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The dark side of Hawaiian religion has proved continually fascinating for outsiders. I remember shepherding a mainland reporter around to meet Hawaiian religious leaders and being surprised when he later turned some peripheral remarks about sorcery into the central subject of his article. “I thought it made a good story,” he explained. Hawaiians on their side often seem to identify the whole of their traditional religion with sorcery and either condemn it or enjoy in it some sense of power. As a result, discussions of Hawaiian religion are often distorted, as if Christianity were described exclusively through ghost stories and demonism.

Julius Scammon Rodman has clearly been engrossed in “much evidence of a blood-chilling nature” (p.4). He seems less interested in social context and historical development than in producing what he admires in another book: a “fascinating and authoritative collection of vignettes” (p.66), (he does however mention Egypt, the Indus Valley Civilisation, *Chariots of the Gods?*, Brahmins, and so on). Rodman gathers his anecdotes from publications of varying worth—often quoted by pages at a time—and, more usefully, from oral informants and unpublished materials (the writings of Charles Kenn and Leinani Melville Jones will be important for any study of modern interpretations of traditional Hawaiian religion). Rodman then strings his stories together—Chapter 7: “Six Prominent Caucasian Victims of the Kahuna Curse in the Old Days” (p.49)—in vivid prose: “In fulfillment of kahuna dreadful chants of doom, so their stories went, Prince Kuhio died a few months later . . . by a hemorrhage so massive according to his physician, that his very brain exploded” (p.61).

Rodman seems happy to repeat any story, indeed the most squalid gossip. He recounts the sorcery-caused deaths of “an amazing number of prominent Hawaiian, American, and European political figures” (p.35). How distressing it is to turn from Lili‘uokalani’s dirge for her younger brother—in which she, her sister Likelike, and her brother Kalākaua are shown prostrated with grief (Elbert-Mahoe 1975: 46)—to Rodman’s canard that Kalākaua later killed Likelike (p.39f.). Then there is “The Fatal Mistake of Sir Peter Buck” (p.53). In 1949 Buck’s cancer was diagnosed as incurable and he was given three months to live (Condliffe 1971: 219). Three years later, he gathered his strength for a final
effort, his moving and inspiring speech at the rededication of a restored Hawaiian temple (Condiffe 1971: 228). As a sign of solidarity with his Polynesian brothers, he wore his Maori cloak. The cloak, according to Rodman, "caused much consternation among the Hawaiians. A few months after the ceremonies Sir Peter died of inoperable cancer of the liver. Several of my Hawaiian friends had told me, soon after the great Maori-Irish scholar and physician presided at the heiau rites, that his failure to placate the gods and spirits of the temple by appropriate prayers and rituals had evoked the wrath of these entities. There was also a story going around that some kahuna were incensed by his faux pas" (p.55). I am sure that in any community there are minds so low—symptoms perhaps of the debased morale of an oppressed minority—but their opinions should be pitied, not published.

The Kumulipo, an origin chant of 2102 lines composed around A.D. 1700, stands at the opposite extremity of the religious spectrum. Preserved and published in Hawaiian by Kalākaua as proof of the quality of Hawaiian intellectual achievements, the Kumulipo uses every device of symbolism and ambiguity to portray simultaneously cosmic and human development. Queen Liliʻuokalani's translation—now made available in an overpriced reprint—is a key work for our understanding of the chant. Her immense learning renders important her every decision as to text, sense, and form. An adequate appreciation of this aspect of her translation must await a complete critical commentary on the text.

Liliʻuokalani's translation is important also for our understanding of 19th-century Hawaiian culture and its relation to its past. In the history of Hawaiian poetry, Liliʻuokalani is grouped with her siblings as Nā Lani ʻEhā, The Four Chiefs, composers who perpetuated the classic traditions in forms appropriate to the modern age. Liliʻuokalani's own poetry is marked by an intense sensitivity to word music and onomatopoeia. Particularly interesting in the context of this review are her experiments with combinations of Hawaiian and English. In a song composed at the same time as her translation, Kuʻu Pua i Paoa-Ka-Lani, 'My Flower at Paoa-Ka-Lani' (Elbert-Mahoe 1975: 72f.), the first line—E ka gentle breeze e waft mai nei, 'Oh gentle breeze, waft this way'—has three soft e sounds and three sharp ee/i sounds; in each case, two in Hawaiian and one in English. In stanza 2, lines 3f., Hawaiian and English are used in the traditional poetic device of linked assonance: ... hue/I ulu i ... Stanza 3, line 3—O come to me kaʻu mea i ʻiʻa nei, 'Oh come to me, person I desire' interweaves sound resemblances intricately, for instance, come and kaʻu mea. Such word and sound associations have philosophical import in Hawaiian thinking: they are evidences of an identity below surface differences. Nineteenth century Hawaiian arts can be described as bi-cultural, but are often better understood as a search for a foundation common to both Hawaiian and Western cultures, a search manifest also in the Kumuhonua literature (Barrère 1971).

Imprisoned after her overthrow, Liliʻuokalani significantly turned to the Kumulipo—the first evidence of the resurgence of nativist religious thinking remarkable in the political poetry of the post-Monarchy period. With the text of the Kumulipo in one hand (Beckwith 1972: 187-240) and Liliʻuokalani's translation in the other, one has the extraordinary sensation of deep calling to deep.
Lili‘uokalani’s language is stripped of all the poetastry of the translations of her time. She has learned from the compactness and concreteness of the original, qualities in fact traditional to Hawaiian poetry.

There are remarkably successful renderings of single lines. (I add diacritical marks to the Beckwith text).

Line 369:  
\[ He \ ‘au \ pōhāhā \ wale \ i \ ka \ mūkā, \]
Their gall burst easily with a smack (p.15).

Line 468:  
\[ ‘O \ ka \ māewa \ huelo \ ka \ loloa, \]
With long and waving lengthy tail (p.18).

Lili‘uokalani is able to give a sense of the important rhythms of the Kumulipo.

Line 256:  
\[ ‘O \ ke \ ka‘ina \ a \ palaoa \ e \ ka‘i \ nei, \]
The train of Palaoa (walrus) that swim by (p.11).

The impure vowel of by corresponds to the diphthong of nei.

By slight departures from the literal sense, Lili‘uokalani can suggest traditional connotations. Line 38, he wai ka ‘ai a ka lā‘au, is literally “water is the food of the plant”. Lili‘uokalani offers “water is life to trees”, expressing the ancient association of water and food with life.

In a number of passages, Lili‘uokalani seems to catch the strange resonance of the original.

Lines 566ff.:  
Over the mountains silence reigns—
The silence of night that has moved away,
And the silence of night that cometh (p.21).

The singular archaism is oddly effective.

Just like the original chant, Lili‘uokalani’s translation of the Kumulipo presents itself to us as a work of art, speaking to deeper levels of our understanding as well as to our discursive reason. Lili‘uokalani does mention the “analogies between its accounts of the creation and that given by modern science or Sacred Scripture”, Introduction (p.3). But these clearly do not exhaust the “inestimable value” of “The folk-lore or traditions of an aboriginal people” Introduction (p.1). Poetry is the prime expression of Hawaiian philosophy because it appeals to the same sensitivity to beauty that informs Hawaiian thinking. The foreigners’ insensitive destruction of Hawaiian culture and sovereignty seemed linked then, as it does now, to their selfish destruction of the land. The Kumulipo was published and is now republished, not as an archaeological curiosity, but as a many-levelled challenge to Western thinking and practice. The Western thinker may search for the Kumulipo’s sensitivity, integrating power, and commitment, in the aboriginal roots of his own intellectual history.

REFERENCES
