



Two Early Hawaiian-Christian Chants

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Abstract. – Two early periods of the Christian missionization of Hawai'i are reflected in chants. In 1820, Hewahewa, the highest religious expert of the kingdom, participated in the first discussions between missionaries and chiefs. He welcomed the new god as a hopeful solution to the current problems of Hawaiians and understood the Christian message largely in traditional terms. He envisioned a Hawaiian Christian community led by the land's own religious experts. Some ten years later, the chiefess Kekupuohi composed her response to a translation of the first chapter of Genesis. Deeply learned in the Hawaiian traditions of the origin of the universe – like the great chant, “The Kumulipo” – she retold the story in such a way as to address the concerns and emphases of the long history of Polynesian speculation. She also addressed problems in perception and thinking that had arisen through contact with Western education. Both Hewahewa and Kekupuohi demonstrated that Hawaiians could contribute to Christian thinking just as Greeks, Romans, and Germans had before them. [*Hawai'i, Christianity, mission, literature, syncretism, native thinking*]

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The history of Christianity is full of cultural change. The religion of Jesus starts as a small Jewish sect, then enters the Greek world, then the Roman, then the German, and so on. As it spreads to each part of the world, it absorbs new ideas and takes on new cultural forms. For instance, the Greek world gave Christianity the language in which to write its New Testament: it would be Greek rather than Aramaic, the language of Jesus. The Roman world gave Christianity its organization into parishes and dioceses.

As Christianity reached each new culture, it changed both the culture and itself. Each culture left its mark on Christianity along with some clear elements of the old religion. The Roman Saturnalia, December 17–24, became the basis for Christmas. The German gods still give their names to the days of our week: Woden's day, Thor's day, Freya's day, and so on.

In each place, there was a process of encounter and assimilation. The Romans began by throwing Christians to the lions and ended by claiming Rome as the center of Christianity. The Spanish missionaries in Central America first burned the old books and priests, and later learned to appreciate them. In Chichicastenango, Guatemala, the parish priest saved the last Chique Maya story of the origin of the universe, and in the cathedral today – built over the ancient temple – Indians carry on their age-old ceremonies under a large sign: “Please do not disturb the Indians at their devotions. Signed: the pastor.”

In almost each place, there was an intellectual effort to see the similar points between the old and new religions and develop a theology that would join them in a broader, more satisfying Christian view. The Anglo-Saxon poet Cymbeline depicts Jesus as a tough warrior mounting the cross as if he were going to battle. The author of “Beowulf” sees Christianity as a sword with which to slay the monsters that oppressed their pagan lives. In the High Middle Ages, great minds like Thomas Aquinas created comprehensive theologies that combined Greek philosophy with Christian Revelation.

Hawai'i is a curious exception to this history. The first New England Congregational missionar-

ies rejected completely the previous religious experience of the Hawaiians and demanded that they start a completely new religious and intellectual life. No bridges, no transitions, would be built between the old and the new. The old was evil and ignorant, and the new was good and enlightened. This attitude can be found today either as a conscious position or a guilty hangover.

The difficulty for Hawaiians was that they still felt the power of their old religion. They were still grateful for the assistance of their family gods, and were still inspired as poets, artists, and dancers by gods like Laka and Pele. They were also faced with religious problems that the foreign pastors could neither understand nor solve. As a result, most Hawaiians became bireligious, following at different times both Christianity and elements of the old religion. But they almost always followed the old religion in secret and rarely discussed their religious double life. Some Hawaiian-Christian churches even preached against the culture and religion while in fact conducting ministries focused on specific Hawaiian problems.

An important result of this history is that no Hawaiians have formulated a generally accepted theology, a comprehensive religious view that combines Hawaiian religion and Christianity. Although many Hawaiians have accommodated both religions in their lives, no one has published a Christian teaching that shows how this can be done. This is important because many Hawaiians today are questioning the compatibility of Christianity with Hawaiian identity. Is Christianity beneficial for Hawaiians or is it a tool of foreign oppression? Is Hawaiian religion totally irreconcilable with Christianity or can Hawaiian elements contribute to the new religion as Greek, Roman, and German religion have? Can Christianity be made better, broader by adopting Hawaiian elements? Hawaiian-Christian pastors, often pushed by younger members of their congregations, are urgently addressing these questions.

How can academics help? One way is to identify and interpret the literature related to this question. What Hawaiian-language writings can be found that show the encounter of the two religions? What can be found in the writings of missionaries and other foreigners? In fact, a great deal of important material can be found, such as the early *Ka Manao o na Alii* (The Opinion of the Chiefs; 1827), statements of principal nobles on conversion to Christianity, and *He Wahi Manao Kumu no na Mea nui maloko o ka ke Akua Olelo*, “Some Fundamental Thoughts Concerning Great Things in the Word of God” (1837; translation by Noelani Arista) by

the major Hawaiian intellectual David Malo. The creators of the later Kumuhonua legends reconstructed a purported tradition behind the similarities found in Biblical and Hawaiian traditions (Barrière 1969). Christian chants and hymns have been composed from the early missionary period until today (e.g., Fornander 1919–1920: 511–516, 524–533). An examination of two early chants composed by Hawaiians reveals how they understood the new religion of Christianity in the context of the traditional religion they had learned and followed from infancy.

Hewahewa

Hewahewa was the former high priest of Kamehameha and a principal collaborator in the recent, so-called abolition of the kapu system (Ellis 1984: 127, 158f.). His chant was published by Joseph Emerson, who may have received it from his father, who may in turn have received it from Hewahewa himself.¹ Internal evidence argues for the chant’s authenticity. If so, it is the first surviving expression of a view of Christianity by a Hawaiian intellectual and religious expert of the highest level.

Emerson was given a story of the chant’s composition (1918: 36f.). Hewahewa foresaw the missionaries’ arrival and announced to the king: “the god will soon land yonder.” During the discussions with the missionaries about the new religion, the chiefess Kapi‘olani was so impressed:

that she told Hewahewa that the god had really landed, and expressed her willingness to accept the new religion. This led Hewahewa, the chief religious leader of the

¹ Emerson (1918: 37ff.) “The prayer itself has been in my collection for more than twenty years” (37). Joseph Emerson’s father, John S. Emerson, knew Hewahewa, “one of the early attendants, if not a communicant” of his church (39). All text references to “Emerson” are to Joseph Emerson.

Laura Green (1926: 124ff.) reprinted Emerson’s Hawaiian text and English translation with one major change along with minor ones. In the Hawaiian, Green lowercases *Kamahele* (line 7), *Kalahala* (13), and *Haku* (23). She changes *Ieku* to *Iesu* (lines 13, 28). In the translation, besides minor changes that do not affect the sense, she replaces “in the presence of Poki” with “with the crowded assembly” (22). More important, she changes “As a mighty kahuna” to “For a mighty priest” (25). This change from “As” to “For” is significant and correct, as I will argue below. Green (1926: 124) states that the chant “was printed many years ago both in Hawaiian and in English by a man named Peter Pascal in the *Kuokoa*.” I have not found this article, so cannot judge whether Emerson was using it.

Glosses in double quotation marks are of the published translation or the dictionary; in parenthesis, mine.

kingdom, to prepare this prayer as a welcome to the new god who had so recently arrived.

Green describes the chant: “An ancient prayer composed by Hewa-hewa, after he had heard of Christianity through the few white men living at the islands” (1926: 124). The mention of chief Boki in the chant, discussed below, argues for Emerson’s more specific circumstances.

The missionaries arrived off the coast of Hawai‘i on March 30, 1820, and arrived at Kailua, Kona, on April 4 (Kuykendall 1938: 102f.; Bingham 1981: 85–90). There they entered into four days of discussions with Liholiho, recently installed as King Kamehameha II, and important chiefs of the court about their religion and the purpose of their mission: missionizing for Christianity and providing Western education:

As ambassadors of the King of Heaven . . . we made to him the offer of the Gospel of eternal life, and proposed to teach him and his people the written, life-giving Word of the God of Heaven . . . and asked permission to settle in his country, for the purpose of teaching the nation Christianity, literature and the arts (Bingham 1981: 86).

In these meetings, the Hawaiians in the missionary party – George Kaumuali‘i, Thomas Hopu, and William Kanui – could act as interpreters, as well as the Englishman John Young, now a Hawaiian court official (Bingham 1981: 86, 90). Indeed, some of the Hawaiian language for Christian concepts may stem from the earlier discussions of the Hawaiian Christians among themselves; they would certainly have discussed their mainland studies in their own language. The king finally allowed the missionaries to stay in Hawai‘i for a trial year. After more discussions, some of the missionaries were allowed to continue their voyage to Honolulu in order to establish a mission station there. The governor of O‘ahu, Boki, would provide for their needs. But in two meetings with Boki, the missionaries found him indifferent and uncooperative (Bingham 1981: 92, 94).

These circumstances relate directly to the chant. In Kailua, the missionaries had been surprised that “Hewahewa, the high priest, expressed most unexpectedly his gratification on meeting us . . .” (Bingham 1981: 88). But since Hewahewa was an alcoholic, “we could have little confidence in his professions. But it was a matter of wonder that the bloody destroyer of his countrymen, whose influence, more than that of any other man, we had dreaded, should be ready in any sense to welcome the teachers of a new religion” (88). This was the beginning of the missionaries’ permanent distrust

of Hewahewa. Nonetheless, they were happy to find that he was not “ready by a form of argument zealously to defend their ancient system of idolatry and ceremonial customs” (88).² On the contrary, Hewahewa’s chant proves that he was welcoming the new religion, perhaps as a substitute for the state ceremonies he and the chiefs had recently abolished.

A further point enables us to identify the specific purpose of the chant. In the chant, Boki is accorded a prominence – “Assemble before the face of Boki” (line 22) – that suggests he was crucial to the introduction of Christianity. In fact, Boki proved indifferent to the missionaries’ presentation. This discord between the chant and the historical event shows that Hewahewa is not referring to a past meeting with Boki but to an anticipated one. That is, Hewahewa in Kailua knew that some of the missionaries would have an official meeting with Boki in Honolulu and composed the chant in order to announce to Boki and the O‘ahu population the arrival of a new religion and to provide a synopsis of his own understanding of it. The chant proclaimed also his own support of the new god and urged his compatriots to do likewise. The use of memorized chants for important messages and official proclamations was Hawaiian practice. The chant is innovative in combining several genres: prayer, ritual, proclamation, invective, and exposition.

Lines 1–2: The chant starts with a first set of imperatives. The crowd of people – *piha* (full); *lau* (many) – is ordered to stand in orderly rows as if at a major temple ritual.³ Such commands by the

2 This remark appears related to the conversations between the missionaries and the chiefs: if Hewahewa had objections, that would be the occasion on which he would raise them. Although the chiefs who attended the meetings are not named by Bingham, Hewahewa would normally have been among them, especially as “the chief religious leader of the kingdom.” Emerson’s story about Hewahewa and Kapi‘olani implies that they were both at the meetings, as does the placing of Bingham’s paragraph on Hewahewa in the middle of the section on the meetings.

3 Fornander (1919–1920: 16f.), the people *ku lalani* (stand in rows); also sitting (10f.), *a hoonoho iho ke kahuna i na kanaka a nui loa, ewalu lalani kanaka, a ua hoonoho maikai ia lakou e ke kahuna a like* (and the kahuna made the numerous people sit down, eight rows of people, and they were seated down well and evenly by the kahuna); 14f.: priests *hoonoho* (seat) the people “in double rows of eight”, *lalani* (rows); 30f.: *hoonoho lalani*; 34f.: *a hoonoho iho la lakou i na lalani kanaka eha* (and they seated the four rows of people). The gods can correspondingly be *kukulu* (set up) in a *lalani* (row): 10f.: *kukulu lalani ia*; 12f.: *ku lalani*; 14f., 34f.: *kukulu*. In Fornander (1916–1917: 481), ‘*o ka lalani akua* is the climax of a stereotyped expression of an increasing number of gods. Priest and people can stand and sit repeatedly during a prayer (12f., 16f., 30f.).

officiants to the people are common during complicated ceremonies, and these two lines may be a formal ritual call, like the one recorded for silence, *Hamahamau ka leo, mai pane!*⁴ At such a ceremony, prayer can be said while standing, sitting, lying prostrate, or moving.⁵ Standing perhaps suggests alertness and readiness for action.⁶ At one point in a ceremony, people are described as standing up to move to another place (Fornander 1919–1920: 34f.), and these first two lines of the chant may be connected to the meeting with Boki of line 22. In these first lines, Hewahewa the chanter is assuming the role of the high priest at a major temple ritual, exercising his office to organize the ceremony and direct the participants.

Lines 3–4: The people are described as benighted and resistant to the truthful message. This is the beginning of the later standard contrast between the heathen *ka wā pō* (benighted age) and the Christian *ka wā ao* (enlightened age) and the respective *ka na'au pō* (the benighted insides [mentality]) and *ka na'au ao* (the enlightened insides). In any case, Hewahewa anticipates resistance to the Christian message. Their insides are *kalakala* (bristly), not receptive. The invective against the participants is unprecedented in such a chant, as far as I know.

Lines 5–7: The people are assembled to await the appearance of the god being evoked by the chant (e.g., N. B. Emerson 1909: 16 ff.; 1915: 229ff.). Hewahewa describes the new god with four adjectives. Two are traditional both for Jehovah and Hawaiian gods: *nui* “great” and *mana* “mighty” (or powerful). A third is most probably taken from Christianity: *mau* “enduring.” This may have been the word the Hawaiian interpreters used for “everlasting” or “eternal.” Many Hawaiian gods had birth stories and at least most could be killed. Moreover, Hawaiians did not have the idea of eternity; even the universe has a beginning. The fourth adjective, *ola* “living,” is standard Christian terminology derived from the Old Testament but can also

be found in Hawaiian chant and ceremony.⁷ I see, however, a difference in meaning. In Hawaiian usage, the point is that the god confers life or enjoys an abundance of vigorous power. In Biblical and Christian usage, Jehovah is a god who is living as opposed to the lifeless idols of the Israelites’ enemies. This sense must have been emphasized in the discussions between the missionaries and the chiefs: the missionaries were bringing the living god as opposed to the Hawaiian idols.

Most important, the passage is not monotheistic: the new god is presented as *He Akua* (A god). Even clearer is the symbolic description *He kamahēle mai ka lani mai* (A *kamahēle* from the sky; 7). The full dictionary definition of *kamahēle* is useful:

A far-reaching, strong or heavy branch, the main branch. *He lālā kamahēle no ka lā'au kū i ka pali* (saying), he is a far-reaching branch of the tree standing on the precipice [i.e., he is of very high rank because of inaccessibility].⁸

The *kamahēle* image has been exalted from the precipice to the sky, but the god is clearly not unique. Moreover, the word *kama* (child, offspring) implies that this god is not the first or the source of all; as *kamahēle*, he springs from the *kumu* (tree trunk, source). Polytheistic thinking certainly eased the acceptance of a new god, as can be seen in the arguments of a priestess of Pele: “She did not dispute that Jehovah was a God, but that he was not the only God.”⁹ But monotheism remains a problem for Polynesian Christians today.

Hewahewa reveals the name of the god, *Iehova* (Jehovah), in line 7, after reserving it dramatically until he has finished his four-adjective description. He then provides the god’s place of origin: *mai ka lani mai* (from the sky). That is, *Iehova* is described in Polynesian mode as a god who can be physically located. Hawaiian stories and chants conventionally begin with the name and location of the main character or characters.

4 Fornander (1919–1920: e.g., 10f., 16f., 26f., 28f.). *Hamahamau*: N. B. Emerson (1915: 229).

5 Standing: Fornander (1919–1920: 6f., 10f., 12f., 14f., 20f., 22f., 26f., 30f., 34f., 38f.). Sitting: (12f., 20f., 22f., 38f.). Prostrate: (12f.). Moving: (24f., 34f.).

6 See the interesting discussion in Andrews (1974: 296), “To rise up to do a thing or for a specified purpose.” Compare Pukui (1983: nos. 1894, 1913, 1914). Pukui and Elbert (1986): at *hiu*: “*E kū i ka malo ā hiu* (Malo 146), stand up with [your] *malo* and go to it.”

7 Charles Langlas noted for me chants in which Kāne is called an *akua ola* (Malo 1951: 156, 181ff., 185 [notes of N. B. Emerson]); Jeff Lyon referred me to Malo (chapter 37, paragraph 65), where *ola* is applied to Kū. Both colleagues advised me not to overdraw the difference between Hawaiian and Christian usage.

8 Pukui and Elbert (1986: at word). Emerson translates “visitor.” Pukui and Elbert (1986): gloss the phrase *kama hele* as “traveler,” but provide no source.

9 Ellis (1984: 310). Stewart (1970: 198), records an argument against the need to become a Christian monotheist in order to modernize the nation: in India, the people “are so rich, that all the people in England and America go there for property; but they keep their stone and wooden gods still.”

Lines 8–12: Hawaiian place terms are used traditionally to describe the exalted status of the god (e.g., N. B. Emerson 1909: 16f.): Jehovah dwells in the furthest reaches, on the apex of the wind, inside the rolling high clouds. He is present on land and sea – a traditional pair used to designate the whole universe – as mist and rainbow, a reference to the fertilizing moisture of the male sky. In Hawaiian thinking, as represented by the Kumulipo, the universe begins with the mating of *lani* (sky) and *honua* (earth). Hewahewa is clearly understanding the new god in terms of the old: the Christian Creator in terms of the Polynesian Procreator. Moreover, the new teaching is being placed within the Hawaiian conceptual framework, which is organized by paired opposites, such as *lunallalo* (above/below), *lanilhonua*, and *ukakai* (land/sea), here *honua* and *moana* (Charlot 2005: 247–273). The habitual use of these pairs inculcates in Hawaiian thinkers the major virtues of completeness and balance. Indeed, the pairs can be used to designate the universe as a whole.

Lines 13–15: Hewahewa now refers to Jesus, who is not explicitly related to Jehovah. Trinitarianism would continue to present difficulties for struggling polytheists. Hawaiians and other Polynesians would tend to identify *ke akua* (the god) with God the Father, and find another designation for Jesus, like *ka haku* (the lord).

Here Jesus' role is to be the *Kalahala*. The traditional concept of *hala* resembles the Greek *'hamartia*: to miss the mark. *Kala* means to undo this mistake or ritual error as one loosens a binding. Both words underwent significant changes of meaning as they were put to Christian uses. Whether *kalahala*, a word for a person who performs the action, was a traditional term or a new coinage remains to be investigated.¹⁰

Jesus is described in even more geographical terms than Jehovah. Like major Hawaiian gods, he migrates to Hawai'i from Kahiki (line 14), a voyage that can also be depicted as across the firmament (line 15; compare, e.g., N. B. Emerson 1915: 229). In this, he is differentiated from Jehovah who stays in the sky and sends down his moisture. No suggestion is made that Jesus has been sent by Jehovah.

10 Andrews (1974) provides Christian glosses for the word, but provides no pre-Christian examples of usage. The only non-Christian use I know is Fornander (1916–1917: 331); *kalahala* is translated “counselor” (330), which is possible in the context of the traditional meanings of the constituent words. The idea might be “counselor” as “problem-solver” or even “trouble-shooter.”

Lines 16–17: With the mention of the firmament, Hewahewa returns to Jehovah as the sky that fertilizes with rain. Jehovah is *'I* (the highest); he is *ka makemake* (the great desire; 17). As the Hawaiians' view of the world broadened beyond their traditions, some questioned whether the power of their gods extended into the newly revealed parts of the globe or whether those gods were merely local to Hawai'i (compare Malo 1837: 9; Ellis 1984: 94). If that was the case, then some other gods must be responsible for the larger whole. Jehovah was presented as the Creator of the universe and thus could occupy the position. That is, Hawaiians had finally learned the name of the god needed to complete their new view of the universe.

Lines 18–19: This point prompts the second set of imperatives. The people are ordered to *hīmeni* (hymn) to the sky. The use of a new loan word, *hīmeni*, may suggest new forms of worship as well as of music.¹¹ The pattern, however, is typical of Hawaiian chants: the appearance of the god prompts the reaction of the devotees (e.g., N. B. Emerson 1909: 33f.; 1915: 229ff.).

In line 19, *olioli* (chant) is the traditional word paralleling *hīmeni*. Another level of meaning can, however, be found. In Hawaiian tradition, the *lani* (sky) of line 18 must be coupled with its pair, *honua* (earth) of line 19. The sky is still being seen in its fertilizing function with the traditional imagery of clouds, mist, rainbows, and rain (lines 11–12, 16). I would argue that lines 18–19 are based on the wise saying *Uwē ka lani, 'oli ka honua* (The sky weeps, the earth rejoices).¹² That is, *olioli* (chant) would be pronounced or understood as *'oli'oli* (rejoice). That this sexual sense is felt can be seen from the fact that in lines 18–20 a traditional organizing schema is being used: male and female mate and produce a result (Charlot 1983).

11 *Hīmeni* is the sort of loan word that would have been created by Hawaiians in a Christian environment, such as those who accompanied the missionaries to Hawai'i. I believe that those Hawaiian interpreters used it in the long negotiations with the king, and Hewahewa learned it on that occasion and used it here significantly.

12 The saying is a variant of the more usual *Uwē ka lani, ola ka honua* (The sky weeps, the earth lives) (Pukui 1983: no. 2888). Charles Kenn used the *'oli* version in a conversation with me in the 1970s. The sexual character of the saying was felt into the twentieth century. When I suggested the Pukui version as a poster title for the association “The Life of the Land,” Auntie Alice Nāmakelua changed *honua* to the nontraditional *'āina* (land) because *honua* was “too sexy.”

Lines 20–21: The result is the *hua* ‘*ōlelo*, glossed *word* but containing in *hua* numerous sexual references: “Fruit, egg, ovum, seed, offspring . . .”¹³ The emphasis on the word was undoubtedly part of the missionaries’ presentation of their religion. Words are important in Hawaiian religion, and many Hawaiian and Christian uses and practices resemble each other. But in all likelihood the missionaries were using “the Word” primarily as the Christian revelation of teachings or content inaccessible by human means, a use I do not find in traditional Hawaiian literature. This particular emphasis on the word was, therefore, new to Hawaiians, and Hewahewa seems to have understood it as part of their offer of Western education. He would have been encouraged in this view by the missionaries’ connection of *pule* (religion) to *palapala* (education) against Hawaiians who would have welcomed the latter without the former (e.g., Stewart 1970: 197f., 342). In line 21, Hewahewa uses typical praise words for education: the word will provide knowledge, which in turn will provide power, and finally life (Charlot 2005: 99). These traditional praise words for education seem to be offered in a significant sequence. Hawaiians needed Western education to cope with the new problems of politics, economics, and health. With that knowledge, Hawaiians could regain their power, which they felt they were losing. They could then survive as a nation and also cure the foreign diseases that were afflicting them.

Lines 22–23: Hewahewa now orders the assembly to meet *i ke alo o Poki* (before the face of Boki). This is clearly a future meeting; that is, the chant has been composed before the first disappointing meetings of the missionaries with that chief. Hewahewa expected more; he anticipated that the *haku* (Lord) – here probably Jesus – would also be present and exercise his power.

Lines 24–26: With a final imperative, Hewahewa orders the people to pray *pono* (correctly) to Jehovah. Hawaiians could pray extemporaneously, but important prayers required faultless composition, exact memorization, and flawless performance, a practice transferred to Christianity (e.g., Ellis 1984: 376; Stewart 1970: 165; see also 171, 178f., 214).

The people should pray specifically *I Kahuna mana o nā moku* (For a powerful kahuna of the islands; 25). Hewahewa clearly does not think that the missionaries are the answer to this prayer. In

fact, the position is the one he himself occupies as high priest, the position he is assuming as author of this chant. That is, he sees Christianity as being organized like the state religion established by Kamehameha I: a high priest directing a hierarchy of subordinate priests and temple officials. In Hewahewa’s view, Christianity would adopt Hawaiian governance (just as it had the Roman system). Though he does not state it, Hewahewa seems to see the priesthood or the personnel as Hawaiian. The policy of Kamehameha I and his successors was to keep power as much as possible in Hawaiian hands, and religion was an important power.¹⁴ That the American missionaries held church power firmly in their own hands for generations was a source of conflict not only with Hawaiians but with the home church that had sent them (Hutchison 1987: 80–90).

Line 26 uses the well-developed Hawaiian literary device of ambiguity to make its two points. First, the word *hewa* can be read *fault*, yielding: Like a torch to see the great fault. *Hewa* can, however, allude to Hewahewa himself: Like a torch to see the great Hewa. Indeed, since the author used the word *hala* earlier, his change to *hewa* in this line might have a special purpose. Hewahewa sees himself as the most appropriate person to lead the worship of the new god in Hawai‘i. The word *nui* is probably meant to recall the title *kahuna nui* (high priest).

Although Hewahewa made himself available to the missionaries, they kept him firmly at a distance. He finally retired to his lands in the valley of Waimea, given to the priests by the pig-god Kamapua‘a. He reportedly returned to his old religion while maintaining contacts with the mission: “one of the early attendants, if not a communicant” (Emerson 1918: 39). His obituary in a Christian newspaper describes him in his final illness as *weliweli nui* . . . *i ka hewa* (greatly afraid of his fault) and asking his friends to pray often for him while he prayed for himself in great fear (“Make” 1837).

Lines 27–29: The chant ends as a prayer with traditional and new elements. *Ola* (life) is the traditional result of the successful prayer. However, that life will come through Jesus, and the loan word ‘*Amene* (Amen) replaces the traditional ‘*āmama, ua noa*. *Amen* is a clear candidate for early adoption as a Hawaiian-Christian loan word, ‘*amene*, especially in its similarity to the traditional term to close a prayer. Hewahewa would have listened carefully

13 Pukui and Elbert (1986: at word). Compare the similarly allusive use in the Kumulipo, line 112.

14 The Samoans, faced with the same problem, were more successful at solving it in their favor (Charlot 1992: 34).

to the Christians because the proper way of praying was essential in traditional Hawaiian religion.

The following is a presentation of the text in modern orthography along with a translation based on the above study:

1. *Kū, kū lā ia, kū lā*
2. *Piha kū lālani, kū lā*
3. *O pouli lā, pō‘ele‘ele lā*
4. *‘Ōpū kalakala. Lau ‘ia, e kū lā*
5. *He Akua nui, he Akua mana*
6. *He Akua ola, he Akua mau*
7. *Iehova ke kamahale mai ka lanī mai.*
8. *He Akua noho i ka ‘iu‘iu*
9. *‘O ka welelau o ka makani*
10. *I loko o ke ao ka‘a lelewa*
11. *He ‘ohu kū i ka honua*
12. *He ‘ōnohi kū i ka moana.*
13. *Iesu ko kākou kalahala*
14. *Mai ke ala i Kahiki ā Hawai‘i nei*
15. *Mai ka ho‘oku‘i ā ka hālāwai.*
16. *‘Ehu‘ehu ka ua mai ka lanī*
17. *Iehova ‘Ī, ka makemake.*
18. *Hīmeni i ka lanī ka ‘akua*
19. *Ke olioli/‘oli‘oli nei ka honua.*
20. *Ua loa‘a ka hua ‘ōlelo*
21. *‘O ka ‘ike, ‘o ka mana, ‘o ke ola.*
22. *Hālāwai i ke alo o Poki*
23. *I ke alo o ka haku mana mau.*
24. *Pule pono iā Iehova*
25. *I kahuna mana no nā moku*
26. *Me he lama ‘ike hewa nui*
27. *I ola mākou ā pau*
28. *I ola iā Iesu.*
29. *‘Amene.*

1. Stand, stand there, stand there
2. Stand in full rows, stand there
3. Lest you be in dark night there, black night there
4. Bristly, unreceptive insides. Crowd together, stand there.
5. A great god, a powerful god
6. A living god, a lasting god
7. Jehovah, the main branch from the sky.
8. A god living in the greatest distance
9. On the tip of the wind
10. Inside the cloud rolling in the distant space
11. A mist standing on the earth
12. A rainbow circle standing on the ocean.
13. Jesus, our loosener of faults,
14. From the path of Kahiki to Hawai‘i here
15. From the zenith to the horizon.
16. The rain sprays towards us from the sky
17. Jehovah the Highest, our desire.

18. Hymn the rolling sky.
19. The earth chants/rejoices.
20. The word is obtained
21. Knowledge, power, life.
22. Meet before the face of Boki
23. Before the face of the lord of lasting power.
24. Pray correctly to Jehovah
25. For a powerful priest for the islands
26. Like a torch to see the great fault/Hewa
27. So that we may all live
28. Live through Jesus.
29. Amen.

Kekupuohi

The second chant I will discuss is *He Mele no ka ke Akua hana ana – A Mele on the Creation*, by Kekupuohi.¹⁵ Kekupuohi was a wife of Kalani‘ōpu‘u at the time of Captain James Cook’s arrival at Kealakekua Bay, Hawai‘i, in 1778. She later married the chief Ka‘iana and, after he was killed in battle, became a member of the court of Kamehameha II.¹⁶ Kekupuohi was a recognized court poet in the classical style and composed at least one other Christian chant, “The True Vine.”¹⁷ She died an exemplary Christian around her eightieth year on February 15, 1836.¹⁸

15 First published [Kekupuohi], February 21, 1834, and re-published [Kekupuohi], December 10, 1834. The only two differences in the republication are typographical errors: *Hoolulu* for *Hooulu* (17) and *nona* for *noho* (24). The text of the first publication is the best.

Andrews (1839), with translation. Andrews has divided the chant into stanzas, indenting the first line of each except the first. The irregular line counts of the stanzas indicate that he has imposed them on the chant. Andrews has often changed the punctuation. For instance, the original *Ha, ke Akua i ka lewa!* loses its comma and has its exclamation mark changed to a simple period. The capitals of *Uhane* (3f.) are lowercased. Line 27 *O ka mana kona mea* has been changed by Andrews to *O kona mana kona mea*; a probable case of dittography. Line 38 *Na kona mana* has been changed to *No kona mana*, a simple mistake. Andrews has added a line after line 7, *I paa ka nakaka . . . : Aole lewa, ua paa i ke Akua*. This new line adds no new sense and destroys the parallelism of lines 7–8; I argue that it is a later, intrusive explanation. D. (1877) offers an “English Poetic Translation.”

16 Bingham (1839: 209). D. (1877); Kamakau (1961: 172, 251, 310 [she was “the greatest beauty of that time”]).

17 Classical: Kekupuohi et al. (1868); D. (1877): she “was a Hawaiian poetess of great merit, and composed various *Mele* (Maylay) or Poems in that language.” Christian: Bingham (1839).

18 Hopu (1836). D. (1877), states she was “over ninety years old” and was buried in a cave at Kealakekua Bay.

Andrews gives the occasion of composition as Kekupuohi's first reading or hearing the Hawaiian translation of the first chapter of Genesis around 1829 or 1830.¹⁹ The Biblical account of the origin of the universe addressed a subject that was fundamental to Polynesian thinkers and had inspired a long and productive tradition of chant and prose. Like other Polynesians, Kekupuohi understood the biblical account of the origin of the universe in the context of such Hawaiian traditions, best represented now by the great Kumulipo (Beckwith 1972), although she would have known other traditions as well.

Again like other Polynesians, Kekupuohi would have been able to recognize the method of composition as the same one used by themselves: older memorized materials were placed within a redactional framework to form a new complex (Charlot 1985, 1991). Moreover, diverse pictures or models could be used together with no attempt to resolve their inconsistencies. Around 1840, Malo distinguished between three models used in Hawaiian accounts of the origin of the islands: *hānau* (birth), *ulu wale* (just grew [out of the ocean]), and *hana lima* (hand made [by the god]) (Charlot 1991: 132). On Manu'a in the Samoan islands, Tauanu'u – both keeper of the oldest traditions and Christian church official – was probably inspired by the Genesis account to gather an unusually full and thus disparate collection of origin traditions into a *tūlagi*, a prose explanation of the ancient chant '*O le Solo o le Vā o le Fuafuaga o le Lalolagi* (The Chant of the Time of the Flowering/Fruiting/Origin of All That Is under the Firmament; Charlot 1991: 133, 142–146).

Kekupuohi would also have recognized many of the subjects and elements of the Genesis account. In fact, both Genesis and Polynesian traditions are based on probably the most ancient recoverable picture of the universe, found worldwide: sky and earth mate, and in a series of generations, plants emerge, then animals, and finally human beings. Thus the whole universe is a family tree, and all its elements are related. This procreational model is presented very purely in the Kumulipo, but in Genesis has been absorbed into a framework based

on a different model: creationism – a god or gods make the world. The same process – assimilating the procreational into the creational – can be found in Polynesia, including some of the same devices used in Genesis (Charlot 1985: 172–178; 1991: 133–146). Hawaiians, however, had maintained their procreational traditions and thus found Christian creationism a major difference from their received views.

Tauanu'u kept his Samoan traditions separate from his Christian beliefs, perhaps wanting to provide as broad and solid a basis for Samoan religion as the one he found in Genesis for Christianity. Kekupuohi, however, was focusing on the Christian revelation, which, she believed, provided the answer to a question Polynesians had been asking for centuries. To understand the Christian answer, she deployed her intelligence and educational background in the subject: she simultaneously reached out towards the new ideas and absorbed them into her old. That is, she acted as had the Greeks, Romans, and Germans before her as well as all the others who came to Christianity and enlarged and deepened it with their own sensibilities, experiences, and thinking.

Kekupuohi's chant is far from a mere versification of the Genesis account. She omits most of the Biblical cosmology and detail, and what she retains can easily be accommodated by traditional Hawaiian cosmic views. That is, she ignores what she does not find compelling or useful and focuses on elements that are close to her own traditions – a practice followed by most Christians of whatever culture. For instance, she prefers the Polynesian (and modern scientific) sequence elements → plants → animals → human beings to the less observational Biblical one. She omits the Biblical scheme of seven days because seven was not a significant number in Hawaiian culture, the scheme interferes with the procreational sequence described above, and she prefers the Kumulipo theme of the great length of time needed for the development of the universe. She rejects the Biblical teaching of man's domination over the world, an idea alien to Hawaiian sensibility. The elements that draw her may be minor or merely implied in the Bible but major in Hawai'i. By finding Biblical points that she can develop with Hawaiian traditions, she is able to tell the story in a Hawaiian way.

Most important, Kekupuohi recognizes the primary difference of the Biblical account. She understands clearly the main thrust of Genesis – god created the world and this act reveals his power – and subsumes all the sections of the chant to that theme. The idea of creationism required explanation and

¹⁹ Andrews (1839: 77). D. (1877), specifies 1830. Andrews questions whether she had learned to read, but Bingham (1839: 209f.) indicates that she had; also D. (1877); Kamakau (1961: 249). Kekupuohi must have read an early translation; the final translation of Thurston and Bishop was published in the completed Old Testament of 1839, "Ka Palapala Hemolele" 1838 [1839]. All my Bible references are to this edition as I have not been able to find the earlier draft translations.

emphasis for a Hawaiian audience. Although Malo mentions creationism, as seen above, and fragments of a Kāne creation tradition can be found, the mainstream Hawaiian tradition was procreational. However, even in developing the theme of creation, Kekupuohi introduces changes and uses Hawaiian concepts and emphases that transform the account into an original understanding of Christianity. In sum, she seems to feel that as long as she upholds the main point of God's creation and power, she can work out the details in a Hawaiian way. Biblical creationism does, however, influence in turn her choice of Hawaiian elements. Kekupuohi does not use the main *pō/ao* (night/day) division of the Kumulipo because the Christian God's presence at the beginning of the process precludes its being described as a time of darkness or natural forces rather than of light and intelligence.

Line 1: For Kekupuohi, the Christian God is *the* God, not *a* god as in Hewahewa's chant. Hawaiians have been developing a language for Christianity since Hewahewa's chant. However, she reverts to the old language when speaking of *he 'Uhane* (a Spirit).

God is not the only being, but is in space. Hawaiians had no idea of an immaterial god. Every god has one or more *kino* (bodies) and thus requires space. Their bodies place gods within the universe and relate them to all other material beings. Kekupuohi will emphasize this relation throughout her chant and at the end join religious teachings to Western scientific discoveries as all part of the same knowledge of our universe, God's creation.

Kekupuohi starts her chant with her fundamental innovation. The Hawaiian Bible begins with God's *hana* (making, work). With a typical Hawaiian wordplay or word connection, Kekupuohi starts with *hā*: God breathes into space. His breath and thus his power spreads throughout the universe. The Hawaiian concept of *hā* (breath) is connected to important ideas and practices (e.g., Pukui, Haertig, and Lee 1972: 30, 43ff., 151). Our individual breath keeps us alive and is thus connected to our spirit or soul. Our *hā* also connects us to our environment. Coming from deep in our insides, our breath carries something of ourselves to the people and things we breathe on. In a family ritual, a dying elder can use his *hā* to confer his personal abilities and spirit on his heir.

Kekupuohi has not found *hā* in the account of the creation of the universe, but she has found a remarkably similar use of breath in the story of the creation of man. The only place in Genesis 1–2 where *hā* is used is 2.7: God makes man's body

out of *lepo* (dirt) *a ha iho la ia i ka hanu ola iloko o na puka ihu ona, a lilo ae la ke kanaka i kana-ka ola* (and breathes the breath of life down into his nostrils so that the human being turned into a live human being). Alone of God's creation, man is enlivened by God's very breath. This emphasizes the theme of man's difference from the rest of creation and rule over it.²⁰ By having God breathe into space, Kekupuohi states that the whole universe has the same closeness to God as only the human being has in Genesis. The universe is not merely the work of God's hands; it lives through God's own breath. The universe is directly and physically connected to God, an idea nearer to a genealogical connection than to that between creator and creation. Thus later she will affirm that the universe is filled with God's virtues. This is a strong affirmation of two traditional Hawaiian ideas: that the universe is good and that human beings and the universe are on a family tree and thus share the same cosmic forces. Kekupuohi uses traditional Hawaiian themes to develop this idea in her chant.

Moreover, in using *hā*, a term that is connected to life and spirit, Kekupuohi has introduced a complex of Hawaiian ideas that is similar to developments found in Biblical literature itself.

Line 3 is based on the second half of Genesis 1.2: "And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters" (King James). The Hebrew *ruah elohim*, translated "Spirit of God," is now generally interpreted as "a great storm" roiling the primordial water (Rad 1961: 37). But the meaning of *ruah* underwent a long development from wind to breath, to the life principle of a body, to the seat of feelings and will, to the *ruah* of God. This was in turn developed into God's effective power, his creative power, and even into his inner being. Finally, *ruah* could be reified as a separate person. Similarly, the word *pneuma*, used to translate *ruah* in the Greek translation, the Septuagint, developed from wind to breath, to life, to soul, to spirit, and finally to the divine *pneuma*. These developments affected the understanding of Genesis 1.2, so that the phrase came to be translated as "the spirit of God" or *ka 'Uhane o ke Akua* in the Hawaiian. This spirit of God could then be identified by Christians with the Holy Spirit, the third person of the Trinity, or

20 Man's unique closeness to God: Genesis 1.27: *Hana iho la ke Akua i ke kanaka ma kona ano iho, ma ke ano o ke Akua oia i hana'i ia ia . . .* Man as ruler over nature: Genesis 1.26: *a e hooalii ia ia maluna o na ia o ke kai . . .*; 28: *e noho alii maluna o na ia o ke kai . . .*

ka Uhane Hemolele (the Perfect Spirit) in Kekupuohi's chant.²¹

Kekupuohi is following the Hawaiian Bible, in which an explicit connection is not drawn between breath and the Holy Spirit. But her use of *hā* suggests intuitively the beginnings of the development of ideas found the Biblical authors and later Christian interpreters: from breath to Holy Spirit. Indeed, wind and spirit were culturally connected by Hawaiians (Pukui, Haertig, and Lee 1972: 56k, 193). That is, the ancient connection between breath and spirit is still felt by the chanter, although it does not rise to the level of expression in this passage. However, the similarities between the Hawaiian and the Biblical complexes of ideas could profitably be explored by contemporary Hawaiian theologians. Indeed, Hawaiian thinkers could reconnect the physical beginnings of the thought process to its spiritual conclusions. Hawaiian thinking at its most elevated and abstract remains firmly grounded in the physical.

Lines 4–5: However, Kekupuohi is not content to leave *Uhane* undefined in Hawaiian terms. The spirit is *he aka no ka mea maika'i* (an *aka* of the good person [God]).²² *Aka* is a word with specific religious uses: "Shadow ... Reflection, image, likeness [a biblical reference] ... essence of an offering rather than the flesh" (Pukui and Elbert 1986: at word). The word is explained at greater length in *Nānā I Ke Kumu* (Pukui, Haertig, and Lee 1972: 10):

The essence of anything, in the spiritual rather than material form. When food was offered to a god, it was understood that the god would be nourished by the *aka*, and a mortal would later eat the food. The ritual phrase was "O ke aka ka 'oukou e ke akua, 'o ka 'i'o ka mākou," "Yours is the essence, O god; ours the material part." ...

21 On *uhane*, see Pukui, Haertig, and Lee (1972: 193ff., and index). Interestingly, Kekupuohi's expression of the motion of the spirit over the water, *Lele ho'olahalahai*, is a closer translation of the Hebrew than the Hawaiian Bible's *ho'opūnana* (nested), a now discarded interpretation (Rad 1961: 37). Pukui and Elbert (1986): at *lahalaha*: "*Lele ho'olahalahai*, to soar in the air with outspread wings; to hover without perceptible wing movement"; at *lahahai* and *lāhai* 1. "To poise aloft, as a kite." Images of Tagaloa/Ta'arua flying like a bird over the ocean are prominent in Sāmoa and the Society Islands; a minority tradition is reported in Hawai'i of the islands originating as an egg dropped by a bird flying over the ocean (Ellis 1984: 430; Bastian 1883: 27).

22 Andrews (1839: 79) translates "a shadow of what is good." *Mea* can refer both to people and things. Since at this point, we have only the god, *mea* is best understood as referring to him. Certain congruences in beliefs about shadows and those about souls may have influenced the progression of Kekupuohi's thought (Pukui, Haertig, and Lee 1972: 123f.).

A shadow. In a sense, a living person's spirit.

In one view, man's shadow contained some of his *mana* (spiritual power).

Kekupuohi has found a Hawaiian term that can be used like several Greek ones in the New Testament. *Morphé* (form), *eikon* (image), *logos* (word), express Jesus's unique closeness to God without claiming identity or equality. Similarly, *aka* is not the person himself, but the thing closest to him and thus to be treated according to certain rules. Line 5 alludes to these when it affirms that the *Uhane* is an *akalani*, a sky or chiefly shadow.²³ The chief's shadow was hedged with rules because of its power. The *Uhane* is thus closest to God but not identified with him and thus subordinate. Trinitarianism is clearly a problem for Kekupuohi.

But her emphasis on the *Uhane* has, I argue, a source in Hawaiian thinking. Whereas Western thinkers and Christianity start with one source – a single god – Hawaiians start with two, sky and earth. God is the one (line 25, *ho'okahi*), but the *Uhane* is the second, *ka lua* (line 26). Although the *Uhane* is subordinate to God, he can be used to bring the Genesis account as near as possible to the traditional Hawaiian two-source cosmogony.

Finally, *aka* is a word used in the Kumulipo (line 3) to allude to the primordial darkness of the first half of cosmic development, a central theme of the Kumulipo but left undescribed by Kekupuohi. On the other hand, unlike Genesis, Kekupuohi does not hurry to disperse explicitly the darkness by light.

In these opening lines of the chant, Kekupuohi's understanding of Christianity is sophisticated, and her formulation is creative and authentically Hawaiian. She has found two Hawaiian terms that are similar but not equivalent to Biblical ones. Her terms have shades of meaning and emotional associations that are new and thus an enrichment of Christian thought. In fact, like her use of *hā*, her use of *aka* is closer than many spiritualizing, dematerializing Western theologies to the Biblical thought world: *aka*, *ruah*, and *pneuma* have not lost their connection to the physical world. She thus demonstrates that a rewarding Hawaiian-Christian theology can be formulated.

23 Andrews' translation, "A shadow of heaven," suffers from the fact that heaven has not yet been created in the chant. *Lani* can mean both sky and chief. Hawaiian literature is adept at defining hierarchies. In the chant *Ka Huaka'i a Pele* (*The Coming of Pele*; Pukui and Korn 1973: 53–56), the organization of a boat is used to place Pele above all the gods; Hi'iaka's position immediately under Pele is revealed by her being the only one to approach the house of Pele.

Lines 6–8: Kekupuohi now begins to relate God’s creation of the universe. She uses the Polynesian sequence and motifs rather than the Biblical, but continually refers back to God’s creativity. That is, she is absorbing her Polynesian traditions into Christianity by making the Christian God the creative agent.

The first motif is the fixing of the as yet unstable elements of the universe. According to one interpretation, Genesis may be using the primeval water of Genesis 1.2 as a symbol of chaos, but the theme is not developed. Indeed, *pa’a* (fixed) is found only in Genesis 2.2 (*Pela i paa ai ka lani a me ka honua i ka hanaia, a me ko laila poe mea a pau*). In contrast, the movement from nonfixity to fixity is a major theme of Polynesian origin texts (Charlot 1985, 1991). For instance, the first section of the Kumulipo moves from the instability of lines 1–2 to the fixity of line 120. Kekupuohi is not content to restrict herself to the concerns of Genesis, but addresses problems raised in her own traditions. Kekupuohi does not use water as an image of chaos (Hawaiians knew too much about the organization of the ocean), rather, like the Kumulipo, she uses unstable land images such as those found in chanted descriptions of volcanic eruptions.²⁴ She is finding equivalents that have more resonance for Hawaiians and thus inspire more emotions in her audience: eruptions were a focus of religious awe. The absence of the ocean from the chant can be explained by the fact that Kekupuohi is using only the *lanilhonua* pair and not supplementing it by the *uka/kai*, as the Kumulipo does.²⁵ *Uka/kai* will be used only late in the chant as a completeness formula, not as a means of articulating the development of the universe.

God stabilizes the shaking by *’apo* (grasping) it with his power.²⁶ This physical picture is supplemented by a set of more abstract elements. Line 8: *I pa’a i ka mana, i ka mana’o* (Fixed by power, by mind/thinking). In just the same way, Kekupuohi will add such abstract qualities to her *piha* (full) section, lines 30–31. She seems to be using this

as a device to move from the more physical Hawaiian religion to the more abstract Christian. In this case, *mana’o* seems to refer to god’s intended plan whereby he will give body to earth.²⁷ To God’s power is added his intelligence, his *’oihana akamai* (intelligent craft) of line 42.

Line 9–10: The rise of the islands. These lines open a section on the *honua* (earth), lines 9–21, that is balanced by the section on the *lani* (sky), lines 22–24/26. Kekupuohi’s account is based mostly on Hawaiian traditions. *Ho’okino* (to embody) is a nontraditional word for origin texts. It seems to emphasize the process, as in “to develop, as a puny infant” (Pukui and Elbert 1986: at word), as does Andrews’ translation: “The earth became embodied” (1839: 79).

Line 10 is, however, traditional. The islands are described as they *ea* (rise) out of the sea; or *ulu wale* as Malo designated the model. The more common Polynesian word for the same action is *tupu*.²⁸ These traditions are really about the origin of the islands rather than of the earth. Moreover, *ea*, *ulu wale*, and *tupu* all identify the agent as the islands themselves: they grow out of the sea by their own power. Samoans connected their *tupu* tradition to Tangaloa as creator by adding an epithet to his name: *fa’atutupunu’u* (Tangaloa who makes the islands *tupu*). Kekupuohi will reaffirm Jehovah’s creationism in lines 15–16.

Lines 11–14: The state of the newly created earth. In the ancient genealogical picture of the origin of the universe, the earthly elements exist before plants. To describe this state, the Hebrew Bible used the phrase *tohu wabohu* (waste land and empty), probably the image of a stony desert. The Hawaiian Bible used the word *’olohelohe* “Bare, naked, barren . . . bald” (Pukui and Elbert 1986: at word). In line 11, Kekupuohi uses this word, but in line 12 she adds as a corrective the more positive *’alaneo* “Clear, calm, serene, unclouded . . . emptiness.”²⁹ For Hawaiians, the plantless land was the lava and the rust-red dirt, which were appreciated for their special beauty and potential. Polynesian traditions see that red dirt as the end of the ele-

24 Pukui and Elbert (1986: at words). Line 6: *nakele* “Soft, boggy, slippery; yielding, sinking in. *Nakele* ‘ā, fresh lava still soft and not yet cold”; line 7: *nakaka* “To crack open as earth from the heat,” etc. The last can be used also for earthquakes, a prime example of the instability of the earth.

25 The Kumulipo lines 1531–1545 can thus refer to tidal waves.

26 Compare the early nineteenth-century verse, Pukui and Korn (1973: 16, 22), *Pa’a ‘ia lewa lani i ka lima ‘ākau o Wākea* “held in heavenly space by the right hand of Wākea”; Fornander (1919–1920: 363), *Paa ia i ka lawaealani i ka lima akau o Akea* “It was fast in the air by the right hand of Akea.”

27 The *ai* of line 9 is the purposive *e . . . ai* construction, used also in line 43, connecting *ho’okino* to *mana’o*.

28 *Ea*: Fornander (1916–1917: 3, 7 [nineteenth century]); *tupu*: Charlot (1985: 171 f.; 1991: 139 f.).

29 Elbert and Pukui (1986, at word). Compare one of the names of the high chiefess Keōpūolani: *Kauika’alaneo* (set in the clear sky). Examples of the word used in a more negative sense are from the Bible.

mental period and the beginning of the plants; the color word *mea* is found throughout the islands, for instance, in the name Pele-honua-mea (Pele of the rust-red earth).

In contrast, *lepo* is the dark, fertile soil. Kekupuohi takes this word from Genesis 2.7 – *ke kanaka, he lepo o ka honua* (the man, soil of the earth) – and bases on it her line 14: *He lepo ke kanaka* (Man is soil). For Hawaiians, the sense is not a negative “dust to dust”; in their own traditions, human beings are *kama’āina* (children of the land) and descendants from the mating of sky and earth. Just as Kekupuohi begins her chant by proclaiming the closeness of God to his creation, so here she affirms the human being’s closeness to the good earth. Similarly, Queen Kamāmalu can chant on leaving for England on November 27, 1823: *e ka lepo ē, aloha ‘oe* (O dirt, you are beloved) (Dibble 1838: 95, modern orthography).

Significantly, Kekupuohi does not describe God’s breathing life into man’s earthly body. In line 1, God has already breathed into space. The human being needs no special inspiration. He breathes the same godly breath as the universe does.

Lines 15–16: Kekupuohi closes this period with a reaffirmation of God’s creativity, necessary because Hawaiians apparently did not have traditions of a god creating human beings out of some prior matter. Samoans told of human beings or their forebears being carved from grubs (Charlot 1991: 142) and New Zealand Māori had a tradition of Tāne shaping the first human being from sand. But such stories in Hawai’i appear postcontact, like the Kumuhonua legends. Kekupuohi will punctuate the various periods that follow with such proclamations of God’s creativity.

Lines 17–20: Returning to the normal Polynesian sequence, Kekupuohi now describes the emergence of plants from the bare earth. She has mentioned the creation of human beings because of the connection with the word *lepo*. But now she reverts back to the traditional Polynesian and Biblical sequence of elements to plants. She has God directly cause the plants to grow, *ho’oulu*, taking the word from Genesis 1.11–12.³⁰

30 Curiously, Genesis is less creational than Kekupuohi in this passage. The idea of the earth bearing plants like a mother was so ingrained that the authors of Genesis had to acknowledge it. They assimilated that tradition by having their god order the earth to bring forth plants. Similar problems and solutions can be found in Polynesian texts. For instance, the Society Islands Ta’aroa priests had to retain in their complexes creational stories of other gods that were too famous

However, Kekupuohi adds a point that is characteristically Hawaiian: beauty. In Hawaiian poetry, the word *ulu* (grow) is inescapably connected with the idea of beauty, for instance, the *uluwehiwehi* “Lush and beautiful verdure” (Pukui and Elbert 1986: at *uluwehi*). Whereas the Hawaiian Genesis does not mention the beauty of plants but just their goodness, *maika’i*, Kekupuohi uses repetition to emphasize her point. The earth is *kāhiko* (decorated); God has *ho’onani* (beautified) the *pua* (plants, fruit); as a result, *nani ka honua* (the earth is beautiful; lines 18–20).³¹

Kekupuohi emphasizes that this beauty was made and intended by God. In line 18, “The earth was decorated/bedecked by the good person,” God.³² He himself beautifies the plants (line 19). The *I* in line 20 is purposive; God’s purpose was to make the earth beautiful. I translate: “So that the earth be beautiful.” Far from being a distraction or snare, beauty is God’s plan for the universe. Indeed, its beauty reflects his goodness, again reaffirming the close connection between creator and creation. The idea of a completely positive, good god was a novelty for Hawaiians and needed to be supported and emphasized. Kekupuohi applies the Hawaiians’ appreciation of cosmic beauty to the Christian God.

Line 21: Again Kekupuohi closes the section with a reaffirmation of God’s creativity, giving it a special direction. God is the one who made the earth beautiful. That was his intention and achievement (line 20).

Lines 22–24 or –26: Kekupuohi links her previous *honua* (earth) section to her *lani* (sky) section very

to omit; they could solve the problem by having Ta’aroa order that god to perform his well-known act (e.g., Charlot 1985: 173f., 177).

31 Dr. Jeff Lyon has kindly provided me with the following note on the Hebrew Bible: Hebrew *töv*, usually translated *good*, can also carry the idea of physical beauty, as in Genesis 26.2, *töbat-mär’eh*, good looking. In I Samuel 9.2, we learn that the young Saul had no equal for handsomeness (*töv*) in all of Israel. Koehler and Baumgartner give one definition of *töv* as “pleasing, beautiful” (2001/1: 371) while Zorell’s Hebrew–Latin lexicon also provides the gloss *pulcher*, beautiful (1989: 282). Similarly, the Septuagint rendering of Genesis 1.4 has *kalon*, fair, beautiful. While the idea of beauty might be absent from the English *good* and the Vulgate *bona*, it is present in the Hebrew original, and in this point Kekupuohi seems to have understood the text better than her teachers.

Although the same argument might be made for Hawaiian *maika’i* (good), Kekupuohi clearly distinguishes between *maika’i* and *nani* (beautiful) in lines 30–31.

32 Andrews (1839: 79) translates: “The earth was decked with beauty”; “with beauty” translates *i ka mea maikai*. I take the phrase as an echo of line 4, that is, a reference to God.

closely by an unusually full repetition of line 21 by line 22. Habitual use of the *lanilhonua* pair made the use of *lani* almost required after *honua*, especially in a cosmogonic context in which the pair referred to the universe as a whole. Again, God's creativity is emphasized.

The size of the sky is emphasized: *nui* (big) and *mamao li'uli'u* (so distant as to be indistinct).³³ These words for the large size of the sky replace the traditional *ākea*, which was also the name of the sky god Ākea or Wākea. The size of the sky demonstrates the creative power of God.

Line 24: Just as God made the earth *pa'a* (lines 7–8), so he now fixes the sky in place. Again, this fixity is not a Genesis theme but a Hawaiian one, as seen in the Kumulipo (lines 2, 120).

Lines 24–25: The Hawaiian sky god lives in the sky, but Kekupuohi feels she must emphasize the fact that the new god does as well. *Noho* can mean settled in place and thus is connected to *pa'a*. The primary sense is, however, to dwell or inhabit. God dwells in the heaven he has fixed. The point is not that the new god will assume the fertilizing role of the traditional sky god, as in Hewahewa's chant. Line 25 emphasizes by repetition that he lives alone: he is creator, not procreator. Kekupuohi's point is rather that the new god has a place inside the traditional universe bounded by sky and earth. He is not above the sky, above his creation, but has created a place inside it for himself. The ambiguity in the Christian use of the word *heaven* as both sky and a dimension beyond the universe is used here by Kekupuohi to preserve an important aspect of the Hawaiian view of gods: they are within the universe, not beyond it. They live in the same world as we do.

Line 26: Kekupuohi emphatically includes the '*Uhane* in the sky, although she is faced again with the problem of Trinitarianism: Jehovah lives *ho'okahi* (alone), but the '*Uhane* is *ka lua* (the second). She does not add to her earlier discussion of the hierarchical relationship between God and the

Uhane, but a Polynesian audience would be able to connect itself more comfortably to an account in which two figures were present at the origin of the universe.

Lines 27–28: Kekupuohi describes God's *mana* (power) as the creator of multitudes, expressed in a stereotyped Hawaiian sequence of words. She is referring to multitudes both on earth and in the sky, that is, stars. Her placing of the creation of stars is closer to Genesis 1.14–19 than to Polynesian traditions, where they tend to be treated in another context (e.g., the Kumulipo lines 1850–1900). This is perhaps the reason Kekupuohi does not describe their creation more explicitly. Also, in the problem-solving section, lines 39–43, she will base her point on the secure placing of the sun, rather than the stars. Kekupuohi could be downplaying the creation of the stars because she feels they present a number of unsolved problems for her developing cosmogony, as discussed below.

Lines 27–31: The word *piha* (full) is used only twice in the Hawaiian Genesis, both times in a literal sense (Genesis 1.20, *e hoopihā i na wai o na moana* . . . ; 28, to human beings, *e hoopihā i ka honua* . . .). However, it is a major theme in the Kumulipo and filled with emotion.³⁴ The poet of the Kumulipo repeats the word to express his awe at the overwhelming and beautiful multiplicity of the universe. Kekupuohi uses the same device of repetition to express her wonder. Moreover, just as with the theme of fixity, she attaches *piha* to a set of more abstract qualities or virtues. Interestingly, she did not do this for beauty – which seems to be a virtue in itself. Finally, Kekupuohi does not connect this multiplicity to the theme of fixity. Traditionally, in the Kumulipo and elsewhere, the plants help to stabilize the soil. However, Kekupuohi has credited God with that stability, and *piha* is used by her to accentuate the beauty of the universe and God's power in creating it.

Line 29: Once sky and earth have been created, Kekupuohi can use the traditional *lanilhonua* pair as a completeness description for the universe. The delayed use of the pair is poetically effective. The traditional cosmogony started with earth and sky, and the Hawaiian audience would have expected to hear that pair named at the beginning of the chant. Now, with the new Creator God, *lani* and *honua*

33 Andrews (1839: 80) translates as time rather than distance: "He made the heavens, long, long ago." This is possible, but it would be the only time reference in a chant preoccupied with space (see below, lines 34–36). *Li'uli'u*, in modern orthography, is temporal as in Andrews (1974) and in Pukui and Elbert (1986). I would argue, however, that it is also a variant of '*ōli'uli'u* "Blurred, indistinct" (Pukui and Elbert 1986: at word). '*ōli'uli'u* is found in the Kumulipo line 496 in just the sense required: the path is so long that its beginnings are indistinct.

34 The Kumulipo: e.g., lines 117–119 (plants and generally), 259 (whales and fish), 368 (birds), 531 (pigs?), 540 (rats), 598 (human beings).

must wait to be created before the pair can be used. The creation of the earth makes the audience anticipate the creation of the sky with which it will be balanced. The use of the pair in this line constitutes, therefore, a climax of the creative process: the complete universe is now present in its fullness both of physical and abstract qualities and virtues, a witness to God's creative power.

Lines 30–31: Those virtues refer first and foremost to God. Indeed, *mana* and *maika'i* have been applied to him; *hemolele* describes the 'Uhane, which is his *aka*; and *nani* has been closely connected to his creative activity. *Ahonui* (patience) is more a personal than a cosmic virtue and was a standard Christian description of God's attitude toward his sinful children. Kekupuohi draws here the consequence of God's breathing into space (line 1): the whole universe is full of his qualities. *Ahonui*, literally (great or long breath), alludes to that primordial *hā*, which proceeds from God's *lokomaika'i* (good insides) of line 33.

Lines 32–38: The completeness, greatness, and fullness of the universe reveal God's unique creative power (lines 32, 37–38). The concluding section of the first biblical creation story, Genesis 2.1–4a, is the basis for Kekupuohi's summary. As a Polynesian, she understands the repetition of the sky/earth pair in Genesis 2.1 and 4a as a celebration of the conclusion of God's work. She herself can now celebrate the greatness of sky and earth (line 35) and add for the first time the *ukalkai* pair, a second major completeness formula. Related to *ahonui* (line 31), the word *lokomaika'i* (good insides) (line 33) alludes to the source of God's *hā*.

Lines 39–43: Line 38 would make a proper ending to the chant, but Kekupuohi adds a section that addresses a problem that she and probably other Hawaiians felt. As seen above, Kekupuohi understands God's completion of the universe in the terms of making it fixed. Her concluding line 43 is couched in the traditional terminology of Polynesian origin accounts: '*O ke Akua ke ko'oko'o nui e pa'a ai ka honua* (The God himself is the great prop that fixes the earth; Andrews [1839: 80]: "God is the great support that holds the earth"). This is very close to a climactic line of the first section of the Kumulipo (121): '*O ke ko'ohonua pa'a ka lani* (The earth is the prop, the sky is fixed). Both are based on the idea that earth and sky are connected and thus fixed by props, a theme extensively developed in Māori texts.

The problem is presented by another piece of

foreign knowledge, not from the Bible but from modern, heliocentric Western science: the earth both rotates and orbits around the sun. Kekupuohi draws no distinction between the two kinds of knowledge. They both have to be accommodated in her new view of the universe and its origin. Moreover, the Kumulipo and other such works were not considered religious knowledge separate from or even opposed to natural observation. The Kumulipo bases its cosmic vision on everything known from the Hawaiians' long and exact study of their environment. Modern scientific knowledge had, therefore, for Kekupuohi as much significance as Biblical and was itself – in new perspectives like heliocentrism – wondrous. From the Bible, therefore, she takes the idea that God created the universe. From Western science, she takes an aspect of the universe he created. She feels she has to put these two ideas together.

Rotation and orbiting are described in lines 40–41. The *moku* is turning around a point, *huli* (line 40). *Moku* means a delimited land section and is, I argue, the word Kekupuohi uses for *globe*, a new concept for Hawaiians and one for which terms had to be established.³⁵ Line 41 describes the motion with words that are not found in traditional Hawaiian origin texts: *palamimo* "to move easily and noiselessly"; *palanehe* "Noiseless, quiet, dainty; to move in a dainty fashion" (Pukui and Elbert 1986: at words; see also Andrews 1974: at words). Andrews glosses *palaneheole* as "Silently, quietly, unperceived" and notes its oddity.³⁶ The phrase *pala 'ole* should be understood from *pala* "Daub, smear, smudge, blot"; *pala 'ole* (not *pala*) would then mean (without leaving a trace). Andrews translates: "With sudden, noiseless, silent speed" (1839: 80). The point of line 41 is that rotation and orbiting cannot be observed or experienced with the naked eye, the norm for classical Hawaiian observation. Other foreign ideas could be checked by Hawaiians. For instance, the roundness of the earth could be confirmed by the fact that the moun-

³⁵ The terms in the Pukui and Elbert (1986) are postmissionary. *He Ui* (1832: 3), in a catechism lesson on the Genesis creation story, still needs to teach that the earth is round: *He poepoe anei ka honua nei me he poka la, he palahalaha anei? He poepoe no me he poka la* (Is this earth round like a musket ball or flat? Round like a musket ball).

Stewart (1970: 253), describes an early Hawaiian conversation on orbiting that includes problems of observation and probably a misunderstood use of *moku* for globe instead of island.

³⁶ Andrews (1974: at word): "It is difficult to see how *palanehe* and *palaneheole* should convey the same idea of a still, quiet movement; the *ole* cannot have its usual meaning of a negative."

taintops appear first when one approaches islands by sea. In contrast, because Hawaiians were not privy to the relevant astronomical observations and calculations, the earth's motion had to be taken on a "faith in things unseen," just like creationism. I believe that Kekupuohi and other Hawaiians did not differentiate between objects of faith here, religious and scientific, and that the belief in the unobservable was a major novelty in their way of thinking. Indeed, the Hawaiians' traditional connection between religion and natural science may have helped them accept the unobservable in religion because they were also accepting it in Western science: both had to be taken on faith.

Nonetheless, acceptance of rotation and orbiting raised a problem for the idea of the earth's fixity, the completion point of the universe in Polynesian thinking. How can the universe or creation be completed if the earth is not fixed? Indeed, the very word *huli* or the related word *kahuli* were used in the Kumulipo (lines 1–2) to describe the uncompleted, unorganized universe; and in the Pele literature, to describe the disruption of the universe. In the new knowledge, the sun is fixed in place (line 39) as the point around which the earth orbits. But the earth still moves. The answer is that God somehow solves the problem even though we cannot see how he does it: 'A'ole kākou e 'ike i kana 'oihana akamai (We ourselves do not see his intelligent craft; line 42; Andrews 1839: 80 "We see not his skillful work"). The Christian can only affirm that God has somehow solved the problem, leaving the unexplained and the unintelligible up to God, again an innovation in Hawaiian thinking. In this line, Kekupuohi has reached the extreme point of her Christian faith: not only new content but a new way of thinking.

However, in Polynesian thinking, an extreme calls its opposite. Kekupuohi's last line describes god's 'oihana akamai by identifying the new god with one of the major physical objects of the old cosmogony: god himself is the prop that fixes the earth (line 43). This line is the extreme point of Kekupuohi's understanding of the new god in traditional terms: she absorbs the new god into the old cosmology as she has absorbed that cosmology into the new god. In religion as in all things, Hawaiians seek balance.

I present Kekupuohi's chant in modern orthography along with my translation:

1. *Hā ke Akua i ka lewa!*
2. *Hohola ka mana, hohola.*
3. *Lele ho'olalahai ka 'Uhane*
4. *He 'Uhane he aka no ka mea maika'i*

5. *He akalani nō ka 'Uhane Hemolele.*
6. *'Apo mai ka mana i ka nakele i pa'a*
7. *I pa'a ka nakaka o lewa wale nō*
8. *I pa'a i ka mana i ka mana'o*
9. *Ho'okino ai ka honua.*
10. *Ua ea pū, ea ka moku.*
11. *'Ōlohelohe ka 'āina*
12. *'Alaneo ka honua*
13. *He lepo wale nō.*
14. *He lepo ke kanaka*
15. *Na ke Akua i hana.*
16. *Nāna nō i hana i nā mea ā pau.*
17. *Ho'oulu mai lā i nā mea uliuli.*
18. *Kāhiko ka honua i ka mea maika'i.*
19. *Ho'onani mai i ka pua o ka lā'au*
20. *I nani ka honua.*
21. *Na ke Akua ia.*
22. *Na ke Akua i hana ka lani nui nei*
23. *I hana i ka lani i mamao li'uli'u*
24. *I ho'opa'a i ka lani i wahi noho.*
25. *Noho ho'okahi Iehova, 'o ia wale nō*
26. *'O ka 'Uhane ka lua.*
27. *'O ka mana kona mea i lehulehu ai*
28. *Lehu ā kini ā nalowale*
29. *Ā piha ka lani, piha nō ka honua*
30. *Piha i ka pono, i ka mana, i ka maika'i*
31. *I ka nani, i ka hemolele, i ke ahonui.*
32. *He mea nui wale nō nāna*
33. *Na ke Akua lokomaika'i*
34. *I nui wale ai ho'ihā ka lani*
35. *He nui ka lani me ka honua*
36. *He nui ka mauna me ke kai*
37. *He mea hana wale nō na ke Akua*
38. *Na kona mana wale nō.*
39. *'O ko ka lā wahi nō i kau ai*
40. *'O ka moku na'e ke huli ana, huli ka moku*
41. *Palamimo, palanehe'ole, pala 'ole.*
42. *'A'ole kākou e 'ike i kana 'oihana akamai.*
43. *'O ke Akua ke ko'oko'o nui e pa'a ai ka honua.*

1. The God breathed into space!
2. The power spread, spread.
3. The spirit flew as poised aloft
4. A Spirit, a shadow of the good person
5. A sky/chiefly shadow indeed is the Perfect Spirit.
6. The power grasped the molten to make it firm
7. To firm up the rifts lest there be only yawning space
8. Firmed up by the power, by the intended plan
9. By which to give body to the earth.
10. They rose together, the island rose up.
11. The land was bare
12. The earth was clear
13. Only soil.

14. Soil was the human being.
15. By the God was he made.
16. By the God were made all things indeed.
17. He made the green things grow forth.
18. The earth was adorned by the good person.
19. He made beautiful the flowers and fruits of the tree
20. So the earth would be beautiful.
21. This was done by the God.
22. By the God was made this great sky
23. He made the sky as almost invisibly distant
24. He fixed the sky as a settled dwelling place.
25. Jehovah lived as one alone, only he
26. The Spirit was the second.
27. The power was his means of making increase
28. The many, the multitude, the innumerable
29. Until the sky was filled, the earth was filled indeed
30. Filled with rightness, power, goodness
31. Beauty, perfection, patience.
32. By him were made great things only
33. By the God of good insides
34. So that the sky would be great indeed
35. Great the sky and the earth
36. Great the mountain and the sea
37. A creation only by the God
38. By his power alone.
39. The sun has its own place to occupy.
40. But the globe is turning, the globe turns
41. Silently, noiselessly, leaving no trace.
42. We ourselves do not see his intelligent craft.
43. The God himself is the great prop that fixes the earth.

Conclusions

What can be learned from these two chants? They certainly raise many intriguing ideas. For instance, Hewahewa envisioned a church under native leadership. How would he have structured it if he had become its head? Certainly both he and Kekupuohi feel that Hawaiian religious experience and traditions can make a contribution to Christianity. They feel they can understand Christianity in Hawaiian terms, which results in a broader conception and development of the Christian message.

Hewahewa's chant reveals the problems monotheism posed for Hawaiians. Some may object that Hawaiians simply did not have the language for monotheism; all their language about the gods was polytheistic. Indeed, even Genesis 1.26 reverts to such language. But polytheistic language reveals polytheistic thinking, and monotheism could not be accepted simply by people whose knowledge of

their gods was experiential. Hawaiians could not believe that Pele existed simply in their imaginations, that their ancestral gods did not help them, and that they met no gods in the bush. Some accommodation of their traditional religious experience still needs to be made in a Hawaiian-Christian theology.

Similarly, Hawaiian views on the origin and structure of the universe were not separate from their observation of their environment and their natural science. The Kumulipo depends on and incorporates lengthy results of generations of careful observation. Thus for Kekupuohi, the truth of Biblical revelation and the truth of Western science cannot be kept apart in distinct categories. Religious views should be based on our most up-to-date views of reality. Similarly, the Israelites arrived in Babylon with the minimal creational account recorded in Genesis 2.4b–6. In that great city, they encountered the finest astronomers of the time and a long tradition of detailed observation. They also heard the monumental *Enūma Elish*, a detailed account of the origin of the universe. Stimulated by this new knowledge, the Israelites composed the much more impressive account in Genesis 1.1–2.4a. That is, they used the opportunity of the latest scientific findings to rethink and reformulate their traditions.

In the same way today, Christians can use the prodigious advances of our knowledge of the universe to achieve a greater appreciation of their God's creative activity. They can take courage from the example of the Hawaiian thinkers, who entered so fearlessly into a new world of physical and intellectual discovery. Like them, Christians should be confident that they will find more beauty.

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