In the summer of 1887 a small group of haole (white) men, fired by a tempestuous meeting of their organization, the Hawaiian League, that had taken place a few blocks away, climbed the staircase leading to the offices of His Majesty David La’amea Kalākaua. They carried with them a hastily composed document that came to be known as the Bayonet Constitution, which they forced the king to sign and by so doing effectively surrendered his executive functions within the government to them. This mo‘olelo (story) is about that event and its place in a complex, though not surprising, unfolding of other events.

Why tell this story? Why not tell the mo‘olelo of the overthrow less than six years after that event, or of the annexation by the United States and the resistance offered by the ‘Ōiwi (Native) patriots in the period in between? Those stories are worthy indeed, with high drama, romance, heroic Native figures, villainous haole, and a soulless, imperium-bent America “consummating” the relationship with its reluctant, even hostile bride.\(^1\) Or perhaps it would be worthwhile to retell the story of Cook’s execution, from the viewpoint of someone who can, at least, claim an ancestral connection to his killers. That is another good story, worth telling and retelling.

By comparison, the Bayonet tale is a squalid one where few of the major players can claim our automatic sympathies, from the king, who has been characterized as weak, cowardly, hedonistic, and inept, to someone like the constitution’s composer, Lorrin Thurston, whose ambitions sprang from his racist belief in America’s destiny and his own white-skinned superiority. Yet this mo‘olelo is not about that event only. For how was it that a constitution could affect the society at all in 1887? A mere fifty years earlier, Thurston’s constitution would
have been gibberish, even to the few ‘Ōiwi able to read and write in English, much less to the growing numbers of our ancestors who could read and write in their own language. One article alone from that constitution would have confounded every single Kanaka Maoli (Native Hawaiian) alive in 1837:

Every male reside of the Hawaiian Islands, of Hawaiian, American, or European birth or descent, who shall have attained the age of twenty years, and shall have paid his taxes, and shall have caused his name to be entered on the list of voters for Nobles of his District, shall be an elector of Nobles, and shall be entitled to vote at any election of Nobles provided: That he shall own and be possessed in his own right, of taxable property of the value of not less than three thousand dollars over and above all encumbrances, or shall have received an income of not less than six hundred dollars during the year next preceding his registration for such election.2

Fifty years previously in 1837, it would have been inconceivable that Aliʻi (the traditional ruling families and original members of the House of Nobles in the kingdom’s first constitution) could be elected by human beings. As descendants of chiefly families whose rank equated them with akua (gods), and as akua themselves, they surely were not chosen by the people to represent them. Even Kauïkeauli, son of the Conqueror Kamehameha and Mōʻī (paramount chief) of the archipelago in 1837, was merely the first among several ranked families who could trace their chiefly genealogies back for a hundred generations. Although he could select those chiefs to serve in his councils, he could not define someone’s chiefly lineage. So it was inconceivable that a collection of well-to-do foreigners and Kānaka Maoli would have been able to koho (choose or elect) someone to be Aliʻi, even if they had had any idea what an election was. More than that, Kānaka Maoli would have bristled at the suggestion that haole should be involved in that sort of process at all.

In fact, the entire article with its references to property and income qualifications is a startling demonstration of how much the millennia-old culture and society had changed in less than three generations. In 1887, the Kānaka Maoli understood the language and implications of Article 59, but once Kalākaua signed the constitution, his people, accustomed to the rule of law, saw no alternative but to obey it. So the moʻolelo of the Bayonet Constitution is not about the political climate
of 1887, but about how it was that the traditional concerns of chiefly politics came to be contests over elections, constitutions, citizenship, and legislation in the first place.

This story is more than a tale of racism, intolerance, and greed, though these are certainly part of the moʻolelo. It is more than just another example of the twisted nature of nineteenth-century colonialism in the Pacific, though, again, this is part of the history. It is more than a revisionist account by another Native historian challenging the typical haole histories that have little understanding of our culture and often a limited understanding of their own. Finally, it is more than a study of men and women who have been largely ignored in previous histories, but whose stories are worth telling.

This is a new moʻolelo, one that has never been told in quite this way before. It is a story of how colonialism worked in Hawaiʻi not through the naked seizure of lands and governments but through a slow, insinuating invasion of people, ideas, and institutions. It is also a story of how our people fought this colonial insinuation with perplexity and courage. But ultimately, this is a story of violence, in which that colonialism literally and figuratively dismembered the lāhui (the people) from their traditions, their lands, and ultimately their government. The mutilations were not physical only, but also psychological and spiritual. Death came not only through infection and disease, but through racial and legal discourse that crippled the will, confidence, and trust of the Kānaka Maoli as surely as leprosy and smallpox claimed their limbs and lives.

Mai Kīnohi Mai

Samuel Manaiākalani Kamakau introduced his recounting of the first legislatures in the Hawaiian kingdom between 1845 and 1852 with these lines: “In the old days it was tabu for the high and low chiefs (aliʻi and kaukaualiʻi) to confer together. In matters of life and death or in difficult questions of policy it was for the high chiefs alone to decide; they held their counsels in secret, and the ruling chief acted upon their counsel. It was by his action that their counsel became known. But that time was past and a new era had come.”3 Originally published as a series of newspaper articles in the 1860s, Kamakau’s histories are one of the few written accounts of prehaole chiefly society.
Much of the content of Ruling Chiefs of Hawai‘i deals with Hawai‘i Ali‘i Nui (chiefs of high rank) just before the coming of Europeans. The author portrayed these stunning, powerful chiefs in rich and often glowing detail. When describing the affairs of his own period, especially the legislature, Kamakau was more somber and often skeptical of the benefits of Western culture and haole customs for the Native people. He noted, for instance, that “it was difficult to find men to represent the country districts” and went on to dismiss the early legislatures by saying, “although a good many laws were passed and the commoners were not successful in getting their side represented, the laws were light” (pp. 396–397).

It was an interesting summary for a man who could, in 1869, look back on a legislative career that spanned nearly twenty years and three different constitutions. His experience with government led him to make sobering evaluations of the directions that the kingdom had taken in politics, in commerce, and especially in social values. In 1869 he wrote:

The younger people are beginning to follow the foreign teaching. They are not a race of beggars who go begging from door to door however much they may trouble their blood relations in this way, but it is an old custom when a man is on the road to ask and receive entertainment. They were taught not to take but to ask. The poor, blind, lame, and crippled, were seldom seen; they were cared for by relatives, orphans were unknown. If one found a waif and attempted to take him in and make him a kind of servant, his blood relations would come and snatch him away unless he were being brought up like an own child. But today the government is doing the asking; it is sending papers from one end of the group to the other and asking what each will give.4

Kamakau did not predicate his evaluation of his time on a flattering view of the traditional chiefly society. He wrote about the capacity of Ali‘i Nui to oppress the Maka‘ainana (the people of the land), Kaukauali‘i (lesser chiefs), and even kāhuna (priests, teachers, and scientists). Furthermore, he realized that foreign ways and foreigners themselves could not be summarily expelled, but in some respects the new foreign teachings were creating a society in many important ways inferior to tradition.

How should we understand his ambivalence? His chapter entitled “Hawaii Before Foreign Innovations” is a series of mixed signals on
the subject of public morals. He denounced “the old days” with tales of infanticide, polygamy (p. 234), and homosexuality, and still contended that because the chastity and purity of the young were guarded carefully in the old days, “Today, licentiousness is more common than formerly” (p. 235). Along with recounting examples of murderous and vengeful Ali‘i, he described the aloha that existed between Ali‘i and Maka‘āinana, acknowledging that “the chiefs did not rule alike on all the islands.”

That may have been an aspect of Kamehameha’s aupuni (the government) that Kamakau preferred over the previous chiefly rule. With the end of conquest had come the end of warfare, and the aupuni could proceed to incorporate law and tradition to keep the land at peace. However, Kamakau was also clear that the lāhui, the people themselves who made up the nation, were imperiled by the changes in government and society. He was most decisive when it came to evalu-
ating who were the primary benefactors of the economic and political changes, writing: “... but the foreigners who had waited a long time to take the land for themselves were all ready, and when the doors were thrown open for natives and strangers alike they could well laugh; land was what they wanted. ... His [Kamehameha’s] children do not get the milk; his adopted children have grasped the nipples and sucked the breasts dry” (p. 407).

His clarity when speaking of haole who made themselves wealthy at the expense of Natives is arresting because he also praised those foreigners such as the Reverends William Richards and Richard Armstrong, who, he believed, had done much to promote the welfare of Hawaiian people. Speaking of Richards in particular, Kamakau said, “... but for the chiefs high and low, for prominent people, and for the humble as well who were in trouble, he was a father and leader who could explain what was right and what was wrong” (p. 406).

If there is one common and consistent thread that weaves throughout *Ruling Chiefs of Hawai‘i*, it is that Kamakau was faithful to the idea that good rule came from good and strong leaders. Thus, in the Hawaiian text he always referred to Kauikeaouli, the Mō‘ī who had granted the first two constitutions, as Makua (Father) and lionized him as a righteous and proper chief, while at the same time acknowledging the weaknesses of the system that Mō‘ī had helped inaugurate.

In 1845 Kamakau added his voice to the thousands of petitioners to the Mō‘ī, all of them concerned that foreigners were being placed in high government positions in the ministry or cabinet to the exclusion of Native Ali‘i. His letter represented the views of “some old people” who had lived in the time of Kahekili and Kamehameha I [late eighteenth century]. In the letter Kamakau revealed the anxieties and uncertainties of the kānaka, and expressed his own as well. He called on the Mō‘ī to reassure his people that the changes in government would not leave them behind.

The old men said “in the time of Kamehameha the orators (*po‘e kākā-‘ōlelo*) were the only ones who spoke before the ruling chief. ... When the chief asked, ‘what chief has done evil to the land and what chief good?’ then the orators alone were able to relate the deeds of the chiefs of old ... and the king would try to act as the chiefs acted who did good deeds in the past.” Then I said, “Dependence upon those things which were done in the past is at an end; the good which is greatest at this time is that which is good for the foreigner. At the
time when the government was taken we were in trouble, and from foreign lands life has been restored to the government.” . . . The old men said, “We love devotedly the King, Kamehameha III; but perhaps the kingdom would not have been taken away if we had not lost the good old ways of our ancestors and depended on the new good ways” (pp. 399–400).

Throughout Kamakau responded to the old men’s apprehensions with his own opinions, demonstrating to the Mō‘ī that not everyone feared the government’s policies. In fact, Kamakau wrote that he disapproved of the people’s rejection of foreign laws, saying that the rulers of Britain and France “believe that the Hawaiian group has a government prepared to administer laws like other governments and hence it is that they allow Hawaii to remain independent” (p. 400). He concluded by saying, “We ought therefore not to object to foreign officials if we cannot find chiefs of Hawaii learned enough for the office” (ibid.).

Discussions like these, not only between ruler and people in Hawai‘i but among the people themselves, reveal some of the political complexities of a community struggling to cope with change. What is also interesting is the discourse on history in which Kamakau and “the old men” engaged.

Ka wā mamua and ka wā mahope are the Hawaiian terms for the past and future, respectively. But note that ka wā mamua (past) means the time before, in front, or forward. Ka wā mahope (future) means the time after or behind. These terms do not merely describe time, but the Hawaiians’ orientation to it. We face the past, confidently interpreting the present, cautiously backing into the future, guided by what our ancestors knew and did. But there was one of the new products of Western education, less than eight years out of school, proclaiming that the lessons of the past did not apply any longer.

Nevertheless, he represented the positions of the old men anyway, perhaps because he could read and write and they could not, or because his own Ali‘i status7 demanded that he convey the Maka-‘āinana voice to the Mō‘ī, or perhaps because he recognized the limitations of his own opinion despite his knowledge and Western education.

In 1845, Kamakau was also young, a mere thirty years old. It would have been hewa (wrong) to simply dismiss the words of his kūpuna (grandparents or elders). But he quite clearly symbolized a
new circle of Natives who were coming of age in a very different world than their elders had known. Armed with a literate education and a better knowledge of the outside world, and yet disarmed by the sheer weight of change that was descending on the Islands, Kamakau and other youthful leaders sought to clarify and mediate those changes for the rest of the kānaka. Perhaps they also believed that, in time, they would be the Native officials chosen to replace the foreigners in the cabinet ministry and privy council.

Kamakau was never one of those so chosen, and there were precious few Natives in the privy council and cabinet in any case. Though he became a district judge and a representative in the legislature, by 1869 he knew that Kauikeaouli’s promise to give the high positions to Native chiefs who had been sufficiently trained would not be realized in his lifetime. In May of that year he published the letter he had written to the king in *Ke Au Okoa* and the king’s response, preceding it with these words: “A learned man had arrived with knowledge of the law, and the foreigners who were holding office in the government hastened to put him forward by saying how clever and learned he was and what good laws he would make for the Hawaiian people. The truth was, they were laws to change the old laws of the natives of the land and cause them to lick ti leaves like the dogs and gnaw bones thrown at the foot of strangers, while the strangers became their lords, and the hands and voices of strangers were raised over those of the native race. The commoners knew this and one and all expressed their disapproval . . .” (p. 399).

Kamakau was not the only Native leader to express in their later years a bitter resignation about the unfulfilled promise of their Western education and knowledge. Others who had also served in the kingdom’s legislature shared similar views, though few had the kind of literary forum that Kamakau had. One who did was Davida (David) Malo, graduate of the same school that educated Kamakau, member of the first legislature of the kingdom, teacher, Christian preacher, and eventual critic of haole. Born at the end of the eighteenth century, before there were constitutions, before there were legislatures, indeed before there was a Christian mission, Malo, like Kamakau, straddled an age of incredible change. This was a time when the young aupuni was pressured by foreign threats and by severe internal distresses of disease and social disorder. These pressures strained chiefly leadership, causing the Ali‘i Nui themselves to execute changes in the administration of government and even in the traditional religion.
Transformations: 1795–1829

The Ali‘i Nui were dramatically affected by catastrophic challenges to their traditional leadership coinciding with Kamehameha’s conquest at the end of the eighteenth century. The Conqueror had initiated some of these challenges himself, creating new administrative structures and establishing more concentrated centers of power around himself and his close supporters. More important, Kamehameha’s military supremacy suppressed the power of other Ali‘i Nui, whose rivalry with one another had contributed so much to the competitiveness and vibrancy of Hawaiian society.

Davida Malo was born in 1793, fathered by a warrior named Aoao who had apparently followed the Conqueror. His genealogy was hardly spectacular, but Malo was hānai (literally, to feed; it meant to adopt) to ‘Auwai, one of Kamehameha’s kākā‘ōlelo (orator, advisor). Undoubtedly, Malo’s intellect was aroused and initially shaped by a very traditional sort of education, one that in older times might have elevated him to a position of some influence. Such influence would certainly have been constrained by his low rank. It is doubtful that such an individual would have been able to distinguish himself in traditional society except as a competent and loyal chiefly server.

Coinciding with the reorganization under Kamehameha and his heirs was the arrival of American Congregational missionaries and the spread of their influence after 1820. Malo was an early and important contributor to their efforts, and like many of the Ali‘i Nui who placed their faith in the political as well as the spiritual possibilities of the new religion, his mana (power) came to be based on the success of the mission.

Without a doubt, however, the most important change was the collapse of the Native population. David Stannard’s 1989 analysis of the horrific consequences of introduced epidemics beginning with Cook and lasting throughout the nineteenth century has been interpreted by contemporary Native historians Lilikalā Kame‘eleihiwa and Kanalu Young as having severely disrupted Ali‘i Nui leadership as well. Young has written, “Compared to the maka‘āinana (producer class) the Ali‘i Nui constituted a smaller population. Consequently, losses from their ranks would seem more severe, because of the potential problems lack of leadership could bring and also because there were fewer of them to begin with.”

Stannard's estimate of a prehaole population of 800,000 is a pro-
jection, of course, and has been challenged as extravagant. But even that challenger postulated that a reasonable estimate would have been closer to 500,000, meaning that the depopulation at the end of the nineteenth century would have been 92 percent rather than 95 percent. Clearly any kanaka in the kingdom, including Malo, lived with the understanding that, as a race, they were in great danger.

It is that context that enlivens Lilikalā Kame‘eleihiwa’s analysis of the Christian mission’s success in the Islands. The reasons that Hawaiians were converted to the new religion, she has argued, are not to be found by analyzing Christian doctrine or missionary policy but by understanding the traditional culture, especially the kanaka understanding of the akua, their Ali‘i, and the relationship that tied spiritual and material realities together, known as pono (balance or harmony).

Pono was a state of balance between numerous dualities: light and dark, sacred and profane. There were akua (gods) for warfare and akua for planting, and caring for these deities was a significant part of any ruling chiefs’ obligations. But above all pono was a balance between what was male and female, a balance that was maintained for centuries by the ritual separation of men and women known as the ‘Aikapu (sacred eating) and by the rigorous observance of the ‘Aikapu by everyone, especially the Mō‘i. Ultimately, the successful rule of any Mō‘i depended on a healthy, growing population. Kame‘eleihiwa wrote: “Certainly epidemic disease and massive death were signs of loss of pono, but Kamehameha—who ruled at the time—was the epitome of a pono Ali‘i. He was devoutly religious . . . and carefully respected the advice of his Kahuna Nui and Ali‘i Nui councils. . . . The people loved Kamehameha because he put an end to war and gave them peace, but for all his efforts he could not give them life.”

For Maka‘āinana the concept of pono linked them as well as the Ali‘i into a relationship with the powerful gods whose mana made the miracle of life possible. This meant that they were to be productive as planters of taro and as fishermen; but also as crafters of the beautiful kapa cloth and moena (woven mats) that achieved such high quality in Hawai‘i. It was the produce and art work of the Maka‘āinana that nourished and adorned the body of the Ali‘i and graced their residences. At the same time it was the Ali‘i whose presence and disciplined behavior also guaranteed that the akua would continue to bless the endeavors of the people as a whole.

The great dying disrupted the faith that had held Hawaiian society together for centuries. In November 1819, less than six months after
the devout Conqueror’s bones were hidden away, his sons and heirs, Liholiho and Kauikeouli, sat with their mother, Keōpūolani, and the Kuhina Nui, Ka‘ahumanu, who was more than an aunt, and ate together, breaking the ‘Aikapu.

Kame‘eleihiwa leaves no doubt that the ‘Ainoa (free or profane eating) was instigated by Ka‘ahumanu, one of Kamehameha’s favorite wahine, his Kuhina Nui (high councillor) and daughter of one of the Conqueror’s most able Ali‘i Nui supporters. Indeed, by that act, she demonstrated her own mana and force of will by convincing the Mō‘ī Liholiho to break the longstanding religion. However, by this same act, she reduced herself and her chiefly relatives to the status of human beings, no longer a divinity.

‘Ainoa was accompanied by increasing alcoholism among the chiefs and people and by mounting epidemics that caused the decline by one-half of the population between 1803 and 1831.17 Perhaps these things were not perceived as mere coincidence by the Hawaiian people. There is evidence that Natives saw the growing presence of foreigners in the Islands as contributing to the miserable fortunes of the Hawaiian people. Many of them, even as Christians, wished the haole would simply go home. At the same time, the haole and their new religion promised to rescue the people and their chiefs from the social breakdown that accompanied the ‘Ainoa by introducing a new commitment and discipline—namely Christian prohibitions, which were understood to replace the old kapu, the rules that had once demarcated the sacred distinctions between chiefs and people, and men and women.

It was Ka‘ahumanu herself who arbitrated the presence and influence in Hawai‘i of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM) until her death in 1832. She was the kingdom’s most powerful individual. Beginning in 1825 she and her chiefs initiated a system of laws based on Christian morality and behavior known as prohibitionary or sumptuary laws. These laws not only altered traditional morality and custom, but also resulted in the Natives’ abnegation of their own culture and values as well as in their reliance on foreigners to tell them what was pono.

Kame‘eleihiwa has argued that the mission’s promise of new life (ola hou) figured prominently in the Natives’ acceptance of the new religion. Steeped in a religious tradition that regarded all life as a spiritual power, the Hawaiians’ turn to Christianity is understandable, especially because it appeared that the old akua had, for some reason,
Dismembering Lāhui / 12

turned their faces away from the kānaka. In 1823 the high chiefess Keōpūolani took missionary William Richards under her wing, helping him establish a church in Lāhainā. Here she was behaving as a traditional Aliʻi Nui, appealing to the power of the akua to bring life to the land, but it also seems that she feared for the destiny of her own soul, begging the mission to baptize her as she lay dying. The ABCFM missionaries’ refusal to baptize someone so briefly under Christian instruction18 is a testament to their extraordinary self-indulgence, but it is also illustrative of the power of this Christian ritual, even in its infancy in our Islands. The church became an institution promising life when death was everywhere, and the eventual conversion of Hawaiians by the thousands must be understood in the context of a time when their own religion, akua, and Aliʻi could not prevent them from dying.

Of course, as Kameʻeleihiwa has reminded us, the missionaries could not save them either. The key to the mission’s success was not that Christianity began to halt the downward slide of the Native peo-
ple. Christianity succeeded as the Ali‘i Nui accepted the new religion and incorporated it into their own rule and into Native society at large through the institution of new kapu.

For Ka‘ahumanu and her Council of Chiefs, the institution of sumptuary laws signaled their commitment to the new deity. These laws, proclaimed between 1825 and 1829, created drastic revisions in kanaka ways of life. In particular, laws prohibiting fornication (virtually any sex outside of marriage), although enforcing monogamy and church-ritualized marriage, may have had much to do with encouraging a society-wide infiltration of the church’s influence. Church attendance was not mandatory, but observance of the Christian Sabbath was. Eventually, these laws would not only prohibit socially unredeeming activities like murder and theft, they would also prohibit behavior that was intrinsically native, such as ‘awa drinking and hula.

Kame‘eleihiwa asserted throughout her work that heeding the advice of haole missionaries such as William Richards, Richard Armstrong, and Gerrit Judd was the fundamental reason for the passage of laws and for the institution of a Western economic system that ultimately dispossessed the Natives of land, identity, and nationhood. This is a correct assessment. However, it is precisely where Kame‘eleihiwa ended her analysis that mine begins. The sumptuary laws proceeded to change the relationship between the various elements of Hawaiian society by creating kingdomwide regulations, granting to the state, for instance, the right to intrude into the kanaka family in ways that had not been allowed or ever before imagined. The laws criminalized not just ordinary behavior (sex and ‘awa) but hula, the culture’s highest artistic expression.

In other words, the power of haole advice came largely as the result of the destruction of Native self-confidence in their own institutions. Law drove a wedge between Ali‘i and Maka‘āinana by creating a new layer of authority between them, a layer that neither could control. The kānaka accepted haole morality and law as rituals that could or would restore balance and health to their society. However, this acceptance requires a closer analysis. Foreign ways were not accepted uncritically. Native conversion to Christianity and Western laws enabled haole to become powerful authorities in Hawaiian society while managing the systematic destruction of the relationship between chiefs and people. It was the dismembering of that relationship that crippled the Natives’ attempts to maintain their independence and their identity.
Conversions

The first class of Hawaiian students at Lāhaināluna in 1831 was like no other class of students in the Islands. For these were not simply Makaʻāinana or Aliʻi learning to read and write, these were the promising young men (women were not included) who would further the cause of literacy and knowledge of the foreigners’ world.

Among these young men was Davida Malo. His age when he entered school was thirty-eight, old in a society gripped by one plague or another. His selection as a student was based, as were the others in his class, on his conversion to Christianity and his personal tie to the Reverend William Richards. However what surely distinguished him more was an aggressive and incisive intellect, noticeable to his teachers from the first.

In many ways, this man helps define his generation and symbolizes the ambiguities of his age. For without an outstanding genealogy, he was, nevertheless, a significant historical figure in a society that had once acknowledged only those individuals with exalted blood-
lines. As a constant critic of an encroaching Western culture, he was, notwithstanding, a most significant asset to the spread of that culture. As a Kaukauali‘i, he spoke and behaved more like an equal to the Ali‘i Nui. Malo is a symbol of the confusing and often contradictory choices that faced Hawaiians as they modernized their government and society in the early 1840s.

Malo was no ruling chief. Kame‘eleihiwa listed him in her Table of Lesser Konohiki as a chief of low genealogy. Of the forty-four graduates of the first class at Lāhaināluna only two names beside Malo coincide with the 218 lesser konohiki listed by Kame‘eleihiwa. One name, Kahele, is listed as a chief of high genealogy, but it is unclear if this is the same individual who attended Lāhaināluna between 1831 and 1835. The name, after all, is a fairly common one. The same holds true for Rikadi Kua‘ana, whose genealogy was a question mark for Kame‘eleihiwa. The Lāhaināluna student roster only lists the name Kua‘ana, another fairly common name.

Possibly there were one or two men in the first class at Lāhaināluna who were descendants of Ali‘i Nui or who may have been konohiki themselves. There was a student named Kuluwailehua that Kame‘eleihiwa listed as an intermediate konohiki, but even she could only guess at his genealogy. It can be said that within the Kamehameha aupuni the classmates at Lāhaināluna in 1831 were, at best, chiefly servers, nothing more.

At least in Malo’s case, a better record of his words and attitudes exists than of his genealogy. In 1898, Nathaniel Emerson, missionary scion and, incidentally, a member of the Hawaiian League that had forced Kalākaua to sign the Bayonet Constitution, wrote the introduction to Malo’s *Moolelo Hawaii*, also known as *Hawaiian Antiquities*. In addition to making extensive editorial remarks wherever he believed Malo to be in error, Emerson bemoaned the fact that Malo’s intolerance for his people’s traditions caused him to “cover with a veil of contemptuous silence matters, which if preserved, would now be of inestimable value and interest to the ethnologist. . . .” Emerson went on to say: “But it is not to be wondered at that David Malo should have been unable to appreciate at its true value the lore of which he was one of the few repositories. It could be expected only of a foreign and broadly cultivated mind to occupy the stand-point necessary to such an appraisal.”

Describing the Native, even one whom Emerson regarded as among the best of them, as incapable of judging objectively what was
good and evil, harmless, or depraved in their own culture is most ironic. In the first place, there is some truth here. Natives indeed became confused the more intensely they accepted Christian doctrine (Emerson actually used the word “warped” to describe Davida Malo). Furthermore, Emerson claimed that only the more sophisticated foreigner could make the real and appropriate judgments about culture and history that the recent and sincere Native convert was incapable of making. Yet, it was Malo himself and young men like him whom the mission began to prepare to lead the aupuni into the modern world. It was not a role that the Ali‘i Nui, at least, expected either the mission or its school at Lāhaināluna to play. Even the mission’s stated aim was merely to spread literacy and Christianity throughout the kingdom. That this was to be their students’ lifelong work was not in doubt even as late as 1835, when Levi Chamberlain, the schoolmaster at Lāhaināluna, decided that ten of the most promising graduates, including Malo, would be retained “as monitors of particular classes . . . as teachers in our children’s school, as assistants in translating into their own language . . . and we strongly hope that a few of them may eventually enter upon the study of theology and be able to preach the gospel to their countrymen—a point greatly to be desired.”

So Malo and other lesser-ranked individuals were to be the conveyers of haole education and theology to the Maka‘āinana. That was a sensible decision from the mission’s point of view. By 1835 there were less than fifty ABCFM workers in the field, not enough by themselves to spread literacy and religion to nearly 100,000 kānaka. In 1841 the Polynesian, a government-run newspaper edited by an American named Jarves, claimed that it was schools like Lāhaināluna that were providing critical new leaders whose literacy and familiarity with Western political concepts set them apart from the older Ali‘i Nui. When the Rights and Laws (kānāwai) of 1839 was drafted, that newspaper claimed that chief credit was to be given to Lāhaināluna graduates and undergraduates “everyone of whom went forth as an unfledged patriot . . . in book learning far above those of their rulers.”

For the haole-run newspaper to print such a provocative statement is interesting enough. What the Ali‘i Nui might have made of Jarves’ editorial apparently did not matter in 1841. Yet the editorial was misleading. Whether Jarves knew it or not, the kumukānāwai (constitution; literally, foundational law) was composed and drafted by William Richards, with Lāhaināluna graduate Boas Mahune merely assist-
Still, the editorial was not meant to praise Mahune. It was trying to make several important points: first, about the importance of Western education, and second, that there was nothing inherently superior about “the rulers” that could not be outstripped by lesser ranks armed with that Western education.

Malo himself provided such an example for any haole looking for evidence of the “rise of the common man.” Malo moved to Lāhainā around 1823, perhaps at the invitation of Keōpūolani herself. He was specifically mentioned by Kamakau as instrumental in saving Reverend William Richards from being put to death for libel against an Englishman, Captain William Buckle, in 1827. According to Kamakau, it was Malo’s reasoning with Kaʻahumanu that convinced her to overturn the ruling of her own chiefs, making, as Kamakau claimed, “enemies for herself of the [British] consul, the foreign merchants and of Boki and Manuia of her own people.”

For the Kuhina Nui to take the advice of a Kaukaualiʻi and overturn the decision of Boki, her own cousin, is not so astonishing if we

Figure 4. Lāhaināluna. Established in 1832 to train Native teachers. A number of representatives received their education here. From the Hedemann collection, courtesy of the Bishop Museum, Honolulu. CPBM 77,961.
understand that Boki was one recalcitrant Ali‘i Nui when it came to cooperating with the regent’s sumptuary laws. In fact, the high chief owned a saloon in Honolulu, dispensing liquor in open defiance of the ban on alcohol. So Ka‘ahumanu’s decision, although perhaps calculated to put Boki in his place, was also a defense of her own Christian kapu and added to the prestige of men like Malo who were close to the church.

The establishment of the school at Lāhaināluna for the training of future teachers for the kānaka also guaranteed a future of service for those who were sent. What service was expected of them? Initially, it was intended that they would teach and preach, but within a decade the graduates were being touted by the haole as the best pool of new political leadership available.

Perhaps we should not be surprised that the aim of schools like Lāhaināluna was changing. The conditions facing the missionaries in the 1840s were more hopeful for them than they had been in the 1830s. Certainly, Christianity’s place in Hawai‘i was no longer so much in doubt as it may have been even in 1835. By 1846, 22 percent of the Native population was registered as members of a Protestant church, as opposed to 0.7 percent in 1835. By 1853, virtually the entire population had an affiliation with some Christian denomination. To the extent that the missionaries had succeeded in planting and nurturing the seed of the new religion, it is not surprising that the missionaries would begin to consider the implications of these changes for their own destinies.

A good example of this change in the social landscape is to compare the mission’s handling of the Holmans with its handling of Gerrit Judd. In 1821 Thomas and Lucy Holman, members of the first mission company, were sent back to Connecticut because Thomas was charging Natives for his services as a physician. The attitude of his brethren, Hiram Bingham in particular, was that capitalism was at odds with the values and ideologies that the mission was determined to instill in the Islands, and for that reason Thomas was excommunicated and dismissed for, among other things, covetousness.

Exhibiting a less than committed attitude toward the church’s work and displaying too much worldliness, Holman and his wife were sent home. What else could be done in 1824? What little haole population existed at that point (whalers, traders, and beachcombers) hardly made up a society of people appropriate for even an excommunicated missionary.
But by the late 1830s, it was possible for a mission physician, Gerrit Judd, to resign his post in the mission in favor of more lucrative political and economic opportunities serving the Mō‘ī. On the eve of Judd’s resignation, his wife Laura wrote:

My husband’s practice in the foreign community increases every day, and if our rules allowed him to receive pay for it, a day’s earnings would support his family for a week. It does not seem right to draw our support from the treasury of the A.B.C.F.M., when ample opportunity is afforded to take care of ourselves without abridging our usefulness to the nation or mission. I have written to my friends to send no more boxes of donations, but to turn their charities in to more needy channels. . . . Lands and herds belonging to the mission will soon be productive, and will make it independent of the board for support. That is as it should be. “Let us provide things honest in the sight of all men.”

By the mid-1830s then, even with Native membership in the Christian church still below 1 percent of the population, the social landscape had altered favorably for the missionaries. The foreign community was now large enough to permit missionaries and their families to conceive a bright future in the Hawaiian Islands. By the 1840s, resignation from the mission to engage in business and politics was a fairly standard practice. Another example was the incorporation of missionaries Amos Starr Cooke and Samuel Castle in 1850 into what would someday be one of the largest and wealthiest of the sugar companies.

Of course, conversion of the kānaka was the primary mission, but conversion to what? The specific goal of Christian conversion was complemented by the broader and no less significant vision of “civilizing” the Natives. Hiram Bingham, leader of the first ABCFM contingent, understood that the process of conversion was concerned with more than spirituality. In his memoirs, he stated that in addition to turning the Native from their “idolatries and oppression” the mission was, “. . . to introduce and extend among them the more useful art and usages of civilized and Christianized society, and to fill the habitable parts of those important islands with schools and churches, fruitful fields and pleasant dwellings.”

In 1839, another member of that first company, Artemis Bishop, claimed that it was not only religious conversion, but the conversion of the entire Native way of life that was needed to save the kānaka
from extinction. That included, Bishop believed, a drastic transformation in the political authority of the chiefs, especially their control of the land:

but this is the fault of the system—a system without any checks and balances to preserve it from despotism. But it has become antiquated and ready to die. Christianity having removed the bloody features which were necessary for its stability, it is now tottering to its fall. But while it exists, its influence will operate to keep the mass of the people so degraded as effectually to prevent them from the full formation of character upon the principles of moral rectitude. Their pleasures consist in idleness and the low indulgence of sensual gratification. No enlightened mind needs to be informed that such a people cannot continue long to increase in numbers when they come in contact with the vices of those who visit them from civilized countries.39

Bishop’s dark vision of what might occur, the virtual extinction of the Native people within sixty years without serious political, social, and economic reform, was the vision that was conveyed to the chiefs

Figure 5. The Chiefs’ Children’s School, also known as the Royal School, established 1839. Every Native ruler after Kauikeaouli and many of the nobles were educated here. Photographer unknown, ca. 1889, courtesy of the Bishop Museum, Honolulu. CP 103,126.
and to the students at mission schools. We know, for instance, that Native haumāna (students) and their haole instructors at Lāhaināluna wrote about the “era of darkness” that existed before the arrival of missionaries: “Listen, you who are reading this, you (now) see what life was like in these islands in olden times. The land was shrouded in darkness; with evil and grief; and pain and death. It was a pit, a dark pit, a pit full of filthy things, a death pit, an ever burning fire pit; that’s where all of Hawaiʻi’s people lived in olden times! Now the light has dawned but some people prefer darkness because of the sins they have committed. Where are we turning our face, ahead to the light? Back to the darkness?”

The ABCFM was a mission that owed its formation and driving theologies to the Great Awakening of eighteenth-century colonial America. Like the originators of that revival, these missionaries were always concerned about how personal salvation was complicated by issues of free will, obedience to “the authority of governors,” and the importance of conversion itself. They also knew that the eternal “felicity” of heaven could never be attained by those who were corrupted by the temptations of the flesh. The mediator for Calvinists was the Bible. The ability to read, understand, and interpret scripture and gospel was the key: “Herein God deigns to confer a singular privilege on his elect, whom he distinguishes from the rest of mankind. For what is the beginning of true learning but a prompt alacrity to hear the voice of God?”

For the missionaries, several of whom were graduates of Andover College and strongly influenced by the revivalist teachings of Jonathan Edwards, conversion to Christianity separated human beings in ways barely distinguishable from any class system except, perhaps, for its continuation into eternity. In the 1750s, Edwards had preached on several occasions that those who earned Heaven did not necessarily earn a place at the right hand of God, but that there were “many mansions” in heaven to accommodate more than one kind of individual soul. More important, ignorance of the gospel would not spare the Native Hawaiian any more than the recalcitrant Yankee from the wrath of God and the awfulness of hell.

Thus Reverend Bishop could argue that “every foreign visitant and resident in the islands, whether he is aware of it or not, has the power to exert, a great moral influence, whether of virtue or vice, on the untutored natives about him.” It was a glorious work that the mission-
aries imagined for themselves. If they were in competition with other foreigners who would use the Natives’ “tendencies” toward licentiousness and drunkenness for their own despicable rewards, so be it.

Their work was also something that missionaries considered a noble sacrifice for which they were paid very little. In time that conception of themselves helped them and their children justify the enormous wealth that they accumulated in Native lands, with Native labor, and by way of the Native government that missionaries helped design. Calvinism, which did not adhere to such frivolous rituals as chastity or poverty, freed the ABCFM missionaries from feeling any shame for their astonishing self-enrichment.

But their financial success did raise questions about missionary intentions, questions that were asked even before individual clerics began to accumulate land and profits. Kamakau believed, for instance, that the Ali‘i Nui Boki, cousin of Ka‘ahumanu, was corrupted by foreigners who hated missionaries: “Boki, whose conduct of the government for a few months was so admirable, fell under the influence of certain foreigners like Consul John Jones [American], Mr. Stephen Reynolds and the British consul, who feared the conversion of the chiefs and commoners to the word of God and used to remark, ‘If the missionaries stay we shall have to go, if they go we will remain.’”

The competition between the ABCFM missionaries and the more secular foreign business community never really ended. In 1851 the disputes between them erupted into a constitutional dispute that involved Natives as well as whites. In the end, of course, the missionaries did not go, but neither did they remain missionaries. Although the ABCFM mission had the firm support of Ka‘ahumanu and most of her chiefs until her death in 1832, the growth of the missionary influence thereafter was by no means stable or uncontested. But Ka‘ahumanu did leave a body of laws supporting the church’s influence. The new Kuhina Nui, Kīna‘u, a granddaughter of the Conqueror, steadily maintained the government’s support for missionaries despite real resistance from the Mō‘i, Kauikeauli.

The fact is that Hawaiians were kānalua (of two minds) about the new religion even in the 1830s. For Natives like Malo, educated in the mission schools and groomed to take up teaching and preaching, the changes in the physical and social landscape were double-edged with promise and anxiety. Their success in helping create a literate society from a nonliterate one in less than a generation suggested a promising future for Hawaiians. On the other hand, the stability and progressive-
ness of Hawaiian society also promised to lure more and more haole to the Islands.46

The expanding presence of foreigners fostered uneasiness among the Makaʻāinana, but also prompted the remaining Aliʻi Nui and Mōʻī to consider ever more radical changes in the political system to achieve the respect of foreign residents and their governments for Hawaiian laws. Among these changes was the creation of a state based on democratic principles of representation. The Makaʻāinana, who made up the vast majority of the population, were to be given a voice in that government. It was individuals like Malo, with no outstanding genealogy but acclaimed by the haole missionaries for their knowledge and leadership, who were called on by the people to represent them before the Mōʻī. These same individuals, a very different elite from the chiefs of old, may have been ambivalent or even contemptuous of the Native past, but they also bore an equally strong apprehension of haole in their future.