Chapter II
The conquerer becomes king
A political analysis of the Hawaiian legend of ‘Umi
(1985)

Que l'on considère avec attention la plus grande partie des fables, on trouvera qu’elles ne sont qu’un mélange des faits avec la philosophie du temps.’

Fontenelle, De l'origine des fables (1724).

The purpose of this paper is to show that the legend of King ‘Umi is the expression of some fundamental aspects of Hawaiian kingship and of its relationship to society. Therefore, after a brief summary of the narrative, I propose to outline the functioning of the political system, then to use this outline as a background against which to interpret the legend.

The legend of ‘Umi
The legend is given in the following publications:
1) Ka Mooolelo Hawaii. Lahainaluna, Maui, 1838. Page 41 of this work gives an extremely brief outline of the narrative;
3) Ka Mooolelo Hawaii. This revised edition edited by John F. Pogue (1858) incorporates a rendering of the legend which obviously derives from Malo (n.d.: 81–6);

1. “When one considers attentively the majority of fables, one finds that they are only a mixture of fact with the philosophy of the time.” See: (1724) 1972. Fontanelle. “Of the origin of fables.” In The rise of modern mythology, 1680-1860, edited and translated by Burton Feldman and Robert D. Richardson, Jr., 10-18, 1972, Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press. —Ed.
4) *Récits d’un vieux sauvage pour servir à l’histoire ancienne de Havaii*, by Jules Remy (1859). Alexander (1888: 78–85) is an English translation. This is a full text;

5) An article by S. M. Kamakau, published in instalments in *Ke Au Okoa*, November 3, 10, 17, and 24, and December 11, 1870. This is translated in Kamakau (1961: 1–21) and is an even fuller text. A part of it was also translated by Thrum (1923: 38–103).


7) *The legends and myths of Hawaii*, by David Kalākaua, New York, 1888. Embellished by the American compiler (R. M. Dagget) and by King Kalākaua himself, this version contains some details that are absent from all the others. Of these details, some are clearly not traditional and are influenced by European literature, but others are compatible with the ancient culture and with the structure of the legend and its message.

Apart from the last text, all the others are similar to one another. I shall therefore furnish a summary of the story as given by the fullest versions (Fornander’s and Kamakau’s) and indicate some significant differences among versions, both in the summary itself and in the course of the analysis.

*‘Umi’s conception*

King Līloa is married to Pinea, who bears him a son, named Hākau. Some time after the birth of Hākau, Līloa leaves his court in Waipi‘o to dedicate a *luakini* (“royal temple of human sacrifice”). After the rites are completed, he moves on to a place where games are held. One day he goes to bathe in a stream where he sees a beautiful naked woman named ‘Akāhiakuleana, who is near the end of her menstrual period. According to Hawaiian belief, this is when women are most fertile. Hence, when Līloa makes love to the lady and discovers that she is bleeding, he knows that she will be with child. He therefore tells her that, if it is a boy, she should call him ‘Umi, and he leaves some tokens of recognition: his royal loincloth, his ivory pendant and his club. According to Kamakau, he adds his feather cape (Kamakau 1961: 3).

*Birth and childhood of ‘Umi*

When ‘Umi is born, ‘Akāhiakuleana’s husband believes him to be his son. The boy is very mischievous and at the same time very generous;
he invites his playmates to his home and gives them all the food in the house. According to Kamakau (1961: 5), he even steals the food-offerings from the family altar. In the versions given by Malo (n.d.: 260), Pogue (1858: 83) and Remy (see Alexander 1888: 78), ‘Umi does not show generosity but—like the mythical heroes who are his archetypes—an incredible appetite; he himself devours all the food. In Kalākaua’s version (1888: 268), ‘Umi shows an aversion for commoner work, that is, for cultivating. Instead, he engages in aristocratic activities; he fishes or brings fruits from the forest. Because of ‘Umi’s behavior, his putative father beats him, until ‘Akāhiakuleana reveals that the child is not her husband’s son and sends ‘Umi off to Līloa with the tokens. She gives him a companion, ‘Ōma'okāmau, who is very tall and a fast runner. According to Malo and to Pogue, ‘Ōma'okāmau is ‘Umi’s mother’s brother; other versions state that he had been adopted by ‘Umi “when he was a mere child” (Kamakau 1961: 6). In Kalākaua’s version, he is ‘Umi’s future brother-in-law.

In the course of his voyage towards Waipi'o, where Līloa lives, ‘Umi meets two other boys, Pī'ima'iwa'a and Ko'i. He proposes to both that they should become his “adopted children.” They accept and follow him.

‘Umi’s recognition and life at court
‘Umi, wearing the tokens left by his father, leaves his companions outside the palace, which he enters by climbing over its fence—a transgression normally punished with death. Having entered Līloa’s house he sits on the king’s lap, an act by which he requests recognition. At first Līloa separates his knees so as to let ‘Umi drop on the floor, thereby indicating rejection. But when he sees the whale-tooth pendant hanging from ‘Umi’s neck, he recognizes him as his son and takes him back on his lap. Then he orders ‘Umi brought to the temple to undergo the ‘oki ka piko rite. ‘Oki ka piko means both “to cut the navel cord” and “to subincise the penis.” The rite thus marks ‘Umi’s symbolic rebirth and initiation into the ali‘i “aristocratic” class.

The story goes on to expound the opposite characteristics of Hākau, the high-ranking son of Līloa, and ‘Umi. ‘Umi is obedient and humble, yet excels in every activity; Hākau is arrogant, cruel, and loses to his half-brother in every competition. Hākau is hated for his

1. In Fornander’s and Malo’s version, however, ‘Umi meets Ko’i at a later stage, when fleeing Hākau’s court.
behavior; ‘Umi is loved. As a consequence, Hākau becomes jealous of his half-brother and makes every attempt to humiliate him.

On his deathbed Līloa nominates Hākau to become the supreme ruler, but leaves the war-god Kūkā‘īlimoku (“Kū-island-snatcher”) to ‘Umi. A diarchy is therefore established, in which ‘Umi takes the inferior but powerful role of warrior co-ruler.

‘Umi goes into hiding and rebels
After a few years of relative concord between the two half-brothers, Hākau’s hatred becomes so evident that ‘Umi decides to secede, and he leaves the court with his companions. They travel through the mountain forests, reaching at last the border between the districts of Hāmākaua and Hilo, not far from where ‘Umi was born. Several pretty girls find ‘Umi and his friends to their liking and invite them to settle there with them. ‘Umi’s companions decide to keep his rank a secret, but at the same time not to let him work, as behooves a chief. As a consequence, ‘Umi’s in-laws complain because of his laziness. When the season for catching the aku (“skipjack”) comes, ‘Umi goes fishing, since this is a noble occupation. However, he sacrifices to his god Kūkā‘īlimoku all the fish that he catches. Thus, again his in-laws have reason to complain.

Remy’s account of this section of the legend is slightly different. According to him, ‘Umi leaves the court because he has “a taste for savage life.” Hence he takes leave of his companions and wanders alone in the forests and on the mountains. One day when he is at the shore he falls in love with a beautiful commoner girl and decides to live with her and her family.

The next sequence narrates the meeting between ‘Umi and the priest Kaʻoleiokū. According to the versions found in Malo, Pogue, Kamakau, and Fornander, this priest keeps seeing rainbows over the place where ‘Umi is living. This being a sign of the presence of a royal personage, Kaʻoleiokū goes there, finds ‘Umi and asks him to come to his house to become his Haku (“Lord”). Then he “set his mind to

3. Let me quote here what I have written elsewhere: “Typically, the diarchy consists of an ‘active’ ruler, who is of relatively inferior rank, but who has a great deal of concrete power, and of a ‘passive’ one, who has superior rank. The active ruler tends to be involved in military activities, to be a ‘conquering king’; whereas the passive one (who can even be a female) is a ‘peaceful king’ in whom are vested the supreme religious prerogatives of kingship” (Valeri 1982: 10) [See Chapter III, this volume. —Ed.]
the study of how he could get control of the kingdom” for ‘Umi, so as to obtain one day a share in the benefits. To achieve this end he attracts as many people as possible and, in order to feed them, he cultivates and raises animals extensively. At the same time he trains his men to fight.

Remy’s version gives ‘Umi the active role: it is ‘Umi who ingratiates Ka'oleiokū by offering him lavish gifts and who devises the policy of attracting a large following with his generous hospitality (Alexander 1888: 80). In Kalākaua’s version, ‘Umi is approached by Ka'oleiokū after he has tamed and befriended a giant whom the hero meets in the mountain forest (1888: 279–80). Kalākaua also states that Ka'oleiokū is the priest of the temple which had been dedicated by Līloa before meeting ‘Umi’s mother.

The next decisive step in ‘Umi’s career is his meeting with two priests, Nunu and Kakohe, who at the time of Līloa were the keepers of the god Kūkā‘īlimoku. They are mistreated by the new king, however, who refuses to feed them. Therefore they decide to go and see if ‘Umi will treat them better. In Fornander’s version, Ka'oleiokū learns that they are on their way and prepares a trick to persuade them that ‘Umi has extraordinary powers. He cooks a pig and leaves it in the oven, and orders a log split and the pieces put back together so that it looks entire. Then he leaves ‘Umi alone in the house. When the two priests arrive, ‘Umi, who does not identify himself, appears to split the log simply by throwing it on the ground and then cook the pig at incredible speed. In Kamakau’s version these feats are presented as real and not fictitious. When Ka'oleiokū returns and tells them that the man they took for a servant is, in fact, ‘Umi, their awe gives way to shame, since they have allowed themselves to be served by a chief. They decide that the only thing they can give him in return is the kingdom. They devise a trick that will allow ‘Umi to conquer it with the few warriors at his disposal; they will persuade Hākau to send all his men to the mountain in search of the Haku ‘ōhi‘a, the log in which the image of Kū was carved (cf. Kamakau 1961: 14), and the feathers necessary to perform the temple ritual. In the meantime, ‘Umi and his men will hide in the cliff overlooking the royal temple in Waipi‘o. On the day of the kauila huluhulu rite (when fresh feathers are placed on the gods’ images, cf. Fornander 1916–20, IV: 201), they will take the temple and kill Hākau.
‘Umi conquers the kingdom
When the two sly priests return to Waipi’o, they persuade Hākau to perform a temple ritual so as to be successful in his upcoming war against ‘Umi. The trick works; instead of the god’s image and feathers, it is ‘Umi and his warriors that come down from the mountain. Hākau and his favorites are slain and offered up to the gods in the temple (Kamakau 1961: 14). ‘Umi becomes king and gives land to the priests and warriors that have supported him. Then Ka’oleiokū asks Ōma’okānau to throw a spear against ‘Umi. ‘Umi dodges it and catches it by the point. Having passed this test, ‘Umi’s hold over the kingdom is declared to be firm. This episode of the legend apparently narrates the institution of the kāli‘i rite, the ceremonial dodging of spears by the king, which is performed at least once a year to legitimate him.

In order to further consolidate his rule, ‘Umi marries Kapukini, Hākau’s sister.

‘Umi conquers the entire island
In the Fornander and Kamakau versions the story continues along different lines. According to Fornander, ‘Umi gains control of the entire island of Hawai‘i by touring it in a clockwise direction. He then marries Pi‘ikea, the daughter of the king of Maui, and at the death of the king he gains control of that island.

In Kamakau’s version ‘Umi must conquer district after district. First he travels incognito to the district of Hilo, where he seduces the daughter of the local king and lives with his father-in-law. One night he sees his wife donning a necklace with a pendant of wood, which is the sign of royalty in Hilo. ‘Umi breaks it, claiming that in his district royalty only wear whale-tooth pendants. When the woman’s father hears of this desecration he orders ‘Umi and his companions to be bound. If ‘Umi does not produce his own ivory pendant, they will be sacrificed to the gods. Pi‘imaia’a runs to Waipi’o to fetch the object. When the King of Hilo receives it he sets ‘Umi free. Having returned to Waipi’o, ‘Umi decides to make war on Hilo in order to recover his pendant. He attacks from the mountain side and defeats the ruler of Hilo. Then, in a series of wars in which he always attacks from the mountain side, ‘Umi conquers all the other districts of the island of Hawai‘i. Thus he becomes “famous as a chief who travelled through the mountains of Hawai‘i” (Kamakau 1961: 18). Remy relates that he was given the name “mountain king” because, after having completed
his conquest, he retired to a temple in the mountains, where people brought him food (Alexander 1888: 83–84). Tradition also relates that ‘Umi married the daughters of the chiefs and commoners of all the districts and thus “became an ancestor for the people” (Kamakau 1961: 19).

Kingship and the political system
It has often been noted that the Hawaiian political system is considerably different from the ideal-typical Polynesian chiefdom (cf., for instance, Goldman 1970: 200). Interpreters have seen it as an example of a feudal system (see, for instance, Dibble 1909: 73; Richards 1973: 21–22; Davenport 1964; Earle 1978: 182) and have even defined it as “a crude, agrobureaucratic hydraulic state” (Wittfogel 1981: 241). The latter characterization must be totally rejected. Not only is there no trace of a “bureaucratic state” in Hawai‘i (Handy 1972: 326), but also the hydraulic component of Hawaiian economy does not have the importance that Karl Wittfogel attributes to it. Irrigation projects normally involved only a territorial community (ahupua‘a) (Earle 1978: 127–28) not the “state” as a whole. Furthermore, a recent study has demonstrated that “the complexity and scale of irrigation were not the critical factors involved in the evolution of a politically centralized organization in Hawaii” (Earle 1978: 136).

Is the characterization of the Hawaiian system as feudal sounder than its characterization as a case of “oriental despotism”? To judge the case, one must first establish what Feudalism is. Feudalism sensu stricto is, of course, a European phenomenon which, moreover, did not last for more than three centuries. It consisted in the main of a particular connection established between a hierarchy of personal relationships, vassalage, on the one hand, and the seigneurial mode of production on the other. Since this mode of production preceded and survived vassalage and the accompanying institution of fief, and is moreover a fairly widespread institution, some historians, such as

4. The study of nineteenth-century Hawaiian court cases undertaken by Jocelyn Linnekin indicates that the konohiki “land and corvée manager of a chief” was not primarily concerned with irrigation (cf. Earle 1978: 136).

5. Incidentally, what the Marxists call the “feudal mode of production” is, in fact, the seigneurial mode of production. It is now recognized that this mode of production cannot be identified with Feudalism sensu stricto (see Fourquin 1970: “Introduction”; Halavi 1980: 364; Roberts 1984).
Marc Bloch ([1939–40] 1968), have claimed that seigneurie as such “n’a aucun titre à prendre place dans le cortège des institutions que nous nommons féodales.”

The majority of contemporary historians, however, believe that one cannot separate the system of personal relationships from its economic base, and therefore the fief from the seigneurie. In the words of Guy Fourquin (1970: 8),

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\ldots \text{le fief, donc la seigneurie rurale, n’est pas une simple articulation, même importante, mais bien la cheville ouvrière de tout le système. Des revenus de la seigneurie vit toute la société féodale, du non libre au seigneur féodal. Ce que celui-ci retire en services et en argent de son vassal — lui-même seigneur rural — ne se conçoit plus sans le support de la terre, laquelle est bien souvent à la fois seigneurie rurale et fief.}
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Georges Duby (1968: 1013), who concurs with this view, defines the seigneurie as a

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\text{système économique livrant la plupart des surplus de l’activité productrice à une élite de possesseurs fonciers, dont les plus riches détenaient dans leur patrimoine, avec les débris de l’autorité publique, le pouvoir de juger, de commander et de punir. Cet édifice social reposait sur un ensemble de prestations et de services requis des serfs, des tenanciers et des rustres soumis au ban privé.}
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6. “. . . has no claim to a place among the institutions which we call feudal” (Bloch [1939–40] 1963: 279). (Manyon translation.) Here and in the following pages I have quoted Bloch and other French medievalists in the original, because an adequate rendering of their terminology seems impossible to me. For the benefit of some readers, however, I have provided translations of the French passages as notes. In several cases I have used existing translations but modified them whenever I have found them unsatisfactory. The reader is cautioned that in these translations the word seigneurie is rendered by various English words, e.g., manor, lordship. I have preferred to preserve the French term throughout.

7. “[T]he fief, and therefore the rural seigneurie, cannot be viewed simply as an articulation—allbeit an important one—but is the mainspring of the entire system. The whole of feudal society, from the serf to the feudal lord, lives off the revenues of the seigneurie. What the feudal lord draws in services and money from his vassal—himself a rural lord—comes from the estate, which very often is both rural seigneurie and fief.” (Translation by author.)

8. “. . . an economic system which surrendered the greatest part of its surplus to an elite of landlords. The estate of the richest of these included, together with what was left of public authority, the power to pass judgment, to command and to punish. This social edifice was based on a range of prestations and services due
Duby sees the origins of the *seigneurie* in “a revolution” which consisted in a turning inward of the military system of the Carolingian period from the exterior to the interior. In other words, when the yearly predatory war ceased to be possible, the bands of warriors turned to the exploitation of the peasants, which was made possible by the military control of a territory. The *seigneurie* was nothing else than “le droit de prendre dans une aire d’occupation militaire” (Duby 1978: 189). By the eleventh century, “l’ensemble d’extorsions qui pesaient sur le peuple lorsque ses chefs n’étaient pas à la guerre” (ibid.: 190)” becomes legitimate and is enshrined in law. Moreover, “l’avidité des gens de guerre détermina l’intensification du travail rural, la mise en valeur des terres vierges, le perfectionnement des techniques agricoles” (ibid.), which in turn produced economic development and population increase.

This characterization of the *seigneurie* and of its genesis demonstrates that it is far from being a purely European phenomenon; indeed, in many respects it could be applied to the Hawaiian situation. As the Hawaiian chronicles amply demonstrate, a king and his nobles were, in fact, a band of warriors who associated to conquer land and booty (cf. Malo 1951: 134). Both were apportioned among them on the basis of their rank and, more importantly, of their contribution to the war.

Once they controlled a land, they exploited on a regular basis the cultivators working it (Richards 1973: 21–22). Essentially, they granted them the right to cultivate the land and to receive enough water for irrigation, in exchange for periodic prestations in kind and corvée labor (Earle 1978: 136, 157, 186–90; Richards 1973: 22; Dibble 1909: 73–74).

Until the unification of the archipelago under Kamehameha, both internal (i.e., regular) exploitation and external exploitation through

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10. “...the whole range of extortions that the populace had to bear whenever its chiefs were not on campaign” (Duby [1978] 1982: 153). (Goldhammer translation, modified by author).

11. “...from the warriors’ greed ensued intensification of rural labour, cultivation of formerly virgin lands, improvements in agricultural technique.” (Duby [1978] 1982: 153). (Goldhammer translation.)
war booty were combined (cf. Valeri 1982: 31–32). The system remained therefore much more fluid than the European one. A sign of this is that the nobility’s rights over lands were almost never recognized as hereditary, but had to be constantly validated by adequate participation in the activity of the aristocratic band. This, in turn, made it possible for the leader of this band, the king, to maintain control over the entire hierarchy, by centralizing it in his person. In this respect, Hawaiian kingship was much stronger than European kingship during the feudal period proper.

This too short discussion of the features common to both medieval seigneurie and the Hawaiian system will suffice, since the crucial question concerns the existence of a connection between the seigneurial system and vassalage. Does something similar to vassalage exist in ancient Hawai‘i?

As is well known, vassalage is a personal bond between two men which is ceremonially established by the act of homage. The relationship is hierarchical but at the same time reciprocal: the lord offers the vassal his protection and gives him the means of subsistence in the form of largesse (provende) or land (fief); in exchange, the vassal gives the lord his support and services (in particular, military services). The relationship is freely entered into, and it can be unilaterally terminated by either of the two parties and does not outlast their death. In such a system, writes Marc Bloch, “l’homme cherche un chef, les chefs cherchent des hommes” (1968: 229). Kamakau’s characterization of the Hawaiian Old Regime seems to echo Bloch’s words: “the search for a superior and the finding of a chief (to become one’s lord [‘imi haku]) was a custom considered high and honorable in old days and one which might carry the seeker from one end of the group to the other. On the other hand, chiefs of rank sought trustworthy followers” (Kamakau 1961: 207, cf. 111–12, 178, 229; Ī‘i 1963: 147; Formander 1916–20, IV: 189–90, 365–66; Malo 1951: 194).

Thus, like the Europeans of the early Middle Ages, the Hawaiians sought a lord in order to obtain protection, food, and, if possible,

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12. An important difference between the European and the Hawaiian system must be stressed: Hawaiian cultivators were not serfs (see Shaler 1935: 95; Townsend n.d.: 17). However, it can be doubted that their mobility was great. Few if any left their native ahupua‘a, “territorial community” (cf. Sahlins and Barreré in Richards 1973: 38, no. 10).

13. “. . . men looked for chiefs, and chiefs for men.” (Translation by author).
grants of land; reciprocally, a Hawaiian lord, like his European counterpart, attempted to attract a large number of followers so as to further his political career militarily or to make the outright conquest of land possible (Richards 1973: 21–22).

The very Hawaiian words used to refer to vassal and lord are semantically quite close to their European counterparts. This is immediately evident in the Hawaiian word *haku*, which means “lord” or “leader.” As for the vassals, in Hawaiian they are called *kauwā* (“servants”), *keiki* (“children”), or *kanaka* (“men”) of their lord. All these expressions have their counterparts in the European feudal vocabulary. The word “vassal” originally comes from a Celtic word which meant “boy” or “servant,” and came to designate the companion-in-arms of their lord (Bloch 1968: 222–25). The European vassals were also called the “men” of their lord. In Bloch’s (1968: 209) words:

_Etre “l’homme” d’un autre homme: dans le vocabulaire féodal, il n’était point d’alliance de mots plus répandue que celle-là, ni d’un sens plus précis . . . . Le comte était “l’homme” du roi, comme le servit celui de son seigneur villageois._

Another important similarity between the relationships of vassalage in early medieval Europe and in Hawai‘i lies in their reciprocal and contractual nature. In fact, this reciprocity is emphasized in Hawai‘i, even more than in Europe. Not only do the Hawaiian lord and vassal have reciprocal duties; the terms used to designate certain of their defining

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14. The term is used in this context in a metaphorical sense. Literally, as we shall see, it is applied to an extremely impure category of people, not to vassals.

15. For examples of this usage, see ʻĪi 1963: 9, 11. See also Kamakau 1961: 115, where Kalaniʻōpuʻu is called “father without love for his children.” The vassals can also be considered as _hoʻokama keiki_ , “adoptive children” (Kamakau 1961: 263). Thus, ‘Umā’s first vassals are called his _hoʻokama keiki_ , “adoptive children” (see above).

16. The use of the term _kanaka_ to refer to vassals is extremely frequent. It is documented even by the legend of ‘Umā. When Hākau complains because ‘Umā has been elevated to noble status, Līloa reassures him by saying “_o kou kanaka keia_ (he is your man)” (Fornander 1916–20, IV: 185).

17. “To be the ‘man’ of another man: in the vocabulary of feudalism, no combination of words was more widely used or more comprehensive in meaning . . . . The count was the ‘man’ of the king, as the serf was the ‘man’ of his rural seigneur” (Bloch [1939–40] 1963: 143). (Manyon translation, modified by author.)
qualities are the same. Three such terms, and the corresponding actions or states, are particularly important: hānai, mālama, aloha.

The term hānai, “adopted or foster child,” may refer both to the subordinates of the haku and to the haku himself. The kanaka are said to be the “foster children” of the haku, and the haku is called the “foster child” of his kanaka (Pukui and Elbert 1971: 52; Pukui, Haertig, and Lee 1972: 49). This reciprocity is illustrated by the relationship between ‘Umi and his closest “men.” The latter are said to be his “adopted children” (Fornander 1916–20, IV: 183), but reciprocally, ‘Umi is called the “adopted child” of Kaʻoleiokū and his other followers (Alexander 1888: 80–81; Kamakau 1961: 15).

Mālama means “to take care of, to serve, to be faithful, to take as one’s charge” (Pukui and Elbert 1971: 214). This term is applied to both haku and subordinates as subjects of actions. Thus, on the same page of the Fornander collection, a chief is said to malama hoi i na makaainana (“take care of the commoners”) and a subordinate is said to malama (“take care” of his haku’s taboos)—in other words, to respect them and make them recognized by all (Fornander 1916–20, IV: 353). Such examples could be multiplied. ‘Umi malama i na makaainana (“takes care of the cultivators”) (Fornander 1916–20, IV: 228; Kamakau 1961: 8, 19); men malama (“take care of, respect”) the king (‘Īī 1963: 9). The king does malama his subordinates by giving them lands; the subordinates malama these lands for the king (Sahlins n.d.).

The word aloha, meaning “love, affection, compassion” (Pukui and Elbert 1971: 19) and even “peace” (Ellis 1842: 35, 380, 454), is also used to refer to the reciprocal feelings of haku and kanaka. This obligatory mutual love is expressed on many occasions, quite sincerely, it seems. Thus, Captain King judges the Hawaiians “a people full of affection and attachment [aloha] to their chiefs” (1784, III: 60). According to François Péron, cries of joy, “a spontaneous expression of the love of his subjects” greeted Kamehameha on his passage (1824: 158–59). When this king landed at Maui in 1812, the inhabitants “expressed their affection [aloha] for him with innumerable gifts. It is said that so many things were heaped before him that the gifts and the foods stood in huge mounds” (‘Īī 1963: 106). Charles Samuel Stewart describes hundreds of dancers “encircling the highest chiefs, and shouting their praise in enthusiastic adulation” (1838: 94).

Similarly, the king is supposed to love his subjects (Kamakau 1961: 75, 142) and declare it publicly (cf. Ellis 1842: 454). This reciprocity is prescribed; a ruler who does not love his people is not loved in
return and consequently loses his kingdom. John Papa ʻĪi (1869) illustrates this principle by several stories concerning paradigmatic kings (May 22 and 29, 1869).

There is another remarkable linguistic manifestation of the reciprocity between lord and vassals. We have seen that the latter are often called the kauwā (“servants”) of the former. But, when the lord feeds his men and takes care of them, he may be called their kauwā (“servant”). Hence the expression na ʻā i poʻe kauwā, “the chiefs who are servants” (ʻĪi 1963: 38).

Obviously the status of a “lord” and a “vassal” are relative in Hawaiʻi as in Europe; a lord may in turn be the vassal of a higher lord, and soon, up to the supreme lord, the king. The relationships of subordination thus form a chain that extends from the lowest level of the society, occupied by the commoners who cultivate the land, through the various degrees of the nobility, to the highest level. At each “step” inferiors obtain land rights from their immediate superior. All rights in land are contained in the king’s right (Richards 1973: 22). As in the European feudal system, the land given to the inferior by his superior returns to the latter as soon as the relationship is severed by death or by the decision of either vassal or lord. Again, as in the European system (cf. Bloch 1968: 299–308), it is possible to have multiple lords, and to hold land rights from them all, even if they are mutual enemies (cf. Richards 1973: 23).

The establishment of vassalage by means of homage is often considered a crucial feature of the feudal system. In this performative rite a man puts his joined hands in the hands of the man whom he wishes to serve (Bloch 1968: 210), symbolizing that this man encompasses him. This rite may be repeated in several occasions to reproduce the bond. In Hawaiʻi, although vassalage is established and re-established in the contexts of more complex and multi-purpose rites, e.g., luakini temple rites (Valeri 1985a) and rites of the naua house (see below), special rites for the creation of vassalage are sometimes used. Two such rites are particularly interesting.

In the first rite, which is illustrated by the legend of ‘Umi, the kanaka sits on the lap of the haku. This makes him like a child relative to the haku who, as a father, encompasses, provides and protects. In the second rite, the haku gives one of his loincloths to his kanaka and fastens it on him with his own hands. A good instance of this rite is found in the legend of King Kūaliʻi (Fornander 1916–20, IV: 430). This is another symbol of the encompassment of the kanaka by the
haku. It again identifies the haku with a father, as the legend of ‘Umi makes clear. There, as we have seen, the father leaves his loincloth, as a token of recognition, for his son; then, when the latter goes to court, he is initiated in the king’s temple, which implies that he is again given a loincloth by his royal father. 18

The personal and contractual nature of the relationships of subordination, however, contrasts with other aspects of the system, particularly with the idea that the nobility forms a vast ramage in which genealogical distance from the core line, the royal line, should ideally determine the rank and rights of everybody. In reality, there is a dialectical relationship between genealogical and contractual relationships among aliʻi (“nobles”). Ideally the relationships of subordination should translate genealogical relationships, but more often personal and contractual relationships of subordination are translated into genealogical terms. The bilateral rule of descent makes it possible to give a genealogical sanction to a relationship of vassalage by selecting the most appropriate among existing genealogical paths or by creating one through marriage.

Ultimately, the recognition of the validity of all genealogical claims depends on the king, since he is their common point of reference. In a special ceremony at the moment of his accession to power, the king—sitting in the so-called nauā house—recognizes or denies the genealogical claims of his men and of his men’s men, distributing land rights and offices accordingly (Malo 1951: 191–92).

The fact that the king is the ultimate basis and controller of the entire hierarchical system indicates that the ideology of kingship is very strong in Hawai‘i. This is reminiscent of the late Middle Ages, rather than of the “first feudal age,” as Bloch calls it. There is, in fact, an implicit contrast in Hawaiian society between the hierarchical but reciprocal nature of the relationship haku/kanaka (“lord/vassal”) on the one hand, and the ideology of divine kingship as the fountainhead of all authority and of the life of the entire community on the other (see Valeri 1985a).

18. The Hawaiian lords’ giving of their loincloths to their vassals and children is in many respects similar to the granting of robes of honor by ancient Near Eastern and Middle Eastern kings. As Francis William Buckler (1927–28: 239) has demonstrated, this transforms the recipients into membri corporis regis, “friends” or members of the King”; “Or, to put it rather differently, the donor includes the recipient within his own person through the medium of his wardrobe” (ibid.: 241).
In the relationship of vassalage, it is the vassal who makes the lord: hence the saying *i aliʻi no ke kanaka*, “a chief is a chief because of his men” (Handy and Pukui 1972: 201). A lord who loses his men ceases to be a lord. This is illustrated by a prophecy made to a king: “you are going to be a wealthy chief at times, but when you reach maturity then you will become poor, in that you will be without followers” (Fornander 1916–20, IV: 266–67; cf. Fornander 1878–1880, 11: 124). A lord abandoned by his men is a lord in name only or, rather, as Hawaiians put it, a *aliʻi inoa ʻole*, “noble without a name” (Fornander 1878–1880, II: 120).

In contrast, kingship is allegedly made by the gods, not by men; it is, like the gods, transcendent and therefore permanent in time. Thus, in theory, it is continuously vested in a line that reaches back to the gods (Stokes 1932). The co-existence of a properly feudal notion of authority, according to which it is the vassal who gives his lord authority over him, with an ideology of kingship in which the authority of the lords over their vassals is derived from the king, seems to involve contradiction. How can authority be derived from above and from below at the same time?

In fact, this apparent contradiction is entailed by the representation of the authority and power of the gods themselves. On the one hand, the gods are conceived as the autonomous source of all *mana* (“power”). But on the other hand, it is believed that the gods’ power does not exist independently from man’s worship and, in particular, from sacrifice. Hence the common name for all acts of worship is *hoʻomana* which literally means “to cause one to have *mana*, to empower.” Thus, quite paradoxically, gods are the source of power but at the same time their worshippers are said to be the source of their power.

This paradox reflects the fact that what creates power as a moral reality is the *real* social effect of the arbitrary belief in somebody’s or something’s power. The reality of the effect reverberates on the cause, and this makes the cause dependent on the effect, contrary to what is postulated by physicalist thought. Since we are accustomed to extend physicalist thought to the understanding of the moral world, the Hawaiian belief appears absurd and contradictory to us, although it is actually closer to the realities of the moral experience.

As the gods are made powerful by the consequences, ritual or otherwise, of the belief in their power, thus the belief that a man is endowed with divinely originated *mana* will prompt many people to
become his vassals in order to benefit from his power; and this will make him all the more capable of delivering what his reputation promises.

The two conceptions of power—the one divinely produced and the other humanly produced—are therefore not incompatible in Hawai‘i. The power of the king and that of the other haku is of divine origin and at the same time is made by their “men.” Even the power of the gods, which does not depend on a superior power, depends on man’s homage.

It is nonetheless true that the two aspects of power are not equally emphasized at every hierarchical level and at every moment. At the lower levels of the hierarchy, further from the divine sources, the idea that somebody’s power is made by his subordinates predominates. At the top, on the contrary, the idea that power derives from the gods is placed in the foreground, as the temple rituals and the symbology of the king’s regalia testify (see Valeri 1985a).

Analogously, in the temporal dimension, the dependence of a pretender to the throne on his supporters is emphasized before he becomes a king. But when he becomes king, and thus everybody’s lord—the chief of the entire society and not simply of a faction—the divine, transcendent aspect of his authority is emphasized.

At this point, a brief discussion of the process of succession to kingship is in order. Kingship should remain in the core line of the ramage that encompasses the ali‘i class, the nobility. Theoretically, it should go to the highest ranking member of this line. The eldest son of the highest ranking wife of the incumbent should ideally succeed his father. However, the incumbent often feels obliged to designate this particular son as his successor, indicating that the application of the rule is by no means automatic (cf. Kamakau 1961: 107–10, 118–19, 187–88, 221; Kotzebue 1821, 1: 308; Choris 1822: 20–21). In addition, it sometimes happens that the incumbent designates another kinsman altogether (cf. ‘Ī‘ī 1963: 4). Whether the successor is designated or not, however, a war of succession is likely to break out because there are several candidates with nearly equal claims. This war makes it possible to discriminate among them on the basis of their power, which ultimately depends on the extent of their support. As Ebenezer Townsend, a foreign observer, quite rightly puts it: “the most popular gets it” (n.d.). Another observer even concludes: “the monarchy is not acknowledged to be hereditary, but, after the death
of the reigning prince, is generally usurped by the chief of the most talents and powers” (Shaler 1935: 97).

In a sense, then, somebody is made king by the gods, since he must descend from them (he must belong to the core of the ramage or be grafted on it) and moreover he must be consecrated in the luakini temple by them (Valeri 1985a). But in another sense, he is made king by his supporters and in the end by the whole people. Thus, the two constitutive aspects of the king’s authority must always be combined and reinforce each other.

An important aspect of this system is that the supporters of the predecessor are likely to be different from the supporters of his successor, since the latter, to have any chance to succeed at all, must put together a faction long before the problem of the succession arises. Thus, every succession involves the loss of land rights and largesse for the vassals of the predecessor (cf. ‘Īī 1963: 13–14; Kamakau 1961: 113–20). The hierarchical network created by a king rarely survives him, although it can be partially reincorporated by his successor. There is thus a latent and not so latent conflict between the incumbent and his supporters, on the one hand, and the possible successors and their respective supporters, on the other. This might explain why the incumbent sends his sons to be raised at the courts of other kings (Kamakau 1961: 68, 128; Fornander 1878–80, II: 270; Vancouver 1801, V: 80; Stewart 1838: 108), and why, moreover, different sons are sent to different courts (Fornander 1878–80, II: 206). This practice avoids conflict as long as the incumbent is alive or strong, but precipitates it at the moment of succession, since the pretenders will have grown foreign to one another and to the previous king, and will have developed no mutual obligation. An example of the exclusion of the predecessor’s men from the successor’s group is found in the legend of ‘Umi itself. The two priests of Līloa are set aside by his successor Hāka‘u; this is precisely why they support his rival. It is even likely that the episode illustrates a structural tendency; the incumbent’s closest vassals are among the less likely to be the vassals of his successor and hence they will tend to support his rivals. Another important feature of the process of succession is that sooner or later a polarization occurs between two main pretenders and all the factions are merged into two opposite sides. Sometimes the two might, at least provisionally, reach an agreement and either divide the kingdom in two, or establish a diarchy in order to preserve the territorial integrity of the realm. It also happens that the incumbent may attempt to avoid
the war of succession, or at least to influence its outcome, by dividing the prerogatives of kingship between the two main contenders. This possibility is inscribed in the legend of 'Umi and therefore in the very type of kingship. It will be remembered that Līloa leaves the supreme attributes of kingship to his highest ranking son (Hākau), but the war god, and therefore the symbol of military power, is left to the lower ranking 'Umi (Valeri 1982).

A further aspect of this system worth mentioning is the structural opposition that tends to exist, for most pretenders, between matrilateral and patrilateral kin. Because polygyny is practiced on a large scale, the different sons of a king often have different mothers. Thus, they find in their matrilateral kin a source of support that is uniquely theirs, while their patrilateral kin will be their competitors and enemies. This happens, as is well known, in many other societies in which kingship is transmitted patrilineally to the candidate whose matrilateral supporters are the strongest (see, for an excellent description of an African example, Southwold 1967). In Hawai'i this is more a tendency than a system, but its ideological pertinence is demonstrated by a large number of myths and by the legend of 'Umi itself, since it is precisely 'Umi's commoner matrilateral kin who protect and support him. In Pogue and Malo's version, 'Umi's closest helper and favorite, Ōma'okāmau, is said to be his mother's brother, and when 'Umi flees Hākau he takes refuge in the district of his mother's kin, etc. Hākau's maternal kin are also an important basis for his power and legitimacy, as we shall see, so that 'Umi's accession to the throne signals the beginning of a conflict with the royal house of O'ahu, from whom Hākau's mother originated (cf. Kamakau 1961: 20 for a mythical transposition of this conflict).

I have indicated above that the king's power has two aspects: he is the "feudal" lord empowered by his vassals and the divine ruler empowered by the gods. As the first, the king is a conqueror and usurper; as the second, he is a manifestation of the continuity of the society's ordering principles and therefore of the divine. Thus, the king is conceived as disordered and ordered, as central to society and as outside and even against it. The successful king is the one who mediates the disordered and ordered aspects of his power, who transforms a cause of disorder into a cause of order. This is true in a cosmological and not just a narrow political sense—or, more precisely, no distinction exists between the two domains. Kingship implies that
politics is a cosmological affair as much as cosmology is a political reality.

The coexistence of ordered and disordered aspects in kingship has often been noted because it is quite noticeable the world over (cf. Dumézil 1956; Heusch 1958, 1962a; Preaux 1962; Willeford 1969; Girard 1972; Yamaguchi 1977; Heesterman 1979; de Josselin de Jong 1975, 1980; Vlekke 1960: 53–67; Schrieke 1957, II; Valeri 1980b [see Chapter I, this volume]; Sahlins 1981). It is partly a function of the king’s transcendence of society, which implies that he is the embodiment of its order but at the same time greater than it and therefore not subject to it, and partly a consequence of the very process whereby kingship concretely reproduces itself by challenging an inefficient order and substituting an effectual (because successful) one for it. Whatever the motivation, kingship is kingship because it constantly reproduces order out of disorder, and society out of anti-social forces. This explains the frequency of certain figures such as the stranger king, the incestuous king, and the monstrous king—all of which exist in Hawai‘i.

The Hawaiian kings’ practice of incest and the negative view that commoners have of this practice (Handy and Pukui 1972: 109) are well known. The figure of the stranger king is integral to the temple ritual (cf. Valeri 1982 [see Chapter III, this volume], 1985a) and is politically realized, as we have seen, by the practice of sending the potential successors to grow up at foreign courts. To my knowledge, however, the close connection between Hawaiian kings and monstrous beings has never been mentioned. Several travellers observed that the king and the high nobility surrounded themselves with dwarfs, hunchbacks, madmen and “hairy men,” who were often buffoons, favorites, kahu (“guardians”), and even priests of the nobles (A. B. C. F. M. 1822: 322; Manby 1929: 43, 45; Kamakau 1961: 110; Cheever 1861: 129; Beaglehole 1967: 629, 1085, 1226, 1229; Titcomb 1948: 135). This association between kings and monsters, which occurs all over the world (see for instance Welsford 1968; Willeford 1969; Valeri 1980b: 766–77 [see Chapter I, this volume]; Anderson 1972: 12; de Josselin de Jong 1980), is justified by mythological precedent, since the ancestor king Paumakua brought the prototypes of these beings with him from Kahiki, the land of the gods, to Hawai‘i (Kamakau 1961: 235). It seems obvious that kings are accompanied by monsters because they alone have the power to neutralize their dangerousness. An example of this idea can be found in
Kalākaua’s version of the legend of ‘Umi, where ‘Umi is able to tame a monstrous giant who thereafter becomes his companion and helper.

Equally striking is the close association between the nobility and the kauwā, sensu stricto a category of “extremely impure people,” probably the descendants of transgressors, defeated kings and nobles (cf. Ellis 1842: 161; Kamakau 1961: 109, note), who are used as victims in the temple sacrifices. Although they are avoided by commoners because of their impurity (Kepelino 1932: 144; Kamakau 1964: 8; Malo 1951: 70; Handy 1972: 324; Remy 1859: 19), they have free access to the houses of the nobles, who consider them as their akua (“gods”) or ‘aumakua (“ancestor gods”) (Malo 1951: 70). The reason for this close connection is clear: the kauwā, as fallen nobles and transgressors, can represent the disordered aspect of the king’s power and therefore allow its neutralization by becoming the victims of his sacrifice. To conquer, or to vanquish the rebels and rivals, the king must produce disorder and is consequently identified with it; but to rule, he must incarnate order and therefore destroy the disorder in himself by destroying its objective correlatives, the rebels and transgressors or the defeated incumbent. This destruction takes on a sacrificial form precisely because it implies communication with the gods that embody the society’s principles of order.

**Interpretation of the legend**

We can now return to the legend. It is my contention that it represents the passage from a state in which the two sets of components of kingly power are separate and opposed, to one in which they are mediated and conjoined. The two sets of components are each embodied by one of the two princes: ‘Umi and Hākau. ‘Umi’s very birth embodies kingship’s connection with what is “below”; he is conceived as the result of the union of King Līloa with a commoner woman, and he comes after Hākau in birth order. According to the strict rules of Hawaiian rank, ‘Umi has a very low status and is therefore referred to as lepolepo, “dirty, filthy, soiled, excrement” (Kamakau 1961: 3; Pukui and Elbert 1971: 188). Worse still, his birth is surrounded with impurity, since at the time of conception his mother was menstruating and therefore his father’s intercourse with her implied a serious transgression, normally punished by death (Malo 1951: 29; Malo n.d.: XVIII, 7). At the same time, as we have seen, this moment of exceptional impurity is also a moment of exceptional fertility, so the king’s transgression is associated with productive and not destructive results.
Moreover, the king’s flaunting of the rules demonstrates that he is indeed a king; a man beyond the rules because he makes them, he is their foundation (cf. Elbert 1957: 104–5). Thus, ‘Umi appears from the very beginning as the embodiment of the disordered, impure, but creative properties of kingship. He is, in fact, described as kalohe, “mischievous, naughty, unethical, or unprincipled in any way” (Pukui and Elbert 1971: 151), a term applied to ‘Umi’s mythological counterparts (tricksters, demi-gods, etc.) and to rebels. He certainly conquers the realm by a double trickery: first by deceiving the two high priests in order to obtain their support, and then by using a trick devised by them. However, ‘Umi’s disorder is productive, not destructive, and realizes itself as an expansion of social relationships. By his generosity, ‘Umi immediately attracts people and makes them his friends, supporters and vassals. Later, when he decides to rebel, he practices hospitality on a large scale.

‘Umi’s personal qualities also embody the figure of the leader who is capable of obtaining love and support. He is not only generous but also humble, patient, good, and eager to listen to advice. He is an accomplished sportsman and a powerful warrior. All these qualities are intrinsically productive of order; they produce disorder only because they inhere in a prince who lacks legitimacy from above.

In contrast, Hákau embodies the transcendent, enduring aspect of kingship. He is the first-born, the highest ranking, in a line that ultimately descends from the gods. Moreover, as befits his transcendence, he is associated with abroad. In fact, he is issued from the last in a series of alliances of the kings of Līloa’s line with women of the higher ranking house of O’ahu (Kamakau 1961: 1). The repetition of this hypogamic alliance for four generations is, in my opinion, a sign of the dependence of Līloa’s line on O’ahu for its rank. Hákau, then, is the perfect embodiment of the legitimacy from above. However, he lacks the qualities that would empower him from below as well; he is cruel, haughty, a bad sportsman, and presumptuous. As a consequence, he is hated as much as ‘Umi is loved.

Thus, a situation of potential disorder delineates itself. Once Līloa dies, a popular low-born prince will be confronted by an unpopular but high-ranking one. Līloa seeks to avoid this confrontation of the two incomplete representatives of kingship by combining them di-

19. The royal line of O’ahu is traditionally considered superior to that of the island of Hawai’i (see Fornander 1878–80, II: passim; Barrère 1969: 45).
archically. But, as the legend shows and Hawaiian history confirms (cf. Valeri 1982 [Chapter III, this volume]), the diarchic solution is not durable; the unity of kingship demands the unicity of the king.

‘Umi’s victory over Hākau implies the supremacy of action, even by a rebel, over inaction. While Hākau is never represented as acting or even leaving his palace and temple—as befits an extremely high-ranking ruler—‘Umi, the guardian of the war-god Kūkā‘īlimoku, is ever active, and mobile. ‘Umi’s efficacious activity also implies the ultimate superiority of a leader who has the support of the people over an incumbent who lacks it. At the same time, the ultimate end of this activity is the conquest of Hākau’s divine legitimacy. ‘Umi’s career is, accordingly, a series of successive encompassments of qualities which belong intrinsically to Hākau. The first step in this process consists in ‘Umi’s recognition by Līloa. In fact, it is clear from the context that Līloa’s act is much more than a recognition. According to the rules of rank, royal paternity does not determine high status if the mother is a commoner (Valeri 1972). The proof of this is that ‘Umi is initially called lepolepo or, by Hākau, kauwā, “servant, slave” (Kamakau 1961: 8). Līloa’s acceptance of ‘Umi therefore involves a complete transformation of the latter’s status; he is made a noble by being symbolically reborn and reinitiated in the king’s temple. Hence, what is emphasized is not filiation as such, but ‘Umi’s possession of the royal tokens left by Līloa and the intrepid nature of his attempt to bring about his recognition, which is obviously not taken for granted.

The second and definitive step in the process is ‘Umi’s sacrificial encompassment of Hākau and sexual encompassment of Kapukini. These are complementary means always used by the conqueror to incorporate the divine substance of kingship (cf. Valeri 1985a). To be more precise, it is not that ‘Umi becomes divine at this conclusive moment only; rather, he reaches a superior stage of divinity actually, the most encompassing one, which is the correlative of the legitimate domination of the most encompassing social unit. ‘Umi’s divinity throughout his career is not only implied by the general principle of interpenetration of divinely and humanly originated powers that I have formulated in the preceding section; it is also made evident by certain details in the narrative. The most important of these details is ‘Umi’s possession of the lei niho palaoa, “necklace with a whale-tooth pendant.” As Halley Cox (1967: 421–24) has convincingly argued, the shape of this object suggests that it is “a highly abstract symbol for the head of a god, reduced to the dynamic sweep of the ‘tongue’ and the
static upright ‘forehead.’” Hence, ‘Umi is made divine metonymically because he wears the god’s image. However, to reduce the god to a devouring mouth with a protruding, defying tongue (cf. Cox 1967: 421–42) implies an emphasis on the conquering and defying aspect of his power. Furthermore, the whale-tooth pendant evokes a hook as well and therefore the image of the conqueror as a “fisherman of islands,” whose mythical archetype is, of course, the trickster-god Maui (Westervelt 1910: 18–19). Hence, ‘Umi is in contact with the divine power in its devouring, conquering aspect, which is also indexed by the “government-snatching god,” Kūkā‘īlimoku, of whom he is the guardian.

Now, the divine in its devouring, destructive aspect can only be satisfied by its encompassment of the realm, which is effected through the conqueror. The process, as I have demonstrated elsewhere, is represented in the luakini temple ritual (cf. Valeri 1982 [Chapter III, this volume], 1985a). It is not surprising, then, that the performance of this ritual marks the main steps in ‘Umi’s career: conception, initiation into the nobility, conquest of Hākau’s realm, conquest of the district of Hilo. Nor is it surprising to discover that even the structure of the legend is analogous to that of the ritual. This double parallelism—one at the level of the events, the other at the level of the structure—indicates that the purpose of the legend is similar to that of the ritual, to justify the legitimacy of the king by symbolically repeating the process of conquest and successive encompassment whereby the king triumphs and becomes, precisely like a Roman triumphator (see Coli 1951; Versnel 1970), the human representative of the society’s supreme god.

To conclude this brief analysis of the legend, let me spell out these parallelisms in more detail. I must begin by mentioning the basic content of the ritual. The initial stage involves an expedition to the mountain forest, in the region called wao akua (“inland region of the gods”) because it is believed to be inhabited by the gods. From this place is fetched a tree of the genus Metrosideros (‘ōhi’a lehua) which is considered to be a natural, wild manifestation of the god Kū. The god in tree form is called Haku ‘ōhi’a. But from it is carved the anthropomorphic image of the god Kūnuiākea, “Kū of the wide expanse,” which will be “quickened” in the temple, where it will be transformed into an akua maoli (“veritable god”). The return of the party with the Haku ‘ōhi’a and the precious feathers that are also collected on this occasion
represents the violent conquest of the realm by the king, his vassals and their god.

In the second stage of the ritual, the Haku ʻōhiʻa is introduced into the temple, symbolically born by cutting his navel cord, and initiated by giving him a loincloth. It appears, then, that the ritual represents the transformation of a wild, nonhuman divine power into an ordered human god that is the ideal counterpart and icon of the king in his most developed and therefore most legitimate state.

In the third and final stage of the ritual this symbolic transformation of the wild divine power into ordered humanity is transferred to the empirical realm. This transfer is effected first in a rite which connects the royal women to the mana of the temple god in order to make them fertile, and then by reuniting the men, who have acquired divine power in the temple, to the women outside it (women cannot take part in the ritual). Thus, man reproduces himself concretely after having reproduced himself symbolically and paradigmatically in the god (Valeri 1982 [Chapter III, this volume], 1985a).

The similarity between this transformation and that which is described in the legend of ʻUmā is quite evident. As the god is conceived in the wilderness, so is ʻUmā. As the god is symbolically born and initiated in the king’s temple, so is ʻUmā. Finally, as the god fertilizes the women and the land, so does ʻUmā, who becomes, in the words of Kamakau (1961: 19), “an ancestor for the people.”

Moreover, the legend makes Līloa’s performance of a temple ritual the antecedent of ʻUmā’s conception. This clearly implies that ʻUmā’s career is destined to be the realization of the ideal transformation of the king and of his divine counterpart, as they are represented in the ritual. Hence, as soon as Līloa has accomplished the symbolic reproduction of kingship in the temple, he begins—as the ritual itself commands—its empirical reproduction by fertilizing a “woman of the land.” In this way the process described by the ritual is repeated, in each of its stages, in the concrete world. Thus, at the very beginning of the empirical process, the appropriation of the woman by Līloa is analogous to his appropriation of the Haku ʻōhiʻa at the beginning of the ritual. The analogy between the menstruating woman seduced in a secluded and wild spot and the Haku ʻōhiʻa is proved by the fact that the god is also found in the wilderness and especially by the fact that menstruating women are assimilated to the ʻōhiʻa lehua tree in which the god manifests himself—an assimilation testified by the expression ʻe waimaka lehua, “the lehua (tree) sheds its tears” [ = the woman menstru-
ates] (Kamakau 1961: 3). But the most profound basis for the analogy between menstruating woman and wild god is that both represent potentialities of human life that must be realized by men. The ritual process by which a god in tree form is developed into a god in human form is, in fact, identified with the sexual process of transforming the blood flowing from a woman into a child.

But let us proceed with the parallels between the stages of the ritual and those of the narrative. ‘Umi’s birth and early childhood in the backlands can be compared to the ritual stage in which the image of the god is carved from the tree, but is still concealed under ferns. The hero’s subsequent passage from the backlands to the court corresponds to the god’s entrance into the king’s realm. The god enters the realm with violence, ‘Umi enters the palace by breaking in. ‘Umi’s symbolic birth and initiation in the king’s temple also parallels that of the god.

In the legend, this transformation must be repeated a second time before ‘Umi can become a king. The second transformation in the narrative bears a much closer resemblance to the ritual transformation than the first one. Moreover, it blends with the performance of a temple ritual and therefore makes the analogy of the two quite clear by adding a metonymic twist to it. In the first stage of this second transformation ‘Umi finds himself in the mountain forest rather than in the backlands where he was born. This, of course, puts him in a position very similar to that of the god in his wild stage, Haku ‘ōhi’a. He then explicitly takes the god’s place by violently entering into the realm in his stead. Like the god, he is then transformed in the temple by the sacrifice of the defeated king and his main vassals. Finally, coming out of the temple imbued with divine power, ‘Umi fertilizes the highest ranking women of the kingdom, several daughters of the land and the land itself, by making it ordered and prosperous (see Kamakau 1961: 19–20).

In Fornander’s version the process stops at this point and ‘Umi peacefully penetrates (in the double sense of conquering and fertilizing) all the districts of the island. In Kamakau’s version, however, the process must be repeated for each district, although only the conquest of the district of Hilo is adequately detailed, in a sort of coda. As in the main body of the legend, in this coda two transformations are described. The first begins with ‘Umi’s decision to travel incognito to Hilo. There he falls in love with the beautiful daughter of the king of the district and marries her. The correspondence between this epi-
sode and that which was the cause of ‘Umi’s birth is quite evident. This indicates that ‘Umi reenacts here his birth, so to speak; the beginning of a new process whereby he will be able to become king at a higher level—that is, a level involving the encompassment of Hilo. Given this peculiar signification, it is evident that the remainder of the first transformation in this narrative coda must differ somewhat from the corresponding part described in the main body of the legend. In fact, they have in common only the motif of the violation of a taboo; the climbing over the royal fence corresponds to the breaking of the royal pendant. But in both cases the transgression is followed by an initial setback. In one, Līloa at first refuses to recognize ‘Umi, which implies that the boy will be put to death; in the other, ‘Umi is at first bound and condemned to death. Then the two corresponding sections of the story become nearly identical, since in each the hero is saved by producing his whale-tooth pendant. The outcome is also similar; although saved, ‘Umi must accept in both cases a subordinate position for a time—vis-à-vis Hākau in one case, vis-à-vis the king of Hilo in the other.

The second transformation described in the coda, like that in the main body of the legend, begins with ‘Umi’s flight from the court of his opponent. In both cases he later returns from the mountain to conquer his rival’s realm and sacrifice him. The final stage is also parallel; in the coda, ‘Umi becomes a more complete king by reacquiring the whale-tooth pendant which has been enriched by a supplementary indexical relationship (to the district of Hilo). In the main body of the legend, of course, ‘Umi is accepted into the aristocratic class and given a position at court.

Thus, by successive transformations, regulated by an identical structure, ‘Umi reaches the stage where he coincides with an all-encompassing king, whose existence embodies the social order he has produced and is its guarantee. The end of the process will therefore be ‘Umi’s assumption into transcendence which is marked by his decision to live in a mountain temple, far from the society he has created.

* * *

I believe that I have shown that the legend attempts to prove that the two contradictory components of kingship (which must originate from “below” and from “above” at the same time) are, in fact, not contra-
dictory at all when considered as two stages of a process. Legitimacy from “above” comes to the man who has been legitimated from “below”; the process of successful conquest by a strong man reveals that he is not simply a strong man and that from the beginning he had been selected by the gods through their representatives—the priests. The ritual consecration of the conqueror is therefore simply the full realization of what has already been actually established outside the temple: *vox populi vox dei*. Therefore, one term of the contradiction is able to encompass the other because the two terms are related not by a synchronic logic of inclusion (as Dumont 1978 would have it for every hierarchical relation), but by a temporal logic of transformation. In other words, since the two terms are contradictory, they are synchronically incompatible but made diachronically compatible by the transformation of one into the other. They are therefore two stages in a process; moreover, the second and superior stage is conceived as the full actualization of the first and the full disclosure of its implicit meaning.

Hawaiian hierarchical thought, then, like its Polynesian cognates, cannot be understood without the notion of transformational process. The global cosmic process (as represented in the *Kumulipo* chant, for instance) is one of decay, of passage from a more perfect state to a less perfect one. But inside this global process kingship brings about a partial, and always provisional, reversal. The successful king is the man able to transform imperfection back into relative perfection, the incomplete into the complete. He is, in sum, the man who—reaching back to the original divine state of the cosmos—drags society behind him towards perfection.

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