ISLANDS OF TRUTH:
VANCOUVER ISLAND FROM CAPTAIN COOK TO THE
BEGINNINGS OF COLONIALISM

by

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Abstract

This study examines Native-white relations on Vancouver Island, and the creation of the region as an object of imperial interest, between the late eighteenth and mid nineteenth centuries. These processes are investigated using a range of empirical and theoretical materials, and in relation to the British Columbian present. Archaeological, ethnographic and historical evidence is considered alongside ideas about the nature of power, space and representation drawn from the critical literature on European colonialism.

The study has a twin argument. First, it is argued that these phases of exploration, trade and imperial dispute should be studied in terms of a broader series of Enlightenment, commercial and geopolitical dynamics. But second, it is claimed that western agendas were not imposed on Vancouver Island in a mechanical fashion. They were warped in regionally specific ways because of the nature of the contact process. Western discourses and practices actively shaped Vancouver Island and were themselves reshaped in the process.

Part 1 explores Captain James Cook’s encounter with the Native people of Nootka Sound in 1778; the spatial and corporeal dimensions of contact are teased out in order to interrogate the scope and limits of Cook’s scientific-humanitarian agenda. Part II assesses the Native-white sea otter trade on Vancouver Island between the 1780s and 1810s. It is argued that traders’ assumptions about, and representations of, Native people were influenced by the commercial geography of the trade and by Native agendas. Part III deals with the way the region was refashioned as a prospective imperial space by western politicians, and the implications of this imperial outreach for Native peoples.

Vancouver Island is viewed through methodological and archival lenses, and is connected to a broader late eighteenth-century capitalist-imperial world. This study works between Europe and Vancouver Island to illuminate the connections and fissures between knowledge, power and geography.
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Abbreviations

Add.MS. Additional Manuscript, BM.
Add.MSS. Additional Manuscripts, BCARS.
ADM Admiralty Records, PRO.
BCARS British Columbia Archives and Records Service, Victoria, Canada.
BCHQ *British Columbia Historical Quarterly.*
BT Board of Trade Records, PRO
FO Foreign Office Records, PRO
HO Home Office Records, PRO.
PAM-HBCA Provincial Archives of Manitoba - Hudson's Bay Company Archives, Winnipeg, Canada.
UBCL-SC University of British Columbia Library - University Archives and Special Collections Division.

Footnotes are numbered consecutively in each Part.
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INTRODUCTION

We have now not merely explored the territory of pure understanding, and carefully surveyed every part of it, but have also measured its extent, and assigned to everything in it its rightful place. This domain is an island, enclosed by nature itself within unalterable limits. It is the land of truth - enchanting name! - surrounded by a wide and stormy ocean, the native home of illusion, where many a fog bank and many a swiftly melting iceberg give the deceptive appearance of farther shores, deluding the adventurous seafarer ever anew with empty hopes, and engaging him in enterprises which he can never abandon and yet is unable to carry to completion.

Immanuel Kant, The Critique of Pure Reason.¹

The history of the world over the last 500 years is indelibly a history of European imperialism and colonialism. European explorers charted and claimed "new" lands for their sovereigns, European merchants searched the world for new resources and markets, colonists settled on Native territories, and European states built up enormous empires. The Native peoples of the northwest coast of North America were first contacted by European explorers and traders at the end of the eighteenth century - late in the history of Europe's expansion overseas - but the subsequent history of the region bears the general chronological characteristics of this European advance. A period of exploration was followed by an intense burst of commercial contact between Native people and white traders, and then, as the resources and commercial potential of the northwest coast came into the view of European politicians, geopolitical disputes about rights of sovereignty arose between imperial powers. These disputes culminated in the establishment of a British colony on Vancouver Island in 1849.

This dissertation considers the physical and intellectual labour that went into these phases of exploration, trade and imperial appropriation: the ideas and agendas that brought Natives and whites into contact, the forms of engagement that characterised the contact process, and the ways in which Native peoples were represented and Native land

was appropriated. I embed Vancouver Island in a broader series of late eighteenth-
century Enlightenment, commercial and imperial dynamics that brought the Native
peoples of the northwest coast and the Pacific into the western imagination, a global
economy, and, gradually, under the aegis of western rule.

One of the main ideas weaving through my discussion is that western ideas and
agendas were not *imposed* on Vancouver Island in a mechanical way. The late eighteenth
and early nineteenth century history of the region should not be treated as a local
example of global phenomena or as a representative case study of processes and agendas
that led inexorably to formal colonialism. Capitalism, imperialism and colonialism were
global dynamics in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, but I resist the idea that they
were monolithic forces that marched over non-western peoples and space. Such forces
worked through local ways, adapted to different kinds of terrain, and were bent in locally
distinctive ways as a result. Vancouver Island was approached, engaged and represented
from a variety of positions, the contact process involved a complex *two-way* physical and
perceptual traffic between whites and Natives, and the fashioning of the northwest coast
as an imperial space involved an equally complex traffic between a general body of
western ideas and a set of local conditions and contingencies.

Above all, I try to show that these phases of exploration, trade and imperial
aggrandisement were fluid, subjectively constituted and doubly conditioned *activities*. I
point to the profoundly corporeal and spatial dynamics embedded in the contact process,
and show how western ideas and assumptions *shape* regions and *are themselves reshaped*
in the process. Vancouver Island was actively fashioned by a series of non-native
discourses, but the texture of these discourses, and Europe's relationship to the northwest
coast, gradually shifted as a result of such engagements. As importantly, I approach
Vancouver Island as a geographer. I argue that the negotiation and representation of
space was fundamental to the contact process and the fashioning of Vancouver Island as
an imperial space.
Part I explores Captain James Cook's encounter with the Native people of Nootka Sound on the west coast of Vancouver Island in 1778. Cook approached the sound with a scientific and humanitarian mandate to represent his discoveries in an objective, empirical manner, and to treat the peoples he met with respect. I discuss some of the main ideas and representational practices informing this mandate, and show how his project both embraced, and was confounded by, issues of vision, experience and positionality. There were a number of *spaces of contact* embedded in this encounter that I tease out in order to interrogate the scope and limits of Cook's agenda. Part II examines the turbulent trade in sea otter furs between Native groups and white traders that developed in the wake of Cook's reconnaissance of the northwest coast. Traders also approached the coast with impressions about Native people that were partly confounded by experience. I argue that the contact process, and traders' representations of Native people, were affected quite materially by the commercial geography of the trade and by Native territorial arrangements and socio-political agendas. And Part III deals with the way this late eighteenth-century realm of contact was rationalised by European and American politicians and became entangled with imperial discourses about sovereignty that worked at a distance from Native people and refashioned the northwest coast from more abstract, cartographic perspectives. In outline, I work *between* Europe and the northwest coast, in hybrid spaces of cross-cultural interaction and imperial aggrandisement.

I examine the first phases of a history of Native-white negotiation and appropriation that stretches to the present. British Columbia is no longer part of the British Empire, but nor is it a postcolonial space. Native land claims remain unsettled, and Native and non-native British Columbians are still struggling to coexist in an atmosphere of cultural toleration. Far from simply being the historical bedrock on which the colony of Vancouver Island rose, these late eighteenth-century processes continue to impinge on the present. Cook's encounter at Nootka Sound has been represented as a foundational story about the coming of white people to the province; and these
geopolitical disputes introduced legal formulas about sovereignty and a set of
geographical impressions about Vancouver Island that papered over Native inscriptions
on the land and were used, in part, to legitimise the colonial apparatus. In British
Columbia the past is not a distant abstraction, but a politically charged and contested lens
on the present.

Scholars of British Columbia cannot ease into the late eighteenth century as if it is
a comfortable old armchair that is out of place in the present. There are material and
discursive threads connecting the past and the present that need to be carefully
documented and evaluated. To understand the nature and legacies of particular forms of
interaction and representation, archival documents need to be tweaked with theoretical
ideas. I consider these first three phases in the non-native fashioning of Vancouver
Island in relation to broader set of ideas about the connections between power,
knowledge and space that inform the critical literature on colonialism. Such ideas help
me to ascertain both the overlaps and disjunctures between particular modes of
engagement and representation, and point to the power, historical scope and arbitrariness
of certain images. In turn, my regional-substantive focus on Vancouver Island helps me
to pinpoint some of the tensions and fissures within these theoretical debates.
PART I
CAPTAIN COOK AND THE SPACES OF CONTACT AT "NOOTKA SOUND"

Introduction

On 13 August 1924, H.M.C.S Malaspina carried a party of dignitaries and over 100 spectators to Friendly Cove at the mouth of Nootka Sound to witness the unveiling of a cairn commemorating Cook's discovery of the sound in 1778 and subsequent European exploration in the region. Walter Sage (a historian at the University of British Columbia) reported on the event for the British Columbia Historical Association:

Just as the Malaspina steamed into Friendly Cove two canoe-loads of Nootka Indians were seen pushing off from the village. As they came nearer there could be heard rising from their canoes a monotonous chant of three notes timed to the paddlestrokes. It was a song of welcome and goodwill to the white men. Both canoes circled the Malaspina, the crews keeping up the vociferous welcome. Then Michael Brown, second chief of the neighbouring Clayoquot tribe, a third cousin of Napoleon Maquinna, rose from his place in the men's canoe and commenced a long harangue in his own native tongue. His booming voice at once commanded silence and his flashing eyes compelled attention. While he spoke in a language unintelligible to the majority of his hearers, it seemed as if the mists of time had rolled away and that we were back again with Captain Cook on the deck of the Resolution looking down at the canoes of the Nootkans which surrounded the ship. Michael Brown may have been conscious of the illusion he was creating, for he swept his hand shoreward towards the village and appeared to be inviting us to land.

After the passengers had disembarked, Chief Brown spoke in English, welcoming his guests to "the country of the Nootkans." Over 150 Indians from different parts of the coast had turned out for the occasion. The memorial party then headed for the cairn, which was draped in the Union Jack and placed on a promontory close to the Indian village of Yuquot (at Friendly Cove); it had been donated by the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada and was the first one they had erected west of the Rockies.

F.W. Howay (a British Columbia judge and historian) opened the formal proceedings by encouraging every one to sing the first stanza of Rudyard Kipling's Recessional; Sage noted that the refrain, "Lest we forget, lest we forget!, " seemed perfectly in keeping with the spirit of the occasion." Howay then studied the cairn and
invoked the Book of Joshua: "What mean ye by these stones?" "[A]s every one knows," he ventured, "the bare facts of history are mere dry bones. The tablet tells us that this sound was discovered by the great Captain James Cook." History had been built on this rock, and people had come to Friendly Cove "to show to the face of the day this pile of stones." The cairn, he continued, was a memorial to Cook and the triumph of two British imperial ideals: that sovereignty over "waste lands" went to the first civilised nation that took "real possession" with the consent of the natives; and that the oceans of the world are free to all nations. Howay then made way for W.C. Nichol, British Columbia's Lieutenant-Governor, who delivered another speech, much of which was prepared for him by John Forsyth, the Provincial Librarian. Finally, the cairn was unveiled, the Malaspina gave a five gun salute, and the spectators sang "God Save the King."

Back at Yuquot, Charles Moser (a Catholic missionary on the west coast of Vancouver Island), acting as official interpreter, introduced the Lieutenant-Governor to Napoleon Maquinna, the Mowachaht Native Chief of the area. Sage noted that Maquinna was "arrayed in his robes of offices", shook hands with Nichol "with all due solemnity", and made a long speech in his native tongue. Nichol delivered "a suitable reply", thanking the Indians for their hospitality. Victor Harrison (Grand Chief Factor of the Native Sons of British Columbia) then addressed a group of Indians about their rights and privileges under Canadian law, while the white spectators inspected the village and bargained for Indian artifacts. And lest the occasion be forgotten, a man from the Fox Corporation was on hand to film the proceedings.1

This remarkable event - detailed, portentous and full of the play of history and power - signposts a particular conjuncture between modernity and colonialism in British Columbia. Howay re-introduced what appeared to be a forgotten imperial landscape. Citizens of a young province and nation-state were at Nootka Sound to re-discover their past and give it meaning. There was a whiff of novelty in the air. Links between history, geography and identity were being discussed, as if for the first time. Howay, for one, had never been to Nootka Sound before. Cook's discovery of Nootka Sound was being viewed as the foundation of history in British Columbia.

I will discuss this "foundational" event at the end of Part I. For now, I want to leave the 1920s and return to the 1770s with this impression that Captain Cook, Britain's illustrious eighteenth-century explorer, had inaugurated history on the northwest coast of North America. This unveiling ceremony, and the historical event to which it refers, points to the influence of *images of discovery* on the construction of colonial ideas, identities and power relations.

Kipling wrote his *Recessional* for Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee in 1897. It was sung at the end of church services, and was seen as a celebration of Empire. The first stanza reads:

```
God of our fathers, known of old,
Lord of our far-flung battle-line,
Beneath whose awful Hand we hold
Dominion over palm and pine -
Lord God of Hosts, be with us yet,
Lest we forget, lest we forget!
```

But Kipling also wrote it to voice concern over the potential abuse of power in the Empire by a Christianity connected too closely to trade and imperialism. He saw "Dominion over palm and pine" as incompatible with "An humble and contrite heart" - the fourth line of the second stanza. See Sandra Kemp, *Kipling's hidden narratives* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1988), p.82. The full text of the *Recessional* can be found in *Rudyard Kipling's verse: Definitive edition* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1940), pp.328-329.

² Howay to W.E. Ditchburn, 18 November 1923, Howay Papers, box 8, folder 2.
But how *did* Cook discover Nootka Sound in 1778? What *kinds* of ideas and images did he intend to transmit? The next three chapters explore the institutional and intellectual context of Cook's voyages, unpack his encounter with the Nootkans, and, by implication, interrupt the factual and rhetorical images articulated by Sage and Howay in 1924.
Chapter One
Openings

All had been ordered weeks before the start
From the best firms at such work; instruments
To take the measure of all queer events,
And drugs to move the bowels or the heart.

A watch, of course, to watch impatience fly,
Lamps for the dark and shades against the sun;
Foreboding, too, insisted on a gun,
And coloured beads to soothe a savage eye.

In theory they were sound on Expectation
Had there been situations to be in;
Unluckily they were their situation:

One should not give a poisoner medicine,
A conjurer fine apparatus, nor
A rifle to a melancholic bore.

W.H. Auden, The Quest.

Cook, science and humanitarianism

Following the Seven Years War (1756-1763) Britain and France renewed their exploration of the Pacific. James Cook, who had distinguished himself as a mapmaker and navigator in North American waters during and after the War, commanded three British expeditions to the Pacific that were at sea for a total of ten years between 1768 and 1780, though he did not complete his third voyage, being killed by Hawaiian Islanders in 1779. The voyages of Cook, and his French counterpart Bougainville, marked a turning point in the history of European maritime exploration, and Cook, especially, still holds a special place in the European imagination. These voyages were not stamped by an aggressive Christian imperialism, as were the missions of Columbus and Cortes. Nor was Cook an "old South Sea" buccaneer or privateer on a "predatory and parasitic" expedition to wrest markets and resources from the Spanish and Dutch empires, as the historian Glyndwr Williams describes the activities of British mariners in
the Pacific up to the mid-eighteenth century. Cook and Bougainville were sent on scientific missions to put the geography of the Pacific on a cartographic footing, and were meant to observe and describe rather than exploit the peoples and resources of the South Seas. Cook's published journals were not chronicles of mishap and a struggle for survival, as those of many previous European voyagers were. He sailed with more sophisticated navigational instruments - principally chronometers - than his immediate predecessors, Byron, Wallis and Cartaret, and was a more accomplished surveyor. He also preserved the health of his crews. Cook and his officers were required to keep detailed logs of their proceedings for the Admiralty. And the scientists and artists who accompanied Cook were able to meet the wishes of Britain's intellectual establishment, the Royal Society and Royal Academy, and produce detailed descriptions and depictions of natural phenomena and the peoples they encountered. Cook's voyages were characterised by a new intellectual rigour.

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6 Cook's health measures included maintaining "a clean, dry, well-ventilated and fumigated ship, scrupulous cleanliness of the persons, hammocks and bedding of his men, clean warm clothing, a three-watch system to ensure adequate rest, and an antiscorbutic diet". The quotation is from Sir James Watt, "Medical aspects and consequences of Cook's voyages," in Robin Fisher and Hugh Johnston (eds.), *Captain James Cook and his times* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1979), pp.129-157, at p.129. Also see "The method taken for preserving the health of the crew of his majesty's ship the Resolution during her late voyage round the world. By Captain James Cook F.R.S. Addressed to Sir John Pringle, March 5, 1776", Royal Society, *Philosophical Transactions*, LXVI (1776), pp.402-406. Cook was awarded the Society's Copley Medal for his efforts.
The accounts of peoples, places and events produced on Cook's voyages heightened public curiosity about the non-European world. The natural specimens, human artifacts, drawings and accounts of non-European peoples that Cook's artists and scientists brought back to Europe stimulated natural history and contributed to the emergence of the human sciences. These scientific voyages influenced the shift in the order of European knowledge from the taxonomies and theological principles of the classical age to the historicisms and secular principles of the nineteenth century.

Cook rode a wave of public enthusiasm for overseas exploration and travel writing. Expensive first editions of the official published accounts of his voyages, commissioned by the British Admiralty with the patronage of King George III and tailored from Cook's journals, sold out almost over night. They were translated hurriedly into other European languages and studied by Europe's philosophers and

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7 See Charles L. Batten Jr., *Pleasurable instruction: Form and convention in eighteenth-century travel literature* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, and London: University of California Press, 1978), chapter 1. In 1772 J.R. Forster, who sailed on Cook's second voyage, wrote in his translator's preface to Bougainville's voyage: "Circumnavigations of the globe have been of late the universal topics of all companies". Lewis de Bougainville, *A voyage round the world. Performed by order of his most Catholic majesty, in the years 1766, 1767, 1768, and 1769* (London: J. Nourse and T. Davies, 1772), p.v. Dr. John Hawesworth's account of the voyages of Byron, Wallis, Carteret and Cook was published the following year.

Public enthusiasm was neither universal nor unqualified, however. On the publication of Cook's third voyage in June 1784, the essayist Horace Walpole wrote to Lady Ossory: "Capt. Cooke's voyage I have neither read nor intend to read. I have seen the prints - a parcel of ugly faces with blubber lips and flat noses, dressed as unbecomingly as if both sexes were ladies of the first fashion; and rows of savages with backgrounds of palm-trees...nor do I desire to know how unpolished the north or south poles have remained ever since Adam and Eve were just such mortals." W.S. Lewis (ed.), *The Yale edition of Horace Walpole's correspondence, vol.33* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1965), p.436. A fan of the Gothic, Walpole perhaps objected to the empirical-ethnographic strain in the work of Cook's artist, John Webber. His remarks were also underwritten by a complex set of ideas about civility and masculinity.

8 The official account of Cook's third voyage comprised three quarto volumes of text and a folio volume of engravings. It was priced at 4 1/2 guineas and sold out in three days. London, *Monthly Review*, vol. LXX (June 1784), pp.460 and 474.
literati. Cheaper editions reached a broader reading public, and extracts from his voyages were published in newspapers, periodicals and compendia. These texts were carefully illustrated by engravers who worked with sketches made during the voyages. Some of Cook's crew members, wanting to tap the huge European market for travel writing, achieved notoriety by publishing their own unofficial, sometimes fantastic, accounts. And many of the artifacts collected on Cook's voyages were deposited in European museums. Cook gained an international reputation as a great explorer and was heroized after he died. His encounter with the peoples of the Pacific was one of the most remarkable and well-documented events of eighteenth-century Britain and Europe.

In his dealings with these peoples, Cook was steered by an official code of conduct - a method and ethics of contact. On his third voyage (which I focus on below), he was instructed to observe the Genius, Temper, Disposition, and Number of the Natives and Inhabitants, where you find any; and to endeavour, by all proper means to cultivate a friendship with them; making them Presents of such Trinkets as you may have on board, and they may like best; inviting them to Traffick; and shewing them every kind of Civility and Regard; but taking care nevertheless not to suffer yourself to be surprized by them, but to be always on your guard against any Accidents.

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9 The impact of knowledge about the non-European world on late eighteenth-century European philosophy is traced in detail in Antonello Gerbi, *The dispute of the New World: The history of a polemic, 1750-1900* [orig. pub. 1955; Jeremy Moyle trans.] (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1973). The knowledge created by Cook's voyages contributed to the emergence of new "sciences of living", Gerbi argues. Philosophers such as Kant and Hegel became interested in the genesis and variation of species in time rather than in their distribution over the face of the earth.


11 Bernard Smith offers a stimulating account of "Cook's posthumous reputation" in Fisher and Johnston, *Captain James Cook and his times*, pp.159-186.

12 The tenor of this "code" remained unchanged over Cook's three voyages.

13 "Secret instructions for Capt James Cook", 6 July 1776, in J.C. Beaglehole (ed.), *The journals of Captain Cook on his voyages of discovery, vol.III: The voyage of the*
Such instructions were fashioned by the Admiralty from "hints" written for Cook, his officers and supernumaries in 1768 by James Douglas (the Earl of Morton), the President of the Royal Society. Cook was cautioned to check the petulance and cupidity of his sailors when in contact with Native peoples, and to avoid violent collisions. Firearms were to be used as sparingly as possible. This made logistical sense to both the Royal Society and the Admiralty. Hostilities that drove Cook's ships off shore would hinder scientific study, and on a long voyage Cook could not afford to lose men and supplies in skirmishes. Trade with indigenous peoples was deemed an effective way of overcoming language barriers and was the preferred means of securing supplies and provisions. It also brought Native people within close range of Cook's artists and scientists.

Implicit in this injunction to "Traffick" was the notion that European goods could be used to illustrate European Civilisation to the peoples of the Pacific: that they would have an irresistible desire for European goods and through them would discover the superiority of European ways. European civilisation was to be bestowed rather than forced on Native peoples. Dr. John Douglas (Canon of Windsor and St. Paul's), who edited the official accounts of Cook's second and third voyages, captured such sentiments in his introduction to Cook's third voyage.

The uncommon objects [non-European peoples] have...had opportunity of observing and admiring, will naturally tend to enlarge their stock of ideas, and to

Resolution and Discovery, 1776-1780, 2 Parts (Cambridge: Hakluyt Society, extra series xxxvi, 1967), pp.ccxx-ccxxiv; the quotation is from p.ccxxiii. These instructions were also printed in the official account of Cook's third voyage: James Cook and James King, A voyage to the Pacific Ocean...performed under the direction of captains Cook, Clerke, and Gore, in his majesty's ships the Resolution and the Discovery. In the years 1776, 1777, 1778, 1779, and 1780, 3 vols. and atlas (London: G. Nichol and T. Cadell, 1784), I, pp.xxxi-xxxv.

14 "Hints offered to the consideration of Captain Cooke, Mr Bankes, Doctor Solander, and the other gentlemen who go upon the expedition on board the Endeavour," in J.C. Beaglehole (ed.), The journals of Captain James Cook on his voyages of discovery, vol.I: The voyage of the Endeavour, 1768-1771 (Cambridge: Hakluyt Society, extra series xxxiv, 1955), pp. 514-519. In the second half of the eighteenth century most British and French explorers carried similar instructions.
furnish new materials for the exercise of their reason. Comparing themselves with their visitors, they cannot but be struck with the deepest conviction of their own inferiority, and be impelled, by the strongest motives, to strive to emerge from it...

Cook was to spread "the blessings of civilisation" under the guise of trade.¹⁵

Cook's promoters hoped that the knowledge he generated would provide Europeans with new insights into their own civilisation. In the preface to his History of English Poetry (1774), which John Douglas quoted in his introduction, Thomas Warton suggested that explorers' discoveries had helped Europeans to assess their own place in history, and to contemplate the "gradation" of societies "from barbarism to civility."¹⁶ As knowledge about the non-European world grew between the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries, European thinkers no longer had to rely solely on European history as a source of comparison and measure of social change. In Terra Australis Cognita, published on the eve of Cook's first voyage, John Callender suggested that in the Pacific Europeans would find "a faithful picture of the innocence and simplicity of the first ages...men simple, and just as they came from the hand of nature".¹⁷ With the results of Cook's first voyage in mind, Warton claimed that Europeans could now look back on their past with a heightened sense of their own importance and superiority in world history. Cook offered further proof of the steps Europeans had taken from "rudeness to elegance". Warton concluded that Cook allowed Europeans "to set a just estimation on [their]...own acquisitions".¹⁸ Exploration, then, did not simply generate new insights; it also fed European assumptions about non-European peoples.¹⁹

¹⁵ Cook and King, Voyage to the Pacific Ocean, I, p.lxxvi.
¹⁶ Quoted in ibid., pp.lxix-lxx.
¹⁸ Quoted in Cook and King, Voyage to the Pacific Ocean, I,
There were also more strictly humanitarian influences on these formulations. "[S]hedding the blood of those people", James Douglas declared, "is a crime of the highest nature: - They are human creatures, the work of the same omnipotent Author, equally under his care with the most polished European; perhaps being less offensive". This acknowledgement of the humanity of other peoples (albeit of divine creation) had complex intellectual roots: in European ideas about "natural man" and the "noble savage"; and in Methodism and the anti-slavery movement in mid eighteenth-century Britain. Treating other peoples with "every kind of Civility and Regard" meant distancing oneself from "tribal" disputes and respecting different ways of life. This policy was not rooted in an unbridled cultural and moral relativism, however. There was a fine line between humanitarianism and moral righteousness. Callender, and many of his contemporaries, thought that "by adopting our ideas of a regular and well-ordered society...[Native] minds would be opened, and formed, their savage manners softened". Cook was to display Europe's cultural "acquisitions." His crews were meant to be models

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19 During the eighteenth century theories of social development were conceived largely in terms of modes of subsistence. Ronald Meek suggests that a "four stages theory" of socio-economic development emerged during the eighteenth century, and was most explicit in the work of Adam Smith. This "theory" held that societies naturally progress over time through four distinct, consecutive modes of subsistence - hunting, pasturage, agriculture and commerce - with different sets of ideas and institutions defining each - roughly labelled savage, barbarian and civilised. This theory, Meek argues, was bolstered by European discoveries in the New World and the Pacific. Ronald L. Meek, *Social science and the ignoble savage* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976).  
of social order and moral strength, and Cook was to lead by example. Cook's backers hoped that non-European peoples would wish to emulate their visitors.

This humanitarian agenda was closely connected to the practice and rhetoric of scientific exploration. Truths about people and nature were to be induced, piece by piece, from observation. Different facts and opinions would be accumulated and accommodated in the belief that a universal order of knowledge would eventually be found. The intellectual historian Barbara Stafford explains that in Cook's day, the scientific gaze was defined as "a tireless and unrelenting visual exploration, the determined effort to 'prove' the existence of the external."\(^{23}\) The science of exploration was rooted in the Baconian belief that knowledge should be sought not for personal fame or gain, but for the general advancement of "mankind." Respect for other peoples, Stafford continues, mirrored the tolerant, non-dogmatic implications of empirical science; the search for truth by induction was meant to be a multi-national venture based on calm deliberation. Science was conceived as "a transcendent interest" above "narrowly commercial, military, or colonial exploitation."\(^{24}\) The French geographer Charles de Brosses captured this spirit of benevolence in his *Histoire des Navigations aux Terres Australes* (1756):

"Too much haste in enjoying the fruits of one's projects often leads only to their failure. In the beginning let us think of nothing but geography, of the pure desire to discover, of the acquiring of new lands and novel inhabitants for the universe..."\(^{25}\)

In the 1920s the novelist Joseph Conrad termed this new beginning "geography militant." Cook's voyages, he claimed, were untainted by "the idea of lucre.... His aims needed no

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\(^{25}\) Quoted in *ibid.*, p.20.
disguise. They were scientific." Cook's militancy was not based on war or colonisation, but on an unremitting examination of non-European space.

Cook's scientific-humanitarian mandate has been much discussed, but political and imperial motives for his voyages have been largely ignored and remain obscure. William Goetzmann, a historian of exploration, claims that the purpose of Cook's second voyage (at least) was to extend the British Empire to "the bottom side of the globe", with science in the service of empire; but he produces little evidence to support his view. Other historians have suggested that Cook inaugurated a Pax Britannica of trade rather than territorial dominion (or what Vincent Harlow termed "the second British Empire"), with science in the service of commerce and Cook as Adam Smith's "global agent", as Bernard Smith has put it, developing markets, spreading the idea of enlightened self-interest, and "bringing to prehistoric cultures the disguised checks and balances of a market economy".

These arguments involve a good deal of hindsight, however. The evidence on whether Cook's voyages were motivated by any grand imperial plan is contradictory.

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28 Smith, "Cook's posthumous reputation," p.179; Vincent T. Harlow, The founding of the second British Empire, 1763-1793, vol.1: Discovery and revolution (London: Longmans, 1953); and see David Mackay, In the wake of Cook: Exploration, science, and empire, 1780-1801 (London: Croom Helm, 1985). Adam Smith's The wealth of nations was published in the year Cook embarked on his third voyage.
29 Recent historians have tended to deduce imperial motives from the results of Cook's travels. Bernard Smith's work is the most difficult to fathom in this respect. In "Cook's posthumous reputation" he argues that the image of Cook as Adam Smith's "global agent" was constructed posthumously. In a more recent essay focusing on Cook's third voyage, though, he suggests that playing the role of "Adam Smith's god" became part of Cook's self-image. Bernard Smith, "Portraying Pacific people," in his Imagining the Pacific: In the wake of the Cook voyages (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1992), p.209. I claim that Cook did not spread enlightened self-interest or market relations in any obvious way.
While Britain was enormously successful in the Seven Years War, the Peace of Paris, as Ronald Hyam has noted, was made "in remarkable ignorance of any but the most obvious British overseas interests." Political discussion about the Pacific as a new theatre of colonisation was cautious and largely speculative. The British and French thought that the discovery of new riches in the fabled Terra Australis might alter the balance of power in Europe. And Cook was instructed to make a careful inventory of the "natural productions" and "manufactures" he found, comment on commercial possibilities and take possession of "convenient Situations" in the countries he discovered. But Britain did not want Cook's first or second voyages to become a pretext for another war with France and had no immediate plans to establish new colonies in the Pacific when Cook sailed on his third voyage.

The historian Linda Colley argues that the Seven Years War challenged "longstanding British mythologies". The acquisition of Bengal and New France by force of arms fractured belief in the symbiosis of the British nation and its empire - the idea that British power and character, at home and overseas, was based on Protestantism, commerce and liberty. Britain's post-war empire, which included new non-Anglophone and non-Protestant subject populations, had to be managed and legitimised. Debates

30 Ronald Hyam, "Imperial interests at the Peace of Paris (1763)," in Ronald Hyam and Ged Martin (eds.), Reappraisals in British imperial history (London: Macmillan, 1975), pp.21-43; the quotation is from p.38.
31 See Glyndwr Williams, "Seamen and philosophers in the south seas in the age of Captain Cook," Mariner's Mirror, vol.65, no.1 (February 1979), pp.3-22. Callender and de Brosses shared the sentiment that "EXPERIENCE has taught us, that a solid and well-regulated commerce should form our principal object in those distant climes, and not the conquest of large kingdoms beyond the Line." Callender, Terra australis cognita, I, book 1, p.12.
32 Beaglehole, Journals, III, p.ccxxiii. The Earl of Morton argued that Native peoples "are the natural, and in the strictest sense of the word, the legal possessors of the several Regions they inhabit", and "No European Nation has a right to occupy any part of their country, or settle among them without their voluntary consent." Beaglehole, Journals, I, p.514.
about the meaning of "Britishness" raged in England and Scotland, and new questions
about allegiance to the British Crown emerged in North America and India. "The
British", Colley demonstrates, were "captivated by but also adrift and at odds in a vast
empire abroad and a new political world at home which few of them properly
understood."34 Such anxieties forestalled thoughts of territorial expansion.

Alexander Dalrymple, the English East India Company’s hydrographer, noted
some of the objections to colonisation in his Collection of voyages to the South Pacific,
published in 1770. One of the main worries was that once established with an economic
and institutional base, distant colonies would strive for independence. He was reflecting
on Britain's tense relationship with its American colonies and argued that exploration
should open a "new vent for manufactures" rather than lead to further conquests. Britain,
he thought, had become too dependent on North America for trade. He hoped that further
exploration in the Pacific would generate new trade routes. Dalrymple, as Howard Fry
has shown, had a "lifelong commitment to British commercial expansion", but in 1770 he
was also concerned with the more immediate strategic and ideological import of "new
discoveries."35 "The subject of discoveries seems to be now reviving", he stated, and
"demands immediate attention from every Englishman, for it may be very justly said, the
being of the British empire rests on our insular situation, and powerful navy. Were any
of our competitors to gain the superiority at sea, the advantages of the first would be
lost."36

35 Howard T. Fry, "Alexander Dalrymple and Captain Cook: The creative interplay of
two careers," in Fisher and Johnston, Captain James Cook and his times, pp.41-57; the
quotation is from p.41.
36 Alexander Dalrymple, An historical collection of the several voyages to the south
Pacific Ocean, 2 vols. (London: J. Nourse, 1770-71), I, pp.xxi-xxx; the quotation is from
p.xxx (emphases in original).
Dalrymple's logic of national-cum-imperial defence through exploration has been picked up recently by Daniel Baugh, a naval historian. Baugh argues that Cook's voyages were motivated, in part, by "a protective maritime imperialism." They were part of a much broader history of Anglo-French rivalry. The British government and Admiralty was anxious to maintain Britain's naval superiority. Blaugh notes that Wallis, Byron and Cook were instructed to keep their eyes out for new naval bases. The Admiralty organised Cook's voyages in the hope that they would nurture Britain's merchant fleet, which was becoming bereft of skilled seamen because under the Navigation Acts, transatlantic trade was being carried on increasingly in American ships. Blaugh admits that the pursuit of science was a genuine motive for Pacific exploration in the 1760s, but he claims that it was by no means detached from strategic considerations and geopolitical rivalries.

Cook's contemporaries did not try to hide these imperial undercurrents. For intellectual figureheads such as Sir Joseph Banks, who was a scientist on Cook's first voyage and became the President of the Royal Society, science and empire went hand-in-hand. Yet Cook made his name not as an imperialist, but as "the most moderate, humane and gentle circumnavigator who ever went upon discoveries", as Fanny Burney (Madame D'Arblay) famously remarked. He followed his instructions carefully and commentators thought that he fulfilled his scientific-humanitarian mandate. He did not wield British power so much as a new world-view - a new curiosity about the world and tolerance of other peoples.

37 Daniel A. Baugh, "Seapower and science: The motives for Pacific exploration," in Derek Howse (ed.), Background to discovery: Pacific exploration from Dampier to Cook (Berkeley, Los Angeles, Oxford: University of California Press, 1990), pp.1-55; the quotation is from p.34.
Beaglehole's Cook

This image of Cook as a humane, scientific explorer was put on a scholarly footing this century by the New Zealand historian John Cawte Beaglehole. In the 1930s Beaglehole embarked on an exhaustive re-examination of the details and context of Cook's voyages, and strove to understand the man who personified this world-view. In the 1950s and 60s he re-edited Cook's journals for the Hakluyt Society of London. In his biography *The Life of Captain James Cook*, published posthumously in 1974, Beaglehole presented Cook as a great navigator, an objective observer, a judicious interpreter, and as a flag-bearer of European civilization who upheld standards of human decency in his dealings with other peoples. Or as Beaglehole put it more succinctly in an earlier essay: "...the humanity that is kindness, understanding, tolerance, wisdom in the treatment of men, a quality practised naturally as well as planned for, is what gave Cook's voyages their success, as much as the soundness of his seamanship and the brilliance of his navigation." Cook prevented his crews from pillaging the South Seas as previous voyagers had done, and engaged Native peoples with less arrogance than many of his nineteenth-century successors.

Beaglehole saw Cook as a representative of the European Enlightenment; as a sailor of humble origins who broke out of the shackles of speculation and tradition, and developed a self-conscious attitude towards observation, description and interaction. Beaglehole claimed that he had "the sceptical mind: he did not like taking on trust. He was therefore the great dispeller of illusion.... He could think, he could plan, he could reason." He deployed his critical faculties using the science of his day and was "the genius of the matter of fact." "He loved facts", Beaglehole suggested elsewhere, and

approached his journal writing with "a perfectly unassuming and primary wish to tell the truth".  

Similar views of Cook can be found in reviews from the late eighteenth century.

Some of these first posthumous treatments followed Dalrymple, portraying Cook as a national hero and using the success of his voyages for propaganda purposes.

Beaglehole worked with a more cosmopolitan intellectual genealogy, which started with Fanny Burney, G. Forster's *Cook der Entdecker* (1787), and Pierre Lemontey's *Elogé de Jacques Cook* (1789), and viewed Cook as a European culture hero - the quintessential scientific explorer serving worldly rather than national interests. "In movement [Cook] realized his innermost nature", Bernard Smith remarks on Lemontey's *Elogé*, and continues: "Europe is like that; a geographical imperative impells it; it must be on the

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43 See Smith, "Cook's posthumous reputation." Also take the following memorial, "Supposed to be by a naval officer grown old in the service of his country," published in 1784, which is a forerunner of Beaglehole's views:

> He raised himself, solely by his merit, from a very obscure birth, to the rank of Post Captain in the Royal Navy....

> Cool and deliberate in judging; sagacious in determining; active in executing; steady and perservering in enterprizing, from vigilance and unremitting caution; unsubdued by labour, difficulties and disappointments; fertile in expedients; never wanting presence of mind; always possessing himself, and the full use of a sound understanding....

> His knowledge, his experience, his sagacity rendered him so entirely master of his subject, that the greatest obstacles were surmounted, and the most dangerous navigations became easy and almost safe under his directions.

*Gentleman's Magazine*, vol.LIV, part II (July 1784), p.35.
44 For example, a book review of the official account of Cook's third voyage published in Britain states:

> [T]he great national expence incurred by our different expeditions, undertaken upon such liberal principles, and without any sordid view of gain and expence, and which from its nature must be satisfied out of the superfluities of a people, will, joined to our success in exploring unknown regions, give posterity a convincing proof that we have a more decided superiority over the other countries of Europe, than could be derived from the most extensive conquests, and will hold us forth to future ages as the most powerful people upon this globe.

*The annual register; or a view of the history, politics, and literature, for the years 1784 and 1785* (London: J. Dodsley, 1787), p.150.
move or perish." Beaglehole wrote at the tail end of this European imperative - after Cook had hooked up the world, and as a New Zealander. His point was that Cook's actions, methods and foibles are worth explaining, and his voyages remain meaningful, because he was a person like "us," struggling to make sense of the world diligently, objectively and compassionately.

Beaglehole's work was profoundly ethnocentric, of course. He studied Cook during the era of decolonisation, when there was an outpouring of anti-European sentiment, and science and humanism were being seen as the handmaidens of European power. His introductions to Cook's voyages might be read as thinly-disguised defences of the political disinterestedness of scientific knowledge. Yet in establishing Cook's Enlightenment and humanist credentials, Beaglehole's work counterbalances the work of post-war liberal historians who reinvoked the nineteenth-century view that contact with Europeans was inherently and inevitably catastrophic for Native peoples - that Cook was a poisoner. Beaglehole argued that far from inaugurating cultural disaster, Cook's voyages set a standard of cross-cultural interaction which others ruined. Beaglehole associated colonialism with the implementation of formal colonial rule and the displacement of indigenous peoples - not explicit features of Cook's agenda - and thought that the creation of knowledge itself did not found imperial desire or colonial power. By the standards of the nineteenth century, Cook's sweep of the Pacific was fleeting and his relations with indigenous peoples were mostly congenial. As a New Zealander,


46 This thesis is associated most directly with Alan Moorehead's The fatal impact: An account of the invasion of the South Pacific 1767-1840 (New York: Harper and Row, 1966), though I do not think his argument can be reduced to the caricature of the title. 47 Or in the words of one of Beaglehole's intellectual allies, "Cook was able to bring back a priceless record of a way of life that the other Europeans were to destroy." R.A. Skelton, Captain James Cook: After two hundred years (London: The Hakluyt Society, 1969), p.30.
Beaglehole must have known that all of this made Cook's status as an imperialist ambiguous.

**Scientific exploration and colonialism**

These connections between knowledge, power and identity under exploration, which rest uneasily in Beaglehole's work, have recently been the subject of intense debate in the critical literature on European colonialism. It is now argued more comprehensively that the texts of explorers induced, supported and legitimised the exercise of colonial power by inscribing, positioning and othering indigenous peoples in particular ways. These arguments stem, in part, from a recognition that while the formal architecture of European colonialism has now been largely dismantled, and power has been transferred to indigenous elites, colonial ideas and stereotypes live on. They are still part and parcel of systems of Western thought, and they are embedded in the nationalisms and self-identities of Europe's former colonies. While colonial "power" has been dissolved, knowledge has yet to be decolonised. They also work with Michel Foucault's dictum that knowledge and power "directly imply one another."

Such recognitions have inspired new perspectives on colonialism that pay close attention to issues of representation - philosophies and methods of seeing and recording, or what Edward Said calls "the power to narrate". Europeans, like all peoples, imagined and represented the world in relation to themselves, but with the privilege of more power than most. Many explorers described non-European space as bounteous and ripe for colonisation. The Pacific was represented as both an Arcadia of simplicity and innocence.

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48 Michel Foucault, *Discipline and punish: The birth of the prison*, [orig. pub. 1975; Alan Sheridan trans.] (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1978), p.27. Foucault never discussed European colonialism at any length, and this insight about knowledge and power cannot be pinned entirely on him; it runs through the work of two of the most influential critics of colonialism, Franz Fanon and C.L.R. James.

which Europeans had lost, and as a region populated by pagans and savages. Europeans, as Henri Baudet explained, eyed the wider world with "dissatisfaction and desire", and with "nostalgia and idealism."

Did explorers such as Cook record other ways of life openly and truthfully, as Beaglehole suggested, or did they actively fashion the distinctions between Europeans and non-Europeans that fill their journals? Is scientific objectivity and detachment necessarily proof of respect or compassion for others, or is it, as some recent critics of colonialism have charged, a strategy for gaining intellectual possession of non-European space and symbolic domination over its inhabitants by making the way Native peoples are positioned in texts seem innocent and immutable?

Some critics have emphasised how exploration helped Europe to construct non-Europeans as different and distant - as Other - in order to constitute itself as a coherent geographical and cultural entity (the hearth and pinnacle of civilisation), overriding imperial rivalries, papering over national differences and legitimising imperial expansion. Other scholars suggest that these boundary-making and othering procedures were paradoxical and anxiety-ridden, and point to the ways they have guided particular colonial practices and have been worked into colonial histories and different forms of "postcolonial" knowledge. Underlying both sets of emphases is the belief that the

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50 See Smith, *Imagining the Pacific*, especially chapters 3 and 4.
52 These questions have been raised recently in relation to eighteenth-century scientific exploration, though not Cook's voyages specifically, by Mary Louise Pratt in *Imperial eyes: Travel writing and transculturation* (London and New York: Routledge, 1993).
53 This emphasis forms the backbone of Edward Said's *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1979), p.5: "...as much as the West itself, the Orient is an idea that has a history and a tradition of thought. These two geographical entities thus support and to an extent reflect each other.” Said appealed to Foucault's arguments about discourse and power/knowledge.
power of colonial discourse lies in its diversity and flexibility - that colonial subjects and objects are brought into being "within multiple discourses and on multiple sites", to borrow the words of Tejaswini Niranjana.55

Much of this critical literature has centred on what Said called the discourse of Orientalism, but these general arguments about representation and the constitution of modern Eurocentrism now inform scholarship on Cook. Bernard Smith, a self-styled "neo-colonial" art historian, has attempted to demythologise Cook's personal voyage to fame by placing him in a broader intellectual context.56 For Smith, Cook's ships "combined the values of a fortress and a travelling laboratory", and Cook's artists and scientists championed the "empirical habits of vision" of the Royal Society.57 Smith has done much to unpack the notions of truth and scientific objectivity invoked blithely by Beaglehole, and reveal the cultural lenses through which Cook and his supernumaries saw the Pacific.58 But as the writer Paul Carter notes, Smith, like Beaglehole, still assumes that "a narrative of eighteenth-century Pacific exploration is a narrative of European experiences".59 The records of Cook's voyages are mined for what they tell "us" about European practices and mores, and the impact they had on European art and

56 Smith, an Australian, describes himself as a "neo-colonial art historian." He initiated critical reflection on Cook's humanism in the 1950s, but has always refrained from indicting Cook because, in his words, "it is not the business of the historian to indict the dead." Bernard Smith, "A comment," in a symposium on G. Obeyesekere's *The apotheosis of Captain Cook* (1992), *Social Analysis*, no.34 (December 1993), pp.61-65; the quotation is from p.65.
58 See Walter Veit, "On the European imagining of the non-European world," in "Australia and the European imagination" (papers from a conference held at the Humanities Research Centre, Australian National University, May 1981), pp.123-156. Veit offers a neo-Kantian interpretation of how the accumulation of "new knowledge" was mediated by a preconceived set of European ideas about primitive societies.
59 Paul Carter, "Violent passages: Pacific histories," *Journal of Historical Geography*, 20, 1 (1994), pp.81-86; the quotation is from p.85.
science. Native responses to Cook's presence are largely ignored. Smith thinks that whether "we" are European or non-European, we are all "the vicarious heirs and beneficiaries" of the knowledge produced on Cook's voyages.\(^{60}\) On his view, Native peoples were not colonised by Cook, but absorbed into a world-historical picture of European making.

Gananath Obeyesekere, an anthropologist from Sri Lanka, thinks that Cook's humanitarian agenda, and the empirical acumen of Cook's artists and scientists, entailed a conceptual blindness to the rationality and historicity of Native societies. In his book *The Apotheosis of Captain Cook*, Obeyesekere tries to debunk the long-held view that the Hawaiians thought Cook was the embodiment of their god Lono.\(^{61}\) Obeyesekere scoured the ethnographic and historical record pertaining to Cook's death, and argues that Cook's apotheosis is a European myth. He views Cook and those who have euologised his achievements as conjurers. He suspects that Cook had a narcissistic streak, presenting himself as a "gentle and humane" explorer to his contemporaries at home, but conducting himself as a tyrant while at sea. He views Cook on his third voyage as a melancholic bore, familiar with the Pacific, at home with "savage ways," and treating indigenous peoples with contempt.\(^{62}\) Obeyesekere pinpoints a subtext of violence, deception and

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\(^{60}\) Smith, "A comment," p.65.


The fact that Cook lost his balance, so to speak, on his third voyage, and became irrational and violent, did not escape other members of British high society, however. Edmund Burke, who was acquainted with some of Cook's officers, noted that lieutenant (later Captain) James King "loved and honourd Capt'n Cooke, and never spoke of him but with respect and regret. But he lamented the Roughness of his manners and the violence of his Temper." P.J. Marshall and John A. Woods (eds.), *The correspondence of Edmund Burke, vol.VII: January 1792 - August 1794* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1968), appendix 1 - "Edmund Burke's character of his son and brother," p.589.
appropriation beneath the scientific-humanitarian veneer of Cook's voyages. Cook burned Native villages, shot thieves and flogged his crew for misdemeanours.63

Obeyesekere's thesis is controversial, but he brings an important postcolonial perspective to scholarship on Cook. The anthropologist Deborah Bird Rose points to his broader methodological project of uncovering procedures of European mythmaking:

In face to face encounters, brute fact contradicts noble theory. It is not that Captain Cook was especially wicked or evil or malevolent. What is terrifying about Captain Cook is that he was just another Englishman. In transforming him into a culture hero, in making myths about his encounters with indigenous peoples, we tell ourselves stories about relationships between ourselves and others which conceal the violence inherent in our lives.64

Rose applauds Obeyesekere's doggedly empirical approach to Cook and reads his book as a self-reflective meditation on the "insulated god-like position" that many scholars (she picks out anthropologists) assume when discussing other societies. She thinks that "The apotheosis of Cook can be seen as a symptom of a more encompassing disorder: that European conquest culture [including its scholarly "heirs and beneficiaries"] is not attuned to bridging intersubjective space, but only to dominating it."65

63 Obeyesekere argues that Cook had a dual persona, one half of which he calls the "'Prospero' syndrome...that of the redoubtable person coming from Europe to a savage land, a harbinger of civilization who remains immune to savage ways, maintaining his integrity and identity"; the other half he labels the "'Kurtz' syndrome...the civilizer who loses his identity and goes native and becomes the very savage he despises". He claims that the latter won out over the former on Cook's third voyage. Obeyesekere, Apotheosis of Captain Cook, pp.11-12.
64 Deborah Bird Rose, "Worshipping Captain Cook," Social Analysis, no.34 (December 1993), pp.43-49; the quotation is from p.48.
65 Ibid., p.47. Rose's comments are sparked, in part, by her work with Aboriginal people in northern Australia, who view Cook as the "quintessential immoral European." For them, Cook stands for a history of destruction and dispossession rather than "listening and talking". By not letting Cook die - in continuing to treat him as a culture hero - white Australians are reproducing structures of white domination. Rose argues that the Hawaiians Cook encountered, like the Aboriginal people she works with, sought a "balanced intersubjectivity, effectively seeking to bridge the distance between the two groups by bringing others into their own sociality." They expected Cook to reciprocate, but the "attribution of primitive credulity to Hawaiians and innovative superiority to Europeans" ensured that cultural difference and distance was bridged on European terms.
Obeyesekere tries to dis-cover and bridge the gap between Hawaiian and European perspectives on Cook's death by using European concepts of practical rationality. "The fact that my universe is a culturally constituted behavioural environment", he states, "does not mean that I am bound to it in a way that renders discrimination impossible. The idea of practical rationality provides me with a bit of space where I can talk of Polynesians who are like me in some sense...to talk of the other in human terms." Marshall Sahlins, who in a number of essays has supported the notion that Hawaiians did view Cook as a manifestation of Lono and has used it to illustrate his "structural, historical anthropology", is the main target of Obeyesekere's intellectual ire. And Sahlins has recently published a vitriolic (though very scholarly) book-length response to his critic, accusing Obeyesekere of sloppy historical and ethnographic scholarship, and of denigrating Hawaiian myths and ways of knowing. "The only difference between Obeyesekere's position and the garden variety of European imperialist ideology", Sahlins argues, "is not that he eschews the opposition between the West and the Rest but that he reverses their values."

He would give the "natives" all that "rationality" Western people take to be the highest form of thought, while endowing Europeans, including the outsider-anthropologists, with the kind of mindless repetition of myth they have always despised - that is, as "native." Which is also to say that this self-proclaimed defence of "preliterate people who cannot speak for themselves" is imperialist hegemony masquerading as subaltern resistance.


Obeyesekere, Apotheosis of Captain Cook, p.21. This is hardly a novel manœuvre more generally, of course; Weber's ideas permeate many disciplines. But Obeyesekere is one of the first scholars to raise such issues in relation to Cook's voyages.


The ultimate victims of Obeyesekere's study...are the Hawaiian people. Western empirical good sense replaces their own view of things, leaving them with a fictional history and a pidgin ethnography.\(^69\)

This debate over Cook's purported apotheosis is part of a much broader debate in anthropology - and the humanities and social sciences more generally - about the politics of intellectual positions. To what degree can scholars observe or write about "other" cultures or the past without imposing their own subjectively constituted and culturally bound categories and agendas on their subject matter?\(^70\) Sahlins argues that concepts of reason and practical rationality are not culturally neutral or universally valid epistemological constellations. They are definitively European concepts that have played an important role in colonial projects; they certainly circumscribed Cook's cultural apparatus of representation, as I will show.

Paul Carter has criticised a different aspect of Obeyesekere's work. Carter thinks that he blurs "the primary spatial dynamic" of contact - "the profoundly different physical and conceptual spaces" that Europeans and Natives occupy and negotiate in contact situations; spaces that mediate the perception and construction of distance and difference, and the generation of meaning in the absence of a common language.\(^71\) For Carter the site of contact has historical significance. To treat Hawaiian space as an inert stage on which the historical drama of Cook's death unfolds (or in his words, "to assume the neutrality of the ground"), as Obeyesekere does, is to perpetuate "the violence of the colonising eye and mind"; Carter suggests that beneath the jostling European and Hawaiian discourses reconstructed by Obeyesekere, a more profound set of questions were perhaps being posed: "...who is to cede the space and on what terms?"\(^72\)

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\(^69\) Ibid., p.197.

\(^70\) See, especially, James Clifford and George Marcus (eds.), \textit{Writing culture: The poetics and politics of ethnography} (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986).

\(^71\) Carter, "Violent passages," pp.85-86.

\(^72\) Ibid.. Carter does not elaborate such claims, but they have been by a number of historians and anthropologists. See, especially, Greg Dening, "Sharks that walk on the land," in \textit{Mr Bligh's bad language: Passion, power and theatre on the Bounty}
Carter himself devotes a chapter to Cook's exploration of Australia and New Zealand in his book *The Road to Botany Bay*. He argues that far from assuming the "neutrality" of space, Cook brought the Australian coast under his intentional gaze, and into his own experiential world of travel, using an elaborate, mischievous naming practice. Carter is interested in explorers' "imaginary dialogue" with their surroundings and their "geo-graphy" (or "writing of lands"). He names Cook the founder of a "nomadic discourse" and "tradition of travelling", which he calls "spatial history." Carter claims that the exploration of Australia was informed by a set of open-ended, imaginative processes of movement and observation, rather than by the "passive and static" - taxonomic - gaze of Cook's scientists; processes he hopes Australians will emulate. 73

Carter's ideas are innovative, and I will address them more below. 74 *The Road to Botany Bay* tries to encourage nondogmatic methods of re-exploring history. Carter knows how precious acts of discovery and processes of exploration are in the public imagination in countries such as Australia, which do not have a long white history, and how easily they get translated into images of territorial self-identification and power. Nevertheless, his reading of Cook is exclusionary. He ignores Cook's dealings with Native peoples. Indeed, the geographer Derek Gregory argues that Native people cannot be seen from Carter's perspective because "spatial history is constituted as the dual of imperial history and hence remains (reversed) in its enclosures." 75 Spatial history cannot

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74 They are also idiosyncratic. Carter is concerned with Cook's first voyage. Beaglehole thinks that Cook was very much an apprentice explorer and writer on this voyage, never getting beyond "the plain style" of writing, and being counselled by Joseph Banks, his highly educated supernumary. Carter thinks that Cook's and Bank's projects were fundamentally at odds; Beaglehole thinks that their writing suggests that they had "parallel passages." Beaglehole, *Cook the writer*, p.9.
recover aboriginal perspectives because it is a critical practice based on writing; it "fixes its gaze so firmly on the West that it can only catch glimpses of other human beings through a glass, darkly." Carter acknowledges that his "spatial history might not say a word about 'The Aborigines', but he thinks, nonetheless, that "by recovering the intentional nature of our grasp of the world, it might evoke their historical experience without appropriating it to white ends." Gregory's point is that such an intense focus on the intentionality of the white (and usually male) explorer "effaces the inscriptions of power in the jostling, colliding construction of...different spatialities". While Carter is adamant that it is Cook's engagement with the Australian coast that matters, and not how we connect him to Europe, he still works within a European imaginary - an imaginary which Aboriginal people think stands for violence and appropriation. Carter uses none of Beaglehole's methods, but their images of Cook are in many respects the same. Cook's journals remain the self-contained locus of representation. For all of Carter's remarks about the spatial (corporeal, situated) dynamics of contact, his spatial history "begins and ends in language."

Carter's Cook reminds me of Spengler's Faustian inventor and discoverer who tried to emulate "the high-hearted, happy research of the early Gothic monks" seeking God's secret. Cook was on an allegorical quest to find his own place in the Pacific. He belonged to a western culture which Spengler claimed had "a discoverer's soul." But did Cook end up creating "a small cosmos obeying the will of man alone", as Spengler's monks did to cover up the Devil's hand, which cajoled them into thinking that in seeking God's secret they were aiming to become God themselves? Could Cook experience the Pacific without directing and mastering it? In other words, Carter's journeying ethic of

76 Ibid., pp.179-180.
77 Carter, Road to Botany Bay, p.350.
79 Carter, Road to Botany Bay, p.xxiii.
self-refashioning has a distinctly European heritage. Can it be invoked unreflexively as a means of decolonising history? As Salman Rushdie has reminded us: "The world of the adventurer contains as many mercenary 'soldiers of fortune' as idealistic knights-errant". Carter's analysis of Cook's naming practices can be read in a number of ways. However, in not addressing his own charge that Cook may have had a colonising eye and mind - and in not discussing the possibility that his spatial history might be colonised by new 'soldiers of fortune' - is Carter replacing one politically interested view of the past with another? Rose's Aboriginal interlocutors do not share Carter's views; as one Aboriginal leader put it to her: "A thousand million years ago / Before I was born / Captain Cook sailed out from big England / And started shooting all my people."

Spaces of contact

With these issues in mind, the next two chapters explore Cook's encounter with the Mowachaht and Muchalaht (Nuu-chah-nulth) people of "Nootka Sound" on the west coast of Vancouver Island in 1778. Cook was then on his third voyage. He travelled to

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82 Cook never visited Australia's Northern Territory where these narratives were recorded, but Rose insists that they are not myths. "Nit-pickers will quibble about the date and the locality. Tommy Vincent, Hobbles, and all the other men and women whose lives have been so radically transformed by invasion say that from Captain Cook all else follows." Rose, "Worshipping Captain Cook," p.44.

83 I put Nootka Sound in scare quotes this once, and in the title to Part I, to point out that it is not a Mowachaht or Muchalaht place name, and to highlight that processes of naming and mapping were integral to the way Europeans appropriated Native land. On this point see, especially, J. Brian Harley, "Rereading the maps of the Columbian encounter," Annals of the Association of American Geographers, 83:2 (1992), pp.522-542. The Native groups of the west coast of Vancouver Island took Nuu-chah-nulth as their collective name in 1978. Before that Europeans called them "Nootkans." The Native groups of this region did not identify themselves collectively in 1778.

Cook first named Nootka Sound "King George's Sound," but changed the name later, thinking that "Nootka" was the indigenous name for this area. The Spanish botanist José Mariano Mozino, who visited the sound in 1792, thought that Nootka was derived from Nut-chi, or mountain. Another Spanish observer claimed that "Cook's men, asking
the north Pacific in search of the fabled Northwest Passage - a water route across northern North America that many Europeans at the time thought connected the Atlantic and Pacific - but stayed at Nootka Sound for a month repairing and resupplying his ships, the Resolution and Discovery.

I read this encounter in three spatial registers: at the "local" site where face-to-face interaction occurred (paying attention to the spatial dynamics of contact alluded to by Carter in his criticisms of Obeyesekere); in terms of Cook's way of travelling and engaging the Pacific (encouraged by Carter); and in the context of a broader European-Enlightenment imaginary (debated by Beaglehole and Smith).

Space cannot be construed as an independent variable in the formation of eighteenth-century European doctrines about the Other, in methods of contact, or in the representational practices of explorers such as Cook. The imagination and production of non-European space was central to the design, execution and record of Cook's voyages. These three spatial registers were meshed in Cook's different encounters with the peoples of the Pacific. In an elliptical line in the preface to his edition of Cook's third voyage, Beaglehole stated: "Where Cook went, why he said what he did, the accidents of the weather: all this may be taken as matter of historical geography." Beaglehole was interested in the geography of Cook's voyage - the separation of geographical fact from fiction, with Cook as the great dispeller of illusion. I want to argue a different point: that there were a number of geographies embedded within Cook's voyages; geographies that both point to and unbbutton the connections between power and space in European exploration.

the [Natives] by signs what the port was called, made for them a sign with their hand, forming a circle and then dissolving it, to which the Natives responded Nutka, which means to give away." José Mariano Mozoño, Noticias de Nutka: An account of Nootka Sound in 1792 [orig. pub. 1970; Iris H. Wilson Engstrand trans. and ed.] (Seattle and London: University of Washington Press/ Vancouver/Toronto: Douglas & McIntyre, 1991), p.66. There have been other interpretations of Cook's mistake.

84 Beaglehole, Journals, III, p.vii.
Chapter Two
Locations

The rattle of empirical science

Cook sighted Nootka Sound on the morning of March 29th, 1778.\textsuperscript{85} By evening, the Resolution and Discovery had anchored near the south end of Bligh Island in the centre of the sound. Figure 1:1, a map from the log of Thomas Edgar (master of the Discovery), shows the tracks of Cook's ships into the sound and his anchorage.\textsuperscript{86}

Following is an excerpt from the official account of Cook's third voyage, published in 1784 - the account sanctioned by the British Admiralty and edited by John Douglas:

We no sooner drew near the inlet than we found the coast to be inhabited; and at the place where we were first becalmed, three canoes came off to the ship. In one of these were two men, in another six, and in the third ten. Having come pretty near us, a person in one of them stood up, and made a long harangue, inviting us to land, as we guessed, by his gestures. At the same time he kept strewning handfuls of feathers towards us; and some of his companions threw handfuls of a red dust or powder in the same manner. The person who played the orator, wore the skin of some animal, and held, in each hand, something which rattled as he kept shaking it. After tiring himself with his repeated exhortations, of which we did not understand a word, he was quiet; and then others took it, by turns, to say something.... After the tumultuous noise had ceased, they lay at a little distance from the ship, and conversed with each other in a very easy manner; nor did they seem to shew the least surprize or distrust.\textsuperscript{87}

As Cook's ships got closer to shore, the official account continues, "the canoes began to come off in greater numbers", totalling 32 at one point. "Though our visitors behaved very peaceably, and could not be suspected of any hostile intention, we could

\textsuperscript{85} Cook had been instructed to explore the coast between 45°N - as far north as any British explorer had been in this region - and 65°N, where it was believed the Northwest Passage would be found. \textit{Ibid.}, pp.ccxxi-ccxxii.

\textsuperscript{86} Thomas Edgar, "A log of the proceedings of his majesty's sloop Discovery, Charles Clerke, commander," part I, PRO ADM 55/21, fol.150.

\textsuperscript{87} Cook and King, \textit{Voyage to the Pacific Ocean}, II, pp.265-266.
Figure I:1 "A plan of King Georges Sound"
not prevail on any of them to come on board."  

For almost two centuries it was assumed that these were Cook's words, and this passage was read as a factual account of first contact at Nootka Sound. It established that Cook and his crew had been there, looking and recording. During the eighteenth century exploration became a resolutely empirical science, and European thinkers put a premium on the powers of observation and the category of experience - on first-hand observation. This was the age of Enlightenment. "[T]he two great mythical experiences on which the philosophy of the eighteenth century had wished to base its beginnings", Michel Foucault wrote, were "the foreign spectator in an unknown country, and the man born blind restored to light."  

The authority and appeal of explorers' narratives rested in good measure on the fact that they had seen new lands and people with their own eyes and compiled their observations on the spot. The fabulous tales of foreign riches and peoples that an earlier generation of Spanish explorers had written were to be overhauled by careful, systematic studies of people and nature. Scientific exploration revolved around what Barbara Maria Stafford calls "the valorization of the instant"; explorers were expected to represent their active, physical engagement with new surroundings.

This passage in the official account undertook to mimic the immediacy of first contact. Nothing was expected of these inhabitants as they approached Cook's ships; Cook apparently had no preconceptions. These people presented themselves freely before Cook's gaze, apparently showed little surprise at the sight of the ships, and invited

\[88 \text{Ibid., p.265.}\]
\[89 \text{Michel Foucault, } \textit{The birth of the clinic: An archaeology of medical perception} \text{ (London: Tavistock Publications, 1973), p.65.}\]
\[90 \text{On Spanish exploration see Beatriz Pastor Bodmer, } \textit{The armature of conquest: Spanish accounts of the discovery of America, 1492-1589} \text{[Lydia Longstreth Hunt trans.] (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1992).}\]
\[91 \text{Stafford, } \textit{Voyage into substance}, \text{ p.400. Stafford's work focuses mainly on representations of nature, but similar principles were obviously at work in European representations of people.}\]
Cook to land. Communication at first depended on body language - motives and intentions were read from gestures.

Objectivity, and the supposition that an account was therefore reliable and true, was based on a particular textual stance towards the world. The task of the explorer, Stafford argues, was to find "an innocent mode of literary and visual expression" which could duplicate the experience of encountering the new. This textual stance constituted the notion of disinterestedness. Scientific explorers, Stafford continues, tried to match words to things without "the crutch of memory" or an "intervening human screen." Disinterestedness entailed a dedication to observation, a commitment not to let the eye wallow in distant memories and vague connotations.

This search for textual innocence also implied detachment: "...the explorer - committed to the living of actuality, not to recollection; unwedded to the landscape; not endemic to his terrain - is an interloper in a raw world that functions without him." The passage in the official account contains no value judgements about the Natives' behaviour. Rather, it states the facts of contact and suggests that such behaviour indicates the natural attributes and cultural traits (or "dispositions", as it was put in Cook's instructions) of this "new" group of people. The implication is that such actions were endemic to these people, and that their reaction to Cook's ships was therefore quite natural.

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92 Ibid., p.28.  
93 Ibid., p.408.  
94 Ibid., p.421.  
95 This passage was also written in the past tense. This did not necessarily imply that observation was rooted in the surveying, perspectival mode of vision and narration that is often associated with retrospection. Many explorers wrote in the first person, and used the present tense, to emphasise that they had relied on their senses and had not leaned on the crutch of memory. But in effect, all explorers such as Cook had to do to denote first-hand contact and objectivity was to convince their readers that their senses had been fixed on the objects under inspection long enough for them to have made an impression on the mind and be put down on paper. Narrating in the first person could imply that the
This account of first contact at Nootka Sound may be "objective" in the sense that Stafford unpacks the term, but how factual is it? In the 1960s Beaglehole compared Cook's holographic journal of his third voyage (housed in the British Museum) with what was printed in the official account and discovered that Douglas had twisted Cook's descriptions, added information from the journals of some of Cook's officers, and added lines of his own to pander to popular stereotypes and to liven up Cook's sometimes wooden (factual, objective!) prose. Scholars now rely on Beaglehole's 1967 edition of Cook's journal rather than the official account, presumably in the belief that they are reading a more authentic Cook.

This is how Cook himself described his passage into Nootka Sound:

We no sooner drew near the inlet than we found the coast to be inhabited and the people came off to the Ships in Canoes without shewing the least mark of fear or distrust. We had at one time thirty two Canoes filled with people about us, and a groupe of ten or a dozen remained along side the Resolution most part of the night. They seemed to be a mild inoffensive people, shewed great readiness to part with anything they had and took whatever was offered them in exchange...

It is a shorter statement than Douglas's, but it is still matter-of-fact and seemingly "objective." But is it a disinterested, on-the-spot account? I.S. MacLaren has studied the four basic stages in the evolution of explorers' narratives - from the log book entry, to the journal, to the book manuscript, and finally to these "official" published accounts - and shows how, from stage to stage in this sequence, the physical scene of writing becomes more distant, the author relies more on memory, and questions of narrative structure
become more central. Cook's journal, MacLaren points out, is a second-stage journal, composed after the fact.  

MacLaren's argument can be expanded. Explorers' first-hand observations were tempered by the recollection of other lands and peoples. The particular words and details that gave Cook's and Douglas's accounts of first contact at Nootka Sound their own vitality were drawn from a space of comparison that had been opened up during the course of Cook's voyages. Native actions and gestures were fixed as facts beginning a new encounter, and each new meeting was made novel by virtue of a singular collection of statements employed to make it differ from others: here, at Nootka Sound, the Native inhabitants apparently showed little surprise at the arrival of strangers on their shores; there, in other parts of the Pacific, they appeared to be hostile; here they approached the ships and threw feathers and dust; there they brandished their spears.

Cook's voyages had a textual momentum. Historians may only read the sections of the official account or Cook's journal that relate to their region, but for Cook's eighteenth-century readers, encounters with different peoples made sense as part of a whole. On his third voyage, especially, Cook tried to "relate as well as to execute" his voyage, as Douglas put it, by weaving his observations into a narrative. Cook highlighted the differences between the peoples he met by pinpointing their different "dispositions." Cook distinguished the "Nootkans" from other groups of indigenous people by emphasising their trading abilities and strong notions of property. Douglas tried to illuminate Cook's space of comparison. He highlighted difference by dividing Cook's various encounters into chapters, working with the journals of some of Cook's


99 Cook and King, *Voyage to the Pacific Ocean*, I, p.lxxvii (emphasis in original). Beaglehole also noted that Cook aimed on his third voyage to write a book that would need little editing when he returned home. Beaglehole, *Journals*, III, p.clxii.
officers, and by drawing more acute contrasts than did Cook between Native peoples and Europeans.\footnote{Douglas drew extensively on the journal of William Anderson, surgeon and naturalist on the Resolution. Unfortunately, Anderson's journal has since been lost.}

This mode of comparison and compilation culminated in "modern" European discourses of causation. In the late eighteenth century this discourse of causation was shaped by figures such as the Forsters, who sailed on Cook's second voyage.\footnote{See Veit, "European imagining of the non-European world."} On his third voyage, Cook recorded and compared the dispositions (attributes and traits) of indigenous societies in a more rudimentary fashion.\footnote{Glyndwr Williams, a historian of exploration, claims that "with little help from the infant sciences of ethnology and anthropology, the first European expeditions into the Pacific after 1763 were ill-equipped to present any systematic account of the peoples they encountered." Williams, "Seamen and philosophers", p.5. De Gerando's The observation of savage peoples, composed for Nicolas Baudin, which lamented European efforts to record other ways of life in any coherent fashion and was one of the first methodological treatises in the emerging discipline of anthropology, was not published until 1800. For a discussion of De Gerando see Bitterli, Cultures in conflict, pp.173-175.} When he inscribed "the new," he generally fell back on his own situation, on his recollections and his journal, rather than on natural history manuals and geography books. Indeed, he did not like "taking on trust", as Beaglehole suggested.

Cook's textual fabrication of difference was also influenced by the geographical momentum of his voyages. Cook tried to capture in writing what Paul Carter calls "the zigzag map created by his passage".\footnote{Scientific observation on Cook's voyages (especially the third, which was not graced with the genius of Banks, Solander, or the Forsters) was perhaps not as "systematic" as some recent scholars have argued. See David Stoddart, "Geography - a European science," in his On geography and its history (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1986), pp.28-40, who argues that Cook's voyages mark the beginning of a modern scientific tradition in geography, defined by realism in description, systematic classification, and comparative methods of explanation. Also see Gregory, Geographical imaginations, pp.16-33, who questions Stoddart's confidence, and argues that if we want to anchor the intellectual project of Cook's artists and scientists anywhere, it might just as well be in Foucault's eighteenth-century classical order of knowledge. I discuss these issues more fully below.} Carter argues that the place names Cook bestowed
(most famously "Botany Bay", and others such as "Islands of Direction" and "Repulse Bay") allude to his journey itself, to its dead-ends and successes; and to a disagreement between Cook and the scientists on his ships about how to represent the new. Cook did not simply try to capture the new and the strange in a factual, transparent, scientific manner. He also tried to record the imaginative act of exploring. For instance, as Cook approached Nootka Sound and glimpsed what appeared to be an inlet, he bestowed the name "Hope Bay", signalling his hope that a good harbour would eventually be found. Cook was not mistaken, of course, but he kept the name because it alluded to the way he had discovered Nootka Sound and his need at that juncture to find an anchorage where he could repair his ships.

We should not go overboard with such images. Cook was a British naval captain foremost, probably identified himself as a European second, and was only a nomadic spatial historian (as Carter sees him) last. Yet Carter is right, I think, that Cook's cultural lenses were not simply of British, European or scientific manufacture, and nor did they remain unchanged over the course of his voyages. They became tinted by his experience of travel, and there was a physicality and materiality to the science of observation and representation.

In addition, representation became more intricate as each new encounter proceeded. Elsewhere - the trace of other encounters supplemental to accounts of new ones - became juxtaposed and interpenetrated with the experience of yesterday. As events unfolded, Cook went back over his journal, reworking first impressions, adjusting statements and polishing his observations. While his ships were stationary, his journal was still on the move. Towards the end of his journal of events at Nootka Sound, for example, he tried to reassess the Natives' readiness to trade, and their use of iron. Had such facets of Native life been picked up from Europeans or were they indigenous? Cook

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knew that the Spanish had sent explorers to the north Pacific in the mid-1770s, though where, precisely, he did not know. He could not resolve the issue and simply noted that these people "have been so many years in a manner surrounded by Europeans...and who knows how far these Indian nations may extend their traffic with one another." Douglas also tried to account for the possibility that these people had been contacted before by Europeans.

They were earnest in their inquiries, by signs, on our arrival, if we meant to settle amongst them; and if we came as friends...; the inquiry would have been an unnatural one, on a supposition that any ships had been here before; had trafficked...and had then departed; for, in that case, they might reasonably expect we would do the same.

In this passage from the official account, sixty five pages on from the passage chronicling Cook's arrival at Nootka Sound, Douglas informs us that Cook did understand the Natives' harangues - that they wanted to know why he had visited them. Yet Douglas still suggested that the Natives had only one, endemic or natural way of viewing strangers; that they would have reacted to Cook and the Spanish in the same way. Cook himself seemed to put parameters around the objectivity of his account of first contact, implying that the inhabitants' initial reaction to his ships was influenced by contact with other strangers and may not have stemmed simply from some natural disposition.

These processes of revision point to another possible interpretation of these accounts of first contact at Nootka Sound: that Cook, and then Douglas, wrote them as an introduction to, and prospect of, things to come; that they served a rhetorical purpose. I will return to this line of inquiry shortly. For now, I want to assess first contact from the

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105 A short account of these Spanish expeditions of 1774 and 1775 was published in London in 1776, just before Cook departed on his third voyage, as an appendix to a pamphlet concerning the Northwest Passage. See Warren L. Cook, *Flood tide of empire: Spain and the Pacific northwest, 1543-1819* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1973), p.85.
margins of Cook's field of vision - in terms of what we can now say he could not have known and did not discover.

Floating islands, bones and blood

A Spanish vessel anchored near Nootka Sound for two days in August 1774. In 1789 an American trader was told by some Natives of the sound that this Spanish ship had terrified them.

About 40 months before Captn Cook's arrival a Ship came into the sound and anchor'd within some rocks on the East side [of] the entrance where she Remain'd 4 Days and Departed. They said she was a larger ship than they had ever seen since; that she was copper'd and had a Copper Head, this I suppose to have been Gilt or painted yellow; that she had a great many guns and men; that the Officers wore Blue lac'd coats; and that most of the men wore Handkerchiefs about their heads. They [the ship's officers] made them presents of Large pearl shells some of which they still have in [their] possession.... When they [the Natives] first saw this ship they said they were exceedingly Terrified and but few of them even ventur'd alongside.109

108 The historian Herbert Beals has ascertained that the Santiago, piloted by Juan Perez, anchored off the west side of Hesquiat Peninsula, about ten miles from the entrance to Nootka Sound, on 7 August 1774, and stayed in the vicinity for two days. Perez's "diario" states that as his ship got close to land, "canoes began coming out from the land...but without wanting to come near regardless of how much they were called." Herbert Beals, Juan Perez on the northwest coast: Six documents of his expedition in 1774 (Portland: Oregon Historical Society Press, 1989), p.88.

When a launch was lowered into the water to look for an anchorage, the Native canoes around the ship fled, though soon returned "giving us their advice." The Santiago started to drift south in the wind before a good anchorage could be found, when more canoes "came within speaking distance" and started trading furs for shells. The accounts of two catholic priests accompanying Perez give a different view. One of the priests wrote that Native canoes approached the ship "making gestures that we should go away", though "After some time, we having made signs to them that they should draw near without fear, they did so...but they could not have been very satisfied with our signs, and went back to land." The other priest gave virtually the same story. Document 18, "The Diary of Fray Tomás de la Peña kept during the voyage of the Santiago," in Donald Cutter (re-ed.), The California coast: A bilingual edition of documents from the Sutro Collection [orig. pub. 1891, George B. Griffin trans. and ed.] (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1969), p.179. Document 19 is the diary of the other priest, Fray Juan Crespi.

109 Joseph Ingraham to Esteban Jose Martinez [1789], Mexico City, Archivo General de la Nacion, Ramo: Historia, 65, in the Freeman Tovell Collection, BCARS, Add.MSS.
Fear eventually gave way to curiosity, however, and there was some trade between the two groups. But this picture of Native fear at the sight of the Spanish was confirmed three years later by the Spanish botanist José Mariano Moño.

The sight of this [Spanish] ship at first filled the natives with terror, and even now they testify that they were seized with fright from the moment they saw on the horizon the great "machine" which little by little approached their coasts. They believed that Qua-utz [a deity] was coming to make a second visit, and were fearful that it was in order to punish the misdeeds of the people. As many as were able hid themselves in the mountains, other closed themselves up in their lodges, and the most daring took their canoes out to examine more closely the huge mass that had come out of the ocean. They approached it timorously, without sufficient courage to go on board, until after a while, attracted by the friendly signs by which the Spanish crew called, they boarded the ship and inspected with wonder all the new and extraordinary objects that were presented before them.110

Ingraham was reporting to the Spanish naval commander at Nootka Sound, and noted that the Natives' testimony fitted in "every particular" with the description of the Santiago he had been given. The Spanish took this as further evidence that they had contacted the Natives of Nootka Sound before Cook. Martinez, who had been with Perez in 1774, took this imperial propaganda one step further by claiming that two Spanish silver spoons that Cook traded from the Natives of the sound had been stolen from him.

Don Esteban José Martinez, "Diary of the voyage...in the present Year 1789," p.81 [William L. Schurtz trans.] UBCL-SC. The image of fear related by Ingraham was not strictly part of this imperial pitch, however, and might be taken in its own right.

In his collection of Spanish voyages to the northwest coast, compiled in 1802, the Spanish naval historian Martin Fernandez Navarrete argued that the Native account recorded by Ingraham fitted better with documents relating to the voyage of Bruno de Hezeta, who was on the northwest coast in 1775, than with Perez's voyage. Navarrete thought that by 40 months the Natives meant 40 moons - or 38 months before Cook - which would have placed Hezeta at Nootka Sound. He noted that there was only one officer on Perez's ship with a decorated uniform, whereas in 1775 Hezeta's officers were dressed in "full uniform" to take possession. Furthermore, Navarrete claimed that the two spoons could not have been stolen from Martinez because the Natives did not board the Santiago; he suggested that "it was...Quadra [in 1775] who suffered the loss of the spoons, which the servants said probably had slid down the scupper hole". Martin F. Navarrete, "Viajes en las costa al norte de las Californias, 1774-1790," [1802; 1874 copy, George Davidson trans.] Bancroft Library, Berkeley, P-B 26, pp.770-783; the quotations are from pp.773-775. From Herbert Beals's cautious reconstruction of this 1775 voyage, it seems likely that Hezeta was in the vicinity of Nootka Sound on 11 and 12 June.

Herbert K. Beals (ed.), For honor and country: The diary of Bruno de Hezeta (Portland OR: The Press of the Oregon Historical Society, 1985), pp.81-83. As far as is known, these were the only two European ships that were in the vicinity of Nootka Sound before Cook arrived.

110 Moño, Noticias de Nutka, p.66.
And in the late nineteenth century Augustus Brabant (a Catholic missionary) was told by Hesquiaht people that their ancestors recollected the Spanish ship. At first, they thought it was a large bird; as it got closer, they changed their minds and saw it as a floating house. Some visited the ship and returned to their village saying they had seen "several of the deceased of the tribe" on board.¹¹¹ Ingraham, Moziño and Brabant started to piece together a Native picture of contact, then, and a Native landscape with its own set of geographical, cultural and spiritual significations - a picture drawn from Native memory and oral traditions.

These Native perceptions of the Spanish can be put together with other ethnographic fragments dealing with the arrival of Cook's ships. In the early twentieth century Chief George of Nootka Sound related a story about how, one day, the tops of three sticks were seen on the horizon. The sticks were soon identified as a watercraft, and people thought that Haitetlik, the lightening snake, was propelling it. Others considered it a salmon changed by magic. Two chiefs thought it was the work of Quautz. As the craft got closer, "all the men and women grew very much afraid" and people were advised to hide. "A woman doctor named Hahatsaik, who had power over all kinds of salmon, appeared with a whalebone rattle in each hand; she put on her red cedar bark cap and apron and sang, saying that it must be a salmon turned into a boat." She called out: "'Hello you, you spring salmon, hello you dog salmon, hello you coho salmon.'" A canoe containing another doctor, Wiwai, then went out; then another canoe with chief Nanaimis and ten strong men went to offer the thing two fine beaver skins. Nanaimis stayed in his

¹¹¹ This account is in Brabant's Miscellaneous papers in BCARS, and is printed verbatim in the B.C. Orphans' Friend, Historical number, (1913), p.81. Peter Webster related a similar story to anthropologists in the 1970s: "I do know [the Spanish ship] was seen south-east side of Estevan Point. This Hesquiat seen something strange out in the open Pacific." When they went to see, "The blocks look[ed] like skulls...of a dead human.... And this is what they thought it was, dead people that was aboard that ship." Barbara S. Efrat and W.J. Langlois (eds.) "The contact period as recorded by Indian oral tradition," in "nu.ka.: Captain Cook and the Spanish explorers on the coast," Sound Heritage, vol.VII, no.1 (1978), pp.54-62; the quotation is from pp.59-60.
canoe but got close enough to the thing to see "that Cook was not an enchanted salmon, but only a man." Maquinna, an important Nuu-chah-nulth chief, then went out, saying to Cook, "I want you to come and stay with me next year."

This text is complemented by others recorded in the 1970s and included in a Provincial Government publication that formed part of the Cook bicentenary celebrations. In a Native account related by Winifred David, the Native people of the Sound "didn't know what on earth" was approaching. Two canoes of warriors were sent out to see, and thought it was "a fish come alive into people". The warriors took a good look at the men on deck. One of them, with a hooked nose, was thought to be a dog salmon. A hunchback sailor was in Native eyes a humpback salmon. The warriors reported home that this thing contained fish "come here as people." Chief Maquinna sent more canoes out to see what these people wanted. When the Indians were given some thick white pilot biscuits by Cook's crews, they thought these men were friendly and should be treated nicely.

In another account related by Gillette Chipps, Cook's ship was viewed as an island and the Indians danced around it. "They say Indian doctors go out there singing a song, find out, try to find out what it was. Rattling their rattles". They saw white faces on both sides of the island. "Maybe it was the same men on the other side when they go around the other side the same person but different places." Cook also visited their village, and his blacksmith, Tom, fell asleep in the big house as the Indians danced and entertained the Captain. During this time the Indians also learned about pilot bread. "They didn't know what the heck to do with it." Some kept it as a good luck charm; others thought it was poisonous and would not eat it. In another account, Peter Webster

112 F.W. Howay and E.O.S. Scholefield, *British Columbia: From the earliest times to the present*, 4 vols. (Vancouver: S.J. Clarke Publishing Company, 1914), I, pp.81-83. According to a Native account heard by Brabant, Cook entered the sound at night or in fog, and his ships were not discovered until they had reached their anchorage on Bligh Island. Augustus Brabant to John Walbran, 19 July 1905, Roman Catholic Church, Diocese of Victoria. Papers, 1842-1912, BCARS Add.MSS. 2742.
related that Cook's ships got stuck at sea, could not find their way into Nootka Sound, and that a whaling canoe went out to guide Cook to shore.\textsuperscript{113}

In these Native texts the new and the strange, remembered from the past, have undergone historical translation. The four Native people who related these accounts all identified Cook by name. British and American traders came to Nootka Sound in increasing numbers in the late 1780s and it is possible that oral histories of these first dealings with non-natives in the late eighteenth century may have been adapted and improvised so as to incorporate such a famous figure as Cook. Floating islands, a white man and his blacksmith, now signify Cook and his ships. Strange objects that carry charms or poison have been identified as ship's biscuits. The anthropologists who went to Nootka Sound in the 1970s were probably looking for stories about Cook.\textsuperscript{114} Some of the details in these Native accounts can be found in the European record of Cook's stay; others cannot.

Other Native texts that refer to Cook's visit do not carry as many of these historical traces, though that is not to say they are necessarily any truer or more authentic than the accounts presented above. When the missionary C.M. Tate was at Nootka Sound around 1880, he recorded some details that had been passed down by Native elders. "[W]e were all down at the ocean beach cutting up a large whale which had been found stranded the previous day when looking across the big water we saw something

\textsuperscript{113} These three account are in Efrat and Langlois, "The contact period as recorded by Indian oral tradition," pp.54-58.

\textsuperscript{114} And these and other Native accounts figured prominently in Native protest over the Cook bicentenary. The West Coast District Council of Chiefs charged the government with giving the public "a distorted view of Cook's visit" and boycotted its plans to send tourists to the sound. "Cook's angry legacy," \textit{Daily Colonist}, 17 January 1978. According to a Native account reported in the \textit{Victoria Times} (8 March 1978), Mowachaht people discovered Cook and his crew flailing around in the fog and in poor health. They rescued him, tended to his sick, and helped to repair his ships. He was asked to leave the sound by Chief Maquinna because his crew were disrespectful to Native women and stole food. The Nootka word for white men, which was derived from this experience with Cook, translates as "people lost at sea."
white that looked like a great seagull". Some thought it was a large bird from the sky that had come to earth to eat the people. "This made us all afraid", the account continues, "and we ran off to the woods to hide ourselves. We peeped out from behind the trees to see what it would do, when we saw it go right past the point and into the bay where our village was." The old people "got very much afraid", but the younger ones "were anxious to know what it was." The wise men of the tribe held a council and one old man said it was a moon from the sky using a sea serpent for its canoe. "As this great thing was now standing still, the old man suggested that two of the young men, who had no wives, should take a canoe, and go off...to see what it was. If they were swallowed up, they would have no wives or children to grieve for them, and then we would know that it was dangerous." The two men who went out were afraid to go near the moon "for some time", but eventually decided to make "a bold dash" towards it. They found men with a great deal of hair on their faces and were frightened until one of "the strange men beckoned with his hand for them to go near." They plucked up the courage to paddle alongside the moon's canoe. "Very soon", the account states, a rope ladder was dropped down, and one of the moon men beckoned for them to come up. They tied their canoe to the rope ladder, and climbed up the side of the moon's canoe, when they were surprised with everything they saw. One of the men, with bright buttons on his coats, spoke to another man, who went down into the very heart of the moon's canoe, and soon came back with two dishes, one of which was full of round flat bones, and the other full of blood [biscuit and molasses]. The man with the bright buttons pointed to the bones and the blood then pointed to his mouth; but the young man did not understand that they wanted them to eat, until one of the moon men took up a piece of the bone, dipped it in the blood, then put it in his mouth...at the same time holding out the dishes for them to eat also; but they were afraid to touch the moon's food.

The two Natives soon realised that the moon men wanted the skins they were wearing, and an exchange took place. When the two men returned to shore, people were interested in the beads and strange clothing that they had received but "felt afraid" when they were told the people of moon's canoe lived on bones and blood. The next day some of the moon men came ashore and one of them had a "crooked stick [flint-lock gun] which he
made speak with a very loud noise." "After a while", the story concludes, "the moon went away, and everybody felt glad".115

The last history I will draw on was told by Muchalat Peter to the ethnographer Philip Drucker in the 1930s. Two people from the community of Tcecis (see Figure II:2) saw an island with people and fire on it that looked like "a spirit thing", a Tc'Exa. When this news reached the village, the chief assembled all the people for a meeting. A group of men and a shaman were sent to find out more. As the ship came into sight again, the shaman began to sing in order to see the spirit in the thing. "I don't think that's a Tc'Exa", she remarked; "I don't see the spirit of it". When they got alongside, they saw men eating fire who asked about "pish". The Indians didn't understand them. When they returned to the village, they looked back expecting the thing to have disappeared, but it had not. The old people of the village thought: "That's our great-great grandchildren coming from the other side of the ocean." Many more canoes returned to the thing and circled it. They did not understand what ladders were for but understood the gesture "come up". Chief u'kwiskteck was the first to go up, and others followed. They exchanged their cedar bark mats and returned to the village to get more blankets. When they returned, the whites wanted to trade clothes but the Indians were not interested because they did not know how to wear them. They wanted iron spikes to make hooks. Back at the village, the chief wanted to know if any one had had a bad dream about the ship. When they said they had not, it was surmised that the ship was not a bad spirit. All the people then went to trade furs. A warrior saw a man with a gun. He "went up to the man, placed [the]

115 This account is in the Tate Family Papers, BCARS Add.MSS. 303, box 1, file 6. It should be noted that missionaries' enthusiasm for recording events of early contact was tied to a politics of conversion. Stories about first contact were used to mark the spiritual gulf between (Native) heathenism and (white) civilisation which was to be closed by the missionary. Nevertheless, it seems that this account was proffered by a Native person rather than solicited by Tate. See Tate's amended reminiscence of this account in J.S. Matthews (ed.), Early Vancouver: Narratives of pioneers of Vancouver B.C., 2 vols. (Vancouver: J.S. Matthews, 1933), II, pp.130-131.
muzzle of the gun against [his] own breast, because he had on armour...that could stop [the gun from] 'blowing'. The white signed that [the] Ind[ian] would fall dead, took the latter's garment, folded it, placed it at the end of the ship, [and] shot [a] hole in [it]. Then they knew that was another Tc'Exa, for no arrows could pierce his armor." The people returned to the village and wondered what kind of Tc'Exa this was. A fleet of canoes then came from another village to wed a woman to a Tcexa man. As they began their feast, "2 boatloads of whites came ashore and stood looking in the doorway. The white captain gave a hat to the chief of the manuasatxa" (people from another village), but his host "became jealous and said the gift had been meant [for] them" and so it was surrendered.\textsuperscript{116}

I have paraphrased these accounts (some of which are long), but have tried to retain their narrative progression and structure. They obviously provide a different set of understandings about Cook's arrival; as such they help us to probe Cook's way of seeing. Like Cook's journal, these accounts are culturally and geographically situated statements about contact. They also point to aspects of this encounter which are obscured in Cook's journal and the official account, but which shine more brightly in the journals of Cook's officers: a more face-to-face, bodily process of interaction, where touch met sight, words failed to translate the meaning of gestures, and human activity on and around the ships could not be easily summarised.

These stories relate a mixture of wonder, astonishment, curiosity and fear at the sight of strange objects and people. In the official account gestures, speeches and songs are registered matter-of-factly; in these Native accounts such actions are invested with supernatural and spiritual meaning.\textsuperscript{117} Chiefs, shamans and wise people were called on to


\textsuperscript{117} These accounts are not radically different from other Native accounts of first contact with whites on other parts of the coast. See Susan Marsden, "Controlling the flow of
interpret the appearance of strange phenomenon; they had their own discriminatory
categories of knowledge, just as Cook did.118

Comments about first contact at Nootka Sound made by some of Cook's officers
tally with these Native accounts. Lieutenant David Samwell, for one, observed that the
Indians "expressed much astonishment at seeing the Ship."119 And Lieutenant James
King reported:

The first [Native] men that came would not approach the Ship very near &
seemed to eye us with Astonishment, till the second boat came that had two men
in it; the figure & actions of one of these were truly frightful; he workd himself
into the highest frenzy, uttering something between a howl & a song, holding a
rattle in each hand, which at intervals he laid down, taking handfuls of red Ocre
& birds feather & strewing them in the Sea; this was follow'd by a Violent way of
talking, seemingly with vast difficulty in uttering the Harshest & rudest words, at
the same time pointing to the Shore, yet we did not attribute this incantation
to...any ill intentions towards us...120

Many of the "facts" of first contact included in the official account come from King's
journal, then, though Douglas toned down his animated prose.

Cook and his officers recorded some events that are recounted in the Native
accounts, though in a different narrative order. In Chief George's story, Maquinna invites

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118 It is exactly these dimensions that Carter's "spatial history" ignores, or, in Gregory's
view, cannot recover. While Cook tried to detach himself from what was going on
around him, we sense in these Native texts that objects from the "outside" were being
used by Native interpreters to regulate a world "inside." For a fascinating discussion of
symbolic constructions of geographical space see Mary W. Helms, Ulysses' sail: An
ethnographic odyssey of power, knowledge, and geographical distance (Princeton:

119 Beaglehole, Journals, III, pp.1088-1089.
120 Ibid., pp.1393-1394.
Cook to come and stay next year. Cook and some of his officers state that this invitation was extended as the ships were leaving the sound.121 Cook did visit two Native villages, in two boats, with some marines (with "crooked sticks"), and gave out presents. The first village he visited, Yuquot, is that mentioned in the accounts related by David and Tate. (It is depicted on Figure 1:1, on the western lip of the sound.) On the basis of Cook's journal, the second village was Tcesis, as Muchalat Peter's testimony confirms. The "Surly chief" that Cook reported meeting there may have been offended because the captain gave a present to a chief from another village and ignored him.122 Midshipman Edward Riou noted that when Cook visited this second village, on 20 April, he "found more of our Old acquaintances than at the town to the So:ward", suggesting that these people had been trading regularly with Cook's ships.123 Lieutenant John Williamson reported that some Native people asked him how his musket worked, and that they laughed when he told them the ball would pierce their armour. Williamson folded a Native garment about six times, pinned it to a tree, and fired at it, putting a hole through it and embedding the ball in the tree.124 The only difference between this account and that given by Drucker's informant is that the event occurred on shore. Finally, within two days of Cook's arrival, the Natives of the sound had boarded the ships and were trading

121 Ibid., p.308; also observed in John Rickman, "Log", n.d. PRO ADM 51/4529[46], fol.217.
122 Beaglehole, Journals, III, p.304.
123 Edward Riou, "A log of the proceedings of his majesty's ship Discovery," Book 2d, 20 April 1778, PRO ADM 51/4529[42], fol.78v.
124 Beaglehole, Journals, III, p.1350. Thomas Edgar also recorded this event in "A journal of a voyage undertaken to the south seas by his majesty's ships Resolution and Discovery", 4 April 1778, BM Add.MS. 37,528, fols. 91-91v, a partial copy of which was deposited in the Provincial Library in Victoria, B.C., but not until after Drucker had interviewed Muchalat Peter. Thomas Edgar, "Incomplete journal", March 7 - June 6 1778, BCARS A/A/20/D63E. Some "facts" from the European record may have been smuggled into Native oral histories over the years. It seems unlikely that this event was, however. Beaglehole was the first scholar that I know of who cited either Williamson's or Edgar's observation.
furs and cedar blankets for metal goods. In short, these European and Native texts relate similar details about this encounter, but from different cultural perspectives.\textsuperscript{125}

The Native accounts also show that first contact was embedded in a complex human geography. They involve different Native groups, villages, families and individuals.\textsuperscript{126} Native histories are passed down along these lines. Events happened at the intersection of family routines and geopolitical rivalries, human dramas and emotions, material and spiritual life, bonds of kinship and the exploits of individuals. Contact had composite meaning. The bodies of white strangers materialised with hooked noses and beards that were associated with natural and spiritual worlds. The two people in Tate's narrative looked on ship's biscuit and molasses as bones and blood: as signs, perhaps, of cannibalism.

\textsuperscript{125} These Native accounts relate to Cook rather than to subsequent voyagers, though some of the cultural emphases in them may point to a more composite set of Native understandings of non-native strangers synthesised from the first ten or so years of contact. After 1778, however, Nootka Sound was not visited again by Europeans until August 1785, when the brig \textit{Sea Otter} under James Hanna arrived to trade sea otter furs. A few days after Hanna arrived, a Native group in the sound attacked his vessel and were "repulsed [by Hanna] with considerable slaughter". Surely, the Native accounts that I have presented would have related this slaughter if they were chronicling Hanna's stay; Hanna's actions are recounted in other Native accounts. After 1785, when British and American trading vessels came to Nootka Sound in increasing numbers, the Native people of the sound grew increasingly accustomed to non-natives and knew some vessel captains by name. The quotation about Hanna's voyage is from an English newspaper: London, \textit{World}, 6 October 1788, reprinted in \textit{White Knight chapbooks: Pacific northwest series}, no.4 (San Francisco: White Knight Press, 1941), no pagination.

\textsuperscript{126} In 1778 over fifteen groups of Native people lived at Nootka Sound, each of which hailed from particular villages and owned specific territories. A number of groups on the west side of the sound were at this time probably allied in a political and economic confederacy. Most of the groups on the east side of the sound were autonomous. See Yvonne Marshall, "A political history of the Nuu-chah-nulth: A case study of the Mowachaht and Muchalaht tribes," Ph.D. dissertation, Department of Archaeology, Simon Fraser University, 1993.
Spaces of physical and textual (in)discipline

Why were these sentiments of fear and astonishment, picked up by some of Cook's officers, excluded from the official account - especially the observations of King, who helped Douglas edit Cook's journal? As I have already implied, Cook's and Douglas's accounts of first contact did not rest simply on canons of objectivity or modes of comparison and recollection. They also served a rhetorical purpose. During this era of scientific exploration, and especially in Cook's case, statements about first contact served as parables of Europe's scientific-civilising mission. Such statements traded on the belief that "successful intercourse" would be had with the Natives. Their lands were discovered, their cultures were recorded, people were treated fairly, and few got hurt, because contact was executed and related in the pacific blink of a scientific eye.

Statements about first contact mesh past, present and future. When Cook met a new group of people, he assessed the progress of his voyage and shaped its broader message at the site of his discovery. The images of friendship and the prospect of trade that Cook worked into his journal helped to confirm his status as a gentle and humane explorer trading the trappings of European civilisation. His factual prose helped to confirm his status as an objective, detached observer. Douglas tried to bolster this image of Cook in his account of first contact at Nootka Sound by working with some of King's observations to give the event a ceremonial quality.

When Cook arrived at Nootka Sound, he did not jump to conclusions. He narrated the event using the collective pronoun "we," and Douglas followed suit. Cook highlighted that he contacted the inhabitants of Nootka Sound as a representative of his country, and as an ambassador of European civilisation. Another officer in the party,

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127 I borrow this phrase from Tom Dutton's exemplary essay, ""Successful intercourse was had with the natives": Aspects of European contact methods in the Pacific," in Donald C. Laycock and Werner Winter (eds.), A world of language: Papers presented to Professor S.A. Wurm on his 65th birthday (Pacific Linguistics, C-100, 1987), pp.153-171.
Captain Charles Clerke of the *Discovery*, saw himself in a similar light, and wrote at first contact at Nootka Sound: "We could not induce them to come on board, but they had no weapons, & behaved very peaceably & socially, which I hope & flatter myself we shall be able to improve upon".\(^{128}\)

These ways of visualising and representing Native peoples relied on a set of disciplinary practices: the control that Cook could wield over his own narrative, the discipline he could exercise over his crews, the confidence he could place in the military superiority of his ships, and the means he had at his disposal for keeping the lid on the unseen and the unthought. John Law suggests that this ship regime of physical and textual discipline can be traced back to the commercial ventures of Portuguese mariners in the Atlantic and Indian Oceans in the fifteenth century. And Greg Dening has shown that this regime grew in sophistication over the following three centuries.\(^{129}\) Law argues that such disciplinary practices were among a number of methods instituted by naval boards and governments for effecting "long-distance control" - ways of arranging matters "so that a small number of people in Lisbon [or London or Madrid] might influence events half-way round the world"; ways of making possible "an undistorted system of global communication and control."\(^{130}\) Law focuses on the mobility, durability, self-sufficiency and security of Portuguese vessels, and the development of a "navigational context" for mariners that freed them from medieval conceptions of the Universe (principally, the deployment of the planispheric astrolabe and quadrant to determine latitude while at sea from stellar and solar observation). On Cook's voyages, the art and science of representing "unknown" peoples was folded into this disciplinary regime. The

\(^{128}\) Charles Clerke, "Log and proceedings, 10 February 1776 - 12 February 1779," 29 March 1778, PRO ADM 55/22, fol.151.


Admiralty and Royal Society sought an "undistorted," empirical appreciation of the world.

Yet in order to maintain these forms of discipline, Cook had to delegate responsibility. He had to encourage his officers to keep detailed logs so that he might consult them to flesh out his own observations, base his dealings with Native peoples on a division of labour, and plan for the possibility of attack. In short, he had to allow his crews to see and do things out of the scope of his own vision. Cook could not be "the same person but different places", as Gillette Chipps related one of the Native accounts.

The principles of consultation and exactitude that Cook forged to maintain his status as the chief author of his voyage disrupted the authority of his representations. Cook's officers paid close attention to their captain's actions, but their journals still drift off in different directions. These officers recorded many things that are not in Cook's journal, and some of their observations contradict those of their captain. Cook's officers also traded observations and borrowed passages from each other, breaking down the idea that something original or immediate about the new and the remote was being represented in a transparent - or undistorted - fashion. And what about the "ordinary" sailors who made up the bulk of the ships' companies and were left mostly in the dark about official matters: instructions about what to observe, and how to represent what they saw? "Is it not quite a different path that he travels and can this path ever cross that of the more experienced observer?", wrote one such sailor who sailed on Cook's third voyage; "is it not possible for one traveller to recall what another might forget?"

Cook's crews found the time and space to do things behind his back. At Nootka Sound truth and objectivity became decentred, and issues of representation were bound

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131 This process of amanuensis is most obvious in the case of Williamson and Edgar, but similar expressions, sentences and paragraphs can be tracked across a number of the journals.
132 F.W. Howay (ed.), *Zimmermann's Captain Cook: An account of the third voyage of Captain Cook around the world, 1776-1780* [orig. German ed. 1781] (Toronto: The Ryerson Press, 1930), pp.21-22.
up with a broader set of epistemological questions about how to capture the *situatedness* of one's first-hand appreciation of non-European peoples and lands. These Native accounts, far from simply signifying a different cultural perspective, point to a multi-levelled geography of contact - an articulation of bodies, spaces and texts - that has been largely lost in discussion of Cook's voyages: to the variety and physicality of this encounter; to actions and meanings that could not easily be represented or summed up. The journals of Cook and his officers both reflect and problematise the institutional and discursive tactics of scientific-humanitarian exploration - the chains of command that were in place to keep order on the ship and prevent conflicts between Natives and crewmen; and the search for a form of representation that was at once objective and spontaneous. The journals of Cook and his officers illuminate the fluidity of observation and diversity interaction at Nootka Sound.

I will now explore further these spatial dynamics of contact, and illustrate this process of dispersion, using the white record.
Chapter Three
Positions

Spectacle and surveillance

On the morning of 30 March, Cook dispatched Lieutenant King and three armed boats to look for a good anchorage. King returned at noon, reporting that he had found a good bay on the northwest side of the sound, but Cook himself had found a "snug Cove" closer to where his ships had anchored the night before and decided to make it his base. Meanwhile, the ships had been surrounded by Native canoes, and Cook wrote in his journal that "trade commenced betwixt us and them, which was carried on with the strictest honisty on boath sides."134

Was convenience Cook's only consideration when he selected this anchorage? King stated he was instructed to find an anchorage "as far as Possible from the Village" on the west point of the sound that they had passed the day before.135 Cook failed to mention this village until three weeks later, when he stated he discovered it while on a reconnaissance of the region.136 But he had practical and political reasons for anchoring six miles away from this village - Yuquot. Bernard Smith argues that on his third voyage, Cook became disillusioned with his Enlightenment mandate. His crews had spread venereal disease, and on revisiting some of the Polynesian peoples he had encountered on his first two voyages, he pondered whether the introduction of European

133 Beaglehole, Journals, III, p.296. Now called "Resolution Cove," on the southern tip of "Clerke Peninsula" on "Bligh Island" in the middle of Nootka Sound. As it was getting dark when Cook made his decision, the ships were not moved to the cove until the following morning.
134 Ibid.
135 Ibid., p.1395. Lieutenant James Burney thought that the ship should have anchored in the cove discovered by King near the village, and states that Cook did not find his snug cove until the evening. James Burney, "Journal of a voyage in the Discovery", 30 March 1778, PRO ADM 51/4528/45, fol.224v.
136 Beaglehole, Journals, III, p.303.
manufactures had upset "traditional" power structures. In addition, some British and American radicals had lampooned Cook, calling him an oppressor of fragile, "natural" societies. For these reasons, Smith claims, Cook wanted to prevent conflict and misunderstanding. Anchoring away from Native villages was a tactic that he resorted to more and more often.137

Cook sometimes commented on such tactics in his journal, but they were often depicted more vividly in the art of his voyages. On his third voyage, Cook used his artist, John Webber, to create images of peace, harmony and detachment. Smith notes that Webber portrayed "a highly selective truth, from which all sense of violence had been removed.... All of Webber's developed compositions constructed on the voyage and for the official publication seem to be saying the same thing: the people of the Pacific are indeed pacific people."138 Selective, of course, because Cook allowed Native-white tension and violence to breed on his third voyage - much of which he was responsible for, and which ended in disaster in Hawaii.

This "Cook-Webber visual-art programme", as Smith calls it, is displayed no better than in Figure 1:2 - a panorama of Cook's ships at anchor in Resolution Cove, Nootka Sound. As Smith and Rudiger Joppien suggest, it is as if this sketch was shot with "a modern wide-angle lens."139

137 Smith, *Imagining the Pacific*, pp.198-210, especially pp.202-205. Smith works within the fatal impact thesis: "[W]hat Adam Smith's free market economy offered the South Seas was not really the difference between civilisation and savagery but the difference between exploitation and extermination" (p.209). I do not agree with Smith on this, but his comments about Cook's art programme are still useful.
Figure I.2 "A sketch of Nootka Sound"
Webber drew the ships larger than their proper scale, towering over the Native canoes. The usual activities of the crew - wooding, watering, and trading - are in full view. On the shore, crew members are rolling water casks, and blacksmiths are forging fittings for a new mast. Contact proceeds in a routine atmosphere of peace, tranquillity and understanding.

Cook's encounter with the Nuu-chah-nulth was, by all accounts, peaceful. But peace did not necessarily imply understanding. Native gestures and intentions could be misread. Webber may have portrayed pacific people, but Cook remained alert to signs of misunderstanding and conflict. In the art of Cook's third voyage spectacle was never entirely divorced from surveillance. Webber tried to capture for the British public in one panorama Cook's transactions at Nootka Sound. But while all seemed calm, one senses that Native movements were being carefully monitored and that a set of strategic relations were being played out. Had this small space been ceded to Cook? Was his presence uncontested? Or was he studying the ground for signs of trouble? Did Cook expect his soliloquy of peace and tranquillity to be interrupted...

Within two days of Cook's arrival, the Natives had boarded the ships. They "laid aside all manner of restraint, if they ever had any", Cook noted, "and mixed with our people with the greatest freedom." But Cook soon found these people to be "as light fingered as any people we had before met with", though the thieves were soon caught.

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140 It is not known exactly when Webber made this sketch, but Joppien and Smith suggest around April 6. The observation tents on shore were erected on 31 March, by which time the Natives were boarding the ships. We should perhaps think about this photographic metaphor in terms of Smith's thesis that Cook was "Adam Smith's god", spreading market relations. For as Jonathan Crary argues, "Photography and money become homologous forms of social power in the nineteenth century. They are equally totalizing systems for binding and unifying all subjects within a single global network of valuation and desire." Smith's and Joppien's use of the metaphor is perhaps more innocent than this, but Smith nevertheless sees Cook as one of the instigators of this global network. Jonathan Crary, *Techniques of the observer: On vision and modernity in the nineteenth century* (Cambridge USA and London UK: MIT Press, 1990), p.13.

and their prizes were relinquished, "sometimes not without force." Having large groups of Natives on board ship - King counted 94 canoes (about 500 people) around the ships - could have endangered the security of Cook's crew. Yet Cook tolerated their presence, was eager to trade, and implied in his journal that there was little threat of violence. However, some of his officers thought that tension was never far from the surface. Samwell watched the proceedings carefully, recording in detail the "wild & uncouth" songs and dances of the Natives who surrounded the Resolution. He noted that the presence of a large canoe full of people which paddled around the ship with "much order & seemingly in a warlike manner"; and he surmised that they had come "to offer us a Challenge if we were Enemies, but finding we declined it & to all appearance were their Friends", they came alongside and traded.

Then, on 4 April, a large number of Native canoes full of armed men assembled in the Cove. A Native attack on Cook's ships seemed possible. Native canoes were hauled on to the beach where some of Cook's crew were busy with chores. Unsure about Native intentions, Cook armed his ships and ordered the men on shore to retreat to the observation tents (depicted in Webber's panorama). "The Indians", he wrote, "seeing that they had given us some alarm, gave us to understand by signs, it was not us they were arming against" but a Native war party that was coming into the sound. Satisfied with these signs, Cook described the rest of this event in a measured, dispassionate tone, implying that he had been in total control of the situation. "At length", he concluded, "the difference, whatever it was, was compromised", though he suspected that it involved Native competition over access to his ships.

142 Ibid., pp.297-298. Other officers noted the same.
143 Ibid., p.1395.
144 Ibid., p.1090.
145 He noted that "our first friends...seemed determined to ingross us intirely to themselves." Ibid., p.299.
While Cook's ships did not become embroiled in conflict, there was a great range of opinion about this incident, and some of his officers wrote about it in detail. James Burney, First Lieutenant on the *Discovery*, who recorded the event in the most detail (down to the size and shape of the arrowheads being brandished), was confident that the ships had been in no danger and stated that the officers dined while the ruckus was brewing outside.\textsuperscript{146} But Cook evidently did not sit back and observe these Native groups arguing with one another. He dispatched King and some armed marines to assess how dangerous the situation was.\textsuperscript{147} Midshipman George Gilbert reported that while Cook did not want to intrude on what seemed to be a Native affair (this being part of his humanitarian mandate), he came very close to firing on some canoes that came alongside the ships.\textsuperscript{148} Samwell did not trust the Natives' signs and judged that "from every appearance", the Indians meant to attack the ships. Cook "expostulated" with the Natives who approached the *Resolution*, and an old sail was draped before the cabin windows to prevent them from being shattered by a hail of stones.\textsuperscript{149} When more canoes entered the sound, Samwell and a number of other officers conjectured that a joint attack was planned.\textsuperscript{150} Captain Clerke of the *Discovery* understood by signs from the "local" Natives that the other canoes had come "to play the Devil with us all."\textsuperscript{151} Riou thought that the "local" Natives might attack because they had not been paid for the wood that Cook's crew members had gathered.\textsuperscript{152} Samwell suggested that the quarrel arose because a canoe

\textsuperscript{146} Burney, "Journal", 4 April 1778, fol.227.  
\textsuperscript{147} Beaglehole, *Journals*, III, p.1397.  
\textsuperscript{149} Beaglehole, *Journals*, III, pp.1092-1093.  
\textsuperscript{151} Clerke, "Log and proceedings," 4 April 1788, fol.152.  
\textsuperscript{152} Riou, "Log," 2 April 1778 [sic], fol.77. Cook realised as much only later in his stay: "...the very wood and water we took on board they at first wanted us to pay for, and we had certainly done it [sic], had I been upon the spot when the demands were made; but as I never happened to be there the workmen took but little notice of their importunities". Beaglehole, *Journals*, III, p.306.
belonging to Natives from outside the sound had been plundered a couple of days earlier by these locals. William Bayly, the astronomer stationed on shore, was less worried about the effectiveness of an attack from the local Natives, noting that they had traded most of their dangerous weapons to Cook's officers over the first few days of contact. But Nathaniel Portlock, master's mate on the Discovery, was not so sure. He thought that Native weapons would "stand the test with an equal number of any men under heaven", and that their arrows could "give mortal wound" at twenty yards. It was in the afternoon of 4 April, after the war party from beyond the sound had departed, that Williamson demonstrated the power of his firearm to Natives on the shore, perhaps as a warning. What is more, the "strangers" from beyond the sound reappeared the next day, and the conflict continued.

Cook did not mention this in his journal, but some of his officers looked on with nervous apprehension.

Such sentiments displace Webber's panoramic eye. Cook could not keep the lid on his officers' anxieties and private reflections. But nor did he seek consensus about the nature of an event before committing himself to paper. He knew that his journal would form the basis of the official account. He also trusted that his officers would hand over their journals before they disembarked in Britain, and that the details of his voyage would not be leaked to the public until after the official account had appeared. Still, Cook expressed only one set of views; views that reflect his position as a naval commander

153 Beaglehole, Journals, III, p.1094. This could be the same incident that Burney reported on 1 April: "Journal", fol.226v.
155 Nathaniel Portlock, "Log, November 1 1777 - May 21 1778," 4 April 1778, PRO ADM 51/4531 [68], fol.293v.
156 See Beaglehole, Journals, III, pp.1094 and 1398.
157 Riou, "Log", 5 April 1778, fols.77v-78; Edgar, "Log", 5 April 1778, fol.150.
158 In his entry for April 4th, Cook states that he witnessed Native territorial rivalries "on other occasions," suggesting that his version of this event was polished much later in his stay.
who was responsible for both carrying out and representing his official scientific-humanitarian mandate.

Two narratives run through Cook's journal entries at Nootka Sound. His reports on contact with Native people are interspersed with details about the progress of his repairs to the Resolution and Discovery. Cook mulled over what was expected to be an arduous trip north; his account of this event on 4 April was tempered by his sense of the broader purpose of his stay at Nootka Sound. Webber's panorama served this purpose. Webber produced an outline sketch of this Native conflict, but he did not embellish it on his return to Britain, perhaps because he thought it would convey the wrong message about Cook's sojourn in the sound.159

Cook may have passed over such incidents lightly, but his officers knew that they were significant and worthy of examination. There was a lucrative market for accounts of events of this kind, as some of Cook's crew members proved. Accounts of Native-white tensions, or actual conflicts, served as parables about social and moral distance, the nature of understanding and the powers of communication. The accounts that Cook's officers wrote of this Native conflict might be read as inquisitions into how to read Native signs. These officers did not defer to Cook's account, though some of them must have discussed this incident with their captain. But could Cook's officers trust their own judgment?

It was during this event that Cook and his officers became aware that the Native groups of the sound were proprietorial and competed with one another. Cook understood that these Natives were not "united in the same cause", and noted that "the Weakest were frequently obliged to give way to the strong".160 And he was not the only one who sensed

159 [John Webber], "A view in ship cove," BM Add.MS. 17,277, fol.21v-r.
160 Beaglehole, Journals, III, p.299.
that the Resolution and Discovery were implicated in this Native quarrel.\[^{161}\] As other parties of "strangers" came to the ships to trade over the following two weeks, it became clear that Cook's "first friends" were acting as middlemen. It became necessary to distinguish between different groups in order to prevent misunderstanding.

When Cook visited the Native village of Yuquot on 22 April, he realised that these Native notions of property and control extended far beyond access to trade with his ships. He had to pay for grass that his crew cut, and observed: "I have no w[h]ere met with Indians who had such high notions of everything in the Country produced being their exclusive property as these".\[^{162}\] Cook did, in fact, reassess the events of 4 and 5 April later in his journal, admitting, perhaps under the weight of his officers' observations, that the incident should not have been passed over so lightly. He accepted that the presence of his ships may have inflamed Native rivalries, but he also claimed that "we were the means of preventing them from coming to blows" and "oftener I believe than this once, for our friends sometimes carried it [themselves] with rather a high hand over strangers who occasionally came to visit us."\[^{163}\] Cook surmised that his "first friends" frightened off the "strangers" by claiming that they were allied with his ships.\[^{164}\]

Meanwhile, Cook's officers were less interested in whether the ships were the source of agitation than in what this conflict encounter said about Native dispositions. Samwell concerned himself with the spectacle and performance of Native power, particularly the "Engagement of Tongues" that occurred when "strangers" approached the ships. He described how, on 4 April, one man "made a long Speech, sputtering his words out with the utmost violent Rage and agitation of mind, to which the motions of his Body

\[^{161}\] See Riou, "Log", 2 April 1778 [sic], fol.77v-78, who noted that "in their harangues...[these competing groups] frequently held up a large Tin Kettle, a Commodity they are exceedingly fond of".

\[^{162}\] Beaglehole, Journals, III, p.306

\[^{163}\] Ibid., p.315.

\[^{164}\] Portlock was convinced that it was simply the sight of the ships that had scared the strangers away. Portlock, "Log", 4 April 1778, fol.294.
corresponded which were violent to an extrem...his actions were those of a man out of his Senses." Such displays, he later reflected, showed that these Natives had a "brave" and "resolute" disposition.\textsuperscript{165} Portlock remarked that everyone on board ship thought that the Natives' harangues and war songs were "the most warlike and awfull thing they ever heard."\textsuperscript{166} Burney, on the other hand, suggested that while these people were "rather quarrelsome" and "very apt to take offence at the slightest indignity", "to do them justice, when they are angry, any little degree of submission immediately pacifies them."\textsuperscript{167}

Native verbal altercations may have been passionate, but Riou emphasised how orderly they were. One protagonist would not interrupt another's speech, and harangues seldom resulted in fighting.\textsuperscript{168} Midshipman James Trevenan put this down to their "fearless independent spirit which apprehended no danger from any other than the person with whom they had particularly quarelled".\textsuperscript{169} Bayly wrote: "The Natives seem rather a dull heavy people but very quick of resentment for the slightest injury - but quite free from malice & design & exceedingly good natured".\textsuperscript{170} And King judged that while the Native balance of power in the sound was difficult to assess, the "superior tribes" seemed to be the ones with the best manners.\textsuperscript{171}

Clerke, who was more prepared to synthesise than most, commented that Cook's "first" friends, "in whose boundaries or confines of Country we happen'd to lay, look'd upon us [as] so far as their property as to be entitled to a right to monopolizing all kinds of Exchanges with us to themselves"; when strangers tried to break this monopoly, "our

\textsuperscript{165} Beaglehole, \textit{Journals}, III, pp.1093 and 1100.
\textsuperscript{166} Portlock, "Log", 4 April 1778, fol.293v.
\textsuperscript{167} Burney, "Journal", 4 April 1778, fol.227.
\textsuperscript{168} Riou, "Log", 4 April 1778, fol.80v. Clerke also noted that they "did not think [it] proper to knock one another on the head." Clerke, "Log and proceedings", 4 April 1778, fol.152.
\textsuperscript{169} James Trevenan, "Notes regarding the death of Captain Cook," p.3, BCARS A/A/40/C77T/A2.
\textsuperscript{170} William Bayly, "A log and journal kept on board his majesty's sloop Discovery," PRO ADM 55/20, fol.115.
\textsuperscript{171} Beaglehole, \textit{Journals}, III, pp.1400-1401.
landlords had recourse to Arms", entering into "warm disputes sometimes to our
surprise...but they never did go farther than mutual abuse and harsh words, and the
general result was, that the visiting Party was allowed to trade with us, upon condition
that some of these People attended them, that they might take care the market was not
hurt by an under sale of Goods". Burney thought that there was a logistical aesthetic to
the way the Natives managed competition and access to the ships. He wrote of events on
8 April:

The canoes from the outer part of the Sound visited us at daylight, leaving a
Canoe without the mouth of the Cove to watch. At 7 the guard Canoe made
signals, on which all the rest left the ships and paddled as fast as they could
around the South Point of the Cove to prevent being cut off. At the same time,
the party from the northward which was now the strongest, made their
appearance. They stopped abrest of the middle of the Cove and single Canoes
passed and repassed, in consequence of which, the flying canoes returned and
after a short parley, erected their pikes and began a Song, beating time with the
staffs against the sides of their canoes. Having finished, they laid down their
pikes, and the other party, who had during the performance sat still, now reared
theirs and gave a song in return; which being ended, the southern canoes saluted
them with a parting halloo and went off, leaving the market to the quiet
possession of the northern party for that day. Burney illuminated Native routines and rituals of interaction, and emphasised that the
waters of Nootka Sound were owned, managed and patrolled like the land. He implied
that while the ships may have been the principal object of the Natives' interest, a
"market" - with all of its arrangements - had existed before Cook arrived. Burney
represented himself as a detached observer - an interloper, perhaps, in a commercial
world which existed without him. He studied signals and movements, and recorded entry
and departure times. Yet he also tried to engage with this scene. He was fascinated by
the "performance" in front of him; in his mind, perhaps, it was like a British military
spectacle.

Neither Cook nor his officers assumed "the neutrality of the ground." Clerke
wrote of landlords, markets and monopolies - terms that were not often used to describe

172 Ibid., pp.1326-1327.
173 Burney, "Journal", 8 April 1778, fols.227v-228.
"traffick" with Natives - and was conscious that the ships were situated within patrolled "boundaries." Images of competition - or of a Native geopolitics of trade and interaction - pervades these officers' discussion of Native dispositions.

When discussing the representational practices of Cook's officers (or even Cook himself), sharp distinctions should not be drawn between logs of daily events and the more generalising "manners and customs" descriptions of land and people that usually followed them, as if the former point to a realm of spontaneous or engaged observation and the latter denotes detached, summary reflection or classification. There were not two distinct modes of knowing enshrined in these different forms of description, but a set of provisional, situated knowledges sketched in different shades. Accounts of Native dispositions (attempts to discern a Native subject) were compilations of observations made during the course of an encounter.

Some of Cook's officers described the nature of interaction at Nootka Sound much more thoroughly than their captain and wrote markedly different things about Native life. These officers had different personalities, backgrounds and literary talents. What they recorded depended in good measure on what they could see from where they were stationed on the ship or on the shore. The kinds of dealings they had with Native

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174 This distinction is most marked in the journals of Cook, Bayly and King. Beaglehole heightened the scientific pretense of Cook's "manners and customs" descriptions by inserting sub-headings and annotating his remarks using botanical and zoological systems of classification. The distinction is less obvious in the journals of most of Cook's officers. Logs of daily events often blur into more general descriptions of "manners and customs."

175 In his discussion of Cook's trip along the Australian coast, Paul Carter makes a trenchant distinction between botany and geography. The former he uses as a model and metaphor for the Enlightenment project of universal knowledge - the reduction of diversity to "a uniform and universally valid taxonomy". He associates geography with Hume's critique of rationalism and Cook's open-ended way of exploring. What informs representational practices at Nootka Sound is a tension, not a division, between reason and experience - between these universalising and particularising currents of Enlightenment thought. Carter, *Road to Botany Bay*, p.18.
people also depended on their rank. It was these issues of personality, location and rank - of positionality in all its senses - that were at play in these officers' range of opinion over different events and in their more blanket statements about Native dispositions. But what was also at play, I think, was the basic dilemma of mid-eighteenth-century British empiricism: of "how to move from the particular to the general without the latter merely collapsing back into the former." 

An unerring or unsteady gaze?

The literary critic Terry Eagleton argues that this conundrum was not simply methodological; it was also profoundly ideological. During the eighteenth century "civilised conduct" - and, by implication, the model of the disinterested observer and the explorer-civiliser - became associated with "common styles of sensibility." Eagleton suggests that this model of civility was based on an "ideological rapprochement" between old and new elites. A new aristocratic-bourgeois elite began to consider itself less as the "state class" than as the leader of a "public sphere" rooted in a civil society which (among other things) cherished individual sensibility. Eagleton claims that social power became rooted less in the "potentially divisive realities of social rank and economic interest" than in "the sensuous immediacies of empirical life, beginning with the affective, appetitive individual of civil society, and tracing from there the affiliations which might bind him to a greater whole." Empiricism, as the philosophy of this civil

176 The logs and journals pertaining to Cook's stay at Nootka Sound vary enormously in length and insight. Some logs focus almost entirely on the shipboard activities of Cook's crews and scarcely mention Native people. See, for example, Anon., "A log of the proceedings of the Discovery, 29 November - 28 December 1778," 2nd journal, PRO ADM 51/4530. Cook's senior officers, and some of his aspiring junior officers, were the keenest observers.

177 This quotation is from Terry Eagleton, *The ideology of the aesthetic* (Oxford UK and Cambridge USA: Basil Blackwell, 1990), pp.32.

178 Ibid., pp.32-33 and passim. Eagleton does think of this prototypical public sphere as masculine.
society, was politically problematical, however, because it shunned abstraction and the search for rational totalities. Eagleton asks: how was the ruling elite "to root itself in the sensuously immediate, yet elaborate this into something more compelling than a heap of fragments?"179

This problematic, I suggest, runs through the empirical "science of the concrete" which many commentators associate with Cook's voyages. British thinkers developed a variety of responses to this conundrum, but it was the thought of moralists such as the Earl of Shaftesbury and poets such as Thomas Gray, I suggest, that informed the writing of Cook's officers. Shaftesbury thought that there was no need to abandon the senses because order, harmony and virtue could be found in one's very instincts. Eagleton remarks that according to Shafesbury, it is possible to "experience right and wrong with all the swiftness of the senses", and "so lay the groundwork for a social cohesion more deeply felt than any mere rational totality." Social harmony and moral order resided in neither utility nor duty, but in the "delightful fulfilment of our nature."180 This, in outline, is also Stafford's view of scientific exploration. Science and morality, of course, were effectively aestheticised.

But this "ideological rapprochement" - or aesthetic celebration of the senses - was undoubtedly more complex, and developed more unevenly, than Eagleton implies. Figures such as the Earl of Shaftesbury were from the British aristocracy, and still associated social harmony with national harmony and order based on privilege and patronage. And notions of civility - of a civil society - were associated with urbanity. "[T]he applause for Happy Britannia was not joined by everyone", John Barrell notes. Poets such as Thomas Gray, who were "unwilling or unable to support themselves in Grub Street or to compete for the dwindling patronage of the great", were less interested in the urbane, national - polite but still ultimately divisive - aesthetics of harmony and

order, than in "the virtues of more impoverished, primitive communities, where the poet instead of celebrating what the polite chose to hear [or see] as the harmony of nation...could be the spokesman of a community less differentiated by rank or occupation."\textsuperscript{181} Such poets, Barrell argues, resented the hierarchical trappings of British civil society, looked for spaces of \textit{private} reflection, and saw in the "the society of primitive men...an ideal which announces that a society is healthy only when its simple structure is visible to all its members."\textsuperscript{182}

Theories about "natural man" were influenced by these eighteenth-century notions of public and private sensibility. To extrapolate from Eagleton and Barrell: was human fellowship, compassion and virtue - order, harmony and beauty in society - imprinted on the body itself, "in its most spontaneous, pre-reflexive instincts?", or reflected in the "simple structures" or rural/primitive life? Had not explorers such as Cook shown that these instincts remained untainted in non-European societies - that indigenous peoples lived a life of natural goodness, uncorrupted by the artifices of European culture? At Nootka Sound, the adjectives used to inscribe Native dispositions were bound up with the body (its appearance, motions, gestures and noises) and the seemingly elementary structures of Native society (reflected in the orderliness of Native harangues and the harmonies of Native songs).

This problematic was also methodological, of course. Cook and his officers knew that they could not see or learn much from short stays in distant spots. Cook declared to James Boswell that he and his crews picked up so little of Native languages that they were at the mercy of their senses.\textsuperscript{183} It became difficult to discover the principles of Native government and religion.\textsuperscript{184} At Nootka Sound, and on Cook's third voyage more

\textsuperscript{182} \textit{Ibid.}, p.109.
\textsuperscript{184} At Nootka Sound, Cook stated: "Of the Government and Religion [sic] of these people, it cannot be supposed we could learn much". Beaglehole, \textit{Journals}, III, p.322.
generally, Cook and his officers produced tentative evaluations of Native social life. Bayly commented: "...we saw very little of their manners & customs the ships being in a small cove distant from their residence so that they only came to us to trade out of curiosity".  

But were such remarks whimsical responses to darker doubts? Did Cook and officers skip along the surface of Native societies, reading the body in lieu of being able to judge the mind or chart Native life at Nootka Sound on some taxonomic grid? If Shaftesbury and other British moralists were trying to sketch a new "corporate" philosophy, as Eagleton suggests, then can Cook's voyages be seen as an attempt to inscribe the non-European world with and for that philosophy? Or did Cook and his officers engage with the harmonies and harangues of Native life in a more private way? 

The anthropologist Mary Louise Pratt offers an account of this "corporate" philosophy in her book *Imperial Eyes*. She argues that between 1750 and 1800 European explorers worked to naturalise "the bourgeois European's own global presence and authority." Her European bourgeois subject was "male, secular, and lettered", and found his utopian image in the taxonomic project of natural history, which was "simultaneously innocent and imperial". He had "imperial eyes" that "passively look out and possess." The systematisation of nature, she claims, carries the bourgeois ideology of accumulation to a totalized extreme, and at the same time models the extractive, transformative character of industrial capitalism, and the ordering mechanisms that were beginning to shape urban mass society in Europe.... As an ideological construct, it makes a picture of the planet appropriated and redeployed from a unified, European perspective.  

Pratt asks crucial questions about how explorers produced the world for their European readers, but her conclusions about exploration in the second half of the eighteenth century are sketchy and overblown. Following Eagleton and Barrell, I doubt  

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185 Bayly, "Journals", 2nd, n.d., fol.102. And, as I argued above, Cook's officers leaned on each other for information.  
186 Pratt, *Imperial eyes*, pp.1-37; the quotations are from pp. 28, 7, 33-34, and 36.
whether bourgeois subjectivity was as coherent or hegemonic as Pratt claims. Nor do I think that these "imperial eyes" were definitively European. However collaborative scientific exploration might have been in theory, the British, as Colley maintains, still saw the French as a hostile Other and defined themselves against continental Europe.\(^{187}\)

The literary critic Lisa Lowe adds that the French and British developed different traditions of thought about the Orient.\(^{188}\) And Bernard Smith shows that the Pacific did not mirror bourgeois hegemony so much as "the old dualities at the centre of European culture: classical antiquity and medieval Christianity."\(^{189}\) In any case, one of the reasons why the "ideology of the aesthetic", as Eagleton describes it, became rooted in the "sensuous immediacies of empirical life" during this period was because many doubted that order, morality and identity could be modelled on the market at all. It was difficult to find any moral design in the workings of the economy, or the ideology of accumulation, apart from that of self interest.\(^{190}\)

\(^{187}\) See Colley, \textit{Britons}, introduction.


\(^{189}\) Bernard Smith, \textit{Style, information and image in the art of Cook's voyages} (Christchurch: School of Fine Arts, University of Canterbury, 1988), n.p.. Smith delivered this as a Harkner Lecture at the University of Canterbury in 1987, and it is reprinted with some changes in his \textit{Imagining the Pacific}.

\(^{190}\) Adam Smith tackled this moral conundrum in \textit{The Wealth of Nations}, as I will note in Part II.

Pratt does not discuss Cook's voyages. Cook may have constructed "pacific people", and charted commercial possibilities, but he did not assume the neutrality of the ground everywhere he went. I am not sure that scientific exploration can be modelled on the project of natural history. Pratt relies on, but in my opinion misreads, Foucault's arguments about classification. The project of natural history, as Foucault represented it, did not produce the world \textit{to} or \textit{for} the bourgeois subject in any direct sense. Foucault described this project as "a fundamental arrangement of knowledge, which orders the knowledge of beings so as to make it possible to represent them in a system of names" - as one facet of a broader classical episteme. In any case, on Foucault's account, the bourgeois subject, as Pratt understands him, was not "born" until the nineteenth century. It should also be noted that Foucault's discussion of the classical episteme is Eurocentric and, as Edward Said has suggested, should not be invoked as the only discursive order (or ontological mechanism) of European engagement with the wider world in the eighteenth century. Michel Foucault, \textit{The order of things: An archaeology of the human}
Propelling British imperialism and industrial revolution was not uppermost in the minds of Cook's officers when they tried to capture Native dispositions. They came from a variety of backgrounds - aristocratic, bourgeois and clerical. And as I have noted, they lived in the fabricated environment of a British naval ship, with its own routines, hierarchies, disciplines, and forms of pleasure and deprivation. Identities could melt in the sensitive heat of the distant and the new. Observations about the "springs" of Native sensibility were prompted mainly by interaction around the ships, and might be read as unsteady disquisitions into the social "nature" of order and harmony.

Clerke's rhetoric of landlords, markets and monopolies is revealing. If anything, it was the very unnaturalness of the Natives' proprietal instincts - the implication that these people had left the "boundaries" of nature and were "out of their senses" - which prompted the use of such language. Others were more circumspect. Embedded in accounts of Native dispositions were composite meanings, identities and distinctions between sense and reason, rudeness and civility, nature and artifice. Cook's officers were attempting to bring the Natives of Nootka Sound within an aesthetic, as much as a taxonomic, field of vision.

Given the range of opinions and adjectives used to describe the dispositions of the people of Nootka Sound, we might ask whether Cook's officers merely ended up with a "heap of fragments" - whether their observations about Native life could be synthesised and used to fashion a corporate ideology of "moral sense" in Britain or Europe? King suggested that they could not. His comments are worth quoting in full:

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191 Trevenan noted that the short "excursions" Cook led into Nootka Sound offered a welcome relief from the discipline of ship life, and added: "Captain Cook also on these occasions would sometimes relax from his almost constant severity of disposition and condescended now and then to converse familiarly with us." Christopher Lloyd and R.C. Anderson (eds.), *A memoir of James Trevenan* (London: Navy Records Society, 1959). p.20.
[W]e come here more unprepar'd & and have not that test within ourselves whereby to judge of the workings of the human mind in its rude state; or rather few of us are capable of seperating the invariable and constant springs by which we are all mov'd, and what depends on education & fashion. As we cannot be said to converse with the people, we can only judge from outward actions, & not knowing all the Causes that give rise to them, we must be constantly led into error; this also inclines us to form conclusions in the narrow confind [sic] sphere of our observations, & what has immediately happnd [sic] to our selves; whence one person will represent these People as Sullen, Obstinate, & Mistrustful, and another will say they are docile, good natured & unsuspicious; the former will prove his assertion from their Phlegmatick temper, from their unwillingness to comply with what has the smallest appearance of compulsion, & from their manner of bartering, examining with the greatest suspiciousness your articles of trade, & not relying on their own judgement but making them pass the same examination amongst not only all in the same boat, but in perhaps all the Canoes alongside, at the same time hold[ing] their own goods fast, which they will not trust out of sight, nevertheless they are on the whole honest in their dealings; he will also instance the perpetual Squabbles amongst themselves.... He who supports the Contrary character will say that they have a nice sense of affronts, & which their passionate & quick tempers immediately resent, that this makes them sensible to a courteous behaviour, & which is returned on their parts with perfect good Nature: that they are easy to be gained by a mild & flattering Carriage, & that a different procedure might be resent'd, and that all this is very contrary to a sullen obstinate character; that the quarrells amongst themselves are mostly of different parties & that they are the free'est from all invidiousness & deception in their Actions of any people in the world; shewing their resentments instantaneously, & totally regardless of the probable consequences of so ill tim'd an appearance of their displeasure; & these are strong marks against the charge of a sullen & mistrustful Carriage.

All that King concluded from this was that "The facts on which the above reasonings are founded are true". The senses, by themselves, were not strong enough to separate truth from error. Partial truths stemmed from "the narrow confind sphere" of observation.

Who could distinguish the "invariable & constant springs" of life from fashion, or nature from artifice? King's account of Native dispositions is riddled with the paradoxes of eighteenth-century empiricism. What assertions can I make? What proofs might I give? What adjectives do I choose? What sense do I have of what I see...

These paradoxes were epistemological as well as methodological. King refused to blend different observations and present some collective account of the Native character. When Cook's officers interpreted Native life at Nootka Sound, they relied on their own senses and referred to themselves; King respected the notion that they were

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192 Beaglehole, Journals, III, pp.1406-1407.
private, individual subjects with different perspectives as well as ranked officers on a British naval ship. Eagleton argues that if one clung too closely to this view of subjectivity, it would become increasingly difficult to find "objectivity":

The wider the subject extends its imperial sway over reality, the more it relativizes that terrain to its own needs and desires, dissolving the world's substance into the stuff of its own senses. Yet the more it thereby erodes any objective criteria by which to measure the significance or even reality of its own experience. The subject needs to know that it is supremely valuable; but it cannot know this if its own solipsism has cancelled out any scale by which such value might be assessed. What is this subject privileged over, if the world has been steadily dwindled to no more than an obedient mirror image of itself?193

This, in the abstract, points to why Cook's officers found themselves so "unprepar'd" at Nootka Sound. The journalist's aim may have been to describe and evaluate other societies objectively, but King knew that objectivity came at a certain price. The only way to do justice to the new was by working with what one had experienced oneself - with what had "immediately happnd". The spatially confined nature of observation aggravated this form of subjecthood. King did not extend his "imperial sway over reality" smoothly and inexorably, but cautiously and anxiously. Eagleton spells out what happened when caution was thrown overboard: "In appropriating the whole of external nature, the bourgeois subject discovers to its own consternation that it has appropriated its own objectivity along with it."194 This was the ideology of the aesthetic that Kant tried to overhaul. For Eagleton, the bourgeois subject grew up as a "tragically self-defeating creature"; James King, he would say, was not a post-Kantian "epistemological entrepreneur" but a "sluggish subject" of eighteenth-century empiricism.195 None of Cook's officers wrote about these questions of subjectivity as openly as King, but such issues inform the writing of Burney and Clerke, especially. What King drew out was the heterogeneity of vision and experience at Nootka Sound, and a set of epistemological anxieties underwriting representation.

193 Eagleton, *Ideology of the aesthetic*, p.70 (his emphasis).
194 Ibid., pp. 70-71.
195 Ibid., p.72
The limits of curiosity, and the boundaries of honesty

Cook and his officers may not have held the same opinions about Native dispositions, but they did share a pervasive, if indeterminate, sense of curiosity. Samuel Johnson doubted whether one could come to any definitive understanding of the non-European world from voyaging overseas, but James Boswell, inspired by Cook's voyages, still admitted that he was "carried away with the general grand and indistinct notion of A VOYAGE ROUND THE WORLD." The literary critic Harriet Guest sharpens Boswell's observation. "The British repeatedly articulated their interest in the South Pacific in terms of the undetermined and ambiguously transactive notion of curiosity". Undetermined, because at this time, as the anthropologist Nicholas Thomas explains, the notion of curiosity was not rooted in any systematic discourse about material culture or any rigidly evolutionary theory about indigenous societies. Yet transactive because the desire for "curiosities," and curiosity about the Other, was what prompted and sustained contact between explorers and Native peoples. Curiosity denoted both "a subjective attitude and...an attribute of things noticed."


The philosopher Edmund Burke, as Thomas relates, characterised curiosity as a passive, childlike and impressionistic attitude towards the object world. The term implied that one was unable or unwilling to pass aesthetic judgment on novel objects. "Curiosity" did not point to a disciplined, methodical scientific view of natural or human life, Burke suggested, but to a realm of uncertainty and ambivalence in observation and representation. Nevertheless, there was a large market for curiosities in Europe and Cook's crews had a great passion for them.

At Nootka Sound, Edgar noted that Native masks were "ingenious" yet "curiously" carved. Riou noted that they had "a very frightful appearance", but were "far from being ill-done." And Samwell stated that they "were not badly designed or carved." "Curiously made", "not badly executed", "strangely produced", "curiously ornamented" and "interestingly shaped" are terms that abound in the journals of Cook and his officers. They had trouble putting a commercial and aesthetic value on many objects, and the inhabitants of Nootka Sound knew it. Samwell noted that the Natives performed "some legerdemain Tricks" to raise the value of curiosities in the eyes of Cook's desirous crewmen.

Thomas argues that these ambivalences and uncertainties are captured in artists' graphic representations of artifacts collected in the Pacific. Take Figure 1:3, which displays artifacts from Nootka Sound. There are many similar engravings in the official folio volumes of Cook's voyages. Thomas suggests that such images show "a

199 Ibid., pp.127-129. Thomas's discussion of curiosity was prompted in part by Bernard Smith's European vision and the south Pacific. Smith notes that evaluations of Native objects become more positive and favourable over Cook's three voyages.

200 At Nootka Sound, many of the objects brought for trade by the Natives were called "curiosities," and Cook noted that "such was the passion for these things among our people that they always came to a good Market whether they were of any value or no[1]." Beaglehole, Journals, III, p.302.


202 Riou, "Log", 30 March 1778, fol.76.

203 Beaglehole, Journals, III, p.1088.

204 Ibid., p.1091.
combination of interest, qualified aestheticization, and indeterminacy" in lay-out. No particular form of vision or reaction seems to be encouraged. Figure I:3 does not signify what function the objects played in the daily life of a Nootkan. One would have to examine Cook's written descriptions to learn whether they had a practical or ceremonial function, or if they were meant to illustrate a particular form or state of society - be it "savage", "warlike", "ingenious", or what have you. Nor were such images necessarily representative of material life, since indigenous peoples usually traded only a selection of their "manufactures."\(^{205}\)

Thomas thinks that such images are marked by an "evacuation of signification."\(^{206}\) But one might equally admit, as he indeed does, that this graphic, clinical form of representation illuminates the authority and disinterestedness of science. Native artifacts were de-contextualised and rearranged by scientists and artists, and inserted into European circuits of capital and culture. Disinterestedness was tied to appropriation. Thomas concludes that during the late eighteenth century, scientific exploration was characterised by a tension between "an unstructured apprehension of diverse things" and "a scientific and imperialist project" of classification and hierarchisation.\(^{207}\) We have only to recall Stafford's synopsis of the scientific gaze and Eagleton's sketch of eighteenth-century aesthetics to appreciate how deeply felt this tension must have been. For the dominant ideology of exploration was that alien people and things were part of a raw, external world, and that it was the explorer's job to represent the new and the Other

\(^{205}\) King, for instance, noted that the "Nootkans" would not part with their knives. *Ibid.*, p.1396.

\(^{206}\) Thomas, *Entangled objects*, p.137.

Figure I:3 "Various articles, at Nootka Sound"
in situ. Had explorers, overwhelmed by the diversity of novel objects, failed to rise to this challenge? What could the public learn about Native life, and what could scholars say about the nature of indigenous societies, from objects that had been detached from their "natural" settings, shipped home and displayed? Explorers still tried to judge and grade other societies. They commented on the treatment and status of women, which many Enlightenment thinkers viewed as a mark of relative social advancement. And they looked for signs of cannibalism, which had a much longer genealogy in European thinking about the Other. Thomas's point is that material artifacts were not taken to represent the nature of non-European societies until the nineteenth century.

The most evaluative remarks that Cook and his officers made about Nootkan society concern the veracity of the people - or what Clerke termed "the boundaries of honesty". And such remarks were bound up with observations about trade. Cook, as we have seen, produced conflicting statements about the honesty of the Nootkans, noting

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that trade was at first carried on with "the Strictest honesty", and then declaring that the Natives of the sound were "as light fingered" as any people he had met.\footnote{Ibid., pp.296-297.} Douglas retained both of Cook's phrases.\footnote{Cook and King, \textit{Voyage to the Pacific Ocean}, II, pp.270-271.} Cook offered a more general evaluation of theft later in his journal:

In trafficking with us, some would betray a navish disposition and would make off with our goods without making any return, if there was an opportunity, but in general most of them acted with different principles. Their passion for iron and brass and indeed any kind of metal was so strong that few could resist the temptation to steal whenever an opportunity offered.\footnote{Beaglehole, \textit{Journals}, III, p.312.}

In fact, many other things were traded and stolen besides iron and brass. Cook was sure that "these people got a greater middly and variety of things from us than any other people we had visited."\footnote{Ibid., p.303} Opportunities to steal arose when the inhabitants were on the ships. But Cook's statements about theft come with qualifications. He concluded the above passage by stating that the natives "touched nothing but what was valuable in their eyes." And in his journal entry for 12 April he states: "I got them down into the Cabbin for the first time and observed that there was not a single thing that fixed their attention for a single Moment"; they "looked upon everything with the greatest indifferency", though "there were some who shewed a little curiosity."\footnote{Ibid., p.301.}

Cook was suggesting that theft was understandable (though unacceptable) because indigenous peoples had an irresistible attraction to European goods (that few "could resist the temptation" to steal), yet he admitted that these people were selective and did not stand aghast at the "middly and variety" of goods on board his ships. American and British traders who came to the northwest coast over the next few decade made the same observation, as I will show in Part II. Cook could not summarise Native attitudes to theft, and some of his officers recycled his inconclusive remarks. Bayly, for
example, noted that the inhabitants were "well versed in thieving". But Riou commented: "We sailed out of this place with less mischief and less things stolen from us by the Natives than ever we have done before at any place."

Cook was highly sensitive about acts of theft on all of his voyages, and reported them in his journal. When Native people stole articles of trade or pieces of equipment from his ships or men, Cook went to the local chief or village with some armed marines to ask for them back, and he sometimes held chiefs hostage until stolen items were returned. When his crewmen stole from Native people, they were lashed on the quarterdeck. Cook tolerated many forms of behaviour on his voyages, but not theft. He thought that anarchy would break out on his ships, and between Native people and his crewmen, if such acts were not punished. He considered the putative honesty - discipline - of his crews to be one the chief symbols of their civility. More pragmatically, he noted incidents of Native theft in order to inform other navigators of what to expect when they encountered a particular Native group. King noted: "We had the good fortune for near a months residence of having no serious quarrels...but I can hardly conceive that a like good fortune will attend any future ships that may visit them & have at the same time so free an intercourse. In the first place their thefts, but more particularly their high Spirits...will draw upon them a severe Chastisement." In this passage King speaks for his captain and his mandate, suggesting that other navigators, bent on the pursuit of profit rather than science, might get themselves into trouble at Nootka Sound. And indeed they did.

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218 See Beaglehole, The life, and Dutton, "Successful intercourse was had with the natives", for discussions of the issue.
219 See Dening, Mr. Bligh's bad language, for a rigorous discussion of Bligh's policies, which he picked up from Cook.
220 Beaglehole, Journals, III, p.1408.
King here blurred the pragmatics of contact into the ideology of scientific-humanitarian exploration. Cook tried to stamp this ideology on his encounters and represent it in his journal. His remarks about theft reflect his humanitarian concerns and the assumptions that went with his mandate. They hinge on the spatial demarcation of vice from virtue. Cook implied that his ships were bastions of discipline and order, where trade with the Natives would be conducted fairly and peacefully. When the inhabitants boarded the *Resolution*, they stepped out of a world which Cook saw only in outline (but where the theft of European goods may not have been viewed as a vice) and entered a space that Cook controlled (and where theft could only be viewed as a crime).

These representational strategies might be contextualised. In eighteenth-century Britain theft and rioting were for many people strategies of survival and resistance to land enclosure, the commodification of labour, and the erosion of customary practices. The historian Margaret Hunt suggests that the English business community tried to grant itself respectability by distancing itself rhetorically from thieves and rioters. Those aspects of business that tarnished this image of respectability - debt and fraud particularly - were viewed as inherent traits of a riotous, polluting other. Hunt argues that travel narratives facilitated these othering processes by compiling beliefs and prejudices about imagined others "in an easily accessible place". Overseas exploration, she claims, helped change racism and commentary about the different ranks of British society "from a rather unsystematic, if nonetheless widely held, medley of popular beliefs into an elaborately worked out taxonomy". Hunt does not examine Cook's disquisitions on theft, but the implication of her argument is quite plain: it is likely that Cook's remarks about the veracity of Native peoples and his common crewmen were read by some eighteenth-

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century Britons as commentaries on economic and social cleavages within Britain. And explorers themselves were no doubt aware of the domestic import of their observations about Native peoples. If, in a fit of humanitarian generosity, an explorer like Cook refused to call a Native group "savage," he could still reach some moral high ground by noting that these Natives were as thievish and undisciplined as a British commoner (or his undisciplined common crewmen). Explorers did not just compile facts. They travelled and wrote with metaphoric and metonymic strokes. Clerke, for one, had to be bailed out of a London debtors' prison before he could join Cook's third voyage, which makes his comments about "the boundaries of honesty" even more prescient.224

Cook tried to regulate trade with Native groups by instituting and policing these boundaries. But he knew that they would likely become permeable. Riou claimed that at Nootka Sound there was a "want of certain restrictions" respecting trade.225 Many sailors traded their personal wares, and maybe some of the ships' fittings, without the permission or supervision of Cook or his officers. As a midshipman, tied to the quarterdeck and responsible for relaying orders and disciplining the lower ranks, Riou could size up trade and interaction from different positions. And Trevenan, another midshipman, commented on what happened when crew members crossed these boundaries.

An old North Briton of a most irascible spirit had been fixed upon as a boatkeeper... [but was] so often outwitted and of course reprehended for neglect of duty, that he was become as savage as the most savage tribe around him, with whom he had perpetual quarrels; and at last in an attempted theft, resolving to take full vengeance on the offender, he made a blow at him with the boat's stretcher...but missing him it fell with such force on the side of the canoe as to break it down to the water's edge.226

The offended Native threatened the Old Briton, and Molesworth Phillips, one of the marines, was called to restore calm. This boatkeeper worked at the side of the ship, in an

224 See Withey, Voyages of discovery, p.319.
225 Riou, "Log", 1 April 1778, fol.77.
226 Trevenan, Memoir, p.20.
interstitial space between the security and "civility" of the ship and the potentially threatening world surrounding it.

Later in his journal Cook conceded that this surrounding Native world was in many respects as ordered as his ships. When he visited the village of Yuquot, he was received "very curiously" and soon realised that the Nootkans held strict views about property. But this did not move him to re-evaluate the nature of theft on board his ships; it simply made it seem more striking and puzzling. Did these people have two standards of intercourse? King lamented that when the Natives were on the ships, they "did not act faithfully up to the rule laid down by themselves" on their own turf.²²⁷

The masculine bounds of interaction and observation

Nor could Cook prevent the prostitution of women to his crew. Native women boarded his ships on 6 April, and some of them remained there for the duration of Cook's stay.²²⁸ Cook himself rarely discussed the sexual activity of his crewmen. It was considered a "rude" issue in "polite" circles, and the Admiralty did not encourage him to write about it. And as Bridget Orr has documented, late eighteenth-century commentators viewed Cook's own sexual abstinence on his voyages as one of his greatest virtues. "Cook's unique sexual restraint played a (necessarily) unremarked but crucial role in both his actual command of his ships and in his elevation into the pantheon of nautical heroes", she argues.

He embodied a markedly paternalistic form of masculinity that seemed to inform both his public virtues and his private character; thus his stern but careful treatment of his crew and much-lauded sense of responsibility towards the natives was matched by celibacy on board and the generation of a large family at home. The cultural power of this image was not inconsiderable. It provided a model of masculinity that rendered male chastity plausible by combining it with manly action.... It also dignified the role of the explorer, who served as civilization's

²²⁸ Samwell reported on such matters in detail. Beaglehole, Journals, III, p.1095.
advanced guard before conquest and settlement, suggesting that his benevolent disinterestedness represented the purity of the colonial mission.\textsuperscript{229}

Cook's officers and crewmen were less restrained, however, and some of them described their sexual activities in lurid detail. And fitting the mode of representation I have been describing, they held diverse opinions about Native women, reflecting their own desires and different senses of morality. Burney judged that the women of Nootka Sound were "jolly likely wenches."\textsuperscript{230} Williamson, who looked for sexual liaisons whenever Cook landed in a new spot, noted that the women of Nootka Sound had "no objection to bartering their favours & are by no means exorbitant in their demands."\textsuperscript{231} Bayly, on the other hand, did not find these women "desirable objects", and reported that the crew "seemed quite easy about them." But he noted that some officers "whose stomachs were less delicate" did buy women. At one point in his journal, Bayly observed that the Native men were "willing to part with anything they have except their women" and were "affronted" when anything was offered for them. But he later reflected that Native men would sell their daughters if it was for something they could not otherwise get, though "this was practiced only among the lower classes of them. The better sort would not hear anything of the kind."\textsuperscript{232} Samwell, who was one of Cook's most licentious officers, declared that once the "favours" of Native women had been secured, the officers took erotic pleasure in conducting "a Ceremony of Purification" - scrubbing the dirt and red ochre off their bodies, or "cleansing" the women of their "different Ideas...of Beauty and cleanliness", as he put it.\textsuperscript{233} Finally, Riou struck a tone of moral indignation, arguing that

\textsuperscript{230} Burney, "Journal", 4 April 1778, fol.227.
\textsuperscript{231} Williamson, "Log", 25 April 1778, fol.100. Edgar wrote the same. And see Bayly, "Journals", 2nd, n.d., fol.95.
\textsuperscript{233} Beaglehole, *Journals*, III, p.1095.
the men of the sound "keep their Women under great Subjection, as much so as at the Society Isles."234

Riou's comment about the subjection of women was very much an aside. Cook and his officers generally did not discuss gender relations at Nootka Sound. Women are not distinguished in their discussions of trade and Native competition; when women do appear in these journals, it as sexual objects to be bartered for along with other Native goods. When Burney or King reported that "the" Natives performed this ritual or that harangue, they were referring to Native men, even though women also acted as performers on such occasions, as some of the Native accounts of this encounter state.

How might this miscellaneous discursive relationship between the articulation of sexual desire and this general invisibility of Native women in discussions of trade be interpreted? My thoughts are speculative. There is a growing literature on how explorers, literary figures, artists and scholars represented European and non-European nature and space. Derek Gregory argues that during the nineteenth century, "Western 'nature' is made ever more elaborately feminine...whereas Western 'space' is made over in the image of a masculine, phallocratic power...space is itself represented as the physical embodiment of (masculine) rationality whose structures are to be superimposed over 'nonspace.'"235 Non-Western 'nature', on the other hand, was seen as feminine, fecund, often virginal, and ripe for colonial penetration. And non-Western 'space' was struck in the image of male explorers and colonists; explorers' charts and colonists' maps and inventories brought non-Western 'nature' into 'spatial' existence. Or as Alan Bewell claims: "The west was conceived increasingly as a marriage of male power and a

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235 Gregory, Geographical imaginations, p.131.
transformed Nature, the East [the "Orient"] as a region dominated by feminine or effeminate power."\[236\]

Over Cook's three voyages, Bewell continues, "an even more powerful feminization of [the] landscape [of the Pacific] took place". Whereas Asia was seen to be "dominated by a surfeit of pleasure", the Pacific "came to be embodied in the image of pleasure to come."\[237\] As I noted in Chapter One, Cook's artists and scientists viewed many parts of the Pacific (especially the Polynesian Islands) as feminine and fecund, and their inhabitants as idyllic and indolent. Bernard Smith claims that on Cook's third voyage, "Webber builds upon that image of the Pacific that the preceding voyages had so rapidly and successfully fashioned. The Pacific as young, feminine, desirable, vulnerable, an ocean of desire. To her, during the next century, all the nations of Europe will come."\[238\]

At Nootka Sound, however, matters were different. As this encounter proceeded, Cook and his officers began to realise that the Nootkans were a calculating, competitive trading people. And as the opinions about the Native women of the sound documented above imply, Nootka Sound was not generally seen as young, feminine or vulnerable. It was situated at the edge of this ocean of desire.\[239\] What pervades discussion of the Nootkans trading abilities is the notion that an ordered Native space had been superimposed on nature - a network of territories; a theatre of commercial transactions;


\[237\] Ibid.


\[239\] See Clerke, "Log and proceedings", 29 March 1778, fol.151. Veit argues that observations about the "indolence" of South Sea Islanders were underscored by a European "superiority complex", whereas the notion that the peoples of the Pacific led "idyllic" lives was connected to an "arcadia complex". He argues that these two formulations are dialectically related in the work of Cook's scientists and artist - and especially in the work of J.R. Forster. Veit, "European imagining of the non-European world."
markets and monopolies. Clerke and Burney described a geometry of power. They implied that the Nootkans lived against the grain of nature, in a *manufactured* space. The Nootkans lived *from* nature, but seemed to have climbed out of a Hobbesian state *of* nature. Competition rarely led to violence.

To answer my question about the general invisibility of women in the accounts of Cook and his officers: they thought of trade and Native competitiveness as masculine traits, and this influenced the way they described interaction at Nootka Sound. They presumed that this society was run by men because interaction was routinised and ritualised, and seemed planned and controlled. There was a *spatiality* to trade which Cook and his officers (and on Gregory's account, Europeans more generally) identified as fundamentally masculine. Bewell argues that during the eighteenth century, "the differences between continents, nations, regions and cultures were given their most powerful iconic form in descriptions of the differences in the intellectual, physical, and reproductive capacity of the world's women."240 Yet women were seen as embodiments of nature, and non-European women, Bewell continues, "were used to represent [non-European] geographical regions...as naturalized or indigenous embodiments of place" - of untouched nature. Nootka Sound was not "nature" or "woman" in these discursive senses; it spoke to that marriage of "male power and a transformed nature." For Cook and his officers, "the Nootkan" was generically male.

I emphasise that this formulation is tentative. These presumptions about masculinity were no doubt more complex than I suggest and may not have been tied so tightly to European conceptions of nature and space. This is the view of Harriet Guest, who has studied the connections between masculinity, exoticism and the gendering of difference in the art of Cook's voyages. She thinks that depictions of Native women (and tattooed women in particular) illuminate a tension in late eighteenth-century British

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thought between two constructions of masculinity and femininity: first, the view that women are more "natural" than men and are therefore more prone to be corrupted by civilisation; and second, the notion that while the influences of education and climate make it possible to distinguish between different communities of men, women are everywhere the same. The implication of this first construct, she claims, is that women were viewed as "more differentiated by their condition" than men, who thereby appeared as "universally accessible" to civilisation. On the second notion, women were excluded from the definition of a national civic community because femininity was viewed as extranational.241

There are hints of this second extranational construction of masculinity in Samwell's remarks about prostitution. Samwell implied that "Nootkan" standards of female "beauty and cleanliness" were determined by men - because it was they who supplied women to Cook's crew and fixed a price - and that such standards could be washed away to reveal woman much as she essentially was in other parts of the world.

More generally, of course, representations of non-European people were mediated by comparative environmental and cultural discourses on climate and colour. Cook noted that "the Nootkans"' colour was not "altogether natural" because the men and women painted their faces and were covered with dirt and grease.242 Williamson thought that when washed, Nootkan men and women had "much of the Scotch countenance", and Bayly added that they were "as fair as any European."243 Douglas embellished these remarks: "...the whiteness of the skin appeared almost to equal that of Europeans; though rather of that pale effete cast which distinguishes those of our Southern nations."244 Douglas tried to diffuse the impression he may have got from Cook's journal that "the Nootkans" did not look on their visitors as superior beings by claiming that these people

241 Guest, "Curiously masked", pp.130-133.
242 Beaglehole, Journals, III, p.311.
244 Cook and King, Voyage to the Pacific Ocean, II, p.303.
resembled effete Europeans rather than robust Englishmen. This was a common trope in British writing and art at this time. Colley demonstrates that there was "a vast superstructure of prejudice" in eighteenth-century Britain aimed at continental Europe. The British represented Catholic Europeans as "impoverished, downtrodden, credulous, and even somehow unmanly".245

Discourses of displacement

I.S. MacLaren outlines the rhetorical devices that Douglas used to "polish" Cook's journal and turn him into a superior.246 He dwells on Douglas's account of Cook's trip to Yuquot on 22 April. Cook wrote in his journal:

The inhabitants...received us in the same friendly manner they had [o]ne before, and the Moment we landed I sent some to cut grass not thinking that the Natives could or would have the least objection, but it proved otherwise...247

And this is what appeared in the official account:

The inhabitants received us with the same demonstrations of friendship which I had experienced before; and the moment we landed, I ordered some of my people to begin their operation of cutting. I had not the least imagination, that the natives could make any objection to our furnishing ourselves with what seemed to be of no use to them, but necessary for us. However, I was mistaken...248

In Douglas's version of this event, Cook's readers see "a masterly captain, if not quite a monarch giving orders to his people."249 Some of MacLaren's other points are worth rehearsing. Douglas used the first-person pronoun repeatedly to focus attention on Cook. Underlying the pronouncement that the grass was "of no use" to the Natives was the assumption that hunting-fishing societies made no systematic use of the soil and therefore had no exclusive right to it: a Lockean point. And MacLaren finishes: "...the implicit

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245 Colley, Britons, pp.35-36.
246 MacLaren, "Exploration/travel literature", pp.46-56.
248 Cook and King, Voyage to the Pacific Ocean, II, pp.283-284.
reversal of blame [over the grass]...where the English are made to pay for what they came to steal, is ironical, if not to Douglas.²⁵⁰

Cook's was more equivocal. He was perhaps thankful that the villagers asked him to pay; otherwise, his actions might have sparked resentment and distrust. And regardless of whether the Natives harvested the grass, Cook simply noted that "there was not a single blade" of it "that had not a separated owner".²⁵¹ Douglas tampered with Cook's journal and tried to represent his stay at Nootka Sound as an encounter between unequals. Cook presented himself to these villagers and to his readers as a humane and tolerant explorer.

In sum, Cook represented his stay at Nootka Sound as a model of cross-cultural harmony and order; "successful intercourse was had with the natives." He believed in the principles of his scientific-humanitarian mandate and tried to carry them out. But he also wielded a rhetoric of European power and civilisation. The Native accounts I have discussed, and the logs and journals of Cook's officers, allow us to penetrate this rhetoric and reveal a much more relative and corporeal world of interaction and representation.

Mimesis - or "the plain style of writing" that Smith thinks so appealed to the eighteenth century public - was central to the way explorers such as Cook attempted to capture and subdue otherness. But the idea of mimesis was shot through with a set of anxieties about the relationship between the viewing subject and the object world. These anxieties peep through the writing of some of Cook's officers. The relationship between representation and reality in some of these journals appears unstable and truncated. I would not go as far as Paul Carter, however, and suggest that "A geographical feature is made no bigger than a page of writing" - that representation and reality, events and the discourses they figure in, are irretrievably yoked together.²⁵² Such implications emerge

²⁵⁰ Ibid., pp.48-49
²⁵¹ Beaglehole, Journals, III, p.306.
²⁵² Carter, Road to Botany Bay, p.xxiv.
from Carter's writing, I suspect, because he focuses entirely on one set of texts -
explorers' "official" narratives. The historical record of early contact in British Columbia
is composed mostly of white texts. But in the case of Cook's stay at Nootka Sound it is
possible to compare and contrast different perspectives. The Native and white texts I
have discussed construct truth and reality in different shades and push Cook from centre
stage. And the white texts themselves suggest that representation was a spatial
problematic. It revolved around Cook's movements, his "zigzag" path across the Pacific,
the location of his ships amid Native people, and the position of his officers on those
ships. It was mediated by the physical and rhetorical demarcation of distance and
difference between Europeans and Natives. And in a much grander and profoundly
compromised sense, the representations I have discussed revolved around the traffic of
European ideas, agendas and epistemologies in non-European space.

As I will now argue, it is important to register such claims, and chart such fissures
and instabilities in the historical record of contact at Nootka Sound in 1778, because
Cook's and Douglas's words have been recycled and deployed for imperial ends, and
because the texts of white explorers such as Cook are still treated largely at face value as
reliable, objective, historical documents.
To return to the cairn, then. To my knowledge the unveiling ceremony at Nootka Sound in 1924 marks the first time a historian had viewed Cook's encounter with the Nootka as the foundation of history in British Columbia. Up to the 1920s the history of British Columbia had been seen in various lights and given various starting dates.253 As the historian Allan Smith notes, late nineteenth-century scholars discussed British Columbia as part of the British Empire and in relation to a much broader history of European exploration, trade and political influence in North America.254 Cook does not figure prominently in H.H. Bancroft's histories of the northwest coast and British Columbia, written in the 1880s.255 And when Alexander Begg published his history of British Columbia in 1894, as "a continuous history of this portion of the British Empire",

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253 The mainland explorations of Alexander McKenzie and Simon Fraser; George Vancouver's circumnavigation of Vancouver Island in 1792; Britain's tussle with Spain over Nootka Sound in the 1790s; the creation of the colonies of Vancouver Island (1849) and British Columbia (1858); the gold rush of 1858; and British Columbia's Confederation with Canada in 1871.


255 Bancroft simply noted that Cook gave "an extended and accurate description" of the land and people of Nootka Sound. The works of Hubert Howe Bancroft, vol.XXVII: History of the northwest coast, vol.1: 1543-1800 (San Francisco: A.L. Bancroft & Company, 1884), p.171. In his History of British Columbia, 1792-1887 (1887), Bancroft discussed the life and character of northwest coast Indians in a chapter on the natural environment. In a handwritten "plan" for this History, Bancroft noted that he would start with the coming of the North West Company and Hudson's Bay Company to the west coast in the early nineteenth century. He also came to Victoria in the 1880s and gathered information and reminiscences from many old fur traders and colonial officials (and retrieved the private papers of Sir James Douglas), leaving with over 4000 manuscript pages. Hubert Howe Bancroft, "Miscellaneous Papers," BCARS E/C/B22.3.
he devoted only a couple of pages to Cook and simply paraphrased lines out of the official account.\textsuperscript{256}

Smith argues that these first historians of British Columbia (who were not born in the province) deployed the conceptual tools of Victorian Britain, judging "local" activity in terms of "the extent to which it released the wealth of the world, created moral communities and illustrated the truth that the individual was the master of his fate." "On all these counts", Smith continues, "the shape and content of the British Columbia experience did more than meet the test" (though historians disagreed on how and when wealth, achievement and virtue had been unleashed and harnessed).\textsuperscript{257} British Columbia was seen as a land of plenty, where pioneers could serve themselves and the interests of the British Empire concurrently. That is, the province signified something greater than itself.

F.W. Howay (who was born in British Columbia) imparted some of these convictions in his work - holding that the colonisation of British Columbia stood for the progress of civilisation, and trading on the image of the self-made pioneer - but he did not blithely accept that British Columbia had an assigned role in history. He was one of a number of Canadian intellectuals working in the interwar years who began to look beyond the bonds of empire and think about the nature of regional and national identity. The cairn was offered by the Canadian Government as a beacon of interpretation rather than as a marker of destiny or of some completed development. Howay represented these currents of thought in his speech at Nootka Sound in 1924. He was not garnishing a British imperial philosophy of history with local produce, but using this event to suggest that history and identity needed to be put on a \textit{white-indigenous} footing. The editor of the \textit{Daily Colonist} noticed as much. "The unveiling is of more than average historic

\textsuperscript{256} Alexander Begg C.C., \textit{History of British Columbia: From its earliest discovery to the present time} (Toronto: William Briggs, 1894), pp.7 and 19-20.
\textsuperscript{257} Allan Smith, "The writing of British Columbia history," pp.74-75.
interest," he declared. "A country is acquiring stability and giving direction to its ideals when it commemorates with fitting ceremony the events of the past which are interwoven with its growth and progress.... [Nootka Sound] is perhaps the most historic site of all in British Columbia." By unveiling a cairn there, he concluded, "we are keeping one hand on the traditions of the past."258 Howay had written to Ottawa in 1921 complaining that "So little interest have we shown in historic Nootka that it has been left to foreigners to mark it!"259 The Washington State Historical Society had erected a monument there in 1903. And reflecting on the importance of the Historic Sites and Monuments Board in an address to a woman's club in Alberta in 1926, Howay announced: "Real nationality must be founded on an interest in local history."260 Sage also grappled with these issues of identity, if in a more dispassionate, academic tone. "With the growth of a Canadian national feeling...[came] the desire to see Canadian history in perspective from sea to sea", he reflected in 1939; but "many Canadians were still 'colonials' in thought."261

Where were Native people in this discussion of national and regional identity, and its colonial hangovers? Moreover, how was this talk of tradition possible when according to the colonialist paradigm of progress sketched by Smith, it was Native people who were assigned the station of tradition; when tradition carried the connotations of fable and barbarism rather than reason and opportunity? And how could Nootka Sound be called a historic spot that was indigenous to white British Columbians when Captain Cook had encountered Native people who obviously thought that they owned the place?

This invocation of tradition and search for historical-geographical identity rested on exclusionary (colonialist) ideas, smudging the notion that British Columbia had coeval foundations in a Native-white contact process and ruling instead that historical spaces

258 Daily Colonist, 15 August 1924.
259 F.W. Howay, "Two memorable landmarks of British Columbia," The historic landmarks of Canada, annual report, 1921, pp.28-30; the quotation is from p.29.
260 Calgary Albertan, 13 May 1926, clipping in Howay Papers, box 18, folder 2.
such as Nootka Sound had thoroughbred roots in the civilised ideals of explorers such as Cook. Howay and Sage gave Native people a back seat in history and incorporated them into their speeches at the unveiling ceremony in highly selective ways. They were struggling with what Terry Goldie calls the issue of "indigenization", or "the impossible necessity of becoming indigenous."\textsuperscript{262} For white Canadians, Australians and New Zealanders to imagine themselves belonging to more than just the British Empire, Goldie argues quite bluntly, they had "to look at the Indian. The Indian is Other and therefore alien. But the Indian is indigenous and therefore cannot be alien. So the Canadian must be alien. But how can the Canadian be alien within Canada?"\textsuperscript{263} Goldie thinks that there were - and are - only two possible answers: either to incorporate signifiers of Native indigeneity within a "semiotic field" mapped out by whites (he uses the example of Mohawk Motors), or to reject the presence of the indigene by simply claiming that countries such as Canada began with the coming of whites.\textsuperscript{264}

Goldie's formulation is too dichotomous, but in the early twentieth century British Columbia's intellectual elite did grapple quite seriously with this question of indigenisation. E.O.S. Scholefield, for instance, wrote in the first volume of his and Howay's history of British Columbia (published in 1914) that "The pagan tribes of Nootka occupy a place in the history of British Columbia analogous to that of Caesar's Britons in the annals of England."\textsuperscript{265} To his mind, Native people belonged to a distant, and to some degree irrelevant, past. On Goldie's formulation, Scholefield incorporated Native people into a white lexicon of British Columbian modernity as prehistoric ancestors while denying that they had played any important role in the development of

\begin{thebibliography}{99}
\bibitem{263} \textit{Ibid.}
\bibitem{264} \textit{Ibid.}, and \textit{passim}.
\bibitem{265} Howay and Scholefield, \textit{British Columbia}, I, p.92.
\end{thebibliography}
the province. If Native people were featured at all in history books written around this time, it was as obstacles to progress.

Such sentiments are reflected in Sage's report about the unveiling ceremony. We do not hear what Maquinna had to say. Nor do we learn what the Native groups assembled at Nootka Sound might have thought about the ceremony, or about the conditions of their participation.\(^{266}\) Sage's passage about the arrival of the *Malaspina* mimics Douglas's account of first contact at Nootka Sound. The Nootka Indians re-enact history itself; Sage is simply a scrivener. They remake and fall out of history at the same time. It was "as if the mists of time had rolled away." The enlightened heirs of Cook re-encountered a Native Other; cultural boundaries were reinscribed. The Native harangues were still unintelligible, and history repeated itself as spectacle. And so read a newspaper headline at the time: "Memorial Party's Vessel Thrice Circled by Flotilla of Indian War Canoes on Approach to Historic Spot - Learned Scholars and Ignorant Natives Stand Together at Foot of Monumental Cairn."\(^{267}\)

Yet this unveiling ceremony was not staged in a political vacuum. Howay's rendition of Kipling's *Recessional* could have been put to the discordant tune of the

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\(^{266}\) The only work I know of that deals with economics and politics in Nootka Sound during this period, Marshall's "Political history of the Nuu-chah-nulth", is silent on this matter.


Howay wanted the cairn in "some prominent and suitable position having in view the topography, the accessibility and publicity, and the historic setting." As such there were plans to place it adjacent to the village - i.e., on reserve land - which would have required the permission of the local native band. But this site proved unsuitable and Howay's engineer opted for the promontory instead, which was crown land. F.W. Howay to W.E. Ditchburn, 18 November 1923, Howay Papers, box 8, folder 2.

\(^{267}\) *Daily Colonist*, 13 August 1924. See also, R.E. Gosnell, *The year book of British Columbia and manual of provincial information* [first ed. 1897] (Victoria, 1903), p.18, on Nootka Sound: "The village is the same, the houses are the same, and the people are the same [as 107 years ago]...the latter still wrapped in blankets and still governed by a descendent of old King Maquinna."
Indian Rights Association (a pan-provincial Native organisation that protested the land question at the start of this century), and Native resistance to a Dominion law banning the potlatch.\textsuperscript{268} White scholars felt the need to disguise these contemporary forms of Native dissent at public functions. In 1908, for example, Scholefield wrote to his friend G.M. Sproat (a prominent businessman and in the 1870s an Indian Reserve Commissioner in British Columbia), asking him about what to include in a public lecture on the history of Vancouver Island. Sproat thought that the challenge was to know "what to leave in the ink pot", and told Scholefield to avoid discussion of Natives "as an ordinary audience cares nothing about aborigines...and some may charge you, as an official, with discussing disputed questions of rights."\textsuperscript{269} In attempting to identify themselves locally, white British Columbians had to fend off competing cultural claims and signs of dissent, and actively maintain their marks and standards of distinction. British Columbia was no longer a British colony, but these scholars and public figures were indeed colonials in thought, preserving those absolute boundaries and hierarchical distinctions between the white and the Indian, the West and the native, that scholars such as Edward Said have shown defined the ideology of high imperialism around the turn of the twentieth century.\textsuperscript{270} For Sage, Douglas's account of first contact served this purpose. Cook, apparently, was invited to land by natives who were eager to trade and please. Under the telos of local history, truth is most precious at its moment of origin - in that original discursive spark when Cook discovered Nootka Sound. Sage probably found this passage both revealing and comforting because it chanted the reassuring message that Native dissent was an aberration of history; that in the beginning - back in 1778 -


\textsuperscript{269} G.M. Sproat to E.O.S. Schoefield, n.d. [1908?], G.M. Sproat Papers, file 6, BCARS Add.MSS.257; E.O.S. Scholefield to F.W. Howay, 2 August 1911, Howay Papers, box 6, folder 7.

\textsuperscript{270} Said, \textit{Culture and imperialism}. 
everything was peaceful and uncontested. Cook was invited to land, and, by implication, to take nominal possession of the coast for Great Britain.

Sage's report amounts to what Foucault called "traditional history": the view that in searching for the origin of things "we" might "rediscover ourselves." In this mode, Foucault remarks, history is conceived as a "patient and continuous development" and written as a "consoling play of recognitions." Sage broached the issue of indigenisation by viewing the past and present as isomorphic - by representing Native people as historical pawns on a white man's checkerboard, as Goldie would have it. As the Malaspina approached Friendly Cove, the mists of time rolled away and the spectators sensed that that they were Cook's acolytes. Sage's climatological metaphor can also be put in ocular terms. His report conforms to what Paul Carter means by "imperial history": history that has "a satellite eye"; history that is "not random, open-minded, [and] equally attentive to all directions... [but which] looks down a telescope." As with Cook's journal, Sage's report is selectively blind. And I am not making a speculative argument here. For Sage kept a detailed diary of this event which illustrates that he papered over some active Native voices and signs of dissent. The Indians obviously did perform some kind of welcoming song as the Malaspina approached, but in his diary Sage was most distracted by the "grotesque appearance" of the Indians' head masks. He thought of the Resolution and Douglas's account of first contact after the event. Nor did he mention in his published report that the memorial party could not reach the cairn because of a high tide. "Learned scholars and ignorant savages" did not stand together before the Union Jack. Howay staged the event from the deck of a tug which bobbed around the promontory in bad weather, and the spectators quickly tired of the formalities. Furthermore, at Yuquot the Indians objected to the man from the Fox

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272 Carter, Road to Botany Bay, p.xx.
Corporation and wanted to "trample on his films and break his camera." Sage was told that things would have gone more smoothly had Maquinna been paid $25 for the privilege of filming his people. The villagers also demanded that the spectators paid a 50c a head admission charge for the privilege of inspecting the village and bargaining for Native wares. If the mists of time had rolled away, it was because these white visitors were back there with Cook having to pay for what they viewed and wanted. In all, the B.C. Historical Association was presented with a spectacular version of this event.

Now Foucault treated the notion of "rediscovery" (in literary and especially scientific texts) as "a retrospective codification of a historical position." In his address at Nootka Sound, Howay both raised and questioned these notions of rediscovery and retrospection. He was not as confident as Sage that there was some isomorphism between the past and the present. Had history been shaped? Nootka Sound, to his mind, remained partly uninscribed; much of what came between Cook and the present was still misty. Howay had gone to Nootka Sound to ground the connections between Cook and local historical identity. He had moaned to the Canadian Parks Commission in Ottawa about how few words he had been given to play with on the plaque.

Howay wrote at the start of his popular history of the province, published in 1928, that there is "a twilight period, before the dawn, in which fact and fiction are intertwined", when it was difficult to decide what came under the domain of history - thus making it difficult to forge a "consoling play of recognitions." For Howay, Native people entered the domain of history for only a short period of time, in the "earliest pages" of exploration and trade. He thought they were largely irrelevant to the history of British colonialism on the northwest coast in the second half of the nineteenth century.

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274 Michel Foucault, "What is an author," in Language, counter-memory, practice, pp.113-138; the quotation is from p.134.
275 F.W. Howay to J.B. Hankin, 4 September 1923, Howay Papers, box 8, folder 2.
and that the study of pre-contact aboriginal life lay in the domain of anthropology. It was Cook who had illuminated the northwest coast and "made" history. Yet Cook still featured in Howay's twilight zone. The explorer's relevance to the developments of Howay's own lifetime still had to be mapped out. "The clouds of doubt and darkness that from the beginning of time had rested upon the western coast of North America found their last abode with the confines of the province of British Columbia", he wrote in 1923; but Cook's search for the Northwest Passage had only "lifted these clouds for an instant". For Howay, Cook's flash of brilliance had to be marked, and murky images of the past had to be weighed up, carefully arranged, and piled up like stones in a cairn. Shortly after the unveiling ceremony, Howay wrote to C.F. Newcombe (an ethnologist, collector, and natural historian), complaining that little was known about the "early history" of the province and stating that he preferred history based on "a careful and critical reading and studying of the old books and writers to all the so-called information one may pick up as one travels."

But standing before that cairn at Nootka Sound Howay was trying to generate this "so-called" information. The party from Victoria was there to see as well as commemorate history. At the unveiling ceremony, Howay suggested that one had to visit old landmarks as well as read dusty old library volumes to understand "the face of the day." This was the point of having a Monuments Board. Howay was to compose the epitaphs and resuscitate the "dry bones" of history. The site as well as the facts of history had significance.

Howay's response to the issue of indigenisation, then, was to appeal to the authority of witnessing. "Everything in the European dream of possession rests on witnessing", Stephen Greenblatt argues; "a witnessing understood as a form of significant

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278 F.W. Howay to C.F. Newcombe, 29 August 1924, Newcombe Family Papers, vol.4, file 82, BCARS Add.MSS. 1077.
and representative seeing. To see is to secure the truth of what might otherwise be deemed incredible." In some senses, Howay found it incredible that Cook's discovery had culminated in Britain's colonisation of the Cordillera. Howay's first essays on the "earliest pages" of history in British Columbia, published in the 1910s, are marked by a language of contingency. He noted that "The Northwest maritime fur trade owed its origin to an accident": the discovery made on Cook's voyage that sea otter furs collected on the northwest coast fetched high prices in China. In turn, he characterised the maritime fur trade as "spasmodic", and argued that the land-based fur trade played only a small part in the economic development of the province. For all of these contingencies, however, Howay still sought to give history direction. He concluded his essay "The fur trade in northwestern development" by arguing that the fur trader had "pointed out to the home-builder [prospective colonist], who in the natural evolution must follow him, the paths which have led us to the proud position of today." In 1924 he was trying to trace this narrative back to Cook, suggesting that Nootka Sound was the wellhead of local history. White British Columbians could dampen their worries about how these historical pieces fitted together, and satiate their thirst for identity, by revisiting Cook's discovery. Howay was trying to manufacture a past through an act of representative seeing - in his capacity as a scholar, collector and custodian of British Columbian history.

Again, though, this form of identification through witnessing involved a denial of British Columbia's roots in cross-cultural interaction. Howay may have thought that the history of British Columbia was unelaborated, but, like Sage, he still thought of it as a shibboleth. "[O]ur first knowledge of the Indians of Northwest America comes from

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Nootka Sound," he wrote in 1921. But he also thought that "contact with civilization" had been "mortal for the native race." When Howay spoke of fashioning local identity, he thought it unnecessary to include Native people because it was largely assumed that they were becoming extinct. In 1868 Sproat wrote that "colonization on a large scale...practically means the displacing and extinction of the savage native population." European diseases, especially measles and smallpox, swept the coast during the nineteenth century, decimating many Native groups. In 1887 Bancroft wrote of the poor Indian, "in his divinely preordained extinction." There were many signs of Native rejuvenation by the 1920s, but Howay clung to this assumption about the extinction of the Indian.

Cook has had many posthumous reputations. In Britain during the 1920s he was being "enrolled among the most celebrated and most admired of the benefactors of the human race." In British Columbia he was being enlisted as a historical figure conferring an uncontested history of British sovereignty.

"The archivization of knowledge"

The correspondents I cite - particularly Howay, Scholefield, Sproat and Newcombe - were prominent public figures and some of the principal architects of a colonialist historiography of British Columbia. They helped to compile and organise a local archive, and hoped it would foster a sense of local identity. Newcombe kept a massive collection of natural specimens and ethnological artifacts (including many

282 Howay, "Two memorable landmarks," p.28.
283 Howay, British Columbia, p.8.
286 This quotation is from the inscription on an obelisk laid in Cook's honour in Easby in 1827, which illustrates Souvenir of the Bi-centenary celebrations arranged in the Cleveland district (Middlesborough: Sanbride Press, 1928).
Native objects procured for the British Museum). Howay searched libraries and booksellers around the world for historical materials pertaining to British Columbia, and built up an impressive personal library. In 1893 R.E. Gosnell became British Columbia's first Provincial Librarian. When he started, he claimed that apart from local statutes and some government journals he had only 10 books in his collection (including Ben Hur and a Life of Queen Victoria). In 1894 he appealed to the public to send him information about "early events". It was difficult to discover the past overnight, though. J.S. Helmcken, one of the first British colonists on Vancouver Island, wrote to Gosnell in 1911 bemoaning that it was still "impossible for the present generation to understand the condition of the early settlers", in part because there was a dearth of information. By 1923, however, Gosnell (then in retirement) boasted to Howay that the Provincial Library had the best collection of Northwest Americana in the world. A separate archives department was established in 1908, which Gosnell started. Scholefield succeeded him as Provincial Librarian in 1898, and became Provincial Archivist in 1910, holding both posts until his death in 1919.

Between the 1880s and 1920s there was a great drive to collect information, discover and rescue historical origins, and give some cultural shape to British Columbia's past. Or as the librarian Terry Eastwood has commented: "The collective vision became

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287 His personal library now forms the core of the Special Collections Division of the University of British Columbia Library. Howay only enquired about the whereabouts of the journals and logs of Cook's officers after the event at Nootka Sound, and was told by John Hosie, the Provincial Librarian, that "no effort has ever been made to find out whether the logs deposited by Capt Cook are still to be had." The only log Hosie had in 1924 was Samwell's, in French. Howay to John Hosie, 11 September 1926; Hosie to Howay, 16 September 1926, Howay Papers, box 8, folder 8, and box 46 - addendum no.8.
288 He appealed to the public through the press. See, for example, the Kamloops Centinel, March 1894.
290 R.E. Gosnell to F.W. Howay, 20 October 1923, Howay Papers, box 3, folder 15.
fixed on the remote glimmerings of a society now coming to feel itself established."
Eastwood claims that Gosnell and Scholefield stood for "national building on a
provincial scale".292

This drive to gather historical information was by no means peculiar to British
Columbia. The historian Thomas Richards argues that during the late nineteenth century
the "archivization of knowledge" became a definitive feature of European empire-
building. For the British, especially, the archive became the principal "place of transit"
between imperial knowledge and power, "the collectively imagined junction of all that
was known or knowable, a fantastic representation of an epistemological master pattern,
a virtual focal point for the heterogeneous local knowledges of metropole and empire."293

The imperial archive was the nineteenth-century equivalent of the eighteenth-century
bourgeois public sphere, he argues: "...it presupposed the neutrality and instrumentality
of all communicative networks at the same time as it formed and channeled knowledge
within epistemological networks specific to a class, a state, and a nation."294

Richards's thesis is based mostly on the analysis of literary texts, but I want to
push his basic point: that the "archivization of knowledge" in the late nineteenth century
was central to the propagation of colonialist discourse in British Columbia. It was with
the aid of a Provincial Archive, and the creation of private libraries such as Howay's, that
scholars remained "'colonials' in thought", as Sage put it. Before this era of the archive,
colonial discourse in British Columbia was fashioned around a discrete set of events, and
knowledge and power was channeled through a number of agencies and institutions.
Explorers, traders, governors and colonial officials wrote in different ways, for different
audiences, and with different aims in mind. There was a spectral relationship between

292 Terry Eastwood, "R.E. Gosnell, E.O.S. Scholefield and the founding of the provincial
archives of British Columbia, 1894-1919," BC Studies, no.54 (Summer 1982), pp.38-62;
the quotation is from pp.61-62.
293 Thomas Richards, "Archive and utopia," Representations, 37 (Winter 1992), pp.104-
135; the quotation is from p.107.
294 Ibid., p.104.
knowledge and power. British colonialism on Vancouver Island in the second half of the nineteenth century was part of a highly dispersed apparatus of British knowledge and power. A general set of British imperial ideas and colonial policies towards governorship, settlement and Native peoples - summarised in tracts such as Herman Merivale's *Lectures on Colonization and Colonies* (1861) - were interpreted and localised in different ways in different British colonies. In the late nineteenth century, on the other hand, there was a huge investment in local *narrative* history. While underwritten by the ideology of empire, works such as Howay's *The making of a province* sought to domesticate colonial discourses about British Columbia; knot them up in local space.

Colonialism was given a British Columbian cast through the careful arrangement of local knowledge and the dissemination of a local will-to-know pointed out in these information drives and boasts about historical collections.

Scholefield found the journals and dispatches of colonial governors, and sent people to private and public archives in London, the U.S.A., Mexico and Spain to copy a panoply of official and unofficial records relating to British Columbia. These heterogeneous knowledges were housed in the Legislative Building in Victoria for the consultation of scholars and government officials. The Provincial Archive was not opened to the public until the 1920s. On British Columbia's centenary in 1958, Sage reflected that during the early twentieth century the historian had to be "a jack of all trades", using archives and libraries, conducting "historical fieldwork", and being a collector as well as a writer.295 This enthusiasm for the collection and synthesis of knowledge - which characterised the work of anthropologists as well as historians - conditioned the nature of the historical imagination. Native peoples became objects of ethnological curiosity. Sage's phrase points to the emasculation of Native history and historicity. As Goldie would see it, these scholars and librarians were not trying to

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"instill spirit in the Other but to gain it from the Other. Through [studying] the indigene the white gains soul and the potential to become of the land."296 Scholars of early British Columbia should be indebted to these early collectors, for without them the past would indeed be much murkier. But we should not forget that these forms of collecting and writing were also acts of appropriation.

When it came to non-native history, scholars spoke of unveiling the past, peering through the mists of time, rediscovering origins, and discovering lost chronologies: of moulding events into a local master narrative. These currents of thought were expressed most distinctly by Scholefield, who wrote to Howay in 1911:

> It is such a great thing, such a fascinating thing, this founding and building up of a [archives] department devoted to the gathering together and preservation of historical records. It is also a work that must tell in the future. Humble as our beginnings were, we laid, broad and deep, a foundation for a structure which will be the splendid, crowning glory of this great Dominion of ours. The study of our early history fascinates me. I look back and I see, as through a mist, an illimitable coast-line, a vast wilderness, unexplored and unknown, indefinably grand. And then, little by little, the veil is lifted. Great explorers, bluff sailors and hardy fur traders in their matter of fact and direct way, smash the theories and explode the fallacies advanced by old map-makers and credulous historians.297

Scholefield tied the European discovery and colonial settlement of British Columbia to the development of the archive. Historical knowledge would be the "crowning glory" of the province and the nation. Scholefield the archivist identified himself with these "matter of fact" explorers and traders. They shared a taste for discovery. The accumulation of geographical knowledge and historical texts went hand-in-hand. Under the spell of the archive, Scholefield saw history as an exploratory process, and one supposes that his archival thirst was never satiated. The more texts he had at his disposal the more "illimitable" and "vast" the historical canvas seemed. Colonial history is like that; a geographical imperative impells it; it must be on the move or perish...

296 Goldie, Fear and Temptation, p.16.
297 E.O.S. Scholefield to F.W. Howay, 5 October 1911, Howay Papers, box 6, folder 8.
through the archive, the past became "unexplored and unknown, indefinably grand" - a historical wilderness to be harvested by historical knowledge.

In Scholefield's imagery the development of the archive also doubles as historical progress. The explorer-archivist smashes the theories of "old-mapmakers and credulous historians." In short, the colonial archive has its own spatiality. It both creates, and attempts to fill, a *terra incognita* with historical meaning. Thus imagined, Native people were again being erased from the local historical imagination. The archive contributed greatly to the conception of British Columbian modernity. Scholefield posited what Homi K. Bhabha calls a "non-place" from which any "historiographical operation starts". "For the emergence of modernity - as an ideology of *beginning, modernity as the new*, Bhabha argues, "the template of this 'non-place' becomes colonial space.... The colonial space is the *terra incognita* or the *terra nulla*, the empty or wasted land whose history has to be begun, whose archives must be filled out; whose future progress must be secured in modernity."298 This was not European modernity; Scholefield was in colonial space. But it was a colonial space fashioned and revised for the needs of white society trying to see its indigeneity, paper over historical contingency, and veil colonialism in a more secular sense of modernity.

*The Cook bicentenary*

In 1978 the British Columbia Provincial Government planned tourist trips to Nootka Sound as part of its Cook bicentenary celebrations. But this time it heard from the West Coast District Council of Chiefs, which refused to participate in the official proceedings unless it was granted a multi-million dollar economic development package to ease unemployment in Native communities and furnish a 15,000 square foot longhouse at Yuquot. When Grace McCarthy (the province's tourism minister) dismissed these

proposals as "outrageous" and "silly," the Council boycotted the celebrations, rejected "the concept of the bicentennial", and vowed to keep visitors away from Yuquot. The press dubbed the village "Not-So-Friendly-Cove." 

A white ritual was forestalled, but colonialist ideas and stereotypes had not been dismantled. The editor of the Victoria Times saw no reason why Native people would want to celebrate for "it was only after the white man came and settled that things went bad for them." (Natives had not disappeared, but they had been mortally wounded, as Howay claimed.) The Daily Colonist stated that the Mowachaht had been the real losers of history: "They have changed. Friendly Cove hasn't." (Friendly Cove remained a wellhead of local history.) Some historians could not understand what the "fuss" over Yuquot was about as Cook had actually anchored a few miles away. (Like many historians, they were giving stage directions that were far too technical for most people.) And an English couple from Middlesborough (near Cook's birthplace), who had won a ten-day holiday to B.C. in a competition sponsored by the Bicentenary Committee and had hoped to visit Cook's landfall, conceded that no one could blame the Indians for upsetting the show. They mused instead about the fact that they could not get a pork pie in Victoria. (Why all the fuss over such a distant ex-colony?) George Watts, the chair of the Council of Chiefs, tried to put matters in perspective, announcing in the press that "Land claims are at the root of the whole matter." He was reiterating a Native grievance as old as white settlement itself: the seizure of Native land and resources by white settlers and government without payment or treaties.

299 Victoria Times, 8 February and 2 March 1978.
300 Ibid., 9 March 1978.
301 Ibid.
303 Ibid., 28 January 1978.
304 Ibid., 11 May 1978.
305 Ibid., 17 January 1978.
In 1978 an academic conference was also held in Vancouver to mark the bicentenary of Cook's arrival at Nootka Sound. In their introduction to the published proceedings of the conference, which attracted Cook scholars from around the world, Robin Fisher and Hugh Johnston (two historians at Simon Fraser University in Burnaby) noted that the memory and legacy of Cook had been manipulated by both Natives and whites "to suit current social and political concerns." This remark was perhaps prompted by the "fuss" over Yuquot, but the issues laying behind it barely reached the conference floor. There was much debate about the influence of Beaglehole on Cook scholarship, and most of the papers dealt with the motives for, and legacies of, Cook's travels from a European perspective. Fisher was the only scholar who tackled the substance of Cook's encounters with indigenous peoples. In his essay "Cook and the Nootka," which is perhaps the classic revisionist statement of the beginnings of Native-white contact in British Columbia, he argued that the two groups forged a reciprocal relationship.

Some appear to want to see Cook's arrival at Nootka in terms of 'good' and 'evil.' There were no such extremes at Nootka Sound in the spring of 1778. There was a balance in the relationship that developed between Cook's crews and the Indians. It is true that opposites can be balanced, but at the point of contact at Nootka Sound each group was subject to the culture of the other, each found things that were familiar, and each had to comply with the demands made by the other. Neither group asserted a dominance, neither perceived the other as superior and, therefore, neither responded with submission.

Fisher used Cook's stay at Nootka Sound to criticise the "fatal impact" thesis then permeating much scholarship on European exploration. But the above passage also summarises his view of early contact relations in British Columbia, sketched in his book Contact and Conflict (1977). The central tenet of this book is that there was "a fundamental change in the nature of Indian and European relations with the passing of the fur trade and the coming of settlement" in the second half of the nineteenth century.

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306 Fisher and Johnston, Captain James Cook and his times, p.4.
307 Ibid., p.84.
Fisher has a bipolar understanding of British Columbia history. He described the first phase of contact as "mutually beneficial" for Europeans and Natives. It was only in the era of settlement that whites began to dominate and exploit Native people. He claimed that explorers and traders "reacted to what they saw" of Indian life, while settlers "tended to react to what they expected to see" (roughly, that is, the notion that Native people were primitives who could be easily pushed aside). In Fisher's opinion, the former generated more objective observations and held more open-minded opinions about Indians than the latter.  

This is not the place to scrutinise Fisher's generalisations. The point here is that while he attacks the monoliths of colonial historiography, Cook still holds a special place in his thesis. Fisher represents Cook as the arch reciprocator, the most experienced and sophisticated exponent of his first economy of contact. He drew this assessment from Beaglehole's edition of Cook rather than Douglas's account, and echoed the New Zealander's view that Cook was dispassionate, open-minded and tolerant of other ways of life. In "Cook and the Nootka" Fisher worked with the journals of Cook's officers, but used them largely to bolster this humane image of Cook. He ostracised Cook from colonial historiography and placed him in an ideologically cleaner, coeval past.

Cook books

The different images of Cook's transactions at Nootka Sound that shine through Douglas's and Beaglehole's texts have been put to work and exacerbated by twentieth-century historians in response to different political and academic objectives. Sage transmuted Douglas's account for the purposes of his present, implying that Native dissent was an aberration of history and attempting to shore up the vicissitudes of a local

308 Robin Fisher, Contact and conflict: Indian-European relations in British Columbia, 1774-1890 (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1977), pp.xi-xv, 1-23, 73-94; the quotations are from pp. xiv, 4-5, 9, 11, and 74-75.
master narrative of British influence in British Columbia. Howay, agitated by the question of local identity, also tried to recount Cook's relevance to the British Columbia of the 1920s. And Fisher, working in a more postcolonial intellectual climate, tried to put this history of British colonialism in perspective by trading on Cook's scientific-humanitarian agenda and pointing out that early contact relations did not forecast the exploitation and marginalisation of Native people.

As my discussion of Cook at Nootka Sound should make plain, we can challenge the objectivity and putative majesty of Douglas's account of first contact by studying the journals of Cook's officers and Native accounts of this event. Most of these accounts were not at Sage's disposal, but he was quick to buy into Douglas's imagery, and not just because he assumed that the official account was an accurate record of Cook's voyage. Douglas's account of first contact conveyed a reassuring message about indigeneity at a time when questions of identity and land in British Columbia were volatile: that whites had taken the land quietly and with the consent of the Natives.

Turning to the 1970s, Fisher did not consider the view that the images of tranquility and trade that pervade Cook's journal are, in part, fabricated truths connected to the explorer's self-estimation as a peaceful representative of the British Crown and a messenger of European civilisation. Fisher could have derived this view fairly easily from the records he consulted when studying Cook, but he chose to ignore it, perhaps because at that juncture the main aim of revisionist scholarship on early British Columbia was to undermine colonialist and teleological narratives about sophisticated European cultures bowling over primitive societies.

Now scholarship is always inflected by one's own present, and it is impossible for one scholar to appreciate fully the situatedness of another scholar's writing. But individual scholarship, however iconoclastic, is always tied to a broader horizon of discourse, and up to the 1970s questions of representation were never treated seriously in historical writing on early British Columbia. This was perhaps because many aspects of
the past still awaited consideration, especially the role that Native people played in the making of the province. Much scholarship was heavily empirical in tone and parochial in outlook. The fact that questions of representation have gained importance over the last twenty years reflects, in part, the increasingly politicised and publicised nature of debates about Native issues in British Columbia.

In spite of Fisher's efforts, colonial ideas about Native people and the land live on. They have been played out in court trials over Native land claims and are being marketed in corporate and public culture. For instance, did The Bay judge its clientele's idea of local history correctly when it ran a newspaper advertisement in August 1993 selling the idea "our history is your history" with the slogan "First came the English, Then came the Bay"? Maybe, though it did draw a playful if serious response from Vancouver Sun columnist Stephen Hume. "Oh!", he pondered, "I wonder what...First Nations [people] have to say about that view of things."

My analysis of Cook's representational practices and these colonial and postcolonial reputations is influenced, in part, by an awareness of the political realities of the 1990s: of the vexed legal question of Native title to land; of vigorous and highly publicised Native protest over land and fisheries laws; and of the British Columbia Treaty Commission, and white racist reactions to it. My concerns are also stimulated by a large critical literature on colonialism, much of which has emerged since Fisher wrote.

In contemporary British Columbia the past is not a foreign country, but a politically charged window on the present. To change current relations of power would involve altering spatial bases of power that were put in place during the colonial period - principally the land laws and the Indian reserve system. But current power relations are also tied up with categories of knowledge about Native people that are inflected by this history of colonialism.

309 Vancouver Sun, 13 August 1993.
I have worked through Howay's and Sage's pronouncements at Nootka Sound in 1924 to illustrate that colonialism is as much an ongoing and arbitrary process of representation as it is a material process of domination. However assiduous our scholarship on Cook might be, we cannot avoid the issue that Cook the man, the name and the messenger is, in good measure, a construction. He has been constructed and reconstructed from the 1770s to the present. There is no original or definitive Cook. From Douglas and Beaglehole, to Howay and Sage, to Fisher, and most recently to Obeyesekere and Sahlins, the explorer has been used to ignite issues of historical development, colonial and postcolonial identity, and the appreciation of cultural difference.

I have used Cook to put contemporary British Columbia in a new historical light. None of the texts I have considered define Cook's stay at Nootka Sound. They each contain partial truths hatched at the intersection of Native and European perceptions of the other in 1778. But taken together, these texts allow us to ask questions about how and why certain representations are taken to be factual and true, while others get buried, ignored or dismissed. Given the political context I have sketched, these are important questions to ask. In the courts Native groups have encountered judges who think that the observations of white explorers are more factual, objective and reliable than Native oral traditions. In Delgammuukw v. the Queen, the most controversial judgment in British Columbia on Native land claims, Chief Justice Allan McEachern stated that he worked with "a different view of what is fact and what is belief" than the Native plaintiffs, who, he thought, had "a romantic view of their history." Patched Native histories that exist "only in the memory of the plaintiffs", he argued, are subsidiary to the knowledge created by the "continuum...[of] great explorations" that brought Native people "into history" and govern the legal view that "authentic" aboriginal practice is defined by what Europeans recorded when they discovered particular Native groups. And most notoriously, McEachern donned the cap of the colonial Leviathan and described pre-contact
aboriginal life as "nasty, brutish, and short." His ideas are not far removed from those of James Douglas, the first colonial governor of Vancouver Island, who wrote that the Indians of British Columbia, "like all barbarous nations possess a book of traditionary history, or perhaps more properly speaking, a patched medley of absurd fables, interwoven with real events". There are strict legal rules about what counts as admissible evidence in court, of course, but in applying such rules to Native land issues judges like McEachern have also adhered to the ideology of scientific exploration and a much more entrenched body of colonialist ideas and assumptions. Judges, and some historians, have assumed that the texts of explorers are reliable because they conform to a European-empirical model of what counts as truth - that these texts are truthful because they are first-hand reports that were written on-the-spot. I have argued that while Cook and his officers may have endeavoured to follow this model, they did not, and perhaps could not, conform to it entirely.

When we think about questions of representation in historical texts (especially texts recounting European-Native encounters) in relation to these current political issues in British Columbia, we can see that models of truth are always bound up with cultural relations of power. Native oral traditions are also constructions of reality, of course, and have probably been revised over time in response to different needs. But to dismiss them as unreliable narratives on the basis of a definitively European notion of truth is to deny the saliency and historicity of cultural difference. If we want to challenge contemporary incarnations of colonialist discourse embedded in these court judgments and newspaper advertisements, work on historical icons such as Cook needs to be methodologically reflexive. Any critical appreciation of early British Columbia should include some analysis of how facts and evidence are derived from historical texts, and of how truths are

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310 These quotations are from Delgamuukw et al. v. the Queen, "Reasons for judgement of the Honourable Chief Justice Allan McEachern," 8 March 1991, B.C.S.C., Smithers Registry, No.0843, pp.49, 17-20, and 13.
constructed and representations are disseminated. We are fortunate that with Cook there is sufficient data to do this. We have a much more limited range of records for studying other phases and forms of contact in early British Columbia.

I also think that to tackle questions of representation adequately we need a vigilant geographical sensitivity to the way people and ideas move and act in different settings, and a sensitivity to questions of position, location, scale and territoriality. Vancouver Island and British Columbia have been imagined and constructed geographically as well as historically, as Scholefield intimated in his remarks about the archive. The agendas and cultural filters that Cook and his officers brought to bear on Nootka Sound came out of a specific corporeal and intellectual context. They worked within the disciplinary parameters of a British naval ship, and in Native spaces, where European discourses of science, civilisation and cultural power were fleshed out, corroborated and confounded by vision and experience. The traders who came to the northwest coast in the wake of the Resolution and Discovery had different concerns than Cook, but they too developed imaginative geographies of the coast and its Native peoples. More materially, the history of British Columbia has involved an immense struggle over land and territory. What is dimmed in Fisher's synthesis of the changing face of Native-white relations in Contact and Conflict, but is acutely apparent in the history of the province and in these recent court judgments, is that it is impossible to study British Columbia's past or present without running into an obvious, complex and shifting set of connections between power and space. If early British Columbia should be approached geographically, it is not because geographers wield better analytical tools than scholars from other disciplines, but because colonial and postcolonial forces are fundamentally territorial.

I do not read Cook's encounter with the Nuu-chah-nulth as an act of historical consecration. This encounter does not point in any single historical direction. It has a literal value all its own, as a discrete and unrepeatable event. Cook's mandate muddled
into his observations, and the observations of his officers muddied the waters of representation even further. This "earliest page" of contact has multiple meanings, and the discussion of foundations seems precocious. To reiterate one of Foucault's genealogical axioms: "What is found at the historical origin of things is not the inviolable identity of their origin; it is the dissention of other things. It is disparity."\(^{312}\)

\(^{312}\) Foucault, "Nietzsche, genealogy, history," p.142.
Their fancy for many articles could be traced to a desire to imitate their somewhat more polished visitors, and the absurdity, if any there was, lay in the manner in which they used them. When attacked upon this point, they would dryly refer to some of our usages as equally absurd with their own. Talking one day upon such matters with Altadsee, a sarcastic old chief of the Hanslong tribe, I ridiculed the practice of covering their own and their childrens' garments with rows of brass & gilt buttons, & loading them with old keys, to be kept bright at a great expense of labour. 'Why', said he, 'the white men wear buttons.' 'True,' I replied, 'but they are useful to us: the fashion of our garments requires buttons to secure them'. 'Ah,' said he, 'perhaps it is so; but I could never discover the usefulness of half a dozen buttons upon your coat-tails: and, as for the waste of labour in scouring old keys, you are right; it is very foolish, and almost as ridiculous as the fashion, which I am told prevails in your country, of placing brass balls upon iron fences in front of your houses, to be polished every day & tarnished every night.' 'Truly,' he added, 'Eijets Hasdi & Hanslong Hasdi cootnanous coonug' ('White people & Hanslong people are equally foolish').

William Sturgis, [1846].

Introduction
In destabilising British Columbian understandings of local identity and historical origins that have stemmed from Cook's encounter at Nootka Sound, we lay the groundwork for a different kind of history: a more disquieting spatialised history of power and appropriation, contact and conflict. For what followed Cook along the northwest coast was a turbulent and often violent trade in sea otter furs, to which I now turn.
Chapter Five
Trading Place and Space.

*From Cook to commercial contact on the northwest coast*

In December 1787 William Bligh (master of the Resolution on Cook's third voyage) sailed for Tahiti to take breadfruit plants to the West Indies to feed negro slaves. In January 1788 eleven British ships landed at Botany Bay with a cargo of convicts to found a British colony on Australian shores. And with much less publicity, in the mid-1780s British merchants inaugurated a trade in sea otter furs with Native people along the northwest coast of America. These were all attempts to "derive benefit" from Cook's "distant discoveries", as Bligh put it.² Britain viewed the Pacific as a potential commercial and imperial space.

There has been great debate about whether such developments were underwritten by a new British imperial manifesto. Vincent Harlow's thesis that after the American War of Independence there emerged a "second British Empire" based on trade rather than territorial dominion, and characterised by a "swing to the East" (with a focus on the Pacific), now seems too schematic.³ "Those who sailed [to the Pacific] in the wake of Cook", David Mackay claims, "were not conforming to a coherent plan, but more commonly buttressing traditional imperial structures, stopping gaps, or pursuing individual opportunity for profit."⁴ Nicholas Thomas largely agrees with this assessment, noting that the proliferation of European knowledge resulting from Cook's voyages was

⁴ David Mackay, *In the wake of Cook: Exploration, science and empire, 1780-1801* (London: Croom Helm, 1985), p.2
not at first "articulated with any significantly interventionist colonial project" in the
Pacific. C.A. Bayly, in his book Imperial Meridian - a survey of British imperialism
between 1780 and 1830 - accepts Harlow's adage but overhauls his thesis. Bayly argues
that we should consider developments in the Pacific in relation to the British Empire as a
whole, and shows that this "new" imperialism was "in some places an era of the
'imperialism of free trade', but there are as many examples of the 'imperialism of
monopoly' or simple chauvinist appropriation." He also emphasises that Britain
expanded "techniques of governance and exploitation" at home and abroad during this
period, and thinks, as Linda Colley does, that class and regional divisions in Britain, and
differences of opinion over the appropriate course of British imperialism, were
circumscribed by a new nationalist sentiment. Commerce, liberty and protestantism
were identified as premier British values that needed to be actively defended at home
against French influences and aggressively promoted in the Empire. Colonial settlement
(such as at Botany Bay), and discipline over subject races (in India, North America and
South Africa), as well as the search for new products for the British market and for
British colonies (as in Bligh's mission and the sea otter trade), emerged as the pinions of
British imperial and commercial expansion.

The sea otter trade was a privately sponsored commercial response to the
discovery made on Cook's third voyage that furs traded at Nootka Sound and further
north along the Pacific coast could be sold at a considerable profit in China. Some of the
earliest merchants in the trade were based in India and probably heard this news in
Macao, where Cook's crewmen had made their fabulous transactions. But the message

5 Nicholas Thomas, Colonialism's culture: Anthropology, travel and government
6 C.A. Bayly, Imperial meridian: The British Empire and the world 1780-1830 (London
7 Ibid., p.2. On the connections between British nationalism, imperialism and commerce
during this period see Linda Colley, Britons: Forging the nation 1707-1837 (New Haven:
was spread most directly by James King, who reported this discovery in the official account of Cook's voyage and jotted a plan for prosecuting a fur trade between Canton and the northwest coast. Word also leaked to the United States of America before King's report appeared. "[S]kins which did not cost the purchaser sixpence sterling", John Ledyard wrote in his "unofficial" account of Cook's third voyage, published in America in 1783, "sold in China for 100 dollars." Indeed, the trade was not a solely British affair for long. American vessels from New England (mainly from Boston) appeared on the northwest coast in the late 1780s and by 1800 dominated the trade. Russians also traded along the Alaskan coast, and a few French, Portuguese and Spanish vessels ventured into the business. Between the mid-1780s and early 1800s (the height of the trade) there was an average of eleven trading vessels per year on the northwest coast.

With the dawn of this maritime fur trade, Cook's mandate slips from view. Interaction was now driven by profit rather than science, appealed to the broker rather than the philosopher, and contact was charted on bank ledgers rather than on a great map of humankind. Native people were dealt the (sometimes quite visible) hand of the market. Vessel masters juggled trading strategies rather than a scientific-humanitarian

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9 John Ledyard, *A journal of Captain Cook's last voyage to the Pacific Ocean...in the years 1776, 1777, 1778, and 1779* [orig. pub. 1783] (Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1963), p.70.

10 The most comprehensive empirical account of the trade is James R. Gibson's *Otter skins, Boston ships, and China goods: The maritime fur trade of the northwest coast, 1785-1841* (Montreal, Kingston, London: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1992); Table I, pp.299-310, is the definitive list of the number of trading vessels on the northwest coast between 1785 and 1841.
project. Under Cook, contact proceeded in the rarefied atmosphere of scientific observation, and - as I showed in Part I - Cook represented his dealings with Native people as an exchange between cultures and histories. In the maritime fur trade contact revolved around the exchange of goods and followed a logic of reification. "Trafficking" took on new, instrumental meanings. Few traders were specifically instructed to study Native life or schooled in academic disciplines such as natural history, as were Cook's supernumaries, Joseph Banks, the Forsters and William Anderson. Robert Haswell, sailing in 1788 with the *Columbia* (the first American vessel to trade on the coast), summarised the outlook of many of his cohorts: "...a regular account of People manners

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11 Some of the earliest British traders on the coast claimed that trade and exploration were joint aims, and couched their published reports in a language of geographical discovery. This was mainly to attract the attention of investors and the public, and to court state patronage. John Meares, for instance, offered his account of transactions on the northwest coast as evidence of the improvement of navigation and the extension of commerce in the British Empire, and prefaced it with an impressive list of subscribers. Nevertheless, even Meares, one of the trade's most notorious self-promoters, noted that he had conducted "Voyages of COMMERCE, and not of DISCOVERY". John Meares, *Voyages made in the years 1788 and 1789, from China to the north west coast of America...* (London: Logographic Press, 1790), pp.v-vi.

12 I shall use the term "trader(s)" - or, when the context seems to warrant it, "white(s)" or "white trader(s)" - as a shorthand for American and European maritime fur traders. I shall use the term "Native(s)" when writing generally about Native people of the northwest coast. "Trader(s)" is a cumbersome expression since Native people were also traders. Still, this distinction between "trader(s)" and "Native(s)" signposts the fact that while traders came to the coast with one aim in mind (to trade furs), Native people had a much broader set of concerns and agendas, and did not pour all of their energies into the sea otter trade. "Whites" is a cumbersome word since the crews of fur trading vessels were drawn from many different parts of the world, and because traders' observations were tinted by their national-cultural backgrounds. "Whites" is also a loaded word in that Native groups distinguished between traders from different countries (they called British traders "King George men" and American traders "Boston men"). But I still find "white(s)" a more convenient label than "Europeans" or "Euroamericans." I use the terms "Native people" or "Native group(s)" rather than "First Nation(s)" because contact between whites and Natives on the northwest coast played a part in the formation of current First Nation boundaries and identities. I use the term "Indian" when writing indicatively through a white observer.
and customs etc. of this vast coast is a task equell to the skill of an able Historian and what I am totally inadequate to".  

The maritime fur trade represented a regional constellation of global capitalist forces: American and European merchant capital in search of a "spatial fix" to commercial and imperial upheaval following the American War of Independence. The first British traders in the business sailed to the northwest coast from London and India, traded with Native groups in the spring and summer months, and then headed for Canton, the principal market for furs. Their fortunes were affected by the charter of the English East India Company (EEIC), which had an exclusive right to British trade with China. British traders were meant to be licensed by the EEIC, and also by the South Sea Company (SSC), which had an exclusive right to British trade in the Pacific. Some traders tried to circumvent these restrictions by sailing under the flags of other nations, but the EEIC and the SSC dominated the Pacific sector of the global economy of the eighteenth century. At Canton, British traders dealt with Chinese merchants through EEIC supercargoes (who charged a commission) and received bills of exchange, which were recovered on the Company's treasury in London. The sea otter trade helped New

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14 The phrase is David Harvey's, who writes in The limits to capital (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1982), p.415: "The role of imperialism and colonialism, of geographical expansion and territorial domination, in the overall stabilization of capitalism is unresolved in Marxian theory.... Is there...a 'spatial fix' to capital's problems?"

15 The licensing powers of the EEIC were reduced in 1793 and 1802, but it was not until 1833 that traders could sail from Canton to the northwest coast without a licence from the Company.


17 These arrangements can be tracked in Great Britain - India Office. Factory Records (China), volumes 86-94, BCARS GR 333; some British traders complained about them quite bitterly (see, for example, vol. 89, p.104, and vol. 94, p.61). The Company confirmed its position in 1791, declaring, 1. that maritime fur trade vessels were not
England merchants to recover from economic depression caused by the loss of imperial trade with Britain.\textsuperscript{18} American traders, who were freed from the monopolistic shackles of the EEIC and the SSC in 1783, bargained (usually) directly with Hong Merchants for teas, silks and porcelains, which were sold mainly in New England.\textsuperscript{19}

allowed to import any European goods into Canton, and only sell their furs at Canton; 2. that at Canton these vessels should be subject to the orders of the Super Cargoes of the Company; 3. that on their return to Britain, they were not to freight Asian goods, except those on the account of the Company; and 4. that the Company would receive from these vessels any bullion money in exchange for bills of exchange to be drawn on the Company Treasury in London. "Opinion of the select committee appointed by the court of directors of the East India Company", 10 March 1791, PRO BT 6/227.

Braudel described the English and Dutch Indies companies as states both within and beyond European states. Company officials "did battle with their shareholders, creating a form of capitalism at odds with traditional [British and southeast Asian] trading practices", but had "to keep an eye...on several foreign markets and relate these to the possibilities and advantages of their national market". These companies established trading posts and factories at main cross-roads of indigenous trade such as Batavia, Bombay, Macao, Madras and Surat, and tied regional economies to a global network of economic flows. Braudel, \textit{Capitalism and civilization}, III, pp.494-495.

In the 1760s and 1770s the EEIC looked for more bases in southeast Asia in order to consolidate its China trade, reduce its trade deficit with Asia, and to subsidise the cost of British rule in India. During the eighteenth century independent traders played an increasingly important role in this mercantilist world economy. By the 1770s, nearly three-quarters of the British and Indian goods exported to China were being delivered by private or "country" traders licensed by the EEIC. See P.J. Marshall, \textit{East India fortunes: The British in Bengal in the eighteenth century} (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1976).

\textsuperscript{18} And the sea otter trade became part of a much broader American commercial interest in Asia. See Herman E. Kross and Charles Gilbert, \textit{American business history} (Englewood Cliff, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1972). However, Gibson notes that the sea otter trade never constituted more than 10 per cent of the U.S.A.'s foreign commerce. Gibson, \textit{Otter skins, Boston ships, and China goods}, p.292ff.

\textsuperscript{19} Since this last leg of the sea otter trade was often the most lucrative, American traders initially had an advantage over the British. After 1793, however, many British traders based themselves in China in order to side-step the Company's control over British imports from China. And by the 1790s, traders were wintering on the northwest coast or on the Hawaiian Islands in order to reduce the number of months they spent at sea, to spare wear and tear on their vessels, and so that they might be the first in the commercial fray the following season.

Native fortunes were conditioned by the propulsive logic of capital. If furs and profits dried up in one location, traders would move to another. When sea otters became extinct on parts of the northwest coast in the early 1800s, traders looked to exchange land furs and any other article they could profit by. In the 1780s and 90s the west coast of Vancouver Island was one of the main areas of trade; by 1805 it had been largely abandoned by white traders. Nootka Sound was the first and most important trading port, but few traders visited there after 1803. When the British explorer Edward Belcher reached the sound in September 1837, he found few signs of Native-white contact and imagined that the place looked much like it had before Cook arrived. "At first I doubted my senses", he noted, "that so small a space could have occupied so much type".20

Belcher alluded to some of the chief dimensions of this late eighteenth-century phase of contact along the northwest coast. Places such as Nootka Sound were not simply fixed by merchant capital as distant ports of call in a global economy. They also became elaborate textual spaces, described and redescribed by many non-native visitors. Haswell may have thought that he was "totally inadequate" to the task of describing Native life, but traders nonetheless kept journals of their transactions and developed distinctive representational tropes to describe and legitimise their dealings with Native people, infusing the contact process with emotion and drama.

Belcher was also alluding to the fact that in 1790 Nootka Sound had figured prominently on an imperial canvas. For this coastal trade did not emerge in a geopolitical vacuum. The Spanish assumed that they had exclusive rights of sovereignty over the west coast of America by virtue of treaties and conventions stretching back to 1493. Worried initially about Russian advances south from (what is now) Alaska, and then about the implications of Cook's reconnaissance for British trade and dominion in the

region, the Spanish staked their claim to the northwest coast by establishing a military post at Nootka Sound in May 1789. Between May and July four British vessels were seized by Spanish officials as legal prizes, and two of them were taken to San Blas (Spanish naval headquarters in California), where their commanders were imprisoned for trading in Spanish waters. When this news reached Britain in 1790, a diplomatic dispute ensued between Britain and Spain which almost culminated in war. Commercial expansion fanned the flames of national and imperial rivalry. I deal with this dispute in Part III. Here the point is that the global economy was not simply a commercial network. It was also an international political system of assumed rights and privileges which had developed in tandem with the growth of European knowledge about the non-European world. Belcher was alluding to the idea that circuits of capital were entangled with networks of cultural and imperial signification. There was a complex, perceptual and political traffic between Natives and non-natives, with routes connecting places like Nootka Sound and western seats of capital and power such as Boston, London and Madrid.

For all of this global traffic, however, this conjuncture of commerce and imperialism was short-lived on the northwest coast itself. Britain and Spain settled their differences in October 1790; the two nations agreed to keep the coast open to traders. And as Margaret Ormsby pointed out, "Skilfull mariners, avaricious traders, restrained diplomats and well-drilled troops had all approached British Columbia's shores from the sea, but none had remained as settlers."21 This burst of commercial and geopolitical interest did not directly prompt interventionist colonial strategies. Yet Ormsby and subsequent scholars have underestimated the ideological import of the maritime fur trade, and especially the Nootka Sound crisis, in the formation of imperialist ideas and assumptions about Native people that were unravelled on British Columbian soil in the

second half of the nineteenth century. I will fill in this argument in Part III. For now I will simply state that in some important respects, these geopolitical processes laid some of the groundwork for the colonisation of Vancouver Island by giving the region an imperial history which colonists could step into, intervene in, and identify with. Colonialism does not start with occupation alone, and does not work solely on land. It also works with images taken from the past; with imaginative geographies that precede, and to a degree anticipate, colonialism.\textsuperscript{22}

However, in what follows I focus on the commercial geography of the sea otter business. I start by considering the connections between action and representation in traders' texts, and will then turn to Native agendas, outlining the relations of power and exchange that characterised Native-white commercial contact along the west coast of Vancouver Island between 1785 and the 1810s. My account should not be taken as representative of the trade as a whole. The maritime fur trade lasted until the 1840s, underwent some significant changes after 1810, and stretched from Russian Alaska to the Columbia River.\textsuperscript{23} Some general processes of Native-white interaction along the coast can be discerned, but there was also geographical variation in the way Native groups engaged traders, reflecting economic and political differences between Native groups.

\textit{Itinerate geographies}

Traders' attitudes towards Native people were freighted by a body of western notions about "primitive" economies and societies. Traders believed that they were more rational and civilised than, and hence superior to, the people they traded with. Such assumptions were reflected in the idea that Native people were fickle savages who were locked in societies characterised by low levels of technological achievement and should


\textsuperscript{23} See Gibson, \textit{Otter skins, Boston ships, and China goods}, chapters 6 and 8.
naturally be tempted by western goods. Traders were concerned with how best to tap
Native temptation. "It is an incontrovertible fact", one of the first British merchants in
the trade reported, "that in new discovered countries the natives are remarkably
capricious; articles, in demand one day will be rejected the following; and both their
fickleness and industry must be tempted by a variety of assortments." Nicholas Thomas calls this formulation about the allure of western goods a "just-
so" story about white-Native contact - a way of essentialising interaction from a western
perspective, with trade as "the constitutive transaction" of cultural and colonial
exchange. "The central motif of this story", Thomas argues, "is the gap between
primitive tools and the manufactured things of white men: the magic and abundance of
the latter are the source of asymmetry between powerless natives and dominant European
colonizers." The Indian was also essentialised in European and American thought as
the figurative Other of civilised life. Eve Kornfeld neatly summarises historiographical
wisdom about the image of the Indian in the opening decades of the American Republic:

To do its cultural work for its [white] creators, the image of the Indian had to be
flattened, reduced, simplified, and frozen. During the years of the early
republic...dominant Americans saw only savagery and primitivism in the Other
and almost completely effaced the variety and complexity of Indian cultures....
Even when intellectuals defended the Indians' potential for improvement or

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24 For example, a British plan for establishing a sea otter trade, discussed by the EEIC's
Court of Directors in 1785, stated that trade vessels should "be laden entirely with such
produce and manufactory of this country that will tempt the natives on the islands and the
coast of America to barter for their produce which chiefly consists of furs". "Additional
proposals relative to the establishing a trade between the north west coast of America and
the coast of Asia...", in Vincent Harlow and Frederick Madden (eds.), British colonial
25 Argonaut [John Cadman Etches], An authentic statement of the facts relative to
Nootka Sound...in an address to the King (London: Debrett, 1790), pp.17-18.
26 Nicholas Thomas, Entangled objects: Exchange, material culture, and colonialism in
pp.84-85.
27 Ibid., p.84.
detected the noble savage among the many ignoble savages in their path, they still believed in the essential inferiority of primitive to civilized life.\(^{28}\)

The maritime fur trade was mediated by this horizon of thought. On the northwest coast, though, traders soon discovered that Native people did not entirely conform to these assumptions. Native groups certainly wanted to trade furs, but they had specific wants and inspected traders' goods carefully. Traders were not always welcomed with open arms and Native people did not necessarily look on western goods as superior or more dignified than their own. Traders endeavoured to represent their dealings with these Native people in material terms, commenting on the relative nature and value of western and Native goods, but they struggled to impute a historical gulf between civilised and savage societies - between the peaks of western achievement and the lowly life of the Indian - simply on the basis of their respective wares. To make their points about civilisation versus savagery, traders resorted instead to a set of geographical arguments about the circulation of capital and the generation of profit.

My basic claim about white involvement in the business is that we cannot adequately assess the way traders viewed and dealt with Native people unless we treat the maritime fur trade as a hierarchised space-economy. The modes of interaction and representational tropes that gave the maritime fur trade its distinctive colour and texture were not simply underwritten by western intellectual ideas about Indian savagery. Traders' inscriptions of superiority, civility and difference were also influenced by the time-geography of trade. Representation was mediated by the durability of the contact relationships that traders established with Native people, and by the way traders envisioned their own and Native involvement in the coastal trade and a global economy. In short, traders' accounts of commercial interaction were bound up the way they imagined and produced space commercially. The economy of the maritime fur trade, I

will argue, did not just amount to a bundle of trading locations and routes to profit. It was also an imaginative space stocked with commercial desire and cultural derision, where actions, meanings and imputations tarried uneasily in different places and at a number of geographical scales.

The phrase "itinerate geographies" signposts three central themes that criss-cross my argument. The first is that the trade was transient, moving from place to place as geographical knowledge of the coast grew, as profits rose and fell, and as the plans of merchant houses changed. Native people of Vancouver Island called traders "Tiyee awinna", or "travelling chiefs". Many members of trade crews were also itinerants. They came from the labouring classes and the merchant marine, worked the northwest coast with other peoples' capital, and had to endure the cramped, leaky and unhealthy quarters of merchant vessels. Some of the first British traders had sailed with Cook, and as the trade developed, ships' mates became traders and some traders became vessel-owners and financiers in Boston and London. But few traders came to the coast more than twice. Maritime fur traders picked up some of the tricks and contingencies of the trade by reading the accounts of their predecessors, but published texts describing the trade were few in number, even by the 1820s, and most of them had small print runs.

29 "John Hoskins' narrative of the second voyage of the 'Columbia'," Howay, Voyages of the 'Columbia', p.262.
30 Among the first traders on the coast: James Colnett, George Dixon, and Nathaniel Portlock had all sailed with Cook. Archibald Menzies, the botanist and surgeon on Vancouver's voyage, had been on Colnett's 1787 trading trip. The American trader William Sturgis, who was on the coast in the 1790s, became a prominent Boston merchant and financier of the sea otter trade in the early nineteenth century. R. David Coolidge came to the coast as first-mate of the Washington in 1788 before commanding the trading schooner Grace in the early 1790s. And Joseph Ingraham and John Boit, who apprenticed on the coast as mates on the Columbia, returned in the 1790s in command of trading expeditions. An American trader noted that Captain John Kendrick - the first American trader on the coast - "taught many of his countrymen the way to wealth, and the method of navigating distant seas with ease and safety." Amasa Delano, A narrative of voyages and travels...comprising three voyages round the world... (Boston: E.G. House, 1817), p.400.
Hoskins noted in his journal of the second voyage of the *Columbia* (one of the best documented trade ventures) that he left Boston in 1790 "without being able to procure the voyages of any of those preceeding navigators", and that the published account of Cook's third voyage gave "little or no information respecting the greater part of the trading coast"; he felt "subject to every inconvenience that can possibly attend a ship on an undiscovered coast".\(^{31}\) Traders learned most on the coast itself, by word of mouth, and in the face of competition. As such fur trading strategies evolved differently in the maritime and land-based fur trades. In the latter the North West Company and Hudson's Bay Company established forts, where factors and chief traders were stationed for a number of years and over time gained experience with, and insights into, Native societies. Some maritime fur trade crews wintered on the coast near Native villages, but in general they had less experience with Native groups, and a more truncated understanding of Native ways, than fort traders.

Second, though the trade was transient, *commercial interaction was very much project-oriented*. While traders vied with each other and Native groups for furs under intensely competitive conditions, the maritime fur trade was not quite the "series of disconnected and individual efforts" that Howay, the first and most prolific historian of the business, thought it was.\(^{32}\) As the trade developed and sea otter pelts became scarcer, traders had to have a rough idea of where their competitors had been and would work in separate locations in order to be "economical in traffic", as a Boston financier put it.\(^{33}\) In 1802 Sullivan Dorr, an American merchant in Canton, reported that the trade was "completely overdone" and that "the trade must be neglected for some years, unless the


\(^{33}\) Horatio Appleton Lamb, "Notes on trade with the northwest coast, 1790-1810," photostat from the Houghton Library, Harvard University, UBCL-SC.
old and first adventurers unite and make a monopoly." It was impossible for any single company or nation to attain a monopoly over the trade, but Dorr was right that as competition rose and fur supplies fell because of over hunting, merchants had to rethink their trading strategies. In the early nineteenth century Boston merchants such as Bryant and Sturgis devised corporate strategies, owning or fitting out a number of vessels and dispatching them to different parts of the Pacific in search of new sources of profit. There is some truth in Howay's observation, however, for the forms of collaboration that can be detected were still driven by competition.

We should also dismiss the view, noted by traders and perpetrated by scholars earlier this century, that Native people had "fickle" dispositions and that their demands and responses to traders were "whimsical." Native groups dealt with traders according to their own set of economic, social and political agendas, and had their forms of competition and collaboration. They were not marionettes of the global economy, and traders were not puppet-masters. Native people were neither awe-struck by "foreign"

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35 In 1817, for instance, Bryant and Sturgis suggested to Captain Clark of the *Borneo* that he "divide skins, rather than enhance their value by attempting to outbid each other". "Extracts from the Bryant and Sturgis Letters," photostat from the Baker Library, Harvard University, UBCL-SC.
36 Such expressions pervade the journals and letters of late eighteenth-century traders and explorers, and became fixed in the European imaginary. See, for example, Archibald Menzies to Sir Joseph Banks, 4 April 1790, in Richard H. Dillon, "Archibald Menzies' trophies," *BCHQ*, vol. XV, nos. 3 and 4 (July-October 1951), pp.151-159, at p.155: Menzies, who had traded on the northwest coast in 1787-88, listed trade articles that he thought would appeal to "the fickle disposition of the Natives."

I turn to historiographical matters below, but as a taste of how early twentieth-century scholars viewed Native participation in the trade, this is F.W. Howay (the principal historian of the trade) in his "Outline sketch of the maritime fur trade," *Canadian Historical Association, Annual Report*, 1932, pp.5-14, at p.8: "[W]hen the Indian had been supplied with these [trade staples, such as iron bars, copper sheets, and cloth] the trader's resourcefulness was taxed to offer something that caught his changeful fancy. Whimsical always, his whimsicality increased with competition."
goods nor the dupes of capitalist development. I accept Marshall Sahlins's injunction that capitalist relations of exchange did not have an indubitable capacity to corrupt or colonise Native economic and social arrangements; that the peoples of the Pacific incorporated European people and products into "their own system of the world". The maritime fur trade was not a one-way traffic, with traders exploiting Natives, and should not be studied in terms of white domination and Native resistance. Rather, the trade entailed strategies of appropriation and tactics of accommodation and exclusion. The maritime fur trade may have connected Native fortunes to a global economy, but Native people had their own ways of bending commercial equations to their own advantage.

When these Native itineraries are tracked in particular areas (within and between specific groups), generalisations about early contact tend to break down and Native people start to appear as partners in, rather than victims of, the trade, as Susan Marsden and Robert Galois have effectively shown in their study of Gispaxlo'ots (Coast Tsimshian) involvement in the fur trade around the Nass and Skeena Rivers. Native demands certainly changed over time and varied from group to group, but to argue that they were "fickle" or "whimsical" is a western fantasy which misses the complicated economic and political logic behind Native agendas. Indeed, traders' self-assertive representations of civility and superiority - the ideological pistons of capitalism and European imperialism between the fifteenth and twentieth centuries - did not have hermetically sealed lives of their own in traders' texts. They were brought into play by

37 In anthropology see, particularly, Thomas, Entangled objects. With regard to European-Native contact in North America see Richard White, The middle ground: Indians, empires, and republics in the Great Lakes region, 1650-1815 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991).
encounters with these Native itineraries, were not always expressed straightforwardly or confidently in traders' journals, and were, in part, retrospective journalistic codifications of complicated (and often seemingly obscure) contact relationships.

And third, at the interface of these white and Native projects there was a much more general and complex set of perceptions and equations about the predictability and reliability of the Other - about whether the Native could trust the trader, and vice versa, and about how commercial deals and guarantees might be struck. William Sturgis (a prominent Boston merchant who traded on the coast in the 1790s) recognised that traders were bent on "ultimate gain", but he also understood that the traffic in furs could only partly be accounted for using western economic formulas of supply and demand, price and profit.\(^{40}\) The trader's seemingly obvious quest for furs entailed its own conundrums and smoke screens. Traders' and Natives' perceptions of each other were bound up with what Arjun Appadurai has termed "the social life of things" - with the way goods were owned, given, exchanged, and circulated; with how they were valued and used.\(^{41}\)

"A commodity", Marx declared, "is a very strange thing, abounding in metaphysical subtleties and theological niceties."\(^{42}\) Marx's comment was based on his rigorous observation of capitalism in Europe, of course, but it has obvious (and perhaps added) purchase in situations of cross-cultural commercial exchange. Native and white participants in the maritime fur trade were not simply accumulating wealth or extracting surplus value. They were also exchanging cultural perceptions of ownership, power and prestige, and dealing with subtleties and niceties that were often difficult to grasp. All

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that was solid could melt into air - to bring a speculative quality to Marx's famous image of capitalist development in *The Communist Manifesto* - not just because traders moved around the coast bartering with a Native group one day and departing the next, but also since Native people and white traders had different ways of evaluating commodities. Hard and fast distinctions between want and fancy, gift and commodity, use and exchange value (or between "articles of value" and "articles of curiosity", as George Vancouver categorised goods) could fracture. Whites and Natives became locked in a maelstrom of cross-cultural signification and miscommunication. The way Victor Kieman summarised European imperial attitudes in his essay "Europe in the Colonial Mirror" applies fully to Native and white perceptions of the other in the maritime fur trade: "There was room for all kinds of fantasy, credulity, deception and self-deception, and the development of stock responses."

These are my thematics. Substantively, there were two "itinerate geographies" embedded in the maritime fur trade. The first of these geographies was about *place*. Traders had to visit Native villages and trading places to get furs, and to achieve and maintain a good profit margin they had to atune themselves to the differences between Native groups - differences in the way furs and other goods were obtained, controlled and handled in exchange. In effect, competition and the profit principle encouraged them to get to grips with Native economic and cultural geographies. Yet in traders' writings this focus on place - this acknowledgement of difference and specificity - often disintegrates into a heap of abstractions, generalisations and stereotypes about Native people precisely because of traders' commercial objectives. Traders were interested foremost in the economic tide of events and frequently made little effort to connect commercial

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43 [George Vancouver], "Papers relating to the voyage of the Discovery and Chatham 1790-1795" BM Add.MS. 17,552, fol.13v.
imperatives to Native social and political currents. Endlessly opportunistic, and without quite the time, energy or talent to study and compare Native groups carefully, traders often accounted for their dealings with Native people by resorting to ad hoc statements about "the" Native mind and character. One French observer accused traders of offering little more than "conjectures" about Native people and monolithic sketches of their societies. The intricacies of Native economic and cultural geography also became folded into more wholesale claims about "the market" for furs, "the coast" as a theatre of commercial interaction, and "North West policy". "[T]he fur trade is inexhaustible wherever there are inhabitants", a British trader noted, rather optimistically, in the late 1780s, "and they (experience tells us) are not confined to any particular situation, but are scattered in tribes all along the coast". In the first years of the business traders tended to skip along the coast, trading at many Native villages and seeking new trade locations. As knowledge about the coast grew and competition rose, they started to stay longer in select locations. Wherever and under whatever circumstances traders conducted their business, however, they had to size up a broader set of business tendencies.

Because of competition and opportunism, then, traders also worked with a much more anonymous and anomalous sense of commercial space. They rarely expended all

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46 Captain George Dixon [William Beresford], *A voyage round the world...performed in 1785, 1786, 1787, and 1788, in the King George and Queen Charlotte, Captains Portlock and Dixon* (London: Geo. Goulding, 1789), p.236.


48 Some of the first merchants in the business thought about establishing trading factories in areas where furs seemed plentiful and the Natives seemed friendly. One early British trader claimed in the introduction to his account of the business that the "inestimable value of their furs will ever make it a desirable trade, and wherever it is established upon a proper foundation, and a settlement made, it will become a very valuable and lucrative branch of commerce." Captain Nathaniel Portlock, *A voyage round the world; but more
their time, energy or trade goods at one location. They had to be open to geographical exploration and attentive to new commercial possibilities. And as they moved around the coast, traders gradually filled in Cook's scanty map of the northwest coast, which pleased pundits and armchair geographers such as Alexander Dalrymple and Joseph Banks. On the eve of Vancouver's departure for the Pacific in 1791, Banks wrote to a British government minister extolling the virtues of the trade:

The Temptation of substituting conjecture for fact in laying down the shores of an unknown Country [sic] is so great, especially at times when...it is difficult to approach the land, that few surveyors, I believe have wholly resisted it, but the present case, as every Creek on the Coast will be repeatedly examined by those in the collection of Furs, and as the merchant in consequence of the distance & danger of the voyage, find it necessary to employ seamen acquainted with all the modern improvement of navigation, no error that is made will long remain undetected.49

Geographical accuracy and error amounted quickly to profit or loss, and one British trader reported to the British government that rivers and inlets were explored most successfully in boats and sailing vessels under 100 tons.50

As the trade developed, traders had to choose carefully where and how to trade. The American trader Joseph Ingraham grasped that one of the most basic decisions was whether to cruise the coast or sojourn in selected locations.

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49 Joseph Banks to W.W. Grenville, 20 February 1791, PRO HO 42/18 [33], fol.168. See East India Company memo, n.d. [1791], PRO BT 6/227, for Dalrymple's views of maritime fur traders surveying abilities. Banks and Dalrymple were the veritable custodians of geographical knowledge about the northwest coast during this period. Banks had close ties with the Admiralty and Home Office; Dalrymple was the East India Company's hydrographer.

50 Untitled report on the discoveries of Charles Duncan, n.d. [1790?], PRO HO 42/13[57]. Some of the first traders sailed in 100-200 ton snows, but found them difficult to manoeuvre in estuaries and inlets.
And his decision was not just influenced by the location of Native groups or how many furs they had. "[A] person is certainly in less danger at anchor in a good port than cruising among these isles where there are strong tides and sometimes heavy gales of wind." Sturgis also understood the way merchant capital shuffled around the coast, and knew that traders did not stay one step ahead of their competitors through single-handed enterprise alone. He noted in his journal in 1799:

...one after another are discovered the great resources of seaport tribes that inhabit this coast. Formerly all the skins that were collected were got at Nootkah, when some vessels pushing inland to the Northward of them, met that tribe on their trading expeditions. Panic struck at the discovery they scarcely made any exertions to keep the trade in their hands, and in one or two seasons sunk to nothing. It [the trade] was next transferred to the [Queen Charlotte] Islands who still keep a considerable share of it; but not half the skins are now got from them that formerly was, and we now have an evident proof that the greatest part of those they have are got from the Main[land]...

Traders learned a great deal from observing Native movements and trade patterns. We can see from these passages that entrepreneurs like Sturgis were not cool, calm directors of capital whose trading strategies were set in Boston and applied mechanically to the northwest coast. They were more like mice in a maze of commercial calculation, opportunity and misfortune. "Prudence is doubtless requisite in all interprizes [sic]", noted Alexander Walker (ensign with the trading snows Captain Cook and Experiment, which reached Nootka Sound in June 1786),

but in such undertakings as ours, where so much is risked, the Execution should be managed with Spirit, and what would be rashness in other Situations, becomes in this case commendable. Much was hazarded in our Expedition, but a Game of

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51 Mark D. Kaplanoff (ed.), *Joseph Ingraham's journal of the brigantine HOPE on a voyage to the northwest coast of America 1790-1792* (Barre, MA: Imprint Society, 1971), pp.146-7
52 Ibid., p.147.
Chance should be reduced as nearly to a certainty, as possible, and this could only be done by encreasing [sic] our Chances, or by dividing our Vessels.\footnote{Robin Fisher and J.M. Bumstead (eds.), \textit{An account of a voyage to the northwest coast of America in 1785 and 1786 by Alexander Walker} (Vancouver/Toronto: Douglas & McIntyre; Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1982). Henceforth cited as Walker.}

Should traders ply the coast safely in pairs but then run the risk of deflating their profit margins by reaching fewer places? Or should they sail off in different directions and thereby run the risk of encountering dangerous shores and hostile Indians? Such choices influenced the way traders viewed Native people and, contrary to Bank's observation, infused their geographies with conjecture as well as fact.

Traders entertained risk and anticipated danger. Today's chief, known to a trader by name and fêted as a dignitary, could become tomorrow's savage. Equally, for Native people, a trader could turn his guns on a Native village and become an instant enemy. The distinctions that traders and Native people noticed in the other - the trader's nationality, the group affiliations of Native people, and distinctions of authority, social rank, gender; that is, particular constellations of subjectivity and power - could be washed away with the tide of events, and the two groups ended up looking on each other as foes. And the representation of place and difference could disintegrate into a series of fractured abstractions. John Hoskins of the \textit{Columbia} noted that Robert Gray, his captain, was prone to "sudden irritation".\footnote{"Hoskins' narrative of the second voyage of the 'Columbia',' Howay, \textit{Voyages of the 'Columbia'}, p.275.} Traders learned to be on their guard and were often easily incited to violence.

This duet of concrete processes of interaction and abstract commercial imperatives made traders' accounts of their business with Native people at once hybrid and conflictual. And, as I will now show in Chapter Six, this pirouette of Native places and commercial spaces gave the economy of truth of the maritime fur trade a hallucinatory quality. Sturgis's overview of the geographical momentum of the trade serves as a good introduction to my analysis of this economy of truth, for I will suggest...
that the panic he described was built on a set of physical and psychical anxieties about how to deal with Native groups.
Chapter Six
The Conflicting Economy of Truth of the Maritime Fur Trade.

"Acts of perfidy"

The Natives of Nootka Sound were apparently sorry to see Cook's ships leave.

"[A]ll the Canoes in the Cove assembled together and sung us a parting song, flourishing the saws, swords, hatchets and other things they had got from us", Lieutenant James Burney reported. The Natives followed the Resolution and Discovery out of the sound, trading from their canoes and on board the ships, and insisted that Cook return. Bayly "endeavoured to tell them we would come again in 6 Moons". And Cook made his own parting gesture:

...a Chief named [...] who had some time before attached himself to me was one of the last who left us, before he went I made him up a small present and in return he present[ed] me with a Beaver skin [i.e. sea otter skin] of greater value, this occasioned me to make some addition to my present, on which he gave me the Beaver Cloak he had on, that I knew he set a value upon. And as I was desirous he should be no suffer[er] by his friendship and generosity to me, I made him a present of a New Broad Sword with a brass hilt which made him as happy as a prince.

In August 1785 the British trader James Hanna arrived at Nootka Sound (following King's suggestion) in command of the brig Sea Otter and was greeted by Natives chanting "Maakook" (trade). According to a column in a London newspaper, Hanna "entered into a friendly and commercial intercourse with the natives; but some

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59 [James Hanna], "Brig Sea Otter from Macao towards America through the Pacific Ocean," 9 August 1785, BCARS A/A/20.5 Se1H. This, probably a fair copy of a log kept by Hanna, stops when the Sea Otter reaches Nootka Sound. For details and background on Hanna's two trading voyages see W. Kaye Lamb and Tomas Bartroli, "James Hanna and John Henry Cox: The first maritime fur trader and his sponsor," BC Studies, no.84 (Winter 1989-90), pp.3-36
difference about the barter of respective commodities arose" which culminated in a Native attack on the vessel. Native canoes approached the Sea Otter, in one of which was a herald, who, standing up...and within hearing of the European vessel, pronounced his reasons for war, and solemnly declared it; informing Capt. Hannay, that they would attack him the next day, by a certain hour. Capt. Hannay put himself into the best posture of defense possible, and awaited the enemy. At the hour appointed, a fleet of prows appeared, and advanced to the vessel, pouring into her showers of arrows and darts.

Hanna responded with musket-fire and small cannon, killing and wounding many people. By evening, however, a peace had been concluded, trade was resumed, Hanna obtained a large cargo of furs, and was invited to return the following year, the Natives "promising to provide furs for him." Another newspaper account states that the Natives were "tempted" to attack "by the diminutive size of the vessel" (it was probably 50-60 tons, and 50 feet in length), but were "repulsed with considerable slaughter", being "unacquainted with the effects of firearms".

Alexander Walker gathered some more details. The evening before the affray the Natives had traded with the Sea Otter "as usual" and relations were congenial, but Hanna was not surprised by the attack the next day because he had been tipped off by a party of strangers who had been trading with the vessel. Walker subsequently added that Hanna had provoked the attack by firing on some Natives for "a petty theft", and concluded:

As an instance of the singular disposition of these People, the Battle was not long over, when the Savages who had been guilty of so recent an Act of perfidy, came again alongside, and offered their skins for Sale as if nothing had happened. The effects of this Engagement may in some Measure account for the extraordinary dread they expressed at our fire arms, - but the Secrecy and cunning with which they concealed the transaction [with Hanna] from us, forms a strong feature of their character.

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Now these two events, separated by only a few years but involving the same Native group, belong to different classes of interaction, observation and representation. Cook singled out a chief (though did not learn his name), exchanged gifts with him, their value increasing in turns, and left the sound in a inflated atmosphere of conviviality. This encounter in some ways summarised Cook's self-estimation as a humane, humble explorer. Europeans and Natives had exchanged pieces of their cultures, and for Cook, perhaps, this event denoted the reciprocity and understanding that he thought had prevailed during his stay. The epistemological quandaries of Cook's officers (discussed in Part I) seem distant from this final transaction at Nootka Sound. Cook's encounter with the "Nootka" was concluded as an event in its own right; a "new" people had been captured in writing, and a new set of Native dispositions would be woven into the textual fabric of his voyage.

Hanna's encounter presages the economy of truth of the maritime fur trade. We have only second-hand information about this event, supplied by people who had met Hanna or heard of his troubles. This was by no means typical of the trade. There are plenty of journals based on direct experience. But hearsay was an integral feature of the business. It was both an expression of competition and a discursive symptom of uncertainty, even anxiety, about how to engage Native people. I will return to Hanna at the end of this section, but first I want to unravel some of the strands in this web of uncertainty.

63 In the official account of Cook's voyage Douglas pumped up this event into an encounter between unequals, with Cook bestowing presents on the chief. See I.S. MacLaren, "Exploration/travel literature and the evolution of the author," *International Journal of Canadian Studies*, 5 (Spring 1992), pp.39-68, at p.50.
64 See Lamb and Bartoli, "James Hanna and John Henry Cox," for details. The London newspapers were obviously interested in Hanna's voyage as it was the first British trading expedition to the coast.
Commercial games of truth and fiction

Merchants and financiers in London and Boston interviewed their traders on their return from the Pacific, and studied their journals, in order to gauge their successes and assess their commercial options. Traders were no doubt asked to be honest and objective, but their backers had to take much information on trust. In the maritime fur trade the "game of truth and fiction", as Foucault glosses the structure of discourse, was mediated by competition and individualism. Some of the first British traders tried to dissuade American traders from visiting the coast by claiming, verbally or in print, that the supply of furs had been exhausted, by suggesting that they had formed exclusive treaties with Native chiefs, or by representing a particular Native group as hostile. Many of the records of conflict between trading vessels and Native groups are third- or fourth-hand reports. Some of the first traders also took advantage of the European public's enthusiasm for voyages of discovery and commerce, and tried to enhance their personal emolument and public profile, by exaggerating their achievements and highlighting their hardships. On all these counts, the British trader John Meares was the most notorious example. George Dixon, who led a British trading expedition to the northwest coast in the late 1780s, was outraged by the way Meares described his geographical discoveries and commercial achievements in his Voyages...From China to

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65 See, for example, F.W. Howay (ed.), "Four letters from Richard Cadman Etches to Sir Joseph Banks, 1788-92," BCHQ, vol.3 (April 1942), pp.125-139, regarding the activities of Portlock and Dixon.
67 James Strange (with the Captain Cook and Experiment) met William Tipping (commander of the Sea Otter) in Prince William Sound in 1786, noting that they "could not fail to View each other with a very Jealous Eye." After this exchange, Tipping abandoned his plan to sail south, believing that Strange had exhausted the Natives' supply of furs. [James Strange], James Strange's journal and narrative of the commercial expedition from Bombay to the north-west coast of America (Madras: Government Press, 1929), pp.37-38.
the North-West Coast (published in 1790), and embarked on a public diatribe, calling Meares's book "a confused heap of contradictions and misrepresentations." 69 And Robert Haswell reported that when Meares and his colleagues boarded the Columbia in September 1788 to talk about trading prospects around Nootka Sound, "they fully employed themselves fabricating and rehursing vague and improvable tales relative to the coast of the vast danger attending its navigation [and] of the Monsterous Savage disposition of its inhabitants". 70 The Americans were certainly not saints either. One of Vancouver's officers observed that "the jealousies of trade" had taught Meares and the American trader Robert Gray of the Columbia "to play off their deceptions" against each other. 71

But this game of truth and fiction, I suggest, was not just about competition; it was also cathartic. John Myers, who traded on the coast in the 1790s, captured this sentiment. "Life at every period seemed balanced in uncertainty", he wrote, describing his life at sea and his dealings with Native people. 72 Traders did not just compile logs and journals in order to keep a factual record of their voyages for their employers. They also used them to record their anxieties and justify their actions.

Traders were instructed to be honest and fair with Native people, and to avoid violence. The owners of the American vessels Columbia and Washington, for example, hoped that Captain Kendrick would cultivate "the most inviolable harmony and friendship" with Native groups, and told him that "no advantages may be taken of them in

69 George Dixon, "Remarks on the voyages of John Meares, Esq" (1790), reprinted in F.W. Howay (ed.), The Dixon-Meares controversy (Toronto: The Ryerson Press, 1929); the quotation is from p.27.
70 "Robert Haswell's log of the first voyage of the 'Columbia'," Howay, Voyages of the 'Columbia', p.49.
71 Thomas Manby, "Manuscript journal of the voyage of H.M.S. Discovery and Chatham, Dec 10 1790 - June 22 1793," 28 April 1792, photostat from the Robertson Coe Collection, Yale University, W. Kaye Lamb Papers, 1-3, UBCL-SC.
trading". In 1789 British merchants impressed on Captain James Colnett of the *Argonaut* that violence was "not only destructive of the Commerce, but of every sentiment of humanity." Given such instructions, when traders did resort to violence they must have felt some responsibility to explain the circumstances. Yet few records suggest that they were ever chastised by their backers for getting embroiled in conflicts. Traders documented Native threats and attacks in detail, and described their retaliatory measures with bravado.

The Spanish explorer Dionisio Alcalá Galiano, who circumnavigated Vancouver Island in 1792, complained that traders had "set aside moral questions and resorted to force", and declared: "If the governments of [trading] ships...do not impose severe penalties on those who breach the laws of probity...they cover themselves with the great opprobrium." But why would Britain or the U.S.A. have been disgraced by the actions of their citizens in such distant waters? Merchants got official seals from their governments to secure their vessels' safe passage through the waters of other countries, some traders claimed that their voyages enhanced the honour of their nations, and a few of the earliest traders were welcomed home as heroes. These were not state-sponsored voyages, though. Traders were "remote from the Laws & observation of Society", as one

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73 "Orders given to Captain John Kendrick of the ship Columbia...1787," Howay, *Voyages of the 'Columbia'*, p.111.
75 John Kendrick (trans.), *The voyage of the Sutil and Mexicana 1792: The last Spanish exploration of the northwest coast of America* (Spokane, WA: Arthur H. Clark Company, 1991), p.87. Kendrick is not entirely sure about who edited this journal, but he is confident that Galiano wrote most of it.
religious-minded trader put it. However undesirable and unfortunate, trickery and violence became part of the trade, and traders were not expected to be humanitarians.

Thus, we cannot account for how traders acted, what they wrote and how they justified their actions just by examining their instructions. Traders compiled their journals in the face of competition and used them to represent themselves in relation to Native people. The economy of truth of the maritime fur trade was riven with contingency and suspicion. Traders' journals are marked by a complex interplay of insight, presumption and speculation about Native people.

The circumspection with which some traders approached Native people is reflected in their journals. For instance, Captain Charles Bishop of the Ruby, which was on the coast in the mid-1790s, noted: "I cannot help observing how Cautious a Trader should be how he begins trade on his Arrival". One had to assess the demeanour of each Native group before establishing prices or letting Native people near a vessel. Bishop claimed that Meares's Voyages was his textbook, but Meares presented himself as a swaggering adventurer who had approached Native people with great confidence and reaped great profits. Other traders cautioned their colleagues not to jump to conclusions about Native people. "Friendly intercourse" could easily be mistaken for "pretended humour", as Bernard Magee, an American trader on Vancouver Island, remarked in 1793;

77 Samuel Hill, "Autobiography," fol.14, photostat from New York Public Library, UBCL-SC. The Spanish and the British cast each other in a bad light for their own imperial ends, adding another dimension to the nature of representation in the maritime fur trade.

78 These instructions to avoid violence and generate friendship were perhaps a concession to the wave of humanitarianism in Europe and America that had marked Cook's voyage. Merchants in Boston and London may have included such clauses in order to court the approval of their peers.

honesty could be malice in disguise.\textsuperscript{89} William Shaler, another Boston trader, thought that merchant vessels should fire their guns as they approached Native villages in order to warn the inhabitants of their arrival and convince them of white superiority - a stock policy which many traders used.\textsuperscript{81}

"Separated from the civilized world", as Sturgis explained, traders had to become "accustomed to rely on their own resources for protection and defense".\textsuperscript{82} Most trading vessels were well-armed. The historian Samuel Eliot Morrison documented some of the standard features of American trading vessels:

Besides swivel-guns on the bulwarks, they were armed with six to twenty cannon, kept well stocked with grape, langrange or canister; and provided with boarding nettings, muskets, pistols, cutlasses and boarding pikes. The quarterdecks were loopholed for musket fire, the hatches were veritable 'pill-boxes'.\textsuperscript{83}

In short, traders took no chances. But this did not prevent them from feeling vulnerable. When James Colnett was anchored at Clayoquot Sound in November 1790 and questioned Native people about the whereabouts of some of his crew who had been gone in the ship's boats for a number of days, he got some "Confus'd stories" and started to speculate. "Being so long used to the Indians, and well acquainted with their Treachery and Cunning I began to be suspicious in my turn."\textsuperscript{84} Had they drowned, or been murdered? Colnett, like many other traders, described his anguish in detail: ".my

\begin{footnotes}
\item[80] Bernard Magee, "Log of the Jefferson," 8 October 1793, photostat from the Massachusetts Historical Society, UBCL-SC.
\item[82] Sturgis, quoted in William D. Phelps, "Solid men of Boston" [c. 1870], p.4, typescript from the Bancroft Library, Berkeley, BCARS A/A/30/So4.
\item[84] Howay, \textit{Journal of Captain James Colnett}, pp.190-191
\end{footnotes}
situation was desperate: short of Provisions, no Boat, Short Man'd, Season advanc'd for going to China, a leaky Ship".85

Traders, then, also projected their anxieties on to Native people. When the American vessel Caroline struck a sunken ledge in 1799 and it looked likely that it would sink, Captain Richard Cleveland noted that his situation "was now one of the most painful anxiety, no less from the prospect of losing our vessel and the rich cargo of furs we had collected with so much toil, than from the apprehension of being discovered in this denfenceless state by any one of the hostile tribes by whom we were surrounded". Cleveland got himself into an "agonizing state of suspense, watching the horizon to discover if any savages were approaching".86 No attack transpired, and the vessel was repaired and went on its way, but Cleveland, like Colnett, felt the need to document such sentiments. They spoke to traders' suspicions about Native people and the problems they had navigating the coast.

When relations between the chiefs of Clayoquot Sound and the crew of the Columbia disintegrated in March 1792, John Hoskins wrote himself the following consoling note:

...we have endeavoured to gain the good will of all ranks of people belonging to this tribe to instil into their minds noble and generous ideas of our nation and to efface from them all savage principles[..] [T]his in some respects we had the vanity to flatter ourselves was accomplished till this unfortunate period which puts it beyond a doubt that it is impossible for an honest honourable or gratefull principal ever to enter the breast of a savage.87

Consoling, because Hoskins realised that his captain, Robert Gray, had caused, or at least aggravated, tension between the two groups. Other traders, and particularly explorers

85 Ibid. Colnett was one of the British traders who had been imprisoned by the Spanish in July 1790.
86 H.W.S. Cleveland, Voyages of a northwest navigator...compiled from the journals and letters of the late Richard J. Cleveland (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1886), pp.50-51.
87 "Hoskins' narrative of the second voyage of the 'Columbia'," Howay, Voyages of the 'Columbia', p.272.
who were not directly involved in the trade, understood the conceit in such platitudes. Up to 1790 Colnett had spent less than a year among Native people, in scattered locations, and had a superficial understanding of Native agendas. Vancouver stated that it was traders, rather than Native people, who often "fomented discords, and stirred up contentions". George Hewitt, surgeon's mate on Vancouver's ship, noted that Kendrick was "one of the worst [traders] and ought to have been taken by Capt V - [Kendrick]...declared he would fire at a village till they brought him 50 skins & this he intended to do every time he visited the N.W. Coast." And Francois Péron, a French officer on the American trading vessel *Otter*, which was on the coast in 1796, observed that "the European sailors have exercised vengeances which are too severe as reprisals for some insult or for some surprise which they feel they have reason to complain of... [and] some of them, after having welcomed the Indians with the appearance of friendship, wanted to take their pelties by force." Even Sturgis, one of the most enlightened and insightful traders, suggested that trading relations were often volatile because it was "scarcely possible" to comprehend Native motivations or to interpret their "incongruous and seemingly conflicting statements.”

Could traders trust Natives? Did friendship preclude the possibility of attack? Maritime fur traders asked themselves such questions quite frequently, and it was they who used incongruous and conflicting statements to capture their uncertainties. What did

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89 George Goodman Hewett, "Notes in Vancouver's voyages," on volume III, p.72, line 12, BCARS A/A/20/V28H.
traders mean when they talked of the "pretended humour" of the Natives, or the "savage dignity" of a chief.\footnote{Samuel Patterson used this last expression to describe Chief Maquinna of Nootka Sound in his \textit{Narrative of the adventures and sufferings of Samuel Patterson}... [1825 edition] (Fairfield, WA: Ye Galleon Press, 1967), p.56.}

Experience and insight were overlaid with "New Ideas, that naturally crowd in the Imagination; of the Savage Customs and Manners of the Indians", as Peter Puget, one of Vancouver's officers, noted upon stumbling across some severed heads in "Puget's Sound."\footnote{Bern Anderson (ed.), "The Vancouver expedition: Peter Puget's journal of the examination of Puget Sound May 7 - June 11, 1792," \textit{Pacific Northwest Quarterly}, vol. XXX, no. 2 (April 1939), pp.177-217; the quotation is from p.181.} I cite Puget to highlight that this tension between observation and presumption, insight and imagination, was not peculiar to traders. The journals of Cook and his officers - indeed, those of any white explorer or trader in non-European space during this era - trade on this tension. And like Cook's officers, the Europeans and Americans involved in the maritime fur trade had different personalities and literary talents, and came from different backgrounds, all of which affected what they wrote. Cook's team distinguished "the Nootkans" from other Pacific peoples. Maritime fur traders likewise compared different Native peoples and different parts of the Pacific. As James Gibson notes: "Shipmasters invariably remarked the stark (and welcome) contrast between the forbidding Northwest Coast - rainy and chilly and peopled by what they considered dirty, sullen, and hostile Indians - and the inviting Sandwich Islands, which were sunny and warm and inhabited by seemingly clean, cheerful, and friendly Polynesians."\footnote{Gibson, \textit{Otter skins, Boston ships, and China goods}, p.50.} Sturgis thought that many American traders formed an opinion of northwest coast Native societies "from the wretched, degraded remnants of the tribes who formerly occupied New England".\footnote{[Sturgis], "Northwest fur trade, and the Indians of the Oregon country," p.17.}

Ebenezer Johnson made a similar comparison between the Natives of the northwest coast and those of New England in his \textit{A short account of a northwest voyage, performed in the years 1796, 1797 & 1798} (Massachusetts: Printed for the author, 1798), p.11.
Nevertheless, traders did not connect questions of representation to issues of scientific observation and epistemology to the extent that explorers did, and most of them probably did not expect that their journals would wind up in bookshops. The mode of enunciation of the maritime fur trade was private, competitive and vitriolic. "[T]he general practice among traders on this coast", one explorer claimed, "is always to mislead competitors as far they can even at the expense of truth." "Truth" meant different things to these traders than it did to Cook or Vancouver. Traders' platitudes about Native people were vexed, inward-looking truths that were conditioned by competition and fear.

I am suggesting that the economy of truth of the maritime fur trade was characterised by anxiety, deception and hostility. We cannot understand the nature of traders' representations, nor explain the mechanics of the trade, by making clinical distinctions between fact and fiction, reality and illusion, and prejudice and fair-mindedness. Traders such as Meares had what Archibald Menzies (Vancouver's surgeon-botanist) called a "fertile fancy" for truth and reality: purposefully and sometimes unknowingly speculating and producing misleading statements about the geography of the coast and its Native inhabitants. I am struck by the simultaneous fullness and vacuity of traders' observations. Their lines about the "savage ways" of the Indians were not simply rooted in a set of late eighteenth-century British and American ideas about non-Western societies. Hoskins's claim that it was "impossible for an honest honourable or gratefull principal ever to enter the breast of a savage", and other such blanket statements, were responses to the often illusory itinerate geographies I have sketched. Traders could not assume that Native people would view them as superiors. Native people played nuanced commercial games with traders. And Native attacks on trade

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96 Though traders such as Meares and Dixon obviously did, as I noted above.
98 Archibald Menzies to Sir Joseph Banks, 1 January 1793, Dawson Turner copies of the correspondence of Sir Joseph Banks, vol.8, p.146, British Museum (Natural History).
vessels proved that Native people did not shy away from conflict just because of traders' firepower.

Traders presented "scenes of fear and desire". This phrase comes from Homi K. Bhabha, who argues that we cannot demarcate and critique colonial and racist discourses by deploying *a priori* normative categories of truth or equality and then categorising statements as positive or negative. Such procedures, he insists, fail to get to grips with the complexity of such discourses and their purchase or redundancy over time. Bhabha claims that colonial discourses produce and buttress processes of appropriation and domination because they incite aggressive and narcissistic processes of identification that position a self and an other - or the coloniser and the colonised - in a cultural-racial-historical hierarchy. Bhabha has focused on stereotypical discourse, and argues that it entangles the coloniser and the colonised in a web of psychic, social and imaginary relations. "The fetish or stereotype", he reasons, is not a misrepresentation of reality, or a distortion of the truth, but "an arrested, fixated form of representation" characterised by "a repertoire of conflictual positions". The stereotype "gives access to an 'identity' which is predicated as much on mastery and pleasure as it is on anxiety and defence, for it is a form of multiple and contradictory belief in its recognition of difference and disavowal of it"; otherness is an object of both "desire and derision". These conflictual positions, he continues, do not necessarily impede or impoverish colonialism because this "mixing and splitting" of signification can become a strategy of appropriation and/or control: a way of articulating, visualising and legislating difference, justifying colonial expansion, and proving the necessity of colonial domination. Or as Bhabha himself embellishes this argument:

The black is both savage (cannibal) and yet the most obedient and dignified of servants (the bearer of food); he is the embodiment of rampant sexuality and yet

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99 Homi K. Bhabha, "The other question," in his *The location of culture* (London and New York: Routledge, 1994), pp.66-84; the quotation is from p.72.

innocent as a child; he is mystical, primitive, simple-minded and yet the most worldly and accomplished liar, and manipulator of social forces. In each case what is being dramatized is a separation - between races, cultures, histories, within histories - a separation between before and after that repeats obsessively the mythical moment or disjunction.\(^{101}\)

Bhabha's general point is that while the concept of fixity - constituting the colonial subject as "other" yet knowable, distant yet visible - is central to colonial discourse, representations of otherness are neither monolithic nor immortal. Statements about foreigness, inferiority, or what have you, form part of an address; they are tied to systems of enunciation that shift through time and over space in response to different needs.

Now this same mixing and splitting of signification can be found in the maritime fur trade. We can detect the same "confictual economy" of representation, as Bhabha has it, in traders' journals. Some of the first traders expected Native people to be gullible, but soon discovered that they were astute traders. Yet "astuteness" was often translated as "cunning." The American merchant Sullivan Dorr informed his brother that "these cunning savages...are great Merchant traders."\(^{102}\) Some of the first traders thought that Native people would desire trinkets (by implication, "childish things"), and would want "to imitate their somewhat more polished visitors" (as Sturgis noted), but found that Native groups had very particular wants and desires. Yet single-mindedness was often translated as "audacity" or "insolence." "[W]e found at our cost", Meares wrote, "that these people [of Vancouver Island]...possessed all the cunning necessary to the gains of mercantile life."\(^{103}\) And Walker noted: "The Savage, who is nevertheless dishonest, pretends to be Scrupulous, and exact in his dealings."\(^{104}\) In profile: many traders viewed

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\(^{101}\) Ibid., p.82 (his emphases).
\(^{103}\) Meares, *Voyages*, pp.141-142.
\(^{104}\) Walker, *Account of a voyage*, p.188.
Natives as "mystical, primitive, single-minded and yet the most worldly and accomplished of liars". Desire was split by derision; mastery was mixed with anxiety.

But this "repertoire of conflictual positions" in the maritime fur trade was tied to a different system of enunciation than the ones Bhabha has in mind. Bhabha is interested foremost in the formal discursive architecture of European colonialism: the pronouncements of imperial thinkers, Orientalists, missionaries, and colonial administrators. As such he focuses on particular forms of address: the inscription of racial pre-eminence, national-cultural superiority, and forms of colonial paternalism/tutelage. He thinks of desire and fetishism mainly in psychoanalytical terms, and, as one recent critic charges, he tends to allot "ontological priority to the semiotic process, the generation of meaning being located in the enunciative act, and not in the substance of the narrated event." Bhabha considers the command functions of colonial discourse - the complex ways in which colonial subjects are formed and placed under authority through language. He does not discuss cases such as the maritime fur trade, where the contradictions of mastery and anxiety were not wrapped up with an official imperial agenda, and the machinations of desire and fetishism were modelled on the commodity. Maritime fur traders were neither imperial thinkers nor colonial officials; all they wanted was furs. And Bhabha eschews discussion of conflict and physical antagonism, which were rife in the trade. So how might these traders' forms of address be characterised and conceptualised?

Michael Taussig offers some insights. He has traced these "scenes of fear and desire" beyond the stacks of the colonial library and found them at work in the Colombian jungle, in the Putumayo rubber boom at the beginning of the twentieth century, which brought together creole traders and Indians in a horrific *danse macabre* of torture and murder. Taussig looks at the efforts of various witnesses of the rubber trade

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105 Benita Parry, "Signs of our times: Discussion of Homi Bhabha's The location of culture," *Third Text*, 28/29 (Autumn/Winter 1994), pp.5-24; the quotation is from p.9.
to explain the atrocities to a British Select Committee. Their testimony was characterised by an "intimate codependence of truth on illusion and myth on reality", mimicking the rubber trade itself, and the Select Committee struggled to understand or explain the terror. British officials wanted to know if the Indians or the traders were to blame, but soon sensed that the two groups were locked together in a commercial battle of fear and fantasy where terror seemed to have a life of its own. Nor could they understand the mechanics of the rubber trade using the language of political economy. Terror, these witnesses seemed to relate, was more a "form of life" than a "utilitarian means of production". The Select Committee was left with two shady images: "the horror of the jungle and the horror of savagery". Or as Taussig describes the terror in his characteristically ebullient prose:

These were vitally important practical affairs. They were also ritual events. As such, they were in effect new rituals, rites of conquest and colony formation, mystiques of race and power, little dramas of civilization tailoring savagery which did not mix or homogenize ingredients from the two sides of the colonial divide but instead bound Indian understandings of white understandings of Indians to white understandings of Indian understandings of whites.107

Taussig shows how these witnesses populated the rubber boom with desire, fear and horror, and documents how the atrocities evaded categorization and analysis in the colonial metropole. And he thinks of the machinations of desire and derision in the same way that I am invoking them in relation to the maritime fur trade: in terms of complex, physical and textured filaments of attraction and repulsion, fear and longing, that were based on the (al)lure of the commodity and visions of profit. Presuppositions,

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106 Michael Taussig, *Shamanism, colonialism, and the wild man: A study in terror and healing* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1987). The Putumayo Indians were starved, tortured, shot, burned, beheaded, and flogged to death. Rubber traders also raided and burned Indian villages and developed a debt-peonage system to extort rubber. Britain sent an envoy to investigate after a series of articles appeared in a London magazine in 1909 exposing these details and the fact that the rubber company responsible for the atrocities was a British-Peruvian consortium.

107 Ibid., pp.3-138; the quotations are from pp.100, 75, and 109.
imputations, meanings and justifications shuffled uneasily between Colombia and London, and between the Indians and the traders themselves. Taussig asks us to "listen to these stories [presented to the Select Committee] neither as fiction nor as disguised signs of truth, but as real." He argues that we might want to distinguish between the reality of the rubber boom and depictions of it, but "the disturbing thing is that the reality seeped through the pores of the depiction and by means of such seepage continued what such depictions were meant only to be about"; the forms of terror that the rubber traders devised "mirrored the horror of the savagery they both feared and fictionalised."

What Taussig draws out, I think, is that space - in this case in the guise of the jungle/savagery - is not an inert plane on which colonial and commercial discourses unfold, but a material and imaginative medium through which desire and derision is visualised and articulated. The Putamayo region, Taussig suggests, was a conduit of enunciation as well as a site of commercial interaction; an imaginative, tropical space of chronic capitalist misadventure through which rubber traders and Indians encountered and fictionalised each other - both a figurative space that encapsulated and seemed to idealise the fetishism of the commodity, and a thoroughly material space of torture and death. There was no retreat from the horror of the jungle and savagery; no vantage point from which this canvas of terror could be pictured, surveyed and rationalised. The facts of the rubber boom - the numbers killed or maimed for the price of so many tons of rubber - conjured up the terror but could not explain it.

Sara Suleri, who also appeals to Taussig's work, has made a similar, extentuated point about the imaginative geographies of British colonialism in India. "[T]he Indian subcontinent is not merely a geographic space upon which colonial rapacities have been enacted, but is furthermore that imaginative construction through which rapaciousness can worship its own misdeeds, thus making the subcontinent a tropological repository from which colonial and postcolonial imaginations have drawn - and continue to draw - their most basic figures for the anxiety of empire." Sara Suleri, The rhetoric of English India (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1992), pp.4-5.
The maritime fur trade was by no means as horrific as the Putumayo rubber boom, but Taussig's notion of "the real" might usefully be adopted to help us understand what maritime fur traders wrote. Traders did not address Native people in any official colonial capacity, and most of them did not have a public audience in mind when they compiled their journals. The conflictual economy of truth of the maritime fur trade was only faintly connected to an imperial public sphere. Representation was influenced by the material, geographical contours of the trade itself - by these "itinerate geographies" of fixity and motion.

When traders tried to summarise their transactions, they invoked two basic motifs: the obstinacy of the coast and the Indians, and the absurdity of the business. While trading around the northern tip of Vancouver Island in June 1791, the crew of the Columbia were ordered not to offend the Natives, but contact over the ensuing weeks was filled with tension. Hoskins believed that the Indians were not given "umbrage", but reflected:

...no doubt it is too often the case that sailors...from their ignorance of the [Native] language, either miscomprehend the natives, or the natives them; thus each deeming the other insulted, a quarrel ensues, and the officers who are on shore fall a sacrifice to it. [A]s well in civilized, so in savage governments; from small causes, great evils spring.111

The stormy coast added a particular spray to these connections between "small causes" and "great evils". In the 1791 trading season the Columbia got into a number of precarious situations and Hoskins noted that traders' fears about their own safety were "easier to be conceived than described."112 Compounding these harsh weather conditions and problems of communication, the maritime fur trade also seemed to have its own economic logic. Sturgis used the phrase "absurdity" to capture the way traders and Native people had fashioned hybrid and often volatile spaces of transaction. Traders

111 "John Hoskins' narrative of the second voyage of the 'Columbia'," Howay, Voyages of the 'Columbia', p.192.
112 Ibid., p.193.
conjured up *spaces of miscomprehension*, where ideas about the Indian that had clean lives in the western imaginary - at home, where "Indians" were geographically as well as rhetorically distant from whites - tarried nervously on a treacherous coast with muckier, physical encounters with difference.

Many traders reflected on the obstinacy of the coast - the difficulties of navigating, and the deprivations of ship life. Sturgis observed: "Heavens knows what wilds of America are on our side of the Continent, but I am sure on this [side] they may be called the wildest of the wild". And Charles Bishop wrote of "this Savage coast." There were few panoramas on the northwest coast, and little to please the eye of a weary trader. "No cultivated fields, no towns, no hamlets, or cottages enliven the prospect to a sailor as he views the land after a long voyage", as Silas Holbrook, an American trader, wrote to his fellow Bostonians. "The Country, as far as the Eye can penetrate", Alexander Walker despaired, "presents nothing to view, but a succession of Stupendous and broken Mountains."

And traders thought that the ways of the Indians reflected this physical geography. Some traders remarked that Native life was stamped by this physical sense of wildness, danger, desolation and deprivation. This is how Walker described the Native peoples of the northwest coast:

Nature has implanted in him an extraordinary feeling and sagacity for his preservation against dangers to which he is incessantly exposed. It is this that creates so many unfavourable features of his Character. Always expecting injuries, and always exposed to danger, all his thoughts are employed about his own safety. He becomes suspicious, deceitful and treacherous.... The life of a Savage is mixed with uncertainty and privations: but its excitements and its habits are dear to him. Custom and ignorance are necessary in our Eyes to reconcile a

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115 [Silas P. Holbrook], *Sketches, by a traveller* (Boston: Carter and Hendee, 1830), p.10. These sketches appeared first in the *New England Galaxy* and the *Boston Courier*.
Savage to his existence. How differently does he view his situation! Every attempt to reconcile him to the Ease and luxuries of civilized Life have failed. After enjoying them for a short time, and when he had the option of enjoying them for Ever, he has preferred all the hardships of his former state, and to cover himself again with the Skins of Wild Beasts.\(^{117}\)

This was not simply geographical determinism. This passage also suggests that the contingencies of the trade influenced traders' perceptions of Native people. Was it the Indian or the trader who always expected "injuries" and was "exposed to danger"? Was it the life of "a Savage" or the life of the trader that was "mixed with uncertainty and privation"? The Indian's preference for "the hardships of his former state" over "the Ease and luxuries of civilized Life" spoke to the absurdity of the business - the sense that traders did not always understand the ways Native people sized up goods. There was no Archimedean point from which to survey and essentialise the trade; just an ensemble of sites and situations within the trade itself from which statements about the particular and the general, about place and space, could be articulated.

To some extent, of course, traders were trying to represent themselves on an axis of savagery and civilisation by invoking images of "home" and drawing stark contrasts. As some of the quotations above suggest, traders associated civilisation with the picturesque, welcoming landscapes of England and New England (or the luxurious islands of the Pacific), and savagery with the rugged, hostile northwest coast. The panorama versus the precipice.... As Edward Said has remarked, to some degree people and societies derive their identities negatively, "our" land being the counterpart of "theirs."

\(^{118}\) "Yet often", Said continues, "the sense in which someone feels himself to be not-foreign is based on a very unrigorous idea of what is 'out there,' beyond one's own territory. All kinds of suppositions, associations, and fictions appear to crowd the unfamiliar space outside one's own."\(^{119}\) Maritime fur traders came to the northwest coast with "dark aspirations" of what was out there, as Holbrook put it, and on experiencing

\(^{117}\) Ibid., p.37.
\(^{118}\) Said, \textit{Orientalism}, p.54.
\(^{119}\) Ibid.
life on the coast they started to make a series of associations between nature and culture, as Walker's formulation suggests.

But traders' representational tropes were also mediated by more hands-on, corporeal difficulties: of surviving in the wet and the cold, and of forging successful contact relationships with Native people. When traders tried to impute difference and distance between themselves and Natives, they did not just look to home. They also turned to their own immediate, physical circumstances. They saw the coast and its Native inhabitants through western eyes, but the contact process also raised personal and performative questions that needed to be answered. Traders may have considered themselves superiors, but how could such ideas be said to work on the ground, in Native space, when Native people did not necessarily see or treat them as such? "Home" was in some respects an empty abstraction for traders because Native people did not see them in their homes reaping the material benefits of their business on the coast.

Some traders claimed that they were treated like royalty by Native chiefs, and some Native chiefs, to be sure, were treated as such by traders. As I will show, the sea otter business entailed a complex set of negotiations between white and Native leaders. These bonds did not come about because the white man had an awe-inspiring presence, however. They were spurred by Native social and political agendas. And a far more uncivilised world loitered around these high-level bonds. Here were white crewmen cramped in dingy vessels exchanging goods such as chisels and copper kettles that had been stripped of their western connotations. Sturgis's story about the chief of the Hanslong tribe registering the absurdity of "placing brass balls on iron fences in front of your houses" (my epigraph for Part II) points to traders' concerns over the way Natives saw them. How could traders demonstrate to Native people that they were members of civilised societies when it was not evident from the way they looked or lived? Could imaginary lines of difference be drawn across the trading process itself?
Traders tried to draw imaginary lines separating self and other, I will now suggest, by "envisioning capital" in particular ways.

"Envisioning Capital"

Susan Buck-Morss uses this phrase to argue that abstract concepts such as "economy" have to undergo a process of "representational mapping" before people can sense them and grasp their explanatory value, and hence use them.\textsuperscript{120} She takes Adam Smith's \textit{The Wealth of Nations} (1776) as an example. Smith faced a simple, if serious, moral conundrum: he claimed that the division of labour enhanced the productivity and efficiency of society, but realised that the division of labour also created, and was to a degree premised on, inequalities of talent and wealth, and undercut the checks and balances of the moral economy. Smith tried to slide over this moral dilemma by comparing British labourers with "savage" tribes in other parts of the world. It was not the efficiency of the pin factory (sheer instrumentality) which justified capitalist society and made it "civilised," Smith claimed, but the fact that British workers possessed more "objects of comfort" than the members of "savage societies." He contrived the conclusion that however victimised factory workers were as producers, they were still in a position to seek and enjoy things-for-themselves, and that as the general wealth of the nation increased, they might one day not have to labour at all.\textsuperscript{121}

\textsuperscript{121} Or as Smith introduced his book: "Such ['savage'] nations...are so miserably poor that, from mere want, they are frequently reduced, or, at least, think themselves reduced, to the necessity sometimes of directly destroying, and sometimes of abandoning their infants, their old people, and those afflicted with lingering diseases, to perish with hunger, or to be devoured by wild beasts. Among civilized and thriving nations, on the contrary...the produce of the whole labour of the society is so great that all are often abundantly supplied, and a workman, even of the lowest and poorest order, if he is frugal and industrious, may enjoy a greater share of the necessaries and conveniences of life than is possible for any savage to acquire." Adam Smith, \textit{The wealth of nations} [orig. pub. 1776] (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1970), pp.104-105.
One of Smith's main aims was to be able to picture individual desire - which Buck-Morss defines as the "pursuit for things" - and show that it pointed to a higher collective good. He envisioned an impersonal, parthogenetic economy hoisted on a theoretically limitless division of labour which, Buck-Morss remarks, was "invisible except in its commodity effects [the new objects it spewed out], insensate to human passions, impervious to human will". Smith's economy is larger than moral society, Buck-Morss points out, and is blind to moral constraint; I (an individual producer and consumer) cannot see or feel this "thing-terrain" - the economy - as a whole. All I can see and feel is my own, much shorter horizon of self-interest. Blindness, she claims, "is the state of proper action" in Smith's economy, but within that limited horizon "desire is free and knows no bounds." Smith argued that my "pursuit for things" and openness to fashion mimics the multiplication of things under the division of labour, and that if I follow fashion I will eventually get to the material position where I can simply desire the pleasure of desiring. Smith considered my relentless pursuit for things as both a happy and necessary state of affairs, because, as Buck-Morss explains, if desire were satiated, "if it were not deflected onto a demand for commodities, the fashionable replacement of which knows no limits, then not only would the growth of wealth come to halt but the whole social nexus of civilization would fall apart." In other words, Smith tried to picture the relationship between the self-interested producer/consumer and the economy - this "thing-terrain" - and he offered the individual the deceptive promise that happiness is rooted in the restless pursuit for things.

Now the "representational maps" that maritime fur traders drafted were by no means as sophisticated as Smith's. They were not trying to picture capitalism as a whole.

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123 Ibid., p.452 (her emphasis).
124 Ibid..
And we should remember that Smith's ideas were neither immediately adopted nor universally accepted by late eighteenth-century British or American thinkers. But maritime fur traders did mull over this question of how to picture their transactions, and some of the connections that Smith made between desire (as the "pursuit for things"), the possession of commodities, and civility/happiness can be seen in their writings.

Traders appealed to notions of luxury and possession to mark their distance from Native people. Indians, on Walker's view, were people who could not quite hold on to "objects of comfort". Natives' seemingly "absurd" notions of demand and price, and the specific (or "whimsical") nature of their desires, were seen as characteristics of a savage society. Sturgis remarked that the influx of European goods "brought with it its concomitants - luxury and want of economy.... [T]he Indians, with that want of forethought natural to a people in an uncivilized state, did not reflect on the possibility of their supplies [of non-Native goods] hereafter being more limited and made no provision against future wants". They would be rich one year but poor the next, having traded or consumed the goods they had obtained. Sturgis and Walker thought that the Indians of the coast were primitive because they did not know how to accumulate wealth and escape the bounds of necessity.

Still, traders found it difficult to explain why their desires were any more civilised than those of Native groups. How could traders claim that they enjoyed the comforts of material life and had escaped the realm of necessity when their crews were often starved or plagued with scurvy, dysentery or rheumatic fever by the time they reached the coast, and had to rely on Native groups to trade them fresh food? If the civility/comfort of white ways was not immediately apparent from the apparel or decorum of fur traders, then where might traders say it came from?

Some traders tried to draw a distinction between the needy/savage Indian and the comfortable/civilised trader by claiming that commodities were only useful to "them" but were sources of profit to "us": that while Native people were admittedly good (or "cunning") merchants, they were not capitalists. But many traders realised that it was difficult to determine whether they had profited any more than a Native group from a particular set of transactions because the two groups valued commodities in different ways. Some traders still tried to argue that they were superior merchants, however, by emphasising that Native people were ignorant of the global scale of the sea otter business, and hence of the profit margins that could be obtained - that Native people had a short horizon of self-interest. Native people might regale themselves with stories of how they tricked a guileless trader, but they did not realise that once the trader had left the coast his cargo could still rise in value as furs were traded at Canton for tea, silk and porcelain, or swopped for bills of exchange, and as these goods were shipped to London or Boston. The trader Myers wrote:

> The canoes...bringing the produce of Sea and Land, have a tendency to excite respect for man even in a savage state.... Here we procured a great number of Otter, Marten, and Beaver Skins. The articles we trafficked for them were trivial; but it should be considered that so ignorant were the inhabitants, that they readily parted with an Otter skin, for a small Iron spear, which on in China, produced us 80 dollars...¹²⁷

Native groups drove much harder bargains than this, and Myers's details are fanciful, even for the early years of the trade. But his general message - one that many traders bought into - was that the "comforts of life" afforded by the sea otter trade were not manifested on the northwest coast itself. They were only slowly revealed during this longer course of commercial transactions. "The articles hitherto employed in the purchase of America furs, &c. are in themselves but of small value, when compared with the prices which these furs obtain at China and other markets", John Meares declared;

"their acquired value is of no trifling consideration." Civilisation was to be found at the end of this round trip (known as the "golden round") from London or Boston to the northwest coast, to Canton, and back home, where traders cashed in their cargoes and went out and bought a new suit of clothes and other "comforts." Civilisation, on Meare's account, was beyond the scope of Native vision. "You" the Indian are of trifling consideration because "I" the trader know of other lands and riches. The irony, of course, which was not lost on some traders, was that while Native people were not capitalists, they had their own circuits of commercial interaction and their own ways of enhancing the value of their goods through trade.

Traders, then, used images of the global nature of the sea otter business as "representational maps" with which to abstract themselves from the hardships of the trade and the incongruities of contact, and picture their lives as ultimately more comfortable and civilised than those of Native people. Sticking close the object of their voyages, they tried to account for civility and savagery by turning to their working lives at sea; by emphasising that the maritime fur trade was a space-economy with different levels and parts, and reassuring themselves that Native people had access to only a part of this commercial space. Reminding himself that his objects of comfort had been gained

128 Meares, *Voyages*, p.lxix. The Spanish explorer Don Alejandro Malaspina, who visited Nootka Sound in 1791, made the same point: "The coast of Northwest America offers nothing to European commerce other than a great number of fine pelts...which, purchased at little cost from peoples who appreciate neither commodities nor luxuries, attain a greater value in the market of Canton". Alejandro Malaspina, "Politico-scientific voyage round the world...from 1789-1794," 3 books, Carl Robinson trans., II, p.240, UBCL-SC.

129 This was not the only tack that traders took to recuperate difference and distance. They also focused on social habits, claiming that Native people were uncivilized because they were dirty, or half-naked, or allowed their furs to become riddled with lice, or did not eat with metal knives and forks. See, for example, [Strange], *Journal*, p.20. Traders also looked for signs of cannibalism - a form of enquiry which pervades the annals of European exploration and trade and was a *leitmotiv* of colonial discourse between the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries. See Peter Hulme, *Colonial encounters: Europe and the native Caribbean, 1492-1797* (London: Methuen, 1986). Scholars of early British Columbia have also been animated by the subject of cannibalism. For a recent
from hard work and the occasional panic, Sturgis told a captive Boston audience that it
would "give him more pleasure to look at a splendid sea-otter skin, than to examine half
the pictures that are stuck up for exhibition, and puffed up by pretended connoisseurs." His aesthetic was resolutely commercial and corporeal.

When the trade was discussed by people who were not involved in it, these
notions of absurdity and obstinacy were often strained into harder-nosed statements that
reflected dominant American and European views about Indians, and these visions of
capital started to fracture. The "obstinacy" of the coast and the Indians, for example, was
stated in bolder terms ("treachery," for instance), and the daring of merchant adventurers
was played up. Here is a stanza from a ballad titled The Bold Northwestman, published
in Boston in the early nineteenth century, which dramatises an attempt by Indians of the
Queen Charlotte Islands to seize the American brig Washington in June 1791:

I'd have you all take warning and always be ready,
For to suppress those savages of Northwest America;
For they are so desirous some vessel for to gain,
That they will never leave it off, till most of them are slain.131

This ballad echoes the sentiments of prominent late eighteenth-century American writers,
such as Timothy Dwight, who wrote about the Indian in his epic poem Greenfield Hill
(1794):

Fierce, dark, and jealous, is the exotic soul,
That, cell'd in secret, rules the savage breast.
There treacherous thoughts of gloomy vengeance roll,
And deadly deeds of malice unconfess'd;
The viper's poison rankling in its nest.132

assessment see Joyce A. Wike, "A reevaluation of northwest coast cannibalism," in Jay
Miller and Carol M. Eastman (eds.), The Tsimshian and their neighbors of the north
Pacific coast (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1984), pp.239-254. As I will
register below, the spectre of cannibalism contributed to maritime fur traders' fears, but I
do not treat the issue here because I do not think it was the distinguishing feature of this
economy of truth.

130 [Sturgis], "The northwest fur trade," p.534.
1 (1928), pp.71-79; the quotation is from p.73.
132 Quoted in Kornfeld, "Encountering 'the other'," p.292.
One of the implications of *The Bold Northwestman*, as Howay noted, is that all Native attacks on trading vessels were unprovoked acts of sheer cunning and savagery. Most Native attacks, of course, were acts of revenge for some perceived or actual insult. When the American and British media reported on the maritime fur trade, it usually focused on acts of violence as if they spoke to some essential and timeless difference between the Indian and the trader - the former, unpredictable and therefore savage, the latter honorable and therefore civilised. In such reports the trader was prised away from the coast and resituated in a more detached and axiomatic cultural realm of right and wrong, white and Indian. The world of the commodity - and these "representational maps" of possession, comfort and deprivation - started to slip over the horizon.

These processes of information circulation and reinscription aggravated the conflictual economy of truth of the maritime fur trade. Just as the British officials at the Select Committee on the Putumayo rubber boom struggled to explain the nature of the terror, so many European observers of the maritime fur trade struggled to understand the nature of Native-white interaction. When C.P. Claret Fleurieu (a distinguished naval historian who edited Marchand's journal for publication) tried to criticise traders' methods on moral grounds, he could not escape the complexities of the real - these "itinerate geographies" - and simply ended up with a set of questions and equivocations:

Have...[traders] never endeavoured to take an unfair advantage of the ignorance which they supposed in the Americans [Indians]? Have they, in the beginning, acted with the honesty, the sincerity which ought to be the basis of trade, especially of barter, and which is not always the basis of transactions between Europeans? In short, will they not deceive themselves still, when they imagine that they can do so with safety?... I am not an apologist for savage people...I am not examining here whether man be good, or whether he be wicked through his nature, nor what he may have lost or gained in the state of great societies; but let us not judge so precipitately, and without knowing them, the people of that unhappy AMERICA which has so much reason to complain of us.133

In other words, what did it mean to take unfair advantage? To buy the Indians' furs cheaply and sell them at a profit? To blow up Native villages or take hostages? Were

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133 Fleurieu, *Voyage round the world*, I, pp.450 and 479-480.
Indians being conned because they were ignorant of the real value of their goods? Was the trader deceiving himself when he thought he could trick Indians without impugnity? Was there anything inherently sincere about barter, or was honesty simply a wise commercial policy in light of the fact that Natives and traders did not fully understand each other's ways of transacting? In any case, who could tell when the Native or the trader was being honest? By the time Marchand got to the coast in 1791, Native people had many things to complain about and many reasons for looking on traders as inherently dishonest.

However hard Marchand and his editor thought about the maritime fur trade, and however much they wanted to rationalise it for a European audience, they could not escape the knotted realm of desire and derision, mastery and anxiety, which characterised the trade. The meddlesome coast, and the murky processes of interaction that went with the trade, could not be given a single meaning or purpose.

If these traders were appropriating Native life, it was with these visions of capital and the physical and psychical anxieties that went with them. There were only a few spots on the coast - Nootka Sound was one of them - that traders knew well enough and visited frequently enough to feel comfortable with a particular Native chief or group. But even at Nootka Sound such relations lasted only until 1803, when the crew of the Boston was slaughtered. When John Jewitt (the armourer of the Boston whose life was spared by Chief Maquinna of the sound) reviewed the circumstances of the disaster in his journal in 1803, he noted that the Indians had not forgotten what Captain Hanna had done in 1785.

134 Fleurieu discussed the maritime fur trade, and outlined Marchand's travels, before the French National Institute of Arts and Sciences.

It is with Hanna, then, that I will conclude this survey of the representational practices of maritime fur traders. His troubles at Nootka Sound encapsulate this hybrid realm of presumption, speculation, misunderstanding and anxiety. Hanna was welcomed by the Natives of the sound, but "friendly" intercourse soon disintegrated into conflict. Hanna, it seems, expected an attack on his vessel; either a Native chief had declared war on him the day before or he had been tipped off by another Native group. But what was made of this conflict? In the newspaper reports it is treated as a trial of strength and a statement about the volatility and cunning of Native people. Yet the conflict was probably caused by some misunderstanding about trade. There was "some difference about the barter of respective commodities". Equally, Hanna may have incited the ire of the chief who declared war on him by trading with a rival Native group, or, as Walker suggested, by shooting a Native person for a minor theft. But having introduced such possibilities, the newspaper reports, and Walker, retreat into platitudes about the Native character. The Natives, according to one of the accounts, were tempted to attack the vessel because of its size, as if to suggest that Native people were naturally aggressive. We do not learn what reasons the Native chief had for declaring war; it is likely that Hanna did not understand what he said. Then these correspondents were puzzled about why, so shortly after the attack, trade resumed as usual. Walker speculated that the Natives resumed trade in a mood of submission, having been overwhelmed and overawed by Hanna's firepower, and implied that these Natives did not sense that they had done anything wrong - that they lived in a land of "perfidy". Walker also saw the Natives' secrecy about this event as a sign of cunning.

In effect, these accounts play with mastery and anxiety. They dramatise this event and reveal the co-dependence of truth on illusion in the maritime fur trade. The trade was marked by trickery and miscomprehension, and was undoubtedly violent. Quantifying such misdeeds, or looking at them in a broader historical perspective to make them seem more or less egregious, sidetracks our understanding of this form of
contact. Nor, obviously, should traders' writings be taken at face value. As this founding encounter of the maritime fur trade intimates, representation became increasingly grounded in the geographical contours of the trade.

This was the agonistic side of the trade. I now want to return to traders' appreciation of place, and Native participation in the business along the west coast of Vancouver Island. For there is another way of assessing traders' pretensions: in terms of Native agendas, which can be partially reconstructed from archaeological, ethnographic and historical records.
Chapter Seven
Nuu-chah-nulth Agendas: An Ethnographic Context

Nodes, networks and hierarchies

In 1792 John Hoskins wrote a memorandum on the maritime fur trade for his Boston employers. The Natives of Nootka Sound, he noted, "will not sell a single Skin but for Copper or Muskits or Powder and Shot", and placed little value on iron goods except chisels. But "to the Northward of this place", between Cape Cook and Queen Charlotte Strait, "they like Iron the best". South of Nootka Sound "they esteem Chizzels very much", though "all of these places have the same liking for Copper and Muskets that they have at Nootka Sound". Turning to exchange rates, Hoskins noted that "the price of a skin at Nootka sound is ten Iron Chizzels, six inches square of sheet Copper or ten Copper Bangles, for a pistol four skins, for a Musket Six skins[,] for a pearl shell one Skin." Exchange rates were only slightly different at Clayoquot Sound, but varied much more as one went south. At the mouth of the Straits of Juan de Fuca, a skin was worth five chisels or "a piece of copper as big as your hand"; these Native people valued the clothes traders offered according to the size and number of buttons on them. Around Cape Flattery, Native groups wanted eight copper bangles for a skin and would offer eight skins for a musket.\(^{136}\)

Written at the height of the trade, when there were over twenty vessels on the coast, Hoskins's memorandum points to the dynamic and uneven commercial geography of the sea otter business around Vancouver Island. Native groups between Queen Charlotte Strait and the Straits of Juan de Fuca wanted different collections of commodities and established different prices for them. At Nootka Sound the Natives

were no longer "most desirous of iron", as Cook had reported. Copper had become a major article of trade and a basic medium of inter-Native commerce. Native groups around Vancouver Island also wanted firearms, and Gray and Hoskins thought that they had become "expert marksmen and exceedingly troublesome" with them. There were elaborate and extensive Native trade networks in Native and non-native goods, and in slaves. In 1792 some traders told Edward Bell, one of Vancouver's officers, that they had identified articles possessed by the Natives of Cape Flattery and the Columbia River that they had sold to Natives north of the Queen Charlotte Islands. A pewter basin stamped with "La Flovie V. Francais" (from the French vessel *La Flavie*), traded to Natives at Nootka Sound in late May 1792, was in the possession of the Nimpkish people of "Cheslakees" village on the north east coast of Vancouver Island when Vancouver's party visited them on 20 July 1792. Thomas Manby, another of Vancouver's officers, was in no doubt that trade goods passed through many hands and that Native groups were very

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137 Cook and King, *Voyage to the Pacific Ocean*, II, p.266.
139 John Hoskins and Robert Gray to Joseph Barrell, 12 July 1792, Howay, *Voyages of the 'Columbia*', p.472. These were the commodities in hottest demand, but traders worked the coast with a great medley of goods. In 1795 Charles Bishop of the *Ruby* listed nearly fifty different goods which he had traded for furs. Roe, *Journal and letters of Captain Charles Bishop*, pp.162-163. Vancouver left England with well over 200 different trade items. Alexander Davidson, "Invoice of sundry artices of merchandise...on board his majesty's ship Discovery", 15 January 1791, PRO ADM 1/4156.
140 Edmond S. Meaney (ed.), *A new Vancouver journal on the discovery of Puget Sound* (Seattle, WA: n.p., 1915), p.38. Meaney thought that this journal was written by Edward Bell, clerk of the *Chatham*.
141 The vessel *La Flavie* stayed at Nootka Sound for a few days and then sailed directly to the Queen Charlotte Islands, where the Spanish explorer Jacinto Caamaño saw it on 29 June. Henry R. Wagner and W.A. Newcombe (eds.), "The journal of Don Jacinto Caamaño," *BCHQ*, vol. 2 (July and October 1938), pp.189-222, 265-301, at pp.200 and 207. The basin was spotted at "Cheslakees" by Archibald Menzies: Newcombe, *Menzies journal*, p.89.
mobile: "...many of our commodities have found their way to situations far removed...and if we understood them [the Natives] right, it is not uncommon for a trading party to make a voyage for one or two Moons".\textsuperscript{142} As traders plied the coast, they started to appreciate the connections as well as the differences between Native groups, and got entangled in Native agendas and rivalries. Traders crossed Native networks of trade and power; they did not set them in motion.\textsuperscript{143}

As I have already indicated, it is difficult to distill the intricacies of white-Native contact or inter-Native interaction between the 1780s and 1810s into a neat set of generalisations. Historical records can be compared with archaeological and ethnographic materials to get a fuller picture of early contact, but these three data sets contain different kinds of evidence, are mediated by different methodological problematics, and cannot be easily spliced together. These sources can be synthesised to a certain extent, however, and some degree of regional synthesis is warranted since the principal scholars of the trade - Howay and more recently James Gibson - have produced ageographical generalisations about its impact on Native groups. Archaeologists and anthropologists are beginning to present a more regionally nuanced picture of Native life before and after contact, and it is becoming increasingly apparent that we cannot interpret Native participation in the trade unless we understand the timing and spacing of commercial interaction.

The maritime fur trade was more short-lived on Vancouver Island than on other parts of the coast. By 1800 most traders headed for Newitty on the northern tip of Vancouver Island when they arrived on the coast, and from there they generally sailed north rather than south.\textsuperscript{144} The trade was also concentrated in particular areas. I compare

\textsuperscript{142} Manby, "Manuscript journal," fol.46v.
\textsuperscript{143} This formulation is also expressed in R. Brian Ferguson and Neil L. Whitehead, \textit{War in the tribal zone: Expanding states and indigenous warfare} (Santa Fe, NM: School of American Research Press, 1992), p.6.
\textsuperscript{144} Captain John D'Wolf, \textit{A voyage to the north Pacific Ocean}... (Cambridge: Welch, Bigelow and Company, 1806), p.18; the harbour of Newitty is described in Anon.,
contact relations at Nootka Sound and Clayoquot Sound (the main centres of trade on Vancouver Island), and track their impact on outlying areas (roughly, from Brooks Peninsula to the Straits of Juan de Fuca) (see Figure II:1).

But I will preface this regional geography by situating Nuu-chah-nulth agendas in more holistic ethnographic context. For while the Native groups of Vancouver Island engaged traders in different ways, Nuu-chah-nulth social life was mediated by a more general set of principles. To interpret Native agendas we have to understand the nature of the "local group" (the basic unit of Nuu-chah-nulth social and political organisation) and inter-group alliances.

"Directions for entering the principal harbours on the north west coast of America by different commanders," BCARS A/B/20.5/C76. By the early 1810s, however, there were signs that the supply of furs at Newitty was drying up. See "Ship Atahualpa of Boston," log, 16 July - 13 August 1812, Bancroft Library, Berkeley, P-K 211.

In 1817 a French trader was told by a chief of Nootka Sound that since the Spanish had vacated Yuquot in 1795 and British and American traders had moved north, only three or so vessels had visited the sound. M. Camille de Roquefeuil, A voyage round the world, between the years 1816-1819 (London: Sir Richard Phillips and Co., 1823), p.31.
Figure II:1 Territories of Nuu-chah-nulth tribal groups, late 19th century.
Nuu-chah-nulth socio-political arrangements

The ethnographer Philip Drucker explained that Nuu-chah-nulth social organisation centred on "a family of chiefs who owned territorial rights, houses, and various other privileges", and "bore a name, usually that of their 'place' (a site at their fishing ground where they 'belonged'), or sometimes that of a chief; and had a tradition, firmly believed, of descent from a common ancestor."145 A local group was comprised of one or more family lines, or "ushtakamhl" in Nuu-chah-nulth, each of which had its own house containing a chief and lesser chiefs who were ranked according to their genealogical proximity to a common ancestor.146 A large ushtakamhl sometimes subdivided, with lesser chiefs and their families building separate houses. The chief of the most important family line led the local group. That is, local groups were built on rank, hereditary ownership and bonds of kinship, and their territories were demarcated on the landscape.147 Drucker highlighted that Nuu-chah-nulth people

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There has been both continuity and change among Nuu-chah-nulth groups over the last few thousand years. I will discuss Native social practices in the past tense and hope that I am not being disrespectful to Nuu-chah-nulth people, who still identify themselves in terms of local groups and tribes, and traditional villages and territories. I certainly do not want to imply that pre-contact Native societies were radically, easily, or quickly disrupted by contact with non-natives. Nonetheless, while some of the most basic concepts of Nuu-chah-nulth social organisation may have remained in tact over the last two-three hundred years, details and patterns of Native group composition have changed.


carried the concept of ownership to an incredible extreme. Not only rivers and fishing places close at hand, but the waters of the sea for miles offshore, the land, the houses, carvings on a house post, the right to marry in a certain way or the right to omit part of an ordinary marriage ceremony, names, songs, dances, medicines, and rituals, all were privately owned property.\(^{148}\)

Native settlement at Yuquot, or "Friendly Cove," in Nootka Sound dates back over 4000 years, and Native people have lived on much of the west coast of Vancouver Island for thousands of years.\(^{149}\) In the earliest centuries of Native settlement around Nootka Sound there were probably a number of small, independent local groups, each of which owned a stretch of coastal or inland water where salmon ran, a stretch of beach, berry and root patches, and hunting grounds. Nuu-chah-nulth people fished, hunted and collected fruits and vegetables in these territories at different times of the year, but they were primarily a sea-oriented people who harvested marine life. Archaeologists and anthropologists think that Native territories became more clearly demarcated as the population of the region increased and groups competed and fought over resource sites - especially fishing grounds.\(^{150}\) The formalised concepts of ownership described by Drucker were probably in place for a number of centuries before contact.

An individual's social standing was bound up with the number and importance of the privileges he/she owned or could exercise, and the most important privileges, associated with the ownership of tracts of land and water, were held by the most senior chiefs. José Mariano Moziño, a Spanish botanist stationed at Nootka Sound in 1792, named three "classes": chiefs, or "taises", at the top of the social ladder, who carried out


"the duties of father of the families, of king, and high priest"; a nobility of "taiscatlati", or "brothers of the chief"; and "meschimes", or commoners, who were "not brothers or immediate relatives of the tais". There was a fourth class of slaves, who were captured in wars, and were owned and traded by chiefs. The leader of the local group owned the group's resource territories, hereditary and ritual names, and privileges. Lesser chiefs, or nobles, owned their houses, rights to resource procurement in particular areas, and some ceremonial privileges. Commoners were only distantly related to the highest-ranking family line, and only a chief could enhance their social status. Slaves served their owners, lived at their mercy, had no rights, and were traded as property.

Nuu-chah-nulth societies were hierarchised, then. But authority did not simply flow from the top of this social ladder down. Certain responsibilities came with the assumption of economic and ceremonial privileges. Chiefs relied on the members of

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152 Other observers tried to piece together this social system. Juan Francisco de la Bodega y Quadra, the Spanish commander at Nootka Sound in 1792, concurred with Mozino and emphasised that commoners and slaves lived under the same material conditions. "Voyage to the n.w. coast of North America by Don Juan Francisco de la Bodega y Quadra...1792," pp.51-52, V.D. Webb trans., typescript of photostat in the Huntingdon Library, UBCL-SC. Roquefeuil, on the other hand, judged (correctly, according to some ethnographers) that commoners were part of the kinship system but slaves ("Mitschimis") were not - Voyage round the world, p.100.

It is difficult to know how rigid the boundaries between these "classes" were. Drucker claimed that there was "an unbroken series of graduated statuses" among the non-slave population. Philip Drucker, "Rank, wealth, and kinship in northwest coast society" [orig. pub. 1939], in Tom McFeat (ed.), Indians of the northwest coast (Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 1967), pp.134-146; the quotation is from p.134. Also see idem., Northern and central Nootkan tribes, pp.243-244.

153 Drucker drew a distinction between "economic privileges", associated with "shelter, food, and wealth, the ownership of habitations, domains for fishing and hunting, salvage rights, and all the special expressions of such rights", and "ceremonial privileges", which included "the right to give certain rituals or to perform a certain act in them, the
the local group to work for them and help them fight wars. In return for these favours, chiefs were responsible for planning and coordinating the economic and ceremonial activities of the local group, and protecting the group's village(s) from attack. Chiefs also had to provide for their families and relatives, grant commoners access to resource sites, and were expected to reward group members for hard work or valour. Chiefs who held hereditary territorial privileges were usually the first to be offered food procured by their relatives and followers from the resource sites of the local group. Such offerings were an acknowledgement of a chief's exalted rank, and reaffirmed the hierarchical social relations of the group. Chiefs would then redistribute part of what they had received at feasts given for their group and for visitors. High-ranking Native people also maintained and enhanced their status and authority through warfare, and by forming marriage and/or trade ties with other groups. In short, chiefly power was performative as well as hereditary.

Wayne Suttles has argued that this Native social system of authority-cum-responsibility was conditioned by environmental factors. He pointed out that the northwest coast provides ample means of subsistence but "is neither uniformly rich and dependable within any tribal area nor precisely the same from area to area." Native groups organised and divided labour in particular ways, generated systems of exchange and redistribution, and instituted a set of social values (such as prestige) in order to cope

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156 Wayne Suttles, "Variation in habitat and culture on the northwest coast" [orig. pub. 1960], and "Coping with abundance: Subsistence on the northwest coast" [orig. pub. 1968], in his *Coast Salish essays* (Seattle and London: University of Washington Press/Vancouver: Talon Books; 1987), pp.26-44, and 45-63; the quotations are from pp.43 and 46.
with cycles of abundance and scarcity. Suttles suggested that this ecological reasoning found its most formal and elaborate expression in the feast (or potlatch) system, where wealth was redistributed, favours were extended and repaid, and rights and privileges were bestowed and confirmed.

[A] man's affinals are his allies against his importunate blood kin. Perhaps a man can save better by giving to his affinals, who are honor-bound to return the gifts when he needs them for potlatching, than by keeping his food and wealth at home only to have it used up by his own blood kin, whom he is honor-bound to support.

In other words, chiefly families, and ultimately the local group, would suffer if wealth was retained in too few hands or if chiefs were too miserly. Chiefly beneficence with local group affiliates and other Native groups was a method of coping with environmental flux.

These are perhaps some the most basic factors that influenced the structure of Native societies. Most ethnographers who worked with Nuu-chah-nulth people noted that local groups suffered from periods of scarcity. In times of need, local groups sometimes warred with their neighbours. They also attacked other groups (absorbing territories), or formed alliances with them (gaining access to more resource sites) in order to reduce the risk of starvation.

The elaboration and persistence of different economic and social emphases among Native groups cannot be explained by environmental considerations alone, however. Suttles admitted that Coast Salish and Wakashan (Nuu-chah-nulth/Kwakwaka'wakw) groups distributed wealth in different ways, and cherished

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158 Suttles, *Coast Salish essays*, p.41.
159 See, especially, Drucker, *Northern and central Nootkan tribes*, pp.15-61, 243-273, and *passim*.
slightly different social values. Leadership was more rigidly determined by hereditary ownership among the latter groups than among the former. In fact, one can derive a more sociological explanation for the formation of redistributive mechanisms among Nuu-chah-nulth groups.

Drucker, and Edward Sapir, claimed that kinship was the centrepiece of Nuu-chah-nulth social organisation. Local groups were primarily kin communities characterised and linked by bilateral descent. Drucker stated that it was "a fundamental tenet of all Nootka social behaviour that one had dealings with one's kin." Philip Newman, an anthropologist who synthesised Drucker's work on social life, noted that while individuals were affiliated with a local group in which they could find some relative (however remote), they could often choose to affiliate with one of a number of groups because they could find relatives in a number of places. Nuu-chah-nulth kinship networks permitted, and in a sense encouraged, individuals to shift residences and change their group affiliations. Local groups could be fairly fluid. People sometimes moved if the group they were with had been decimated by war or disease and was struggling to operate successfully as an economic or ceremonial unit. But many moved out of choice.

There were no fixed rules of residence. When Nuu-chah-nulth people were deciding where to live, they considered how closely they were related to a chief or chiefly family. Since "class" was based on kinship - the social rank of one's parents, and on primogeniture - one's choice of residence would be influenced by genealogical factors. A person would want to live where he/she was closest to that line of descent in a local group which possessed the most important rights and privileges.

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161 Ibid., p.478.
162 Drucker, Northern and central Nootkan tribes, p.274.
164 Drucker, Northern and central Nootkan tribes, p.141.
Newman argued that among higher-rank people "there seems to have been a tendency for an individual to chose the place where he could expect to maximize his rights and where the performance of his obligations would be the most rewarding."\textsuperscript{165} This also held for lower-rank people who had some fairly direct kin connection with a chiefly family. Lower-rank people who were only distantly related to an important line of descent might change residence a number of times during their life, and Drucker understood that they were often given minor privileges "in an effort to bind them more surely to their chiefs."\textsuperscript{166} Indeed, Drucker got the impression from his informants "that there was a continual stream of people, mostly of low rank, pouring in and out of the houses", and he characterised lower-rank people as "for the most part perpetual transients".\textsuperscript{167}

When lower-rank people were thinking about where to live, they would have considered how generous their superiors had been. Chiefs who did not accumulate enough food or wealth to redistribute, or who were stingy, might lose followers.\textsuperscript{168} Chiefs wanted to prevent this, of course, because if they lost followers they would not be able to exploit their economic privileges as effectively. As such Drucker claimed that "both the chief and his tenants knew that the former's effective performance of his role, his greatness, depended on the assistance of his tenants."\textsuperscript{169}

There were aggregations of Native people larger than the local group: tribes (characterised by Drucker as two or more local groups sharing a common winter village),

\textsuperscript{165} Newman, "Intergroup collectivity," p.11.
\textsuperscript{166} Drucker, \textit{Northern and central Nootkan tribes}, p.279.
\textsuperscript{167} \textit{Ibid.}. Or as one of his informants put it: "After a man had stayed with one chief for a while, fishing and working for him, he would decide he had helped that chief enough, and would move to the house of another chief to whom he was related".
\textsuperscript{168} This tendency was documented by Edward Sapir and Morris Swadesh, who worked with Nuu-chah-nulth groups in the region of Clayoquot Sound, Barkley Sound, and Alberni Inlet. See their \textit{Native accounts of Nootka ethnography} [orig. pub. 1955] (New York: AMS Press, 1978), pp.111, 315, and 346.
\textsuperscript{169} Drucker, \textit{Northern and central Nootkan tribes}, p.454.
and confederacies (a collection of local groups or tribes sharing a summer village). Native people united in these intergroup arrangements for a number of reasons: when one group dominated another militarily; for mutual protection against common enemies; because of inter-marriage; and through mutual consent. Such arrangements lasted for varying lengths of time, and Drucker thought that there was "a very real feeling of solidarity" within them even though they were not defined strictly by ties of kinship. The social and political integrity of the local group was not undermined as a result of these mergers, however. Rather, these collective communities contained group subdivisions. Or as Sapir explained: while no longer completely autonomous, each local group retained "its own stock of legends, its distinctive privileges, its own house in the [confederate] village, its old village sites and distinctive fishing and hunting waters that were still remembered in detail by its members." In short, kinship and hereditary rank were the basic organising principles of Nuu-chah-nulth societies, and Native life along the west coast of Vancouver Island was socially and spatially dynamic.

170 Ibid., pp.220-221.
171 Ibid., p.221.
172 Edward Sapir, "Sayach'apis, a Nootkan trader," in Elise Clews Parsons (ed.), American indian life: By several of its students (New York: B.W. Huebsch Inc., 1922), pp.297-323; the quotation is from p.308. Also see Sapir and Swadesh, Native accounts of Nootka ethnography, pp.43-45.
173 This is obviously a synthetic anthropological sketch. Drucker, who was in the field in the 1930s, estimated that the mid-to-late nineteenth century was his "ethnographic horizon"; he could not date much of his data. Sapir, who worked with Nuu-chah-nulth groups in the 1910s, wrote to a colleague that because of "the strong development of family property rights" among these groups, "to get a really adequate idea of their customs one must get separate accounts of almost every custom and separate versions of family legends and songs from several families. In other words an almost endless field of work is opened up." These methodological issues should be noted, but it seems to me that Sapir (with characteristic insight) solved his own problem, suggesting that any "adequate" or holistic interpretation of Nuu-chah-nulth social life should take as its centrepiece the pervasiveness and sophistication of these kin relations in "Nootkan" memory, and the social order and dynamism that they created. See Drucker, Northern and central Nootkan tribes, p.3; the quotation is from Edward Sapir to C.F. Newcombe, 25 November 1910, Newcombe Family Papers, vol. 5, file 126.
Now what impact would these social relations have had on the sea otter trade? Obviously, the wealth that traders injected into Native societies was perceived and controlled in particular ways. It seems likely all Native people would have wanted to trade as much as they could, for wealth was a form of prestige and a means of enhancing social standing. However, economic opportunity was not equally distributed through the local group. A small number of chiefs and their families owned the areas in which sea otters were caught and the waters in which traders anchored. Chiefs therefore held the privilege of controlling access to trade vessels and would have expected to gain the most from the sea otter business.

Chiefs could handle the traffic in furs in their territories in a variety of ways. The most direct and tangible way for them to accumulate wealth was by catching and trading sea otters themselves. They could also act as middlemen between traders and Native groups visiting their waters to trade. Chiefly families could thereby enhance their personal prestige by giving more feasts and using their wealth to seal trade and marriage alliances. If chiefs were generous with their affiliates, they might also consolidate their authority over the local group and attract more followers. Whether or not this was a viable strategy depended on a number of factors. The number of trade vessels and local groups involved in the trade would have been one of the main factors influencing a chief's decision. If, say, there were five vessels in a small area trading with five local groups (ie, with Natives from different lineages and villages, but among people who could find relatives in a number of places), then Native people who held few or unimportant privileges might chose to live with the chief who was doing the best business and redistributing the most wealth. Monopolisation, seemingly, would best suit chiefs who had the most access to, and control over, trade, and who could keep their followers contented.

Monopolisation was by no means the only, or the most sensible, option, however. Chiefs and their close relatives could catch only a certain number of sea otters; if a
number of trade vessels appeared in their waters at the same time, they might run out of
furs quickly and miss a trading opportunity. Chiefs could expand their economic
horizons by trading or warring with other groups, thereby accumulating furs, gaining new
fur-bearing territories, and capturing slaves who would work for them. But it made equal
sense for them to employ their own followers to hunt and/or trade on their behalf. Chiefs
may have expected to receive all the wealth generated by these group ventures, and then
redistributed part of it. Or they could allow their people to keep a portion of what they
had traded. With this inclusionary strategy, chiefs could generate more wealth from the
fur trade and solidify group affiliation.

But by opening up the trade, delegating responsibility, and granting commoners
hunting and trading privileges, chiefs could also lose a certain amount of control over the
local group. They would have to weigh up how much time and how many people could
be devoted to the sea otter business without disrupting the resource procurement regimen
of the group; whites generally did not trade food. Commoners might not hand over all of
the goods that they were supposed to, or they might carry off the goods they had traded
and use them to attain a higher social status in another village. Nor was warfare always a
sensible option. Drucker claimed that it created "many difficult social situations"
because of the extensiveness of kin links.\(^{174}\) Since the members of local groups and
tribes had relatives in a number of places (some of them distant), warfare could create
divided loyalties. Drucker judged that in times of war, women tended to favour their
blood kin rather than their husbands or in-laws, and "thus it was that plans were often
betrayed, and information was given to attackers."\(^{175}\) If chiefs did not assess these
possibilities, their strategies of group inclusion and territorial expansion could become as
self-defeating as monopolisation.

These are abstract scenarios, but they were all present in some shape or form in the maritime fur trade on Vancouver Island. Native agendas were also affected by the depletion of sea otter stocks, and, in places, by the spread of disease. These variables were negotiated in different ways by the chiefs of Nootka Sound and Clayoquot Sound, but the contact process in both areas was underpinned by the dynamics of the Nuu-chah-nulth kinship system.176

176 Thomas has questioned the efficacy of this style of anthropological reconstruction for the study of cross-cultural exchange relations. He thinks that it tends to posit "an authentic indigenous form out of time". Yet Drucker and Sapir knew that they were not recording a timeless, idealised Native past. They judged their ethnographic horizon to be the mid-nineteenth century. It is impossible to weigh up precisely how theory-laden their analyses were, but these scholars were also chronicling social processes that traders encountered and in part observed. Thomas, Entangled objects, p.36.
Chapter Eight

Nootka Sound

Commercial contact and chiefly power

In 1786 James Strange (with the vessels Captain Cook and Experiment) named the Native village of Yuquot at the mouth of Nootka Sound "Friendly Harbour" (see Figure II:2). In spite of Hanna's troubles, the first traders to reach the sound generally viewed it as a safe harbour and a source of high quality furs. They grasped, as did Cook, that the Native groups of the sound had sharply defined territories and notions of property, and that Native access to trading vessels was controlled by chiefs. This chiefly mediation was one of the main reasons why interaction was for the most part orderly. Native-white interaction was also calmed, if complicated, by the presence of a Spanish military garrison at Yuquot between 1790 and 1795. Spanish officials monitored the movements and actions of traders, and tried to keep the peace. They also formed close ties with the most important chiefs of the sound, dining with them regularly, attending Native feasts, being invited to important Native events, using Native people as messengers, and seeking a chief's opinion when investigating acts of misconduct. The American trader Joseph Ingraham suggested that the Native chiefs of the sound had been "polished" by the Spanish - that the two groups engaging each other "with a great deal of ceremony - bowing, scraping, adieu senor".

177 Walker, Account of a voyage, p.48.
178 Galiano, for instance, noted that a close friendship prevailed between the Spanish and the Indians. "Moved by the gifts and good treatment of the commandant [Quadra], Maquinna had come to live very close to the ships. He ate nearly every day from the table of the commandant.... He used a knife and fork like the most polite European, letting the servants wait on him, and himself contributing to the good humour of the society." Kendrick, Voyage of the Sutil and Mexicana, p.73.
179 Kaplanoff, Joseph Ingraham's journal, p.222.
There was a serene quality to contact at Nootka Sound. The Spanish explorer Alejandro Malaspina, who visited the Spanish garrison at Yuquot in August 1791, observed:

Here the ship is surrounded by canoes, all with some goods for sale, all with the same desire for trade, all coming alongside confusedly in frail canoes, necessarily with frequent collisions, yet here is a silence, a harmony, an order which nothing can break. In the European ports to the contrary, scarcely do two boats alongside a ship touch each other, with any damage whatsoever, and instantly cries are heard from all sides and not infrequently an assault follows requiring the intervention of the Law.  

Malaspina knew that commercial interaction in the area was heavily influenced by Native values. Contact was managed and restricted along certain lines by specific chiefs. In some respects, though, this image of harmony was a facade. Spanish officials used images of friendship and order for propaganda purposes, to appease their bosses in New Spain and Madrid who had instructed them to be beneficent towards Native people. A Native chief told Malaspina that the Spanish had been received with "vexation, coldness, and fear". By 1800 the Native groups of the sound had many reasons to complain about both the Spanish and fur traders. In 1789 Callicum, a chief of Tahsis Inlet, was shot and killed by the Spanish official Don Esteban José Martinez. Maquinna, the highest-ranking chief at Yuquot, fled to Clayoquot Sound for a while in fear of his life, and moved his people from Yuquot to Aoxsha a few miles north (see Figure II:2). Martinez occupied and fortified Yuquot and the Spanish expanded

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181 They also used such images to suggest to the world that the Spanish were not imperial bullies. Spanish officials in New Spain and Madrid were secretive about their imperial plans for northwest coast, however; the journals of Spanish explorers were locked in government vaults, or buried in archives, for many years.
183 Newcombe Family Papers, vol. 43, folder 47; Manuel Quimper to Bodega y Quadra, 3 December 1790, in Mary Elizabeth Daylton (trans.), "Official documents relating to Spanish and Mexican voyages of navigation, exploration, and discovery, made in North America in the 18th century," p.135, BCARS A/A/10/M57t.
Figure II:2 Nootka Sound - Settlement patterns and socio-political arrangements, early contact period.

- Territorial boundary of tribal groups
- Territorial holdings of various chiefs allied in the Yuquot-Tahsis confederacy
- Settlement and/or resource site
- Settlement and/or resource site with ethnographic name
- Settlement identified by white observers, 1775-1810
their military presence there the following year. One Spanish official reported that within a few months of occupying Yuquot, Native people "were continually asking when we were going to leave". With their resource procurement regimen disrupted by this Spanish imposition on their summer village, Maquinna's people went short of food; after a severe winter in 1793-94 they began to starve and Ramón Saavedra, a Spanish official, was obliged to cook a cauldron of kidney beans for them each day. And while Spanish officials sought to maintain peace and harmony, it seems that they found it difficult to control their troops. Spain's five year sojourn at Nootka Sound was peppered with incidents of violence. Spanish troops chased Native women for sex, and took house boards from Native villages. Native people became frightened when the Spanish visited their villages.

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185 "Extract of the navigation made by the pilot Don Juan Pantoja y Arriago...", in Henry R. Wagner, Spanish explorations in the Straits of Juan de Fuca (Santa Ana, CA: Fine Arts Press, 1933), p.162.
Fur traders only considered Nootka Sound a safe and serene place in comparison with other trading locations on the coast.\(^{188}\) By the early 1790s they had explored the northern parts of the sound, and the Spanish had mapped the region. Native people became familiar, and, as Belcher suggested, Nootka Sound became an elaborate textual space. Still, traders threatened and shot at Native people, and took furs and provisions by force. For example, when James Colnett traded at the mouth of Muchalat Inlet in 1787, he became suspicious of Native trade motives and held a Native person hostage until he had a clearer picture of the situation.\(^ {189}\) The following summer William Douglas (one of Meares's associates) purportedly chased Native people up the sound and took provisions by force.\(^ {190}\) And according to Saavedra, the American trader Kendrick cannonaded a Native village on the east side of the sound in July 1791, killing 300 people.\(^ {191}\) British and American traders, and the Spanish, fabricated some stories of violence, and Native people, sensing the rivalry between these non-native groups, also exaggerated reports of conflict for their own ends. But Native-white conflict at Nootka Sound was by no means fictional.\(^ {192}\) In 1905 the Catholic missionary Augustus Brabant was told by some Native

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\(^{188}\) Roquefeuil, for instance, described the people of Nootka Sound as the "least dangerous" Native group on the coast - *Voyage round the world*, p.103.


\(^{190}\) "Haswell's log of the first voyage of the 'Columbia'," Howay, *Voyages of the 'Columbia*', p.53.


\(^{192}\) In September 1818 Roquefeuil was told by a Native chief of the sound that an American vessel had just departed having seized Maquinna and his son, and demanded a large ransom of furs. Roquefeuil, *Voyage round the world*, p.93. Galiano noted that Maquinna "complained a great deal about the treatment [of his people] by foreign ships which trafficked along the coast, because of several outrages which he said his people had received." Kendrick, *Voyage of the Sutil and Mexicana*, p.73. For Mowachaht accounts of the way traders abused Native people see Edward Curtis, *The North American Indian, volume 11: The Nootka; the Haida*, Frederick Webb Hodge ed. (Norwood, MA: Plimpton Press, 1916), pp.7-9; Newcombe Family Papers, vol. 36, folder 16, and vol. 43, folder 38.
people of the sound that their ancestors were eager to tell them what the Spanish and these traders had done. 

"[T]he natives had a bitter hatred for the white man since the Spanish fort", Brabant was told; "that they suffered bad treatment from whites without taking revenge in fear that they might lose trade [from the British and Americans] & protection [from the Spanish]." After the Spanish left, few vessels visited Nootka Sound and Chief Maquinna "became spiteful and vowed to plunder the next ship that came". That ship was the Boston. Jewitt understood Maquinna's frustration and blamed "the melancholy disasters" that befell traders on "the imprudent conduct of some of the captains and the crews of the ships employed in this trade, in exasperating [Native people]...by insulting, plundering, and even killing them on slight grounds."  

Summarising his sojourn at Nootka Sound, James Strange emphasised that he had avoided conflict. But this, he noted, "was more Owing to the Caution I took...rather than to any Good disposition in them, not to attempt the Commission of Theft, which they were always ready to do whenever an Opportunity Offered." Beneath this veneer of order and calm there remained a level of apprehension and mistrust between traders and Native people. John Meares wrote glowingly about the Native chiefs of the sound, but was disdainful about the general Native population, stating that "it had been very generally observed by us all that at times, their countenances told a very plain tale of a savage mind."  

These platitudes about Native people belong to the economy of representation I have outlined. At Nootka Sound, though, which pundits hoped would be the hearth of the sea otter business for many years, traders knew that to be successful they would have

193 Augustus Brabant to John Walbran, 19 July 1905, Roman Catholic Church, Diocese of Victoria, Papers, 1842-1912, BCARS Add.MSS. 2742.  
195 [Strange], Journal, p.28.  
196 Meares, Voyages, p.142.
to try to understand Native ways.\textsuperscript{197} Meares wrote: "We had not the time, even if we had possessed the ability, to have pursued the track of the philosopher and the naturalist. We had other objects before us; and all the knowledge we have obtained was, as it were, accidently acquired in pursuit them."\textsuperscript{198} This "knowledge" was about how to trade furs, and since Native chiefs seemed to control the traffic, Meares and other traders mused about them in detail. Walker was another keen observer of Native social life. He supposed that Maquinna and Callicum were chiefs because they were "highly esteemed by their Countrymen", and continued:

\begin{quote}
We were told, that they derived their consequence from the Number of their Male relations and connections. Several Families lived in each of their Houses, and these if we understood them correctly, were connected with them by ties of blood. Some of them fished and hunted for the benefit of their respective Chiefs; while others were ready to attend his Person. The whole composed one family of which the Chief was head. They deposited the joint fruits of their labours in the Chests of their leader, where it remained entirely at his disposal: But in some measure it must be considered as a joint stock, as the Chief was obliged to provide for the whole family.\textsuperscript{199}
\end{quote}

Walker judged that hereditary right and succession "was the acknowledged order of inheritance" at Nootka Sound, but he also noted that it was "evident that as obedience was voluntary, the exercise of authority must be limited and feeble. The Chiefs to ascertain [sic] extent would probably be elective, and their power would be in proportion to their Personal qualities."\textsuperscript{200}

These traders did not grasp the intricacies of the kinship system reconstructed by anthropologists (and some facets of this system may have emerged during the early contact period), but they did learn that the Native people they traded with were neither autonomous individuals nor a homogenous mass. Walker and Meares began to realise that Native trade methods did not simply flower from some essential "disposition" - or "a

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{197} See Harlow and Madden, \textit{British colonial developments}, pp.21-32.
\item \textsuperscript{198} \textit{Ibid.}, pp.270-271.
\item \textsuperscript{199} Walker, \textit{Account of a voyage}, pp.60-61.
\item \textsuperscript{200} \textit{Ibid.}, p.61.
\end{itemize}
savage mind" - but were influenced by these "joint stock" economic and political relations.\textsuperscript{201}

The chiefs of Nootka Sound pursued an inclusionary contact strategy: commoners as well as the members of chiefly families participated in the trade. But the chiefs commanded the most furs, monitored the activities of their followers, and accumulated a disproportionate amount of wealth from the trade. When trade vessels approached the sound, especially before and after the Spanish occupation of Yuquot, they were met by many Native people who wanted to trade. Chiefs had the most furs, however, and held the privilege of dealing with vessel masters first.\textsuperscript{202} Commoners often had little more than fresh fish to part with.\textsuperscript{203} Walker recognised that Maquinna and Callicum were wealthier than anyone else at Yuquot because they employed their relatives as hunters, received tribute from strangers who wanted access to the Captain Cook and Experiment, and because they traded for furs with other groups.\textsuperscript{204} And with wealth came personal prestige. When these chiefs returned to Yuquot in May 1788 after an expedition, they were received by their followers with fanfare and ceremony.\textsuperscript{205}

Traders looked to strike trading relationships with such chiefs. On Vancouver Island, as in other parts of the Pacific, the proffering and exchange of presents was an important feature of Native-white interaction. Traders such as Colnett, who had been

\textsuperscript{201} As such they noticed some of the geopolitical relations described by Cook. Meares and Walker had copies of Cook's \textit{Voyage to the Pacific Ocean} in their cabins. Meares claimed that the official account of Cook's third voyage was "universally read and known" by the first traders - \textit{Voyages}, p.xliii. Walker referred to Cook frequently in his journal. But Meares's and Walker's remarks about socio-political relations at Nootka Sound have a different texture than the explorer's. Cook and his officers struggled to distinguish between chiefs and Native people of lower status. Cook wrote little about chiefs at Nootka Sound and simply ventured that their authority did not extend much further than over their families. Beaglehole, \textit{Journals}, III, pp.317 and 322; Cook and King, \textit{Voyage to the Pacific}, II, p.333; and see above, Part I.

\textsuperscript{202} See Jewitt, \textit{Adventures and sufferings}, pp.68-70.


\textsuperscript{204} See Walker, \textit{Account of a voyage}, pp.43-59.

\textsuperscript{205} See Meares, \textit{Voyages}, pp.112-114.
trained by Cook, sensed the importance of seeking out Native dignitaries when he arrived at a new place and offering some object in order to ingratiate himself, appease Native suspicions, or entice Native people to trade. Colnett offered grenadiers' caps. The chiefs of the sound usually reciprocated, and traders were sometimes invited ashore for a feast on their arrival. Meares emphasised that Maquinna and Callicum expected to exchange presents before trade commenced. The chiefs of Nootka Sound accepted many different articles as presents, but they cherished copper sheet and ear-rings, broadcloth and blankets, guns, powder and shot the most. That is, they took as presents items that they also wanted to trade for. Chiefs viewed these presents as an acknowledgement of their status and authority.

Walker and Meares also ascertained that Maquinna and Callicum were ranked differently and performed different duties. When Strange and Walker visited Yuquot and stopped at Callicum's house first, thinking that he was the more important chief, Maquinna was "highly offended at the preference" and explained that he was served by far more people. "Enumerating every thing esteemed valuable at Nootka Arrows, Canoes, Iron, Copper, Skins, he asserted that in all these he was richer than Kurrighum", Walker noted. Once this relationship was understood, Strange tried to encourage Maquinna "to part with everything for furs" and promised the chief that his vessels would return to Nootka Sound "with more Copper and Iron than his house would contain". Meares observed that the districts of Nootka Sound were "more immediately

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206 See Meares's testimony to British government officials during the Nootka Sound crisis. Great Britain - Privy Council - Register, 8 February 1791, PRO PC 2/135, pp.442-443.
208 See Jewitt, Adventures and sufferings, p.39 and passim.
209 Walker, Account of a voyage, p.67. Strange tried to make amends for his mistake by offering Maquinna a present of copper, iron tools, and copper ear rings for his wife.
under...[Maquinna's] command" than Callicum's, but that between them, the dominions of these two chiefs extended as far north as Cape Scott.\textsuperscript{211} Meares also noted that Maquinna possessed many slaves.\textsuperscript{212} Callicum hunted and collected furs to sell to the vessels, and managed the traffic of Native groups visiting the sound.\textsuperscript{213} Maquinna entertained the captains of trading vessels, oversaw village affairs at Yuquot, and supervised his people's dealings with traders.\textsuperscript{214}

These chiefly relations of power made contact at Nootka Sound relatively safe. For the trader, however, safety did not necessarily amount to satisfaction. Meares both summarised traders' respect for Native protocol and pointed to traders' equivocations over the contact process:

In the interval between our arrival and the fifth of June [1788], a very brisk trade had been carried on for furs, and we had procured upwards of one hundred and forty sea otter skins. On our first arrival we had stipulated a certain price for every different kind of fur, according to its value; but in the whole business of this traffic they availed themselves of every advantage; and it was our interest, from the views of future benefit, to submit to any deviation they attempted to make from their original agreement.

And after a short time, Meares continued, "they changed the whole order of their traffic with us; and instead of common barter, according to the distinct value of the articles exchanged, the whole of our mercantile dealings was carried on by making reciprocal presents".\textsuperscript{215} Meares could not determine the reason for this switch and was not sure whether he was being tricked or if these Native people simply did not understood his concept of value.

Walker used stronger words to convey his confusions. He noted that the Natives of Yuquot "showed great inconstancy in their desires after different commodities, an

\textsuperscript{211} "Testimony of John Meares," PRO PC 2/135, p.442.
\textsuperscript{212} Meares, Voyages, p.255.
\textsuperscript{213} Meares thought that Maquinna had appointed Callicum to be "our guardian and protector" - Voyages, p.114
\textsuperscript{214} See Walker, Account of a voyage, pp.51 and 59; Meares, Voyages, p.133.
\textsuperscript{215} Meares, Voyages, pp.119-120.
article being one Day in high estimation, and the next totally despised”, and they used "a thousand little arts" to inflate the value of their goods. Native people would trade metal goods such as copper kettles, only to turn them into personal ornaments. They would show great interest in certain articles but refuse to trade for them. They sometimes ceased trading after obtaining a certain number of goods even though they still had furs or other items in their canoes. They would pay great attention to the ships one day and ignore them the next. Strange wondered why most of the Indians seemed to think that his vessels had visited the sound solely to obtain food. Other traders did not understand how Native people distinguished between utility and fashion. "They give and receive what is useful", Walker remarked; yet "profit and conveniency yield, not unseldom even in this state, to vanity". And as the French trader Camille de Roquefeuil explained in 1818, the Native's vanity case contained a mixture of the old and the new: "...a comb, some necklaces and ear-rings, a mirror, some down to serve as powder, and several little bags, with black, white, and red dust".

None of this quite made sense to traders. At Nootka Sound, it was the hybridity and seeming irrationality of these exchange processes and notions of value, rather than the actions of chiefs such as Maquinna and Callicum, that prompted frustration and anxiety. "Among savages", Walker declared, struggling to fathom Native trade methods, "the greatest ferocity, and an extraordinary suavity of manners, follow close Upon each

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218 Meares claimed that the only metal tools these Native people valued were saws and chisels - *Voyages*, p.262.  
220 [Strange], *Journal*, p.22.  
222 Roquefeuil, *Voyage round the world*, p.33.
He used this expression to take the pomp and ceremony out of contact at Yuquot; it was a comment about the Natives' seemingly unpredictable standards of commercial interaction. They were generous, sincere and kind one minute, Walker noted, but selfish, savage and rude the next. They were open and fair traders one minute, but devious and secretive the next. Walker hammered home his message by informing his readers that the South Sea Islanders, "who are Cannibals, guilty of Murdering their Children...are at the same time distinguished by their mild, social and hospitable disposition." By the end of his stay at Nootka Sound, Walker was convinced that Maquinna and Callicum, who appeared initially to be competitors, had conspired to deceive their visitors. And Strange suspected that acts of theft were committed "with the Connivance & perhaps at the special Command" of these chiefs. Meares and Colnett were less discriminating with their accusations, calling the Native people of the sound fickle and indolent.

These frustrations were compounded by issues of cannibalism and sexual licence. Most late eighteenth-century European explorers and traders looked for signs of cannibalism when they were in unfamiliar territory; it was seen as a litmus test of savagery and cultural difference. Maritime fur traders and Spanish officials tried to determine whether the Natives of Nootka Sound were cannibals, and Native chiefs, cognisant of this form of enquiry, toyed with white fears. The Spanish bought children from Maquinna for sheets of copper under the impression that he would have otherwise

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223 Walker, *Account of a voyage*, p.70
228 I agree with Obeyesekere that "statements about cannibalism reveal more about the relations between Europeans and Savages during early and late contact than, as ethnographic statements, about the nature of Savage anthropophagy." Gananath Obeyesekere, "British cannibals: Contemplation of an event in the death and resurrection of James Cook, explorer," *Critical Inquiry*, 18 (1992), pp.630-654; the quotation is from p.631.
devoured them.229 And in 1796, when Captain Péron questioned Maquinna about a six
year-old he was carrying around, the chief responded: "I plan to have him for my
supper."230 Native men also frustrated sailors by toying with their licentiousness. The
prostitution of Native women to the crews of trade vessels was much less common on the
northwest coast than in other parts of the Pacific, and most of the Nuu-chah-nulth women
who were prostituted probably came from the slave population.231 Sailors' attempts to
tempt or bribe the women of Nootka Sound into prostitution were mostly rejected.232
However, Walker noted that Native men "never made any scruple of bartering for their
Women...and that with much obscenity, but they could never be prevailed upon to bring
the affair to a conclusion. It evidently appeared, that all they designed was to raise a
laugh against us (or to get something from us.)"233

Traders were most concerned about the exchange process, however, and their
confusions about Native trade methods encouraged them to be defensive. Native chiefs
were invited aboard trade vessels, but business with the general native population was
usually conducted over the side of a ship. In spite of his putative friendship with
Maquinna and Callicum, Meares remained unsure about Native motives and thought it
prudent "to inform them of our power, by explaining the force we possessed, and the
mode of applying it." He wished "to operate on their fears as well as their gratitude".234

230 [Péron], Mémoires, II, p.2.
231 The fact that it was mostly slave women who were prostituted was emphasised in
some of the unofficial accounts of Cook's third voyage, written by crewmen. See, for
example, W. Ellis, An authentic account of a voyage performed by Captain Cook and
Captain Clerke... 2 vols. (London: Robinson, Sewell, and Debrett, 1782), I, p.216. It was
also noted by the Spanish and by Jewitt: "Log of Jacinto Caamaño," 1790, Daylton,
"Official documents," p.157; Jewitt, Adventures and sufferings, p.65. Also see Drucker,
Northern and central Nootkan tribes, p.309.
232 Nevertheless, Mozino noted that the Natives of Nootka Sound were afflicted by
venereal disease - Noticias de Nutka, pp.43-44.
233 Walker, Account of a voyage, p.87.
234 Meares, Voyages, p.115.
Strange fired a musket at a canoe to convince Native people of his superiority. Walker was convinced that such tricks worked at Yuquot, arguing that the Natives' "apparent acquiescence and assistance in seconding our business, was owing to the vicinity of the Ships, and their conviction that the Village, their property, their canoes, and their Persons, were wholly under our power." But Native groups in other parts of the sound did not seem awed by traders' cannons or firearms, and were more contemptuous with visitors.

At Nootka Sound, as elsewhere, traders invoked scenes of desire and anxiety. Yet because Nootka Sound was described in detail, it is possible to interrogate these white representations and get at Native itineraries. Commercial interaction can be reassessed in terms of the politics of local groups, and inter-group competition and collaboration.

Native competition and chiefly power

First, the "inconstancy" of native demands may have been a reflection of Native competition. A number of Native groups traded at Yuquot, and they may each have established different prices for trade goods. Traders sometimes struggled to distinguish the members of different Native groups. The types of trade goods demanded in specific locations was also affected by inter-group trade. Walker, for instance, noted that as he advanced up the sound the prices of furs became more exorbitant, and that Native people possesed such a quantity of beads, traded from other groups in the sound, that "they offered them to us in derision."

Second, traders did not receive assistance at Yuquot simply because Native people were afraid of their swivel guns or firearms. More reasonably, this Native group sought to control the trade of Nootka Sound and did not want to drive traders away by

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235 [Strange], Journal, p.23.
236 Walker, Account of a voyage, pp.56-57.
237 Ibid.; and see Colnett, "Journal," I, p.64.
238 Walker, Account of a voyage, p.43
being unfriendly. Furthermore, a British merchant noted that if British traders had been able to use their guns to impress the Natives of the sound, this advantage was lost after Martinez seized Colnett and Meares in 1789.

The Indians, hitherto, had been impressed with an idea that no human force could oppose, much less conquer Britain, but having lately been witness to its humiliation, they will naturally become estranged, and lose that reverence and admiration which they entertained for the power, superiority and protection of its subjects. In their future mutual intercourse and traffic, there will be on each side, more diffidence and distrust, and the proprietors precautions for their own safety and defence, must increase their stationary force and expenditure.  

This was a prophetic observation. Don Juan Francisco de la Bodega y Quadra, the leading Spanish official at Yuquot in the summer of 1792, noted that American and British traders arrived at Nootka Sound "on a war footing...and not even the least of these is free from the dread of being attacked by the Indians". Martinez's actions surely contributed to Native irreverence towards traders, but the Spaniard did not create this aura of estrangement. Before 1789 there were signs that Native groups knew full well about how to play off traders against each other.

Third, the terms under which Native commoners traded with vessels were dictated by particular chiefs. Maquinna and Callicum may have authorised commoners to sell only a certain type and number of goods. Strange's comment that the people of Yuquot thought that the Captain Cook and Experiment had come for sustenance perhaps indicates that he dealt with commoners who had few furs to trade or were only permitted to sell food. On the other hand, Maquinna and other chiefs did not want to exclude their followers from trading altogether. Galiano understood that these chiefs were "masters of the life and labour of their mischismis, distributing work to them and having whatever they require at their disposal"; but he also noticed that the loyalty of the commoners arose

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239 Argonaut [John Cadman Etches], A continuation of an authentic statement of the facts relative to Nootka Sound... (London: T. Beckett, 1790), pp.9-10.
from the chief's interest in their well being. Yvonne Marshall notes that under the *ha hoolthe* and *tupati* system of chiefly rights, commoners would have procured food for chiefs, which was then given or sold to traders. Commoners may have become resentful of their chief if he gave or sold too much to traders and did not keep enough to distribute to his followers to thank them for their services. And commoners had more to worry about than access to trade vessels. John MacKay, who was left at Nootka Sound by Strange to observe Native life, stated that soon after the *Captain Cook* and *Experiment* departed, Maquinna had a big feast, invited several hundred people from neighbouring local groups, and distributed large quantities of dried salmon. MacKay did not state whether the people of Yuquot were invited, but Malaspina discovered that during MacKay's fourteen month residence at Nootka Sound there was a great scarcity of food. Possibly, Maquinna had given away too many winter provisions to these visiting Natives.

Finally, incidents of theft are more difficult to interpret, but it is unlikely that they were foremost a chiefly strategy. Maquinna knew that traders and the Spanish were highly sensitive about theft, and Galiano noted that the chief instituted "rigorous penalties" to dissuade his people from stealing and tried to recover goods that his people had stolen. More likely, theft was a form of Native rivalry. Traders rarely recorded who, precisely, stole from their vessels, but Natives from beyond Nootka Sound may have poached more goods than Maquinna's people under the presumption that their own

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241 Kendrick, *Voyage of the Sutil and Mexicana*, p.76.
245 Kendrick, *Voyage of the Sutil and Mexicana*, p.79.
villages were safe from traders' guns. Drucker noted that instances of theft among Native people were frowned upon and rare, but that the same social sanctions did not apply to non-native property.

These are just possibilities, but given the ethnographic context I have sketched, Native trade methods were obviously not whimsical. Walker's most transparent observation was that the Native groups of Nootka Sound viewed trading vessels as "enormous bulk[s] of wealth". The Native methods and tricks that traders wrote about in a derisive tone were, more properly, strategies for gaining and managing this wealth. What these early traders picked up, though never discussed at length or synthesised, was that the Native groups of Nootka Sound were enmeshed in a complex and shifting set of collaborative and competitive relationships. Traders sailed into a dynamic political and commercial space. Native agendas that pre-dated contact took on new twists because wealth was injected into particular locations and was controlled by certain chiefs.

Such agendas are difficult to discern, but should not be discounted. The attack on the Boston is a case in point. It was not simply an act of revenge - or an act of "savage eloquence", as one newspaper at the time described the event. It was also about chiefly power and prestige. The number of trade vessels visiting the sound dropped dramatically between 1795 and 1803. Without trade goods, Maquinna found it

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246 Martínez, for instance, noted that some Natives from Hesquiat Harbour came to Yuquot to steal some iron pipes from the Spanish settlement. Martínez to Bodega y Quadra, December 1790, Daylton, "Official documents," p.135.
increasingly difficult to maintain his status. He looked on the wealth of the Boston as a means of regaining his influence. Jewitt's life was spared because he was an armourer and therefore useful to the chief. According to Jewitt, Maquinna "was very proud of his new acquisition", and within a few days of the attack a great number of canoes from twenty or so Native groups assembled at Yuquot, expecting to trade and feast.

Maquinna apparently gave away many spoils of war - 100 muskets, 100 looking glasses, 400 yards of cloth, 20 casks of powder, and many other articles - in order to reaffirm his chiefly status in the eyes of these other groups. Presents were also distributed to the people of Yuquot. Maquinna's reasoning in 1803 was probably more complicated than this, but these details about the Boston suggest that to understand the impact of the trade at Nootka Sound we need to consider questions of prestige. Chiefly status was not inviolable. At Nootka Sound, the maritime fur trade posed a series of opportunities and challenges for chiefs, their followers, and groups from other areas seeking power and influence.

Chiefly power and prestige

American, British and Spanish visitors to Nootka Sound identified a number of chiefs. Apart from Maquinna and Callicum, Meares dealt with Hannape, an Ehattesaht chief. Hannape's daughter, Hestoquatto, was married to Maquinna. Kendrick and

251 Maquinna asked Jewitt whether "I would be his slave during my life - if I would fight for him in his battles, if I would repair his muskets and make daggers and knives for him" - Adventures and sufferings, p.29. The same can be said about Mackay. Strange noted that Maquinna wanted Mackay to stay because he was a doctor and had cured a skin complaint afflicting one of Maquinna's children - Journal, p.22. Walker noted that Mackay was paraded in front of guests, and that his musket was the centrepiece of attention - Account of a voyage, p.180.
252 Jewitt, Adventures and sufferings, p.37.
253 Ibid., p.39.
Gray usually anchored at the village of Mawun (see Figure II:2), where they had dealings with Clahquakinna.\textsuperscript{256} Galiano encountered Quicomacsia, another chief living at Mawun, who married the daughter of Chief Natzape in 1791, assuming the name Ouicsiocomic.\textsuperscript{257} Saavedra identified Guadazape as Maquinna's brother.\textsuperscript{258} The Malaspina expedition had frequent dealings with Natzape, who was either an Ehattesaht or Nimpkish chief; a Spanish chart shows that he owned a village and territory at the head of Zeballos Inlet.\textsuperscript{259} Natzape was married to the daughter of a Nimpkish chief, and probably had economic and ceremonial privileges on both the west and east coast of Vancouver Island.\textsuperscript{260} Quicomacsia was Hannape's son (and therefore Maquinna's brother-in-law), and succeeded his father around 1792.\textsuperscript{261} Natzape's sister was one of Maquinna's four wives. Maquinna was also married to Y-ya-tintla-no, the daughter of Wickaninish (a chief of Clayoquot Sound).\textsuperscript{262} Galiano named Tlupananul and Cicomacsia as "heads of tribes."\textsuperscript{263} This former chief, from Tlupana Inlet, formed close ties with the Spanish.\textsuperscript{264} Officers with the Malaspina expedition thought that Tlupananul

\textsuperscript{256} Howay, \textit{Voyages of the 'Columbia'}, pp.82, 100, 163, 265, 278. Bell named this chief "Clequawkini": Meany, \textit{New Vancouver journal}, p.22.
\textsuperscript{257} Kendrick, \textit{Voyage of the Sutil and Mexicana}, p.80.
\textsuperscript{262} Jewitt, \textit{Adventures and sufferings}, p.67.
\textsuperscript{263} Kendrick, \textit{Voyage of the Sutil and Mexicana}, p.74.
\textsuperscript{264} Mozino, \textit{Noticias de Nutka}, p.31; Henry R. Wagner (trans. and ed.), "Journal of Tomás de Suria of his voyage with Malaspina to the northwest coast of America in
had previously been called Callicum; Saavedra figured that he was the uncle of Maquinna and Quicomacsia.\textsuperscript{265} The Spanish also dealt with Naneguiyus (a son of Hannape and a brother-in-law of Maquinna, who acted closely with Natzapé), Tlaparanalh and Apecos, and thought that Hannape was the father of both Natzapé and Tlupananul.\textsuperscript{266} Hereditary names were passed from father to son, and individual chiefs assumed different names as they grew older, married, and gained new privileges.\textsuperscript{267}

The chiefs of Nootka Sound were related by marriage, then, but it is not easy to determine precisely the economic and political connections between them. Marshall argues that there were three power blocks, or intergroup collectivities, around Nootka Sound during this period. Maquinna, Callicum, and Clahquakinnah were each the highest ranking chiefs of their own lineages, and were also, respectively, the three highest ranking chiefs of a Yuquot-Tahsis confederacy comprised of seven or eight groups (see Figure II:2 for territorial and socio-political arrangements). Tlupananul was the highest ranking chief of a number of local groups that lived most of the year in Tlupana Inlet; these groups also had rights on Bligh Island and Hesquiat Peninsula. Hannape was the highest ranked chief of a number of Ehattesaht groups that lived around Zeballos Arm and Espinosa Inlet.\textsuperscript{268} Some Nutchatlaht groups of Nuchatlitz Inlet shared summer and winter residences, but it does not seem that they constituted a power block during this

\textsuperscript{267} Some of these chiefly connections among the Mowachaht can also be traced in Jean Braithwaite, "Genealogical and selected biographical data on the Mowachaht," unpublished typescript, Parks Canada.
period. In Muchalat Inlet and on Hesquiat Peninsula there were a number of independent local groups.269

When, how and why these different social and political arrangements came about has been the subject of much speculation. Different local groups give different accounts, and there are a number of conflicting ethnographic histories.270 Marshall's account of group politics is the most recent and detailed. She argues that Native origin and family stories (she works with those in volume 11 of Edward Curtis's *North American Indian* [1916]), and archaeological evidence, show that lineages and local groups around Nootka Sound cherished both sovereign autonomy and political alliance.271 She claims that there was a constantly shifting balance of power in the sound before contact and during the early contact period which reflected a basic tension "between marrying out, forming alliances and therefore sharing power, and marrying in, consolidating local power and building a sovereign, autonomous power base".272 And she thinks that when Cook arrived in the sound, four different sets of political arrangements co-existed. First, there were independent local groups whose economic, social and political life was rooted in particular places, usually at the mouth of a salmon stream. Second, there were alliances of two or more "inside groups" living in the inlets. Third, there were alliances of two or more "outside groups" living on the coastal fringe of the sound. These alliances were often characterised by multi-lineage villages, encouraged group identification with a chief and lineage rather than a place, and led to the formation of collectivities that had

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269 Drucker called these Muchalaht groups a confederacy because they shared the summer village of Lupatescis, but he did not ascertain when or how this alliance was established. Drucker, *Northern and central Nootkan tribes*, pp.227-237.


272 Ibid., pp.203-205; the quotation is from p.203.
access to both coastal and inland resources. Chiefs were also expected to widen their social connections through marriage alliances. And fourth, the Yuquot-Tahsis confederacy, which Marshall thinks was formed 300-400 years before contact and synthesised this tension between autonomy and alliance, was a large, ranked political structure. The groups in this confederacy derived their names from chiefs and lineages rather than places. They wintered in Tahsis Inlet and spent the summer and fall at Yuquot, where the chiefs of different lineages had their own houses and feast seats. 273

During the early contact period Native itineraries at Nootka Sound were characterised by chiefly rivalry, the consolidation of pre-existing Native trade links, the formation of new trade and marriage ties, and a proliferation of Native warfare. The Yuquot-Tahsis confederacy became a powerful trading block, Maquinna and other chiefs became wealthy and enhanced their authority by widening their economic and social connections, and the local groups of the confederacy looked on trade goods as primary sources of prestige.

Just as Cook experienced, the Native people of the sound were territorial in their dealings with whites and competed over the sea otter trade. Walker explained that the Native people "completely identified themselves with their Country, and claimed every thing that appertained to it as their peculiar Possession." 274 Natives ushered traders to their villages, where they tried to monopolise the traffic. 275 Ingraham reported that these

273 Before the formation of the Yuquot-Thasis confederacy there were probably five areas of political cooperation: the upper part of Tahsis, the upper part of Tlupana Inlet, Muchalat Inlet, the central part of the sound south to Hesquiat Peninsula, and the outside coast of Nootka Island. The inlets tended to be occupied by single lineage local groups; arrangements on the outside coast were more complicated. See Drucker, *Northern and central Nootkan tribes*, pp.248-251; Marshall, "Political history of the Nuu-chah-nulth," pp.192-197.
275 [Strange], *Journal*, p.18. In 1787 Colnett traded around the mouth of Muchalat Inlet. When the supercargo of the *Prince of Wales* explored the sound, he discovered that there were a number of groups wanting to trade. Native people from the east side of the sound
Native groups were jealous of each other, and that the stronger tribes (such as Maquinna's) tried to rob the weaker ones of their goods, even within the sight of trade vessels. The people of Yuquot had the most muskets and wanted to keep it that way, asking Captain Gray not to sell firearms to any one else.

Traders sometimes treated these sharply defined Native territories as cocoons, hoping that they would form close trade ties with a particular group and secure a promise from a chief to supply furs on a yearly basis. In his *Plan for Promoting the Fur Trade* (1789), Alexander Dalrymple encouraged traders to go to Nootka Sound because the Indians were known for their "Probity and Honour", having stood true to their promise to Hanna in 1785 to keep their furs until he returned the following year. But by 1792 (when there were over fifteen vessels in the sound), white merchants realised that they could not put too much store by these Natives promises, and Quadra noted that traders had "taken precautions against becoming rivals of each other", either fanning out around the sound or working in pairs and dividing their furs. Traders were expected to capitulate to Native protocol and Native chiefs were prepared to push their luck with vessel masters. Native leaders sometimes made promises to specific traders in order to discourage them from visiting other villages. Chiefs also withheld their furs until a number of vessels had visited the sound and they had a full picture of what goods different traders had and what prices they were asking. In 1791 Ingraham thought that Kendrick was being deceived by the people of Mawun: they enquired after Kendrick, insisted that Colnett change his anchorage before they commenced trading as they "dared not offend the Chief whose district we lay in." Colnett, "Journal," I, p.57.

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276 Ingraham to Martínez [1789], Freeman Tovell Collection.
278 In 1785 Hanna exchanged names with Cleaksinah, a Kelsemaht chief, who promised to hold furs for him if he returned the following year. Lamb and Bartroli, "James Hanna and John Henry Cox," pp.12-13.
"saying they had plenty of skins for him and they would not sell to anyone else. [They were] very fond of Captain Kendrick for he ever treated them with great kindness; but I believe their view for wishing to see him at present was to dispose of their skins at an exorbitant price which none but Captain Kendrick would give." In any case, Dalrymple had not got his facts straight. In July 1786 Strange traded over 500 skins, and when Hanna arrived in the sound (on his second voyage) a few weeks later, he procured only 150 or so skins.

These commercial dynamics were complicated by Native attitudes towards status. The chiefs of Nootka Sound did not just view trade vessels as bulks of wealth. They also treated their relationships with traders and the Spanish as ways of gaining prestige. These political dynamics became most evident in the spring and summer of 1792 when Quadra took control of the Spanish garrison at Yuquot. He tried to work out how the chiefs of the sound were ranked, and picked out Maquinna for special attention. Maquinna "always occupies the first place when he dines at my table", Quadra remarked; "I myself take the trouble of waiting on him, and he makes a lot of my friendship and much appreciates my visits to his rancherias" at Mawun, Kupti, and Tahsis (see Figure II:2). Maquinna responded in kind, entertaining the Spaniard, and Vancouver's party when they visited in 1792 and 1794. Marshall interprets this scenario well:

Quadra's hospitality, especially the importance he attached to rituals involving the serving of food, the attention he paid to placing people at his table according to rank, and his policy of housing high ranking guests in his own quarters, again placing each one according to their rank, closely paralleled local notions of what constituted appropriate chiefly behaviour. Paramount among chiefly virtues was hospitality, and in particular, lavish generosity with food. Quadra's behaviour

282 Walker, *Account of a voyage*, pp.66 and 202. Such figures cannot be taken at face value, of course. Traders sometimes lied to each other about the number of furs they obtained. Bell reported that at Nootka Sound it was "very difficult...to come at the truth of what numbers of skins ships collected; for the Masters of them and their mates & ships company...seldom agree in their accounts of their quantity on board, many of them, and often, varying hundreds of skins." Meaney, *New Vancouver journal*, p.31.
283 Quadra, "Voyage to the n.w. coast," p.44.
was of a kind that would earn a local chief his people's respect and approval. But more importantly, it was the kind of behaviour that established the correctness of a chief's position in the eyes of other chiefs and commoners. It demonstrated that a chief's inherited right to hold an exalted rank was indeed valid.  

Maquinna temporarily put aside the indignities he had suffered at the hands of the Spanish and used his dealings with Quadra to consolidate his authority among his people and neigbouring groups. This friendship was not simply a spell of calm in a stormy contact process. As with other aspects of white-Native interaction, it was rooted in the social and political structures of Nuu-chah-nulth life - in the performative facets of chiefly power.

Quadra's favouritism towards Maquinna was challenged by other chiefs, particularly those who were not formally ranked in the Yuquot-Tahsis confederacy. The "vanity of enobling themselves over the others", Galiano noted in May 1792, "is the principal topic of conversation of the taises." Quicomacsia, in his twenties and perhaps eager to expand his influence, invited Galiano's crew to Mawun, where he held a dance for them, distributed gifts, and boasted about his marriage alliance with the Nimpkish, claiming repeatedly that it gave him precedence over Maquinna. Tlupananul, though an elderly man, also tried to ingratiate himself to the Spanish. Galiano stated that "equalizing two fingers of his hand", this chief "said to us that he was Cococoa [similar to] Macuina. We did not observe that they had the least respect for each other". In 1791 Tlupananul received Malaspina's party at the mouth of the sound and gave a long speech designed to wrest the Spanish away from Maquinna's influence:

Do not believe that my years can serve as an obstacle to serve you in what you may be pleased to order me to do. Although you may marvel and believe me a barbarian, I am not ignorant of the inviolable laws of friendship. They inspire me to tell you not to confide in nor feel safe from the dissimulated perfidy of Macuina. I tell you that he is crafty and overbearing and he looks on you with hatred and abhorrence. He shortly meditates dislodging you from this place which you have founded in our dominion, but he cannot do it while Tlupanamibo

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285 Kendrick, Voyage of the Sutil and Mexicana, p.80.
286 Ibid.
287 Ibid.
lives, who, being experienced in this double-crossing game, will know how to oppose it as I have his malign projects to the present.  

These chiefs offered friendship and services to the Spanish, and they both feasted with Quadra. Neither Quadra nor Maquinna were convinced by such appeals, however. Maquinna kept his special place at Quadra's table. When Quadra and Vancouver feasted with Native dignitaries at Tahsis in September 1792, Maquinna made a speech in which he compared himself only to Wickaninish of Clayoquot Sound, thereby implying that the other chiefs of the sound were of lower birth and rank than he. According to Archibald Menzies, dinner was served up "in a manner that made us forget that we were in such a remote corner, under the humble roof of a Nootka Chief." Maquinna deported himself like a king, and Menzies surmised that these other chiefs were his dependents.

Maquinna exercised a good deal of agency in his dealings with Spanish and British officials, acting as a go-between and consultant, but always with his interests and those of his followers foremost in mind. Quadra's attention to Native detail helped Maquinna to enhance his status, and the Spanish were not able to dictate to him or any other chiefs. Christon Archer, the principal historian of Spanish activities on the northwest coast in the late eighteenth century, argues that "the small Spanish garrison at Yuquot became the hostage of Native activities and of the rivalries among the different

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289 Quadra, "Voyage to the n.w. coast," p.47.
290 Lamb, Voyage of George Vancouver, II, pp.671-672
291 Newcombe, Menzies journal, pp.120 and 115. And as Marshall has pointed out, there is no evidence that any of the chiefs ranked in the Yuquot-Tahsis confederacy challenged the seating arrangements at such feasts, implying that they acknowledged Maquinna as the highest ranking chief. Yvonne Marshall, "Dangerous liaisons: Maquinna, Quadra, and Vancouver in Nootka Sound, 1790-5," in Fisher and Johnston, From maps to metaphors, pp.160-175.
292 After the Spanish left, the British felt indebted to him for passing on important letters about the restitution of Nootka Sound. See William Robert Broughton, A voyage of discovery to the north Pacific Ocean...performed in his majesty's sloop Providence, and her tender, in the years 1795, 1796, 1797, 1798 (London: T. Caddell and W. Davies, 1804), p.30; Roe, Journals and letters of Captain Charles Bishop, p.95.
Because of misunderstandings and minor conflicts between the Spanish and Native people, in 1793 Spanish commanders banned their troops from leaving Yuquot or visiting Native settlements without official permission.

We should not stretch this image of Native rivalry too far, however. The chiefs of Nootka Sound may have used foreigners to compete for status, but this did not rule out the need for Native collaboration. These chiefs knew that there were fewer sea otters at Nootka Sound than at Clayoquot Sound and on other parts of the coast. To make the most out of the trade, Maquinna had to gather furs from other groups and widen his social connections, as I will now explain.

Native collaboration and the Yuquot-Tahsis confederacy

In the mid-1780s Nutchatlaht people from the north end of Nootka Island and around Nuchatlitz Inlet traded regularly at Nootka Sound. Ehattesaht people supplied Maquinna with many furs and other Native goods, and the marriage ties between Hannape's family and Maquinna's were probably forged to cement this commercial link. Maquinna also had strong commercial ties with Clayoquot and Nimpkish people. In 1789 Martinez noted that the groups of Nootka Sound traded with nine villages to the north and another nine to the south - from Kyuquot Sound to the Straits of Juan de Fuca. These connections were still in place when Jewitt was captured.

The groups of Nootka Sound also warred with other groups for furs and slaves. Contrary to the vitriolic tone of his speech to Malaspina, Tlupananul had friendly ties with the groups of Yuquot, and Tomás de Suria (with Malaspina's party) noted that he acted as "head of the army" in Maquinna's military campaigns. While chiefs were

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294 Walker, Account of a voyage, pp.54-55.
295 Jewitt, Adventures and sufferings, p.36 and passim.
296 Martinez, "Diary," p.213.
297 Jewitt, Journal; idem., Adventures and sufferings, pp.36-37 and passim.
trained to lead the local group and learned the protocols of appropriate chiefly behaviour, they often were not trained specifically to fight wars. That honour was usually bestowed on lesser chiefs.  

Of the 107 or so trade vessels that visited the northwest coast between 1785 and 1795, around 70 traded at Nootka Sound. All of the Native groups of the sound could benefit from the trade, even if a large portion of the business was channelled through Yuquot and Maquinna's hands. And fewer vessels would have visited Yuquot had there been protracted Native warfare in the vicinity. There was great Native rivalry, but the groups of the western part of sound did not jettison peace for short-term gain. Internecine warfare would have caused political instability and made Native villages vulnerable to attack and/or colonisation by neighbouring groups. Maquinna was not a monarch, but what Marshall calls an "umbrella chief" - a figure of exalted status, but one who shared power with his confederate chiefs.  

Marshall claims that Maquinna's politics at Nootka Sound during this period were marked by consensus and diplomacy. This became most evident, she claims, in 1792, when violence broke out between the Natives of Neah Bay, led by Chief Tatoosh, and the Spanish commander Salvador Fidalgo. A Spanish pilot was killed by Tatoosh's people.

300 About one third of these 107 vessels were one-time visitors; the majority of vessels that traded at Nootka Sound visited in two or more separate seasons. See Gibson, Otter skins, Boston ships, and China goods, table 1, pp.299-310. My figures for vessels at Nootka Sound between the years 1789-1793 are derived from the American, British and Spanish sources cited above. In addition, there were six vessels at Nootka Sound in September 1794. See Thomas Manby, "Log of the proceedings of his majesty's armed tender Chatham, 27 September 1792 - 8 October 1794," PRO ADM 51/2251, fol.s.127-127v, photostat in W. Kaye Lamb Papers, 4-3; and Archibald Menzies, "Journal," February to September 1794, fol.184, photostat from the National Library of Australia, W. Kaye Lamb Papers, 11-8. I know of four vessels that visited in 1795: see Edmund Hayes (ed.), Log of the Union: John Boit's remarkable voyage to the northwest coast and around the world, 1794-1796 (Portland: Oregon Historical Society and Massachusetts Historical Society, 1981), p.59; and Roe, Journal and letters of Captain Charles Bishop, p.94.
and Fidalgo retaliated by killing eight Natives. Wickaninish and Hanna, his relatives at Clayoquot Sound, to avenge Fildago's actions. Wickaninish had his own reasons for revenge: his people and village had been fired at a number of times by American and British traders. Marshall thinks that a plot was hatched by these three chiefs to expel both traders and the Spanish from the coast. They appealed to Maquinna to join their cause, and his vote of confidence was crucial because of his rank, wealth and status. Maquinna chose not to sever his links with the Spanish and did not want to curtail the fur trade. Marshall argues that a general war between whites and Natives would have undermined Maquinna's position, and she claims that his dealings with traders and the Spanish prove that he treated conflict as a last resort. Yet Maquinna was aware of the implications of his decision. As Marshall has it:

...to go against the call for united action would be to gamble with possible annihilation. If Maquinna opposed the planned action but did not gain the support of other chiefs, Wickaninish would not only attack the Europeans but also treat Maquinna as their ally and pursue his destruction. At stake was not only who would decide how the Europeans and their trade were to be managed but also who could command the greatest influence and highest status - Maquinna or Wickaninish.

Maquinna invited Hanna to Nootka Sound for a meeting and defused the plot.

Autonomy versus alliance; conflict or consensus? Marshall illustrates that these tensions were played out at a regional level as well as on a local basis. Decisions made by powerful chiefs such as Maquinna and Wickaninish impacted on the plans of other groups. Rumours and reports, imputations and implications, travelled quickly between Native villages. Native chiefs performed their own pirouette of place and space (or locale and region), but there was nothing hallucinatory about the way they accounted for the fur trade. Traders imagined that the Native groups of the northwest coast lived on the fringes of the global economy, but Native people had their own canons of desire and

302 Fidalgo reported on this event to Quadra: Daylton, "Official documents," pp.87-88.
derision. Their attitudes towards traders were mediated by complex issues of Native fellowship and chiefly prestige.

Marshall emphasises that Maquinna's wealth and status were built on peaceful interaction with whites, and she uses his dealings with Quadra to suggest that the roots of present-day Nuu-chah-nulth politics lay "in long-established political structures and practices which valued the sharing of power, diplomacy, and consensus". I applaud Marshall's efforts to demonstrate that Native dealings with traders and the Spanish were rational and strategic rather than whimsical, and to track such agendas to the present. But this conclusion about Mowachaht politics is too revisionist, I think, for she overlooks the aggressive policies that Maquinna and the Yuquot-Tahsis confederacy adopted towards other Native groups, especially before the Spanish occupied Yuquot, in order to ensure that Nootka Sound remained a centre of trade.

In 1792 Mozino sensed that there had been about two centuries of warfare between the groups of Nootka Sound and the "Tlaumases", being "all nations that live on the other shore of the sea". More specifically, he reported that Maquinna's father (possibly the chief who exchanged presents with Cook) died in 1778 in a war against this group. Roquefeuil learned that young Maquinna avenged his father's death at the

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305 And if lifted out of the context of late eighteenth-century Nuu-chah-nulth socio-political practices, projected unequivocally into the future, or treated too didactically, such reasoning can also entail Eurocentrism in reverse - a denial or retreat from the issue of cultural difference, the imputation that Native chiefs operated like modern, liberal Europeans, and the implication that Native leaders cherished the same tenets of European ideology that were instrumental in their dispossession and marginalisation. Maquinna may have been a peaceful, consensus-oriented diplomat, but this does not change the fact that British colonial officials viewed Native people as warlike and irrational, and that European powers used a liberalist rhetoric of reason and order to legitimise their colonial projects. Should we discuss European-Native contact processes on this European discursive terrain of diplomacy, consensus and rationality? I am not sure, but arguments sometimes escape their authors and Marshall might have acknowledged the cultural-historical provenance of the terminology she uses.
hands of the "Tahumasses...in a terrible manner." In July 1786 Maquinna introduced Strange to a war chief of Nootka Sound named Clamata who had "personally slain Eight and twenty of the Enemy within the last Ten Moons" (around nine months): that is, shortly after Hanna had left the sound. Walker noted that the people of Yuquot "were fond of speaking of their Enemies, who, according to their account, were very numerous, and frequently employed in making War." According to Meares, in August 1788 Maquinna and Callicum were preparing for an expedition against an enemy "more powerful, numerous and savage than themselves" which had attacked a village about 60 miles north of Nootka Sound that was under the jurisdiction of Maquinna's grandmother. Meares claimed that Maquinna and Callicum borrowed firearms from him, killed about 30 people in battle, and seized "a great-booty of sea-otter skins." And in November 1788 Kendrick learned that the people of Yuquot were at war with a Native group from the east side of the sound, probably Muchalat Inlet. By 1791, Maquinna had more muskets than any other chief in the area, and Saavedra thought that he had traded many of them from Kendrick.

This information is sketchy, but the timing of these events is noteworthy. The first two instances of prolonged contact with whites on Vancouver Island, in 1778 and 1785, were followed by Native conflict. It seems that the maritime fur trade inflamed old grievances and encouraged new conflicts. Native groups were probably fighting over furs, sea otter territories, and for access to trade goods. Chiefs also hoped to capture slaves.

308 Roquefeuil, *Voyage around the world*, p.103.
309 [Strange], *Journal*, p.27.
311 Meares, *Voyages*, p.196.
313 "Haswell's log of the first voyage of the 'Columbia'," Howay, *Voyages of the 'Columbia'*, p.55.
We should not read too much into these references to firearms. Haswell thought that the Natives of Nootka Sound had added guns to their traditional weaponry of bows and arrows, spears, daggers, and stone axes, but Robin Fisher has argued that the muskets Native people received were probably not very accurate or reliable. Indeed, in 1794 Saavedra was informed that only twenty of the many muskets Kendrick had traded to Wickaninish in 1791 still worked. The evidence concerning the use of guns by the Native peoples of the northwest coast is contradictory, but the chiefs of Nootka Sound, it seems, clung to tried and tested war methods: surprise attacks at night or dawn with blades and clubs. These chiefs viewed firearms more as prestige goods - icons of wealth and power - than as war weapons. Caamaño reported that the Natives of Yuquot wanted firearms to intimidate their rivals with rather than to war with, and contradicting Hoskin's remark about Native marksmanship, the Spaniard claimed that "the [Nootka Sound] Indian who dares to discharge them is very rare, and even the one who does attempt to it turns his head to one side, and closes his eyes."

Now Folan has speculated that the "Tlaumases" were the N-La', a Nutchatlaht group from around Nuchatlitz Inlet, and that a Yuquot war song recorded by Jewitt may have described their defeat at the hands of Yuquot people. In addition, when Walker visited Nuchatllitz Inlet he saw many people he had seen at Yuquot, noted that they were poorer than the people of the sound, and implied that they were vassals of Maquinna. But Folan's interpretation can be disputed. Jewitt distinguished between the "Neu-chad-lits" (or Nutchatlaht), the Klahars (who lived at Yuquot, had been conquered by

319 Walker, Account of a voyage, p.54.
Maquinna, and who Folan identifies as the "Tlaumases"), and the "Newchemasses" (or Nimpkish, on traders' and Spanish understanding). Jewitt claimed that the Newchemasses were "a very savage nation...who come from a great way to the northward, and from some distance inland", who spoke a different language than the Nootkans, but one well understood by the people of Nootka Sound. And given Moziño's description, it is unlikely that the Tlaumases were a Nutchatlaht group.

Robert Galois has presented some tantalising material with which to think about the identity of the Tlaumases and interpret Nuu-chah-nulth involvement with Kwak'wala-speaking people. In the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, he argues, Kwakwaka'wakw socio-political space was fairly volatile, especially around Cape Mudge and Quatsino Sound. During this period the Hahamatsees, a Lekwiltok group, took control of Salmon River having either moved south from Nimpkish River or moved north from the interior (see Figure II:1). Galois also suggests that prior to contact, the area between Quatsino Sound and Cape Cook was controlled by Nuu-chah-nulth people. This region was taken over (probably) by the Klaskino, who either captured it or merged with a Nuu-chah-nulth group just before or around the time of contact.

It is difficult to know how traders heard Native sounds and determined a spelling, but superficially, "Tlaumases"/"Tahumasses" does not sound like a Nuu-chah-nulth tribal name because it does not contain the first person singular or plural present indicative clauses -art/at/it(s), -lat/let/it(s), or -quot/quat(s) commonly used by traders to designate

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320 Jewitt, Adventures and sufferings, pp.59 and 68.
322 Ibid. The Hahamatsees are listed as a Lewkiltok tribe in some the first Hudson's Bay Company censuses of the Native population of the northwest coast taken between 1835 and 1841. See ibid., Appendix 1, for details.
Nuu-chah-nulth groups. And superficially, Hahamatsees is the only Kwakwaka’wakw group name resembling Moziño’s and Roquefeuil’s interpretation. It is also possible that the war Maquinna and Callicum fought sixty miles north of Nootka Sound (the Cape Cook area) in 1788 was to avenge a Klaskino incursion.

I am speculating, but my interpretation of Nuu-chah-nulth ties and conflict with Kwakwaka’wakw groups can be supported. Franz Boas recorded the details of an "early war" involving the Nimpkish and Nuu-chah-nulth groups (though he did not ascertain a date), and noted that there had been a number of Nuu-chah-nulth incursions into Kwakwaka’wakw lands over the years. When Cook arrived at Nootka Sound, the main avenue of trade between the west and east coasts of Vancouver Island was between Tahsis Inlet and the Nimpkish River (see Figure II:1). Natzape told Malaspina that he traversed this route quite regularly, and that he had met Cook as a youth of 13 or 14 years of age. Natzape "preserved very well in his memory various events of that expedition. The house and rancheria visited by Captain Cook were those of Calacan [Callicum]. He recognized a portrait of the Captain; he named without aid Captain Clerke, and asserted his belief that Lieutenant King was the son of Captain Cook." More to the point, Natzape informed Malaspina that "the hands, heads and bones presented aboard the Resolution, were nothing more than the remains of his enemies". Galois does not give any evidence of warfare involving the Nimpkish or the Ninelkaynuk (their neighbours living around Woss Lake) at this time (see Figure II:1), but putting these fragments together, I suggest that around 1778 groups from Nootka Sound and the Nimpkish River were at war with some other Kwakwaka’wakw group called the Tlaumases/Tahumasses for control of the Tahsis-Nimpkish trail. After Cook’s visit, these Nootka Sound and

325 Malaspina, 1791, quoted in Cutter, Malaspina and Galiano, p.102.
326 Ibid.
327 On the Ninelkaynuk see Galois, Kwakwaka’wakw settlements, pp.319-320. Galois relies mainly on Wilson Duff's field notes. Archer Martin, a British Columbia lawyer,
Nimpkish groups may have stepped up their expeditions against the Tlaumases in order to protect their mutual trading interests.

Ethnographers have emphasised that warfare was an integral, if probably only sporadic, feature of pre-contact Nuu-chah-nulth life, and what Walker heard implies as much. Scholars have ascribed a number of motives for war; revenge and economic gain are the reasons that have been given most often by Nuu-chah-nulth informants. These wars of the 1770s and 1780s were seemingly fought for basically these reasons. But something else is striking about them: they were not internecine conflicts. They were between Nuu-chah-nulth and Kwakwaka'wakw groups. This was certainly not a general pattern along the west coast of Vancouver Island. Groups around Clayoquot Sound and Barkley Sound fought between themselves before and after contact, as I will document. Maquinna and Callicum, on the other hand, fought with groups quite far to the north and northeast of Nootka Sound. Nor do these late eighteenth-century wars imply that the chiefs of Nootka Sound had a master plan to annex and control distant territories. Rather, it seems that Nootka Sound groups fought these wars to consolidate their trading interests with the Nimpkish and to widen the economic berth of the Yuquot-Tahsis confederation.

believed that there was a large inland tribe living between the Nimpkish River and Nootka Sound which was wiped out by warfare or disease around the time of contact, though he did not name the group. Archer Martin, "The inland tribes of Vancouver Island," BCARS F/I/M36. He got his information in 1903 from George Blenkinsop (a Hudson's Bay Company trader, and later an Indian Agent).


This scenario makes sense if we recall the marriage and trade connections between chiefly families in and around Nootka Sound. Malaspina noted that the chiefs of the sound were interrelated "either by accident, or by regulation, or by convenience derived possibly from previous bloody wars", and estimated that Maquinna’s influence stretched to the Nimpkish River.  

Meares reported that Maquinna was the chief of four villages to the north of the sound, and four villages to the south. And trusting Maquinna’s testimony, Meares characterised the area from Cape Cook to Nootka Sound as a huge extended family:

From him we learned that there were several very populous villages to the Northward, entrusted to the government of the principal female relations of Maquilla and Callicum; such as grandmothers, mothers, aunts sisters &c....and several other villages were assigned to the direction of other relations, all of which were ready to join, as occasion required, for the support of their mutual safety, and to yield a ready obedience to the summons of the sovereign chief...

We do not know when or how, precisely, these connections came about, and Maquinna and Meares were likely exaggerating their extent. Nonetheless, it seems to me that Meares got the gist of Maquinna’s approach to the maritime fur trade. From the mid-1780s to the early 1800s he widened his commercial horizon through inter-marriage, trade and warfare. The Yuquot-Tahsis confederacy also became more tight-knit through intermarriage and military liason. The marriage alliances documented above facilitated inter-group trade and made warfare with neighbouring Nuu-chah-nulth groups an unwise policy. If Drucker is right that Nuu-chah-nulth people had relatives in a number of places, it is unlikely that the chiefs of Nootka Sound could have waged war on their neighbours without creating dividing loyalties. Meares noted that "from political motives", Maquinna had married out his female relatives rather than his brothers and sons, some of whom had no doubt been trained as war chiefs and may have threatened his

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330 Cutter, Malaspina and Galiano, p.103.
331 Meares, Voyages, p.229.
332 Ibid., pp.228-229.
power had they assumed leadership roles in villages distant from his direct supervision.333

In part because of these policies, many Native groups came to trade at Nootka Sound, and Maquinna relied on his neighbours to supply him with furs. The inhabitants of Yuquot ran out of furs to sell within three weeks of the arrival of the Captain Cook and Experiment. Callicum made a number of trips to the south, and Maquinna's agents "sweeped the Coast a great way to the Northward" to trade.334 And furs and trade goods changed hands quickly. Given the number of vessels that had traded in the sound between 1778 and 1788, Meares was surprised to find on his arrival that the inhabitants were "totally destitute of European articles", and he wondered about the "manner they had contrived...to dissipate their treasures."335 Archaeologists have since found few remains of western goods in the layer of midden at Yuquot dated to early contact. John Dewhirst notes that this can be explained, in part, by the fact that the mostly wooden and metal items traded by whites would have disintegrated over time. But archaeologists have also taken this evidence, and their examination of Native tools, to suggest that Nuu-chah-nulth technology remained basically unchanged during the early contact period. Few western goods were adopted by Native people for utilitarian purposes. Most of them were traded for furs and as prestige goods or used as ornaments.336

333 Ibid., p.228.
334 Walker, Account of a voyage, p.59. When Colnett reached the sound the following year, the Natives told him that they had sold all their furs to Charles Barkley, another British trader - "Journal," I, pp.46-48. Also see Meares, Voyages, p.120; Wagner, "Tomás Suria's journal," p.273.
335 Meares, Voyages, p.120-121. Martinez noted: "All these natives trade among themselves from one village to another.... It is known that although the Nootka Indians have received so much copper and iron from the different ships...scarcely a piece of either can be seen among them now" - "Diary," p.200.
336 John Dewhirst, "Nootka Sound: A 4,000 year perspective," in Barbara S. Efrat and W.J. Langlois (eds.), "nu.tka.: The history and survival of Nootkan culture," Sound Heritage, vol. VII, no. 2 (1978), pp.1-29; Marshall, "Political history of the Nuu-chah-nulth," chapter 5. Meares noted that "it was seldom that we could persuade them to make use of our utensils in preference to their own" - Voyages, p.262.
The Yuquot-Tahsis groups traded many of the western goods they obtained from whites to the Nimpkish for furs. The Nimpkish were probably Maquinna's greatest trade partners during the early contact period, and especially in the 1790s, when the fur trade was at its peak but sea otters were vanishing from Nootka Sound itself. According to Quadra, the Nimpkish were the best fur trappers on Vancouver Island, and the importance of the Tahsis-Nimpkish trail was noted by many observers. Malaspina claimed that the Nimpkish supplied about 6000 sea otter furs per year to Nootka Sound, and Chief Natzape drew him a map showing the "two great lagoons" (Nimpkish Lake and Woss Lake) where they captured the sea otter.

In 1790 Caamano observed that copper was the principal article of traffic with the Nimpkish, who "were very anxious for it". Copper was highly valued by Tlingit, Tsimshian, Haida, and Kwakwaka'wakw people, who manufactured it into breastplates and collars that were used as currency and status emblems. Spanish Monterey shells and muskets were also cherished by the Nimpkish. When Vancouver's party visited the Nimpkish village of "Cheslakees" in July 1792, they discovered that the inhabitants understood the Nootkan language, viewed Maquinna as a "great chief", were "well versed with the principles of trade", and possessed many trade goods, including about 100 muskets, most of them of Spanish manufacture.

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337 There were scarcely any sea otters at Nootka Sound by the early 1790s. See "Log of Jacinto Caamaño," 1790, Daylton, "Official documents," pp.159; Mozino, Noticias de Nutka, p.48; Kendrick, Voyage of the Sutil and Mexicana, pp.200-201.


339 Malaspina, "Políti-co-scientific voyage," II, pp.228-229. It should be noted, however, that we know very little about the distribution of the sea otter, and whether they lived in large numbers in inland lakes such as Woss Lake.


342 Lamb, Voyage of George Vancouver, II, pp.625-627. Vancouver stated that the village consisted of 34 houses, and he found two or three muskets in each house.
the Natives of Nootka...was pretty evident from their own account", Menzies explained, "for they assured us of having received from thence most of the Articles of European Manufactory in their possession." Both Vancouver and Galiano noted that the Nimpkish were much less shy with Europeans than the Native people they met just 30 miles south, suggesting that cross-island traffic and interaction was tightly focused along the Tahsis-Nimpkish trail.

It was via these trading routes that Maquinna and the other chiefs of Nootka Sound became wealthy. According to Mozino, Cook inaugurated a "memorable epoch" for them. "The natives believed they had succeeded in unloading their merchandise at a very advantageous price. In effect they had...tripled their capital by means of the copper which, leaving the hands of the Nootkans, began to disperse itself throughout almost all the Archipelago." And so it would remain as long as Nootka Sound remained a main centre of white commerce, and other Native groups had less frequent contact with white traders. Native groups did not need a global economy to enhance the value of their goods. They profited by the variegated nature of their own commercial environment. On Mozino's logic, the three sheets of copper that a chief of Nootka Sound got from a trader for one sea otter fur could be sold to the Nimpkish for three sea otter furs; those three


Interestingly, Chief Cheslakees informed Vancouver that Maquinna "seldom visited" his village, and nor is it documented that Cheslakees ever visited Nootka Sound. This raises the possibility that Natzape acted as a middleman between the Nimpkish and Nootka Sound groups. Natzape could have had connections with the Ninelkaynuk tribe, which lived around Woss Lake and whose members were probably bilingual. Wilson Duff notes that this group joined the Nimpkish "after the traders came". Wilson Duff Papers, file 122, microfilm in possession of the Department of Geography, UBC.
345 Mozino, *Noticias de Nutka*, p.65. Hoskins noted that the Nootka Sound groups traded furs from the Nimpkish "for a trifling consideration in comparison to what they are afterwards sold to foreigners" at Nootka Sound. "Hoskins' narrative of the second voyage of the 'Columbia',' Howay, *Voyages of the 'Columbia'* , p.265.
Nimpkish furs might have been procured from another group for one sheet of copper; and so forth.

But Maquinna did not triple his capital for long. He did not monopolise this Nimpkish traffic. By 1790, if not before, Nimpkish people were trading directly with the Spanish for guns, copper and shells. And when Jewitt was at Nootka Sound, the Nimpkish arrived to trade without any furs. In 1818 Roquefeuil was told that since the late 1790s, Maquinna had been selling most of his furs to the Chicklisahht people of Nasparti Bay (Cape Cook), which was visited occasionally by traders.

As the maritime fur trade wound down at Nootka Sound, Maquinna struggled to retain his status and influence. He had incorporated western goods (especially guns and copper) into the Native prestige and trading system, and without them he slipped in importance in the eyes of his neighbours. He tried to ameliorate economic hardship by focusing the energies of his local group on salmon fishing and whaling. And he became less vulnerable politically when Tlupananul was given a house site and feast seat at Yuquot in the mid-to-late 1790s, forming what anthropologists call the Mowachaht confederacy. As the Yuquot, Tahsis and Tlupana Inlet groups merged, the more loosely allied groups of Muchalat Inlet became vulnerable to Mowachaht attack and colonisation. During the nineteenth century a number of wars broke out over salmon streams in Muchalat Inlet. We do not know when, precisely, these wars started, but

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347 Jewitt, Adventures and sufferings, p.68. The sea otter population around Queen Charlotte Sound was starting to decline, and traders were venturing more frequently to the vicinity of Nimpkish River.
348 On these economic changes see Marshall, "Political history of the Nuu-chah-nulth," chapter 8.
according to Augustus Brabant, they continued on and off until 1874.\textsuperscript{350} While Jewitt was at Nootka Sound, Maquinna also went to war with a Barkley Sound group.\textsuperscript{351}

\textit{Effects of the trade}

The maritime fur trade at Nootka Sound was connected to a much broader space of Native calculation and aggrandisement. Questions of value and wealth were overlaid with the politics and symbolism of kin, status and territoriality. In aggregate terms, the maritime fur trade exacerbated inequalities of wealth among the Native groups of central and northern Vancouver Island. In relative terms, however, things were more complicated. Groups that had infrequent direct contact with whites, or had limited access to trade goods, could balance out inequality by forming trade and/or marriage alliances with wealthier groups. The fur trade also exacerbated inequalities of wealth within local groups. Maquinna and the other chiefs of Nootka Sound amassed a disproportionate amount of the wealth and influence from the fur trade, and enhanced their status through marriage and/or trade alliances and warfare. And we have seen that these chiefs specified and supervised the conditions under which their followers participated in the trade. In 1912 C.F. Newcombe was told by a Mowachaht informant that following the seizure of the \textit{Boston}, Maquinna was stingy with his followers and wanted to keep everything for himself.\textsuperscript{352} There is also some suggestion that Maquinna and Callicum gave away large number of trade goods and foodstuffs to visiting Native groups at the feast they held after the departure of the \textit{Captain Cook} and \textit{Experiment}, depleting precious winter provisions.

These references to the distribution of provisions and trade goods raise important questions about the effect of the trade on Native groups. Did this Native enthusiasm for

\textsuperscript{350} Augustus Brabant, "The death of Shewith the Mowachat (Nootka) chief," [1903], Roman Catholic Church, Diocese of Victoria, Papers.
\textsuperscript{351} Jewitt, \textit{Adventures and sufferings}, p.99.
\textsuperscript{352} Newcombe Family Papers, vol. 36, folder 16.
trade with whites affect Native procurement strategies and settlement patterns, and
Native technologies? John Dewhirst has argued that Native groups on the west coast of
Vancouver Island probably used outside and inside environmental settings on a seasonal
basis prior to contact. And summarising the findings of the research team that excavated
the Yuquot midden, he claimed that Nootkan cultural patterns (especially tool
technology) did not change greatly from 1000 years before contact to the late nineteenth
century.\(^{353}\) Richard Inglis and James Haggarty, on the other hand, have claimed that pre-
contact Native subsistence and settlement patterns changed dramatically during the early
years of contact, and that the Native seasonal round at Nootka Sound was a post-contact
phenomenon. When the maritime fur trade started, the chiefs of outside groups, such as
Maquinna, sought to become port managers and had to reschedule their resource
procurement strategies if they were to devote the summers months to trading with whites.
They exchanged trade goods for foodstuffs and furs with their neighbours, and developed
a subsistence cycle that would not interfere with the sea otter trade. Inglis and Haggarty
argue that Cook observed independent local groups operating within small resource
territories, whereas Jewitt described a ranked socio-political confederacy and a seasonal
round. In short, Jewitt viewed a culture which had undergone intensive change over 25
years.\(^{354}\)

Dewhirst was too quick to generalise about Nuu-chah-nulth cultural patterns from
his Yuquot data. There have been other archaeological site surveys and digs on
Vancouver Island since he wrote in 1980 which show that the trade had a very disruptive

\(^{353}\) John Dewhirst, "The Yuquot project vol. 1: The indigenous archaeology of Yuquot, a
Nootkan outside village," *History and Archaeology*, 39 (1980), especially pp.15, 346,
336.

\(^{354}\) Richard I. Inglis and James C. Haggarty, "Cook to Jewitt: Three decades of change in
Nootka Sound," in B. Trigger, T. Morantz and L. Dechêne (eds.), *Le castor fait tout:*
*Selected papers of the fifth North American fur trade conference, 1985* (Lake St. Louis
impact on subsistence and settlement patterns in some areas. Inglis and Haggarty pinpointed the relationship between trade and changing subsistence strategies at Nootka Sound, but their reading of the early historical record is inaccurate. Cook and some of his officers, Strange, Meares, and Haswell all pointed to the existence of a seasonal cycle of resource procurement and habitation. More recently, Marshall has argued that an inside-outside seasonal cycle was in place at Nootka Sound well before contact, but that the maritime fur trade encouraged the outside groups of the sound to focus more on the procurement of inside resources. This was obviously the case with Maquinna's people because Yuquot was occupied by the Spanish for six years. Outside resources, especially whales, were harvested in greater numbers again after the trade declined.

Local group dynamics at Nootka Sound are difficult to interpret, but population data suggests that Yuquot grew during the early years of contact. Population estimates vary greatly, but if we trust the counts made by Cook's team in 1778 and Jewitt's figures for 1803, the summer population of Yuquot grew from around 400-700 to about 1500 during the first 25 years of contact, and the number of dwellings at the site doubled. Marshall argues that settlement patterns in the Nootka Sound area were stable during the first few decades of contact. No major pre-contact settlements were abandoned, and no

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355 And with these studies has come methodological debate among archaeologists about how to characterise continuity and change among Native groups. For a summary of different approaches to northwest coast archaeology see Marshall, "Political history of the Nuu-chah-nulth," chapters 1 and 2.
356 See Beaglehole, Journals, III, pp.303, 311, 1097, 1396, 1404; [Strange], Journal, p.37; Meares, Voyages, pp.201-202, 344; Howay, Voyages of the 'Columbia', pp.48, 55, and 83.
357 In September 1791 Maquinna purportedly told Malaspina: "I have not paid more visits [to Yuquot] because it is the season for laying fish to dry in the open. Since your people have been occupying this Cove I have been obliged to dwell permanently at Tahsis, where I try in summertime to make sufficient provision of fish for the winter." Quoted in Bartroli, "The Malaspina Expedition at Nootka," p.95.
359 This population data is discussed by Folan, "Community, settlement and subsistence patterns of the Nootka Sound area," pp.70-80.
new large settlements were established. Rather, there was a growth in the intensity and extent of occupation at major settlements such as Yuquot, Tahsis, and Kupti. What we do not know is how many of these extra people hailed from local groups in the sound and how many were slaves. Since wealth was a form of status, lesser chiefs, and the chiefs of villages who were not ranked in the Yuquot-Tahsis confederacy, were able to enhance their social standing by giving more feasts and exchanging trade goods in return for prized ceremonial privileges and access to better resource sites. But the situation of Native commoners is more unclear. Natives with distant kin ties to the chiefly families of the Yuquot-Tahsis confederacy may have moved to places such as Yuquot. But equally, if chiefs such as Maquinna were stingy with their followers, commoners may have remained at the villages they lived in prior to contact. Nevertheless, given the Native trade and marriage alliances documented above, it seems likely that the maritime fur trade encouraged individual mobility between local groups, and the image of transiency that Drucker picked up from his informants may have been a post-contact phenomenon.

In all, we are left with a series of impressions about changes in subsistence and settlement patterns at Nootka Sound rather than precise facts. Likewise, there is little evidence with which to assess the impact of this commercial focus on Nootka Sound on Nuu-chah-nulth economic and political geographies to the north of the sound. Nutchatlaht, Ehattesaht, Kyuquot and Chicklisahnt people traded regularly with the Natives of Yuquot during the early years of contact, but these northern Nuu-chah-nulth were visited only sporadically by traders.

361 Leland Donald has synthesised references to slavery in the historical and ethnographic record, and suggests that some Natives villages on the northwest may have had a slave population of up to 30 per cent. It is impossible to arrive at a specific figure or percentage for Nootka Sound, however. Leland Donald, "The slave trade on the northwest coast of North America," Research in Economic Anthropology, vol. 6 (1984), pp.121-158.
Colnett visited Chicklisah territory in 1787, and Robert Gray visited "Columbia's Cove" on the north side of Nasparti Inlet in the summers of 1791 and 1792.\(^{362}\) John Boit (who had sailed with Gray) returned to this inlet in the summer of 1795 as captain of the American vessel Union. And a few other traders visited the area in the 1790s. But Nasparti was only a minor port of call, and one established, in part, for the sake of convenience during the Spanish occupation of Yuquot. Gray was suspicious of the Natives of the inlet, and in May 1792, following a dispute about trade, he fired at them.\(^{363}\) A week later a delegation of Chicklisah people arrived at Nootka Sound to ask Quadra to tend to their wounded and punish Gray; the American had apparently killed seven Natives and taken furs by force.\(^{364}\) Boit thought that these Natives were more hospitable when he visited in 1795, but he exhausted their supply of furs within a few days.\(^{365}\)

Few traders visited Kyuquot Sound, and the one detailed account we have of commercial contact there speaks directly to traders' distrust of Native people. Joseph Ingraham reached this sound in the 70-ton brigantine Hope in July 1792. After trading at a couple of villages at the mouth of the sound, he ventured further into Kyuquot territory, and, suspicious of Native intentions, took two Natives with him as hostages. Within a few hours, the Hope was surrounded by 15 canoes and the Natives looked as if they planned to seize the vessel. Ingraham fired warning shots over the canoes, but they kept coming. So he fired directly at the Natives, driving them away, and motioned his crew to arm the long boat, as if he intended to give chase. With this trading opportunity bungled,

\(^{364}\) Kendrick, Voyage of the Sutil and Mexicana, p.87.
\(^{365}\) Hayes, Log of the Union, pp.63-65.
he made a speedy exit for Nootka Sound. Ingraham, like many traders in small vessels, approached unfamiliar territory very cautiously and often expected the worst.

Because contact with whites was sporadic, the fur trade probably had a minimal effect on the social geography of these northern Nuu-chah-nulth groups. There have been no major archaeological surveys in this area of Vancouver Island, so the interpretative possibilities are limited. Nonetheless, I have not found any ethnographic or historical evidence of social disruption due to disease or warfare among these groups during the late eighteenth century. Maquinna may have partially colonised the region politically, as Meares suggested, but Drucker believed that Kyuquot people lived in a confederacy of four tribes uniting 14 local groups that had been stable for a considerable time. Chicklisahrt geography was likely affected more by the incursions of Kwak'wala-speaking groups than by contact with whites - although such incursions may have been related to the fur trade.

Closer to Nootka Sound, matters were more complicated. Drucker thought that Nutchatlaht groupings were formed from the leftovers of Mowachaht and Ethetasht unions, and as some of the above documentation implies, Nutchatlaht people living around Nootka Island may have been dominated by Maquinna. Traders visited Ethetasht territory quite frequently, and these people had ancient and ongoing ties with the Yuquot-Tahsis groups and the Nimpkish. Hannape and Natzape were seemingly important and powerful chiefs, and probably managed the fur trade in a similar way to Maquinna.

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Chapter Nine
Clayoquot Sound

"Wickaninish's Sound"

Contact relations and Native agendas at Clayoquot Sound were different than those at Nootka Sound, and can be summarised more easily. The first trader to reach this sound, Captain Charles Barkley of the Imperial Eagle in 1787, named it "Wickaninish's Sound" after Chief Wickaninish, who seemed to possess "great authority" there. In the late 1780s and the 1790s the area between Meares Island to Barkley Sound became increasingly dominated by Wickaninish and his family (see Figure II:3). They expanded their influence over neighbouring groups through warfare and the institution of a tribute system, and monopolised commerce with traders in Clayoquot Sound. Traders discovered that there was a large supply of furs in the region and understood that they had to go through Wickaninish to get them.

At Clayoquot Sound, traders had entered a recently amalgamated Native space. In pre-contact times the sound was inhabited by between 11 and 17 local groups of varying size, influence and degrees of autonomy. The three most important groups

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369 The observation comes from Barkley's wife, who accompanied him on his voyage and was the first white woman to visit the northwest coast. Frances Barkley, "Reminiscences," p.47, BCARS A/A/20/B24A. Barkley's trading journal has been lost; W. Kaye Lamb summarised what is known of this voyage in "The mystery of Mrs. Barkley's diary," BCHQ, vol. VI, no. 1 (January 1942), pp.31-59.

Spanish explorers judged that Wickaninish was between 40 and 50 years old, and described him as a plumb, robust, impressive man. Wagner, Spanish explorations, pp.83, 164.

Figure II.3 Settlement patterns and socio-political arrangements in Clayoquot Sound, late pre-contact; tribal territories in Barkley Sound, late pre-contact.

- Area of Clayoquot control or influence after the war with the Hisau'istaht, in late pre-contact times
- Clayoquot settlement and/or resource site. (Main Clayoquot settlements and/or resource sites before the Clayoquot-Hisau'istaht war are indicated)
  - Hohpitshaht settlement
  - Non-Hisau'istaht or Hohpitshaht settlement captured by the Clayoquot in the Clayoquot-Hisau'istaht war, or other pre-contact conflicts
  - Settlement of local group other than the Hohpitshaht, allied with the Clayoquot, in the Clayoquot-Hisau'istaht war
  - Ucluelot settlement and/or resource site
  - Annual round of the Clayoquot local group, before the war with the Hisau'istaht
  - Annual round of the Clayoquot, and possibly offshore and allied groups, after the Hisau'istaht war
were probably the Clayoquots, a large family that owned the villages of Tla'ohw on Clayoquot Arm (their ancestral home) and Ohqmin on Kennedy River, lived part of the year at Ya'hlapis, and had fishing and whaling rights around Echachis Island; the Hohpitshaht, whose ancestral settlement was Hohpitsh, and who also lived at Echachist in the summer and probably at Opitsat during the winter; and the Hisau'istaht, who owned the villages of Esowista and Kanoowis and probably controlled much of Tofino Inlet (see Figure II:3). There were a series of conflicts in the sound in pre-contact times, but the most decisive war occurred a few years (or decades) before contact. The Clayoquot, allied with three or four other local groups, wiped out the Hisau'istaht. After the war, Clayoquot Chief Ya'aihlstohsmahlneh (who later took the name Wickaninish) redistributed Hisau'istaht territories, names and privileges to his relatives and war allies, and the local groups of the region began to live together at Opitsat during the winter.\textsuperscript{371}

The eleven families of the Clayoquot group each had a house at Opitsat. Smaller local groups probably had one or two houses each in the village. Native informants state that there were between 30 and 40 lineage houses at the village in the early contact period, over two thirds of which belonged to offshoot lineages of the Clayoquot and surrounding groups that had allied with the Clayoquot in the war.\textsuperscript{372} Meares named the area around Opitsat "Port Cox" and depicted 17 houses on his 1788 map of Opitsat - built, he said,


There are conflicting accounts about the history of Opitsat. The ethnographer Vincent A. Koppert claimed that the Clayoquots displaced a Kelsemaht group from the village around 1780 and built around 20 houses there. Vincent A. Koppert, \textit{Contributions to Clayoquot ethnography} (Washington D.C.: University of America, 1930), p.1. Drucker, on the other hand, claimed that the village was captured from the Hisau'istaht - \textit{Northern and central Nootkan tribes}, p.240. But Arcas Associates point out that there is no mention of this capture in Drucker's field notes, and that before the Clayoquot-Hisau'istaht war the site may have been occupied by some other Clayoquot Sound groups, including the Hohpitshaht - "Patterns of settlement", p.161.

\textsuperscript{372} This information, from Drucker's field notes, is summarised by Arcas Associates, "Patterns of settlement", pp.161-163.
with "a greater share of...rude magnificence" than any he had seen.\textsuperscript{373} By 1791, the Spanish explorer Francisco Eliza estimated that about 2500 people lived at the village.\textsuperscript{374} American traders called Opitsat "Hancocks Harbour", and in 1792 Boit counted over 200 houses there.\textsuperscript{375} If we trust these figures, Opitsat grew enormously during the first few years of contact with whites; by the 1790s it was the largest Native settlement on the west coast of Vancouver Island.

These wars and amalgamations gave Wickaninish an influence over the contact process that was almost unparalleled on the northwest coast. He was not an umbrella chief like Maquinna, but a patriarch whose large family and allies owned rich inside and outside resource territories. When Meares first encountered Clayoquot people at Nootka Sound in June 1788, he noted that they were "superbly dressed in furs of the highest estimation" and had a "thriving appearance".\textsuperscript{376} He subsequently judged that their opulence stemmed from the abundance of whales around Clayoquot Sound.\textsuperscript{377} Meares was pointing to the backbone of Clayoquot power: these groups had a large resource base, were probably more self-sufficient than their Yuquot-Tahsis neighbours, and did not have to adjust their annual round because a foreign force was lodged on their territory. As such Wickaninish was able to dictate the timing and terms of commerce to traders; he largely expected them to work around his seasonal schedule.

Before the Clayoquot-Hisau'istaht war the Clayoquot group used Ohqmin as their winter village. In the fall they pursued salmon through the Kennedy River system to spawning grounds at the head of Clayoquot Arm, where their ancestral home was located.

\textsuperscript{373} Meares, \textit{Voyages}, pp.143, 203. Another "mixed and split" expression, as Bhabha would have. Many traders were impressed by Native architecture and thought that it reflected complex socio-political arrangements. But they still tied such impressions to dualistic intellectual categories - in this case, the distinction between rude and polite society.

\textsuperscript{374} "Extract from Eliza's voyage," in Wagner, \textit{Spanish explorations}, p.146.

\textsuperscript{375} Howay, \textit{Voyages of the 'Columbia'}, pp.56, 391.

\textsuperscript{376} Meares, \textit{Voyages}, p.125

\textsuperscript{377} \textit{Ibid.}, p.136.
While wintering at Ohqmin, they relied on stores of dried fish and whale oil, and in the spring moved to Ya’hlapis. During the summer some people moved to Echachist to fish and hunt whales. Following the war new outside and inside resource areas were added to this basic territorial pattern (see Figure II:3). This annual cycle can be discerned from traders’ observations. In the fall many Clayoquot people stayed at Kanoowis on Indian Island (previously Hisau’istaht territory), and around early October moved to Ohqmin and fished for salmon in the Kennedy River system. They moved to Opitsat in December, where they wintered. In the spring they moved to Echachist and other outside villages, where they stayed during the summer to fish and hunt sea mammals. Meares gave a vivid description of the preparations they made for their gravitation back towards Ohqmin in late summer:

The inhabitants...were busily employed in packing up fish in mats, securing the roes of them in bladders, cutting whales into slices, and melting down blubber into oil, which they poured into seal-skins. All this mighty preparation was the provident spirit of catering for the winter: and the incredible quantities of these various provisions which our people saw collected, promised, at least, that famine would not be an evil of the approaching season.

On these shores the winter is the happy portion of the year which is appropriated to luxury and ease; nor are they ever aroused into action, but to take some of those enormous whales, which, at that season, frequent their seas, in order to feast any of the neighbouring chiefs who may come to visit them.

Commerce with traders virtually ceased at these busy times in the annual round.

At Clayoquot Sound, as at Nootka Sound, chiefs dictated the terms of group participation in the fur trade. Traders were usually offered little more than fresh food by

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378 This summary is derived from Arcas Associates, "Settlement patterns," p.159.
379 This annual cycle, and the gendered division of labour that went with it, can be pieced together from Meares, Voyages, pp.136-138, 143-148, 202-204; and Howay, Voyages of the 'Columbia', pp.45, 70, 248, 254, 257, 278-279, 315 and 390. The Clayoquot had taken over Indian Island, which was probably Hisau’istaht territory before the war. Echachist, a prime whaling spot, was probably owned by the Hohpitshaht, but the Clayoquots seemed to have some rights to it before the war and were certainly living there on an annual basis by the late 1780s. See Arcas Associates, "Settlement patterns," p.164; they note that this annual round persisted through the nineteenth century.
380 Meares, Voyages, p.203.
Native commoners. Wickaninish, his family, and chosen attendants controlled the traffic in furs. When the *Columbia* entered the sound in June 1791, Gray was ushered to Wickaninish, who opened trade negotiations. Hoskins noted that trade commenced "first with Wickananish's father, then with the other Chiefs in succession". If commoners got to trade at all, it was after Wickaninish's entourage had finished. Native groups visiting the sound usually had to pay tribute to Wickaninish for the privilege of bartering with trade vessels, and there are indications that some groups from the south were refused access altogether.

This socio-political hierarchy, which probably had become more formalised and extenuated as a result of the Clayoquot-Hisau'istaht war, was reflected in feast arrangements at Opitsat. Wickaninish's house took centre stage in the village and traders usually met other Clayoquot chiefs through him. He lived in "a great house adorned with columns of huge figures which hold up three large pine timbers, as long as ninety feet and thick in proportion", one Spanish explorer recorded. "The entrance is a figure the mouth of which is a door. More than one hundred persons besides the king live in it." Meares was invited inside this huge house in July 1788, and claimed that he met over 800 people "divided into groupes, according to their respective offices, which had their distinctive places assigned them."

Traders had different experiences with Wickaninish. Charles Bishop of the *Ruby* declared that he was "one of the most esay People" he ever knew.

He Prides himself on having but one Word in a Barter: he Throws the Skins before you...[and says] I want such an Article; if you object, they are taken back

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382 "Hoskins' narrative of the second voyage of the 'Columbia'," Howay, *Voyages of the 'Columbia'*, p.184
383 Meares, *Voyages*, pp.142-149.
384 Manuel Quimper's journal, in Wagner, *Spanish explorations*, p.85. Other observers gave roughly the same description.
385 Meares, *Voyages*, p.139.
into the Canoe and not offered again. A Stranger not knowing this Whim of his, would loose many skins."  

The crew of the *Columbia* had a more frustrating time. When they first reached the sound in August 1788, they were received cordially by Wickanininish and trade prospects looked good. But Haswell noted that while the chief and his family came with many skins, "greatly to our mortification there was nothing in our vessel except muskets [which] would perchance one of them [and] that was an article we were not supplied with having scarce armes enough for our defence." Wickanininish also demanded copper, but the *Columbia* had little of it either, and left the sound empty handed.

These experiences illustrate Wickaninish's policy towards traders: he tried to get them to accept his prices, and traders did little business unless they took stock of his desires. Wickaninish, like Maquinna, amassed a great deal of wealth from the trade. By attending feasts, traders acknowledged his power and thereby confirmed his status in the eyes of his followers and would-be challengers. Wickaninish expected traders to participate in his world of power and prestige. There is hardly any suggestion in traders' journals that Wickaninish's followers were disgruntled with his handling of the trade or that other Clayoquot Sound chiefs challenged his supremacy. He distributed large quantities of provisions and trade goods at feasts, thus consolidating his prestige by being generous with his relatives, allies and followers.

387 "Haswell's log of the first voyage of the 'Columbia'," Howay, *Voyages of the 'Columbia'* , p.44.  
388 The *Columbia* did a far better business at Clayoquot Sound on its second voyage, when it was stocked with copper and guns.  
389 Meares and the officers of the *Columbia* gave lengthy descriptions of what they witnessed.  
390 Hoskins was given a Native guard when he visited Opitsat in January 1792, but he could not ascertain whether Wickaninish was fearful of "other tribes attacking...or of the wild beasts". Hoskins was told the latter but suspected the former. "Hoskins' narrative of the second voyage of the 'Columbia'," Howay, *Voyages of the 'Columbia'* , p.261.
Spatial Politics of Exchange

Traders felt threatened by Wickaninish’s power, however, and took defensive measures. Meares declared that

the subjects of [Wickaninish]...appeared to be far less civilized than our friends at Nootka; we therefore proportionably increased our precautions. Their numbers were very considerable, and the boldness they discovered in all their transactions with us, gave us reason to believe, that any relaxation of our vigilance might tempt them to a conduct which would produce disagreeable consequences to us all.... We...had sufficient reason to remain in a state of preparation against the possibility of that mischief which it was in his [Wickaninish’s] power to do us, and which opportunity might tempt him to employ.’

Here again are some of the main elements of traders’ vexed appreciation of place. Traders studied Wickaninish and appreciated the way he controlled Native affairs in the sound, but they never fully trusted him and recorded their physical anxieties with expressions about Native temptation and opportunism. Colnett, who was more narrow-minded and suspicious of Native people than many traders, fired at Opitsat in December 1790 under the impression that a group of Clayoquots who had attempted to board the Argonaut had been instructed by their chief to capture the vessel. Traders also took precautions because Wickaninish turned a blind eye to Native thefts from trade vessels. Kendrick and Gray built a bullwork around the Washington in 1789 after a cannon was stolen. Pieces of equipment were also stolen from the Gustavas III while it was in the sound in 1791.

But the exchange process itself was the biggest source of Native-white tension. Despite his defensiveness, Meares was sensitive to the ceremonial trappings of Native-white interaction, looked to attach himself to Native dignitaries, and grasped that present-

391 Meares, Voyages, pp.144-145.
392 Howay, Journal of Captain James Colnett, p.201.
393 "Haswell's log of the first voyage of the 'Columbia'," Howay, Voyages of the 'Columbia', pp.57
394 John Bartlett, "A narrative of events...in the years 1790-1793, during voyages to Canton, the northwest coast of North America, and elsewhere," in Captain Elliot Snow (ed.), The sea, the ship, and the sailor: Tales of adventure from logs books and original narratives (Salem MA: Marine Research Society, 1925), pp.287-337, at p.297.
giving was an integral part of the contact process at Clayoquot Sound. When he first reached the sound in June 1788, he was invited to a feast at Opitsat, where he presented Wickaninish with "a great variety of articles", including blankets and copper kettles, which the chief prized highly. Fifty men then stepped in to the middle of Wickaninish's house, each displaying a six-foot long sea otter skin, and remained still while Wickaninish informed Meares that the skins were "the return he proposed to make for our present".\textsuperscript{395} "Our royal host appeared entirely satisfied with our homage", Meares noted, "and we...were equally pleased with his magnificence".\textsuperscript{396} One wonders whether Meares understood Native languages as well as he claimed, but he certainly did not mistake the nature of this transaction. Wickaninish used foreigners to bolster his status, and would not negotiate exchange rates or trade regularly with vessels until such "homage" had been paid.\textsuperscript{397}

Traders less perceptive than Meares, who did not fully appreciate this prestation system, gathered fewer furs. When the \textit{Columbia} returned to the sound in June 1791, loaded with with copper and muskets, Wickaninish and his family went on board but "appear'd quite indifferent about trading; rather wishing to receive our articles of traffic as presents".\textsuperscript{398} Gray was reluctant to exchange presents, however, because he thought that they "would cost much dearer than if the skins were purchased", and he declined some of Wickaninish's invitations to attend some important events at Opitsat.\textsuperscript{399} This evidently irritated the chief and tension between the two groups mounted.

\textsuperscript{395} Meares, \textit{Voyages}, p.140.
\textsuperscript{396} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{397} The Spanish paid Wickaninish a great deal of attention when they visited Clayoquot Sound, presenting him with shells and sheets of copper, and were treated well by the chief. See Wagner, \textit{Spanish explorations}, pp.86, 186.
\textsuperscript{398} "Hoskins' narrative of the second voyage of the 'Columbia'," Howay, \textit{Voyages of the 'Columbia'}, p.183.
\textsuperscript{399} Ibid., p.265.
In June 1791 a Hawaiian boy named Ottoo deserted the Columbia and Gray held one of Wickaninish's brothers hostage until he was returned. Gray's actions seemed to be forgotten when the Columbia anchored at Clayoquot Sound for the winter three months later. Hoskins and Boit feasted at Opitsat, and in January 1792 they witnessed an important potlatch at which Wickaninish's 12 year old son assumed his father's name and chiefly privileges. And Clayoquot chiefs dined regularly on the Columbia. Trouble was never far from the surface, though. In October 1791 one of Wickaninish's brothers tried to take Gray's "great coat"; other thefts occurred over the next few months. Then, on 18 February 1792, Gray uncovered a Native plot to massacre his crew. Ottoo admitted to Gray that one of Wickaninish's brothers promised to make him a great chief if he would wet the firearms, small cannon, swivel guns and powder on the Columbia. Hoskins became convinced that Ottoo's story was true when Wickaninish and his brothers started to inspect the Columbia carefully and ask detailed questions about the seaworthiness of the Adventure, a sloop Gray was building on the shore. Native people approached the Columbia and the Adventure over the following two days in war canoes, making "the most dreadful shrieks and whoops", and Haswell claimed that Wickaninish had over 200 firearms and plenty of ammunition. But Gray had taken adequate precautions and no attack transpired.

After Ottoo's revelation Hoskins noted that "it was not revenge for any injury they had received for which they were seeking[,] it was alone to possess themselves of our

400 Ibid., p.186.
401 "Boit's log of the second voyage of the 'Columbia',' Howay, Voyages of the 'Columbia', p.384-386; and see Hoskins's account, ibid., pp.260-265.
402 "Hoskins' narrative of the second voyage of the 'Columbia',' Howay, Voyages of the 'Columbia', p.250.
403 Ibid., p.270.
404 "Haswell's log of the second voyage of the 'Columbia',' Howay, Voyages of the 'Columbia', p.312.
property which to them appeared immense. But then on 20 February, Wickaninish and one of his brothers visited the Columbia "with the most specious shew of friendship" and presented a sea otter cape and two skins. "[T]hese Captain Gray took from them", Hoskins recounted, "and told them to go to Yethlure and Yeklan to whom a musket and cloth cootsack [coat] had been sent for their pay[.][T]hese chiefs were then ordered to depart and never to return again on pain of death." Hoskins then thought that Gray had overreacted to the rumoured Native plot: his captain's dismissal of Wickaninish had "effectively shut up our source of trade...and we now have no longer a right to expect to be able to procure any more skins from this tribe who as yet have done us no farther injury than alarm us". Finally, Gray destroyed Opitsat as he was leaving the sound at the end of March in retaliation to the insults he thought he had endured. Fortunately, the village was deserted at the time.

This is a classic example of the way contact relations could disintegrate over the course of a few weeks or months; one that was repeated many times on the northwest coast. Mutual suspicion and contempt did not disappear as Natives and traders grew familiar with each other. Contact relations often became pricklier the longer a trader sojourned in one place. Gray's destruction of Opitsat undoubtedly stemmed from his general distrust of Native people, but Wickaninish may have intended to attack his crew. Indeed, Yvonne Marshall hypothesises that Wickaninish did plan to take the Adventure, and the Argonaut before that, in order to enter the fur trade himself. This is certainly credible, for by the late 1780s Clayoquot chiefs were using sails to power their canoes,

405 "Hoskins' narrative of the second voyage of the 'Columbia'," Howay, Voyages of the 'Columbia', p.272.
406 Ibid., p.275.
407 "Boit's log of the second voyage of the 'Columbia'," Howay, Voyages of the 'Columbia', p.391. Boit lamented: "This fine Village, the Work of Ages, was in a short time totally destroy'd."
and in 1793 and again in 1795 Wickaninish tried to purchase a schooner from traders. But it does not fully explain why tension grew.

Traders' violent actions were remembered differently by Clayoquot people. Wickaninish was apparently flabbergasted by Gray's and Colnett's attacks on his village. When Magee of the Jefferson reached the sound in 1793, Wickaninish's brothers told him that contact relations had disintegrated because traders had not observed Native protocol, and that Native frustration had reached fever pitch over Gray's "loan of a coat of war" to Wickaninish (probably the transaction on 20 February noted by Hoskins). Gray did not treat this transaction as a loan; Clayoquot people reported that Gray was unhappy with the number of furs he had received for the coat and threatened to shoot one of Wickaninish's brothers unless more furs were brought in recompense. Drucker claimed that there was a "vagueness as to the values" Nuu-chah-nulth groups attributed to wealth goods such as furs and blankets, and that "there was no concept of borrowing and lending, and even less, of loans at interest"; vague, that is, in comparison with Kawkwaka'wakw groups and with the elaborate systems of exchange, wealth complexes and permutations of debt that characterised societies and polities in the Pacific Islands during this period. There were "rough standards" of barter, Drucker observed, "but each exchange was arrived at as an individual case". Now Drucker was a good student of Native social life, but he was a poor student of material culture. While some Nuu-chah-nulth groups may not have worked with concepts of borrowing and lending, Wickaninish did, especially in his dealings with traders.

411 "Log of the Jefferson," 13 June 1793.
412 Drucker, Northern and central Nootkan tribes, pp.110-111. For the Pacific Islands see Thomas, Entangled objects.
413 Drucker, Northern and central Nootkan tribes, p.110
The violence did not stop there. In August 1792 William Brown, master of the British vessel *Butterworth*, told Ingraham that Clayoquot Natives had attacked his crew "without any cause of provocation", killing one person and wounding two others. But Ingraham again got a different picture from Magee, who had been on the scene: "He said the English sailors landed at a village in order to rob the natives and actually cut several skins off the natives' backs." Armed conflict broke out, which Magee quelled by firing a cannon into the air. Magee learned more about this violent affair when he returned to Clayoquot Sound the following year, and described how the actions of Colnett, Gray and Brown had affected contact relations.

[W]e were visited...by a number of women & children belonging to the family of Wicananish as well as by two of his brothers, to all of whome [we] paid particular attention while on board, presenting them with various trifling articles to thire fancy with regard to Commencing a trade with the Cheeff.... Tatootchicsettle said that his brother [Wickaninish] would not come on board for that purpose unless two of the officers of the ship would go on shore to remain till his return from the ship and being assented to the[y] immediately sent a message to thire brother to acquaint him thereof & mention the various articles with which it was proposed to affect a trade.... [I]n the afternoon the messenger returned with [the] answer that Wicananish should not come on board, upon which the brother proposed that we should send the 3rd officer with another to wait upon him & know from himself respecting the prosecution of any business with him.... [The] doctor went down to the village in a Canoe carrying a few small presents. [R]eturning on board in the evening [he] reported that having had a Conference with his Majesty & being courteously & civily treated by him & those around him[,] he [Wickaninish] informed them that...he should not come on board this or any other vessel whatever for the futer, giving the reason his having being insulted & his people fired upon & several of them killed, among which were his brother & two Cheeffs, by the people belonging to an English ship visiting that place the last season Commanded by Capt Brown who not having received such a number of Skins from him as to be esteemed a sufficient Complementary return to the present he had made him, of his own will had thought fit to extr[ac]t them by sending his boat armed & which attacked him at his village. [He] also mentioned a further instance of in Capt Gray of Boston... [H]e did not Conceive it safe for to trust his own person any vessel...he could not but be apprehensive some advantage would be taken upon him by some unknown stranger to his people's hurt. [H]e seemed to have amassed Confidence in Capt Kendrick...believed that Capt Roberts was his friend and ment no hurt to him, but observed that if he were to trust one he might all. [H]e was willing if he [we] would send send his Copper

415 Ibid., p.225.
and Cloth &c to the village to trade thire if agreeable & his brother should remain on board while we were trading...416

This passage captures Wickaninish's approach to traders, summarises the disintegration of contact relations at Clayoquot Sound in the early 1790s, and shows that misunderstanding and conflict was rooted in the exchange process.

In Nuu-chah-nulth societies rank and status were acknowledged and confirmed through the giving and receiving of goods, and Native leaders expected traders to conform to this socio-political standard. The form and quantity of goods given, and whether any return was expected, depended on the type of relationship being forged or renewed. Marriage alliances were often expensive, and the size of a dowry varied according the relative rank and status of the transacting parties. In 1793 Wickaninish told Magee that he had very few skins because he had "exposed of his whole stock in the purchase of a young wife & alliance from Maquinna".417 In presenting a large dowry, Wickaninish may have been acknowledging that he was "not considered as equal in rank to Maquilla" - the observation being Meares's.418 The negotiation of Native-white trading relationships could also involve the exchange of a large number of presents, as Meares's case illustrates. Wickaninish treated such exchanges as ways of establishing political and commercial bonds with traders for the duration of their stay. Meares understood that these bonds had to be reaffirmed each time he returned to Clayoquot Sound. He presented Wickaninish with copper kettles and twelve brass-hilted swords when he returned to Opitsat in August 1788. "A more brisk trade was then carried on with the inhabitants than we had hitherto experienced; a considerable quantity of furs were obtained".419

417 Ibid.
418 Meares, Voyages, p.230.
419 Ibid., pp.203-204. Vancouver was at Nootka Sound when Wickaninish arrived to strike this marriage arrangement. Lamb, Voyage of George Vancouver, III, p.917.
Other traders were reluctant to follow Meares's lead and became frustrated by this logic of present-giving. They thought it a Native ruse. Clayoquot Sound, like other trading locations on the coast, was a space of miscomprehension where traders' fears and misperceptions of Native agendas tarried uneasily with Native expectations of whites. Traders' main confusions over the exchange process at Nootka Sound can be explained in terms of Native rivalry and competition. At Clayoquot Sound, on the other hand, tension and conflict should be interpreted in terms of this prestation system.

Goods had phantasmagoric qualities. A "coat of war", of trifling value relative to Gray's grander commercial scheme, heightened tension and led to the Columbia's premature departure from the sound. A copper kettle, again of trifling value in Meares's grand scheme of things but given as a present and apparently highly prized by Wickaninish, was the basis of a lucrative trading relationship. Exchange relations were emblematic of power relations: of the facility to use objects to establish and hold together social relationships. The power to exchange lay at the threshold of the forms of power chiefs and traders exercised over their constitutive groups. The successful exchange of furs and kettles substantiated routinised facets of sanction and domination - the disciplinary power invested in vessel masters by their financiers to control a vessel's cargo, coordinate and supervise the day-to-day tasks of crew members, and punish transgressions of a stipulated code of conduct; or the power bestowed on a chief by primogeniture and rank, and the elective power invested in him by a larger kin community, to coordinate the seasonal round, handle the community's furs, and police interaction with foreigners. The authoritativeness of Meares's and Wickaninish's power to exchange rested on these social relations of power. Yet there was fine line between power based on social sanction and power which entails domination - or between the performative search for prestige and the demonstrative exercise of power. Wickaninish and Meares supported each others' taste for prestige by exchanging presents, but their followers and crew would not sanction their dominion over the exchange process unless
they could see that their interests were being considered. In Drucker's view, Native people based such judgements on social notions of generosity. Wickaninish's monopolistic strategic apparently worked because he redistributed many of the articles he got from traders.\footnote{Meares observed this - \textit{ibid.}, p.175.} The crews of trade vessels probably weighed up whether they could trade privately with Natives behind their captain's back, and whether their captain ensured that they got adequate provisions. Captains took these concerns seriously. Meares's crew attempted mutiny a number of times.\footnote{Meares noted that there was a fine line between "that rigour which begets discontent" and that idleness born from leisure which "so often appropriates to mischief." \textit{Ibid.}, p.190.}

Value, then, did not have a determinate foundation in the global economy, as some traders claimed. Nor were Native concepts of value and exchange as vague or individualised as Drucker claimed. Rather, value was corporeal and liminal; it stemmed from physical and imaginative processes of exchange. Goods carried alienable social and political identities, and exchange prices and relations were as stable or unstable as the socially sanctioned relations of power that underpinned the way Native and white leaders matched their demands and desires. The officers of the \textit{Columbia} were critical of Gray for overstepping the bounds of Native protocol and taking matters into his own hands. Meares realised that the way he operated in Native space had just as much bearing on his profit margins as the use he could make of the "golden round," and knew that he had to rely on Native people to supply his crew with fresh food.

These relations of prestige and power, sanction and domination - of performance and appropriation in exchange - were also acutely spatialised. The matching of desires and demands inevitably involved the negotiation of social space. In times of calm the trade vessel and the chief's house were spaces where Natives and whites witnessed each other's ways, inspected each other's goods, and negotiated each other's fortunes. In times of tension or conflict they were transformed into bastions of safety in unpredictable
waters. Physical and imaginary lines dividing self and other became starker and less negotiable, as the passage from Magee illustrates. A chief checked how many guns a trading party had as it approached his village. Watchmen stationed on the quarterdeck of a trade vessel peered into shadows for signs of approaching canoes. Hostages were exchanged like pawns in a more rarified and bloody game of contact. The ship and the Native village were transformed from spaces of mutual exploration into containers of power. Wickaninish knew traders by name and discriminated between them, but once the threshold of abuse had been crossed he was forced to think of them as one - as unknown quantities. He still wanted copper and cloth, but the contact relationship was reduced to an exchange of bodies under pain of death. Natives and whites became more proprietorial about their goods and spaces. There was little in the contact process more basic than this recourse to hostage-taking and violence. The mutual entanglement of bodies, spaces and objects was volatile on the northwest coast.

Meares documented the ebb and flow of contact relations at Clayoquot Sound, and captured the way objects and spaces took on different properties and connotations in times of peace and tension. His "state of preparation" against a Native attack in June 1788 was considered by the chief as distrust in his friendship, gave him great offence, and occasioned a short coolness between us.... Wicananish observed that whenever he paid us a visit the great cabin was decorated with arms, and that several blunderbusses, &c. were placed on the deck; and not only left the ship in great anger, but refused to trade with us himself, and forbade his people from bringing us any supplies or fish or vegetable. It was not, however, by any means, our interest that things should remain in this unpleasant, as well as inconvenient situation; it was therefore thought prudent to pay him a visit of peace on the following day; when, by the conciliating present of a sword, with a brass handle, and a large copper dish, the treaty of friendship was renewed; and this restoration of good humour was confirmed by a present of five beautiful otter skins, a fat doe, and supply of fish for the crew. The generosity, as well as the friendly conduct of the chief, on this occasion, seemed to demand an extraordinary exertion of acknowledgement on ours; and we made him happy beyond expression, by adding to his regalia a pistol and two charges of powder; a present which he had long solicited.422

Traders and Native chiefs had to exert themselves to maintain pleasant and convenient contact relations, opening and closing their domiciles as events turned. Traders continued to visit Clayoquot Sound because Wickaninish had more furs than other chiefs on Vancouver Island, but the area became known as a volatile space of interaction. The trickery and violence that went with the trade culminated in the Clayoquot attack on John Jacob Astor's vessel the Tonquin in 1811. Most of the crew were murdered, and one of the survivors blew up the vessel the following day, killing over 100 Natives as they plundered the decks. Contemporaries saw this event as a leitmotif of Indian savagery, and the Clayoquots were held to be the most warlike Native group on Vancouver Island. There are many different accounts of what happened, and journalists, collectors and scholars have written more about the Tonquin disaster than any other single event in early British Columbian history.

I do not want to rehearse many details here, nor track the importance of this event in the local historical imagination, but it is clear that disaster was sparked, again, by a misunderstanding over trade. According to a number of contemporary observers, there was a dispute over trade prices, an important Native chief became "insolent" towards a trader, and the trader struck him with a sea otter pelt. White commentators viewed the Native attack as a cold-blooded act of revenge. A Native account collected by W.E. Banfield in the 1850s provides a slightly different spin: an old Indian named Wookamis annoyed the chief trader of the vessel because he asked for an extra present after a trade deal had been struck. In sum, when

423 Although traders visited the sound less frequently after 1795.
traders and commentators tried to account for conflict at Clayoquot Sound, they generally lapsed into remarks about Indian savagery and did not see abuse of the Native prestation system as a primary source of tension. The Native accounts collected by Magee and Banfield, on the other hand, suggest that the giving and receiving of presents was integral to the way Clayoquot people engaged foreigners and was one of their main sources of irritation with traders.

_Wickaninish and Barkley Sound_

But there was more to Wickaninish's involvement in the fur trade than his dealings with traders. He also competed with neighbouring chiefs and extended his sway beyond the sound. Traders had to pass Vargas Island (Ahousaht territory) to get to Opitsat, and in the late 1780s there was a complex set of negotiations between Wickaninish and Ahousaht Chiefs Hanna and Detooche over trade privileges on the outside coast of Clayoquot Sound. They argued over access to trade vessels and the order in which they should trade. The Ahousaht were an autonomous tribe and had peaceful relations with the Clayoquots during the early contact period. A Clayoquot-Ahousaht war would have caused political instability in the region and pushed traders away. Wickaninish also had marriage ties with Maquinna and Hannape, and Chief Tatoosh of Cape Flattery. When Wickaninish's people visited Nootka Sound to trade, they were granted freer access to trade vessels than other visiting groups. Maquinna and Tatoosh were not given free reign to trade at Clayoquot, but they were certainly welcomed and feasted by Wickaninish.

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427 Meares, _Voyages_, pp.146-147.
428 See Howay, _Voyages of the 'Columbia'_, pp.261, 386; Ramón Saavedra, "Report on Nootka Sound," 1793-1794, Daylton, "Official documents," p.300. Wickaninish and Hannape were cousins; Wickaninish was married to Tatoosh's sister; Wickaninish and Maquinna were parents-in-law and brothers-in-law.
429 See Walker, _Account of a voyage_, pp.59-60.
Wickaninish adopted a more aggressive policy towards groups immediately south of Clayoquot Sound, however. Between 1789 and 1793 the Native people of Barkley Sound refused to sell their furs to traders, saying that they were to be collected by Wickaninish.\(^{430}\) Clayoquot chiefs visited the American vessel Jefferson regularly while it wintered at the head of Toquart Bay in 1793-94; they collected furs from Barkley Sound groups to trade to Magee.\(^{431}\) And in 1795 Captain Bishop of the Ruby ascertained that the Native groups of Ucluelet Arm were "subject" to the Clayoquots. Bishop traded only two of the 50 furs promised him by Ucluelet chief Hyhocus, and was told that the remainder had been disposed of to Wickaninish, their "sovereign".\(^{432}\)

Wickaninish extorted furs from these groups and dominated the west side of Barkley Sound. When a crew member of the Jefferson was murdered in Toquart harbour by Natives from "Seshart" (Tsicya'atHa people) in October 1793, Wickaninish advised the captain to take two Native lives in retaliation and added that he had "been under the necessity himself to kill forty of them not long since on acc[oun]t of thire obstinate & troublesome disposition...that the[y] paid him little tribute."\(^{433}\) There is also evidence that Wickaninish used the firearms and ammunition he traded from Gray to check the growing influence of the Hatc'a'atHa (Jewitt's A-y-charts) in Barkley Sound. The Hatc'a'atHa fought and defeated the T!o'mak'Lai'atHa and two other Barkley Sound groups, probably just before contact, after a dispute over territorial jurisdiction.\(^{434}\) Then the Hatc'a'atHa fought with the Tok'wa'atHa (Toquart). The Ucluelets joined in the

\(^{430}\) "Haswell's log of the first voyage of the 'Columbia',' Howay, *Voyages of the 'Columbia*', p.79; "Log of the Jefferson," 1 June 1793. Although Wickaninish took sea otter furs from Barkley Sound, Magee of the Jefferson improvised, trading clamons (elk hides used as war dresses), which were prized by Native groups on the northern coast, and Haiqua (dentalia) shells, which Chinook people around the Columbia River used as currency.

\(^{431}\) "Log of the Jefferson," 28 September 1793 - 2 April 1794.


\(^{434}\) Sapir, "Nootka Notes," notebook I (Johnny Yocum informant), pp.10-11, and notebook XII (Sayaachapis informant), pp.27-27v.
conflict when a Hatc'a'atHa killed a Ucluelet, having mistaken him for a T'ok'wa'atHa. The Ucluelets raided with spears and swords. Then the Clayoquots sided with the Ucluelets and joined the war. "They said that the Hachaa Tribe was bad and had killed a Clayoquot", Alex Thomas (one of Edward Sapir's Native fieldworkers) was told in 1914 by Kwishanishim, a Ucluelet informant.

The Clayoquots had got guns.... The Hachaa learned that the Clayoquots had guns. They laughed at them. They said they were only for frightening and that they could not kill. The Clayoquots never raided twice, but always wiped out the enemy in a single raid, because they knew how to fight.

After the raid "no one was left of the Hachaa." This war probably started in April 1792. In January 1792 Boit noted that Clayoquot chiefs "had been telling us for some time that they was going to war with a distant tribe and wish'd for us to lend them Muskets and Ammunition". A month later there was gun fire around Opitsat and Chief Tootoocheetticus (one of Wickaninish's brothers) informed Hoskins that his people were preparing for a war against "a tribe not far distant called Hichahats [Hatc'a'atHa] who had not of late in every respect paid them that homage which they thought due to so great a nation", and that he had been teaching his people how to fire muskets. Haswell was told that the Clayoquots wanted guns - and, if we pursue Marshall's logic, a vessel as well - to attack the village of Highshakt. Kwishanishim's account implies that the Clayoquots had used guns before to intimidate their neighbours, and also suggests that Wickaninish's sway over the west side of Barkley Sound was resisted. This war against the Hatc'a'atHa probably lasted for around ten years, for when Jewitt met Wickaninish at

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435 "Ucluelets seize Effingham Inlet," Sapir and Swadesh, *Native accounts of Nootka ethnography*, pp.368-377; the quotation is from pp.374-375.
436 "Boit's log of the second voyage of the 'Columbia'," Howay, *Voyages of the 'Columbia'* , p.389.
437 "Hoskins' narrative of the second voyage of the 'Columbia'," Howay, *Voyages of the 'Columbia'*, pp.269.
438 "Haswell's log of the second voyage of the 'Columbia'," Howay, *Voyages of the 'Columbia'* , p.313.
Nootka Sound in 1803, the chief informed him that he had just been at war with the "Ah-char-arts" and had killed 150 of them.\textsuperscript{439}

Traders discerned only the edges of these Native relations around Barkley Sound, but they were convinced that Wickaninish effectively controlled the region. "[H]e lives in a state of magnificence much superior to any of his neighbours, and [is] both loved and dreaded by the other chiefs", Meares observed. "His subjects, as he himself informed us, amounted to about thirteen thousand people": 4000 in Clayoquot Sound; 2000 around Ucluelet Arm and Barkley Sound; and 7000 people further south.\textsuperscript{440} Meares never spelled out what he meant by the term "subject", but he grasped that Wickaninish's approach to the maritime fur trade was different than Maquinna's. Wickaninish evidently did not form trade or marriage ties with these Barkley Sound groups, and therefore did not have to worry about creating divided loyalties in times of conflict. He had peaceful trade ties with the Native groups of Cape Flattery and Nittinat, and groups to the north, but he was ruthless with his Barkley Sound neighbours, instituting a tribute system.\textsuperscript{441}

Wickaninish took advantage of the fact that Barkley Sound was a highly volatile region. During the eighteenth century there were a series of wars and amalgamations between local groups of various sizes in and around the Broken Group Islands. By the late eighteenth century there were probably five main local groups in the central and western part of the sound: the T'ok'wa'atHa (Toquart); the Ts'Iicya'atHa (Sheshart); the MakL'ai'atHa; the T!o'mak'Lai'atHa; and the Hate'a'atHa (Haachaht) (see Figures II:3 and 4). Warfare between these groups and their neighbours proliferated in the early contact

\textsuperscript{439} Jewitt, \textit{Journal}, p.11.
\textsuperscript{440} Meares, \textit{Voyages}, p.212.
\textsuperscript{441} There are two exceptions to this statement about Clayoquot relations with northern groups. There is some suggestion in the Spanish record that the Clayoquots killed 70 Hesquiahts in 1793 (see Daylton, "Official documents," p.267); and the Clayoquots, allied with the Mowachaht, attacked the Kyuquots in the mid-1850s (see Sproat, \textit{Scenes and studies of savage life}, chapter XX, for a lengthy description).
period, and lasted until the 1850s, when an amalgamated Sheshart tribe established itself in the Broken Group Islands.\textsuperscript{442}

Richard Inglis and James Haggarty, who have synthesised most of the available ethnographic and historical data on Barkley Sound, and conducted an archaeological survey of the region, show that there was intense and violent inter-Native conflict in Barkley Sound between the late eighteenth and mid nineteenth centuries, and they hypothesise that the maritime fur trade was one of the principal catalysts. The Ahousahts, Clayoquots, Ucluelets, these five Barkley Sound groups, the Ohiahts on the east side of Barkley Sound, and the Ditidahts to the south, all trying to make the most out of the trade, focused their competitive and destructive energies on Barkley Sound. Native contact with traders was quite sporadic in the sound itself, but there was a large population of sea otters. There was great competition between the T'ok'wa'atHa, Ts'licya'atHa and Hact'a'atHa over trade with the Jefferson in 1793-94, such as these groups managed it behind Wickaninish's back. The Ts'licya'atHa, like the Hact'a'atHa, also became embroiled in conflict with the Clayoquots and Ucluelets during the 1790s. And in 1793 Ts'licya'atHa villages were attacked by Oanayit'atHa, a Ditidaht group, and by the Jefferson.\textsuperscript{443} The Ts'licya'atHa abandoned the region during the early nineteenth century; their territories were occupied by the Ahousahts and Ucluelets until "The long war in Barkley Sound", which broke out around 1830 and was started by a Ts'licya'atHa raid on the Ucluelets (see Figure II:4).\textsuperscript{444}

\textsuperscript{442} The details in this and the following few paragraphs are derived from Inglis and Haggarty, "Pacific Rim National Park."
\textsuperscript{443} See "Log of the Jefferson," especially February to April 1794.
\textsuperscript{444} "The long war" is chronicled by Kwishanishim in Sapir and Swadesh, \textit{Native account of Nootka ethnography}, pp.386-440.
Figure II.4 Broken Group Islands, Central Barkley Sound – main settlement and/or defensive sites, and socio-political arrangements, late pre-contact.

Cycle of raids and group amalgamations, in Broken Group Islands, affecting Sheshart before the long war in Barkley Sound, as hypothesized by Inglis and Haggarty (1986):

1. Hāc’a’tat Há take territory of T’o’kmak’Lai’at Há by his’ok’t
2. Hāc’a’tat Há warred with Mak’Lai’at Há, and almost wiped them out
3. Mak’Lai’at Há joined Tslicya’at Há
4. Hāc’a’tat Há fought T’o’km’a’at Há, either having taken Nāc’as’at Há territory as his’ok’t, or after the Tslicya’at Há had conquered the Nāc’as’at Há, and come into conflict with the T’o’km’a’at Há
5. But before the long war in Barkley Sound, in the early nineteenth century, this region was controlled by Ucluelets, who gained it from the Hāc’a’tat Há or Tslicya’at Há
6. Tslicya’at Há fought with the Ahousahts

- Main village site and/or defensive site
- Village identified by traders
+ Sheshart village, attacked by Jefferson, 1793
--- Group boundary

Hatc’a’at Há take territory of T’o’kmak’Lai’at Há by his’ok’t
Hāc’a’tat Há warred with Mak’Lai’at Há, and almost wiped them out
Mak’Lai’at Há joined Tslicya’at Há
Hāc’a’tat Há fought T’o’km’a’at Há, either having taken Nāc’as’at Há territory as his’ok’t, or after the Tslicya’at Há had conquered the Nāc’as’at Há, and come into conflict with the T’o’km’a’at Há
But before the long war in Barkley Sound, in the early nineteenth century, this region was controlled by Ucluelets, who gained it from the Hāc’a’tat Há or Tslicya’at Há
Tslicya’at Há fought with the Ahousahts
These wars entailed depopulation and profound settlement change, and probably became more destructive as firearms became more available. When George Blenkinsop toured Barkley Sound for the Canadian Department of Indian Affairs in 1874, he observed numerous deserted villages and noted that many people had perished because of frequent wars with the Clayoquets. Unfortunately, we have only glimmerings of these wars. In the late nineteenth century the Catholic missionary Augustus Brabant was told by Native people that some Barkley Sound groups decided to exterminate the Clayoquets after the Tonquin disaster, believing they they had few warriors left, but the Clayoquets, known for their ingenuity, dressed their women in mens’ clothes to scare off aggressors. There were attacks on the Clayoquets, however. According to a story heard by an American pioneer in the mid-nineteenth century, two white survivors of the Tonquin disaster, a blacksmith and his father, who were captured by the Clayoquets, operated two cannons recovered from the vessel in a war that "sprang up...[with] a neighbouring tribe" in 1813 - probably Barkley Sound people.

If we trust the statements of Meares and Eliza, and Blenkinsop’s 1874 census, the Native population of the Barkley Sound region fell by around 90 per cent during the first 100 years of contact, from 9-10,000 people to less than 1,000. Much of this devastation was caused by smallpox, measles, dysentry and scrofula (tuberculosis of the

445 George Blenkinsop to John Devereux, 25 May 1896, John Devereux - Correspondence, 1890-1896, BCARS J/G/T61D. He also reported on warfare in Barkley Sound in the 1850s. Blenkinsop to George Simpson, 24 October 1852, PAM-HBCA D.5/35, fols.87-88.
446 Augustin J. Brabant to John Devereux, 15 May 1896, Augustus J. Brabant, Miscellaneous Papers, BCARS E/D/B72.4.
447 Samuel Hancock, "Thirteen years residence on the north-west coast...", fols.264-269; the quotation is from fol.266, Bancroft Library, Berkeley, HHB P-B29.
448 Eliza remarked that Barkley Sound had a larger population than either Nootka Sound or Clayoquot Sound: "Extract from Eliza’s voyage," 1791, Wagner, Spanish explorations, p.149. And see "Report to the commissioner of Indian Affairs," signed by George Blenkinsop, 23 September, 1874, Department of Indian Affairs, Black Series, Public Archives of Canada RG10, vol.3614, file 4105.
lymph glands), which spread along the coast of Vancouver Island from the mid-nineteenth century onwards. However, Inglis and Haggarty argue that warfare was the principal cause of depopulation in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Parts of the Broken Group Islands were abandoned around the time of contact because of conflict, and tribal boundaries changed markedly. There were probably many more large Native settlements in Barkley Sound in pre-contact times than the few that traders and Spanish explorers counted in the late eighteenth century (see Figure II:4).449

How much of this warfare can be attributed to the presence of traders and the influx of trade goods and firearms is very much open to debate. The Native war stories collected by Sapir and his workers in the 1910s contain few references to whites or the fur trade, but this does not necessarily mean that the maritime fur trade did not ignite or inflame Native grievances. Barkley Sound was never a major centre of Native-white trade, but it remained a region of intense inter-Native conflict into the nineteenth century, in part because of the uneven geographical distribution of wealth flowing from the fur trade. Wickaninish pillaged furs from Barkley Sound using the firearms he had traded.450

*From Barkley Sound to Cape Flattery*

Traders visited other fairly large Native settlements in Ditidaht and Pacheenaht territory, but did not sail far into the Straits of Juan de Fuca until the 1820s, when Hudson's Bay Company traders started to venture into the Strait of Georgia to trade. Between 1785 and the 1810s the maritime fur trade effectively stopped at Tatoosh's Island, Cape Flattery, where there was a large Native settlement (see Figure II:1). Meares, Charles Duncan, Gray and other traders visited Cape Flattery a number of times, but they found Chiefs Tatoosh (of Tatoosh's Island) and Cassacan (of Nittinat) difficult to

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449 See Inglis and Haggarty, "Pacific Rim National Park," pp.87-93 and *passim.*
450 The Ahousaht elder Peter Webster also suggested that the Ahousahts used guns during the Long War in Barkley Sound. Webster, *As far as I know*, pp.59-60.
deal with, and some trade vessels were attacked by Natives in this area.\footnote{See Howay, \textit{Voyages of the 'Columbia'}, pp.197-198, 380, 393-394. In the summer of 1788 Robert Duffin, Meares's first officer, was attacked while trading in a longboat - Meares, \textit{Voyages}, pp.175-177.} Spanish explorers ventured farther into the Strait of Juan de Fuca in the early 1790s, noting that the Natives were warlike and daring, that most of these Native people had not met whites before, and that there were many signs of Native warfare.\footnote{See Wagner, \textit{Spanish explorations}, pp.109-127, 149-153, 171-190; Daylton, "Official documents," pp.159-197.}

As Vancouver and Galiano sailed into the Strait of Georgia in 1792, they encountered small groups of people living in scattered locations and discovered a stark, horrific reality: the ravages of smallpox. "[T]he smallpox must have had", Peter Puget noted, "and most terribly pitted they are; indeed many have lost their Eyes, & no Doubt it has raged with uncommon Inveteracy among them."\footnote{Peter Puget, "A log of the proceedings of his majesty's sloop Discovery," 4 January 1791 - 14 January 1793, PRO ADM 55/27, fol.134,} Galiano noticed abandoned villages.\footnote{Kendrick, \textit{Voyage of the Sutil and Mexicana}, p.116.} Cole Harris has argued recently that a smallpox epidemic swept the Strait of Georgia region in 1782, devastating Native populations (see Figure II:1).\footnote{Cole Harris, "Voices of disaster: Smallpox around the Strait of Georgia in 1782," \textit{Ethnohistory}, 41:4 (fall 1994), pp.591-626.}

This epidemic seemingly spread as far west as Nittinat, the home of Chief Cassacan, who had a pock-marked face, and maybe as far north as Cape Mudge at the northern end of the Strait of Georgia. Tatoosh's people of Cape Flattery were spared from the disease, however, and it touched neither Nootka Sound nor Clayoquot Sound.

The geographical reach of this epidemic is intriguing given the amount of Native traffic along the west coast of Vancouver Island. There are no references to smallpox or measles in the historical or ethnographic record pertaining to Vancouver Island north of Nittinat during the late eighteenth century. Yet traders reported that Wickaninish's brothers visited Cape Flattery regularly, Tatoosh and Cassacan visited Barkley Sound and
Clayoquot Sound to trade, and Tatoosh collected furs from groups living along the Strait of Juan de Fuca.\textsuperscript{456} This raises many questions, among them whether these Native trade patterns were post-contact creations?

\textit{A regional geography}

It seems clear that at Nootka Sound the maritime fur trade encouraged the consolidation of preexisting trade routes - principally the Nimpkish-Tahsis Trail - as well as the elaboration of others to the north and south. But what about Clayoquot Sound and Barkley Sound? The archaeological and ethnographic data presented by Areas Associates and by Inglis and Haggarty suggests that whether at peace or war, local groups operated within fairly small resource territories in pre-contact times. Native interconnectedness seemed to grow as a result of the Clayoquot-Hisau'istaht war, the wars involving the Tslicya'atHa and Hatc'a'atHa, and Clayoquot and Ucluelet intervention in Barkley Sound around the time of contact. The maritime fur trade bolstered Wickaninish's power and encouraged the Clayoquots to become more mobile. Traders' focus on Clayoquot Sound, and the likelihood that a smallpox epidemic had devastated the Strait of Georgia region, probably also encouraged southern Nuu-chah-nulth groups to venture north more frequently to trade. The fur trade was superimposed on processes of territorial change that had been underway for a number of decades before contact, and seemingly encouraged the reformulation of Native trade patterns.

In sum, Nuu-chah-nulth groups probably came into greater contact and conflict with each other during the era of the maritime fur trade. We cannot understand Native-white trade dynamics unless we try to appreciate Native agendas, and we cannot grasp the impact of the trade on different Native groups unless we try to discern the degree to which Native people became interconnected through trade, marriage and warfare. There

was a regional geography to Native-white and inter-Native contact processes, which I have summarised in Figure II:5.
Conclusion: Ideologies, Models and Geographies of Contact

Until recently there were two basic theses about the place of the maritime fur trade in the history of Native-white relations in British Columbia. The first, marked by the colonialist paradigm of thought sketched in Part I, was that the trade marked the beginning of the end for Native people. Howay argued that the trade was "of a predatory character and best constituted unequal trade with a primitive people" - "merely a looting of the coast." Drucker recycled Howay's views in his popular book Indians of the Northwest Coast, arguing that maritime fur traders "had no interest in cultivating the good will of the natives." And in a more general article on Native-white contact in North America, Edward Sapir argued that the influx of western goods caused "the fading away of genuine [Native] cultures." Native people, he proclaimed, "slipped out of the warm embrace of culture into the cold air of fragmentary existence."

Howay's views, particularly, were tied to the assumption that Native peoples lived in unchanging societies - "in harmony with [their] maritime environment", as a latter day historian has finished his thought; and that regardless of traders' actions, the influx of European commodities could only ruin this harmony and dislocate Native societies. These superficially sympathetic ideas were underpinned by the notion that Native groups suffered because of their fatal attraction to western goods; that they were victims of their own innocent, short-sighted desire to trade. Such scholars denied that Native people had much control over the terms of trade, and their arguments helped to justify the reserve

459 Edward Sapir, "Cultures, genuine and spurious," [orig. pub. 1924], in Mandelbaum, Selected writings of Edward Sapir, pp.308-331; the quotation is from p.318.
460 This quoted phrase is from Barry M. Gough, The northwest coast: British navigation, trade and discoveries to 1812 (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1992), p.50.
system, and take the sting out of the subsequent violence of colonialism, by rooting
Native dislocation and dependence on whites in a pre-colonial past.

This thesis was first contradicted in 1947 by Joyce Wike, an anthropologist, who argued that the maritime fur trade facilitated an efflorescence "of prevailing [Native] cultural emphases and directions".461 And Wike's thesis has since been pushed most forcefully and consistently by the historian Robin Fisher. Over the last twenty years Fisher has held that "the cultural balance sheet, like the trade itself, was evenly weighed during the early years of contact."462 He maintains that far from being innocent victims, Native people "met the maritime fur trade and molded it to serve their ends."463 The two group established a "mutually beneficial" relationship, Native societies were enriched through trade, and Native chiefs controlled the traffic.464

This second thesis, popularly known as the enrichment thesis, undermines the images of Native descent and cultural loss that underpinned Howay's work, and challenges the metanarrative of white invasion which informs much twentieth-century historical literature on the impact of European exploration and trade on the peoples of the Pacific. Fisher's work is informed by a post-colonial literature on different forms of culture contact which grapples with questions of Native agency, western domination, and forms of cultural continuity and change among indigenous peoples. Nicholas Thomas is

one of the most sophisticated exponents of this post-colonial style of inquiry, and summarises his critical concerns thus:

Historians of the relations between Europe and the people said to be 'without history' have often described the process of European expansion - the sequence of demands for particular commodities and the political violence - as though everything about colonial contact derived from the interests of the world market and imperial states. Such a perspective can only fail to specify the reasons why particular 'peripheral' societies became involved in international trade at all: it is obvious that such involvement, which often developed initially in the absence of any physical coercion or through an uneven combination of acquiescence and resistance, cannot simply be regarded as an imposition of the West upon the rest. Although the ultimately exploitative character of the global economy can hardly be overlooked, an analysis which makes dominance and extraction central to intersocial exchange from its beginnings will frequently misconstrue power relations which did not, in fact, entail the subordination of native people. The character of early contact was often such that foreigners were in no position to enforce their demands; consequently local terms of trade often had to be acceded to.... The partial intransigence of indigenous societies in the face of both imperialism's sheer violence and its more subtle ploys must thus be recognised.

Fisher would agree with this intellectual agenda, but he has tended to invoke it didactically rather than work through it empirically. He uses examples of face-to-face processes of interaction between Native chiefs and traders at places such as Nootka Sound and Clayoquot Sound to support his argument about Native agency, and thus ignores the more diffuse geographical ramifications of the trade on intra-group and inter-tribal relations. Chiefs such as Maquinna and Wickaninish obviously did have a powerful influence on the contact process, but to what extent did they exercise such power at the expense of their followers and neighbours? And is "enrichment" the best concept and adjective with which to assess the nature of change among Native groups? Conceptually, I think, this thesis is impoverished because it assumes that trade goods had some automatic value to Native people, and it imputes western values of accumulation and material progress to judge whether the trade was good or bad for Native people. Empirically, the thesis is too general to account for the historical-geographical variation of Native demands and the uneven social geography of Native participation in the trade.

Native chiefs amassed wealth from the trade, and some chiefs, such as Wickaninish, seemed to distribute many trade goods to their followers. But chiefly agendas also exacerbated inequalities of wealth within and between Native groups because Native people did not have equal access to whites and their goods.

Wike in fact shed doubt on the utility of the enrichment thesis for the study of early contact on the northwest coast in an article published in 1958, and called for more research. Over the last 10-15 years it has become increasingly clear from the work of archaeologists, anthropologists and geographers that the earliest phase of contact was marked by intense social change and geographical disruption among Native groups on some parts of the coast. Revisionist scholars such as Fisher have underestimated the scale and impact of warfare and disease, especially. We now have a much more intricate and variegated image of contact, conflict and change than the enrichment thesis ever allowed for.

Regional rather than absolute generalisations about the impact of the trade are emerging. Inglis and Haggarty have proposed that on Vancouver Island, contact with Euro-Americans at the end of the eighteenth century resulted in immediate and profound changes to economic patterns and to socio-political and settlement patterns for groups at the trading centres. In areas peripheral to this intensive contact changes were likely less radical and the traditional patterns persisted.

I agree with their last point, but Yvonne Marshall and Arcas Associate have shown that at Nootka Sound and Clayoquot Sound there was settlement stability and a consolidation of socio-political structures during the era of the maritime fur trade. Indeed, Inglis's and Haggarty's own analysis suggests that the most profound changes in subsistence and

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467 He had less data to work with than we do now, but continues to play down the impact of these destructive forces. See his "Preface to the second edition" of *Contact and conflict* (UBC Press, 1992).
settlement patterns, and socio-political structures, occurred in areas immediately adjacent to main centres of trade, such as Barkley Sound. Marshall has in my view offered a more adequate generalisation about Vancouver Island: that "greater changes probably occurred among those groups who maintained small sovereign polities than among those who developed more complex sovereign and confederate polities". Small polities, such as the groups of Barkley Sound, became destabilised because of the actions of powerful chiefs such as Wickaninish. But should we deduce the likelihood and extent of change on the basis of levels of socio-political sophistication, as Marshall implies? Such a model, while attentive to the importance of kinship relations in Nuu-chah-nulth social and political life, downplays issues of brute material power and logistical-political issues raised by depopulation due to disease and warfare.

Yet for all of this recent empirical rigour, debate about the impact of the maritime fur trade on Native societies is still largely circumscribed by dualistic conceptual categories of stability versus change, directed versus undirected change, autonomy versus dependence. What has always been missing from this debate is any sustained analysis of Native-white power relations. For it seems to me that in order to interpret contact relations and social and territorial change among Native groups, we need to analyse the spatial bases and strategies of power that Natives and traders could and/or did forge, and the spatial ramifications of a geographically uneven contact process. It is difficult to read inter-Native relations on the west coast of Vancouver Island in any other way than through the kinship system because this is how Drucker and Sapir broached the issue, and kinship was, indeed, the basis of Nuu-chah-nulth socio-political organisation. But Native-white power relations can be approached through the historical record. I have tried to show how Native-white partnership, tension and conflict was affected by both the time-geography of the trade and the interconnectedness of Native groups, and how

contact was focused in particular locales (around the ship and in the Native villages and trading places). *We should think of contact in terms of strategies and tactics for producing and negotiating spaces of interaction.*

The maritime fur trade fostered myriad alliances and oppositions, and probably entailed far more mechanisms of change than can possibly ever be recovered. Looked at spatially, analysed with questions of power in mind, and described geographically, questions of Native agency and social change become much more complex, and historical generalisations about "the cultural balance sheet" of contact (itself a western economic metaphor which reifies the corporeal dimensions of the trade) become more difficult to sustain. I have also brought issues of representation to the fore, suggesting that traders' views of Native people were not entirely rooted in an unbendable body of western assumptions about Indians. Traders' representational practices were acutely spatialised and mediated by the physical and psychical dynamics of face-to-face contact.

Nootka Sound and Clayoquot Sound became lodged in the American and European imagination as markedly different places. Capitalism, like colonialism, is thoroughly territorial; the regionalisation of Vancouver Island - the imaginative colonial work of demarcating and categorising space - had begun. Yet Native groups were just as territorial. The socio-political dynamics of Native participation in the trade were fundamentally geographical dynamics. Around the time of contact there was an intensification of Native territorial struggle. Native tribal territories were extended, subdivided, and amalgamated, and some Native groups were colonised and wiped out by other Native groups.

Native geographies on Vancouver Island had been fundamentally rearranged by the time colonists planted their picket fences around Victoria in the 1850s and William Banfield was sent to the Barkley Sound region by Governor Douglas to take a census of the Native population. When Sapir reached Vancouver Island in 1910, he realised that a timeless, traditional Native past was both unrecoverable and a dubious ethnographic
construct. Native life in Barkley Sound was stamped by wars and movements that his informants took back into the distant past. In one of the more poignant moments in British Columbia's history, Sapir wrote to his fieldworker Alex Thomas in October 1914:

I shall be quite pleased to get the war story that you refer to, also any other stories that you may be able to obtain. Now that the great European war is on, perhaps the Indians will be particularly eager to shell out with information about old time war customs.... Of course we know that old Indians often do better when they tell things of their own accord than when they are bothered by precise questions which they do not always understand.\textsuperscript{470}

It did not take a war in Europe to jog Native memories, however. Native people assured Sapir that they had their own long history of warfare; he simply had not asked much about it before - a tumultuous history, which traders, for all of their bravado, were only partially implicated in.

All of this undermines the colonialist paradigm that it was whites who instituted and drove change among Native groups. On the other hand, it cannot be denied that commercial contact with whites constituted some kind of threshold for Native people. The maritime fur trade surely affected the nature and intensity of change among Native groups. I have claimed that we need to analyse the trade geographically in order to appreciate these questions of change.

Such issues also raise questions of historical representation at a period when Native--non-Native relations in British Columbia are tense and highly politicised. Will this documented history of Native warfare and disease be used to rejuvenate older colonial tenets: that whether by design or accident, contact was mortal for Native people, and that colonists did settle a largely empty land? And will this history of ongoing territorial realignment among Native groups be used to criticise Native claims about traditional lands? The problem, of course, is with the categories and agendas we impose on history (as best we can reconstruct it). I hope that my analysis of the maritime fur

\textsuperscript{470} Extracts of "Edward Sapir's Correspondence," National Museums of Canada Mercury Series, in the possession of Richard Inglis, Royal British Columbia Museum, Victoria, Canada.
trade broadens discussion of notions of tradition, continuity and change, and revitalises debate about the most obvious dimension of the early contact period: that Native-white contact was a two-way process. The maritime fur trade entailed complex processes of mutual appropriation and accommodation, mutual desire and dread. In other words, the trade had a thoroughly human geography.

But as the maritime fur trade developed in the late 1780s, a more abstract geography began to emerge: an imperial geography that, as I will now show, deflated the materiality and physicality of the contact process, and worked through definitively European rather Native geopolitical corridors.
PART III
CIRCULATING KNOWLEDGE AND POWER

[T]here are some unquestionably who know our [Vancouver] Island by name alone and recognise in it an almost mythical locality.

J.R. Anderson: "Notes and comments on early days and events in British Columbia, Washington, and Oregon" [1878].

Introduction

Between 1790 and the 1840s the northwest coast was enveloped by imperial discourses about territory that laid some of the legal and ideological groundwork for the colonisation of Vancouver Island and British Columbia in the second half of the nineteenth century. The seizure of British trade vessels at Nootka Sound in 1789 by the Spanish naval officer Martinez sparked a diplomatic crisis over rights of sovereignty in the Pacific that brought Britain and Spain to the brink of war and culminated in a Convention that guaranteed British rights to trade and settle in the region. Then, in the early nineteenth century, Britain and the United States of America became embroiled in a territorial dispute over the Oregon Territory - the vast area west of the Rocky Mountains between Alaska and northern California, which, in the early 1800s, was brought under the commercial aegis of American and British land fur trade companies. This dispute culminated in the Oregon Treaty of 1846, which finished the partition of the continental mainland of North America - establishing the 49th parallel as the border dividing American and British possessions between the Rockies and the Strait of Georgia - and coaxed Britain into establishing the colony of Vancouver Island in 1849.

These geopolitical disputes were marked by processes of abstraction and point to the appropriation of Native land and life. The trading propensities of Native groups and the tricky business of making contact, which were of utmost concern to maritime and land-based

fur traders, barely made it into the heap of diplomatic correspondence over Nootka Sound or the Oregon Territory. Legal arguments about sovereignty and a convoluted set of international political relations were of paramount importance in this imperial outreach. The corporeal substance of Native-white contact described in Parts I and II became buried beneath the imperial paperwork of politicians and diplomats, and the northwest coast was gradually rendered as a geopolitical shell.

The British explorer George Vancouver put a particular stamp on these processes. Following the Nootka Sound crisis he was sent to the northwest coast to conduct a more exhaustive survey than Cook had managed, to settle (once and for all) dispute about the existence of the Northwest Passage, and to negotiate with Spanish officials at Nootka Sound over the restoration of British property seized by Martinez. Vancouver's diplomacy produced few results, but his charts became important geopolitical tools during the Oregon boundary dispute. His reconnaissance was invoked by British politicians to foil American territorial claims to the coastal region north of Cape Flattery, and the blank, "undeveloped" space in the middle of his map of Vancouver Island implied an alluring colonial future. In the words of James Anderson, a Hudson's Bay Company fur trader, some British speculators and colonists recognised Vancouver Island "by name alone" and viewed it as "an almost mythical locality" - as largely empty land that was up for grabs. Alexander Anderson (another fur trader) complained that these geographical impressions contributed to a number of "alluring fictions" about Native people: that British colonists tended to exaggerate maritime and land-based fur traders' accounts of Indian treachery, truncate traders' appreciation of Native agendas and territoriality, and regard Indians either as bloodthirsty savages or as primitives who had barely scratched the land and who could easily be pushed aside.²

In this last part of "Islands of Truth," then, I explore colonial Vancouver Island's imperial inheritance, tracking these processes of abstraction across international space, and sketching some of the main boundary-making procedures and place-holding tactics that went with them. European and American politicians sought a space of summation - an imperial map of who owned what and where; an inventory of the commercial and geopolitical value of the northwest coast. The work of explorers and traders was abbreviated, rationalised and used to support a set of territorial claims. The scientific-humanitarian tactics of observation and contact that gave Cook's sojourn at Nootka Sound its vibrancy, and the spatial strategies of commerce that mediated maritime fur traders' "mixed and split" representations of Native people - that is, the means by which Natives and whites encountered each other on the northwest coast in the late eighteenth century - became encompassed by geopolitical forces that operated at a distance from Native people. In short, a set of imperial equations were superimposed on the contact process, and a more divisive set of connections between power and space began to emerge. Native people were not dispossessed by this imperial outreach per se, but by a colonial apparatus that instituted British common law, reallocated much prime Native space to colonists, and placed Native people on reserves. However, this apparatus was informed by legal formulas about white sovereignty and ideas about Native life that stemmed from this envelope of imperial assumption and power.
I shall not despair... When Universal Commerce shall invigorate the hand of Industry, by supplying the mutual Wants, and maintaining the Common-Rights of ALL MANKIND; instead of the Lives and Property of the PEOPLE being sported away; at the caprice of a Fool! or a Tyrant!

Alexander Dalrymple, The Spanish Pretensions Fairly Discussed. 3

The reception of Martinez's actions in Europe

On 4 January 1790 Anthony Merry (Britain's Consul in Madrid) sent a muddled dispatch to the Duke of Leeds (Britain's Foreign Secretary) concerning Martinez's actions. 4 Merry's report was based on rumours. He gathered that the Viceroy of Mexico had learned of British plans to establish a settlement at Nootka Sound and sent a Spanish ship there to reassert Spanish sovereignty over the northwest coast. But Merry was confused about what Martinez had done. American, Portuguese and Russian ships were apparently in the sound during the summer of 1789; some people in Madrid thought that only the British vessel had been seized, while others understood that these foreign vessels had also been arrested.

This information reached London on 21 January and was succeeded by two more dispatches from Merry containing more vague information. 5 The British Cabinet did not get a detailed picture of this affair until April, but Leeds responded quickly to the rumours. On 2 February he instructed Merry to collect more information about the extent of Spanish

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4 Anthony Merry to the Duke of Leeds, 4 January 1790, PRO FO 72/16, fol.3-4.
5 Merry to Leeds, 7 and 15 January 1790, PRO FO 72/16, fols. 9, 64. In his dispatch of 15 January Merry enclosed extracts of a letter from Mexico dated 28 August 1789. By the start of January 1790 Count Floridablanca (Spain's Foreign Minister) had a fairly detailed knowledge of what had happened at Nootka Sound. He had received documents from Mexico that chronicled the affair, including two letters written by the Viceroy of Mexico summarising Martinez's actions. The letter Merry saw was probably unofficial, and it was thin on detail. For more details see William R. Manning, "The Nootka Sound controversy," Annual Report of the American Historical Association For the Year 1904, pp.279-478, especially pp.334-367.
settlement on the Pacific coast of North America, and urged him to be "very cautious [in conversation] of giving even a hint which may be construed into a dereliction of our right to visit for the purposes of trade, or to make a settlement in the District in question; to which we undoubtedly have a complete right, to be asserted and maintained with a proper degree of vigour, should circumstances make such an assertion necessary".6 And on 7 February Leeds wrote to the Marquis del Campo (the Spanish Ambassador to London), arguing that Martinez's "violent" act "must be disposed of in a way to satisfy the injured Honour of the British Crown before any discussion of the point of right to the particular place in question can be agitated."7 Campo responded on 10 February, having been briefed by Count Floridablanca (Spain's Foreign Minister) about how to represent Spain's case. Leeds was told that the British trader was arrested because he aimed to take possession of Spanish territory "in the name of the British King", and Campo requested that "His Brittanic Majesty...punish such undertakings in a manner to restrain his subjects from...[allowing] them on these lands which have been occupied and frequented by the Spaniards for so many years."8

Britain and Spain each made formal protests over Nootka Sound using a pointed language of national honour and territorial rights, and this obscure event started to evolve into an international melee. Leeds thought that it was the "unanimous sense" of the British Cabinet that the incident should be treated with "a high hand", but William Pitt (First Minister of the Cabinet) was agitated by the aggressive tone of Leeds's letter to Campo and started to manage the affair himself.9 Under Pitt's supervision, Leeds wrote to Campo again

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6 Leeds to Merry, 2 February 1790, PRO FO 72/16, fol.87-88.
7 This quotation is from a draft of Leeds's letter, which was evidently written in a rage, in PRO FO 72/16, fols.130-131.
9 William Pitt to Leeds, 23 February, Leeds to Pitt, 23 February 1790, PRO 30/8/102, fol.170, 30/8/151, fols.55-56. Pitt was also agitated because Leeds had not given copies of his letter to the Cabinet. Pitt was First Lord of the Treasury and primus inter pares in the
on 26 February, demanding the restitution of the vessel and compensation for the insult, but also suggesting, in a more conciliatory tone, that both Courts should seek more information before making declarations about territorial issues.\footnote{Copy of Leeds to Campo, 26 February 1790, PRO FO 72/16, fols.136-137.}

Nothing of major consequence happened in the dispute for another six weeks, and as John Ehrman, the leading student of the younger Pitt's political career, has it, neither country wanted war.

Despite lingering differences over the Mosquito shore [south of Belize], their relations were now quite amicable and might indeed well improve. The Spaniards were worried by events in France [the Revolution], and were on rather bad terms with Russia - they were anxious to be neutral in the [Austro-Russian] war with Turkey, and had refused to allow Russian naval ships to use Spanish ports. They had recently shown signs of wishing to revive the commercial negotiation with England [of the mid-1780s], and the earlier mutual suspicions seemed on the whole to be dying down. The British for their part remained genuinely anxious to reach an understanding, and when they were invited to mediate in central Europe [in 1788-1789] they even thought momentarily of asking Spain to help. Throughout February and March 1790 each side therefore waited on the other, not relaxing their pretensions but hoping that a formula might be found.\footnote{John Ehrman, \textit{The younger Pitt, vol.1: The years of acclaim} (London: Constable, 1969), p.556.}

This diplomatic affray unfolded in a complicated international situation. Britain and Spain had been imperial rivals for centuries, of course, and were at war between 1739 and 1748, in 1762-63, and between 1779 and 1783, clashing in the Caribbean, the Philippines, and the western Mediterranean. Anglo-Spanish relations improved after 1784, and British diplomats thought that Floridablanca wanted to keep Spain out of expensive and troublesome alliances with other European powers until the political ramifications of the French Revolution became clearer. Yet in 1790 King Carlos IV of Spain still hoped that he could revive the Bourbon Family Compact with France (Britain's other great rival) in times of international crisis. Pitt was troubled by the possibility of a Franco-Spanish military alliance against Britain, and he also understood that Prussia, Britain's main ally during this period, would not be enthusiastic about assisting Britain if war broke out. Furthermore, in February 1790 Pitt
was concerned foremost with the military threat that France and the Austrian Netherlands posed to the newly independent Belgian states, and British diplomats were trying to hold together the Triple Alliance that Pitt had forged with Prussia and the United Provinces in 1788.\textsuperscript{12} Pitt and Floridablanca were acutely aware that if the incident at Nootka Sound was not treated cautiously, it might trigger a wider political crisis in Europe, for no individual European state was strong enough militarily or financially to be able to ignore the maze of fleeting international alliances and conflicts that enveloped late eighteenth-century Europe.\textsuperscript{13} Thus while Britain and Spain wanted peace, the two countries remained suspicious of each other, took precautions, and began to assess the possible reverberations of Martínez's actions.

In April 1790 Spain explained its case to France and approached Austria, Russia and Sweden to negotiate an alliance against Britain.\textsuperscript{14} Spanish defences in the West Indies were strengthened, and Spain started to fit out ships of the line.\textsuperscript{15} Floridablanca tried to convince Merry that Spain was arming against France, but the British Cabinet watched this Spanish naval build up carefully and took heed of Merry's dispatch of 29 March, which stated that Floridablanca maintained that the British viewed the incident at Nootka Sound as "a ground for quarrelling."\textsuperscript{16}

This diplomatic dispute prompted the British Cabinet to review British commercial activity in the Pacific and contemplate whether it should take a more active role in its development. The Cabinet knew that the British whale and seal fishery in the south Pacific

\textsuperscript{12} See Jeremy Black, \textit{British foreign policy in an age of revolutions, 1783-1793} (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), chapter 5, which is the most recent and accomplished analysis of the European dimensions of the Nootka Sound crisis.


\textsuperscript{14} Merry to Leeds, 5 April 1790, PRO FO 72/16, fols.245-247.

\textsuperscript{15} Merry to Leeds, 8, 18 and 25 February, 29 March, 12 and 19 April 1790, PRO FO 72/16 fols.97-99, 109, 118, 239, 257, 270; Merry to Leeds, 3 May 1790, PRO FO 72/17, fol.3. Also see Paul Webb, "The naval aspects of the Nootka Sound crisis," \textit{Mariner's Mirror}, 61 (1975), pp.133-154.

\textsuperscript{16} Merry also doubted whether Spain had good enough finances to muster a large military force quickly.
posed a considerable threat to Spain's commercial monopoly over the Pacific coast of America, and Pitt's sense that the incident at Nootka Sound presented a chance for Britain to enhance its imperial position in South America was heightened on 14 February, when he met with Francisco de Miranda, a Spanish American agitator who had a "grand plan" for overthrowing Spanish rule and forming a federation of independent states that would trade with Britain. Then, on 23 February, the Cabinet endorsed an Admiralty plan to send a naval expedition to the northwest coast to establish a British trade post and assess the value of the sea otter trade. The commanders of the expedition were given their instructions at the end of March and were about to sail at the end of April when the plan was shelved due to the revelations of John Meares.


18 British business promoters held out hope that a northwest passage would be found. In July 1789 the British fur trader George Dixon wrote to Evan Nepean (undersecretary of state at the Home Office), arguing that a naval expedition should be sent to the northwest coast to establish a British settlement in order to prevent the Russians, Americans and Spanish from colonising the commerce of the region, and to protect the coast for British "Traders from both Hudson's Bay and Canada" in the event that a water passage across North America was discovered. Dixon's remarks were reiterated by Alexander Dalrymple, who, in September 1789, impressed on the Home Secretary the need to prevent the Northwest Passage from falling into Spain's hands. George Dixon to Evan Nepean, [July] 1789, PRO CO 42/72, fol.243-244; Dalrymple to Viscount Sydney, [September] 1789, PRO CO 42/61, fols.56-62. Dalrymple's involvement in the Nootka Sound crisis is discussed by Alan Frost, "Nootka Sound and the beginnings of Britain's imperialism of free trade," in Robin Fisher and Hugh Johnston (eds.), From maps to metaphors: The Pacific world of George Vancouver (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1993), pp.104-126.

19 [Evan Nepean], Instructions to Captain Roberts of the Discovery, March 1790, PRO HO 28/61, fol.249; W.W. Grenville to Commodore Cornwallis (secret), 31 March 1790, PRO HO 28/61, fol.253-254. Overland expeditions in search of the Northwest Passage were also planned through the offices of the Hudson's Bay Company. See Glyndŵr Williams, The British search for the north west passage in the eighteenth century (London: Longmans, Green, 1962), pp.239-240.
Meares arrived in England from Macao in early April and presented William Grenville (the Home Secretary) with a detailed memorial describing Martínez’s actions and the history of the sea otter trade.\(^\text{20}\) He stated that four British vessels belonging to a British mercantile outfit (in which he was a principal investor), and commanded by former British Navy officers, had been arrested between May and July 1789, and that their crews had been imprisoned and abused by the Spanish. Three of these vessels were seized by Martínez as legal prizes, and two of them were taken to San Blas, where their commanders had to explain to a Spanish court why they had been trading in Spanish waters.\(^\text{21}\) Meares also noted that Martínez had claimed formal possession of Nootka Sound and the northwest coast for Spain in June 1790.

British citizens had been bruised as well as insulted. But Meares did not stop there. What grabbed Grenville’s attention, and subsequently altered the nature of the dispute, was Meares’s claim that he had bought spots of land on the coast, and had erected a small building on one of them, a year before Martínez arrived:

That your Memorialist, immediately on his Arrival in Nootka Sound, purchased from Maquilla, the Chief of the District contiguous to and surrounding that Place, a Spot of Ground, whereon he built a House for his occasional Residence, as well as for the more convenient Pursuit of his Trade with the Natives, and hoisted the British Colours thereon.... That during the absence of your Memorialist from Nootka Sound, he obtained from Wickananish, the Chief of the District surrounding Port Cox and Port Effingham...in consequence of considerable Presents, the Promise of a free and

\(^{\text{20}}\) The handwritten draft of Meares’s memorial is in PRO HO 28/61, fols.291-373; it includes 14 documentary appendices detailing Martínez’s actions. On Meares’s dealings with Grenville see Norris, "Policy", p.569 notes 1 and 2.

\(^{\text{21}}\) The Iphigenia Nubiana, commanded by William Douglas, was detained on 13 May but released two weeks later. The North West America, commanded by Robert Funter, was seized on 9 June. The Argonaut, commanded by James Colnett, was seized on 3 July. And the Princess Royal (then on its third trading trip to the northwest coast), commanded by Thomas Hudson, was seized on 13 July. The latter two vessels were taken to San Blas in the third week of July. The Spanish stripped all of these vessels of their sea otter furs, trade goods, and provisions, and Martínez renamed the North West America the Gertrudis and sent it on a trading trip for Spain’s benefit. Manning has documented this chain of events in great detail in "Nootka Sound controversy," pp.286-361. Also see Warren Cook, Flood tide of empire: Spain and the Pacific northwest, 1543-1819 (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1973), pp.146-199.
exclusive Trade with the Natives of the District, and also his Permission to build any Storehouses, or other Edifices, which he might judge necessary; that he also acquired the same Privilege of exclusive Trade from Tatouche, the Chief of the Country bordering on the Straits of Juan de Fuca, and purchased from him a Tract of Land within the said Strait, which One of your Memorialist's Officers took Possession of in the King's Name, calling the same Tatouche, in honour of the Chief.

That the Iphigenia [one of Meares's vessels], in her Progress to the Southward, also visited several Ports, and in consequence of Presents to the Chiefs of the Country, her Commander had Assurances given to him of not only a free Access, but of an exclusive Trade upon that Coast, no other European Vessel having been there before her.  

This information dishevelled Spain's claim to exclusive sovereignty and put British rights to trade and settle in the region on firmer ground. For at the core of Britain's understanding of the Law of Nations was a materialist formulation about sovereignty: that "Discovery alone, not followed by Actual Occupation and Establishment, can never be admitted as giving any [territorial] Right to the Exclusion of Other Nations", as Leeds put it. I will return to this formulation below. Here the point is that Leeds thought that Martínez had acted illegally because Meares had provided Britain with prior rights to the sound.

Meares's memorial was largely self-serving. Looking for notoriety and compensation for Martínez's assault on his company, he exaggerated his losses and the brutality of the affair, and misled the government about his activities. But with no other direct information from a British source to go on, Meares's hefty claims were treated seriously and incited indignation towards the Spanish. On 20 February Leeds learned from Campo that "the

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22 The memorial of John Mears, lieutenant in his majesty's navy, to the Right Honourable William Wyndham Grenville...dated 30th April 1790; the quotation is from pp.1-2 (emphases in the original).
23 The quotation is from Leeds to Alleyne Fitzherbert, 17 August 1790, PRO FO 72/18, fol.189. The same point is made in Leeds to Pitt, 2 June, Leeds to Fitzherbert, 5 July 1790, PRO 30/8/151, fol.57, PRO FO 72/18, fol.22. And see Verus [Bland Burges], Letters lately published in the Diary, on the subject of the present dispute with Spain (London: G. Kearsley, 1790), letter III, p.7: "...no right but that of actual possession or prior occupancy, can amount to an exclusion of other nations." Burges was undersecretary of state at the Foreign Office and advised Leeds on legal matters.
24 See Argonaut [John Cadman Etches], An authentic statement of all the facts relative to Nootka Sound... (London: Debrett, 1790), published in June, which points up some of the inaccuracies in Meares's statement of losses, and his account of the sea otter trade. Etches was one of Meares's associates.
British vessel" taken to San Blas had been restored, but Meares showed that Spain had concealed the extent of the insult. And after studying Meares's memorial, Leeds and Pitt also became dissatisfied with the reason Campo had given for the restoration of the vessel: that Spain was being courteous to Britain because the trader that Martínez arrested was evidently "ignorant" of Spain's "exclusive rights of sovereignty" over the northwest coast. The aspersive implication here was that Britain should have acknowledged such rights and instructed British traders to steer clear of Spanish territory - rights that the Cabinet maintained were simply alleged and could not be proved.

British ministers acted quickly on Meares's information and this diplomatic affray over insult and injury grew into a full-fledged dispute about territorial rights. On 30 April King George III approved a Cabinet decision to demand "immediate and adequate satisfaction for the outrages committed" by the Spanish: financial compensation for Meares and his associates, acknowledgement that Martínez had acted illegally, and an admission that British rights to the region had not been erased. At the start of May the Navy Board was ordered to fit out forty ships of the line and organise a press for sailors in order to back Britain's demand. And over the next few weeks the Admiralty sent circular letters to British colonial officials in America, Asia and the Mediterranean, alerting them that war could be on the horizon, and dispatched spy vessels to assess the state of the Spanish fleet. Meanwhile, military strategists advised the Cabinet on how to coordinate a naval onslaught on Spain's colonies on the Caribbean coast, and Pitt met with Miranda again on 6 May to gauge how much support Britain could expect in Spanish America if war broke out.

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27 Grenville to George III, 1 and 2 May, George III to Grenville, 1 and 2 May, Grenville to Earl of Westmorland, 3 May 1790, HMC, Dropmore, I, pp.579-580.
28 See Webb, "Naval aspects".
29 See Frost, "Nootka Sound".
American historian F.J. Turner also showed that Britain tried to gain the allegiance of Vermont separatists and Kentucky pioneers; Grenville reasoned that if war with Spain focused on the Caribbean, the former might prevent the United States from allying with Spain and could defend British military posts in North America, and that the latter might support a British military campaign for control of the Mississippi delta.\(^{30}\)

As these preparations involved a great mobilisation of people and resources, the details of this dispute could not be kept secret any longer. The Navy Board's 'hot' press of 4 May apparently took the country by surprise.\(^{31}\) The following day the Government published Meares's memorial, and Pitt and Leeds read the King's Message on Nootka Sound in Parliament.\(^{32}\) And on 6 May Pitt asked the House of Commons for £1 million to finance Britain's military preparations, and debated the issue with the Opposition.\(^{33}\) He was reported as stating that between January and March Spain had made

the most absurd and exorbitant [claim about sovereignty] that could well be imagined, a claim which [Britain]...had never heard of before, which was indefinite in its extent, and which originated in no treaty, nor formal establishment of a colony, nor rested on any of those grounds on which claims of sovereignty, navigation, and commerce usually rested. If that claim were given way to, it must deprive this country of the means of excluding his majesty's subjects from an infant trade, the future extension of which could not but be essentially beneficial to the commercial interests of Great Britain.\(^{34}\)

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\(^{32}\) Printed in William Cobbett (ed.), The parliamentary history of England..., vol.XXVIII (London: Hansard, 1816), pp.764-769. This message was prepared by Pitt and the King considered it a "fair and concise narrative" of the issue. George III to Pitt, 5 May 1790, quoted in Donald Grove Banes, George III and William Pitt, 1783-1806 (New York: Octagon Books, 1965), p.227. Printed copies of Meares Memorial can be found in PRO HO 42/16, PRO FO 72/17 and FO 95/7/4.

\(^{33}\) These proceedings are documented in Great Britain, Official papers relative to the dispute between the courts of Great Britain and Spain, on the subject of the ships captured in Nootka Sound... (London: J. Debrett, 1790), pp.27-38. A summary of Meares's memorial was also published in the Gentleman's Magazine for June 1790.

\(^{34}\) Cobbett, Parliamentary history, XXVIII, pp.770.
These sentiments were echoed in dispatches to Merry at the beginning of May. Leeds stated that while the King would prevent his subjects from "interfering with the Just and Acknowledged Rights" of Spain, Britain could not accept Spain's claim to exclusive sovereignty over the northwest coast.† Merry was briefed about the contents of Meares's memorial and told to impress on Floridablanca that

British subjects trading under the protection of the British flag...have an unquestionable Right to a free and undisturbed enjoyment of the Benefits of Commerce, Navigation and Fishery [in the Pacific], and also [to] the Possession of such Establishments as they may form, with the consent of the Natives, in such places unoccupied by other European Nations.36

The Cabinet still hoped to resolve the issue peacefully. Campo was informed that Britain's military preparations were defensive measures, and Pitt decided to replace Merry with Alleyne Fitzherbert, a more experienced and talented diplomat, who was told to assure Floridablanca that Britain wanted to "do Justice to the Fair Rights and Interests of both Countries".37 But these overtures were in many respects diplomatic foils. The two countries were now at loggerheads over the spoils of navigation and commerce in the Pacific.

The dispute dragged on through the summer of 1790, generating a flurry of diplomatic activity in Europe, and Britain spent over £2 million on its military preparations.38 Spain continued to seek the assistance of France and other European powers.39 Britain borrowed 10 ships of the line from the Dutch, and employed Portuguese spies to report on Spanish naval activities.40 British diplomats tried to ensure that France remained neutral in the dispute, and Prussia reluctantly agreed to provide military support to Britain if Austria,

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35 Leeds to Merry, 3, 4 and 5 May 1790, PRO FO 72/17, fols.7-9, 15-21, 23-24.
36 Leeds to Merry, 4 May 1790, PRO FO 72/17, fol.20.
37 [Leeds], Draft instructions for Alleyne Fitzherbert, 7 May 1790, Leeds to Fitzherbert 16 May 1790, PRO FO 72/17, fols.35-52, 54-59, 84-87; the quotation is from fol.54 (my emphasis). Fitzherbert was sent to Spain as Britain's Ambassador.
France or Russia became involved in the dispute and war broke out in Europe. Territorial rights were not discussed until late August, after Spain had signed a Declaration on 24 July agreeing to reparations. And a settlement was not reached until the end of October, when Spain, without allies in Europe, dropped its claim to exclusive sovereignty. The Nootka Convention did not establish precise imperial boundaries, but it permitted British subjects to fish and trade in the Pacific, and to establish temporary settlements along the Pacific coast in areas unoccupied by the Spanish.

The Nootka Sound crisis illustrates some of the main features of European geopolitics and British imperialism at the end of the eighteenth century, and marks a turning point in the history of the northwest coast. As European powers (especially Britain, France and Spain) explored, laid claim to, occupied and fought over more and more sections of the globe during the eighteenth century, minor scuffles between European actors in "remote" corners of the world became blown up into serious geopolitical dramas. The dispute over Nootka Sound may have struck Europe as "a bolt from the blue", as Pitt's biographer, J. Holland Rose, remarked earlier this century, but it was also a striking example of the way European powers projected the non-European world through their own prisms of rivalry and conflict.

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41 See Black, British foreign policy in an age of revolutions, for a detailed analysis of these diplomatic manoeuvres.
42 This Declaration and Britain's Counter-Declaration are printed in Cobbett, Parliamentary history, XXVIII, pp.914-916, and The annual register..for the year 1790 (London: J. Dodsley, 1793), pp.300-301.
44 This Convention was signed on 28 October 1790, and was published on 7 November. Copies can be found in PRO FO 72/20, and The annual register, 1790, pp.303-305.
45 The Anglo-Spanish war of 1739 - known as the "War of Jenkins' Ear" - was sparked by a British naval captain, who returned to England from Florida with one of his ears in his pocket, claiming that a Spanish officer had cut it off. Jenkins displayed his ear in Westminster. And Britain and Spain were at loggerheads in 1770 over rights of trade and settlement on the Falkland Islands.
46 The quotation is from J. Holland Rose, William Pitt and national revival (London: G. Bell and Sons, 1911), p.567.
Martínez's actions reignited long-standing Anglo-Spanish competition over the New World, and the diplomatic dispute became wrapped up with a larger body of political reaction in Britain to the French Revolution. Indeed, John Derry notes that some British politicians seemed more interested in the diplomatic role that the French National Assembly played in the dispute than in the nature of the grievance with Spain; the dispute "allowed pro-French sympathisers to point to the [eventual] denunciation of the old Family Compact between the French and Spanish Bourbons [by Luzerne and Mirabeau] as evidence that the French reformers were acting up to their protestations of peace and their renunciation of dynastic ambitions." And Britain, Spain, and France also viewed European reaction to the dispute as a test of the strength and durability of the Triple Alliance. The northwest coast was roped into European geopolitics and transformed into an imperial signifier.

Nootka Sound was also viewed as a territorial marker of international capitalism. As many scholars have pointed out, one of the main consequences of Europe's "age of revolution" at the end of the eighteenth century was that it reaffirmed that the economic and military strength, political stability, and national self-consciousness of European states was bound up with capitalist-cum-imperialist forces that spanned the globe. Europe drew a large part of its wealth from the rest of the world, and inter-state competition over markets and resources induced territorial conflict both in and beyond Europe. European powers considered themselves to be what Jean Comaroff and John Comaroff call "polities on a world map": as culturally and politically distinct states whose identities were mediated, to varying degrees, by the way they had explored, carved up and exploited the world.

47 John W. Derry, Politics in the age of Fox, Pitt and Liverpool: Continuity and transformation (London: Methuen, 1990), p.80.
geopolitical relations were regulated, in part, by diplomats, who standardised procedures of address, developed tit for tat formulas for offsetting what James Der Derian calls "the mutual estrangement of states", and they appealed to treaties, conventions, proclamations, and philosophical and legal texts about the nature of sovereignty (collectively known as the Law of Nations) to resolve international disputes. But diplomats were not policy-makers, often failed to prevent wars, and European states interpreted the Law of Nations in different ways. Michael Mann aptly describes late eighteenth-century Europe as a multi-power-actor-civilization embodying an inherent contradiction: geopolitically highly competitive unto war, yet regulated by common norms. Eighteenth century war [in and beyond Europe] became more destructive and costly, yet also more profitable for the Great Powers [Britain, France, Russia and Spain] and also partly regulated by transnational institutions [commercial and, increasingly, industrial capitalism] and by multistate diplomacy.

Nootka Sound was transposed into this European setting of rivalry and revolution, filtered through the correspondence of diplomats and politicians, and reconstructed as an object of European concern. Martinez's actions concerned the British Cabinet, as I will now illustrate, because of the material and ideological importance of overseas trade to Britons.

The Map, the register, and British commercial vision

In eighteenth-century Britain, commerce, nationalism and imperialism were completely intertwined. As Linda Colley has spelled out: "...the claim that trade was the muscle and the soul of Great Britain, both the source of its greatness and the nursery of patriots, was abundantly echoed in the poetry, drama, novels, newspapers, tracts,

50 James Der Derian, On diplomacy: A genealogy of western estrangement (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1987), who argues that multistate diplomacy in eighteenth-century Europe presupposed "a system of reciprocal orientations", and aimed to mediate "mutual estrangements between states" - that is, mediate culturally and politically specific notions of foreignness (pp.105-106).


parliamentary speeches, private correspondence, even the sermons of the time." Britain's commercial community was highly segmented, and land had by no means been eclipsed as a main source of government revenue or social prestige, but Colley argues that "This cult of trade crossed party divisions, just as it crossed social boundaries." And it crossed the oceans with merchants such as Meares. Commerce was central to Britain's wealth and identity as a European actor and imperial power. During the eighteenth century customs and excise duties made up between 60 and 70 per cent of British government revenue, the ratio of exports to national income climbed from around 8 to 15-18 per cent, the import ratio hovered between 11 and 16 per cent, and creditors were highly sensitive to fluctuations in international trade. Domestic and international traders supplied the state with much of the revenue it needed to defend the nation from foreign invasion and domestic insurrection (which would upset business), and to expand Britain's infrastructure and to regulate business practices. Equally, Britain's military successes overseas opened up new markets and sources of raw materials, and encouraged new forms of trade. It was these complex affiliations between government and trade, war and commercial expansion - this British constellation of mercantilism - that made the incident at Nootka Sound an important national issue. The Cabinet did not seek "unqualified satisfaction" from Spain simply because it thought that Martínez had acted illegally. More profoundly, Spain had insulted the British nation because Meares and his cohorts were considered to be

54 Ibid., p.60.
Public agents - not state servants, but bearers of Britain's commercial soul. They were important to Britain's sense of self and system of government. Alexander Dalrymple highlighted that "the Insult and Injury was publick", and that "the Satisfaction and Atonement must [therefore] be publick!"; he and other commentators demanded that Spain make a formal apology to all Britons.\textsuperscript{57} And James Boswell satirised these connections between nationalism, war and commerce at a banquet held at the Guildhall in London on 7 November 1790 (the day the Convention with Spain was published) to install John Boydell as the new Lord Mayor of London. He wrote a ballad for the occasion, titled "William Pitt, the Grocer of London". The third and fourth stanzas read:

Though fleets in vain-boasting hostility ride,
Still BRITAIN is queen of the main;
The secret well kept now comes forth with due pride;
And lo! a Convention with Spain!

Too noble to brag, as we're never afraid,
'Tis enough that we've had a good pull.
There's a GROCER OF LONDON who watches our trade,
And takes care of th'estate of JOHN BULL.\textsuperscript{58}

Robin Reilly argues that while Pitt's approach to European politics following the loss of its American colonies was to re-establish British influence and prestige "by a combination of alliances and mediation", his handling of the Nootka Sound crisis was marked by a ruthless determination to protect Britain's international trading interests, which mirrored the political philosophy of his father who told Parliament at the start of the Anglo-Spanish war of 1739: "When trade is at stake it is your last retrenchment. You must defend it or perish."\textsuperscript{59}

\textsuperscript{57} A. Dalrymple, \textit{The Spanish memorial of 4th June considered} (London: George Bigg, 1790, p.6. Also see [Burges], \textit{Dispute with Spain}, letter 1; Leeds to Merry, 4 May 1790, PRO FO 72/17, fol.15. The crisis was also dramatised on the stage. James Bryn's pantomime-opera, "Nootka Sound; or Britain prepar'd," opened at Covent Garden in June 1790. A typescript of the text is held at UBCL-SC.

\textsuperscript{58} Quoted in Marlies K. Danziger and Frank Brady (eds.) \textit{Boswell: The great biographer 1789-1795} (London Heinemann, 1989), p.113. Pitt attended the banquet, and was a member of the Grocer's Company of London.

Britain had a great commercial interest in the Pacific at this time, and the Nootka Sound crisis presented both a threat to Britain's economic stability and a chance to consolidate British influence in the Pacific. On the one hand, the King's Message of 5 May caused "much alarm and [a] falling of stocks" in London, and caused one wry, if concerned, Opposition pamphleteer to ask whether it was "a wise measure to go to war with half of Europe for the sake of the fur trade of Nootka Sound."60 The Nootka Sound crisis raised practical as well as ideological questions about whether British commerce in the Pacific was large enough to warrant an expensive war.61 And commentators did not just worry about the reverberations of the dispute in Europe. In June 1790 Bland Burges (under-secretary of state at the Foreign Office) warned Leeds that "before we know where we are, we shall have the Americans, and possibly the Russians on our backs", and that if Britain was defeated in a naval war, "we will lose the Canada Forts and possibly something still more essential".62 On the other hand, Pitt argued in the Commons that the dispute presented a window of commercial opportunity, and reasoned in private that war might enhance Britain's imperial position in the world. Indeed, after receiving a copy of the King's Message, Floridablanca told Fitzherbert that he was convinced that Britain's demand for satisfaction was underpinned by "a real design of making ourselves Masters of the Trade of Mexico - that our Southern Whale-Fishery covered a like design against Peru & Chili, and as to our Colony at Botany-

61 During May and June 1790 Cabinet ministers were questioned by the Opposition about the value of the sea otter trade and whether it was likely to remain profitable. The debates can be followed in G.B., Official documents relative to the dispute. Commentators also argued over the value of the whale fishery. Some merchants claimed that whales caught in the Pacific sold for £90 in England, whereas Greenland whales were worth £170. Other merchants noted that whale oil from the Pacific sold for £50 a ton in London, whereas that from the north Atlantic was worth only £19 a ton. P.W. Wilson, Pitt, the younger (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1930), p.204.
Bay, that it must necessarily have been founded with a view of seconding these designs & of adding to our other conquests that of the Philippines."63

Floridablanca was largely correct. Central to the Cabinet's approach to the Nootka Sound crisis was the prospect of gaining access to the extensive markets of Spanish America, and the pivotal role that overseas trade played in Britain's system of government and sense of national identity. These material and ideological themes were articulated most emphatically by the Scottish politician Henry Dundas (Treasurer of the Navy in 1790, Home Secretary in 1791, and one of principal architects of British commercial policy in the 1790s) in a Commons debate on the Convention with Spain in December 1790. "The spirit of the nation was roused" over Nootka Sound, he argued,

to vindicate its honour, and to assert an equal right with Spain to occupancy, trade, and navigation in those parts. Whatever settlement we had at Nootka, every thing was restored according to circumstances, either in land or pecuniary compensation. So much as to reparation. But it had been asked, what had we for the security of our settlement? Was there any precise line of demarcation drawn as a boundary? No. This was impracticable; as we were not contending for a few miles, but a large world.... This country would not be limited in its market. Its wealth was founded upon the skill of our manufacturers, and the adventures of our merchants. These raised our armaments, and rendered us formidable in the scale of nations. Our prosperity was the admiration and envy of the world.... We do not insist on any right to invade the colonial rights of other nations, in order to extend our commerce; but the spirit of commercial adventure in this country is unbounded.64

Britain would not be limited in its market... Nootka Sound was viewed as a doorway leading to a large world of profit, as this cartoon (Figure III:1), *Billy and Harry Fishing For Whales* (published by William Holland in December 1790), also illustrates. Dundas steers the boat

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64 Cobbett, *Parliamentary history*, XXVII, p.979.
while Pitt, enjoying his political victory over Spain, fishes hefty bags of sterling and some small fry out of the South Sea. The benefits of the "distant" whale fishery and, by implication, the Convention with Spain, are brought home and represented in monetary terms. This political similitude of commerce, money and power in British thinking was also echoed by John Cadman Etches, one of Meares's associates, who argued under a pseudonym.
that "the vigorous and the tender shoots of diverging commerce should be fostered and protected, with the same scrupulous vigilance as its bank paper, or its national stock."\textsuperscript{65}

And as Dundas suggested, Britain's commercial soul was fuelled by the "adventures" of British explorers and traders. "In the fashion of his age", Ehrman notes, "Pitt was a great reader of maps."\textsuperscript{66} He kept four sets of maps at his Downing Street study (including maps of the fabled Northwest Passage, and of the Pacific), and a large section of his personal library was devoted to international trade. He collected dictionaries and gazeteers of commerce, navigation pilots, and texts chronicling voyages of exploration and trade.\textsuperscript{67} The Board of Trade, Home Office and India Board also kept enormous collections of commercial records. During the Nootka Sound crisis Pitt and his colleagues turned to maps such as Aaron Arrowsmith's \textit{Chart of the World on Mercator's Projection} (published in January 1790, which collated European discoveries in the Pacific up to 1780) in order to chart the activities of British traders and assess Spain's territorial claims. And they consulted traders such as Meares, and turned to trade statistics and \textit{Universal Registers} and \textit{Dictionaries} of commerce, in order to plot connections between Britain's disparate international business ventures and assess the importance of the sea otter trade. Pitt and his colleagues had a large general knowledge of international trade, had followed the development of the whale and seal fishery since the early 1780s, and were interested in \textit{patterns} of trade and business \textit{trajectories}.\textsuperscript{68} They viewed Nootka Sound through the lexicons of the map and the register, as a pawn on a commercial and imperial checkerboard.

The synoptic quality of British commercial thinking about the Pacific is highlighted in the interview that the Board of Trade conducted with Meares on 27 May 1790. Meares

\textsuperscript{66} Ehrman, \textit{Pitt}, I, p.354.
\textsuperscript{67} \textit{Ibid.}
\textsuperscript{68} On Pitt's appreciation of British trade see \textit{ibid.}, pp.329-436. On the whale and seal fishery see David MacKay, \textit{In the wake of Cook: Exploration, science and empire, 1780-1801} (London: Croom Helm, 1985).
was asked a set of general questions about the sea otter trade. What was "the highest and lowest latitude of successful commerce" on the northwest coast? How long did it take to get from Canton to the Sandwich Islands, and from there to Nootka? What were the chief "objects of commerce" and "articles of barter" in the trade? Was the Native population of the northwest coast large enough to make the demand for British manufactures "considerable"? How much competition did Meares suffer from American traders? Was the Asian market for furs large enough to keep the business profitable, and were there any trade posts in the western Pacific that Britain did not know about? And Meares was asked whether the sea otter trade and whaling trade could be combined, whether there was any prospect of developing a trade between Japan and India, whether North American ginseng could be sold in China, and about what the government could do to bolster British business in the region.69 In essence, the Board of Trade wanted an objective picture of the value and potential of the sea otter trade rather than a detailed account of how to conduct it. At several points in the interview, Meares suggested that issues of value and profit were mediated by the corporeal and spatial mechanics of the trade - by Native demand and competition, and the relationships that traders could forge with chiefs - but the Board kept pressing him with general questions. The sea otter trade was being repositioned as a cog in a global wheel of commerce.

When the diplomatic negotiations turned to territorial questions, the Foreign Office looked to Alexander Dalrymple (the East India Company's hydrographer) for a better understanding of the history of exploration and trade in the Pacific, and the legitimacy of Spanish claims to the northwest coast.70 He supplied Leeds with maps, compendia of historical and commercial information about Spanish America, and two pamphlets about the dispute that he published in May and June 1790.71 "In Disputes concerning Geographical

69 "Examination of Mr. Meares (fur trade)," 27 May 1790, PRO BT 5/6, fols.113-119.
71 Dalrymple to Nepean, 3 July and 20 August 1790, PRO FO 95/7/4, fols.339-340, 438. The two pamphlets are Spanish pretensions, published on 7 May, and Spanish memorial, published in mid-June.
Limits", Dalrymple argued in one pamphlet (aiming to draw political attention to his own expertise), "The Proper Authorities to consult are Geographers; for although a Map may not be considered as conclusive, it must be admitted as presumptive, testimony of a fact". Now Spain's memorial of 13 June, which was delivered to all foreign ambassadors in Madrid, stated that "The vast extent of the Spanish territories, navigation, and dominion on the continent of America, the islands and adjacent Seas in the South Seas appears by documents, Laws, Schedules, particular orders, discoveries and formal acts of possession". Leeds did not discuss the empirical merits of this memorial until after Spain had agreed to reparations on 24 July, and when he finally did, in a long dispatch to Fitzherbert on 17 August about how to negotiate territorial questions, which he admitted was almost "more voluminous than Postlethwayt's Dictionary", he treated the texts that Dalrymple had sent him as conclusive proof that Spain's claim to exclusive sovereignty was vague and insupportable. Leeds enclosed copies of Meares's Memorial, two Spanish works on the history of California, Dalrymple's pamphlets, and Arrowsmith's Chart for Fitzherbert to study, and emphasised two main points: first that on "the most Authentic Map published in different Countries previous to the late Discoveries" of the 1780s (i.e. Arrowsmith's), "the Whole Coast, north of the Peninsula of California, is laid down as Unknown to Europeans, and cannot therefore be reasonably supposed to be settled by Spain"; and second, that "in a Noticia de California, said to be published in 1757 by Authority of the Spanish Government, their knowledge of the America[n] Coast is expressly stated not to go beyond California". In other words, to Leeds's knowledge Spain's first and only settlement north of California was at Nootka Sound, 

72 Dalrymple, Spanish pretensions, p.8 (his italics).
73 Fitzherbert's translation, enclosed in Fitzherbert to Leeds, 16 June 1790, PRO FO 72/17, fols.308-310. A slightly different translation can be found in G.B., Official documents relative to the dispute, pp.51-52, and The annual register, 1790, pp.294-298.
74 Leeds to Fitzherbert (private), 16 August 1790, BM Add.MS. 28,066; the quotation is from fol.27. The reference is to Malachy Postlethwayt's Universal dictionary of trade and commerce (1774).
75 Leeds to Fitzherbert, 17 August 1790, PRO FO 72/18, fols.192-193. This Noticias, written by A.M. Burriel, was approved by the Spanish government.
and Meares had apparently bought land there before Martinez took formal possession. As such Fitzherbert was told that Spain could only reasonably claim sovereignty over the coastal area between the latitudes of 40°N-45°S - i.e., leaving the sea otter trade and South Sea fishery intact.

Ehrman rehearses the global scope of the Cabinet's commercial vision during this period: "In the middle eighties its thoughts were directed to snatching the Atlantic trade from the Americans; by the early nineties it was also envisaging a new pattern of commerce in the East, from the Pacific coast of America to the South Sea Islands and Canton.”  

And Edmund Burke captured the way Britain and Spain abstracted the Pacific from an imperial standpoint, writing to the Earl of Charlemont on 25 May 1790:

I do by no means bel[ie]ve that Spain had serious Intentions of making war upon us, because I do not see what serious Object she could have in risquing it upon offensive principles. I do indeed apprehend, that if she thought we had formed a Systematick Scheme of a connected chain of establishments, beginning at Staten Island, and ending at Nootka Sound, and by a Port in Sandwich Islands commencing a regular establishment in the South Sea, that Court would rather put every thing to hazard, rather than suffer a Line of circumvallation to be drawn about their Colonies...

These modes of vision, inquiry and argument were not simply practical means of connecting the incident at Nootka Sound to a broader set of issues, or of distilling the details and implications of the dispute into a manageable set of ideas and claims. They were also ways of constructing the Pacific and putting the northwest coast in Eurocentric perspective. Politicians and diplomats overlooked the physicality of the contact process on the northwest coast and reduced the Pacific to a set of geographical coordinates and trade statistics that revealed the boundaries of European knowledge and pulse of European capital but marginalised Native sensibilities. Edward Said has called such representational practices acts of "geographical violence": ways of seizing and devouring space from a distance. The British and Spanish objectified the Pacific as a space to be carved up on exclusively

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European terms. And the inter-subjective processes of interaction that characterised the maritime fur trade were inverted: all that seemed to melt into air was solidified; the "itinerate geographies" of the maritime fur trade discussed in Part II were put in suspended animation, as it were. The northwest coast was refashioned from perspectives that Native people could not affect.

These ways of constructing the Pacific were mediated by the rationalising currents of eighteenth-century thought. Texts such as Dalrymple's *Historical Collection of Voyages* (1770), Malachy Postlethwayt's *Universal Dictionary of Trade and Commerce* (1774), and Arrowsmith's *Chart* belong to the international project of "universal" knowledge - the attempt to picture the world as a systematic totality, to inscribe it as an intellectual challenge to an inquiring European mind, to collate the way it had been explored, and to take stock of its richness and potential. This project had a particular cast in Britain, as scholars such as John Brewer have demonstrated. British authors of *Universal* dictionaries and registers aimed to demonstrate the affinity between accurate (empirical) knowledge about the peoples, resources and commerce of the world, and Britain's national well-being; between Britain's wealth and power, and its system of international trade. And British authors of *Universal* histories and geographies aimed to "profess" to the public "the essence of all the books of Geography, voyages, & travels ever published" in order to reveal the connections between

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80 I am referring to Brewer's *Sinews of power.*
what was "beneficial" to the nation and "delightful" to the intellect, as two late eighteenth-century British chroniclers put it.\(^{81}\)

These projects of "universal knowledge" were not just attempts to rationalise the world or inducements to exploit it. Brewer argues that they were also efforts to make knowledge useful to the individual and the state, and experiments in how to turn knowledge into power.\(^{82}\) The expansion of Britain's state apparatus during the eighteenth century was bolstered by the development of a new form of knowledge - what Brewer terms "useful knowledge": bodies of descriptive and statistical information about the regions of the world, European affairs, domestic and international trade, government revenue and expenditure, social conditions, and so forth. "If Britain were to play a major part on the grand stage of European strategy", Brewer notes, "information about the diplomatic and military plans of her rivals was needed. If a new duty was required to fund another government loan, some knowledge or informed prediction of its return was necessary."\(^{83}\) And as the state grew, the public called for more information about it activities. In eighteenth-century Britain there was a proliferation of government departments, information agencies, and lobby groups.\(^{84}\) The impact of "useful knowledge" on government was undoubtedly uneven. Brewer notes that the Excise Commission developed a sophisticated system of data collection and management. On the other hand, Bland Burges complained that when he joined the Foreign Office in 1789, "immense number[s] of dispatches" were "piled up in large presses, but no note of them is taken, nor is there even an index to them; so that, if anything is wanted, the

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\(^{81}\) These quotations are from T. Bankes (ed.), *A new, royal, and authentic system of geography...containing a genuine history of and description of the whole world* (London: C. Cooke, [1790]), preface, no pagination; and George Augustus Baldwyn (ed.), *A new, royal, complete, and universal system of geography...* (London: Alex Hogg, [1785]), p.iii.

\(^{82}\) Brewer, *Sinews of power*, part five.


\(^{84}\) Also see Philip Corrigan and Derek Sayer, *The great arch: English state formation as cultural revolution* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1985), especially p.124ff.
whole year's accumulation must be rummaged over". Even so, Brewer is right to emphasise that these systems of data collection and compendia of "useful knowledge" were important to politicians and the public "as constructs, ways of ordering knowledge", and of "bring[ing] the world to order." The types of useful knowledge derived from Meares and Dalrymple allowed the Cabinet to think in terms of "systematick schemes" and "lines of circumvallation", as Burke put it. The map and the register were the ontological matrices through which Britain ordered the Pacific as a commercial arena and a space of European sovereignty. They supported a condensed vantage point on the world.

As Brewer suggests, then, and as Michel Foucault showed in more conceptual terms, these modes of vision and inquiry were not solely constructions of the world. They were central to the art of government; they induced effects of power. Foucault connected the development of "useful knowledge" to "the governmentalisation of the state" (or a specifically governmental form of political rationality). Government departments such as the Excise Commission and Home Office, disciplines such as moral statistics, political arithmetic and eventually political economy, and compendia of commercial data and tracts about how to administer social and political affairs, were among a panoply of "institutions, procedures, analyses and reflections" that established new "fields" of state intervention and methods for examining and managing them in their "depths and details". Foucault considered the emergence of "population as a datum", the fashioning of the economy as "a specific sector of reality", and the idea of society as "a complex and independent reality that has its own laws and mechanisms of reaction".

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By extension, my argument that the northwest coast was brought to order through the political rationalisation of cartographic and commercial information should not be viewed simply as a discursive counterpoint to my discussion of the contact process on the northwest coast. For the map and the register (as I have symbolised the types of knowledge that the British Cabinet found "useful") were also tools of power. The British used them to assert themselves in the world - to establish the Pacific as a field of commercial and imperial intervention. Foucault never unpacked the connections between European imperialism, colonialism and modern "governmentality." And the northwest coast was not examined in its "depths and details", but viewed in synthetic outline. Still, in synthesising the details of exploration and trade, the British Cabinet was absorbing the northwest coast into a matrix of state calculation - fashioning this region as an object of governmental concern rather than of private mercantile interest, and arranging (or re-contextualising) knowledge for specifically political ends. Unlike traders such as Meares, who had to attune themselves to Native socio-political arrangements in order to be profitable, and who established inter-subjective spaces of interaction, politicians such as Leeds used the map and the register to fashion and segment a geopolitical space that Native people could not manipulate, and to claim the right to hold it for a future generation of British settlers. The Nootka Sound crisis laid some of the imperial groundwork for the colonial disposal of land to British settlers in the second half of the nineteenth century in that it introduced a set of European ideas about property and possession. Leeds worked with imperial formulations about territory that papered over the fact, discovered by Cook, Meares and other fur traders, that the Native groups of the

89 But see David Scott, "Colonial governmentality," Social Text, 43 (1995), pp.191-220, for an interesting attempt to draw such connections. Robert Young notes that "the paradox of Foucault's work is that his analyses seem particularly appropriate to the colonial arena, and yet colonialism itself does not figure." Foucault used "suggestive spatial and geographical metaphors: position, displacement, interstice, site, field, territory, geopolitics...[but his] own domains of reference remain resolutely fixed within the western world, and effectively within France." Robert J.C. Young, "Foucault on race and colonialism," New Formations, 25 (1995), pp.57-65; the quotation is from p.60.
northwest coast had their own views about property. At the heart of Said's argument about the geographical violence of imperialism is the notion that the appropriation of Native land and colonisation of non-European peoples was supported by an apparatus of representation - a discursive capacity to seize space and induce effects of power without physical force and behind the backs of Native people.

Foucault dwelt mainly on the disciplinary and regulatory aspects of modern government within Europe, but his work helps us to both contextualise and pinpoint some of the connections between knowledge, power and space that were brought into play by the Nootka Sound crisis. During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, he argued, there was "a veritable technological take-off in the productivity of power."90 "The old power of death that symbolized sovereign power was...carefully supplanted by the administration of bodies and the calculated management of life."91 There was "an explosion of...diverse techniques for achieving the subjugation of bodies and the control of populations" - discourses on birthrates and public health, migration and trade, changes in the army, the police and fiscal administration, and institutional arrangements such as the clinic and the prison.92 He called these techniques forms of "bio-power" because they aimed to bring "life and its mechanisms into the realm of explicit calculations and made knowledge-power an agent of transformation of human life".93 And he linked such disciplinary strategies to the emergence of a new set of relations between law, government and the idea of the common good. Foucault argued that medieval discourses on government were based on a circular argument about sovereignty and law. 'The common good' was almost synonymous with obedience to the law - the law of a sovereign or that of God. "What in every case characterises the end of sovereignty, this

93 Foucault, History of sexuality, I, p.143.
common and general good", he claimed, "is in sum nothing other than submission to sovereignty" - respect for the established order and acceptance of one's position in it. By contrast, "the finality of [modern] government resides in the things that it manages and in the pursuit of the perfection and intensification of the processes which it directs; and the instruments of government, instead of being laws, now come to be a range of multiform tactics": specific tactics for maximising the wealth of the nation and regulating the productivity of the population, for example. Law became one among many tactics of power, rather than the ultimate source and medium of government. Foucault characterised this programme of governmental rationality as "a project to create a system of regulation of the general conduct of individuals whereby everything would be controlled to the point of self-sustenance, without the need for intervention": as a decentred and increasingly anonymous project of normalisation. This project did not have the same cast across Europe. Foucault himself noted that Britain developed a slightly different form of governmentality than France because of its parliamentary and common law traditions. Nevertheless, scholars such as Mitchell Dean and Felix Driver have argued convincingly that the 'art of government' in Britain took a fairly dramatic turn between 1780 and 1850 towards the project of self-regulation and surveillance identified by Foucault.

95 Foucault, "Governmentality," pp.94-95.
96 Foucault, "Space, knowledge and power," p.241. In an earlier interview Foucault described this project as a "new 'economy' of power...which allowed the effects of power to circulate in a manner at once continuous, uninterrupted, adapted and 'individualised' throughout the entire social body"; an "economy of power" in that it was "more efficient and much less wasteful...than the techniques previously employed which were based on a mixture of more or less forced tolerances...and costly ostentation". Foucault, "Truth and power," p.119.
98 Mitchell Dean, The constitution of poverty: Towards a genealogy of liberal governance (London and New York: Routledge, 1991); Felix Driver, Power and pauperism: The
Now the Nootka Sound crisis obviously does not point to the rise of bio-power on the northwest coast. Pitt and Leeds were not seeking to administer Native bodies, lives and populations. The diplomatic negotiations turned on questions of sovereign power, not disciplinary power. It was territory - or rights of sovereignty - rather than the management of Native life that was at stake in this dispute. Nor was this dispute quite about sovereign power as Foucault symbolised it: by the spectacle of the scaffold, "spectacular and discontinuous interventions of power", and the sovereign's "right to take life or let live". The map and the register serviced a juridical mode of power which, as Foucault himself explained at a number of points, did not just revolve around the right of European sovereigns to treat their people as subjects under their authority and protection. Sovereign power was also circumscribed by a mercantilist logic of inter-state rivalry and commercial expansion overseas: the political correlation of the sovereign's power with the wealth of her or his nation, and the concomitant fashioning and management of non-European spaces (ports, plantations, and estates) as sites of extraction.

What Foucault did not consider, because of the European (and sometimes largely French) bias of his work, was the variable ways in which this mode of power was deployed for imperial ends. Conquest and colonisation were intrinsic features of European imperialism, of course, but this sovereign-mercantilist mode of power often did not come crashing down on Native heads. Native lands were also claimed by the putative authority of letters patent and papal bulls, symbolic acts of possession-taking,

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_workhouse system, 1834-1884_ (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993). Echoing Foucault, Driver argues that in late eighteenth-century Britain there emerged a science of "moral statistics" concerned with "the norms, habits and conduct of particular sectors of the population; it mapped the distribution of phenomena such as crime, delinquency, pauperism, disease, drunkenness, insanity and prostitution.... [T]hinking about morals, about patterns of conduct and obligations, was a way of thinking about society at large; a pattern of thought which was to reach the height of its influence in mid-Victorian Britain" (p.10). Foucault's icon of modern governmentality, of course, was Jeremy Bentham.

99 These phrases are from Foucault, "Truth and power," p.119; _idem., History of sexuality_, I, p.136 (his emphases). Also see _idem., Discipline and punish_, chapter 2.

and by treaties and proclamations. The Nootka Sound crisis is an example of these non-conflictual forms of territorial appropriation. Leeds and Floridablanca were concerned with models of sovereignty - discourses bearing on the authority and legitimacy of European claims to the non-European world - rather than with the physical reach or application of sovereign power on the northwest coast.

In sum, Foucault's arguments about the shifting relations between sovereignty, discipline and government in Europe help us to see that Britain's approach to the northwest coast in 1790 encompassed two orders or rationalities of power, and combined them in a particular way. A rudimentary calculus of governmental rationality, which was characterised by the arrangement of particular types of knowledge for political ends and was disciplinary in orientation, was superimposed on an older sovereign power of imperial assertion which was mediated by the philosophy of mercantilism. The types of information derived from Meares and Dalrymple were folded into a sovereign mode of power which targeted space rather than people, tied the northwest coast to a set of mercantilist ideas about the national good, and, as I will now conclude, filtered out issues of Native territoriality.

Britain, Spain and the law of nations

At the core of the Nootka Sound crisis was a profound and centuries-old disagreement between Britain and Spain about the nature of European sovereignty in the New World. Spain based its claim to the northwest coast on Pope Alexander VI's *Inter Caetera* of 4 May 1493, which granted to Ferdinand and Isabella, and their heirs and successors, all discovered or unknown lands west of the meridian 100 leagues west of the Azores that were not already occupied by another Christian prince; on article 8 of the Treaty of Utrecht of 1713 between Britain and Spain, which Floridablanca thought acknowledged the "vast extent" of Spanish dominion in America; and on Perez's discovery of Nootka Sound in 1774, Hezeta's acts of possession-taking along the northwest coast in 1775, and Martínez's
formal possession of Nootka Sound in June 1789. And the Viceroy of Mexico claimed that Martinez's right to treat British vessels as legal prizes was based on a Spanish Royal Cedula of 1692 (and the Anglo-Spanish Treaty of Madrid of 1670, to which the Cedula referred), which stated that British subjects "shall not sail unto, and trade in the havens and places which the Catholic King holdeth", and implied that Spain had "true and just" dominion over the Pacific coast north of California; and on a peremptory Royal Order of 1776, which authorised Spanish officials to "detain, take prisoner and prosecute by law whatsoever foreign vessel should arrive in our ports" in the Pacific. In short, Spanish politicians invoked a variety of texts, authorities, and acts; so much so that Dalrymple and Leeds argued that Spain had to scramble to find enough evidence to support its position, and that its claims to the northwest coast were contradictory.

By contrast, the British rooted questions of sovereignty in strictures about occupation. "Whatever the Pretensions may be, which Spain may think herself justified to advance with respect to Nootka Sound founded either on an alleged prior Discovery or on the Application of the general Words of formal Treaties to that Place", Leeds wrote to Fitzherbert on 5 July 1790,

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103 Dalrymple, Spanish memorial, pp.10-11; Leeds to Fitzherbert, 2 October 1790, PRO FO 72/19, fols.93-109.

104 For all of their criticisms of the Cabinet for pushing Britain into a costly war over an obscure place, Opposition M.P.s agreed with Leeds on this point about sovereignty. Charles Fox, for example, argued in the Commons in May 1790 that "occupancy and possession should be considered as the only right to title". Quoted in Stanley Ayling, Fox: The life of Charles James Fox (London: John Murray, 1991), p.147.
it is clear that she had not such an established Possession and Acknowledged Dominion there [before mid-June 1789], as could alone justify the Seizure of the British Vessels [from late May to mid-July]. A Right to proceed in that manner in the First Instance, could, according to the Law of Nations, result only from a Right of Territory, manifested by open Possession, and by the actual exercise of His Catholick Majesty's Authority, and this confirmed by an express or tacit Acknowledgment of other Nations. 105 Leeds did not deviate from this position over the ensuing months. The British challenged the validity of Papal Bulls, and considered acts of discovery or symbolic acts of possession-taking (marking one's discoveries with crosses or royal banners) as insufficient grounds for establishing exclusive sovereignty. 106 Patricia Seed has shown that from the sixteenth century onwards, "the primary symbolism of the English conception of sovereignty was architectural." 107 Sovereignty was founded on the erection of permanent dwellings. "Because their concept of dominion was bound up with residence on the land and with the nearly synonymous use of 'possession' and 'property'," Seed continues, "the English believed that symbolic manifestations [of possession-taking]...functioned merely as mnemonic devices, or at best as navigational beacons." 108 To Leeds, rights of ownership - and therefore the right to rule - stemmed from de facto possession. This was why Meares's memorial was so influential. He abandoned his dwelling at Nootka Sound months before Martinez arrived, but he made it clear that he intended to return to the northwest coast, reoccupy the building, and possibly build trade posts on the other spots of land he said he bought. Leeds admitted that the two silver spoons that Martinez said were stolen in 1774 and returned to him by Natives of Nootka Sound in 1789 were tangible evidence that the Spanish had discovered the

105 Leeds to Fitzherbert, 5 July 1790, PRO FO 72/18, fols.22-23.
106 Spain's invocation of the Papal Bull of 1493 inspired this rhyme by a political satirist, published on 12 May 1790:
   Your right so to do which you claim from the Pope
   We Britons dont value the end of a rope!
   It's a farce you make your Subjects believe,
   But our right's equal to yours from Adam and Eve.
Quoted in Ehrman, Pitt, I, p.558.
108 Ibid.
sound before Cook, but he denied that this, or any other acts of discovery or evidence of contact with Native people, gave Spain any *exclusive* territorial rights to the region; leaving "a few trifling articles with the Natives", he argued, did not amount to sovereignty.\(^\text{109}\) In addition, Daines Barrington, who translated and published an account of Hezeta's 1775 voyage in England in 1781, noted that Spain's alleged rights to the coast were "flimsy" because this region was peopled by Natives who lived in permanent dwellings, and since Native people pulled down the crosses planted by the Spaniard.\(^\text{110}\) Finally, Leeds disputed Spain's recourse to the Treaty of Madrid and Treaty of Utrecht, noting that Spain had never occupied the vast majority of the territories mentioned in these international agreements.\(^\text{111}\)

As some of these arguments suggest, Native people had an ambiguous position in the Law of Nations. At a few points in the diplomatic correspondence Leeds implied that rights of sovereignty were strengthened if overseas lands were bought or occupied "with the consent of the Natives."\(^\text{112}\) Barrington argued that Spain's rights to the coast were weakened by the fact that Native people resisted Hezeta's incursion on their land. Meares, on the other hand, stated that he had made fair and open deals with Native chiefs, and Leeds interpreted this to mean that Britain had a *bona fide* title to Nootka Sound and other parts of the coast. Yet such formulations, which imply that Britain admitted that Indians had rights to land by virtue of permanent occupation, were informed by the duplicitous currents of humanitarian thought that informed Cook's agenda, and by a broader series of moral and cultural arguments about liberty versus despotism that spun around the French Revolution and the definition of British national identity. Dalrymple had a great influence on the Cabinet's handling of territorial questions, and the following argument, from his pamphlet *The Spanish*

\(^{109}\) Leeds to Fitzherbert, 17 August 1790, PRO FO 72/18, fol.75.
\(^{111}\) Leeds to Fitzherbert, 16 May 1790, PRO FO 72/17, fol.84.
\(^{112}\) Leeds to Merry, 4 May and 22 June 1790, PRO FO 72/17, fols.20, 343.
Pretensions Fairly Discussed, points to the contradictory manner in which Britain positioned Native people in the Law of Nations:

I shall not despair...When Universal Commerce shall invigorate the hand of Industry, by supplying the mutual Wants, and maintaining the Common-Rights of ALL MANKIND; instead of the Lives and Property of the PEOPLE being sported away; at the caprice of a Fool! or a Tyrant!

The fundamental Principles of the Law of Nations, are Justice and common Interest: In former times, when Ignorance prevailed, and narrow prejudices, ever consequent to Ignorance, the Law of Nations was not extended to Infidels or Pagans; who were then considered, by Christians, as free Objects of Injury and Oppression; but in these enlightened Times, The Catholic King has no hesitation in concluding Treaties with Mahometans, with whom, by the absurd Oaths of ancient Bigotry, He was engaged to perpetual Warfare.

...Common Sense must evince that Europeans, visiting Countries already inhabited, can acquire no right in Such Countries but from the good will of the Friendly Inhabitants, or by Conquest of Those who are Aggressors in Acts of Injury: nor can the right of Conquest be justly extended, when Acts of Injury, in the Natives, can be construed to proceed from fear of the Strangers, or from mistake: In either case. Both Parties being equally culpable, though no criminality in either; the European not sufficiently explaining his peaceable intentions, and the Native in not readily apprehending those intentions.113

Dalrymple's text obviously cannot be read at face value. His points about Native people are overdetermined by a British rhetoric of imperial right and the good of "mankind" - by a set of attitudes that regarded non-European peoples as pawns in a broader narrative of imperialism.

This remarkable passage encapsulates some of the main themes of my argument about the imperial refashioning of the northwest coast. Dalrymple transposed the corporeality of Native-white interaction on the northwest coast - this embodied world of apprehension, fear and mistakes, as he put it (which he had picked up from reading traders' journals) - into the historical lexicon of Anglo-Spanish rivalry, and chained the contact process to a set of European ideas about sovereignty and the cultural-historical distinctiveness of different European nations.114 To Dalrymple's mind, Spain's imperial

113 Dalrymple, Spanish pretensions, pp.6-8 (his emphases).
114 Dalrymple collected manuscript copies of the journals of the first British maritime fur traders, and in 1789 and 1790 published a collection of their maps. For lists see "Catalogue of the extensive and valuable library of books; part 1, late the property of Alex. Dalrymple" (sold by auction, London, 1809), British Library; A. Dalrymple, Memoir of a map of the lands around the north-pole (London: George Bigg, 1789), p.iv.
methods were tyrannical, whereas Britain's were based on the development of "mutual
wants" and "common-rights" - on the enlightened, liberal principles of "universal commerce"
that characterised Britain's national soul. Spanish imperial despotism was fuelled by the
Pope and littered with "acts of injury", whereas the interests of "all mankind" were only truly
served by that "just" mixture of liberty and commerce which British traders and colonists
took overseas. For Dalrymple, I suggest, fostering the "good will of the Friendly
Inhabitants" - or taking land with the consent of the natives - was not so much an admission
of Native rights to land as it was proof of Britain's approach to the world: its peaceful
development of universal commerce. The land deals supposedly struck by Meares proved
that Britain was a peaceable nation, and were evidence that Native peoples around the world
had entered into mutually beneficial trading relationships with British merchants. Martinez's
actions, Dalrymple implied, were rooted in the "narrow prejudices" of an arrogant Catholic
country. Dalrymple believed traders such as Meares, who noted that Spain had not made any
treaties with Native people before claiming formal possession of Nootka Sound or the
northwest coast. In other words, these apparently enlightened views about the Natives of the
northwest coast were mediated by a broader culture of imperialism - an apparatus of imperial
representation - and Dalrymple and Leeds deployed them primarily as rhetorical whips with
which to reveal Spain's territorial ambitions and to beat its claims to exclusive sovereignty.

This clause about taking land with the consent of the Natives did not cause Leeds to
admit that Native people had sovereignty over their lands in any internationally acceptable
legal sense of the term. In 1938 the authors of *Creation of Rights of Sovereignty*, the classic
text on European methods of possession-taking between the fifteenth and eighteenth
centuries, came to the following conclusion, which reflects Leeds's silence on the question of
Native sovereignty:

Since the European states considered that ownership could be ascertained without
reference to the acts of natives, it is apparent that they did not consider the natives as
having anything in the nature of sovereignty that had to be respected. On the other
hand, possession, as distinguished from ownership, was to be determined by the
actual situation on the spot, and the acts of the natives were to be considered, not as having legal significance in the sense of a transfer of a recognized title, but merely as facts that showed the actual situation as to possession.\footnote{Arthur S. Keller, Oliver J. Lissitzyn and Frederick J. Mann, \textit{Creation of rights of sovereignty through symbolic acts 1400-1800} (New York: Columbia University Press, 1938), p.9.}

More recently, the legal historian Leslie Green has argued that at the end of the eighteenth century, "international law did not recognise the aboriginal inhabitants of...newly discovered territories as having any legal rights that were good as against those who 'discovered' and settled in their territories."\footnote{Ibid., p.126.} Native people were deemed to be "the subjects of the [European] ruler exercising sovereignty over the territory. As such they enjoyed no rights that international law would recognise".\footnote{Green and Dickason, \textit{Law of nations and the New World}, p. 125.} Neither Britain nor Spain investigated Meares's land purchases; if we trust Green, the veracity of his testimony about his dealings with Native chiefs was inconsequential from a legal point of view. Leeds was interested foremost in the timing of Meares's alleged purchases. And when Britain did investigate Meares's case further, in February 1791, Privy Councillors questioned him about the situation of his land purchases and the development of the sea otter trade.\footnote{Privy Council Register, 8 and 11 February 1791, PRO PC 2/135, pp.439-453. This emphasis on the \textit{situation} of Meares's purchases, and the legal aspects of his actions in relation to Spain are revealed in marginalia on the draft documents of this interview. Privy Councillors made notes about the spots of land Meares's had occupied, and raised questions about whether there were any lands adjoining these purchases, and whether Meares continued to take possession of such spots each time he returned. They passed over Meares's comments about his dealings with Maquinna and Wickaninish. PRO PC 1/63/B22.} The acts of the Natives had significance to the British Cabinet only to the degree that they were evidence of Britain's use and occupation of the coast. The way Native chiefs regarded Meares and his land purchases were filtered out of these legal-imperial equations. "Among Nations, ignorant of Letters and the Diplomatic Rules of Europe", Dalrymple concluded, "Treaties of Amity cannot be executed according to European Forms".\footnote{Dalrymple, \textit{Spanish pretensions}, p.16} Dalrymple meant that while treaties of amity in the form of land purchases from Native chiefs could be used to ground Britain's right to trade
and settle on the northwest coast, Native people themselves did not have any legal rights to the soil because they did not act according to European rules.

In the Nootka Sound crisis, then, the details of contact were translated into a European legal and geopolitical language, and politicians raised the idea, albeit vaguely at this point, that Native people might one day be subjects of European rule. The Law of Nations was built by Europeans for Europeans. It was one of the chief determinants of the culture of imperialism.

*The loss of locality*

"For the native", Edward Said writes,

> the history of colonial servitude is inaugurated by loss of the locality to the outsider; its geographical identity must thereafter be searched for and somehow restored.... If there is anything that radically distinguishes the imagination of anti-imperialism, it is the primacy of the geographical element."

The Nootka Sound crisis inaugurated the absorption of the northwest coast into the British imperial imagination and the sequestration of Native land and life. Britain did not colonise the region immediately after its political victory over Spain. Pitt turned his attention to events in central Europe and the affairs of the Triple Alliance, the details of compensation and the restoration of British property took another five years to work out, and the British Cabinet decided to wait for the results of Vancouver's survey before deciding whether Britain should take up its hard-won right to establish temporary settlements on the northwest coast. It was the Oregon Treaty rather than the Nootka *Convention* that marked the beginning of formal colonialism on the northwest coast. But as Said argues, Native struggle against the course and legacies of colonialism is often not mediated solely by the physical experience and memory of colonialism. Certainly, Native struggles in British Columbia cannot be fully appreciated unless we understand this late eighteenth-century era of European imperial aggrandisement. Many non-native British Columbians believe that the province rightly

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120 Said, *Culture and imperialism*, p.225.
belongs to the Crown by virtue of international treaties, imperial proclamations and colonial land laws - that their right to private property is guaranteed by a colonial apparatus which was inflected by a body of assumptions about land and territory that stemmed from this earlier imperial outreach. Native people, on the other hand, have tried to impress on provincial and federal governments, and the non-native public, that their cultures cannot be rejuvenated unless their lands are restored; that while they have been stripped of their territories, they have never lost their cultural and political identification with the land. Recent court battles and treaty negotiations over aboriginal rights and title to land show that Native groups are not simply engaged in a post-colonial struggle against economic deprivation, social oppression and political marginalisation. More fully, their struggle is an anti-imperialist struggle against a set of geographical impressions about land and property, and legal formulas about sovereignty, that were introduced by these British and Spanish politicians and that, over the last 150 years, have been used to beat down Native demands for redress for the loss of their territories.

At a recent conference held in Vancouver to mark the bicentennary of Vancouver's survey of the northwest coast, Chief Philip Joe of the Squamish Nation reminded scholars and local history buffs that over the last 200 years Native and white histories "have been inexorably intertwined, but recalled from different perspectives." What the Nootka Sound crisis launched, and Vancouver's survey and the Oregon boundary dispute furthered, was an imperial history that undermined this historical sense of entanglement and encouraged a splitting of perspectives. By the end of the eighteenth century knowledge about the northwest coast and its Native peoples had effectively been linked to questions of European state power. The maritime fur trade was folded into an economy of power concerned with national-imperial rights rather than with commercial and cultural exchange.

121 "How the Squamish remember George Vancouver," in Fisher and Johnston, From maps to metaphors, pp.1-5; the quotation is from p.5.
Chapter Eleven
Circumscribing Vancouver Island

Among the questions asked of me are - Where is Vancouver Island? How can I get there? And what is the best season to arrive? Vancouver's Island will be found where Vancouver 'laid it down,' - on the north-west coast of America...

Letter to the editor of the London Times, 13 January 1862.

Vancouver's island

George Vancouver circumnavigated Vancouver Island in the summer of 1792 in the vessels Discovery and Chatham, and left the northwest coast in October 1794, after two more arduous survey seasons, having in his mind "remove[d] every doubt, and set aside every opinion of a north-west passage...existing between the North Pacific, and the interior of the American continent, within the limits of our researches."122 "I believe no task was ever executed with more assiduity & perservering zeal, than the intricate examination of this coast", Archibald Menzies, Vancouver's botanist-surgeon, wrote to Joseph Banks on 1 October 1794.123 This sense that Vancouver and his party had truly sorted out the geography of the northwest coast was reiterated by nineteenth-century navigators and commentators, and has been upheld by a host of scholars. After visiting the northwest coast in the mid-1820s, the Scottish botanist John Scouler noted that he had nothing to add to Vancouver's map, and that "the admirable surveys of that navigator have rendered the numerous islands and complicated inlets of the N.W. coast of America familiar to the geographers of Europe."124 Berthold Seeman, who commanded a British Admiralty survey of the northwest

123 Archibald Menzies to Joseph Banks, 1 October 1794, Dawson Turner copies of the correspondence of Sir Joseph Banks, British Museum (Natural History), vol.IX, p.108.
coast in the mid-1840s, noted that "No accurate information [of the northwest coast]...begins previous to Vancouver, who...examined the whole with scientific accuracy. His work is still referred to for its agreeable truthfulness."¹²⁵ Vancouver's work was not bettered until the late 1850s, when G.H. Richards led a six-year survey for the British Admiralty.¹²⁶ And this century, J.C. Beaglehole maintained that "Vancouver's systematic and painstaking survey ranks with the most distinguished work of the kind ever done" - a remark cited approvingly by W. Kaye Lamb, who re-edited Vancouver's journals for the Hakluyt Society of London in the early 1980s.¹²⁷

I will not rehearse many details of Vancouver's voyage.¹²⁸ I am interested mainly in the way his survey figured in the Oregon boundary dispute and became a reference point for British speculators and settlers in the early colonial period. But my concerns need to be prefaced with some remarks about Vancouver himself, and especially his mapping of Vancouver Island, because they go against the grain of some of the main ideas and assumptions in the scholarly literature on the explorer: particularly the views, invoked recently in the published proceedings of the conference held to mark the bicentenary of his voyage, that we cannot hold him responsible for the way his survey was used for imperial ends and is now seen by some Native groups and non-native sympathisers as a part of the

¹²⁶ The results of Richards's labours are represented on numerous Hydrographic charts, and in his *The Vancouver Island pilot...* (London: Hydrographic Office, 1864).
narrative of colonialism. As Robin Fisher and Hugh Johnston argue in their introduction to this collection:

There is no denying the oppression and suffering of the Native peoples of the Pacific region, and around the globe, from the time of their first encounter with Europeans; but as non-Natives strive to write the so-called 'history of the other side' they sometimes forget their own. The achievements of explorers are downplayed. Certainly for Vancouver the wheel had come full circle by 1992 as, once again, he was disparaged or ignored, just as he had been in the years after he returned from his voyage. The bicentennial of his coming to the northwest coast did not receive the same recognition as the Cook bicentennial had.... One reason was an increased consciousness among civic politicians and the public of Native issues and Native perspectives. A Vancouver event no longer seemed appropriate. But laundering history for public consumption does not lead to better understanding of the past. History must constantly be reinterpreted, but ought not be denied. Such arguments are informed by the idea that face-to-face processes of interaction are the real measure of power and generators of change, and that the representation of space (particularly cartographic representation) has only a minor bearing on the formation of imperial attitudes and colonial policies. Fisher and Johnston use the fact that Vancouver had most friendly dealings with Native people as evidence that he was not an aggressor or imperialist.

Recently, then, Vancouver's reconnaissance has been viewed as an ideologically innocuous foray in search of geographical truth. Vancouver's achievement, so this story goes, was that he progressively separated geographical fact from fiction - that he discovered a good portion of the spatial reality of the northwest coast. Glyndwr Williams writes: "This exact, meticulous explorer found his satisfaction in producing charts of such accuracy that they were used for more than a century after his death." And Fisher and Johnston argue that "Vancouver could be said to have discovered the northwest coast of North America, for

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129 Fisher and Johnston, From maps to metaphors, especially the introduction, and chapters 2, 3, and 4.
130 Ibid., pp.13-14.
131 Glyndwr Williams, "Myth and reality: The theoretical geography of northwest America from Cook to Vancouver," in ibid., pp.35-50; the quotation is from p.50.
it was he who established that it was a continuous line, unbroken by any passage to the Atlantic."¹³²

Such images basically mimic Vancouver's own sense of his survey. He noted in his introduction to the published account of his voyage (1798): "Although the ardour of the present age, to discover and delineate the true geography of the earth, had been rewarded with uncommon and unexpected success, particularly by the perservering exertions of this great man [Captain Cook]...all was not completed."¹³³ Vancouver sailed on Cook's second and third voyages, and knew that the illustrious navigator had not produced an "exact knowledge of that extensive and interesting country", the northwest coast.¹³⁴ "The very detached and broken region that lies before so large a portion of this coast, rendered a minute examination altogether unavoidable", Vancouver noted in August 1794.¹³⁵ And he thought that his team conducted "an accurate survey" of the region, and that his survey was a "dispassionate investigation of the truth".¹³⁶ "It was with infinite satisfaction", he concluded, "that I saw, amongst the officers and young gentlemen of the quarter-deck, some who, with little instruction, would soon be enabled to construct charts, take plans of bays and harbours, draw landscapes, and make faithful representations of the several head-lands, coasts, and countries, which we might discover".¹³⁷

This rhetoric of accuracy, exactitude and faithful geographical representation, invoked by Vancouver and recycled by historians, is underwritten by the assumption that Vancouver's team charted in a more or less truthful way a geography that was waiting to be discovered; that they made a closer copy of reality than any previous surveyor. Scholarship on Vancouver remains largely blind to the growing critical literature on the history of cartography, which posits a set of links between maps, knowledge and power. "Whether a

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map is produced under the banner of cartographic science - as most official maps have been [and Vancouver's were] - or whether it is an overt propaganda exercise," Brian Harley argued in 1988, "it cannot escape involvement in the process by which power is deployed."\footnote{138}{J.B. Harley, "Maps, knowledge, and power," in D. Cosgrove and S. Daniels (eds.), The iconography of landscape (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), pp.277-312; the quotation is from p.279.} Maps often "'desocialise' the territory they represent", he continues, to the degree that "Decisions about the exercise of power are removed from the realm of immediate face-to-face contacts."\footnote{139}{Ibid., p.303.} This, roughly, I suggest, is what Vancouver's cartography encouraged. In mapping the coast, he was not simply engaged in a veridical search for an anticipated reality, and nor was he unfurling the geographical truth about the coast in a progressive fashion - starting at the Strait of Juan de Fuca (which some European pundits thought led to the Northwest Passage) and finishing his survey at "Point Conclusion" on Baranof Island - as scholars have tended to represent his survey. As accurately, Vancouver \textit{manufactured} a geography which resituated Native people on the territorial scene and facilitated geopolitical decision-making processes that once again worked at a distance from Native people, papered over the inter-subjective spaces of interaction created by Natives and traders, and objectified the northwest coast as a prospective imperial space. As my epigram for this chapter implies, Vancouver's methods cannot be divorced from his imperial legacy. Vancouver Island would be found where Vancouver "laid it down"; he fashioned as well as discovered the Island that bears his name.

Arguments about the accuracy of Vancouver's survey re-endorse what Graham Huggan calls the "mimetic fallacy" at the heart of the scientific culture of imperialism: the idea that "an approximate, subjectively reconstituted and historically contingent model of the 'real' world" can be faithfully "passed off as an accurate, objectively presented and
Vancouver's movements and dealings with Native people have been retraced with great accuracy, but his assumptions about truth and reality have barely been discussed. His survey had its own epistemological fissures and substantive contingencies, but Vancouver passed it off as a reliable reconstruction of a geography which was *indubitably there all along*.

Huggan claims that mimesis endorses a particular view or kind of reality: that of the West. The "imitative operations of mimesis can be seen to have stabilized (or attempted to stabilize) a falsely essentialist view of the world which negates or suppresses alternative views which might endanger the privileged position of its Western perceiver." Principally, Vancouver's cartography was falsely essentialist (or biased and incomplete) in that it erased most signs of Native territorial arrangements. Historians such as Fisher, Johnston, and Williams do not comment on such issues, I suspect, because they collapse the distinction between what Huggan calls the "approximate function" of the map as a form of representation, and its "authoritative status" as a form of knowledge which may or may not induce effects of power. Vancouver's aim, they imply, was also his achievement; it was the plausibility (or accuracy) of his cartography that made his survey authoritative, not the western views of the northwest coast that it licensed.

Ironically, in de-politicising Vancouver's cartography these scholars have cut a set of links between maps, imperial power and regional identity that were forged by historians of British Columbia earlier this century, albeit in a colonialist vein. In the summer of 1792 the Spanish explorers Galiano and Valdés were also searching for the Northwest Passage, and

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140 Graham Huggan, "Decolonizing the map: Post-colonialism, post-structuralism and the cartographic connection," *Ariel*, vol.20, no.4 (October 1989), pp.115-131; the quotation is from pp.117-118.
141 The principal exception is Barbara Belyea, who in a number of articles has dealt with questions of epistemology and mimesis in eighteenth-century cartography of North America and the northwest coast. See, especially, her "Images of power: Derrida/Foucault/Harley," *Cartographica*, vol.29, no.2 (summer 1992), pp.1-9.
142 Huggan, "Decolonizing the map," p.116.
they accompanied Vancouver through the Strait of Georgia. The British and Spanish explorers shared information, and to acknowledge such participation, and the purpose of his diplomatic mission at Nootka Sound, Vancouver, at Quadra's request, named the region he had surveyed "the island of QUADRA and VANCOUVER." In addition, in 1790 Meares spread rumours in England that the American trader Gray had sailed "a considerable distance" into the Strait of Juan de Fuca in 1789 and "arrive[d] at an open Channel or Sea, [and] did reenter the Pacific Ocean between the Latitudes of 54° and 55° North, having completely ascertained that Nootka Sound, and all the lands adjacent, to be an archipelago of Islands, and not the Continent of America." This left some historians confused about who deserved the accolade "true discoverer of Vancouver Island", and in 1914 C.F. Newcombe was moved to publish a memoir proving that Vancouver was indeed the first explorer to circumnavigate the Island. "[T]he earliest stages in the progressive discovery of the inner channels of Vancouver Island were reached entirely by British ships", he declared, and Vancouver's "sketches and charts were of such a reliable nature that the names bestowed on various places are still in use upon the maps of the present day." Newcombe was sloughing off the influence of nineteenth-century American explorers on the toponymy of the Puget Sound region as well as Spain's hand in the exploration of the coast. And Howay wrote of this meeting between Vancouver and the Spanish explorers: "It was the meeting of destinies, the dawn of British rule, the setting of Spanish glory." These authors pointed out that there was an imperial politics to geographical exploration. The names that Vancouver bestowed, on maps of such accuracy, were a

144 See Lamb, *Voyage of George Vancouver*, I, p.672
145 Memorial of John Meares to W.W. Grenville, 20 July 1790, PRO FO 95/7/4, fol.415. Meares depicted Gray's circumnavigation in the vessel *Washington* on his map of the northwest coast, which was published in his *Voyages* (November 1790).
monument to the way Britain had come to possess the region north of 49 degrees. G.M. Sproat thought that Vancouver's circumnavigation was "the outstanding historic occurrence" in the early history of British Columbia because it caused American politicians to admit that Britain had sovereignty over Vancouver Island, which "was empty but for savage tribes". Other historians were bent on preventing the names bestowed by explorers and pioneers from being taken off the map by the Geographic Board of Canada. E.O.S. Scholefield argued that they were vital "links in the chain" between the past and the present. And a reviewer of Captain John Walbran's *British Columbia Coast Names* (1909) noted that "names are in a sense an epitome of the history of the country. If they are aboriginal in their origin they are always, either historical or descriptive, for the idea of a name, as something apart from the thing to which it was applied, does not seem to have suggested itself to the North American Indian".

These early custodians of British Columbia history recognised that Vancouver created "something apart from the thing to which it was applied": a cartographic and toponymic totality which had been deployed for political purposes, underwrote British Columbia's imperial history, and made Vancouver Island British rather than Spanish, American or Native. This was not a retrospective formulation; these connections were made in the nineteenth century and were rooted in the authority of official surveys and the importance of mimetic representation in the political culture of western imperialism. Yet these links between cartographic "truth" and territorial appropriation are also embedded in

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151 These links between imperialism and cartographic precision, emphasised in the early twentieth century, have not entirely disappeared from scholarship on Vancouver, however. See, for example, John Naish, "The achievements of Captain George Vancouver: A reassessment after 200 years," *Mariner's Mirror*, vol.80, no.4 (November 1994), pp.418-430.
the textual fabric of Vancouver's voyage itself. They are implicit in his surveying
instructions and are captured on the published engraving of his map of Vancouver Island.

Vancouver's surveying instructions, which were prepared for the Home Office by
Major James Rennell (who had a great hand in the mapping of India), Joseph Banks and
William Bligh, were far more detailed than any Cook had been given, and reveal the great
emphasis that the British Government placed on the cartographic aspects of Vancouver's
mission.

It is judged necessary, in order that future Surveyors may profit to the fullest Extent,
by your Discoveries & Operations; & that they may be able to Appreciate the
Authorities on which the Geography of the several Portions of the Coast rest; that
those Authorities should not only be pointedly marked in your Chart but that a
Register should also be kept in the Nature of a Log Survey Book...so that, in Cases
where you have not been able, either from Weather or Accidents to compleat the
Trigonometrical or Observational Process, others may be enabled to compleat what
you have begun, without the Delay of going through the whole Process anew.  

With regard to charting, Vancouver was told that

every principal object whose position is either wholly or even thro' Accident only
partially and incompletely determined shall have that position marked by a dot (.) &
the mode by which it was so determined shall be described by adding as many of the
following Marks as may serve to express it.

- a Position determined by Celestial Observation...
- Longitude of Time Keeper
- Latitude by Observation
- Lat. by Account
- By Intersection of Bearings, with 2 or more broken lines...
- Surveying Stations of the Day, Month & Year to be added...
- Measured bases...  

And with regard to illustrating the charts:

It is suggested that significant and Characteristic Names should be given, on the spot
of the several Objects that form the Sound Marks; in which case, if named with
Judgment the Name would convey some portion of information to succeeding
Navigators and Surveyors.  

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152 "General instruction for surveying," in the hand of Sir Joseph Banks, 21 February, 1791,
PRO HO 42/18, fol.170.
153 Ibid., fols.171-172.
154 Ibid., fol.177.
Vancouver had another set of instructions from the Admirality, which outlined his diplomatic objectives at Nootka Sound but also impressed on him that his principal goal was to acquire "a more complete knowledge...of the north-west coast of America".\textsuperscript{155} This was a slightly different mission than Cook's third voyage. Vancouver, like other British explorers sponsored by the Admiralty during this period, was told to "avoid disputes with the natives", but it was Archibald Menzies who was chiefly responsible for investigating natural history, describing "the present state & comparative degree of Civilization of the [Native] Inhabitants", and collecting botanical specimens.\textsuperscript{156} Vancouver and his officers were meant to focus on surveying.\textsuperscript{157}

As these surveying instructions suggest, Vancouver's team did not exactly chart a geographical reality waiting to be discovered. Rather, they used a particular set of methods and instruments to knit together space and depict it on a uniform plane - a scale map. They worked with what William Boelhower calls "a combinatory calculus".\textsuperscript{158} Boelhower discusses the mapping of the eastern seaboard of North America up to the nineteenth century, but his arguments about scale maps have a more general purchase. Vancouver's survey work, I take Boelhower to suggest, revolved around his "physical and cognitive mobility across an open series of heterogeneous spaces", and his charts were attempts "to weave such infinite variety into a unified discourse."\textsuperscript{159} Vancouver used different techniques and types of equipment to connect up the dots on his charts: chronometers and lunar observations for establishing longitude at sea; gunther chains for measuring bases in areas with long stretches

\textsuperscript{155} Lamb, \textit{Voyage of George Vancouver}, I, p.283.
\textsuperscript{156} This quotation is from "Instructions to Menzies from Jos. Banks," Soho Square 22 February 1791, BM Add.MS. 33,979, fol.75. Banks sponsored Menzies and many other late eighteenth-century travellers.
\textsuperscript{157} A full list of the instruments, and nautical and surveying texts used on Vancouver's voyage, prepared by Andrew David of the Hydrographic Office in Taunton, U.K., is published in Fisher and Johnston, \textit{From maps to metaphors}, pp.291-293.
\textsuperscript{158} William Boelhower, "Inventing America: A model of cartographic semiosis," \textit{Word \\
& Image}, vol.4, no.2 (April-June 1988), pp.475-497; the quotation is from p.479.
\textsuperscript{159} \textit{Ibid.}.
of beach; triangulation stations on shore for determining the angle of a bay or headland in relation to the sun; sextants, compasses, long lines, and the turning points of a long boat when determining the size of an inlet; and compass bearings taken from "ship stations" to judge the distance between prominent coastal features. The combination of methods and tools used at specific points was influenced by the weather and physical terrain.\footnote{160}

Vancouver judged that his team had "completely explored every turning" of Puget Sound; this survey was successful because there was much flat land in the area and triangulation bases could be established a regular intervals.\footnote{161} And he noted that there were "a sufficient number of stopping places" in Johnstone Strait "to answer all our [surveying] purposes".\footnote{162} But Vancouver could not obtain an accurate latitude for the head of Jervis Inlet because of low cloud.\footnote{163}

At the centre of Vancouver's surveying instructions was the idea that he was to produce - or as Vancouver often put it, "embellish" - a geography out of "course & distance", "Angles & Bearings", and an "uninterrupted series of Bases for the Determination of the Objects around you."\footnote{164} His charts and log survey book were meant to reflect his physical, cognitive and optical route through spaces that were at once "real" and technical, "geographical" and analogical. Headlands, inlets, bays, tides, beaches, and horizons were simultaneously spotted and measured, discovered and brought into spatial existence by a cartographic method. The Home Office hoped that he would produce a unified geographical discourse: a set of charts that incorporated and corrected the work of previous explorers, and that rendered the geography of the coast "compleat". "The benefit that Government will derive from this mode of surveying is, that the Employment of conjecture will be rendered impossible", Banks wrote to Grenville; Vancouver's survey, if properly conducted, would

\footnote{160}{For a more rigorous discussion see Andrew David, "Vancouver's survey methods and surveys," in Fisher and Johnston, \textit{From maps to metaphors}, pp.51-69.}
\footnote{161}{Lamb, \textit{Voyage of George Vancouver}, II, p.558.}
\footnote{162}{\textit{Ibid.}, II, p.628.}
\footnote{163}{\textit{Ibid.}, II, p.589.}
\footnote{164}{"General instruction for surveying," PRO HO 42/18, fols.170-171, 175.}
preclude "all Plea of mistake" about the existence of the Northwest Passage, and help the Cabinet to size up the region's commercial and strategic potential.165 And Vancouver represented the tracks of his long boats as well as his ships on his maps in order to make his discoveries appear as "conclusive" as possible. Because the northwest coast was so "detached and broken", he explained,

I have considered it essential to the illustration of our survey, to state very exactly not only the track of the vessels when navigating these regions, but likewise those of the boats when so employed.... The perusal of these parts of our voyage to persons not particularly interested, I am conscious will afford but little entertainment; yet I have been induced to give a detailed account, instead of an abstract, of our proceedings, for the purpose of illustrating the charts accompanying this journal: of shewing the manner in which our time day by day had been employed; and, for the additional purpose, of making the history of our transactions on the north-west coast of America, as conclusive as possible...166

Vancouver wanted to show how he had made geography: the techniques and physical toils that were involved; the different ways in which he had arrived at a conclusion. Vancouver Island is a monument to Vancouver's intricate and heterogeneous passage between his survey log book, journal and charts, and to the political saliency of scientific cartography. "At the centre of the map is not geography in se", Boelhower declares, "but the eye of the cartographer."167

Vancouver's eyes, of course, were not just fixed on distances and angles. He looked for safe anchorages, deep harbours, fertile tracts of land, as well as that elusive water passage into the interior. And he was instructed to bestow appropriate names. Vancouver was meant to characterise the region's potential and make it characteristically British. This was where both the overlap and discrepancy between the official (authoritative) and existential (functional) aspects of his survey came to the fore.

One the one hand, Vancouver was a representative of George III, and was meant to mark his geography "British" and describe its main features. Like many other explorers, he

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165 Banks to Grenville, 20 February 1791, PRO HO 42/18[33], fol.168.
166 Lamb, *Voyage of George Vancouver*, IV, p.1391 (Vancouver's emphasis).
167 Boelhower, "Inventing America," p.479.
named his "true" findings (discoveries for which there were no authorities) after royal, aristocratic, military and political figures: "The Gulf of Georgia" after the King; "Point Chatham" after William Pitt (Lord Chatham); "Grenville Channel" after the Home Secretary.

And he bestowed the name "Possession Sound" at the opening of Puget Sound to signify the position where he claimed formal possession of the Gulf of Georgia region for Britain. Vancouver then described the landscapes to which such names had been fixed. For instance, he considered the area around "Possession Sound" to be of "a rich fertile mould", and, from an agricultural point of view, "capable of high improvement" - a "most lovely country" with commodious harbours.\(^{168}\) As he moved north during the summer, however, he discovered that the "country presented a very different aspect from that which we have been accustomed to behold further south" - steep, rugged rocks with small bays and "herbage of a dull colour".\(^{169}\)

But like explorers such as Cook, Vancouver also sought to capture in his journal and on his charts his own experience of travelling. On the other hand, then, he bestowed names that signified the physical and technological aspects of surveying, and the particular circumstances of his voyage at different points in time. He named "Puget's Sound" and "Johnstone's Strait" after two of his most hard-working officers. He bestowed names such as "Desolation Sound" because he considered it a "gloomy place" which "afforded not a single prospect that was pleasing to the eye", and "Observatory Inlet" (on the Nass River) because he reckoned that the time his party spent there in July 1793 was "essential for correcting our former survey".\(^{170}\) His writing about landscape was also tempered by experiential contingencies. He noted that Johnstone Strait was "infinitely more grateful" than Desolation Sound; but he also found it grateful, no doubt, because it was the passage which confirmed the insularity of Vancouver Island.\(^{171}\) And as the exhausting survey dragged on, Vancouver

\(^{168}\) Lamb, *Voyage of George Vancouver*, II, pp.533 and 535.  
became less enthusiastic about the coast, and far less discriminating in his judgements about
the potential of the land. He wrote to the Admiralty Board in December 1793: "The country
we have passed through in general this summer appears incapable of being appropriated to
any other use than the abode of the few uncouth inhabitants it at present contains". By the
end of the third survey season he was desperate to quit "these remote and uncouth parts".

In short, Vancouver tried to intersperse the physicality, technicality and official
nature of his voyage in his journal and on his charts. One can follow his path around
Vancouver Island from "Port Discovery" (which he bestowed to mark the arrival of his aptly
named ship in uncharted waters), to "Admiralty Inlet" (bestowed, in part, to signify its
commodious harbours), to "Port Townsend" (after the Marquis of that name, who became
commander of British forces in Quebec after General Wolfe's death). Or one can follow his
track from "Jervis Inlet" (named after an Admiral), to "Upwood Point" (named "in
remembrance of an early friendship"), and on through parts of the Strait of Georgia where
Spanish explorers had bestowed names (many of which he acknowledged in his journal).
His charts represented the spatial relations described in his journal. His journal gave his
charts historical and experiential depth by describing the circumstances under which he had
made his discoveries: the weather, the instruments used, his mood, and his expectations and
disappointments. Vancouver weaved together a variety of spaces and names, and produced a
unified geographical discourse which was at once personal and national, corporeal and
imperial. He framed the northwest coast as a distinctively scientific British domain.

Yet as scholars such as Boelhower and Huggan argue, cartographic systems of
representations are rarely as stable or uniform as they appear, and we can reveal the
arbitrariness and political-interestedness of their claims to universality and completeness by

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172 Vancouver to Stephens, 6 December 1793, in ibid., IV, p.1588.
173 Vancouver to a friend, 2 October 1794, quoted in Gough, Northwest coast, p.168.
174 Lamb, Voyage of George Vancouver, II, pp.589-596; the quotation is from p.591.
searching for their "blind spots", or erasures and closures. Maps can be "deconstructed" in a number of ways; in Vancouver's case, I suggest, it is the discrepancies between his journal and the engraved chart of "Quadra and Vancouver's Island" (Figure III:2a) that point to such "blind spots."

This engraving, which was adapted from draft charts prepared by Vancouver and Joseph Baker during the course of the voyage and appeared in the published account of the voyage (1798), simplifies and rationalises Vancouver's reconnaissance of 1792 in particular ways. The region is circumscribed by the track of Vancouver's vessels; the Island is named "Quadra and Vancouver's Island," but the fact that Vancouver discovered it is clearly represented. By the mid-1820s, Hudson's Bay Company fur traders and British politicians were referring to the island as "Vancouver's Island." Only a small fraction of the names bestowed by Vancouver are retained on this map, and those few refer mainly to Admiralty figures. Desolation Sound is one of the only names on the map that represents the experiential aspects of Vancouver's survey. And the "revised and corrected" version of the map (engraved by S.I. Neale), which appeared in the 1801 edition of Vancouver's voyage, retains even fewer names and omits Desolation Sound (compare Figures III:2a and III:2b). What is more, there is barely a trace of Spain's hand in the exploration of the region, or that of maritime fur traders, in either engraving; and there is hardly any indication of a Native presence.

Figure III:2a partly contradicts Vancouver's journal, which reveals that he drew on the important survey work done in the region by the Spanish explorers Quimper, Fidalgo and Eliza in 1790 and 1791, received assistance from Galiano and Valdés in 1792, and felt some

175 Also see José Rabasa, "Allegories of the Atlas," in Francis Barker, Peter Hulme, Margaret Iverson, and Diana Loxley (eds.), Europe and its others, Proceedings of the Essex Conference on the Sociology of Literature, 1984, 2 vols. (Colchester: University of Essex, 1985), II, pp.1-16. Rabasa argues that "The allegorization of the four continents [in Mercator's Atlas, 1595-1636] suppresses the colonialist machinery and fabricates an omnipotent European who can dominate the world from the cabinet, but it also produces a blind spot that dissolves history as a privileged modality of European culture" (p.12).
Figure III:2a Warner, "A chart showing part of the coast..."
Figure III:2b Neale, "A chart showing part of the coast..."
obligation to mention Spanish names.\textsuperscript{176} Similarly, while Vancouver dismissed maritime fur traders as "adventurers" who "had neither the means, nor the leisure...for amassing any certain geographical information", he nevertheless valued the charts made by the British traders George Dixon and Charles Duncan in the late 1780s, and consulted with traders about the character of different Native groups.\textsuperscript{177} As significantly, this engraving does not fully represent the fact that Vancouver spotted many Native villages and came into contact with Native people across the length and breadth of eastern Vancouver Island. Only Cheslakees Indian village is depicted on the 1798 engraving; this village was omitted from the 1801 "corrected" map. Vancouver and his officers made some important ethnographic observations about the spread of smallpox and Native trade patterns, and in a few places Native people threatened to interrupt his survey work.

In effect, these two engravings suppress the idea that Vancouver had traversed Native space, and that Native groups and white traders were in close proximity of each other's ways. And it simplifies the complex Native territorial and political arrangements on the west coast of Vancouver Island that were described, in part, by fur traders. "Archipelago de Clayoquot" and "Archipelago de Nitinat" were derived from Spanish names. These engravings - and, to a considerable extent, Vancouver's draft charts as well - subvert the commercial and corporeal connections between place and space that gave the early contact period its colour and vibrancy, and re-present the region as a lifeless, unified, objective spatial environment marked by names that refer mainly to the power and geographical reach of the British

\textsuperscript{176} See Lamb, \textit{Voyage of George Vancouver}, II, pp.591-592, 663.
\textsuperscript{177} The quotation is from \textit{ibid.}, I, p.274. On Vancouver's use of Dixon's and Duncan's charts see \textit{ibid.}, II, p.592; III, pp.1069, 1071; IV, pp.1322-1326. The importance of Duncan's discoveries were related to the Home Office in 1790, probably by Alexander Dalrymple, who had a copy of his journal and published two of his charts. PRO HO 42/18[57]; Dalrymple, \textit{Memoir of a map}, p.iv. Vancouver was more disparaging about Meares. When Vancouver met Gray at the mouth of the Strait of Juan de Fuca in April 1792, the American denied having ventured more than 50 miles into the Strait of Georgia. Meares exaggerated the American's achievements for his own ends. See Newcombe, \textit{Circumnavigation of Vancouver Island}, pp.29-38.
Admiralty. The Admiralty's engravers inserted Vancouver Island into what Boelhower calls a system of "global circulation" characterised by the "combinatory passion of the scale map". It was with the rise of scale cartography, he argues, that maps "truly" became icons of nation-building and imperial expansion, because they instituted a series of distinctions between the global and the local, line and image, passage and place. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, Boelhower claims, the scale map became an icon of America's "sheer passage" across the continent:

Global circulation over the continental territory was...the categorical imperative of nation-building. But if the global-route-line becomes the dominant factor of the cartographic text, then the local-place-image becomes mere context. At the global level - that is, on the abstract surface of the scale map - context disappears, place is no longer important.178

A passage purportedly without obstacles; a passage premised on what Rabasa calls a "systematic forgetfulness" of prior inscriptions on the land.179

Vancouver's achievements should be assessed in the light of the concepts and distinctions that he brought to the northwest coast. Abstract concepts of scale and uniformity that characterised neither the maritime fur trade, nor, quite, Cook's sojourn at Nootka Sound. Surveying practices that homogenised space, and naming practices that personified Vancouver Island and the northwest coast as British. As I will now show, British politicians and colonists invoked Vancouver's survey as a vital link between British interest in the northwest coast and British sovereignty over Vancouver's Island - as an objective link between exploration and empire.

Delineating the Oregon Territory

Vancouver's survey did not figure in the Oregon boundary dispute until 1826. The first round of negotiations, held in London in 1818, was prompted by political bickering in the United States over the transfer of the American trade post Astoria at the mouth of the

178 Boelhower, "Inventing America," p.484.
Columbia River to British traders in 1813, but was used mainly to consolidate the provisions of past treaties.\textsuperscript{180} The \textit{Convention} resulting from this negotiation fixed a boundary from Lake of the Woods (now on the Minnesota/Ontario border) along the 49th parallel to the Rockies, granted joint occupancy of the Oregon Territory for ten years, but left questions of title in the region in abeyance.

At these 1818 negotiations the United States reclaimed Astoria from the British North West Company under Article 1 of the Treaty of Ghent of 1814, which annulled the territorial gains made by Britain and the United States during the War of 1812, though John Jacob Astor's traders never returned to the site and the region remained a British fur trade preserve. But British politicians viewed this meeting in broader terms, as a chance to fix a boundary across northern North America.\textsuperscript{181} European and American diplomats had considered the 49th parallel west from the Great Lakes to be an appropriate boundary separating British and French territory in North America for much of the eighteenth century, but it had never been instituted as a border by any treaty or convention. In 1818 British diplomats wanted to formally ratify this boundary because the cartographic wisdom at this time was that the headwaters of the Mississippi River lay above 49°N, and British traders could thereby claim the right to descend the river to the Gulf of Mexico.\textsuperscript{182} Henry Popple's \textit{Map of the British Empire in America} (1732), which shows the 49th parallel bisecting the Mississippi River, was still considered accurate in 1818; the headwaters of the Mississippi were not discovered to lie below 49°N until 1823.\textsuperscript{183}

\textsuperscript{180} The classic account of the Oregon boundary dispute, which has not been bettered, is Frederick Merk's \textit{The Oregon question: essays in Anglo-American diplomacy and politics} (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1967).
\textsuperscript{182} See \textit{ibid.}, pp.37-59.
The 1818 negotiations revolved around geopolitical ideas and assumptions stemming from the Anglo-French Treaty of Utrecht of 1713, which adjudicated commercial competition between the two nations around Hudson's Bay. This Treaty did not establish a British-French border in the region, but ruled that an Anglo-French commission would determine it at a later date. This commission met in Paris in 1719. It did not fix a border either, but the idea that the 49th parallel west from Lake of the Woods was an appropriate boundary dividing British and French territory as far as they extended was clearly stated in instructions given to Britain's commissioners and quickly became a British diplomatic assumption. Nor did the United States formally dispute this assumption when it acquired France's American possessions in the Louisiana Purchase of 1803. While trying to stretch this boundary to the Rockies in 1818, American diplomats Albert Gallatin and Richard Rush simply refused to grant Britain rights to descend the Mississippi, and, looking beyond the mountains, suggested to their Secretary of State, John Quincy Adams, that "There was no reason why, if the countries extended their claims Westward the same line should not be continued to the Pacific." The idea that the 49th parallel was an appropriate boundary did not just rest on British diplomatic assumptions, however. The boundary was also engraved on British, American and French maps published from 1751 onwards, such as Jean Palairet's Map of North America (1765). Yet the eighteenth-century cartography of North America was quite varied. There were maps that divided British and French territory around Hudson's Bay much higher than 49°N - most notably John Mitchell's Map of the British and French Dominions in North America (1755), which was respected by scholars and politicians on

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185 "Protocol of the sixth conference", October 9 1818; Gallatin and Rush to Adams, October 20, 1823, Manning, Diplomatic correspondence, II, Docs. 634 and 639, pp.872, 878.
both sides of the Atlantic. And other famous maps, such as Aaron Arrowsmith's _Map Exhibiting all the New Discoveries in the Interior Parts of North America_ (1795; additions to 1818) did not depict any boundaries west of the Great Lakes. Why did not United States diplomats appeal to Mitchell's map to argue for a boundary west from Lake of the Woods that would run higher than 49 degrees? Gallatin gave the following explanation:

As this [the 49th parallel] had been assumed many years before, as a positive fact, and had never been contradicted, I also assumed it as such and did not thoroughly investigate the subject.... It appears very extraordinary that any geographer or map-maker should have invented the dividing line, with such specific details, without having sufficient grounds for believing that it had been thus determined by the Commissioners under the treaty of Utrecht...[and] there is no apparent motive, if the assertion was known by the British negotiators not to be founded in fact, why they should not have at once denied it."

Gallatin and the other diplomats viewed maps as honest, transparent depictions of an assumed geopolitical order. Palairet's map represented eighteenth-century diplomatic wisdom. Mitchell's map did not encourage dispute because it did not represent this wisdom and gave no geopolitical precedent for the existence of other boundaries.  

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186 On the importance of Mitchell's map in the geopolitical history of North America see Seymour I. Schwartz and Ralph E. Ehrenberg, _The mapping of America_ (New York: Harry N. Abraams Inc., 1980), pp.158-160, and passim. Mitchell was commissioned by the Earl of Halifax, the President of Britain's Board of Trade.

187 Robert Greenhow, a nineteenth-century American scholar of the Oregon boundary dispute, cites three "esteemed" maps depicting the 49th parallel as the border west of Lake of the Woods - Postlethwayt (1751), Palairet (1765), and Brown and Gibson (1775) - and he might have added to that list the maps by Sculp and the Society of Anti-Gallicans (both 1755); another four maps showing alternative boundaries - Mitchell (1755), Smollett (1760), Bennet (1770), and Faden (1777); and he cites a number carrying no boundary line in the region - most notably Popple (1738). Robert Greenhow, _The History of Oregon and California..._ (Boston: Little and Brown, 1844), pp.281-283, 436-9.


189 Greenhow worked for the United States State Department, and his book had a fairly important influence on American thinking during the last round of diplomatic negotiations in 1845-46. He was right in believing that the 1719 commission did not institute the 49th parallel west from Lake of the Woods as the border, but he was unaware of these British diplomatic instructions, and he did not consider the role that cartography played in the negotiations of 1818. The following statement alludes to my thesis and undoes his view of these negotiations: "These discrepancies [between these maps with different boundaries] should excite no surprise; for maps, and books of geography, which are most frequently consulted in relation to boundaries, are, or rather have been, the very worst authorities on
In the negotiations of 1818, cartography and diplomacy, image and assumed reality, were tightly bound. The idea of the 49th parallel as an appropriate boundary and the maps depicting this border reinforced one another. Questions of cartographic competence and propaganda were sidelined. These diplomats were concerned with the classification of signs (the identity of words and maps) rather than the historical and political context of their production or the suitability of establishing a line of latitude as a border. They worked in short-hand, with diplomatic and cartographic texts that reduced the exploration and occupation of the continent to a simple set of geopolitical coordinates and precedents, and they used such texts to strive for a quick territorial settlement. The British explorer David Thompson, who traversed and mapped much of northwest America between 1787 and 1797, and established a number of trade routes and posts in the Columbia River region for the North West Company between 1807 and 1812, complained that "the British ministry appear to consider and prefer general lines for Boundaries in the wilderness of North America in preference to Lines more in detail, as if Mountains, Hills and Rivers would assume the form [of] place position and course intended by a general line." Nevertheless, when Gallatin suggested that the 49th parallel might be stretched from the Rockies to the Pacific, the British objected because the boundary would bisect the British fur trade, which was focused on the lower reaches of the Columbia River and the upper reaches of the Fraser River, and was connected by an elaborate system of brigade trails and water routes.

The British only hinted at a general boundary - the Columbia River. The United States proposed the 49th parallel, but it was unacceptable to the British. Looking for a

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189 David Thompson to the Colonial Office, 30 April 1842, enclosure 7, Foreign Office 5 - America: transcripts, BCARS GR327, vol.4. Thompson was referring to the negotiations of 1818 and 1826.

compromise, Gallatin and Rush turned again to maps - in this instance, a map in an anonymous pamphlet published in 1817 (but since credited to Simon McGillivray of the North West Company) showing a river purportedly used by British traders emptying into Puget Sound (see Figure III:3).\(^{192}\) On the basis of this map, Gallatin proposed a line which, after crossing the Columbia at 49°N, "should deviate so far southwardly as to leave within the British claim all waters emptying into the sound called the Gulf of Georgia."\(^{193}\) Lord Castlereagh, Britain's Foreign Secretary, accepted Gallatin's logic but rejected the proposal. McGillivray may have simply confused his fictitious Caledonia River with some smaller streams in the area, but is equally likely that he was playing a confidence trick on diplomats. Just as eighteenth-century maps depicting the 49th parallel reinforced diplomatic wisdom, so McGillivray may have thought that his map would reinforce the idea that British traders used the Caledonia River. Neither Gallatin nor Castlereagh consulted any explorers or traders to verify whether the river existed.

This is how the 49th parallel entered the diplomatic imagination. These diplomats were trying to reconstruct, albeit in a rudimentary fashion at this stage, an authoritative history of boundary-making precedents, and based such a history on a sequence of diplomatic and cartographic "facts." They were trying to work out what Benedict Anderson has neatly termed (in relation to nineteenth-century Thailand) the "property-history" of the

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\(^{192}\) This proposal did not make it into the official diplomatic record. It was discovered by Merk. See *Oregon question*, pp.53-57. The text in question is [Simon McGillivray], *Notice respecting the boundary*... (London: B. M'Millan, 1817). This fictitious river is also depicted on the 1818 edition of Arrowsmith's *Map...of North America*. The North West Company was viewed as a cartographic "authority" on North America. Thompson's maps of the Columbia River region were more detailed than McGillivray's, and his 1816 *Map of North America* does not depict the Caledonia River. See David Thompson, *Columbia journals*, Barbara Belyea ed. (Montreal & Kingston, London, Buffalo: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1994), pp.296-297.

Figure III:3 "A map of America..."
North American continent west of the Great Lakes; a space that Britain and the United States claimed they owned but which had not been formally segmented. This property history, and debate about the boundary, was given a different quality in 1826, when diplomats turned to the testimony of people with first-hand knowledge of the Oregon Territory.

When British and United States diplomats negotiated in 1826, they confronted the details of discovery and occupation. Their mental political geography of North America had faltered at the Rockies. The negotiations of 1826 revolved around the nature of local empirical knowledge about the Oregon Territory. And what linked local knowledge to diplomacy was the way the territory had been, and might be, produced: where explorers had gone, where traders were placed, and where new commercial outlets might be anchored. In these negotiations diplomats pushed aside the work of map-makers and focused on how knowledge of the Oregon Territory had been acquired.

George Canning (Britain's Foreign Secretary in 1826) prompted the negotiations for two main reasons. First because he was irritated by the build up of a United States naval presence in the Pacific, and by American plans to militarise Oregon. And second, and perhaps more importantly, because he had been lobbied by the Hudson's Bay Company. The Company absorbed the North West Company in 1821 and established the Columbia Department west of the Rockies as part of a major commercial expansion. George Simpson, the head of the Company's operations in North America, toured the region in 1824-25 and reported to headquarters in London that it had enormous economic potential. Governor John Pelly then advised the British Government about the Company's plans for the region and in December 1825 appealed to Canning to secure British territorial rights to the Columbia Department, noting that "the free navigation" of the Columbia River was essential.

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195 On the context to the negotiations see Merk, *Oregon question*, pp.107-163.
to the Company's business on the Pacific. By 1826 the Company had thirteen establishments scattered between the lower Columbia River and headwaters of the Fraser River; if the 49th parallel was adopted as the boundary, their spatial economy would effectively be undermined.

Gallatin was sent back to London to negotiate with Britain's restaffed, empire-conscious Foreign Office. In debate, he emphasised that the United States had exclusive title to the area between the 49th parallel and the Columbia River by virtue of discoveries made by American explorers and traders. Britain, on the other hand, emphasised the issue of occupation and argued that the United States had no right of sovereignty over any of the Oregon Territory. Gallatin wrote to Henry Clay, his Secretary of State: "...the general ground assumed by the British plenipotentiaries is that...mere discovery without occupation constitutes no title".

These positions were drawn, in part, from circumstance. The American maritime fur trader Robert Gray had beaten Vancouver past the mouth of Columbia River in 1792 (the river being so named after his ship). Farther north, Britain, Spain and America had shared in

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198 There had been a previous round of negotiations, in 1823-1824, but they did not inject any new emphases into the boundary debate. Britain closed the negotiations by proposing a boundary along the 49th parallel to the Columbia and then down the river to the Pacific. Gallatin returned to London in 1826 with a counter-proposal, insisting on the 49th parallel to the Pacific, but allowing British subjects use of the Columbia if it proved navigable from its point of intersection with the parallel. Britain rejected the offer, but came back with a compromise, proposing the Columbia River as the main boundary but granting the United States what is now the Olympic Peninsula and therefore some good deep-water harbours in Puget Sound. Gallatin considered the offer offensive - an attempt to create an American island in British territory. Thus, soon after the 1826 negotiations started, Britain and the United States were back at square one. This correspondence can be tracked in Manning, Diplomatic correspondence, II, pp.55-76 and passim.

the exploration of the coast, British traders such as Thompson had mapped the interior, and American traders had used the interior of the Oregon Territory for only a few years, while a British fur trade was firmly established there by the early 1800s. United States sovereignty was therefore harder to prove. And in 1826 the Hudson's Bay Company's headquarters west of the Rockies were at Fort Vancouver on the Columbia - so named in March 1825, Simpson noted, "to identify our claim to the Soil and Trade with [Vancouver's]...discovery of the River and the Coast on behalf of Gt Britain."201

British and United States diplomats grounded their respective claims by rationalising the activities of explorers and traders in particular ways. As the British saw it, Vancouver's survey diminished American claims to the Oregon Territory because he had been dispatched to the region by the British Government and had sought to separate geographical fact from fiction. And as Gallatin saw it, the United States had a strong title to the Columbia River because Gray had discovered its mouth, and Lewis and Clark had descended the River from one of its sources under the patronage of President Jefferson. Britain rejected the idea that Gray had given the United States any solid title to the lower Columbia on the grounds that he was a private trader and because his discovery was "a lucky adventure" rather than a scientific reconnaissance of the river, as was Vancouver's survey shortly thereafter.202 This is how H.U. Addington, Undersecretary at the Foreign Office, summarised Britain's position for Canning in May 1826:

The American title proper [to the Columbia], on which by far the greatest stress is laid [by the United States], is founded on the expeditions of Gray, and of Lewis, and Clarke, to that Country; but more especially of the first, Gray, a private trader, and sailing in a private Merchant Vessel....

200 See R. Cole Harris (ed.), Geoffrey J. Matthews (cartographer), Historical atlas of Canada, vol.1: From the beginning to 1800 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1987), plate 66, "The maritime and land fur trade" (Robert M. Galois, Sheila P. Robinson), and plate 67, "Exploration in the far northwest" (Richard Ruggles).
201 Merk, Fur trade and empire, p.124.
202 These formulations can be tracked in Manning, Diplomatic correspondence, Docs.920-931.
Great Britain proceeds to oppose to the names of the Adventurers above-mentioned those of *Meares, Cook, and Vancouver*, all sent on publick expeditions fitted out by their Government; but especially the latter, who, in, 1792, explored most minutely every part of the Coast in question, and took formal possession of it in the name of Great Britain...  

Similarly, when Britain tried to base a claim to the coast south of the 49th parallel on the "prior discoveries" of Meares in 1788, the United States argued that there was nothing scientific or intentional about Meares's foray into the Columbia River region. Meares had his eyes set on the Straits of Juan de Fuca. Or as Gallatin caustically remarked: "Meeres [sic] had given names [on the Oregon coast] indicative of his total failure [to find the Strait] - Cape Disappointment and Deception Bay." In other words, both countries emphasised that the most significant feats of territorial appropriation were ones based on *scientific intention* and *state sanction*.

But while Britain and the United States agreed about the authoritativeness of official surveys, they disagreed about the nature of sovereignty. Addington summarised the United States' view of Gray's discovery, and Britain's reaction to it.

After, in the first place, denying the validity of this private act of occupation...[we secondly reject] the American doctrine, that the occupation of one point on a River gives, *ipsa facto*, to the Occupant an exclusive title to the whole extent of the Country watered by that River and it Tributaries.... If the American claim proper [derived from Gray] be insisted on, Great Britain can equally shew a superior right to The United States over the same Country, inasmuch as a commissioned Navigator of her own [Vancouver], fitted out on the publick account, first took actual possession of the River and Territory in dispute, in the name of his Sovereign; Her Traders first frequented the vicinity of that Country, and She has, without interruption, continued in uncontested possession of it since 1810, thereby adding to the right of discovery and possession, that derived from Use, Occupancy, and Settlement.  

As Gallatin grasped, Britain objected strongly to this American "doctrine" about discovery because it had a peculiarly *architectural* notion of title and sovereignty (as I pointed out in Chapter Ten). "The whole of this [British] doctrine", Gallatin noted, "which excludes titles

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derived from prior discovery and substitutes occupancy, rests on the Nootka Convention.... Actual occupancy and regard to mutual convenience are therefore the only bases of any arrangement...of a boundary" which Britain would accept.\textsuperscript{206}

The United States, on the other hand, harked back to the Spanish idea that acts of discovery signified an \textit{intention} to settle and govern. And Gallatin implied that the British had simply occupied the Oregon Territory to traffic with the Indians - that they would be transient rather than permanent dwellers - while Gray had found and preserved American title for a future republic. "The United States claimed a natural extension of their territory to the Pacific Ocean", Gallatin observed,

\begin{quote}
\textit{on the ground of contiguity and population which gave them a better right to the adjacent unoccupied land than could be set up by any other Nation.... How much more natural and stronger the claim when made by a Nation, whose population extended to the central parts of the Continent, and whose dominions were by all acknowledged to extend to the Stony Mountains.}\textsuperscript{207}
\end{quote}

The United States thought that the principle of contiguity was clearly established in the Law of Nations, and that successive British governments had referred to it in imperial proclamations made between 1580 and 1732. Gallatin also remarked that the "point of occupancy", on which Britain rested its case, "was solely owing to that westwardly expansion of their trading settlements of Hudson's Bay".\textsuperscript{208}

The United States pursued this argument about its "natural" right to expand westwards up to 1846. It was part of the American doctrine of manifest destiny. But Britain would not accept such ideas, and Hudson's Bay Company officials thought that this principle of contiguity was ridiculous. In 1826 Simpson pointed out that the United States showed no

\textsuperscript{206} Gallatin to Clay, 16 November 1826, Manning, \textit{Diplomatic correspondence}, II, Doc.920, pp.529-530; Gallatin also highlighted this in his reflections on these 1826 negotiations, printed in his \textit{The Oregon question}, pp.5,18,31-32.


\textsuperscript{208} \textit{Ibid}.
intention of occupying the Oregon Territory. And when American settlers did venture over the Rockies in the early 1840s, and the United States started to agitate the question of American title over the whole of the Oregon Territory more forcefully, James Douglas, a Company trader at Fort Vancouver, emphasised that it was British traders, not American settlers, who were the first and bona fide occupants of the region. "If you chance to overlook a ditch on your estate and I should be the first person to stumble into it, does that simple accident invest me with any right of propriety in your broad acres", he asked. Or as Adam Thom, a Hudson's Bay Company lawyer, put it to Simpson in 1842: "The Americans would claim whole kingdoms for the sake of a harbour or even a mooring post".

Britain and the United States articulated different conceptual positions, and viewed the Oregon Territory as a space of geopolitical dispute. In the process the issue of Native title to land was forgotten. In 1845 Henry Howells, a British philanthropist, reminded Britain's Foreign Secretary that "The Oregon Territory...is occupied by about one hundred and fifty thousand Indians who inherit it from their ancestors; to whom, therefore, it rightfully belongs, and not in equity to either of the nations claiming the same." But such issues had effectively been buried much earlier. Gallatin commented on the protocol of his second meeting with British ministers in 1826:

Mr Huskisson said that it would be lamentable that, in this age, two such Nations as the United States and Great Britain should be drawn to a rupture on such subject as the uncultivated wilds of the North West Coast. But the honour and dignity of both Countries must be respected, and the mutual convenience of both parties should also be consulted. He then objected to the straight line which we proposed [the 49th parallel to the Pacific] as having no regard to such convenience, and observed

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210 James Douglas to Sir George Simpson (private), 23 October 1843, George Simpson, Correspondence Inward, PAM-HBCA D.5/9 fol.119.
211 Adam Thom to Sir George Simpson (private), 8 August 1842, George Simpson, Correspondence Inwards, PAM-HBCA D.5/7 fol.184.
212 Henry Howells to Lord Aberdeen, 8 May 1845, FO 5 - America: transcripts, BCARS GR327, vol.4.
particularly that its cutting off the southern portion of Quadra & Vancouver's Island...was quite inadmissable.\textsuperscript{213}

Huskisson highlighted Vancouver's survey and the imperial baggage that went with it: that the northwest coast was an austere, "uncultivated" (and, by implication, empty) region, foreign to the dignified world of metropolitan diplomacy and culture, but a region that Vancouver had nevertheless mapped and claimed for Britain. Because Vancouver had replaced traders' geographically vague images of this "wild" land with precise cartographic lines - put the geography of the northwest on its "true" footing - general boundary lines across the region would not do justice to the issue of convenience. Huskisson and Gallatin attempted to divide a geographical space that had already been prised away from Native groups by a cartographic apparatus of representation.

Diplomats at the 1826 negotiations failed to establish a border, and the joint occupancy agreement was renewed. The boundary issue was not agitated formally again until 1843, when American settlers started to encroach on the Hudson's Bay Company's lands around the Columbia River and the details of the dispute filtered into American Congressional debates and the British and American press. Political debate about the Oregon Territory was intricate, swayed the on-off boundary negotiations that took place in Washington between 1843 and 1846, and caused great public excitement in Britain and the United States. The boundary question was placed in a broad national and imperial context. The United States connected the region to the issue of America's "natural" continental destiny, while Britain viewed the region in a more utilitarian light.

During the 1840s the United States, spearheaded by Democratic President James Polk, embarked on what David Pletcher has called a "diplomacy of annexation."\textsuperscript{214} American power was shored up in Texas and California, and with Oregon in mind the expansionist President warned Britain that "no future European colony or dominion shall,

with our consent, be planted or established on any part of the North American continent."

Such sentiments were padded out by the American press, and prompted the Duke of Wellington to declare:

...the Democratic Party throughout the World is inimical to this country. The reason is, that our system is essentially conservative: that the freedom of the subject is founded upon law and order; which provides at the same time for the conservation of person, property, privileges, honor and character; and the institutions of the country. Democracy abroad looks for plunder; which cannot exist with our system. Wherever a democratical influence or even a democratical Press exists, we must expect to find enemies.

By the summer of 1845 war looked likely, and Lord Aberdeen, Britain's Foreign Secretary, debated the Oregon issue in the Commons, reassuring his colleagues that "our honour is a substantial property that we can certainly never neglect." Britain would not let American troops or settlers simply walk into the territory, the Hudson's Bay Company pressed Aberdeen to protect its trading interests, and the Cabinet decided to dispatch a secret naval expedition to the region to assess its strategic potential.

Territorial claims and priorities were reordered slightly in the diplomacy of the 1840s - principally, Britain, under the advice of the Hudson's Bay Company, was willing to give up the Columbia River if it retained Vancouver Island - but the diplomatic arguments supporting

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217 Hansard's parliamentary debates, 3rd Ser., vol.LXXIX (1845), col.123.
them remained essentially the same. Tension stemmed mainly from delicate political egos and a public clamour for confrontation. Some British parliamentarians thought that Aberdeen was an ineffectual Foreign Secretary. And these two cartoons (Figure III:4) from London's *Punch* magazine illustrate that the British still viewed the United States as a rebellious sibling, and considered Polk to be a trickster. Pletcher argues that Polk lacked the primary quality of a diplomat - "the ability to appreciate a foreign people's hopes" - and saw Britain as a "thieving bully".

In the United States public debate about Oregon was high-spirited. Gallatin observed that by 1845, the territorial issue had become "one of feeling rather than of right." By 1845 thousands of American settlers were pouring into Oregon, and a stream of information about the region started to flow back east. Extracts from emigrants' letters home were published in eastern newspapers and journals. Editors superimposed their own geopolitical commentary on these raw vignettes, and British and American journalists entered into a war of words. In lieu of a boundary settlement, and in an attempt to legitimise Polk's pronouncements, American writers devised an elaborate rhetoric of American right and destiny. Some agitated for war against Britain. Gallatin, John Calhoun (a prominent United States Senator), and the newspaper *Niles' Weekly Register* spoke for those who wanted peace, or at least thought that Britain would not threaten war. In 1843 Calhoun proposed a policy of "wise & masterly inactivity" - swamping Britain's claim to Oregon and

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219 The Hudson's Bay was willing to give up Fort Vancouver, mainly because of the dangers of navigating the bar at the mouth of the Columbia River. In 1841 Simpson sent Douglas north along the coast to look for a new trade base, and decided on Fort Victoria at the south end of Vancouver Island in 1843. Simpson to Pelly, 10 March 1842, Pelly to Foreign Office, 29 March 1842, PRO FO 5/388, BCARS GR 327, vol.4. And see Margaret Ormsby, "Introduction," in Hartwell Bowsfield (ed.), *Fort Victoria letters, 1846-1851* (Winnipeg: Hudson's Bay Record Society, 1979), pp.xi-xix.
221 Pletcher, *Diplomacy of annexation*, p.603.
222 Gallatin, *The Oregon question*, p.27
223 On the formation and articulation of such views see Pletcher, *Diplomacy of annexation*. 
"WHAT? YOU YOUNG YANKER-NOODLE, STRIKE YOUR OWN FATHER!"

Figure III:4 *Punch* magazine
the Hudson's Bay Company's trading districts by encouraging Americans to emigrate to the
to Simpson in October 1843: "...it would appear from the rush of emigration to this quarter,
that his words have produced their effect and there can be no doubt about the final success of
the plan, if the country remains open a few years longer.... An American population will
never willingly submit to British domination, and it would be ruinous and hopeless to
enforce obedience on a disaffected people."225 And Gallatin published some sobering letters
in the American National Intelligencer explaining the nature of the dispute and suggesting
that it did not merit war.226 Other American commentators described the Hudson's Bay
Company as a rapacious, violent monopoly - as an enemy of civilized living based on
permanent agricultural settlement, competitive markets, and individual liberty backed by
federal institutions. In short, Oregon was viewed in terms of American historical and
cultural distinctiveness. The region had a rhetorical place in the Union before it had United
States institutions.

Spirits also ran high in Britain. In the spring of 1845 the Times declared that "the
territory of Oregon will never be wrested from the British Crown, but by war", and
admonished the "ill regulated, overbearing, and aggressive spirit of the American
democracy."227 But Aberdeen saw the territorial issue in a more instrumental light, and took
advantage of Oregon's obscurity and distance in the public mind to secretly promote a press
campaign debasing the utility of the region and suggesting that territorial concession need
not imply a loss of national honour.228 "The real strength of public opinion is arrayed against
a belligerent policy", the Times (now under Aberdeen's thumb) tried to persuade its readers in

224 See ibid., pp.584-591, for a discussion of Calhoun.
225 Douglas to Simpson (private), 23 October 1843, PAM-HBCA, D.5/9, fol.119.
226 These letters are collected in The Oregon question.
227 London, Times, 27 March and 5 April 1845. On the role of the British periodical press in
the dispute see Richard S. Cramer, "British magazines and the Oregon question," Pacific
228 See Chamberlain, Aberdeen, pp.331-40.
January 1846. Other commentators and journalists supported Aberdeen's position. The *Edinburgh Review* described the Oregon Territory as an "unprofitable incumberence" and "unfit...by situation, soil, and climate, for profitable settlement." And the London *Examiner* called the region "a mere hunting ground." Public consternation at the United States cooled off, and Oregon was then represented as a commercial abstraction, a minor port of call in a global empire and unworthy of a costly war. By April 1846 the question of preserving British national honour hinged on little more than Britain's retention of Vancouver Island as an anchor in a buoyant Pacific trade and a British Empire based increasingly on free trade rather than protected markets and monopolies. John Pakenham, Britain's Ambassador to the United States, renewed negotiations in Washington and successfully defended the diplomatic position he had established a year before: that

In 1792, Vancouver...circumnavigated the island which now bears his name [and where, by 1843, the Hudson's Bay Company had a trade post]; and here we have...as complete a case of discovery, exploration, and settlement, as can well be presented, giving to Great Britain, in any arrangement that may be made with regard to the territory in dispute, the strongest possible claim to the exclusive possession of that island.

It was Britain's compliant Foreign Secretary who was most eager to prevent military conflict, and debasing Oregon in the press was an effective way to sway public opinion and sell compromise to his political opponents. The United States Congress signed the Oregon Treaty in the summer of 1846 mindful of the fact that Britain's Tory government was tottering and that its collapse would usher in politicians bent more on threatening war to protect national honour than on preserving peace - principally Lord Palmerston.

The Oregon Treaty established a geopolitical space that was fundamentally at odds with the way the region had been explored and developed by the fur trade. For the United States the Treaty confirmed what John Quincy Adams had in 1823 said was "pointed out by

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229 London *Times*, 3 January 1846.
232 Mr. Pakenham to Mr. Buchanan, 29 July 1845, enclosure 2, letter 28, "Correspondence relative to...the Oregon Territory", p.43.
the finger of nature": that the United States had a continental destiny and that British
influence in the Americas had natural limits.\textsuperscript{233} And the Treaty prompted Britain to establish
Vancouver Island as a colony under the proprietorship of the Hudson's Bay Company.

The 49th parallel cut the Hudson's Bay Company's vast Columbia Department in half,
heralded the decline of the fur trade, which had been grafted on to native territories and
extracted large profits, and called forth white laws and institutions that put Natives on
reserves and offered them a subservient place in new national and imperial projects.

But the Oregon Treaty was obviously more than an agreement that looked to the
future. It was a certain rationalisation of sixty years of spatial experience: an attempt to press
a range of geographical meanings onto a map that solidified who owned what and where.
The Oregon boundary dispute as a whole shows that distinctions between fact and fiction,
truth and error, are made rather than given. Between 1818 and 1846 Britain and the United
States constructed the Oregon Territory in a number of historically and culturally distinctive
ways. This region was a not an inert plane, or geographical given, over which a geopolitical
drama unfolded. It was actively fashioned through a concatenation of diplomatic arguments
about discovery and occupation, and by competing national outlooks. In the process the
work of explorers and traders, and the different relationships that they forged with Native
people, became encompassed by imperial discourses about sovereignty, and national
discourses about honour and destiny. At root, the Oregon boundary dispute, like the Nootka
Sound crisis, points to the geographical violence of imperialism: the creation and deployment
of representational practices through which Native land is appropriated, and the realm of
Native-white contact is abstracted away, to the point where territory actually becomes non-
native, competing Native claims to the soil are seen only dimly, if at all, and territory is
emptied of its prior significations and seen as an empty shell waiting development. "The
Oregon territory is a subject of curiosity for two reasons", a reviewer for \textit{The Gentleman's

\textsuperscript{233} Adams to Rush, 22 July 1823, Manning, \textit{Diplomatic correspondence}, II, Doc. 681, p.58.
*The Gentleman's Magazine* wrote in 1845. "The one, from its forming at present a point of dispute...as to the right of possession. Secondly, because it is said to be the only remaining portion of the globe where there lies an unoccupied territory, suitable to receive the emigration from populous countries".234

**Mythical localities**

With the border established, Britain planned to colonise Vancouver Island in order to offset, as the Colonial Office saw it, "the great danger...of allowing an ambitious Nation to pursue its own peculiar method of immigration and settlement with the avowed determination to annex the whole [Oregon] territory" - of allowing American settlers to move north from the Columbia River.235 The British Cabinet entertained a number of colonisation schemes, and the one it accepted - that of the Hudson's Bay Company - was based on a detailed knowledge of the northwest coast and an enterprising grasp of its commercial potential. But other schemes were presented, based on the abstract geographical impressions about the northwest coast that had been built up over the previous 50 years.236 By far the most far-fetched scheme was put forward in 1852 (three years after the Hudson's Bay Company had taken the colonial reins) by Theodore Cordua, a British speculator based in Hawaii. He wanted to divide the Island in 12 districts, named: England, Scotland, Ireland, North and South Germany, Holland, Belgium, Sweden, Poland, Hungary, New Helvitia, and France.237 While outrageous, Cordua's scheme captures what was at stake in the colonisation

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234 *The Gentleman's Magazine*, vol.XXIII, new series (March 1845), p.284. This reviewer was discussing John Dunn's *History of the Oregon Territory* (1944).
235 This quotation is from Henry Hawes (undersecretary at the Colonial Office) to Lord Aberdeen, 10 February 1846, PRO FO 5/459, fol.134.
236 Such schemes are referred to in "Papers relating to the colonization of Vancouver Island," in *Report of the Provincial Archives, department of the province of British Columbia...for 1913* (Victoria: King's Printer, 1914), v.49-84; and "Correspondence relative to the colonization of Vancouver's Island 1847-48, British parliamentary papers, vol.XLII (619) (London: House of Commons, 1848).
237 Theodore Cordua to Dugald McTavish, 24 June 1852, PAM-HBCA A.10/33, fol.275.
of Vancouver Island. The Colonial Office required that the Hudson's Bay Company, or any other colonising agent, consider the "welfare" of the Natives, but the nature of Native-white interaction or the location of Native villages and territories was not strictly an issue. Britain viewed Vancouver Island as territory over which British sovereignty was assumed, and aimed to *parcellise* an abstract cartographic space.

John Dunn gained many years of experience with Native people as a fur trader with the Hudson's Bay Company, but when he assessed the value of the Oregon Territory for a British and American audience in the 1840s, he stripped the landscape of its Native significations and described Vancouver Island as "a perfect network", a "labyrinth of bays, sounds, inlets, creeks, and harbours - promontories, islands, and land tongues, with...countless sinuosities of land and water": as a cartographic abstraction, a rationalised geographic space. Many British colonists came to the Island in the 1850s and 60s with a set of geographical impressions that had come out of Vancouver's survey and the Oregon dispute, viewing Britain's new territory as unoccupied (but for a few "savage tribes") and awaiting development. One such colonist, Charles Forbes, introduced his essay *Vancouver Island: Its Resources and Capabilities as a Colony* with this image:

> [W]ho will not recall, with delight, the early feelings and associations of his boyhood, when glancing at the chart, he sees, that under yonder rugged mountains like Nootka and Clayoquot, names well remembered, but over the reality of which, from the remoteness of the scene, a certain mystery seemed to hang, graphically described though the places were, by Cook and Vancouver. The romance and the mystery have now however alike given way to a hopeful reality, and the Emigrant sees before him in that mountain range, the rocky pillars and stony butresses of the land of his adoption - a land full of promise and hope.... [T]he field is still unoccupied, still open, calling for the labour of man, to regulate its wild luxuriance, and develop its latent wealth.

Vancouver, especially, had described the edges of colonial space in *graphic* detail, but he had also rendered the region both remote and mysterious precisely because of the

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geographical precision of his cartography (its sheer bias towards line over image). The area
behind Nootka and Clayoquot, and beyond the coastal mountains of the mainland (in the land
Vancouver named New Hanover and New Georgia), was a field of wild luxuriance, still
unoccupied, that was "calling for the labour of man."

Some British commentators complained about the austerity of such discursive
practices. In 1860, for instance, George Hills, the first Anglican Bishop of British Columbia,
moaned that explorers such as Vancouver had only "surrounded the country...with a
visionary romantic interest of no practical use." Yet he also acknowledged that these early
cartographic projects had an important influence on the way Native people were considered
from afar. "[S]o distant, wild, and difficult of access did [the interior of Vancouver Island
and the mainland]...appear to be", Hills continued, "that men habitually regarded it as only
suited for the last refuge of the Indian with such animals as delight in wild freedom and
desolation." Native people had been hemmed in by European cartography, as it were; in
mapping the coast, explorers such as Vancouver imputed a series of spatial distinctions:
between the domesticated outskirts of space (domesticated because they had come under the
cartographer's gaze), and the unmapped wilds of the interior (as untamed as the Indians);
between the dots on the map linking up the coastline, and the blank image of the interior as
an obstacle to progress. Or as Boelhower extrapolates such distinctions:

According to the [cartographic] line's culture of technics, cartographic blank space
can only stand as an obstacle to political and cultural consensus, to the epos of global
conquest. The projected contents of this space are familiar enough: the forest,
Indians, wild animals, the devil. 'Terra Incognita' the toponymic system calls it. As
cartographic tradition has it, these spaces, considered uninhabited, are also
uninhabitable."  

It was in such blank-mysterious-wild spaces that colonists placed the Indian and situated
their dreams of colonial lucre. "Regarding the interior [of Vancouver Island]...absurd notions

240 George Hills, "General statement of the Diocese of Columbia for 1860," Columbia
241 Ibid.
prevailed”, the British explorer-naturalist Robert Brown noted in 1868, "and for long the Colonists (in the face of all geographical analogy) flattered themselves that rich prairies would be found embossemed amid wooded mountains in that mystical interior." Colonists viewed the interior of the Island as a promethean challenge as well as an obstacle to progress. The act of simply "surrounding the country", as Hills put it, was enough to encourage development and settlement schemes based on little practical knowledge of the region and little regard for its aboriginal inhabitants.

Robert Brown was one of the first non-natives to bring "light geographical", as he put it, to the interior of Vancouver Island. He led the Vancouver Island Exploring Expedition in 1864, and wrote in his diary on his birthday in 1865 that he had achieved "colonial fame at 23" for doing so. He proclaimed that "a diligent naturalist does better when he visits a country after another because he has then a sort of frame-work to weave his labours around." Vancouver had provided that framework, but Brown also noted that "a country is not 'worked out' because so and so had been there." He was pointing to the fact that by the 1860s exploration was tied directly to colonial development; Brown was searching for new resources, new sources of profit, and possible settlement sites for an expanding colonial society.

Vancouver did not provide the images of Native people that colonists used to fill in his cartography. They were drawn from the fur trade and a much more general body of British assumptions and ideas about the North American Indian. But his cartography, and

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245 Robert Brown, "Diary," 23 March 1865, Robert Brown Collection, box 1, file 17.
247 Ibid.
the nexus of geographical abstraction I have been describing, did influence the way settlers and developers imagined the Indian. One British writer, D.G.F. Macdonald, warned prospective British colonists that "The wild man of British Columbia is as savage as the scenes which surround him, and in harmony with the freaks of nature." The new colonist, he suggested, "is waited for by the crafty, bloodthirsty and implacable savage". A.C. Anderson tried to refute such "misapprehensions", and the charge made by colonists and writers that fur traders were as uncouth as the Indians they traded with. Such views, he argued, stemmed from "the disappointment of over-sanguine hopes, [and] the exaggerated perception of minor difficulties". In the early 1860s one colonist suggested that there was "a touch of the Robinson Crusoe romance" in colonial life on Vancouver Island, but acknowledged that the land was not as bountiful as he had been led to believe. The southern end of Vancouver Island - the first area to be colonised - was strewn with rock and swamp, making farming difficult.

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Conclusion: Islands of Truth

British colonialism on Vancouver Island was not simply built on white settlement, the formation of a colonial state, and the creation of an Indian reserve system. 1849 was a colonial start superimposed on an imperial background. Colonialism proper was in some important respects presaged and legitimised by these late eighteenth and early nineteenth-century processes of geopolitical and cartographic representation. Vancouver Island was imagined and conceived as territory - as a British possession - before it was colonised in the 1850s. Politicians such as the Duke of Leeds, diplomats such as Gallatin and Huskisson, and George Vancouver and his officers, worked with discourses that rationalised and stripped down the contact process on the northwest coast and in the Cordillera, wrested territory away from Native people, and gradually turned Vancouver Island into a "mythical locality" of imperial desire and colonial opportunity. The northwest coast was not an inert geographical plane that was simply discovered, charted and eventually brought under the aegis of British colonial rule. It was made, re-made and encountered in a number of different capacities between 1778 and the 1840s.
Vancouver Island was imagined and fabricated as an object of imperial desire - as an imperial space - in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries before it was colonised in the 1850s. British colonialism on the Island in the second half of the nineteenth century was presaged and to a degree legitimised by these earlier Enlightenment, commercial and geopolitical processes of engagement. Yet in some basic respects the advent of formal colonialism marked a new beginning. In the 1850s and 60s Vancouver Island was refashioned as a colonial space. I hope to pursue these processes of colonial construction in a future study, but I want to end this dissertation by pointing to some of the main elements of this colonial apparatus.

The British moved into Native territories that had been owned and used for millennia, claimed title to land, and with a small colonial apparatus and English common law redistributed much prime Native space to white settlers. Colonialism worked through land laws and an Indian reserve system that cut into Native subsistence and trading territories and gradually pushed Native people onto the lower rungs of a white wage economy. The land laws were backed by a small colonial militia, a flotilla of British naval gunboats, and by Indian agents. This colonial apparatus was also supported by Protestant and Catholic missionaries, who moved to far-flung Native villages to impart the word of God, and, in time, established residential schools where Native children lived away from their parents, were taught English, and were encouraged to drop their own languages and ways. As significantly, European diseases - especially smallpox and measles - swept the coast between the 1850s and 1880s, devastating many Native groups.

In the colonial period a more direct and thoroughgoing set of connections between power and space emerged. Hudson's Bay Company officials, who had the colonial reins in the 1850s, were instructed by the Colonial Office to institute the ideas of
Edward Gibbon Wakefield: to settle the land in an orderly, systematic fashion and give colonists a proprietary interest" in the land. The southern end of Vancouver Island was surveyed in the early 1850s, and townsites were laid out - the first being Victoria, the Island's colonial capital. By the early 1860s Natives and whites lived side by side on the small patches of fertile land that southern Vancouver Island offered, and the colonial government instituted an Indian reserve system, denying Native people any proprietary interest in the land and allocating them tiny reserves amidst surveyed grids of white settlement. And explorers such as Robert Brown looked further afield for suitable tracts of agricultural land.

Colonisation was based on a mixture of sovereign and disciplinary power. When Native people made trouble in areas of white settlement, the colonial governor visited their villages in a gunboat and lectured them on their relationship with the Queen. These sovereign tactics of power were inherited from the fur trade, but were now authorised by the British imperial state and mediated by the rhetoric of British law. Such messages were often translated by Anglican missionaries, who, informally, acted as colonial servants, but who also considered themselves paternalists who would protect their Native "children" from an arrogant, dynamic, colonial society. This system of paternalism was extended by Indian agents, who placed Native groups under a rough system of surveillance (monitoring their actions and movements), and acted as intermediaries between Native groups and the colonial state.

Land surveys, settlement plans, and Indian reserves: these were not just ways of appropriating and taking Native land. They were also ways of distilling contact relationships between whites and Natives - of demarcating and separating histories and cultures on the ground: naming this space civilised and that space primitive; calling this townsite modern and that Indian reserve traditional. These were the exclusionary partitions of what Edward Said would call an "imaginative geography" of colonialism.
And these material and imaginative geographies of colonialism were marked by a new set of power relations between Natives and whites. The vast majority of land was claimed by the colonial state and settled by whites without the consent of Native people. The relations of mutual appropriation and accommodation that characterised the fur trade began to disappear, and Native people began to protest and actively resist the incursions of settlers and the colonial apparatus on their lands. Native groups petitioned the governor, asking for treaties, larger reserves, and compensation for the loss of their territories.

Power was landed in a new set of ways, and Vancouver Island's relationship to Britain shifted once more. Colonial governors such as James Douglas rationalised and localised a general body of colonial ideas and practices. The Wakefield system of colonial development had to be adapted to Vancouver Island's rocky and swampy terrain. Mechanical technologies and industrial techniques introduced from Britain and the United States also had to be adapted to a specific set of circumstances. And because it took up to four months for a colonial dispatch to get from Victoria to London, Britain's Colonial Secretaries placed a great emphasis on colonial governorship - on the need to improvise with a general set of colonial directives. In short, some of the formal trappings of nineteenth-century modernity and colonialism were ushered into Vancouver Island, but they were given a local cast.
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Figure II:2. Adapted from: Philip Drucker, Northern and central Nootkan tribes; Yvonne Marshall, "Political history of the Nuu-chah-nulth".

Figure II:3. Adapted from: Clayoquot Sound - Arcas Associates, "Patterns of settlement of the Ahousaht (Kelsemaht) and Clayoquot bands"; Ucluelet and Barkley Sound - Richard Inglis and James Haggarty, "Pacific Rim National Park".

Figure II:4. Adapted from: Richard Inglis and James Haggarty, "Pacific Rim National Park".

Figure II:5. My interpretation.

Figure III:1. William Holland. Billy and Harry fishing for whales. London, 1790.

Figure III:2a. John Warner, A chart showing part of the coast of n.w. America with the tracks of his majesty's sloop Discovery and the armed tender Chatham commanded by George Vancouver..., in George Vancouver, Voyage of discovery to the North Pacific Ocean.... 1798, plate 5.

Figure III:2b. S.I. Neale, A chart showing part of the coast of n.w. America with the tracks of his majesty's sloop Discovery and the armed tender Chatham commanded by George Vancouver..., from charts by G. Vancouver and J. Baker, in George Vancouver, A voyage of discovery to the North Pacific Ocean.... New edition, with corrections,1801, plate 5.

Figure III:3. A map of America, between latitudes 10 and 70 north, and longitudes 80 and 150 west, exhibiting the principal trading stations of the North West Company, in [Simon McGillivray], Notice respecting the boundary....

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