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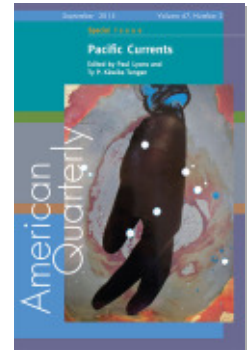
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Mo'okū'auhau versus Colonial Entitlement in English Translations of the Kumulipo

Brandy Nālani McDougall

Mai Poina 'Oe Ia'u.

—Lili'uokalani

In 1895 Queen Lili'uokalani was put on trial, sentenced, and imprisoned for several months in 'Iolani Palace for misprision of treason after an armed royalist attempt to reinstate the Hawaiian Kingdom. Just two years earlier, a group of Americans and Europeans, some of whom held government positions and were Hawai'i citizens, conspired with US government minister John L. Stevens to overthrow the Hawaiian Kingdom with US military support. The queen's imprisonment conveniently delayed her from petitioning the United States to reinstate her throne, so she handed out ribbons to her supporters that read "Mai Poina 'Oe Ia'u," or "Don't forget me," to ensure that resistance and the petitioning process continued.

Confined to a small bedroom with a *kōkua*, an assistant, who willingly joined her during her sentence, Queen Lili'uokalani began her English translation of the Kumulipo,¹ her mo'okū'auhau, or genealogy, which traces her descent from over eight hundred generations of kings and queens and recounts the beginnings of the universe. Given this history and her authority as a translator over her own genealogy, most would think that Lili'uokalani's translation is widely studied and taught by scholars interested in the Kumulipo, though this is far from the case. Unfortunately, her translation is largely invisible, and the American folklorist Martha Beckwith's translation of the Kumulipo, published in 1951, is often thought to be the only available translation. Exactly how this has come to pass, I assert, is directly related to American settler colonialism within Hawai'i and how the settler sense of "colonial entitlement" to be authorities over Indigenous peoples and cultures continues to pervade academic forums. The work of scholars like Vine Deloria Jr., Haunani-Kay Trask, Elizabeth Cook-Lynn, Devon Mihesuah, Waziyatawin Angela Wilson, Vilsoni Hereniko, Konai Helu Thaman, Linda Tuhiwai Smith, Taiaiake Alfred, Robert Warrior, and several others attest to the ongoing racism and assertions

of colonial power to which both Indigenous scholars and Indigenous communities (as subjects of study) are subjected.

Within colonial contexts, the term *entitlement* is most commonly associated with native or Indigenous entitlements to land, social welfare programs, and certain cultural rights in recognition of the need to redress histories of native dispossession and displacement. This essay, however, draws attention to “colonial entitlement,” which describes the naturalized authority/ownership over everyone and everything Indigenous that emerges from histories of conquest. Patrick Wolfe describes settler colonialism as following a “logic of elimination” of Indigenous peoples to provide “access to territory,” as “territoriality is settler colonialism’s specific, irreducible element.”² He asserts that “elimination refers to . . . the summary liquidation of Indigenous people,” and “a return whereby the native repressed continues to structure settler-colonial society.”³ Colonial entitlement, which exists within the structure of settler colonialism, occurs as a correlative for native repression, by recognizing that settlers become entitled not only to land and natural resources, but also to Indigenous intellectual, cultural, and creative property. Specifically, colonial entitlement may include the perceived right to claim authority over and specialized knowledge of, Indigenous peoples, lands, and cultural productions while in effect usurping Indigenous authority over such productions.

Nothing is sacred or forbidden where colonial entitlement is concerned; rather, colonial entitlement asserts itself as a kind of unapologetic academic freedom, and despite often being exercised at the expense of Indigenous peoples’ rights and sovereignty, colonial entitlement goes largely unquestioned by its wielder. Just as American settler colonialism is a foreign introduction in Hawai‘i yet asserts itself as normative, scholars who have no specialized expertise or obvious connection to indigeneity may assume a naturalized authority that, especially when accompanied by institutional and commercial support (i.e., funding and publishing opportunities, university teaching positions, national speaking engagements, and awards programs), renders them recognized experts. Simultaneously, Indigenous expertise and specialized knowledge are often boldly dismissed, denied, and exploited, and what Mihesuah describes as “academic gatekeeping” ensures that the existence of Indigenous knowledge and expertise remains obscured.⁴ At stake is the freedom and natural right for Indigenous peoples to represent and speak for ourselves.

Issues of Indigenous self-representation may also be complicated by translation and what Lawrence Venuti describes as “the invisibility of the translator,” which obscures both the translator and his or her motives.⁵ Comparing English

translations of the Kumulipo authored by Queen Lili'uokalani and Martha Beckwith, this essay examines the opposition between colonial entitlement and mo'okū'auhau, which refers to both genealogy as a cultural and epistemological product and the practice of genealogizing, as they are mediated by translation. I begin by discussing the cultural, political, and spiritual significance of mo'okū'auhau and the Kumulipo. I then "ho'okū'auhau,"⁶ or genealogize, as a methodology to trace Queen Lili'uokalani's use of her English translation of the Kumulipo to affirm Hawaiian national sovereignty and to examine how Beckwith used her translation to question the legitimacy of the Hawaiian Kingdom. The process of genealogizing, whether through tracing biological, intellectual, and literary heritage, while infinitely rich, may also be difficult to limit in scope. For this essay, I ho'okū'auhau to make biological, political, and spiritual connections between the lands of Hawai'i, Kānaka 'Ōiwi,⁷ and Hawai'i's last two sovereigns, Kalākaua and Lili'uokalani. I also ho'okū'auhau to examine the biological, political, and patronal connections between haole missionary descendants, sugar barons, and translators and scholars in Hawai'i, like Beckwith. Consequently, I assert that Beckwith's sense of colonial entitlement led her to both translate the Kumulipo and challenge Lili'uokalani's Indigenous expertise, and examine the problems implicit in the Beckwith text's continued wide dissemination as the authoritative translation, while Lili'uokalani's translation remains a "hidden" text. Finally, I compare both translations to show how they conflict with each other ideologically and politically. I argue that while Lili'uokalani's translation concretizes an active relationship to lived experience and political resistance, Beckwith's translation asserts an objective distance from the act or effects of translating and aestheticizes to depoliticize. I conclude the essay with how the Kumulipo embodies a Native Pacific studies approach to challenge American Empire in the Pacific, using Jamaica Osorio's 2009 performance of a poem titled "Kumulipo" at the White House.

Mo'okū'auhau and the Kumulipo

Before situating the competing translations of the Kumulipo, it is necessary to give some background as to the cultural and political significance of mo'okū'auhau in general and of the Kumulipo in particular. Both as a practice and cultural product, mo'okū'auhau are upheld within Hawaiian culture as both sacred practice/texts and historical methodology/records. Before the introduction of writing in the 1820s, mo'okū'auhau were oral histories preserved, memorized, debated and composed by native historians and intellectuals for

generations. They were consulted regularly as historical records to guide ali'i (chiefs, monarchs) in their care of the lands and the people.

So central were mo'okū'auhau to Hawaiian epistemology that in 1896, the same year that the Republic of Hawai'i instituted English as the only medium for schools and government, among the first articulations of its negative impact focused on the loss of mo'okū'auhau. The nationalist newspaper *Ka Makaainana* published a series called "Mo'okū'auhau Hawai'i," which was prefaced with the following question: "E hooliloia ana anei ka hanauna hou o Hawaii nei ma ka papa o na poe kuaaina a me hupo? Ina aole pela, alaila e imi koke a hoomaopopo i ka moolelo oiaio a me ke kuauhau o Hawaii nei." Translated, the excerpt reads: "Will the new generation of Hawaii become backwards and ignorant people? For this not to occur, we should quickly seek to understand the true history and genealogy of Hawai'i."⁸ Of particular concern was the potential for the people to forget the "mo'olelo 'oiaio a me ke kū'auhau" of Hawai'i, and the practice of genealogizing, as a historical methodology, amid a rapidly solidifying American colonialism reinforced by the new English-only law. The comparison of those without knowledge of mo'okū'auhau to "backward and ignorant people" is telling of the cultural and pedagogical role played by mo'okū'auhau.

Of all the preserved mo'okū'auhau today, the Kumulipo is the most complete and thus holds special significance to Kānaka 'Ōiwi. A 2,108-line creation and genealogical chant, the Kumulipo is also an evolutionary account of creation, tracing the beginnings of the Kanaka 'Ōiwi concept of the universe. The Kumulipo is divided into sixteen wā, or eras of creation, with the first seven wā occurring in the time of Pō (darkness, night) when the heaven and earth are created, as well as the plants, animals, and gods, and the final nine wā occurring in the time of Ao (light, day), when human genealogies emerge from the godly. Ao and Pō are among several unopposing dualisms or "complementary pairs" expressed throughout the Kumulipo as harmonious balance, or pono—Kāne/Wahine (male/female); Akua/Kanaka (god/human); and 'Āina/Moana (land/ocean). This relationship of pono, rather than a Manichean structural hierarchy indicating dominance of one side of the pair over the other, emphasizes how both sides of each duality are necessary and equally important in terms of their roles and functions. Altogether, the Kumulipo traces over eight hundred generations.

Mo'okū'auhau, like the Kumulipo, trace the ancestry of ali'i to the gods, validating the authority and mana (power) of the ali'i. They were also used in the late nineteenth century to help Hawaiian constituents determine claims to rule



Figure 1.

King David Kalākaua reigned over the Hawaiian Kingdom from 1874-1891. Dedicating his reign to “Ho’oulu Lāhui” (Increasing the Nation), he supported cultural and spiritual revitalization and nationalist projects that protected Hawai’i’s membership in the family of nations.

within the constitutional monarchy system. After King Kamehameha V, the last direct descendant of Kamehameha I in line for the throne, died on December 11, 1872, William Charles Lunalilo and David La’amea Kalākaua both ran

as candidates to succeed him. Lunalilo was the more popular of the two and was elected as king largely because of his close lineage to Kamehameha I. His grandfather was Prince Kalaimamahu, a half-brother of Kamehameha I, and he was thus a cousin of King Kamehameha V.⁹ Lunalilo died just a little over a year later, and an election was held with Kalākaua as a candidate once again, this time against Dowager Queen Emma Naea Kaleleonālani Rooke, a beloved

ali'i who descended from Kamehameha I's full brother, Keli'imaika'i. While Kalākaua was elected as Hawai'i's monarch by the legislative vote, Emma held the popular vote partly because of her Kamehameha lineage. Kalākaua could not claim as close a link with the Kamehameha line, so he chose to reinforce his succession to the throne by emphasizing his descent from the illustrious Keaweikekahiali'iokamoku line through the Kumulipo, which he hoped would convince his detractors of his claim to rule.

Kalākaua's reign (1874–91) can be characterized by its emphasis on Hawaiian cultural traditions, which he recognized could strengthen the spiritual and political sovereignty of Hawai'i that had been threatened by aggressive foreign interests since the 1820s. He ushered in the first Hawaiian Renaissance by reviving and promoting the hula, which was banned with the first generation of missionaries; reviving and funding Ka Papa Kū'auhau o nā 'Ali'i (Board of Genealogy of Hawaiian Chiefs) and the Hale Nauā, both societies made up of ali'i and kāhuna who specialized in genealogies and the histories of Hawai'i; and celebrating and recording the traditional arts of oli, mo'olelo, and mele (chant, [hi]stories, and song) in writing. He also worked to frame Hawai'i as a sovereign nation within a global market. Tiffany Ing details Kalākaua's efforts as "spectacles of display," which were intended "to convince those inside and outside of Hawai'i that he possessed the intelligence and ability to lead, to revive Hawaiian culture, and to make other peoples and nations recognize Hawai'i as an independent nation."¹⁰ Along with revitalizing Hawaiian cultural productions, he also affirmed Hawai'i's sovereignty through spectacles that would be recognized as "civilized" and "progressive" by European nations, such as the building of a royal palace, 'Iolani Palace; the embracing of the latest technology, like the telephone and electricity;¹¹ and the recording of his royal genealogy, the Kumulipo, which had garnered some international recognition as an Indigenous evolutionary account preceding Charles Darwin's evolutionary theory.

However, the writing of the Kumulipo also served several Hawaiian domestic interests. In recording the Kumulipo in writing in 1889, Kalākaua was able to continue to assert his legitimacy and authority as ruler of the Hawaiian Kingdom to foreign corporate factions in Hawai'i and ideologically resist Western ideals of history and culture.¹² He was also able to encourage Kānaka 'Ōiwi to "Ho'oulu Lāhui" or "Increase the Nation," the motto of Kalākaua's reign. During this period, Kānaka 'Ōiwi were commonly perceived to be a "dying race," after suffering massive depopulation since contact with Captain Cook and his men in 1778. David Stannard estimates that the population was

“only 10% of its pre-contact population just 100 years later.”¹³ The writing and sharing of the Kumulipo was the king's response to this massive depopulation and the cultural decline of his people by providing an example of the continuing strength and survival of the Hawaiian people and nation.¹⁴ Thus, though the Kumulipo was considered “the special property of the latest ruling family” and among the most precious (and private) of possessions of an ali'i, Kalākaua allowed the genealogy to be written and shared with his people as a national mo'okū'auhau as well.

Queen Lili'uokalani and Her Translation of the Kumulipo into English

As her brother's successor, Queen Lili'uokalani also saw the political significance of the Kumulipo. As mentioned earlier, she began translating the text into English in 1895, while she was imprisoned in 'Iolani Palace by the newly formed Republic of Hawai'i. She finished the extensive translation in 1897 while traveling to Washington, DC, to petition against the American annexation of Hawai'i and to regain internationally recognized sovereignty for her small country.

Rather than articulate political reasons for the translation, Lili'uokalani emphasizes Indigenous historical and cultural preservation as her motives:

There are several reasons for the publication of this work, the translation of which pleasantly employed me while imprisoned by the present rulers of Hawaii. . . . The folk-lore or traditions of an aboriginal people have of late years been considered of inestimable value; language itself changes, and there are terms and allusions herein to the natural history of Hawaii, which might be forgotten in future years without some such history as this to preserve them to posterity. Further, it is the special property of the latest ruling family of the Hawaiian Islands.¹⁵

A clever rhetorician, Lili'uokalani's introduction abounds with carefully worded protests against the hostile takeover of her country and her subsequent imprisonment, alongside the reasons she gives for the translation; she also is careful to emphasize that her translation was also an effort at preservation. Aside from these, however, there were other political implications of her translating the Kumulipo into English. English was the language of the corporate oligarchy that overthrew the Hawaiian Kingdom and the language of the people of the United States. As Lili'uokalani was in the process of submitting two anti-annexation petitions signed by over 90 percent of Hawaiian citizens to Congress at the time, her translation of the Kumulipo reinforced Hawai'i's sovereignty by “explaining to the people of the United States the Kanaka Maoli were a



Figure 2.

Queen Lili'uokalani reigned over the Hawaiian Kingdom from 1891 to 1895, when she was forced under duress to abdicate the throne to the United States. She dedicated the rest of her life to restoring Hawai'i's internationally recognized sovereignty.

people with a very long history . . . [and] counter[ing] the discourse that disparaged the Kanaka Maoli in order to justify annexation and military occupation of Hawai'i."¹⁶ Like Kalākaua, the Kumulipo also affirmed Lili'uokalani's

legitimacy as a sovereign of Hawai'i by virtue of her genealogy. On the title page of her translation, Lili'uokalani notes that the Kumulipo was "created for Ka-Ii-Mamao" and passed on to "his daughter Alapai Wahine[,] Liliu'okalani's great-grandmother."¹⁷ She writes further in her introduction that the Kumulipo "connect[s] the earlier kings of ancient history with the monarchs latest upon the throne" and thus is "a contribution to the history of the Hawaiian Islands, and as such it is the only record of its kind in existence."¹⁸ In doing so, she further emphasizes her descent from a long succession of monarchs who ruled in Hawai'i before US involvement.

The queen's translation was published by Lee and Shepard in Boston in 1897, and unfortunately, its circulation was short-lived, as it went out of print the same year. Though the reasons behind the translation going out of print so quickly are unclear, it may be surmised that the queen's Kumulipo translation represented a counternarrative that challenged the American colonial occupation of Hawai'i under the McKinley presidency in 1898. Despite the success of Lili'uokalani, and the patriotic groups, the Hui Aloha ʻĀina and the Hui Kālaiʻāina, and the thousands of Hawaiians they represented in defeating the Annexation Treaty in the US Senate, both houses of Congress passed the Newlands Resolution before being signed by President William McKinley in 1898 to annex Hawai'i so it could be further militarized during the Spanish American War. Any anti-imperialist challenges, especially from the lands targeted as a part of this expansionist era, were silenced and the queen's translation of the Kumulipo was no exception.

To date, Lili'uokalani's translation remains fairly invisible, though it was republished in 1978 by Pueo Press, an independent Hawaiian-run press with limited distribution. Its founder, Kimo Campbell, shares that he felt Lili'uokalani's translation of the Kumulipo ought to be made available as "a useful tool for modern Hawaiians attempting to understand, preserve, and revitalize Hawaiian culture."¹⁹ By 1978 the second Hawaiian Renaissance, which celebrated and called for a reawakening of Kanaka ʻŌiwi cultural and political consciousness and creative and scholarly expression to resist American colonialism, was well underway. In Hawai'i, as in other parts of the world, people were actively interrogating government policies promoting white supremacy and colonial oppression while renewing cultural preservation and revitalization efforts. After nearly a century of English-only policies in Hawai'i's schools, the majority of Kānaka ʻŌiwi spoke only English but yearned for ancestral reconnections. Pueo Press's republication of the queen's translation of the Kumulipo answered this call, both as an act and as a product, signifying a powerful means of resistance through mo'okū'auhau and Hawaiian national identity.

Beckwith and Her Translation of the Kumulipo into English

Very little has been written on the life of Martha Warren Beckwith outside the short biographies included with her books and translations—a fact not so unsurprising when much of her work has been predicated largely on considering herself an "unbiased" or "objective" translator, researcher, and scholar. However, in reviewing her scholarly pursuits and its patrons, as well as her own

mo'okū'auhau, it is certain that Beckwith was far from unbiased or objective, even by Western standards.

Beckwith was born in 1871 in Wellesley Hills, Massachusetts, and moved to Hawai'i as a young child with her parents, George Ely Beckwith and Harriet Winslowe (Goodale), both schoolteachers. Part of their relocation to Hawai'i was determined by their familial ties to the Thurston family. Among the first American Christian missionaries to Hawai'i in the 1820s, Asa and Lucy Goodale Thurston were the grandparents of Lorrin Andrews Thurston, who played an instrumental role in forcing Kalākaua to sign the Bayonet Constitution in 1887, in orchestrating the American military-backed overthrow of the Hawaiian Kingdom in 1893, and in Hawai'i's annexation to the United States in 1898. Through her own mo'okū'auhau, Beckwith was the grandniece of Lucy Goodale Thurston and the second cousin of Lorrin Andrews Thurston.

Beckwith's father taught at both the Royal School, which educated ali'i children, and O'ahu College, now Punahou School, originally founded by Congregational missionaries in 1841 so their children could be segregated from Hawaiian and other nonwhite children. Later, her father started a sugar plantation in Ha'ikū, Maui, which was purchased by Alexander & Baldwin. Martha Beckwith befriended Annie Montague Alexander, whose father was Samuel Thomas Alexander of Alexander & Baldwin, and whose mother was Martha Eliza Cooke, an heir of Castle & Cooke. Annie Alexander became an enthusiastic supporter of Beckwith's scholarship and translation endeavors, and eventually funded her entire career at Vassar College.²⁰ Katherine Luomala shares that this transaction was kept strictly confidential:

The Vassar Memorial to [Beckwith] in 1959 says of the research professorship that "it was probably unique in the history of American college education—and perhaps is even to this day. . . . even President MacCracken [of Vassar College] did not know the identity of the donors until after Miss Beckwith's retirement, and was given solely for Miss Beckwith."²¹

Along with these professional benefits, Beckwith became the first person at any university in the country to hold a chair in folklore through the establishment of the Folklore Foundation at Vassar, also funded by Alexander wealth. Tellingly, after Beckwith's retirement in 1938, the Folklore Foundation closed because of funding issues.²²

While it is difficult to discern any direct connection between Alexander patronage and Beckwith's project to translate the Kumulipo, there is, however, an indirect connection through William DeWitt Alexander. W. D. Alexander was a professor of Greek and history at O'ahu College and later became its fourth

president. In 1871 he became royal surveyor-general (under Lot Kapuāiwa's reign) and in 1874 was appointed to the Board of Education. Alexander's authority over education in Hawai'i continued over the next twenty years, though it was not until after the overthrow that he was more public in supporting the aims of the Provisional Government, then later the Republic of Hawai'i, to annex Hawai'i to the United States. The Alexanders, like other sugar-profitting haole families, viewed a Hawaiian-controlled government as the primary obstacle to greater profits.²³ In January 1894, when the Provisional Government was relatively unstable and it was still uncertain whether the oligarchy could maintain control or secure annexation, Alexander wrote *History of the Later Years of the Hawaiian Monarchy and the Revolution of 1893*, which traced the "germs of many of the evils of Kalakaua's reign."²⁴ In particular, Alexander's work reveals much about how threatened the haole corporate faction was by the revitalization of the Papa Kū'auhau o nā Ali'i and the Hale Nauā in particular, as both were Kanaka-only societies dedicated to protecting and advising the king and researching and preserving the Kumulipo and other mo'okū'auhau of all the ali'i lineages and other histories of Hawai'i, activities that reinforced the legitimacy and continuation of Hawaiian sovereignty using traditional processes and standards. He portrays the Hale Nauā "partly as an agency for the revival of heathenism, partly to pander to vice, and indirectly to serve as a political machine," and castigates Kalākaua for "reviv[ing] heathenism under the pretense of cultivating 'national' feeling."²⁵

Later in 1896, Alexander was appointed by the Republic of Hawai'i as commissioner of public instruction. He played a key role in creating and then maintaining the law that English be the medium and basis of instruction in all public and private schools in Hawai'i, a law that prepped Hawai'i for American colonial rule, functioned to ban the Hawaiian language from schools, and instituted corporal and other forms of punishment for children caught speaking Hawaiian. Though the nature of Beckwith's relationship with Alexander is uncertain, it can be inferred that his work to discredit the Hawaiian monarchy had some notable influence on her, as it did for many others supporting and benefiting from corporate sugar's control. It also seems more than a coincidence that Beckwith, who was certainly grateful for the patronage and friendship of the Alexanders, would use her work to similarly discredit Kalākaua and Lili'uokalani over fifty years later and dedicate this work to the memory of Alexander's niece Annie, her "lifelong friend and comrade from early days in Hawaii, whose generous sponsorship has made the author's research possible."²⁶

At eighty years old, Martha Beckwith published *The Kumulipo: A Hawaiian Creation Chant* with the University of Hawai'i Press in 1951, eight years before Hawai'i's further colonial entrenchment through statehood. While Beckwith offers few reasons for embarking on the project, she shares in her introduction that the Kumulipo was "buried in obscure libraries out of reach of scholars today and unknown even to the few Hawaiians left who read their own language and might be able to interpret its meaning."²⁷ Like other colonially entitled scholars of her time, Beckwith viewed Hawaiians who could not speak Hawaiian as inauthentic and assimilated, a view popularized within the anthropological studies period of "salvage ethnography of disappearing natives," which was followed by an era of "acculturation studies of Hawaiians becoming Americans" (under the assumption of already vanished natives) from the 1920s through the next several decades, according to Ty Kāwika Tengan and Geoffrey M. White.²⁸ As a folklorist of the Bishop Museum, a settler site of knowledge linked to the University of Hawai'i, Beckwith was among few "credentialed" scholars who could salvage Indigenous knowledge from "uncredentialed" and rapidly vanishing "authentic" Hawaiian sources. Her credentials and authority, reinforced through her affiliation with Bishop Museum, enabled her to assume an expertise on "Hawaiian folklore" (under which the Kumulipo was classified) while dismissing any continuity of Hawaiian cultural knowledge.

Beckwith presents another motive, however, in her brief description of the Kumulipo in *Hawaiian Mythology* (1940): "In 1889 Kalākaua had his manuscript version printed, and this has become, in spite of many textual errors and alleged tampering with the original, the standard text for the Kumulipo. In 1897 appeared Lili'uokalani's translation."²⁹ In her opening chapters to the translation, Beckwith describes the last two sovereigns' motives for altering the text: "It was to [Kalākaua's] interest and later to that of his sister as queen to uphold in every way the family claim to blood descent from the fountain source of Keawe's line."³⁰ This reveals her desire to set the record straight about the legitimacy or authenticity of Kalākaua's version and consequently, Lili'uokalani's translation. Because the Kumulipo is a royal genealogy, however, this question of legitimacy or authenticity inevitably questions the legitimacy of Hawai'i's last two sovereigns and native governance as well. Beckwith's choice of text to translate is extremely significant in that the process of inscription "operates at every stage in the production, circulation, and reception of the translation. It is initiated by the very choice of a foreign text to translate, always an exclusion of other foreign texts and literatures, which answers to particular domestic interests."³¹ In choosing to translate and analyze the Kumulipo, Beckwith asserted both her colonial entitlement to the Kumulipo and her

colonial entitlement to and colonial authority over its previous translation by Lili'uokalani, to whom the Kumulipo belonged. Beckwith then used her authority to define the Kumulipo as a text worthy of study for its feat of poetic aesthetics only. In doing so, Beckwith discounts any readings excepting those that are metaphorical and determines a lack of historical accuracy based on Kalākaua's and Lili'uokalani's supposed motives, as well as the Western view of orality's subjection to manipulability:

I think the idea must be abandoned that these earlier genealogies represent a succession of generations rather than of events arranged. . . . Historical accuracy just does not exist as we understand the term, and the painstaking toil of our own scholars in calculating dates far into the past from these oratorical recitations must certainly be abandoned.³²

Because the efforts of “our own scholars” to “calculat[e] dates” could work to validate the Kumulipo as a historical record and, in doing so, also validate Kanaka 'Ōiwi claims to sovereignty via Kalākaua and Lili'uokalani, Beckwith must cast the “succession of generations” within the Kumulipo as nothing more than “events arranged” or “oratorical recitations.” While it is true that the Kumulipo may not necessarily conform to a strictly linear chronology of events (though its alinearity would also be difficult to prove), this supposed pitfall in meeting standards of “historical accuracy as we understand the term” (a point Beckwith makes to distance the Kumulipo from scientific rationality) should not discredit the Kumulipo as a genealogical record, nor should it limit the Kumulipo only to aesthetic readings. Rather, as is the case for many other Indigenous sacred texts, the Kumulipo requires and therein teaches new-old ways of interpreting history, using Indigenous methodologies to account for and include multiple meanings, figurations, and realities. During the time of Kalākaua's recording of the Kumulipo in writing and Lili'uokalani's subsequent translation, international interest in the Kumulipo was widespread, as it demonstrated an evolutionary account of creation that predated Darwin's theory of evolution. Perhaps in response to this popular reading of the Kumulipo, which also exalts Hawaiian intellectualism, Beckwith insists on only a distanced aestheticization of the Kumulipo.

Positing herself as an expert in 'ōlelo Hawai'i (the Hawaiian language), she further discredits the integrity of Kalākaua's “text” through a discussion of its imprecision of language:

The Kalākaua text contains misprints, besides puzzling elisions in the manuscript due to oral memorizing. Since the chant has already died on the lips of a reciter, the absence of any sign for the unvocalized glottal catch makes it necessary to distinguish, by the probable meaning alone, words from quite different roots that are spelled alike in the text.³³

By asserting the written rendering of the Kumulipo is imprecise in language, Beckwith uses the long-upheld argument often used to discount Indigenous knowledge that oral texts are inexact and more vulnerable to manipulations while questioning the validity of Kalākaua's version and thus Lili'uokalani's translation. From Beckwith's perspective, it is the version of the Kumulipo she is translating (and its linguistic ambiguity without orthography) that is the problem, not her translation skills and "expertise" in the Hawaiian language and culture, or her colonial entitlement to assert her expertise.

Beckwith's accusation that the Kumulipo has been manipulated to suit Kalākaua and Lili'uokalani is also rooted in her comparisons between the cosmologies she collected from other Pacific peoples. Considering these comparisons, she deems the first division of the Kumulipo as accurate, "a reworking from old material." However, she argues that "the latter half of the chant from the dawn of light (ao) . . . is clearly designed to give the genealogical history of the family of Keawe to which the young chief belonged and from which the family of Kalākaua and his sister claimed descent."³⁴ Because she is unable to verify points of reference from other Pacific texts, she concludes that the final nine wā have been changed to validate Kalākaua's reign. By underscoring the filial connections Kānaka 'Ōiwi have to other peoples in the Pacific, she calls into question the credibility of the Kumulipo as a true genealogical account, but fails to recognize how Kānaka 'Ōiwi have experienced histories unique and separate from other Pacific peoples.

An outright dismissal of Beckwith's analysis of the Kumulipo as based only on colonial misreadings, however, is complicated by her citing of four Kānaka 'Ōiwi, or "living Hawaiians familiar with native chant style," to support her arguments. Specifically, she cites David Malo Kupihea, who is "from a Molokai priestly family [and] held an inherited post under the late monarchy as keeper of the royal fishponds below Palama"; Pokini Robinson, "an old family friend of exceptional qualities of mind belonging to an important chief family of the island of Maui"; Daniel Ho'olapa, who "belonged to an old Kona family on the island of Hawaii, and his wife was also of chief blood"; and Mary Kawena Pukui, who offered "unfailing helpfulness as interpreter and for her sound advice on questions of detail."³⁵ Beckwith's framing of these intellectuals as native informants replete with recognizable Indigenous authenticity markers further allows her to assume a naturalized authority over the Kumulipo despite her dependence on their knowledge and interpretations.

Certainly the cultural authority of Mary Kawena Pukui is paramount. Beckwith met Pukui at Bishop Museum when Beckwith started researching there in

1921, less than a year after Beckwith started the Folklore Foundation at Vassar. Over the next eight years, Beckwith, Laura S. Green, and Pukui collaborated on four books published by the Vassar Folklore Foundation: *Hawaiian Stories and Wise Sayings* (1923), *Folk-tales from Hawai'i* (1928), *Legend of Kawelo* (1929), and *Hawaiian Folk Tales* (1933). Pukui's role in the first three books was downplayed despite her contributing "the majority of legends in the first two books" and collecting the entire "legend of Kawelo."³⁶ The fourth text, *Hawaiian Folk Tales*, was compiled and translated by Pukui, who is rightfully credited for her work, and Beckwith is listed as the editor. Amos Leib and A. Grove Day share Pukui's description of the translation work:

The method of translation was as follows: Mrs. Pukui gave her Hawaiian manuscript to Miss Green, who, after reading it, discussed it with Mrs. Pukui. Miss Green then made a translation of the story, which Mrs. Pukui checked over, making any necessary clarifications. Miss Beckwith, the editor, made very few changes.³⁷

Overall, Beckwith is described as contributing very little to these publications yet retaining credit for the work. The nature of the collaboration between the three scholars, with Pukui's treatment, often, as a native informant or source, demonstrates the typical colonially entitled academic practice of the time: if Hawaiians wanted to participate in research, especially funded research that would be published, they had to do so through collaborations, in which haole authors got most of the credit. In their examination of Pukui's work with the anthropologist E. S. Craighill Handy, Tengan and White note that Pukui's role as author of *The Polynesian Family System in Ka'u, Hawai'i and Native Planters* was diminished similarly, while Handy was given authorial prominence.³⁸ Pukui and Beckwith went on to collaborate (with several others) in translating the works of Samuel Kamakau in the 1930s, though no further collaborations ensued until, as Beckwith claims, her Kumulipo translation.

While Beckwith eventually established herself as a folklore scholar and translator specializing in Hawaiian literature in her own right, these early collaborations with Pukui were foundational and allowed her access to Hawaiian cultural knowledge and sources she would not have known otherwise. By the time of the publication of Beckwith's translation in 1951, Pukui was recognized throughout Hawai'i, the Pacific, and the United States as a preeminent Hawaiian literature scholar and translator who was well into working on the *Hawaiian-English Dictionary* (1957) with Samuel Elbert.

Beckwith cites Pukui only six times throughout her commentary, either sharing that she is using Pukui's translation of a particular line or word or

citing relevant stories and details said to be related by Pukui. For example, Beckwith cites a lullaby sung to “Kawena Pukui” by her grandmother to explain her translation of “ho‘oleilei” as “cradled” and “lana” as “arms” in the line “Hanau kama a ka Powehiwehi / Ho‘oleilei ka lana a ka Pouliuli,” or as Beckwith translates, “Born is a child to Po-wehiwehi / Cradled in the arms of Po-uliuli[?]” in the second wā. *Ho‘oleilei* does indeed describe an action associated with child care, but it means to toss or swing a baby,³⁹ not to cradle. *Lana* is also mistranslated, perhaps to better fit with *ho‘oleilei*, as rather than “arms,” *lana* may refer to floating, buoyancy, the calm, stillness of water, or an anchor.⁴⁰ She also attributes her translation of the next line, “O Mahiūma, o Ma‘apuia,” as “A wrestler, a pusher [?]” to Pukui, who Beckwith notes suggested the words to describe the “early movements of an active youngster.”⁴¹ While Beckwith cites Pukui in this instance, it seems unlikely that Pukui, a scholar of *kaona* (veiled metaphorical, symbolic, or allusive meaning) employed within the Hawaiian literary aesthetic, would advise her to limit all other readings of Mahiūma and Ma‘apuia, especially as they were clearly rendered as proper names in the original.⁴² This example demonstrates how Pukui’s knowledge was misconstrued yet exploited to further establish Beckwith as expert and Beckwith’s translation as authoritative text. Furthermore, recognizing Pukui as “the final authority in correction of both text and translation” endowed Beckwith’s translation tremendous cultural authority while diminishing her own accountability for any errors, mistranslations, and misinterpretations.⁴³

Comparatively, the credibility of Pokini Robinson, whom Beckwith identifies as “an old family friend,” seems predicated chiefly on Robinson’s Hawaiian cultural identity. Beckwith further describes Robinson as having “exceptional qualities of mind [and] belonging to an important chief family of the island of Maui.” She assures her readers,

Although given an English education in a mission household, [Robinson]

preserv[ed] a constant connection with Hawaiian life and tradition . . . as she followed it through the Hawaiian press. She read the *Kumulipo* for the first time from the copy I lent her and exclaimed with enthusiasm, “How I should like to hear this chanted!”⁴⁴

Beckwith’s descriptions of Robinson is replete with Indigenous authenticity markers to underscore Robinson’s credibility, including her chiefly lineage, her “constant connection with Hawaiian life and tradition,” and her ability to speak and read ‘ōlelo Hawai‘i as she “followed . . . the Hawaiian press.” While these markers establish Robinson’s Hawaiian cultural identity, they belie Robinson as a cultural authority insofar as the *Kumulipo* is concerned, especially since

Robinson had no access to the text until Beckwith lent it to her. Though Robinson's Hawaiian literary and historical knowledge is uncertain, Beckwith uses Robinson to further assert her claim that the Kumulipo should be seen as a work of literary metaphor only, and not a genealogy or history:

Pokini Robinson was sure, for her part, that the first seven sections composing the period of Pō symbolize stages in the development of the divine taboo chief from infancy to adolescence, when there begins in the second division [of Ao] the symbolic rehearsal of his taking a wife, house building, and the rearing of a family.⁴⁵

Throughout her commentary, Beckwith upholds prescribed boundaries between creative and critical genres while ignoring how these boundaries are often blurred in Indigenous texts. Robinson's assertions of the Kumulipo being an extended metaphor for the stages of development of an ali'i lies within the practice of kaona, which allows for hidden, multiple meanings; however, as with Pukui, it seems doubtful that Robinson asserted that her interpretations were the only way to read the Kumulipo.

Suspiciously, Beckwith makes the same argument without crediting Robinson just two years before her translation was published, wherein she dismisses the Kumulipo as evolutionary and argues that it is only metaphorical:

The underlying theme is not the coming into being of the material world through a progressive development of life on earth. . . . The chant is in fact centered upon the conception and birth of the sacred child to whom it is dedicated, the child through whom the family stock is to be continued and of whose birth indeed the cosmogonic beginnings serve as analogue and in some sort as determinant.⁴⁶

Because Robinson is not cited in this article, which was published just two years before Beckwith's Kumulipo translation, it is difficult to determine whether this argument was originally Robinson's or whether Beckwith was exploiting Robinson as a Hawaiian to argue what was wholly Beckwith's perspective. Either possibility raises serious implications for Beckwith's integrity as a researcher and a scholar.

Throughout her commentary, Beckwith references David Malo Kupihea to advance the Kumulipo as a way to order the Hawaiian class structure. However, she also uses Kupihea to buttress her accusations against Kalākaua and Lili'uokalani. Like Beckwith, Kupihea is reported to believe that Kalākaua "changed and adapted the original source material in order to jeer at rival factions among the chiefs of his day and laud his own family rank."⁴⁷ As is the case with Robinson, Beckwith decontextualizes Kupihea's assertion that Kalākaua

altered the genealogy from another intellectual tradition within which Kānaka ʻŌiwi debated issues of genealogy quite openly and publicly. This tradition was a part of hoʻopāpā, a debate that demonstrated feats of historical memory and improvised rhetorical and poetic skill before an audience. Of course, debating moʻokūʻauhau also enabled balanced historical inquiry and revision. In citing Kupihea outside this intellectual discourse, Beckwith silences this long tradition of intellectualism as well as any Kānaka ʻŌiwi who engaged or would have engaged Kupihea in debate and argued against him in favor of Kalākauaʻs Kumulipo, as there most certainly would have been.

In her portrayals of native corroboration, Beckwith may draw from the collective cultural ethos of her Kanaka ʻŌiwi sources, treating them as collaborators or informants while conveniently evading a sense of responsibility for any mistranslations and misinterpretations as well as consequential divisions created within Kanaka ʻŌiwi communities. Beckwith assures her readers that “both [text and translation] have in almost every case been based upon manuscript readings or have been suggested or approved by these Hawaiian interpreters.”⁴⁸ This affirms that her work is credible, informed and endorsed by Kanaka ʻŌiwi sources with either “chiefly” or “priestly” lineage. It is difficult to say if Kupihea, Hoʻolapa, Robinson, or Pukui intended to have their opinions and interpretations used to discount the Kumulipo as a history, and thus challenge the legitimacy of Kanaka ʻŌiwi governance and sovereignty, or to have Beckwith’s translation and commentary supplant Liliʻuokalani’s translation. Certainly, their knowledge, which they entrusted with Beckwith, grew from thoughtful analyses based on their own perspectives and cultural experiences. However, the vagueness with which Beckwith describes Pukui’s and Hoʻolapa’s contributions, as well as her decontextualization of Kupihea’s and Robinson’s views from Hawaiian intellectual traditions, illustrates how Kānaka ʻŌiwi, and other Indigenous peoples, can be exploited and manipulated in unforeseen ways to promote colonial entitlement and authority.

Finally, Beckwith’s expertise and authority is also reinforced through her translation’s continued printing and wide dissemination by the University of Hawaiʻi Press. Though it is not the most recent English translation (Rubellite Kawena Johnson published hers with Kū Paʻa Press, an independent Hawaiian press, in 1981), it is also the most widely studied and most often quoted. As the majority of those interested in Hawaiian culture, including Kānaka ʻŌiwi, do not speak, read, or understand Hawaiian and must consequently read an English translation to interact with the Kumulipo, it is problematic that Beckwith’s translation has become so central to its study. The greater vis-

ibility and dissemination of Beckwith's largely depoliticized translation over her Kanaka 'Ōiwi counterparts exemplifies how institutions, like the university, endorse colonial entitlement and authority over indigeneity while meaningful Indigenous contributions that may counter or complicate colonial entitlement and authority are silenced through gatekeeping practices. As is the case with the Kumulipo, this colonial entitlement and authority extends over the very genealogy of the original translator, Lili'uokalani, whose own translation remains somewhat invisible because of publishing issues as well as its integration into Hawaiian and Pacific studies courses.

A Comparison of the Translations

Translations are never exact linguistic, cultural, or transnational transactions, though they simulate exactness. As translations are often the only means through which nonspeakers may interact with Hawaiian-language texts, the biases within English translations of Hawaiian literature and analysis can be invisible to readers unfamiliar with Hawai'i's colonial history and politics. The translator and her motives are also similarly protected by "invisibility," as the translation's fluency "conceals the numerous conditions under which the translation is made, starting with the translator's crucial intervention in the foreign text."⁴⁹

Beckwith's translations have been described in the Leib and Day bibliography as "awkward" and "literal," and thus failing to fully convey the original Hawaiian poeticisms within the English language. In this way, her translation skills diminish the rhetorics and aesthetics of the Kumulipo, and therein distance readers and depoliticize the text. Beckwith's own biological and patronal mo'okū'auhau was also obscured as she assumed colonial authority over the Kumulipo partly under the veil of objectivity. Beckwith's invisibility as translator, coupled with the Lili'uokalani's translation being out of print, enabled Beckwith to make serious claims in her commentary to discount the Kumulipo as a historical record and as a legitimate claim to Hawaiian sovereignty. These circumstances also enabled her to support those claims through her translation choices. While there are several letters indicating how Bishop Museum patrons, many adhering to settler sensibilities, responded favorably to Beckwith's translation upon its publication, there is no record of how Hawaiians did. For example, Edwin H. Bryan Jr. writes to Beckwith on April 22, 1951, on Bishop Museum stationery:

Many years ago I tried to read a copy of Queen Liliuokalani's version of this Hawaiian creation chant, and not being able to fathom what it was all about, I neither finished it, nor enjoyed it. But with your clear and entertaining book it has been quite different.⁵⁰

Bryan's letter suggests that Beckwith's version successfully domesticated the Kumulipo for an American settler readership, making it "clear" and "entertaining," and providing a simplified interpretation that emphasized poeticism and aestheticism and elided any political nuances. Aside from the relative inaccessibility in print of Lili'uokalani's translation and perceptions of Beckwith's credentialed expertise and authority, these simplifications may also perhaps explain Beckwith's translation's wider academic readership and larger number of scholarly citations, contributing to its officiality since its publication by the University of Hawai'i Press over sixty years ago.

Comparing the queen's translation with Beckwith's translation makes their identities, motives, interventions and political and cultural lenses much more visible. Lili'uokalani's emphasis of her translation as embodying her lived experience and political resistance contrasts significantly with Beckwith's objective distance from the act or effects of translating, and her aestheticization and subsequent depoliticization of the Kumulipo. Both translators' projects are made less obscure through productive juxtapositioning, which may change how readers, both Indigenous and non-Indigenous, receive and understand the Kumulipo in translation, as well as how they approach Indigenous texts subject to similar colonial constraints. Consequently, I employ lineations of the original Kalākaua text in Hawaiian first, Lili'uokalani's translation second, and Beckwith's translation last, so the differences between texts are clear.

Among the first noticeable differences is their different translations of the word *wā*. *Wā* refers to an extended period of time—an epoch or era, season, or age. The Kumulipo is organized into 16 *wā*. Lili'uokalani, in keeping with this meaning, translates *wā* as "era" and titles each *wā* with its corresponding order (The Tenth Era, The Eleventh Era, etc.). Beckwith, on the other hand, ignores the word *wā* altogether, titling each section as a "chant," as in Chant One, Chant Two, and so forth. This misrepresentation enables her to obscure how the Kumulipo, as an *oli mo'okū'auhau*, is viewed as a historical record, one that supports the legitimacy of Hawaiian governance of Hawai'i. It also allows Beckwith to view the Kumulipo entirely through an aesthetic lens.

Another divergence between the translations is Lili'uokalani's privileging of Hawaiian names for various plants and animals and Beckwith's choice to use Western names either as outright translations or in brackets.

Hanau ka Naonao ka makua
Puka kana keiki he Pinao, lele

The Naonao (an ant) was born and became parent;
Its offspring was a Pinao (dragonfly).

Born was the Ant, the parent
Out came its child a Dragonfly, and flew

More than just a matter of ideological resistance, Lili'uokalani's choice to privilege Hawaiian names also follows both a Hawaiian literary aesthetic and taxonomy. Lili'uokalani chooses to either give English translations of names in parentheses or leave Hawaiian names untranslated, allowing for *kaona*. To translate each Hawaiian name to signify only the animal or plant would reduce the multiple meanings and allusions that could be drawn from the name. For example, in the line "Its offspring was a Pinao (dragonfly)," *pinao* is indeed "dragonfly," but Lili'uokalani's keeping of its Hawaiian name preserves how *pinao* may also refer to a particular fish or a "broad jump,"⁵¹ which may describe the movement of *pinao*. In privileging the Western names of several of the plants and animals in the *Kumulipo*, Beckwith erases these multiple meanings and taxonomic descriptions.

The scholar *ku'ualoha ho'omanawanui* identifies two primary aesthetic tropes, repetition and rhythmic form, as part of the poetic structure of the *Kumulipo*, "which also assist[ed] the storyteller as a memory aid in both the memorization and the recitation process."⁵² Lili'uokalani's translation preserves these tropes.

Hanau ka 'Ina, ka 'Ina
Hanau kana, he Halula, puka
.....
Hanau ka 'Ole, o ka 'Ole'ole kana keiki, puka

The Ina was born Ina (sea egg).
The Halula was born Halula (sea urchin).
.....
The Ole was born, the Oleole was its offspring (conch).

Born was the sea urchin, the sea urchin [tribe]
Born was the short-spiked sea urchin, came forth
.....
Born was the conch shell, his child the small conch shell came forth

Lili'uokalani translates the verse as “The Ina was born Ina (sea egg). / The Halula was born Halula (sea urchin). / . . . The Ole was born, the Oleole was its offspring (conch),”⁵³ preserving the original text’s use of complimentary pairing and word mirroring and honoring its repetitive and rhythmic structure. In not using the Hawaiian names, Beckwith diminishes the Kumulipo’s complex poeticisms, consequently framing the chant as somewhat simplistic: “Born was the sea urchin, the sea urchin [tribe]. . . . Born was the conch shell, his child the small conch shell came forth.”⁵⁴ While Beckwith tries to retain the repetitive structure, her clunky language fails to adhere to any regular rhythm. Also, her use of “child” is a typical translation of *keiki*, but given the context of discussing plants and animals, Lili'uokalani’s “offspring” is more appropriate and open to evolution through multiple generations.

Beckwith’s limited knowledge of the catalogued Hawaiian marine animals is also evident here. Lili'uokalani correctly translates *ina* as “sea egg” in parentheses, a name that emphasizes this sea urchin species’ resemblance to an egg with a yolk center. Beckwith’s translation of *ina* as “the sea urchin” implies that it is a blanket term for all sea urchins and, moreover, that it should be read as a “tribe” (of sea urchins? of people?) without explaining why. While both Lili'uokalani and Beckwith translate *halula* as “sea urchin,” and indeed it is a species of sea urchin, it has long spines, not short spines as indicated by Beckwith. Near the end of the verse, Beckwith also translates the *ole* as “the conch shell” and the *oleole* as “the small conch shell,” failing to distinguish between the species of conch from the Hawaiian perspective.

Another Hawaiian poeticism of the Kumulipo that Lili'uokalani honors and Beckwith diminishes is the repetition of certain key choruses of lines that change subtly as the *oli mo'okū'auhau* progresses. In the first four *wā*, the following three lines are repeated frequently in the original Kalākaua version and Lili'uokalani’s translation:

O kane ia Wai'ololi, o ka wahine ia Wai'olola

.....
He po uhe'e i ka wawa

.....
O ke Akua ke komo, 'a'oe komo kanaka

Man by Waiololi, woman by Waiolola,

.....
A night of flight by noises

.....
So the gods may enter, but not man.

Two lines repeatedly follow “O kane ia Wai'ololi, o ka wahine ia Wai'olola” that feature a different complementary pairing (and word mirroring) of one species living on land and another in the ocean each time, as in the lines,

Hanau ka limu Kala noho i kai
Kia'i ia e ka 'Akala noho i uka

The Limukala was born and lived in the sea;
Guarded by the Akala that grew in the forest.⁵⁵

These lines vary to describe the interdependence and complementarity of land plants and animals to their ocean within Hawaiian taxonomy.

Beckwith's translation follows the land–sea complementarity, as well:

Man for the narrow stream, woman for the broad stream
Born was the Kala seaweed living in the sea
Guarded by the 'Akala vine living on land⁵⁶

In translating *Waiololi* and *Waiolola* as “narrow stream” and “broad stream” (attributing the translation to her “informants”), Beckwith eliminates the possibility of the terms representing proper names for people or lands, as well as the musicality of the sound mirroring and the process of multiple meaning-making of any Hawaiian composite words. Further, Beckwith replaces the three lines that follow (ll. 46) of the repeated stanza with “Refrain,” perhaps because she “arrived at no satisfactory translation.”⁵⁷ What she asserts as a refrain, however, subtly changes in each successive wā. In writing that there is a refrain, Beckwith elides an evolving cosmogenesis specific to the theme of each wā. Below is a comparative lineation of the Kalākaua original, Lili'uokalani's translation, and Beckwith's translation taken from the first wā, focused on the complementarity of land and ocean plant life, and the second wā, focused on the relationship between fish and land plant life:

Wā 1
He po uhe'e i ka wawa
He nuku, he wai ka 'ai a ka la'au
O ke Akua ke komo, 'a'oe komo kanaka

A night of flight by noises
Through a channel; water is life to trees;
So the gods may enter, but not man.

Refrain

Wā 2
He po uhe'e i ka wawa
He nuku, he kai ka 'ai a ka i'a
O ke Akua ke komo, 'a'oe komo kanaka

A night of flight by noises
Through a channel; salt water is life to fish;
So the gods may enter, but not man.

Refrain

Lili'uokalani's translation, remaining true to the original, includes all thirteen times that the lines are repeated in the first wā, and all fifteen times in the second. She also continues to translate the repetition of these lines six times in the third and nine times in the fourth, also like the original. Here are the repeated lines in the third wā, focused on the emergence of birds and insects, and the fourth wā, which details the complementarity of forest and ocean life:

Wā 3
 He po uhe'e i ka wawa
 He hua, he 'i'o ka 'ai a ka manu
 O ke Akua ke komo, 'a'oe komo kanaka

A night of flight by noises.
 Eggs and the Io are life to birds,
 So the gods may enter, but not man.

Refrain

Wā 4
 He po uhe'e i ka wawa
 He nuku, he la'i ka 'ai a kolo
 O ke Akua ke komo, 'a'oe komo kanaka

A night of flight by noises
 Through a channel, la-i is food, and creeps;
 So the gods may enter, but not man.

Refrain

These small variations are repeated throughout their respective wā, a part of the original text to which Lili'uokalani remained loyal in her translation—a choice that also privileges a Hawaiian perspective of how words, when repeated, gain mana. Including them in her translation also demonstrated the Kanaka 'Ōiwi perspective that all life, no matter how small or seemingly insignificant, is fed and nourished by the land and ocean (and moreover that the land and ocean are symbiotically linked), and that this was the case before the coming of humankind. By not including this in her translation, Beckwith eliminates this central idea of environmental interdependency and reciprocity of the Kumulipo and the Hawaiian concept of aloha 'āina, a mutual love and respect between the land, the ocean, and humankind.

The fifth wā provides another example of the translations' divergences. This section of the Kumulipo is devoted to the era of Kapokanokano, translated by Lili'uokalani as “Night of Strength” and by Beckwith as “the Night-Digger,”⁵⁸ an ancestor of Kamapua'a:

Ka 'aina a Kapokanokano i noho ai
 Oliuliu ke ala i ma'awe nei
 O ka ma'awe hulu hiwa o ka pua'a
 Hanau ka pua'a hiwahiwa i ke au

The land where Kapokanokano dwelt,
 To which place laid a path of frailest trail,

A trail as fine as the choicest hair of this pig,
A being was born half pig, half god

The land where the Night-digger dwelt
Long is the line of his ancestry
The ancient line of the pig of chief blood
The pig of highest rank born in the time

The translations differ in their translation of the lines “Oliuliu ke ala i ma'awe nei / O ka ma'awe hulu hiwa o ka pua'a,” with Lili'uokalani choosing to retain the metaphorical language and thus multiple meanings of the original, and Beckwith choosing to offer an interpretation that limits all other meanings. Also, Lili'uokalani translates “ka puaa hiwahiwa” as “a being [born] half pig, half god,” while Beckwith translates the phrase very literally as “the pig of highest rank.”⁵⁹ Kamapua'a is not named directly in the Kumulipo, but Lili'uokalani uses her translation to make this allusion clear. Beckwith's translation, “the pig of highest rank,” relies on her extensive commentary to explain Kamapua'a, but taken alone may seem ridiculous to an outsider reader unaware of the allusion to the sacred and powerful shape-shifter associated with fertility, the forest, and farming. Beckwith's choice to describe Kamapua'a as a “pig of highest rank” in her translation, despite her own knowledge of the Kamapua'a tradition, belittles Kamapua'a as a sacred figure, deems him laughable even, and in doing so, she also belittles Kanaka Ōiwi culture and religious belief systems.

Though I did not find many overtly political references within Lili'uokalani's translation, there is one excerpt, which more than others, that blatantly reflects Lili'uokalani's anger and her positionality as a dispossessed sovereign. Later in the fifth wā, Lili'uokalani translates the following passage from the original Kalākaua version:

Hanau ke Po'owa'awa'a, he wa'awa'a kona
Hanau ke Po'opahapaha, he pahapaha laha
Hanau ke Po'ohiwahiwa, he hiwahiwa luna
Hanau ke Po'oahaole, he haole kela
Hanau ke Po'omahakea, he keakea ka 'ili

The Poowaawaa was born, his head was uneven.
The Poopahapaha was born, his head was flat and spread.
The Poohiwahiwa was born, he appeared noble.
The Pooahaole was born, he became a haole (foreigner).
The Poomahakea was born, his skin was fair.⁶⁰

Born were the peaked-heads, they were clumsy ones
 Born were the flat-heads, they were braggarts
 Born were the angular-heads, they were esteemed
 Born were the fair-haired, they were strangers
 Born were the blonds, their skin was white

Beckwith shares that both Kupihea and Pukui describe this wā as recounting the births of various “classes” within Kanaka ‘Ōiwi society, one meaning that Lili‘uokalani’s translation does not contradict. However, what is most striking about Lili‘uokalani’s translation is her line, “The Poohaole was born, he became a haole (foreigner).” This is an exact translation of the original Kalākaua text reprinted in Beckwith’s translation, which reads “Hanau ke Po‘ohaole, he haole kela.”⁶¹ Though *haole* had become synonymous with whiteness during her time, Lili‘uokalani chose instead to honor the original meaning of *haole* as “foreign” or “foreigner.” In translating *haole* as “foreigner,” Lili‘uokalani was emphasizing the continued sovereignty of her country despite its occupation by haole, those who, in overthrowing her kingdom and seeking annexation to the United States, were never truly citizens of Hawai‘i. By translating *haole* in this way, she was further able to emphasize her own Indigenous claims to sovereign nationhood.

In Beckwith’s translation, aside from assigning specific characteristics to the “heads” represented (another instance of her literal translation rendering the Kumulipo as laughable and simplistic), these same lines also reveal how the term *haole* is problematic for Beckwith. She translates “Hanau ke Po‘ohaole, he haole kela / Hanau ke Po‘omahakea, he keakea ka ‘ili” as “Born were the fair-haired, they were strangers/ Born were the blonds, their skin was white.”⁶² In doing so, Beckwith depoliticizes the term *haole* through her translation, while oddly, *Po‘omahakea*, a term not usually associated with whiteness, is racialized through her translation as people with blond hair (there is no mention of hair in the original Hawaiian) and white skin. Lili‘uokalani’s translation of “he keakea ka ‘ili” as “fair-skinned” (not necessarily “white”) is more exact. Beckwith’s use of the word *stranger* rather than *foreigner* shows her own misgivings about her own self-identified colonial positionality as a “foreigner” to Hawai‘i. Thus she chooses *stranger*, denoting “a person who is not known in a particular place or community,” a word that obscures the history of the term *haole*.

In these few examples, the differences between the translations are clearly determined by both translators’ political and cultural lenses under American colonialism. Lili‘uokalani’s translation reflects her struggle to counter the colonial discourse that framed Kānaka ‘Ōiwi as primitive savages unfit to govern

themselves and regain recognized sovereignty for her country, while Beckwith's translation reflects her own aims to aestheticize and depoliticize the Kumulipo as a historical and sacred text, and to undermine Kalākaua and Lili'uokalani as legitimate monarchs and Hawai'i as a sovereign nation. Without access to Lili'uokalani's translation, Beckwith's translation and commentary go unchallenged and unchecked by non-speakers of 'ōlelo Hawai'i, which at this time includes the majority of Kānaka 'Ōiwi who have been products of English-dominant schools for nearly five generations. To the degree that readers are put in the position of relying on Beckwith, they are distanced from the politically resistant spirit of Lili'uokalani's translation and from seeing how the Kumulipo underscores Hawaiian sovereign governance amid the Hawaiian movement for independence.

Conclusion

That Beckwith's aestheticized settler translation of a sacred and central text in Kanaka Maoli culture remains the standard edition, that it has not been replaced in standard usage by Lili'uokalani's Indigenous and politically charged text, suggests that colonial entitlement continues to pervade occupied Hawai'i. Beckwith's work provides just one example of how a sacred Indigenous text may be changed and misrepresented through English translation. Consequently, researching Indigenous histories, cultures, and issues using only English-language sources without being able to adequately determine translators' or primary sources' motives leaves scholars vulnerable to merely reproducing colonial misrepresentations and the structure of settler power it reinforces.

As scholars, we must overturn colonial entitlement and interrogate the credibility of secondary sources used to research Indigenous histories, cultures, or contemporary issues to be more responsible to Indigenous peoples and Indigenous self-determination. It is only through colonial entitlement that Beckwith could be audacious enough to assert her colonial authority over the Kumulipo and the superiority of her translation over the queen's, when the Kumulipo is Lili'uokalani's mo'okū'auhau; and it is only through colonial entitlement that her translation could so effectively erase and replace the queen's.

Indigenous cultural and political productions, like the Kumulipo, and cultural and political icons, like Queen Lili'uokalani, become prime sites of colonial entitlement and authority because they articulate continued native sovereign identity and the viable claims Hawaiians and other Indigenous peoples have to restored nationhood. As colonialism is a system that must justify itself

through the colonized peoples' purported ineptitude to govern and support themselves, the Kumulipo stands as a sacred Pacific text that emphasizes the intimate genealogical relationship that Hawaiians have to Hawaiian lands and waters, and stands as a record recounting eight hundred generations of sovereignty and native governance. Despite Beckwith's efforts to discount the Kumulipo as a historical record, Queen Lili'uokalani knew the Kumulipo's potential to demonstrate the foreignness of the United States in Hawai'i as well as the youth of the United States as a nation in comparison with Hawai'i.

It has been a mere four or five generations since the illegal overthrow of the Hawaiian Kingdom, Queen Lili'uokalani's forced abdication of the throne, and the subsequent (and also illegal) annexation of Hawai'i to the United States. Lili'uokalani remains a beloved symbol of Hawaiian governance and nationhood, and aloha 'āina, love for the land and patriotism for the Hawaiian Kingdom, abounds. Jamaica Heolimeleikalani Osorio's 2009 performance of a poem titled "Kumulipo" at the White House, with President Barack Obama and First Lady Michelle Obama in attendance, stands as one such testament of aloha for the queen, the Hawaiian Kingdom, and Hawaiian cultural expression. Osorio's "Kumulipo" is a personal mo'okū'auhau, one that traces her own genealogy from her paternal grandparents to herself; however, the poem also represents a personal epiphany for the poet, showing how genealogies provide knowledge and guidance, insight into history, and a basis for personal identity and the danger in forgetting them.

Her performance begins with the devastating question, "What happens to the ones forgotten?" and continues:

the ones who shaped my heart from their rib cages
 i want to taste the tears in their names
 want to trace their souls into my vocal chords so that I can feel related again
 because i have forgotten my father's own grandparents' middle names
 forgotten what color thread god used to sew me together with⁶³

Using a lowercase *i* to humble herself in relation to her kūpuna in the poem, Osorio illustrates how in a colonized space where genealogies are not valued and preserved, there is always the threat of forgetting. Lisa Kahale'ole Hall suggests that "because colonization relies on forced forgetting and erasure, the need to bring the past forward into our consciousnesses is ongoing. Reconstructing tradition and memory is a vital element of indigenous survival, and there is nothing simple or one-dimensional about the process of reconstruction."⁶⁴ Osorio's anxiety of forgetting and reconstruction of memory are thus, at the

heart of her performance, reflected in the mournful tone of her voice and gestures, as she realizes her great-grandparents and their middle names may have been forgotten. Because Hawaiian middle names became a way to carry the names of one's maternal lineage, forgetting the middle names of her great-grandparents raises the threat of forgetting entire lines of ancestors.

Consequently, Osorio urges other Kānaka to recognize the importance of remembering our roots, our ancestors:

Our roots cannot remember themselves
 Cannot remember how to dance if we don't chant for them
 And will not sing unless we are listening.

Osorio's performance is punctuated by her recitation of her mo'okū'auhau, emphasizing the continuance of Hawaiian language, culture, and family, as well as the deep connections between the past and the present. The poem's final words, "Don't forget us. Mai Poina," may at once reflect an urgency to reconstruct Indigenous memory while also directly addressing the United States, which has yet to answer for its ongoing and belligerent colonial occupation of Hawai'i. Of course, Osorio's words also echo the queen's "Mai Poina 'Oe Ia'u" ribbons, signifying their continued political resonance. Exactly 115 years later, Osorio's performance demonstrates the endurance of aloha 'āina. Just as Queen Lili'uokalani did before her, Osorio stood as a strong Kanaka 'Ōiwi woman before the seat of American power, fiercely dedicated to her country and bolstered by mo'okū'auhau.

Notes

This essay is dedicated to ku'u mau kūpuna aloha, Clifford and Leinā'ala Kekauoha. Mahalo piha to Noenoe Silva, Georganne Nordstrom, and Craig Santos Perez for reading a draft of this essay and generously offering support and feedback. Mahalo nui pū to Chuck Lawrence and my Junior Faculty Seminar cohort, especially Lia Keawe, Kekailoa Perry, and Sarah Twomey, as well as Jonathan Kamakawiwo'ole Osorio for their encouragement, insight, and careful readings of early versions of this essay. All errors are mine alone.

1. I use the Kumulipo here and throughout this essay (without italics to indicate the title of a work) to emphasize the sacredness of the text, similar to the Bible, the Koran, and the Bhagavad Gita. Like these other sacred texts, the Kumulipo may also be read as a historical record with different recognized versions. The title of Kalākaua's version of the Kumulipo begins with "He Pule Ho'ola'a Ali'i, He Kumulipo . . ." ("A Prayer to Consecrate Ali'i, A Kumulipo . . .") to recognize that it is just one version of this genealogy and sacred text. Lili'uokalani's translation is of Kalākaua's version of the Kumulipo and is titled *An Account of the Creation of the World according to Hawaiian Tradition*. I use the Kumulipo (as opposed to *a* Kumulipo) throughout this essay to speak generally and to be more inclusive of all

- versions, but also to stress its authority as a sacred Hawaiian text. I call attention to Kalākaua's version and Lili'uokalani's translation in particular because of their political importance and use to convey the legitimacy of both the Kalākaua dynasty and Hawaiian sovereignty and governance.
2. Patrick Wolfe, "Settler Colonialism and the Elimination of the Native," *Journal of Genocide Research* 8.4 (2006): 388.
 3. *Ibid.*, 390.
 4. Devon Abbott Mihesuah, "Academic Gatekeepers," in *Indigenizing the Academy: Transforming Scholarship and Empowering Communities*, ed. Devon Abbott Mihesuah and Angela Cavender Wilson (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2004), 32.
 5. Lawrence Venuti, *The Scandals of Translation* (New York: Routledge, 1998), 67.
 6. I use *ho'okū'auhau* to refer to the active and constructive process of genealogizing as opposed to the recitation of genealogies. *Hō'o-* is a prefix indicating causation and transitivization, and *kū'auhau* can be translated as "genealogy" or "genealogist" or "to recite genealogy."
 7. I use the terms *Kanaka 'Ōiwi* and *Hawaiian* to mean the Indigenous people of Hawai'i, though there are also instances that I intend *Hawaiian* as a nationality (as opposed to an ethnicity) because Hawai'i was internationally recognized as a sovereign country before the United States' forced annexation in 1898. Other terms used by scholars include *Kanaka*, *Kanaka Maoli*, *Kanaka 'Ōiwi*, and *Native Hawaiian*. *Kānaka* (with a macron) indicates plurality, while the term without a macron indicates singularity.
 8. W. H. Kapu, ed., "Mookuauhau Alii," *Ka Makaainana*, April 20, 1896; translation mine.
 9. The only person more closely related to the Kamehameha line was Princess Bernice Pauahi Bishop; however, Pauahi denied her own ascension to the throne twice—first, by refusing a marriage proposal from Kamehameha V and, second, in refusing the throne after Kamehameha V's death.
 10. Tiffany Ing, "'To Be or Not to Be,' That Was Not the Question: A Rhetorical Study of Kalākaua's *Legends and Myths of Hawaii: The Fables and Folk-lore of a Strange People*" (MA thesis, University of Hawai'i at Mānoa, 2003).
 11. The 'Iolani Palace had electricity and a working telephone before the White House.
 12. Noeoe Silva, *Aloha Betrayed: Native Hawaiian Resistance to American Colonialism* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2004), 98.
 13. David E. Stannard, *Before the Horror: The Population of Hawai'i on the Eve of Western Contact* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i, 1989), 51.
 14. Lili'uokalani, trans., introduction to *An Account of the Creation of the World according to Hawaiian Tradition* (Kentfield, CA: Pueo, 1978), n.p.
 15. *Ibid.*
 16. Silva, *Aloha Betrayed*, 98.
 17. Liliuokalani, title page to *Account of the Creation of the World*.
 18. *Ibid.*
 19. Kimo Campbell, preface to *Account of the Creation of the World*, n.p. The queen's translation has been Pueo Press's only publication. Campbell's own genealogical ties to the Kawanakoa family through the Campbell line may mean the Kumulipo is his mo'okū'auhau as well, though he does not indicate this in his preface.
 20. Katherine Luomala, "Martha Beckwith: A Commemorative Essay," *Journal of American Folklore* 75.298 (1962): 341–53.
 21. *Ibid.*
 22. Elizabeth A. Daniels, "Martha Beckwith," Vassar College Encyclopedia, 2005, vcencyclopedia.vassar.edu/index.php/Martha_Beckwith.
 23. *Haole* is a term that originally meant "foreigner" in the Hawaiian language but is now used synonymously with "white" in Hawai'i.
 24. W. D. Alexander, *History of Later Years of the Hawaiian Monarchy and the Revolution of 1893* (Honolulu: Hawaiian Gazette, 1896), 1.
 25. *Ibid.*, 16.
 26. Martha Beckwith, trans., title page to *The Kumulipo: A Hawaiian Creation Chant* (1951; rpt. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i, 1972).
 27. *Ibid.*
 28. Ty Kāwika Tengan and Geoffrey M. White, "Disappearing Worlds: Anthropology and Cultural Studies in Hawai'i and the Pacific," *Contemporary Pacific* 13.2 (2001): 392.

29. Martha Beckwith, *Hawaiian Mythology* (1940; rpt. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i, 1970), 311.
30. Beckwith, *Kumulipo*, 29.
31. Venuti, *Scandals of Translation*, 67.
32. Beckwith, *Kumulipo*, 149.
33. *Ibid.*, 37.
34. *Ibid.*, 313.
35. *Ibid.*, 3, 4.
36. Amos P. Leib and A. Grove Day, *Hawaiian Legends in English: An Annotated Bibliography* (1949; rpt. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1979), 30. Leib lists Pukui as the source for this information.
37. *Ibid.*
38. Tengan and White, "Disappearing Worlds," 390.
39. Mary Kawena Pukui and Samuel Elbert, *Hawaiian Dictionary*, rev. ed. (1957; rpt. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1986), s.v. "leilei."
40. *Ibid.*, s.v. "lana."
41. Beckwith, *Kumulipo*, 62.
42. Lili'uokalani, emphasizing the meaning of *ho'oleilei* as tossing up or swinging a baby and preserving the names Mahiūma and Ma'āpuia, translates the same lines as:
The first child born of Powehiwehi (dusky night)
Tossed up land for Pouliuli (darkest night),
For Mahiūma or Maapuia
43. Beckwith, *Kumulipo*, 3.
44. *Ibid.*
45. *Ibid.*, 41.
46. Martha Beckwith, "Function and Meaning of the Kumulipo Birth Chant in Ancient Hawai'i," *Journal of American Folklore* 62.245 (1949): 290–91.
47. Beckwith, *Kumulipo*, 40–41.
48. *Ibid.*, 4.
49. Lawrence Venuti, *The Translator's Invisibility: A History of Translation* (New York: Routledge, 1994), 1–2.
50. Edwin H. Bryan Jr. to Martha Beckwith, April 22, 1951, Bishop Museum Archives, Honolulu.
51. Pukui and Elbert, *Hawaiian Dictionary*, rev. ed., s.v. "pinao."
52. ku'ualoha ho'omanawanui, "He Lei Ho'ohenō nā Kau a Kau: Language, Performance, and Form in Hawaiian Poetry," *The Contemporary Pacific* 17 (2005): 364.
53. Lili'uokalani, *Account of the Creation of the World*, 2.
54. Beckwith, *Kumulipo*, 58.
55. Lili'uokalani, *Account of the Creation of the World*, 4.
56. Beckwith, *Kumulipo*, 73.
57. *Ibid.*, 53.
58. Lili'uokalani, *Account of the Creation of the World*, 4; Beckwith, *Kumulipo*, 82.
59. Lili'uokalani, *Account of the Creation of the World*, 19; Beckwith, *Kumulipo*, 83.
60. Lili'uokalani, *Account of the Creation of the World*, 19.
61. Beckwith, *Kumulipo*, 200.
62. *Ibid.*, 83. Beckwith's translation omits the last line of this passage.
63. The lineation of Osorio's performance of "Kumulipo" are hers and are taken from the written version of the poem that she shared with me.
64. Lisa Kahale'ole Hall, "Strategies of Erasure: U.S. Colonialism and Native Hawaiian Feminism," *American Quarterly* 60.2 (2008): 279.