.6: Screenshot of personal website of Pitcairn Islander advertising accommodations (www.young.pn/stay-with-us.html 2014).

Perhaps worthy of note regarding the tourism website is the very few images of the Pitcairners themselves; there are few photographs of people on the websites, and any other images of people seem to be tourists (for instance purchasing curios[63] on a cruise ship) visiting the island. The image the islanders present conflicts with the whole of how

[63] Curio is defined as carvings, jewelry, or other handicrafts made by the islanders.

"Pitcairn Island" is sold elsewhere. Self-proclaimed travel expert Lee Abbamonte[64] said of his three-day visit to Pitcairn in 2012, "there are many mysteries surrounding Pitcairn Island... but it is the wonderful people who made the trip and make the island what it is" (2012). This is in complete opposition to the previously mentioned examples of particular voices from outside Pitcairn, which call for (or at the very least predicting) an eventual depopulation of the island for economic reasons, or cite (rather sanctimoniously, but obviously not without some recent historical justification) concern for the socio-cultural welfare of the community. In spite of new laws and restrictions, Pitcairners continue to promote their island and invite tourists to visit, perhaps not realizing that throughout history it is not the place but the people and how they functioned within their space that is the interest and focus for the rest of the world.

Conclusion

Thomas More's *Utopia* (1516) presented a constructed ideal place — gowned in satire — and has evolved to be used in the English language as an adjective to describe place (Morley 2005). The notion of dystopia eventually evolved four centuries later as an opposition to the place that is Utopia, and dystopian literature is paved with degraded landscapes, daunting details, and apocalyptic tendencies (Jacoby 2005, 7; Feenberg 1995). Long before the events of the last decade, Ian Ball (1973) described the prospect of Pitcairn ever being a utopia as a "notable failure," primarily due to its dependence on the outside world (Ball 1973). Ball states that Fletcher Christian sought a "crumb of land... [that] he could turn into a utopian haven" (1973, xiii). That Pitcairn was deliberately

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[64] Abbamonte is one of the only people to have visited every country on earth as of 2012 (Rogell 2012).

sought in 1789 as a refuge is, however, well established in literature. The choice of location provided Christian and his companions resources enough to sustain them (and their offspring) for generations, albeit not without periodic environmental concerns. Over the last 150 years, with opportunities and resources available in other locales, some Pitcairners have emigrated.[65] Yet they retain deep-rooted ties to the land; some return late in life to live out their days on the island. Similarly, some of the younger generations have returned in the last decade, having temporarily sought education or employment off the island.

In a recent scholarly article, Lyman Sargent (2001) discusses utopianism in the creation of New Zealand's current national identity. Whereas New Zealand's utopia was based on colonial plans, views of original settlers, later planned communities, and "social, economic and political movements (which put forward explicit designs for an improved New Zealand"), the native Maori seemed rather prominently to be excluded from that early vision. Similarly, Pitcairn has not benefitted from such insight or planning. As Sargent points out, the early plans for colonial New Zealand were essentially a reinvention of Britain, down to place names, "without the extremely rich or extremely poor," (3) a somewhat equalized community not unlike what Pitcairn is, if at a far smaller scale.

Settlement on Pitcairn predates colonial New Zealand by fifty years, and each was settled under distinct circumstances — Pitcairn afforded necessary features crucial to survival, New Zealand offered simply a better life. Not until after World War II did utopian ideals shift toward dystopia in New Zealand, with the arrival of an authoritarian government, big business, and a resulting class structure (Sargent 2001). In contrast, Pit-

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[65] For example, there are Pitcairners in New Zealand, Australia, England and the U.S.

cairn avoided large-scale development and the impact of "big business." Continuing to live in their isolated, egalitarian society, at least in comparison with New Zealand standards, Pitcairners maintain a utopian environment. How is it then that with definable standards for modern-day utopia present, and a demonstrated devotion with ties to their land, Pitcairn can continue to be viewed in such a negative light?

"Islands are Earth's crucibles and cradles, bridges and bonds," Steven Fischer writes in 2012 (6). Islands reside in the places of imagination and dreams; realities are generally rejected in favor of the myth. A. Grove Day contends that there are two distinct visions of the Pacific islands, the most common as "idyllic refuge for seekers of escape from the cares of a pedestrian Western life, and the more real vision which does not mask history" (Day 1987). Some of the struggles faced on Pacific islands throughout history include ethnic conflicts, war, cannibalism, and disease, all of which have been mentioned in a variety of literary sources, ranging from the records of early Pacific explorers the likes of Captain Cook, to scholarly publications of the twentieth century,[66] to the fictionalized novels of the twentieth century seen in the publications of authors such as Robert Louis Stevenson, Louis Becke, and James Michener. Yet the constructed images of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries endure.

That islands can be places of beauty, adventure, and romance is not disputed. However, constructed and romanticized visions of Polynesian paradise is what is marketed to tourists today in order to sustain the economy of the region, including modifications of landscapes and marketed images (Kahn 2011). Perpetuation of the paradisiacal myth

[66] For instance work in the subject of Pacific anthropology (Oliver 2002; 1989), Pacific archaeology (Kirch 2000; Weisler 1994; 1995; 1996) and Pacific history and culture (Diamond 1999; 2005).

that surrounds Polynesia allows for the maintenance of "a false image of the grim reality" (Day 1987). Where many islands have seen alterations in landscape (World War II, tourism development, economic opportunities), few places might be found that experienced a shift in image the likes of Pitcairn, including French Polynesia, which retains its idyllic stereotype in spite of tourism impacts and horrors now manifesting as a result of France's nuclear testing.[67]

Of all the Pacific islands, Tahiti is most closely tied to Pitcairn's cultural history — the source of more than half its founding population in 1790. Tahiti is (as are most other major island groups in Polynesia) still viewed in some capacity as a paradise, still marketed as such,[68] and with direct transportation.[69] While the idea that place has a role in the construction of human identity and ties to land, the image Pitcairn Island bears today was externally constructed and is vastly different from what the Pitcairners have historically reflected (Korpela 1989; Dixon & Durrheim 2000; Kana'iaupuni & Malone 2010; Kahn 2011). A more 'real' image of this place is likely somewhere in between.

During the trials, the islanders themselves presented conflicting images of island life. In response to the thought of the men going to prison: "...you might as well pick Pitcairn up and throw it away, because no one is going to survive" (Olive Christian to Marks 2008). Another woman during the trial claimed Pitcairn (as a place) to be "hell" (Allen 2013). Ten years after the beginning of the sexual misconduct trials on Pitcairn, island resident Meralda Warren calls Pitcairn "... a wonderful place. And we want it remem-

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[67] France actively conducted nuclear testing throughout French Polynesia until 1996. Recent findings show Tahiti was exposed to more than 500 times the accepted levels of radiation (Christafis 2013) and 30% of people working on the island of Moruroa (SE of Tahiti) have been stricken with cancer (Kahn 2011).

[68] View more than 9.9 million results on Google when pairing "Tahiti" and "Paradise."

[69] International airline Air Tahiti Nui, Hawaiian Airlines, Fiji Airways, or Air New Zealand for example.

bered as a wonderful place" (Allen 2013). An islander living off-island describes his island home with two words and a simple explanation: "peaceful and history, because that's where I come from" (Johnson 2013).

Miriam Kahn (2011) writes:

> Images of the Pacific Islands as a utopia were further fixed in the minds of Europeans with the mutiny on the HMS *Bounty* in 1789... and ever since, the name "Bounty" has reverberated with a sense of male adventure and freedom, with breaking the shackles of oppressive government on the high seas and finding sexual pleasures under the tropical palms. (Kahn 2011, 38)

Where the use of terms such as "rugged," "isolated," and "insignificant" (as seen in the works of Shapiro (1936), Howard (1983) and Marks (2008) among others) might once have lent much to the romanticized history of Pitcairn that Miriam Kahn speaks of, those are words that now connote the sinister. Today, publications often reflect little positive imagery pertaining to Pitcairn, with the exception of materials that come from the islanders themselves. There have been some rather neutral productions, for instance National Geographic videos[70] and recent scholarly articles: one regarding the Pitcairnese[71] language another pertaining to the ultimate fate of Fletcher Christian.[72] The image of Pitcairn constructed around, and possibly in spite of, its people, skews external perceptions and opinions of this place.

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[70] National Geographic video on diving off Pitcairn Island (Sala 2013) and the journal of an "explorer in residence" who visited Pitcairn (Howley 2012), and National Geographic's "Adventure" magazine (Synott 2007) featured St. Paul's Pool on Pitcairn as having "magnificent.... rock pinnacles that rise from the sea."

[71] Also known as Pitkern—a creole of Tahitian and English arising in 1790 with the founding population and still spoken on the Pitcairn and Norfolk islands. A recent article was submitted on the foundations of the Pitkern language at the Pitcairn Island Conference in 2012 titled the "Linguistic Landscape of Pitcairn Island" by Dr. Peter Muhlhausler.

[72] Remember that Christian is regarded as the most famous mutineer in history, "mutineer" of course being a negative implication. Dr. Roger Stuart-Andrews submitted a recent article on the fate of Fletcher Christian at the Pitcairn Island Conference in 2012.

Pitcairn evades the Polynesian stereotype. The Pitcairners have throughout history primarily affiliated with a British heritage and much less with Polynesians.[73] By geographic location, they are Polynesian and in step with the rest of Polynesia, are making serious attempts to attract tourism in line with the efforts of other Pacific Islands, despite legal issues of the past decade. Their defense attorney raised the question of whether Pitcairn was ever officially under British jurisdiction on behalf of the Pitcairners during the appeal process in 2006 (Marks 2008). Although it was unwaveringly determined that Pitcairn is indeed a British colony,[74] it raises the question as to the impact the opposite decision might have had on the fate of this island, economically, politically and with regard to the actual identity of the Pitcairners.

By definition, Pitcairners live on a Polynesian island, the region itself stereotyped as paradisiacal and idyllic (Kahn 2011). Yet it is evident that many view Pitcairn as anything but paradise. Although negative perceptions of place[75] have been voiced, there is a long-standing history demonstrating attachment to place by the islanders, and the present population is dedicated to presenting their island in the best light possible using the most modern technologies. The islanders have been trying to maintain a landscape comparable to that of their Polynesian neighbors for more than just the recent decade, however. This sentiment is conveyed in Pitcairn resident Tom Christian's statement to Ball (1973): "It's hard to build a Garden of Eden in this old world."

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[73] There are efforts being made to instruct children in Polynesian traditional arts, tapa making and culture. Several children bear Polynesian names (first or middle names), and a monument was recently erected on the island to the Polynesian women of the *Bounty*.

[74] "If the Crown says a certain territory is a British territory, it's not for the courts to question that." Lord Hoffman in Privy Council, London, 2006 (Marks 2009, 285).

[75] "Hell" from a Pitcairn woman in the trials of 2004 (Prochnau and Parker 2008).

The Tahitian proverb “The life of the land is the life of the people” seems appropriate when considering Pitcairn’s past. In the nineteenth century, with limited space and resources, Pitcairn could not compete with the islands still attracting western attention, including New Zealand, Hawai‘i and Tahiti as a supplier of goods or as a productive colony. Only the maritime saga of the mutiny on the *Bounty*, now 225 years ago kept Pitcairn in the minds of would-be tourists or historians, and later, studies pertaining to the geology and prehistory of the island were conducted (Carter 1967; Erskine 1999; Diamond 2005).

Marks states that until only recently Pitcairn was considered a “tropical paradise” (Marks 2008, 1). It is evident that the perception of Pitcairn as place began to shift from utopian perspective as early as the mid-nineteenth century, it is the socio-cultural concerns put forward in recent publications pertaining to the trials of 2004 now taint the image of Pitcairn to a level that may be difficult to overcome, in contrast to what New Zealand was able to do[76] (Sargent 2001). In the meantime, they remain a quintessential example of a people tied to their land under a constructed image. These conflicting images may continue to clash, as Pitcairners strive to promote their island to tourism for economic benefit as well as their home, against the ideas and opinions of media and journalists who seek to unveil hidden truths. Perhaps Abbamonte said it best: “Someone recently wrote a relatively unflattering book about Pitcairn called ‘Paradise Lost.’ I didn’t see it that way. I saw it more as a lost paradise” (2012).

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[76] Sargent discusses New Zealand’s Utopian construct beginning in the middle nineteenth century and the struggle to maintain an egalitarian society and work to bridge communication with the Maori people.

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Figures

2.1 “A Representation of the Attack on Captain Wallis in the *Dolphin* by the Natives of Otaheite” (Hawkesworth 1773). Courtesy, National Maritime Museum, Greenwich.

2.2 “The Death of Captain Cook” (Johan Zoffany 1795). Courtesy: National Maritime Museum, Greenwich.

2.3 “Two Tahitian Women” (P. Gauguin 1899). Courtesy, Metropolitan Museum of Art.

2.4 Map, Polynesian Triangle. Courtesy: wikicommons.org.

2.5 Screen shot, Pitcairn Island Tourism Webpage, 2014 (www.visitpitcairn.pn).

2.6 Screen shot, Personal Website of Islander, 2014. (www.young.pn/stay-with-us.html).

Appendices

A “Call for depopulation of Pitcairn,” *Southland Times*, November 6, 2004. Accessed November 19, 2012.

Chapter 3: Pigs, Culture, and Identity on Pitcairn Island: The Discovery of a Pig Mandible and its Significance

Introduction

Pitcairn Island is a high volcanic island in the South Pacific Ocean and is one of four islands in the Pitcairn Island group, including Ducie, Oeno, and Henderson. With a summit of 1,100 feet and almost entirely cliff-bound, Pitcairn is approximately two square miles in area. The descendants of the *Bounty* mutineers[77] and their Tahitian wives inhabit Pitcairn Island to this day. New Zealand administers Pitcairn, which remains an overseas territory of the United Kingdom. Pitcairn is considered one of the Pacific's twenty-five "Mystery Islands" with evidence of ancient Polynesian habitation where the fate of earlier populations is unknown (Bellwood 1979; Weisler 1996).

Pigs were long part of the Polynesian settlement of the Pacific, transported and maintained as both symbols of prestige and as food sources; as prolific breeders they were a constant source of protein (Oliver 1989). Found in the archaeological record throughout Polynesia, *Sus scrofa* is used in DNA studies[78] to support peopling models of the Pacific (along with linguistic and archaeological studies) to better illustrate colonization patterns. Moreover, interactions between pigs and humans provide insight into cul-

[77] The mutiny on the *Bounty* occurred in 1789 in the Pacific Ocean as a result of growing hostilities between Captain Bligh and the first mate of the ship, Fletcher Christian. Christian put Bligh and his faithful seamen off the ship and sailed back to Tahiti, where some of the sailors chose to remain. Christian resupplied the ship and later sailed from Tahiti with nine British mutineers, their Tahitian wives, six Polynesian men and three additional women. The group reached Pitcairn on January 23, 1790, burned the *Bounty* and intended to live out their days in anonymity, presumably because history holds that Fletcher Christian knew Pitcairn was mischarted by several hundred miles and the British would have great difficulty in find them.

[78] For example, Dr. E. Matissoo-Smith, University of Otago, has performed numerous studies regarding faunal/human interactions, presenting biological evidence that supports particular peopling models.

ture. While both species have a prehistory in Polynesia, with regard to Pitcairn Island contemporary interaction is of greatest interest.

The presence of pigs during the prehistoric occupation of other Polynesian islands and cultures is consistent with Pitcairn Island's, but is shrouded in mystery. *Sus scrofa* was present in the prehistory of Pitcairn,[79] evidenced in faunal remains according to Bellwood (1979), Weisler (1995), and Diamond (2005). Throughout Polynesia and other Pacific Islands beyond Southeast Asia, the remains of pigs are only found where pigs were previously introduced as domesticated animals. Pigs derive from Southeast Asia and are part of the Austronesian expansion into Polynesia. In an area where there are few or no native land animals,[80] pigs are a considerably more important resource in the Pacific Islands than in Southeast Asia, where there are many other animals, domesticated and wild.

In June 2006, while conducting roadwork on the northern side of the island, residents of Pitcairn uncovered a pig skull (Johnson 2006). Before the skull could be removed, a violent storm occurred, after which only the mandible remained (Figure 3.1). The mandible was photographed and extracted, although despite careful efforts and with instructions on the best techniques to remove the bone,[81] it broke into pieces upon removal, and was further destroyed in transport to the United States. Significant portions of

[79] Prehistory in the case of Pitcairn Island must be considered to be prior to 1790, as there are no written records to reflect anyone having visited prior to Carteret's discovery and naming of the island in 1767. Carteret did not visit the island.

[80] Oliver (2002) notes that the only land-based mammals living on tropical Polynesian islands prior to human colonization were fruit bats and even those were only found on the western borders of Polynesia in Tonga and Samoa. All other land mammals found in Polynesia were deliberate transports.

[81] Direction for extraction was received from Dr. Donald Hardesty, Department of Anthropology, and now Professor Emeritus at the University of Nevada, Reno.

bone and teeth were recovered and sent to the Anthropology Department at the University of Nevada, Reno to be processed and to have the artifact dated.[82]

Figure 3.1: Pig mandible *in situ*, Pitcairn Island, 2006. Source: Leslie Jacques, OBE.

The discovery and recovery of this mandible raises several issues. First, there is the basic question of antiquity. Throughout Polynesia, pigs were linked to human colonization (Oliver 2002). The current population of Pitcairn is comprised of descendants of the mutineers of the HMAV *Bounty*, their Tahitian wives, and several others Polynesians who traveled to Pitcairn Island in 1790. Those who arrived on the *Bounty* were not the first occupants of the island. The cultural remains of an earlier human settlement were immediately evident to the *Bounty* mutineers upon arrival in 1790 (Shapiro 1936). These

[82] It is perhaps worthy of note that the two most prominent teeth (the canine teeth) were missing from the package sent to the U.S. and attempts to determine the location of these teeth proved fruitless.

include several stone statues (said to resemble those of Easter Island) and petroglyphs on the southeast side of the island (Flenley and Bahn 2003). Additionally, stone tools, including axes, fish hooks, and spear points, which continue to be unearthed by residents, were discovered. The archaeological record shows Pitcairn was once a hub of Polynesian economic activity with a population of several hundred people (Diamond 2005). Ample food sources would have been necessary to support this population. In addition to fishing, Polynesians transported a variety of flora and fauna as food sources throughout the islands, pigs and rats among them. Although pigs are no longer on the island, the Polynesian rat (*Rattus exulans)* is still present today on Pitcairn as it is in many other Pacific locations.

The historical record of Pitcairn Island reflects an extermination of all pigs in 1886 due to religious influence, when all the inhabitants converted to Seventh-day Adventism (Shapiro 1936).[83] As such, greater significance is added to the discovery of the skull and its antiquity. Determining which Pitcairn settlement the remains were associated with (as a prehistoric remnant, or affiliated with the contemporary settlement) was of primary importance.

Pigs in the Prehistory and History of Pitcairn

The contemporary history of Pitcairn is documented and understood in general terms, despite the distortions and inventions of various Hollywood films. Nine British mutineers, with their seventeen female and male Polynesian (primarily Tahitian) companions, settled the island in 1790. All but one of the English mutineers died within ten years, most at the

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[83] Leviticus 11:7-8 NRSV illustrates the Old Testament proscription on consuming pork.

hands of the Tahitian men.[84] The first known outside contact took place eighteen years after the *Bounty's* arrival, in 1808, when an American whaling ship (the *Topaz*) stopped at the island. Young men in canoes greeted the *Topaz*'s crew, ending the mystery of whether any of the mutineers of the *Bounty* survived the mutiny.[85] The ship captain did not contact British authorities about the discovery of the mutineers until 1812. Thereafter, other ships began to visit the island, ending Pitcairn's isolation. The Pitcairners date their formal incorporation into the United Kingdom to November 30, 1838, when a new constitution was signed. Pitcairn became an official British Settlement nearly fifty years later under the British Settlements Act of 1887 (Govt. of the Pitcairn Islands 1999).

Loved by the Western imagination and a topic of many written accounts,[86] Pitcairn continues to attract publicity today. Pitcairn gained worldwide attention (including a series of articles in the *New York Times*) in 2004 when several island men were charged, brought to trial, and convicted of sexual crimes against Pitcairn women and girls (Marks 2008).

The prehistory of Pitcairn is far less famous, documented and understood. In his 2005 book *Collapse: How Societies Choose to Fail or Succeed*, geographer Jared Diamond devotes a chapter to the prehistory of Pitcairn and its nearest neighbor, Henderson Island. Diamond asks why these islands were settled and occupied and then, after centuries, the society failed. Referring to the archaeological work by Marshall Weisler (1994,

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[84] Approximately fifty descendants remain on-site to this day on the island.

[85] Captain Bligh of the *Bounty* survived the mutiny and returned to England to report it in March 1790, thus enlightening the world on his version of events. The British searched the Pacific for the *Bounty*, but to no avail and abandoned the search in August 1791, with the sinking of the HMS *Pandora* having been sent in search of the *Bounty* and to collect the remaining mutineers from Tahiti.

[86] Pitcairn has been the setting of several works of literature, and depicted in five cinematic productions and made-for-television portrayals of the mutiny on the *Bounty*.

1995, 1996) on both islands, Diamond uses the same arguments he applies to the collapse of Polynesians settlements on Easter Island (Rapa Nui), the Norse in Greenland, the Anasazi in the American Southwest: an initial heroic colonization of a marginal place followed by an overexploitation of resources (especially forests), unsustainable population increases, and, by implication, foolish choices including a failure to adapt to changing environmental circumstances.

Pitcairn and Henderson are literally one of the last regions of Pacific, and the world, to be reached and occupied by humans. Both are remote and marginal in terms of circumstances and resources found throughout the permanently settled Polynesian islands. According to evidence synthesized and interpreted by Diamond, Pitcairn and Henderson were first settled around the eighth century CE. Both, he assumes, were occupied continuously until after the fifteenth century with populations declining from a maximum of no more than one hundred on Pitcairn and of only several dozen in Henderson, dwindling to disappearance.

In contrast, Peter Bellwood (1979) suggests prehistoric Pitcairn was settled and abandoned more than once, the term “abandonment” suggesting inhabitants left the island rather than gradually perishing as Diamond claims.

However the depopulation occurred, according to Diamond, neither island was suitable for permanent occupation and both experienced ecological declines by means of deforestation and soil erosion. Each had particular resources (abundant sea life and birds on Henderson and fine basalt and obsidian used for tools on Pitcairn) to make them both viable in a wider inter-island production network. Trade was linked to the populous Mangareva Island, several hundred kilometers to the west, but only until Mangareva itself

went into ecological collapse, did its available resources become overburdened by human population (Diamond 2005). Once the original settlement disappeared, Henderson was never re-colonized. Today, Henderson is a protected UNESCO World Heritage Site, declared in 1988 for its status as a "pristine island ecosystem and its endemic plant and bird species" (UNESCO 2014). Pitcairn was eventually reoccupied in desperation by a group of refugees for whom its remoteness and elements of its other apparent liabilities[87] were assets. Pitcairn's population could never increase significantly on the basis of scarce local resources (Diamond 2005).

Today Pitcairn's population fluctuates between forty-five and fifty inhabitants, sustained in large part by outside support, though for much of its history it was largely self-reliant. Many residents have government jobs (at the post office, office of the secretary, general store, and museum) while others produce souvenirs they sell to the occasional cruise ship tourists. Islanders continue to fish, garden, and harvest local chickens and eggs for a fresh food supply, but the majority of their food is imported.[88] How long the *Bounty*-era Pitcairners would have survived in the absence of outside contact is unknown; survivors lasted eighteen years, until 1808, with little evidence after. The decline and collapse Diamond hypothesized for the prehistoric occupation of Pitcairn may or may not have taken place, but an eventual rediscovery of Pitcairn's *Bounty* crew and descend-

[87] These liabilities included an extreme landscape: a cliff-bound topography, rough seas and no natural harbor, which afforded a less than desirable stopping point for ships to refuel with fresh water and vegetation. Prolific forest allowed for the habitation of the island to go unnoticed by passing ships for decades.

[88] Supply ships arrive at the island four to six times per year, weather permitting, and bring frozen meats, canned vegetables, and supplies for the island store and personal orders made by the islanders. Freezers are able to be run on generators in the store, and in homes, during the hours power is supplied on the island.

ants was inevitable as time and increased transportation, industry development, colonization, and exploration of the Pacific accelerated.

***Sus scrofa* and Human Cohabitation on Pitcairn**

The evident presence of *Sus scrofa* during the prehistoric occupation of Pitcairn raises a further question of whether feral pigs might have survived on Pitcairn after the disappearance of the last earlier human inhabitants. Weisler (1995), who conducted archaeological research on the earlier occupation of Pitcairn and Henderson islands reports it is unlikely pigs could have sustained on Henderson, absent humans (399). The ecology of Pitcairn, though, differs from Henderson's[89] and *Sus* might have survived absent humans, yet there is no known evidence that pigs were present on Pitcairn when the *Bounty* arrived.

Pigs were important for Pitcairn's *Bounty* colonizers. Unaware of whether any pigs or other fauna would be present, those who arrived on the *Bounty* brought their own supply from Tahiti (Figure 3.2). Anthropologist Harry L. Shapiro (1936) reports historical records reflect the mutineers procuring 312 hogs, thirty-eight goats, and ninety-six fowl, in addition to a bull and a cow previously left by Captain Bligh from Tahiti before proceeding eventually to Pitcairn. How many of these animals remained alive through the voyage and went on to be introduced onto Pitcairn in 1790 is unrecorded, but a portion of the pigs, goats, and chickens survived the journey, were released or escaped, and formed feral populations (Folger 1808; Pipon 1814).

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[89] Pitcairn is a "high island" with abundant foliage and spring water. Henderson is a raised coral atoll largely unsuited for agriculture and with little fresh water.

Figure 3.2: Depiction of the early Pitcairn settlement, pre-1829. Women processing a pig on open fire. Unknown French publication dated 1837, private collection of author.

The C_{14} date obtained for the pig mandible recovered in 2006 clearly indicates that it is of the historic period, rather than an ancient one (Appendix B). C_{14} dates are inexact; the closer the dates are to the present, the greater the relative inexactness. In this case, four possible dates were associated with the sample, two of which predate the *Bounty* settlement of Pitcairn.[90] The prehistoric or mystery phase of the occupation of the island is assumed to have ended even earlier than the earliest possible date given for the age of the remains, 1530 CE (Diamond 2005). Feral pigs might have survived after early Polynesian populations collapsed on the island but the presence of pigs absent of humans is unlikely according to assumptions about the ecology and prehistory of the region (Oli-

[90] The calibrated C_{14} results and possible dates given for the remains are: 1530-1560 AD, 1630-1680 AD, 1740-1800 AD and 1940-1950 AD.

ver 1989). In addition, early historical records fail to mention that *Bounty* settlers observed pigs upon arrival to Pitcairn, and to date, no remains have been unearthed or dated that contradict this statement. Of the four possible dates provided in the C_{14} dating of the mandible, by deduction the period of 1740-1800 is the time in which the pigs were present on the island.[91] If correct, this suggests this pig likely arrived at Pitcairn with the *Bounty* and its settlers.

Pig Cohabitation and Elimination

The Pitcairn pig population (the descendants of pigs that survived the voyage to the island) of Pitcairn went extinct in 1886, after the inhabitants converted to Seventh-day Adventism[92] and eliminated them (Shapiro 1936). The extermination of the pigs[93] removed the temptation of eating pork; in keeping with the cultural materialist theory, the reason for eliminating pigs was perhaps pragmatic. According to accounts from the first outsiders to reach Pitcairn in the early nineteenth century, feral pigs had proliferated and become a nuisance, damaging household gardens (Pipon 1814). Laws were implemented to control pigs. For example, laws enacted on the island prior to 1850 include a provision for owners of land on which a pig had trespassed to keep the pig, or to collect damages from the pig's owner if he had caught the animal in the act of rooting or other property destruction (Shapiro 1936). Aside from their value as food, for a time the liability of pigs was offset by their sale or barter to ships that visited the island. With the decline of whaling and the arrival of ships in the latter part of the nineteenth century, pig trade values

[91] The mutineers arrived in 1790.

[92] Seventh-day Adventists follow prohibitions on eating pork, goats, and all but scaled fish and seafood.

[93] Mention of pig elimination is found in missionary records, Shapiro (1936) and Guide to the Pitcairn Islands (1999), all referencing religious restrictions.

diminished. Indeed, a question may be raised as to whether the islanders would have been as willing to convert to Seventh-day Adventism (and adopt pork proscription) if pigs had not become a liability.

This question is prompted by recent discussions of pig keeping ecology on small Pacific Islands. Patrick Kirch (2000) argues that at least under particular circumstances pig keeping is unsuitable on small islands. Kirch begins with observations made by Douglas Oliver (1989) that pigs in Oceania are costly in terms of effort and resources, requiring a greater expenditure of caloric energy than they return in the form of meat. Pigs were kept because humans liked to eat pork, valued pigs as objects of wealth and prestige, and used them for religious sacrifice rather than as an inexpensive or efficient calorie source. Pigs were expensive; effort needed be expended to pen them or, alternatively, to keep them fenced out of gardens. Humans must provide sufficient food, and the more intensively, land to sustain a pig population.[94] Pigs and humans in island environments consume much of the same food, which suggests that humans obtain far fewer calories by eating pigs than they would by eating vegetables they provide to pigs. In terms of energy exchange, the relationship is a matter of trophic competition rather than symbiosis or efficiency (Kirch 2000).[95]

Despite ecological inefficiencies, pigs were a fundamental and nearly ubiquitous part of human adaptation throughout Polynesia; inhabitants were generally able and will-

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[94] As the population began to increase on Pitcairn, larger gardens were required to provide for both human and pig sustenance. More natives working in more gardens equaled less space for domesticated pig keeping, yet more pigs were required to support a larger human population. Abandoning meat consumption and eating at the second tropic level would have resulted in a lower caloric output and necessary input.

[95] Kirch footnotes but does not otherwise discuss fishing or shellfish collecting, though these are a source of high-value protein foods throughout Polynesia that might partially offset the need for pork, if not its symbolic and political importance, although this resource was also impacted by religious conversion.

ing to pay costs of keeping them (occasionally in large numbers) in most of the permanently inhabited Polynesian islands, for instance Tahiti and Hawai'i. Kirch's concern is with places and circumstances in which this was not the case; specifically small islands where limiting conditions prevail. Kirch discusses Tikopia, Mangaia, and Mangareva, three islands where pigs were kept for long time periods throughout prehistory but eventually were deliberately exterminated. In all cases, conditions that he suggests led to the abandonment of pig keeping late in prehistory are, in addition to small size and relative isolation, high population density, intense competition for resources, and persistent internal social strife and/or warfare. While inhabitants may have identified their own reasons for eliminating pigs, the functional or ecological reasons involve these interrelated, underlying circumstances. Broadly speaking, this argument is reminiscent of Marvin Harris's (1974) well-known explanation of why "pig hatred" came about in the arid Biblical lands of the Middle East (36).

To what extent does the "pig hatred" theory fit with what appears to have happened on Pitcairn? Can Pitcairn be added to the list of islands that exemplify the conditions under which pork-loving islanders deliberately forego consuming pigs? On the basis of present evidence, it cannot be proven that Pitcairners eliminated pigs for any reason or motive other than a religious one, specifically because they embraced a version of Christianity that forbade pork consumption, even though a number of ecological circumstances noted by Kirch were present on Pitcairn at the time the islanders exterminated pigs.

Like the islands instanced by Kirch, Pitcairn is certainly small and remote -- the latter circumstance being one of the main reasons the island was chosen as a sanctuary by the *Bounty* mutineers. Kirch (2000) notes, "geographic factors posed significant con-

straints on economic production" (34). The size factor presumably limited flexibility, but the main consideration may have been a matter of crowding, especially agricultural density. The significance of remoteness is less obvious, but the implication is that the presence of nearby inhabited islands might have enabled an exchange of pigs or pork for other valuable raw materials or manufactured items, and therefore provided an incentive to keep and raise pigs.

Goats, Chickens, and Marine Life on Pitcairn

Other faunal resources were present on Pitcairn, specifically goats, chickens, and marine resources, which further complicate its ecological picture. *Bounty* settlers obtained goats and chickens in Tahiti, though in smaller numbers. As with pigs, questions remain as to how many goats and chickens survived the voyage; however it can be assumed that the numbers were smaller in both instances, due to being eaten during the voyage, if not succumbing to death. In the case of goats, an early nineteenth century account reports that some became feral and survived (Pipon 1814), and it is likely goats on the island today are their descendants, kept as a feral population on the uninhabited portion of the island known as Tedside. Although today goats are no longer consumed, they were a part of the natives' diet until 1953 (Sanders 1953**).** Similar to the pigs, goats proved problematic, as they were known to forage in gardens. Their numbers are now monitored and population control is enforced today, yet no efforts have been made to completely eliminate them. If goats were as destructive and reproduced as rapidly as pigs, it seems reasonable from human interests' perspective to suppose they would have been destroyed as well. But they were not and unless it was not possible to do so, it would seem the goats survived in

part because there was no strong religious motive for destroying them. A portion of the chickens introduced to Pitcairn survived, while others were brought in during subsequent time periods. Today most chickens are neither generally caged nor individually owned by particular households but are instead wild or semi-wild. They are captured and eaten and their eggs are collected, constituting a valuable resource. Nor do chickens cause garden damage that pigs once did and goats still do, though regulations were enacted to control responsibility for their keeping as well (Shapiro 1936)**.**

Fishing continues to be an important activity, but while fish are a valuable resource, this marine resource is more underutilized than in many other Polynesian islands,[96] for reasons including a comparatively small human population on a high island topography. In addition, since their religious conversion in 1886, the Pitcairners have accepted further dietary restrictions on seafood, specifically a religious taboo on eating shellfish, crab, lobster, shrimp, or any fish lacking scales, including most importantly sharks and rays.[97] These circumstances would seem to have made the decision to eliminate pigs more costly than on other islands. These costs were offset to an extent by the continuing availability of goats and chickens and particular fish.

Overall population density in relation to arable land is significant in the case of Pitcairn for the period between the introduction of pigs in 1790 and their elimination. By the middle of the nineteenth century, the islanders and colonial authorities regarded Pitcairn as overpopulated. Whether "overpopulation" was a matter of demographic reality or

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[96] As of 2014, efforts are underway to declare the waters surrounding the Pitcairn Island Group as a marine reserve, with 200-mile protective radius surrounding each of the four islands. This is primarily due to the "pristine reefs" affiliated with Ducie Island.

[97] Leviticus 11:9-10.

not is debatable but the perception was significant enough to lead the inhabitants to abandon the island. In 1856, the entire population (then 187) moved approximately 4,000 miles (6,200 km) across the Pacific and resettled on the much larger Norfolk Island, closer to the administering authorities[98] (Shapiro 1936). The move was not prompted by Pitcairners' desire to relocate to a less remote island home. Although not as remote as Pitcairn, Norfolk was deemed suitable in part because it no longer had other inhabitants and because it would enable the Pitcairn natives to continue to live in isolation. Nevertheless, the move to Norfolk Island was not permanent for all the Pitcairners. Ultimately discontented with their new land, two of the resettled families returned to Pitcairn in January 1859, followed by another group of in 1864. The total returning population within five years numbered forty-two. This population later began to increase, reaching a peak population of 233 by 1937.

A Pig Jaw and its Place

England delegated the administration of Pitcairn to Pacific colonial entities early in the nineteenth century, and it has changed hands three times over the two centuries, from Australia, to Fiji, and then to its present administering country, New Zealand. The cultural identity of a native population is certainly affected when administered by an outside entity, as is the case with many colonial projects throughout the world. As such, few if any influences from outside Pitcairn continued to link the island to Polynesia. Initially, when arriving on the *Bounty* and finding Easter Island-like statues (*moai*), the mutineers pushed them into sea, presumably under the direction of Fletcher Christian, who feared

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[98] Norfolk is 1500km NE of Australia, then the administrative authority over Pitcairn for England, then newly abandoned as a penal colony (Shapiro 1936).

they would be worshipped by the Polynesians if they were allowed to remain. When islanders embraced Seventh-day Adventist missionaries' persuasions a hundred years later, the natives already regarded themselves as Christians.[99] The acceptance of the taboo on eating pork and the extermination of all island pigs did not involve the abandonment of Polynesian traditions of ritual feasting, for exchange of such traditions had not been permitted to develop in the first place. It seems, therefore, that pigs became too costly, and getting rid of them was a practical step rather than a major cultural shift.

Worthy of note regarding the discovery of the pig skull is that it was "discovered" in the first place. The notion of discovery refers to the finding of something of possible significance. The skull unearthing in 2006 was almost certainly not the first instance in which pig remains have to come to light on Pitcairn, given the numbers of pigs once living on the island. Even if soil conditions do not favor preservation, several bones (and teeth) would survive and eventually become visible as a result of gardening and other ground disturbances. It seems most likely that pig remains have been previously encountered but were discarded or ignored because they had no meaning of importance. The discovery and recovery of the remains in this instance thus reflect changing cultural attitudes toward the past and its material embodiments on Pitcairn.[100]

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[99] Although never officially converted to Christianity, the founding population in 1790 was organized as a Christian population, based on the dominant British population of men, and the only source of reading material being the *Bounty* Bible. The only official religious conversion to have occurred on Pitcairn was to Seventh-day Adventism in the late nineteenth century.

[100] It must be acknowledged, what has taken place was not simply the result of local views and actions. As noted, the Commissioner from New Zealand was involved early on, and played a crucial role in the recovery, but he did not make the discovery and would never have known of it had he not been contacted. He was contacted because the islanders thought what they found was important enough to take the trouble of doing so. This decision marks a shift in values, or a growing affinity for Polynesian relations in conjunction to easier communications (contacting the Commissioner).

European Influence on Pitcairn's Culture

From the beginning, Pitcairn's European influence has been overwhelmingly dominant, which can be seen in the language, culture, and values of the Pitcairners. Although only one Englishman survived after the first ten years of the settlement (John Adams), he was important in efforts to create, preserve and transmit British identity, language, and culture. What this has ultimately resulted in is a strong British identity, surnames, the English language and Christianity. When Westerners rediscovered and began to visit Pitcairn in the early nineteenth century they were greeted at sea by young men who were skilled at building and handling canoes in the rough waters off the island and in catching fish, all part of their Polynesian cultural heritage. But the young men wore European clothes (or remnants of these) spoke fluent English, behaved with proper English manners and asked if these visitors knew their relatives back in England or Captain Bligh (Shapiro 1936). Regardless of the Polynesian basis of their survival, British identity was fostered over the next two centuries by visitors, colonial officials, and missionaries who brought with them Bibles, other books, and European clothing. Many of these outsiders took away *Bounty* remnants as souvenirs and acquisitions for distant museums, further instilling among Pitcairners the importance of preserving the *Bounty's* legacy.

Cultural Value and Identity

Pigs belong to the history of Pitcairn, but as elsewhere, the past is subject to reinterpretation in light of present developments. Pitcairn has had a small museum since the 1980s, which was rebuilt in 2005 and relocated into a new building behind its previous location in the Adamstown Square. The presence of a museum on Pitcairn is indicative of the is-

landers' desire to share their history. Today, Pitcairn Islanders are associated with the historic past and it is this history for which the island is most famous and for which tourists in small numbers[101] come to see on exhibition.

In 2014, the museum contains *Bounty*-related materials and creations the present population craft. A valued holding is a small collection of stone tools and other material remains from the Polynesian prehistory. While the museum collection emphasizes *Bounty* history, the presence of Polynesian artifacts indicates the settlement of Pitcairn was originally Polynesian. The curation of both *Bounty* and prehistoric Polynesian artifacts reflects a mixed or dual identity of modern Pitcairners as both Polynesian and European, pigs belonging to the Polynesian history and culture. More specifically, pigs were a part of Polynesian adaptation, including boat building, sailing, fishing, gardening and other practical activities that provided food and nobility. Descendants of the 1790 settlers continue to identify with British culture, yet an increased shift toward their Polynesian heritage is evident; this change likely fueled by recent legal challenges to Pitcairn autonomy.

Signs that the Pitcairners seek to reestablish their cultural identity and political situation are present. The question of whether Britain ever had authority over the Pitcairners arose in 2004 as a result of the scandal and ultimate court trials pertaining to alleged illegal sexual activities. High courts in London determined that Pitcairn was officially still a colony of England. This is significant, as was it found to be no longer under British control, the question of independence, and ultimately identity, would undoubtedly have come into play. With the closest populated Polynesian Island

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[101] In comparison to tourism statistics of other Polynesian islands in closest proximity; for example, Easter Island attracts more than 1,000 tourists per week, and the territory of French Polynesia welcomed more than 14,000 per month throughout 2012, an increase of more than 3.8% over 2011 (Worldbank).

(Mangareva) just 335 miles northwest of the Pitcairn Islands, Pitcairn could easily be adopted into the French Polynesian territory and likely benefit tourism opportunities in that region. Further affiliations with Polynesia are surfacing: a monument to the women of the *Bounty*, all Polynesian, was erected on Pitcairn in 2006. Several children now bear either first or middle names of Polynesian origin, and "culture days" are conducted at the school. "Culture days" often involve storytelling, lessons in Pitkern (the term for their language), and traditional cooking lessons.[102] An effort to reintroduce the art of tapa making[103] and teaching it to younger generations has begun. The founding population of women on Pitcairn made tapa (Figure 3.3) but abandoned the practice in favor of western clothing in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The tapa that is produced on Pitcairn today is displayed on the museum's website and is available for purchase as art. Perhaps worthy of note is the presence of *Bounty* imagery on the tapa produced, a blend of British history and Polynesian culture. *Bounty* memorabilia sells to tourists much more than Polynesian references. Strengthening ties to their Polynesian past through art and education, attempts to remember the language via "culture days," and a connection with Polynesia seen in children's names affords the opportunities to those inhabitants willing to bridge to the Polynesian heritage that has been suppressed in favor of the British culture for two centuries.

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[102] Children were taught the process of skinning and preparing breadfruit (a Pacific-based tree which bears a heavy, carbohydrate-rich fruit), and given language lessons in the culture day the author of this article attended during fieldwork.

[103] Tapa is a traditional Polynesian art form, in which bark from trees was stripped and processed until soft and pliable, and could be used for clothing, bedclothes, ceremonial or art purposes. Tapa is no longer used for daily clothing, but is still found in use in traditional costumes in many Oceanic locales. Most tapa is now produced for souvenir value.

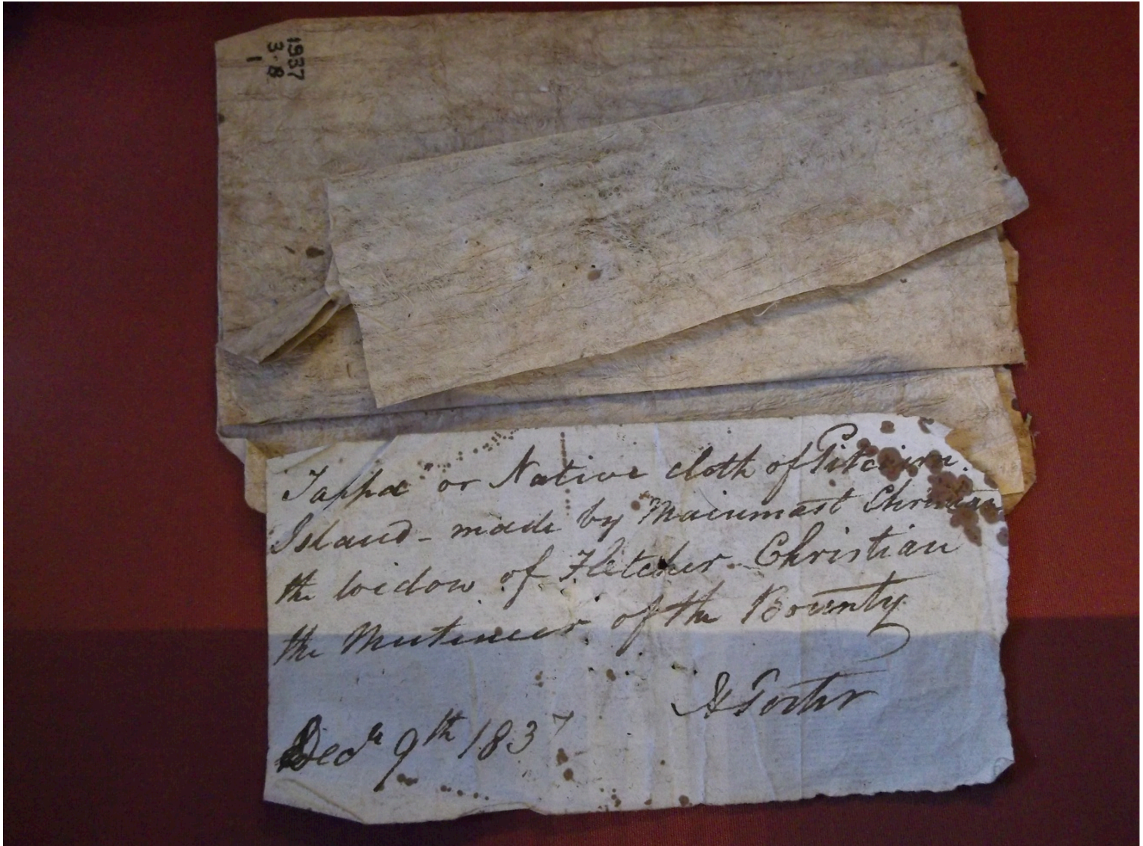

Figure 3.3: Tapa cloth made by Fletcher Christian's wife on Pitcairn Island. Courtesy, British Museum, Anthropology Department. Photo by author, 2013.

Perhaps stronger ties with other Polynesian islands could be identified in Pitcairn culture; that is, ones closer than New Zealand (considered to be the Western world), on the other side of the Pacific. In recent years, Pitcairn and French Polynesia interaction has increased, in the form of transport and shipping agreements and investigations into connecting with current tourism industries. In 2004, several Pitcairners took French lessons in an effort to better communicate with their relatively near neighbors. These developments form the context of the "discovery" of the pig skull, giving it more significance than it would have had in earlier years, making it a noteworthy element of Polynesian heritage. Influences from the outside world continue to be Western rather than Polyne-

sian. Pitcairners developed a creole language that has lasted the centuries, but this too is now disappearing as younger generations are learning and using Standard English as a result of the education system,[104] videos, the Internet, other media exposure, and the influence of governing authorities that have been British Commonwealth entities since the early nineteenth century. Natives of Pitcairn historically welcome passing ships with tourists, both as an economic opportunity for selling trinkets and souvenir handicrafts, and as a distraction from daily routines. One of the major projects planned for the island is a docking facility development that will improve a very difficult transfer between ships and island access, with the hope of increased tourism and dollars. When cruise ships visit the island it is not to see a remote and foreboding Polynesian outlier once home to a mysterious pre-*Bounty* population; rather, it is to see one of the most famous and romantic of all the colonial outposts of British adventure and maritime history. Museum development and the efforts now underway to regain the scattered material remnants of the *Bounty* play to such considerations.

The unearthing of a pig jaw amid drastic change on the island illustrates a shift in cultural values. The construction of a new museum to better house and display cultural materials is reflective of a shift in values, and the museum on Pitcairn is proving to be a bridge between its two pasts. The Pitcairners continue to donate stone implements unearthed during roadwork or gardening, adding items made by the current population and other historical *Bounty* artifacts, curios, and memorabilia. Surviving teeth and mandible

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[104] The educational system on Pitcairn has long been full of western appropriations, and generally follows an Anglo-American practice. Early in the nineteenth century teachers were imported teachers from Britain, as begun in 1828, and that continues today with teachers from New Zealand; older children participate in higher education correspondence work via Australia or New Zealand, and two have recently been enrolled in boarding schools in New Zealand.

fragments of the pig remains are being conserved, and will be returned to the museum to be displayed along with the photo of the mandible *in situ* on Pitcairn prior to its removal. Further analysis is being considered, including possible DNA studies done on the pig jaw found in 2006, to help further identify its place in history, and aid in depicting Pitcairn Island's famous legacy from an extended and broadened perspective.

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Figures

3.1 Pig mandible *in situ*, 2006, Pitcairn Island. Courtesy: Leslie Jacques.

3.2 Illustration, Pitcairn community, women processing pig. Pre-1829. Collection of author.

3.3 Tapa cloth, made by Fletcher Christian’s wife while on Pitcairn. Obtained by the British Museum in 1837. Photo courtesy of British Museum, taken by author, June 14, 2013.

Appendix B Calibrated radiocarbon results for bone specimen. Results by Beta Analytic Radiocarbon Dating Laboratory, Miami, FL. 2006.

Chapter 4: Negative Imagery of Pitcairn Island in Art, Literature, and Film

Islands take on form through geology, take on life through biology, and take on meaning through culture. — Steven Fischer (2012,7)

Introduction

Pitcairn, a remote island in the southeastern Pacific, is visited by few, but known to many as the home of the descendants of the *Bounty* mutineers. The mutiny on the *Bounty* occurred on April 28, 1789, but Pitcairners celebrate January 23, 1790, the date the *Bounty* burned to its waterline at the island, as the inception of their community, their culture, inaugurating their commitment to place. The burning of the *Bounty* marked a point of no return for the community of settlers who sought refuge from a world that would inevitably hunt them for their crimes (Barrow 1831; Shapiro 1936; Alexander 2003).[105] Born out of mutiny, the community on Pitcairn[106] endures, despite various environmental, political, and social challenges throughout its history.

The history of Pitcairn's community is amply documented in literature, film, and in art. These venues are the primary vehicles by which audiences have formulated an image of Pitcairn Island as place, and moreover, the sources from which viewers glean most knowledge, whether embellished or not. Humans use art, film, and literature as creative outlets to communicate with one another. These mediums allow creators to present a perspective, agendas notwithstanding, "solicit active collaboration" from their audience, and allow for interpretation (Stam 2004). The art, film, and literature pertaining to Pitcairn Island are subject to each author's perspective, and the audience's resulting interpretation

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[105] The H.M.S. *Pandora* was sent to search the Pacific for the mutineers; reaching Tahiti in 1791, Captain Edwards discovered fourteen of the *Bounty*'s crew, which he captured and imprisoned on his ship to return to Britain to be tried for their crimes (Barrow 1831; Alexander 2003).

[106] Population of resident Pitcairners as of February 2014 is 48 persons (Johnson 2014).

is skewing the island's image. "Image is about power. Those who can control the way a place is represented can control the place itself" (Borsay 2000, 7 in Barber 2008, 5). These interpretations may be harmful to the long-term image of Pitcairn Island.

There are many examples of whimsical interpretations, near-slanderous suggestions, if not perversely erroneous images of Pitcairn Island in the artistic representations, literary sources, film adaptations, and novels featuring Pitcairn that were written over the last century. Gleaning a sense of place true to Pitcairn Island is difficult; Pitcairn's remoteness restricts tourism and, as such, it is the constructed images that tend to stand undisputed. This article explores art, literature, and film's influence on the imagery of Pitcairn Island.

Pitcairn in Art

Geographer Yi-Fu Tuan (1979) writes, "Landscape, as a distinct concept ... is a fusion of disparate perspectives. To see landscape properly, different sets of data must be conjoined through an imaginative effort" (97). The genre of fine art known as "landscapes" was coined in the sixteenth century in Western Europe (97), and became more widely used for documenting explorations of the Pacific during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The Romantic Movement in the eighteenth century impacted many nineteenth century artists' to depict the people and places of the Pacific as lush, sensual, and exotic (Day 1987). Artists, intentionally or not, embellished their depictions of remote places, images that were largely undisputed due to the general inaccessibility to the region by average people during that time.

Polynesia provides the setting for a stereotypical paradise; Pitcairn situated within this region, however, is far from a utopia. Pitcairn is one of the smallest inhabited places on Earth, with an area of two square miles (Ball 1973). Eighty-eight of the 1,280 acres that comprise Pitcairn Island are considered flat ground, the rest of the island is cliff-bound, and has steep hills and valleys, no beaches, and thick, clay soils (Shapiro 1936). Yet settlers intentionally founded the village of Adamstown in 1790, and its residents successfully organized their community.

Figure 4.1: Pitcairn Island showing Bounty Bay and Village, Drawn by Rear-Admiral Marcus Lowther, Lieutenant H.M.S. *Portland,* Flagship of Rear Admiral Moresby 1850-1854. Courtesy, British Museum 2014.

Landscape productions convey what viewers see at a given time (Holdsworth 1997). Most landscapes depicting Pitcairn Island as the subject include the single village of Adamstown. Ships' captains and crews produced most of the artwork, and provide

what could be regarded as primary source reference as to the state of the community at a given time, however these primary sources contain inaccuracies. Because visitors came to the island so infrequently in the early nineteenth century, comparisons of the images produced were unlikely; rather, the images produced were taken as reality resulting in a skewed perspective of place.

Figure 4.2: Photo of Pitcairn Island from similar perspective as described by Lowther. Photo by author, 2004.

For example, Lowther (Figure 4.1) depicts the location of the village community accurately, but alters the physical landscape by removing known stands of trees on the north face of the island.[107] The artist most likely omitted the trees in order to illustrate the location of the village, recording it for historical purposes; however, the true image of the island that spectators viewed from the sea is most definitely altered (Figures 4.2 and 4.3).

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[107] Early records (Beechey 1825) describe the village of Pitcairn being completely hidden from view and the dense foliage present on the island still today is well documented throughout history.

Figure 4.3: Adamstown, north face, central portion of Pitcairn Island. Four structures can be seen largely due to their white surfaces. Photo by author, 2004.

One of the most notable descriptions of the community of Adamstown on Pitcairn in early historical records is by Captain Beechey (1825), who mentions the village could not be seen from the sea, well hidden behind large stands of trees, and that Fletcher Christian used to climb to what is now called "Christian's Cave" (a lookout above the village) to watch for passing ships (Shapiro 1936).

> In clearing the space that was allotted to the village, a row of trees was left between it and the sea, for the purpose of concealing the houses from the observations of any vessels that might be passing, and nothing was allowed to be erected that might in any way attract attention. (Beechey 1825 in Shapiro 1936, 54)

As such, Lowther (Figure 4.1) erroneously depicts the village on a rolling hill, idyllic compared with the reality of this high-island landscape, replete with steep hills and deep valleys, hidden from ocean view today. In contrast, Admiral Fanshawe's depiction

(Figure 4.4) is a more accurate representation of the island.

Figure 4.4: Pitcairn Island; Captain E.G. Fanshawe, August 12, 1849.[108] Courtesy of National Maritime Museum, Greenwich, London.

Sketches from the 1849 visit of Admiral Fanshawe to Pitcairn Island (Figure 4.4) depict the island landscape and only mention the village on an affiliated note.[109] Similarly, Captain (Sir) John Barrow's work in 1831 includes several hand-drawn scenes of various Polynesian or historical scenes by Lt. Col. Batty. Of these, only one pertains to Pitcairn. This drawing by Lt. Col. Batty[110] depicts the island and its village fairly accurately (Figure 4.5), although Batty used original sketches by Lt. Col. Smith,[111] in 1825 as

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[108] Artist notes on attached label on artwork "Island's height 1,200 feet, village is on the green patch about 500 feet above the sea" (Beasley Collection, Anthropology Department. British Museum).

[109] Footnote is present in collection of the National Maritime Museum, Greenwich, and is attached to the artwork.

[110] Lt. Col. Batty was Barrow's son-in-law, a British army officer, and a renowned artist of his day. Batty was a member of the Royal Society, an early version of Britain's Academy of Sciences, and does not appear to have actually visited Pitcairn.

[111] Lieutenant Colonel Smith produced sketches of islands under British Captain F.W. Beechey of the H.M.S. *Blossom,* which visited Pitcairn in 1825 during a three-year expedition to the Pacific. (Beechey 1825).

reference. This illustration shows early Adamstown[112] enclosed within the stands of trees, as described in historical references, a setting that remains largely unchanged today (Figures 4.3 and 4.6.)

Figure 4.5: Pitcairn Island community (Adamstown); Lt. Col. Batty, 1831.

[112] Adamstown is the capital and name for the collective settlement on Pitcairn.

Figure 4.6: Several buildings on Pitcairn, shrouded by trees. Photo by author, 2004.

Book-jackets and cover art further contribute to Pitcairn's skewed sense of place. Cover art on books "has become increasingly important to sales" by including images (photographic or artistic) that evoke and promote the contents within, designed to "pique reader interest" (Heller 1995, 7). The following cover art accompanying modern literature pertaining to Pitcairn are examples of skewed representation of place in art. The two examples shown in Figures 4.7 and 4.8 at first glance appear representative of Pitcairn, yet each contains errors. Nordhoff's and Hall's 1934 jacket (albeit the jacket of a historical fiction publication) shows the *Bounty* sitting in a large bay from an opposite view, although no such bay is really present at Pitcairn. The prominent waterfall is likewise absent from the island (Figure 4.7). Figure 4.8 shows what is presumed to be the *Bounty* resting off Pitcairn's shore; however, the many boats in the foreground give cause for

question. According to historical records, the *Bounty* had one cutter,[113] and it was used to set Captain Bligh and his crew adrift following the mutiny on April 28, 1789 (Bligh 1936). Pitcairn is recorded to be uninhabited at the time of the *Bounty*'s arrival in 1790. The presence of the many boats in Figure 4.8 signifies that this is either not Pitcairn, but possibly Tahiti. In contrast, many descriptions of the Tahitians greeting (or attacking) eighteenth and nineteenth century visitors exist (Figure 4.9).[114] If the artist meant the heavily boated seascape to represent Pitcairn Island, it is presented erroneously. While many elements of the landscapes depicted are consistent with Pitcairn's landscape,[115] both of these representations afford the casual reader with an inaccurate perspective of the island.

Figure 4.7: Nordhoff/Hall 1934.

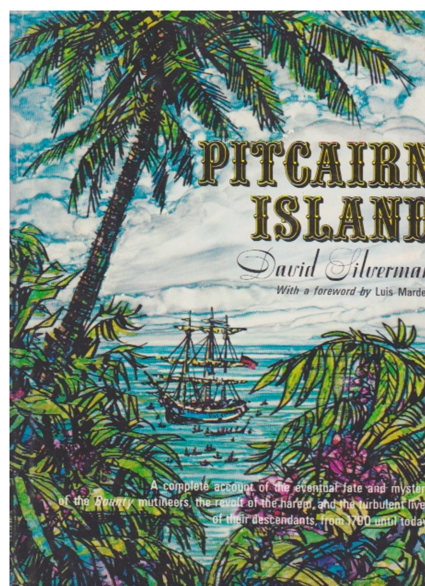

Figure 4.8: Silverman 1967.

[113] A cutter is a small boat a larger ship could use most often to transport goods, crew, or passengers from ship to shore.

[114] This image appears in Hawkesworth's 1775 publication on Cook's voyages, and is entitled "A Representation of the Attack on Captain Wallis in the *Dolphin*, by the Natives of Otaheite" (Barrow 1979, 14).

[115] Physical features such as palm trees, mountainous landscape, a rocky shoreline and a sense of lush, verdant foliage can be gleaned from these illustrations.

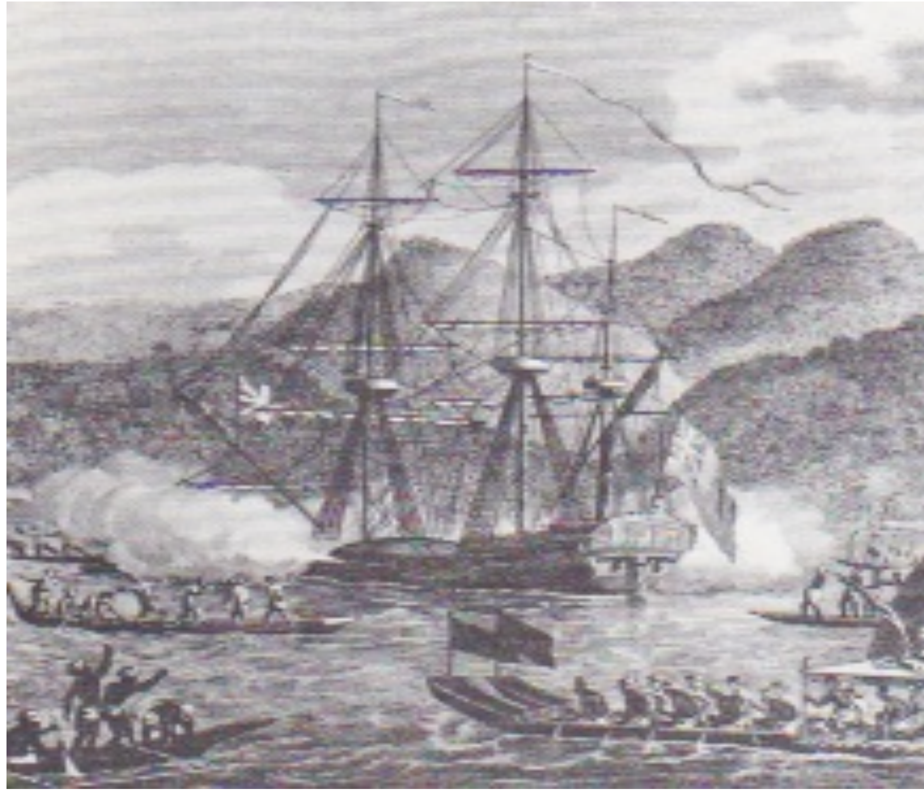

Figure 4.9: “Attack on Captain Wallis in the *Dolphin*” Hawkesworth 1773. In Barrow 1979.

There is a power to using photography on a book jacket to afford a sense of place (Figures 4.10, 4.11). The use of photography brings a sense of realism to the viewer. Neither image in the following examples depicts Pitcairn in a pleasant light; Figure 4.10 with a looming cloud over the island and paired with the word ‘serpent’ creates an ominous feeling based on an image that may or may not have been digitally manipulated. Similarly, the cover in Figure 4.11 with mist and dark gray coloring of the entire image leaves the reader with a negative representation. Ironically, the building on the cover is the former schoolmaster’s[116] house. To anyone who might know this building, the “dark se-

[116] The teachers in the Pitcairn Island School have historically been off-islanders, most often from New Zealand, Australia or England.

crets" in the book have nothing to do with teachers or that particular building.[117] As Tuan (1977) writes, "place achieves reality when our experience with it is total" (18). In this regard, none of the artistic presentations here depict reality, as the results were all subject to the artists' skill, intent, and perspectives.

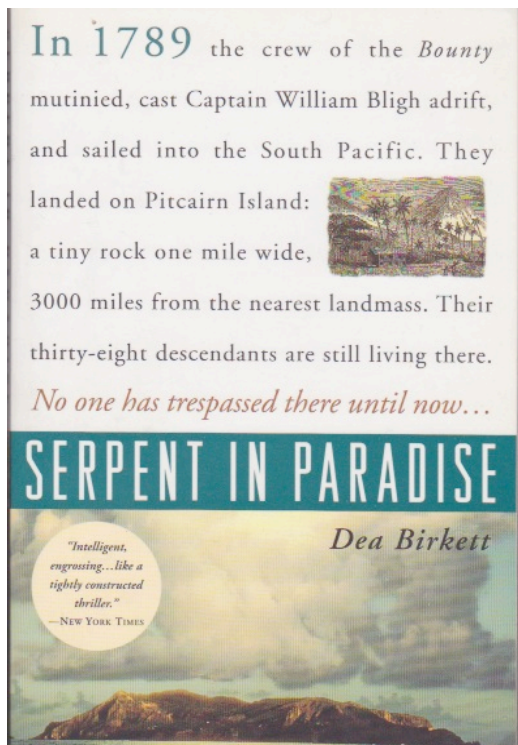

Figure 4.10: Birkett 1997.

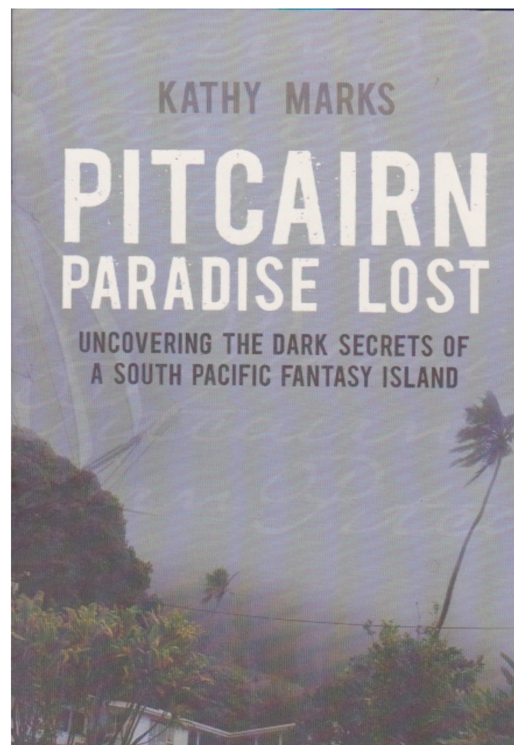

Figure 4.11: Marks 2008.

Literature

There are assorted publications across various genres of literature with widely divergent degrees of accuracy pertaining to Pitcairn Island.[118] Authors commonly mention the geography of Pitcairn, whether as a primary focus (as in a travel essay or travel book), a background setting (fictional publications), or most recently as a present-day fortress of

[117] Mark's book covers the "Pitcairn Sex Trials" of 2004.

[118] The Guide to Pitcairn (1999) states, "over 2000 books and articles have been written."

sinister secrets (non-fiction reporting on the sex trials of 2004). Rarely do writers describe Pitcairn in a positive manner; rather the adjectives they use help construct an unwelcoming if not hostile landscape and image.

The materials discussed in this article are a representation of the literature currently in mainstream access (rather than nineteenth century historical records), which the mainstream public is more likely to access, availing the average reader to the agendas and perspectives of the various authors. Perspectives and agendas of authors, coupled with the remoteness of the island afford the reader very little freedom for objective opinion.

Although a variety of media has immortalized the *Bounty*, literature has comprehensively covered its story,[119] in narrative mutiny recounts, travel essays, magazine articles, and historical fiction. Authors take great liberties in some cases, and in others simply the etic perspective of the author leaves the reader with an incomplete or inaccurate image of the island or its legacy.

There is little descriptive narration in any literature that leaves a reader excited at the thought of experiencing what Pitcairn's geography offers. Rather, literature commonly makes reference to the island's severe and extreme topography and remoteness.[120] Herbert Ford (2012), regarding the reasons for ships stopping historically at Pitcairn, writes: "They have come in spite of Pitcairn's isolation, her tricky ocean currents, her ofttimes lethal surf and her sudden, southeasterly gales..." (2012, 1). He continues, "Captains, crews and passengers have been drawn at least as much by a wordless something

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[119] Cinematic portrayals of the Pitcairn saga are adaptations from literary sources, with the exception of a few documentaries produced.

[120] The earliest description of the physical geography of Pitcairn Island is found in historical records, the first in the written accounts of British explorer Philip Carteret, 1767.

more - an indefinable compound of loneliness, fame and mystique found nowhere else in as concentrated a form as on this minuscule isle" (Ford 2012, 3). Ford touches on the island's original allure: its isolation.

History reflects the notion that Fletcher Christian[121] was aware the island was mischarted and was said to have set his mind on finding Pitcairn in an attempt to hide from the British (Salmond 2011). The mutineers were presumably seeking both isolation and refuge, but their experience in the Pacific islands would certainly have given them perspective; sustainability and natural amenities of the island must have influenced their decision to call Pitcairn their new home; these features part of other similar Polynesian landscapes. Yet the most famous literary version of the *Mutiny on the Bounty* (1934) depicts Pitcairn as a foreboding place, more of a prison than a paradise. *Pitcairn's Island* by Nordhoff and Hall (1934), is the longest published (fictional) account of the historic event, and is still available after eighty years for purchase in print and now electronic versions. This publication describes the physical geography not as utopian, but rather uses an imagined fear and skepticism of the settlers to depict the landscape. In the fictional voices of the historical figures, readers hear a narrative description of the island in their observations and concerns regarding their new home early on in the novel:

> An ill place!' said Tetahiti…. No man could climb out, though a lizard might. The southern coast of the island was iron-bound everywhere, set with jagged rocks offshore. Directly before them rose a steep, heavily wooded slope, the broken-down remnant of what must once have been a wall of rock... they…made their way with difficulty through the dense forests and vine-entangled thickets.[122]

[121] Christian, leader of the mutiny was responsible for locating their eventual destination.

[122] Nordhoff and Hall 1934,16-41

Similarly, Kingsolving (1996) depicts the geography of the island as treacherous and unwelcoming in his novel, *Mister Christian: The Further Adventures of Fletcher Christian, the Legendary Leader of the Bounty Mutiny*. Here, Pitcairn's geography is "... a lush but forbidding rock of an island, bound up from the ocean by its high cliffs, traversed by spiky ridges, the main one, Gannet's Ridge, running the island's length from east to west." The features authors describe in these works are physically present on the island.[123] However, while the "forbidding" landscape may lend itself as an effective description and therefore a vehicle to carry the plot, each author fails to describe the more habitable areas of the island, satisfied instead to rely on words such as: rock(y), steep, spiky, ridges, cliffs, dense, and entangled, among others. These words are not reflected in figures 4.12 and 4.13.

Figure 4.12: Pitcairn Island. Site of Thursday October Christian's home, razed in 2004. Photo by author, 2004.

[123] Pitcairn is known to experience rough seas, is cliff-bound with rocky shores and extreme hills and steep valleys. However, the focus solely on these features is to ignore the more habitable areas of the island.

Figure 4.13: Pitcairn Island, radio tower. Top, central portion of the island. Photo by author, 2004.

McDermid's 2006 fictional work, *The Grave Tattoo,* and Rinaldi's 2004 *Mutiny's Daughter*[124] build on the myth that Fletcher Christian viewed Pitcairn as an emotional prison and equate his personal struggles with the landscape. Having been only twenty-four years old at the time of the mutiny, Christian presumably could not face the prospect of living another half-century or more confined to Pitcairn's restrictive two square miles. He fled as a nautical hitchhiker on the first ship (although historically undocumented)[125] that arrived at Pitcairn post-mutiny and pre-discovery, between 1790 and 1808.[126] History records Christian as being a deeply emotional man who struggled to balance duty and ob-

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[124] Juvenile historical fiction.

[125] See Stuart-Andrews (2012), Alexander (2003).

[126] Christian is purported to have been seen in England by fellow mutineer Peter Heywood in 1809 (Ball 1973), (Alexander 2003).

ligation with ethics and morals (Bligh 1936). Following the mutiny, Christian found himself leader of the new community on Pitcairn and historians note him (initially) as being respected by both crew and Polynesians alike.[127] Likely drawing from these early descriptions, McDermid and Rinaldi construct Pitcairn's image, reflective of Christian's remorse and personal struggles over the ramifications of his mutinous actions; he was engulfed in a personal, inescapable Hell.[128] The sense of place attributed to the island thus becomes a prison, in every way a remote island landscape can afford. While Rinaldi alludes to Fletcher's escape from Pitcairn pre-1808 (taking his daughter with him), she illustrates the idea that the child is tied to the land (Pitcairn) depicted in the child's longing for Pitcairn as she grows up in England. Her nostalgia for Pitcairn is conveyed with her remembrance of Pitcairn as a long-lost paradise, a feeling imprinted on her at birth. This contrasts her father's (purported) view of the island as a prison he sought to escape with his child. The child's attachment is reminiscent of geographer Yi-Fu Tuan's (1977) argument that places are centers of value, and humans can become attached to places despite limited experiences—a concept Rinaldi effectively, if not unintentionally, illustrates.

Non-fiction or travel-essays lend a personal and as such, a more believable description of the island. For instance, British author, Dea Birkett, wrote a travel essay about her journey to Pitcairn, *Serpent in Paradise* (1997), based on her yearlong experiences on Pitcairn in 1994. In her nonfiction account, she narrates her co-existence among the Pitcairners. Although it is a travel essay, it is largely ethnocentric and evokes a sense

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[127] As noted in Beechey (1825), Bligh (1936) and Shapiro (1936).

[128] Bligh recorded Christian's last words to him as: "Captain Bligh, - that is the thing; - I am in hell - I am in hell!" (1936).

of pity for her experiences on the island. Among very few, a positive physical description of the island is:

> Captain Beechey's chart of Pitcairn is pinned up above my desk. Because it is only of the island, without the surrounding sea, it disguises Pitcairn's single defining feature – its isolation. (Birkett 1997, 290)

The book jacket reads: "one woman's pursuit of an elusive dream... a sharply observed account of the darker side of Utopia." While stopping short of labeling Pitcairn a dystopia, the description of the apparently futile search for Utopia leaves the reader with the idea that the island is anything but Paradise, if its single defining feature is isolation. The title itself, *Serpent in Paradise*, can be viewed as a play on the author's experience on the island.[129] Not only is this book a negative account of Birkett's experiences on the island, it does not lend the reader any sort of comfort that their own experiences may be different and projects the notion that the author escaped the island having barely eluded emotional abuse and physical violence. The book ends with the author's nostalgic attempt to sort through the mental images she has and regains the image of Paradise she started her journey with (alluding paradise is lost). The negative experience and lasting negative imagery in this publication does not afford Pitcairn any chance of redemption in descriptions of the culture or physical geography of the island.

Similarly, in 2008, Kathy Marks composed *Lost Paradise: From Mutiny on the Bounty to a Modern-Day Legacy of Sexual Mayhem, the Dark Secrets of Pitcairn Island*. Marks, a professional journalist, relates on the back cover:

> Pitcairn Island – remote and wild, home to the descendants of the *Bounty* is a South Pacific Shangri-La, shrouded in myth, but also as the world would discover

[129] The presence of the author on the island, followed by the publication of the book in 1997 caused a great deal of upset to some of the islanders; in this way the author becomes the serpent.

> a place of sinister secrets. In this riveting account, she uncovers a society gone badly astray, leaving lives shattered and codes broken: a paradise truly lost. (Marks 2008)

This description makes an effort to associate the island with paradise, using the term "Shangri-La," but associates the residents themselves with a dark image. Marks' analysis of Pitcairn as place culminates by comparing the island to William Golding's *Lord of the Flies*,[130] stating that Pitcairn is a "cautionary tale" after stating in the first sentence of the book that Pitcairn was "until recently considered a tropical paradise" (Marks 2008, 1–4). Among several reviews, one describes this publication as revealing "an incredible litany of evil on a little island we thought was Paradise" (Parker 2009). Where Parker extracted his assumed image of paradise with regard to Pitcairn is of interest, however his point in noteworthy: a publication such as this is indicative of the potential impact of the written word on a place.

Authors have continued in recent years to add to the construction of negative imagery of Pitcairn, a representation that the islanders attempt to counteract. Including the work most closely tied to their history, *The Mutiny on the Bounty,* by definition has a negative connotation due to its association with the crime of mutiny. Titles such as *Lost Paradise*, *Pitcairn: Paradise Lost*, *Fragile Paradise, Serpent in Paradise,* and *Pitcairn: Children of Mutiny* reinforce negative imagery; yet have proven successful and attractive enough to sell books. Magazine articles and Internet publications have similarly grasped at Pitcairn's dark imagery. Articles with titles such as *Vanity Fair*'s "Trouble in Paradise" (2008), *National Geographic*'s "Rock in a Hard Place" (2007) and Internet news cover-

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[130] *Lord of the Flies s*peaks to "human nature," suggesting that in the absence of organized rule, humans will descend to a savage state.

ing the "sex trials" of 2004 provide the average reader no clear sense of place. One can deduce negative imagery through the journalists' word choice (e.g. trouble, trials, fragile, lost, serpent and sex). More neutral titles include Trevor Lummis's 1997 book, *Pitcairn Island: Life and Death in Eden*, Caroline Alexander's *The Bounty* (2003), and Glynn Christian's *"Mrs. Christian: Bounty Mutineer"* (2011).

In contrast, Pitcairners' written descriptions convey a paradisiacal image, focusing instead on the beauty of the flora and views from the island. For example, "The island was lonely, inaccessible, uninhabited, fertile and warm, it exceeded Christian's highest hopes," "Pitcairn enjoys a sub-tropical climate," and "Bob's Valley, which by night smells of the strong, sweet scent of the Queen of the Night flower," and "Pitcairn Island is remarkably fertile and productive and its relatively benign climate allows a wide range of tropical and temperate crops to be grown" (Govt. of Pitcairn 1999, 6). Additional Pitcairners' publications project a positive image of their history: Pauline Reynolds (2008) writes regarding the initial settlement in 1790:

> The men built houses and fences and dug out plantations, the women began making much needed 'ahu.[131] Out of this mélange of customs.... a new culture was born" and "there was one constant. The sound of women. Women singing, dancing, cooking... weaving, loving... (2008, 10)

Betty Christian presents perhaps the most neutral assessment of Pitcairn Island as a place in the forward of her cookbook (2008): "Pitcairn Island is a land of contrasts and conflicting experiences." This sentiment is explained by Tuan's assertion that "no two social groups view their environment in the same way" (1990, 5).

[131] 'Ahu is tapa or bark cloth, commonly made and used throughout Polynesia.

Furthermore, the book *1000 Places to See Before You Die*,[132] does not list any of the islands of the Pitcairn group.[133] Perhaps the lack of access, no beaches, and nothing substantially attractive on the island from a western perspective warrants Pitcairn's exclusion understandable. Nevertheless, among the islands in Polynesia one is suggested to see before dying are the islands of Aitutaki and Rarotonga (Cook Islands), eight of the Fijian Islands, the Marquesas, Society Islands and the Tuamotu Islands, many possessing similar topographic or physical features to Pitcairn. The three points that mark the Polynesian Triangle are noted as must-see places: New Zealand, Easter Island, and the Hawaiian Islands. Thus, according to this book, most island groups within Polynesia have something worthwhile to visit, due to historic interest, recreational opportunities, natural beauty, flora and fauna, and cultural significance. Notably absent is the Pitcairn Island group, with its unique history and legacy, a variety of Polynesian and *Bounty*-related artifacts displayed both throughout the island and in a new museum,[134] considerable natural history and endemic species, one of its islands named a World Heritage Site in 1988 (Henderson Island),[135] and international efforts to establish the world's largest marine reserve in the waters surrounding the Pitcairn island group (Sala 2013). In stark contrast, Schalansky's (2010) inclusion of Pitcairn in the recent *Atlas of Remote Islands: Fifty Islands I have Never Set Foot on and Never Will* further solidifies a negative image for Pit-

[132] Schultz 2010.

[133] The Pitcairn group of islands includes Pitcairn, Ducie, Oeno and Henderson; only Pitcairn is inhabited.

[134] Museum built in 2005.

[135] Inducted as an atoll possessing ecology largely untouched by humans and notable ten plants and four birds endemic to the island (UNESCO 2013).

cairn in popular literature, implying this island (among forty-nine others) is not worth visiting.

A lone contrast to the previously mentioned materials is found in Ken Jennings'[136] book *Maphead* (2011). Jennings recounts a conversation between himself and a man who claims to have purchased a house on Pitcairn, his dream "for more than seventy years" (Jennings 2011, 152). While there is information available on the island's travel website regarding immigration, research conducted prior to fieldwork in 2004 on historical land laws, and knowledge of immigration to Pitcairn to this point of the island made the reporting of this scenario seem questionable.[137] My attempts to verify this account (buying a house on Pitcairn) resulted in laughter and incredulity from the islanders themselves, as there are no homes available for purchase on Pitcairn.[138] Inquiry to Mr. Jennings[139] resulted in a confirmation of his research notes and a guarantee that he did not misquote the information published in his book. The buyer's view of the island as a dream location is significant, but ironic because it is impossible to buy a home on Pitcairn.

Film

"Film's depiction of the American West influenced and continues to influence how Americans perceive the American West," (Hausladen 2003, 296). This idea might be equally applied to Pitcairn's history, as film and popular literature are easily accessible to

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[136] Of NBC television's "Jeopardy" fame, winner of more than $2.5 million dollars on seventy-four episodes.

[137] Original research pertaining to land tenure and ownership, in addition to knowledge of immigration to the island gave reason to question this statement. Only six people previously unaffiliated with or with no pending duty or obligation to the island have immigrated to Pitcairn in more than 220 years, and only two of those six lasted longer than a two-year stay (PIA 2013).

[138] All homes are used or maintained for others while off island.

[139] Personal communication, January 13, 2012.

the general public and largely left to interpretation, damaging the island's image. Polynesian islands are often depicted on film in a romantic, idyllic light,[140] yet the most famous facet of Pitcairn's history, the mutiny on the *Bounty*, is what is revisited in various retellings, thereby constructing an unrealistic perception of this Polynesian island. Christina Kennedy (1997) writes, "According to postmodern social theory, everyday experiences are not immediately felt, but instead are re-presented to us. Re-presentations thus become both models for social interactions and for our experiences of place" (38). In this way, film producers re-presented the history of Pitcairn no less than five times[141] in large-scale productions. Although varied in aesthetic norms of the period, each acts to reinterpret history and to present an erroneous image of Pitcairn.

Five feature-length films were made concerning the mutiny on the *Bounty*, all during the twentieth century. The surviving films include: the silent film, *In the Wake of the Bounty* (1933), starring Errol Flynn; the Academy Award-winning Best Picture, *Mutiny on the Bounty* (1935), starring Clark Gable; Marlon Brando's 1962 version of *Mutiny on the Bounty;* and *The Bounty* (1984), starring Mel Gibson and Anthony Hopkins. Worthy of note: none of the films were filmed using Pitcairn's landscape, only two mention the island at all,[142] and all of them contrast with historical records on particular details.

The mutiny on the *Bounty* saga is fundamentally based on a negligent captain's mistreatment of his ship's crew, resulting in the crew's revolt. Filmmakers overlook ex-

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[140] Consider *South Pacific* (1958, 2001), *Hawai*i (1966), *Kon-Tiki* (1950, 2012), *Six Days Seven Nights* (1999), *Forgetting Sarah Marshall* (2008) and all the *Mutiny on the Bounty* films (1933, 1935, 1962, 1984).

[141] A fifth (silent) film, *Mutiny of the Bounty* (1916) was lost to history.

[142] The other films show the *Bounty* arriving at an island, but do not reveal the name with the exception of the 1962 version. The 1935 version calls the island "Pitcairn's Island," the original name for the island given by British captain Carteret in 1767.

ternal geographic elements when constructing the narrative of these films. The impact of the Tahitian culture and landscape over a six-month period on the British sailors may have fueled the mutiny, a point Bligh supported later in life (Bligh 1936). Describing the "handsome, mild and cheerful" women, and paired what he described as promises of "large possessions" by the chiefs to the *Bounty* men if they stayed, Bligh relates:

> Under these, and many other attendant circumstances, equally desirable, it is now perhaps not so much to be wondered at, though scarcely possible to have been foreseen, that a set of sailors, most of them void of connexions,[143] should be led away. (Bligh 1936, 176)

Many men acquired 'wives' on the island, engaged in traditional tattooing, and began learning the language. Forced to leave their paradise, the notion of spending another year on the *Bounty* in return voyage to England, coupled with an overbearing captain was enough to fuel mutiny. Upon their return to Tahiti, sixteen mutineers chose to stay, but eight opted to leave with Christian, stocking the *Bounty* with their 'wives,' six Polynesian men, three additional women, and an infant girl,[144] abandoning Tahiti in search of anonymity and finding freedom on Pitcairn (Shapiro 1936). Given Tahiti's role in the mutiny, and understanding that half of Pitcairn's heritage stems from the Tahitian women who left in the *Bounty* with the mutineers in 1789, Tahiti is important to depict in any film version of the *Bounty* saga, both for historical reference as well as to please the eye of the viewer. Filmmakers chose to use footage of Tahiti as a backdrop when depicting the landscapes in *Bounty*-related movies. Although most of the story pertains to sea voy-

[143] Spelled as printed in Bligh 1936, 176.

[144] There is speculation that the Polynesians were perhaps not as willing to leave Tahiti as romantically depicted in film and literature; historical records reflect that "all the women brought to Pitcairn had been kidnapped" (Alexander 2003, 368).

age and experiences on Tahiti, the story always ends with the *Bounty*'s arrival at Pitcairn, yet its landscape is notably absent from all cinematic productions.

Although it is quite common to replace landscapes in filmmaking by using surrogate sites as stand-ins for real locations, it is a disservice to the epic saga of the *Bounty* that the actual island of Pitcairn is never shown on film. The dichotomy between the Pitcairn and Tahitian landscapes could have been used as imagery to support the notion of isolation and, in keeping with history, illustrate the disparity in geographies that may have led to possible discontentment.[145] Filmmakers' exclusion of the Pitcairn landscape in these films is presumably due to financial cost in travel to such a remote location. For instance, *In the Wake of the Bounty* (1933) was filmed in Australia and Tahiti, and although the 1935 version used images of Tahiti, it was largely filmed in the Channel Islands and other coastal areas of California. *The Mutiny on the Bounty* (1962) was filmed primarily in Tahiti,[146] and uses many shots of the beaches of Tahiti to convey the sense of place for the whole of Polynesia, a veritable paradise. Worthy of note is the filmmaker's attention to detail with regard to the *Bounty*. This is the first instance of a ship constructed using original (in this case eighteenth century) plans "specifically for the purposes of being used in a film" and further, filmmakers show the *Bounty* arriving at Tahiti and dropping anchor, in what is purported to be the exact same location that was used in 1789 (IMDB 2014). However, the detail filmmakers paid to this feature of the film is negated by a variety of historical inaccuracies.

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[145] Alexander (2003) recounts the eventual displeasure of the women at having left Tahiti, some choosing to return decades later after the demise of their British husbands on Pitcairn.

[146] Filming locations obtained from the Internet Movie Database, IMDB.com.

In the 1962 version, the *Bounty* arrives at Pitcairn depicts the crew rowing up to a beautiful, sandy beach, and later climbing to a mid-level perch to scan the many mountainous peaks, although Pitcairn has none (Figures 4.14 and 4.15). Although considered a high-island, often accompanied by abundant beaches, Pitcairn's physical geography is vastly different than what the film shows, with no beaches, a rocky shore, steep cliffs and terrain, and rough seas. Nevertheless, few in the world would know these facts, and for the purposes of the film, the sense of place is maintained.

The 1962 version is the only film that suggests Fletcher Christian was unhappy with his mutinous actions, as he suggests a return to England, stating, "We shall never find contentment on this island." This contrasts historical records revealing Fletcher was content with life on the island, but lived in fear of being found by the British (Shapiro 1936).[147] In the Brando version, the *Bounty* catches fire in the night, and shows Christian (Brando) running onboard the burning vessel to retrieve a valued sextant.[148] As a result, he is fatally injured and shown gasping his last breath on a flat piece of land on Pitcairn Island.

With none of the flat land on Pitcairn near the shoreline, it is patently obvious to anyone in the know that Marlon Brando's depiction of Christian dying as the ship burns in the background is inaccurate. What is known and accepted as the fate of Christian (available in historical records to filmmakers in 1962), is he was alive at least a year and as many as four years on Pitcairn (Shapiro 1936). His ultimate fate is uncertain; history provides at least four scenarios, the most widely told (that Pitcairners accept) is one of the

[147] The theory that Christian feared being discovered by the British surfaces in several historical documents and in recent popular literature (Alexander 2003).

[148] A sextant was an eighteenth century navigating device.

Polynesian men shot Christian while he was working in his garden several years after arriving at Pitcairn (Folger 1808).

Figure 4.14: Pitcairn Island. Photo by author, 2004.

Figure 4.15: Harbor, Rocky Shore of Pitcairn Island. Photo by author, 2004.

The sharpest contrast among the four films is between the 1962 and 1984 versions. *The Bounty* (1984) is shot in a similar geography, yet from a completely different perspective, displaying much more of the Tahitian culture in dance scenes, tattooing methods, and the efforts between the Polynesians and British to communicate. This film uses Captain Bligh's actual documented testimony as reference to tell the story (Bligh 1936). *The Bounty* (1984) ends with the image of the ill-fated ship burning in the background, text scrolling across the screen stating no one knows the exact fate of Fletcher Christian. This (accurately) contradicts the 1962 version, and similarly, as Bligh was ousted from the *Bounty* more than a thousand miles from Tahiti, he could not have known the fate of the crew and to where they escaped. In this regard, the discrepancies between the films provide skewed, if not completely erroneous, perspectives of the story, and likely add to a muddled history in addition to the confused physical image the island bears today.

Additionally, *the Bounty* (1984) might be the most accurate choice of casting when compared to historical record. Historical records reveal Christian was only twenty-four years old at the time of the mutiny, yet he was played (in order of production) by Errol Flynn at 24, Clark Gable at the age of 34, Marlon Brando at 38, and Mel Gibson at 28. Bligh, only in his mid-thirties during the mutiny was played by Mayne Lynton at 48, Charles Laughton at age 36, Trevor Howard at 49, and Anthony Hopkins at 47. While all actor ages are at least in relatable ranges for the purposes of the story, the casting of *The Bounty* (1984) with Gibson and Hopkins results in the best interactions, Gibson close to the descriptions of Christian in age, demeanor, and physique, and Hopkins believable in

age, authority, and depiction of Bligh's morality, honor and skill.[149] These two actors, along with the choices producers made in the film's end, provide the most authentic film experience, and therefore the story is the most believable.

Although no definitive archaeology proves or disproves any of the multitudes of myths and legends surrounding the fate of Fletcher Christian and his ultimate resting place, *The Bounty* (1984) seems to make the greatest effort to illuminate the Polynesian culture at the time and evidently used historical records to support the story.

Although unclear as to why, when asked, Pitcairners tend to favor the 1935 *Mutiny on the Bounty* starring Clark Gable; an explanation was never revealed (Johnson 2004, 2006). Reviewing the films affords the idea the 1935 version is perhaps viewed as the most flattering depiction of the island's legacy because more of the film is focused on the struggle between Bligh and Christian, and less on sexual tension and the allures of Paradise in comparison to the other versions.

Many films depict islands as settings. Producers often use alternate locations in film production, despite the potential impact on the viewer's sense of place (FitzGerald 1995). In the case of Polynesia, it seems as long as certain elements, primarily beaches and palm trees, are present, an adequate sense of place is maintained. Essentially, film viewers assume the places portrayed on the film are the actual places they are meant to be; the geographies are accurate if the landscape is authentic. This authenticity is based on what the viewer assumes of Polynesia. "It is less important that something be absolutely real than that it feel authentic" (Boorstin 1990, 16).

[149] Qualities described in several publications, including Ball (1973), and Barrow (1831).

Pitcairn is anything but a stereotypical Polynesian Island (Figures 4.16 and 4.17). Like many another island in the Pacific, Pitcairn has a high, volcanic presence with a lush and verdant landscape; unlike many others, Pitcairn has no beaches, has extremely rough surrounding seas, and is home to a highly varied flora and fauna including hibiscus, passion fruit, poinsettia, citrus and pine trees, several dozen endemic species of plants and birds, and a steep rise in elevation from sea level to 1,100 feet within an area of two square miles. Although island landscapes might be easily substituted and authenticity maintained for the viewer, in the case of Pitcairn, most people will never reach the island. As such, the use of the real landscape may have instilled a more impactful sense of place and enhanced the story, better conveying the impact of the decisions made by the settlers on Pitcairn to burn their ship and spend eternity on Pitcairn Island.

Figure 4.16: Leeward face of Pitcairn Island. Photo by author, 2004.

Figure 4.17: North face of Pitcairn. Photo by author, 2004.

Islands are depicted as places of serenity, peace, romance, getaways, isolation, entrapment, and fear.[150] Islands on film are hideouts for pirates, homes to dinosaurs and the ultimate romantic destination for honeymooners. Ball (1973) states the mutineers of the *Bounty* were "predisposed to mutiny" simply having resided for months in the confines of "paradise"[151] (1973). All *Bounty*-related films adequately depict paradise in the South Seas, and blame the mutiny on Bligh. There is a wide range of island geographies depicted on film, ranging from idyllic to craggy.[152] "Films are designed to have effects on viewers" (Bordwell 2008, 2). Gerald Macdonald (1994) questions where we locate cinematic meaning - in the place the film is made, in the mind of the scriptwriter or in the

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[150] For example *South Pacific*, *Six Days Seven Nights*, *The Beach*, *Jurassic Park*, *Pirates of the Caribbean*, *Shutter Island*.

[151] Paradise in this context is Tahiti (Ball 1973, 88-89).

[152] Howard 1983.

mind of the audience (27). Landscapes depicted do not have to be real; they can be interchangeable when part of a broader context. However, in the case of the *Bounty* films, depicting Pitcairn's landscape would have added to the sense of place, and as such, driven home the severity and depth of the decisions made in 1790 having left "paradise" in search of Pitcairn. In this way, all of the *Bounty* films fall into what MacDonald describes as a "First Cinema" categorization, where geography takes a back seat to corporate agendas and high financial production values (1994). While the space filmmakers portray onscreen might be imaginary, the spatial experience to the viewer is genuine (Hopkins 1994, 57). The mind of the audience is easily swayed with regard to islands and as long as the landscapes serve a purpose and help tell the story, audiences forgive the errors.

A final thought on the image of Pitcairn portrayed not in film, but in other forms of media reveals the continued negative or dark image the island and its history bring to mind at the subjective hands of the author or filmmaker; for instance, the television show *The Simpson's* parodied the *Mutiny on the Bounty* in a 2006 episode entitled "Wettest Stories Ever Told," and in the film *Star Trek IV: The Voyage Home*, the character Leonard McCoy (Bones) names a Klingon ship the *Bounty*, drawing parallels between the mutinous, piratical seizure of the ship and the aggression of the Klingons in the film. Similarly, Gary Larson's "Farside" paid homage to the *Bounty* saga with a cartoon entitled "Mutants on the Bounty" (Figure 4.18). It is unlikely these constructs originated with malice, but together, they help construct a negative image of Pitcairn as place islanders themselves seek to refute daily. Resident Betty Christian said of Pitcairn: "I love it, and I would never do anything to hurt it... it's such a gorgeous place" (Marks 2008, 269). It

does not appear that the impact these external constructions might have on this island have been thoughtfully considered.

Figure 4.18: Gary Larson's "Farside."

Conclusion

"Lacking details, we lapse into abstractions about a place, a people and a relationship with them" (Parsons 1993, 287). As such, the remoteness of Pitcairn Island leaves most in the world wanting for details; details of the landscape and about the people. Absent first-hand experience, audiences must deduce details about place and rely on questionable interpretations. "Distortion rather than honest interpretation has been the rule in the historical and literary treatment of the mutiny" (Ball 1973, ix). This sentiment, however, can be applied to the history of Pitcairn long past the time of the mutiny, and most especially in the creative mediums of film, art and literature.

Art is at the very least, subjective, if not completely culturally biased (Warshall 1998). Much of the exploration records of the seventeenth- through the nineteenth-centuries included artistic representations in various mediums[153] of encountered land-scapes, flora, fauna, and people. As such, the images and information that spectators gleaned from artwork are best carefully compared to historical documents before there is any speculation about accuracy. In this regard, it seems most of the art produced pertaining to Pitcairn and its people during the earliest years was, for the most part, accurate, and illustrates a society functioning at a higher cultural level[154] than other island groups during the same period. The most erroneous depictions are found merely in absence of trees, thereby exposing the location of the community to the viewer (Figure 4.2), or the presence of questionable cultural (boats) or natural features (waterfalls, beaches). Early artists did very little to impart any kind of correct visual representation of the island, and later images (including photography) are skewed to depict the island with an ominous light.

The *Bounty* films were made during the twentieth century, and none of them depicted any actual Pitcairn landscape on film; the environments borrowed were all surrogates for the island. This, coupled with historical discrepancies in the storytelling, leaves viewers with an incomplete if not wholly inaccurate account of events. The history of Pitcairn is incomplete, subject to shifting accounts of its early history to the early nineteenth century visitors, and later to the choices made by filmmakers. The true story of the

[153] Sketches most often produced, but a variety of watercolors of plants and landscapes can be found from this time period.

[154] Construction of colonial-style homes, care and keeping of western clothing, use of religion in everyday life.

legacy of the mutiny on the *Bounty* and Pitcairn may be neither the crime-fueled romance in paradise commonly portrayed on film, nor the place of deviance described in recent literature. Yet both of these benefit by the use of extremes: “it remains more profitable for Hollywood to continue reproducing stereotypical images” than it does to depict truths (Marubbio and Buffalohead 2013, 4).

The most significant deviation from reality with regard to Pitcairn’s image occurs primarily in the realms of film and literature, the latter being the most destructive. The impact of the written word, seen in book titles, negative themes, and topics in literary works, supplemented by an absence of Pitcairn as place in film leaves the average person with nothing to compare. “Place construction is at the core of human geography” (Tuan 1991, 684) and the control of Pitcairn’s image is in the hands of external sources. It is vital to consider the impact these constructed images had and may continue to have on the ultimate fate of the Pitcairn people, as they struggle to attract tourists and compete in the primary industry (tourism) within their geography (Kahn 2011).

Positive imagery may help attract would-be tourists. The island undisputedly possesses difficult and harsh terrains, but these same features are attractive to adventure seekers (Synnott 2007). Additionally, Pitcairn has other geographical features in line with other Polynesian islands, including climate and flora, and there are islands that share Pitcairn’s “extreme” topography, but which do not receive the negative attention that Pitcairn does (Figure 4.19). Negative imagery in literature continues to thwart Pitcairners’ hopes for increasing tourism. In 2012, a mere 870 people arrived at the island, 702 of them on cruise ships that happened to stop at the island (Government of the Pitcairn Islands 2014). Remoteness alone explains the extremely low annual tourism as compared

with the rest of Polynesia, but the promotion of negative imagery, may be daunting for the Pitcairners to ever overcome.

Figure 4.19: Laupahoehoe Point, Hawai‘i. Courtesy: wikicommons.org.

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FIGURES

4.1 Pitcairn Island. Lowther, 1850. Pitcairn Island. Courtesy of British Museum 2014.

4.2 Ocean view of Pitcairn Island. Photo by author 2004.

4.3 Close-up of village from ocean view, Pitcairn Island. Photo by author 2004.

4.4 Pitcairn Island; Captain E.G. Fanshawe, August 12, 1849. Courtesy of National Maritime Museum, Greenwich, London.

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4.10 Book cover, “Serpent in Paradise.” Birkett 1977.

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4.13 Pitcairn Island, Radio tower. Photo by author 2004.

4.14 Pitcairn Island. Photo by author 2004.

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4.16 Leeward face of Pitcairn Island. Photo by author 2004.

4.17 North face of Pitcairn Island. Photo by author 2004.

4.18 “Mutants on the Bounty.” Farside, reissue. Gary Larson 2006.

4.19 Laupahoehoe Point, Hawai‘i. http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Hamakua_Cliffs_from_Laupahoehoe_Point.Hawaii.jpg

Chapter 5: Conclusion

> *When one first sees their little, low-roofed houses, perched on the slope of a green hill on their tiny island lost in the vast Pacific Ocean, one realizes their remoteness from civilization in spite of their wireless* [radio] *and the occasional call of ships; and one's heart goes out to them in desire to fraternize with and if possible, to be of use to them.* — London Times*,* May 1936

Pitcairn Island is, if not definitively, certainly among the most remote, inhabited places on the planet today, its legacy revolving around a single moment in history: a decision made by a twenty-four year old man to steal a ship afloat on the Pacific, notwithstanding any extenuating circumstances. The subsequent generations that followed in the wake of that event reestablished Pitcairn, which resulted in a place that exists, 224 years later, remote and elusive in geography, yet home to those some fifty people who work to sustain themselves in the shadow of their famous legacy. The image of Pitcairn as place was largely constructed around this history, and is less wedded to its geography, beyond isolation and an insular culture. However, I argue in this study that geography is exactly what defines Pitcairn as unique. The intent of my research was to identify, if possible, a changing image of place pertaining to Pitcairn, with regard to western ideals and constructions. As image is a social construct, with regard to Pitcairn, there is disparity; image constructed as a product of the external West is vastly different than the image the islanders struggle to promote.

Findings

Pitcairn Island is neither wholly British nor resolutely Polynesian. It is, however, geographically defined as a Polynesian island, politically maintained as an overseas territory

of the United Kingdom,[155] and culturally hybridized between the two. What this means is that Pitcairn is unique in its geography; while other island groups were impacted by the effects of colonialism, or are presently affiliated with a larger governing institution or nation-states (American Samoa, French Polynesia, Hawai‘i), the indigenous people of these areas and their affiliated cultures have enhanced the sense of place, and have been a foundation for establishing tourism.

In contrast, Pitcairn's tourism presently is based much more on the history of the island,[156] a history affiliated primarily with the British, which leads to Pitcairn seeming out of place within its geography. The reality is that the founding population was predominantly Polynesian, living within Polynesia, yet choosing to affiliate with Britain, for almost twenty years before British authorities knew they existed. The unique culture of the Pitcairners is largely overlooked in favor of history. The focus on the history provides a skewed sense of place.

"Culture affects perception," Yi-Fu Tuan asserted with humanistic authority in 1977 (162). The prevailing western perspective focuses on the island as the site of the final resting place of the *Bounty,* neglecting its present-day role as the home to a historic and distinctive culture and people. Romanticized over the course of two centuries due to the geographic affiliation with "Paradise" and the need to revel in lore of the maritime mutiny, authors and filmmakers have had the most impact on Pitcairn as place. These constructions of the West, including media coverage, books, films, art and other publica-

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[155] Pitcairn is not a member of the Commonwealth of Nations.

[156] They are presently working to promote ecotourism and have long engaged in constructing "Polynesian" souvenirs (baskets, carvings, and now tapa). The island also began work in 2011 in conjunction with National Geographic and the PEW Environment Group to propose Great Britain establish a marine reserve and economic zone surrounding the Pitcairn Islands (Pitcairn Islands Marine Reserve 2013).

tions primarily focus on negative imagery, which paint Pitcairn as an unwelcoming place. The physical geography of Pitcairn mimics many another island formation across the Pacific Ocean (it is a high-island with a subtropical climate). That combination of traits is long-affiliated with the concepts of Paradise and island Utopia, the convenient marketing base for all of Polynesia. The Island then, while perhaps more remote than most other islands, is defined less by its physical geography than for its association and affiliation with a historical event, and the present Pitcairn population suffers as a byproduct of being tarred by this history. The impact of focus on the notoriety of their ancestors, the present day scandals and the reinterpretations, re-tellings and re-presentations of the Mutiny on the *Bounty* saga add no positive imagery to the landscape. “Too many Westerners... have lost their understanding of place in any meaningful sense,” geographer George Demko averred in 1992 (14). The ultimate impact of western culture and perspectives on Pitcairn is unknowable, but what is known is that western and Pitcairn perspectives of place are very different.

The course of this research uncovered two recent references to the suggestion of present-day forced depopulation or abandonment of the island. While depopulation was part of their history at least twice, those early efforts were based on concerns for environmental sustainability, not socio-economically based as the most recent discussions infer. The notion that since 1945 Britain has wanted several times to relocate the remaining Pitcairners has been mentioned, including the assumption of inevitability and feasibility of evacuating then against their will” by Kathy Marks (2008, 232). These suggestions are made despite the many progressions Pitcairn is making in tourism, environmental programs, and island development.

Four of the oldest Pitcairn Island residents died in the last several years, including one in August 2013. Sentiments this recent decedent passed along to me before his death voiced a deep concern for the future of the island, and asked how younger generations of Pitcairners will remember the place, the place names, and the history without him (and those of earlier generations). The same sentiment should be held by the world for the welfare of this island, this culture, this history, as the impact of an image of the island constructed by social media, journalists, voyeurs, and filmmakers is evidently taking its toll.

The three preceding chapters, while focused on distinct topics, share the common theme of image. Chapter 2 discusses images of Pitcairn that shifted from utopian to dystopian beginning in the middle nineteenth century, when the more forceful of the two depopulations consumed the island. Yet Pitcairn's image as an island still falls far outside the notion of Paradise; it is more widely perceived by outsiders as an island of ill-repute, with notorious beginnings and a forbidding present. Furthermore, the prospects of a once Utopian model of society endured literary and social attacks that have forced the image and sense of place of the island from one end of the spectrum to the other, moving from a definition of a stable island community housed in a paradisiacal geography to the definition invested with chaos and disorder. In the meantime, it takes no special authority to argue that Pitcairn remains a quintessential example of a place where people are tied to their land, with a strong and devoted multiple-family structure of some fifty people who live quietly in the shadow of an identity foisted on them from outside. In fact, Pitcairn is only in the broadest possible conception a nation-state, or even a colonial dependency; instead, in size and function it is a more like a village, if one isolated in the extreme, and hard for outsiders to observe or discuss with much authority.

Chapter 3 discusses the impact the island has endured culturally, as a result of contact with the West. Possible concern for space and resources, coupled with a religious conversion led to the abandonment of pigs keeping on the island, a significant cultural shift a hundred years after their settlement. There are few faunal remains recovered (that are known), and the notion that the artifact was found and valued enough to be recovered and sent for study indicates a modern shift in values, a reconnection with a distant past tied to Polynesia, and at least in part a reversal of the cultural distance from Polynesia that Pitcairners have cultivated for generations. Questioning and embracing their past through artifacts is paramount to claiming and re-forming an evolving ethnic identity.

Chapter 4 revisits the impact of the west (primarily Britain and the US) on Pitcairn, as seen through the devices of artistic representation, in art, film, and literature and denotes artistic license that is taken with representation of the island. While these manifestations of place may not have been constructed maliciously in all cases, they nevertheless have skewed the sense of place of the island for the masses of people with access to these productions, and not the island itself. The analysis of various Pitcairn-related publications and its imagining through time illustrates the fragility of this (if not other) tiny communities in a larger, global perspective. The remote geography of Pitcairn Island leaves most in the world wanting for details, which have been provided primarily through film and literature. Absent first-hand experience, deductions about place are subject to interpretation based on materials readily available, no matter the source. As such, the impacts of external artistic representation on Pitcairn's image and the prospects of survival in this vastly changing world are of concern.

Summation

Finally, it should be emphasized here the place Pitcairn presently occupies in the world. Since the founding of Pitcairn's modern society in 1790,[157] the world has seen two global-scale wars, many regional wars,[158] fifty Olympic Games, the inception of the Space Age, the globalization of technology and medical advancements that have all largely passed this tiny island by. Only now benefitting from technology,[159] it seems that a world that has focused on this place for its entertainment value in film and literature has found it convenient to exclude or forget Pitcairn islanders altogether whenever it was convenient to ignore them. Brought into a modern world with economic concerns, Pitcairn's economy is tourist-driven, and controlled by external authorities providing evidently little contribution. "Tourism is commonly justified by governments as an essential route to economic development," Robert Winzeler wrote in 2010 (367). In this way, the epic saga of the mutiny on the *Bounty* plays a critical role in securing Pitcairn economically, but support for its Polynesian heritage would more strongly affiliate the island with its geography and perhaps add to tourism value.

"Place construction is at the core of human geography" Yi-Fu Tuan writes (1991, 684), and with much of the supposed place-knowledge of Pitcairn deposited like the guano of oceangoing birds visiting the island, it helps to look at the impact these constructs have had and may continue to have on the people of Pitcairn. Robert Winzeler (2010) warns ".... the problem with economic tourism development is that it can draw others"

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[157] Remembering that there was a prehistoric Polynesian population at some time on the island.

[158] Second Boer War, Vietnam, South Korea, and Middle East conflicts in which their administrative countries (Australia and New Zealand) participated.

[159] In 2006, telephones were installed (New Zealand area codes), satellite television is available (CNN, BBC, Discovery Channel, MTV, Fox, Australia Network), and computers are a part of daily life.

(367). This ultimate effect of “the others” on the culture and the landscape of Pitcairn is uncertain and may in the future have even greater impact than sources discussed in this study. The impact of outsiders on a homegrown image is questioned throughout this dissertation, and in few cases is the departure of insider from outsider so historically pointed and dramatic as at Pitcairn Island.

Future Work

Some particular circumstances shaped the diversion of my work in this study from the original focus for research for my graduate program. In the future, my goal is to revisit the topic of the land tenure system that evolved over 200-plus years on Pitcairn Island. This system is significant within the region, established and maintained within British tradition, and distinct from many of the other Polynesian island cultures. The recent passing of some of the members of the older generation, coupled with a low present population, increases my sense of urgency in looking toward this effort.

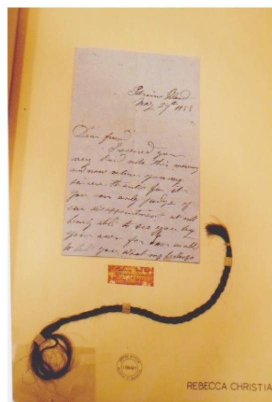
As a result of the research I have reported here, a great amount of material pertaining to the women of Pitcairn has presented itself. Tahitian women were brought to Pitcairn by the mutineers to serve as their companions and wives. Yet as history played out, within five years of settlement, women were the majority adult population on the island. The native knowledge the women possessed allowed for the tiny community to thrive. Knowledge of native plants for medicinal and food purposes, knowledge of the seas, the ability to use natural resources for clothing materials, and the choices women made for the sake of their children resulted in the community’s success and longevity.

Mutineer and last surviving British settler John Adams is credited in Pitcairn history as the revered patriarch of the community. I would contend, however, that it was the women of Pitcairn who were ultimately responsible for the survival of the population, and moreover, the women shaped the culture into what it is today. Pitcairn's women were among the first on Earth to be given the legal right to vote. Women on the island are generally more highly educated than Island men, and women (then and now) have held positions such as island council offices, police officer, passport/customs agent, nurse, author and cultural instructors.

In 2006, a monument to the Polynesians that arrived on the *Bounty* in 1790 (including six men) was erected next to the monument for the mutineers. This monument was largely in memory of the women and to honor the Polynesians and their culture, without which the founding population would have likely foundered.

With time, I would like to further research and construct a comprehensive monograph that focuses on the history and achievements of Pitcairn Island women of, in spite of the desire of the rest of the world to wallow in *Bounty* legacy that has always highlighted the male population.

Figure 5.1: Rosalind Young, 1879.



Pitcairn Island
May 27th 1853

Dear friend
I received your very kind note this morning and now return you my sincere thanks for it. You can only judge of our disappointment at not being able to see you by your own, for I am unable to tell you what my feelings

Figure 5.2: Letter and braid of Rebecca Christian, 1853.

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FIGURES

5.1 Rosalind Young, Pitcairn Island. 1879. Courtesy British Museum, 2013.

5.2 Letter and braid of Rebecca Christian, 1853. Courtesy British Museum, 2013.

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FIGURES

1.1 Photo of boat dock and harbor at Pitcairn Island, 2004. Photo by author.

1.2 Photo of boat being taken out at boat dock, Pitcairn Island, 2004. Photo by author.

1.3 Photo of harbor at Hanga Roa, Easter Island.
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Hanga_Roa_Harbour.jpg

1.4 Map, expanded view of the Pitcairn Island Group, South Pacific Ocean.
Source: http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:PN_-A.png

2.1 "A Representation of the Attack on Captain Wallis in the *Dolphin* by the Natives of Otaheite" (Hawkesworth 1773). Courtesy, National Maritime Museum, Greenwich.

2.2 The Death of Captain Cook" (Johan Zoffany 1795). Courtesy: National Maritime Museum, Greenwich.

2.3 "Two Tahitian Women" (P. Gauguin 1899). Courtesy, Metropolitan Museum of Art.

2.4 Map, Polynesian Triangle. Courtesy: wikicommons.org.

2.5 Screen shot, Pitcairn Island Tourism Webpage, 2014 (www.visitpitcairn.pn).

2.6 Screen shot, Personal Website of Islander, 2014.
(www.young.pn/stay-with-us.html).

3.1 Pig mandible *in situ*, 2006, Pitcairn Island. Courtesy Leslie Jacques.

3.2 Illustration, Pitcairn Community, women processing pig. Unknown French publication, pre-1829. Collection of author.

3.3 Tapa cloth, made by Fletcher Christian's wife while on Pitcairn. Obtained by the British Museum in 1837. Photo courtesy of British Museum, taken by author 6/14/2013.

4.1 "Pitcairn Island." Lowther 1850. Courtesy of British Museum 2014.

4.2 Ocean view of Pitcairn Island. Photo by author 2004.

4.3 Close-up of village from ocean view, Pitcairn Island. Photo by author 2004.

4.4 "Pitcairn Island." Fanshawe, Admiral (Sir) Edward Gennys. Courtesy of National Maritime Museum, Greenwich, London.

4.5 Pitcairn Island community (Adamstown); Lt. Col. Batty 1831.

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4.7 Book cover, *Pitcairn's Island*. Nordhoff & Hall 1934.

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4.9 Etching, "Attack on the Dolphin." Hawkesworth 1773.

4.10 Book cover, *Serpent in Paradise*. Birkett 1977.

4.11 Book cover, *Paradise Lost.* Marks 2008.

4.12 Pitcairn Island, T.O. Christian home site. Photo by author 2004.

4.13 Pitcairn Island, Radio tower. Photo by author 2004.

4.14 Pitcairn Island. Photo by author 2004.

4.15 Rocky shore of Pitcairn Island. Photo by author 2004.

4.16 Leeward face of Pitcairn Island. Photo by author 2004.

4.17 North face of Pitcairn Island. Photo by author, 2004.

4.18 "Mutants on the Bounty." Farside, reissue. Gary Larson 2006.

4.19 Laupahoehoe Point, Hawai'i. http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/ File:Hamakua_Cliffs_from_Laupahoehoe_Point.Hawaii.jpg

5.1 Pitcairn Island. Courtesy, Pitcairn Island Tourism.

5.2 Rosalind Young, Pitcairn Island. 1879. Courtesy British Museum, 2013.

5.3 Letter and braid of Rebecca Christian, 1853. Courtesy British Museum, 2013.

Appendices

A “Call for depopulation of Pitcairn,” *Southland Times*, November 6, 2004. Accessed November 19, 2012.

B Calibrated radiocarbon results for bone specimen. Results by Beta Analytic Radiocarbon Dating Laboratory, Miami, FL. 2006.

Appendix A: "Call for depopulation of Pitcairn," *Southland Times*, November 6, 2004. Accessed November 19, 2012.

Westlaw. NewsRoom

11/6/04 Southland Times 6
2004 WLNR 9709231

Southland Times (New Zealand)
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November 6, 2004

Section: FEATURESSection: LETTERS

Call for **Pitcairn's** disestablishment

NOW that the trial of the six **Pitcairn** Island males is coming to its final stages, I suggest that it would be prudent for the British Government to evacuate this small colony of only 47 persons and rehabilitate them elsewhere.

Living in this remote, seldom visited location, can naturally create a risk to an incestuous situation.

In fact an evacuation of this nature would not be new for the UK, as I remember the entire population of Tristan de Cuhna, (an island group in the South Atlantic), being moved to the UK shortly following World War 2 and I recall seeing some of these islanders living in a disused army camp in Hampshire, whilst waiting to be rehabilitated and settled elsewhere.

A similar situation occurred, I believe, in the early 1900s, when the population of a remote Scottish Island, (St Colombia?) was also evacuated.In terms of heritage and ancestry, West Cumbria, where the name of Christian is still well-known, Devon or perhaps Tahiti, where most of the female ancestry comes from, could be other op- tions.

Norm Walsh Ashburton Abridged -- Editor

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Appendix B: Calibrated radiocarbon results for bone specimen. Results by Beta Analytic Radiocarbon Dating Laboratory, Miami, FL. 2006.

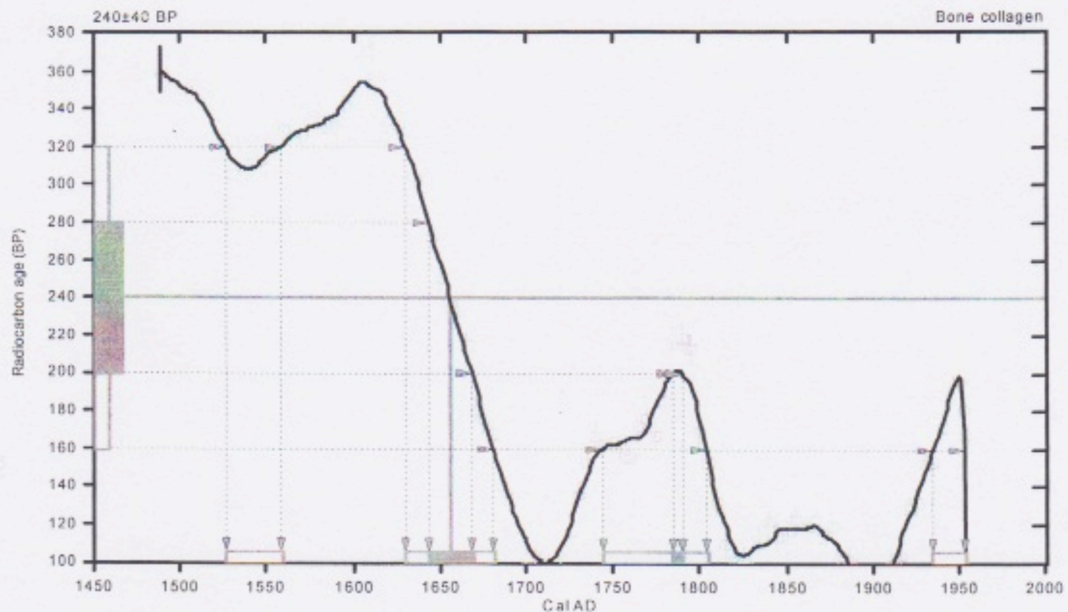
CALIBRATION OF RADIOCARBON AGE TO CALENDAR YEARS

(Variables: C13/C12=-20.9:lab. mult=1)

Laboratory number:	**Beta-227233**
Conventional radiocarbon age:	**240±40 BP**
2 Sigma calibrated results: **(95% probability)**	**Cal AD 1530 to 1560 (Cal BP 420 to 390) and** **Cal AD 1630 to 1680 (Cal BP 320 to 270) and** **Cal AD 1740 to 1800 (Cal BP 210 to 150) and** **Cal AD 1940 to 1950 (Cal BP 20 to 0)**

Intercept data

Intercept of radiocarbon age with calibration curve:	Cal AD 1660 (Cal BP 290)
1 Sigma calibrated results: (68% probability)	Cal AD 1640 to 1670 (Cal BP 310 to 280) and Cal AD 1780 to 1790 (Cal BP 160 to 160)



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