AKUA HULU MANU

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INTRODUCTION

_Akua hulu manu_ (feather gods) of Hawai‘i are images which have both fascinated and intrigued scholars since the voyages of Captain James Cook. Nineteen of these images, believed to be a representation of the _akua Kūka‘ilimoku_, are known to have survived not only the long journey to their contemporary homes in museums and galleries around the world, but the very test of time itself. Though each is visually distinctive, all are comprised of six primary materials: ‘ie’ie (wicker vine), ‘olona nae (woven net), _huluhulu_ (feathers), _pā_ (pearl shell), _niho_ (teeth), _lauoho_ (hair), and _lā‘au_ (wood).  

Contextualized within their historical period, the reign of Kamehameha I, _akua hulu manu_ were cared for by a man called a _kahu_. This caretaker was a member of the _ali‘i_, if not the high chief, as Kamehameha I was in his possession of the _Kūka‘ilimoku akua hulu manu_. It was the _kahu_’s responsibility to make sure the _akua_ was afforded the utmost care and reverence at all times, strictly obeying the _kapu_ system of Hawai‘i. Under the care of the _kahu_, the _akua hulu manu_ functioned within three primary social constructs; death and burial, the _luakini heiau_, and warfare. As a _kino lau_ of Kū, and within these functional constructs, the _akua hulu manu_’s primary roles were as protector.

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1 _Kūka‘ilimoku_ was the favored war god of King Kamehameha I. The name translates to “snatcher of land”. This _akua_ was a _kino lau_ of one of the primary Hawaiian _akua_, Kū and as such was also related to fishing, death, and other associations of the _akua_.
2 H.M. Luquien’s, _Hawaiian Art_, (Honolulu: Bishop Museum Press, 1931), 30. Chapter 2 contains a more detailed account of the individual materials and their construction in the _akua hulu manu_. The information contained within this chapter comes primarily from the work of Peter Buck. (Sir Peter Buck. _Arts and Crafts of Hawai‘i_. Honolulu: Bishop Museum Press, 1957.)
4 The _kapu_ system was both a religious and social system of prohibitions, special privileges, sacredness and consecrated actions, objects, powers, etc. It was intimately connected with the concept of _mana_, or power (Mary Kawena Pukui and Samuel H. Elbert, _Hawaiian Dictionary_, (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1986), 132).
5 _Kino lau_ can be defined as many forms taken by a supernatural body (Pukui, 153).
and guide for the deceased in burial, as a vehicle of communication between the \textit{akua}, \textit{kahuna}, and \textit{ali'i} within the \textit{luakini heiau}, and as a protective and aggressive force within ancient Hawaiian warfare.

The following examination of \textit{akua hulu manu}, through comparisons between the image and traditional Hawaiian religion, social structure, arts, and language, reinforces the role of the images through their physicalities, their materials and methods of construction. Through this investigation, we are able to address the primary question of proper contemporary museological treatment. Our understanding of the cultural context and means of construction of \textit{akua hulu manu} suggests that contemporary museum practices of conservation and restoration risk disrupting the connection between materials, manufacture, and meaning. This contemporary dilemma is addressed primarily through the investigation of three examples, the Kamehameha [Fig.1] and Punahou \textit{akua hulu manu} [Fig.2], both housed at the Bishop Museum in Honolulu, Hawai'i, and the \textit{akua hulu manu} located within the Georg August Universität Göttingen in Germany [Fig.3]. The decision on how to treat \textit{akua hulu manu} museologically is one that concerns both traditional and modern cultural perceptions and value of the objects. This investigation will examine how these technical decisions affect the cultural understanding of the \textit{akua hulu manu} focusing on the violation of the \textit{kapu} system through display, decontextualization, and the processes of restoration.

An examination such as this, though focusing upon the flaws in the contemporary museological practice, aims at providing a solution on how to properly treat \textit{akua hulu}

\footnote{For selection purposes, please see Chapter 3.}
manu and other Indigenous arts. In doing so, we may not only ensure that objects such as these survive, but that they maintain their traditional values associated with the physicalities of the object. What is at stake if this issue remains unresolved is an irreversible loss of cultural meaning and ultimately, contemporary cultural identity. Because the materials and methods of construction of the akua hulu manu are integral in constructing the traditional meaning of the images, modern museological processes of conservation and display should only be carried out using original methods and materials in order to avoid destroying the system of meaning and cultural identity of the image.
CHAPTER 1
ROLE OF AKUA HULU MANU IN ANCIENT HAWAI'I

As kino lau of the akua (god), akua hulu manu functioned in three primary social constructs: death and burial, the luakini heiau, and warfare. Within these, the primary roles of the akua hulu manu were as protector and guide for the deceased in burial, as a vehicle of communication between the akua, kahuna, and ali'i within the luakini heiau, and as a protective and aggressive force within ancient Hawaiian warfare. In investigating how these objects functioned in ancient Hawai‘i, the historical cultural meaning and value may be examined. Applying this knowledge towards our intertextual examination of akua hulu manu, we may be better able to contextualize the objects, ultimately enabling a more culturally sensitive museological treatment.

DEATH AND BURIAL

The akua hulu manu played an important role in the rituals of death and burial in ancient Hawai‘i. One of the most basic functions was to serve as caregiver and guide to the deceased kahu. The akua hulu manu are recorded as having been placed in graves as a means of spiritually guarding the bones and sanctifying both the physical remains and the earthly grave.7 This protection was based on the great mana, or power, which was imbued in the akua hulu manu. Considered an earthly manifestation of the akua, the

image would possess all the *mana* of the god. Therefore, in burial, the deceased were afforded the greatest level of protection.

In addition to this role of protector, the *akua hulu manu* also served as a guide for the spirit of the deceased.8 Records of this function come to us from the 1893 journal of William Ellis who wrote of a particular *akua hulu manu* named *Keolo'ewa*.9 The name of this *akua*, much like *Kūkaʻi'ilimoku*, speaks of the *akua*’s associated meanings. Just as *Kūkaʻi'ilimoku* means “snatcher of land” and is associated with *Kū* and therefore war, *Keolo'ewa* is associated through mythology with *Kūkeolo'ewa*, an *akua noho*.10 Malo tells us that, “if, after death, a man’s bones were set in position along with an idol, and then his spirit came and made its residence with the bones, that was an *akua noho*, though specifically termed an[...]*aumakua*.11 To clarify the complex mythological beliefs, understood within its funerary context, the *akua hulu manu* served as a conveyor of souls, guiding the deceased into the spirit realm, and then returning the spirit to the temporal realm as an *aumakua*, a spirit which would care for their *kahu*’s descendants.12 So as the *kahu* protected the *akua hulu manu* in its ritual functions by observing the *kapu* system in life, the image, in death, has become *kahu* to the deceased.

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10 Martha Beckwith, *Hawaiian Mythology*, (Honolulu: University of Hawai‘i press, 1976), 114. An *akua noho* is an *akua* who is intimately associated with death. (Pukui, 16.)
11 David Malo, *Hawaiian Antiquities*, (Honolulu: Bishop Museum Press, 1951), 115. An *aumakua* is a demi-god, usually consisting of an ancestor, which belongs to either an individual or a family line. The *aumakua* can be called upon in times of crisis and need. (Pukui, 32.)
12 Beckwith, 110.
Another Hawaiian myth provides a second connection between the akua hulu manu and its role as a conveyor of souls. Ali‘i were often entombed in sennit caskets called ka‘ai a practice which was later abandoned in favor of burial with an akua hulu manu. The term ka‘ai can mean two things however, both the funerary vessel and “to wrap”.¹³ Often the word is used interchangeably with kahai, which, in mythology, is the name of a cultural hero heralded as a navigator who located a lost lover.¹⁴ Thus, we may connect the practice of interment in ancient Hawai‘i with the concept of navigation, either through the role of the akua hulu manu as ‘aumakua, or linguistically through the mythological connection to Kahai. Clearly, through this reinforcement of concept, the role of the akua hulu manu as navigator for the deceased was historically important.

LUAKINI HEIAU

A luakini heiau is a sacred Hawaiian temple reserved only for the ali‘i and his priests; it was also the primary ‘residence’ of the akua hulu manu [Fig.4]. The luakini hosted a variety of rituals, thus making it both a heiau loulu, a temple for starvation, drought and other agricultural rituals, and a heiau kaua, a temple where rituals related to warfare would take place. Therefore, the luakini heiau was able to host rituals of all functions for the use of the ali‘i, rituals which often incorporated the akua hulu manu.¹⁵

¹³ Pukui, 107.
¹⁴ Malo, 249.
Within the confines of the luakini heiau walls were many smaller buildings. One was called the hale mana (house of power). This building, the largest and most sacred building within the heiau, housed the major temple images, including the akua hulu manu.\(^{16}\) In the luakini heiau the akua hulu manu took part in numerous rituals and functioned in a variety of manners. Within these rituals, the akua hulu manu can be seen to function both as a conduit for the mana of the akua, a vehicle of communication between the ali‘i and the akua, and a means of signaling the appropriate kapu system.

One of the rituals of the luakini heiau which incorporated the akua hulu manu was called ho‘omanamana.\(^{17}\) Although this ritual will be discussed in more detail in the examination of the ‘ie‘ie components of the akua hulu manu, here the image, through chant and prayer, served as a conduit for the mana of the akua and functioned as a vehicle of communication between the kahu, kahuna\(^{18}\), ali‘i, and the akua.

Another ritual of the luakini heiau involving the akua hulu manu is known as ‘ahu huluhulu or kauila huluhulu. Immediately following the taxation of the Makahiki season and the collection of feathered payment, a kahuna called upon Kū to enter into the akua hulu manu and reanimate it.\(^{19}\) This ritual was a means of containing the mana of the akua within the receptacle of the akua hulu manu. In doing so, this ritual added to the understanding of the akua hulu manu as a living embodiment, or kino lau of Kū.

Immediately following the ‘aha huluhulu, the akua hulu manu take part in the haku ‘ohi‘a rites. These rites take place during the selection of a tree from which to create

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\(^{16}\) Ibid., 246.

\(^{17}\) The ho‘omanamana was a means of capturing the mana, or power, of the god in the akua hulu manu. It could only be performed by the kahu, or caregiver, of the ki‘i. (Ibid., 102).

\(^{18}\) Kahuna: Hawaiian word meaning “high priest”. (Pukui, 114).

\(^{19}\) Valeri, 1985, 12.
the primary heiau wooden image. The akua hulu manu are again carried by their kahu, but in this ritual, they exit the luakini heiau and make their way up the mountains. The akua hulu manu leads the procession along with the kahuna to a tree that is selected for processing.20

Finally, the akua hulu manu take part in the kauila nui rite. This procession, opened by the appearance of the akua hulu manu, consecrates the luakini heiau.21 During the procession, the kahuna makes known the kapu surrounding the heiau through the appearance of the akua hulu manu, the most sacred temple image.22 Within this ritual then, the akua hulu manu, a vessel containing the mana of the akua, and therefore highly kapu, signaled the state of kapu for its locality, the heiau.

The role of the akua hulu manu as a sacred, living object within the rites of the heiau aids in our understanding of the image as a living embodiment of the akua, a kino lau. Through this understanding of the akua hulu manu, gained through an intertextual examination rooted in the historical role of the object, we may eventually arrive at a more culturally sensitive decision on museological treatment.

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20 Ibid., 165.
WARFARE

One of the primary associations of the *akua hulu manu* within ancient Hawai‘i was with warfare. Prior to battle, two prayers were offered to the *akua hulu manu*, the *pule huluhulu*, a victory prayer, and the *pule oenemo*, a prayer meant to verbally blight the opponent. The *akua hulu manu*, having mythological associations with *akua* of the Kū group, was intimately associated with warfare. To offer prayers to the *akua* before battle helped to ensure one’s success.

After the *pule huluhulu* and *pule oenemo*, the *akua hulu manu* was carried onto the battle-field by its *kahu*. The image was born upon a stick of *kauila*. The presence of the *akua hulu manu* on the battle-field provided spiritual and psychological support throughout the battle to the warriors of the *ali‘i* who possessed it. This concept, of spiritual protection, was a function of the *akua hulu manu* but also was a trait imbued in the materials and methods of construction which will be examined more fully in Chapter 2.

As stated, the *akua hulu manu* of ancient Hawai‘i functioned in three main settings: death and burial, the *luakini heiau*, and in warfare. In each role, the *akua hulu manu* performed necessary actions as the *kino lau* of the *akua*, ensuring either the protection and guidance of the deceased, the sanctity of the *heiau*, or the safety of warriors. These roles were rooted in both the religious and societal structures of ancient Hawaiian society, roles which are reinforced through the materials and methods of construction.

23 Kaeppler, 1982, 105
24 Ellis, 117.
CHAPTER 2
MEANING AS MANIFESTED IN MATERIALS AND CONSTRUCTION

Through our understanding of the three basic roles of the *akua hulu manu*, an intertextual investigation of the images, through their construction materials and methods, is possible. Although each of the nineteen remaining *akua hulu manu* varies in appearance, the materials and basic methods of construction remain the same for each. Building upon the examination of construction techniques by Sir Peter Buck and the ethnobotanical work of Abbott, Krauss, and Summers, the following discussion of the materials, construction and meaning of the *akua hulu manu* is possible. Through this investigation, we may discover how the individual materials contributed to the power invested in the *akua hulu manu* and come to a greater understanding of how the image was an embodiment of the *akua* and a visual manifestation of the societal structure of Hawai‘i.

Seven materials make up the *akua hulu manu*: ‘ie’ie (wicker vine), ‘olonā nae (woven net), huluhulu (feathers), pā (pearl shell), niho (teeth), lauoho (hair) and lā‘au (wood). 25 The *akua hulu manu* is composed of woven, split, aerial roots of the ‘ie’ie (*Freycinetia arborea*) vine covered with a woven net, or nae, called ‘olonā (*Touchardia latifolia*). Attached to the ‘olonā are the huluhulu, or feathers, in colors of red, yellow and black. Pā, or pearl shell, comprises the eyes of the figure, secured onto the ‘olonā through the use of a central peg of wood, or lā‘au, thus dually anchoring and forming the

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25 Of the 19 remaining *akua hulu manu*, a total of 8 contain human hair.
eye. Teeth, or niho, fill the open mouths of the akua hulu manu; typically they are incisors from canines, or niho ‘ilio. In examining each of the materials and their roles in the construction of the akua hulu manu individually, we are better able to understand the comprehensive traditional cultural value associated with the figure.

‘IE‘IE

The core of the akua hulu manu, its internal framework, is made of a sculpted base of ‘ie‘ie (Freycinetia arborea) vine [Fig.5] which has been split and formed into the bust figure. The ‘ie‘ie vine is indigenous to the Hawaiian islands and grows at an altitude of 1,000 to 4,500 feet along the slopes of the volcanic mountains of the island of Hawai‘i. The vine, growing upward to the tops of trees, is a flowering vine with orange seeded berries and spiked leaf clusters of a rose hue. The aerial rootlets of the vine drop down toward the ground; it is these rootlets [Fig.5.1] which are harvested to form the akua hulu manu.

For its sculptural use in the akua hulu manu, the ‘ie‘ie vine had to be processed into a malleable material. To do so, a series of steps was observed beginning at around six months maturation. After the aerial rootlets were harvested, in order to increase

26 I say that typically dog’s teeth are used as the akua hulu manu in the Fuller Collection at the Field Museum in Chicago contains the teeth of sharks, but this instance appears to be singular in nature and does not conform with the remainder of the surviving figures. (Doland Mitchell, A Guide to the Hawaiian Artifacts in the Loan Exhibition "Artificial Curiosities", (Honolulu: The Kamehameha Schools Press, 1978),51).
pliability, the 'ie'ie was placed into an *imu*, or underground oven. After heating for a few hours, the rootlets were removed and soaked in a bath of fresh water to facilitate the peeling off of the outer bark. Once the bark was removed, the rootlets were beaten to achieve the desired resiliency for the sculptural base.

After the 'ie'ie was beaten and prepared, the construction of the framework for the *akua hulu manu* could begin. In accordance with the Polynesian tradition of employing a specialist in the construction of ritually significant objects, a *kahuna* (priest) was charged with the formation of the *akua hulu manu*. Starting the articulation at the *piko*, or crown of the head, the 'ie'ie was arranged into *ma'awe loloa* (warp) and *kaona*31 (wefts). 'Oai (twining) begins with a single pair twine with a single *kaona* bent in half to create two elements alternating around a *ma'awe loloa* with single *milo* (twist) between each successive *ma'awe loloa*.32 This type of twine is called *alokahi* and continues down the figure in round turns.

As the *kahuna* continued the formation of the base, they had to anticipate the final form of the object as an anthropomorphic bust, and weave the depressions of eyes, the projection of the nose, and the cavity of the mouth in the 'ie'ie accordingly. The eye depressions are relatively simple in woven technique, featuring a bent warp and a manipulation of the weft rows. The assemblage of the projecting nose appears to have

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30 Summers, 101.
31 The Hawaiian word *kaona* has multiple meanings. Used here it means “wefts”, but throughout the paper, I have also used it to mean “layers of meaning”. (Pukui, 130).
33 Ibid.
been a more arduous task, as the technique employed is quite complicated. Here, "the 
warps were arranged to form a triangle, and short, bias wefts were arranged to widen out 
the lower end. The horizontal weft rows coming in from one cheek were continued over 
the warp projection and then on over the other cheek."35 This construction of the nose can 
be seen in the majority of the surviving akua hulu manu. The exception to this 
articulation process is the Kamehameha akua hulu manu in which the nose of the object 
was woven independently and attached using olonā cord.

The mouth of the akua hulu manu could take one of two forms; either an open or 
a closed mouth. Although both were made by alolua 'uni'i pa'a (double interlocking 
twining)36 the majority of the akua hulu manu feature an open mouth. The lips of the 
akua hulu manu are created separately through the same technique and attached to the 
'iie'iie base using 'olonā cord. The neck of the image widens slightly as the weavers 
continued their work downward to allow, presumably, for greater balance and support of 
the image. Graduated bias wefts were inserted into the neck to accomplish this feat.37

Because akua hulu manu had primary associations with the religious structure of 
ancient Hawai'i through its three primary roles, let us first look at the mythological 
associations of the 'ie'iie. To the ancient Hawaiians, the plant was considered to be a 
manifestation of the akua Kū,38 in other words, a kino lau. This belief, while based on a 
multiplicity of factors, was strongly rooted in the physical characteristics of the plant. 
One of the attributes of the 'ie'iie which contributed to this belief was the altitude at

35 Ibid., 506.
36 Bryan, 128.
37 Buck, "Twined Baskets", 505.
38 Krauss, 171.
which the vine grows. As previously discussed, the ‘ie’ie plant grows at great heights\textsuperscript{39} which, to the ancient Hawaiians, were often associated with the spiritual, or deified realm.\textsuperscript{40} Therefore, an association between the vine and the akua was formed. The red flowers that bloom upon the vine of the ‘ie’ie are another physical characteristic which allows for the association with the akua in ancient Hawai‘i. The color red in ancient Hawai‘i was associated with the ali‘i and the akua, in particular, Kū.\textsuperscript{41} This association with Kū sprang forth from the warfare and fishing with which Kū is related. The blood resulting from such warfare and fishing, red in nature, is thus associated with all material exhibiting similar coloring. That being said, because the base of the akua hulu manu is comprised of the ‘ie’ie, a kino lau of Kū, then the figure itself must be understood as a manifestation of Kū as well.

Another physical attribute of the ‘ie’ie which aids in understanding its ritual importance in ancient Hawai‘i is the fragrance of the flowering vine. Employed, as previously discussed, in the religious rituals of the luakini heiau, the ‘ie’ie was often used to cover sacrificial altars and images of akua. Valeri notes that the plant was selected for such purposes based upon the sweet odor of its flowers. It was thought that the scent of the flowering vine would attract the mana of the akua into the heiau, the objects upon the altar, and ultimately, into the akua hulu manu.\textsuperscript{42} This is known as ho‘omanamana. Here, the conducting force, the fragrance of the vine, coupled with the mythological understanding of the ‘ie’ie as a kino lau of Kū, enables the akua hulu manu to serve not

\textsuperscript{39} Summers, 100.
\textsuperscript{40} Valeri, 1985, 4.
\textsuperscript{41} Ibid., 12.
\textsuperscript{42} Ibid., 246.
only as a conduit for the *mana* of the god, but to function as a vehicle of communication between the *kahu, kahuna, ali‘i*, and the *akua*.\(^{43}\) Effectively, through the physical characteristic of the plant’s scent and its subsequent use in the *heiau*, the ‘*ie*‘*ie* vine’s incorporation into the *akua hulu manu* has reinforced one of its three primary functions. Understanding that the physicalities of the ‘*ie*‘*ie* aid in establishing the concept of the *akua hulu manu* as a *kino lau* of Kū as well as reinforcing function through materiality underscores the necessity of an intertextual analysis of the images.

Let us now turn our attention towards the preparatory processes and articulation of *akua hulu manu*, paying close attention to the role of the ‘*ie*‘*ie*, as we examine the image alongside the texts of other Hawaiian arts. The preparatory process of the ‘*ie*‘*ie* rootlets can be compared to the creation of *kapa* (Hawaiian barkcloth) [Fig.6], if we examine these two processes side by side. To produce *kapa*, bark is stripped from the trunk and limbs of a paper mulberry tree. The bark is then soaked in water to ease the separation of the outer bark from the inner, tender bark (bast) desired for *kapa* making. This bast is removed through scraping after the bath, and finally it is beaten with mallets to spread the bark into a thin cloth.\(^ {44}\) This process is almost identical to the baking, soaking, scraping, and beating of the ‘*ie*‘*ie* in the construction of the *akua hulu manu*.\(^ {45}\)

While the similarities between the two art forms, *kapa* on one hand and *akua hulu manu* on the other, may seem to be only the process necessary to facilitate the making of the objects, perhaps there is a deeper significance. Using the knowledge we possess

\(^{43}\) Ibid., 102.


\(^{45}\) Summers, 101.
regarding the treatment of the *akua hulu manu* as a *kino lau* of Ku, it is thought that *akua hulu manu* in general are associated with deified bodies, or bodies of the *akua*.

*Kapa* is a product intimately associated with the body. This is due in large part to its use as clothing in the Hawaiian archipelago. Not only is *kapa* used for clothing material for the human inhabitants of the islands, the cloth is also used as sacred bindings for images of the *akua*, thereby associating it with the deities. If the same method of preparation is utilized in the creation of both *kapa* and *akua hulu manu*, objects directly connected to the body, it may not be a stretch to say that similarities in the treatment of bodies in Hawai‘i are exemplified through these specimens, bolstering the argument that *akua hulu manu* are earthly manifestations of the *akua*.

This theory is further bolstered by the previous work of academics such as Alfred Gell. Gell focused upon the connection in Hawaiian arts between objects of adornment and the body. His work proposes that objects associated with the body, such as tattooing or clothing, were treated as extensions of the body, in fact, as second skins. If we apply Gell’s theory to the study of the *akua hulu manu*, then it is plausible for us to assume that the processing of the ‘ie ‘ie, being similar to the treatment of *kapa*, signals the treatment of the *akua hulu manu* as an extension of the body. This concept serves to reinforce the identification of the *akua hulu manu* as a *kino lau* of Ku through the comparison of mythology to material.

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46 Barkcloth is not restricted to Hawai‘i. Variations on the name exist throughout all of Polynesia where it is utilized as the primary fabric for clothing.
47 Valeri, 1985, 244.
Continuing with out intertextual examination, a study of the articulation of the 'ie'ie in the akua hulu manu and its connections with the Hawaiian language may be made. As mentioned earlier, the kahuna began the weaving of the 'ie'ie at the piko, or crown of the head.\textsuperscript{49} This single word, piko, is one of rich kaona. It holds a multiplicity of meanings within the Hawaiian language, the definition changing with its use. Meanings can include ‘the summit’, ‘the center’, ‘the umbilical cord’, and the ‘crown of the head’.\textsuperscript{50} In looking at the definitions for piko, the similarities in meaning cannot be ignored. In Hawaiian society, the piko is considered to be a source of life and the connection to one’s genealogy.\textsuperscript{51} If we understand the crown of the head as an important symbol, then the act of beginning the weaving at this point takes on a larger connotation. Associated with the source of life, the beginning of the ‘ie’ie articulation is thus the beginning of the life of the akua hulu manu. Giving the figure life reinforces the concept of the image as a kino lau of Kū.

If we understand the crown of the head as an important symbol in Hawai‘i, then the fact that the akua hulu manu is comprised mainly of a head as opposed to an entire body begins to take on a greater meaning. The bust form of the akua hulu manu serves to emphasize the importance of the head, the most important part of the body and the seat of mana. This concept of containing mana reinforces the role of the akua hulu manu as a conduit for the akua’s power in the rites and rituals of the luakini heiau as discussed in


\textsuperscript{50} Pukui, 328.

\textsuperscript{51} Valeri, 1985, 316.
Chapter 1. This intertextuality between form, function, material, and language is repeated throughout the *akua hulu manu*.

**'OLONĀ**

After the completion of the vine weaving, a netting of 'olonā (*Touchardia latifolia*) fibre was draped and fitted over the wicker sculpture. 'Olonā is an indigenous plant to the islands of Hawai‘i [Fig. 7]. Though a total of eleven different species of the plant grow throughout the islands, only two grow on the island of Hawai‘i. The ‘olonā shrubs grow to a height of one to three meters and feature red-veined leaves and green flowers. ‘Olonā is the only indigenous non-edible plant cultivated since pre-contact time; it can be found in the moist regions of land, in the wet uplands or the deep inland forests. The stems of the plant, harvested at around one year, are known for their resiliency and strength.

Much like the processing of the 'ie'ie, the ‘olonā also had to be soaked and stripped of its outer bark for use in the *akua hulu manu*. Once this has been accomplished, the kahuna may then use the processed fibers to weave a fine gauge mesh to be tightly fitted and secured onto the 'ie'ie base of the *akua hulu manu*. In using this vine, the artist is able to form a finely woven, yet incredibly strong net, which was draped over the foundation and secured to it using a fine piece of ‘olonā twine [Fig. 7.1]. The net is made with a two-ply ‘olonā cord called *ka‘a lua*, a specific type of netting knot seen in

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52 Summers, 22.
53 Abbot, 60.
various other ancient Hawaiian crafts such as fishing nets and other feather work. Using the same method, the artist attached the ‘olonā nae to the foundation with two stitches and a number of secondary securements to the base.\textsuperscript{54} The net covers the entirety of the piece and is cut to fit the foundation ending at the bottom of the neck.

Emerging from our understanding of the ‘olonā material and processes of construction, we may compare the \textit{akua hulu manu} alongside the texts of Hawaiian mythology, ritual, arts, and language. Through such a study, we may discover how the individual material of ‘olonā contributed to the power invested in the \textit{akua hulu manu} and will come to a greater understanding of how the construction of the image in its entirety united the community.

Unlike the ‘ie‘ie, the ‘olonā possesses no physical characteristics which link it to mythology of Kū. However, the use of ‘olonā throughout ancient Hawai‘i gives it practical associations with the \textit{akua}. The ‘olonā was commonly woven into a nae, such as the one utilized in the construction of the \textit{akua hulu manu}. In this state, ‘olonā netting was also used to create fishing nets and feather work,\textsuperscript{55} applicational uses which aid in forming associations between the \textit{akua hulu manu} and the \textit{akua Kū}.

Fishing and one \textit{kino lau} of the \textit{akua Kū}, Ku‘ula kai, are synonymous in ancient Hawai‘i.\textsuperscript{56} Fishing is related to this \textit{akua} who is more commonly associated with violence, owing to the brutality and subsequent bloodiness of ancient Hawaiian fishing

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{54} Buck, “Ornaments”, 223.
\item \textsuperscript{55} Sir Peter Buck, “Clothing”, \textit{Arts and Crafts of Hawai‘i}, (Honolulu: Bishop Museum Press, 1957), 218, and Sir Peter Buck, “Fishing”, \textit{Arts and Crafts of Hawai‘i}, (Honolulu: Bishop Museum Press, 1957), 289.
\item \textsuperscript{56} Beckwith, 19.
\end{itemize}
tactics. In fishing, ‘olonā is used for aho (lines) and ‘upena (nets) [Fig. 8] because of its durability and resistance to water. The use of the fabric in the processes of fishing, forming an association with Kū, serves to reinforce the association between the akua hulu manu and Kū made by the ‘ie ‘ie through the incorporation of ‘olonā within the image.

Much as we were able to compare the processes of preparation for the ‘ie ‘ie with those of kapa, we may also compare the processing of the ‘olonā with the barkcloth. The ‘olonā plant is harvested after a year of growth, allowing the plant to be strong yet pliable. The bark is stripped from the stems and soaked before the scraping of the inner bark. The fibers are then separated thinly and made into aho (cordage) through the process of hilo (twisting) and beating. The similarities between the processing of the three materials, ‘ie ‘ie, ‘olonā, and kapa, serve to draw attention to the treatment of the akua hulu manu as a body, or kino lau, of the akua. It is hard to imagine that the kahuna creating the akua hulu manu would not be aware of the similarities in processes. It is possible that these materials were chosen not only for their physical properties but also because of their articulation process. The decision to incorporate ‘olonā within the akua hulu manu serves only to strengthen the argument that the akua hulu manu is a deified body, an earthly manifestation of the akua Kū.

The ‘olonā also contributed to the understanding of the akua hulu manu as a kino lau of Kū through the spiritual protection imbued in the fabric in the process of weaving.

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57 Ancient Hawaiian fishing tactics were often bloody, resulting from the use of bone hooks, spears and such. Fishing with throw nets, as we are familiar with now, was not introduced to the Islands until the late 1800s with the arrival of the Japanese to work the sugar cane fields (Kahu Harold Teves, Interview, Honolulu, 28 January 2008).
58 Summers, 51.
59 Ibid., 26.
60 Ibid., 44-46.
as documented by Adrienne Kaeppler. During the articulation of the 'olonā into nae, kahuna performed a recitation of prayers or chanting. This effectively bound the prayers into the nae, forming a layer of spiritual protection for the akua hulu manu. 61 Such a layer would imbue the piece with a high level of mana, a state befitting the akua. This protection would also be practical for the military function of the akua hulu manu discussed in Chapter One. As the akua hulu manu was carried into battle, the spiritual protection of the 'olonā would have been a necessary component to protect the akua from harm.

This concept of spiritual protection of the akua hulu manu afforded by the incorporation of the 'olonā, as Kaeppler noted, is found in Hawaiian feather work, most notably the capes and cloaks of the ali‘i [Fig.9]. The foundational material for these garments was 'olonā, woven into a nae. The process of chanting into the 'olonā observed during the weaving process of the akua hulu manu was also executed in the construction of the cloaks. The spiritual protection imbued in the 'olonā layer of the akua hulu manu therefore was also found in the garments of the ali‘i. These garments were worn onto the battlefield; much like the akua hulu manu was carried into battle. The 'olonā in the cloaks however would also have afforded a level of physical protection, protecting the ali‘i wearing the garment from projectile weapons.62 This knowledge of the physical protection raises an interesting question regarding the protection afforded to the akua hulu manu by the 'olonā: does the presence of the 'olonā in the akua hulu manu then

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62 Ibid., 105.
offered the image both spiritual and physical protection during its role in ancient Hawaiian warfare?

Arguably, yes, the incorporation of the 'olonā within the *akua hulu manu* provides the image with both spiritual and physical protection for its function within the warfare of ancient Hawai‘i. Two observations support this: function of objects and sacred associations. Primarily, both the capes, cloaks, and the *akua hulu manu* had military functions; capes were worn into battle and certain *akua hulu manu* were carried into battle. Secondly, both the capes and the *akua hulu manu* were associated with *akua*. We are currently investigating throughout the course of this paper how the *akua hulu manu* was a *kīno lau* of the *akua*. The cloaks on the other hand, were worn by the *ali‘i*. It is important to note however, that in ancient Hawaiian society and mythology, the *ali‘i* were thought to be descendents from the *akua*. Therefore, the 'olonā present in the capes would have provided both physical and spiritual protection to a manifestation of the *akua*. Expounding upon this thought, it is quite plausible then that the 'olonā functioned in the *akua hulu manu* in much the same manner, providing physical and spiritual protection to the manifestation of the *akua*.

The 'olonā of the *akua hulu manu* serves also to underscore the ancient Hawaiian theme of societal binding. In the articulation of the *akua hulu manu*, the 'olonā is first formed into *aho*, or cordage, before being woven into a *nae*. Valeri, in his examination of the *luakini heiau* rituals, notes the presence of the social theme of binding evidenced in the use of *aho*, specifically in the 'aha helehonua, the wrapping of the *mana* house in

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63 Valeri, 1985, 143.
64 Buck, "Religion", 508.
'aha cord. Valeri states that the presence of cordage "symbolizes the encompassing of the land by god and king". Applying the societal meaning associated with the cordage reported by Valeri to the akua hulu manu's 'olonā, we then are able to associate the theme of social binding, or the reinforcement of the social system, through the material of the akua hulu manu.

This theme of social binding is continued through the articulation of the 'olonā within the akua hulu manu through the harvesting, processing, and weaving of the material. We have previously discussed the processes of construction; however, the workers responsible for carrying out this process have not been discussed. The creation of the akua hulu manu required the joint efforts of the entire ahupua'a. United under the rule of the ali'i, craftsmen of the ahupua'a were enlisted to perform their specific craft in the creation of the akua hulu manu. In this process, craftsmen were enlisted to gather the vine and work it into weavable fibers. Kahuna took over the articulation process by taking the processed fibers and weaving them into the nae. By incorporating the various strata of society in the construction of the 'olonā for the akua hulu manu, the image effectively united the community, echoing the envelopment of the land that Valeri noted.

A crucial element in the weaving process also reinforces the concept of social binding. In the weaving of the 'olonā nae, a knot by the name of ka 'ai is utilized. If we are to define this word, it can mean one of two things, either the knot formation as seen in

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65 Valeri, 1985, 280.
66 An ahupua'a is a land division usually extending from the uplands to the sea belonging to one ali'i. (Pukui, 9).
67 Buck, "Religion", 508.
68 Krauss, 35.
the ‘olonā, or “to wrap”.

The fact that the ‘olonā wraps around the ‘ie‘ie, and linguistically is synonymous with ka‘ai is clearly a conscious choice made to reinforce the concept of binding. This idea of wrapping is a concept addressed by Alfred Gell. Although concerned primarily with Marquesan tattooing, Gell’s analysis revealed in Polynesia a penchant for wrappings as a means of both concealing and revealing a subject. The idea of a wrapping as concealment is a global concept, not confined to the Pacific.

However, in places like Hawai‘i, this concept of wrapping as concealment was linked to mana and kapu. The kapu system of ancient Hawai‘i, a system of societal protection based upon religious beliefs, was based upon the concept of mana as being both a positive and negative force. One of the concepts underlying the kapu system was that exposure to mana greater than one’s own could be harmful, and also, exposure to mana lesser than one’s own could degrade oneself. Stemming from these beliefs, concealment was a means of ensuring protection for both parties. Therefore, to conceal an image would be indicative of its high level of mana. It is known, through drawings from European encounters as well as first hand written accounts, that many of Hawai‘i’s temple images were wrapped in white kapa, both in storage within the luakini heiau’s hale mana, and when on display within the larger heiau compound, in particular, the

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69 Pukui, 107.
70 Gell.
71 Kaeppler, 1982, 102.
72 This concept applied only to the commoners, the maka‘āinana, because the kahuna were trained in the ‘art’ of how to maneuver within the kapu system, how to ‘handle’ mana, and the ali‘i were considered to be earthly manifestations of the akua, therefore there was nothing in existence with greater mana than themselves except for the akua. Their genealogical connection with the akua however afforded them a level of accessibility in regards to objects with great mana, such as the akua hulu manu.
Therefore, applying Gell’s theory of wrapping to the akua hulu manu through the intertextual examination of ‘olonā and kapa, the image may be seen to exhibit great mana, reinforcing the argument that the image is a kino lau of the akua Kū.

By examining the ‘olonā netting present in the akua hulu manu alongside other artistic products (fishing nets and feather cloaks), concepts of societal binding and the idea of both physical and spiritual protection, and social support, the importance of the ‘olonā in contributing to the visual representative qualities of the image become apparent. Through this comparison, one can see that the akua hulu manu is both an embodiment, a kino lau, of Kū, and a visual reinforcement of the societal structure of ancient Hawai‘i.

HULUMANU

It is to the layer of ‘olonā nae that the feathers of the akua hulu manu are attached. All nineteen of the akua hulu manu still in existence contain feathers from only four bird species: red feathers of the i‘iwi (Vesitaria coccinea) [Fig.10] and the ‘apapane (Himatione sanguinea) [Fig.11], and yellow feathers of the ‘ō‘ō (Moho nobilis) [Fig.12] and the mamo (Drepanis pacifica) [Fig.13]. Each image may use either all or a selection of these species. For example, the Kīka ‘ilimoku akua hulu manu housed at the Bishop Museum is covered in red feathers of the i‘iwi bird. The crest of the image’s

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73 Ellis, 66.
74 Buck, “Clothing”, 217.
*mahiole* is now mostly bare, but the few feathers remaining indicate that it was once covered in the yellow feathers of the *mamo* bird. The process of collecting the bird feathers was an intricate, time consuming task accomplished in three ways: by a professional hunter (*po'e hahai*), by a professional gatherer (*kia manu*), or through offerings to the *akua* and *ali'i*. The professional gatherers were responsible for trapping the *mamo* and the 'ō'ō birds. These two birds individually possessed few feathers of the desired color (yellow). The *puapua* (feathers from the tail), the *pue* (feathers from above the tail), the *e'e* (axial feathers of the 'ō'ō), the 'ae *mamo* (thigh feathers of the *mamo*) and the *ko'o* (feathers from the *mamo*'s tail) were plucked from the birds before they were released. The bird hunters were entrusted with obtaining feathers from the 'i'iwi and the *apapane*. These two bird species, having most of their bodies covered in red feathers, would be killed and eaten upon plucking.

The second step in processing the feathers for the *akua hulu manu* consisted of the sorting and binding of the feathers by women. While men executed the first step, i.e., the collection of the feathers, it is interesting to note that the duality of the sexes so present in Polynesian societies is embodied here in Hawai'i through the construction of

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75 *Mahiole*: Hawaiian crested helmet constructed in the same manner as the *akua hulu manu* (*'ie'i'e* vine with 'olona and feathers). They were property of high-ranking chiefly class men only and would be worn into battle or during auspicious occasions. (Pukui, 220.)

76 If this is true, that would be an interesting connection. The famous feather cape known to belong to Kamehameha was comprised entirely of *mamo* feathers, the only cape like it ever known to exist. The *mamo* were most valued of all bird feathers as they only lived in high altitude climates of the big island of Hawaii. Also, each bird only generated a few feathers, hence a multitude of birds would be needed to supply the thousands of feathers simply needed to adorn the crest of the *akua hulu manu*'s *mahiole*.


78 Buck, "Ornaments", 538.

79 Abbot, 106.

the *akua hulu manu*. While women were not allowed to work on the finished *akua hulu manu*, they were employed to sort through the feathers brought to them. The feathers were first separated by color and secondly by size. Small bundles of feathers were made before being bound with *ʻolonā* cord [Fig. 14].

The final step in feathering the *akua hulu manu* involved the weaving of the feather bundles onto the *ʻolonā*. This duty was designated to the *kahuna* of *Kī*. The *kahuna* who performed this task were called *haku hulu*. These men worked from the bottom of the *akua hulu manu* to the top in securing the feathers. *ʻUo*, or small bunches of feathers, are secured with *ʻolonā* to the *akua hulu manu* through various overhand knots [Fig. 15]. The *haku hulu* continued to attach the *ʻuop* to the piece row by row, each overlapping the previous. Only the *haku hulu* could construct this layer of the *akua hulu manu* as they were properly equipped to deal with the *mana* imbued in the feathers.

Understanding that the processes outlined above were generally similar for each of the nineteen surviving *akua hulu manu* an intertextual examination of the material may begin. The feathers that were chosen to adorn the *akua hulu manu* were chosen specifically for the task. Their selection was based upon a multiplicity of factors which we shall address by comparing the feathers of the *akua hulu manu* to the texts of Hawaiian mythology, society, art, and language.

Contextualizing the *akua hulu manu* within the framework of Hawaiian mythology necessitates consideration of the feathers that were intimately associated with a major deity, *Kanaloa*. The legend of *Kanaloa* came to Hawai‘i from Tahiti where the

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81 Ibid.
82 Buck, "Clothing", 225-226.
god was believed to have fallen to earth covered in red and yellow feathers. As he tore
the feathers from his body, they fell to earth and became other demi-gods, including Kū.
As such, birds were understood to be a *kino lau* of Kū known as Kūhulumanu (Kū of the
bird feathers). While mythology provides one association between feathers and the *akua*
Kūhulumanu, color association also allows for a connection to be made between the
feathers and two other manifestations of Kū.

Using color associations, it is possible to examine the red feathers adorning the
*akua hulu manu* alongside the texts of Hawaiian mythology. In certain *mo'olelo* this *kino
lau* of Kū was said to have been created out of the feathers from the slain forehead of the
deity Kiwa'a. The feathers from his forehead, covered in his blood, became alive with
*mana* and gave life to Kūkaʻilimoku. Kūkaʻilimoku is thus a war *kino lau* of Kū
emerging from the violent act of death, created from and by feathers. This legend serves
to explain how red feathers in particular are explicitly associated with Kūkaʻilimoku,
removed from the general association of feathers with the gods known through the legend
of Kanaloa. The color red could also, as previously discussed, be linked with
Kūkaʻilimoku through the association of the color with blood. Blood was intimately
associated with Kūkaʻilimoku since the two primary activities of the *akua* were warfare
and fishing.

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83 In Tahiti, the god was known as Tangaroa. Throughout Polynesia, because of the language similarities
(all being Austronesian in origin), the alteration of a single letter is sometimes all that separates the
languages of different island nations. What is a “t” in Tahiti is often a “k” in Hawaii.
84 Valeri, 1985, 12.
86 Valeri, 1985, 12.
In addition to color associations, the bird species contributing feathers for the *akua hulu manu* is explicated within Hawaiian mythology. According to legends, the ‘i’iwi bird was considered to be a manifestation of Kū. This was due, in part, to the bird’s body being covered almost entirely in red feathers.\(^87\) In this respect, he was seen as a visual manifestation of the *akua* as related to the *kino lau* Kūka‘ilimoku. In addition to its red feathering, the ‘i’iwi bird [Fig. 10] was associated with Kūka‘ilimoku because of its food source, the ‘ie‘ie. We have already demonstrated that the ‘ie‘ie plant was considered to be a manifestation of the *akua*. Because the ‘i’iwi consumed the body of the *akua*, it too may have been considered to be a manifestation of the god. To the ancient Hawaiians, when the ‘i’iwi fed upon the nectar of the red blooms of the ‘ie‘ie plant, it may also have been thought to be consuming the *mana* of the *akua*. In many places throughout Polynesia, plants were considered to be divine manifestations, comparable to the Hawaiian belief of the ‘ie‘ie. As such, birds which feasted upon the fruit of the trees were seen as consuming the *mana* of the deity. Understanding the complex mythological associations between both individual bird species and feathers in general allows for a reading of the *akua hulu manu* as the embodiment of the *akua* Kū.

Based upon our understanding of the complex processes of collecting, processing, and applying feathers in the construction of the *akua hulu manu*, an examination of these processes and their function may occur. The process of collecting the bird feathers was an intricate, time-consuming task which could be accomplished in three manners: by *po‘e hahai* (professional hunters), *kia manu* (professional gatherers), or through offerings to

\(^{87}\) Ibid., 146.
the akua and ali‘i during the Makahiki season. While the professionals were responsible for obtaining the majority of the feathers over the course of the year, the maka‘āinana contributed feathers towards the construction of feather work as a form of taxation. According to Valeri, at the end of the Makahiki season, a taxation of the maka‘āinana occurred wherein the commoners were expected to repay the ali‘i and the akua for keeping them safe for another year with goods from their harvest, fish, or feathers.

Anne D’Alleva argues that the feather-work of ancient Hawai‘i, through the visual manifestation of the time devotion and the communal processes of construction, could only have occurred in this particular social structure; accordingly these objects may be viewed as visual representations of Hawaiian society. D’Alleva’s argument both supports and is supported by this investigation into the processes of akua hulu manu construction.

While it is interesting to note how the process of collecting the feathers united the community, the application of the feathers gathered after the Makahiki taxation may reveal the power invested in the akua hulu manu. It is known, through Valeri’s work, that the feathers contributed by the maka‘āinana were incorporated into the akua hulu manu in a rite called the ‘ahu huluhulu, or the kaula huluhulu. This ritual immediately followed the taxation of the people and was performed by a kahuna in the Luakini heiau. During this rite, the kahuna called upon Kū to enter into the akua hulu manu and reanimate it after its rest during the Makahiki, during which time the akua hulu manu

88 Kaeppler, 1985, 110.
89 Valeri, 1985, 12.
were never seen. The reanimation of the akua hulu manu was accomplished through the re-feathering of the object with the offerings (taxes) and collected feathers. In essence, the akua hulu manu possessed dormant mana of Kū during the Makahiki but became laʻa (alive) through the process of wrapping the image with feathers. While the offerings and collection of feathers demonstrate the unification of Hawaiian society, the ritual of applying the feathers to the akua hulu manu displays the immense mana the object held as it was believed to be a manifestation of the akua.

Stemming from the ritual of ‘ahu huluhulu, or kauila huluhulu, the concept of binding, or wrapping can also be addressed. Much as the theory proposed by Gell can be applied to our study of the ‘olonā, it is also applicable to the re-feathering process. Because the object was entirely covered in feathers, one could say it has been wrapped in the material. This wrapping, understood as a kino lau of the akua as a raw material, functions as a conduit to the deity, who is called into the akua hulu manu at the time of re-feathering. Somewhere between the ritual of calling to the akua and the addition of the mana of the feathers to the akua hulu manu, the object is thought to become alive. Thus, the wrapping of the image with the feathers, much like the wrapping of bodies in cloth, contributes to the power of the akua hulu manu.

Continuing our examination of the initial construction of akua hulu manu, after the feathers have been collected, sorting and binding by women began. This step in the articulation process also serves to reinforce the concept of the akua hulu manu as a visual...
reinforcement of the unification of society. Duality of the sexes, commonly seen throughout Polynesia, is embodied in the akua hulu manu through this phase of articulation. Sexual duality in Hawai‘i is not the same as the modern concept of such. Rather, Hawaiians saw the two sexes as being dependent upon the other; each needed the other in order to form a complete whole. The incorporation of women into the construction process of akua hulu manu serves as a means of unifying Hawaiian society then through balancing the male presence, representing not just one gender but both to form a whole. The participation of women in the construction of the akua hulu manu may then be understood as an affirmation of the societal structure of ancient Hawai‘i.

It may seem appropriate here to address gender studies in this social contextualization of the akua hulu manu in regards to the cooperation of women in the image’s construction. The incorporation of the female sex into the processes of akua hulu manu construction does, in a particularly Hawaiian manner, aid in the creation of a gendered body. The body which is created is a kino lau of Kū, a male body. However, going back to what we have just discussed, Hawaiian sexual duality was focused on the combination of both male and female genders to create a unified whole, a concept wholly Polynesian in origin. Therefore, a traditional discussion of gender in regards to the akua hulu manu is not possible. Rather, the identification of one aspect of the image or its construction being ‘male’ or another ‘female’ serves only to underscore the concept of the societal whole.

The binding of the feathers with ‘olonā cord also reinforces the concept of societal binding. After the feathers had been sorted according to size and bundled, ‘olonā
cord was wrapped around the base of each bundle, securing it together. 94 This act of binding, although functional in nature, could be likened to the binding of the *akua hulu manu* in feathers, or to the binding of temple images in cloth. These literal bindings are meant to visually reinforce the concept that the construction of the *akua hulu manu* unites all of the society under a common task.

The final step in the feathering process of the *akua hulu manu* involves the weaving of the feathers onto the 'olonā-covered 'ie 'ie. This duty was designated to the *kahuna* of Kū. 95 The *kahuna* who performed this task were called *haku hulu*. These men worked from the bottom of the image to the top in securing the feathers. 'Uo, or small bunches, of feathers are secured with 'olonā to the *ki 'i* through various overhand knots. The *haku hulu* continued to attach the 'uo to the piece row by row, each overlapping the previous. 96 Only the *haku hulu* could construct this layer of the *akua hulu manu* as they were properly equipped to deal with the *mana* imbued in the feathers. Through this final step in the process, we see a complete journey from the commoners and professional bird hunters gathering the feathers, to women sorting and bundling, to the religious leaders weaving the feathers onto the image. By encapsulating all of society in the construction of the *akua hulu manu*, the image becomes a visual manifestation of the ancient Hawaiian social structure.

It is also possible to compare the *akua hulu manu*, particularly its feather-work, to other Hawaiian arts. Particular examples include the feather capes and cloaks of the *ali 'i*

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94 Buck, "Clothing", 224.
95 Brigham, 3-4.
96 Buck, "Clothing", 225-226
[Fig.9]. In this comparison, two physical similarities immediately arise, the first being the feather-work properties, and the second being the use of ‘olonā in construction. The construction methods and materials of the ‘olonā and the feathers carry the same cultural and religious meanings in the capes and cloaks as they do in the akua hulu manu. We have previously discussed how the ‘olonā is used in both art forms as well as the similarities in military function of both the capes and the akua hulu manu. Here let us focus upon the similarities in feather work. In both the akua hulu manu and the capes, the three primary colors of both the ali‘i and the akua, red, yellow, and black, are used. The colors are referential of the akua with whom they are associated. The color patterns however, are indicative of genealogy, thus the ali‘i. The patterns on the cloaks and capes functioned to convey the identity of the wearer, placing them not only in a historical context, but a societal one as well. This genealogical aspect of the cloaks is similar to the genealogical connections of the akua hulu manu through their kahu. Thus, in the comparison of the akua hulu manu with other feather arts of the islands, the cloaks of the ali‘i in particular, the commonalities of genealogical connections, akua associations, physical and spiritual protection are all observed, thus providing a contextualization of the akua hulu manu within art, society and religion.

In looking at akua hulu manu, it is important that one not forget the importance of these feathers through language. By comparing the text of the akua hulu manu to the text of Hawaiian language, we see a stressed emphasis on the feathers through the very naming of the object. Akua hulu manu translates into “feathered god”. 97 Huluhulu, or

97 Pukui, 15.
feathers\textsuperscript{98}, takes priority in the naming of the piece. Therefore, an emphasis has been placed on the connection between the feathers and the image itself. Because the feathers are not only symbolic of \textit{Kū} through their color, but are physical manifestations of the \textit{akua} as seen through mythology, and encapsulation of society as demonstrated by construction methods, the feather adornment of the \textit{akua hulu manu} reinforces the theory that the \textit{akua hulu manu} are indeed manifestations of the gods and visual reinforcements of the social structure of Hawai'i.

\textbf{PĀ}

Upon the layer of feather work, pearl shell eyes (\textit{pā maka}) are applied.\textsuperscript{99} The eyes are attached to the \textit{akua hulu manu} with a wooden beaded center. A single central hole is drilled in each plate and through the wooden bead for fixation. A long stalk of the 'ie'ie plant is fed through the wooden bead and shell plate, through the 'olonā netting, and into the hollow center of the foundation where a knot is tied to secure the eye in place [Fig.16].\textsuperscript{100}

Turning our attention to an intertextual examination of the \textit{pā} within the \textit{akua hulu manu}, we may better understand how both the raw and processed material, rich in meaning, contribute to the historic and contemporary understanding of the \textit{akua hulu manu}. Looking first at the physical qualities of the \textit{pā}, it is apparent that the pearl shell

\textsuperscript{98} Ibid., 90.
\textsuperscript{99} Kaeppler, 1982, 105.
\textsuperscript{100} Buck, "Clothing", 507.
material is reflective in nature. Throughout the world, there are associations of reflective materials with the supernatural, Hawai‘i is no exception. Here the pā is associated with the hōkū (stars) and lā (sun).  

101 Eyes, especially in the context of temple images such as the akua hulu manu, are known as ka‘ono hi o ka lā, “the pupil of the sun”.  

102 Valeri tells us that, in this association with the stars, the pā make reference to the akua as well as sight and intelligence. He states that “the correspondence between the eye and the star seems thus to offer […] the possibility of translating – through knowledge – the god into concrete human action and states.”  

103 Thus, through the understanding of the associations of the material, the presence of the pā on the akua hulu manu serves as a means of manifesting the akua.

This association between the pā and hōkū can also be used to examine the materialistic connection between the shell and the akua. Both stars and shells are related to the sea: one through use in navigation, the other through environment.  

104 In ancient Hawai‘i, stars were used in navigation of the ocean. This connection to the sea is reinforced by the fact that the material, pearl shell, comes from an ocean dwelling animal, a crustacean. Kū, specifically Kū-ula or Kū-ula-kai (Kū of the abundance of the sea), most commonly thought of in connection with fishing, may then be seen as being associated with the akua hulu manu. This connection echoes the use of both the ‘ie‘ie and ‘olonā as manifestations of and materials associated with Kū.

101 Valeri, 1985, 252.
102 Pukui, 130.
103 Valeri, 1985, 252.
104 Ibid., 15.
105 Beckwith, 15.
The use of stars for navigation also makes an association with the akua Kanaloa possible. Hawaiian mythology tells us, as previously discussed, of the connection between the akua Kanaloa and Kū established by the presence of red feathers. However, Kanaloa is also linked with the ancient Hawaiian concepts of death in that the akua was considered to be a guide for the dead. As we have already examined the role of the akua hulu manu in death and burial, we understand the image to have been a spiritual guide for the deceased ali‘i. The concept of spiritual guidance of the deceased by the akua hulu manu can be likened to the navigation of the seas by the stars. Through the complex connections between hōkū, pā, and Kanaloa, the presence of the pā on the akua hulu manu may be seen as a symbolic reference to both the function of the image as a guide for the deceased and an embodiment of Kū.

The pā maka of the akua hulu manu, when examined alongside the Hawaiian language, reveal an association between the material and the image as a kino lau of Kū. The pearl shell eyes of akua hulu manu appear to be wide and staring. Eyes are likened to ‘ike, or “seeing” which can mean not only the physical ability to see but also the ability to understand. Eyes which are wide open and staring are visually understood globally as eyes which see all. The concept of omniscience is one which is associated with the akua in Hawai‘i. Examined within this context, the eyes of the akua hulu manu can be understood as not only visually perceiving all things, but visually referencing the akua’s

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105 Kanaloa, the akua who fell to earth covered in feathers, is related to Ku through that mythology surrounding feathers. Pa maka are related to Ku because they are shellfish, and Ku is the akua of fishing.
106 Beckwith, 160-161.
107 Pukui, 96.
possession of all knowledge, thus reinforcing the iconology of Kū within the *akua hulu manu*.

Comparisons of the *pā maka* of the *akua hulu manu* to eyes of other Hawaiian images from the pre-contact period of the 18th century further evidences the overall Kū iconology of the images. This type of gaze, wide and staring, seen on the *akua hulu manu* can also be observed among Kona Coast style Hawaiian sculpture [Fig.17], most produced during the reign of Kamehameha I, owner of the *Kūkaʻilimoku akua hulu manu*, and uniter of the Hawaiian archipelago through warfare. These images exhibit facial expressions such as wide staring eyes which Kaeppler argues indicate "scorn, indifference and disrespect."109 She goes on to state that “These images project the essence of disrespect, permissible in Hawaiian culture only in those at the very top, or by enemies in war.”110 This perception of the gaze reinforces the use of the *akua hulu manu* in ancient Hawaiian warfare. The eyes of the image, meant to frighten and startle an opponent, would fulfill such a function. Through physicalities and through functionality, the *pā maka* represented the presence, ferocity, and strength of Kū’s *kino lau Kūkaʻilimoku*.

109 Kaeppler, 1982, 97.
110 Ibid.
NIHO ‘ILIO

Along with the pā maka, niho ‘ilio are also attached atop the feathers of the akua hulu manu. Dog teeth, or niho ‘ilio are sewn into the ‘ole ‘ole, or figure-eight mouth of most akua hulu manu. The artist, preparing the canine incisors, would cut off the roots of the teeth to create uniformity in length before attachment. These individual teeth are secured to the ‘ie ‘ie base of the akua hulu manu by winding ‘olonā cordage around the middle of each tooth multiple times [Fig.18]. The attached dog teeth, coupled with the shape of the mouth, effectively convey to the viewer that the akua hulu manu is an embodiment of Kū and a reflection of the societal structure of ancient Hawai‘i.

In comparing the akua hulu manu, specifically the niho ‘ilio to that of Hawaiian society, the connection between dogs and the image is made clear. ‘ilio (dogs) served as protectors to their owners, kanaka. Upon the death of an ali‘i kanaka, the ‘ilio would be sacrificed and buried with the body of its owner. Thus, in death, as in life, the ‘ilio would protect the kanaka. This calls to mind the funerary function of the akua hulu manu. Just like the ‘ilio, the akua hulu manu was interred with its kahu upon death to serve as a protector. Thus the presence of the niho ‘ilio on the akua hulu manu was a visual reinforcement of the societal practice of ali‘i protection. By placing the teeth onto the akua hulu manu, the protective nature of the piece was expressed. Here then, the

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111 Ibid., 12
112 Ibid.
114 ‘ilio were not always sacrificed. This would only occur if the kanaka was an ali‘i. Also, if the ‘ilio died before the kanaka, the man would wear the teeth of his dead ‘ilio to maintain the connection between them (Titcomb, 4).
message the material incorporation expressed was a reinforcement of the traditional function of the akua hulu manu.

Further amplifying the meaning of the niho ‘ilio in the akua hulu manu are certain texts of Hawaiian mythology. According to legend, one of the kino lau of Kū is Kū-long-dog, or Kū’ilioloa, a vicious warrior of supernatural power. This ‘warrior dog’ manifestation of Kū battles Kamapua’a (a pig formed god). The mythology says that Kamapua’a devours Kū’ilioloa but Kū’ilioloa bursts forth from his loins rebirthed, killing the pig-god. From this point on, Kū’ilioloa is known as a ‘man eater’.115 This kino lau of Kū would also have been associated with another kino lau of Kū, Kūka’ilimoku, through its vicious nature and affinity for battle. This association of the akua with warfare and battle reinforces the traditional function of the akua hulu manu in warfare. It also aids in the identification of the akua hulu manu as a kino lau of Kū. Thus, the material presence of the niho ‘ilio in the akua hulu manu contributes to our understanding of the akua hulu manu in ancient Hawaiian culture.

In looking at the niho ‘ilio, one could also look at the shape of the mouth as a means of visually reinforcing certain aspects of the social structure of Hawai‘i. Kaeppler calls the figure-eight shaped mouth of the akua hulu manu, “the mouth of disrespect”.116 She argues that the shape of the mouth, seen in both the akua hulu manu as well as other art forms of Hawai‘i, served as a visual reinforcement of the societal structure. In pre-European contact Hawaiian society, an act of degradation to others advanced one’s own

115 Beckwith, 347-348.
116 Kaeppler, 1982, 97.
social status. Thus, the gaping mouth of the *akua hulu manu* may be seen as an action that would degrade the viewer, thus elevating the status of both its *kahu* and the *ali‘i* who owned it. Such an expression would also serve to ensure that all surrounding the *akua hulu manu* were relegated to a lower social standing than the *akua*. Therefore, the shape of the mouth of the *akua hulu manu* functioned to express and ensure the power of the *akua*, *kahu*, and *ali‘i*, thus serving as a visual reinforcement of the social structure of Hawai‘i.

The shape of the mouth can also be associated with warfare through the same concept of degradation. In attempting to contextualize the *akua hulu manu* within other art forms of ancient Hawai‘i using the mouth and dog-teeth, an understanding is gained that the image effectively conveys the strength of the *ali‘i*. The gaping mouth seen on the *akua hulu manu* can also be seen on Kona coast wooden *ki‘i* from the *heiau* associated with Kamehameha on the island of Hawai‘i [Fig.17]. These large-scale wooden *ki‘i* are known to be manifestations of Kū, Kūka‘ilimoku, the favored god of Kamehameha. Because of the similarities in mouth shape as well as the known identification of these two art forms as representations of Kūka‘ilimoku, it may be safe then to say that the figure eight shaped mouth is characteristic of the *kino lau* of Kū. If this is the case, the presence of this mouth shape on the *akua hulu manu* serves to reinforce the acknowledgement of the embodiment of the *akua*. Similarly, and in the same manner, the repeated presence of the mouth shape on images would also then reinforce the strength of the *ali‘i*, thus the social structure of Hawai‘i. This would be through an association of

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Kiʻi  ilimoku with warfare; and in the case of the successful warfare of Kamehameha I (to whom one of the akua hulu manu in question belonged). Thus, the identification of the akua hulu manu as Kiʻi  ilimoku serves to both acknowledge the image as an embodiment of Kū and visually reinforce the strength of the aliʻi within the social structure of Hawaiʻi.

LAUOHO

Another material present on some akua hulu manu, such as the Punahou akua hulu manu, is lauoho (hair). The hair is attached much in the same manner as the feathers. The strands of hair are first bundled and bound before being woven directly onto the ‘ieʻie framework of the akua hulu manu [Fig.19]. While the origin of the lauoho for the akua hulu manu is not certain, some scholars argue that lauoho used in other Hawaiian arts may come from ancestors related to the aliʻi who has commissioned the construction of the image. This theory is rooted in the Polynesian association of hair with the ancestors and provides a plausible explanation for the source of hair on the akua hulu manu.

Throughout Polynesia, hair is directly related to the concept of both the physical presence of ancestors and their mana. In Hawaiʻi, mana was believed to come from the head, poʻo, the most sacred part of the body. This concept was endemic to Tahiti, where

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118 Kaeppler, 1982, 89.
headdresses made of human hair, called *tamau*, were worn to mark the most sacred events. The hair for the construction of these headdresses came from the ancestors of the dancers, and was thought to contain their *mana*.\(^{119}\)

Hawaiians also had sacred ornamentation comprised of human hair, called the *lei niho palaoa* [Fig.20]. This lei of hair with a pendant of whale ivory was owned only by the *akua* and the *ali‘i*. Kaeppler proposes that the presence of the hair in the lei was a means of signaling the physical presence of the ancestors and harnessing it one’s self\(^{120}\) and notes that this genealogical connection was a manifestation of the social structure which in turn was the basis for Hawaiian religion.\(^{121}\) If we understand the use of *lauoho* on the *akua hulu manu* as a means of referencing the genealogy of the piece, then the presence of the hair not only reinforces the genealogical implications of the *akua hulu manu* as evidenced through its *kahu* and funerary functions, but also as means of reinforcing the societal structure of Hawai‘i.

The use of hair on the *akua hulu manu* has been the focus of a debate over *akua* identification, specifically in Kaeppler’s work. In her article entitled *Genealogy and Disrespect*, Kaeppler argues that the presence of hair on images such as the *akua hulu manu* identifies the image as the *akua Lono*. She bases her argument on the observation that the images with hair often have a “more pleasant expression” and that priests of *Lono* were thought to wear helmets of human hair.\(^{122}\)

\(^{120}\) Kaeppler, 1982, 89.
\(^{121}\) Ibid., 102.
\(^{122}\) Ibid., 104.
It seems more likely that the surviving nineteen *akua hulu manu* are all manifestations of *Kū* as opposed to *Lono*. This assertion can be made with strong conviction thanks, in large part, to the evidence produced by the mythological analysis of the raw and processed materials of the *akua hulu manu*. As we have seen, these feathered images are closely associated with *Kū* and his many *kino lau*, most often that of *Kūka'ilimoku*. No evidence, other than the presence of hair helmets among the priests of *Lono* would suggest an affiliation with that *akua*. Kaeppler’s other assertion, that the *akua hulu manu* with hair often have a more pleasant facial expression, may be rooted in a Western concept of what constitutes ‘pleasant’, an idea based on the colonialist canon of aesthetics. In order to provide a historically contextualized analysis of these images, it is necessary to abandon these aesthetic theories.

**LĀ’AU**

The final material in the construction of *akua hulu manu* is *lā'au*, or wood, in the form of a pole on which the figure was carried. Typically, the wood used in the *akua hulu manu* was *kauila* (*Alpiitonia ponderosa*) [Fig.21] or *ulu* (breadfruit, *Artocarpus altilis*) [Fig.22]. As both *kauila* and *ulu* are indigenous plants to the Hawaiian Islands, and, due to their hardness, height, and straightness, are considered to be manifestations of *Kū*, these poles would have been carved by *kahuna*.

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123 Valeri, 1985, 15.
In examining the *kauila* and breadfruit poles of the *akua hulu manu* alongside the use of these materials in other arts of Hawai‘i, an understanding of how they are manifestations of *Kū* can be reached. *Kauila* wood is often associated with ‘ō‘ō, or digging sticks [Fig.23]. These sticks, used by men, are forms that penetrate the earth. They are vertical, masculine symbols in Hawaiian society. While it is known that these traits are associated with *Kū*, so is the action of penetration. Valeri states that “many of *Kū*’s ‘bodies’ evoke virility because they are “straight,” “erect.” Moreover, these are signifiers of *Kū*. More generally, everything that is straight, vertical, high, or deep in nature tends to be associated with *Kū*, that is, with human virility.”¹²⁴ The key to this understanding is grasping the concept that to penetrate is an important aspect of reproduction, thus human virility. These concepts of masculinity can also be found in *ulu*. *Ulu* was a wood specifically chosen to be incorporated into the *akua hulu manu* as it was a *kino lau* of *Kū*. This association was based on a multiplicity of factors including the hardness of the wood and the height of the trees, both qualities as we have discussed being associated with *Kū*. However, another possibility for this identification was the color association between the *akua* and the wood.

*Ulu* can be found in Hawaiian arts associated with *Kū*, such as the primary wooden temple images of the Kona Coast of Hawai‘i. In Kaepller’s analysis of the materials of these images, she found that the main temple images of *Kū* were only made of *ulu*.¹²⁵ The ancient Hawaiians intimately associated the *ulu* with *Kū*. While surely this

¹²⁴ Ibid., 12.
association was based on a multiplicity of factors, one of the strongest was the color association between the *akua* and the wood, the *ulu* being a red color. The connection between the color red and *Kū* has previously been discussed. Again, the concept of the image as a physical manifestation, or *kino* lau of *Kū* is underscored by utilizing a raw material also considered to be a manifestation of the *akua* into the construction of the *akua hulu manu*.

The presence of wood in use for carrying poles of the *akua hulu manu* had still other implications. We have already discussed in the context of the *hulu hulu* the rite called *lupalupa*, the wrapping of the image in feathers. However, this ritual is also known as *kauila hulu hulu*, understood as “*kauila* wood covered in feathers”. Valeri tells us that “here, *kauila* is perhaps a metonymy for the feather gods, which are supported by a handle of pole” made from the wood.\(^{126}\) Thus, linguistically, the *kauila* associates the *akua hulu manu* not only with the feathers of the *akua hulu manu*, but with the image as a whole, as a manifestation of *Kū*.

*Kauila* can also be called *ka uila*. This creates an association between the *akua hulu manu* and lightning (*ka uila*). Lightning was typically considered to be a manifestation of the power of *akua* in that it imparts light into darkness. The violent nature of lightning also creates an association between the act of nature and the *akua Kū* through the deity’s association with warfare and violence. The identification with lightning also references the ‘*ie’ie* of the *akua hulu manu*, since the forking of the

\(^{126}\) Valeri, 1985, 269.
branches of the plant was often likened to the visual form of lightning.\textsuperscript{127} Therefore, the linguistic examination of the \textit{kauila} within the \textit{akua hulu manu} reveals strong associations between \textit{Kū} reinforcing the concept of the \textit{akua hulu manu} as a \textit{kino lau}.

Clearly the materials and methods selected for use in the construction of the \textit{akua hulu manu} are rich and multifaceted in meaning. In understanding the mythological, linguistic, and artistic associations of the raw and processed materials and well as the conceptual associations with the construction techniques, a more culturally sensitive understanding of the \textit{akua hulu manu} is made possible. Once this understanding has been gained, the question becomes, how can we apply this understanding to the contemporary treatment of these objects.

\textsuperscript{127} Ibid, 269-270.
CHAPTER 3
A BIOGRAPHY OF THREE AKUA HULU MANU

Embedded within the *akua hulu manu*’s complex of meaning lies the ancient Hawaiian concept of genealogy, an association with both the *ali‘i* and *akua*. This genealogical connection is the root of Hawai‘i’s social structure, and as Adrienne Kaeppler herself argues, this was in turn, the basis for the Hawaiian religion. The belief of the *akua hulu manu* as a *kino lau* of the *akua*, and as such a living link in the genealogical chain, did not end with the abolition of the *kapu* system at the end of Kamehameha I’s reign. Rather, this connection, through a colonialist culture, became what we now consider provenance. In examining the provenance of a selection of three specific *akua hulu manu*, we are able to follow the shift in cultural meaning from the traditional *kapu* system of ancient Hawai‘i to the modern, aiding in our investigation into the museological treatment of the objects.

Of the nineteen *akua hulu manu* documented in existence, we shall examine three; the Punahou and Kamehameha *akua hulu manu* housed at the Bishop Museum in Honolulu and the *akua hulu manu* housed within the Cook/Forster Collection of the Georg August Universität Göttingen, Germany. All three feature similar construction techniques and materials, and in that manner, are akin to all other *akua hulu manu* throughout the world.

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129 Kaeppler, 1978, 53.
These three *akua hulu manu* have been selected for examination for a multiplicity of reasons, one being accessibility. While both the Punahou and Kamehameha *akua hulu manu* are permanently located at Bishop Museum, the Göttingen *akua hulu manu* was also in Honolulu for the 2006 exhibit by the Honolulu Academy of Arts entitled *Life in the Pacific of the 1700s: The Cook/Forster Collection of the Georg August University of Göttingen*. The commonality of location facilitated the examination of the three pieces, allowing for a more in-depth analysis of their construction materials and techniques as well as observation of their contemporary museological treatment.

Museological treatment is the secondary factor in the selection of these three *akua hulu manu* for study. The Göttingen *akua hulu manu* is an example of a non-culturally restored piece, meaning that the restoration processes it has undergone have not been overseen by a traditional Hawaiian cultural advisor. The Kamehameha and Punahou *akua hulu manu* have also been restored; however, these processes have been accomplished under careful supervision of cultural advisors. In observing these three specimens, each in a different state of museological care, we are better able to study the items, understand their cultural value, and make culturally conscious decisions regarding the future museological treatment of *akua hulu manu*.

To facilitate the contemporary examination of these three *akua hulu manu*, a formal analysis of the individual specimen is necessary. In addition to the visual information that is obtained from the *akua hulu manu*, there is also provenance.

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130 Other *akua hulu manu* have also undergone processes of restoration or conservation, these three specimens are not unique in that manner.

131 These issues will be expounded upon more fully in Chapter 4.
Following the cultural beliefs of the ancient Hawaiians however, the *akua hulu manu* should be treated as living entities, each possessing their own history and mana. As such, the provenance of the *akua hulu manu* is less an account of where the objects were found than a biography of sorts. This biographical information is necessary to establish not only the physical history of the *akua hulu manu*, but also to place the images in the proper cultural context and aid in our understanding of the power invested in them through their genealogical ties. As the history of each image enters its colonialist era however, we will be able to examine the shift in not only physical treatment of the *akua hulu manu*, but the governing religious structure of the *kapu* system.

KAMEHAMEHA I AKUA HULU MANU

This *akua hulu manu*, housed at the Bishop Museum is known as Kamehameha’s *akua hulu manu* [Fig.1], in particular it is identified as *Kūka‘ilimoku*. The image possesses the standard features of an *akua hulu manu*, including a crest-like mahiole extension of the head. The crest begins near the top of the image’s forehead and extends to the back of the neck totaling 4.5 inches. Overall, the *akua hulu manu* is 68.58 centimeters tall and weighs in at 3 pounds, 1 ounce. The neck of the image is 19.05 centimeters long with a diameter at the base measuring 22.86 centimeters. The majority of the image is covered in red feathers with yellow feathers adorning the top of the mahiole and the base of the neck, much as in the Göttingen image. Black feathers embellish the piece, indicating the eyebrows and perhaps ears of the image. The mouth,

132 Brigham, 1974, 37.
133 Buck, “Clothing.”, 504.
measuring 27.94 centimeters wide, also contains dog-teeth. 94 individually secured teeth fill the mouth of the image, 49 in the upper lip and 45 on the lower. The securement of the teeth in the Kamehameha akua hulu manu differs from that of both the Göttingen and the Punahou akua hulu manu in that the teeth are intentionally filed down to create an evenness in length before a hole was drilled in each base. A cord was threaded through the hole in the tooth and attached to the lips, each tooth individually.\textsuperscript{134} The open mouth of the image is filled with not only the dog-teeth, but a tongue comprised of red feathers as well.\textsuperscript{135} The eyes, pā maka, of the akua hulu manu are comprised of pearl-shell as is standard in the images. This akua hulu manu features a nose, measuring 5.334 centimeters at its widest and 7.112 centimeters in length, which has been woven separately and attached to the figure. The piece is supported by the inclusion of four hoops of 'te 'te within the frame of the akua hulu manu located above and below the eye sockets, below the chin, and near the base of the neck.\textsuperscript{136}

There is a long genealogical history associated with this akua hulu manu beginning on the Big Island of Hawai'i with Liloa, chief of the island during the 18\textsuperscript{th} century. From Liloa, the ki'\textsuperscript{137} was handed down to Kekuaokalani, Umi, Keawenui'umi, Lonoikamakahiki, and eventually to Kalaniopu'u. Upon his death in 1782, Kalaniopu'u designated two heirs; his son Kiwalo to become high chief of the island, and his nephew Kamehameha to become kahu\textsuperscript{138} of Kūkaʻilimoku.\textsuperscript{139} To bestow the title of Chief to

\textsuperscript{134} Brigham, 1974, 37.
\textsuperscript{135} Buck, "Religion", 508.
\textsuperscript{136} Ibid., 505.
\textsuperscript{137} The term "kiʻi" means figure, or in this case, refers to the akua hulu manu (Pukui, 148).
\textsuperscript{138} Kahu: Hawaiian word meaning caregiver, or in the case of akua hulu manu, the person entrusted with the safety of the God (Pukui, 113).
Kiwalo yet appoint Kamehameha as kahu of Kūka‘ilimoku broke with a long tradition of immediate genealogical succession of both titles (Chief and kahu). Following such a division, civil war broke out over control of the island of Hawai‘i.

In possession of Kūka‘ilimoku, Kamehameha fought his cousin Kiwalō over leadership and eventually conquered him at the battle of Pu‘ukohola. By 1795, Kamehameha had successfully united all the islands of the Hawaiian archipelago under his rule. At this point, the importance of Kūka‘ilimoku began to decline as his powers were less conspicuous. During the reign of Kamehameha, sustained contact with Europeans began, and these interactions brought about great changes to the traditional kapu system of ancient Hawai‘i.

The kapu system of Hawai‘i began to dissolve during the later years of Kamehameha I.’s reign. As Europeans, including Cook, became more familiar to the people of Hawaii, small infractions of the kapu system began to occur such as the drinking of alcohol by both sexes together. Upon Kamehameha’s death in 1819, his son Liholiho was named as heir to the kingdom.

Just as his uncle Kalaniopu‘u had done, Kamehameha split the inheritance of the kingdom between his son Liholiho, appointed new high Chief of the united Hawaiian Islands, and his nephew Kekuaokalani, kahu of Kūka‘ilimoku, reinforcing this past break with genealogical tradition. Having grown up in an environment where the kapu system was frequently being violated, albeit in small measures, Liholiho, with the support

140 All the islands except Kaua‘i (Kaeppler, 1982, 99).
141 Ibid., 102.
142 Ibid., 101.
of the two most important wives of Kamehameha (Keopuolani and Ka'ahumanu) broke with the kapu system by ceremonially eating with women.\textsuperscript{143} Upon this break with the traditional system, a civil war broke out between Liholiho and the opposition backed by Kekuaokalani. The war was brief and Kekuaokalani, killed in battle, relinquished his position of kahu of Kūka'īlimoku to Liholiho through death.\textsuperscript{144} As the old kapu system was no longer in place, and as Kūka'īlimoku was no longer such an important deity, the exchange of previously kapu objects such as akua hulu manu between Hawaiians and Europeans became commonplace.

In the early nineteenth century, with the fall of the traditional kapu system, traditional Hawaiian images such as akua hulu manu became objects of curiosity for European traders. As such, "the personal history of an object became alienated."\textsuperscript{145} After the death of Liholiho, records for this particular akua hulu manu become scare, although they reference the hiding of the image in a Kona cave, an act, which Kaeppler argues, may indicate that Hawaiians were treating the image as an important dead ancestor.\textsuperscript{146} Eventually, the akua hulu manu was given to a Protestant missionary, and in 1850 became the property of the Museum of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions in Boston, Massachusetts.\textsuperscript{147} Bishop Museum purchased the image from the Board in 1895 and has been in possession of the akua hulu manu ever since.

\textsuperscript{143}The consumption of food by the ali‘i, and men in general, in front of women was something that was strictly forbidden by the kapu system.

\textsuperscript{144}Kaeppler, 1982, 102.


\textsuperscript{146}Kaeppler, 1982, 103.

\textsuperscript{147}Brigham, 1974, 37.
The wonderfully detailed record of the *Kūkaʻīlimoku akua hulu manu* that exists does so because of the genealogical associations with it. The *akua hulu manu* were passed down from one generation to the next, entrusting the care of the *akua* and his sculptural embodiment to a *kahu*. Traditionally it is known that these positions were given based upon direct family ties, the heir to the chiefly position becoming *kahu* to the image. However, with the act of Kalaniopuʻu bequeathing the *akua hulu manu* to his nephew Kamehameha, the beginning of the break from the traditional *kapu* system began, ultimately leading to the exchange of these images as cultural curios with Europeans.

**PUNAHOU AKUA HULU MANU**

This second *akua hulu manu* under investigation is also housed at the Bishop Museum in Honolulu, Hawaiʻi. Let us examine this image known as the Punahou *akua hulu manu* [Fig.2]. This figure is one of eight existing *akua hulu manu* that feature attached *lauoho*, or human hair. The hair of this *akua hulu manu* has been attached so as to lie short on the sides and long and wavy down the center of the head, forming a *mahiole* style.¹⁴⁸ Measuring 55.88 centimeters tall, the *akua hulu manu* has lost much of its feathers, leaving only enough remnants behind to enable observers to determine that the majority of the figure had originally been covered in red feathers. The eyebrows of the figure remain, denoted with black feathers, while yellow feathers rim the bottom of

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the neck. The *akua hulu manu* features a large open mouth, 15.875 centimeters long, in a crescent shape, convex on the top and straight on the bottom. Much like the Göttingen *akua hulu manu*, the Punahou *akua hulu manu* features a mouth filled with attached dog-teeth. These have been strung onto cord and attached separately to the lips. A total of seventy-four dog-teeth fill the mouth of the figure, forty on the upper lip and thirty four on the lower. Like all other *akua hulu manu*, the eyes of the figure, *pa maka*, are made of pearl-shell and attached to the base of the figure using wooden pegs. On the Punahou *akua hulu manu*, the pegs are located relatively close to the nose, giving the figure an almost cross-eyed appearance. The nose of this *akua hulu manu* is quite different than others in the fact that it is built into the frame of the figure as opposed to being separately attached. The support of the Punahou *akua hulu manu* comes from a central stick placed in the interior of the figure. It attaches to the figure on the interior of the forehead and the front of the neck. It is visible through the mouth.

This particular *akua hulu manu* was previously considered to be in poor condition, as most of the feather-work is missing and sections of the *olonā nae* had become detached [Fig.2.1]. Sometime in the 1980’s however, Bishop Museum officials made the decision to have the piece restored, reattaching the *olonā* to the framework of the *akua hulu manu*. The Punahou *akua hulu manu* differs structurally from the other two *akua hulu manu* examined within this paper in that it is lacking a central crest atop the head. In place of the crested *mahiole*, the Punahou *akua hulu manu* features attached

149 Buck, “Religion”, 509.
150 Ibid., 509.
151 Brigham, 1974, 37.
human hair in central strip. This formation of hair can also be called a mahiole much like the helmets that the other two akua hulu manu exhibit.

Unlike the lengthy genealogical record attached to the Kamehameha akua hulu manu, records for the Punahou image are strictly colonial in nature. The name of the image itself comes from this modern record of ownership, or provenance, first recorded in the 1860's. At this time, the image was owned by the Reverend Alonza Chapin, stationed in Honolulu for the purposes of missionary work for a period of eight years. How Reverend Chapin came to own such an object is unclear. The akua hulu manu was donated by Reverend Chapin to the Trustees of the Museum at O'ahu College, known now as Punahou School. O'ahu College retained ownership of the akua hulu manu until 1900, at which point, unable to care for it properly, they donated it to the Bishop Museum in Honolulu.152

GÖTTINGEN AKUA HULU MANU

The akua hulu manu housed at the Göttingen Museum [Fig.3] is similar in form to the Kamehameha akua hulu manu at Bishop Museum in that it features a crest-like projection on the top of the head called a mahiole and an open mouth. Tall and slender, measuring 46.5cm tall and 16.5cm at its widest, the akua hulu manu is covered almost entirely in red feathers, with accents of yellow feathers at the top of the mahiole,

demarcating ears, and in the form of a collar around the base of the neck. Black feathers distinguish the eyebrows of the piece.\(^{153}\) The open mouth is standard in its exaggerated figure-eight shape, forming what Adrienne Kaeppler calls “the mouth of disrespect”.\(^{154}\)

We shall discuss the significance of this shape later on in our investigation. The mouth is filled with dog-teeth which have been strung together, then attached to the inside of the mouth. The pearl-shell eyes, or \(pā\) maka, of the akua hulu manu, are set diagonally into the figure. In the center of each shell disk are wooden pegs that dually form the pupil of the eye and serve to anchor the eye to the inner framework of the akua hulu manu. Beaglehole described this akua hulu manu in 1967 as, “being a representation of a human figure, but frightfully distorted, with a Helmet on its head.”\(^{155}\) Overall, in its appearance, this akua hulu manu conforms to the majority of the extant nineteen surviving akua hulu manu.

Much like the Punahou akua hulu manu, there are no genealogical records in existence for this image. The record of provenance that does is strictly European in nature. While we cannot be sure who possessed this akua hulu manu before its departure from Hawai‘i, we can be sure that it was created sometime during or before the reign of Kamehameha I. The image has been deemed a “Cook piece”, meaning that it made the voyage from Hawai‘i to Europe on one of the three Captain James Cook voyages in the Pacific. On both the second and third voyage, between 1768 and 1779, two German natural scientists, Johann Reinhold Forster and his son Georg Forster, were enlisted to


\(^{154}\) Kaeppler, 1982, 97.

collect the flora and fauna encountered upon the journey. The two men also collected many cultural artifacts as well, usually two of each specimen, much in the same manner that they collected scientific evidence. These two men had ties to the academic community in Göttingen, located in the Lower Saxony region of Germany, an area ruled by the English royal house. As such, upon their return, many of their 'curiosities' were sold to collectors in the Göttingen region. Others remained in their personal collection or were gifted to King George III along with other artifacts collected by the remainder of the crew.

How the *akua hulu manu* actually ended up at the Museum is unknown, although two possibilities exist. The first explanation is that, in 1782, King George III made a donation of 500 objects from Cook’s voyages to the Academic Museum of the Georg August Museum, the first ethnographic museum in the world. It is possible that the *akua hulu manu* was included in this donation. The second and most widely accepted explanation for the appearance of the *akua hulu manu* is that all of the feather-work now located in the Göttingen Museum, entered the collection through the London based dealer George Humphrey. Adrienne Kaeppler recounts that sometime in late 1780, Humphrey was commissioned by the Museum to put together a collection of Cook artifacts. In June of 1781 Humphrey attended the sale of the collection of David Samwell, surgeon’s mate aboard the ‘Resolution’ from February 1776 to August of 1778 when he was transferred to the ‘Discovery’ following the death of surgeon, William Anderson, who died during the voyage. The Samwell collection was broken up among many bidders, Humphrey
being one of them who bought at least 150 recorded pieces.\textsuperscript{156} It is possible that some of the unrecorded pieces could have included the \textit{akua hulu manu} upon which time it was sold to the Göttingen Museum.

Through the genealogical record and/or the documentation of provenance, we are able to see how the shift from the traditional \textit{kapu} system to a more modern set of regulations allowed for the exchange of \textit{akua hulu manu} from Hawaiians to Europeans. Understanding this change in \textit{kapu}, coupled with the traditional complex of meaning imbued in the images through their materials and methods of construction, is integral to our contemporary comprehension of the \textit{akua hulu manu}, particularly in terms of their museological care.

Our examination of the materials and methods of construction of *akua hulu manu* forms the basis for a historically contextualized understanding of the cultural meaning of the images. Taking into consideration the genealogical nature of the images and the movement from the traditional *kapu* system to a contemporary one, the *akua hulu manu* are currently situated in a complex framework of value systems, a combination of traditional *kapu* and modern scientific and cultural learning. It is crucial for museums and galleries to take both the traditional understanding of the image as well as the modern cultural practices into account when making decisions on the conservation and display of Hawaiian art, particularly the *akua hulu manu*.

Contemporary museological treatment of *akua hulu manu* may be broken down into two categories: restoration and conservation, and display. Conservation aims for the examination, documentation, treatment, and preventative care of objects, supported by research and education, while restoration seeks to return the work of art to a previous, visually original state. The controversy surrounding these processes arises out of the change to both original materials and methods of construction through the process of restoration. These processes are compound, involving questions of materials and techniques used to make and remake *akua hulu manu*. The materials and methods of construction of *akua hulu manu* are part of the complex of meaning surrounding the

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157 American Institute for Conservation of Historic and Artistic Works
physicality of the *akua*; they are not incidental to its meaning. As such, the main issue surrounding the museological treatment of *akua hulu manu* is one of *kapu* observance. Therefore, conservation and display should only be carried out using original methods and materials, to avoid disrupting this complex of meaning.

The *kapu* system of ancient Hawai‘i is a complex system of social and religious control. Throughout the course of our examination of the *akua hulu manu* we have seen how the *kapu* system serves as a social and religious framework for both the construction and treatment of these objects, controlling who could access the image as well as when and where the images were housed and used. These interactions, along with all others within Hawaiian society, were governed by the *kapu* system. The relevance of this concept for museological practice is, therefore, centered around interaction; the contemporary interaction surrounding and including the *akua hulu manu*.

Through the genealogical record associated with *akua hulu manu*, in particular the Kamehameha I. *akua hulu manu*, we are able to follow the transition from this traditional *kapu* system of ancient Hawai‘i to a more modern cultural observance of an altered complex. Placing the *akua hulu manu* within a museological context continues a European tradition of decontextualization and appropriation of Indigenous cultures through the violation of the Hawaiian *kapu* system. The contemporary treatment of *akua hulu manu* is a violation of the traditional *kapu* system of ancient Hawai‘i in their display, decontextualization, and their restorative treatment.
DISPLAY

In terms of display of the objects, it is necessary to discuss viewership and visibility, both historically and contemporaneously. Through our contextualization of the *akua hulu manu*, we have come to the understanding that visual access to the *akua hulu manu* in ancient Hawai‘i was restricted to *kahuna*, *kahu*, *ali‘i*, and, during times of warfare, warriors. These interactions between people and the *akua hulu manu* were structured around the *kapu* system. Every detail, from the aforementioned viewership to the visibility of the objects was regulated to fit into this system of social and religious control. In their contemporary museum settings, *akua hulu manu* are afforded no such regulation. These sacred images are accessible by all visitors, and their visibility, while taken into account in structuring displays, is constructed based on ease of visibility, not the traditional *kapu* regulation of restriction. Therefore, the contemporary museological display of *akua hulu manu* is a violation of the traditional *kapu* system of ancient Hawai‘i.

The second issue involved with the modern display of *akua hulu manu* is the visibility of the image to all viewers. As we have previously discussed, the *akua hulu manu* were housed within the *hale mana*, wrapped in white *kapa*¹⁵⁸, and placed high in the shelter, thus ensuring their sanctity and safe-keeping.¹⁵⁹ Here the *akua hulu manu* would have been seen atop its pole, resting high above the head of those who were able to

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¹⁵⁸ Here the two means of violating the *kapu* system are inseparable; the unrestricted access to the *akua hulu manu* and the current housing of the objects in museums and galleries. The original location of the *akua hulu manu*, the *hale mana* of the *luakini heiau*, ensured both a proper place for the *akua* to reside as well as sheltered the image from view. Therefore, the debate over the issue of location in violation of the *kapu* system can be conflated with the debate over the unrestricted access to the items.

¹⁵⁹ Valeri, 1985, 246.
enter the structure. As previously mentioned, in ancient Hawai‘i, height was often linked with the realm of the *akua*. Therefore, to place the image in a high location not only prohibited it from being damaged and restricted both viewership and visibility, the height signified its *mana*.

This same issue of height can be addressed within the second traditional role of the *akua hulu manu*; warfare. When carried onto the battlefield, the *akua hulu manu* were carried upon their wooden poles. This created an elevation of height over the heads of the warriors. Not only was height associated here with the *akua*, but it also conceptually allowed for clearer vision. As we have discussed, the concept of sight is intricately linked with both the deities in general and the *akua hulu manu* in specific. An all-knowing *akua* is likened to an all-seeing being. Therefore, to raise the *akua hulu manu* overhead was to allow for greater sight.

Contemporaneously, *akua hulu manu* may be found throughout the world located in museums and galleries. The objects, when on display, are placed in glass cases, and when in storage collections away from the eye of the public, are placed on shelves in rooms of various other ‘artifacts’ of Hawai‘i. A prime example of this is the treatment of the *akua hulu manu* housed at the Bishop Museum. Both the Punahou and Kamehameha *akua hulu manu* were on display during the exhibition “*Nā Hulu Ali‘i: Royal Feathers*”. During the exhibition, both images were housed in glass cases, placed approximately five feet from the floor thereby bringing the viewer on a ‘face-to-face’

160 Valeri, 1985, 4.
161 Ibid.
162 “*Nā Hulu Ali‘i: Royal Feathers*” ran from September 2, 2006 through January 8, 2007 at the Bishop Museum, Honolulu, Hawai‘i.
level with the *akua hulu manu*. The exhibition of the *akua hulu manu* at Bishop Museum broke with the traditional observance of the *kapu* system and placed the images on an even viewing level with the visitor. Not only are the images now missing their original wooden poles that contribute to the understanding of the *akua hulu manu* as a *kino lau* of Kū, but the image has literally and metaphorically been brought down to the level of the viewer. In decreasing the displayed height of the *akua hulu manu*, thus increasing the visibility of the object, the Museum has removed *mana* from the piece and violated the *kapu* system. This decrease in height also creates a decrease in the perceived sight of the image however, which in turn, lessens the *mana* of the *akua hulu manu* breaking the *kapu* system. While this exhibition of feather-work displayed the violation of the *kapu* system through their display, it also demonstrated a decontextualization of the images, a concept we will discuss later on.

The issue confronting us today then is how best to display objects such as *akua hulu manu* and still observe the *kapu* system. As we have seen through our genealogical examination of the Kamehameha *akua hulu manu*, the very *kapu* system that should govern museological processes has changed over the years, becoming significantly less restrictive since the reign of Liholiho. Contemporary practitioners of Hawaiian religion observe this modern *kapu* system. La'akea Suganuma, a spokesman for the Royal Hawaiian Academy of Traditional Arts, observes this modern *kapu* system, and argues that such stringent regulations need not apply to these images as they should be viewed from a purely artistic point of view. He makes the argument that the *akua hulu manu* are merely representations of the *akua*, a god which has not diminished in any way. In fact,
he likens the *akua hulu manu* to a crucifix as a symbol of the faith, but no longer the
embodiment of the *akua* it was once believed to be.\textsuperscript{163} As these images are no longer the
sacred *heiau* images they once were, the display of these images by contemporary
museums may be seen as acceptable under the guidance of the new *kapu* system.

**DECONTEXTUALIZATION**

Museums, as we know them, are a modern invention, a gallery of ‘art’ or ‘history’
by which to study the humanities society offers. This educational experience however
grew out of the European concept of colonialism and its accompanying ‘cabinets of
curiosity’. These origins of museums are still visible in the treatment of indigenous art,
specifically in this case, the treatment of *akua hulu manu*. Placed within a colonially
constructed framework of ‘art’, *akua hulu manu* are decontextualized objects.

The colonization of Hawai‘i, and the loss of traditional indigenous culture, began
with the voyages of Captain Cook to the Islands in the late 1700’s. These voyages of
discovery led to the appropriation of materials.\textsuperscript{164} Items which left Hawai‘i during these
exchanges of goods included *akua hulu manu*.\textsuperscript{165} Upon their arrival in England, the
objects brought by Cook’s men were viewed as wonders of a primitive land and peoples.

During the 18\textsuperscript{th} and 19\textsuperscript{th} century, objects such as these were collected by wealthy

\textsuperscript{163} La‘akea Suganuma, Email, Honolulu, 18 March 2008.
\textsuperscript{164} Hawaiians were quick to accept Cook as they believed he was the *akua* Lono. Materials, such as red
feathers, that the men brought with them on their ships, were readily exchanged for other goods by the
Hawaiian islanders.
\textsuperscript{165} By the time Cook and his men arrived in Hawai‘i, under the rule of Kamehameha, the traditional *kapu*
system had been overturned. Therefore, the *akua hulu manu*, while still considered objects of wealth,
prestige, and power, did not contain the same *mana* as previously believed.
individuals and placed in private galleries as ‘curiosities’ stemming from a Renaissance tradition of a similar nature.\textsuperscript{166} This type of display grew into the museums with which we are familiar today.

The idea of ‘curiosities’ continues today in museum displays of indigenous art. Cabinets often contain several different kinds of artifacts arranged in a visually appealing manner for the viewer, not with any regard for traditional context.\textsuperscript{167} While the Bishop Museum does not go so far in their decontextualized display of the \textit{akua hulu manu}, the display isolates the image and removes it from its ritualistic, burial, and warfare context. As previously demonstrated, the traditional roles of the \textit{akua hulu manu} are manifested through the materials and methods of construction. Therefore, to remove the image from its proper context creates a separation between object and function, thus decreasing the \textit{mana} or power imbued in the object. Removing the \textit{akua hulu manu} from proper context is therefore constitutes a violation of the \textit{kapu} system.

This decontextualization of \textit{akua hulu manu}, traditionally seen only during particular events because of their incredible \textit{mana} and position as possibly, the most important of the \textit{heiau} images, in its violation of the \textit{kapu} system, essentially disavows the presence of \textit{mana}. How then should museums acknowledge the \textit{mana} of objects in their care? This is a difficult question to answer, assuming there is an answer. As previously discussed, the \textit{mana} of these images is rooted in their historical function, their materials, their methods of construction, and their genealogical associations. The \textit{akua hulu manu} were objects


involved in ancient Hawaiian religion and society. Today, these objects still carry many of the same associations. Hui Malama and OHA believe that images such as the *akua hulu manu* are “needed by Native Hawaiian religious leaders in order to help validate, strengthen, and continue traditional ‘*aumakua* practices today.”¹⁶⁸ As objects that remain socially and religiously important, it is crucial for museums to properly acknowledge the *mana* of these images. In order to do so, a full cultural understanding of the *akua hulu manu* must be reached. This paper is the first step in reaching this understanding. Upon possessing this knowledge, decisions based upon the modern *kapu* system and honoring the *mana* of these pieces may be made regarding their museological treatment. An area in desperate need of this attention is the processes of restoration of *akua hulu manu*. Through the cultural knowledge gained through our investigation into the *akua hulu manu*, museums will be able to acknowledge the *mana* of these images more appropriately by correcting issues of display and processes of restoration.

**PROCESSES OF RESTORATION**

The final issue we will discuss in regards to museological treatment of *akua hulu manu* is the processes of restoration, particularly the use of non-indigenous materials and methods of construction within these processes. As our intertextual examination of the *akua hulu manu* has shown, the materials and methods of construction of these images

¹⁶⁸ National Park Service, *NAGPRA Review Committee Meeting Transcript: November 1, 2, 3, 1996* (Myrtle Beach, South Carolina, 1996).
were significant in imbuing the object with mana. The social and religious aspects of the akua hulu manu within the context of ancient Hawai'i were deeply rooted in the physicality of the image. As such, to alter the materials and construction of the images in any manner, results in a loss of the mana of the piece and a violation of the traditional kapu system. Therefore, the museological processes of restoration should be abandoned for a more culturally sensitive process of conservation.

USE OF NON-INDIGENOUS MATERIALS

Extensive restoration, including the alteration of materials, has taken place to the akua hulu manu housed in the Georg August Universität in Göttingen. This image made its first restored appearance during the exhibition entitled "Life in the Pacific of the 1700's: The Cook/Forster Collection of the Georg August University of Göttingen" at the Academy of the Arts in Honolulu in 2006. When the akua hulu manu was unveiled, viewers were stunned by the bright plumage and seemingly perfect condition of the piece. Most akua hulu manu throughout the world are in some state of disrepair due to the fragility of the materials and construction methods coupled with the age of the pieces. Most of the damage can be seen in the loss of feathers from the akua hulu manu. The Göttingen akua hulu manu however, upon sight, did not seem to be in the same state. Instead, the image seemed almost freshly feathered.

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169 The exhibit "Life in the Pacific of the 1700's: The Cook/Forster Collection of the Georg August University of Göttingen" ran from February 23, 2006 to May 14, 2006 at the Academy of the Arts, Honolulu, Hawai'i.
Upon extensive research, it appears that the Göttingen *akua hulu manu* has undergone extensive restoration, including the addition of non-indigenous and non-Hawaiian feathers. Used instead were brightly dyed feathers of a readily available bird, presumably a fowl.\(^{170}\) In studying the contemporary restoration practices of museums, it seems that often, non-traditional feather material is incorporated into the restoration of the items.\(^{171}\) Typically, when done so, the new material is integrated into the piece underneath the traditional materials, meaning the added feathers would not be visible per se but add to the total visual effect of the object.\(^{172}\) In the case of the restoration of the Göttingen *akua hulu manu* however, the additional feather material is quite obvious, covering the entire piece.

Having demonstrated the complexity of *kaona* present within the *akua hulu manu* due to material, the process of restoration and its subsequent alteration of material is thus evident as a destructive process. In the Göttingen *akua hulu manu*, although the base of 'ie'ie vine and the covering of *ʻolonā nae* remain intact, establishing the image as a *kino lau* of Kū, the red feathers of the *i ʻtwi* and the yellow feathers of the 'ā ʻū bird have been replaced. These materials were originally chosen for a specific purpose; their embodiment of Kū. The feathers were not chosen for use in the *akua hulu manu* based upon ease of availability, illustrated through the complex process of feather collection. To

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\(^{170}\) Gerry Barton, Interview, Honolulu, 17 November 2006.
\(^{171}\) Another practice, though used less frequently, is to remove feathers from a piece which is not as visually appealing as the object which is being restored. The feather removed from “object B” are then incorporated into the restoration of the “object A”, thus recycling the material. This process is no less damaging to either object, in fact more so due to its effect on two objects rather than one. (Michelle Kamalu Dupreez, Interview, Honolulu, 14 February 2008.)
\(^{172}\) Ibid.
replace the feathers of the *akua hulu manu*, bodies of Kū, with dyed feathers of another species is to remove a layer of religious meaning from the image.

This alteration of material not only results in a loss of spiritual meaning in the *akua hulu manu*, but genealogical significance as well. Nicholas Thomas tells us that "the object was not merely a sign but a material genealogy that connected divine ancestors and previous rulers with a living individual, as well as a substance charged with divine presence in itself."\(^{173}\) The feathers of the *akua hulu manu* therefore not only embodied Kū but connected the *akua* with the ancient Hawaiian society. The materials of the *akua hulu manu* also functioned to connect the ancestors, both divine and lay, with their contemporaries. The strong genealogical ties of the *akua hulu manu* are most clearly recorded in the Kamehameha *akua hulu manu* in its transition from Kalani‘opu‘u to Kamehameha I.\(^{174}\) In passing the care of the *akua hulu manu* to Kamehameha, Kalani‘opu‘u effectively transferred his *mana* to his successor. This transfer of power was integral to the social history of the ancient Hawaiians. Thus, the *akua hulu manu* was a marker of the social history of the Islands. Contemporaneously, even in their museum context, *akua hulu manu* continue to serve as a conduit for the mana between *akua* and Hawaiians as well as visually manifesting the social history of the archipelago. To alter the materials of the *akua hulu manu* in any manner is to disrupt this flow of *mana* and break the genealogical record.

The Bishop Museum has avoided the issue of incorporation of non-indigenous materials into their restoration processes of the Punahou *akua hulu manu* and their


\(^{174}\) II, 139-40.
conservation of the Kamehameha *akua hulu manu*. While the Punahou image has lost all of its feathers, the objects, still a manifestation of *Kū*, retains its original ‘*olonā nae*. The loss of the feathers over time in no way lessens the traditional value associated with the piece; it is only through the addition of non-authentic, non-traditional materials that a loss in value occurs. Bishop Museum, during the 1980s began an intricate process of restoration of the Punahou *akua hulu manu*. They did not seek to re-feather the image. Rather, they reattached the ‘*olonā nae* which had become separated from the ‘*le‘ie* base. Traditional specialists or contemporary *kahuna* were brought in by the Museum to oversee the reattachment of the ‘*olonā nae* to the structure of the *akua hulu manu*. Once it was reattached, the work of the restoration team was complete. The *akua hulu manu* was also placed upon a more secure, steady base, easing both the transport of the image from collections and storage to display, and safeguarding it from structural failure.175

The Museum’s conservational treatment of the Kamehameha *akua hulu manu* is similar in its aims to reinforce the structure of the image in order to maintain the image in its present state. Widely considered to be in excellent condition, this particular image retains the majority of its original materials and is both structurally and visually sound. In preparation for the exhibit *Nā Hulu Ali‘i: Royal Feathers*, the Museum attempted to stabilize the *akua hulu manu* on a base to ensure both the support structure of the piece and conserve its present state. For this process, much like for the Punahou *akua hulu manu*, the Conservation Department at Bishop Museum created a base of acid-free cardboard upon which the image is able to sit. A cone of the same material projects up

175 Valerie Free, Interview, Honolulu, 14 February 2008.
from the base into the center of the hollow kiʻi to fully support the image’s weight and aid in maintaining the shape of the structure.\textsuperscript{176} Clearly, both the restoration of the Punahou \textit{akua hulu manu} and the conservation of the Kamehameha \textit{akua hulu manu} by the Bishop Museum have attempted to maintain the traditional meaning and value invested in the images by refraining from altering the original materials.

The museological process of conservation and restoration carried out by Bishop Museum may serve as a model for the contemporary treatment of \textit{akua hulu manu}. The staff here has, through their commitment to cultural knowledge, taken steps to ensure that their treatment of the images falls within the structures of the modern \textit{kapu} system. The employment of modern cultural specialists as well as the maintenance of original materiality accomplishes this cultural preservation.

\textbf{ALTERATION OF CONSTRUCTION TECHNIQUES}

Perhaps the most complex issue surrounding the debate over restoration of \textit{akua hulu manu} is the concept of the loss of value, meaning, or \textit{mana} through the alteration of traditional construction techniques. As previously discussed, the creation of \textit{akua hulu manu} was a lengthy process involving all strata of society. Therefore the image was a visual manifestation of the social structure of ancient Hawaiʻi. In altering these construction techniques through contemporary restoration, this layer of \textit{kaona}, or meaning, is stripped from the image.

\textsuperscript{176} Ibid.
Adrienne Kaeppler states that "artifacts and works of art are products of human action and interaction and are visual manifestations of social relationships."\(^{177}\) In no object is this more apparent than *akua hulu manu*, particularly when examining the feather material of the piece. As previously demonstrated, the processes of collecting, sorting, binding, and attaching the feathers to the *akua hulu manu* involved the entire community. The feathers of the image are not only embodiments of the *akua*, but visual manifestations of the societal structure of ancient Hawai‘i. To alter the traditional construction technique of the *akua hulu manu* through the process of restoration is to remove this layer of social signification from the piece.

The restoration of the Göttingen *akua hulu manu* is an example of how a modern museological process, through the incorporation of non-traditional, non-indigenous materials and construction techniques, may remove the ancient Hawaiian social significance of an object. As we have discovered, the new feather material incorporated in the restoration of the Göttingen *akua hulu manu* were not original feathers but presumably those of fowl, dyed to resemble the lost i‘iwi and ‘ō‘ō. These feathers did not come from *Makahiki* offerings. Nor did they come from the collective work of the bird catchers and hunters of ancient Hawai‘i. In utilizing feathers obtained perhaps from a modern process of mass production, the social significance of the incorporation of the community into the construction of the *akua hulu manu* has been removed.

The visual manifestation of ancient Hawaiian societal structure, when removed, results in a loss of social meaning to the piece in multiple ways. Not only does it replace

\(^{177}\) Kaeppler, 1985, 106.
the ritualistic creation of the *akua hulu manu* with a process of mass production, but it removes the underlying conceptual meaning of binding seen throughout the arts of Hawai‘i and Polynesia. Discussed in the writings of Valeri and Gell, the construction of the *akua hulu manu*, through incorporation of materials and literal acts of binding, such as the feathers to the ‘olonā and the ‘olonā to the ‘ie‘ie, echoed the concept of societal binding through the cooperative effect in the creation of the image.

In the restoration of the Göttingen *akua hulu manu*, the traditional process of construction has been abandoned. Although exact records detailing the process of the image’s restoration are non existent, it is doubtful that the Göttingen Museum employed a *kahuna* to re-feather the object. By not observing the traditional construction methods, let alone materials, the Museum has, in effect, removed the ancient Hawaiian community from the image. In removing the society from the *akua hulu manu*, the image no longer echoes the Hawaiian concept of binding and lacks the traditional social significance. The restoration of the Punahou *akua hulu manu* on the other hand not only preserved the original state of the piece, but acknowledged and incorporated the rites and rituals of ancient Hawai‘i, through the employment of a *kahuna*, in order to assure that the contemporary *kapu* system was observed and the cultural meaning of the image was preserved. In maintaining the traditional social and religious systems associated with the *akua hulu manu*, Bishop Museum provides an example of how to properly handle the restoration of ancient Hawaiian art.

178 This doubt springs forth not only from the lack of *kahuna*, especially in the Germanic location, but also from the understanding that a traditional practitioner of Hawaiian arts would not condone, let alone take part, in these detrimental acts of restoration.
CONCLUSION

The *akua hulu manu* are complex ancient Hawaiian socio-/religious images whose meaning is deeply rooted within the physicalities of the object, both its materials and methods of construction. Historically functioning within death and burial, the *luakini heiau*, and warfare, these images served as embodiments of the *akua Kū*. Pualani Kanahele says of Hawaiian antiquities, “we need today to reinterpret our connection to these particular objects.”179 He goes on to say that although the images were used historically, “it still has the same function for us today. And the function is that we’re still fighting the battle of maintaining a very high level of being connected to our land.”180 Clearly these ancient images still hold great *mana*, though they are governed by a contemporary *kapu* system significantly less stringent than the ancient system.

Through our understanding of the *akua hulu manu* as a *kino lau* of Kū and a visual manifestation of Hawaiian society gained through our intertextual examination of the materials and methods of construction, we may discuss the museological treatment of Hawaiian antiquities through a more culturally sensitive lens. The three images we have examined, the Kamehameha, Punahou and Göttingen *akua hulu manu*, are examples of images which have undergone contemporary museological treatment. As demonstrated by the process of restoration executed by the Gottingen University museum, and the exhibitions of Bishop Museum, contemporary treatment of the arts of Indigenous cultures

180 Ibid.
often results in damage to the traditional socio-, religious-, cultural meaning of an image.

For *akua hulu manu*, the primary issue, violation of the *kapu* system, is predominantly based upon the physicalities of the objects, their materials and methods of construction.

Our investigation has shown how the *kapu* system changed dramatically after the reign of Kamehameha I. and today is a more lax system of religious rather than social control. Though we have examined how the display of *akua hulu manu* by Bishop Museum and the restoration of the image by the Georg August Universität Göttingen in Germany have failed to fully take into account the contemporary *kapu* system, the mistakes of these institutions may serve as a lesson to all scholars and museum practitioners of Indigenous arts. It is crucial for museums to take into account the complexes that construct meaning in objects, in the case of the *akua hulu manu*, the physicalities of the image, in making decisions of museological treatment. Restoration must be abandoned in favor of the less culturally destructive process of conservation. These processes should only be performed under the supervision of a cultural practitioner, someone who has been instructed in the cultural knowledge needed to properly handle the *akua hulu manu*. 
Figure 5.1
Figure 7.1
Figure 10
Figure 16
GLOSSARY

‘aha – prayer effective only without interruption
akua – god, goddess, image, idol, spirit
akua hulu manu – bird feather god
akua noho – a spirit that takes possession of people and speaks through them as a medium
ali‘i – chief
alokahi – single pair twine
alolua ‘umi‘i pa‘a – double interlocking twining
‘apapane – Himatone sanguinea
‘aumakua – family or personal gods, deified ancestors
haku hulu – male feather worker
hale – house, building, institution
hale mana – the largest and primary temple within the luakini
hākī ‘i – tie
hīlo – twisting
heiau kaua – temple used to bring success in war
heiau loulu – a temple erected to prevent starvation, drought, ruination, and other epidemics
helu onne – third victim in a battle
hōkū – star
ho o‘omanamana – to impart mana, as to idols or objects, to deify
huluhulu – feathers, body hair
hulumanu – bird feathers
‘ie – aerial root of the ‘ie ‘ie
‘ie ‘ie – Freycinetia arborea
‘i‘iwi – Vestiaria coccinea
‘ike – to see, to know, to understand
imu – an underground oven
iwi – bones
‘e‘e – yellow feathers of the ‘ō ‘ō
‘ilio – dog
ka‘ā – thread, line
ka‘ā lua – two ply
kā‘ai – sennit caskets
kāhāi – variation of ka‘ai
kahua – caretaker, guardian, keeper
kahuna – priest
kahuna nui – high priest
kahuna nui ‘o Palikū – a high priest of the order of Lono
kahuna ‘o Kanaiu – priest of the order of Kū
kapa – tapa
kapu – taboo, sacredness
kauila – Alphitonia ponderosa and Colunrina oppositifolia
Kia manu – bird catcher
ki ‘i – image, statue, picture, photograph, drawing, likeness, idol
kino – body, person, receptacle, form, material
kino lau – many forms, many bodies
koana – wefts
ko’o – long, as in feathers
la’a – sacred, consecrated
lā‘au – tree, plant, wood, forest, club, hardness
lauoho – hair of the head
lehua – warrior and beloved friend, killed first in battle
loulu – long ritual dedicating a temple including Haku ‘ōhi’a, Kaula nui, Kuiki, and Hono rites
luakini – large heiau where ali’i prayed and human sacrifices were offered
lupalupa – rite of purification
ma‘awe loaloa – warps
mahiole – feather helmet with ‘ie’ie framework
maka – mesh, eye
maka‘āinana – commoner, populace
Makahiki – period beginning in the middle of October through February
makawai – second victim in battle
mamo – Drepanis pacificia; descendant
mana – divine power, authority
manamana – to impart divine power
milo – twist
naepuni – fine netting of olonā
niho – tooth, toothed
niho ‘ilio – dog tooth
‘oai – twining
‘oki mahiole – haircut with a crest of hair left down the middle of the head
‘olē’olē – wide mouthed grin, as of an idol
‘Ōlelo Hawai‘i – Hawaiian language
olonā – Touchardia latifolia
olonā ka ‘ākahū – single ply olonā
‘ō‘ō – Moho nobilis
‘ōpiki – Cellana
pā – Mother of pearl shell
papa olonā – olonā scraping board
piko – crown of the head, umbilical cord of newborns
po‘e hahai – hunters
po‘o – head
puapua – tail feathers
pue — feathers directly above the puapua
pule — prayer
pule hulahula — victory prayer
'ula — red
'u lu — Artocarpus altilis
ulukoko — first victim of a battle
'unih'i pili — spirit of the deceased
'uo — small bunches of feathers
'upena — nets
waiwaikaua — spoils of war


Bishop Museum Ethnographic Photography Files.


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