

HE HULIKO‘A KANALOA—
SEEKING THE DEPTHS OF KANALOA

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DEDICATION

Turning to the shadows, I found a muted path— narrow and rough, like the skin of dead coral reefs. I heard stories Time was too busy to tell. I saw faces History had long forgotten. I became shrouded in the sea spray and emerged from the depths of a world otherwise omitted. The words in this document are mine. The sentiment is ours. The inspiration is, and always has been, theirs. I dedicate this work to the gods, remembered and forgotten.

‘Eli‘eli kau mai.

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this thesis is to reach a more holistic understanding of Kanaloa, one of the major male forms of the divine in the Hawaiian pantheon. It examines infrequently accessed Hawaiian language resources in order to expand on his functions in ancestral times, as well as readdress narrow interpretations of him that ignore the depth and breadth of ‘ike kupuna. In addition to prioritizing primary resources, this thesis also works to acknowledge Kanaloa’s position as a pan-Polynesian deity, and speaks to the variation with which Oceanic deities have been understood across time and place. The first chapter of this thesis discusses Tahiti’s Ta‘aroa and the connections he bears to Kanaloa in Hawai‘i. The second goes over Kanaloa’s portrayal in selected primary Hawaiian language resources, namely 19th and 20th century newspapers, which reveal several ways his functions and roles can be expanded. The third chapter discusses Kanaloa’s demonization during the advent of Christianity, and provides context for the legends that portray him as a “Hawaiian devil.” This thesis also includes an introduction detailing methodology and a conclusion that provides an analysis of the claims made.

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INTRODUCTION

HE HULIKO‘A KANALOA—SEEKING THE DEPTHS OF KANALOA

Kanaloa is one of the four primary male gods in Hawai‘i, functioning as the main oceanic deity of the region. Considered a major form of the divine throughout Polynesia, Kanaloa and his linguistic counterparts—Ta‘aroa, Tangaloa, Tagaloa, Tangaroa, Tagaroo, and Tana‘oa or Taka‘oa— govern several domains and fulfill a variety of functions in Oceanic cultures. Significantly, although Kanaloa is a major male deity in Hawai‘i, there has yet to be an in-depth investigation of his functions that utilizes primary resources and actively recognizes his position as a pan-Polynesian god.

This thesis offers a holistic view of Kanaloa by examining the depth and breadth of ‘ike kupuna preserved in ‘Ōiwi artistic-intellectual genres such as pule (prayer), oli (chant) mele ko‘ihonua (genealogy relating the origin of gods and humans), kanikau (laments), mo‘okū‘auhau (genealogy), and mo‘olelo (history), preserved in nineteenth- and twentieth-century Hawaiian-language newspapers, and other primary sources, including works written in English by Hawaiians who are cultural experts. Because I have researched Kanaloa in different archives, relying especially on Hawaiian-language resources, which are under utilized because very few scholars can easily access Hawaiian, I offer evidence that engenders new ways of interpreting Kanaloa’s functions—data that has been widely ignored in academic texts. Such an investigation offers a more balanced understanding of this deity, which in turn, allows us to revisit reductionist assumptions of the past.

I chose this topic to draw attention to the need for a more thorough investigation of Hawaiian deities. Despite decades of resurgence in Hawaiian intellectualism, and easier access to archives of primary Hawaiian-language resources, there is still a reliance on secondary sources. The reliance on these secondary sources is problematic because the theories and interpretations therein are based on a handful of works by Hawaiian intellectuals translated into English—translations that are often problematic. Most importantly, these secondary sources offer reductionist interpretations of Hawaiian akua (deities). Scholars who are not culturally literate in nā mea Hawai‘i (things Hawaiian) tend to conflate important distinctions and ignore critical instances of variation in Hawaiian thought and practice. In short, they take information about Hawaiian akua out of context. As a result, their scholarship has left the uninformed with misconceptions about how Hawaiian gods have functioned across history. Moreover, the continued reliance on these inadequate resources has allowed their erroneous descriptions to flourish, and thus several misconceptions are treated as definitive. An example of this can be seen in Kanaloa’s depiction as the “Hawaiian Devil,” a role that he was assigned in a specific historical context, which Abraham Fornander ignored (*Polynesian Race*, 2: 84). Chapter 3 of my thesis is dedicated to this topic.

In particular, there is a lack of recognition that understandings of Kanaloa, and all Polynesian deities, evolve as the world that they live in and people that honor them continue to change. Hierarchies, domains, functions, laws, and restrictions are all dynamic when it comes to Hawaiian gods. Therefore, we must recognize their constant progression even as we seek to understand them historically. One of the main goals of this thesis is to deepen our understanding of Kanaloa by looking at his roles and functions as they are described in primary resources, and importantly, to show that his roles and functions have evolved throughout history, and that they

continue to do so. That said, it is not my goal to provide a clear-cut definition of Kanaloa's functions, domains, or forms. Rather, I aim to readdress narrow interpretations by offering a more holistic understanding of him, without limiting him to any one role. I have chosen to use the word *huliko 'a* in my thesis title, because it best describes my research process, that is, "to seek into the depths of a matter, to describe fully" (Pukui and Elbert s.v. "huliko 'a"). Notably, *huliko 'a* does not entail defining something, but describing it. My methodology is thus geared towards incorporating as many primary materials as possible to offer a contextualized study of Kanaloa that recognizes the wealth of knowledge that 'ike kupuna offers.

Methodology and Literature Review

I conducted extensive research on Kanaloa using a variety of primary resources. While most academic works treat Kanaloa vaguely, offering little to no information on his modes of worship or connection to human life, rarely accessed primary materials reveal Kanaloa as a respected deity, named in mele ko'ihonua, mo'olelo, and hundreds of kanikau. Marie Alohalani Brown has spoken extensively on the importance and value of accessing these 'Ōiwi artistic-intellectual genres. Brown notes that according to an 'Ōiwi worldview, the universe is "a web of interconnected and genealogically related elements—gods, humans, land, sea, sky, and everything therein— this awareness underpins our poetical approaches to creating and relaying knowledge" (8). In other words, traditional Hawaiian genres transmit knowledge in a way that recognizes multiplicity and acknowledges the fact that Hawaiians, their deities, and the 'āina (land) are interrelated. Brown adds, "Neglecting to take into account Kanaka Maoli narrative art forms is an example of Western othering that has historically misrepresented us and worked to our detriment," again showing the necessity of accessing these diverse genres in our academic

pursuits (8). Previous scholarship on Kanaloa conducted by Western scholars often ignores the multiple views that these ‘Ōiwi genres offer. For this reason, I saw a clear need to exhaust available materials so that I could address the reductionist interpretations of Kanaloa.

The primary sources I collected are mostly from Hawaiian language newspapers, which were published from 1834 to 1948. The data drawn from these newspapers includes information on Hawai‘i’s religious history preserved in ancestral mele and mo‘olelo, which made the transition from oral to written tradition when contributors put them to pen and published them. Some of the accounts I discuss are more recent than others, such as the Kumuhonua mo‘olelo, which was composed and published in 1865, and thus a relatively recent tradition.

Though some might question the “authenticity” of a such a contemporary mo‘olelo and its variations, I recognize that all traditions begin as innovations, and acknowledge that these works have had profound effects on Hawaiian religion, including our understanding of Kanaloa, despite their recent composition. When people accept something as meaningful, they learn it, connect it to their past, and transmit it to the next generation. This is how traditions are formed, and this is how I understood tradition as I researched primary materials for my thesis. I also want to draw attention to the historical evolutions Kanaloa has undergone in connection with religion-related change, which makes accounts such as Kumuhonua pivotal for my research.

By acknowledging that Hawaiian akua, and Hawaiian epistemology (ways of knowing) and ontology (ways of being) are informed by the natural island world—an environment that is always in flux and thus variable, we are able to recognize the importance of considering numerous views to reach a holistic understanding of Kanaloa’s roles and functions. Hawaiian gods, people, and ways of relaying knowledge all reflect the evolution and variation we see in nature. Thus, fluctuation and diversity are normal. Still, knowledge, new or old, has a lineage,

connecting it to a wider genealogy of intellectualism. In comparison, Western scholarship aims to reach a uniform truth by which it can define something, often ignoring important instances of change.

We must bear in mind that for Hawaiians, knowledge is experiential. The experiences from which we derive data are diverse and change from island to island, ahupua‘a to ahupua‘a (a land division that run from the mountain to the sea), but also depend on familial and professional perspectives. The relationship Hawaiians have to the environment and the geographical features of environment informs Hawaiian understandings and interpretations of deities and the natural phenomena they represent. My research on Kanaloa speaks to this variation, and shows that between islands, there is much diversity in how he is described and how he functions, which is evident by the commentary about him offered in Hawaiian-language newspapers.

Notably, a word-search “Kanaloa” in Papakilo Database, an electronic archive, yields 1,318 results in Hawaiian-language newspapers. Compared to word-searches for other deities, this number proved quite high, revealing the frequency with which Kanaloa was mentioned by Hawaiians of the time. For example, a search for the gods Kāne, Kū, and Lono had an overwhelming number of results because their names bear several meanings. However, searches for other well-known gods produced significantly lower results than Kanaloa— “Haumea” (583 results) or “Kamapuaa” (414). Kanaloa’s frequency is comparable to that of “Hiika” (1,385 results). In the hundreds of newspaper articles that name Kanaloa, I found data that contradicts current academic assumptions about him, as well as information that reveals the diverse ways that Hawaiians understood him.

I should note that the research I conducted on Kanaloa proved extremely fruitful, and I do not cite them all in this thesis. In particular, I found that Kanaloa is named in several mo‘olelo,

some well-known and some less so. However, because I cannot do them justice here, I plan to present information elsewhere, such as in a dissertation, which would allow me the space to include all my findings on Kanaloa. Moreover, before delving into so many mo‘olelo, I would like to reach fluency in the Hawaiian language. I feel that currently I do not have the advanced language skills required to detail the diverse and intricate ways that Kanaloa has been understood in our histories, belief narratives, and other important works. Recognizing my own limitations, I have focused on Kanaloa’s portrayal in selected primary materials. Readers should thus bear in mind that this study is not exhaustive, but the beginning of a larger project that will incorporate all the data that I have collected.

Here, I discuss significant works that examine Kanaloa. Important ethnographies such as *The Polynesian Family System in Ka‘u Hawai‘i* (Handy and Pukui) and *Nana I Ke Kumu I and II* (Pukui, Haertig, and Lee), as well as well-researched secondary sources such as *Chanting the Universe* (Charlot) and *The Kumuhonua Legends* (Barrère) have significantly advanced our understanding of Kanaloa, and I use them in my thesis to expand on data collected from primary resources. By combining the views from these sources, I bridge gaps, correct misunderstandings, and offer a more complete picture of the various ways that Hawaiians perceived Kanaloa.

Pualani Kanaka‘ole Kanahele, a renowned expert in Hawaiian culture, has come closest to achieving a holistic portrayal of Kanaloa in her report for the Kaho‘olawe Island Conveyance Commission, *E Mau Ana ‘o Kanaloa, Ho‘i Hou*. Here, Kanahele discusses “the native Hawaiian philosophy of Kanaloa,” examines his various forms, and shares insights into their significance (2). Using her cultural expertise, Kanahele makes connections that previous scholars did not, analyzing the data we have on Kanaloa and expanding upon them. But there remains more to be done. I rely on Kanahele’s expert analysis as a foundation from which I can further expound

upon the information I have gathered on Kanaloa, extending previous discourse on him and contextualizing his role as a pan-Polynesian deity.

It is notable that Hawaiian depictions of Kanaloa offer unique interpretations that are quite distinct from other Polynesian views. While such distinctions should be highlighted, we should also consider that the Hawaiian understanding of Kanaloa is ultimately informed by wider Polynesian beliefs. Therefore, in addition to privileging primary resources, I also researched Kanaloa's counterparts in neighboring islands cultures to draw attention to his wider genealogies and roles throughout Polynesia. Since I cannot access materials in Tahitian, Samoan, Tongan, Māori, Marquesan, or any of the languages in which European scholars published their works, such as French and German, my research on Kanaloa's pan-Polynesian roles is limited to scholarly texts that were written in or translated into English. During the research phase of my project, I investigated Ta'aroa (Tahiti), Tagaloa (Sāmoa), Tangaloa (Tonga), Tana'oa/Taka'oa (Marquesas), Tangaroa (Aotearoa), and Tagaroa (Manihiki), collecting data on their unique roles and functions to broaden our knowledge about Kanaloa's wider lineages.

However, because I am not well-versed in these cultural traditions, I did not feel comfortable detailing the diverse functions of Kanaloa's Polynesian forms. For the purposes of being concise, and not misappropriating another's culture, I chose to focus on Tahiti's Ta'aroa in my thesis, since I was able to access sound data on the subject in English. I began my investigation on Ta'aroa by reading Teuira Henry's *Ancient Tahiti*. I also examined selected articles from the *Journal of the Polynesian Society*, as well as texts discussing Polynesian beliefs in general. Some resources were better than others, and I did my best to ensure that the information I collected came from sources were considered reputable by those indigenous to the region. Given my language barriers, Henry's text proved to be the most helpful, as it is written in

English, often provides the Tahitian for reference, cites primary sources clearly, and is widely considered an excellent text on Tahitian history and culture.

Increasingly, more and more scholars recognize that it is important to acknowledge their positionality. I am trained in the study of religion and this thesis proves that I am capable of performing meticulous and exhaustive research on religion-related topics and articulating my findings. That said, it is my kuleana (right, privilege, and responsibility) as an ‘Ōiwi, to note that I write this thesis as a believer. Kanaloa and the Hawaiian gods discussed in this thesis are gods I keep personally. The ancestral culture and belief system I write about informs the culture and belief system according to which I live my life today. In this respect, we may consider my position an “insider”; however, my discussion is centered on Kanaloa’s functions before my time. Therefore, I also occupy the position of “outsider.” I note this point because I recognize that when we write about religion—whether as insiders, outsiders, or both—we inevitably write according to our own perceptions of life and the world we live in. This is in part why I chose to write my thesis in first person— drawing attention to the fact that the claims made are my own, and not representative of the entire Hawaiian community. That is not to say that the views and interpretations in this thesis are my personal beliefs dressed up as academic thought. However, I do not pretend to occupy an objective position as I cannot remove myself from my work. In short, this thesis is written by an indigenous Hawaiian woman about the indigenous Hawaiian belief system. I wrote this work as a devotee of Kanaloa, as the daughter of a Mo‘o Kāne, and as an extension of the consciousness that has connected my people across generations.

Thesis Organization

In this Introduction I present my thesis topic, discuss its relevance to Hawaiian religion, and its importance for future studies and works concerned with the same subject. I explain my methodology, offer a literature review, and outline the organization of this thesis.

Chapter 1 examines the Tahitian Ta'aroa for the valuable insights that this exploration can offer us in terms of better understanding the Hawaiian Kanaloa's position as a pan-Polynesian god. This chapter is a necessary foundation for my discussion of Kanaloa's functions in Hawai'i in Chapter 2.

Chapter 2 discusses Kanaloa's roles and functions according to data from nineteenth- and twentieth-century Hawaiian-language newspapers and from selected secondary sources. The goal here is to put these sources in dialogue. In particular, I consider poetic descriptions of Kanaloa in kanikau and their importance in understanding some of his lesser known roles and function. Mo'olelo and mo'okū'auhau in the form of mele ko'ihonua are another source of important information about Kanaloa, which I also examine in this Chapter.

Chapter 3 contextualizes the misrepresentations of Kanaloa as the "Hawaiian devil." I utilize primary resources to add context to the original accounts that describe Kanaloa as a Satanic figure, as well as secondary sources that uphold this view as Kanaloa's definitive role. Here, I consider a specific instance of Kanaloa's transformation, namely, the ways that the advent of Christianity affected how Hawaiian converts understood him. Dorothy Barrère's work on the legends that characterize Kanaloa as a devil-like figure is significant, and although I cite her work extensively, I focus more on why scholars picked Kanaloa to fill this role, and the consequences that choosing him had on future scholarship.

The Conclusion marks the end of my thesis. Here, I provide an analysis of my findings and bring the diverse views surrounding Kanaloa in primary materials into dialogue with each

other, broadening the ways that we can interpret Kanaloa as a Hawaiian and pan-Polynesian deity. I also discuss the variation inherent in his depictions and functions across place and time, which highlights his constant evolution and why he cannot be conclusively defined. Although, as Pukui notes, there is a “conspicuous blank” where Kanaloa’s function is concerned, my investigation, which examines the breadth and depth of ancestral knowledge, allows us to work towards a more complete understanding of him. While similar (re)investigations should be carried out for all Hawaiian deities, I feel it is fitting to start with Kanaloa, god of depth, to guide us in our pursuit of this deeper place of knowing. ‘Eli‘eli kau mai—Descend, deepen the revelation (Kanahele 169).

CHAPTER 1
THE UNIQUE ONE: TA‘AROA AND KANALOA—A PAN-POLYNESIAN
MO‘OKŪ‘AUHAU

To gain a deeper understanding of Kanaloa’s functions in Hawai‘i, it is crucial that we examine his manifestations in neighboring island cultures. A major god throughout Polynesia, Kanaloa’s wider genealogies are significant because they reveal the ways that he has been conceived of as a god across place and time. In Tahiti, Kanaloa is known as Ta‘aroa, in Sāmoa as Tagaloa, in Tonga as Tangaloa, in the Marquesas as Tana‘oa or Taka‘oa, in Aotearoa as Tangaroa, and in Manihiki as Tagaroa—and his roles and functions vary in these cultures. This chapter examines Kanaloa’s status as pan-Polynesian deity by discussing Ta‘aroa’s primary functions, forms, modes of worship in Tahitian society and depiction in Tahitian literature. I have chosen to focus on Tahiti’s Ta‘aroa for several reasons, some linguistic, some historical, and some due to the number of connections I was able to draw between Ta‘aroa and Kanaloa. It is my hope that in showing how these deities interconnect, future scholarship on Hawaiian gods will also incorporate data on their Polynesian counterparts.

In her work on Hawaiian intellectual history, Noenoe K. Silva has discussed the “mo‘okū‘auhau consciousness” that characterizes Hawaiian intellectualism, which is “an ethic and orientation to the world” (4). This observation holds true for much of Polynesia, where it is recognized that all things exist within a mo‘okū‘auhau, a genealogy that connects us through time and space. The same is true for our gods, who transform, migrate, and resettle alongside us.

About a thousand years after seafarers settled Fiji, Tonga, and Sāmoa around 3,000 BCE, descendants from Tonga and Sāmoa migrated into Eastern Polynesia (Kirch 138, 140),

establishing themselves in the Cook Islands and French Polynesia (Finney 74). From there, these seafarers eventually “sailed north, southeast, and southwest to colonize Hawai‘i, Rapa Nui, and Aotearoa at the extreme points of the Polynesian triangle” (74). Although these peoples’ belief systems evolved during this extended dispersal, they nevertheless continued to intersect.

In regard to Hawai‘i’s religious history, John Charlot posits that around the year 1000 C.E., Hawai‘i underwent several religious and cultural innovations traditionally credited to Tahitian tahuna (master of a particular craft), Pā‘ao and La‘amaikahiki (*Chanting the Universe*, 146). Notably, according to both Davida Malo and Samuel M. Kamakau, the name of the canoe Pā‘ao sails to Hawai‘i is “Kanaloamuia” (Malo 25; Kamakau, “Nu Hou”). While there are several possible translations of the canoe’s name, some of which have nothing to do with Kanaloa, given the relationship between Kanaloa and Tahiti, it seems plausible the name refers to him. There are several religious connections between Tahiti and Hawai‘i, including the relationship between Ta‘aroa and Kanaloa—the former quite likely inspiring the latter. An example of this relationship is found in chants and mo‘olelo from Kaho‘olawe, one of Kanaloa’s kino lau. Kino lau translates as “many bodies” or “many forms.” Marie Alohalani Brown explains kino lau as the “physical manifestations and symbolic associations of a deity” (Personal communication). Kaho‘olawe is notably the only major Hawaiian island named as a kino lau, and it belongs to Kanaloa. I discuss this relationship in Chapter 2.

According to these histories (chants and mo‘olelo), Tahitians belonging to the Moaulanuiakea class of kahuna came to Hawai‘i and brought their god Ta‘aroa with them, landing on the shores of Kaho‘olawe and naming the island after him (Kanahele 22). In a Tuamotuan creation account, Tangaroa-i-te-pō and Māui are father and son (Henry 348, 352), and perhaps when Tahitians came to Hawai‘i, they recited these chants. According to Kupihea,

one of Martha Beckwith's informants, Kāne and Kanaloa arrived to Hawai'i about the same time as Māui (Kupihea qtd. in Beckwith 11). In primary Hawaiian-language resources, an 1865 account relates Kanaloa's arrival to Hawai'i with Kāne and their younger brother Kāne'apua from the Pillars of Kahiki (Naimu). Kanaloa also appears in the eighth wā (era) of the Kumulipo, one of our most prominent creation chants (Kanahēle 5). In short, there is more than one tradition about Kanaloa's arrival to Hawai'i, indicating that he has had multiple comings throughout history. It is therefore difficult to determine exactly when or where Kanaloa came from, or who he arrived with, as traditions vary on this point. However, there is a clear connection between Hawaiians and Tahitians, and Kanaloa and Ta'aroa. In a quest to know more about Kanaloa, knowledge about Ta'aroa is relevant and revealing.

Polynesian cosmologies typically depict creation as beginning in or with the Pō, a non-anthropomorphic, meta-divine void or darkness from which all life emerges. E. S. Craighill Handy notes that the exceptions to this norm are Io legends from Aotearoa and Ta'aroa cosmologies in Tahiti (10). Handy does not comment, however, on the likeliness that Io is a post-Christian concept created to liken Maori beliefs to Christianity. (See J.Z. Smith's chapter on Io in *Imagining Religions*.) He also fails to comment that similar stories are found in Sāmoa and Tonga, where Tagaloa and Tangaloa respectively create the entire cosmos, much like Ta'aroa in Tahiti.

Teuira Henry's *Ancient Tahiti* has a lengthy chapter discussing a wide range of Tahitian and Tuamotuan cosmologies. While the length and setting of these stories vary, they all uphold that the world was created by the great god Ta'aroa, who existed alone in the Pō within his shell Rumia. He calls forth Tumunui and Paparaha to be the foundation and stratum of the earth and uses his shell Rumia to form the sky. He conjures forth major deities, and in one version, his own

body parts flesh out the planet. Everything belongs to Ta‘aroa and all creation is due to his work, revealing his primary function as a creator god (336–40).

Several scholars have noted that Tahitian cosmologies are unique in the way they elevate Ta‘aroa to a pre-existing, supreme creator (Marck 236, Barrère 103, Monberg 269). Different theories have been put forth at different times to explain this phenomenon, some centered on the primacy of Ta‘aroa in Ra‘iātea, others pointing to Christian and Biblical influences. Very few of these theories are persuasive, and dates alone are able to discredit those that point to Christian inspirations, since the earliest of these chants were recited in Tahiti several years before Cooke and Christian missionaries first arrived with the Gospel (Monberg 270). The most persuasive hypothesis belongs to John Charlot, who provides an outline of Polynesian and Hawaiian religious history in *Chanting the Universe*. He supposes that between 800–900 C.E., the god Tangaloa became the first supreme creator of Manu‘a in Sāmoa (144). Charlot draws a connection between the emergence of a single creator and the advent of a political claim for sovereignty. He notes that when the first Tui Manu‘a claimed dominion over Sāmoa, histories were re-written to reflect the new political-religious environment. Tangaloa, who is most likely the ancestor of the chief in question, becomes the ultimate creator of the world, a movement that spreads first to Tonga, and eventually to Tahiti (145). The idea that creation is the act of a single god is thus directly connected to the rise of a sovereign leader.

Torben Monberg posits a similar theory for Ta‘aroa in Tahiti, though he seems unaware of the comparable and earlier events occurring in Sāmoa and Tonga. In “Taaroa in the Creation Myths of the Society Islands,” Monberg draws from Henry’s data and suggests that Ta‘aroa’s elevation to supreme creator was a political strategy used by the Pōmare family to establish their right to rule all of the Society Islands group (273). Henry presents the Pōmare family’s

genealogy, whose earliest ancestors are Ta‘aroa-manahune and Hiti-te-ara-pi’opi’o, and moreover, in nearly all the chiefly genealogies that Henry lists, there is a Ta‘aroa ancestor in the first few generations (265). After the 1768 civil war, Pōmare I successfully invaded neighboring islands but had not established a clear right to rule them. Rules of war in this region reflect long-standing ideas about who has the right to rule their land, namely, only those who descend from the local-district gods (297, 303). As the first to successfully unite the Society Islands, it seems likely that Pōmare I, a descendant of Ta‘aroa, would put forth the idea that his ancestral god created the cosmos, providing a clear right for him to rule. Had he not made his reign a religious event, he might have faced rebellion, and thus also more battles (Monberg 276).

While this theory is seductively neat, it is important to note the historical factors behind such tremendous religious change could be many and they are difficult to pinpoint with certainty. No doubt there are several influences, previously unconsidered, that contributed to Tangaloa and Ta‘aroa’s rise to supremacy. However, given the political and social functions of Polynesian creation chants, it is plausible that a rise to political sovereignty would play a role in determining Ta‘aroa’s function as creator. This is further evidenced in Tati Salmon’s discussion on ari’i (the ruling class) in Tahitian society, where he notes that the Opuhuiari’i (family of ari’i) has a godly origin and credited their common ancestor Ta‘aroa for their unique position as divine humans (39). In this way, it is probable that Ta‘aroa’s function as creator is linked to political activity amongst his human descendants, and that these two positions inform one another.

Notably, in addition to creating the universe, Ta‘aroa’s rise in supremacy also gives him sway over the afterlife, connecting him to both creation and to death. In Henry’s discussion on Tahitian ideas of a future state, she notes that souls who are led to the pō are ushered to Ta‘aroa-nui-tuhi-mate (Great-Ta‘aroa-whose-curse-was-death), where they would be left in darkness to

work. Occasionally, “when it pleased Ta’aoa, his cooks scraped the spirits into a pulp with the shell of the *tupere* (cockle) as sweetening for his *pota* (taro-leaf spinach), but after being eaten by the god, they would be immediately reborn back into the darkness and await their next death” (201). Unlike the Christian hell, this fate was not eternal, though it is described as a miserable existence. Eventually Ta’aoa feels pity for the souls and allows them to return to earth as ‘oromatua or “inferior gods” (201). Henry explains that the family of the departed soul awaits its return as an ‘oromatua, however she notes that during this wait, the soul is “supposed to be safe with Ta’aoa in the Pō” (202). Babies that died because they were born prematurely would enter Ta’aoa’s pools in the Pō. There, they would become “*hihi* (periwinkles) and *o’opu* (*Electris fusca*), and when the gods ate them, they did not die but were immediately reborn into new bodies on earth, going through the process with no pain or suffering (200).

When we consider Polynesian conceptions of Ta’aoa, Kanaloa, and Tana’oa/Taka’oa, we find they are all connected to death and the “underworld,” a position that has led certain scholars to suppose they are antagonistic to mankind, incorrectly described as evil, devil-like figures (Fornander, *Polynesian Race*, 1:84; Hongi 24). However, even as Ta’aoa-nui-tuhi-mate, Ta’aoa is depicted as a protector of souls, a god who guides humans through the afterlife until they can rejoin their living family members as ‘oromatua, but he is also the entity who punishes souls in a purgatory-like setting. Nevertheless, in his role as creator, Ta’aoa’s connection to death takes on a different nuance. Being the creator of the cosmos, it makes sense that Ta’aoa is also given control over the afterlife, his supremacy remaining intact by virtue of his potential to create, alter, and destroy. In these roles, Ta’aoa is not seen as inherently good or evil, like the Christian god and devil are. While the later duality is understood as oppositional and

antagonistic, in actuality, Ta‘aroa’s dual role is complimentary, the two functions working to ensure a harmonious cycle of life, death, and rebirth into a spiritual realm.

Henry draws a noteworthy connection between Ta‘aroa, creator of the universe and Ta‘aroa-nui-tuhi-mate in her discussion on the origins of human sacrifice. Henry notes that when Māui¹ built the first marae and established the local religion, there was no need for human sacrifice until a terrible drought convinced the community that Ta‘aroa-nui-tuhi-mate was angry with them. After several failed attempts to appease him with prayers, a human was offered and then the rain began to fall. The community took this as evidence that Ta‘aroa-nui-tuhi-mate craved human flesh and began to conduct ceremonial human sacrifices in times of turmoil. Here, we see a theme play out where objects or ideas are opposed to reflect ideas of balance. Just as the sacrifice of a human life ensures prosperity for the greater community, Ta‘aroa, creator of the cosmos, is attributed a role connected to death to achieve balance and thus maintain order. Ta‘aroa’s function as creator thus goes hand in hand with his manifestation Ta‘aroa-nui-tuhi-mate, the two being responsible for maintaining direction and stability.

Beyond these ideas of life and death, scholars have upheld that Ta‘aroa bears a connection to the ocean and ocean-related practices, a role with which he has been attributed in most of his Polynesian manifestations (Handy 50; Kame‘eleihiwa 48; Kanahale 10). Though the god’s close association with the sea is evident, there seems to be confusion as to what specific functions he has in connection to it, particularly in the way he has been deemed a fishing deity in more recent scholarship (Handy 82). In looking at Tahiti’s moon calendar, we do find that the Ta‘aroa moons are some of the best nights for fishing, particularly for long-snouted fish. These are nights when Ta‘aroa remains awake, and when nets overflow with bounty. Few fish are

¹ This is the eldest Māui brother, not the youngest who is famous for his heroic feats.

under restriction at this time, and several instructions are given for the best placements of traps and nets (Stimson 333).

Handy, however, mistakenly asserts that Ta'aroa was the “patron of fishing” in Tahiti, a claim that is incorrect when fully contextualized (50). To support his claim, Handy refers to an account shared by Henry about a stone in Tairapu that was “possessed with the spirit of Ta'aroa” and to whom fishermen prayed (Henry qtd. in Handy, 82). Long ago an unnamed man went out to fish and kept pulling up the same rock, regardless of the direction of his cast or location of his canoe. He took the stone ashore and had it examined by experts, who determined that the rock was imbued with Ta'aroa's spirit. It was placed in a cliff at Tairapu and named Ta'aroa-ofa'i-i-te-pari (Ta'aroa-in-the-stone-of-the-bluffs) (Henry 382).

It is important to note that in her highly detailed text, Henry makes little comment of Ta'aroa's connection to fishing outside of this account. In her discussion of Ta'aroa's functions, her focus seems centered on his role as creator, noting his relationship to the marae, healing, and war rather than fishing. While several scholars have cited the story shared above as evidence for Ta'aroa's position as a fishing deity, it seems that beyond this specific manifestation, Ta'aroa is not widely considered a fishing god. Ta'aroa-ofa'i-i-te-pari may be understood as a manifestation of Ta'aroa, but this does not imply that the great Ta'aroa is a fisherman's god, especially since no other Ta'aroa fishing gods are named. As the pre-existing creator of the universe, it is fitting that Ta'aroa would be closely connected to the ocean, given the sea's magnitude and primacy in Polynesian life. Fishing and navigating are crucial activities for any people dependent on the sea. However, to claim outright that Ta'aroa is a “patron of fishing” is misleading. He is the god who created the ocean-dependent reality in which his descendants

must survive, and as such has several ocean-related responsibilities and forms. As Ta‘aroa-ofa’i-i-te-pari he appears as a fishing deity, but Ta‘aroa himself is a supreme god.

When exploring Ta‘aroa’s connection to the ocean, we should consider the fact that several other deities are named as gods of the sea or of fishing. According to Tahitian traditions, Ta‘aroa conjures forth Tumu-ra’i-fenua, the foundation of the earth and heavens, who grows first into a giant octopus, then becomes the sea itself (Henry 338). On top of Tumu-ra’i-fenua, Ta‘aroa creates layers of sky and fills these heavenly abodes with different deities. The different creation chants list the various gods that were created, and several are specifically named as ocean-deities—where Ta‘aroa is not. For example, Tumunui and Paparaha give birth to Oropa’a, a god that dwells in the sea and “still exists in the ocean throughout the world” (358). He insatiably swallows fleets of men and has no language to tell us what he wants. Whales are his messengers. After Oro-pa’a, Tinorua is born. Ta‘aroa conjures Tinorua, and sets him as lord of the ocean, giving him both a divine and human form. He swims constantly in the sea, which is his permanent home, and all sharks are as his messengers (359). Additionally, Henry notes that Tinorua, along with Rua-hatu-tini-rau and Rua-hatu-o-te-tai-euea are the principal fishing gods in Tahiti, and were the primary deities worshipped in the fisherman’s marae (148). This evidence shows that we should be cautious in our assumptions about Ta‘aroa’s connection to the sea.

Though it is evident Ta‘aroa is connected with the ocean, he is not a fishing deity in Tahitian traditions outside of his manifestation Ta‘aroa-ofa’i-i-te-pari. This holds true for Kanaloa in Hawai‘i, where the god is widely considered the main oceanic deity yet has no connection to fishing practices (Handy 116) other than the fact that some consider it bad luck to bring bananas, which are one of his kino lau, on the canoe, or today, other kinds of vessels—but this belief is not about fishing specifically, but seafaring more generally (Brown, personal

communication). The fact that Ta‘aroa is connected to the ocean does not mean that he is primarily an ocean god. Rather, I would emphasize that Ta‘aroa’s relationship with the ocean is, like his position as lord of the underworld, directly determined by his function as creator. For those living in Polynesia, the bulk of the earth is not “earth” at all, but water. Whatever being is named as the creator of this world would thus be inextricably linked to the oceanic region. Therefore, it is pivotal we base our understanding of Ta‘aroa’s oceanic functions in light of his position as the creator of the world, not as an oceanic god.

Further ways that Ta‘aroa is linked to the sea are seen in his ties to navigation, which become apparent when looking at the forms or “shadows” of the god. In naming the incarnations of Ta‘aroa, Henry lists several birds and sea animals associated with him and with seafaring. The mauroa-hope-’uo and mauroa-hope-’ura are white-tailed tropic birds scientifically classed as *Phaethontidae*, which are said to protect those who face peril at sea. Henry notes that if people prayed to Ta‘aroa while lost, he would send these types of birds to lead the way back to land (383). Ta‘aroa also has an incarnation in the common albatross, called pulu or rura. If one of these birds flew past a canoe swamped at sea, a chant was cried to the bird, invoking Ta‘aroa to make the sea calm and navigable: “E ta’u atua Taaroa e! Haamaita’i i te moana na ia tere. Ho atu na i te motu i te vahine e tamarii e!” — “Oh my god Taaroa, cause the sea to be calm and navigable! Permit us to reach the atolls with the women and children!” (386). Furthermore, due to their connection to Ta‘aroa, these birds were never hunted or killed as game, although their feathers were highly prized (386).

Ta‘aroa’s sea forms include tupere or cockles, which are considered a favorite dish of the god, as well as the fa’i, or stingray, which is poetically referred to as the “swimming temple of Ta‘aroa” (390). He is connected to the tohora or whale, as well as the papahi or sunfish and

paTa‘aroa or parrotfish. He also has several shark messengers and pets. Henry notes that fe’e or octopus are intimately linked to Ta‘aroa, though they are considered shadows of Tumu-ra’i-fenua, the great octopus that grew into the sea (390). Ta‘aroa’s connection to the fe’e, as well as the mauroa-hope-‘uo, mauroa-hope-‘ura, and the common albatross reveal his relationship to seafaring and navigation, one of his primary functions in Polynesia (Kame‘eleihiwa 45). With the sea birds, Ta‘aroa is able to aid those in nautical danger, guiding them to shore or calming ocean storms. In regard to the fe’e, Ta‘aroa takes on an orienteering function as he is linked to the eight-point compass that was traditionally ascribed to the eight-legged octopus.

Handy, Kame‘eleihiwa, and Rubellite Johnson note Ta‘aroa’s relationship with the octopus and the standard compass. Johnson even goes as far as to call him the “compass god” (182). Kame‘eleihiwa notes that the religion of Ra’iātea and Tahiti was “a religion of Navigation and Seafaring,” and that as the creator of the world, Ta‘aroa was intimately connected to these practices, bearing a specific relationship to the eight-point sailing compass due to his connection to the eight-legged fe’e (46). Thus, Ta‘aroa appears as a key figure in navigation practices due to his ties with nautical animals, the compass, and the sea itself. Henry additionally mentions Ta‘aroa’s beloved shark Ire, who bears a connection to stars and the Milky Way. After being wrongly killed by two men, Ta‘aroa and Tū resuscitate Ire and then place him permanently in the Vai-ora-a-Ta‘aroa, his life-giving waters, which according to Henry is the Milky Way (404). This link to the Milky Way points to Ta‘aroa’s position as creator of the universe, but also expands the ways that he is tied to navigation, connecting him to the stars that are so pivotal in our seafaring feats.

As the primary creator, Ta‘aroa should be expected to deal with a variety of tasks related to human life. Ocean duties are clearly a pivotal part of his role; however, he is also sought out in

times of healing and war, which are other ways that he functions in society. As with fishing, there are several primary healing and war gods, all created by Ta'aroa, to oversee these functions. However, Ta'aroa is at times invoked to heal or kill when illness and battle strike. Henry notes that when a family member fell ill, a medical tahuna would treat the person and invoke the various healing deities to restore them. If that failed, a pig would be anointed and sacrificed, bananas would be harvested and offered, and family members would place the sick person's valuables around their bed, hoping to make Ta'aroa feel pity for the person and save them (289). Notably, Ta'aroa is not described as a healing deity outright, but rather, he can be invoked in times of turmoil as the ultimate deity in the pantheon. In this case, extra offerings are made, particularly the ta'ata-o-meiaroa or long-banana, which has elsewhere been named as a preferred offering to Ta'aroa (426). Family of the sick thus attempt to plead to Ta'aroa personally, hoping that he will heal the sick family member.

We find similar roles in regard to Ta'aroa's connection to war. Although not named as a war deity, Ta'aroa frequently received offerings in the form of human sacrifice during times of battle. Captured enemies would be bound and called "I'a a Tu ma Ta'aroa i te vai o Tu" or "the fish of Tu and Ta'aroa in the water of Tu." "Te vai o Tu" or "The water of Tu" poetically refers to the battlefield. The "i'a" or "fish" in Tū's "water" are enemies captured in war, usually sacrificed to Ta'aroa at the time of victory (310). These captives would be sacrificed while the victors chanted over them, "E Tu ma Ta'aroa e, e Ta'aroa nui tuhi mate e, teie te i'a na oe, o te i'a o te aitea no roto i te vai o Tu," or as Henry translates, "Tu with Ta'aroa, O great Ta'aroa whose curse is death, here is your fish, your fish caught from the water of Tu" (311). Therefore, it appears that despite Tū's primacy in connection to war, sacrificed warriors were dedicated to Ta'aroa. It is unclear whether these men were considered Ta'aroa's due to his supremacy as

creator, his connection to death, or both. Nevertheless, it is important to note his role as a deity to whom these human sacrifices, the most powerful of all offerings, were offered.

We find further mention of Ta‘aroa’s role in relation to sacrifices in connection with the marae (religious complex or place of worship). Henry shares that the first marae was made out of Ta‘aroa’s own body, and she describes the structure—from its exact dimension and its every detail—because as she explains, this first marae has since been the model for all others, each replicating the original made by Ta‘aroa. According to tradition, Ta‘aroa goes into a trance after creating the world and sees his empty body floating on the surface of the sea. He has his daughters (unnamed) empty his body of fluids and set it turned over on the land, creating the first marae. The blood they pour from his body becomes redness in the sky and the rainbow (426).

When we analyze this account, it becomes apparent that the marae, a place where offerings and sacrifices are made, has its origins in Ta‘aroa offering or sacrificing his body to be the first place of worship. This would account for why every marae, regardless of the deity to whom it is dedicated, has a place reserved for Ta‘aroa, the supreme creator. Henry notes that the *ava’a-rahi* was the “holiest of holies” in the marae, being the receptacle of the god’s image. Next to the *ava’a-rahi* was a small chamber called the *ava’a-iti*, which contained a charred carving of a whale to represent Ta‘aroa, and a small image of *Ire*, Ta‘aroa’s pet shark. These images were set up to guard the *ava’a-rahi*, and the space around their chamber was extremely *tapu* (sacred and therefore restricted) (133). Ta‘aroa thus has a permanent presence and function in all marae, or at least where the *ava’a-iti* contains his images, demonstrating his religious magnitude.

Practices, ceremonies, and rituals conducted at the marae are numerous and can greatly vary; however, based on Henry’s data, it seems that sacrifices were regularly made to Ta‘aroa—humans, pigs, or more commonly, the *ta’ata-o-meiaroa* (197). Significantly, not only was the

ta'ata-o-meiaroa a preferred offering for Ta'aroa, but it was the only plant considered a suitable replacement for a human sacrifice. It was also one of four traditional atonement foods, which was used in healing illness associated with sorcery or curses sent by gods (209). Henry shares an account from the voyages of the ari'i Rata that illustrates this practice. After Rata breaks several tapu, his ship becomes badly damaged. Needing to atone for his transgressions and appeal to the gods for help, Rata and his tahu (religious attendant) offer ta'ata-o-meiaroa to Ta'aroa to secure his aid to fix Rata's canoe (488).

These instances of sacrifice to Ta'aroa further reveal that his primary function is that of Tahiti's creator god. As the ultimate atua (deity), devotees turn to Ta'aroa for a variety of needs, which expand his associations, forms, and functions to ensure that he plays a role in several aspects of human life. A survey of chants and prayers dedicated to Ta'aroa shows that he may be implored to help canoes wrecked at sea, called on to rid disease, beseeched to ensure victory in battle, or simply honored as the pre-existing creator (290, 310, 338, 386). While Ta'aroa's main function is that of demiurge, over time he has been attributed other significant roles in a variety of spheres. Ta'aroa's position as the first marae also demonstrates this point. Dedicated for set tasks and devoted to specific gods, the marae are characterized by a marked variation in protocol and function. However, each marae is modeled after Ta'aroa's body and contains an image of him. Thus, Ta'aroa is present in every marae, overseeing all activities.

By now, on the basis of the evidence given thus far, it should be clear that Ta'aroa's numerous functions are rooted primarily in his position as creator of the world. As the creator deity, Ta'aroa began as a supreme being, higher than the deities he brought forth, but at one point, this changed. There is considerable evidence for a slow but steady decline in his all-powerful role, and he is eventually superseded by the god Tāne. When Henry discusses the

creation chants that name Ta‘aroa as creator, she notes when these chants were recited, where they were dictated, and who uttered them (336–344). The dates for these chants range between 1820 and 1834, and moreover, they were performed throughout the Society Islands group. In one instance, Henry notes that in the case of one chant, it was recited with nearly exactly the same wording at different islands by a different class of priests around the same time (336). Therefore, we can ascertain that these chants, which recognize Ta‘aroa as the demiurge of this region, seem to have been widely acknowledged by the 1820s in the Society Islands.

Notably, by the 1840s, the stories Henry shares start to take a turn. Around this time, high priests from Tamera and Mo‘a begin to recite chants that favored Tāne, exalting him above figures like Tumu-nui, the earth’s foundation. The chant *Taaroa Exalts Tane* notes that Ta‘aroa gives Tāne the best of everything—the largest temples, the most images, the loudest drums and so on—leaving the lesser of these things to Tumu. The chant concludes, “Tane, he was a very great god. Taaroa made him great and all his greatness emanated from Taaroa” (399). According to another tradition, Tāne is powerful enough to kill Atea, setting fire to the heavens to kill him with the help of his men who bear Ta‘aroa names. In this account, Tāne appears superior to Ta‘aroa, Tumu, and Atea (353). We can thus begin to see the progression of Tāne worship at this time, the stories clearly showing his elevation in power over other divinities, including Ta‘aroa.

Significantly, both Henry and Kame‘eleihiwa note that over time, Tāne appears as a figure who attempts to usurp his father’s power and position as high god (Henry 398; Kame‘eleihiwa 48). According to Kame‘eleihiwa, this theme denotes a political schism between Ra‘iātea and Tahiti, a division that started when Tahiti turns from Ra‘iātea’s control and exalts Tāne as their chief deity rather than Ta‘aroa (48–49). Keeping in mind the probability that Ta‘aroa was elevated to creator due to political activity, it makes sense that as the political

context changed, so would his position and function in the greater society. Henry also remarks on this feud between the island groups, providing chants that praise Tahiti as superior to Ra’iātea, as well as the Raiatean responses to these remarks that spurn Tahiti for being “full of stone workers with no real gods,” a line she attributes to the fact that Tahiti had stopped worshipping Ta’aroa as the primary creator (433–436). Around this time, we also see that in Tahiti, the largest crater on the island is dedicated to Tāne, while the smaller is set aside for Ta’aroa, showing that Tahiti eventually had more land dedicated to Tāne worship than they did Ta’aroa (Kame‘eleihiwa 49).

On the basis of these changes in Ta’aroa’s status and function, we can arrive to some tentative conclusions about Polynesian gods and the inconsistency behind their roles. We should first note that changes in the divine power structure are not unique to Tahiti, but can be seen throughout Oceania, pointing to the fact that divine hierarchies in Polynesia are dynamic. A perfect example of this is seen in the demonization of Kanaloa in Hawai‘i, a shift that coincided with the advent of Christian ideas about hell and Satan, a topic I discuss in depth in Chapter 3. As John Charlot has noted in connection with Polynesian hierarchies, “the gods become important when they are important to people” (124). There are thus several factors that influence these shifts in hierarchy, and we cannot hope to recognize all of them in their entirety. Religion, ever personal and intimate, can never be fully encapsulated through word and reason alone. Why exactly Tahiti chose to exalt Tāne is not completely clear. However, the fact that he was exalted proves a crucial point—that the status and importance of gods in this region fluctuated over time, that their positions were not permanent, their stories not canonized, and their tapu not immutable dogma.

When studying or researching Polynesian religions, we must recognize that the beliefs, cultures, and peoples of this place have migrated countless times, moving and adapting traditions in ways that prevent their stagnation. As we investigate these beliefs, we should not look for set hierarchies or consistent interpretations. There are no monolithic answers, practices, or customs. We are a people accustomed to change, a people that has moved in large numbers across vast spaces, ever seeking, adapting, and evolving. It is in this space, marked by variation, that we can understand and be understood. As I move forward to discuss Kanaloa in Hawai‘i, this point is crucial to bear in mind. With careful research and close analysis, we can investigate who Kanaloa was at certain times in history. However, we must recognize that as a Polynesian deity, his roles and functions have continued to transform beyond these historical contexts, and that while his roles and functions are rooted in a set lineage, there is always opportunity for and probability of further variation.

In this next Chapter, I discuss the ways that Kanaloa is portrayed in different genres of Hawaiian artistic-intellectual production in Hawaiian-language resources.

CHAPTER 2

KE ALA MUKU A KANALOA:

INVESTIGATING KANALOA IN PRIMARY HAWAIIAN RESOURCES

In Hawai‘i, Kanaloa is many things. He is ka he‘e hauna wela—the octopus dwelling in the hot fowl depths (Kanahele 13). He is the sunset (Kame‘eleihiwa 48). He is the Western and Southern hemispheres (Ho‘oulumāhiehie, Mar. 3, 1906). He is the ocean winds and currents (Kanahele 3). He is the brother-companion of and complement to Kāne (Naimu). He is the keeper of healing waters (Anonymous, “Ka Ike Hou”). He is the banana (Handy and Pukui 34). He is Kaho‘olawe (Kanahele 22). He is submarine groundwater (22). He is the ‘awa drinker and water finder (22). He is the nai‘a (porpoise), the koholā (whale), and the navigator’s guide (5). He is depth (Tangaro 16). This is Kanaloa. Eia nō.

“Ke ala muku a Kanaloa” is a common line found in kanikau or chants of lamentation, which I discuss in this chapter. *Muku* is defined as “cut short, shortened,” (Pukui and Elbert s.v. “muku”) and is used in these chants to poetically reference death, particularly an untimely one. I use the line in my title because Kanaloa’s depiction in academic resources is muku—shortened and cut off compared to other deities. Investigating Kanaloa in primary resources offers deeper insights into his functions throughout Hawaiian history. In particular, information on Kanaloa in Hawaiian-language newspapers differs strikingly from data found in secondary English-language sources, which remain the principal materials most scholars access when they research Hawaiian deities. In this chapter, I examine Kanaloa’s various functions as evidenced in Hawaiian newspapers, combining their primary information with data drawn from selected secondary sources. While my goal is to expand our ways of understanding Kanaloa’s functions by

incorporating data from rarely accessed materials, I also want to also put primary and secondary resources into dialogue in order to draw new connections and correct confusion surrounding Kanaloa's roles throughout history.

Kanaloa in Kanikau

In this section, I examine the kanikau that mention Kanaloa. *Kanikau* is defined in English as “dirge, lament, or chant of mourning” (Pukui and Elbert s.v. “kanikau”). Mary Kawena Pukui also terms them “poetic funeral odes” (Pukui, Haertig, and Lee 1: 36). These chants function as a way to express grief and commemorate loss, most often in connection with the death of a loved one, although, as Marie Alohalani Brown points out, they “were not only written for people” (“Mourning the Land,” 377). Mary Kawena Pukui notes that kanikau were extremely expressive, and often included wails of intense sorrow. She shares that such crying was not “acted out,” but genuinely experienced by the chanter-composer, who simultaneously mourned, prayed, and honored the deceased through the power of their voice (45). Kamakau notes that when a loved one died, in addition to chanting, some would also fast, cut their hair, burn their skin, knock out their teeth, or tattoo themselves (“Ka Moolelo Hawaii,” Sep. 29, 1870). Clearly, kanikau are an important and emotional aspect of the ritual grieving process.

The incredible number of kanikau published in Hawaiian newspapers evidences their continued importance in Hawaiian culture in the face of great social, political, and religious changes that characterized the times in which contributors lived. My research on Kanaloa in the Hawaiian-language newspaper archive *Papakilo Database* reveals that kanikau is one of the genres that most frequently name him. I collected several hundred chants published between 1840 and 1936. Within these kanikau that mention Kanaloa, I have identified a number of

epithets for him. Notably, several of these descriptive phrases are documented uses of *kaona* (hidden meanings or symbolic references) for death. For example, several *kanikau* include the line, “Ua hala i na ao polohiwa ula a Kanaloa” or “he/she has passed to the dark clouds of Kanaloa,” (Lipo). The use of “ao polohiwa” is a common way to poetically reference death, and as such, it is found in numerous *kanikau*. The same is true for the line, “I ke ala maawe a Kanaloa” (Paelua). *Ma‘awe* has several meanings including fiber, thread, and rootlet. An *ala ma‘awe* is a faint path or track, and figuratively refers to the soul’s departure from the body after death (Pukui and Elbert s.v. “ma‘awe”).

Notably, there are several instances where Kanaloa is named in *kanikau* in connection to his “ala” or path. The use of *ala* in these chants figuratively points to the road to the afterlife, referring poetically to the soul’s leaving at death. At times it is the aforementioned “ala ma‘awe a Kanaloa” while at others it is “ke ala ula a Kanaloa” or “the red path of Kanaloa” (Miner). I also found several instances of “ke ala muku a Kanaloa” or “the diminished path of Kanaloa” (Kanaikaua), and “ke ala huna a Kanaloa” or “the hidden path of Kanaloa” (Anonymous, “E Pauli”; Anonymous, “He Mele Kanikau no Walia Kahahana ka Moi o Oahu”; Haalipo; Nuela), both of which work as epithets for death. Additional examples include “ke ala laula a Kanaloa” or “the broad path of Kanaloa” (Kahuaina), as well as “ke ala nui a Kanaloa” or “the large path of Kanaloa” (Ikaika), which are instances of variation in how these “ala” are conceptualized.

It is striking that throughout these *kanikau*, Kanaloa is named in connection with his “ala,” and even more notably, they are described in contradicting ways. In some instances, his path is narrow (*ma‘awe*), thin (*nāwele*), or cut off (*muku*), while in others it is large or great (*nui*), and broad (*laulā*). Such variation reveals that while Hawaiians of the time associated Kanaloa with the passing of a loved one, they had diverse ways of expressing and

conceptualizing their departure. Given the intimate nature of kanikau, each variant was probably chosen for personal or poetic reasons; however, while Kanaloa's "path" is not described in uniform terms, all uses of the phrase clearly point to the fact that someone had died.

Other common "ala" lines in kanikau include "ke ala koiula a Kanaloa," which may be translated as "a rainbow-hued mist path of Kanaloa" (Kaane), and "ke ala polikua a Kanaloa" or "the path to the dark beyond of Kanaloa" (Anonymous, "Ua Hala"). Significantly, Pukui notes that *polikua* refers to the "dark, invisible beyond," and represents something that has passed and cannot return (Pukui and Elbert s.v. "polikua"). The same can be said of the term *ko 'i'ula*, a rainbow-hued cloud or mist, which symbolizes dying (s.v. "ko 'i'ula"). Other phrases used in combination with Kanaloa are "ke ala pua i nawele" or "the slight flower path" (Kuakaha); "ke alahaka ulili ula" or "the red ladder path" (Anonymous, "Kuu Komo Daimana"), and "ke ala wailiula" or "the mirage path" (Kahele). These three epithets poetically reference death and the soul's journey into the spirit world as threadlike, difficult, and illusive.

Additional, though less frequent, mentions of Kanaloa in kanikau reference stringing (kui) lei with him (Hinai), or entering his "hiamoe kapu" (restricted or consecrated sleep) (Kalei). While the kaona behind stringing lei is unclear, the "hiamoe kapu" seems to be another reference to dying, although other interpretations are possible. For each of these examples, I found several instances of their use in kanikau, except for the last line, "ke ala wailiula a Kanaloa" (Kalei). Significantly, the other epithets were widely used, appearing in many kanikau across several decades. Certain connotations within these "ala" lines obviously point to ideas of death. Although these epithets are nuanced to some extent, all depict Kanaloa's path as the road to the afterlife. In this way, we find a clear link between Kanaloa and death, a role with which he has not been widely associated beyond his Christianized, negative depiction in the Kumuhonua

legends, which represent him as the Hawaiian equivalent of Satan. I discuss these legends and their depiction of Kanaloa as a Hawaiian devil in Chapter 3.

In addition to numerous mentions of Kanaloa's "ala," several kanikau named Kanaloa in connection with his water, stating that the deceased either drinks of them (Kaaua), or swims in them (Kaukunui). Significantly, within these accounts, Kanaloa's water is often described as "māpuna" which can refer to a bubbling spring, a rough sea, or figuratively, the surging of deep emotions (Pukui and Elbert s.v. "māpuna"). Another theme surrounding Kanaloa in kanikau is found in reference to his papakū (foundation) and paepae (platform), both of which appear as places to where departed souls journey at death (Una). Thus, we can see that the language surrounding Kanaloa in these chants depict him, his ala, and his domain as connected to the afterlife, assigning him a function in connection with souls and life after death. Kanaloa is a major deity in the Hawaiian pantheon, but his depiction in secondary sources is minimal, particularly when it comes to his various functions. However, if we consider the ways that kanikau represent him, we can recognize Kanaloa's fundamental function in connection with death and the afterlife.

Significantly, data in the Hawaiian-language newspapers reveals other ways that Kanaloa is connected to death beyond the kanikau that mention him. In Ho'oulumāhiehie's version of the Hi'iaka epic, Kāne is associated with the East and North, a realm for life, while Kanaloa is connected to the West and South, a realm for death (March 3, 1906). The mo'olelo further notes that the West and South are considered realms of death because this is the area where the sun sets. Notably, throughout Polynesia, Kanaloa is associated with the sunset (Kame'eleihiwa 48). Joseph Poepoe notes in his "Mo'olelo Hawai'i Kahiko" series that "ke alanui ma'awe ula a Kanaloa," a line frequently found in kanikau, is a general reference for the West (Sept. 26,

1906). In other words, the relationship between Kanaloa, the West, and the sunset, all of which bear a connection to death, is well documented. Additionally, given the relationship between Kāne, the sunrise, and humankind's vital needs for survival, it is easy to understand how Kanaloa, who is closely associated with Kāne, is a god linked to death and mortality—counterparts to Kāne—and thus part of a dyad, a dyad that reflects Hawaiian understanding of balance in connection with the cycle of life and death.

Martha Beckwith speaks of Kāne and Kanaloa's relationship in *The Kumulipo: A Hawaiian Creation Chant* where she attempts to explain it. She hypothesizes that during the embryonic stage, surrounded by fluid in the womb, a person belongs to the spirit world with Kanaloa. At birth, they enter the world of humankind, and are given responsibility to Kāne until their death, where Kanaloa again takes over (172). Notably, Beckwith seems to have reached this conclusion through data from the Kumuhonua legends, which connect Kanaloa to death in a sinister way. However, if we consider the numerous ways that Hawaiians related Kanaloa to death, few of which actually appear negative, we find that her theory holds true, and reveals an important function of Kāne and Kanaloa's relationship. Should we follow her hypothesis, Kanaloa is connected to the aspects of life prior to birth and after death, while Kāne takes charge in between. Such a notion further expands Kanaloa's functions in human life and deepens the significance of his bond with Kāne, giving us new insight to their dyadic relationship.

If we bear in mind Kanaloa's functions in regard to death, bereavement, and the afterlife, we begin to see the magnitude of his position in ancestral society. Our understanding of his functions is further expanded when we consider Kaua'i beliefs about him, where he has notable associations with healing, freshwater, and luakini (a type of heiau, or structure associated with religious ceremonies, usually in connection with war and politics). In the Hawaiian newspapers, I

found numerous mele, kanikau, and mo‘olelo contributed by the ‘Ōiwi community on Kaua‘i. In particular, I found several mentions of ka wai a Kanaloa (the water of Kanaloa), which is described in different ways. While it is common knowledge that Kāne and Kanaloa together tap freshwater for humans in various water-finding mo‘olelo, there is a widely held belief that Kanaloa is strictly a deity of salt water or ocean water. However, according to accounts from Kaua‘i, his waters are fresh and delicious to drink (Joseph). Other accounts describe the depth of his water and note that people swim in it, revealing that not only is it a body of freshwater, but a fairly large one (Anonymous, “Huakai Makaikai”).

Locations listed for ka wai a Kanaloa vary, and many note the difficulty with which they are found, which implies that their location is somewhat of a secret (Makuakaneheleloa). However, when I researched the cliffs and place names listed in these accounts, I found that his water is located in the Nāpali ahupua‘a, in the Hā‘ena region, often described as close to the cliff Kapala‘e (Hodge). According to one newspaper contributor, ka wai a Kanaloa, which is described as astonishingly clear and pure, is found in back of Limahuli. The contributor declares that there are no waters like this elsewhere in the world. These waters can fix any problem and heal any illness as they contain minerals from deep within the earth. While traditionally considered kapu, more and more were seeking these waters to use them for a variety of healing purposes (Anonymous, “Ka Ike Hou”).

These descriptions of ka wai a Kanaloa allow me to expand upon several points made in secondary sources regarding Kanaloa’s functions. First, scholars have noted that Kanaloa is associated with healing by virtue of his kino lau the he‘e (octopus) (Kanahele 9; Malo 149). Due to other meanings of *he‘e*, including “slide,” and “flee,” the he‘e is used in various healing rituals and chants to cause illness to “slip” away (Pukui and Elbert s.v. “he‘e”). To invoke the he‘e is to

invoke Kanaloa, giving him a function in healing illness. Within these accounts of ka wai a Kanaloa, we can see that he is further linked to healing through his mineral-rich, fresh water, which according to the account above, was extremely sought after to heal any ailment—emotional or physical. It is further significant that these waters are wai, fresh water, and not kai, sea water. Previous scholars, in recognizing Kanaloa’s relationship with navigation, ocean winds and currents, and sea animals, have tended to associate Kanaloa with the ocean and thus, salt water, connecting his counterpart Kāne to freshwater on land. However, these accounts are instances of variation in beliefs about Kanaloa. The narrow association of Kanaloa with saltwater is potentially problematic, as it ignores the many, and often diverse, Hawaiian beliefs about him.

When we consider that ka wai a Kanaloa is rich in minerals from deep within the earth, we can surmise it is submarine groundwater, rather than surface water from the rain. This becomes especially apparent when we note Pualani Kanaka‘ole Kanahele’s interpretation of the mo‘olelo that discuss Kāne and Kanaloa as water finders. In her analysis of these mo‘olelo, Kanahele points out that while Kāne is the one to break open the ground to create streams with his digging stick, Kanaloa is the one to point out where these waters are, revealing his connection to the earth’s depths (1). Rather than locating Kanaloa’s function specifically to the ocean, Kanahele associates him with depth in general, recognizing that these mo‘olelo reveal Kanaloa as the god with intimate awareness of the earth’s subterranean realm. In this way, Kanaloa’s connection to water goes beyond the sea, extending to fresh water found underground, such as Kaua‘i’s wai a Kanaloa. This expands our ways of understanding his relationship with water and healing, while also repositioning him as a god connected to depth, not just the sea. It is striking and fitting that Taupōuri Tangarō in acknowledging Kanaloa as a god of depth, links him to

depth psychology (16). As such, Kanaloa represents more than the depths of the earth, but also the depths of consciousness and of self.

In addition to detailed discussions on ka wai a Kanaloa, I also found evidence that there was a luakini dedicated to Kanaloa on Kauaʻi. Luakini are amongst the most important religious spaces in Hawaiʻi, serving as large temple complexes where ruling chiefs prayed and human sacrifices were made (Pukui and Elbert s.v. “luakini”). Typically, luakini were dedicated to Kū, the principal male deity of war and politics (Malo 149). It is therefore significant to find a luakini dedicated to Kanaloa, something not widely noted even in primary materials. However, according to the moʻolelo about Lāʻiehau, Kanaloa has luakini dedicated to him in Hāʻena on Kauaʻi, and Lualualei in Waiʻanae on Oʻahu. The moʻolelo shares that in Hāʻena, there is a kahua hai kanaka (a platform where human sacrifices were laid) and an accompanying heiau dedicated to Kanaloa, similar to the one in Lualualei, Waiʻanae (Anonymous, “He Moolelo Hawaii No Laiehau”). This brief mention of these luakini is significant as it broadens our understanding of his importance and establishes him as a deity associated with war and politics. Notably, my conversations with ʻŌiwi from Waiʻanae confirm that Kanaloa had a luakini in Lualualei, showing that the community is familiar with this data which has been preserved outside of written accounts (Nunes, personal communication).

Additionally, in his work on the history of Hawaiian language, Al Schütz includes one of the earliest lists of Hawaiian words (34). This list was compiled by William Anderson in 1778, based on terms that he heard on January 21, when he, James Cook, and John Webber were taken inland of Waimea bay on southwest Kauaʻi. During that excursion, they were taken to see a luakini which was dedicated to the god Kanaloa (Tangaroa in his notes) (35). Webber’s accompanying sketch of this heiau makes it very clear that it was a luakini. Other mentions of a

luakini dedicated to Kanaloa on Kaua‘i are found in Thomas G. Thrum’s *Hawaiian Almanac and Annual: 1904–07*, which includes Thrum’s list of all heiau on the island, including a luakini po‘okanaka (lit. “human head”) dedicated to Kanaloa (112). Thus, it appears that in this instance, Kanaloa was a luakini god, honored by a ruling ali‘i who offered him human sacrifices. Given that luakini played a crucial role in establishing an ali‘i’s rule and the stability of his/her reign, and thus the local community’s well-being, we can see that Kanaloa, when conceived of as a luakini deity, serves important roles in the political and social lives of humans.

Keeping in mind Kanaloa’s relationship with luakini, as well as with healing, death, and the ocean realm, I find striking connections with Ta‘aroa in Tahiti. As I showed in Chapter 1, Ta‘aroa is the primary creator in Tahitian cosmogonic accounts, and he has numerous roles, many of which coincide with Kanaloa’s functions in Hawai‘i. Hawaiians notably provide diverse mo‘okū‘auhau for Kanaloa. Our mele ko‘ihonua and mo‘olelo offer different accounts about his origins, one of which is the idea that Kanaloa came to Hawai‘i at a later date, arriving with Tahitian tahuna who brought him as their principal deity (Kanahele 22). One account in the newspapers is adamant about this fact, the author stating that prior to Pā‘ao, Hawaiians only prayed to Kāne, Kū, and Lono. They note that Kanaloa was not worshipped or known in Hawai‘i until Tahitians brought him (Anonymous, “He Lahui Hoomana Kii”). Similar views are also expressed in the earliest published account of Kāne and Kanaloa as water-finders (Naimu). While it is not the goal of this thesis to determine Kanaloa’s origins, the shared functions of Kanaloa and Ta‘aroa are notable, particularly when juxtaposed to accounts that claim Kanaloa is from Tahiti.

Examining the various Hawaiian origin accounts for Kanaloa reveals the numerous ways that he has been understood. For example, we find several mo‘olelo that discuss his arrival with

Kāne. It is striking that in many of these accounts, Kāne and Kanaloa are described as kupua, which can be understood as a demigod or cultural hero, oftentimes with the power to change forms (Kalau) while elsewhere they are termed akua (god) (Lokai). Notably, Kamakau states that Kāne and Kanaloa arrived in Hawai‘i as the first kahu akua (keepers of gods), and over time, became worshipped as akua themselves (“Ka Moolelo no Kamehameha,” Jan. 12, 1867). At times they are said to arrive from divine lands such as Kuaihelani, while in others they arrive from Kahiki, which may refer to Tahiti or another foreign land. In the mo‘olelo that discuss Kanaloa’s arrival with Kāne, they are depicted as water finders, ‘awa drinkers, and banana eaters; establishing springs throughout the islands so they can drink their ‘awa and plant banana patches (Anonymous, “Ke Kilohana”).

Notably, the banana is a kino lau of Kanaloa, an association he shares with Ta‘aroa in Tahiti (Pukui 34; Henry 426). In her discussion of Kanaloa’s kino lau, Pukui notes that his botanical forms include banana and “plants of a similar habit,” but provides no other information (34). It is noteworthy that banana plants, though colloquially considered trees, are botanically classed as berries. As berries, they lack the vascular tissues trees utilize to store water for long periods of time yet water is able to move through them very quickly. As a result, they are extremely water-dense, and for short periods of time they can store copious amounts of potable water (Ram and Steward 669). This description of the plant calls to mind Kanaloa’s association with freshwater underground, the banana’s vascular cells holding and moving water in a way similar to underground aquifers. In this way, we might understand Kanaloa’s association with the banana, particularly in these water-finding mo‘olelo, as a connection derived from his function with submarine groundwater.

Banana, ‘awa, and freshwater are frequently mentioned in mo‘olelo that discuss Kanaloa’s arrival with Kāne. Their constant union in our histories reveals their dyadic relationship, the two regularly appearing as an indivisible pair in belief narratives and supplication chants. In Hawai‘i’s Ololo genealogy, Kāne and Kanaloa are born as twins, yet they also may be interpreted as a dyad (Poepoe, “Moolelo Kahiko,” Jan. 1, 1929). Elsewhere they are named as brothers or simply companions, and it is rare indeed they are not paired, though it does occur (Charlot 25). Additionally, their associations and functions are complementary, as seen in their respective connections to the sunrise and sunset, East and West, and life and death. In other words, if we want to discover more about how Hawaiians conceived of Kanaloa, we must recognize his relationship with Kāne, as these two gods complement one another and express important Hawaiian ideas about balance.

In Hawai‘i’s creation chants such as the Kumulipo, we find that Kanaloa is born with Kāne and Ki‘i in the eighth wā (epoch), which marks the start of the Ao or day, when the first divine humans appear (Beckwith 169). Significantly, he is born as an octopus, and called “ka he‘e hauna wela,” which Kanahale translates as “the octopus dwelling in the hot-foul depths” (13). Kanaloa appears again in the thirteenth wā, mating with Haumea who gives birth to the Māui clan (Kame‘eleihiwa 50). Beckwith notes that Kanaloa’s position as Haumea’s mate is a prestigious one and may reflect the exaltation of a new regime under the Kanaloa priesthood, although she does not explain further (113). However, Kanaloa’s depiction as Haumea’s mate in the Kumulipo is significant because it identifies him as the divine ancestor of ‘Ōiwi (Kame‘eleihiwa 51).

In their discussions of Kanaloa’s depiction in the Kumulipo, scholars have focused on his birth as an octopus, putting forth diverse interpretations of “ka he‘e hauna wela.” The term is

difficult to analyze because it has numerous poetic and literal interpretations. I prefer Kanahēle's definition noted above. However, most pertinent to this thesis is the way Kanaloa's birth as "ka he'e hauna wela" connects him to the he'e and oceanic realm. Because Kanaloa has been classified narrowly as a oceanic deity, one of my goals is to highlight the different ways Hawaiian have conceptualized him, and draw attention to his functions beyond his connections to the sea. Nevertheless, his position as an oceanic deity is evident in his birth as a he'e, his additional sea creature kino lau, and his ties to navigational practices, particularly on Kaho'olawe. Considering the importance of the ocean in the lives of Hawaiians, Kanaloa's connection to the sea is telling of his wider influence. Although he bears other, less known roles, his links to the ocean are important to discuss.

Kanaloa's relationship with the sea is apparent in his different kino lau. Compilations of Kanaloa's kino lau are consistent for the most part, each list appearing to draw from Handy and Pukui's list in *The Polynesian Family System in Ka'u Hawai'i*. These forms include the he'e, koholā (humpback whale), honu (sea turtle), 'ea (hawksbill turtle), nai'a (porpoise), palaoa (sperm whale and its ivory), hīhīmanu (manta ray), banana, and the island Kaho'olawe (176). Scholars have noted that most of these kino lau were forbidden foods for women under the 'ai kapu (lit. "sacred eating," a political and religious system based on the idea that food and food consumption was sacred). However, I find it notable that several of these animals were restricted for the bulk of society, not just women. Both the koholā and palaoa were considered chiefly symbols, especially the palaoa, whose ivory was reserved for ruling ali'i, which, notably, gave the wearer the "intelligence and character of Kanaloa" (Kanahēle 4). As such, these animals were rarely hunted and eaten. Additionally, the hīhīmanu were not eaten by men or women, and were looked upon with suspicion. Pukui notes in her work with Titcomb that when these animals

washed up on the shore or were caught in nets, they were released back into the sea, the divine realm (74).

He'e refers to both octopus and squids, which are connected to navigation due to their eight legs, representing the eight directions on a standard compass. Historically, these animals were eaten, but not by women or devotees of Kanaloa (Kanahele 6). I have already briefly discussed the way *he'e* and Kanaloa are connected to healing, one of his primary functions in connection to human life. Kanahele further notes that the multi-colored, slippery character of the *he'e* points to the elusive nature of Kanaloa, who even in primary sources is portrayed in vague ways (7). His tie to the *he'e* and *hīhīmanu* seem to signify this aspect of his character, his association with death and depth giving him an intimidating otherness, which scholars tend to misinterpret as “evil” (Valeri 119).

Significantly, the *he'e* and *hīhīmanu* are not common 'aumākua, as they are looked upon with some mistrust. Recognizing the importance of word association in Hawaiian culture, definitions of the word *he'e* and its associations with slipperiness, likely account for Kanaloa's lack of 'aumākua manifestations. Pukui and other scholars have commented that while Kāne, Kū and Lono have numerous 'aumākua forms, each with a specific function important in the lives of humans, Kanaloa has none (Pukui, Haertig, and Lee 2:122). We find the same notable lack of data in Hawaiian newspapers. In Kamakau's “Ka Moolelo Hawaii” series, he lists twenty examples of Kāne kino, noting that there are hundreds more, just as there are hundreds of Kū and Lono 'aumākua forms. However, he explains, “ua kuhao o Kanaloa,” or “Kanaloa stands alone” (“Ka Moolelo Hawaii,” Sept. 29, 1870). The same is said in the “He Moolelo Hawaii” series, which names several Kāne, Kū and Lono forms, but states, “koe ae o Kanaloa” or “Kanaloa remains excluded” (Nakaa, 1893). Previous scholars have not explained why Kanaloa “stands

alone,” but if we note Kanaloa’s elusive qualities, as derived from his kino lau, we can understand why he is not attributed ‘aumākua forms— his intangibility and slippery nature would not be considered ideal qualities in an ‘aumākua.

Significantly, Poepoe notes that while Kanaloa does not have ‘aumākua manifestations, he is considered an ‘aumakua himself. Poepoe notes that ‘aumākua can either be of the Pō or the Ao (night or day), and notes Kāne and Kanaloa as examples of “aumakua i ka po.” He explains that ‘aumākua of the Pō are ali‘i of that realm, but are still our kūpuna, being distant, high-ranking relatives. ‘Aumākua of the ao are living things that were worshipped and placed under kapu by people. These are the ‘aumākua that help in one’s daily life and can be ordered to do one’s bidding (“He Moolelo Hawaii,” May 13, 1893). In this way, we can see that as an ‘aumakua Kanaloa is tied to the Pō, the realm of gods and divine ancestors that one journeys to at death (Pukui, Haertig and Lee 1:35). Kanaloa’s role in the Pō as an ‘aumakua is particularly fitting in light of his other associations with death and the afterlife. It thus appears that while Kanaloa does not have individual ‘aumākua manifestations, he still plays an important role as a divine ancestor dwelling in the Pō.

Kanaloa and his Polynesian counterparts Tana‘oa and Ta‘aroa are often depicted as deities of the Pō, bearing connections to the “underworld” and life after death (Henry 202; Fornander, *Polynesian Race*, 1:84). Therefore, Kanaloa’s function with death is one that extends beyond Hawai‘i. In recognizing this association, we find an additional reason for why he is named in kanikau as he is one of the main ancestral deities to greet the dead in the Pō. Significantly, Kanaloa’s function with death is not portrayed in these accounts as evil or antagonistic to human beings. Despite this fact, it does seem to be a primary reason for his later association with Satan and hell (2:84). However, while some scholars have fixated on Kanaloa as

being devil-like, Poepoe's description of "aumakua i ka po" and the many kanikau composed by Hawaiians that reference Kanaloa demonstrate that Kanaloa was not widely understood as evil. That being said, Kanaloa does indeed have mysterious qualities. These do not make him sinister, but they do make him unapproachable or put another way, less comprehensible.

While some of Kanaloa's kino lau point to his elusive character, Kanahale notes that Kanaloa has the nai'a as a manifestation, which are favorable signs for navigators (5). The connection between Kanaloa and the nai'a, in addition to his power over ocean currents and winds, makes it evident that he functioned as a navigation deity (Pukui 35). This association is also evidenced by his island kino lau Kaho'olawe. Kanahale notes in her work on Kaho'olawe that the island was used ancestrally as a navigation school, its geographical features and ocean currents creating the best atmosphere to learn seafaring and observe the ocean (20). Moreover, Kaho'olawe has numerous kuahu (altars), ki'i (images of deities), and heiau (religious spaces for worship) dedicated to Kanaloa (18). Additionally, several place names on Kaho'olawe relate to Kanaloa's kino lau and to navigation (29). Thus, Kanahale concludes, Kanaloa is the life force of the ocean and spiritual guide for navigators, many of whom were trained on Kaho'olawe, his island form (14).

In discussing his island birth, Kanahale discusses the name "Kaho'olawe," which recalls ideas of "taking away" (17). She relates this meaning to Kanaloa's association with ocean winds and currents, which carry navigators away to new shores, and bring them back home. Noting Kanaloa's association with death, I find further significance in the way that his island form calls to mind ideas of withdrawal and departure. Kanaloa's island birth is discussed in Mele a Paku'i, where Papa birthes him as Kaho'olawe, which marks his prestigious position in this account about the creation of the Hawaiian Islands (Kamakau, "Ua kaawale," Jan. 7, 1869). Elsewhere,

Kamakau notes that the reason Kaho‘olawe is called Kanaloa is because the island connects to Kealaikahiki, a channel in the ocean used to sail from the Hawaiian archipelago to Tahiti. Moreover, he explains, Kāne and Kanaloa arrived in Hawai‘i as kahu, not gods, and came from Tahiti, landing first on Kaho‘olawe, which they named after Kanaloa (“Ka Moolelo no Kamehameha,” Jan. 12, 1867). Kanahēle also states that Kaho‘olawe is one of Kanaloa’s names, and shares Kaho‘olawe chants that mention his arrival from Tahiti (22).

Here, I should note that there appears to be a schism in how Kanaloa is perceived in his connection to Kaho‘olawe. On the one hand, Mele a Paku‘i and other mo‘okū‘auhau such as the Kumulipo, reveal Kanaloa as a god born in Hawai‘i, which is evident in his birth as one of our major islands. Such accounts do not depict him as a foreign god or kahu but position him as a fundamental divinity in the birth of our land. However, ‘Ōiwi interpretations of these mo‘olelo seem to recognize the possibility that Kanaloa arrived from Tahiti or with Tahitians. In this way, it appears that while Kanaloa is a Hawaiian god and part of a Hawaiian philosophy, he also serves as an important bridge connecting us to our Polynesian cousins. His links and ties with Tahitians, who recognize him as a supreme creator, remain evident in Hawaiian histories, pointing to remnants of older traditions and revealing their evolution over time.

I find it notable that early Hawaiian scholars who wrote extensively on Hawaiian religion have diverse ways of portraying and interpreting Kanaloa’s positions in the belief system. In some accounts, he is undeniably a Tahitian god, transplanted into our mo‘olelo when he arrived with Tahitian tahuna (Anonymous, “Ka Mookuauhau”). In other histories, he is inseparable from Kāne, the two existing as complementary halves that together, create a whole (Mokumaia). In others still, he is present in the earliest dawn of our existence, revealing him not only as a Hawaiian god, but as one of our oldest deities (Kamakau, “He Mau Mele Koihonua,” Jan. 7,

1868). He is portrayed as a god of healing and described as ‘olu‘olu (pleasant) (Anonymous, “He Lahui Hoomana Kii”). He is depicted as Kāne’s antagonist and characterized as ‘ino‘ino (wretched) (Anonymous, “Na Paemoku o Hawaii”). He is connected to navigation and embodies the sea (Kanahale 29). He is linked to freshwater and underground aquifers (Anonymous, “Ka Ike Hou”). His roles and functions are numerous, revealing that there is more than one way to define him.

The different ways that Kanaloa has been understood testifies to the ways that variation is inherent to Hawaiian religious traditions. Like the slippery he‘e, Kanaloa evades all attempts at being restrained by a single definition, his functions and positions reflecting the changing contexts in which believers have understood and honored him—this is why I describe him as elusive. Nonetheless, we can identify certain thematic elements in primary resources. Kanaloa is a deity connected to death and mourning. He has functions in the pō as an ‘aumakua, is named often in kanikau, and is associated with the sunset and Western hemisphere. In this chapter, I have shown that Kanaloa’s ties to death link him to his counterpart Kāne, a god widely associated with humankind’s survival needs, as well as the sunrise and Eastern hemisphere. Compared to Kāne, Kanaloa is notably obscure as his functions and roles are far less discussed even in primary sources. However, as a deity connected to life before birth and after death, Kanaloa cannot be as easily conceptualized as Kāne, which accounts for why there is less discussion on him compared to Kāne.

Kanaloa’s obscurity may be further reasoned by looking at Kāne and Kanaloa’s relationship with freshwater. Kāne is water above ground, easy to access and plain to see, while Kanaloa is water submerged deep within the earth, difficult to find and not always visible. The same can be said of Kanaloa’s sea animal kino lau—creatures that are not normally eaten, found

in deep water, associated with danger, or elusive in habit. Notably, animals that are commonly hunted and eaten are not considered his manifestations. Kanaloa additionally appears as a god tied to depth—of the ocean, earth, and self. In this way, he represents the subconscious and subterranean aspects of life, while Kāne is associated with the conscious, surface elements. Even in today’s technological age, we know little of the ocean’s depth in comparison with how much we know about our galaxy, which speaks to how the ocean is an unfamiliar realm. Since it is from Kanaloa that the characteristics of the ocean emerge, it follows that Kanaloa himself is incomprehensible and obscure in character. In this way, Kanaloa can be difficult to identify, but is nonetheless recognizable, his importance and influence reaching the very depths of our planet and encompassing our minds.

In Chapter 3, I discuss the variation in the ways that Kanaloa was viewed after the advent of Christianity. It is important to bear in mind that Kanaloa’s status and functions underwent several changes long before he became, as Christians have depicted him, the “Hawaiian devil,” and that they continue to evolve. Kanaloa, like the water he embodies, flows in a ceaseless current, often unseen. To know him, we must investigate deeply, and study him in movement.

CHAPTER 3

THE DEMONIZATION OF KANALOA AFTER THE ADVENT OF CHRISTIANITY

“Kanaloa” is . . . a personified spirit of evil, the origin of death, and prince of “Po,” the Hawaiian chaos.

—Abraham Fornander, 1878

This attitude [mistrust of the squid, Kanaloa’s *kino lau*, as an *‘aumākua*] is reflected in a tendency by Hawaiian antiquarians to equate Kanaloa with the Christian devil.

—Martha W. Beckwith, 1940

It seems that Kanaloa represents the negative or sinister aspects of *Kāne*.

—Valerio Valeri, 1985

The epigraphs that open this chapter attest to how Kanaloa, in secondary sources across time, has been depicted as a malevolent entity (Fornander, *Polynesian Race*, 1:84; Beckwith, *Hawaiian Mythology*, 60; Valeri 17). Though scholars, past and present, have commented on Kanaloa’s connections to the ocean, navigation, and healing, some continue to perpetuate the misconception that he is “evil.” We must bear in mind that Kanaloa has been a principal deity throughout Polynesia long before the arrival of Christianity. Across time and place, Kanaloa’s functions, associations, and rank have changed considerably, but he has always been a primary

male god. It was only after the advent of Christianity that Kanaloa was transformed into the “Hawaiian devil.” This chapter examines the origins of Kanaloa’s demonization in the early nineteenth century. I consider why Kanaloa was assigned this role of “Hawaiian devil” and discuss the reductionist interpretations of him that ensued as a result.

Significantly, the idea of Kanaloa as the “Hawaiian devil” originates in primary Hawaiian-language materials. As Dorothy Barrère’s work shows, the various Kumuhonua legends composed by Samuel M. Kamakau and Kepelino Keauokalani were the first to depict Kanaloa according to Christian archetypes of Satan (2). Written in Hawaiian according to ‘Ōiwi poetics by Hawaiian scholars, the Kumuhonua traditions are primary sources, albeit inflected with a clear Christian bias. It appears that Kamakau and Kepelino, devout Christians, were committed to connecting Hawaiian traditions to the Bible, their Christian schooling and knowledge of Biblical tradition inspiring them to adapt older Hawaiian genealogies. Their works carefully make use of names and themes in the *Ololo* and *Palikū mo‘okū‘auhau*, which are found in the *mele ko‘ihonua* called *Kumulipo*, pairing them with what is essentially the plot of Genesis.

Of all of Hawai‘i’s genealogical chants, *Kumulipo* is one of the most treasured and unique, relaying Hawai‘i’s “genealogical answer” to the creation of the universe (Kame‘eleihiwa 3). The chant details not only a sexual reproduction of the cosmos, but important events in ancient Hawaiian history, dividing time into sixteen *wā* (epochs). Lilikalā Kame‘eleihiwa’s work on the *Kumulipo* shows that the chant reveals a specifically Hawaiian worldview and identity story. It informs what we do, who we are, and gives us a familial relation to our surrounding natural environment. The genealogies shared in this chant are lineages for important gods and ancestors, each extending from creation to Hawaiians living today (5). Therefore, Kamakau’s use

of names from the Ololo and Palikū mo‘okū‘auhau make his account more impactful because it appears ancestral.

As to why Kamakau would want to link Kumulipo traditions with Genesis is a question whose answer we can only conjecture, but it needs to be addressed. I hypothesize that as devout Hawaiian Catholics, Kamakau and Kepelino struggled with ideas of paganism, and dealt with the shame that their traditions and ancestors had erred in the eyes of their new God. This might have driven them to create Hawaiian cosmologies that resembled Biblical tradition, wanting to connect the beliefs of their ancestors to their personal beliefs. I also find significance in the fact that Fornander and Hawaiian intellectuals like Kepelino and Ho‘oulumāhiehie drew a connection between Hawaiians and the lost tribes of Israel, there being a clear desire on the part of certain individuals to connect Hawaiians, from an early date, to Israelites and their traditions, which include Genesis (Fornander, *Polynesian Race*, 1:85; Kepelino 66; Ho‘oulumāhiehie June 29, 1906). Therefore, it becomes clear that there was much at stake for Kamakau and Kepelino in proving that Hawaiians had Biblical ideas of creation for generations, long before the arrival of missionaries.

Kamakau wrote two distinct different versions of this account, one in 1865 and one in 1869. According to the first, there is a god above and beyond Kāne, Kanaloa, Kū, and Lono. This unnamed god appoints the major four as “ali‘i ‘uhane” or spirit ali‘i, and creates the earth, sky, sun and moon with the rind and seeds of a calabash. The god then orders Kāne, Kanaloa, Kū, and Lono to create the first human. Kāne, Kū and Lono begin the process but Kāne takes clear charge. They draw a man in the dirt and Kāne brings him to life, then names him Wela-ahi-lani-nui. Kanaloa creates his own man from dirt, but he is unsuccessful as the man does not live. Resentful, Kanaloa creates bitter things (mea awaawa) to cause sorrow (hoawaia), and from him

comes many evil things (mea ino he nui wale). The account ends with Kāne, Kū and Lono creating the first woman, ‘Owe, out of a portion of Wela-ahi-lani-nui’s body, similar to Eve’s birth from Adam’s rib (Kamakau, “Ka Moolelo o Kamehameha,” July 29, 1865).

Notably, in this legend, Kamakau makes use of the calabash, a motif taken directly from accounts of Wākea, who in some traditions creates the earth and firmament from a gourd birthed by Papa. Significantly, Kamakau shares this tradition of Papa and Wākea in his series, including it to explain the function of Papahānaumoku (“Ka Moolelo Hawaii,” October 14, 1869).

Therefore, it is clear that Kamakau, in writing this account, made use of Hawaiian creation stories already known to him. This is further seen in the name Kamakau gives to the first man, Wela-ahi-lani-nui, which appears early on in the Ololo genealogy as the father of Kahiko Luamea and grandfather of Wākea. By using the name of a well-known and well-documented ancestor, Kamakau gives his account credibility, making it appear ancestral rather than modern. He additionally states that this legend comes from the mo‘olelo of Kaloheaulani and Kapa‘ahulani, from the reign of Kualī‘i in the early eighteenth century, which we can construe as yet another strategy to establish the validity of his account as traditional, one that existed prior to the arrival of Christianity.

In Kamakau’s 1869 version, we see that Kanaloa’s role is expanded. Here, Kanaloa is depicted as the sole enemy of Kāne, Kū and Lono, who appear as a Hawaiian version of the trinity. Within this account, there is no unnamed god above the three. Rather, Kāne acts as the “father,” commanding Kū and Lono who have less mana than him. In six days, this trinity (Ke Kolu Akua) creates the earth and heavens before setting out to make a man. Kamakau states, “Hookahi enemi nui i ka hana ana i ka lani a me ka honua a me ke kanaka, o Kanaloa,” or “There was a single great enemy in the creation of the heavens, earth and mankind, Kanaloa” (Kamakau,

Ka Moolelo Hawaii,” October 21, 1869; Barrère 4). He shares that Kanaloa wants humans to be made from the lepo (dirt) and return to dirt. He does not want them to be haku (masters) of the earth, so he creates mea ‘awa‘awa (bitter things), mea ‘o‘oi (things that sting) and mea make (things that cause death). Kanaloa then attempts to create a human out of earth, claiming that Kāne lacks the mana to create life. However, the human made by Kanaloa turns to stone, while Kāne, Kū and Lono’s man, Kane-huli-honua, lives. The account ends with Kamakau noting that this trinity of Kāne, Kū and Lono is known throughout Polynesia, as is the “akua hana ino” or “evil doing god” Kanaloa (Kamakau, “Ka Moolelo Hawaii,” Oct. 21, 1869).

Barrère points out that there are notable changes in names, locale, and plot in Kamakau’s accounts. Kamakau’s choice to change the first man’s name is particularly noteworthy, as “Kānehulihonua” is strikingly similar to the oldest male in the Palikū genealogy, Hulihonua (5). Significantly, the name Hulihonua appears early on in different mo‘okū‘auhau, including the well-known genealogy of Kualī‘i (Kamakau, “He Mau Mele Koihonua”). Kamakau additionally notes that Kānehulihonua goes on to be called many names in different genealogies, including Kumuhonua. This name again bears a remarkable likeness to Li‘aikūhonua in the Kumulipo (Barrère 6). Accordingly, we can see that in writing these accounts Kamakau incorporated significant Hawaiian ancestors into an account inspired by the Bible’s Genesis, hoping to produce a creation story that seemed traditionally Hawaiian and inherently Christian.

Aside from Kamakau’s 1865 and 1869 accounts, Kepelino Keauokalani also provides a Christianized cosmology in 1868, calling it the “Mele o Kumuhonua,” or “Songs of

Kumuhonua,” utilizing the same name Kamakau adopts a year later in his 1869 account.² Barrère notes that Kamakau had most likely read or heard Kepelino’s mele prior to his decision to rewrite his own Christianized accounts, and decided that there should be some continuity between the two (8). Thus, when Kamakau notes that Kānehulihonua is known in other genealogies as Kumuhonua, he is likely referring to Kepelino’s 1868 manuscript. Barrère also acknowledges that Kepelino’s work as a whole clearly mimics Genesis 1:1-10, depicting Kāne as the sole creator of all things, who separates light from darkness (6). Later, Kepelino’s chants continue to imitate Biblical themes, portraying Kāne, Kū and Lono as an inseparable trinity that create Kumuhonua, the first man.

Interestingly, Kepelino does not mention Kanaloa in his accounts, even when he depicts Kumuhonua and his wife Lalohonua’s “sin” in Kāne’s hidden garden. Based on Kamakau’s accounts, one would expect Kanaloa to trick Lalohonua into eating Kāne’s ‘ōhi‘a or apple, but rather, it is ‘A‘aianuinkeakulawai‘a, a great white sea bird (32). While Fornander later associates this bird with Kanaloa, Kepelino does not mention him (Barrère 11). Notably, in Kepelino’s earlier writings he states that the three akua to create the universe are Kāne, Kanaloa, and Lono, leaving out Kū (8). Barrère hypothesizes that Kepelino’s decision to replace Kanaloa with Kū in these Kumuhonua chants reflects his desire to link his account with Kamakau’s (9).

After writing these Christian-Hawaiian creation accounts, Kepelino and Kamakau worked closely with Fornander, who was the first to publish English versions of them outside of

² Kepelino’s account was written for his *Mo‘olelo Hawai‘i* book, which was published posthumously. Martha Beckwith published his manuscript and her English translation as *Kepelino’s Traditions of Hawaii*—one of the most widely used resources for things Hawaiian.

the authors' original works (*Polynesian Race*, 1:71). Barrère's study shows that Kamakau and Kepelino elaborated on their stories in conversations with Fornander, who later characterizes them as traditional genealogies (1). She provides the notes Fornander took as he sat with Kamakau and Kepelino, and points out that as the three men collaborated, they amplified the extent to which the "Kumuhonua legends" were linked to the Bible (10). According to Fornander's notes, Kāne is the head of a trinity with Lono and Kū, who help Kāne make the first man "in his own image" (10). This man, called by different names, including Kumuhonua, is put to sleep while Kāne removes one of his ribs to create his wife, Keolakūhonua. Fornander notes that Kanaloa is an "evil spirit" or "akua ino" who interferes with Kāne's creation. Kanaloa attempts to create his own man but fails, and tells Kāne, "I will take your man and he shall die" (11).

From here, Fornander outlines Kanaloa's origin, something not discussed in either of Kamakau's or Kepelino's accounts. According to Barrère, it seems that Kamakau and Kepelino added details for Fornander, who did not realize the extent to which the Bible was informing their discussion. He notes, "One tradition reports that Kanaloa was a generic name for a multitude of evil spirits, created by Kane, who opposed him or revolted from him because they were denied awa" (11). Their inability to have 'awa symbolically represents that they were not allowed to be worshipped, a status reserved for the trinity of Kāne, Kū and Lono alone. Kāne casts out this band of evil spirits into the "uttermost darkness" where they are ruled by the "king of death" who is Kanaloa. Fornander does not state what tradition this information comes from but given that Kamakau and Kepelino were his informants, we can infer that they are the source.

Barrère shows that in his notes, Fornander discusses the creation of the earth and heavens, and that his description combines Kepelino and Kamakau's reports. He mentions the

hidden garden of Kāne from Kepelino's account, however, it is Kanaloa rather than 'A'aianuinkeakulawai'a who tempts Keolakūhonua. Fornander notes that Kanaloa seduces Keolakūhonua, and afterward, she and Kumuhonua have "broken the laws of Kane" and experience a fall in rank, exactly like Adam and Eve when they are banished from the Garden of Eden. Kanaloa is not mentioned in Kepelino's original account, but Fornander, in his notes, replaces the sea bird in Kāne's garden with Kanaloa, which suggests that by this time, he had accepted that Kanaloa was the "Hawaiian devil" (11).

It is striking that in his notes, Fornander does not recognize the extent to which the Bible and Christianity had influenced Kamakau and Kepelino's accounts. In fact, the parallels between these accounts and Genesis are so evident that I am convinced that Fornander was aware that the accounts were Christianized prior to publishing them as "Ancient Hawaiian chants referring to creation" (*Polynesian Race*, 1:71). On this point, Barrère seems to agree as she cites Father Yzendoorn, the former chancellor of the Catholic Mission in Honolulu, who also read Kepelino's Kumuhonua mele, and his belief that the doctrine of the trinity was so obviously expressed that it "makes one look with suspicion on the genuineness of the legend" (8). In short, it is doubtful that Fornander would have missed the numerous references made to Genesis and Christian teaching. Given that these accounts were made to seem "authentic," Fornander would imaginably have faced some difficulty in handling them. However, this does not excuse Fornander's silence on their close conformity to Biblical accounts. As I show shortly, he does eventually acknowledge that some of the work that Kamakau gave him was indeed suspect for this reason.

Fornander's version of the Kumuhonua legend is published in *An Account of the Polynesian Race, Its Origin and Migrations and the Hawaiian People to the Times of Kamehameha I* (three volumes), appearing alongside theories of Polynesian origins and

migrations. His preface notes that he obtained valuable creation chants and the groundwork for the Kumuhonua legends from Kepelino, which were confirmed by Kamakau, revealing that he had no other informants for these accounts (1:xii). The version he publishes is derived from the notes he took in conversation with Kamakau and Kepelino, and it is more obviously Biblical than either of the originals. As Barrère points out in her introduction, many of Fornander's theories in *The Polynesian Race* have been dismissed as lacking credibility, however, the same scholars that critique his work utilize his evidence and resources, recycling the same material to fit new, equally problematic theories of their own (1).

Significantly, the idea that Kanaloa represented a "Hawaiian concept of evil" is derived solely from the Kumuhonua accounts that Kamakau and Kepelino composed, and that Fornander then edited, showing that the interpretation of Kanaloa as a sinister being stems from minimal, Christianized evidence that has been over used and under analyzed. In this work, we find other derogatory references for Kanaloa: "Akua ino" or "evil spirit" (1:83), "a personified spirit of evil, the origin of death" (1:84, 85), a "fallen angel" (1:85, 2:61), and "prince of darkness and chief of the infernal world" (2:61). In *Fornander's Collection of Hawaiian Antiquities and Folk-Lore*, published posthumously, we find similar unfavorable remarks about Kanaloa, such as the fact that Kanaloa is "not noted for beneficent gifts" (5:604), "seems to have been an evil spirit (akua ino) (6:267), or "that Kanaloa was a generic name for a multitude of evil spirits" (6:268). In *Polynesian Race*, Fornander acknowledges in a footnote that Kamakau had given him a legend that Fornander considered suspect:

On first receiving this legend, I was inclined to doubt its genuineness, and to consider it as a paraphrase or adaptation of the Biblical account by some semi-civilised or semi-Christinaized Hawaiian, after the discovery of this group by Captain Cook. But a larger

and better acquaintance with Hawaiian folklore has shown me that, though the details of the legend, as narrated by the Christian and civilised Kamakau, may possibly in some degree, and unconsciously to him, perhaps, have received a Biblical colouring, yet the main facts of the legend, with the identical names of places and persons, are referred to more or less distinctly in other legends of undoubted antiquity. (1:99)

Here, we see how Kamakau's artful use of names convinced Fornander to accept the information therein, and evidently, he accepted the Kumuhonua legends for the same reasons, not recognizing that they were innovations belonging to the mid nineteenth century.

Notably, when Fornander introduces Hawaiian creation accounts, he states that he only knows of two that have been preserved and written down, referring of course to Kamakau and Kepelino's Kumuhonua accounts (Fornander, *Polynesian Race*, 1:74; Barrère 14). Fornander's understanding of Kanaloa as sinister ran so deep that he assigned the same role to some of Kanaloa's Polynesian counterparts, such as Marquesan Tana'oa. Fornander notes that both Hawaiians and Marquesans depicted their oceanic deities as malicious, and that Kanaloa and Tana'oa "embody the same conception of evil" (1:84).

Fornander's treatment of Kanaloa in his manuscript reveals that he draws his interpretations of the god's functions and character from Kamakau and Kepelino's depiction of him as a malicious entity in their Kumuhonua legends. For example, Fornander provides a general description of Kanaloa, and notes that in early Hawaiian chants, Kanaloa is not a primary deity. Instead, Kanaloa appears in old creation accounts as a "fallen angel, antagonistic to the great gods and representative of evil's spirit" (1:84). Moreover, Fornander notes that Kanaloa is depicted as "lord of the infernal regions" in older legends, and here again he references only Kumuhonua accounts (1:86). He additionally describes the Pō as the "infernal regions" in terms

of “chaos” and “hell,” making it appear that as a deity of the Pō, Kanaloa was devil-like.

Fornander cites these ideas of Kanaloa as though they are definitive, and his work leaves little room to question whether other interpretations exist.

Fornander’s persistent reliance on the Kumuhonua legends has had lasting effects on Hawaiian scholarship, particularly in discussions surrounding Kanaloa and his functions. Barrère shows the magnitude of Fornander’s influence when she states that if Fornander’s text was the only source for the Kumuhonua legends, “modern students would be hard put to discredit their authenticity as ancient Hawaiian lore” (1). Kamakau and Kepelino’s approach to composing the Kumuhonua legends ensured that the accounts appeared ancestral, hiding the extent to which they were influenced by the Bible. This state of affairs, paired with Fornander’s rigid reliance on the accounts for data, allowed their Christian-inflected view of Kanaloa to become widespread in secondary sources. Fornander, like many western scholars of the time, was committed to documenting “authentic” Hawaiian traditions, but failed to realize the diversity with which Hawaiians describe and understand things. According to Barrère’s research, it appears that after engaging with Kamakau and Kepelino, Fornander was certain the Kumuhonua cosmologies were the only Hawaiian creation accounts that truly mattered. In short, not only did he overvalue their data, but he also used it as though it expressed a universal Hawaiian worldview. As a result, theories about Kanaloa as a “Hawaiian devil,” which continue to be repeated today, are reductionist notions derived primarily from Christianized accounts.

Significantly, the vast majority of primary resources depict Kanaloa as a fundamental divinity in Hawai‘i, and do not state that he is sinister or an antagonist to humankind. As my previous chapters have shown, an investigation of Kanaloa’s depiction in Hawaiian-language newspapers does not reveal him as an “akua ‘ino,” or as oppositional to Kāne. Had Fornander

engaged with more primary resources outside of Kamakau and Kepelino's Kumuhonua legends, he would have had a more diverse collection of theories and data to work with. But even then, Fornander's acceptance of Kamakau's materials even though he initially found them suspect, raises questions about Fornander's level of cultural literacy. Still, while Fornander plays a significant role in pushing these ideas forth as "authentically Hawaiian," he is not alone in favoring the Kumuhonua accounts. Judging by the frequency with which Kanaloa is described as a "Hawaiian devil," it appears that scholars have favored sources that depict Kanaloa as malevolent over those that depict him otherwise.

The fact that Kamakau's newspaper series and Kumuhonua legends have been translated into English quite likely plays a role in why his unique view of Kanaloa has managed to become so widespread. As scholars like M. Puakea Nogelmeier (*Mai Pa'a I Ka Leo*), Noenoe K. Silva (*Aloha Betrayed; The Steel-tipped Pen*), and Marie Alohani Brown (*Facing the Spears of Change*) have discussed, there is a tendency to rely on the English translations of a handful of works by Hawaiian scholars, including Kamakau, as representative of more than one hundred years of Hawaiian intellectual production. If we are aware of the persistent and problematic reliance on Kamakau's work and the recycling of Fornander's material, it becomes clear why ideas of Kanaloa as being evil abound in secondary sources. By favoring English translations of Kamakau's work over the breadth and depth of 'ike preserved in Hawaiian language resources, scholars working with secondary materials have little to say of Kanaloa outside of his Christianized depiction. Beginning with Fornander's first text in 1878, we can trace Kanaloa's steady demonization in secondary materials up until today—nearly 150 years of misinterpretation. In that time, countless works have discussed Kanaloa, but each one lacks a holistic understanding of him. As a result, Kanaloa's true functions and position in the Hawaiian

pantheon have been unconsidered. Only one scholar has produced a text on Kanaloa that offers a more rounded understanding of him, his functions, and his kino lau—Pualani Kanaka‘ole Kanahele, and unsurprisingly, Kanahele works primarily with Hawaiian-language resources.

Given that these descriptions of Kanaloa have been largely derived from the Kumuhonua legends, it is helpful to contextualize their data, working to determine what is based on Christian doctrine and what comes from Hawaiian tradition. As Christians, Kamakau and Kepelino had a strong and obvious desire to relate their ancestral traditions to the Bible. However, as Hawaiians, they utilized names, themes, and locations that are significant to Hawaiian people, making the legends Christian in ideology but Hawaiian in expression. The necessity of creating a “Hawaiian devil” and a “Hawaiian trinity” in these accounts came from the authors’ Christian understanding of God, sin, and Satan. On the one hand, without a trinity and a devil, the accounts would have seemed polytheistic, which would be counterproductive to the authors’ goal of linking Hawaiian beliefs to Christianity. On the other hand, if the texts did not mention Kāne, Kanaloa, Kū and Lono, they would appear distinctly un-Hawaiian and thus raise questions of authenticity. Moreover, it was vital for Kamakau and Kepelino to present an account that reflected a monotheistic, Christian interpretation of the divine. Both authors achieve this end by placing Kāne, Kū and Lono into a trinity and, in the case of Kamakau, assigning Kanaloa the role of the devil.

While the inspiration to transform the positions of these gods came from Biblical teachings, Kamakau’s decision to have Kanaloa fill the role of Satan was probably informed by Kanaloa’s functions as a Hawaiian god. Though I do not see Kanaloa as a “Hawaiian concept of evil” in any way, I cannot deny that of the major four male deities, he is the most likely candidate for the role of “Hawaiian devil.” Kanaloa’s close connection to death makes him

particularly well-suited, which is evidenced in the way Kamakau depicts Kanaloa's human turning to stone, his wider function with death preventing him from creating life. Kanaloa's connection to Kāne, especially the ways they are juxtaposed, also positions him as a potentially evil figure if their relationship is interpreted according to Christian notions of God and Satan. In applying a Christian worldview to Hawaiian tradition, Kāne can be naturally interpreted as Jehovah due to his functions with water, sunlight, and humanity's needs. In the same way, Kanaloa appears as devil-like with his connections to death, depth, and the Pō. Thus, in attempting to bring Hawaiian deities into dialogue with Christian doctrine, the dyad of Kāne and Kanaloa is inevitably made oppositional rather than complimentary.

Therefore, because Kamakau wanted to create a Hawaiian cosmology that inherently expressed a Christian worldview, it was necessary for him to alter the interpretation of Kāne and Kanaloa's relationship, by making them "enemies" rather than companions. In Chapter 2, I discussed the Kāne/Kanaloa dyad and showed that their relationship is complementary and how it speaks to Hawaiian understandings of balance. I also showed that within this dyad, Kanaloa represents the aspects of life that are difficult to see, know, and understand. For example, we find Kanaloa's functions with humanity are centered on the embryonic stage before birth and with life after death, two phases that are unknowable to the living—with the exception of Hawaiians who possess special powers. The same can be said of Kanaloa's connection with freshwater, as he is only associated with aquifers deep underground, which cannot be seen. Moreover, we can look to Kanaloa's kino lau, such as the whale that frequents the ocean's depths, or the slippery he'e, both of which lend to Kanaloa's elusive and distanced character. I expand upon this thought in my concluding section, when I discuss the implications of Kanaloa's associations.

According to traditional Hawaiian interpretations of the Kāne/Kanaloa dyad, the different things with which Kanaloa is associated do not make him “evil,” but mark him as an important complement to Kāne, and together they represent balance —the eternal cycle of life and death. These dyadic views of Kāne and Kanaloa can be discerned in numerous primary materials, including accounts written by Kamakau. While Kamakau did more to position Kanaloa as Satan than any other Hawaiian intellectual, an examination of his other articles reveals that he also portrayed Kanaloa in numerous other ways, and not all of them were Christian interpretations. If we examine Kamakau’s portrayals of Kanaloa after his first Kumuhonua account in 1865, we see that his stance on the god changes depending on the topic. In his series “Ka Moolelo O Kamehameha I,” Kamakau regularly notes that Kanaloa was amongst the high-ranking male gods prayed to by Kamehameha and his court (Oct. 5, 1867). Notably, Kamakau does not mention that Kanaloa is sinister or representative of the devil in this series, perhaps because it was dedicated to a discussion on the life of Kamehameha I.

Elsewhere, Kamakau shares that Kanaloa arrived in Hawai‘i with esteemed deities like Kāne or Haumea, the latter sometimes identified as his kaikuahine (sister or female cousin of a male) (“Ka Moolelo Hawaii,” Mar. 31, 1870). In these accounts and others, Kamakau makes no mention of Kanaloa being an akua ‘ino, even in his post-Kumuhonua works. The later dates of these examples show that his decision to depict Kanaloa as evil was done in a particular context to achieve a specific aim. Outside of his attempts to align Hawaiian traditions with the Bible, Kamakau does not frequently discuss Kanaloa as a “Hawaiian devil.” As a historian, Kamakau’s responsibility was to write about views and practices across history, all of which do not recognize Kanaloa as sinister. In his writings about ali‘i, mo‘olelo, and mele, Kamakau reveals a Kanaloa that is clearly not devil-like. Instead, Kanaloa is a major deity invoked for healing,

navigating, and mourning purposes. It is by taking Kanaloa and applying a Christian, monotheistic interpretation of his functions that Kamakau's portrayal of the god appears negative.

I make this point above to show that while Kamakau worked pointedly to transform Kanaloa into a Hawaiian devil, he also preserved important examples of Kanaloa's functions across Hawaiian history. The mo'olelo, mele, descriptions, and explanations he provides in his series have done much to further our ways of understanding the progression of Hawaiian religion generally and Kanaloa specifically. Kamakau's assertion that Kanaloa was a "Hawaiian devil" thus appears as one of many views he expresses. It is tempting to assert that as a Christian and author of the Kumuhonua legends, Kamakau undeniably understood Kanaloa as evil. However, it is not my right or responsibility to determine his personal beliefs. Rather, I find meaning in the fact that his portrayals and interpretations of Kanaloa are diverse, and that they reveal the different ways that people have understood him over countless generations in and beyond Hawai'i.

While portrayals of Kanaloa are extremely varied in Kamakau's work, it does seem that his depiction of Kanaloa as the "Hawaiian devil" was popular amongst Hawaiians of the time. Descriptions of Kanaloa as an akua 'ino that hates mankind begin to appear in diverse newspaper articles after 1870, showing that Kamakau's Kumuhonua legends did have an impact on how Kanaloa was later portrayed. Diverse accounts, including one written by the well-known historian Joseph Poepoe, summarize Kamakau's Kumuhonua legends and include them in general discussions of mo'okū'auhau ("Ka Moolelo Hawaii Kahiko," Mar. 7, 1906). At least one article additionally states that the legends are "kahiko loa" or extremely old, which suggests that some believed them to be ancestral and not modern (Anonymous, "Huakai Pokole"). It appears

that Kamakau's Christianized creation account spoke to some Hawaiians, and thus continued to be circulated as part of our traditions (Anonymous, "Ke Emi Nei"). However, they are just one of several views expressed in primary resources, and do not reflect the beliefs of all Hawaiians.

Notably, my investigation reveals that even within Christian interpretations of Kanaloa, we do not find uniform understandings of his role. In some accounts, Kanaloa is named as the "Uhane Hemolele" or Holy Ghost within the trinity rather than the devil (Anonymous, "He Moolelo Hawaii"). Others state that all Hawaiian deities are evil, not just Kanaloa, and that none of the old gods should be worshipped, since Jehovah is the only true god (Kinau). Then of course we find evidence that despite Christianity's influence, people still chose to worship Kāne, Kanaloa, Kū and Lono as their primary deities, honoring them in their traditional roles without imposing Christianized interpretations on them (Kapahukapu).

When we consider the many different ways that Hawaiians viewed Kanaloa, whether Christian-inflected or traditional, we can see that the function of the god hinges on more than their portrayal in mo'olelo. Interpretations of gods and relationships with them are dependent on one's work, genealogy, ahupua'a, island and historical context, to name just a few. As nature deities, functions of Hawaiian gods are also dependent on the unpredictability of the natural world and phenomena. Past scholars have failed to realize the extent to which this affects the roles of not only Kanaloa, but all Hawaiian deities. In their scholarship they have asserted partialized definitions of his functions based on limited scopes of research. They have assumed that there is a single role by which he can be defined, or that he has been understood according to a set doctrine (Handy, "Traces of Totemism," 49; Fornander, *Polynesian Race*, 1:84; Beckwith, *Hawaiian Mythology*, 60; Valeri 18). As a result, the theories surrounding Kanaloa are reductionist interpretations in that they ignore the depth and breadth with which he has been

understood historically—across place and time—and thus leave us with minimalistic and largely negative depictions.

The idea that Kanaloa represents the “Hawaiian concept of evil” or functions as the “Hawaiian devil” is obviously a Christian interpretation of his role as a deity. The point of this chapter was not to make that evident, but rather, to show the danger that comes from assuming that the functions of Hawaiian deities are uniform or universal. Had Fornander contextualized his portrayal of Kanaloa in the Kumuhonua legends as one of many of his roles, perhaps later scholars would have looked beyond his work to draw their own theories, and the discoveries I have put forth in this thesis would have already been known and detailed. If scholars do not access more resources and contextualize them, their theories become regurgitations rather than contributions, and any attempt at rediscovering Hawaiian deities becomes null.

While I recognize and admire the progress we have made in reinvestigating Hawaiian deities, rituals and beliefs, there is still much to be discovered and readdressed. As scholars, we need to show more care. We need to engage with a wider array of resources. We need to recognize the variability inherent in primary sources, and we need to acknowledge it as meaningful. We cannot be afraid. Engaging with a narrow subject and finding multiple, conflicting views can be intimidating and even frustrating for those unfamiliar with such variation, but important distinctions cannot be collapsed. There are ways to interpret Hawaiian deities that acknowledge their numerous functions and consider their wider lineages, recognizing both variation and tradition. Even Kanaloa, who is marginally described in secondary resources, has an abundance of functions, positions, and genealogies when we engage with primary materials and recognize the multiplicity of their views. As this chapter has shown, some of these understandings of Kanaloa are Christian-inflected and as such are negative, and moreover, are

relatively recent innovations. However, the fact that these accounts are modern and Christianized does not change that fact that they have had an effect on our traditions, nor does it negate views that show Kanaloa as a benevolent, major form of the divine. Society, politics and religion in Hawai‘i have gone through countless changes, but the gods always follow. They may transform but they do not expire. It is up to us to rediscover them.

CONCLUSION

DIVING INTO THE DEPTHS OF KANALOA

This thesis set out to provide a more holistic understanding of Kanaloa by examining his pan-Polynesian mo‘okū‘auhau and his depiction in infrequently-accessed primary resources. In doing so, I have been able to further develop several of his known functions, as well as introduce new roles as revealed in Hawaiian-language newspapers. I have not exhausted the research I collected, but by analyzing the kanikau and mo‘olelo that I have thus far discussed, our understanding of Kanaloa’s position in Hawai‘i has been significantly expanded. Beyond this thesis, I plan to exhaust the research I have collected on Kanaloa, and his Polynesian counterparts, in order to further contextualize and analyze his positions. This is something I hope to see done with all Hawaiian deities, so that we may begin to reinvestigate and reanalyze their functions in Hawaiian religion past and present.

I began my investigation of Kanaloa by looking to his Tahitian counterpart Ta‘aroa. I discussed Ta‘aroa’s various roles and problematized associations that fail to recognize his position as demiurge. Previous scholarship discusses him primarily as a god of fishing, navigating, and the oceanic realm, ignoring that fact that these positions are likely informed by his greater function as creator. While it is true that Ta‘aroa, Kanaloa, and their Polynesian counterparts are connected to the ocean, E. S. Craighill Handy and other scholars have over-emphasized this role in connection with them. The characterization of these deities as oceanic gods is so prevalent that the nuances with which believers have understood their oceanic functions has been ignored.

Most notably, Handy asserts that Ta‘aroa is the “patron deity of fishing,” but his claim is based on a single manifestation of Ta‘aroa in the form of a specific stone that aids fishermen. He

draws this data from Henry, who names the primary fishing gods in the fisherman's marae, none of whom are the greater Ta'aroa (148). In this way, it seems that Handy, prior to collecting data on Ta'aroa, had in mind that the deity was innately oceanic, and thus focused on finding data that confirmed this point. Given that Handy had access to Henry's data, which reveals Ta'aroa as a creator god with numerous functions, I fail to see why else he would have focused on such a narrow aspect of Ta'aroa's role.

In this thesis, I have provided substantial evidence to show that while Ta'aroa does have ocean-related roles and functions, he has other significant non-oceanic related functions: he is connected to creation, the Pō, healing, war, the marae, and obtaining human sacrifices. Notably, most of these roles and functions are also assigned to Kanaloa in Hawai'i, showing the ways these two gods are connected and fulfill similar functions. I end my discussion on Ta'aroa by pointing out that over time, and in fairly recent history, he was usurped by Tāne as the primary deity in Tahiti.

Although I emphasize the need to analyze Ta'aroa's various roles and functions in light of the fact he is creator, it is also important to realize that they are the product of political-religious change. In other words, Ta'aroa's position and rank in the Tahitian pantheon roles evolve over time. Thus, while he is permanent, his importance and relevance for Tahitians fluctuates. Fluctuations in a deity's prominence are common in Polynesian religious hierarchies, and thus, examinations of Polynesian gods must consider the way that a deity's or class of deities' current and future roles, associations, and functions may be informed by their past roles, associations, and function. Ta'aroa illustrates the critical need for such an approach to studying Polynesian gods. The many and diverse roles assigned to Ta'aroa speak to his importance in human life, which are ultimately informed by his original position as demiurge.

My discussion of Ta‘aroa in Tahiti provided a foundation for my investigation of Kanaloa, who is part of a wider, Polynesian genealogy of the entity known as Ta‘aroa in Tahiti, Tagaroa in Manihiki, Tangaroa in Aotearoa, Tana‘oa or Taka‘oa in the Marquesas, Tagaloa in Sāmoa, and Tangaloa in Tonga. This lineage informs the Hawaiian Kanaloa’s roles and functions in Hawai‘i. I highlighted that Kanaloa is frequently named in kanikau in different epithets that poetically reference death, particularly the soul’s journey to the afterlife. These epithets, together with his associations with the sunset, Southern and Western hemispheres, and the Pō, reveal Kanaloa as an important deity connected to death and the passage of the soul into the afterlife. Significantly, these are not negative associations. Therefore, primary evidence demonstrates that Kanaloa was a benevolent god whose connection to death and the afterlife was clearly positive, and thus he is evoked by those who mourn the passing of a loved one.

I also note that by recognizing Kanaloa’s functions with death, we can expand on his dyadic relationship with Kāne. God of the sky, sunrise, freshwater above ground, and staple foods such as kalo, Kāne can be conceived of as the principle deity connected to humanity’s vital needs. Thus, as his natural counterpart, we can understand why Kanaloa takes on a less obviously prominent role in human lives. Like Beckwith, I believe that we might understand Kāne as the general high-god for humans during their life on earth, while Kanaloa is the main deity for the embryonic stages and life after death (172). Therefore, the phases of life where Kanaloa is dominant are not visible to living humans as they are stages that bookend our conscious life, representing the beginning and end of our existence as humans, and thus periods in the cycle of life and death that we cannot readily conceptualize or remember.

In examining accounts of Kāne and Kanaloa as waterfinders, I show that despite Kanaloa’s connection to the sea, and thus salt water, both he and Kāne bear associations with

wai, freshwater, which additionally explains his banana kino lau. In keeping with his status as a somewhat mysterious entity, Kanaloa is connected to freshwater deep underground, and has an intimate connection to the earth's subterranean realm. By recognizing that Kanaloa has functions connected to the sea and submarine groundwater, his association with depth becomes evident, which leads to new understandings of him, such as Tangaro's notion that Kanaloa is a god of depth psychology, who represents depth of self and deep thinking (16)—a significant example of how new understandings, which are, importantly, rooted older ideas of this entity contribute to his evolution.

Kanaloa's function with depth and death were taken as sinister when interpreted according to a Christian view, linked to ideas of hell and damnation. As the god of depth in Hawai'i, Kanaloa is indeed connected to the afterlife and the Pō, though these spaces are not traditionally interpreted negatively. Notably, Hawaiian understandings of depth have positive connotations when it comes to intelligence and deep thinking. Terms like hohonu (deep, profound), huliko'a (to dive into the depth of a matter) and 'eli'eli (to dig, profound, deep) show that we, in part, understand depth as linked to knowledge and thought (Pukui and Elbert s.v. "hohonu," "huliko'a," "'eli'eli"). In this way, I hypothesize that as a deity of depth, and more recently, depth psychology, Kanaloa is representative of the subconscious.

This claim is further substantiated when acknowledging Kāne and Kanaloa as a dyad. Kāne is representative of humanity's conscious life and needs. His associations are on land and above ground, a space of order that can be clearly perceived and interacted with. As his complement, Kanaloa takes on roles connected to the sea, where no humans can survive indefinitely, and depth, a realm that we associated with death and that we normally cannot see or understand as living beings. Kanaloa is depicted as subordinate to Kāne, and in their shared

mo‘olelo he is less vocal and active than Kāne. If we assign these Kāne and Kanaloa qualities to thoughts and feelings, Kanaloa is the subconscious to Kāne’s conscious.

Subconscious refers to “the part of the mind of which one is not fully aware but which influences one’s actions and feelings” (*Merriam-Webster*, s.v. “subconscious”). Kanaloa’s prominence in kanikau has additional significance when we interpret him in this way, allowing us to see how he functions in connection to our emotions, particularly deep-seated ones. This point allows us to expand on Kanaloa’s role with healing. As a deity connected to mourning, deep thinking, and curative powers, his function as a god of psychology becomes evident, and gives him a therapeutic function. Significance is added to this when we consider that the ocean in general is conceived of as a place of healing and therapy.

In the Introduction, I discussed how Hawaiians interpret life according to the natural environment that surrounds them. Following that logic, it makes sense that as a deity of earth’s depths, Kanaloa also represents depth of self, taking on functions in connection with emotions and the psyche. If we expand this understanding, Kanaloa’s function with submarine groundwater may additionally link him to tears, and all water within the body, which broadens his ability to heal whether the ailment be mental, emotional, or physical. Newspaper accounts authored by the ‘Ōiwi community on Kaua‘i reveal similar interpretations of Kanaloa in their descriptions of his healing waters. Difficult to find and access, people primarily seek these waters for healing purposes, as they can cure physical or emotional illnesses.

Information from Kaua‘i accounts reveal several nuanced points surrounding Kanaloa’s function, including his link to a luakini in Hā‘ena, a rare but significant association. It is paramount to recognize that the functions Hawaiians assign to gods may and often differ between islands and ahupua‘a and that this is in part due to differences in the natural

environment, which informs our understandings of our akua. In this way, Kanaloa's prominence in Kaua'i is significant as it may reflect the Island's amount of ground water. Moreover, Kanaloa's only other known luakini was in Lualualei, Wai'anae, a place that seems arid but is known for its submarine groundwater which emerges from the sides of certain cliffs (Ho'oulumāhie May 3, 1906). Given the relationship between Hawaiian gods, 'āina, and natural phenomenon, it seems that Kanaloa's position as a luakini god in these communities may have to do with his wider function with groundwater—a possibility that needs to be investigated.

Previous scholarship on Kanaloa has emphasized his connection to the ocean and salt water over his function in connection with wai, and thus depicted him as strictly an ocean god. Though his roles clearly extend beyond the sea, navigation and the ocean realm remain important associations. Kanaloa's kino lau Kaho'olawe evidences his function with seafaring, as the island was traditionally used as a navigation school and ocean observatory (Kanahele 19). Kanaloa's tie to Kaho'olawe and its channel Kealaikahiki notably connect him to Ta'aroa in Tahiti, who is also connected to navigation, and thus this entity known by different reiterations of the same name across Polynesia is a deity associated, in one way or another and to differing degrees, with navigating, which is extremely meaningful in seafaring cultures.

Kanaloa's kino lau are also significant and telling of his character. I shared Kanahele's work on Kanaloa in which she discusses how the qualities of the he'e and nai'a are revealing of Kanaloa's characteristics (6). In particular, the slippery nature of the he'e represents Kanaloa's vague and elusive qualities. To this I would add that his other sea animal kino lau are also telling of his character in the sense that several of his forms frequent the ocean depths, and are rarely eaten or sought out as 'aumākua. In this way, Kanaloa's nature appears distant, elusive, and intangible, which explains why he lacks individual 'aumākua kino, and "stands alone" as one

contributor to the Hawaiian-language newspapers has noted (Anonymous, “Ka Moolelo Hawaii,” Sept. 29, 1870).

The fact that Kanaloa is the only major male god without ‘aumākua kino is striking and revealing of his natural disposition as a god of death, depth and the sea, a realm that remains mysterious to us today. According to a Hawaiian religious interpretation, Kanaloa is not enigmatic and awe-inspiring because he represents the ocean but rather, the ocean is mysterious and awesome because these qualities belong to Kanaloa. Compared to the land, the ocean is a chaotic, othered place that lacks the order humans crave. The sea inherits this chaos from Kanaloa, and thus, we can recognize that he is an enigmatic, even intimidating deity. He is not Kāne, god of humankind. He is not our rising sun, or our kalo crops. He has no ‘aumākua manifestations and he takes precedence out at sea when we are far from the comforts of land. We know him in the womb and then forget, and do not rejoin him until we meet him in the Pō when we die.

It is this intimidating quality of Kanaloa that Kamakau utilizes in his Kumuhonua mo‘olelo that depict Kanaloa as a “Hawaiian devil.” In Chapter 3, I pointed out that Kanaloa’s depiction as a Satanic figure is informed by Kamakau’s Christian beliefs, which Abraham Fornander incorrectly promulgated as a universal Hawaiian view. Evidence suggests that Kamakau’s depiction of Kanaloa stemmed from his desire to interpret Hawaiian gods according to a Christian interpretation of the divine, however, Kamakau’s decision to portray Kanaloa as the devil was likely informed by the god’s function with death and depth. According to a Christian perspective, these associations are negative, and thus, depth and the Pō are linked to hell and damnation.

In the Kumuhonua accounts, I find it notable that Kanaloa attempts to create a human but cannot, his association with death behind his inability to spark life. The idea that Kanaloa hates humans and creates bitter, stinging, and poisonous things to harm us is also revealing, pointing to the way that Kanaloa is further distanced from humanity unlike Kāne, Kū and Lono. While much of Kanaloa's depiction in these legends comes from a specific Christian understanding of creation, God, and Satan, several aspects of his character are derived from his functions as a Hawaiian god. These legends are significant to the study of Kanaloa for several reasons, including the way they introduced his connection to the devil and mark him as an akua 'ino'ino. The Kumuhonua accounts are also significant for what they reveal about variation because they demonstrate how a Hawaiian god transformed with the advent of Christianity, and how this transformation was informed by his wider, ancestral functions.

All Hawaiian deities have an underlying philosophy that they embody. Their roles, function, and importance may change considerably but they nevertheless encapsulate, symbolize, or express a set idea, phenomenon, or theory. The theory is informed by the natural phenomena they represent and by the relationship humans have with it. In my analysis of Kanaloa which entailed examining Ta'aroa's roles and functions in Tahiti, how Hawaiians depicted him in kanikau and mo'olelo in nineteenth- and twentieth-century Hawaiian-language newspapers, and how the advent of Christianity affected his evolution, I drew attention to the fact that there is a notable consistency in how he is understood and what functions he fulfills. These themes are not definitive nor permanent, but they do appear across time and place in connection with religion- and political-related change, which speaks to how they are deep-seated and an integral part of Hawaiian philosophy.

In terms of roles and functions, Kanaloa, perhaps more than any other deity, is elusive to humans. The domains he governs and the forms he embodies are distanced from human lives, and thus difficult to conceptualize and relate to. Compared to Kāne, Kanaloa appears chaotic to humans and can be intimidating. That is not to say Kanaloa's roles and functions are not pivotal to humanity, because they clearly are. Yet, there is something “subconscious” about his roles and how they function. He is of the psyche—the human mind and spirit. He is innate to our consciousness, our epistemology and ontology, but he is subsurface. He influences and inspires humanity as much as other major deities, but he does so in a less obvious way—playing a dominant role in our existence before birth, after death, and in the depths of our subconscious minds. In recognizing these roles, there are numerous ways he can be understood past and present.

It is my hope that by engaging with the material in this thesis, readers will have a more holistic understanding of Kanaloa's functions in Hawai'i's religious history. Secondary sources claim that there is little information about Kanaloa, yet I have shown that this is not true. We can gain deeper understandings and offer more culturally literate interpretations of Hawaiian gods if we look to the depth and breadth of 'ike kupuna in primary Hawaiian-language resources. Kanaloa is a case in point. For generations kupuna strove to preserve their 'ike so those of us today would have access to its wealth. It is our kuleana to ensure it does not slip through our fingers. Thanks to their legacy, we are equipped to find whatever we seek— no matter the depth.

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