Pele and Hi’iaka
The Hawaiian-Language Newspaper Series
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Abstract. — The Hawaiian volcano goddess Pele is the subject of a vast number of Hawaiian-language texts, which constitute a multigenre body of literature. Prominent among these works are six lengthy newspaper serials published from 1861 to 1911, of which five are studied in this article. The composition of these serials perpetuates techniques of the oral tradition, in which memorized materials are arranged by a redactors into a complex. The result is a combination of traditional materials and the individual tendency of the redactors. A history of the literature can therefore be reconstructed from the earliest, originally independent elements up to the time of the redactor. As a result, the series provide not only a wealth of details on traditional Hawaiian culture but a history of Hawaiian reflection on the past, the present, and themselves. [Hawaii, Pele religion, oral tradition and literature, gods]

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Publication History

Hawaiian-language newspapers provide thousands of pages of information on all aspects of Hawaiian culture. A short publication history of the materials studied in this article, although more technical than the following discussion, will serve to orient the reader.

Unfortunately, most of the newspapers are unindexed, so texts need to be discovered by extensive reading and often by happy accident. Mary Kawena Pukui collected and sometimes translated the Pele series she discovered, and Rubellie Kawena Johnson has continued her work (Johnson 1976: 387 ff.). Lately Sherilyn Ku‘ualoha Meyer has discovered yet another series (Rice May 21 – September 10, 1908).

Photocopies of all the series discussed in this article have been placed in the Hawai‘i-Pacific Collection, Hamilton Library, University of Hawai‘i. This effort was initiated in the Depart-

ment of Hawaiian and Indo-Pacific Languages and Literatures and involved, among others, Kristina Kikuchi, Ku‘ualoha Meyer, Puakea Nogelmeier, Noenoe Silva, and Laiana Wong. Full acknowledgements are found on the cover sheets of each series. The following series are discussed in this article.

Kapihenui (December 26, 1861 – July 17, 1862) is the earliest and seems to have been known to the later writers (Emerson 1915 uses it extensively). The installment for January 30, 1862, is not on the microfilm reel, but can be supplied from Bush and Pa‘alui (March 3-9, 1893). Other small lacunae can be filled as well. The series has therefore survived complete, but has never been translated. A manuscript copy from the newspaper series is found in the Bishop Museum, HMS L23 (my thanks to Lei A. Kahiwalani for calling my attention to it).

Bush and Pa‘alui (January 5 – July 12, 1893) begins with an independent tradition and then switches into an unattributed reprint of Kapihenui on January 30, 1893. The reasons given are the pau pono ole “the incorrect ending” (or lack of ending?) of the first text and the greater fullness, he oia ka piha, of Kapihenui’s. Kapihenui’s termination and sign-off of July 17, 1862, are replaced by Bush and Pa‘alui’s of July 12, 1893. Some small changes in wording and paragraphing were made, but the intention was clearly to reproduce the original. Kapihenui (April 10, 1862) was omitted, apparently by mistake.

Manu (May 13 – December 30, 1899) is an independent creation rather than a version of the Pele tradition. Manu, a well-known and imaginative writer, purports to provide an ancient, hitherto secret tradition of events that occurred before Pele’s final migration to Hawai‘i. To do this, he uses traditional characters, motifs, and devices, and plays on traditional stories (an interesting example of his technique can be studied in his use of a Māui story of Kamapua‘a and Kapo and her husband [Manu August 12, 19, 1899; Charlot 1987: 34]).
His work is thus a parallel to that of Daniel Damien on Kamapua'a (Charlot 1987: 94 f.). Mary Kawena Pukui n.d.a. is a nearly complete translation. This work is the subject of a Master’s thesis by Sherilyn Ku‘ualoha Meyer. I will not discuss Manu’s series in this article.

The series by Ho‘oulumāhiheie was started in Hawaii Aloha, July 15 – November 24, 1905. The continuation of the series was announced on November 30, 1905, in Ka Na‘i Aupuni (“Ka Moolelo o Hiiakaikapoliopele”); and the series ran from December 1, 1905, through November 30, 1906. The earlier numbers that had appeared in Hawaii Aloha were reprinted concurrently, June 1 – October 17, 1906. The original preface was reprinted at that time. I have done a spot-check of the original and the reprint and have also checked for major additions or omissions. The differences I found were minor (the author states that he made some small changes in the republication of a prayer, he wahī tōli uku no nae [March 13, 1906]).

As to wording, the author reproduces in general the Hawaii Aloha version in Ka Na‘i Aupuni, even when he might have changed it. For instance, the last paragraph of July 6, 1906, refers to Hawaii Aloha, alluding to the newspaper in which the series was first published. The first words of Hawaii Aloha September 29, 1905, referred to the last issue. They are reprinted in Ka Na‘i Aupuni, but are now in the second paragraph. Original references to Hawaii Aloha appear unchanged elsewhere as well (e.g., September 22, 1906, August 30, 1906).

In the first issue (Hawaii Aloha July 15, 1905; Ka Na‘i Aupuni June 1, 1906), the original reads ka mea nona keia moolelo e panea ia; this has been changed to ka mea kona keia moolelo e paneaia. The last word is probably a typographical error. Hawaii Aloha September 29, 1905, reads: O na kumua naunui keia a na mana huia a na kino eepa o Pateie ... Ka Na‘i Aupuni August 25, 1906, changes this to O ke kumula na keia a na mana huia a na kino eepa o Pateie ... There are other small changes in wording and spelling.

Long paragraphs of Hawaii Aloha have often been divided into smaller ones in Ka Na‘i Aupuni. Some of the lines of typographical dots used to divide sections in Hawaii Aloha have been omitted in Ka Na‘i Aupuni. Hawaii Aloha uses quotation marks more consistently than Ka Na‘i Aupuni. Ka Na‘i Aupuni counts a half line as a full line in numbering the chart on July 17, 1905.

As to additions and omissions, the continuation of the series in Ka Na‘i Aupuni is announced on November 30, 1905. In the first installment on December 1, 1905, a short preface, Olelo Hoakaka, merely refers (erroneously) to the last number of Hawaii Aloha. The original preface of Hawaii Aloha is provided with the beginning of the republication of the first part of that series on June 1, 1906. A new preface precedes the original one and explains that it is a republication.

The only extended omission I found during my spot-check was Hawaii Aloha October 6, 1905 (390, paragraphs 2–8), which is missing from Ka Na‘i Aupuni September 6, 1906. The missing section compares Hi‘iaka’s healing with her skirt to Matthew 9:20–22, where a sick woman is healed by touching the hem of Jesus’s garment (also Matthew 14:36). The author asks whether in this respect the Hawai‘i of Hi‘iaka’s time was not similar to the time Jesus was living among the Jews. He then returns to the story.

Another omission is indicated at the end of Ka Na‘i Aupuni July 17, 1906. Hawaii Aloha September 1, 1905, contains a paragraph saying that the girl being healed woke up and Hi‘iaka started to speak, but this is not found in the following installment of Ka Na‘i Aupuni. The next issues of Hawaii Aloha are missing, so it is impossible to tell how much is missing.

As to general organization, the installments in Hawaii Aloha are much longer than those in Ka Na‘i Aupuni. Only Hawaii Aloha August 18, 1905, and Ka Na‘i Aupuni July 2, 1906, end with the same words. That is, no attempt has been made to end installments at the same places. In fact, an original installment can be cut in the middle of a paragraph in the republication. We can conclude therefore that the ending of installments was not used as a literary device.

Ka Na‘i Aupuni has survived more complete than Hawaii Aloha. The following missing numbers of Hawaii Aloha can be covered by the corresponding installments in Ka Na‘i Aupuni:

| Vol. 1, no. 5 | June 22–27, 1906 |
| Vol. 1, nos. 9–11 | July 17 – August 22, 1906 |
| Vol. 2, nos. 2–3 | September 18–29, 1906 |

The missing installment after October 12, 1906, of Ka Na‘i Aupuni is covered by Hawaii Aloha November 25, 1905 (548–550) (O ka hele keia ...; kanaka a lana matie iloko ona).

He Moolelo Kao no Hiitaka-i-ka-Poli-o-Pele (September 18, 1924 – July 17, 1928) published in Ka Hoku o Hawai‘i, is an unattributed reprint of Ho‘oulumāhiheie, with the addition of a short introduction. Mary Kawena Pukui (n.d.b) translated several installments of the Ka Na‘i Aupuni publication and also of the reprint in Ka Hoku o Hawai‘i (Pukui n.d.c).
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Poepeoe (January 10, 1908 – January 20, 1911) has never been translated. The issue of June 18, 1909, is missing and in all likelihood contained an installment. The series stops before the completion of the story.

Rice (May 21 – September 10, 1908) is the publication of a Kauai manuscript owned by Rice (1923: 3 [E. J. K. Rice]). Three installments are missing; the second of May 28, the fourth of June 11, and the sixth of June 25, 1908. The loss of the fourth installment is particularly grievous because it must have contained the dream journey to Kauai and the treaty with Hi’iaaka. “The Goddess Pele,” in Rice (1923: 7–17) is a selective summary of the text, with some additions and explanations.

I have not succeeded in locating any of the manuscripts used for these publications.

The Gods Pele and Hi’iaaka

Of all the Hawaiian gods, the volcano goddess Pele is today the best known and most widely revered. Although minor traditions in the Society Islands and New Zealand can be used to question whether she is an indigenous Hawaiian god – like the pig god Kamapua’a – there is no doubt that she was developed more extensively in Hawai’i and with specifically Hawaiian traits.

First and foremost, her personality is formed by the character of her land, Kīlauea, the region of the active volcano of the big island of Hawai’i. Just as the lush fern forests of the slopes can explode into fiery lava, so Pele’s mood and body can change from an enticing young woman to a vengeful crone. Like a chief, she rules and represents her land, and Hawaiian descriptions of Pele are based on observation both of volcanos and of women. Pele is an outstanding example of the Hawaiian interest in personality. Like Kamapua’a, she has all the liveliness of the smaller Hawaiian gods and all the power of the more impersonal gods of high chiefs and priests.

Pele’s power is an early and central theme of her literature. As a ma`nini “newcomer” god, she enters a territory already occupied by other gods, worshipped as appropriate by older generations of Hawaiians: earthquake gods (Kihanu‘ilūlimoku “The Great Lizard Who Shakes the Land,” Kāneoli’a “Earthquake Kāne”); storm gods (Kānehikili “Thunder Kāne,” Kāne’pauhihoio “Whirlwind Kāne”); forest gods (Laka and perhaps Kapo); mountain gods (Li‘i‘amea, Poli’ahu); and an early attempt at a specifically volcano god (“Ai-lā’au “Wood Eater”). Some of these she will drive out; others she will appropriate as family members or followers. ‘Allā’au will become a mere epithet of Pele.

Pele becomes more powerful as her worship spreads. Like the Kamapua’a religion, hers starts in the backcountry among the commoners and laha “spreads” to other areas and levels of society, which add their own interests, themes, and motifs to her growing literature. This spreading is typical of movements in classical Hawai’i and demonstrates the mutual influence of all parts of society.

As her religion spreads, it develops its organization. The basis would seem to be the religion of the Pele family itself, for whom she is an aumakua “family god.” Non-family worshippers then adopt her as their akua “god.” The religion develops its officials – priests and prophets – its rituals, sacrifices, and prayers, all with a distinctive style.

In the continuing discussions and growing literature of the Pele worshippers, the major themes of their theology emerge. Pele is exalted above the other gods; her power is proved as her lava destroys their sacred places. Moreover, her power like her personality is essentially uncontrollable. Other gods can be studied for their likes and dislikes, their attachments and weak points, and by sagacious offerings and prayers they can be brought under some control. But “Pele stays wild,” Noho Pele i ke ‘āhiu. In the words of the hula master Eleanor Hiram Hoke, “they couldn’t fool around with Pele” (personal communication).

The Pele literature will therefore always work against the mainstream constructive tendency of Hawaiian thinking; the continuing attempt to bring all aspects of the universe into an ordered whole, as exemplified by the “Kumulipo,” the great chant of the origin of the universe. The Pele vision is based on the experience of the volcano: any evolved or constructed order can be overturned in the flash of an explosion. Life is essentially walking on a volcano.

The overturning of the established order is egregiously clear in the place accorded women in the Pele literature. Pele can be referred to simply as ka wahine “the woman.” She is a goddess who defeats and rules gods. In fact, her power is specifically female. Pele tells Hi’iaaka: aohe ou mea mano e hoopili kia o ke alanui, nau ka make na ka wahine, aohe make a na kanu “you will have no one to make your way troublesome; death is by you, by

1 Emerson 1915: 206 (text regularized). The line can also be translated, “Pele stays in the wild.”
the female; there is no death by the males."² Hi’ia-
ka will dispatch any males who underestimate her. 
Just as women have power, they have every human 
quality to a degree unlimited by gender ideals and 
stereotypes. Notably, they can be just as angry and 
vicious as men. As a result, women in the Pele 
literature are among the fullest, most interesting 
characterizations in world literature. Much of this 
virtue can in fact be found in the rest of Hawaiian 
literature and culture. Whereas Westerners say “Be 
a man,” Hawaiians say Ho’okanaka “Be a human 
being.” Significantly, a number of women activists 
have spoken of Pele as a model for their conduct, a 
decidedly unclassical practice. Human beings are 
not permitted to act like gods.³

Pele, her sisters, and their friends establish a 
community dominated by strong-willed women, in 
which men most often play a tangential and even 
comic role (the name of the principal love interest, 
Lohi’au, translates as “slow” [Ho’ouluumiahie 
June 13, 1906]). The passions of women for each 
other – both loving and hating, constructive and 
destructive – are often the main motivations of 
the action. Those passions can be sexual, a clear 
reflection of the bisexuality common in classical 
Hawaiian life. The community of Pele is thus a 
countersociety, a demonstration of the power and 
self-sufficiency of women.

The Pele worshippers exult in her female, ir-
resistible, and unfeetable power. But they still 
seek some security, some connection to the god-
ess. Pele’s youngest sister, Hi’iakakapoliopoele 
“Hi’iaka In The Bosom of Pele” is therefore 
characterized with the epithet no’eau “wise”; as 
the person closest to Pele, she can carry the con-
cerns of the worshippers to her sister and present 
them in the most effective way. Pele theologians 
also debate whether Pele is moral, whether her 
destruction is always punishment for some offence 
or simply the expression of her willful mood. 
Two schools of thought oppose each other on this 
question from the earliest literature until today.

The Pele movement itself has never been fully 
absorbed into the mainstream; it remains oppo-
sitional, challenging fundamental ideas and practices 
of Hawaiian culture. The Pele literature in many 
ways is an expression of protest, remarkable for its 
voicing of disruptive anger. This characteristic has 
enabled the Pele religion to survive the corruption 
of foreign influences into Hawai’i, which overthrown 
much of the established order. The keepers of 
the Pele traditions continued to teach; the hula 
academics continued to perform her chants and 
dances. Prophets continued to be possessed by 
Pele and speak for her (“Kupanaha” August 20, 
1844). Pele followers were active in the resistance 
to the early missionaries and up to the present day 
have opposed westernizations of Hawaiian society 
and culture, such as the sale of land to foreigners, 
housing developments, and the use of the volcano 
for geothermal energy.

Poets of the early contact period, like Ke’aulu-
moku, and of the missionization period, like N’tu, 
adapted the language of the Pele literature as 
most appropriate to describe the culture-clash they 
were experiencing. The two great traditions of 
Pele’s migration and of the saga of Pele and 
Hi’iaka covered, as few stories did, the whole of 
the Hawaiian chain. They could thus be used to 
develop a national literature that corresponded to 
the development of a national consciousness 
through the 19th century. Because that literature 
inculcated pride of place as well as awe before 
the power of the gods, it could be used to support 
Hawaiian morale and cultural confidence.

Moreover, because Pele was still experienced 
as a living and powerful god, she could personify 
those elements of Hawaiian life that refused to 
die. She could challenge the foreign views – both 
missionary and anthropological – of the value and 
character of the Hawaiian past. Today more than 
ever, “Pele remains in the wild.”

An important part of the Pele movement has 
appearedly always been literature; the quantity, va-
riety, and quality of which testify to her powerful 
spiration of Hawaiian authors. The Pele literature 
has a distinctive fierceness, energy, and humor. 
Like the Kamapua’a literature (Charlot 1987), 
individual works on Pele must be interpreted as 
components of a vast body of literature, with char-
acteristic vocabulary, genres, motifs, themes, and 
characters. These are used along with the many 
literary devices common to Hawaiian literature.

The student of the Pele literature quickly rec-
ognizes that certain words are employed regularly. 
Some of these words are in common use, but 
become conventional in Pele descriptions. For in-

² Kapiheum January 9, 1862. Compare the translation in 
Emerson (1915: 23): “Nothing shall avail to block your 
road. Yours is the power of woman; the power of man is 
nothing to that.”

³ Hi’iaka can however be used as a model in those 
characteristics of hers that represent the conventional morality 
in opposition to the objectionable qualities of Pele (I have 
profited on this point from a conversation with Noeoe 
Silva). Human and godly behavior can also overlap, but 
the gods are not providing behavior models in such cases. 
Compare the invocion of Pele by two nineteenth-century 
non-Hawaiian feminists who had married into missionary 
stance, her eyes are inflamed and watery; mākole, ukoko, ukolo, piheka, and kele. Pele is regularly described as lili “jealous,” an ordinary word appropriate to stories of her punishing young men who refuse her. The word expands in use, however, to designate all of her difficult and powerful personality. The same words and expressions are used widely in chant descriptions of eruptions and storms. One word seems to be a genuine technical term: pāoa for Pele’s digging stick (Pukui and Elbert 1986: at word; Rice June 4, 1908).

Similarly, a wide variety of common genres is used in the Pele literature, and a special one is created. The “Hulihia” “Overturned” is a type of chant beginning with that word and describing the manifestation of Pele’s power in eruptions. The genres used can be studied from small ones to large. There are Pele place and personal names, Pele sayings and riddles, and a Pele credal formula: ‘O Pele ko’u akua “Pele is my god.”

Pele single stories are particularly numerous and various. There are many cautionary tales. One or two young girls who are impolite when the old woman asks for food and drink are punished by being turned into stone. Good people are warned of and protected from lava flows; bad people are overturned. Pele turns to stone the young men who resist her advances. Modern stories include versions of the phantom hitchhiker.4

Single stories along with chants can be gathered into complexes.5 These can be comparatively short and local, like the story of Kahawai and the battle between Pele and Kamapua’a at Kilauea.6 They can also be much longer and include the entire island chain. The complex Ka Mo’olelo o Pele “The Story of Pele” usually includes, in great variety, her family and origin in Kahiki, her motivation to emigrate, her voyage, her arrival at the westernmost end of the Hawaiian chain, her progress through the islands looking for a suitable home and creating land features, and her final settling at Kilauea.

The complex Ka Mo’olelo o Hi’iakaikapoiopele “The Story of Hi’iakaikapoiopele” starts with Hi’iaka, already settled with the family at Kilauea, going to the sea to bathe. She there meets her new friend Hōpoe, and they chant and dance the hula. Pele meanwhile enters into a deep sleep during which her soul is attracted by chanting and drums. She follows the sound to Kau’i and there meets the handsome young chief Lohi’au. They fall in love and live together until she must return. She enjoins him to be faithful and promises to send someone to fetch him to her in Hawai’i. Her soul then returns to her body, and she awakes.

Pele asks her sisters to fetch Lohi’au, but they realize the danger of Pele’s lili “jealousy.” Finally the youngest sister, Hi’iaka, agrees to go on the condition that Pele will not destroy her friend Hōpoe and her favorite land, the pandanus forests of Puna. Pele agrees and Hi’iaka travels with one or more companions. They travel along the northern, windward side of the island chain, slaying mo’o “lizard gods” and offensive humans, participating in various local stories, and chanting for the place or the occasion. They arrive on Kaua’i to find that Lohi’au has killed himself for love. Hi’iaka revives him, and the group returns along the southern, leeward side of the islands, again involving themselves in many incidents.

Meanwhile, Pele’s jealous anger has overcome her—the exact point in the story at which this happens varies—and she kills Hōpoe and destroys Puna. Hi’iaka takes her revenge by performing sexual actions with Lohi’au on the rim of the crater in Pele’s sight. Pele then overruns Lohi’au with lava, and in her grief, Hi’iaka begins to break through the rock strata of the volcano, threatening to introduce the sea and extinguish the fires. She is dissuaded from doing so and goes off in search of Lohi’au. Meanwhile, Lohi’au’s great friend, named Kauakahiapa’oa or Pā’oa, vows to revenge himself on Pele. He travels to Kilauea and encounters Pele in a characteristic mix of antagonism and sexual attraction. Lohi’au is eventually revived a second time, and he and Hi’iaka are reunited.

These two complexes are often told together, but they are clearly differentiated by Kapihenui under the two titles given above and can in fact be told separately.7 Both complexes can be told in many versions and filled with a variety of local stories and chants. Both complexes are clearly designed to facilitate the absorption of such shorter literary forms, and those forms in turn can be easily attached to the larger framework when performed individually.

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4 Luomala 1972. A remarkable modern story was collected by my student Matthew Schirman.

5 On the single story form and its use in constructing complexes, see Charlot 1977; 1987: 27–37 (especially 29). For a list of story summaries, see Ka’awa February 9, 1865. Ka’awa October 10, 1865, is an outstanding example of the independent telling of a story connected to the complex (I thank Robert J. Morris for providing this text).


7 Kapihenui February 23, 1865. See also Ho’ouluumahiebie June 1, 2, 4, and August 1, 1906.
As mentioned above, chant is a major component of the Pele literature, and many genres are used. High points in the story — such as Hi‘iaka’s departure, her discovery of the death of Hōpoe and the destruction of Puna, her defense of Lohi‘au at Kilauea, and Pā‘oa’s arrival there — were inspirations to poets and are marked by long series of major chants.

Moreover, the Pele religion is intimately connected with the hula. The episode at the shore with Hōpoe is considered in some traditions to be the origin of that dance form,8 and the Pele story continues to be an inspiration today. Dances can characterize the god and narrate stories. Series of dances can present extended sections of the complex or indeed the whole complex itself; that is, the whole story could be told in chant and dance with little or no prose connection (Emerson 1909: 7, also 186 f.). Just such a performance was given recently by the Hālau o Kekuhi, directed by the Kanaka‘ole family, relatives of Pele (Hālau o Kekuhi 1996).

The oral presentation could, however, be primarily prose. Gorham D. Gilman reported in 1845 that “such is its fascination for them that they will sit and listen while it is being recited, all day and from sunset to sunrise. In its full detail it is very lengthy, but it can be abridged”; indeed, “To write it all out would make an ordinarily sized novel” (Barrère et al. 1980: 97, 99). The lengthy newspaper series are therefore based on oral practice.

**The Newspaper Series: Tradition and Variation**

The publication of so many newspaper series demonstrates their popularity. Poepeo may be alluding to this when he records the response to Hi‘iaka’s own telling of part of the story: *ua nui ke aloha i komo iolo o na makaainana i ka lohe ana mai i keie [sic: keia] moolelo walohia “great was the aloha that entered into the commoners on hearing this moving story” (July 22, 1910). The purpose of the authors was, however, more than entertainment or even art for art’s sake. The nineteenth-century and early-twentieth-century Hawaiian writers were preserving Hawaiian literature for posterity. In his preface, Bush argues that the language, literature, history, and traditions must be preserved in order to perpetuate the race (January 5, 6, 1893). The story of Pele and Hi‘iaka was one of Hawai‘i’s “wondrous tales,” *kekahi o na moolelo hoopahao-hao. Although Ho‘ouluumāhiehie cannot vouch for every detail of the story, it is sacred, prophetic, and related to Hawai‘i as a whole. Generations of religious experts used it reverently and with ritual as a basis for the study of the universe, prophecy, and healing. That is, the story of Pele and Hi‘iaka forms a religious, national literature (May 24, 25, 1906). The story reveals the knowledge and wisdom of ancient Hawai‘i and can thus be compared favorably with the Bible and modern science. For instance, Ho‘ouluumāhiehie relates Hi‘iaka’s influencing the course of the sun to the stories of Māui and of Joshua, a parallel that reveals the Hawaiians’ premissional knowledge of the Bible.9

The body of the Pele literature clearly merits a full-scale study. I confine myself in this article to an examination of the six series published in Hawaiian-language newspapers.

William Hyde Rice collected important Kaua‘i traditions and manuscripts, some of which were published in his excellent translations (Rice 1923). Rice (May 21 — September 10, 1908) is the only publication, as far as I know, of an original manuscript from this collection. The name of the author is not given, but internal evidence indicates that he or she was from Kaua‘i (as in the case of Ho‘ouluumāhiehie, whose identity is also unknown, the author could be a woman). Nothing indicates that editorial changes were made either by Rice or by the newspaper (where they could be made by typesetters as well). For instance, the text is divided into chapters, but these are not followed in the publication. The text represents therefore the only available example of a private manuscript on the subject. Many such manuscripts existed and were edited in various ways for newspaper publication, as seen very clearly in Ho‘ouluumāhiehie’s and Poepeo’s versions.

Because Rice is less of a composite than some of the other series, it displays more unity, and its interpretation is simplified. The text is beautifully written in a traditional poetic style. Symbolism is used extensively, especially in passages of sexual rhetoric. Traditional literary devices are used throughout. The dialog is varied and colorful, for instance, when Hi‘iaka’s companion Wahine‘oma‘o is being sassy (July 9, 1908).

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8 The point of the story, in my opinion, is that the earlier inhabitants of the islands taught the hula to the new immigrants.

9 Ho‘ouluumāhiehie February 26, 28, and March 1, 1906. Copied by Poepeo January 7, 1910. Also Kaphihemalu March 6, 1862.
Rice is much shorter than the other series, so much contained in them is omitted, especially chants. The long chant of Malaa’ha’ako is replaced by a short mention that entertainment was offered (July 16, 1908); there is no long series on O‘ahu of chants about the destruction of Puna. The impression is sometimes given that the author is summarizing a lengthier account. For instance, the numbering in the very abbreviated narrative of Lohi‘au’s resuscitation is conventionally used in longer sections. Rice does, however, contain materials absent in others, like the account of the Hilo court (June 18, 1908).

A special characteristic of Rice is its emphasis on Kaualī with its corresponding de-emphasis of all islands other than Hawai‘i. Lohi‘au is said to return to Kaualī nei “here,” indicating that the author is on that island (August 13, 1908). The Kaualī sections are proportionately larger and more locally detailed than other versions (starting July 9, 1908); for instance, much information is provided on the kūpua “minor gods” of Hanalei. Moreover, the author connects Lohi‘au to the tradition of Pele’s first migration to Hawai‘i, emphasizing the importance of the island and the person (May 21, 1908). A kīlua game, a famous part of the general tradition, is placed on Kaualī, but not on O‘ahu (July 23, 1908). At the end of the story, Hi‘iaka and Lohi‘au retire to Hā‘ena, Kaualī, and live happily until his death. Hi‘iaka then gives all to Lohi‘au’s sister and establishes a temple at Nu‘alolo on the nearby Nā Pali coast. The god thus validates a Kaualī chieftain and is the founder of a local temple.

The most striking influence of Kaualī on Rice is the difference in the characterization of Lohi‘au. In the other versions he is a figure of fun: handsome and talented, but dumb and weak-willed. In Rice, he is respected as a high chief. He is clever enough to fool even Hi‘iaka with a trick (September 3, 10, 1908). He is wise and a generous rewarmer of his followers, who are devoted to him. After Pele kills him, other gods, Kanemilohae and Leho, intervene because of their connection to him, not to Hi‘iaka as in other versions (September 3, 1908). A similarly positive view of Lohi‘au is found in the version recorded on Kaualī in 1845 (Barrère et al. 1980: 98 f.). Similarly, the name of Lohi‘au’s sister is given as Kili‘oe, which connects her to an older local mo‘o god.10

This privileging of Kaualī in the story of the Hawai‘i goddesses implies that there is some special connection between the two islands. Rice himself explains that they share several place-names (August 13, 1908). Evidence exists that others considered Kaualī to have a special relation to the Pele traditions. Indeed, Ho‘ouluumāhiheie and Poepoe discuss special Kaualī words in the appropriate section of their complexes.

Localism is, however, a general influence in Hawaiian literature. One exalted one’s own land and therefore focused on it when composing complexes, using details from its learned traditions. Such details enable the reader to locate the origin of a tradition or text, whether at Kilauea, Hawai‘i, or Ko‘olaupoko, O‘ahu. One also deprecated other places; Ho‘ouluumāhiheie states that Kaualī people are slower than those of Hawai‘i (June 13, 1906). Hawaiians were well aware of local influence on texts and used it in their evaluations of them. For instance, Poepoe carefully identifies his traditions by island.

The 1861–1862 series by M. J. Kapihenu13 was the first published on Pele and Hi‘iaka. It was consulted by the later published authors (newspapers were often bound and kept). N. B. Emerson calls it “less mythical” and thus “the preferable” version (1915: 158, 160), and long sections of his book are more or less loose translations or summaries of Kapihenu. The series is long, contains a wealth of material, and articulates a developed, traditional theology. Both Kapihenu’s series and his letter are addressed from Kailua, O‘ahu, and he states that he is a kēiki “child” of that area, from which he provides numerous local chants. However, he gives traditions of other islands very fully as well.

The newspaper in which the series appeared, Ka Hoku o ka Pakipika, ran from September 26, 1861, to May 14, 1863, and was the first to be published entirely by Hawaiians without foreign, church, or government support. This caused a public controversy in which the nationalist, nativist tendency of the paper was made explicit. David Kalākaua, later king of Hawai‘i, was one of the editors, and the great writer S. N. Hale‘oe, a contributor. The publication of the first Pele and Hi‘iaka series can

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11. The famous chief Manōkalanipō is mentioned as a follower of Pele in a chant (Emerson 1915: 230; Charlot 1983: 24). Nēmēnii is connected to Pele in observation, tradition, and practice (Pukui, Elbert, and Moooki 1974: 166). I thank Lei A. Kahiwaliwa for identifying this location.


13. Kapihenu December 26, 1861 – July 17, 1862. His letter of February 23, 1865, is signed J. M.
therefore be considered part of the newspaper's politico-cultural program.

The author was, however, dissatisfied with the publication of his work. In a letter to the editor of another newspaper (February 23, 1865), he later complained that the chants had been shortened. Indeed the newspaper editors intrude into the text to mention that they have done this because the chants were too long (July 17, 1862); sections of the prose were abbreviated as well (July 10, 1862). Some of these chants appear in longer versions in other publications, like Emerson's, and their abbreviation certainly distorted them. Moreover, Kapihenui was apparently forced to cease publication before the story was finished (July 17, 1862, pau ka‘u wahi i loa o keia moolelelo i kei), during the chants of Pa‘oa at Kilauea. Three chants were suppressed that were considered *ano hila‘ila* “of a shameful character” (May 8, 1862), although Kapihenui can be sexually explicit elsewhere.

Kapihenui is clearly writing for the newspaper, referring regularly to previous issues. He is also typical of nineteenth-century Hawaiian-language writers in his concern to explain his material to an audience that he felt was no longer sufficiently knowledgeable. This concern gives rise to a type of encyclopedic literature: on the proper occasions, lengthy descriptions of practices are given along with the associated terms. Accordingly, Kapihenui explains words and symbols and interprets chants and motives. He explains even as major a cultural practice as the ‘ai kapu ‘tabu eating,” the separation of men and women at meals (May 8, 1862). He replaces a classical word like *kauoha* for the agreement between Pele and Hi‘iaka with a modern equivalent, ‘*olelo aie like “contract”* (Kapihenui January 9, 1862; also Rice July 9, 1908).

Kapihenui is exceptional among published Hawaiian authors in being a poor writer. For instance, series were conventionally constructed of similar parts, but Kapihenui does this so mechanically that the frameworks of those individual parts are almost literally the same, resembling fill-in-the-blanks. He compensates for this with a marked sense of humor; for instance, Lohi‘au’s sister and her husband are presented as an old married couple, an antiromantic view of marriage that serves as a foil to the passion of the general story (March 13, 1862).

The next series, published by John E. Bush and S. Pa‘aluhi in 1893, is a curiosity in that it switches after several installments to an unattributed reprint of Kapihenui. Today’s reader regrets the loss of an independent tradition, but is consoled by being able to fill in those sections of Kapihenui that have not survived from the original publication. Bush and Pa‘aluhi have added an unusually long and important preface, signed by Bush alone, as well as a few concluding remarks. In the preface, Bush – a major writer and Hawaiian activist of the turn of the century (and sometime editor of the newspaper in which his series appeared) – makes clear the politico-cultural importance of such publications. Bush is probably also responsible for the later explanation of Pele’s deification (January 9, 1893), which accords with the preface. A full interpretation of any newspaper text must attempt to differentiate between the original manuscript and any editorial additions and modifications in the final publication. The original text used by Bush and Pa‘aluhi, or as much of it as survives, is a straightforward, unassuming presentation, using classical devices and also revealing nineteenth-century concerns. Chants are interpreted, and technical terms are employed in order to preserve them (especially January 27, 1893).

The major series by Ho‘oulu‘mahieie (July 15, 1905 – November 30, 1906) has a complicated publication history, which I detail in the publication history above. Fortunately, the author himself directed the publication (June 1, 1906), so little if any interference by the newspaper need be feared. In fact, the editor of that newspaper was J. M. Poepoe, the author of the next important series, and his own extensive use of Ho‘oulu‘mahieie’s work reveals his respect for it. The author’s name appears to be a pseudonym. Ho‘oulu‘mahieie is a masterful Hawaiian-language stylist, ranging from exquisite descriptions of the environment, to lively invective, to battle narrations with onomatopoeic effects.

He shares the typical nineteenth-century concern for explaining possibly unfamiliar or difficult materials to his readers. For instance, Pa‘oa’s vow would be clear to a classical audience, but not to a modern one (October 1, 1906). The author uses editorial asides, digressions, interpretations of chants, biblical and scientific parallels, modern place information, and comparisons of versions of the saga. In order to preserve vocabulary, he

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14 His collaborator may be the Reverend Simeon Pa‘aluhi who died in 1913 (In Memoriam 1913).

15 Nothing is known by me of the author, except that he signs himself in closing as the author of *Ka Moolelo o Hawa‘i: The Story of Hawa‘i* and is the author of a series on the chief Kawelo. The latter series is the subject of an M.A. thesis by Kame‘e Wall, who informs me that it contains many of the tendencies discussed below.
uses technical terms in appropriate passages and explains special Kaua’i words. He offers numerous explanations of words, and his use of parentheses with a more common word is a likely indication that he is working from manuscripts. For instance, he has a long discussion of the ancient name for Kaua’i, Ka Māwaewalani (Poepe will use this and other discussions). Ho’oulumāhieiehie explains customs and makes humor explicit. He uses chants and modern songs to illustrate his points (he does in fact refer often to non-Pele literature, like the “Kumulipo” and other famous classical chants). He can, however, consider that a saying is sufficiently clear to have Hi’iaka say that one does not have to be an expert to understand it (August 10, 1906).

Ho’oulumāhieiehie is also a writer of his time in that he fears that certain classical elements will be unattractive to his readers. He can cut short his narratives and reduce repetition in series. He asks for the readers’ patience for the number of chants he records, but he wants to preserve them for future generations. He seldom uses the classical structure of single stories — introduction, narrative, and conclusion — but tends to turn stories into episodes of a continuous narrative. As a result, much of the narrative takes on a modern, aimless character, the individual sections not achieving clear results as in the classical literature. Similarly, single stories can be inserted into others, and stories and minor characters can be strung out over long stretches of the narrative as unifying devices.

The author uses many Western literary devices, like recalling earlier sections, flashbacks, and revealing information in informal conversations. Certain modernisms can be found in his work, such as loanwords, translated expressions (e.g., women as the “āo’āo palapala “weaker side” [October 2, 1906]), the marking of a birthday, and gender distinctions between names. Lohi’au seems to be buried in a modern grave. The author adopts foreign folktales elements, especially fabulous and gigantic ones, which heighten the wondrousness of the classical tradition. Similarly, traditional elements can be exaggerated. For instance, weather signs were used for their general significance in classical literature, but Ho’oulumāhieiehie uses them for individual actions (April 18, 1906). Hawaiian syntax has even, if rarely, been influenced by English (Aole au i maopo’o instead of Atele i maopo’o ta u [October 3, 1906]). Ho’oulumāhieiehie uses interesting modern comparisons, like a torpedo (February 9, 1906). A shell trumpet is compared to the ones used to call pupils to class in the missionary schools (April 5, 1906). A cattle fence of cactus is used as a sexual symbol (May 10, 1906). A female mo’o is compared to a crocodile (June 26, 1906). Most important, the author introduces a sentimentality that is unknown in classical Hawaiian literature, but had been adopted by some nineteenth-century writers. Everyone gets “married” in a truly happy ending.

The author does, however, cleave to certain traditional practices and concerns. For instance, he is notably careful to discuss and compare critically his sources, both written and oral. He follows the classical Hawaiian practice of gathering all the relevant traditions, criticizing them, and then making his choice. He states that he is copying from the book of J. W. Nāhe of Kohala, Hawai’i, and of D. K. Wai’ale’ale. Those versions contain wind chants that are missing in other versions and that can be compared with those in the story of Kīkapāka’a. The author provides alternative versions of chants. He discusses often the differing placement of stories and chants in other versions. He can signal the materials he is publishing for the first time. Ho’oulumāhieiehie gives reasons for preferring his own version, but urges the collection and publication of others (December 26, 1905; March 1, 1906). He is careful to clarify his own editorial principles. For instance, chants belonging to the story are numbered as well as their individual lines, and he asks readers to refer to them when they write the newspaper with their corrections (July 6, 1906).

Ho’oulumāhieiehie incorporates an impressive amount of traditional material in his series, but his work is marked especially by the strong interpretation he gives to it. Even traditional sections like the battle with Pana’ewa, are imprinted with

17 Ho’oulumāhieiehie June 19, 1906. References to other versions are frequent. See especially July 6, 1906 (there are many versions of the Hi’iaka story and of the chants associated with it); July 23, 1906 (he is following the explanations he received orally from an old man named Kīha of North Kohala, Hawai’i, in 1870); August 1, 1906 (he criticizes other versions); January 12, 1906 (a woman hula master Nīka’a Kahuna’ele provided information); January 30, 1906 (he refers the reader to local sources in Kahana, O’ahu, to verify a story); March 1, 1906 (he is using three versions for a section, two small and one long one with chants); June 26, 27, 1906 (he refers to his manuscript collection; he provides other versions of a story he tells himself, one of which he gives in classical form); December 11, 12, 1905 (he compares favorably his own version of a circumcision prayer to the one published in Malo 1951).
the author's personal views through discursive explanations. He greatly admires classical Hawaiian culture and speaks affectionately of the good old times, an attitude different from that of many nineteenth-century writers. He emphasizes the wealth of knowledge possessed by people in classical Hawai'i. But in many ways, Ho'oulumāhiehi is using new literary devices and themes influenced by Christianity to create a modern version of tradition in order to attract contemporary readers.

Joseph M. Poepoe was an important politician and author and the editor of some eight newspapers from 1883 to 1912, including the one in which Ho'oulumāhiehi's series appeared. He was the editor also of the newspaper in which his own series appeared, so the reader is assured of reading it in the form the author intended.

Poepoe was a masterful stylist with an extensive vocabulary, which he used with great smoothness and precision. As seen in his book on King Kalākaua (1891), he was a student of classical Hawaiian rhetoric, which he deploys on appropriate occasions in his series. He shares many of Ho'oulumāhiehi's late nineteenth-century characteristics as a writer, such as using an encyclopedic style to preserve vocabulary and customs, and explaining and interpreting his material; he even draws out the stages of a story to make it clearer and adds descriptions of the psychological and emotional factors involved. Indeed, he usefully clarifies many passages that in other versions appear obscure to the modern reader. But he handles the quantity of his information in a way that does not burden the text. Somewhat less than Ho'oulumāhiehi, he also curtails the classical structural elements of stories and transforms them into episodes inside larger narrative sections, increasing the smoothness of their flow. He also adds modernisms and fabulous and gigantic elements, but handles them in a way that is less obtrusive. In doing this, he seems to have learned from S. N. Hale'ole's nineteenth-century masterpiece "Laieikawai" (Beckwith 1919). In sum, Rice and Kapihenui represent the most traditional storytelling, Ho'oulumāhiehi the most modernizing, and Poepoe occupies a middle position.

Poepoe makes a point of discussing his sources in detail. He knows Kapihenui and of course Ho'oulumāhiehi. These and other sources represent for him the Hawai'i version of the tradition, the only one published so far, which he uses as a base and generally prefers. In fact, he simply copies Ho'oulumāhiehi for long sections. To this Hawai'i tradition, he makes the major addition of a Māui version, which he compares at important points with the Hawai'i version. Very learned in Hawaiian traditions, Poepoe also uses other oral and manuscript sources on both big and small points. Like Ho'oulumāhiehi, Poepoe follows the traditional practice of first gathering as many traditions as possible and then comparing and evaluating them and sometimes choosing between them. The criteria for choice are sometimes made explicit; for instance, he prefers the Hawai'i version over the Māui on one point because it accords with a chant.

The Pele series are clearly composites, starting from the basic complexes, which insert smaller genres like sayings, credal formulas, single stories, and chants into a framework. These smaller units are easily identified in the stylistically more traditional series, like Rice and Kapihenui, and can still be recognized in the more thoroughly redacted series of Ho'oulumāhiehi and Poepoe.

Chants are a particularly clear example. Kapihenui employs numerous chants of different genres: waking, place, kilu game chants, sorcery, mourning, and chants peculiar to the story. He often organizes these into series, usually with a very repetitive framework. Chants must therefore be distinguished from their contexts. Rice, for instance, wants to include a place chant for Kahalu'u, but in his version, Hi'iaka does not visit that place. He therefore has her feel improbably the rain of distant Kahalu'u on arriving on O'ahu, which provides the excuse for including the chant. Many of the same chants appear in the other series, and the authors note differences in wording and placement. The narrative framework can be adapted to fit prose materials as well.

The tendency of the authors is to be as comprehensive as possible. This is traditional in itself and was supported by the desire to preserve materials for posterity. As a result, the authors are happy to incorporate corrections and additions as they proceed, and even ask their readers to send them

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18 E.g., Poepoe January 10, 17, 24, July 31, 1908; June 25, 1909, he specifies that this is the tradition of some Māui people.
19 Poepoe January 17, 1908. Ho'oulumāhiehi (January 30, 1905) argues for a certain chronology on the basis of a chant; December 26, 1905, he prefers his version because it follows Pele's treaty with Hi'iaka and because Hi'iaka's prophecies are fulfilled.
20 In Kapihenui (January 23, 1862) and others, Hi'iaka has to double back to Hilo to destroy more mo'os. Her need to provide reasons for proceeding along the windward side of O'ahu in Kapihenui (February 6, 1862) may reflect an early stage of creating a framework that later became conventional. In Rice, Hi'iaka travels along the leeward side.
to the newspapers (e.g., Ho’ouluumāhiie January 30, 31, March 1, August 1, 6, 22, September 7, 1906). The story of Pele and Hi’iaka is therefore not treated as a perfected work of fiction, but as a many-branched historical tradition to be reconstructed. Thus Kapihenui writes, following nineteenth-century practice, that the people who were living at the time of the story are no longer available to correct his account (December 26, 1861). Bush and Pa’aluhi can switch to a more detailed version, without regretting the shorter version they began publishing. In the Hawaiian esthetic, the artistic quality is in the learning and skill with which a complex is constructed and in the beauty of the language. Similarly, no attempt is made to fashion each installment as an individual unit; they are simply taken from the manuscript according to space available.

An important part of the work of the authors is establishing the overall organization into which the smaller units are placed. Important differences can be found in the series. For instance, the Mo’olelo o Pele “Story of Pele” can be told before the Mo’olelo o Hi’iakaikapoliopo’ele, as do Rice, Bush and Pa’aluhi, Ho’ouluumāhiie, and Poepoe (compare Ka’awa February 2, 1865). Kapihenui, however, omits the former Mo’olelo.

One of the major differences among the series is the point at which Hi’iaka discovers that Pele has broken her word and killed Hōpoe and destroyed Puna. In the 1845 version, this takes place on Hi’iaka’s return to Kilaeua (Barrere et al. 1980: 98). Ho’ouluumāhiiehie mentions a version that places the event on Hi’iaka’s return to Hilo, Hawai’i (May 28, 1906). Kapihenui and Rice have Pele destroy Puna and kill Hōpoe as soon as Hi’iaka leaves Kilaeua. In Kapihenui, Hi’iaka is aware of this and chants about it throughout her voyage. This raises a serious question of motivation for the modern reader: why continue the trip? Neither Kapihenui nor Rice shows any signs of being aware of this difficulty, but it was apparent to other authors. Ho’ouluumāhiiehie places Hi’iaka’s learning of the destruction and killing emphatically at a place and point that has been widely accepted: at Pōhākea, O’ahu, on her return voyage.21 Poepoe is explicitly aware of the problem of motivation posed by Kapihenui’s placement and adopts that of Ho’ouluumāhiiehie; but he attempts to reconcile the two by stating that Pele began to send her lava to Puna as Hi’iaka was leaving, but was dissuaded by her sisters (February 5–19, 1909).

Besides the above major differences, many minor ones can be found and are often noted by the authors. For instance, the sorcery battle with ‘Olepa and his family can be placed on the way to Kaua’i (Rice, Poepoe, Hālau o Kekuhi) or on the way back to Hawai’i (Kapihenui, Ho’ouluumāhiiehie). I emphasize again that the authors are aware of such differences in organization and discuss them.22

Because of the above method of composition, the interpreter must be aware of the multileveled character of the texts: originally independent materials, earlier stages of redactional complex-building, the final manuscript redaction, and the newspaper publication. Each literary unit and level expresses a view; for instance, Ki’i’oe is a positive mo’o of Hā’ena, so her use in the Pele literature absorbs her into that tradition, either positively or negatively. The views of units or levels can conflict within a complex. For instance, in Bush and Pa’aluhi (January 20, 1893), Hi’iaka intones a chant that includes a reference to the destruction of Puna, but there is no hint of that destruction in the prose.

Each of the author-redactors of the newspaper series has his own view or tendency. The Kaua’i emphasis of the Rice version has already been mentioned. The author emphasizes wondrous elements of a purely traditional kind. After a genealogy in traditional form, he describes the birth of the Pele siblings from different parts of the body of their mother Haumea (May 21, 1908). Hi’iaka is born from the palm in the form of an egg. Pele takes her in this form to Kilaeua, where she transforms her into a human body and names her (June 4, 1908). The whole narrative is told in a traditional sexual and violent style. Hi’iaka is good, generous, and a healer; she even revives ‘Olepa, who dies in the other versions (July 2, 1908). But she is also a fearsome fighter. The gods are those of old Hawai’i. Similarly, Kapihenui writes, maanei nae kakou e ike ai i ke kumu o kona hele ana i Kauai, a me kona ikaika i ka hakaka ana, i kona kau “here we will see the reason [Hi’iaka] went to Kaua’i and her strength in her battles, and her chants” (December 26, 1861). His major theme is thus the traditional one of the power of the

21 Ho’ouluumāhiiehie May 28, 1906; curiously, his emphasis on Hi’iaka’s foresight (e.g., July 2, 1906) reintroduces the problem. Bush and Pa’aluhi (January 20, 1893) do not mention the destruction in their prose, but include a chant that alludes to it. I would judge this to be a case of a chant being used that does not fully conform to the prose; that is, there is no real indication in this version that Puna is destroyed early in the story.

22 E.g., Ho’ouluumāhiiehie May 28, 1906 (discovery of Pele’s actions); December 27, 1906, July 25, 1906 ('Olepa).
god, which is demonstrated without concessions to modern Christianized views. Rice, Kapihenu, and the Bush-Pa'aluhi version (without the editors' intrusions) are the most traditional presentations of the story.

Ho'oulumāhieie in contrast is clearly a modernizer. He de-emphasizes the bloody aspects of the tradition, shortening battle descriptions and often omitting the death of the victims. He even avoids narrating arguments traditional to other accounts. Hi'iaka has great power—articulated often by means of foreign fabulous elements—but is presented empathetically as morally good, clearly in the right in her conflicts, but preferring to conciliate and forgive. Indeed much, but not all, of the remaining violence is ascribed to Pele or is the fault of the victims themselves. Hi'iaka is portrayed as kind, good, merciful, and generous, as a healer and helper of the distressed. Her pa'a "skirt," a powerful weapon in other versions, is used mostly to protect and heal, just like the hem of Jesus's garment (October 6, 1905: 390). Many of the stories depict Hi'iaka's good deeds to which people react with gratitude and love. A version of a story is explicitly rejected because it stated that Hi'iaka killed innocent people (December 12, 1905). Indeed many of the characters in the series display a monotonous goodness.

Ho'oulumāhieie's Christianizing tendency is clear in his many biblical comparisons and interpretations of Hawaiian religious phenomena. Along with other biblical phrases, the name Pele is compared apparently to Bel (June 28, 1906), and Hi'iaka's with the biblical phrase "in the bosom of Abraham" (June 29, 1906). Prayers are less often potent formulas than Christianlike supplications to the god. The attitude of the old Hawaiian worshipper is one of aloha for his gods (March 31, April 6, 1906), and the author can use Christian language to articulate classical Hawaiian religion. Winds are like guardian angels (June 26, 1906). The worshipper should not fear Hi'iaka: rather she is a redeemer and a rescuer (August 8, 1906). Pele will not be merciful to Lohiu because his remorse arises from the fear of death (September 5, 1906); an echo of Roman Catholic teaching of the possibility of redemption at death through an act of perfect contrition.

Hawaiian traditions are compared also to modern science and technology. Pele's use of a lighting messenger is compared to the electric telephone as well as the Pentecostal tongues of fire. All such parallels demonstrate the wisdom, if not more, of the ancient Hawaiians. Hi'iaka, like Jesus, can grant life (e.g., January 4, 1906), a power that comes ultimately from God (March 1, 1906); she can also raise people from the dead (e.g., September 21, 1906); resurrection is in fact implied in Hawaiian sayings (e.g., August 25, 27, April 14, 1906). Hawaiians even prayed to the Trinity (August 22, 1906). Ultimately, Hawaiian traditions should be considered a support of Christianity (August 21, 1906); they both require the same faith (March 27, 1906). Ho'oulumāhieie also addresses contemporary Hawaiian concerns, such as leprosy and illnesses caused by the modern neglect of the family gods, popularly called ma'i 'aumakua, for which the author offers an effective prayer, which is a mixture of Hawaiian and Christian elements.23 Of course, this interpretation overlies quite different earlier materials, which persist in showing themselves through the Christianizing interpretation.

Since Poepoe follows Ho'oulumāhieie extensively, many of his modernizing and Christianizing tendencies are reproduced. But just as Poepoe occupies a middle position in regard to traditional style, so he retains many of the classical themes. Hi'iaka is emphatically good, punishing justly, and helping others; but she can also be as imperious and aggressive as in the more traditional versions. The devotee can feel aloha for the god, but expects a reward.24 Poepoe, however, reflects his times, for instance, in using a political model for the relation to the god. The devotee is like the kanaka "subject" of a chief (September 24, 1909); Poepoe modifies the expression make'e ali'i "affectionate to chiefs" to make'e akua "affectionate to gods" (October 15, 22, 1909). Make'e ali'i was a slogan for those supporting the recently overthrown monarchy.

Other versions of the Pele and Hi'iaka story expressed their own views, such as the one described by Ho'oulumāhieie, which seems to have been even more wondrous than the author's own: the boat Hi'iaka took from Hawai'i to Māui was the boat-body of a god (December 26, 1905). As a result, the Pele and Hi'iaka texts contain much information, not just on Hawaiian customs, but on views and attitudes as well. In fact, any

23 Ho'oulumāhieie (January 25, 1906) gives the account of a sickness that resembles leprosy. This was a popular story, and the author collected three versions of it. Another version appears in Kawelo (September 10, 1970: 5); this oral version is also very Christianizing. Ma'i 'aumakua: December 9, 1905; also, January 10, 1906. This is a common subject in the medical discussions of the time.

24 Gods can also expect rewards and credit (Rice September 8, 1908).
complex will display a wide range of old and new, inconsistent and even conflicting ideas. I will look only at some major themes.

**Major Themes of the Pele Literature in the Context of Hawaiian Culture**

A major theme of the Pele literature is the power of the god and her family and its relation to that of other gods. In order to understand the discussion, one must rid one’s mind of many secondary accounts of Hawaiian religion. First and foremost, there was no pantheon in the sense of an ordered system of gods or generally accepted hierarchy. Nor was godly power the source of all other powers in the universe; mana did not descend from the gods down some Neoplatonic chain of being. Rather all things enjoyed their own intrinsic powers that were themselves related to all the others in the universe. As a consequence, the power of a god was always the subject of contention.

In Pele chants, the god is explicitly exulted above the supposed “high gods” Kū, Kāne, Lono, and Kanaloa. In the series under discussion, Pele and Hi‘iaka regularly command and defeat other gods and human beings – outsmarting, maiming, or killing them. The purpose of such stories is precisely to demonstrate the family’s superior powers: Pele’s ano Akua a mana no ho ‘o “Godly as well as powerful character” (Rice May 21, 1908). Their powers are many. Like other gods, they can change their bodies or forms. They can control the weather and games, and travel in various wondrous ways. Hi‘iaka can hear and see things that are distant and hidden; she has foresight and second sight. A special theme of Ho‘oulumāhieiehi is Hi‘iaka’s power of prophecy; she is a kāula “prophet” (July 17, 1906). For instance, when as a reward she names a place for a person and states that this will remain its name forever, the prophecy is fulfilled in contemporary practice.

![Image](image.png)

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26 Rice (May 21, 1908) connects this to the system of kino iau “multiple bodies,” found clearly in other gods, but less often used for the Pele family.

27 A few examples from Kapihele 1862: January 9 (Hi‘iaka knows Leh‘“uu’s name before Pele has mentioned it); January 9, March 6, April 3, July 3 (she sees the dead Leh‘“uu); January 16 (she sees a shark in the water that is hidden from others); e.g., July 5 (she follows Pele’s activities on Hawai‘i).


knowledge of the universe. In the saying *Pau Pele, pau manō* “Finished by Pele, finished by a shark,” she represents the land in the *uka/kai* “land/sea” pair. She and Kamapua’a together form the male/female pair.

Power however is never absolute, and its articulation requires considerable nuance. There are limits to the power of the gods. They can be weak, tired, frightened, pained, and vulnerable, even to death. In Kapihenu, Pele wants Wahine’ōma’o to spy on Hi’iaka, which shows that Pele needs her help. In Bush and Pa’alulhi, other gods can lure Pele to Kaua’i (January 12, 1893). In Rice (August 27, 1908), Pā’oa fulfills his vow of revenge on Pele, but she does not die because she is guarded by her brothers. As a result, the accounts of power are not always consistent; if the gods can travel wondrously, why do they sometimes need boats?

Most important, other gods, even family members, have minds of their own and can disagree hotly with each other. Many of the *mo’o* and other gods killed are in fact rebellious relatives of the Pele family. Pele must repeatedly command supposedly subordinate family members to destroy Lohi’au when they balk in sympathy with Hi’iaka and admiration for Lohi’au’s beauty; they keep hoping that Pele will change her mind. In Hi’iaka’s sorcery battle with the sisters of ‘Olepau, both sides invoke gods (Kapihenu April 17 – May 8, 1862; Ho’ouluamāheieie July 6–24, 1906). ‘Olepau’s gods’ support has made him, but finally abandon him because of their closer relation to Hi’iaka and her greater power and higher moral position. In Ho’ouluamāheieie’s account of the killing of Lohi’au by Pele (starting August 17, 1906), he receives advice from his hula gods that conflicts with that of Hi’iaka. He makes the mistake of preferring their advice, not realizing that she is *ke po’o o nā ahu hula* “the head of the hula gods” (February 13, 1906). Even the followers of a god can revolt; Pā’oa seeks revenge against Pele even though she is his god (Ho’ouluamāheieie October 19, 1906).

These conflicts of powers are reflected in discussions of their sources. Pele’s power is classically that of her family, transmitted from the ancestors (Ho’ouluamāheieie May 28, September 12, 1906; Poepeo January 13, 1911). Ho’ouluamāheieie Christianizes his Pele theology by placing the ultimate source of the family power in God.30 Bush and Pa’alulhi develop a modern, euhemeristic theory of the Pele religion.31 Pele and her family and followers immigrated as conquerors to Hawai‘i and won over the earlier inhabitants. Since oral tradition turns history into fable all over the world, the people gradually deified Pele and attributed the volcanic phenomena to her family. Modern science has shown that this is not correct, but Christianity reveals that all such power comes from God, so volcanic phenomena do ultimately have a religious source.

Power can be conferred by a more powerful person to a less powerful one. Pele gives several powers to Hi’iaka, and both can give powers to their followers, like Wahine’ōma’o and Pā’iʻōpapa-la’a.32 Ho’ouluamāheieie discusses the conferring of powers in some detail. Pele lends Hi’iaka certain powers, but can take them back. He lists the powerful hand, the skirt, healing, and the voice; Pele can take back all but the voice.33 However, when Pele retracts Hi’iaka’s powers, the younger sister still retains several, including the skirt (August 15, 30, September 11, 1906). When Hi’iaka starts destroying the volcano to look for Lohi’au’s soul in the subterranean levels of the land of the dead, Pele is puzzled as to the source of her power (September 8, 10, 1906). She mistakenly believes that all family powers are conferred by herself and are thus controllable and limited. Hi’iaka is, however, receiving power greater than Pele’s and her own from a Kāne god, Kāne’emilohe (September 11–26, 1906), who earlier advised Hi’iaka to abandon her revenge and seek the water of life to revive Lohi’au (August 30, 1906). When Pele finally repents, she returns the powers to Hi’iaka (September 28, 1906). A happy ending is then provided through the advice and power of Kāne’emilohe, who even adjudicates the dispute between Pele and Hi’iaka (November 10–11, 1906). This superior placing of a male Kāne god is exceptional in the Pele literature.

Intelligence and knowledge are powers of both Pele and Hi’iaka, whose usual epithet is *no’eau*

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30 Ho’ouluamāheieie (February 28, 1906) copied by Poepeo (January 7, 1910). Also Ho’ouluamāheieie March 1, 1906.
31 Bush and Pa’alulhi January 5, 9, 1893. Such interpretations were common in the 19th century, compare Kalikaua (1972: 139–141). Poepeo occasionally offers naturalistic interpretations of some of Hi’iaka’s powers (e.g., January 17, 24, 1908).
32 Ho’ouluamāheieie (December 26, 1905) records an independent tradition in which Pele gives Hi’iaka two powerful aids: the boat-body of the god Kāne’emilohe and *ka luna kui o ‘Iliaua* “the smiling hand ‘Iliaua.” Conferring power on others; Rice July 23, 1908; Ho’ouluamāheieie March 12, July 27, 1906.
33 Ho’ouluamāheieie February 12, 1906, see also March 2, August 13, 17, 18, 1906.
Both have knowledge of places, such as their wind names, that is greater than that of the natives. Hi'iaka has expert knowledge of fishing, healing, and riddling. The use of intelligence is an occasion for the very popular genre of trickster stories (Kapihenu January 16, 1862).

Even more striking is the power of their beauty, which is described in many purple passages along with the extraordinarily strong response it evokes: Keu ka ui, keu ka ikaika, aoke lua o ka ui a me ka ikaika “Great the beauty, great the power, unequaled the beauty and the power” (Rice June 18, 1908). The one offense Hi'iaka will not forgive is to question or compare her beauty. An angry Pele wants to disguise Lohi'au because people will say that he is beautiful and she is ugly (Kapihenu June 10, 1862). The power of beauty displays itself from humor — beauty can be used to cadge fish and hop rides — to cosmic significance: beauty as the catalyst of the fertilizing powers of the universe, through which the cosmos was engendered and is perpetuated. In fact the male/female pair can be used to classify everything in the universe. On a more day-to-day level, people feel sympathy for and confidence in people who are beautiful.

The beauty of men receives equal emphasis, motivates much of the action, and tests the goddesses’ powers of resistance. In a frankly sexual passage during the erotic kīlua dancing, Lohi'au displays his manhood so beautifully that he expects Hi'iaka to lālau “grab” him (Kapihenu April 17, 1862). The hostess, the chiefess Pele'u'a, is greatly aroused by Lohi'au's dancing and desires him. When she sees that Hi'iaka is not excited, she concludes that she must have godly powers of resistance. When Hi'iaka takes Lohi'au, she will do it by her decision (Kapihenu May 8, 1862). The power of the god is not in the absence of desire, but in its control.

Beauty and power are clearly connected to gender in Hawaiian thinking. Pele can be called simply ka wahine “the woman” and, in Rice (May 21, 1908), is the only child born from the vagina of her mother. As seen above, Kapihenu makes explicit that female power is greater than male (January 9, 1862). In the sorcery battle over 'Olepa, Hi'iaka invokes exclusively goddesses whereas her eventual victims invoke gods as well. Ho'ouluumāhiehie is exceptional in referring to females as the "aoa o palupalu “weaker side,” a translation of a Western expression. One of Hi'iaka's most powerful weapons is her skirt.

Nevertheless, the exact character and extent of sexual activity are difficult to define in the literature. The first reason for this is the censorship imposed by the writers themselves and by external authorities — such as, the publishers and the state — after conversion to a puritanical, Anglo-Saxon Christianity. Bush and Pa'aluhi are even somewhat negative about nudity (January 24–25, 1893). An important statement of the problem is made by Ho'ouluumāhiehie (October 1, 1906). After articulating Pā'oa's vow of revenge — which involves nudity and genitalia — he writes that he has done so in the language of riddles, which the reader himself must decipher. The vow was expressed clearly in the original manuscript, but this is the time of "gentlemen and ladies" with laws that enjoin the dissemination only of "angelic language" in the newspapers. He therefore uses the language of riddles at this point. The reader should understand the symbols and the references, for instance, to the phallic stone of Nānāhoa on Moloka'i. He ends with the lapidary statement: i ka wa kanawai ole, ola iho la au; a puka mai ke kanawai, make iho la au "In the time without law, I was living; when the law appeared, I died." As a consequence, the newspaper series are filled with the most interesting sexual symbolism and rhetoric. Other writers were, however, more explicit, and even Ho'ouluumāhiehie can be astonishingly frank for the times.

The series contain a good deal of sexual humor. Hi'iaka and her companions are expert teases and lure men into granting favors. The women regularly elude the fools and enchant one into having sex with a boulder, thinking that it is the object of his desire. Rice provides a rare extended example of such a joke (July 9, 1908). Hi'iaka and Wahine'ōma'o approach two men at Mākaha, O'ahu, who are preparing their canoe to travel to Kaua'i. The men are struck by their beauty.

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34 E.g., Poepoe June 26, July 10, August 7, 1908. In Kapihenu (January 9, 1862) Pele does not understand Hi'iaka's chant, suggesting that Hi'iaka is the more intelligent.

35 Kapihenu February 6, 1862. Rice June 18, 1908. Ho'ouluumāhiehie February 24, 1906; on February 20, 1906, he Christianizes even this point: Hi'iaka is angry at being called pukapuka "ugly," in fact a traditional word in descriptions of Pele, but controls her anger on Wahine'ōma'o's urging; Hi'iaka's response, Ahe make a ka haaukealo pukapuka "The word ugly won't kill" is a "sticks and stones" modernism: compare Poepoe (December 10, 17, 1909). Hi'iaka bets her body during a contest (Rice June 18, 1908).

36 Ho'ouluumāhiehie October 2, 1906. Similarly, Hi'iaka is powerful even though she is not a male (February 15, 1905).

37 E.g., Ho'ouluumāhiehie October 1, 1906. Kapihenu (December 26, 1906; July 10, 1906) is clearer on Pā'oa's vow. Rice July 9, 1908. The kīlua game scene on O'ahu in Kapihenu and Ho'ouluumāhiehie contains a description of Lohi'au's penis.
The women ask indirectly to be taken to Kaua'i, and the men eagerly offer their boat. Hi'iaka says the women can help with the paddling, when the men get tired. The men insist that they are vigorous enough for the task. The women get into the canoe. One man is paddling at the prow of the canoe; the other, at the stern. The two women are sitting in the middle. Once out to sea, Hi'iaka whispers to Wahine'ōma'o that she should face towards the man at the prow, while Hi'iaka faces the one at the stern. They will then expose themselves as a joke. When the man at the stern sees Hi'iaka's beauty, he is so confused that he stops paddling. The canoe turns and is slapped broadside by a wave. The paddler at the prow turns around to complain and sees Wahine'ōma'o exposing herself. The sexual symbols fly furiously, including the modern hammer and crowbar. The canoe comes to a dead stop. Hi'iaka asks them if they are māluhihi tired" of paddling. They say they are not mālo'e'elo'e, a less general synonym of māluhihi, used conventionally to denote fatigue after sexual exercise. The men want sex, but Hi'iaka says she prefers to wait till they land. The men row very fast towards Kaua'i, where they will be tricked out of their promised reward.

A second reason why sexuality is difficult to define in the texts is that words for companion—like ipo and aikāne—were losing their necessarily sexual implication as they have done in contemporary usage. Rice is particularly clear on the sexual implication of aikāne throughout his text, and that sense seems occasionally clear in other authors (e.g., Poepoe June 3, 1910).

Finally, there are differences of opinion among the authors themselves as to the sexual activities of their subjects. Bush and Pa'alulu say that Pele had sex with Lohi'au on her visit to Hā'ena (January 17, 1893). Ho'oulumahiehe expresses the same view through the use of symbols. Kapihenu explicitly denies that Pele and Lohi'au had any sex other than nose-kissing and speculates that the reason was that Pele was in her soul—or god-body.

The greatest difference among the authors concerns the bisexuality of the protagonists. Bisexuality and homosexuality were common practice in classical Hawai'i and can be recognized in the literature (Morris 1992). On this point, the ambiguity of language is particularly problematic: are the terms of affection to be understood as expressing a sexual relationship— their classical use—or a more general affection that is not necessarily sexual? All the authors stress the intense love of the women for each other, even to the point of wanting to die together. Kapihenu emphasizes Hi'iaka's love for her sisters, her friends, and her land (she spares a girl because she showed that she knew where they came from by mentioning Kilaeua in a chant [February 6, 1862]). Hi'iaka acts out of love for her friends and travels with them, which solidifies their relationship. Hi'iaka's friends exercise an influence over her. When she is destroying the volcano, Pele sends Wahine'ōma'o to mollify her successfully with an u'e helu, a chant recounting the events of their trip together. Of course, these relationships can be differentiated; Hi'iaka is the haku "leader" of some women and the aikāne of others.

Pele and Hi'iaka do have heterosexual relations. The main line of the story is their relationship with Lohi'au. Later Pele and Pā'oa have an affair (e.g., Rice September 3, 1908). Such affairs are presented as short and passionate, as elsewhere in Hawaiian literature. Pele will use the men for a few days and then pass them on to her sisters or anyone else. But the principal woman should have her choice of the men and enjoy them first. Thus Pele interprets Hi'iaka's making love to Lohi'au at Kilaeua in her presence as primarily a gesture of disrespect (Rice August 6, 1908). There is some suggestion in Rice that Pele's desire for Lohi'au disrupts the peaceful situation created by the women living alone together (June 4, 1908). Long-term

38 In a seminar paper, Lōkāhā Antonio emphasized the use of ipo and other love terminology in the chants addressed by women to each other and concluded that their relations were sexual. Pukui and Elbert (1986: at word), followed by Morris (1992), derive aikāne from ai "Cootion; to have sexual relations, cohabit"; the word therefore implies coition between males. The word is often pronounced with an initial glottal stop: aikāne, possibly "male eating." This might be a construction parallel to ai'aio"eating before the face/ in the presence of"; aikāne might then refer to the fact that men ate apart from women and thus formed bonds of friendship. Both pronunciations may have been used; according to Bierbach and Cain (1996: 92), the possible Proto-Polynesian form has the glottal as do some cognates. In classical times, whatever the pronunciation and understood meaning, the word was used for a man who participated in an intimate friendship with another man, a relation that included sexual relations. The word was applied to Lesbian friends as well. The word does not necessarily designate an exclusively homosexual person.

39 Noenoe Silva convinced me that those symbols had to be taken more seriously than I originally had.

40 Kapihenu December 26, 1881. Compare Ho'oulumahiehe (June 22, 1906), Lohi'au does not realize that Hi'iaka has a god-body.

41 E.g., Rice August 6, 1908. Ho'oulumahiehe emphasizes the great love of Hi'iaka for Hōpoe (July 7, 24, 25, 1906).
heterosexual relationships are also described in the series, and in Rice, Hi‘iaka stays with Lohi‘au until his death. Ho‘oulumāhiehehi’s happy ending implies as much for several couples.

Hi‘iaka has sex with Lohi‘au at Kīluaea to revenge herself on Pele. Earlier in some traditions, she had sex with a chief on O‘ahu, Kanahau or Kā‘anahau, who offered her an extraordinary feast of her favorite food, taro leaves. In Ho‘oulumāhiehehi, Hi‘iaka had not yet been tempted by a man, but is attracted to Kā‘anahau, has sex for the first time with him, and feels real love for him. This is a cause for Pele’s anger: Hi‘iaka should not have dallied but hurried along with her trip. In Rice, Hi‘iaka’s having sex on her way to Kaua‘i is used as a justification for Pele’s anger; Hi‘iaka lost time in her romantic distractions (July 9, August 6, 1908). Wahine‘o‘ma‘o predicts that Hi‘iaka will love Lohi‘au and condemns it (July 23, 1908). Hi‘iaka’s companions can also act heterosexually: for instance, Wahine‘o‘ma‘o is attracted to Lohi‘au (e.g., Rice July 23, 1908).

The relation between two women can also be described as passionate. Rice is particularly uninhibited and thus clear. When Pele arrives at Ni‘ihau, her beauty amazes everyone, especially the chiefess Kaaohi (May 21, 1908). Pele is given the hospitality of the court, and after a feast, she and the chiefess become aikāne. They then go to bed together, and in florid language, their love-making through the night is described. When shortly afterwards Pele disappears, the chiefess is devastated and makes every effort to find her.

When later Hi‘iaka meets Hōpoe at the seashore, she is impressed by her lei-making and she decides to make Hōpoe her aikāne. Hōpoe willingly agrees (June 4, 1908). They express their aloha for each other, and Hi‘iaka says:

Penei kaua e pono ai ke hana. E hai mai oe i kou inoa ia‘u, a pela no hoi au ia oe, a i lilo ai no hoi kaua i io hookahi, a ma ko‘u wahi e hele ai, malaila mai no hoi oe, a ma ko‘u wahi no hoi e moe ai, malaila pu mai no oe.

We two will be right to act thus. Tell me your name, and I will also do the same to you; and we will also become one flesh; and the place I go to, there also you will come; and also in the place I lie down, there you will lie down with me.

The exchange of names is a traditional part of the ceremony of becoming aikāne (Ho‘oulumāhiehehi July 11, 1906). The author then bases her articulation of the relationship on two passages from the Hawaiian Bible. Genesis 2:24 – a e lilo laua i io hookahi “and they shall become one flesh” – is an indisputable expression of sexual union. The remainder of the passage is adapted from Ruth 1:16. Both texts were and continue to be used by some Hawaiian-Christian ministers in the wedding ceremony.43

Ho‘oulumāhiehe knows the Lesbian tradition of Hi‘iaka and explicitly refutes it (July 27, 1906). Wahine‘o‘ma‘o is attracted to Hi‘iaka and wishes to be a man so Hi‘iaka could be her woman; no man can see Hi‘iaka and not desire her. Hi‘iaka reads her thoughts and laughs. Wahine‘o‘ma‘o is confused and says that she is aroused by Hi‘iaka’s beauty and would have sex with her if she herself were a man; she admits this would be wrong. Hi‘iaka only laughs and warns her against homosexuality. Wahine‘o‘ma‘o is elsewhere attracted to female beauty and seems to personify in Ho‘oulumāhiehehi the subject of female homosexuality.44

Ho‘oulumāhiehehi redefines aikāne as a true friend in times of trouble (December 21, 1905).

The relationship of Lohi‘au and Pā‘oa can also be understood as one of aikāne. Kapihenu emphasizes the love Lohi‘au’s friends have for him; they are all members of the same hula academy and are close with each other and with their teacher Mapu. Pā‘oa’s vow to revenge Lohi‘au, with its sexual characteristics, also indicates that they are aikāne. Rice is again the most explicit. Pā‘oa has vowed to die with Lohi‘au and kisses his body turned to stone by Pele (August 13, 1908). After Lohi‘au has joined Hi‘iaka definitively, Pā‘oa kills himself, and curiously nobody notices (September 10, 1908). These depictions of bisexual relationships are not unusual in Hawaiian literature, and the practice

43 I am grateful to the Reverend David Ka‘upu for identifying the latter text and providing the information on the use of the passages. The passage is a striking example of the use of foreign literature for Hawaiian purposes.

44 Ho‘oulumāhiehehi July 28, 1906. See also December 28, 1905; August 14, 1906. Wahine‘o‘ma‘o does not want to live without Hi‘iaka. Ho‘oulumahiehehi’s Western attitude towards sexuality is also demonstrated by his untraditional (and, as far as I know, unparalleled) ascription of actions and opinions to gender differences (December 13, 14, 1905; February 19, September 26–27, 1906). Compare Pūpo‘e July 23, 1909. Wahine‘o‘ma‘o is used conventionally to facilitate explanations: she asks questions about chants and procedures so that Hi‘iaka can answer them; she acts as an audience in order to make explicit moods, emotions, and responses.

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was and still is an accepted part of Hawaiian life. Despite all obstacles, traditional attitudes were perpetuated after missionization.

The fact that Pele and Hi'iaka are gods is used to create interesting situations. When they travel incognito, people receive them hospitably, a major Polynesian virtue, or fail to treat them with the respect due to travelers. The rude are punished, and the hospitable rewarded, in accordance with worldwide folk motifs. The gods are more punctilious, and descriptions of the proper way to treat Hi'iaka assume the form of instructions, such as clarifying that her favorite food is taro leaf. Hawaiian etiquette and religious ceremonies were basically similar in form; moreover, Polynesian feasting assumed the participation of the gods to whom prayers were addressed. The hospitality offered to Pele and Hi'iaka assumes therefore the character of a religious ceremony in which the follower is making a prayer and food offering to the god who is really present and who in turn rewards the follower. The ritual character of godly eating is the reason, I would argue, why, except in Rice, the gods are very particular about when and what they eat; their freedom from ordinary hunger is also a sign of their godliness. In contrast, the human beings eat without constraint. Also special attention is paid to the custom of not leaving food remains, koe koea. When Hi'iaka herself performs a religious ritual, like resuscitating Lo'ihi'a, she follows the form of the high temple ceremonies.

On several occasions, people, especially religious experts, suspect the identity of the gods or even recognize them. Hi'iaka meets Pele worshippers on the different islands. The spread of the Pele religion, the ever wider recognition of her power, is in fact a theme of the Pele literature (e.g., Emerson 1915: 230).

The authors are much concerned with the reality of traditional Hawaiian religion and its relation to Christianity. This reflects the perpetuation of Hawaiian beliefs and customs after missionization through the 19th century and in fact until today. A central conviction of Hawaiian culture is the power of the word: the properly articulated prayer itself generates an effective force. Chants resuscitate Lo'ihi'a and O'olepe and other enemies. This idea differs from the Christian view of prayer as a petition to a God who freely decides whether or not to grant it. Ho'o'olumāhieie generally Christianizes prayer, but the traditional view intrudes. For instance, Hi'iaka does not want to help a chiefess, but when the ritual performed to help her is addressed to Hi'iaka herself, she cannot "dodge" the offering and must accept it. A large number of other religious beliefs and practices are described and discussed, some of which were and are still part of Hawaiian life, such as possession and the life of the soul after death.

The power and godliness of the Pele family raise problems of morality. As stated above, the question whether Pele acted morally, immorally, or amorally divided the Pele followers. The criteria used were classical, although certain attempts were made to modernize or Christianize Hawaiian ethics. There were many other differences of opinion, for instance, on "whether Pele shews approval or rage by an eruption" (Korn 1958: 55).

The moral evaluation of Pele and Hi'iaka's actions towards each other is a central theme of the series. The study of the subject is handicapped by the fact that the ending is missing in Kapihenui and Poepoe and abbreviated in Bush and Pa'aluhui. In Hawaiian literature, the end of a story is often a conclusion that states its point. Thus Bush and Pa'aluhui make their moral judgment clear by having Hi'iaka and Lo'ihi'a find each other and Pele be left i ka nele loa "completely lacking." There were in fact different traditional endings from which an author-redactor could choose. The story could end with the death of

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45 Kapihenui February 13, 1862 (Kahili chants the credal formula o Pele le ko aula Pele is my god' at Kaliuwa'a, O'ahu); February 20 - March 6, 1862 (Malaeha'akoa and his wife are Pele followers on Kaua'i).

46 Ho'o'olumāhieie October 5, 1906. See also March 1, 5, August 17, 1906 (a prayer must be said correctly or be effective); March 8, 1906 (the power of prayer). He is still within traditional Hawaiian thinking when he states that despite everything prayer sometimes has power and sometimes not (September 6, 1906). Ho'o'olumāhieie also speculates within the Pele theology: Hi'iaka may be able to heal by inserting into the sick person the power of the fire of lightning (March 21, 1906). He also connects Pele traditions to more general Hawaiian ones (September 18, 1906).

47 E.g., Ho'o'olumāhieie: the circumcision ritual (December 11, 1905) and the hi'waii "water purification" ceremony (March 27, 1906) belong to classical times; the negative significance of the hala "pandanus" lei (January 4, 1906), and ritual or spontaneous possession (August 6-7, 1906), are still actual.

48 For instance, Poepoe argues that individuals should be punished, not the groups they belong to (September 25, 1908). Ho'o'olumāhieie says that no good deed will go unrewarded (June 2, 1906).

49 Bush and Pa'aluhui July 12, 1893, this judgment belongs primarily to them as editors rather than to the tradition or traditions they were using; they condemn Pele's breaking of the agreement (January 18, 1893).

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Lohi'au at Kilauea (Green 1923: 25 ff.; Barrère et al. 1980: 99). Ho'oulumāhiehie's less traditional, modernizing ending was used by Emerson (1915) and has perhaps influenced modern understandings of the tradition.

Kapihenu emphasizes morality throughout his series and judges that Hi'iaka is entirely in the right and that Pele's breaking of their agreement is morally unjustifiable (e.g., March 20, 1862). Hi'iaka's moral position and her long and dangerous voyage are the reasons her relatives sympathize with her against Pele. Nonetheless, Pele is given her say: Lohi'au did not keep the agreement that Pele made with him on Kaua'i, despite all she did for him (May 29, June 10, 1862). Poepoe's position is generally similar to Kapihenui's (e.g., January 13, 1911).

The Rice version articulates a more nuanced judgment. On the one hand, Pele confesses that she did wrong to break the agreement with Hi'iaka and kill Lohi'au (Rice June 18, August 6, 13, 27, September 3, 1908). On the other hand, as seen above, Hi'iaka wronged Pele by letting herself be distracted by an affair during her trip. This two-edged judgment is reflected in the fact that Pa'oa partially effects his revenge on Pele and then has an affair with her.

Ho'oulumāhiehie forms a similarly differentiated judgment, which he articulates at length. On the one hand, Pele laid a particularly important law of separation on Lohi'au, the kai 'okia "separated by sea," which meant that he should not have been touched. Pele ordered Hi'iaka to keep her law (June 26, 1906), and Lohi'au was in any case her love before he was Hi'iaka's (November 9, 1906). On the other hand, Hi'iaka kept the agreement she had made with Pele, while Pele broke it, which was indefensible and justified Hi'iaka's taking her revenge (May 28, June 8, August 11, 1906). If Pele broke their agreement, so could Hi'iaka (March 2, 1906).

Kānemilohae judges the dispute (November 10–14, 1906): both Pele and Hi'iaka are partially in the right and partially in the wrong. Pele should have accepted Lohi'au's chants at Kilauea and not turned him to stone. Hi'iaka was wrong to have sex with Lohi'au, but Pele was wrong to have sex with Pa'oa while the kai 'okia law was still in force. The two wrongs cancel each other, and if Pele tries to harm Lohi'au again, she will anger the ancestors. Pele confesses her fault and gives instructions to lift the law. Lohi'au stays with Pele for two or three days and nights and then leaves. The kai 'okia law is lifted, and forgiveness is requested and given all around (November 23–24, 1906). Ho'oulumāhiehie agrees with the common view that Hi'iaka is generally a more moral person than Pele (March 21, 1906).

The vast Pele literature is clearly an important resource for the study of Hawaiian culture, containing a wealth of details on such subjects as household customs, hula, rituals, and the life of the separated soul. Moreover the history of Hawaiian thinking can be followed on important subjects from classical times until those of the composition of the series. Most important, the Pele literature attests to the fundamentally religious and esthetic character of Hawaiian culture: Pele has constantly inspired great works of music, dance, and literature. The quality of the art attests to the power of the god.

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