

“A TRUSTWORTHY HISTORICAL RECORD”:  
THE LATER WRITING OF ABRAHAM FORNANDER, 1870-1887

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## ABSTRACT

Using a post-colonial framework, this thesis examines the later research and writing of Abraham Fornander. The paper addresses the politics, religion, and society that informed Fornander's research and writing, then focuses more closely on his book, *An Account of the Polynesian Race* and international response to it. Fornander's tenacity in promoting his Western worldview and his efforts to advance his career infused his writings and, in the end, served to overshadow existing indigenous language and culture, hastening deterioration of both. Utilizing correspondence, early writing for newspapers, and other archival information, the paper demonstrates his attempts to attain authentic status for himself and his work. Though inconclusive in terms of proving Fornander's complicity with colonialism, the thesis presents another viewing of one man's work and begs a previously hidden discussion.

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## Introduction

An excerpt of a letter from Rollin Daggett to Abraham Fornander in 1884 exemplifies some of the strategies used by haole <sup>1</sup> translators and writers who translated and/or retold traditional Hawaiian history and literature in the late 1800's. It speaks of approaches used by Western writers to represent indigenous peoples and their cultures to a public readership in America and Europe.

While following the general line of tradition, minor events are introduced which it seems most reasonable tradition has lost, and the addition of dates assists in lifting them from the misty realm of doubt. Thus, to make Kaikilani a more attractive heroine, I have relieved her of all suspicion of infidelity in Molokai. While tradition does not warrant this, it at least does not disallow it, and it is therefore done. I simply (sic) add what might have happened to what tradition says really did happen, and by so doing many pretty stories may be written of ancient Hawaii by one versed in its mythology and customs. Partly to amuse myself, and partly to assist my friends of the San Franciscan, I have started to write a few of these stories, which have the merit of freshness to the Eastern reader, if nothing more.<sup>2</sup>

Writers like Daggett and Fornander foraged through, elaborated on, and reconstructed indigenous myths based on their Western perceptions and prejudices, using their work to further their particular careers. Fornander's response to the letter further illustrates this approach to representing indigenous peoples' lives and beliefs.

I heartily and joyfully appreciate the work you have set yourself to do in bringing Hawaiian Legends and ancient lore to the attention of thousands of readers who otherwise, would neither have known, nor ever dreamt of the fund of poetry, of devotion, or romance which in older times stirred the souls and illumined the lives of those of whom the world knew nothing

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<sup>1</sup> White, European or Euro-American: "White person, American, Englishman, Caucasian; . . . formerly, any foreigner". Mary Kawena Pukui and Samuel H. Elbert, *Hawaiian Dictionary* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1986).

<sup>2</sup> Daggett to Fornander, May 23, 1884, Pinao G. Brickwood Houston Collection, Hawai'i State Archives. See full text of letter in Appendix 1 of this document.

until a hundred years ago and whose modern savants are even now loth to acknowledge. I am delighted with the manner and the style with which you popularise those legends. They deserved a Walter Scott, and I am glad that they have found him.<sup>3</sup>

The manner in which the two men undertook their writing was not unique to them or their contemporaries in the Western world. Ward Churchill describes elements shared by an active literary imagination in colonial America, components that included ignorance of the actualities of native culture and the use of imaginative invention and stereotype to represent indigenous life.<sup>4</sup> Combined with the primacy of English as the colonizing language, the approach was instrumental in assuring perpetuation of colonial power in previously self-governing countries.<sup>5</sup> The letters cited above illustrate Fornander's influence on the representation of Native Hawaiians in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Despite his concern for a waning Native Hawaiian population and culture, Fornander's later research activity supported a model highly influential in establishing and promoting a European and American colonial effort in Hawai'i in the mid-to late 1800's.

It is the focus of this thesis to examine Fornander's research for and writing of *An Account of the Polynesian Race, Its Origin and Migrations, and the Ancient History of*

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<sup>3</sup> Fornander to Daggett, May 31, 1884, Pinao G. Brickwood Houston Collection, Hawai'i State Archives. See full text of letter in Appendix B, this document. Samuel Clemens (Mark Twain), a close friend of Daggett's was later instrumental in getting Daggett's book published. See Appendix C for a letter describing intricacies of its publication.

<sup>4</sup> Ward Churchill, *Fantasies of the Master Race: Literature, Cinema, and the Colonization of American Indians* (San Francisco: City Lights Books, 1998).

<sup>5</sup> See Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin, *The Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practice in Post-Colonial Literatures* (London: Routledge, 1989) for extensive discussion on colonial and post-colonial literature.

*the Hawaiian People to the Times of Kamehameha*<sup>6</sup> and to explore the context in which he wrote. Investigation will shed light on his role in the colonizing of Hawai‘i. Fornander’s writing has yet to be scrutinized using a post-colonial lens. This paper attempts to do so, examining motivations for and influences on his translations of indigenous texts. The following questions direct the inquiry. How did the times and culture in which he lived influence Fornander’s research and writing? What was the response to his writing, in Hawai‘i, in the U.S. and in Europe? Did the developing disciplines of philology and folklore in Europe and the United States influence Fornander’s later writing of *An Account of the Polynesian Race*? Did Fornander and his writing further the colonizing efforts of the United States in Hawai‘i in the 19<sup>th</sup> century? Did Fornander manipulate his research and his writings for his own purpose? These questions direct an analysis that joins other post-colonial research in challenging 19<sup>th</sup> century notions and practices that are at the heart of the work of writers like Abraham Fornander.

It is the intent of this writer to question and challenge Fornander’s research effort as more than a benevolent attempt to preserve the remnants of the Hawaiian culture. The paper begins by addressing the politics, religion, and society that informed Fornander’s research and writing, and then focuses more closely on his particular work and finally, responses to it. I propose that Fornander’s motivation for his research and scholarly efforts was founded primarily on a desire to be an acclaimed scholar, in addition to

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<sup>6</sup> Abraham Fornander, *An Account of the Polynesian Race, Its Origin and Migrations, and the Ancient History of the Hawaiian People to the Times of Kamehameha I*, (3 vols., 1878-1885; reprint, Rutland, Vt.: Charles Tuttle Company, 1969). Later in this paper, the book will be referred to as *An Account of the Polynesian Race*.

empathy for Native Hawaiians. His tenacity in promoting his worldview and his efforts to advance his career infused his writings and, in the end, served to overshadow the indigenous language and culture, hastening deterioration of both. In his attempts to attain authentic status for himself and his work, Fornander eclipsed Native Hawaiian written accounts for almost a century.

When Swedish writer Abraham Fornander came to Hawai‘i in 1844, he brought with him a particular European culture and worldview. As editor of and writer for three newspapers between 1850 and 1865, he presented thoughts and opinions to a highly literate community that included both Native Hawaiian and foreign readers.<sup>7</sup> A supporter of Native Hawaiians, his voice challenged the predominant missionary views that degraded them and their culture. His articles on Hawaiian history and mythology appeared in his newspapers and in journals published by the young Hawai‘i Historical Society.<sup>8</sup> Fornander maintained close professional relationships with the Hawaiian monarchy as they attempted to preserve and perpetuate Hawaiian traditions in face of growing U.S. capitalism and colonialism. They awarded him assignments as circuit court judge and minister of education, both of which required him to make extensive visits throughout the islands. Coupled with his fluency in the Hawaiian language, these visits

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<sup>7</sup> *Ke Kuamo‘o O Ke‘elikōlani*, (Hilo: University of Hawaii, Hilo), Vol. 8 No. 2 (Summer 1999): 2. “1841 The Kingdom of Hawaii establishes formal public education in the islands and includes the first high school west of the Rocky Mountains. Hawaiian texts are published and Native Hawaiian literacy rates soar to higher than 90%, placing the Hawaiian nation among the most literate in the world.”

<sup>8</sup> Amos Leib, *Hawaiian Legends in English: An Annotated Bibliography* (Honolulu: University Press of Hawaii, 1979), 9.

offered him opportunities for learning about contemporary conditions of Native Hawaiians and hearing the histories and myths of a culture that fascinated him.

In the late 1800's, the growing European-based discipline of comparative linguistics, with its search for a single source for all languages and cultures, piqued Fornander's interest. His pursuit of an Aryan origin for Polynesian and Native Hawaiian languages and cultures captivated him for much of his later life. At the age of 65, he began writing a series of three manuscripts that later became the comprehensive book, *An Account of the Polynesian Race, Its Origins and Migrations and the Ancient History of the Hawaiian People to the Times of Kamehameha*, published in 1878.

The first volume of the book asserted his theory of the origin of the Polynesian race. In it he laid out a model tracing the development of the languages and cultures of Hawaiians and other Polynesians. In a letter to Ljungstedt he wrote: "... the Polynesians are no kindred of the Malays, as has been so gratuitously assumed for a hundred years ... the Polynesians descend from a white race ... I think they came through Deccan into the [Indian] Archipelago after having more or less amalgamated with the Dravidians in South-India."<sup>9</sup> The second volume described the history and cultural practices of Hawai'i: "a history of its progress from heathenism to Christianity, from Despotism to Constitutional liberty."<sup>10</sup> Fornander included Hawaiian traditions, legends, genealogies, and chants.

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<sup>9</sup> Abraham Fornander, *Thirteen Letters to Erik Ljungstedt*, ed. Christian Callmer (Lund: Humanistiska Vetenskapssamfundet, 1973), 38.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid*, 23.



The third provided much of the linguistic research, in the form of lists of words that substantiated his claims in the first volume. He compared lists of Hawaiian words with those of diverse languages: Sanskrit, Greek, Latin, Gothic, Javanese, Swedish, Gaelic, Persian, Samoan, Maori, Tahitian and others. A second book, *The Fornander Collection of Hawaiian Antiquities and Folklore*, was edited and published posthumously in 1916, as a compilation of the Hawaiian mythology, history and cultural practices Fornander collected and translated between the time of his arrival in the islands in 1846 until his death in 1887.<sup>11</sup>

*An Account of the Polynesian Race*, which included Fornander's theory of Polynesian origins and supporting data, was both accepted and ridiculed in journal reviews in London, New York, and Honolulu. It now stands as an example of practices of 19<sup>th</sup> century comparative linguistics. His detailed collections of Hawaiian genealogies, myths, and cultural practices in both of his books continue to be referenced by contemporary writers. Both of Fornander's works have endured over time as authentic textual monuments of Hawaiian culture and history and continue to be referenced in modern and contemporary literature and history.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Abraham Fornander *The Fornander Collection of Hawaiian Antiquities and Folklore*, trans. revised and illustrated with notes by Thomas G. Thrum (Honolulu: Bishop Museum Press, 1916).

<sup>12</sup> See for example: Elizabeth Buck, *Paradise Remade: The Politics of Culture and History in Hawai'i* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1993), Teuira Henry, *Voyaging Chiefs of Havai'i* (Honolulu: Kalamaku Press, 1995), Lilikala Kame'eleihiwa, *The Legendary Tradition of Kamapua'a The Hawaiian Pig-God* (Honolulu: Bishop Museum, 1996), Dennis Kawaharada, *Storied Landscapes:: Hawaiian Literature and Place* (Honolulu: Kalamaku Press, 1999), King David Kalakaua, *The Legends and Myths of Hawai'i*, ed. R.M. Daggett (New York: C.L. Webster & company, 1888), Padraic Colum, *The Bright Islands* (London: Oxford University Press, 1925), Martha Beckwith, *Hawaiian Mythology* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1970), David Guard, *Hale-mano: a Legend of Hawai'i* (Millbrae, CA: Celestial Arts, 1981), Abraham Fornander, *Ancient History of the Hawaiian People to the Times of*

## Purpose of the study

Two instances prompted research for this paper. In 2001 I learned of Fornander's work while writing a paper for a Hawaiian mythology class. Various translations and retellings of a particular myth I had chosen to research lacked the detail described by Lilikala Kame'eleihiwa as characteristic of traditional Hawaiian literature.<sup>13</sup> The different versions were all written by haole writers and cited Fornander's work as source or reference.<sup>14</sup> At the completion of my paper, I was curious to explore the times and work of Fornander. Given the extensive repository of writings by Native Hawaiians themselves in Hawaiian language newspapers during the 1800's and recently accessed by Native Hawaiian scholars, I was puzzled to find that past and current translations of the myth I had chosen to research all came from haole and English sources.

Later that year, in a phone conversation with Bishop Museum bookstore staff, I learned that their currently top-selling book of Hawaiian myths was a publication of Rollin Daggett's *Legends and Myths of Hawaii*, referenced in the introduction.<sup>15</sup> It was

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*Kamehameha I*, with an introduction by Glen Grant (Honolulu: Mutual Publishing, 1996), and James Rumford, *Kahalaopuna: Ka U'i O Manoa*, (Honolulu: Manoa Press, 2001).

<sup>13</sup> Lilikala Kame'eleihiwa, *The Legendary Tradition of Kamapua'a The Hawaiian Pig-God* (Honolulu: Bishop Museum, 1996), VIII-IX.

<sup>14</sup> Versions included: William Westervelt, *Hawaiian Legends of Old Honolulu* (1915; reprint, Tokyo: Charles E. Tuttle Company, 1963), 204-245; Padraic Colum, "Le-pe the Bird-Maiden, and How Her Brother Sought for Her and Found Her," in *The Bright Islands* (London: Oxford University Press, 1925), 187-196; Eric Knudson, "Le-Pe, The Bird Maiden," in *Teller of Hawaiian Tales* (Honolulu: W. H. Male, 1945), 46-49; and Martha Beckwith, "Legend of Lepeamoa," in *Hawaiian Mythology* (1940; reprint, Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1970), 428-429.

<sup>15</sup> King David Kalakaua, *The Legends and Myths of Hawai'i*, ed. R.M. Daggett (New York: C.L. Webster & company, 1888). Phone interview.

originally published in 1888, two years before the overthrow of the Hawaiian Kingdom and, as noted earlier, was born out of a conversation between Daggett and Abraham Fornander. At the time Daggett held the post of American Minister to Hawai‘i.<sup>16</sup> In his letter to Fornander he described his plan for writing his book of Hawaiian myths, using Western metaphors and conventions to elaborate on Fornander’s “crisp little legends”.<sup>17</sup> I was interested that a text such as Daggett’s, that so distorted traditional Hawaiian history and culture, could still be in such demand.

Although he is frequently cited in current publications, I could find no contemporary analysis of Fornander’s writing or his role in creating his authoritative works.<sup>18</sup> This study intends to examine the work and times of one haole translator to better understand his influence on traditional Hawaiian history and literature. While conclusions of this study cannot be generalized to all haole writers of the time, the effort may provide a glimpse into literary practices that all but silenced the Hawaiian voice in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. Little has been written about the colonizing works of early haole translators and rewriters of Hawaiian myths; this paper focuses on one whose influence continues to hold sway in contemporary times.

Because of situations like that at the Bishop museum, the work of early haole translators must be questioned. Their works, and other more contemporary derivations,

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<sup>16</sup> Like his friend Mark Twain, he occasionally published pieces in the *San Franciscan*, a weekly California journal.

<sup>17</sup> Both Daggett and friend Samuel Clemens (Mark Twain) shared with American and European readers their understandings of Hawaiian culture, based on their brief sojourns in the islands. See also A. Grove Day, *Mark Twain’s Letters from Hawaii* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1975).

<sup>18</sup> Fornander wrote “As for the work itself, the conclusions I arrive at may be questioned or disputed; but no competent Polynesian scholar will dispute the genuineness and authenticity of the data, on which those conclusions are based.” Fornander, *Thirteen Letters*, 14.

line the shelves of local library and bookstore Hawaiiana sections, begging questions and analysis. For most of the public, they provide the primary source for information on Hawaiian history and literature, information that stereotypes Native Hawaiians and is highly biased toward Western colonial models. This study attempts to initiate a discussion with that work by uncovering information on the writing and times of Abraham Fornander.

## Methodology

Research for this thesis led me in several directions: one, to descriptions of a richly intricate and highly developed Hawai'i of the 1700's, and its transition through subsequent colonization in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Another directed the writer to the 19<sup>th</sup> century establishment of the discipline of philology or comparative linguistics, and the nascent studies of ethnology and folklore studies.<sup>19</sup> A further led to contemporary theories of imperialism and decolonization. A final guided me to the writings and practices of collecting and representing of the Swedish writer, Abraham Fornander. The title for the thesis came from a review of Fornander's book.<sup>20</sup>

This thesis presents a response to the questions listed above by examining letters written by or to Fornander over the course of his career, articles he wrote for newspapers of the day, notes composed for his book *An Account of the Polynesian Race*, and reviews written locally and internationally. The purpose of the thesis is to view Fornander and his work through a post-colonial lens, calling attention to colonizing influences of the time. Post-colonial works of Noenoe Silva, Haunani Trask, Lilikala Kame'eleihiwa, Jon Osorio, Linda T. Smith, Ward Churchill, Regina Bendix, and James Clifford will help to form the argument that the work of philologists and folklorists like Fornander tended to

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<sup>19</sup> Linda T. Smith describes disciplines such as these embodying "views which are either antagonistic to other belief systems or have no methodology for dealing with other knowledge systems. Underpinning all of what is taught at universities is the belief in the concept of science as the all-embracing method for gaining an understanding of the world. Some of these disciplines, however, are more directly implicated in colonialism in that either they have derived their methods and understandings from the colonized world or they have tested their ideas in the colonies." Linda T. Smith, *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples* (London: Zed Books, 1999), 65.

<sup>20</sup> "Fornander's Polynesian Race," review of *An Account of the Polynesian Race*, vol.1-3, by Abraham Fornander, *Science*, (New York), no. 193, (October 1886): 355 - 356.

obscure the indigenous voice and instead foreground the voices of outsiders like himself. Grounded in a Western hegemonic historical and literary record, their work continues to eclipse the diversity of readings available from Native Hawaiian sources.

The focus of this thesis is on Fornander and his role in supporting the colonial effort in Hawai'i; I will not address the specific act of translating Hawaiian language into English. He was, and for many still is, the authority on Hawaiian mythology. Yet there are flaws in his methodology and in his translations.<sup>21</sup> This paper will build a context and an understanding for why they took place. It will point to the need to look to other sources for accounts of Native Hawaiian myths, cultural practices, and history.

Because this is an historical analysis, it necessitates a discussion of the notion of presentism. Chandra Power describes it as double pronged: writerly presentism and readerly presentism. The former describes the imposition of a writer's current ideals, morals, and standards to historical figures and events. The latter depicts the same for the reader. Power describes, "Presentism is to a large degree inevitable as writers and readers cannot completely identify and control their own cultural and social

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<sup>21</sup> See Dorothy Barrere, *The Kumuhonua Legends: A Study of Late 19<sup>th</sup> Century Hawaiian Stories of Creation and Origins* (Honolulu: Bernice P. Bishop Museum, 1969) and further discussion later in this thesis. Barrere's text challenges the Kumuhonua legends of creation and origin used by Fornander in his theory of Hawaiian creation and migration. These legends support his theory of an Aryan source for ancient Hawaiians. She utilizes his "biographical notes" for his text, *The Polynesian Race* and notes from texts of his primary informants, Kepelino and Kamakau to expose the Kumuhonua legends as "thoroughly unreliable evidence for any theory which attempts to reconstruct Polynesian prehistory." Joseph Poepoe, Hawaiian scholar, also challenged Fornander's assumption that because he could not find the source of certain place names in Hawai'i, it necessitated a search elsewhere. Poepoe believed that several of the names might be ancient place names on windward O'ahu and no longer in use. Joseph Poepoe. *Ka Na'i Aupuni* (Honolulu), 5 March 1906, translated by Noenoe Silva, 21 November 2001.

conditioning.”<sup>22</sup> While argument may be made that analyzing the past from the present is somehow unfair, that same argument may also function to support a selective tradition that negates the possibility of multiple beliefs, values and awarenesses that comprise the past. Researching and analyzing the past from the present furnishes the challenge to resist judgement and persist toward a more complex understanding of and appreciation for the past.

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<sup>22</sup> Chandra Power, “Challenging the Pluralism of Our Past: Presentism and the Selective Tradition in Historical Fiction Written for Young People,” *Research in the Teaching of English*, Volume 37, May 2003, online at [http://www.ncte.org/portal/30\\_view.asp?id=109325](http://www.ncte.org/portal/30_view.asp?id=109325).

## Background to the study

The contemporary project of decolonization took root in the late 1950's as African countries gained political independence from their colonizers. Much of the early work focused on political and governmental change, based on the work of Antonio Gramsci and Karl Marx. Beginning in the late 1970's, writers initiated dialogues addressing colonized literatures, identities, and cultures. This post-colonial endeavor grew to inform independence efforts in the Pacific, Asia, Great Britain, and the Americas, giving literary voice to peoples previously silenced through the process of colonization. As Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin describe:

What each of these literatures has in common beyond their special and distinctive regional characteristics is that they emerged in their present form out of the experience of colonization and asserted themselves by foregrounding the tension with the imperial power, and by emphasizing their differences from the assumptions of the imperial center.<sup>23</sup>

Examination of these differences from mainstream culture continue and expand to be articulated through endeavors that bring indigenous peoples together around rights to control their land, water, cultural practices and education; efforts that continue to challenge a dominant colonial model.

Contemporary decolonizing efforts have attempted to destabilize imperial and colonial forces initiated by European countries during the time of the Enlightenment, a time that engendered a worldview that promoted the conquest and control of 'new lands.' It was in this spirit that previous cultural, political and economic models were transformed into expressions widely employed and directed by a Western worldview. By

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<sup>23</sup> Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin, *The Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practice in Post-Colonial Literatures* (London: Routledge, 1989), 2.



securing and subjugating indigenous peoples and their lands, European control assured markets and capital investments that fed the imperial system of dominance. Linda T. Smith depicts an imperial vision that “enabled European nations to imagine the possibility that new worlds, new wealth and new possessions existed that could be discovered and controlled. This imagination was realized through the promotion of science, economic expansion and political practice.”<sup>24</sup>

Through this imagination, disciplinary knowledge was created, further developed and maintained over time, providing the underlying structure of education systems worldwide. The 18<sup>th</sup> century saw a flourishing of the traditional Western disciplines of philosophy, economics, philology and literature. Newly seeded fields of linguistics, anthropology and political science readily took root in the fertile ground of the imperial efforts of England, France and other European countries in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Guided by a shared master narrative founded in Western versions of history and philosophy, these disciplines developed boundaries that ensured a separation and “purity” of their individual histories. Smith describes the resulting isolation. “Insularity protects a discipline from the ‘outside’, enabling communities of scholars to distance themselves from others and, in the more extreme forms, to absolve themselves of responsibility for what occurs in other branches of their discipline, in the academy and in the world.”<sup>25</sup> North America embraced the worldview of the Enlightenment, adapting its own disciplinary knowledges to suit its colonial efforts.

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<sup>24</sup> Linda T. Smith, *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples* (London: Zed Books, 1999), 23.

<sup>25</sup> Smith, 67.

### *Language and Colonization*

Throughout the world, the language of colonial powers functioned to carry this disciplinary knowledge and effectively change the culture of indigenous peoples, who were most impacted by colonial endeavors. Beginning with missionary efforts in Hawai‘i, and later, the work of foreign settlers, the English language was situated as the dominant speech of the church, later taking over education, and finally business and government. Over time, colonial speech and writing displaced several thousand years of indigenous oral tradition, obscuring traditional communication and culture. In his 1983 report to the U. S. Senate, Larry Kimura detailed the history of the loss of Hawaiian language in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries:

The few Hawaiian medium schools remaining at the time of the overthrow were abolished by law, and English became even more pervasive as its official status formed a means for English speakers to move into occupations, such as lower-civil service, that formerly required skill in Hawaiian rather than English. . . . increased erosion of the Hawaiian language and growth of an English-speaking population led not to an increase in the political, social, and economic position of Hawaiians, but to a decrease in these areas proportionate to the loss of skill in Hawaiian.”<sup>26</sup>

An ongoing assault on the indigenous language took place through educational policies to eradicate Hawaiian language and implement English-only practices, through infusion of English in all aspects of business culture and finally, by the translating and retelling of traditional histories and myths by haole writers.

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<sup>26</sup> Larry L. Kimura, “Native Hawaiian Culture,” in *Native Hawaiian Study Commission: Report on the Culture, Needs and Concerns of Native Hawaiians* (1983), 195.

Contemporary Native Hawaiian writers describe the violation and ensuing loss in their poetry and prose.<sup>27</sup>

Scholars have described approaches employed by Europe and the United States over the past three centuries as these colonizing countries moved to dominate less powerful ones.<sup>28</sup> To gain control of economic and human resources in less powerful countries, colonizers used a variety of strategies: military invasion, subjugating and exploiting the indigenous population, forcibly relocating native peoples, and destroying the indigenous culture by silencing the language. Over time, colonial language, and the practices it articulated, damaged and in some cases destroyed the indigenous language and culture, leaving in its place a culture heavily influenced by Western values.

Kimura describes the Hawaiian language, rich with “word power,” as the “bearer of the culture, history, and traditions of a people.”<sup>29</sup> In his detailed account, he depicts how language internally stores the changes and adaptations of a people. The dominance of the

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<sup>27</sup> See Noenoe Silva, “Kanakanā Maoli Resistance to Annexation,” in *‘Oiwī a Native Hawaiian Journal* (Honolulu: Kuleana ‘Oiwī Press, 1998), 42; Haunani Kay Trask, *Night is a Sharkskin Drum* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2002). Lilikala Kame‘eleihiwa, *The Legendary Tradition of Kamapua‘a The Hawaiian Pig-God* (Honolulu: Bishop Museum, 1996), VII-VIII; Joseph P. Balaz, ed., *Ho‘omanoa: An Anthology of Contemporary Hawaiian Literature* (Honolulu: Ku Pa‘a Incorporated, 1989), xiii-xiv.

<sup>28</sup> For more extensive explanations of colonial and imperial strategies and their impacts on indigenous cultures, see Linda T. Smith, *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples* (London: Zed Books, 1999). Ngũgĩ wa Thiong’o, *Decolonising the Mind: The Politics of Language in African Literature* (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 1986). Haunani-Kay Trask, *From a Native Daughter: Colonialism and Sovereignty in Hawai‘i*. (Monroe, ME: Common Courage Press, 1993). Albert Wendt, “Novelists and Historians and the Art of Remembering” in *Class and Culture in the South Pacific*, eds. Antony Hooper et al. (Auckland, Aotearoa: Centre for Pacific Studies, University of Auckland; Suva, Fiji: Institute of Pacific Studies, University of the South Pacific, 1987). Ward Churchill, *Fantasies of the Master Race: Literature, Cinema, and the Colonization of American Indians* (San Francisco: City Lights Books, 1998).

<sup>29</sup> Kimura, 175.

English language in Hawaii created an immense negative impact on Native Hawaiian culture:

. . .Aesthetic culture divorced from its language cannot exist. . . Hawaiian base culture becomes redefined as a subculture and historic development will move toward a definition of negatives that contrast with the ideals of both the indigenous aesthetic culture and the imposed aesthetic culture. . .English inevitably implies Anglo-American culture in direct proportion to that part of Hawaiian culture that is lost in the description. This has a negative impact on Hawaiians, not only in the impressions gained by outsiders, but also in the self-impression gained by English-speaking Hawaiians using such descriptions.<sup>30</sup>

Included in the redefinition of culture was the impulse and practice of outsiders to represent Native “others,” enforcing stereotypes that furthered the colonial effort.

### ***Representing Others***

As American and European influence gained ground in Hawai‘i in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, there developed a practice of representing Native Hawaiians and their history, culture and myth among haole elite in a derogatory manner. Letters from missionaries in Hawai‘i to their families on the East Coast of America and later settler literature were often filled with descriptions deriding indigenous culture.<sup>31</sup> Many of the early letters, published in newspapers and journals of the time, proliferated a particular view of Native Hawaiians, similar to that of Native

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<sup>30</sup> Kimura, 184.

<sup>31</sup> See Patricia Grimshaw, *Paths of Duty: American Missionary Wives in Nineteenth-Century Hawaii* (Honolulu: University of Hawai‘i Press, 1989) for excerpts of letters. Missionaries Hiram Bingham and Charles Stewart described Hawaiians as “half man and half beast – a link in creation, connecting man with the brute.” See also Hiram Bingham, *A Residence of Twenty-One Years* (Hartford, CN: H. Huntington, 1848) 81, and C. S. Stewart, *Journal of a Residence in the Sandwich Islands During the Years 1823, 1824, and 1825*, 3rd ed. (London, Fisher and Jackson, 1830), 88.

Americans in North America. With wide circulation, the images of Native Hawaiians as “heathen” and “savage” and descriptions of Native Hawaiian cultural practices as “uncivilized” became what David Stannard calls “political mythology.” These myths supported the colonial practice of “teaching the colonized to view with contempt the contrived histories of their own people and to look with awe at the contrived histories of their conquerors.”<sup>32</sup> With the arrival of the printing press to Hawai‘i in 1820, the myths gained currency beyond private letters and found their way to news letters and papers started by missionaries.<sup>33</sup>

The rapid decimation of indigenous populations both in Hawai‘i and on the continent, following introduction of deadly diseases gave rise to a commonly held belief that native peoples were “vanishing.”<sup>34</sup> The portrayal of Native Hawaiians in “rapid decay” and “a people doomed to die out” was a common description and understanding of Hawaiians and Native Americans during most of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>35</sup> In response to this notion that

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<sup>32</sup> David Stannard, “Recounting the Fables of Savagery: Native Infanticide and the Functions of Political Myth,” *Journal of American Studies*, 25 (1991): 3, 383.

<sup>33</sup> See Helen Chapin, *Shaping History: The Role of Newspapers in Hawai‘i* (Honolulu: University of Hawai‘i Press, 1996) for the role of the written language in displacing Hawai‘i’s oral and memory based culture and circulating “Christian enlightenment imbued with American values.” (Chapin, 15).

<sup>34</sup> For more on the belief as it circulated in North America, see Ward Churchill, *Fantasies of the Master Race: Literature, Cinema, and the Colonization of American Indians* (San Francisco: City Lights Books, 1998), xvii. The concept that Hawaiians and Native Americans were dying races was given common currency in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Both populations suffered the decimating impact of Western disease. However, the notion quickly gained what Stannard terms political myth and helped to marginalize indigenous people to more effectively exploit and subjugate them and their cultures. See Stannard, “Recounting the Fables of Savagery” and Linda T. Smith for detailed explanations.

<sup>35</sup> Contemporary critique of its use as a colonizing influence can be found at Ward Churchill, *Fantasies of the Master Race: Literature, Cinema, and the Colonization of American Indians* (San Francisco: City Lights Books, 1998).

circulated among European and American settlers, academics and lay men developed the concept of and procedures for preserving the remnants of indigenous culture. They perceived such cultures as static and perpetuated the European idea of housing vanished cultures in museums and texts for further study.

It was only as the extinction of the Polynesian race hastened toward completeness that its origin began to be adequately studied. . . . The races and the languages of Polynesia are disappearing at a continually accelerated rate, from the face of the earth. Within two or three centuries the ever-swelling tide of civilization will have swept over them, and the only traces of their speech will be those preserved in books.<sup>36</sup>

This same review appeared two days later in *The Saturday Evening Post* in New York<sup>37</sup> and demonstrates how widely the notions circulated with time.

Within the imposed structures of Western education and literacy, these stereotypes served to inform indigenous peoples and settlers of a “‘correct’ understanding. . . .of the appropriateness of their physical and cultural demise.”<sup>38</sup> Fornander voiced his understanding in a letter to Swedish friend Ljungstedt in 1879: “The Census of the population was taken last December. Its results are upon the whole favorable, and those

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<sup>36</sup> Review of *An Account of the Polynesian Race*, vol. 1 and 2, by Abraham Fornander, *The Nation*, no. 865, (January 1882): 82-83. Another writer describes the situation: “The saddest fact about these Hawaiians is their rapid decay in recent times. As a people they are apparently doomed to die out.” “Review of *An Account of the Polynesian Race Its Origins and Migrations and the Ancient History of the Hawaiian People to the Times of Kamehameha I*,” vol. 1, by Abraham Fornander, *Contemporary Literature* (April 1881), 237. Founded in 1865, *The Nation*, a weekly magazine supported abolition, featured articles on current affairs, upheld what it considered to be democratic principles, and worked to elevate the working class.

<sup>37</sup> “Polynesian and Aryan,” review of *An Account of the Polynesian Race*, vol. 3, by Abraham Fornander, *The Saturday Evening Post*, (New York), (August 1886). Started in 1821, the *Saturday Evening Post* listed as its banner: “Devoted to Morality, Pure Literature, Foreign and Domestic News, Agriculture, The Commercial Interests, Science, Art and Amusement.” Its coverage of business and public affairs ran conservative.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid*, 14.

among us who adopt the ideas of certain political economists and philosophers – that native races are doomed to extinction when they come in contact with the Almighty Anglo-Saxon – are rather silent.”<sup>39</sup>

In reference to the period before the overthrow of the kingdom (1874 to 1891), Kimura describes the decrease of the once prestigious Hawaiian language and the concepts it carried: “Also destructive was the direct exposure to Euro-American philosophy (in a way, propaganda) of that era, which proposed that non-Western peoples were inferior, further weakening confidence of Hawaiian children in themselves, their native language, and their culture.”<sup>40</sup> The understanding prompted men like Fornander and his contemporaries to gather indigenous traditions, histories, and myths with urgency before they were lost forever.<sup>41</sup> It helped to mold the guiding purpose of early ethnologists intent on saving ‘remnants’ of indigenous cultures. As Ward Churchill writes:

It is relatively easy to perceive how, during the nineteenth century, any valid concept ever possessed by the English speaking population of North America as to Native Americans being peoples in their own right, peoples with entirely legitimate belief systems, values, knowledge and lifeways, had been lost in the distortion popularly presented through literature and pseudoscience. The stereotypes had assumed a documented ‘authenticity’ in public consciousness.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> Abraham Fornander, *Thirteen Letters to Erik Ljungstedt*, ed. Christian Callmer (Lund: Humanistiska Vetenskapssamfundet, 1973), 25. The previous year marked the lowest on the trajectory for native Hawaiian population. For a detailed examination of Hawai‘i’s pre-contact population, see David E. Stannard, *Before the Horror: The Population of Hawai‘i on the Eve of Western Contact* (Honolulu: The Social Science Institute, University of Hawai‘i, 1989).

<sup>40</sup> Kimura, 194.

<sup>41</sup> In his letter to Ljungstedt dated 19 July 1884, Fornander describes the “harvesting” to be done in Hawai‘i. Others include Dr. Hjalmar Stolpe who also references to Native Hawaiians writing; cultural practices retained underground

<sup>42</sup> Churchill, 8.

Combined, the stereotypes of extinction and the image of “noble savage” used in romantic writing of the time provided collectors a justification for the intense collecting that characterized much of 19<sup>th</sup> century academia.<sup>43</sup>

### *Collecting Cultures*

Dominating Western narratives of heathen, noble savage, and cultural demise provided a screen for colonial take over of indigenous languages and the cultures they nurtured. Stereotypes like those described above made it possible for the rooting of colonial practices such as collecting artifacts of indigenous cultures. As James Clifford describes,

Collecting – at least in the West, where time is generally thought to be linear and irreversible – implies a rescue of phenomena from inevitable historical decay or loss. The collection contains what ‘deserves’ to be kept, remembered, and treasured. Artifacts and customs are saved out of time. Anthropological culture collectors have typically gathered what seems ‘traditional’ – what by definition is opposed to modernity. From a complex historical reality (which includes current ethnographic encounters) they select what gives form, structure, and continuity to a world.<sup>44</sup>

During the 1800’s, European philologists focused their efforts on taxonomy and the idea of creating a complete series of artifacts with an emphasis on their developmental

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<sup>43</sup> Churchill, 4. See examples at Samuel Clemens, *Mark Twain’s Letters from Hawaii*, ed. A. Grove Day (Honolulu: University of Hawai‘i Press, 1966) and King David Kalakaua, *The Legends and Myths of Hawai‘i*, ed. R.M. Daggett (New York: C.L. Webster & company, 1888).

<sup>44</sup> James Clifford. “On Collecting Art and Culture”. *Out There: Marginalization and Contemporary Cultures* eds. Russell Ferguson, Martha Gever, Trinh T. Minh-ha, and Cornel West (New York: The New Museum of Contemporary Art, 1990), 152.



sequence.<sup>45</sup> This emphasis had at its source the concept of evolutionism and began to influence the collecting of artifacts at the time Fornander was gathering for his work. His chosen discipline of philology emphasized the need for scholars to “assemble a full collection of versions before an adequate comparative analysis could be done.”<sup>46</sup> This effort required extensive collections and a system of reference for comparing materials from different cultures and regions. Foundational to the enterprise were the then popular theories of monogenesis and diffusionism: that all folklore texts were believed to have an original form, created in a particular historic moment in a particular historic place and from there spread and changed over time.

Antiquarians like Fornander participated in the collecting frenzy required of the disciplines of philology, art, anthropology, and history during much of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. By then it had become highly structured and deeply encoded with Western colonial values. The model told a story of human progress and fit with the growing dominance of a Western economic model. “The value of exotic objects was their ability to testify to the concrete reality of an earlier stage of human Culture, a common past confirming Europe’s triumphant present.”<sup>47</sup> This confirmation proved critical to countries intent on acquiring and controlling territory and its human and natural resources.

The value of the gathered artifacts and customs in this developing system was largely based on their age. Those from antiquity, and especially from civilizations perceived to

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<sup>45</sup>Pertti Anttonen, “Philological Approach” in *Folklore: An Encyclopedia of Beliefs, Customs, Tales, Music, and Art*, ed. Thomas A. Green (Santa Barbara, Ca, 1997).

<sup>46</sup> Pertti Anttonen, 644.

<sup>47</sup> James Clifford, 150.

be vanishing, were accorded a higher value. Linda T. Smith depicts the practice, “The idea that collectors were actually rescuing artefacts from decay and destruction, and from indigenous peoples themselves, legitimated practices which also included commercial trade and plain and simple theft.”<sup>48</sup> For the collector, this compulsion to rescue from extinction produced an image of the collection as salvation and the collector as savior. John Elsner and Roger Cardinal elaborate on the act of collecting: “At the margins of social convention lie the urges sublimated in careful arrangements and informative labels: desires for suppression and ownership, fears of death and oblivion, hopes of commemoration and eternity. Collections gesture to nostalgia for previous worlds (worlds whose imagined existence took place prior to their contents being collected)”<sup>49</sup>

As Clifford describes, “Collecting has long been a strategy for the deployment of a possessive self, culture, and authenticity.”<sup>50</sup> This strategy depended on specific rules of selection, ordering and classification using hierarchies. The collector selected the object, knowledge, experience, or memory, removed the fragment from its initial and specific context, ascribed to it new meaning, inserted it into a new arrangement, and finally, created a scheme for storage or display. All aspects of the procedure were driven by decisions made by those carrying out the process. While the collection itself appeared to embody a smooth order on its surface, the process of classification hid the history of each fragment’s appropriation and reproduction.

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<sup>48</sup> Linda T. Smith, 61.

<sup>49</sup> John Elsner and Roger Cardinal, introduction to *The Cultures of Collecting*, eds. John Elsner and Roger Cardinal (Cambridge, Ma: Harvard University Press, 1994), 5.

<sup>50</sup> James Clifford, 143. For Clifford authenticity concerns itself with an inventive present as much as it does with the preservation or resurrection of a past.

The act of collecting 'heirlooms' of cultures understood to be disappearing was integral to the 19<sup>th</sup> century philological research tradition as it sought out scientific systematization of oral traditions to support models of previously unwritten literature.<sup>51</sup> Philological scholars in Europe and America sought to explain and reconstruct textual histories by comparing folklore texts, using the historic-geographic framework.<sup>52</sup> They employed comparisons between different versions of texts, phrases or words to establish a linear process of descent and to substantiate the source for the text. As Anttonen describes, "The scientific aim is to reconstruct a text that could be considered complete and original and that would then give information about the customs and beliefs of earlier generations. To meet the other scientific requirements, a publication of such a study must contain a critical apparatus that lists the alternative folklore sources and their variant readings." The discipline required scholars to accumulate a full collection of versions before they could make a competent comparative analysis.

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<sup>51</sup> See Pertti Anttonen, 641.

<sup>52</sup> Scholars included: Max Muller, Theodor Benfey, Julius and Karl Krohn, Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm, Francis James Child and William Whitney.

## 19<sup>th</sup> Century Hawai‘i

Over thousands of years, Native Hawaiians, like Native Americans on the Continent, established and maintained highly developed systems of agriculture, economy, and religion. As Kame‘eleihiwa depicts,

The people and the land prospered as a sophisticated civilization developed, including the largest network of wet land taro fields and hundred acre fishponds, ever found anywhere in the world. Living in harmony with the land developed into an exquisite art form and generosity in all things, especially in the sharing of food, was considered the highest mark of civilized behavior.<sup>53</sup>

It was an interdependent relationship that the Hawaiians perpetuated: the ‘Aina (the land), the Maka‘ainana (the common people), the Ali‘i (the rulers) and the Akua (the gods) all working together. The commoners caring for the land and sea fed the chiefs, who in turn fed the gods. The gods returned favor to the Maka ‘ainana and Ali‘i with prosperity. Despite natural disasters and intermittent warring in attempts to unify the islands, Hawaiians experienced relative stability for many hundreds of years.

Three phenomena converged by 1820 to create tremendous imbalance and upheaval for the Hawaiian people. The first and most devastating was the introduction of foreign disease. In the late 1700’s through the early 1800’s, explorers and then traders, whalers and settlers brought with them diseases that caused epidemics of bubonic plague, influenza, whooping cough, mumps, and leprosy killing hundreds of thousands of Hawaiians. Because of their geographical isolation, Hawaiians had developed little or no resistance to these diseases. By the time Fornander settled on O‘ahu in 1844, Hawaiians

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<sup>53</sup> Lilikala Kame‘eleihiwa, “A Synopsis of Traditional Hawaiian Culture, the Events Leading to the 1887 Bayonet Constitution and the Overthrow of the Hawaiian Government,” *Hawaiian Studies 107 Handbook* (Honolulu: 1995), 2.

had lost more than 80% of their 1778 population of nearly one million.<sup>54</sup> In little over a hundred years, Hawaiians lost almost 95% of their people. Stability that had grounded Hawaiian society for centuries was shattered and with it much of the accompanying culture. Hammered deeper with each shipload of traders, whalers, and settlers, the wedge of disease drove to the heart of Hawaiian life. The first boatload of Calvinist missionaries arrived in 1820 bringing more illness and a new religion and way of life.

This second impact, that of Calvinist belief and lifestyle, struck deeply at the remaining Hawaiian culture. Missionaries, bent on converting Hawaiians and their practice, introduced and enforced their foreign beliefs and routines. Kame‘eleihiwa again describes, “The Ali‘i Nui hoped that the Christian message of Ola Hou, literally new life, or resurrection would give their people new physical life. But the price to be paid by the Hawaiian Ali‘i Nui was high. American missionary protection meant complete obedience to all dictates and the rejection of everything Hawaiian.”<sup>55</sup> In addition, American missionaries aligned themselves closely with Ali‘i Nui to become their advisors. They deliberated with Hawaiian rulers on how best to change traditional Hawaiian government to conform to the ‘civilized’ Western model. Within twenty years of their arrival, missionaries had effectively converted souls, governing bodies, and daily business to a Calvinist and capitalist model.

In 1838, missionary William Richards returned to his supporting agency in Boston, the American Board of Commission for Foreign Missions, requesting someone to return

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<sup>54</sup> Ibid., 4. For a detailed argument of Hawaii’s pre-contact population and the impact of foreign disease, see David E. Stannard, *Before the Horror: The Population of Hawai‘i on the Eve of Western Contact* (Honolulu: The Social Science Institute, University of Hawai‘i, 1989).

<sup>55</sup> Ibid., 6.

with him to Hawai'i to teach western models of economics and government. His chief interest was instructing the chiefs in the land-related practices of enlightened countries.<sup>56</sup> Unsuccessful with his effort, he took on the position himself and was extremely influential in establishing Hawai'i's first constitution in 1840. The document decreed for Hawai'i a declaration of rights, legislative and judicial systems, and the powers and duties of the king, all modeled on the American form of government. Although they were required to renounce allegiance to the United States, and take an oath to the King, Richards and thirteen other haoles closely advised rulers in the transition from a monarchical governing system to this American model. These haole administrators advised the King to institute three organic acts, the first of which established an official cabinet and council with departmental positions filled by each of the haole men. In addition to detailing cabinet and council responsibilities, the second organic act created a land commission to settle land claims. This act had the powerful and devastating effect of changing forever the practice of land use in Hawai'i. In spite of pressure from his haole council and the foreign business community to conform to western patterns of governing, Kamehameha III, ruler at the time, secured treaties and declarations with foreign countries acknowledging and reinforcing Hawai'i's status as an independent country. The intrusion of the western model of government continued to dominate politics in Hawai'i despite efforts by several rulers to restore traditional Hawaiian structures and values.

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<sup>56</sup>Eileen Tamura, Cornelia Anguay and James Shon, eds., *The Shaping of Modern Hawaiian History: Databook and Atlas* (Honolulu: The Curriculum Research and Development Group, University of Hawai'i, 1983), 129.

Amid skirmishes and posturing among the countries of England, France, and the United States over protectorship of Hawai‘i, missionaries settled into businesses of their own. When their American sponsors judged the islands ‘Christianized’ and withdrew their financial support in 1840, many missionaries chose to remain in Hawai‘i on retainers from the government for their roles as ministers or other officials, or to start up businesses in banking, agriculture and publishing. Foreign businesses in Hawai‘i that initially served whaling and trading ships and early settlers expanded, moving the country toward a more capitalist economy. This growth firmly established foreigners and their Western culture in Hawai‘i leading to a third and final blow – inaugurating private ownership of land.

By 1845, the drop-off of fur trade between the Northwest and China and the end of sandalwood trade between Hawai‘i and China with the decimation of Hawai‘i’s sandalwood forests spelled termination of Hawai‘i as a viable port of call. The declining whaling industry contributed to a dim future for island merchants heavily dependent on the commerce driven by these trades. Businessmen in search of securing new sources of commerce and expanding profits looked to agriculture to satisfy their needs. As Marion Kelly describes, their primary challenge was “to have the Hawaiian system of use-rights land tenure changed into the western system of private ownership of land.”<sup>57</sup>

The traditional method of land tenure in Hawai‘i had been a system of distribution and redistribution of land by the prevailing ruler and differed markedly from the feudal system in Europe. “...all Hawaiians had interest in and rights to the land, as it was a

primary source of food. Ali‘i Nui had ultimate control over the lands, but Commoners had ancient and irrefutable usufruct rights. No one owned the land in the western sense nor was land bought or sold.”<sup>58</sup> Following the death of Kamehameha II, the principal of hereditary land-ownership was adopted by the monarchy and land could be transferred only with the consent of the king.

Haole businessmen and government officials argued that private ownership of land would both protect the sovereignty of Hawai‘i and, with title to land, foreigners might provide an example of ‘industry’ to the indigenous people. The second organic act, described above, provided the structure necessary to leverage the haole plan for private ownership of land and functioned to bring Hawai‘i under the protection of a U.S. government which, by then, had a particular interest in securing and developing American business interests. In 1848, after unrelenting pressure from missionary advisors and foreign businessmen and talk of threats of foreign takeover, Kamehameha III agreed to privatize the land of Hawai‘i. Former missionaries and businessmen quickly bought land, investing in burgeoning sugar plantations, and became major power brokers as a result of their financial and political successes. Into this unstable culture, heavily influenced by Calvinist and capitalist values, Abraham Fornander landed and settled in 1844.

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<sup>57</sup> Marion Kelly, “The Mahele,” in *The Shaping of Modern Hawaiian History: Databook and Atlas*, ed. Eileen Tamura, Cornelia Anguay and James Shon. (Honolulu: The Curriculum Research and Development Group, University of Hawai‘i, 1983).

<sup>58</sup> Lilikala Kame‘eleihiwa, “A Synopsis of Traditional Hawaiian Culture, the Events Leading to the 1887 Bayonet Constitution and the Overthrow of the Hawaiian Government,” in *Hawaiian Studies 107 Handbook*. (Honolulu: 1995). Usufruct is a legal term meaning “the right to utilize and enjoy the profits and advantages of something belonging to another so long as the property is not damaged or altered in any way.” *The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language*, ed. William Morris (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1976).



## **Abraham Fornander**

Fornander was born in 1812 and raised in a well-educated and well-endowed family on Oland, an island off the coast of Sweden. Counted among his twenty-odd godparents were relatives that included the widow of a wealthy Swedish shipping tycoon and a prosperous Kalmar merchant and shipowner. Named for a grandfather who was a cleric and member of the Swedish upper class, Abraham grew up second in a family of six children. It was a household busy with visitors exchanging ideas and conversation with their rector, Abraham's father. Throughout his youth Fornander showed signs of following his father's vocation in philosophy and religion, and his family assumed that he would become a minister like his father. He and his brother attended high school in Kalmar, learning the classics and developing keen interests in historical and archaeological antiquities of their native land through interaction with a relative who taught in their high school. Through this cousin, they met other scientifically minded men, in particular, Gabriel Marklin. Fornander shared a passion for collecting fossils with the man who was an assistant in the natural history museum at the prestigious Uppsala University where Fornander later studied.<sup>59</sup>

In 1828, at age 16, Fornander enrolled in theological studies at Uppsala University, where generations of Fornanders had studied before him. At one time famous for its

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<sup>59</sup> Marklin was an eccentric and mostly self-educated collector who concentrated on fossils, mollusks, and insects. "He lived only for his collections, which he accumulated and financed by a lifetime of incredible frugality, until they were the largest and most complete privately owned ones in Sweden." His regular visits to Fornander's household (his uncle with whom he then lived and Marklin were old friends) gave Fornander the opportunity for a mentor. "Young Abraham, also a fossil collector, was eager to learn all he could about classifying them from the older man, and so the two became friends and correspondents."

scientific discoveries through professors such as Celsius, Linnaeus, and Rudbeck, the university was known in the early 1800's for its studies in philosophy, aesthetics, history and literature. In the latter discipline, Fornander had the opportunity to work with a man who represented Sweden's role in the Romantic Movement of the early nineteenth century. Eric Gustav Geijer, poet, folklorist, scholar, and author of the well-known poem, "The Viking," may have profoundly influenced Fornander with works that glorified the freedom of life at sea.<sup>60</sup> After a restless year at the equally notable Lund University, perhaps worried about money to complete his education or possessed by a longing to see the world, he abruptly left the university to work on a whaling ship. He described the experience many years later, "...an indescribable desire held possession of my soul to see the new world and find or make a way for myself in life."<sup>61</sup> For the next fifteen years he visited ports in Japan, Russia, the Caribbean, South America and Hawai'i, and became fluent in several languages.

Upon settling in Hawaii in 1844, Fornander formed a close friendship with British physician, Dr. Thomas Rooke, "whose literary tastes and classical education created a bond of sympathy between him and me."<sup>62</sup> Rooke himself had settled in Honolulu in 1830, married Grace Kama'iku'i Young, the widow of Ke'eaumoku and daughter of John

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Eleanor H. Davis, *Abraham Fornander: A Biography* (Honolulu: The University Press of Hawai'i, 1979), 18-19.

<sup>60</sup> Davis, 23.

<sup>61</sup> Abraham Fornander, *Thirteen Letters to Erik Ljungstedt*, ed. Christian Callmer (Lund: Humanistiska Vetenskapssamfundet, 1973), 9.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid, 10.

Young and started a coffee plantation on land in lower Nu‘uanu Valley.<sup>63</sup> He also served the royal family as court physician and administered medications and advice to Hawaiians from his dispensary in the first floor of his home. As Davis describes, Rooke’s home was “a cool oasis of books, flowers, and beautiful furniture, of good conversation and excellent wines.”<sup>64</sup> Fornander began working for Rooke in 1844, supervising his plantation and surveying Rooke’s land.<sup>65</sup> He also enjoyed using Rooke’s extensive library and taking part in the family’s social events. Here Fornander “remained quiet and happy with free access to my friend’s valuable library.”<sup>66</sup>

Following Rooke’s example, Fornander swore allegiance to the Kingdom of Hawai‘i in 1847, an act required of foreign men wishing to marry a Hawaiian woman or to hold governmental office. That same year he married Alanakapu Kauapinao, daughter of ali‘i from Moloka‘i. Once powerful rulers and landholders, her family was stripped of land and power in 1835 and relocated to O‘ahu.<sup>67</sup> Through his marriage Fornander became

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<sup>63</sup> Having sworn allegiance to the Kingdom, he could marry a Hawaiian woman and secure land as a gift from her family or the current ruler.

<sup>64</sup> Davis, 50.

<sup>65</sup> For his medical service to the royal family, Rooke received the land on which his home stood and other properties in Nu‘uanu. With the passing of his wife’s father, John Young, in 1836, Rooke managed parcels of his wife’s inherited land on O‘ahu (the ahapua‘a of Halawa), Maui and Hawai‘i island. With the change in land ownership at the Mahele in 1848, Rooke claimed Halawa and other land before the Board of Commissioners to Quiet Land Titles.

<sup>66</sup> Abraham Fornander, *Thirteen Letters to Erik Ljungstedt*, ed. Christian Callmer (Lund: Humanistiska Vetenskapssamfundet, 1973), 10.

<sup>67</sup> In 1835 Kauapinau’s father fell into disfavor with the kingdom’s ruler, Kina‘u and lost his title and holdings. With lands potentially changing ‘ownership’ with each new mo‘i (the sovereign ruler), Fornander may have hoped that his wife’s land might be returned to her family when the next mo‘i came to power. It was not. The Bureau of Conveyances for the State of Hawai‘i lists two parcels of land in Fornander’s name, one held for just two years. In fact, his holdings were small and upon his death, he left \$2,000 in cash, the manuscript for his second book, and his library valued at \$2,500. For much of his life, he was beholden to various kings and cabinets for government appointments from which he earned his living. Prior to the Mahele in 1848, when land was privatized and sold to foreigners, Hawaiian chiefs and

fluent in the Hawaiian language and knowledgeable about Hawaiian genealogies, having documented that of his wife.<sup>68</sup> After a brief and unsuccessful trip to California in search of gold in 1849, Fornander permanently settled in Honolulu to pursue a career in writing and publishing.

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then kings held and distributed all land. The only means by which foreigners could acquire land was through a gift from a chief or king or by marrying a Hawaiian woman, thereby gaining access to her lands. Though missionaries forbade their children to marry Hawaiians, it was not uncommon at the time for other male settlers to do so, whatever their intent.

<sup>68</sup> See reference at Fornander, *An Account of the Polynesian Race*, Vol. II, 73.

## Fornander's Newswriting

From 1849 through 1863 Fornander successively wrote for, edited or published five different Honolulu newspapers, providing an oppositional view to the *Pacific Commercial Advertiser*, the leading English language newspaper and voice of American missionaries. Like other writers of the time, he first wrote under a pseudonym in his work for the *Honolulu Times*. Fornander's writing style was eloquent and revealed his European education and familiarity with American English learned as a seaman. His writing for both public and private purposes contained references to Latin and other languages familiar to him. "...In my younger days I acquired several modern languages that have been of great advantage to me in after-life. When settled permanently on these Islands I have endeavoured to keep au courant with the literature of the civilised world..."<sup>69</sup> In his editorials Fornander criticized an absence of voting rights and open elections that had led to secret elections and legislative operations promoted by missionary advisors. From the beginning of his writing career, his views drew criticism from the missionary community.

With the first issue of the *Weekly Argus* in 1852, Fornander joined Mathew Smith in promoting "the sovereign's true interests and those of his people, his welfare and the nation's advancement."<sup>70</sup> The two would seek to expose officers of the government that attempted to impinge upon the ends it chose to promote: betterment of the country's economy, development of untapped resources, and equal allotment of the 'provisions of

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<sup>69</sup> Abraham Fornander, *Thirteen Letters to Erik Ljungstedt*, ed. Christian Callmer (Lund: Humanistiska Vetenskapssamfundet, 1973), 26.

<sup>70</sup> Davis, 63.

God.’ As co-editors, Fornander and Smith critiqued Protestant missionaries extensively, calling them to task for their close ties with and weighty influence on the monarchy. Edwin Hall, editor of the *Polynesian*, which published government news, responded to the inaugural issue of the *Weekly Argus* with comments that solidified the incendiary tone both papers would take toward each other for the next three years.

With the *Weekly Argus*, Fornander continued to influence public opinion toward his hope for free trade and his vision of Hawai‘i as a critical port of call on the thoroughfares connecting the Eastern and Western hemispheres. At the same time, he begged tolerance for what he understood was a dying Hawaiian culture.

As editor for the *New Era and Argus* in 1854, Fornander continued coverage of the politics of the day, shifting his focus from economic development and governmental reform to reform of the public school system. With deep personal affection for the Hawaiian people, he expressed concern for Hawaiian and part-Hawaiian children as they were forced to make sense of a rapidly changing culture and would be compelled to compete with foreign children for control of their country. What began as suggestions for reform of schools, quickly became points of contention between Fornander and the missionary establishment as he urged that Hawaiians take on more control of the instruction of their children. In an editorial from 1854 Fornander wrote:

It will be a question whether the time has not arrived when the instruction in public schools can be left to the care of the public in their respective districts, as well as religious preaching and information. We think it can. We think that, when a people have attained that degree of civilization that they can propagate their own instruction, it is of a political necessity that this instruction should no longer be under the absolute control of any man, sect or party. What does the majority of our people want? They want political meat, as well as religious bones. An insight into their duties and rights. A knowledge of what is going on among and around them; the

place they occupy in the world, and the means by which a nationality, however small, however poor, makes itself respected, enlightened and prosperous. This they have not and never will have, while their instruction depends on the judgement of any.<sup>71</sup>

He advocated abolishing common schools that lacked the priority funding of English language schools established for haole and part-haole children. He felt strongly that Hawaiian children needed and deserved more than the religious instruction they received in the common schools and defended English language schools for all children.

Fornander's views drew the ire of missionary writers and readers alike. An editorial in the *Polynesian*, then edited by E. O. Hall, titled "The Glory of Hawaii Nei," responded to Fornander's accusations:

In considering in a candid manner the causes which have operated in elevating the Hawaiian race from a state of absolute ignorance and barbarity to the position they now occupy, we instinctively attribute to education its full share of the good thus achieved. It was the schools, *the common schools*, that prepared the natives, from the highest to the lowest, from the adult to the youngest child, to read and understand the laws by which they are governed, - the Constitution, that guarantees their rights, and the expression of their ideas through the press, of which many of them are so fond. To the *schools* are they indebted for a large share of the difference that exists between them now. . . . We have not the slightest fear that the school system of the Hawaiian nation is to be abandoned, or neglected. It has too firm a hold upon the best class of them, have, to their honor, too much regard for the best interests of their children, to suffer the narrow-minded bigotry of some, or the malignant opposition of others, to deprive them of this last hope for their children. . . . There are men besides the editor of the New Era and Argus, who would crush the Hawaiian school system, had they the power, and for ever deprive the nation of one of its chief glories...Shame to the selfishness that would keep others in ignorance, to profit by their want of knowledge!<sup>72</sup>

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<sup>71</sup> *New Era and Argus*, 9 March 1854.

<sup>72</sup> *The Polynesian*, 18 March 1854.

Later in 1856, while writing for his journal, the *Sandwich Islands Monthly*, Fornander often reminded the foreign community of its responsibility in shaping civilization in the Hawaiian Islands. He warned that he would continue to “show what civilisation ... has done in the performance of its duty towards these Islands and their inhabitants, and also wherein it has erred; grievously, seriously, and perhaps, irretrievably erred.”<sup>73</sup> His lone voice requested a more tolerant view of Hawaiians as he critiqued the narrow-mindedness of his fellow writers; it also betrayed a voice more convinced of its own authority:

There are men also of the present day who do not scruple to assume that the only destiny of a barbarous people is to occupy the land, until a more enlightened race, shall stand ready to ease them of it; with whom extinction is mercy, and a Christian “ticket of leave” the highest stretch of philanthropy... They look with eager and self-satisfied attention over the statistical accounts of the nation’s decrease; they calculate to the month the time when not a Hawaiian shall remain to reflect back the warm tint of his native sun, and they cannot understand the necessity of studying the predilections, prejudices, characteristics and capabilities of those whom a few years will see beneath the sod. They have not studied civilisation in their own lands, and have no conception of its working here.<sup>74</sup>

Public response to Fornander’s early writing, exhibited in newspapers of the time, proved fairly dismissive. Many of the articles he wrote in the newspapers he edited and published provoked and perpetuated ongoing debates with missionaries and haole settlers. His ideas and values earned him a reputation as an upstart and oppositional force. He was quick to criticize missionary influence with the Monarchy and was for some time a lone voice advocating better conditions for Native Hawaiians. Regard for

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<sup>73</sup> Abraham Fornander, “Civilisation, a Thought,” *Sandwich Islands Monthly*, January 1856.

<sup>74</sup> Abraham Fornander, introduction to Prince Lot Kamehameha’s “Address to the Hawaiian Agricultural Society,” *Sandwich Islands’ Monthly*, June 1856.



him changed slowly as social pressures tempered his previously strident voice. Over time, the large missionary establishment that had found fault with his opinions, became interested in and accepting of his theories and ideas, particularly children of missionaries.<sup>75</sup>

In the period 1830 – 1920, newspapers in the Hawaiian language thrived. Having lost so many lives to disease and fearing further loss of life and culture, Hawaiians took advantage of their recently acquired literacy to transcribe much of their oral tradition in the Hawaiian language newspapers, the *Hoku o ka Pakipika* and the *Ku'oko'a*. Both papers published histories, myths, songs, and chants and political and economic news from home and abroad. The former was started in 1861 by editor David Kalakaua (later king of Hawai'i), the latter several months later by missionary descendent Henry Whitney. As publisher of the *Pacific Commercial Advertiser*, Whitney was Fornander's primary rival and, following an unsuccessful attempt to take over the *Hoku o ka Pakipika*, he started the *Ku'oko'a*.<sup>76</sup> Fornander strongly supported the publication of the *Hoku o ka Pakipika* as a journal free of the missionary and foreign influence that he felt encumbered the *Ku'oko'a*.

It is true that a foreign publisher...has offered to issue a journal in the Hawaiian language to supply the intellectual wants of the native people, and that his offer has been most warmly seconded and espoused by the

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<sup>75</sup> N. B. Emerson would later translate and edit Fornander's manuscript for *The Fornander Collection of Hawaiian Antiquities and Folklore*. Fornander had correspondence with a grandson of his former rival, missionary Dr. G. P. Judd.

<sup>76</sup> Noenoe Silva. *Ke Ku'e Kupa'a Loa Nei Makou: Kanaka Maoli Resistance to Colonization*. (Ph D. dissertation, University of Hawai'i at Mānoa, 1999), 35-36, in Joan Hori. *Background and Historical Significance of Ka Nupepa Ku'oko'a*. Online at [http://128.171.57.100/nupepa\\_kuokoa/kuokoa\\_html/kuokoa.html#20](http://128.171.57.100/nupepa_kuokoa/kuokoa_html/kuokoa.html#20).

Missionaries, but...the natives repudiate it...because it is calculated to drive their own paper out of the field, and because they apprehend that it will not be a true reflex of their own opinions and thoughts.<sup>77</sup>

By 1857 Fornander had lost his wife and all but one of his children; the former in childbirth, the latter to diseases. Though he himself was fluent in the Hawaiian language, he did not see fit to pass it on to his remaining daughter, Katy. Rather, he preferred English and saw to it that his daughter was placed in the Sacred Hearts School for girls when it opened its boarding and day facilities in 1859.<sup>78</sup> Like other settler families with ties to the business and professional community, Fornander could now provide his child with a quality education that previously was available only for missionary children through O‘ahu College (Punahou School).

Though he maintained cordial relationships with all royalty, Fornander primarily found friendship with fellow settlers. Early acquaintances with Dr. Thomas Rooke, a British immigrant and American Henry Sheldon matured over time; Rooke and Fornander with mutual alliances in the Masonic Order and Sheldon and Fornander as business partners. In letters to his friend Ljungstedt, Fornander included descriptions of friendships with Danish immigrant August Unna, a sugar planter on Maui, Captain L’Orange of France and Valdemar Knudsen of Norway, both sugar planters on Kaua‘i,

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<sup>77</sup> Abraham Fornander. *Polynesian*, 23 November 1861, in Noenoe Silva, *Ke Ku‘e Kupa‘a Loa Nei Makou: Kanaka Maoli Resistance to Colonization*. (Ph D. dissertation, University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa, 1999), 37-38.

<sup>78</sup> He wrote in the *New Era* that he would “rather hear a parent speak broken English to a house full of children, than pour for the the ‘sweetness and melody’ of the purest Hawaiian.” *New Era*, 20 April 1855. Instruction at the school was all in English and included topics in reading, writing, grammar, history, arithmetic, music, drawing and painting and French and German.

and Reverend S. C. Damon, a missionary in Honolulu. One of his most intimate and valued friends was American John Dominis, husband of future Queen Liliu‘okalani.<sup>79</sup>

Fornander’s distrust of everything missionary regularly found voice in his earlier publications and intensified when he took over as editor for the *Polynesian* in 1860. His primary rival was missionary son, Henry Whitney, then editor of the *Commercial*.<sup>80</sup> Ongoing arguments over government responsibility for controlling disease from prostitution and poor sanitation made cover story. Other points of disagreement included modeling the colonial control of the Dutch in Java and Spanish in the Philippines where coercive rule over native populations created very productive lands. The editors also disagreed over the Civil War taking place in America.

At this time Hawai‘i enjoyed a high degree of literacy and readers welcomed the healthy competition between the many dailies and monthlies written in both Hawaiian and English.<sup>81</sup> Writers for all papers presented their perspectives and understandings of current policies and politics, traditional and religious beliefs, and general goings on about town. Heated debates like those between Whitney and Fornander often took place in letters to the editors. Writers disseminated and contested ideas and policies of the day.

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<sup>79</sup> Abraham Fornander, *Thirteen Letters to Erik Ljungstedt*, ed. Christian Callmer (Lund: Humanistiska Vetenskapssamfundet, 1973), 60.

<sup>80</sup> Born and raised in Hawai‘i, Whitney completed his schooling in New York and worked for some time at the *New York Commercial Advertiser*, later a model for his Honolulu paper, the *Pacific Commercial Advertiser*. His strong American sentiments mirrored those in most American dailies of the time and set well with Honolulu’s growing business community.

<sup>81</sup> In the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, literacy in Hawai‘i reached 90% with Hawaiian and foreign residents relishing access to Hawai‘i’s many newspapers. For a thorough description of the Hawaiian language and its condition over time see Larry L. Kimura, “Native Hawaiian Culture,” *Native Hawaiian Study Commission: Report on the Culture, Needs and Concerns of Native Hawaiians* (1983), 173-224.

Fornander found an intellectual ally in Scottish economist John Rae, who had settled in Hana, Maui and in sixteen issues of the *Polynesian* in 1861 and 1862, published Rae's critique of Calvinism and its impact on Hawaiian culture.<sup>82</sup> He also ran a series of articles by Rae that questioned the origin of the Polynesian race and in particular queried the Hawaiian language: How was it related to the origin of language itself? What connection did it have to other languages? In 1864, the *Friend* published a piece by William Alexander, an acquaintance of Fornander, entitled "The Polynesian Language, Its Origin and Connections."<sup>83</sup> The articles demonstrated the growing interest of academics and lay people in language and its origin. The issues and questions raised by both writers exemplified work by philologists of the time. Given Fornander's interest in languages and antiquities, both these articles influenced the direction his own writing would take over the next ten years.

By 1863, cover stories in the *Polynesian* reflected Fornander's changing interest in newsworthy events. Whether forced to shift his emphasis for financial reasons (Whitney's pro-America and business focus provided stiff competition) or for personal reasons, his newspaper's headlines reflected this shift: New Zealand Affairs (11/21/63), A British Journal on British Justice (12/26/63), the Relations of Man to Lower Animals

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<sup>82</sup> Rae settled in Hana, Maui in 1851, after teaching for a short time in Boston and New York. Trained at the Universities of Aberdeen and Edinburgh and well traveled in Europe, Rae wrote books on political economy and economic geography. Once settled in Hawai'i, he wrote of his philological, sociological, and scientific observations and speculations on the past, present and future of the Hawaiian Islands, some of these published by Fornander in the *Polynesian* (February 2 through April 29, 1861 and May 17 through June 21, 1862). His later articles on Polynesian languages (*Polynesian*, October, 1862) may have provided Fornander a basis for his research. See Eleanor H. Davis, *Abraham Fornander: A Biography* (Honolulu: The University Press of Hawai'i, 1979), 136-142.

<sup>83</sup> William DeWitt Alexander, "The Polynesian Language, Its Origins and Connections" *Friend*, 1 January 1864, 1-3, and 5 February 1864, 9-12. Son of missionaries, Alexander was a graduate of Yale and later professor and president of Oahu College (Punahou School).

(1/9/64), and The Gambling Houses of Germany (1/23/64). Bored with Honolulu and no longer content to argue with Whitney, Davis describes a Fornander yearning “for reading societies, private theatricals, dancing parties, and musical evenings.”<sup>84</sup>

Imagine for a moment that you are a guest of King Kalakaua at the grand opening in 1882 of his new home in Honolulu, the ‘Iolani Palace. You join 180 fellow Masons to christen the Italian Renaissance building where, as was customary in their practices, the Masons had laid the first cornerstone three years prior. Like other attendants you wear ritual clothing of the order and greet other members with the secret handshakes. Prominent Honolulu businessmen, dressed in their Masonic attire with sashes and hats designating their place in the order, gather with you to celebrate prospering businesses and their ties of mutual support in an exquisite palace, reminiscent of those in Europe, graced with great crystal chandeliers, sparkling glass, royal china, and an elaborate feast. Unlike their Calvinist missionary counterparts, these men bring with them from America and Europe the Masonic traditions of interdenominational and international fellowship, which has attracted scientists, freethinkers, and aristocrats of the time. At the front of the state dining room sits King Kalakaua, flanked by fellow Masons Abraham Fornander and Rollin Daggett, the U. S. Minister to Hawai‘i.

Eager to keep pace with its American and European counterparts, the foreign social establishment in Hawai‘i (about 10 percent of the country’s population) created and supported institutions like the Masonic brotherhood, literary and historical circles, newspapers, journals, and other cultural venues modeled on those of Europe and

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<sup>84</sup> Davis, 150.

America. Following on the heels of an effective and far reaching missionary movement, these institutions fueled a rapidly changing society in Hawai'i and created an increasing divide between traditional Native Hawaiian culture and one based on a European worldview. With its inception in Hawai'i in 1843, the Masonic Order provided foreigners with necessary support for establishing themselves in an otherwise unfamiliar culture.

Masonic members included King Kamehameha IV and all of his cabinet members, missionary Lorrin Andrews Sr., Dr. Thomas Rooke, foreign minister Robert Wyllie, King Kamehameha V, King Kalakaua, Episcopal Bishop Staley and many high level government officials, businessmen, and other professionals representing Hawai'i's new economic order. Aside from the religious and spiritual needs the organization met, it also provided its members a European social nexus with its familiar banquets, parades, and other festivities.

Fornander joined the Independent Order of Odd Fellows in 1854, a Masonic group organized in Hawaii in 1846.<sup>85</sup> Here he met with his friend Dr. Rooke and other Honolulu businessmen and leaders for comradeship and support of their social and economic beliefs. Composed largely of foreign merchants, professionals and members of the Hawaiian monarchy, the fraternal organization provided settlers and newcomers with business, social, and intellectual contacts as they planted roots in their new home. Frank

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<sup>85</sup> Freemasonry, of which the Odd Fellows is a component, originated in Britain and spread throughout Europe and America during the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries. The movement originated as medieval stonemasons gathered in guilds to set standards, protect their rights as workers, and provide other benefits for themselves. By the mid-1700's the movement was defined as more speculative and philosophic in nature and attracted the attention and membership of aristocrats, scientists and freethinkers. Members and their texts supported Enlightenment theory and progressive economics.

Karpiel describes “. . . It is clear that Masons shared the widespread views among Westerners that ‘civilization’ had arrived in Hawai‘i with Caucasians. Positive contributions of the missionaries and subsequent Western immigrants including a written language and medicine and technology were contrasted in Manichean duality with negative projections of Hawaiian culture.”<sup>86</sup> Masonic groups wedded Western concepts of civilization and progress to Honolulu’s social and intellectual life and to the developing economic order in Hawaii.<sup>87</sup>

In the midst of growing American political influence, royalist Masons, like Rooke, Fornander, and Thomas Cummins supported the monarchy in an independent Hawai‘i. These men had lived in the country for decades, had taken up citizenship in the kingdom, married Hawaiian women, and had friends among the ali‘i.<sup>88</sup> Unlike newly immigrating Americans, these foreigners had knowledge of traditional Hawaiian culture. But like their American ‘brothers’, they believed in the Western concept of progress, and the attendant constructs it fed. Fornander remained an ardent lodge member the balance of his life, achieving the highest position of lodge Master.

In 1864 Fornander gave up the publishing business and was appointed circuit court judge for Maui and later the same year, designated the first Inspector General of Schools

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<sup>86</sup> Frank Karpiel, “Mystic Ties of Brotherhood: Freemasonry, Royalty and Ritual in Hawaii 1843 – 1910” (Ph.D. diss., University of Hawai‘i, 1998), 50.

<sup>87</sup> Frank Karpiel, “A Multinational Fraternity: Freemasonry in Hawai‘i, 1843 – 1905,” *The Hawaiian Journal of History* 34 (2000), 146.

<sup>88</sup> Newcomers that also married Hawaiian nobility and that Fornander considered friends included Hermann Wideman who raised funds to print the first volume of *An Account of the Polynesian Race*, Arthur Brickwood and Frank Pratt. By marrying Hawaiian nobility, these men gained social privilege and access to land, unavailable to most foreigners at the time.

for the Kingdom of Hawai‘i by the newly formed Board of Education.<sup>89</sup> He toured the islands making observations of and recommendations for the dismal state of the common schools where most native children attended. He found neglected schoolhouses, poorly trained teachers, and low quality and insufficient supply of textbooks. For five years he battled school board members in an effort to get funding to alleviate some of the conditions. By 1870 the physical and mental demands of the job proved too much and an uncooperative board dismissed him from his position.

Fornander was re-assigned the post of circuit court judge for Maui, Moloka‘i and Lana‘i in 1870. He traveled the islands hearing cases, processing claims (some dealing with land ownership), and requesting funds for building roads and bridges.<sup>90</sup> As with his job as school inspector traveling outlying areas of the islands, he had ample opportunity to get to know older residents who had knowledge of Native Hawaiian history and mythology. It was during the next ten years, when free of his duties as judge, that Fornander researched and compiled his two books, one tracing the source of the Hawaiian and Polynesian languages, the second, a compilation of Hawaiian antiquities and folklore.

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<sup>89</sup> Members included President Kekuanao‘a (the King’s father), Charles Hopkins (minister of the interior), Charles de Varigny (minister of finance), Bishop Staley, and Dr. Hutchison. The Britain Hopkins was former editor of the *Polynesian* where Fornander went to work in 1857 and the two became close friends. A member of the Privy Council and the House of Nobles, Hopkins indebted himself to the monarchy as private secretary and oversaw rental and sale of crown lands. Hutchison, an immigrant from Scotland, previously worked closely with Fornander to establish a sanitary commission to deal with the spread of disease on O‘ahu. He held the position of circuit court judge for Maui before Fornander replaced him in 1864. Fornander’s nomination was supported by a majority of Kamehameha V’s cabinet, most, like himself, settlers from Europe and America.

<sup>90</sup> See a variety of documents at Fornander in the Hawai‘i State Archives.



Fornander's fascination with the work of philologists and antiquarians of the time kept his bookshelves lined with their treatises and texts. Included in his library of more than two hundred volumes, were seven by German philologist F. M. Muller, several by linguists A. H. Sayce and W. D. Whitney and a variety of dictionaries and histories of Pacific islands (Tahiti, Samoa, Melanesia, and Aotearoa) and ancient cultures (Assyria, Egypt, Parthia).<sup>91</sup> Living so removed from academic centers, he relied on friends travelling to the U.S. and Europe to acquire the books he needed for his research.<sup>92</sup> Others kept him abreast of articles and reviews relating to anthropology, ethnology, and philology, common in literary and scientific journals of the time.

Fornander's movement toward more academic research and away from day to day politics produced in him a changing attitude toward contemporary events. Issues that once provoked passionate response in him, now caused only occasional comment. In his letters to Ljungstedt, Fornander describes little by way of politics in the islands, though each letter includes at least a brief paragraph referencing events with the government. This contrasts sharply with his earlier stance as watchdog and voice for the common people of the Kingdom. For example in May 1879 he wrote:

Of Hawaiian life and events I have nothing of special note to relate since my last. Sugar and rice are increasing in number and value. Its results are upon the whole favorable, and those among us who adopt the ideas of

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<sup>91</sup> *Catalogue of the Fornander Library and Manuscripts, Legends, Chants, Meles, &c*, Bishop Museum Pamphlet File, #23.

<sup>92</sup> In a letter to Frank Damon, then living in Berlin, Fornander asks Damon to send him books on Dravidian grammar and makes arrangements to reimburse him. Abraham Fornander to Frank Damon, 17 July 1880, Fornander Collection, MS 336, 1.3, Bishop Museum Archives. Fornander describes the difficulties of conducting research in an isolated location to Titus Coan, lamenting inaccessibility of materials. Abraham Fornander to Titus Coan, 7 March 1882, MS Grp 262, Bishop Museum.

certain political economists and philosophers – that native races are doomed to extinction when they come in contact with the Almighty Anglo-Saxon – are rather silent.<sup>93</sup>

The sugar and rice to which he alluded came from plantations owned by men such as his friends Valdemar Knudson, August Unna and Christian L'Orange.

While the Native Hawaiian population continued to decline as a result of disease and conversion to Western land tenure, these men and others prospered as their growing industries met with continuing success. Foreign immigration rose with the import of Asian labor to meet the demands of expanding plantations. Historian Jonathan Osorio describes a nation in the grips of modernity; one with a government increasingly focused on promoting “capital expansion, aggressively marketing the production of sugar and spending its tax revenues on the infrastructure necessary for increasing production.”<sup>94</sup> Hawai‘i was undergoing a rapid transformation from a small island Kingdom to a major world competitor in the production of sugar. Shifts in governing paralleled economic changes.

Inching closer to representative democracy, voters elected their king (Kalakaua) for the first time in 1874. The election caused a growing divide in a previously unified Hawaiian population. Osorio describes, “For Hawaiians, the king was not an office of the government; he was the symbol of the Hawaiian people, the bodily link to divine

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<sup>93</sup> Abraham Fornander, *Thirteen Letters to Erik Ljungstedt*, ed. Christian Callmer (Lund: Humanistiska Vetenskapssamfundet, 1973), 25.

<sup>94</sup> Jonathan Osorio, *Dismembering Lahui: A History of the Hawaiian Nation to 1887* (Honolulu: University of Hawai‘i Press, 2002), 146.

ancestors and the greatness of the Conqueror and his times.”<sup>95</sup> The bold action of the election served to feed a growing disharmony between traditionalists and progressives.

To many haole eager for control of land and water for their sugar plantations, the king stood in the way of progress in general and their individual profits in particular. Dependent on these growers to support the Kingdom’s treasury, the king had no choice but to work with them as they vied for the Kingdom’s limited resources. The most stellar example of growers was Klaus Spreckels who convinced the monarchy to award him 24,000 acres of land and rights to water. By 1880 Spreckels garnered almost immediate prosperity and the enmity of other haole growers. Given his ties to the King, disaffection between other haole growers and the King developed. Strong opposition to all the development from Native legislators further eroded the credibility of the King and added to the image of a corrupt administration.<sup>96</sup> Fornander’s earlier comment belies the intense economic and political changes occurring in Hawaiian society.

In another letter dated June 1880, Fornander commented to Ljungstedt: “Your remarks about tariffs and free-trade have my heartiest concurrence. I have been a Free-trader all my life, and I have never seen a place or a country come to grief that adopted it.”<sup>97</sup> Between 1875 and 1890, Hawai‘i’s export of sugar grew from 50 to 250 million pounds. Although the small island nation that had been trading with other nations for

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<sup>95</sup> Ibid, 150.

<sup>96</sup> For extensive description of these and other events leading up to the Bayonet Constitution and overthrow of the Monarchy, see Jonathan Osorio, *Dismembering Lahui: A History of the Hawaiian Nation to 1887* (Honolulu: University of Hawai‘i Press, 2002).

<sup>97</sup> Abraham Fornander, *Thirteen Letters to Erik Ljungstedt*, ed. Christian Callmer (Lund: Humanistiska Vetenskapssamfundet, 1973), 27.

more than 100 years, by 1890 it suffered a public debt that had grown from \$388,900 in 1880 to \$2,600,000 in 1890.<sup>98</sup>

In the same letter Fornander remarked: “No momentous events have occurred to ruffle the tide of prosperity that has characterised the few last years of Hawaiian national life. Our biennial Legislature is now in session, and its Solons do not seem to differ much in the aggregate from those of other countries. Much verbiage and considerable friction of parties in the beginning, but gradually moderation and justice come to the front, and the real, imperative business and wants of the nation receive attention.”<sup>99</sup> That business and those wants were primarily focused on expansion of sugar production that benefited a handful of haole plantation owners. While King Kalakaua wanted to increase the wealth of the nation, he was also committed to establishing institutions that would guarantee the survival of Native Hawaiian culture. A growing friction between prospering haole and languishing Native Hawaiian populations marked politics of the 1880’s and is well depicted by Osorio: “As for the haole, though they were as well represented during Kalakaua’s reign as they had been in every previous one, their lack of commitment to the nation became more explicit. So too did the kanaka opposition to them in the elections, and from the beginning of Kalakaua’s dynasty could be heard the cry, ‘Hawai‘i for Hawaiians.’”<sup>100</sup> The disparity in views gave way to dissension that informed the

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<sup>98</sup> *The Shaping of Modern Hawaiian History*, 133.

<sup>99</sup> Abraham Fornander, *Thirteen Letters to Erik Ljungstedt*, ed. Christian Callmer (Lund: Humanistiska Vetenskapssamfundet, 1973), 32.

<sup>100</sup> Osorio, 180.

Hawaiian League, a highly influential group of haole businessmen, attorneys, laborers and artisans, men who would later lead the overthrow of the Kingdom.

### **Fornander's Philological Research**

While Fornander's attention to politics, economics and education seemed to wane during this time, his interest in the European based discipline of philology grew. Piqued by the works of colleague John Rae and philologists writing for European and American audiences, Fornander joined the challenge presented by competing philological theories of the late 1800's. In a manner similar to other researchers he collected artifacts and constructed theories to answer questions and assertions concerning the origin of Polynesians and their languages.

The research tradition of philology provided Fornander an accepted system for analyzing oral traditions and a model for understanding them as artifacts of oral literature. Classification followed a botanical model, with the incorporation of terms such as 'genetic', and scholars describing changes in folklore following rules similar to 'natural laws.' As Anttonen describes, "The main focus of philological approaches lies in the comparison of folklore texts for their various textual-linguistic elements in order to: classify the texts according to genres, types, variants, and motifs; determine their origin, genealogy, historical development, and geographical distribution, or more recently; study on the textual level the nature of their oral composition."<sup>101</sup> This was the system and model Fornander used as he attempted to trace Polynesian and Hawaiian people and languages back to an Aryan origin.

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<sup>101</sup> Pertti Anttonen, 641.

To support his model, Fornander collected Hawaiian genealogies, legends and vocabulary and compared them with those of other cultures. The folklore he collected led him to the belief that Hawaiians descended from Aryan roots, migrating over many generations through the South of India to the Indian Archipelago and eastward to various Pacific islands. As he describes,

Now that folk-lore presents me with data leading back to the hoariest antiquity, to the dawn or twilight of history, and gives new versions, though substantially the same, of Myths and legends which at that early time passed current around the Mesopotamian basin, when the Cushite race – Chaldean and Arabian – occupied the proscenium of the world's stage. That folk-lore presents me with a language so rich in Arian roots, that I am forced to conclude that, notwithstanding its subsequent mixture with Dravidian or other forms of speech, it was originally, as it remains to this day, a from unknown causes arrested development of the Arian mother-tongue . . .<sup>102</sup>

The first volume of *An Account of The Polynesian Race* asserted his theory of the origin of the Polynesians, tracing migrations out of the Pacific, through the Malay archipelago and India, to an Aryan source. He compared place names and numbers, traditions and genealogies to support his hypothesis. The second described Hawaiian cultural practices and traced the migratory period from the eleventh century to the late 1700's when Kamehameha I brought the islands under his rule. The third volume compared vocabulary of the Polynesian and Indo-European languages and provided much of the linguistic research with which he substantiated his claims for an Aryan origin for Polynesian peoples and cultures in his first volume. Describing his process to his friend Ljungstedt, Fornander wrote:

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<sup>102</sup> Abraham Fornander, *Thirteen Letters to Erik Ljungstedt*, ed. Christian Callmer (Lund: Humanistiska Vetenskapssamfundet, 1973), 15.

In reading the book you will perceive that the evidence of their origin is nowhere direct and positive, but of the kind which Lawyers call circumstantial and cumulative. I hold that the folk-lore, including the language, of a people is an heirloom of their past, as much so as a pyramid, it is a legitimate subject for investigation, in order to discover the source of such people. . . . It is by following the clue that such folk-lore affords, and collating the data we there find with similar data among other peoples, that we discover connection or divergence between them. This is what I have endeavoured to do with the Polynesian folk-lore. . . . Having seen so many varying theories about the origin of the Polynesians, and all of them extra-forensic, as it were, I was determined to set forth the data which the Polynesians themselves possessed about their Origin and Migrations, and to show the inferences and conclusions to which those data would give a reasonable support.<sup>103</sup>

Fornander believed himself to be an expert on Hawaiian language and antiquities. In two prefaces to his volumes that make up *An Account of the Polynesian Race*, he asserted his authority in the more abstract and distanced qualities of the researcher. No longer content to advocate for health services or education for Hawaiians as he did earlier in his writing, he took up the more intellectual search for the origin of the Polynesian race. In the preface to his first volume, Fornander established his “right to be the spokesman of a people whom no one knew till a hundred years ago.”<sup>104</sup>

As a result of his collecting and transcribing legends, chants and prayers, and with the assistance of educated Hawaiian employees over a period of three years, Fornander succeeded in creating an extensive repository of Hawaiian history and customs. He describes,

I am now in the possession of probably the greatest collection of Hawaiian lore in or out of the Pacific. It took me a long time, during leisure

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<sup>103</sup> Abraham Fornander, *Thirteen Letters to Erik Ljungstedt*, ed. Christian Callmer (Lund: Humanistiska Vetenskapssamfundet, 1973), 14-15.

<sup>104</sup> Abraham Fornander, *An Account of the Polynesian Race*, vol. 1 (1878, reprint, with an introduction by Helen Doty, 3 vols. in 1, Rutland, VT: Charles E. Tuttle Co., 1969) iii-x.

moments from official duties, to peruse, collate, and arrange these materials, and, though they are filled with much that was worthless for my purpose, yet I found very many pearls of invaluable price to the antiquarian and historian. . . I submit this work without hesitation to the favourable regard of the Hawaiians and the Polynesians, whose past I have endeavoured to rescue from the isolation and oblivion which were fast closing over it, and whose echoes were growing fainter and fainter in the busy hum of a new era and a new civilisation, derided by some, disputed by others, unheeded by all.<sup>105</sup>

The two Native Hawaiians that assisted Fornander with his research were Samuel M. Kamakau and Kepelino Keauokalani, both Christians and chroniclers of their peoples' history and mythology. Kamakau was schooled at and later taught at Lahainaluna Seminary, a Protestant missionary school on Maui. A deeply religious man, he later converted to Catholicism. Malcolm Chun described him as "One of the leading Hawaiian intellectuals, he served as an elected and appointed official in the government. . . . He was committed to recording the history of the Hawaiian people."<sup>106</sup> He wrote extensively for the Hawaiian language newspapers, *Ka Nupepa Kuokoa* and *Ke Au Okoa*. Kepelino studied at the Catholic Seminary at 'Ahuimanu on O'ahu and later served as secretary for Queen Emma and wrote *Moololelo Hawaii*, his account of Native Hawaiian traditions. Martha Beckwith wrote of Kepelino's book, "Even those who demand more rigorous proof of the historical accuracy of the Kepelino manuscript as an exact replica of antiquity, may grant its value as the genuine thought about his own ancient heritage of a native Hawaiian who grew up during the stirring days of the missions and the monarchy

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<sup>105</sup> Ibid.

<sup>106</sup> Malcolm Chun, *Na Kukui Pio'Ole: The Biographies of Three Early Native Hawaiian Scholars* (Honolulu: First People's Productions, 1993), 17. Chun included a description of Kamakau by Fornander as being "often very credulous, inconsistent, and uncritical . . . his love of antiquity often leads him into irreconcilable difficulties." Chun, 19.



in Hawaii.”<sup>107</sup> The two men met and shared their knowledge with Fornander in the early 1870’s as he compiled research for *An Account of the Polynesian Race*.

In the brief preface to his second volume, Fornander acknowledged different journals for their kind reviews of his previous volume and their encouragement for his continuing scientific research. Describing his systematic endeavors in the second volume he wrote:

In entering the wilderness of a hitherto untrodden field and the almost impenetrable jungle of traditions, legends, genealogies, and chants, the author has had no easy task in reducing his materials to historical sequence, precision, and certainty. The difficulties he has had to contend with hardly any but Polynesian scholars can full appreciate, and how far he has succeeded he respectfully leaves to the Hawaiians themselves to decide.<sup>108</sup>

W. D. Alexander, contemporary of Fornander’s and fellow historian, wrote the preface to third volume.<sup>109</sup> In much the same manner that Fornander did in his first preface, Alexander provides detailed context for Fornander’s work. Referencing philologists and researchers of the day, attributing sources and describing their theories, Alexander, and Fornander, in his later introduction, created an historical record that linked Fornander to American and European scholars of philology and folklore. Among

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<sup>107</sup> Martha Beckwith, ed., *Kepelino’s Traditions of Hawaii* (Honolulu: Bernice P. Bishop Museum, 1932), 7.

<sup>108</sup> Abraham Fornander, *An Account of the Polynesian Race*, vol. 2 (1880, reprint, with an introduction by Helen Doty, 3 vols. in 1, (Rutland, VT: Charles E. Tuttle Co., 1969) iii-v.

<sup>109</sup> W. D. Alexander was the son of missionaries, a graduate of Yale, and professor and then president of Oahu College (Punahou School). In 1864 he published an article on “The Polynesian Language, Its Origin and Connections” in *The Friend*, which may have inspired or assisted Fornander in his research, as Alexander is noted in Fornander’s preface to the first volume. In addition to historical works, he wrote a book for students titled *A Short Synopsis of the Most Essential Points in Hawaiian Grammar*, (Honolulu: H. M. Whitney, 1864).

those they cited were F. M. Muller, Wilhelm von Humboldt, A. H. Sayce, Franz Bopp, and W. D. Whitney.<sup>110</sup>

In keeping with the practice of collecting there developed notions of authority and authenticity that informed the field of philology. The concept of authenticity informed the work of Fornander and many of the scholars he noted in his historical records. As they promoted their linguistic theories and models, these scholars relied on “authentic” material for support. They found it in the work of fellow researchers or directly in the field, from informants. As Regina Bendix describes, “The call for ‘authenticity’ implied a critical stance against urban manners, artifice in language, behavior, and art, and against aristocratic excesses; it promised the restoration of a pure, unaffected state of being. Such nostalgic visions were clearly fueled by explorers’ reports of encounters with ‘exotic’ and ‘savage’ peoples whose existence an enlightened age sought to link to itself.”<sup>111</sup> Fornander described his efforts thusly, “As for the work itself, the conclusions I arrive at may be questioned or disputed; but no competent Polynesian scholar will dispute the genuineness and authenticity of the data, on which those conclusions are based.”<sup>112</sup> Scholars would later do exactly that.

Below, Fornander described and established his authority to speak for the Polynesians, and in this case, Hawaiians.

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<sup>110</sup> Books by these authors are listed in the *Catalogue of the Fornander Library and Manuscripts, Legends, Chants, Meles, &c*, Bishop Museum Pamphlet File, #23.

<sup>111</sup> Regina Bendix, *In Search of Authenticity* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1997), 16.

<sup>112</sup> Abraham Fornander, *Thirteen Letters to Erik Ljungstedt*, ed. Christian Callmer (Lund: Humanistiska Vetenskapssamfundet, 1973), 14.

Thirty-four years' residence in the Hawaiian group; nineteen years' position in various offices under the Government; a thorough local and personal knowledge of every section of the group acquired during numerous journeys; my knowledge of the language, and the fact – though with all due modesty I state it – that I am well known, personally or by reputation, to every man within the group, from the King on the throne to the poorest fisherman in the remotest hamlet; - all these considerations give me a right to speak on behalf of the Polynesian people, to unveil the past of their national life, to unravel the snarled threads of their existence, and to pick up the missing links that bind them to the foremost races of the world, - the Arian and the Cushite.<sup>113</sup>

Referring again to his authority in a letter to his friend Ljungstedt, Fornander wrote “. . . I am perfectly sure that my analysis of the Polynesian language as a whole, as set forth in the Introduction, is not only correct, but the only one by which its linguistic affinities can be discovered and a proper comparison instituted . . .”<sup>114</sup>

Despite the fact that Native Hawaiian writers were concurrently recounting both ancient and contemporary Hawaiian history and literature in local newspapers, Fornander was compelled to establish himself as an ‘authority’ and his work as ‘authentic’ to promote his archetype to the larger academic world.<sup>115</sup> This effort was essential in the international competition for recognition and credibility in the discipline of philology. Historians, antiquarians, and linguists supported their models with materials carefully sifted and arranged to remove any doubt that might bear on their conclusions. Their models, once loosed on the larger literary world, were targets for intense scrutiny,

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<sup>113</sup> Abraham Fornander, preface to *An Account of the Polynesian Race* (1878; reprint, Rutland, Vt.: Charles Tuttle Company, 1969), iv.

<sup>114</sup> Abraham Fornander, *Thirteen Letters to Erik Ljungstedt*, ed. Christian Callmer (Lund: Humanistiska Vetenskapssamfundet, 1973), 52.

<sup>115</sup> Those papers included: *Ka Nonanona*, *Ka Elele*, *Ka Nupepa Kuokoa*, *Ke Au Okoa*, *Ka Hoku o ka Pakipika*, and others.

critique, and often ridicule. To avoid such misfortune, Fornander established an extensive historical record in his first volume, recognizing and confirming his sources and for each, establishing their authenticity and his own authority.

Noting the fullness and accuracy of their works in his introductions, Fornander referenced internationally acknowledged philologists and historians of the time from Germany, Britain, and France.<sup>116</sup> This historical record elaborated by Fornander firmly grounded his text in the realm of the ‘authentic’ as established by a Western worldview.<sup>117</sup> Awards for and reviews of his work added to his credibility as an expert in the field.

In selecting oral and written materials for his collections, Fornander had a wide array of resources at his disposal. His experiences as school inspector and district court judge provided him with ready access to people who knew ancient and more contemporary histories and genealogies. Fluent in Hawaiian, it can be inferred that Fornander was aware of the narratives that circulated in the Hawaiian language newspapers at the time. He also had sources in the writings of Davida

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<sup>116</sup> Included were: M.G.L. Domeny de Rienzi, William Humboldt, Francis Bopp, J. Crawford, Adolph Pictet, and Max Muller.

<sup>117</sup> In critiquing the imaging of Native Americans in American literature, Churchill offers a description of the use of the ‘historical record’ that could well apply to the work of historians and philologists. “...each later literary figure could lay claim to the ‘authenticity’ of a firm grounding in the ‘historical record.’ That such history utterly ignored the indigenous oral accountings of the people/events thus portrayed, and did so in favor of the thoroughly alien literary record, serves to illustrate the self-contained dynamic through which literature dismisses anything beyond its pale (including what is being written about). Again, the logic describes a perfect circle: product and proof are one and the same.” Ward Churchill, *Fantasies of the Master Race: Literature, Cinema, and the Colonization of American Indians* (San Francisco: City Lights Books, 1998), 7.

Malo, Kepelino Keauokalani, and Samuel Kamakau, the latter two helped Fornander with research for his book.<sup>118</sup>

These two men Fornander chose to assist him with his volumes were also his primary sources for the Kumuhonua legends, which he used to establish his theory of Hawaiian origins.<sup>119</sup> Keauokalani and Kamakau both appear in Fornander's notes as providing him with stories and legends that he would eventually use to support his explanation of an Aryan source for the Hawaiian race. As Dorothy Barrere describes, "The 'genealogy' of Kumuhonua, which was given to Fornander to provide credibility to the legends, was published by him, and only by him, from notes he took in conversations with Kepelino and Kamakau. This 'genealogy' is constructed from previously existing genealogies ... and interpolations of their own invention."<sup>120</sup> In a similar vein, the Grimm brothers from Germany, who amassed extensive collections of folk tales in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, applied text critical principles to their work to "combine different versions of the same tale and reconstruct them in their alleged 'essential' and authentic form."<sup>121</sup> Fornander, like the Grimm brothers and others in the field, took varying degrees of artistic license in the process of reinscribing meaning to selected artifacts.<sup>122</sup>

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<sup>118</sup> See Samuel Kamakau, "Kamehameha I" in *Ka Nupepa Ku'oko'a*, 20 April 1867-8 January 1869., Kepelino, *Ka Mo'olelo o na ia Hawai'i* (1867), Kepelino, *Ho'oili'ili Havai'i* (Honolulu: Pai-palapala Katolika, 1858-1860)., David Malo, *Mo'olelo Hawai'i* (1840), and Davida Malo, *He Wahi Mana'o Kumu No Na Mea Nui Maloko O Ka Ke Akua Olelo* (Lahainaluna, Hi: Mea Pai Palapa no ke Kula Nui, 1837).

<sup>119</sup> Dorothy Barrere, *The Kumuhonua Legends: A Study of Late 19<sup>th</sup> Century Hawaiian Stories of Creation and Origins* (Honolulu: Bernice P. Bishop Museum, 1969).

<sup>120</sup> Ibid, 1.

<sup>121</sup> Pertti Anttonen, 642.

<sup>122</sup> Bendix describes the paradox inherent in the transformation from experienced authenticity to its textual representation, "Once a cultural good has been declared authentic, the demand for it rises, and it acquires a

Based on Barrere's research, Fornander and his informants created a narrative that supported his model for the origins of Hawaiians. The legends he collected were of value to him as they served his larger theory.<sup>123</sup> Given the highly competitive nature of philological research of the time, Fornander may well have modified the stories of Kepelino and Kamakau to suit his own needs. Mieke Bal describes how a model can take control of the research activity and the collection can overtake the collector.

This struggle over 'ameliorations' by means of ... expertise competing with that of others ... engage subjects on both sides of the 'logic of narrative possibilities', and on both sides of gender, colonialist and capitalist splits. If the plot evolves so easily around struggle, then the collector's opponents are bound to be the 'other': the one who loses the object, literally by having to sell or otherwise yield it, or, ... by forfeiting that for which the collector's item is a stand-in.<sup>124</sup>

The dispossessed in this struggle were the Hawaiians, both Fornander's informants who were relegated to the margins of his endeavor as 'other' and the general Hawaiian public

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market value. Unlike an authentic van Gogh, folklore can be endlessly replicated and imitated – any member of the 'folk' should be equipped with the skill and spirit to produce some lore. Individuals all over the globe have been sufficiently savvy to alienate themselves far enough from their traditions to market them." Regina Bendix, *In Search of Authenticity: The Formation of Folklore Studies* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1997), 8. And from Churchill: "Works that are secretly composed of pure imagination and conjecture are presented as serious factual writing; works of acknowledged fictive content are presented as 'authentic.' The journalist is and has always been novelist, the novelist has always pretended to journalistic 'truth' in relation to the Native American, a condition which – in this sense at least – has served to define American literature itself. Ward Churchill, *Fantasies of the Master Race: Literature, Cinema, and the Colonization of American Indians* (San Francisco: City Lights Books, 1998), 2.

<sup>123</sup> Fornander noted in his preface to his first volume, "It took me a long time, during leisure moments from official duties, to peruse, collate, and arrange these materials, and, though they are filled with much that was worthless for my purpose, yet I found very many pearls of invaluable price to the antiquarian and historian." Fornander, v.

<sup>124</sup> Mieke Bal, "Telling Objects: A Narrative Perspective on Collecting", in *The Cultures of Collecting*, eds. John Elsner and Roger Cardinal (Cambridge, Ma: Harvard University Press, 1994), 114.

whose genealogies and legends were misrepresented for the purpose of one man's recognition.<sup>125</sup>

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<sup>125</sup> In some cases the concept of 'other' took the form of the mythology of the 'noble savage,' where we are presented with the persistent image of a "godless heathen subject to redemption through the 'civilizing' ministrations of Christian missionaries." Ward Churchill, *Fantasies of the Master Race: Literature, Cinema, and the Colonization of American Indians* (San Francisco: City Lights Books, 1998), 4. Smith describes a concept of 'Trading the Other' which confers superiority and advantage to those who prevail. "It is concerned more with ideas, language, knowledge, images, beliefs and fantasies than any other industry. Trading the Other deeply, intimately, defines Western thinking and identity. As a trade, it has no concern for the peoples who originally produced the ideas or images, or with how and why they produced those ways of knowing." Linda T. Smith, *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples* (London: Zed Books, 1999), 89.

## Response to *An Account of the Polynesian Race*

Over the course of his lengthy career as a writer, first in journalism and later as an academic, the response to Fornander's writing ran from dismissal to acceptance. As noted earlier, his journalistic voice met with opposition from the missionary population. The sources referenced below demonstrate that Fornander's later writing received both scorn and praise from both a local and international audience for which he wrote.

With the publication of his three-volume *An Account of the Polynesian Race*, he expanded his reading audience to a potentially more accepting readership in America and Europe. The book met with mixed reviews locally and internationally. Only at home did he enjoy a late but unified acceptance. Excerpts from various reviews of the three volumes below demonstrate the uneven reception that Fornander's work received at the time of publication.

A favorable review of Fornander's second volume in *Contemporary Literature* in 1881 describes an author well-prepared to write the history of the Hawaiian people.

The work required in its author an accurate knowledge of the language, the fullest familiarity with the people and their modes of thought, and also the faculty of discrimination in the use of the difficult materials out of which the history is constructed. These Mr. Fornander possesses; and his work appears to us to be at least worthy on the ground of accuracy to take its place among other ancient histories.<sup>126</sup>

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<sup>126</sup> Review of *An Account of the Polynesian Race Its Origins and Migrations and the Ancient History of the Hawaiian People to the Times of Kamehameha I*, vol. 1, by Abraham Fornander, *Contemporary Literature* (April 1881): 237.



Fornander's work was again applauded in a review of Herford's *The Sources of Early Israelitish History*<sup>127</sup> where his book resulted in conclusions reached by "a most careful process of sifting." The author spoke of 'the almost impenetrable jungle of traditions, legends, genealogies, and chants' from which he has had to extricate his final results. . . Mr Fornander's most reliable results consist in long lists of carefully preserved names."<sup>128</sup> These carefully constructed lists of words later became targets for more scientifically oriented critics.

S. J. Whitmee's favorable review of Fornander's second volume in the British journal *The Academy*, refers again to Fornander's role as an historian: "To one at all acquainted with the difficulties of collecting such material, and of discriminating between fact and fiction, the labour which the book has cost its author will appear immense."<sup>129</sup> He ended his review thanking Fornander for "this valuable contribution to the ancient history of the Polynesian race."<sup>130</sup>

The same journal's review of Fornander's third volume of the book criticized his use of vocabulary rather than grammar as a foundation for analysis of the origin of Polynesian language. The writer described Fornander's ideas of etymology to be lacking and outdated. "Before Mr. Fornander can expect comparative philologists to accept his theories he must acquaint himself with the etymological principles and phonetic laws

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<sup>127</sup> Phillip Wicksteed, review of *The Sources of Early Israelitish History*, by Rev. Brooke Herford, *The Atlantic Monthly* (Boston), no. 53, (March 1884): 337 - 398. Started in 1857, this periodical tended to focus on literature and art and avoid politics.

<sup>128</sup> Ibid

<sup>129</sup> S. J. Whitmee, review of *An Account of the Polynesian Race*, vol. 2, by Abraham Fornander, *The Academy*, (London), no. 460, (February 1881): 147-148.

<sup>130</sup> Ibid.

which they have now worked out in the Indo-European family of speech.”<sup>131</sup> Fornander’s use of work lists and facile connections from one culture and language to another would draw additional criticism from reviewers.<sup>132</sup>

In a review in the London *Athenaeum*, dated 1881, the critic scrutinized Fornander and his first two volumes of the *Polynesian Race*. The writer challenged Fornander’s analytical process and conclusions throughout the review.

He analyzes with great ingenuity some of the most widely spread Polynesian legends, showing that while devoid of meaning when applied to an island residence of their heroes, they become plain when referred to a continental home. He would prove the connexion with old world traditions by showing their coincidence with those of Hawaii....He however, lays too much stress on mere nominal resemblances.”<sup>133</sup>

Joseph Poepoe, a Native Hawaiian scholar writing at the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, also challenged Fornander’s assumption that because he could not find the source of certain place names in Hawai‘i, it necessitated a search elsewhere. Poepoe believed that several

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<sup>131</sup> “Two Books on Polynesian Ethnology,” review of *An Account of the Polynesian Race*, vol. 3, by Abraham Fornander, *The Academy*, (London), no. 720, (February 1886): 134-135.

<sup>132</sup> For example, Fornander showed his process of word matching in a response to a reviewer who suggested a connection between Lilith and Lili-noe: “In view of the evident approachment which Polynesian, Chaldean and Hebrew Legends bear to each other, touching the Creation, Paradise, Tree of life, the flood etc, the Hawaiian “Lili-noe” is surely but an echo of the Hebrew or Ante-Hebrew “Lilith-Noah”. If the Hebrew legend really had it that “Lilith” was a wife of Adam, that Legend, of probably post-captivity origin among the Hebrews, may have been erroneously quoted; or the Hawaiian Legend is an evident anachronism arising, no doubt, from its descent, orally, through numberless ages, or the wilful manipulation of priests. The philological coincidence is none the less remarkable, however it may be explained.” Abraham Fornander to A. F. Judd, 24 February 1882, MS Group 262, Bishop Museum. He later repudiated his assertion in another letter to Judd. Abraham Fornander to A. F. Judd, 9 March 1882, MS Group 262, Bishop Museum.

<sup>133</sup> Review of *An Account of the Polynesian Race*, vol. 1 and 2, by Abraham Fornander, *The Athenaeum*, (London), no. 2806, (August 1881): 179-180.

of the names might be ancient place names on windward O‘ahu and the names no longer in use.<sup>134</sup>

Fornander’s three volumes received separate reviews from London’s *The Saturday Review* dated 1878, 1881, and 1886. In all three, the critic called Fornander to task for his lack of scientific rigor and overuse of conjecture. Over the eight year span of time, the criticisms became more pointed and the critic less tolerant of Fornander’s theories. In the first, the writer concluded the review with: “In taking leave of a work which would doubtless have been more valuable had Mr. Fornander either possessed no books at all or books more scientific than many that fell his way, we quote an interesting paragraph which shows how long man has occupied the Polynesian islands.”<sup>135</sup>

In the second review, the writer again castigated Fornander for his weak analysis of the origins of Polynesian words and his expansive use of the term ‘Aryan,’

In our notice of Mr. Fornander’s first volume we ventured to treat with gentle irony the philological arguments by which this pre-Vedico-Ario-Dravidio-Cushite Polynesian pedigree is supported. . . But, as he returns in his preface and the early chapters of his second volume to his pre-Vedic theory of the origin of the Polynesians, we venture once more to express our opinion that certain of his arguments are not real proofs of his hypothesis. . . . Professor Max Muller himself has protested against the wide and erroneous use of the word [Aryan] as employed by Mr. Fornander. There are no such things as ‘customs and modes of thought exclusively Aryan,’ and there is, probably, no savage or barbarous custom or mode of thought which ‘Aryans’ cannot be shown to have known and

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<sup>134</sup> Joseph Poepoe. *Ka Na ‘i Aupuni* (Honolulu), 5 March 1906, translated by Noenoe Silva, 21 November 2001.

<sup>135</sup> “The Polynesian Race,” review of *An Account of the Polynesian Race*, vol. 1, by Abraham Fornander, *The Saturday Review*, (London), (February 1878): 180-181.

practised. Again, we do not believe that there exist in folklore, any 'prehistoric heirlooms' peculiar to the Semitic race alone.<sup>136</sup>

The review closed with the commendation that this second volume is "infinitely more valuable than its predecessor" and requested the actual texts of the Hawaiian genealogies, so that readers might better form opinions of Fornander's work. In his analysis of the third volume of *An Account of The Polynesian Race* from *The Saturday Review*, the critic opened with:

Certainly the subject [Polynesian origins] will never be advanced by writers who, like Mr. Fornander, start from some wild assumption and then proceed, in the approved deductive method, to fit their facts to their theories. It is deplorable to find this writer still persevering in the hopeless task he has set himself to prove that the South Sea Islanders are the direct descendants of the 'Aryan' or 'Indo-European race.' In this third volume of his elaborate work he deals with the linguistic aspect of the question; and, after Bopp's conspicuous failure, philologists will scarcely need to be told that Mr. Fornander does not succeed in demonstrating the fundamental unity of Aryan and Polynesian speech. The labour wasted on the attempt, however, need not be regretted should it only have a deterrent effect on others tempted to pursue like fatuitous courses."<sup>137</sup>

In the United States, the journal *Science* published a mixed review in 1886, applauding Fornander for his accurate portrayal of the ancient history of Hawaiians and reproaching him for his theories and etymological analysis.

The ethnological and linguistic speculations which occupy his third volume, and on which he has evidently bestowed much labor, will not commend themselves to the judgment of students familiar with such inquiries. But the portions of his work devoted to the history, traditions, and ancient usages of the Hawaiian people, have great interest... One of the most notable results of Mr. Fornander's work, and the one for which it will be perhaps most cited hereafter, is the clear proof which it affords that

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<sup>136</sup> "The Polynesian Race," review of *An Account of the Polynesian Race*, vol. 2, by Abraham Fornander, *The Saturday Review* (London), (January 1881): 82-83.

<sup>137</sup> "Polynesia," review of *An Account of the Polynesian Race*, vol. 3, by Abraham Fornander, *The Saturday Review*, (London), (January 1886): 58-59.

traditions going back for several centuries may, under certain conditions, be accepted as authentic history.<sup>138</sup>

The critic closed the review saying “Ethnologists, while they will find the author’s archeological theories and his peculiar etymologies fanciful and unsatisfying, will not allow these minor defects to blind them to the great and indeed unique value of his work as a treasury of local traditions and customs and a trustworthy historical record.”<sup>139</sup> In a letter to A. F. Judd, Fornander basked in the glow of this review. “The review of my work in the “Nation” has given me much pleasure. The appreciation and juxta-position of myself with such literary giants in the field of ethnology and archeology as Prof. Bastian and Wm. Keane, is highly flattering.”<sup>140</sup>

Aside from criticism of the publisher’s negligence in omitting an index, table of contents, chapters and sub-divisions, the author of an 1882 review in *The Nation* considered the work (the first two volumes), on the whole, “a contribution of highest value to Polynesian studies.”<sup>141</sup> The writer included Fornander’s name with other philologists of the time pursuing Polynesian origins: Sir George Gray, Wallace Taylor, A. H. Keane and Adolph Bastian. Regarding the third volume, however, the critic took Fornander to task for his research methods.

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<sup>138</sup> “Fornander’s Polynesian Race,” review of *An Account of the Polynesian Race*, vol.1-3, by Abraham Fornander, *Science*, (New York), no. 193, (October 1886): 355 - 356.

<sup>139</sup> Ibid.

<sup>140</sup> Abraham Fornander to A. F. Judd, 24 February 1882, MS Group 262, Bishop Museum.

<sup>141</sup> Review of *An Account of the Polynesian Race*, vol. 1 and 2, by Abraham Fornander, *The Nation*, no. 865, (January 1882): 82-83. Founded in 1865, the weekly magazine supported abolition, featured articles on current affairs, upheld what it considered to be democratic principles, and worked to elevate the working class.

His work is a comparison of the results of his own long study and practice of the Polynesian languages with the results obtained by others in the field of Aryan philology. We are perfectly willing to admit that his knowledge of the comparative philology of the Aryan languages is as complete as is necessary for his purpose; but we have many and weighty objections to his methods of treating the facts. Throughout his book he appears, not as a judge, but as an advocate. He has a theory to maintain – a theory conceived early in life, and to which he is enthusiastically devoted. We would not have our readers infer that Judge Fornander in any instance consciously misrepresents or distorts the facts. Really great advocates seldom do this. On the contrary, we believe him to be an eminently conscientious writer, but one whose mental eye is blind to everything upon which the light of his theory does not fall. He seems to have little or no appreciation of that cardinal principle of modern scientific investigation, namely, that the investigator should not seek to mould his facts, but should allow his facts to mould him.<sup>142</sup>

Further challenging Fornander's entire effort:

We cannot help thinking that Judge Fornander has missed a great opportunity. . . . Had he, for example, without forming any theories at all, used his remarkable knowledge in the construction of a comparative grammar and dictionary of those Polynesian dialects with which he is best acquainted, he would probably have produced an instructive work, and made a contribution to science the value of which would only have been increased by the lapse of time. As it is, this volume contains little of value that cannot be found in other books, and it will either join the 'innumerable caravan' of linguistic works which have been constructed 'with a view of establishing' a preconceived theory, or it will survive as a noticeable example of wasted learning and misdirected labor."<sup>143</sup>

In a local review in *The Friend*, the editor (possibly Fornander's friend Reverend Damon) described the lack of a table of contents and index in Fornander's second

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<sup>142</sup> Review of *An Account of the Polynesian Race*, vol. 3, by Abraham Fornander, *The Nation*, no. 1104, (August 1886): 181-182.

<sup>143</sup> Ibid.

volume, then commented, "The volume before us, however, contains a great amount of linguistical, historical, and traditionary lore, relating to the Polynesian Race."<sup>144</sup>

A review from *Honolulu Saturday Press* spoke highly of the first and second volumes. Concerning the former, the critic wrote:

"It embraces, besides the results of the original research of the author, all worthy of interest or credence that had been deduced by previous investigators. It is one of the most important works that has been contributed towards solving the mysterious origin and history of this large division of the human race, and as a book of reference for the student and investigator it is invaluable."<sup>145</sup>

Of the latter the writer concluded;

Mr. Fornander has conferred a lasting obligation on the Hawaiian kingdom and every one interested in the history of the primitive inhabitants of these beautiful islands, by collecting and compiling so much valuable information that otherwise must soon have been totally lost to the world, and a copy of his work should have a place in every public and private collection of books in Hawaii nei.<sup>146</sup>

With his search for and theory of an origin for Polynesians, Fornander placed himself in the larger arena of European and American philology. The preceding reviews reveal an interest in and acceptance of his work. Those from the *Academy*, *Contemporary Literature*, *Atlantic Monthly*, *Science*, *The Friend*, *British Quarterly*, and *Westminister Review* all applauded Fornander's labors at uncovering the history and culture of Hawaiians. He was referred to as "historian of the race" and the writer for *Science* asserted that works such as Fornander's

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<sup>144</sup> Review of *An Account of the Polynesian Race*, vol. 2, by Abraham Fornander, *The Honolulu Friend*, (June 1881): 46.

<sup>145</sup> Review of *An Account of the Polynesian Race*, Volume vol. 1 and 2 by Abraham Fornander, *Honolulu Saturday Press* (April 1881).

<sup>146</sup> Ibid.

that trace traditions back several centuries could be considered “authentic history”.

Other writers took their critiques to another level as they analyzed Fornander’s research processes and his conclusions. Writers from the *Athaeneum*, *Saturday Review*, and *Nation* all criticized Fornander’s method of inquiry as “unscientific habit of thought” and “curious speculation”. Their comments portrayed an academic out of touch with then current theory and methods. These reviews presaged the detailed and far-reaching analysis provided by Dorothy Barrere almost eighty years later. Clearly absent in all of the reviews is any indication or awareness of the fact that Hawaiians were themselves documenting their history, myths, and cultural practices in both the Hawaiian and English press in Hawai‘i.

In response to his writing, The California Academy of Sciences’ Section of Oriental Science and Literature invited Fornander to become a corresponding member in 1879 based on the first volume of his “instructive work.”<sup>147</sup> In the same year he received a decoration from the Royal Order of Kalakaua and, in 1880, he was invited to become a corresponding member of Sweden’s Anthropological and Geographical Society.<sup>148</sup> Two years later the secretary of the California Academy of Sciences presented Fornander’s second volume to the Academy and in a letter to Fornander, encouraged him in the

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<sup>147</sup> A. B. Stout to Abraham Fornander, 8 January 1879, MS Kapiolani-Kalanianaʻole Collection, Bishop Museum.

<sup>148</sup> Abraham Fornander, *Thirteen Letters to Erik Ljungstedt*, ed. Christian Callmer (Lund: Humanistiska Vetenskapssamfundet, 1973), 32. Ljungstedt’s efforts to get copies of the manuscripts to society members was instrumental to this and other Swedish recognition.



completion of the third volume of his work.<sup>149</sup> Though acknowledged by fellow scholars, one of his final wishes in the last years of his life was to gain acceptance of his work by the eminent Swedish philologist, Elias Tegner, though this never came to be.<sup>150</sup>

The most serious criticism of Fornander's work came seventy-five years after the publication of the final volume in his first book and long after Fornander was dead. In her study *The Kumuhonua Legends*, Dorothy Barrere critiqued the very foundation on which Fornander based his theories of the origins of Hawaiians and found them sorely lacking.<sup>151</sup> As a researcher with the Bishop Museum in the 1950's and 60's, she compiled recordings of traditional Hawaiian chants and mele (songs) and edited books on Hawaiian traditions. In her study of the Kumuhonua legends, she found "a series of Biblicized stories, which include the Creation of the universe and of man, the flood, and the Exodus. The evidence also came from Fornander's 'biographical notes', which contain details about characters in the 'legends' who were patterned after Old Testament patriarchs."<sup>152</sup>

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<sup>149</sup> A. B. Stout to Abraham Fornander, 17 September 1881, MS Kapiolani-Kalaniana'ole Collection, Bishop Museum

<sup>150</sup> Elias Tegner was a well-known Swedish philologist and professor of Oriental languages at Lund University, the school Fornander attended as a young man. Fornander sent him copies of the first two volumes of his *Account of the Polynesian Race* and later a letter asking Tegner to review them. In his last letter to his friend Lungstedt just before his death, he describes his disappointment at Tegner's lack of response. See Abraham Fornander, *Thirteen Letters to Erik Ljungstedt*, ed. Christian Callmer (Lund: Humanistiska Vetenskapssamfundet, 1973), 57.

<sup>151</sup> Dorothy B. Barrere. *The Kumuhonua Legends: A Study of the Late 19<sup>th</sup> Century Hawaiian Stories of Creation and Origins* (Honolulu: Bernice P. Bishop Museum, 1969). Barrere worked closely with Mary Kawena Pukui to edit *Kamakau's Ka Po'e Kahiki: The People of Old* (1964), *Na Mo'olelo a Ka Po'e Kahiko: Tales and Traditions of the People of Old*, and *Fragments of Hawaiian History* (1963). She also worked on studies documenting archeological sites in Hawai'i.

<sup>152</sup> *Ibid*, 1.

She maintained that the legends were not traditional but in fact, “fabrications of the latter 19<sup>th</sup> century”.

In an earlier study titled “Revisions and Adulteration in Polynesian Creation Myths,” Barrere compared corruptions of myths from various Polynesian countries including Hawai‘i. Here she critiqued Fornander’s method saying “Fornander’s uncritical acceptance of the invented “Kumuhonua legends” and the weight of authority given them by his publication have distorted the study of ancient Hawaiian traditions for some two generations. . . . any and all stories or theories originating in the “Kumuhonua legends” are not a part of true Hawaiian tradition, but are traceable to adulterations made in Hawaiian mythology in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century.”<sup>153</sup> Barrere’s study followed the development of the Kumuhonua legends and their accompanying genealogy. In describing Fornander’s ‘variant tradition’, Barrere’s research affirmed Kamakau and Kepelino as the only informants for the legends he used.

None of the traditions or chants in Fornander’s vast collection of folklore, gathered over the course of years from informants on all the islands (1878: x-xi), contains stories similar to those in the Kumuhonua “legend”. . . .The “genealogy of Kumuhonua, which was given to Fornander to provide credibility to the legends, was published by him, and only by him, from notes he took in conversations with Kepelino and Kamakau. This ‘genealogy’ is constructed from previously existing genealogies . . . . and interpolations of their own invention.”<sup>154</sup>

Barrere’s thorough examination of Fornander’s sources of the “legends” and their founding genealogy resulted in his “thoroughly unreliable evidence for any theory which

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<sup>153</sup> Dorothy Barrere, “Revisions and Adulterations in Polynesian Creation Myths,” in *Polynesian Culture History*, eds. Genevieve A. Highland, Roland W. Force, Alan Howard, Marion Kelly, & Yoshiko H. Sinoto (Honolulu: Bishop Museum Press, 1967) 110.

<sup>154</sup> Dorothy B. Barrere. *The Kumuhonua Legends: A Study of the Late 19<sup>th</sup> Century Hawaiian Stories of Creation and Origins* (Honolulu: Bernice P. Bishop Museum, 1969), 1.

attempts to reconstruct Polynesian prehistory.”<sup>155</sup> She acknowledged that Fornander didn’t have access to the full range of materials to which she herself did, but faulted him for not challenging Kamakau’s variant rendition of the Kumuhonua genealogy published in the *Ku’oko’a* newspaper in 1868, information readily available to him. She questioned if Fornander may have suppressed the genealogy “in favor of the Kumuhonua ‘genealogy’ given him by his two informants to substantiate their stories.”<sup>156</sup> He regarded this variant of the Kumuhonua genealogy as “the true and most ancient of the genealogies covering the period before Papa and Wakea.”<sup>157</sup>

Katherine Luomala, prominent ethnologist and folklorist of Polynesian cultures in the 1940’s through the 1970’s, critiqued use of the Kumuhonua legends in a lighter vein, referring to the creative nature of mythmaking:

The incorporation of the Menehune into the Bible-inspired myth about their being harassed by a cruel chief and eventually immigrating to a wonderful land is definitely a late addition, as is the entire Kumuhonua myth in which Hawaiian names and details are worked into a Biblical framework. The myth can surely be dismissed as regards information of historical value, but it remains as one of the most interesting examples of the mythological process of adopting and adapting new traditions into a mythology.”<sup>158</sup>

In the preface to Barrere’s study, Kenneth Emory, a noted ethnologist himself, described how the three researchers, Kamakau, Kepelino and Fornander failed to appreciate the extent to which their European and Christian training influenced their

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<sup>155</sup> Ibid.

<sup>156</sup> Ibid, 18.

<sup>157</sup> Ibid, 25.

telling of Hawaiian history. Fornander in particular brought with him his own theories of the origins of Polynesians and extensive knowledge of the larger world. Emory writes:

Fornander's beliefs concerning the ultimate origin of the Polynesians, and in particular the Hawaiians, are not the only ones which have suffered in the light of present day knowledge of Polynesia – a knowledge which has developed as a result of modern comparative research, especially in archaeology and linguistics. In our search into the thoughts of the Polynesians before the sudden and disrupting impact of Western civilization broke upon their island isolation of several thousands of years, we must ever be on guard against the effects of this impact in what was recorded subsequently about the pre-contact period. The world of the Polynesians began to be transformed overnight by Western influence. Some features changed immediately, others slowly, and some not at all. . . . The influence of the new geography, the Book of Genesis, and of Fornander's own theories in moulding the "legends" and "genealogy" was not a phenomenon unique to Hawaii. Post-contact manipulation of traditional material has been observed in other Polynesian groups. The Kumuhonua "legends" are notable examples of such manipulation.<sup>159</sup>

The collecting, the arranging, the manipulating, the display; all combined to present theories and vicariously, personae on the larger stage of the colonial effort. Fornander wrote, "I am not only opening a new field of philological research, but also have to combat a number of errors and prejudices of long standing and in very respectable literary quarters."<sup>160</sup> Concerning Tegner's refusal to review his book, Fornander wrote his friend Ljungstedt, "I appreciate his caution. The Pacific and its surroundings are yet a 'mare incognitum', it seems, to most of the European Savants, and an innovator on

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<sup>158</sup> Katherine Luomala. *Menehune of Polynesia and Other Mythical Little People of Polynesia* (Honolulu: Bernice P. Bishop Museum, 1951) 51.

<sup>159</sup> Kenneth Emory, preface to *The Kumuhonua Legends: A Study of the Late 19<sup>th</sup> Century Hawaiian Stories of Creation and Origins*, by Dorothy B. Barrere (Honolulu: Bernice P. Bishop Museum, 1969).

<sup>160</sup> Abraham Fornander, *Thirteen Letters to Erik Ljungstedt*, ed. Christian Callmer (Lund: Humanistiska Vetenskapssamfundet, 1973), 45.

settled systems of classification, like myself, should be approached cautiously.”<sup>161</sup> And again to his friend Ljungstedt, “My conclusions as to an Aryan descent of the Polynesian family is not only a literary and scientific novelty, but, ‘ut ita dicam’, a revolutionary attempt to enlarge the orthodox limits of comparative philology.”<sup>162</sup>

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<sup>161</sup> Ibid, 47.

<sup>162</sup> Ibid, 55.

## Discussion and implications

Two years later in a follow-up call to Bishop Museum bookstore staff, I learned that a current publication of Daggett's *Legends and Myths of Hawai'i* upholds its position as their best selling book of Hawaiian legends. Readers continue to receive highly distorted and romanticized impressions of Hawaiian literature and history. Native Hawaiian historian and poet Haunani K. Trask describes the distortions thusly:

Which history do Western historians desire to know? Is it to be a tale of writings by their own countrymen, individuals convinced of their "unique" capacity for analysis, looking at us with Western eyes, thinking about us within Western philosophical contexts, categorizing us by Western indices, judging us by Judeo-Christian morals, exhorting us to capitalist achievements, and finally, leaving us an authoritative-because-Western record of their complete misunderstanding? <sup>163</sup>

We are no longer dependent on Western interpretations of Hawaiian history and literature. Because Hawaiians recorded so much of their culture in Hawaiian language newspapers in the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century, there exists an enormously rich repository of writing that has been archived in local museums and libraries. Groups currently work to index and sort texts. Students learn the language and translation techniques. We can begin to look elsewhere for more accurate and informed representations of Hawaiian history, literature, and genealogy and we can enjoy translations unencumbered by the colonial constraints imposed by early haole translators.

Using the example of Abraham Fornander I have explored how one of many haole writers in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century collected and translated Hawaiian history and literature. I examined how he and others represented Hawaiian culture to the larger English-speaking

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<sup>163</sup> Haunani-Kay Trask, *From a Native Daughter: Colonialism and Sovereignty in Hawai'i*. (Monroe, ME: Common Courage Press, 1993), 120.

public and how they were part of a much more widespread practice of collecting that was common to the philological research tradition and the larger colonial experience.

Based on letters and his writing for newspapers and books, Fornander was a man passionately engaged with issues of his time. His European heritage and worldview influenced his beliefs and decisions as he exercised his authority in a rapidly changing Hawai'i. For the most part, Fornander's views matched those of fellow European settlers, anxious for systems that would allow them prosperity and progress based on European and American business models. He and fellow settlers brought with them the desire to establish a life similar to the ones they had left abroad. They instituted organizations and groups that allowed them their pleasures. In doing so, they drastically changed the existing indigenous culture.

With his research for and writing of *An Account of the Polynesian Race*, Fornander ascribed completely to the demands of philological research of the time. He appears to have engaged in the effort without questioning the agenda itself or the potential impact of his work or that of his colleagues. His determination in publishing his book attests to his desire to join in debate with other scholars worldwide. The pamphlet listing the contents of his library reveals a man keenly interested in then current thinking in philology and philosophy and his own writing shows a man highly educated and extremely articulate in Western forms.

Barrere described Fornander's manipulation of his research to fit his theories. She asserted that he invented an entire genealogy to support his model for Hawaiian origins. This 'artistic license' was taken by other scholars in the field and by some seen as inherent to the reproduction of folklore. Fornander's use seems unique as it was

foundational to his entire research effort. Its impact on contemporary understanding and writing of Hawaiian history and literature demands further research.

Response to his writing locally and internationally was mixed. His newswriting was often too inflammatory even for his colleagues though it did inspire change in existing systems. He received international criticism for theories and research practices in *An Account of the Polynesian Race*, though locally he fared better. Fornander's theories have been replaced by more current understandings of Hawaiian origins, but his texts remain living monuments to practices still in place today. His writings continue to serve as reference for writers of and about Hawaiian culture. His and other derivative texts proceed to re-publication on a regular basis, and line bookshelves of public and school libraries and reference rooms in Hawai'i.

For more than a century, the works of Fornander and other haole settlers have had continued and prominent presence and distribution in education and the marketplace. Their Western interpretations of Hawaiian and Polynesian history, literature, and culture have dominated policy and curricula. With an ever-growing demand for understanding the Hawaiian language, the possibility for renewed tellings of traditional histories and the generation of new texts, both oral and written, engages those with fluency in the language. Histories once eclipsed by Western writing come to the fore, igniting imaginations and feeding appetites. Works like Fornander's occupy a new place, one that exemplifies indigenous history and culture seen through a Western lens. These works take their place in the rear and listen to a growing array of indigenous voices speaking multiple pasts and presents.



## **Postscript**

By way of bookending this thesis, I'd like to describe my research process. Many thanks go to my family, friends and most profusely to my thesis committee for their support for what became the "never-ending thesis." They all critiqued many drafts and provided me with suggestions, valuable insights and helpful discussion. What I anticipated would take me several months to complete instead took three years. The time has provided me with a rich understanding that I might otherwise not have experienced. I continue to find new information to add and more related questions to pursue; such is the nature of historical research.

This research was a life changing experience for one who previously had little interest in history and even less regard for seemingly dead archives. What I found in my search was instead an incredibly rich repository of vibrant lives and fascinating interactions. I read letters of kings and queens: touched the paper and ink of their thoughts and was privy to their frustrations, anger and joy. I followed government correspondence detailing a kingdom moving through colonization. Most memorably, I shared the archives with others, young and old, eager to learn some part of Hawai'i's past.

In many ways this thesis provided me the opportunity to explore and clarify my own past. The four strands tying my parents to ancestor times come from the highlands and midlands of Scotland and possibly Africa. Impetus to pursue my genealogy came from classes I took in Hawaiian Studies and Hawaiian Art where it was required in class assignments. The exercise provided me a structure and context for questions I had about my background and elicited stories about those who came from Scotland as Calvinist missionaries, first to America's east coast, and later to Hawai'i. And tales of farmers

who migrated to Canada and moved south to carve prairie lands into farms. Both did well, prospering at the expense of indigenous peoples they encountered.

As I worked on my thesis, peripheral reading and viewing helped me to understand results of their actions. Films and videos of stories and past struggles of Pacific people and cultures helped define the ongoing impacts of colonization for indigenous peoples and colonizers. Fiction and nonfiction fleshed out with description and imagination contemporary life for indigenous people living in the Pacific, in some cases providing testimony to the dynamic nature of storytelling, moving genealogy out of the historical record and into a rich present. Histories of Scotland, New England, and Hawai'i created contexts for my research on Fornander and informed my own past.

Initially, I engaged a research model I had used in former times of making art. I gathered, sampled, read, xeroxed, pinned up pictures, laid out letters and surrounded myself with my subject. I waited for a form to take shape. I spent Saturdays in the Bishop Museum Archives, any free weekday time at the Hawai'i State Archives and the State Bureau of Conveyances, and Sundays at Hamilton Library. In a short time, the quantity of information became too overwhelming and I began to sort and sift my finds, not unlike Fornander described in his own writing. With any shred of evidence I could find, I confirmed my early assumption about Fornander being a self-centered writer focused on his own success. My determination to prove him wrong fueled my efforts. It took the better part of two years mucking about in all the information before I realized my error. The process was too curiously familiar. I had been doing just what I criticized Fornander for doing: molding my data to fit my theory.

Although I described earlier that I was not skilled to critique Fornander's actual translations, at the start of the project, I took the liberty of comparing a small section of his translation with my own using Pukui's dictionary. It was enough to confirm what I later read elsewhere, that the process of translating is very creative in nature, with people bringing their values and preferences to the act. I had initially viewed Fornander's translating process as fairly compromised based solely on his worldview. Over time, I proceeded with an attitude of questioning rather than blaming.

Initially, questions that seemed clear-cut and findings that could be readily judged gave way to a far more complex process than I had initially imagined. Clear and tidy answers gave way to gangly and unruly possibilities. They necessitated a change in my stance as judge to one of facilitator. What I could do was articulate information I found on Fornander and his writing, offer my interpretations, and let the reader make conclusions. Even with a conscious redefinition of my role, I was challenged to maintain neutrality. And perhaps with historical research such as this, all one can do is admit bias and request a hearing. This writing is after all just another viewing of a time in history and one man's work. An interesting analysis now would be how Fornander's work gained and maintained the stature and durability it did over the past hundred years. A continued critique of the colonization of indigenous literature in Hawai'i would prove interesting and foreground the need to hear from voices silenced during that period.

In a presentation shortly after I defended this thesis, Puakea Nogelmier of UH Manoa talked of the contested business of translating and the role of religion, particularly in Hawaiian translations. He described the challenges of understanding a worldview from another time and how it affects our present understanding. Though his focus was on the

Hawaiian canon of Malo, Kepelino, I‘i, and Kamakau, he could well have been describing Fornander when he talked about a ‘discourse of sufficiency’ that prevents people from exploring alternative texts, both written and oral, for a culture’s history and literature. His work with others to create an optical character recognition database for more than 7,000 pages of text from Hawaiian language newspapers and the indexing project of Edith McKenzie and others build a foundation for the diversity of voices and interpretations that characterize Native Hawaiian oral and written literature. Their work builds resilience for varied interpretations and as such helps to dismantle a hegemonic historical record.

## Appendix A: Letter from Rollin Daggett to Abraham Fornander

May 23, 1884

My Dear Judge [Fornander]:

I inclose herewith a copy of the San Franciscan, with two articles marked. It seems that my first contribution on Hawaiian traditions, in which your theory of a Jewish origin of the natives of these Islands was briefly given, has attracted some attention. Prof. Nelson's assumption (see page 16) that the Hawaiians are Phoenicians rather than Israelites, does not seem to be consistent, as they have brought down with them few or no characteristics of the home of Cadmus. A little discussion of the subject would do you no harm, as your works on these Islands are not sufficiently known beyond the group. A brief communication from you to the San Franciscan would be in order, I think. I am not able to handle the matter, as all I know of the ancient history of the Islands I have stolen from Fornander, Ellis, Jarves and others.

And, talking about plundering from you, what do you think of my style of elaborating your crisp little legends? I do not deviate materially from the actual story, but, warranted by the title – "Romances of Hawaiian Legends" – give the pictures a somewhat more elaborate framing. It affords an opportunity to introduce touches of the manners and customs of the times, and to make arbitrary connections of events, and therefore more complete and readable stories. While following the general line of tradition, minor events are introduced which it seems most reasonable tradition has lost, and the addition of dates assists in lifting them from the misty realm of doubt. Thus, to make Kaikilani a more attractive heroine, I have relieved her of all suspicion of infidelity in Molokai. While tradition does not warrant this, it at least does not disallow it, and it is therefore done. I simply (sic) add what might have happened to what tradition says really did happen, and by so doing many pretty stories may be written of ancient Hawaii by one versed in its mythology and customs. Partly to amuse myself, and partly to assist my friends of the San Franciscan, I have started to write a few of these stories, which have the merit of freshness to the Eastern reader, if nothing more. I am now hunting up the story of Umi, but fear it will be too long for a newspaper. If I can find enough of them, they might make a readable volume in the end. Can you point me to a few characters that might be worked up? Just designate them in your own history, and I will look them up.

I regret that we did not meet the last time you were down here, as I was anxious to have a talk with you

I do not see much of Gov. Dominis now, as his time is given to law-making.

Ever Yours,

Rollin M. Daggett<sup>164</sup>

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<sup>164</sup> Daggett to Fornander, May 23, 1884, Pinao G. Brickwood Houston Collection, Hawai'i State Archives.

## Appendix B: Letter from Abraham Fornander to Rollin Daggett

May 31<sup>st</sup> 1884

His Excellency  
Rollin M. Daggett  
Honolulu

My dear Sir Your esteemed favor of the 23<sup>rd</sup> inst. with enclosure addressed "Lahaina" were received here this morning, on my return from Makawao. Many and sincere thanks. I heartily and joyfully appreciate the work you have set yourself to do in bringing Hawaiian Legends and ancient lore to the attention of thousands of readers who otherwise, would neither have known, nor ever dreamt of the fund of poetry, of devotion, or romance which in older times stirred the souls and illumined the lives of those of whom the world knew nothing until a hundred years ago and whose modern savants are even now loth to acknowledge. I am delighted with the manner and the style with which you popularise those legends. They deserved a Walter Scott, and I am glad that they have found him.

I may not have expressed my ideas sufficiently clearly in this first volume of my book ("Polyn: Race &") in regard to the origin of the Polynesians, or through some mistake or misconception you seem to have conceived that I advocated the theory of a "Jewish origin" of the natives of these islands. I hope you will allow me to correct that impression. So far from advocating the theory of a Jewish or Semitic origin, I am more strongly impressed than ever that the primitive, racial, origin of the Polynesians must be sought in an Aryan, Caucasian, or white race. I beg to refer you to pages 101-103, 137-144, 150 of the first volume, and on p. 101 I have expressed my disbelief in an Israelitish origin of the many Polynesian legends which at first sight startle the reader by their remarkable correspondence to similar Jewish legends.

As to Prof. Nelson's article referring to yours in the "San Franciscan" of Febr. 16, I must say that he does neither you nor me justice. You, in as much as although you quote your authority, he is running off at a tangent to show that the Hebrews were a Canaanite clan, ergo Phoenicians, ergo the importing of those particular legends in the Hawaiian archipelago, mixing up Hebrews who were Semites with Phoenicians who were Cushites in a manner and with an aplomb that would astonish the leading Orientalists of today, such as Birch, Sayce, Lenoement, Renan and others; - Me, in as much as he has not apparently read my work at all to which you refer as your voucher. That you erred in mistaking my opinions is no excuse for his attacking you and exposing his own ethnological errors without first having consulted the authority which you honestly gave.

You think a "brief communication from me to the 'Franciscan' would be in order." I thank you for the suggestion, and as soon as this court business is over at Wailuku and I return to the quiet of Lahaina I shall attend to it.

I intend to go down to Honolulu toward the 20<sup>th</sup> of June and hope then to have the pleasure of a long talk with you and call your attention to some legends which you might handle with that verve and grace which .....[missing the rest of the letter].<sup>165</sup>

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<sup>165</sup> Fornander to Daggett, May 31, 1884, Pinao G. Brickwood Houston Collection, Hawai'i State Archives.

## Appendix C: Letter from Samuel Clemens to Charles Webster

Hartford, Nov. 11/85

Dear Charley:

R. M. Daggett, late U.S. Minister to the Sandwich Islands (an old friend of mine,) has submitted to me a book which I shall be very glad to have, under certain conditions. It would make a book the size of one of Gen. Grant's volumes. It was constructed by Daggett & the king of the Sandwich Islands, working together, & consists of the (historical) Traditions & legends of the natives, reaching back connectedly 1500 years, & of course is very curious - & *new*. It is fresh ground – untouched, unworn, & full of romantic interest. I have read three of the legends, & they impress me favorably.

I told Daggett that what was required for success was a *good* book; & that the other nine-tenths of the requisite of success was that there should be a big name back of the good book. So I said that if he could get the King to let his name appear as part author, we *wanted the book*. (In fact I wanted it anyhow, but I didn't say so.) I said we preferred to keep up our standard, & be known in the world as a house that publishes only for Kings & full Generals.

It is the King who tells the ancient native legends (or Sagas) to Daggett, & Daggett writes them down - & connects them, very plausibly into an historical chain, with names & dates & details.

Daggett is to be at San Diego, California, until the middle of December, & I said we would confer together & tell him what we require. This is what I suggest:

1. That without the King's expressed collaboration, we will pay what I was paid on the *Innocents Abroad* – 15 per cent of the profit above cost of manufacture.
2. With mention of the King as collaborator in the introduction, we will pay 40 per cent of the profits.
3. With *both names in the title page* as authors, we will pay 60 per cent of the profits.

Keep this thing quiet. We will talk when I come down. And keep this letter handy for reference.

Daggett thinks he can get the King to consent to nearly any reasonable thing. With a sufficient concession from him, I would rather have this book than *any* that is offering now. It can be fascinatingly illustrated....

Yr truly  
SLC<sup>166</sup>

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<sup>166</sup> Samuel Clemens to Charles Webster, 11 November 1885, in Samuel C. Webster, *Mark Twain, Business Man*. (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1946), 341-342.



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