STOLEN IDENTITY:
DEFINING 'AIHUE FROM A
HAWAIIAN PERSPECTIVE

A THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE GRADUATE DIVISION OF THE
UNIVERSITY OF HAWAI‘I IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT
OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF

MASTER OF ARTS

IN

PACIFIC ISLANDS STUDIES

DECEMBER 2003

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter 1: Introduction ........................................................................................ 1

Chapter 2: Society, Concepts of Ownership and 'Aihue .................................. 13
  Economic Life on the Ahupua'a ................................................................. 16
  Ownership among Maka'a'inana .............................................................. 20
  Ownership among Ali'i - Kapu and Mana ................................................ 28
  Defining 'Aihue ......................................................................................... 32
  Attitudes toward 'Aihue ........................................................................... 39
  Gods and Priests ...................................................................................... 42

Chapter 3: Concepts of 'Aihue in Traditional Times .................................... 47
  'Aihue in Polynesia .................................................................................. 47
  'Aihue in Hawai'i .................................................................................... 50
    Story of Iwa .......................................................................................... 51
    Story of Puapulenalena ....................................................................... 57
    The Rat is Caught Raiding the Nest ..................................................... 59
  The Art of 'Aihue .................................................................................... 63
    The Art of 'Aihue: A Contemporary Example ..................................... 65

Chapter 4: Concepts of 'Aihue after Western Contact ............................... 69
  What the Early Accounts Really Say ...................................................... 71
  Theft or Innocent Taking? ..................................................................... 73
  Two Major Theft Events ....................................................................... 78
  Honua'ula and the Massacre at Olowalu ............................................. 83
  Kamehameha and Thievery .................................................................. 85

Chapter 5: Conclusion .................................................................................... 94

Selected Bibliography ...................................................................................... 100
CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

During one of my earliest teaching experiences at the college level, a longtime Hawaiian activist "Brada" who had seen all and done all, had protested. been arrested, testified and occupied, enrolled as a student in my beginning Hawaiian language class. Halfway through the semester as we were reviewing the new vocabulary list, the students were introduced to the word 'aihue, meaning to steal. The Brada, as self appointed class sage announced with a great degree of pride, "In the old days, stealing was one occupation, one art." There was silence. Just silence. What could we say? Here we were. It was 1991 only a few years since the governor proclaimed 1987 "The Year of the Hawaiian". We were just two years away from the one hundredth year anniversary of the overthrow of the Hawaiian Nation. Finally, at that point in our history, after generations of shame, disintegration of cultural pride and knowledge, and loss of identity as Hawaiians, finally after all of that time, we could stand up as products of the cultural renaissance and declare proudly "We are Hawaiians. We are somebody." And so, in that instant following the Brada's proclamation, red lights flashed, buzzers went off in my head because something was just not right. It didn't feel right to celebrate the fact that some of our people were thieves. What was I supposed to do with this information? It didn't instill in me the same feeling of pride as when I saw the sailing canoe Hokule'a land at Kualoa after its journey from Tahiti, proving that Hawaiians were great seafarers who intentionally and purposely navigated their way throughout
Polynesia, debunking the theory that our ancestors drifted here on a fluke. Was I supposed to feel as proud as my Brada felt because our ancestors were great thieves? My thirteen years of Catholic school education were not helping to convince me either. Yet, here was this Brada who had seen it all, who was part of the early days of resistance, revolution and reawakening, who was obviously as proHawaiian as could be, albeit one who existed on the fringe of society, completely rocking my world. There was no resolution in my mind. So, I let it go. Brushed it off.

Years later, while in graduate school, I came across He Ka'ao no 'Iwa, A Story Concerning 'Iwa (Elbert 1982). This story pertained to a celebrated culture hero whose claim to fame was none other than 'aihue, thievery. I marveled at his abilities in stealing things by using his wits. His was truly an art form. At that moment, the Brada's words came back to me. He was right. Stealing was an occupation and an art. 'Aihue was a contest, a challenge and it seemed to be considered an honorable profession. The culture hero 'Iwa was known, and is still known to Hawaiians today as the greatest thief of his day. This kind of 'aihue as portrayed in the exploits of 'Iwa was accepted by generations of Hawaiians. Thieves like 'Iwa were employed by chief and commoner alike. The names of great thieves like 'Iwa, Puapualenalena and others are celebrated until this very day. Yet, despite the fact that those thieves are celebrated, there also exist a great number of proverbs which reflect society's disdain for thievery. Thus, the notion of 'aihue is complex. It can be acceptable or unacceptable depending on
certain circumstances. I wanted to delve deeper into those circumstances. That is how my interest in 'aihue began and how I chose to write a thesis about it. My research on 'aihue is presented in three parts: 1) Society, Concepts of Ownership and Defining 'Aihue; 2) 'Aihue in Precontact Times; and 3) 'Aihue at Contact.

In order to begin a discussion on thievery, the reader needs to understand the context in which these acts took place. In Chapter 2, I will describe precontact Hawaiian society in terms of social classes, landscape and community, economics of exchange and concepts of ownership. Because perceptions of 'aihue differed depending on who stole from whom, it is especially important to describe differences between ali'i and maka'ainana and the kapu governing them. We will see that stealing from a chief governed by kapu and imbued with mana from the gods was a more serious infraction than stealing from a mere commoner.

This section will be followed by a discussion of 'aihue - who they were, what they stole, possible motivations for stealing and how they were viewed by society. This section will detail specific terms describing different kinds of thievery, poetical sayings and proverbs relating to thieves and thefts and, traditional metaphors representing thieves. These words and sayings serve as clues as to how Hawaiians of certain time periods viewed 'aihue as well as other forms of taking including robbery, taking by way of chiefly privilege or taking on the run. This chapter will set a foundation for defining what 'aihue was and what it was not.
The mo'olelo, the classical literature of old discussed in Chapter 3 will uncover attitudes concerning 'aihue in the period prior to Kamehameha. I will discuss mo'olelo concerning 'aihue, and examine the cultural paradigms of 'aihue, what it entailed, how it was viewed in those specific time periods as captured in our mo'olelo. These stories celebrated our greatest thieves, their skill, ingenuity, trickery and cunning. These 'aihue epitomized the art of thievery. I will explain the reasons why these 'aihue were celebrated and remembered while other thieves lived on in tradition as examples of how not to act. I will also provide examples of thieves who tried stealing but were eventually caught, proving that success as a great 'aihue depended on one's ability to get away with it. These thieves who were unsuccessful were unlike the celebrated thieves in motivation because they stole out of selfishness and greed. Examples of stealing in Polynesian literature may also help to illuminate attitudes toward thievery showing that while it was generally considered a nuisance, according to tradition, the existence of some objects of cultural significance are attributed to thievery. My goal in this chapter is to understand why some thieves were portrayed and perceived in a positive light while others were not.

In Chapter 4, I will discuss thievery at the time of contact and the absence of artfulness in thievery, that which required skill as a trickster, cunning and smarts. When I first began researching the primary accounts of Captain Cook and Clerke and their crews as well as subsequent histories based on these accounts, I was bothered by constant references to Hawaiians as thieves. I
immediately became defensive, searching for ways to prove that although indeed Hawaiians of that initial period seemed to be helping themselves to an array of items from the foreign ships, they were not stealing according to the Hawaiian worldview. In searching for ways to defend my position, to my surprise, I uncovered comments by early explorers on Hawaiian honesty, on Hawaiians taking innocently rather than with deception, on admissions by the haole sailors that the items taken were trivial and of little value, on stolen items often being easily recovered and on the clashing of the two worlds in regards to differing concepts of property ownership. These entries help to support my theory that initially, Hawaiians were not stealing at all. This was not ‘aihue. Rather they seemed to be taking what was meant to be taken. They took things that were not under kapu but seemingly to them, free for the taking. These initial takings had more to do with differing conceptions of property ownership than stealing. If the items left about were of such value to the haole, then why were they left out in the open in the first place? I will show that during these initial encounters, Hawaiians were neither stealing in the Hawaiian sense (‘aihue) nor in the haole sense.

Later however, as relations progressed, things changed. Stealing in the Western sense of the word became rampant. It was sometimes blatant yet at other times deceptive, cunning and requiring all the skills that a great ‘aihue possessed. I will examine and contextualize possible reasons for the increased number of thefts and violence during this period, as well as two separate but
significant historical events involving thefts: The death of Captain James Cook and the incident at Honua’ula leading to the bloody massacre at Olowalu. After this point in history, great and celebrated thieves disappeared. Hawaiians took on the new label that can be found in countless modern Hawaiian history books available. Gone were the days of glory for the old ‘aihue. The artfulness of ‘aihue was denigrated to something sinister and criminal. This section of the paper will end with a discussion on the role that Kamehameha played in changing the attitudes of his people with regards to ‘aihue. (By this time, the word ‘aihue itself was used to refer to the taking of something in any way, shape or form, with cunning and deception or simply by grabbing and running.) Kamehameha created laws specifically prohibiting plundering from ships in any form and, taught his people by decree what stealing was and that it was wrong. Kamehameha realized the political value of safeguarding and protecting the haole from theft when other chiefs of his time did not. Many proverbs reflect his influence. In this chapter, I will show that at contact, Hawaiians were not stealing but that after a time, stealing became rampant. In most modern histories detailing this period, the authors simply label Hawaiians as thieves without contextualizing the events and the reasons behind the increased thievery. If Hawaiians were indeed stealing simply for the objects, I do not have a problem saying so. The conclusions I have drawn regarding the possible reasons for theft during the early period of contact are not an attempt at justifying stealing. Rather, they are an attempt at representing the Hawaiian side of the story.
As for the literature reviewed in this thesis, a variety of Hawaiian and non-Hawaiian sources have been consulted. Of great significance are the works of nineteenth century Hawaiian historians David Malo, John Papa II, and Samuel Kamakau. Their writings shed light on the society of old, concepts of property ownership and laws governing chiefs and commoners as well as any attitudes concerning the act of ‘aihue.

David Malo wrote an invaluable work entitled *Ka Mooolelo Hawaii*, also known by its translated title, *Hawaiian Antiquities*. Malo's work is important in that it illuminates Hawaiian world view, practices, customs and how traditional society functioned. The only criticism is that his bias as a Christian convert is ever present in his writings. At times, he tends to sermonize and pass judgment on traditional customs or practices, condemning them as wrong. While this is understandable given his conversion, and the fact that his missionary teachers convinced him of it, it makes readers question the validity of his statements. For example, with regard to *kapu*, he writes that those who violated it were burned, strangled or stoned to death and that *kapu* of the chiefs "oppressed the whole people" (1951, 57). While the *kapu* system maintained the sacred status of chiefs and while admittedly the threat of death hovered over the common man who broke chiefly *kapu*, to say that *kapu* of the chiefs "oppressed the whole people" seems influenced by missionary criticisms not Hawaiian ones. Despite his religious bias, Malo's work still has much value but must be read with the
understanding that he was heavily influenced by Christian teachings. Born in 1795, he was the oldest of the three well known Hawaiian scholars of his period.

John Papa Ii was another influential writer of the same period. He was born in 1800. His writings were originally published as a series in the Hawaiian language newspaper Ka Nupepa Kuokoa and later published as Fragments of Hawaiian History (1959). His work is significant because of his position as a personal, household attendant of Liholiho, also known as Kamehameha II. Ii provides readers with a glimpse into what court life was like. His writings also reflect the life of one who lived under strict kapu, having lived in the presence of the chiefs. Ii himself escaped death twice while at court: once for almost allowing the cover of the chief’s spittoon to fall to the ground, another time for coughing when a serious kapu had been imposed which restricted noise of any kind. Like Malo, Ii experienced first hand the conquests of Kamehameha, the death of many chiefs, the abolition of the kapu system, the arrival and institution of a new religious order and the profound changes that society and government would encounter. Ii wrote from personal experience. As he studied under missionary Hiram Bingham, his Christian bias is similar to Malo’s.

The last Hawaiian scholar of that period, whose works are monumental in the canon of Hawaiian history is Samuel Mānaiaikalani Kamakau. Born in 1815, Kamakau is known for collecting information from native informants of his day and compiling a comprehensive history of the Hawaiian people from the days of ‘Umi until Kauikeauli, Kamehameha III. His most influential works, Ruling
Chiefs of Hawaii, Ka Po‘e Kahiko: The People of Old and Na Hana a Ka Po‘e Kahiko: The Works of the People of Old were all originally published as articles or running serials in the Hawaiian language newspapers Ke Au Okoa and Ka Nupepa Kuokoa from the 1840s through the 1860s. In recent years they have been compiled into Hawaiian language texts, Ke Kumu Aupuni and Ke Aupuni Mō‘i. Like Malo and Ii, Kamakau was also a Christian who at times interjects personal opinions into his writings. Kamakau was greatly influenced by the Kamehameha era. In retelling the events of many generations prior, Kamakau describes them like those of Kamehameha’s time, as if that was the way things always were. His references to ‘Umi in particular could pass for descriptions of Kamehameha himself who ruled eight generations after. Kamakau describes ‘Umi as a good chief who took care of the old man, the old woman, and the fatherless and who prohibited murder and thievery in his reign (1992, 19). No doubt that ‘Umi was a beloved chief; however, Kamakau’s description of him sounds suspiciously like Kamehameha. More evidence on the influence Kamehameha had on Kamakau’s writings will be presented in Chapter 4.

Put together, these writings of all three Hawaiian scholars are most valuable in understanding traditional society and its many parts. In my research, I compared the English translations with the Hawaiian texts in order to get a better sense of the original intent of the author.

In addition to those major Hawaiian writers of the nineteenth century, much of my research is based on the work of modern scholar Mary Kawena
Pukui. Among her many contributions, *The Polynesian Family System in Ka-u, Hawai‘i* which she co-authored with E.S. Craighill Handy proves to be a valuable insight into daily life, relationships and customs and rituals of late nineteenth and early twentieth century Hawaiians in the close knit, familial community of Ka‘ū. Another significant work referenced in this paper is ‘Olelo No‘eau: *Hawaiian Proverbs and Poetical Sayings*, a collection of sayings reflecting Hawaiian attitudes over the span of many decades. These sayings are often times accompanied by stories recollecting the specific instance in which the saying itself originated, most important when trying to date the material as evidence of certain attitudes which prevailed during certain periods. Unfortunately however, not all proverbs are dated, leaving one to speculate on the origin of the attitude reflected.

For sources on mo‘olelo, or traditional Hawaiian literature, I consulted Fornander’s *Collection of Hawaiian Antiquities and Folk-Lore*. Because Fornander’s renditions are bare boned, really just outlines of bigger stories, I needed to look for full versions printed elsewhere. The story of ‘Iwa came from the Hawaiian newspaper *Ka Hōkū o Hawai‘i* while another version of Puapualenalena was researched in *The Legends and Myths of Hawai‘i* by Hawai‘i’s last king, David Kalākaua. Other traditional stories come from *He māu Ka‘ao Hawai‘i* by Pukui and Green. These mo‘olelo hold great importance as they illuminate the beliefs, values, customs and lifestyle of past generations.

Finally, sources written by non Hawaiians were used to piece together the entire puzzle. The observations recorded in the journals of early explorers...
present on the voyages of Captain James Cook (in Beaglehole 1967, Cook and King 1784,) as well as on the voyages of Vancouver (1801) and Kotzebue (1821, 1830) were enlightening as were the records of passing merchants and traders to Hawai‘i (Shaler 1808). Other accounts by haole residents John Whitman (1813-1815) and Archibald Campbell (1806-1812) provide insight into the early historical period. Missionary records were also important in getting a sense of ownership and stealing. Literature cited here included but was not limited to The Diary of Lucy Thurston: Pioneer Missionary, Oliver Pomeroy Emerson’s Pioneer Days in Hawaii, and Honolulu: Sketches of Life in the Hawaiian Islands from 1828-1861 by Laura Fish Judd. All were affiliated with the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions. Perhaps the most significant journal however, is that of Reverend William Ellis who wrote A Narrative Tour of Hawai‘i on his visits to these islands in 1822 and 1823. Ellis was not an American missionary but came from the London Missionary Society. Thus his account is more palatable than the writings of Hiram Bingham and others who characterize Hawaiians as naked savages and vile heathens. Ellis was, for the most part, nonjudgmental of Hawaiian society, cultural practices and traditions although the same cannot be said for his characterizations of our Polynesian cousins, the Tahitians.

By using both Hawaiian and non Hawaiian sources, I hope to shed some light on the many facets of stealing and how at times it was perceived positively, while at other times negatively. In this paper, we will meet thieves in their time
of grandeur, celebrated for their successes in ‘aihue. We will meet thieves who
were not as skilled, who were successful up to a certain point, then in the end,
were killed. We will see Hawaiians being accused of thievery when they were
not stealing in either the Western or Hawaiian sense of the word. We will see
Hawaiians commit blatant outright theft and at other times, we will see them
revert to the tradition of ‘aihue with all its cunning and planned trickery. We will
see when and how perceptions of ‘aihue changed and come to understand what
‘aihue was and what it was not. We will be able to celebrate ‘aihue for what it was,
to understand what it meant to own something in the Hawaiian sense, and to
debunk the myth of Hawaiians as common thieves by contextualizing various
historical events which included thefts of one kind or another. I will argue that
‘aihue was viewed by Hawaiians as both an honorable profession and as a
nuisance depending on the circumstances. I will discuss concepts of ownership
showing that contrary to popular belief, ordinary commoners understood
property ownership. However, I will explain how Hawaiian views differed from
Western views because of the importance of generosity and the obligation to
share in Hawaiian society.

Through this research, I hope to shed some light on Hawaiian perceptions
of ownership, and stealing in its varied contexts. The knowledge gained from
this study of ‘aihue can be added to the growing number of works published by
modern Hawaiian scholars, which help us understand who we are as a people
and help in reclaiming and reshaping our identities as Hawaiians.
CHAPTER 2. SOCIETY, CONCEPTS OF OWNERSHIP AND ‘AIHUE

In order to understand who ‘aihue were and their motivation to ‘aihue, one needs to first understand the structure of the world in which they lived. The high priest Pa’ao was responsible for establishing the chiefly and priestly classes upon which classical Hawaiian society was based (Malo 1951, 6). What follows is a description of post-Pa’ao Hawaiian society and the roles that each group played within it.

Hawaiian society was made up of three classes of people: ali‘i, chiefs; kahuna, priests; and makaʻainana, common people. Within the ali‘i and kahuna classes themselves, further distinctions of rank could be made depending on pedigree. The three classes formed the basic structure of society. Everyone knew their place, their function in society and their responsibilities.

Above the classes of men were the akua, the gods. Directly beneath them were ali‘i nui or high ranking chiefs who were seen as living, breathing akua on earth. Another term for paramount chief is mōi. However, I choose not to use the term here as mōi is usually regarded as supreme ruler over all the islands, Kamehameha being the first, who was responsible for consolidating all the islands under a single rule and Lili‘uokalani the last. Instead I use the term ali‘i as a more general classification of all chiefs. Ali‘i were considered kapu, meaning they were sacred, thus set apart from the masses. They did not live amongst their people, but lived in their own compounds, surrounded by family members of higher, equal or lesser rank. Because of their high kapu, their close relations to
the *akua*, and the amount of *mana*, divine power and authority they possessed, *aliʻi nui* were feared by *makaʻainana*. As Hawaiian scholar Lilikālā Kameʻeleihiwa has written, "A *makaʻainana* near an *Aliʻi nui* was constantly surrounded by the threat of death" (1992, 37). The *kapu* that chiefs possessed separated the sanctified from the profane, thus if *makaʻainana* who were unsanctified, came into contact with the chief or anything of the chief's person, death was certain. This does not mean that the people were necessarily oppressed or that they did not love their *aliʻi*. On the contrary, if the *aliʻi nui* was *pono*, just and kind, that *aliʻi* was loved and respected for he fulfilled his duty in caring for the people and the land. But because *aliʻi nui* were imbued with so much *mana*, another name for an *aliʻi nui* was *Ka Lani* - the heavens or heavenly one referring to his close relationship and proximity to the gods. They were revered with awe, respect and fear. Since the threat of death loomed for those who broke *kapu* intentionally or otherwise, those in the presence of an *aliʻi nui* needed to be very cautious and fully aware of the *kapu* specific to that high chief.

Below the *aliʻi nui* but still within the chiefly class were several gradations of chiefs. The *aliʻi aimoku*, literally "chief who eats the district" was appointed by the *aliʻi nui* to rule over the designated district. Below this chief was the *aliʻi ai ahupuaʻa*, "chief who eats ahupuaʻa" who managed lesser chiefs called *konohiki* beneath him. These *konohiki* managed certain parcels of land and functioned as intermediaries between the high chiefs and commoners. Being an *aliʻi* meant having *kuleana*, both privilege and responsibility. Although *aliʻi* were afforded the
best of everything the world had to offer, the foremost responsibility of an ali'i pono, a good and proper chief, was to take care of his or her people and assure the fruitfulness of the land by keeping the akua appeased. One's status as an ali'i was determined by genealogy. After the kahuna nui, the high priest Pa'ao brought Pili to Hawai'i from Kahiki (from lands beyond the horizon) to establish a chiefly line, ranking was determined by heredity. Various matings produced different degrees of chiefs, the highest being the n'auipi'o (Kamakau 1964, 4). Like the ali'i class, status as a kahuna was also determined by bloodline. According to Kamakau, the priesthood was part of the chiefly class (1964, 7). The role of the ever watchful kahuna nui was to instruct ali'i nui on necessary rites, sacrifices and appeasements necessary as well as to provide political strategy. Lesser kahuna, like lesser chiefs were closer and more accessible to the populace. They served in their religious capacity as intermediaries between the common people and the gods. There existed many different orders of kahuna ranging from the medical doctor to the canoe building expert, the prophet to experts in war. The maka'ainana were the producers of foods and goods. They worked the land by farming and fishing. Although these works were not exclusively done by commoners, chiefs taking occasional part in fishing and farming, the maka'ainana indeed were the major food producers in ancient society. The maka'ainana depended on those closer to the gods to protect them and to intercede on their behalf in times of trouble so that the land and sea continued to prosper and all remained pono or right in the world. These classes of gods and men formed the
structure of the society in which Hawaiians lived since the institution of the priestly and chiefly classes and of the kapu system by Pa‘ao. After the kapu system was abolished in 1819 by Liholiho at the death of his father Kamehameha, the lines between the classes of chiefs, priests and commoners began to blur.

**Economic Life on the Ahupua‘a**

The physical landscape was made up of ahupua‘a, large tracts of land running ma ʻuka to ma ʻkai, from the mountains to the sea, whose boundaries for the most part were determined by the natural lay of the land. Hawaiians lived in communities of ʻohana, kin, where houses used for different purposes were clustered together, forming the kauhale. The various kauhale of the ʻohana were located in different parts of the ahupua‘a. Economic life in the community centered on the regular exchange of goods between ʻohana from the uplands and ʻohana living near the shore. Those in the uplands provided the taro, other starchy foods, medicinal herbs and bark cloth, while those near the sea provided the fish, salt and other ocean foods. This exchange of resources constituted a regular system of informal, reciprocal movement of goods. Handy and Pukui insist that this type of exchange was not in barter (1976, 5). Although to barter means to exchange goods and services without the use of money, the term was probably rejected by the writers as too impersonal and not reflective of a more amicable and personal exchange between families they wished to portray.
Hawaiian Historian Samuel M. Kamakau describes Hawaiians as a people who gave freely of food and clothing, who were hospitable to passersby offering meals and a place to stay all without expecting compensation. He goes on to say that Hawaiians were “ashamed of giving things away for the sake of gain (1911, 156-7).” Further, he wrote of peddlers with spite and contempt saying that peddling was a “slanderous occupation” and that “a peddler was like a defiled person, kanaka haumia, in ancient times (1976, 123).”

Generosity was a trait most admired in Hawaiian society. Kame’eleihiwa wrote about the conflict between Hawaiian generosity and capitalism and that Hawaiians share their wealth as “there is nothing more uncivilized to the Hawaiian mind than stinginess” and moreover, that all classes of society “felt a duty to share” as “generosity was and still is, vital to the Hawaiian sense of humanity” (1992, 178). Furthermore, generosity was important in Hawaiian society as it was the basis for forming and maintaining social and political relationships within the community.

The customary exchange among ‘ohana living on ahupua’a has been described as “voluntary (though decidedly obligatory) giving” (Handy and Pukui 1976, 5-6). Since this kind of giving was voluntary, it was rude to expect something in return. However, not receiving something in return was in a way, a breach of an unspoken agreement. Everyone knew that reciprocity was the norm. If however, someone was not able to reciprocate because of lack of goods or there had been no catch or harvest that day, the other party understood and
knew that the gift would be repaid at a later date, although this was never spoken. If the party who failed to reciprocate came through at a later date, that was fine. If they did not, the other party would feel slighted and bothered but would not complain outright.

The rules of conduct for exchange were often referred to in traditional stories. One example is given in Pukui and Green’s *Folktales of Hawai‘i* in the story of *Kākaʻōhi‘aakalaka* (The ‘ōhi‘a tree of Laka stands). Kauakuahine (The Kuahine rain) who lived in the uplands often visited her brother and his wife who lived near the shore. On each trip she took them kalo and returned with fish for her family. Kūkaʻōhi‘aakalaka told his wife to give their sister fish whenever she came by. After a time, the sister in-law became greedy and started hiding the dried fish under her sleeping mats. When Kauakuahine brought her goods from the uplands, her sister in-law would say that all they had was salt. Yet, she would take the gift of kalo from Kauakuahine for herself and her husband to eat. After leaving there empty handed Kauakuahine would go to the shore for some limu, seaweed. As she began her journey home, she started to think that her traveling all the way down to the shore just for limu was a waste of time and although she had strong suspicions that her sister in-law was deceiving her, she could not accuse her. On returning home, the story goes that she felt pity for her husband and children so she slapped them all and turned them into rats. She herself turned into a spring. Her brother Kūkaʻōhi‘aakalaka found out through divine means that his wife had been hoarding the fish and not sharing, causing the
demise of his sister and her family. He returned home and questioned her. She
denied it but upon finding rows and rows of fish piling up in many spots under
the mats, Kūkaʻōhiʻaakalaka killed her. He then ventured to his sister’s home in
the mountains. There he saw his sister’s children and husband scampering
around as rats. He also saw his sister in the shape of the spring. Feeling aloha,
love and pity, he dove into the water and changed into an ʻōhiʻa tree which is said
to bear only two flowers until this very day, the flowers representative of he and
his sister (1995, 111).

What this story teaches its listeners are the rules of exchange and the
consequences of greed. One should haʻawi wale, give freely without reservation
because it is the right thing to do. One should not be pil, or stingy. In most other
stories pertaining to greed, in the end, the stingy, greedy or selfish suffer a
terrible fate. As for the husband and children being turned into rats, this may
symbolize that they were forced to become thieves, rats being a metaphor for
those who stole food. Because they were without fish due to the stinginess of
Kūkaʻōhiʻaakalaka’s wife, they were reduced to pilfering.

With a basic understanding of how life functioned within the extended
family community, and how sharing and generosity were valued as an integral
part of economic life, we can now turn to a discussion of concepts of ownership.
Ownership among Maka‘ainana

On the surface it may seem that Hawaiians of old did not possess notions of private property ownership. After all, the words “to own” are absent from Hawaiian lexicon, save the Hawaiianized English word ‘ona. Yet, that argument will not go far since the Hawaiian language contains words for yours, mine, his/hers and all other personal possessives. Indeed, there is a tendency among modern Hawaiians to believe that since maka‘ainana lived in communities of extended families in which goods were exchanged freely amongst them, all property was communally shared as well. However, there are distinctions to be made between conceptions of common property and private property both of which maka‘ainana understood and possessed.

Common property was that which all members of the community were entitled to including certain use rights such as gathering wild plants of the mountains and collecting foods of the shore. Common property also extended to the fish one helped pull in or the kalo one helped to plant and harvest. If one helped in the harvesting, one was entitled to a share. Certain events such as large feasts and the gathering of tributes for the mukahiki festival required families from ma‘uka and ma‘kai to pool their resources together, in the spirit of laulima (many hands), to work together for a common purpose. Everyone who shared in the work, shared in the profits thus, when asked to help, it was advantageous to do so because all who helped benefited. E.S. Craighill Handy and Elizabeth Green Handy wrote that the fish traps used in ponds were considered property
of the community (1978, 263). In addition, the right to fish from the pond was also shared among those who had an interest in it, presumably those who helped build it, or those who lived in the area or belonged to that certain *ahupua'a*. Private property included everyday utilitarian objects, food, small plots and gardens cultivated by the immediate *'ohana* and the like. The following examples further illustrate concepts of private ownership among *maka'āinana*.

A certain story is told about a woman of Kahuku, O'ahu who, after beating *kapa* one day, set her *kua*, or tapa beating log in the river to prevent it from cracking. When she returned, the *kua* was gone. The woman, thinking that it had been stolen, set out to find it. When it was not recovered in the immediate vicinity, she journeyed around the island in search of it. Upon arriving at Waipahu, she heard the sound of her favorite *kua* resonating in the distance. When she reached the house, she tried to claim the *kua* as hers but the new owners refused to give it up. In order to prove that she was the rightful owner, the woman asked the Waipahuans to accompany her back to Kahuku, whereupon she set a *pī'ōlu*, a ti leaf bundle adrift which later ended up in the Waipahu stream. Only after ownership was proven was the *kua* recognized as the property of the Kahuku woman (Sterling and Summers 1978, 149). The woman certainly thought of the *kua* as her personal property. When she and the other women went to the house for beating *tapa*, it is more than likely that she sat at her *kua* and the other women at theirs. So, perhaps ownership for *maka'āinana* was defined by usage. It was understood that the *kua* belonged to
that specific individual and if one other than immediate 'ohana wished to use it, they must first ask permission from that woman.

Another example of private property was clothing which could be identified as belonging to a specific person since each piece had its own distinctive marking or decorative feature (Charlot 1991, 136). Everyone knew who that particular article of clothing belonged to because of its specific detail. Likewise, patterns and designs represented 'aumakua, ancestral gods that were specific to certain families. Therefore, people were able to recognize their own property whether an implement, animal, or article of clothing. This illustrates some degree of personal ownership or, of the object being associated with a particular individual.

One might argue that in the case of clothing, ownership was more fluid since clothing could be shared between close family members of the same sex. I suspect that although clothes could be shared, it did not occur frequently because of the belief that clothes being so close to the body contained the mana of the wearer. The closer the garment, the more mana (Pukui, Haertig and Lee 1972, 91). Although Hawaiians had more restrictions guiding the sharing of clothes, the clothes still belonged to the original wearer/owner.

Upon the arrival of Europeans, Linnekin wrote, “Hawaiian men and women both chiefly and commoner, owned movable property - personal items reserved for their own use, which they could distribute as they wished” (1990, 55). Furthermore, when Hawaiians gambled on games and sports, they wagered
their own personal possessions. They definitely understood the meaning of private property ownership but because generosity and sharing played in to these concepts of ownership, they were perceived as more fluid, somehow not as rigid as the Western model. E.S. Craighill Handy and Mary Kawena Pukui have described mid-nineteenth century Hawaiians as possessing “little understanding of the meaning of private ownership” but that instead, they had a “strong sense of family rights and responsibilities” (1976, 17). While I agree with the latter, the argument can be made that Hawaiians did indeed possess an understanding of private ownership. The difference however, between Hawaiian concepts of ownership and Western concepts of ownership was that by custom, Hawaiians may have been more obligated to share. This is why the assumption that Hawaiians did not own things privately exists. The obligation Hawaiians felt toward sharing property with those of the community so as not to seem stingy did not necessarily mean that all property was communal. Close relatives and those regarded as belonging to the household could probably use things freely, while others in the community needed to ask permission first. This point is illustrated in Fay Calkins’ memoir My Samoan Chief. The situation in Samoa is applicable to traditional times in Hawai‘i because Hawaiian communities were also composed of relatives, both of the immediate and extended families. Calkins married a Samoan chief and later left the United States and returned with him to settle in his homeland. She wrote of the culture shock she experienced, especially regarding concepts of ownership. When her husband told her that no one in
Samoa owned anything, but that they only "used" things, she was perplexed. When they built their house and found food, clothes, tools, household goods and furnishings gone, she wrote of those missing items that "apparently they were being used" (1975, 95). The people who took those things were part of the extended family. Obviously they thought they had a right to use the things in the possession of their kin, so they did not ask permission. This might suggest that all property is held in common by the community but it holds true only amongst close family members.

Thus, the misconception that all property was shared communally may come from the fact that Hawaiians were obligated to share since generosity was perceived as good and stinginess bad. When missionary William Ellis traveled the islands in 1822-1823 he observed that ownership was expressed as all-inclusive. When he asked who a certain object belonged to, others would give the owner’s name. But when he inquired of the owner himself, he would say of the object, “It is yours and mine” (1963, 274). Ellis regarded this as a courtesy and a “desire to please.”

In the same way, if a family member living near the shore made his way to a kauhale in the uplands, he was invited by its inhabitants into ka hale o kakou, the house of us /our house, the visitor included as one who was entitled to use the house, as kakou is the inclusive form of us. This way of speaking was polite, considerate and gracious.
In Hawaiian tradition, those who refused to share and give freely of what they had in the end learned their lesson with great regret. Stinginess was abhorred. So much so that if one even hinted at (*ho'omuae*), asked for an object indirectly or openly admired it, it was given freely (*ha'awi wale*) to that person without the slightest hesitation. It could be an implement, an adornment, a piece of clothing, whatever. The person giving away their possession certainly viewed it as theirs to give. They did not ask anyone else in the community if it was alright to give it away. They simply did because they perceived the object as theirs. This is why when admiring an object, one needed to carefully construct his compliment so as not to seem desirous of possessing it. Instead of saying, "Oh what a beautiful *lei*", one should instead remark, "Oh, you look beautiful in your *lei*".

This cultural practice of giving freely can still be seen in parts of Polynesia today. While on a trip to Rarotonga several years ago, my mother inadvertently complimented the finely weaved pandanus mats adorning the house of her hostess. She returned to Hawai'i with those same mats in tow, astonished at the generosity of her Rarotongan acquaintance who did not seem at all attached to the mats covering her floor. At my mother's remarking how beautiful the mats were, her Rarotongan hostess simply rolled them up and gave them to her. Was it because the mats were easily replaceable? Or is true generosity a virtue in Polynesian cultures? The consequence of such an act of kindness is that the generosity of the giver is clear, and that the taker leaves not only with the goods
but with a feeling of indebtedness. This example shows that generosity was more important than attachment to any material possession. Hawaiian generosity “was admired, and it enhanced both self-respect and prestige” (Handy and Handy 1978, 311). The same can be said for Polynesian generosity.

O.P. Emerson whose parents were early missionaries to Hawai‘i quoted from his father’s journal on Hawaiian’s “loose, mischievous conception of the rights of private ownership” writing further that when one asked for something the other had in his possession, it was simply given so as not to seem *pi* (1928, 139). In the example cited, the household cook, a Hawaiian, was upset because he had just given his new pair of recently purchased boots away to his friend who had asked for them. In keeping with cultural protocol of not being *pi*, he gave them away. However, he was bothered by it. Prior to the arrival of foreigners, everyone had access to the same resources. If someone admired something, one simply gave it without reluctance or regret. Since however, the item relinquished here was something new, something not easily acquired, something he had purchased, the cook felt his loss. The lady of the house asked him what was wrong and demanded that he get his boots back from his friend, which he did. Needless to say, the friend was hurt and, as a result of having to take his boots back, the cook felt worse. For Hawaiians, the relationship was more important than the object. The cook must have realized afterward that he made a terrible error in judgment. He may have had his boots back but relations with his friend were strained. Moreover, word about his stinginess and greed would spread...
throughout the community. This story illustrates how the custom of ha'awi wale began to change and why after Hawaiians began acquiring items from the West, concepts of property ownership did indeed become private. Favorite possessions were hidden away for safe keeping to prevent another from asking for it (Pukui 1983, 77).

Ownership of an object was understood as that object being kapu, or reserved for a particular person's use. As kids, when we would go riding around for fun, my two cousins and I would kapu the window seats by saying "I kapu the window." Those kapu were respected as real and binding. The third person who was late in declaring kapu was the loser who had to sit in the middle. In that same way, people understood that certain things belonged to certain people. If a fisherman had a canoe which he built, used regularly and cared for, it was perceived by him and the community as his canoe. If someone, likely a relative came by and wanted to use the canoe, he was not free to just take it. He asked permission first because he knew that it belonged to the fisherman.

As late as 1836, missionary Lorrin Andrews observed what he understood to be private property ownership, saying that "no man ever uses his wife's book, and vice versa, and so of a slate and other property" (1836, 390-391). Those objects were kapu to the individual. If there is no kapu, the object is noa, free from kapu, but also free to use, free for the taking. In the case of ali`i, everything they came into contact was made kapu. Therefore, notions of private property ownership for ali`i were more pronounced.
Ownership among Aliʻi - Kapu and Mana

Lorrin Andrews, missionary and author of A Hawaiian Dictionary of the Hawaiian Language explained kapu as:

"A general name of the system of religion that existed formerly on the Hawaiian Islands, and which was grounded upon numerous restrictions or prohibitions, keeping the common people in obedience to the chiefs and priests; but many of the kapus extended to the chiefs themselves" (2003, 259).

Kapu has various meanings. In some contexts it means forbidden. In others, sacred. And in still other contexts, kapu can mean segregated, separated.

Although makaʻāinana were regulated by kapu, for the most part they themselves were noa or free from kapu. In contrast however, chiefs were kapu, sacred, therefore whatever they ate, drank, used, or came into contact with was kapu, that is, reserved for them and them alone. The kapu system maintained the power and status of the chiefs. If something was made kapu for the chief then only the chief could use it. Things were made kapu for aliʻi, especially for aliʻi of high rank because the higher their rank, the more sacred they were. The more sacred, the more mana, or power they possessed because of their close genealogical link to the gods.

Depending on the rank of the aliʻi and the certain kapu that applied, the chief may or may not have walked about or have had much contact with the populace. Keōpūolani, sacred wife of Kamehameha was of such high rank that she mostly stayed indoors during the day so as not to burden her people who were required to prostrate themselves when she passed. This kapu she possessed

28
was the kapu moe. If a chief had a kapu noho, the people were only required to squat in the chief's presence. Chiefs of very high status were set apart. So too were their possessions. Kamehameha as well as five others of his family had a kapu that required people to sit or squat in deference as possessions of these chiefs passed before them (Li 1959, 59).

John Whitman, a haole observer who lived in the islands in 1813-1815, during the reign of Kamehameha wrote that everything even connected to the production of the King's clothes were kapu (1979, 46). Old worn out clothes of the chief could not be used by anyone else and were burnt. Old tapa cloth used by the chief might be made into match ropes used for lighting but only for lighting the chief's fire and no one else's (1979, 47).

Kamakau refers to these laws which protected ali'i, the property of the ali'i and the maka'ainana as the kanawai kapu ali'i. These laws made clear that the possessions of the chief were his or hers alone. Ali'i had special storehouses for their possessions (Handy and Pukui 1976, 12). But despite the kapu placed on these possessions, the necessity for the storehouses to be guarded day and night remained.

Once anything was worn by an ali'i, it became kapu. 'Ele'io, the famous court runner of the chief Kaka' alaneko of Maui, was given an 'ahu'ula, a feather cloak. It was said to have been the first 'ahu'ula seen on Maui. It had been a gift that 'Ele'io was to present to Kaka' alaneko. 'Ele'io put on the cloak and ran back to the chief's compound. Most modern readers today might be shocked at his
audacity in even putting on the chiefly regalia. What we fail to understand
however, was something that 'Ele'io understood perfectly well. That is that the
cloak was not *kapu* until the chief put it on. So 'Ele'io did nothing wrong in
wearing the cloak before handing it over to the chief.

All of the items that were close to the chief’s body including sleeping
mats, adornments, blankets and other symbols of chiefly regalia were *kapu*, thus
also cared for by trusted attendants. The *kapu* ʻili that applied to *makaʻainana*
applied to *aliʻi* as well but even more so, since they were more sacred than the
common man. Maui chief Kahekili was of such high *kapu* that anything that
touched his body had to be burned so that it could not be used by anyone else
(Kamakau 1992, 166).

An *aliʻi* could however, choose to give away chiefly regalia or any of his or
her possessions as he or she wished. A traditional motif often seen in Hawaiian
literature is the gifting of regalia by the chief to the mother of his unborn child as
proof of royal paternity. If the chief chose to give things away, by his act those
things are then made *noa*, free from *kapu*. Thus, everything of the chief’s
personage was *kapu*, sacred and to be treated with the utmost respect and care.
The possessions of the chief were guarded by trusted family members, lesser
chiefs, *kaukaualiʻi*, who served as the chief’s personal attendants. John Papa ʻIi,
who wrote of an instance where one such attendant, a relative of his, was
accused of wearing the *malo* of the chief (1959, 23). It turned out that he and the
chief owned loincloths of similar design. If the attendant had been found guilty,
he and his family would have been held accountable and would have suffered
death. Eventually however, he was cleared of the charge. This example
emphasizes the point that everything, especially things worn by the ali'i were
kapu. Besides personal possessions, places could also be designated kapu, for the
chief's use only. From fishponds to 'awa patches, bathing areas to surfing and
fishing spots, these were examples of places set aside for royal use only.

Ina i hume ke kanaka i ko ke ali'i malo a 'a'ahu i ke kapa paha, e make no. Hawaiian
historian David Malo wrote that if a common person was to gird the chief's
loincloth or wear his clothes, he would surely die. Not only were those things
reserved for the chief, and not only did they contain the mana of the chief, but
those types of things symbolized status and rank. Perhaps Malo is alluding to the
fact that breaking such a kapu was so severe that the punishment if caught was
death. Perhaps he means that the sacredness and mana imbued in the object
would be too much for a commoner to handle, thus he would die. Perhaps he
also reflected what was passed down from generation to generation as a
deterrent. Imagine if someone did get hold of chiefly regalia and decided to visit
a district in the back country. This impostor could act as an ali'i, wreak major
havoc, taking whatever he desired and burdening the people of the area in the
name of the chief. Thus, wearing the attire of an ali'i was a serious offense
punishable by death. Thus, everything that was used by the chief was made kapu.
This not only protected the ali'i from harm but protected maka'ainana as well. The
people understood that stealing from a chief would bring severe consequences.
Stealing from the kahuna too was an infringement of kapu but could be much more serious if the object stolen was consecrated to the gods. Pigs to be offered for sacrifice were marked by cutting the ear. The pig was then left to roam and root until needed for the offering. If the pig intended for the god was taken, the culprit would face severe consequences for breaking the kapu of the gods.

**Defining 'Aihue**

Now that we have a basic understanding of concepts of ownership among maka'ainana and ali'i, we can begin to discuss 'aihue, for something cannot be stolen unless it is first perceived as being owned. In other words, notions of theft depend on notions of ownership.

It has already been shown that Hawaiians understood the notion of private property. This is also illustrated by the fact that retaliation for thefts among maka'ainana occurred. If property was viewed as belonging to all, then retaliation would not take place. When items were stolen, it is safe to assume that its owner was not pleased. This part of the paper will uncover attitudes toward 'aihue in order to understand how stealing was perceived in varied contexts.

A simple definition of 'aihue is the taking of something from another without their knowledge. Literally the word 'aihue comes from 'ai: to eat + hue: to filch, quickly, with deception. According to Pukui in Nana I Ke Kumu Volume I, the term originally referred to one who took food from another (1972, 6). In *A Dictionary of the Hawaiian Language* by Lorrin Andrews, the meaning for 'aihue is
given as "to steal food", however Andrews states that ‘ai, food can also be translated as "property of any kind" (2003, 9). There is also a linguistic similarity between the words ‘aihue and ‘aiahua meaning "to break secretly the kapu of the gods, irreligious, unmindful of kapu" (Andrews 2003, 8). This may be a reason ‘aihue of old were viewed with such awe. One who dared to break kapu of men, chiefs and gods was thought to have possessed mana since he was daring, and since he successfully completed his theft act without being detected or worse, without being killed.

At present, the definition for ‘aihue in Pukui and Elbert’s Hawaiian Dictionary is problematic. It is defined as “to steal, rob, pilfer, filch, cheat, a thief, robber, theft, or larceny (1986, 10).” In their attempt to provide as many different English language equivalents as possible, Pukui and Elbert lumped all of these definitions under the single term ‘aihue. But look up "robbery" and you will find poa, look up "to snatch away" and you will find kā ili. Only in cross referencing does one understand that there are more specific terms that would better suit the different contexts being addressed. To use the word ‘aihue as a general catch all word is erroneous.

The word ‘aihue refers to both petty thievery as well as a successful, well planned, well executed, artful way of taking that requires thinking, cunning and skill as exemplified in the way that ‘Iwa in Ke Ka‘ao no ‘Iwa stole. ‘Aihue refers to both the taking of an object secretly and intentionally and to the person doing the action.
Following are other terms that describe different ways of stealing. Lawe mala, literally translated means "to take secretly," and although similar to 'aihue in meaning, its roots are not specific to the taking of food. The usage of this word may have come about as 'aihue began to change. No longer were takings limited to food but extended to the taking of other objects as well. Later we will see that Hawaiians were accused of stealing when there was no sneaking around, no deception, no intent to steal by taking secretly. Perhaps the term lawe mala originated for the necessity to be more specific in detailing how the action was carried out.

These next terms describe thieves who were successful because of their speed and agility. The term mio meaning to move swiftly or to make off with swiftly describes thieves who were quick, a trait necessary for thieves who required quick getaways (Beckwith 1976, 337). Similarly, the terms mokio and pūhe'eniki mean to steal and dash away, the first referring to the quickness of a person's actions, the second referring to swiftly fleeing as an octopus in danger. These terms do not refer to the classic 'aihue who depends more on quickness of mind than quickness of foot.

Terms like hao (to seize), pākaha (to raid), ka'ili (to snatch), and poa (to rob) greatly differ from 'aihue. They belong to a different class of taking, surrounded by a different set of circumstances. Hao is a word used in reference to ali'i or chiefs because they had kuleana or rights to seize anything they wanted and, could by their chiefly status and privilege, take whatever goods they desired.
from commoners or chiefs of like or lower status. The word *hao* can be pejorative in meaning when linked to unjust *ali'i* who seized property belonging to the common people, in most cases in the spoils of war (Kamakau 1996, 20). *Hao* also means to grasp, gouge, pillage, plunder (Pukui and Elbert 1986, 58). To *hao* was to use power, either by physical force or as a result of one's status over another. Similarly, *pakaha* and *ka'ili* have to do with raiding and snatching away by force. The term *ka'ili* could also refer to chiefly privilege in securing an item belonging to someone of a lower status than himself. *Po'a* refers to robbery with the intent to kill. *Po'a* is associated with violence or threats of violence. These terms are quite different from *'aihue*.

In Hawaiian *mo'olelo* or stories, concerning robbers who kill, the terms *po'a* or *'olohe* are used, not the term *'aihue*. *'Olohe* were robbers of old who murdered and stole. They were wrestlers proficient in *lua*, the art of bone breaking. They were known for laying in wait along secluded trails then ambushing, robbing and murdering unsuspecting travelers. *'Aihue* went unseen and caused no physical harm. *'Olohe* on the other hand robbed, attacked and killed their victims. There is, however, one similarity they share. For both the *'aihue* and the *'olohe*, the reward lay less in the objects stolen, but more from the *mana* obtained from committing the act and getting away with it. *'Olohe* were not celebrated as *'aihue* were but certainly feared. And in being feared their *mana* increased. *'Olohe* did not rob in order to gain wealth, but rather to practice their bone-breaking art and to survive, since they lived in seclusion where food was hard to come by.
The sheer volume of words in the Hawaiian lexicon referring to thieves and thievery means that stealing of various kinds certainly occurred. The question is, why would stealing be necessary? If someone asked for or even hinted for the possession of another (*ho'oma'oe*), the object was given outright. If people shared freely then why the need to steal secretly?

Here are a few reasons that stealing might become necessary. If a stranger came from another land and happened to be an unsociable character, an 'ae'a, a wanderer separated from family, it might have been necessary for that person to steal food as a means of survival. Another reason people might have needed to steal could have been that those possessing the objects were too stingy to share. Still another possible reason to steal could have been laziness. One might have been too lazy to produce whatever object was needed and found that it was easier to take it from someone else. Another reason could have been a simple desire to possess the object. If one so desired an object and knew that it could be taken without anyone knowing, that person might just try. If he wasn't caught, no one would ever be the wiser. In his commentary on the story of 'Iwa, William Westervelt says that "the sin of stealing consisted in being detected." (1963, 148). Another motivation for stealing was the challenge that the theft offered. To 'aihue was to do so without detection. The more artful, the more cunning, the more trickery involved, the more skilled the 'aihue. To be successful meant getting away with things others could not. Sometimes, especially if stealing from a chief, breaking *kapu* was involved. The theft entailed
thought, planning and deception. I suspect that stealing in precontact Hawai‘i had more to do with the act itself rather than the actual object being stolen. What one derived from it was not so much the object, but the mana that came with accomplishing such a feat. If the object taken was food, there was no real glory. Stealing food was petty. If however, the ‘aihue took something from a chief as we will see in traditional literature, then the mana of the ‘aihue increased greatly. That the ‘aihue had a disregard for established kapu and, was able to break kapu to get items without being detected was to be commended. Thus, the motivation lay in getting away with it. His reward was famed reputation as skilled, great ‘aihue. For those who never achieved such status but were successful thieves amongst their own communities, their mana increased as well. After a time, the community would become aware of an ‘aihue in their midst, yet would not know who the culprit was. They would have to safeguard their possessions even more, making it all the more difficult to steal. If the ‘aihue succeeded, mana was his reward.

If ‘aihue were caught, how were they dealt with? Prior to the unification of the islands under a single rule by Kamehameha and his proclamation of the Kanawai Mamalahoa/Mamalahoe (The law of the Splintered Paddle), the law which safeguarded all people from undue harm, the majority of laws or kapu in existence pertained to chiefs only. The maka‘ainana answered to each other. Since communities were made up of ‘ohana, disputes were settled internally. Serious complaints were taken to the konohiki. Punishments for everyday offenses like
stealing were settled locally, within communities and probably differed according to region. Ellis wrote that a punishment for stealing which he observed between 1822-1823 was for the victim to go to the house of the thief and seize whatever property could be found. Moreover, this retaliation was fully supported by the local community (1963, 306). If a chief became a victim of theft, in some places the thief was tied up and set adrift in an old canoe since ali'i and their property were protected by kapu. This is why stealing from an ali'i was powerful. The penalty for stealing from a chief could be death. If one was not caught, imagine the amount of mana the thief must have to get away with such an unthinkable act.

What kind of objects were stolen? Food, pigs, prized lures, shell trumpets, and at the time of contact, anything made of or containing iron were among the objects documented in stories, proverbs and historical accounts. But, as mentioned earlier, perhaps the object was not as important as the power gained from the theft. The 'aihue in traditional stories did not keep what they stole. Upon the death of an ali'i, especially a powerful ali'i, his or her bones were hidden so as to prevent them from being stolen and mistreated. Hawaiians believe that the bones contain the very mana, the essence of the person. Bones of defeated chiefs and others were known to have been used for decorating spitoons, filth pots, fishhooks and other implements. Therefore, bones were hidden away in the cover of night to prevent theft and subsequent misuse.
Attitudes toward 'Aihue.

What was the general attitude concerning 'aihue? Some thieves were indeed celebrated for their prowess. The following chapter will detail their exploits and explain the reasons for their glorified status as great 'aihue. In most other instances, it seems that 'aihue were seen as a nuisance, especially when stealing was petty and was done for no particular reason or, to serve one's own self interests. The proverb, "I ka 'ai, i ka nana, i ka 'ai, i ka halo" meaning "Eat, look, eat, peer, eat, peep," is a phrase describing the sinister behavior of a thief who eats quickly, constantly looking about here and there to check for anyone who might catch him in the act (Pukui 1983, 128). Hawaiian historian David Malo described thievery as wrong and evil (1951, 73). Whether this was his personal sentiment influenced by missionary teachings or if this the way Hawaiians perceived stealing prior to the arrival of missionaries is unknown. However, the existence of many proverbial references to thievery as a nuisance lead one to believe that stealing of this kind was frowned upon.

The difficulty in interpreting attitudes Hawaiians had toward stealing lay in the fact that many of the proverbs and poetic references cannot be dated. It is impossible to know if the people always viewed stealing as wrong or if their attitudes were shaped by Kamehameha and the missionaries who followed.

What is known is that stealing on behalf of the chief was acceptable as will be shown in traditional mo'olelo. Those 'aihue were celebrated for their skill. What is also known is that stealing could be justified if the result benefited the whole.
For example, the thievish nature of the ‘iole, or rat is appreciated and acknowledged for saving mankind from starvation when the god Makali‘i, gathered up all the food on earth and suspended it high in the sky above. The ‘iole bit through the net, releasing the food back down to the people and became a hero to man (Emerson 1928, 14).

Because the origins of certain sayings reflecting Hawaiian attitudes toward stealing cannot be identified, we are left with the notion that ‘aihue was perceived both positively and negatively depending on the circumstances. Following are more proverbs, time referent unknown which show negative attitudes toward thieves and thievery. The first portrays the same ‘iole, savior of mankind, in a negative light. The proverb "Piko pau ‘iole" meaning umbilical cord devoured by rats illustrates the dislike for the thievish nature of the rat and refers to a baby whose piko or umbilical cord had dried up, fallen off, had not been cared for, and as a result, was found and eaten by rats. It was believed that a child whose piko was devoured by the ‘iole would in turn inherit its nature. This is why when the remnants of the piko fell off, it was important for parents to take care in hiding or burying it. (Handy and Pukui 1976, 72). No one wanted their child to become like an ‘iole, a nuisance who would sneak around in the night and quietly devour food that belonged to someone else.

On the whole it seems that ‘aihue who stole food were annoyances. This kind of thievery was petty and considered insignificant, like the tiny ‘a fish that stole from hooks requiring one to constantly bait the hook. He ‘a aki maunu
was a poetic reference to a petty thief. In addition to petty thieves like the ‘ā‘ē fish and the ‘iole, dogs were also metaphors for thieves. Dogs however, were perhaps not as sinister nor as notorious as rats. They simply didn’t know any better. Like today’s dogs who steal slippers left outside the front door, the dog of old, took whatever was left about. In order to avoid having things taken, people were reminded in proverbs, to take care of their belongings and not “leave them to the dogs or the rats.”

"'A'ohe malama pau i ka 'iole."
“Things that are cared for are not taken by rats.”
(Pukui 1983, 22)

"Miki ka 'ilio kahu 'ole no ka hemahema."
“Stray dogs are quick to take what is left about.”
(Pukui 1983, 235)

"'O ka mea maka'ala, 'aohe lilo kona waiwai i ka 'ilio."
“The one who is alert doesn’t lose his things to dogs.”
(Pukui 1983, 265).

The ‘iwa, the tropical frigate bird and the ‘io, the Hawaiian hawk are also metaphors for thieves because of their characters; the ‘iwa because he “steals food by forcing other birds to disgorge” (Pukui and Elbert 1986, 104). Like the trickery used by the ‘aihue, forcing another to disgorge also requires some sort of trickery on the part of the ‘iwa. The ‘io is known for his ability to appear out of

41
nowhere, swoop down on his prey and make off quickly. A clever thief was “a hawk that could catch chickens,” “He ‘io po'i moa” (Pukui 1983, 641). Like the ‘iwa, his expertise at thievery took planning, observation and quickness.

Interestingly, even though the ‘iwa and the ‘io are metaphors for thieves, both birds are also thought to be the epitome of beauty and handsome physique. A good looking, graceful, poised person, especially one of high rank is referred to as an ‘iwa or an ‘io. The name of Kamehameha IV’s ma‘i, or genitals is ‘Iolani, heavenly hawk. Perhaps this referred to his ability to swoop down and steal the heart of any woman he wished.

Using the same metaphor for thief and beauty is not at all contradictory in the Hawaiian way of thinking. Theft was not considered a crime unless one stole from ali‘i because one had to break kapu to do so. The beauty in ‘aihue was the artful way in which it was carried out. In other words, a great thief never got caught.

‘Aihue was acceptable under certain circumstances. In the context of the great ‘aihue ‘Iwa who stole not for himself but for the benefit of the ali‘i, Westervelt wrote: “In ancient Hawai‘i, thieving was an honorable profession. It required cultivation as well as natural ability” (1963, 148).

Gods and Priests

As with any other occupation, principal deities were invoked to ensure success. Presiding over thievery were the gods Makua‘aihue (Thief-Parent), god
of thieves (Malo 1951, 82) and 'Ōpelunuikauha‘alilo (Great ōpelu fish placed far off in the distance), god of thievery and medicinal practice (Craig 1989, 192). These gods belonged to the kini akua, the multitude of gods that the people might call upon in times of need, help or guidance in 'aihue. Hawaiians prayed for every task they would undertake whether it be farming, building a new structure, dancing the hula, fishing at sea or going out to steal. Having gods of thievery supports the idea that stealing was considered a legitimate occupation.

When one intended on stealing an object of value, a kahuna or priest might be consulted. The kahuna was able to give advice to the 'aihue on whether or not the theft would be successful. The kahuna would do this through divination. After being told what would be taken and from whom, the kahuna would gather 50 or so small pebbles and place them in a heap. The heap was then covered and separated into two. The 'aihue was asked to choose the pile that represented himself. The other pile represented the would-be victim. The kahuna would then uncover the piles and begin to count the stones. If both piles were counted as even or both as odd, it was considered a bad omen. If the pile of the 'aihue turned up even and the would-be victim's odd, he was advised not to go along with his plan for he would be unsuccessful. Only if his pile turned up odd and the victim's even would he be advised to proceed (Fornander 1985, 72), (Beckwith 1976, 39). Thus kahuna were sought out for advice and counsel.

A kahuna could also prove helpful in revealing the identity of, or in punishing the wanted thief. Archibald Campbell who resided in the islands
during the reign of Kamehameha, described a ceremony in which the kahuna prayed over the fire but appealed to the gods to "Muckeeroio kanaka ai kooe," which he translated as "Kill or shoot the fellow" but which is probably closer to the Hawaiian, e make 'i'o ke kanaka 'aihue or, the thief shall truly die. In this ceremony the kahuna began by praying the thief to death. At that point, the 'aihue became horrified enough to reveal himself and subsequently returned the stolen property. He was then ordered to pay a fine of four pigs and warned not to steal again. He does not say what was stolen. Could it have been a pig or two, or four? The kahuna then recalled his prayers of death and the thief was spared. If however, the thief did not confess, the necessary rites for praying him to death would continue and he would eventually die (Campbell 1967, 124).

John Whitman who lived in Hawai'i from 1813 - 1815 observed a similar incident in which a thief was prayed to death in this manner and although the stolen goods were returned, the death prayer could not be revoked and, over a short period of months the thief was reduced to nothing but skin and bones (1979, 30). He withered away and died, undoubtedly due to the self imposed stress and worry over his impending death.

Another way of detecting accused persons was noted by Ellis as "wai haruru," trembling water. The accused was assembled before the kahuna. After the kahuna uttered a prayer, each was required to place his or her hands over a calabash filled with water. The trembling water would reveal the guilty one (1963, 308).
It was in these ways that kahuna were consulted in matters of 'aihue. By these examples, it is clear that stealing did occur. While not everyone engaged in thievery, for some it was an occupation or a way of life.

Neither Campbell nor Whitman make any reference to the status of the thief so it can only be assumed that they were indeed maka'atinana. If they had been chiefs, neither the ceremony nor the death prayer would have taken place as ali'i possessed certain privileges over the land and its people. If chiefs could take what they wanted, why the need to have things stolen on their behalf? In his notes to Elbert's Selections from Fornander, editor Thomas Thrum stated:

When it was a recognized right of the king to take whatever he desired of his subjects' possessions, there would seem to be little need for expert thieves in his service, yet even Kamehameha, with all his good qualities, is said to have had one Kaikioewa as superintendent of this particular work, at the formation of his government (1982, 30).

Although the credibility of Thrum's comment is questionable, if it was true, Kamehameha would not have been the only chief known to have employed thieves. 'Umi employed six of his own. Perhaps the reason ali'i employed court thieves was because stealing the object caused less trouble than procuring it by other means. Even though ali'i could by privilege, take what they wanted from others of equal or lesser rank, doing so may have caused bad feelings. Having the item stolen avoided that. Another reason for employing thieves might be to steal from an ali'i of higher rank.

Of the thieves mentioned in traditional literature, all were from the maka'atinana class. The most famous 'aihue that ever lived was 'Iwa, a mere boy
who was said to have stolen while still in his mother’s womb. In the end of his story his expertise at ‘aihue gains him chiefly favor and a position in the aloali‘i, the royal entourage as court thief. The other famous ‘aihue was Puapualenalena (Yellow Tail), a dog who was companion of his master, also a maka‘ainana.

What these stories illustrate is that one can be recognized by the chiefs and find glory in their company if one is so skilled. What made these ‘aihue so special was their ability to break the kapu of the chief. And a chief would much rather have experts like these working for them than against them.

In summary, ‘aihue is defined as taking secretly. The act was most often committed by maka‘ainana. Gods were invoked to assist. A truly skilled ‘aihue was one who got away with it. Mana derived from getting away with the act was more important than the actual object stolen. Cultural metaphors refer to the petty thief as a nuisance, and other greater thieves as beautiful, soaring above the rest. In short, ‘aihue was perceived as both positive and negative depending on the context. It was acceptable for an ali‘i to employ thieves to steal on his behalf. But it was not acceptable for someone to steal for his own benefit, gain or profit. Stealing took many forms but the one I seek to explore is the one that entails deception, wit, trickery and skill, that which exemplified the true art of ‘aihue. Traditional stories document the exploits of famous ‘aihue who accomplished fantastical feats in an artful and cunning manner on behalf of ali‘i. To this day these are the famed and expert ‘aihue.
CHAPTER 3. CONCEPTS OF ‘AIHUE IN TRADITIONAL TIMES

Mo’olelo, traditional stories, give us an insight into perspectives of the past. They serve as a looking glass, peering into the history, mythology, folklore, morals, values and ethics of our ancestors. Mo’olelo reveal attitudes of the past. The interpretation of the story is left to its reader. When combined with anthropological and historical sketches, these mo’olelo enable the student of Hawaiian studies to develop a deeper understanding of Hawaiian philosophy.

Since Hawaiians belong to a larger family of Polynesians, mo’olelo concerning thievery should also be consulted in order to get a sense of how it was viewed in those cultures as well.

‘Aihue in Polynesia

The thief/trickster motif occurs frequently in Polynesian literature. The exploits of clever thieves are not unique to Hawai‘i and are found elsewhere in Polynesia (Beckwith 1976, 447). They are stories which prove what one may accomplish if quick in mind and body. Here are some examples that stood out in my research. In Rarotonga, a trickster gains permission to try on clothes and adornments then goes off with them (Beckwith 1976, 445). A similar story of a trickster outsmarting his victims by teaching them a dance then making off with the valuables is told in Hawai‘i as well as in many other Polynesian islands (Beckwith 1976, 445). This tells audiences that trickery was an important attribute of the successful thief. The Hawaiian trickster Punia is celebrated for outwitting
and turning a group of ferocious sharks against each other in order to steal lobsters from the cave that they guarded (Ka Hoku o Hawaii).

Like the Hawaiian 'aihue 'Iwa, Hiro, Iro and Whiro were thieves found in Tahiti, Rarotonga, and Aotearoa respectively. They were thieves and tricksters, 'aihue in the Hawaiian sense of the word, who saw stealing as a worthwhile occupation, a gratifying pursuit, a worthy ambition. Tahitian literature speaks of Hiro, a young man who began thinking about a profession to take up. He asked his grandfather what men did. The grandfather replied that men became husbands and providers. Not satisfied, Hiro asked what tricks a man could do. When his grandfather responded, "lying, deceiving and thieving," Hiro replied with excitement that stealing would be good, profitable and satisfying (Henry 1985, 537). Hiro chose this profession under the guidance of the god of thievery who went by the same name. In Tahiti, this god was manifested in the dragonfly because they were useful assistants to thieves who would release them into a house they intended to steal from. The inhabitants would be so dazzled and distracted by the dragonfly that the thief could go about unnoticed (Henry 1985, 391).

In Sāmoa, there existed many lesser household gods who were either appealed to for help in stealing or who were called upon to avenge thefts. Haelefeke and Moso were Sāmoan gods who on two separate occasions were unsuccessful in their attempts at stealing some islands of Tonga (Gifford 1971, 87). Some physical features of the land are attributed to these failed attempts.
One such example was when Moso tried to take the island Tanoa but accidentally dropped it. This explains why the island seems to stand on its side today. The origin of certain plants are also attributed to thefts committed by the gods as in the case of Lefanoga who stole kava from the heavens and introduced it to Sāmoa (Craig 1989, 137), while another Sāmoan deity stole taro to plant on earth. Similarly, in Aotearoa, the first Māori thief Rongomai stole sweet potatoes from the heavens for the people of the land (Best 1995, 285). These godly thieves are credited with bringing important staples to the land by stealing them from the heavens.

In Tongan literature, the famous pan-Polynesian trickster Māui stole fire from the god of the underworld, making it available to those on earth (Collocott 1928, 45). Māui was also known to Sāmoans as a hero who stole certain vegetables and fruits from the greedy gods who refused to share with the people. In Māori literature, two women Kuiwai and Hangaroa went to the marae Rangītea and “stole the principal gods Maru, Iho o te rangi, Rongomai, Hupawa and Haungaroa” before leaving Hawaiki for the new land (White 1887, 123). Credited with bringing important elements of culture to their lands, those thieves were celebrated and immortalized in story.

Rakurū, the first Māori thief stole a magical fishhook from the primordial homeland Hawaiki. However, he was found out by the gods who intended on severely punishing him. Before they could do so however, he committed suicide (White 1887, 170). Indeed, stealing was wrong only if one got caught. If not, the
thief must have been a great trickster, a true master of his craft and deserved not only to live but live on in mo'olelo that continue to be told.

The Polynesian stories concerning thievery detail the stealing of gods from gods and men from gods. When gods steal from other gods, their acts go unpunished. But if a man steals from a god and is caught, the punishment is severe. A skilled thief then, never gets caught. When the man is successful in stealing from the god, his name will live forever because 1) he was not caught, 2) his thieving brought a great result to the land or the people, 3) he broke established rules (kapu) by stealing something belonging to the gods and 4) he did so through use of cunning, trickery, artfulness, observation, and planning.

'Aihue in Hawai'i

The most famous 'aihue documented in Hawaiian mo'olelo is 'Iwa. His story is a classic example of an 'aihue as a culture hero. In Hawaiian mo'olelo, 'Iwa is celebrated as the greatest thief of his day. He is the epitome of a great thief because 1) unlike many other Polynesian thieves, 'Iwa was not a god but a human and, a mere boy at that; 2) he was able to break kapu without detection; 3) he was never caught in the act of stealing, rather he chose to give himself away as a boastful show of his own skill and; 4) his craft was his occupation which eventually landed him employment in the royal court of the ruling chief, 'Umi which in turn led to his fame. Today, his name is synonymous with the word thief.
The Story of 'Iwa

He Ka'ao no 'Iwa or The Story of Iwa in the Hawaiian language newspaper serial Ka Hoku o Hawaii introduces us to a classic Hawaiian culture hero who is a great thief or 'aihue. Iwa lived during the time of Hawai'i island chief 'Umi, approximately eight generations before Kamehameha. Although this story contains elements of folk-lore; astonishing and unbelievable embellishments which serve to make stories entertaining, its cast of historical characters lend to its credibility as a true account of an 'aihue of ancient times.

The story begins with a commoner named Kea'au from the island of Hawai'i who had in his possession, two beautiful leho or cowry shells. From these leho, he designed a most magnificent lure for catching he'e or squid. The leho were of such a superb quality, some said a magical quality, that all Kea'au needed to do was lift the lure out of its container and barely touch the surface of the water, when he'e would immediately jump up and cling to it. Kalokuna was the name he gave to his awesome lure. Kea'au knew that it would be impossible to keep an object of such value a secret for long. He was right, for word about the fascinating leho soon spread to the chief 'Umi. As it was the right of ali'i, to have the best of everything, he sent his men to fetch (hao) the famed leho in Kea'au's possession. Anthropologist Jocelyn Linnekin explains, "In general, chiefs were entitled to the first, best, and biggest of everything, and they had the absolute right to confiscate goods that were qualitatively or quantitatively inappropriate to commoners (1990, 78)." Therefore, when the chief's messengers arrived,
Kea'au had no choice but to relinquish his claim to the leho in deference to his chief. But he was certainly not happy about it. He became so obsessed with regaining possession of Kalokuna that he packed up his canoe and sailed the eight seas with the expressed purpose of finding the most skilled 'aihue in all the land. He would hire the thief to steal his precious lure from the ali'i 'Umi. So, Kea'au loaded his canoe with gifts, enticements and payment for the thief. He sailed the island chain and upon reaching Moloka'i, was told about the greatest 'aihue of all time, 'Iwa of O'ahu. He was instructed that as soon as he landed his canoe, he was to offer his gifts straight away, lest they be stolen. (By 'Iwa of course!)

Upon arrival at 'Iwa's house, Kea'au was surprised to learn that the famed 'aihue was a mere boy. Ua lewa ka ma'i. His genitals dangled, meaning he was a boy who had not yet reached puberty, whose ma'i was not yet bound in a malo or loincloth. Kea'au presented the gifts to the boy with an explanation of his task, and the boy eagerly accepted the challenge.

After obtaining permission from his father, 'Iwa sailed with Kea'au to Hawai'i, to the fishing grounds of the chief. When they reached the spot, they hid far enough away as not to be seen. 'Iwa watched for awhile before secretly diving down, unfastening the leho lure and tying the chief's line to a coral head. This sounds easy enough but, 'Iwa just broke a number of kapu here. First, he entered the fishing area probably made kapu for the chief's canoe only. Then, he actually stole from right below the chief's canoe without being seen. This means he swam the distance from Kea'au's canoe which was probably quite a ways off,
then dove down under the chief’s canoe, then untied the *leho* and retied the line to the coral.

Kea’au returned home with his precious lure and the great ‘aihue ‘Iwa. Meanwhile, the chief continued to float over the same spot for hours. After a long while, he tugged at his lure then realized that it was caught on something below. He sent his divers down to loosen it but to no avail. It was too deep. The men ran out of breath before reaching the bottom. He sent more men down but no one could even get close. The chief, ‘Umi decided to send runners to all parts of the island in search of expert divers to help loosen the lure. In no time, a runner made his appearance at Kea’au’s house. When he relayed the chief’s request for expert divers and the reason they were needed, ‘Iwa blurted out, “The lure is not to be found at the end of the line.” Perplexed, the messenger took ‘Iwa back with him to court, into the presence of the chief. ‘Iwa admitted that it was he who had stolen the *leho*, and from right under ‘Umi’s nose, he added. What is amazing here is that ‘Iwa turned himself in. If he said nothing at all to the messenger, who would know of his great skill? But admitting to the theft might be more profitable to the young trickster. ‘Iwa boasted of his skill at ‘aihue and ‘Umi was impressed. ‘Iwa explained to ‘Umi that he had been brought to Hawai‘i by Kea’au to retrieve the prized *leho* that had once been his. ‘Umi ordered the boy to return the *leho* to him. That would be easy as he knew where Kea’au had kept them. Kea’au may have lost his *leho* once and for all but at least he kept his life which is interesting since he had hired an ‘aihue to steal from a
chief. ‘Umi was intrigued by the skill of this young ‘aihue, and wanted to devise a test to see how good the boy really was. ‘Iwa naturally consented. He was up for the challenge. In the first test, he was instructed to go to Waipi’o to get a ko‘i, a special, prized adze belonging to the chief. This was no ordinary ko‘i. It was a mea kapu, an object reserved for the ali‘i. It was housed and guarded, day and night at the heiau of Pāka‘alana. The ko‘i hung suspended in the middle of a length of rope whose ends were tied around the necks of two old women.

In order to succeed in stealing the ko‘i, ‘Iwa studied every detail carefully before setting out. In doing so, he learned of a special kapu, or taboo that the chief ‘Umi sometimes placed on his people. This kapu extended from Waipi‘o to its surrounding districts and its function was to confine people to their homes. Pretending to be the messenger of the chief, ‘Iwa cunningly placed the kapu on the lands around Waipi‘o and set off to the house where the ko‘i was kept. Acting as representative of the chief, he made his way to the wall of the pili grass house atop the heiau. He called from the outside asking the women, “How is the ko‘i?” “It is fine”, they replied. “Let me feel it so I know it is safe” requested ‘Iwa. When the women moved closer to the wall, ‘Iwa quickly snatched the ko‘i from the unsuspecting old women and made off with it. His success is a testament to the fact that this boy possessed keen observation skills. He was also good at imitating the representative of the chief, no small feat for a mere boy. The chief ‘Umi was surprised and impressed with ‘Iwa’s cunning and with the speed at which he accomplished his goal. Being entertained as such, ‘Umi requested just
one more test of the boy's skill. If 'Iwa was successful at this final test, only then could he be called the greatest thief of his day.

‘Umi proposed a contest between ‘Iwa and six of his own court thieves. Now, the fact that ‘Umi employed court thieves raises the question as to why they were necessary. If ali'i possessed the right to take from those of a lesser rank or of equal status, why then would an 'aihue be called upon? Perhaps it had to do with how ‘Umi wanted to be perceived by his people or by other chiefs. Even though the privilege of chiefs to take what they wanted was accepted by the populous, it doesn't mean that those possessions were happily and wholeheartedly given up. Kea'au was a good example of a commoner who gave up his prized leho to the chief only to try and steal it back. If the chief employed 'aihue then he would not have to use his privilege, no one would think the worse of him, or they would be ignorant of the fact that the item was in his possession.

As discussed previously, having court thieves allowed for anonymity. It allowed ‘Umi to possess what he wanted without having others view him as selfish.

The contest ‘Umi proposed was to be held over a period of a single night. Two empty houses were set up, one house for ‘Iwa’s use and the other for the use of the six thieves. The object was to fill the houses with as much as they could steal. Whoever had the most at the end of the contest would win.

The six court thieves set off right away stealing canoes, animals, tools, household items even men, women and children too. Just before dawn they filled their house. Out of curiosity, they checked in on the boy, but not only was
his house empty, he was asleep within it. The six, on the other hand worked all night. Finally, near dawn, with their task complete, they partook of some ‘awa. They drank until sleep overcame them, confident that victory was theirs. About the same time that they began to doze off, our hero ‘Iwa awoke. He saw the group fast asleep and began to fill his empty house with everything they had stolen. Another version of the story says that ‘Iwa even snuck into ‘Umi’s house, stealing the very blanket which covered him. This is how ‘Iwa won not only the contest but more importantly, the favor of the chief. According to the moʻolelo, whoever lost this test would die. Whether or not the six thieves were really killed is left to speculation. Perhaps they were truly put to death. Or, perhaps they simply fell out of favor with the chief, being replaced by ‘Iwa whose skill far surpassed theirs. In any case, from that day on ‘Iwa’s reputation as the greatest thief of his day spread.

Prior to becoming a court thief for ‘Umi, ‘Iwa’s expertise as an ‘aihue was known by some, but his real fame came by way of his connection to the ali‘i ‘Umi whose own story is well documented in Hawaiian history. Because of his connections to ‘Umi, ‘Iwa became admired and praised by the populace. By being connected to and working on the side of the chief, his actions of ‘aihue were acceptable. He was not stealing for himself but for his ali‘i. His reward did not come in the form of the actual items he secured, but rather in the form of glory, fame and immortality. Furthermore, if this boy was able to break kapu and steal prized items reserved for the chief, that says a lot about his own mana.
He broke *kapu* and lived to tell about it. Although he was an ordinary human boy and a *maka'ainana* at that, such ability was almost magical, seemingly god-like. Thus his reward as an 'aihue was manifested not in the object he stole but the *mana* derived from stealing it.

**The Story of Puapualenalena**

Another culture hero like 'Iwa, who stole for the benefit of the *ali'i* and received favored status and wealth was Puapualenalena. He was a *kupua*, a demigod, who took the form of a dog. This dog stole food and 'awa for his master. The master was unaware that the dog was stealing from the chief until Puapualenalena was caught stealing from the royal 'awa patch *kapu* to the chief Kiha. According to Kiha, his life and that of his master’s could be spared only by retrieving Kihapu, a prized shell trumpet that had been stolen by a band of ghost-thieves. These ghost-thieves continued to taunt Kiha by continuously blowing the conch throughout the valley at all hours of the day and night.

In King Kalākaua's rendition of the story, this dog Puapualenalena was so proficient at 'aihue, it was said that he "possessed the intelligence of a *kahuna... and could steal the mantle from a man’s shoulders without being detected"" (1984, 261). Using all his powers as a *kupua*, Puapualenalena succeeded at returning Kihapu to the chief Kiha. Again as in the story of 'Iwa, the object being stolen, in this case retrieved, was a *mea kapu*, an object *kapu* to the *ali'i*. In some versions of the story, Puapualenalena became a favorite in the chief's household. In
Kalākaua’s version of the story, the dog returned Kīhapū to the chief and dropped dead at his feet.

Puapualenalena is another example of a celebrated thief whose proficiency at ‘aihue was used to benefit the chief. Like ‘Iwa, Puapualenalena broke kapu. In his case, he stole from the ‘awa patch kapu to Kiha. Unlike ‘Iwa, Puapualenalena was caught. However, he had been lucky since his talent at stealing was direly needed, so his theft from the chief was pardoned. Kiha knew that Puapualenalena was capable since he had been raiding his ‘awa patch for sometime without detection. Also, unlike ‘Iwa, Puapualenalena used his powers as a kupua to outwit the thieves and regain possession of the prized conch.

Puapualenalena and ‘Iwa live on as celebrated culture heroes in Hawaiian literature. They are remembered because they could accomplish things ordinary people could not. They are not remembered so much for what they stole but rather, that their expertise in stealing enabled them to break established rules and gain the notice and favor of a chief, which in turn raised their own status as well. ‘Iwa was so good that he was never caught in the act. Puapualenalena was detected but pardoned with the condition that he work for the chief.

There are others who tried stealing but never achieved the fame and glory of ‘Iwa and Puapualenalena. The reasons that their stories are not remembered or celebrated are that 1) their thefts were committed in greed; 2) they were caught; and 3) they were not connected to chiefs in any way.
The Rat is Caught Raiding the Nest

This proverb, *Loa'a pono ka 'iole i ka pūnana*, describes an unskilled *'aihue* who gets caught thieving. In *He Kaao no Maniniholoikuaua a me Keli'imalolo*, Legend of Maniniholoikuāua and Keli‘imālolo, (Fornander 1986, 164) Maniniholoikuāua is characterized as being very strong and very quick. He was not known as an *'aihue*, but as an excellent runner. Martha Beckwith describes Maniniholoikuāua as being known throughout Moloka‘i for his thievery (1976, 339). However, in the Hawaiian text of Fornander’s version of the story, the author does not mention the word *'aihue* even once. In his references to how the boy Maniniholoikuāua took things, words like *ki‘i* - to fetch and *lilo* - to change possession from one to another are used. Never once is the word *'aihue* used. Yet in the translation, the boy is said to be stealing (Fornander 1986, 164). My interpretation is that Maniniholoikuāua was not an *'aihue*. He was a swift and agile runner who used his talent to steal but he differed from *Iwa* in that his actions were devoid of any cunning, deception or wits. He was simply quick. His actions were not characteristic of *'aihue*, rather he fetched (*ki‘i*) and made off with things as fast as he could. People would catch him in the act but could not literally catch him because of his dexterity. People knew that he was running off with possessions because they witnessed him doing it. And, they looked down upon him for being greedy.

His story is interesting because of what results from his greed. Unlike *'aihue* of our previous stories, Maniniholoikuāua was in it for the goods. He
favored canoes and all that they contained and because he was strong and fast, he was able to take them. He also achieved some degree of *mana* since he became renowned for his quickness of foot and perhaps for the audacity with which he fetched possessions belonging to another.

Maniniholoikuāua lived with his *mo'o* or lizard grandmother Kalama'ula, in a cave that opened and closed on his command. All the people of Moloka'i knew that Maniniholoikuāua could carry heavy burdens like canoes and things with little effort. Visitors to the island were warned to guard their possessions well. One such visitor, Keli'imālolo, a swift runner of O'ahu was warned that instead of beaching his canoe there on the sand, he should take it into the shed lest it be taken by the boy who steals canoes. Keli'imālolo doubted that the boy could be so swift as to steal his canoe that he paid no mind to the warning. While bathing nearby, Keli'imālolo saw Maniniholoikuāua near the canoe. He yelled out to him to leave it alone but at that instant, the boy lifted the canoe and ran swiftly for the cave. Keli'imālolo gave chase but was too slow. He could not find a way into the cave either so decided to give up, but only temporarily. He would have his revenge. Eventually, he found another way back to O'ahu. He then sailed to Kaua'i in search of runners whose skill surpassed his. There, as he bathed once again, his *malo* was snatched away by two men. He tried to give chase but was no match for them. These men would turn out to be his runners that would help him retrieve his canoe.
As they neared the shore, Maniniholoikuāua spied their canoe and had designs on getting it for himself. His grandmother warned him to leave it alone, lest they both die but, her warnings went unheeded. When all was ready, Maniniholoikuāua sped toward the landing, picked up the canoe and made off with it. They all shouted for him to stop and one of the runners, Kamaakamikioi followed in hot pursuit. Maniniholoikuāua called out for the cave to open but just as he did, Kamaakamikioi shouted the command for the cave to close, crushing Maniniholoikuāua to death.

In the end, Maniniholoikuāua did not become a hero. For one thing, he may have been strong and quick but he was not too bright. He got caught. He hoarded goods for himself. Perhaps his motivation lay in practicing his skill and seeing if indeed he could get away with it. However, his taking of one canoe after another was a real inconvenience to his victims. He gained a reputation as a nuisance to the common folk who always had to be on guard and not leave their possessions unattended. In contrast, in the stealing exploits of 'Iwa and Puapualenalena, no harm was done to their victims.

In the end of the story, all the goods from the cave were retrieved by the people of Moloka'i and Maniniholoikuāua became an example of what happens to one who uses his talent to bother others and is greedy as well.

Those who are caught stealing almost always meet their ends suddenly and violently. The proverb "Lewa ka waha o ka puhi 'o Laumeki" meaning, "The mouth of the eel Laumeki dangles," recalls an eel-man from Moloka'i who
discovered a pond full of fattened fish on Maui which he raided frequently. Over
time, the people of the area caught him and smashed his jaw, leaving it dangling
open for all to see. His greedy pilfering which filled only his own stomach cost
him his life. The lessons learned are twofold. One, don’t be greedy and two, if
you’re going to steal, you had better not get caught.

Manininhoikuāua and Laumeki were not 'aihue in the sense that they
possessed no proficiency in stealing. They simply wanted things and just took
them. There was no thinking, no planning, no artfulness involved.

In one version of his story (Thrum 1923, 259), the famous trickster of
Polynesia known as Māui was said to have met his end after being caught in a
theft. At the time he was living at Waipiʻo, Hawaiʻi, and was well furnished with
food from the land and sea, yet he was bored and wanted a challenge. He spied
some gods roasting bananas across the stream and decided that he would take
some for himself. He fashioned a long spear, poked the banana from the fire and
proceeded to eat it. However, on his second attempt, he was caught. The gods
dragged him to the heiau and bashed his head with a stone, illustrating the point
that good 'aihue never get caught.

Hawaiians celebrated their 'aihue for these reasons. Those who could
accomplish such feats without detection were true experts whose amazing
accomplishments should be celebrated. Their stories were passed down until
they became embedded in the consciousness of all. Hawaiians who heard these
stories developed an understanding that 'aihue was not wrong as long as it went
The art of ‘aihue consisted of stealing by using tricks, wit and intelligence. It meant doing things that were unexpected. Mischievousness was a virtue in Polynesia. Polynesian stories celebrate scamps and rascals who are as radical as they can be within established boundaries. Tricksters like these pushed established boundaries that society had set up and became heroes for doing so. Similarly, ‘aihue are also tricksters. They use wits, cunning and deception. The art of ‘aihue did not amount to just taking something and running. It involved trickery. An example from Hawai‘i tells of the thief suspected for his thievery who constructs an image of himself, puts it in the canoe, sends it out to sea and tricks the people of the community into thinking he is really out at sea. Meanwhile, as they watch the canoe, he steals their food (Smith 1966, 15).

Unlike your typical petty thief, ‘aihue go beyond established guidelines. They break kapu and survive, and are successful in their exploits. Skilled ‘aihue could sneak about without ever being detected. And by breaking kapu, they gained mana, power that no ordinary person had. The objects stolen were of no consequence especially since they would be handed over to the ali‘i. Instead, the real prize was success in the act itself, the mana gained by actually breaking kapu and, the bragging rights that went along with it. This was the art of ‘aihue that is
reflected in classical literature. ‘Aihue were famous because they could get away with things that others could not. ‘Iwa’s skill was tested time and time again by the chief until he was satisfied that indeed, the boy was the best he had ever seen. And better to have the boy in his company, doing his bidding than out there running rampant.

To hear of the adventures and exploits of the great ‘aihue ‘Iwa is to admire and have pride in our own hero, possible ancestor to some, who was witty, cunning and artful in his use of deceit.

His expertise at stealing must have been fascinating to the old Hawaiians who, upon listening to his story, understood how difficult it would have been to steal from the chief and, the skill and bravery required to successfully pull off such thefts. I would like to illuminate the art of ‘aihue by further examining what ‘Iwa’s stealing expeditions may have actually entailed. First, after Kea’au hired him to steal the leho Kalokuna back from the chief ‘Umi, ‘Iwa had to think of a way to get close enough to the fishing grounds of the chief so as not to be detected. Then, after formulating his plan and how to execute it, he had to swim all the way to the chief’s canoe, dive further down, untie the leho, and retie the line to a coral head, swim back to his canoe, then escape without ever being seen. A simply incredible feat, since 1) the chief’s fishing ground was probably made kapu because of his presence there, meaning the place was reserved for him, his entourage and no one else. Common people were not allowed to just come swimming by. A penalty for such an infraction could be death. So, ‘Iwa needed
to swim some great length going completely undetected, 2) the very nature of leho fishing was to lower the lure and watch it from above. Oil from the kukui nut was used to make the surface of the water clear for optimum viewing below.

'Iwa would have to have been a strong, quick swimmer who was brave enough to even attempt breaking kapu in order to steal from the chief. 'Iwa's talent was a testament to his skills in observation as well. In order to steal the sacred ko’i, 'Iwa needed first to know where it was housed and how it was guarded. He needed to know exactly how the kapu was proclaimed and enforced. He needed to first practice his skills at impersonating the chief's runner who was responsible for placing the kapu so as to sound believable.

He was also a keen observer of the nature of man as well. In his last challenge, he devised his plan well before the six other thieves set off. He knew that after an entire night of thieving, the six would be tired. He could allow them to do the work then steal from them as they slept.

Perhaps the trait that Hawaiians of old could most appreciate from the daring, adventurous 'Iwa was his keen sense of observation, a trait that many Hawaiians were credited with possessing. A great 'aihue like 'Iwa would use his abilities to his advantage when stealing.

The Art of 'Aihue: A Contemporary Example

In February 1994 two kat'ai, woven sennit burial caskets containing the bones of long deceased ali'i, Liloa, (father of 'Umi) and Lonoikamakahiki
disappeared from a locked storage cabinet at Bernice Pauahi Bishop Museum without a trace. Upon detection of the theft, a small group of kupuna admonished the thieves and cried for the safe return of the bones to the museum repository. Other Hawaiians celebrated their liberation and presumed reinternment to the ‘āina. Word spread that those who stole the ka‘ai were instructed to do so in a dream, being told that the iwi, the bones, wanted to go home. Hawaiians believe that iwi do not just contain the mana of the deceased chief but contain the very ‘uhane, spirit of the person (Handy and Pukui 1986, 151).

An article in the Honolulu Advertiser, 26, February 1994, quoted Kenneth Brown of the Bishop Museum board of directors, as saying that the theft was “a very well planned, sophisticated operation”. The ka‘ai were supposedly last seen a day before fumigation of the building was to occur. According to police, there were no signs of forced entry into the room or cabinet in which the ka‘ai were kept. It was not until everything was said and done that someone received a call saying “Liloa is home.” The person who received the call notified the museum but it was not until two days later that the museum actually realized what the phone call actually meant. In classic ’aihue style, not only was the theft well planned and carefully orchestrated but the act of ’aihue went completely unnoticed, so much so that the ’aihue himself had to call someone to let them know that the bones were indeed gone. This is reminiscent of how ‘Iwa bragged about stealing the leho from right under the chief’s nose.
The thief’s act of prowess took ‘aihue to its highest form. He can be compared to ‘Iwa in that he stole in service of his chief and that he broke established modern day kapu by stealing from the museum. But unlike ‘Iwa, he did not steal an object for the ali‘i, rather, he stole the ali‘i themselves, liberating them from captivity and returning them to where they belonged.

Mo‘olelo of old tell us that the true ‘aihue does not steal for himself but uses his talent as a service to his ali‘i. The ‘aihue did not keep the object that he stole. The ‘aihue gained mana from success in his accomplishment. Although the identity of the ‘aihue of the kd’ai remains unknown to the general public today, there is no doubt that people will always remember, and many will always celebrate his act, thus bestowing mana upon him as a great, although anonymous, ‘aihue.

The art of ‘aihue continues to be practiced today as in the stealing of the kd’ai and as seen in more playful situations like the following. An admitted ‘aihue of Hawai‘i island prides himself in taking possessions from friends from time to time, as a test of skill. If things are left out, displayed as treasures, “Butchie” will steal them without the owner’s knowledge. He will take it home but instead of hiding it, he will display it too, just as it had been before so that when its rightful owner comes to his place, he will notice it, be amused thinking, “That’s mine” and be challenged to steal it back without “Butchie” knowing. Again, the reward here is not the object but the act itself and the amazement of the friend who sees his treasure displayed in Butchie’s house and thinks, “How did he do that?”
This kind of 'aihue was an art. The main difference between thieves of the Western world and professional 'aihue is that thieves in Western society concentrate on getting the object. 'Aihue in Hawaiian society concentrate on the act itself and the prestige and mana gained from it.

When European explorers landed in these islands, theft was one of their most frequently recorded complaints. In the following chapter I will show the clash between differing concepts of ownership, how Hawaiians came to be known as thieves and how attitudes toward stealing of any kind were transformed. Moreover, how as relations with the haole progressed, the stealing became less about gaining mana and more about possessing the object. And finally how, as time passed, the celebrated art of 'aihue became denigrated into something sinister and criminal, so that it has become a part of our past most Hawaiians of today have difficulty reconciling.
CHAPTER 4. CONCEPTS OF 'AIHUE AFTER WESTERN CONTACT

Pick up almost any book pertaining to the history of Hawai'i, written in the twentieth century, and you will find that Hawaiians of the contact period are characterized as thieves. Sometimes subtle, sometimes more blatant, these comparatively modern histories give readers the idea that Hawaiians as a group were as lowly as the common criminal, pilfering whenever the opportunity arose.

These characterizations are not unique only to Hawaiians. The Marianas were called "Las Islas de los Ladrones" or "Islands of Thieves" by Spanish explorers. In The reception of European voyagers on Polynesian islands 1568 - 1797, W.H. Pearson wrote that with the exception of three islands whose chiefs strictly forbade stealing, inhabitants of all other islands in Polynesia who encountered foreign ships stole (1970, 140). Furthermore, no matter what the natives thought to be their rights to property, this right was simply not recognized by the foreigners.

Before his arrival in Hawai'i, Captain James Cook experienced major conflicts over what he labeled "thievery." He dealt with offenders punitively, cutting off the ears of a Huahine native, lashing Tongan chiefs, taking Tahitian chiefs hostage and firing shot and ball at accused and potential "thieves" throughout the Pacific. These violent cross cultural interactions were justified by Cook as a deterrence to further violence, "for they must not imagine they have gained an advantage over us" (Cook and King 1784, 515). I.C. Campbell, along
with many other non indigenous writers of history, justified Cook’s punishments for thievery as a means of controlling “the endless threat to his limited resources” (Campbell 1989, 57).

Early explorers indeed realized that their ideas of property ownership differed from those of Hawaiians but they failed to respect or understand them. Instead, they would teach the Natives what they considered proper behavior through violence and force. They operated within the scope of their own value system as did the Hawaiians.

Contemporary histories characterize Hawaiians of the contact period as thieves, plain and simple. They were said to have possessed a “thievish disposition” (Kuykendall 1938, 16), and were “light fingered Polynesians” who “helped themselves to the movable property of navigators” (Campbell 1989, 57). Gavan Daws, wrote as if a matter of fact, “One thing more than most gave Cook trouble with Polynesians - they were thieves, and in this the Hawaiians of Kaua‘i were like the rest” (1968, 3). With these powerful strokes of the pen, Hawaiians were labeled for all time as criminals. These labels of Hawaiians as cunning and sinister, pilfering savages who lacked any understanding of personal property ownership were repeated over and over in the making and writing of history. One might assume that these labels came directly from the journals of Captains Cook and Clerke and their crews, since modern histories which have shaped our impressions of Hawaiians of the contact period are heavily based on these same journal accounts. While indeed these primary sources are filled with many
references to thievery, it is interesting to note that in those same journals, they are not regarded as being as important as modern writers insist. In other words, although the journal writers recorded thefts often, they have also commented that: 1) the items taken were of little value; 2) most of the items were easily recovered; 3) Hawaiians were among the most honest people that they had ever encountered.

**What the Early Accounts Really Say**

At first glance, the journal accounts do seem full of references to thievery. But upon closer examination, we see that these complaints are offset by just as many entries attesting to the “remarkable honesty” of Hawaiians (Cook and King 1784, 475 n1) and the general agreement that Hawaiians were kind and fair in all dealings (Broughton 1967, 33).

A closer examination of the journals reveals that of the items taken from the ships of early explorers, most were considered nothing of consequence including items such as tongs, chisels, hooks, tools, hammocks and others, the majority being objects made of iron, which was highly prized by Hawaiians and in seemingly abundant supply aboard foreign ships. With the exception of the small cutter taken from Cook’s ship which will be discussed later, most of the items taken during the initial stages of contact were inconsequential, described as “trifling articles” (Portlock 1968, 125). Furthermore, of these items that were taken, most were easily recoverable. During the years of initial contact, 41% of
“stolen” goods were eventually returned to their owners (Dobyns 1988, 169). Over half of this percentage of the goods taken and returned were found to have taken place specifically during Cook’s voyages to Hawai‘i. These so called acts of “thievery” were balanced by a large percentage of the goods being returned to their owners.

It seems that the authors of those early accounts, those that experienced firsthand encounters with Hawaiians understood more than most modern retellers of history, that thievery was not a trait common to all Hawaiians and that one should be cautious in labeling them as such. William Shaler in his *Journal of a voyage between China and the Northwest Coast of America, made in 1804* wrote of Hawaiians:

> These amiable people have been stigmatized as being the greatest thieves in the world, but experience has given me an opportunity of knowing the malicious charge is unjust. That there are thieves among them is unquestionable, and among what people are they not to be found? Would it be just to call the English and Americans nations of thieves because many are to be found among the rabble of London and New York? No; and it ought to be considered, that the first ships that visited these islands were filled with articles above all price with them, such as gold and diamonds would be with us; these tempting objects were exposed to their view, and apparently not greatly valued by their owners; and I do not think it extraordinary that petty thefts should happen in such cases 1935, 90).
Theft or Innocent Taking?

The most interesting discrepancy between the early accounts and modern histories is the recognition made by journal writers like Cook, Clerke, Samwell and the rest, that Hawaiians were not stealing in the Western sense of the word. This major recognition is simply ignored in modern versions of history. What modern writers failed to do was to contextualize the theft events. Instead they consider all takings as stealing. Moreover, they tend to emphasize the thefts that did occur without contextualization.

The writings of early explorers show that Hawaiians were not acting deviously or with intent to steal. They were not hiding their actions or trying to sneak around as an 'aihue would. Rather, they seemed to be casually taking what was left for the taking.

On one occasion after being reprimanded while leaving with a metal clamp that was left on deck, the accused thief “immediately left off seemingly as unconcerned as if he had been doing an indifferent action” (Samwell 1967, 1082). On another occasion, the foreigners fired shots in response to a so-called theft. The Hawaiians involved were said to “not have [had] any idea they were doing wrong” (Law 1779, 491). They were seen “very leisurely” and “without any scruple or hesitation” loading their canoes with goods and were “greatly surprised” when confronted, “for they could not believe we were in earnest but imagined we would allow them to take what they chose” (Gilbert 1982, 62). In most instances, negligence on the part of the owner was what caused the items
to be taken. To the Hawaiian mind, things left lying about, meant that they were not highly valued, perhaps even discarded. As the haole, or foreigner was quick to learn, items not safeguarded were up for grabs.

It can be argued then that Hawaiians in this early period of interaction with foreigners were not committing thefts. These were not acts of 'aihue as they were not taking things secretly. The Hawaiians involved in the takings did not consider their actions as wrong. If they intended on stealing, they certainly did not act deceptive or cunning. They did not try to hide their actions. Rather, they took openly.

Perhaps because no kapu had been placed on the ships, everything upon it may have been perceived as noa, as unsanctified, thus free for the taking. Hawaiians did not understand that the ship and everything on it was kapu to the haole and not free for the taking. It was not until the haole began protesting that Hawaiians realized that these things were indeed kapu, reserved for the haole alone.

Some were offended by the foreigner's greed for as we know, in the Hawaiian world greed and stinginess were despised. How could they who had so much not be willing to share just a little of their wealth? The foreigner had little understanding of the concept of shared ownership. He had little understanding of the Hawaiian world which was based on ideas of personal yet communal property. These last accounts illustrate this point. A group of Hawaiians were aboard a ship as the crew prepared to set up their hammocks.
Upon seeing the abundance of hammocks, the Hawaiians there started to take their share, passing them down to others on waiting canoes. When they were stopped by the ship’s crew they “by no means seem’d alarmed, as tho’ detected in a theft, but rather surprised and hurt by our illnature that we would not spare them a few, of what we apparently had so many.” (Cook and King 1784, 1322).

Cook, in one of his entries, even corrected his earlier statement that Hawaiians were stealing by explaining that rather, Hawaiians seemed to think they were entitled to whatever was there. Again, this idea of things that were left about were free for the taking is applicable. He wrote, “Some indeed at first betrayed a thievish disposition, or rather they thought they had a right to anything they could lay their hands upon... (Cook and King 1784, 2: 205). One possible explanation for Hawaiians thinking they had the right to “anything they could lay their hands upon” was that those Hawaiians could have been ali‘i who were indeed used to taking what they wanted by way of their status as chiefs.

Another simpler explanation is discussed by Norman Meller in his 1988 article “Concepts of Stealing in Pacific Island.” According to Meller, perhaps the only iron seen prior to the arrival of foreign ships was that which came ashore as flotsam and jetsam. He surmised that the iron would belong to whomever found it. Thus, the island natives who boarded foreign vessels simply found iron everywhere – things left lying about, even nails which held the ship together. In Hawai‘i, flotsam and jetsam belonged to whoever found it, except in cases where the ali‘i of the area made it kapu, reserving it for himself as did Kamehameha.
with any iron that washed ashore during his reign. Kualoa on the windward side of O'ahu was also kapu for ali'i as it was known for the place that palaoa, or whale's tooth ivory often washed ashore. Thus, the iron aboard foreign ships may have been perceived as iron "found".

Yet another possible explanation is that the ali'i may have felt entitlement through protocol. In his article "European Intimidation and the Myth of Tahiti," W.H. Pearson discusses the proper protocol over the arrival of drift canoes in Futuna. Upon coming ashore, the canoe and all its contents become the property of the gods and are distributed among the chiefs. If the visitor wished to return from whence he came, he was given a new canoe filled with food and supplies for his return. Pearson argues that "the arrangement, in its reciprocity can be seen as a kind of exchange" (1969, 202) and that eventually an exchange system would have been established. Indeed, a social relationship which entailed bartering - some nails for a hog, trinkets for fresh water, had been established between Cook and company and the Hawaiians. This relationship like the bartering between inhabitants of the uplands and the shore was the social relationship which created the expectation of sharing. In other words, the Hawaiian obligation to share now extended to Cook and crew. The only problem for both parties was that Cook and his men did not recognize this. They wanted to barter but on their terms. And since they did not recognize the cultural obligation to share, the real stealing began.
What all of this says about theft and thievery in the early contact period, prior to the event leading up to Cook’s death is that Hawaiians were not the notorious thieves that modern histories made them out to be. Indeed they were curious. Initially, they did not sneak around or take while trying to hide or deceive. Rather, they took items that were, as they saw it, carelessly left for the taking and noa, free of kapu. The early explorers recognized this fact. Writers of modern history did not. Modern writers have perpetuated the notion of Hawaiians as thieves because they took notice of every instance of theft, petty or otherwise that was ever recorded, but failed to provide a context in which to view them. On the surface, it may have seemed that Hawaiians were thieves and that their thievery became more and more devious and cunning as relations progressed. What really happened was that at initial contact, Hawaiians took what they believed to be free for the taking. Later on however, as relations progressed, Hawaiians began to steal. This is why modern writers were so quick to label them thieves. They will cite two significant historical events involving theft and murder which undoubtedly affected the writing of history and the making of the myth of Hawaiian as thief and savage. They shaped the way that people would come to view Hawaiians. They informed our understanding of these events, pointing the finger at Hawaiians as instigators and as thieves yet, failed to provide context. In examining these two major events, we will see that indeed, those Hawaiians who stole were no longer taking innocently. They were stealing intentionally. But for what reason?
Two Major Theft Events

These bloody encounters; the death of Cook and later, the events at Honua'ula, reinforced the stereotype of Hawaiians as thieves thus making it easy for modern writers of history to use the label. What needs to be examined are the situations that Hawaiians were reacting to.

The Resolution and the Discovery under the command of Captains Cook and Clerke sailed into Kealakekua, Hawai'i in January 1779. The Hawaiians there had heard of these men, their ships and their abundance of iron, as they had appeared on Kaua'i a year prior. Upon their arrival into the bay, Cook and his crew were greeted by throngs of kanaka. Over the course of their month long stay, they were welcomed, given tribute, honored, provided with an abundance of food gifts, fresh water and other valuables, and entertained. Their commanders were treated with the highest respect and regard, equaled only to that of chiefs of high status.

The ships had been at Kealakekua for over a month, all the while depleting food, water, provisions and valuable material resources of the district. In their intercourse with the Hawaiians of Kealakekua, the haole made it clear that they objected to the petty thieving that was taking place. Yet they had taken women freely, filled their casks with fresh water and their bellies with the finest foods, and enjoyed the fruits of paradise all at the expense of the community. They were like guests who just dropped in without warning and overstayed their welcome.
Finally after a month had passed, to the relief of the residents of Kealakekua, the foreigners set sail, leaving the bay on February 4, 1779 (Kamakau 1992, 101). But in less than a week’s time, they returned. One of their masts broke while out at sea and Cook chose to return to the calm, safe harbor of Kealakekua to repair it. Upon their return, the bay was quiet. There were no greetings or warm welcomes as there had been on their initial arrival. The Ali‘i nui, the High chief Kalaniōpu‘u was elsewhere; the bay and village were under kapu until his return. When he returned and freed the bay from kapu, bartering resumed but relations seemed strained and the Natives a bit hostile. Examples of this hostility include an incident of stone throwing at a watering party and growing numbers of thefts that had been taking place since their return. Yes, thefts. At this point, the innocent takings turned into calculated takings, real acts of thievery. The reason seems obvious. The Hawaiians were upset at the return of these hungry, greedy foreigners who had nearly exhausted their supply of already limited resources. The rock throwing incident occurred while the British filled their casks at the well. This is understandable. They were back for more water! This strain on already diminishing resources was the reason for the troubles that the foreigners faced at their return (Price 1971, 255). Could these acts of stealing have been seen as payment for all they had previously given and all that they would be giving again to these greedy foreigners? Or was the stealing provoked by something else?
In all fairness to the British, on their return, they still engaged in trade and barter for their provisions. Thus, in their minds, they were entitled to fill their casks once again. The reasons for increased hostilities and subsequent thievery could have had to do with problems between the ali'i and maka'ainana. As Marshall Sahlins explains, "trade with Europeans created unprecedented relations of competition between Hawaiian chiefs and commoners" (1981, 43-44). If commoners obtained goods, chiefs seized them by way of chiefly privilege. Also, ships were increasingly placed under kapu, thus restricting trade only to the ali'i. Thus, thefts occurred more frequently as maka'ainana tried to obtain items any way they could. Perhaps stealing was the only way to acquire iron and other highly prized possessions since anything maka'ainana possessed could by right, be taken by ali'i. When maka'ainana stole, their aim was to go undetected by both the haole and the ali'i.

Over the next week tensions continued to escalate. While sailors were filling their water casks onshore, shots were heard echoing from one of the ships in the bay. The Discovery had fired on some Hawaiians making off in a canoe, followed by sailors giving chase. A pair of tongs and a chisel had been stolen. Edgar, one of the crewman in pursuit retrieved the stolen items and in a moment of confidence, tried to seize the canoe belonging to the presumed thieves. But it turned out to be the wrong canoe. This one belonged to the chief Palea who, upon being confronted claimed innocence and refused to surrender his canoe. A fight ensued wherein another sailor took hold of an oar and struck the head of
the chief, Palea. The next morning on that fateful day of Cook’s death, February 14th, the cutter from Clerke’s ship, was discovered missing. It had been taken under cover of darkness. The foreigners contend that this was just another act of thievery in order to obtain more iron, but looking at the circumstances, it is more likely that the cutter was stolen in retribution for the insult committed to the ali’i, Palea the previous day. Kamakau surmised that they stole the cutter “in order to get the iron in it, and perhaps they were angry with the white men for striking Palea with a club” (1992, 102).

When Cook learned of this latest incident, he was angered, not because the sanctity of a chief had been defiled, but because he wanted his skiff back. He devised what he thought was a clever plan, similar to others he carried out in other parts of Polynesia. He would take the Ali’i nui, Kalaniʻōpuʻu hostage until the cutter was restored. Cook, along with some other officers went to fetch Kalaniʻōpuʻu. For his audacity in trying to take the ali’i hostage, Cook rightly paid with his life. As for the Hawaiians involved in the killing, they were simply defending their chief. Yet as it stands, Cook went down in history as a hero, as one of the greatest seafarers who ever lived and Hawaiians as savage murderers and thieves.

After tensions arose, the innocent takings turned into calculated thefts. Some thefts were examples of ‘aihue because the thefts were well planned, and well executed, artful in their composition. The Hawaiian’s success at stealing iron from the ships, as well as the cutter from right under the noses of the haole was,
like 'Iwa, a testament to their observation skills. The Hawaiians used the same observation techniques they used for say, fishing or farming. They paid attention to the very nature of things. In fishing, a lawai'a would know where the fish congregate, how they act, and how to trick them, manipulate them into doing what he wanted. In farming, a mahi'ai would know the optimum times for planting and harvesting by watching the weather, the lunar cycle and knowing the nature of the plants he or she worked with. In the same way, the 'aihue was successful because he observed everything that was going on around him. He knew exactly what the haole were up to. The 'aihue watched them watch the cutter. He learned how to get what he wanted by simply watching. And eventually, the 'aihue was successful in getting his prize because he had observe the nature of the haole thus, he knew the prime time for going after it.

To argue this point about observation skills a bit further, let's take a look at the haole complaint of Hawaiians stealing the very nails from the ships from right under their noses. The first question to ask is, how did they do that? How could they possibly steal the nails that were holding the ship together? What tools did they have at their disposal? Or did they steal tools like pliers, tongs and chisels for that very purpose? And if they had, removing the nails was still no simple task. They would either have to remove the nails that were underwater, so as not to be detected or, know of a distraction or diversion which was to occur that would make it easier for them to go unnoticed. In any case, the 'aihue watched, learned and waited patiently for the opportune time to strike.
In addition to the events leading to Cook's death, another major historical incident contributing to the stereotype of Hawaiians as thieves took place at Honua'ula, Maui.

**Honua'ula and the Massacre at Olowalu**

More than a decade had passed since the death of Cook. From that time on, Hawai'i witnessed the constant arrival of foreign vessels to her shores. In 1790, yet another foreign vessel, the *Eleanora*, commanded by Simon Metcalfe sailed into Honua'ula to barter for provisions. Historical accounts report that while anchored there, a sailor was killed and a small boat cut loose, stolen for the iron. In retribution, Metcalf shot at a native canoe killing several on board. Unsatisfied however that he had taught the natives a lesson in proper manners and civility, he proceeded to burn the dwellings and nearby *heiau* on shore. He had managed to take some Hawaiians prisoner. After learning from one of them that the thief of the cutter came from Olowalu, Metcalf set sail. In a cruel and calculated move, he encouraged the inhabitants of Olowalu to come out and trade. Unsuspecting, large numbers of canoes made their way starboard as directed by the captain. When Metcalf was satisfied that they were all in position, he massacred them with gun and cannon fire. Over a hundred innocent Hawaiians were killed. He exacted his bloody vengeance on the innocent people there, in the hope of deterring further acts of violence and thievery toward himself and his crew.
Some might see Metcalf's actions as cruel but justified. Those who do, might argue that his actions were provoked by the violence and thefts committed by Hawaiians against him and those of his crew. The question that needs to be asked is, why were Hawaiians, like those at Honua'ula stealing and why were acts of violence continuing to escalate against foreigners sailing into Hawai'i?

The reasons for increased thefts and violence had to do with the interactions between native and foreigner. Hawaiians were seen as savages and were likewise treated as such. At Olowalu, it is said that the chief of the area and others had wanted to trade but the haole were "unfriendly and beat them off with ropes" (Kamakau 1992, 145). Naturally tensions would arise from this kind of treatment, especially directed toward chiefs!

In both the stealing of Cook's cutter and the theft events at Honua'ula, Hawaiians felt slighted. The Hawaiians, many of them chiefs, were being treated poorly and unjustly. The thefts were retributions for ill treatment.

Also, by 1790, the craving for iron, especially firearms had not been satisfied. Hawaiians desired what they knew the haole had lots of. Yet, their needs were not being fulfilled. So, they took what they could by whatever means necessary.

These two events illustrate the reasons for the increase in hostilities and thefts. Some thefts were committed for the sake of revenge. Others may have been committed simply out of desire for certain objects that the haole possessed.
Others still may have been committed by maka'ainana who were unhappy with the monopoly that the chiefs had on trade.

It was these two historical events involving theft which caused contemporary retellers of history to label Hawaiians as thieves denigrating them to the status of criminal. Even though, admittedly Hawaiians began stealing, at the very least, modern writers of history should provide context as to the reasons for the increased thieving, not as justification of the thefts but as a means of representing both sides of the story.

**Kamehameha and Thievery**

According to various journal entries at the time of contact, maka'ainana did most of the taking, while ali'i or chiefs did the returning (Dobyns 1988, 169). What is not known is if the maka'ainana stole on their own behalf or if they stole for the chief. On one occasion a knife was stolen whereupon Palea, an ali'i, immediately recovered it. Samwell described the incident thus: "The chiefs have always very good intelligence and there is hardly anything can be stole, be it ever so secretly done, but they are able to recover if they choose it" (Samwell 1967, 1161). Law, complained of another incident in which "they began today to make use of their fingers too freely... among other things the Captns bunch of keys, which he got again by the assistance of an Aree or Chief" (1779, 490n2).

The ali'i realizing the effects that thefts had on their relationships with the haole had the items returned. This in effect not only demonstrated their authority
over their people in retrieving the items but also served to reestablish good relations between the foreigners and themselves because of their ability to do so. Kamehameha was one such ali‘i who recognized the value of friendly relations. Because of this he established laws that prohibited thievery of any kind.

By 1792, Johnstone, who had sailed to Hawaii previously in 1787-1788 commented on a marked change of attitudes. On his first visit he remarked that the Hawaiians were "hostile" but on his second visit "the reverse," "docile, orderly trading fairly," with not the smallest theft having had occurred (Vancouver 1984, 457).

These changes had to do with Kamehameha and his influence over those in his domain. Under Kamehameha's rule a new order and a new way of thinking was established. Kamehameha had witnessed the first encounters with foreigners at Kealakekua and, had known how those initial and subsequent interactions had been marred by theft. As he rose in power, Kamehameha cultivated relationships with foreigners because he had seen what benefit those good relations could have on advancing his political career. He could obtain not only counsel and the support of entire countries but guns, cannons, weapons and foreign vessels with which to do his bidding. Kamehameha was a political strategist. He understood the value of maintaining peaceful relations with the haole. In the journal of Captain Otto Von Kotzebue, it was written: "The O-Waihians are included in the charge that our seafarers make against the South Sea Islanders in general, namely that they are devoted to thievery. That we had
no occasion to join in this lament can probably be ascribed to the protective care that Tameiameia [Kamehameha] took of us... (Von Chamisso 1986, 315). Unlike Kamehameha, his rival chief Kahekili saw things differently. It is written that Kahekili encouraged his entourage to steal. In his journal, James Colnett wrote of Kahekili, "my royal guest employ'd all his attendants to thieve" (in Sahlins 1992, 39) As a result, Kahekili was not as successful as Kamehameha in securing the backing of foreigners, much less foreign nations. Kahekili still believed in his inherent right, his chiefly privilege to possess the best that existed whether it be in the possession of commoner or foreigner. So, he did what he felt was necessary in order to secure those items. And, according to chiefly custom, his actions were completely justified.

In his writings comparing the ali'i and the common people, David Malo wrote that chiefs stole saying that "there were no laws and even the chiefs were given to robbery and spoilation" (1951, 57) and that at court, nearly everyone was engaged in some kind of robbery, thievery, embezzlement or extortion (1951, 66). Here, Malo fails to explain chiefly privilege and the right of the chief to take whatever he wanted from those of equal or lesser status and the fact that this right of the chief was accepted by all as simply the way things were. Indeed there were good chiefs as well as bad. But Malo's characterization of "nearly everyone at court" as a criminal is an ethnocentric, Christianized viewpoint. Malo did however, distinguish Kamehameha from those chiefs who "were given to robbery, spoilation, murder, extortion and ravishing" and reported that
Kamehameha was an aliʻi pono, a chief who conducted himself in an upright and proper manner (1951, 58).

Indeed, Kamehameha instituted and enforced laws prohibiting 'aihue which in turn served his own political interests. Thievery ('aihue) and seizing of property in any form, even taking by chiefly privilege (hao) was outlawed by Kamehameha. He allowed chiefs their privileges so long as they did not burden their people by plundering, causing distress or oppressing them (Desha 2000, 424). He himself set an example for other chiefs by not seizing property of commoners or chiefs as was his privilege. By doing so, Kamehameha seemed to be moving away from tradition and moving toward the establishment of one law over all regardless of class. It was said, He aupuni noi ko Kamehameha.

Kamehameha had a government in which things were asked for, or requested. A story is recounted of his travels to the district of a lesser chief in order to obtain taro slips for planting. The chief whose patch he had visited was not home but instead of just taking as was his right, Kamehameha waited for the chief to return so that he could ask the other’s permission (Kamakau 1992, 205).

Kamehameha taught his people that 'aihue was wrong. And punishment for these crimes would be severe. Thieves could be held by those they stole from or by the executing officer (luna ho'oko). If one was caught stealing the personal property of the ruling chief or of lesser chiefs, the penalty was death (Nupepa Kuokoa).
Kamakau who wrote a generation after David Malo, in 1865, makes reference to thievery in many of his writings. In *Ka Po'e Kahiko* he wrote that stealing was one of two major sins/evils (*hewa nui*) for which one suffered while living and even after death. The punishment of a thief was to have his flesh stripped from his bones until he died (1976, 37). The problem with these references is that Kamakau does not give us a sense of time or context, so we are left with the impression that this is the way Hawaiians always thought. The saying "*Ho'ole ka waha, holehole 'ia no ka iwi*" meaning "The mouth may deny it, but the flesh is nevertheless stripped from the bones" refers to thieves being liars who will deny stealing even to their deaths. According to Pukui, this saying originated in Kamehameha's time when thievery and murder were strictly prohibited and "severely punished" (1983, 117). It is possible that Kamakau's statement concerning thievery was based on this saying.

Kamakau's writings are based heavily on the laws of Kamehameha's time. Born in 1815, four years prior to the death of Kamehameha, it is easy to see why Kamakau's writings are influenced by events of that period. He frequently refers to theft events of Kamehameha's time. He gives a story about a Hawaiian who was roasted whole for thievery during Kamehameha's reign. He describes another incident of a man who stole from a chief's pond near Waihe'e in 1811, whose eyes were gouged out as punishment. Kamakau wrote that Kamehameha abolished the death penalty for thievery but that the fear of severe punishment deterred potential thieves in those days (1992, 313).
Kamakau was without a doubt, influenced by what he knew of Kamehameha and his laws prohibiting thievery. He wrote as if those same laws existed prior to Kamehameha's time, so it is difficult to know if they really existed then. For example, he wrote that the chief 'Umi prohibited thievery (1992, 19). Yet, 'Umi was known to have employed court thieves, one of whom became the famous culture hero 'Iwa. Kamakau seemed to be applying the nature of Kamehameha's reign to the time of 'Umi, who lived eight generations prior. Or is it possible that Kamakau was right, that thievery was prohibited but only thievery against himself? Could a double standard have existed in 'Umi's court?

Another example of the influence that Kamehameha had on Kamakau's thinking is present in his piece on the arrival of Captain Cook in which the kahuna or priest warned the people not to steal lest they be shot. When a Hawaiian was indeed shot and killed, the priest responded by saying, "our fault for plundering, let us live under law. If any man rob or steal his bones shall be stripped of flesh"(1992, 94). If this was truly the punishment for theft in those days, the foreigners would surely have recorded them in their journals. Moreover, the stripping of one's flesh from one's bones would have been enough to deter any theft from having occurred. Again, this was not the case.

What we do know for sure about Kamehameha is that he had a definite influence on his people regarding the institution of laws which prohibited stealing of any kind. Because he was politically motivated in his quest to rule all
the islands and in his desire for firearms, it was important for Kamehameha to control trade between Hawaiians and foreigners as much as possible. Kamehameha placed _kapu_ on ships so that commoners and lesser chiefs could not trade, thus maintaining his monopoly. Furthermore, he was known to have sent trusted companions (_aitane_) aboard ships "to look after the vessel, and keep the natives from stealing" (Corney 1896, 96).

Kamehameha died in 1819, a year prior to the arrival of Christian missionaries to Hawai‘i. Although Kamehameha had heard of the foreign god from Vancouver and other foreigners, he refused to convert to Christianity. He died devoted to his own gods whom he credited for his success as conquerer of all the islands. It was Kamehameha who taught his people that stealing was wrong and he did so not under any influence of the foreign religion, but as a means of maintaining control over his subjects and maintaining peaceful relations with _haole_ traders. Thus, he created a new national conscience pertaining to thievery. He made it clear that stealing was wrong and should not be engaged in. What Kamehameha did was establish law protecting the rights of all people, _ali‘i_, _maka‘ainana_, foreigner and native alike. But, despite his laws forbidding stealing, the practice still continued.

With the arrival of the _haole_, the nature of ‘aihue changed. In precontact times, people stole mostly for the _mana_ obtained by the act. After contact, emphasis shifted to the item.
Pioneer missionary Lucy G. Thurston wrote in her diary in the year 1820 that because their typically Hawaiian house had no locks, she was forced to stay home for four months to guard their belongings. She wrote further, “the lack of eyes in the back of my head, gave opportunity of having property taken in my very presence” (1882, 48). Was it simply a matter of Hawaiians wanting the items and making off with them? Or, were Hawaiians still behaving according to culture? When Mrs. Thurston’s possessions were admired, following Hawaiian custom, she was expected to share. If she did not, she was being pt. Perhaps the Hawaiians may have felt entitled to take them. This example, like the various entries in the journals of Cook and his crew show that in the Hawaiian mind, people had more obligation to share. When foreigners arrived on the scene, they did not realize that they too were expected to behave according to custom.

At the time of contact, what early explorers observed and documented was the clash between Western and Hawaiian concepts of ownership. For Hawaiians, the line between what was kapu and what was noa was never clearly delineated. Later as thieving increased, so too did hostilities. By that time Hawaiians were aware that the haole considered thievery as wrong, just by their reactions to them and, by the fact that they demanded the return of the stolen items. When Kamehameha realized that thievery was a common cause for complaint among the haole and, that it would be politically advantageous for him to prohibit it, he did so. In teaching his people that stealing was wrong, he introduced a new moral code of conduct, one that was reinforced after his death.
when Calvinist missionaries arrived bringing the laws of the new god. But, as more and more haole came to settle in Hawai'i, bringing their foreign goods, to some, their possessions became objects of desire. At that point, the emphasis of stealing shifted from mana gained to possessing the actual object. Over time the missionaries set about proselytizing and colonizing through education. In 1838, Laura Fish Judd wrote that "life and property were everywhere safe" (1966, 62). The missionaries were successful in teaching and enforcing the commandments of their god, among them "Thou Shall Not Steal."
CHAPTER 5. CONCLUSION

The complexities surrounding 'aihue have to do with the circumstances surrounding the theft. Generally 'aihue was seen as a nuisance. Those who stole were perceived as greedy, unless of course, the theft benefitted the whole or was committed on behalf of the ali'i. Under these circumstances, 'aihue was accepted, even celebrated.

Whereas the modern day thief steals for material possessions, the 'aihue o' old stole for the mana obtained from getting away with the act. The actions of skilled 'aihue were remarkable, simply because unlike ordinary people, they broke established kapu and lived. 'Aihue like this are remembered for their artful ways of stealing, their cunning and wit.

When Europeans explorers arrived in Hawai'i, initially, Hawaiians were not stealing at all. Rather, they took what was perceived to be free from kapu and left out for the taking. Later, as tensions arose and relations became strained, stealing became rampant. This led to the labeling of Hawaiians as thieves. Modern historians gave the label but failed to provide context as to why the thefts may have been occurring. Instead of understanding or contextualizing these events from a Hawaiian perspective, they simply called Hawaiians thieves which in turn placed most of the blame for bloody cross cultural encounters on Hawaiians. When these modern writers of history labeled Hawaiians as thieves, they stole our true identity. When they failed to provide historical context from a Hawaiian perspective, they stole our true identity. Although some Hawaiians
stole, to label an entire people as such distorts reality. Therefore, I reject the label of Hawaiians as thieves. Through this research, I have provided a Hawaiian perspective on 'aihue. Labels which stereotype an entire people need to be challenged. History needs to be told from a balanced perspective which represents all sides of the story. The voice that was silenced throughout much of the history making in the past is the voice that must be heeded now. The indigenous voice must be heard so that a more balanced view of history exists.

Native scholars and those sympathetic to the plight of Hawaiians today are beginning to set the record straight. In their writings, they strive to represent the Hawaiian perspective by challenging labels and stereotypes shifting focus on how what foreigners did led to the demise of the Hawaiian people of past and present. In the same way, through this research I have defined thievery from a Hawaiian point of view. I have also shown that in the making of history, as a result of every documented theft, petty or otherwise, Hawaiians were the ones who ended up being labeled as thieves. The irony here is that when we look around today, we see that Hawaiians are the ones who have become displaced physically and socially as a result of stolen history, stolen lands and stolen government. In looking back at history, the question to ask is, “Who were the real thieves?” Who stole greedily for their own gain and profited tremendously at the expense of the Hawaiian people? While some Hawaiians engaged in stealing tools, iron, trinkets and other possessions from foreigners who touched these shores, the missionaries and their descendants stole much more. While
they preached their God's commandments, they steadily worked their way into politics and government affairs. Soon many realized the potential for enormous profit that could be made and went into business for themselves. Missionaries and their descendants as well as many other foreigners who settled in Hawai'i witnessed and even contributed to the continual decline of the Native population due to introduced diseases, the uprooting of *keiki o ka 'aina*, children of the land from the sands of their birth, the introduction of capitalist ideas and the power of persuasiveness that *haole* advisors had over chiefs and affairs of the government. The land, nearly cleared of Native inhabitants was more than affordable for the *haole*. It was a steal. Ancestral lands were converted to sugar plantations. This control of land and the profits reaped soon led to lust for control of the government in order to reap more economic benefit. In 1893, a small group of American businessmen, many of whom were Hawai'i born and descended from missionaries, fearing that reigning monarch Lili'uokalani would proclaim a new Constitution which would give power back to herself and her people and which would, in turn take power away from foreign landowners, conspired to overthrow the government. Backed by the military might of the United States Navy, and under the guise of threats to their life and property, they stole control of the government. The overthrow is considered by Hawaiian activists as the ultimate theft, still left unresolved. The Apology Bill, also known as U.S. Public Law 103-150 issued in 1993 has yet to resolve matters or restore what was stolen. Its declaration was as ridiculous as would be an apology from someone
who admitted stealing your car yet kept driving it around town for you to see. The fact that Hawaiians are the ones who have gone down in the history books as thieves is just as ludicrous.

This thesis has been about Hawaiians defining Hawaiians. Much work remains in the area of defining and asserting our own identity for ourselves. Identity should be the one thing that no one can take away yet, even that has been and continues to be stolen by those who call themselves Hawaiian but possess no native blood. These are Hawaiians by convenience. Even Queen Lili‘uokalani wrote of such people, whom she referred to as “pseudo Hawaiians.” They were foreigners who traveled to Washington D.C. representing themselves as Hawaiians in order to push for annexation of Hawai‘i to the United States. They called themselves Hawaiians only when it served their purposes while back in Hawai‘i, they asserted their status as citizens of America the great. In her book, Hawai‘i’s Story, Lili‘uokalani states vehemently: “They are not and never were Hawaiians (1987, 325).”

A more recent example of theft of Hawaiian identity by non-Hawaiians pertains to the admittance of a non-Hawaiian, more specifically a haole, into the Kamehameha Schools, a school set up in 1883 by the will of Ke Ali‘i Bernice Pauahi Bishop for the education of Hawaiian children. According to her will, preference for admittance should be given to children of Hawaiian ancestry. As proof of Hawaiian ancestry, the child’s mother submitted the birth certificate of her hanai or adoptive father without revealing it to the administration. The child
was accepted into the school but when it was found that he was not of Hawaiian ancestry, the invitation to attend was rescinded. This resulted in his mother filing a lawsuit against the school and a subsequent court order allowing the child temporary admittance until the matter could be resolved further. The judge believed that the mother’s actions were not deceptive, as she considered herself and her son to be Hawaiians. The majority of the Hawaiian community is outraged by this blatant act of cultural theft authorized by the court.

In her article, "Politics in the Pacific Islands: Imperialism and Native Self-Determination", Hawaiian activist and Professor of Hawaiian Studies Haunani-Kay Trask described this problem of identity theft:

"Because of colonization, the question of who defines what is Native, and even who is defined as Native has been taken away from Native peoples by Western-trained scholars, government officials, and other technicians. This theft in itself testifies to the pervasive power of colonialism and explains why self-identity by Natives of who and what they are elicits such strenuous and sometimes vicious denials by the dominant culture (1993, 53-54)."

In this paper, with regards to thievery, I have shown that some Hawaiians stole. Some stole professionally, others stole out of greed or desire. Some did not steal at all.

Labeling an entire people as thieves stems from having an ethnocentric view of the world. This thesis has been about reclaiming part of our stolen identity. It says this is who we are. More research and study can help us understand who we were as a people and what that historical and cultural knowledge means for us today. This type of knowledge helps us see that
Hawaiians were people too, sometimes very similar and sometimes very different from those of other cultures. They had good traits and bad. They were people who understood the difference between right and wrong, good and bad, crime and punishment. Despite the separations of the people by classes, the people of old were still people. And just like the people today, their lives changed in response to changing times.

The work ahead consists of Hawaiians reclaiming our own identities, righting the wrongs as recorded in history and defining for ourselves as a people, who we are and those we consider as part of our group, those we consider to be Hawaiians. Theft of any kind whether material or cultural, demands resolution. Only when the wrongs are again made right will justice for Hawaiians prevail.
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101


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