

MOE 'UHANĒ--THE DREAM: AN ACCOUNT OF THE DREAM IN TRADITIONAL HAWAIIAN CULTURE

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Dreams and dreaming would seem an unusual subject for historical investigation. Historians' interest in dreams has been slight: Dreams seem to be at the edge of ordinary reality and consequently at the edge of historical discourse. As a rule historians have left the dream for other disciplines to examine. In contrast to the conventional artifacts of history, such as the diary and the newspaper, the dream appears fragile--it is private and intangible.

With few examples to follow in general history or in Pacific history, I have attempted in this article to construct an account of the Hawaiian's traditional cultural experience of the dream. In particular this study attempts to identify the significant dreamers in Hawaiian culture and elucidate the experience of dreaming for the Hawaiian individual. Historically this subject warrants investigation, for there has been no comprehensive study on Hawaiian dreaming.

Like historians, ethnographers have tended to shy away from examining the dream in a full cultural context. This tendency can be largely ascribed to a lack of emphasis on the dream in recent Western tradition, which has favored scientifically observable phenomena. The dream occupies an uncomfortable position in a worldview that values concrete structures; concomitantly the act of dreaming has been described as a "random and casual phenomena" (Stock 1979:114). Rather than dismissing the significance of dreams altogether a more subtle approach

has been to pass over the study of dreams. As Michele Stephen writes, "the role of the dream in society has been almost entirely overlooked" (1982: 106).

A lack of Western emphasis obviously does not preclude a Hawaiian or Polynesian emphasis on the dream. In fact most non-western cultures have given the dream a much greater "epistemological value" (Stephen 1982:117). The value that non-Western cultures have placed on the dream suggests that it is a cultural artifact¹ well worth investigating. Anthropological studies of dreams have revealed a close correspondence between the culture of the dreamer and the manifest content of the dream, suggesting that the dream draws very much on the culture for its structuring (Bourguignon 1972:407-408; Stephen 1982: 120). At this level, the dream is a public experience insofar as the dream's symbolism can be perceived to derive from cultural practices (Firth 1973: 217), though one cannot assume any simple relationship between culture and the manifest content of dreams (D'Andrade 1961:308-309). Those studies that have investigated the public-manifest aspect of dreams have stressed the innovative role of dreams in culture (D'Andrade 1961:299).² More recently Stephen has suggested that among the Melanesian Mekeo people the role of dreams and dream interpretation has been as "a guide to social action and adaptation to change" (1982: 106).

The lack of a substantial historiography and ethnography of dreams in culture (Bourguignon 1972:405-406) has informed the structural choices made in this article with respect to the analysis of the dream in Hawaiian culture. In particular this study emphasizes the conceptual or ethnographic perspective rather than a developmental or chronological perspective of dreams in history. An emphasis on the conceptual aspects of the past does not preclude a developmental perspective on the dream in Hawaiian culture. For instance, there is obvious evidence of Christianization in the telling of dreams (Kamakau 1964:55). But it would seem premature to examine the historical development of the Hawaiian unconscious before a study has been made to define the role of the dream in culture--one has to know what the dream was before one can say what it became.

I have chosen to provide context and epistemological analysis sparingly, believing extended review to be more valuable for my purpose here. Evidence from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries has been drawn upon in an effort to complete a sufficiently comprehensive picture of the dream in Hawaiian tradition, although unquestionably the period from which a source is drawn will inevitably shape its nature

(Valeri 1985:xvii). Ultimately the conflation of nineteenth- and twentieth-century sources is problematic from a historical point of view. Nonetheless there are obvious links in contemporary Hawaiian culture with the past, of which the written traditions surrounding dreams is one remnant. As Beaglehole and Handy have noted, the “old ways” have persisted into the twentieth century as a variation on a fundamental pattern (Beaglehole 1940:49; Handy 1941: 126).

This article has attempted to counteract, in part, the inherent problems of an ahistorical approach by basing most of the evidence on key texts of nineteenth-century native Hawaiian observers, notably Kepe-lino and to a lesser extent Kamakau and Malo. Arguably these records are more reliable accounts--though Christianized--than the more removed accounts of missionaries or anthropologists (Johansen 1954: 269). Even so these latter works are still valuable in constructing a traditional account of Hawaiian dreaming. In the nineteenth century such observers were William Ellis, Joseph Emerson, and William Rice.³ In the twentieth century E. S. C. Handy and Mary Pukui have been key figures in the study of dreams in Polynesia and Hawaii respectively. The significance of Pukui's and Handy's writings is that they have mutually acknowledged the central role dreams have played in the psychic lore of Polynesian-Hawaiian religion (see Handy 1941; Handy and Pukui 1972).

Defining the Dream

The task of defining the dream in Hawaiian culture has not been easy. Reservations by historians about studying dreams are not without foundation, for as a product of unconscious mental processes the dream cannot be ordinarily accessed. The problem of the dream's inaccessibility lies not only in the nature of the unconscious but also in the problem of translating a largely visual, imaginative phenomenon into words. The imaginal realm is typically the realm of creativity; thus dreams are essentially groups of images occurring within a creative (imaginative) discourse. In the sense that dreams are “image-full” and creative they have much in common with art (Hillman 1983:29-30; Lévi-Strauss 1978: 154-155). In translating a phenomenon such as the dream into words, I understand that there is an inaccessibility and an elusiveness about what I seek to describe--ultimately there is a profound subjectivity in comprehending dreams. James Hillman, a Jungian psychologist, recognizes that ultimately the key to the dream “is not hermeneutic, not a gesture of understanding. . . . We respond to paintings and music

without translation, why not as well the dream? Imaginative art forfeits interpretation and calls instead for a comparable act of imagination" (1983:29-30).

For Foucault the "comparable act of imagination" must come through language. The incompatibility between language and the object is not the end but the starting point: Through language the object (in this case, a painting) gradually reveals itself once we acknowledge that "the profound invisibility of what one sees is inseparable from the invisibility of the person seeing" (Foucault 1974:16). Foucault's comprehension of the painting reflects upon the comprehension of the dream in this article. In both forms, language is the key through which a creative process may be elaborated.

For the study of the dream in culture this process of elaboration unfolds in the world inhabited by the dreamer. As Stephen writes, "each man and woman, through the creative process of his or her own dreaming, constructs a private symbolic universe--that is, creates an idiosyncratic combination of the beliefs and symbolic motifs made available to them by their particular cultural and physical environment" (1982:120).

A Hawaiian Definition of the Dream

One cannot discuss dreams without first defining what Hawaiians meant by dreaming. Hawaiian culture recognized that the act of sleeping produced a wide variety of visionary states. For instance, there was a conventional distinction in Hawaiian belief between the dream that occurred as one was falling asleep or awakening and the dream that occurred in deep sleep. Kamakau, writing on Hawaiian culture, distinguished between "dreams at the moment of falling asleep (*hihi'o*); and dreams in deep sleep (*moe 'uhane*)" (1964:55). As well as distinguishing between dream states the Hawaiians attached varying significance to each. The transitional and deep-sleep states that Kamakau described were deemed by Kepelino to produce the most significant dreams. "Of all dreams the most significant ones were those which came when one was startled in a very deep sleep or just as the eyelashes closed together when falling into a doze. Those were true dreams" (Kepelino 1932:114).

In current psychological terms the states that occur when one is falling asleep or awakening are termed hypnagogic and hypnopompic respectively. These periods of light sleep produce a brief hallucinatory state and are distinguished from orthodox sleep states (Dictionary 1973: 188). In Hawaiian accounts one may discern sleep states that approxi-

mate the Western definition of the hypnagogic and hypnopompic. The Hawaiian notion of *akaku* in particular describes this transitional visionary state. As Handy and Pukui write: “*Akaku* . . . describes those clear flashes of imagery that seem so tangible, so real, across the threshold of sleep, generally just as waking consciousness dawns, particularly in the dim early hours of morning. They may come at the moment of dozing” (1972: 127).

In the Hawaiian texts there seems to be some discrepancy whether *akaku* can truly be described as a dream. Kamakau clearly terms *akaku* a vision and distinguishes it from the dream states *hihi’o* and *moe ’uhane*: “A vision, *akaku*, is unlike either of these. It is what one sees when one is really awake, and it is raised up by the mana [supernatural or divine power] of the *’aumakua* [family or personal god; guardian spirit]” (1964:55). In contrast to Kamakau’s specific description of *akaku* as a vision, Handy and Pukui’s more recent description cannot be so easily categorized. According to Handy and Pukui, *akaku* may occur in broad daylight or in sleep, making it more difficult to distinguish the vision experience from a dreaming state. The link Handy and Pukui make between *hihi’o* and *akaku* also confounds attempts to clearly distinguish between vision and dream. *Hihi’o*, it appears, not only describes a dream but also a vision--and while *ukaku* is the vision seen, *hihi’o* is the act of visioning (Handy and Pukui 1972: 127).

Western definitions of the dream derive from a viewpoint that tends toward a strict delineation of these psychological states. In Hawaiian terms, however, such a clear distinction may be inappropriate, despite an obvious recognition in the language that sleep produces a variety of altered states. By reason of a common hallucinatory base, dreams, visions, and trances are interrelated.⁴ Bourguignon has placed the dream at one end of a continuum of altered states. She writes that “it is legitimate and indeed appropriate to discuss dreaming and other types of hallucination, such as visions, in a ritual context” (Bourguignon 1972:423). In Hawaiian terms this continuum seems to be at work in their perception of the vision and the dream. Given the Hawaiians’ broad and complex perception of dreams, the subject of dreams naturally encompasses the phenomena of visions that may occur during sleep.

A Preliminary Investigation of the Structure of the Dream

Kepelino’s Traditions of Hawaii includes one of the most comprehensive passages on Polynesian dream lore.⁵ Kepelino’s “Dream Lore,” the

major written work on dreams in traditional Hawaiian culture, provides a rudimentary framework for ordering, dividing, and comprehending the nature of dreams in Hawaii. The authorship of this document is attributed to a Hawaiian native, Keauokalani Kepelino, who was born at Kailua, Hawaii island, about 1830. Kepelino's traditional background gives his writing a firm historic context and credibility (Kepelino 1932:3-7; Leib and Day 1979:28-29).⁶

Kepelino writes, "The doings of the night held an important place in the thought of old Hawaii even down to these sad days" (1932: 114). His statement points to the significance of the dream in Hawaiian culture, a status indicated by the recounting of dreams and the public acknowledgment of the dream in culture. The dream is thus seen to be an expression of community and family structures. Arising out of the importance accorded to dreams in the culture, certain individuals have a role to play.

I will now look at these significant individuals; in particular, the dreamers and dream interpreters. In Hawaiian culture it is apparent that there were significant dreamers, notably the chief and the priest (*kahuna*). But it is the interpretation of the dream that gives it its public sense. As Kepelino writes, "In olden days dreams were taught by dream interpreters and their teachings spread everywhere even to this day" (1932:114).⁷ Dream interpretation was largely the domain of priests generally and designated dream specialists in particular.

Next this article examines the Hawaiian experience of the dream and the relationship of the dreamer to the spirit world, again in context of community and family ties. The opening lines of Kepelino's "Dream Lore" alludes to this subject: "Dreams were things seen by the spirit. They were called revelations to the spirit and their great name was 'doings of the night,' or another, the 'great night that provides' " (1932: 114). Kepelino's statement--that dreams were things seen by the spirit--reveals that, for the Hawaiian, the dream was essentially the experience of the spirit leaving the dreamer's body. The relation between the dream spirit and the dreamer highlights the "different" Hawaiian concept of self.

An understanding of the nature of the dream spirit would be incomplete without reference to the "doings of the night" that Kepelino mentions. The dream spirit journeyed into a night world inhabited by a host of spirits. In this spirit world, the dreamer experienced both the good and bad aspects of dreams: "Dreams were divided into two classes, good dreams and bad dreams, and both kinds came from the night" (Kepelino 1932: 114). At a mundane level, the relationship between the

dreamer and the spirit world broadens the base from which cultural analysis might be made.

Placing the Dream in a Cultural Context

At a broad level the experience of the dream reflects initially on the structure of Hawaiian society, in particular its communal and hierarchical structures. What initially strikes one on investigating the dream, as a subject, is that in a social setting it is an egalitarian experience--everyone dreams. The experience of dreaming transcends all boundaries of age, gender, social class, and race. As Stephen writes, "dreaming is a form of mental activity uninhibited by normal conventions" (1982: 116). In Hawaii, the egalitarian experience of dreaming distinguishes the dream from the more consciously enacted hierarchical traditional structures within society. As J. P. Johansen writes, the dream is "a gift which is not otherwise allotted to ordinary people" (1954:256). Johansen's comment, although referring to the Maori, can be applied to the Hawaiian cultural situation, insofar as dreaming is an experience of the wider community and family (*'ohana*).

The dream in Hawaii should be understood in light of the significance of the family structure. As Johansen observes, it is a European or Western perception that the dream is an expression of individual consciousness, whereas for the Maori (as with the Hawaiians), the dream is located within a "fellowship" (1954:256). If one takes Johansen's discussion further, one can say that the experience of the dream does not throw the Hawaiian back on himself or herself but on his or her sense of community--in this case the family. The Hawaiian concept of *'ohana* expresses the communal links between the dreamers and their family.⁸ Handy and Pukui write that dreams "affect the whole family, even though the dream be related primarily to some particular person; and more so when the dream reveals something of importance to the whole *'ohana*" (1972: 126). The ability to dream for the community reflected a gift that singled individuals out from other members of the community, Hawaiian society understood that certain people would have "great gifts (*ha'awina*) of vision" (Kamakau 1964:55).

Dreaming is also linked to the acquisition of skill. At a basic level dreams required interpretation--and the act of interpretation demanded a certain amount of skill and training. At a more specific level dreams were used by individuals as an aid for ritual and healing purposes (NK 1979, 2: 175). The place of the dream in Hawaiian culture must also be seen to represent the existing status structures. The appear-

ance of the chief in the dream, for instance, was a recurring symbol of the status structure (Kepelino 1932:114). Within the status structure, the other prominent figure was the priest who interpreted the chief's dreams and, on occasion, dreamt for the chief (Rice 1923:99; Fornander 1917:442; Ellis 1827:284). Together, the paramount chief and the high priest represented the pinnacle of the status structure in Hawaii; they also embodied the public archetypal experience of the dream.

The Chief and Priest as Dreamers

Given that the chief was the supreme living symbol of divine power (*mana*) (Valeri 1985:98-99, 142) and had proof of the deepest genealogical ties, extending back in a direct line to the gods, it is not surprising to find that he had a significant role to play as a dreamer. Handy describes the first-born chief's function as that of a "spiritual medium between the gods, the people and the land" (1941: 128). As spiritual medium, the chief was the keeper of his people's welfare insofar as his divine power was connected with the fertility and productiveness of the land. In this sacred role as medium, the chief was a vessel of significant cultural dreams (Rice 1923:20-26).

While the chief may have been the ideal channel for a sacred power that was perceived to flow over into the secular realm, in practice the sacred and secular spheres of power were more separate. Generally speaking, the paramount chief governed the secular sphere of the Hawaiian social structure while the high priest presided over the religious sphere (Goldman 1970:12). In broader terms it was the priestly class in general--the *kahuna* class--that was devoted to dreaming and dream interpretation rather than the chief.

Dreams and the Hawaiian Specialist

In Hawaii the dream was employed as a specialist tool in a variety of ways. Those people whose occupations essentially involved attention to dreams in some form can be divided broadly into three categories: (1) those who interpreted dreams (*wehewehe moe 'uhane*), (2) those who used dreams as a device to track the activities of a living person's spirit or soul (*kilokilo 'uhane*), and (3) those who used dreams as a premeditated or spontaneous device for healing (*kahuna lapa'au*). The members of the two latter categories can be deemed to be part of the general category of specialist-professional *kahuna* (Valeri 1985: 135-137).⁹

The Dream Interpreter (Wehewehe Moe 'Uhane). In Hawaii the dream interpreter was required when an individual was having difficulty understanding the meaning of a dream. "One thing may mean this, and another that. When a person could not understand his dream and it worried him, then he went to a dream interpreter, To a *wehewehe moe 'uhane*" (AK 1979, 2: 175).

The word *wehewehe*, writes Pukui, means "to take apart or explain"; **the** word *moe 'uhane* is a generic Hawaiian word for dream (Kamakau 1964:55; Pukui and Elbert 1971: 106). Thus the *wehewehe moe 'uhane* is one who "takes the dream apart to see what each part means and how all the parts fit together" (NK 1979, 2:175). Pukui tells us that each Hawaiian '**ohana** traditionally had its own dream interpreter and that "every region and every family had its own customary meanings for dreams" (NK 1979, 2: 176). There were definite advantages to having a family member interpret one's dreams, including a knowledge of family symbols and personal circumstances.

The Spirit Diviner (Kilokilo 'Uhane). Alexander writes that it was the *kilokilo 'uhane* (literally, spirit diviner) "who reported on the condition of the soul ('uhane), and interpreted dreams" (1899:72). David Malo also describes the activities of the *kilokilo 'uhane*, whom he generally entitles *kahuna kilokilo*. Malo writes that it was the practice of the *kahuna kilokilo* to claim that he had seen "the wraith or astral body" of a person appear to him "in spectral form, in a sudden apparition, in a vision by day, or in a dream by night." The *kahuna kilokilo* interpreted the appearance of a person's astral body or spirit as a sign that the person's '*aumakua* (guardian spirit) was offended. The *kahuna* warned the person whose spirit he had seen that the '*aumakua* could only be placated through a ceremony of atonement and sacrifice (*kala*); otherwise death would result (Malo 1951: 112-113).

Alexander writes that the *kilokilo* were diviners "divided into several distinct branches" (1899:72). The *kilokilo* that Alexander and Malo refer to appear to have been part of a category of specialist who interpreted or read signs (*kilo*). Kepelino writes that the term *kilo* described interpreters who "read signs on the body, the signs in the heavens, and so forth" (1932: 130). In keeping with Kepelino, Pukui and Elbert write that the *kahuna kilokilo* was a priest or expert who observed the skies for omens. Given Malo's use of the term to describe the *kilokilo 'uhane* it appears that *kahuna kilokilo* was a general classificatory title (Pukui and Elbert 1971: 106; Kamakau 1964:8).¹⁰

The Healing Specialist (Kahuna Lapa'au). The healing specialist in Hawaii was typically termed a *kahuna lapa'au* (curing expert). Kama-kau writes that the category *kahuna lapa'au* was divided into eight branches, specializing in a variety of healing practices ranging from sorcery and hands-on healing to healing through insight or "critical observation" (1964: 98).¹¹

Alexander states that dreams and visions were used by *kahuna lapa'au* to judge whether a patient would recover or not, although he does not specify if the use of dreams was a general feature of this class or confined to particular specialists. Of the *kahuna lapa'au* Alexander writes that "after prayer and sacrifices he would go to sleep, in order to receive intimations from his *akua* [god] by dreams or visions as to the cause and remedy of the disease" (1899:66). The role of the healing *kahuna* is mentioned elsewhere in Hawaiian literature. Laura Green and Martha Beckwith describe a woman who attempts to heal a family's ailing relative, first by falling into a trance and then, when that method fails, waiting for the answer to the cause of illness that "might come in a dream" (1926: 208).

The ceremonies described by Alexander and by Green and Beckwith bear a close resemblance to the "*kuni ahi*" ceremony that Ellis describes in his *Narrative of a Tour through Hawaii*. Ellis gives a detailed account of the divinations and diagnosis of a chief's illness. As in the previous examples the dream is contained within a nexus of other divinatory procedures, forming one element of the prognostication process. As part of this ceremony, animal offerings were placed on a fire. A small portion of these offerings was eaten by the priest. After the rest of the remains had been consumed by the fire the priest slept, and upon awakening informed the sufferer of the cause of his or her illness (Ellis 1827:283-284). In the *kuni ahi* ceremony the dream was used as a premeditated device (insofar as the dream was sought out consciously by the healer), but there appears to have been another class of persons, "more commonly female," whose role demanded that the dream be used in a more spontaneous fashion. Handy describes this class as "psychic sensitives.

One prone to vivid dreaming at times of sickness or other personal or family crises" (1941: 126).

The Priest (Kahuna). Clearly the term *kahuna* is a general classification that subsumes a variety of divinatory practices and religious occupations. Broadly speaking the crafts of the *kahuna* ranged over two main occupational areas, although in practice these areas were not always clearly divorced. In the first instance there were the ceremonial

priests (*kahuna pule*) who enacted formal rituals and functions associated with chiefs and their temples; second, there was a “heterogeneous” category of “professional” priests comprising specialists in ritual activities and medical (healing) practices (Valeri 1985: 135-140), such as the above mentioned *kahuna lapa‘au* and *kahuna kilokilo*. Evidence has shown that the dream was employed in some manner by each of these two priestly groups. In ritual the dream appeared as one of a number of divinatory procedures at the disposal of the priest. As a medical tool the dream had implicit connections with healing, for dreams were often experienced as forewarnings of illness (see page 68 below).

Within the priestly class there was a fourth category of person who could be called a dream specialist. In Hawaii the dream interpreter (*wehewehe moe ‘uhane*) could be properly termed a dream specialist.

Even from the relatively fragmented evidence, one is able to discern the significance of the dream in Hawaiian culture. The dream was particularly significant for a few, notably the chief and the *kahuna* class, for its oracular and healing qualities. But the significance of the dream lay not only in the domain of the specialist. The dream expressed communal and family ties, and as such, it should be largely interpreted within this framework.

The Dream Spirit

Hawaiians conceived the dream as essentially the dream spirit leaving the body during sleep, to wander. The wanderings and encounters of the dream spirit (in a realm external to the dreamer’s private, inner, and unconscious mental realm) constituted the Hawaiian dream experience (Alexander 1899:72; Beckwith 1940: 144, 177).¹² “Leaving through the *lua ‘uhane* or ‘spirit pit’--the tear duct at the inner corner of the eye--the spirit went traveling, seeing persons and places, encountering other spirits, experiencing adventures” (NK 1979, 2: 170).

Complex and difficult philosophical, linguistic, and anthropological issues arise when one attempts to apply the Western notion of self to a traditional Hawaiian setting. In Hawaiian belief, the dream spirit was held to move away from the dreamer’s physical presence and travel in other realms; nevertheless the dream spirit was part of one’s being and thus could be said to be part of the self in a Western sense (albeit a mobile part that in some sense detached itself from the dreamer). As a detachable personal element it was feasible in Hawaiian belief that the dream spirit’s experience might not be initially congruent with the

dreamer's sleeping or waking experience of their dream. Nonetheless the impact of the dream spirit's experience or wanderings could be measured in the physical realm. For example, the capturing of the dream spirit by hostile elements could result in the dreamer's experiencing a variety of physical symptoms ranging from a minor ailment to a major illness and even death (Malo 1951:114-115; NK 1979, 2:206n).

Naming the Part of the Self That Dreams

In the English-language portions of the literature on Hawaiian traditions, the terms *soul* and *spirit* are used interchangeably to name and describe the part of the self that dreams (NK 1979, 2:170; Malo 1951: 114). In this article the term *dream spirit* has been used to describe the part of the person that experiences the dream. There are a number of advantages to this compound term. First, the inclusion of the word *dream* differentiates the dream state from other states in which the spirit leaves the body; for instance, during trance and death (Alexander 1899:72; Emerson 1902: 13). Second, the term serves to distinguish between the different "spirit" parts of the self. In Hawaii the dream spirit was generally one of two or more vital essences ascribed to a person (Emerson 1902:10). Underlying the belief in the existence of spirit essences was the belief in an immortal part of the self, commonly described as the soul. In death, the dream spirit separated from the body with which it had been associated in life and was usually renamed to signify its changed state (NK 1972,1:193).

The name, thus given, partially reveals the nature of the dream spirit, but additional evidence is needed to elaborate on the nature of this entity. In particular, the relation between the dream experience and sleep and the relation of the dreamer to the dream spirit are two key relationships in the Hawaiian experience of the dream. The relation of the dream to the state of sleep is shown directly in the Hawaiian language: The word for sleep (*moe*) is part of the term for dream (*moe 'uhane*). Literally, *moe 'uhane* means soul sleep (Pukui and Elbert 1971: 230). In Hawaiian *'uhane* designates the dreamer's spirit; more generally it is the term for the soul (Kepelino 1932: 114-115; Pukui and Elbert 1971: 146).

Inasmuch as the dream is a private experience, the relationship between the dreamer and the dream spirit is much harder to define than the invariant relationship between sleep and dreams. Because the dream spirit was immaterial it was ultimately undefinable, yet paradoxically the dream spirit was linked to the definable, concrete body of

the dreamer. For instance, the dream spirit had the appearance and attributes of the dreamer. Invariably the dream spirit was perceived as a replica (albeit an invisible, nonphysical representation) of the dreamer. An interpreter of Hawaiian culture at the end of the nineteenth century remarked that a woman's "spirit was seen and recognized from its close resemblance to the physical body to which it belongs" (Emerson 1902: 10).

The World of the Dream Spirit

Although the term has been briefly explained, a full description of the dream spirit (and therefore the dream) must include an account of the wider context. The dream spirit journeyed in a world inhabited by a multitude of entities of a spiritual nature. In Hawaii, these spirits were part of a complex and variegated pantheon that included dreamers' spirits, the spirits of the dead, and assorted deities (Valeri 1985: 12-36). Although these spirits were for the most part invisible, except to a select few, the Hawaiians believed that they intimately and powerfully influenced human life. Altered states of consciousness, such as dreams, made the usually invisible spirit presence visible. A Hawaiian perspective elucidates the way in which dreams gave access to the spirit world.

They are seriously regarded and carefully studied by elders skilled in interpreting their meaning because they represent the most direct and continuous means of communication and contact between those living in this world of light (*ao malama*) and the ancestral guardians (*'aumakua*) and gods (*akua*) whose existence is in the Unseen (*Po*). (Handy and Pukui 1972: 126-127)

Family Ties and the 'Aumakua

In Hawaiian belief, most dreams were believed to be caused directly or indirectly by spirit activity (NK 1979, 2: 171). Most, or all, of the spirits that played a significant role in dreams were family spirits, the *'aumakua*-both ancestor spirits and recently deceased relations. The notion of family in Hawaii has already been briefly examined in relation to the communal aspects of dreams and dream interpretation. The supernatural realm reflects the continuity of this family structure internally, in the unconscious.

In particular, dreaming was a time when the *'aumakua* could pass on valuable messages (NK 1979, 2:172). For instance, dreams could be

used by the 'aumakua to show an individual that he or she was in fact related (in spirit) to a particular 'ohana (Handy and Pukui 1972:120). Thus the dream message of the 'aumakua restored the important links of family ties that transcended physical blood ties. The dream was also the medium by which a newborn child was given its sacred *inoa po* (night name). Such a name reflected the divine link between the ancestral god and the named individual (NK 1972, 1:95). The 'aumakua could also visit during the night as a "spirit-lover." These spirits were called *wahine* or *kane o ka po* (nighttime wife or husband respectively). The *kane* or *wahine o ka po* would often give assistance and assurance to its human counterpart, but such a relationship could become life-threatening if one fell in love with the spirit, for the dreamer's own spirit could be enticed away from the body (Handy and Pukui 1972:120-122; NK 1972, 1:120). It was necessary to maintain a respectful relationship with the 'aumakua of one's dreams, for the nature of that relationship reflected also the nature of the broader relationship to one's own 'ohana, as the following passage indicates: "To-day as heretofore, dreams foretell good and bad fortune, sickness, ways to heal illness or correct faults committed in relationship or in disregard of duty to 'ohana and 'aumakua" (Handy and Pukui 1972: 127).

Punishment by the spirits for transgressions could manifest indirectly, for instance as an illness, perhaps foretold in a dream. Illness was also thought to arise from a sorcerer's involvement in, and invasion of, the psychic realm. The sorcerer's involvement obviously points to a human agent (not just a spirit agent) in dreams. Certain spirits, like sorcerers, were also ascribed innate malignant tendencies. The sorcerer directed and controlled some of these malignant spirits for his or her own ends (NK 1972, 1: 119).

The spirits, however, protected those who served them properly. Thus, behind the ostensibly vengeful aspect of the spirit realm lay a benign concern. Gods and spirits alike sought to guide and aid, as well as chastise, the dreamer. The nature of illness reflected the positive and negative aspects of dreams, for the spirits who caused illness were also believed to heal it (Handy and Pukui 1972:127). The Hawaiian conception of good and bad dreams is next examined as related to spirit behavior. Necessarily, this examination touches upon the subject of family ties.

Good Dreams and Bad Dreams

At one level dreams were revelations (Kepelino 1932:114).¹³ This creative aspect of dreams ultimately derived from the gods. Such dreams

were classified as *ho'ike na ka po* (revelations of the night) (NK 1979, 2:171). For instance, in Hawaii certain medicinal remedies were imparted through the dream experience (Green and Beckwith 1926:208). Thus dreams were a source of invention but they also offered glimpses into the future (*moe pi'i pololei*) (NK 1979, 2:171; Handy and Pukui 1972: 127). At a deeper level such dreams reflected a profound religious experience. As Kepelino writes of one such dream, "It will encompass you" (1932:122).

But the knowledge or revelation the dream imparted could be used for negative ends, as well as positive ends. In a Hawaiian legend we are told that a man dreamt of a new kind of tree that directed him to worship it as an idol with "the power of procuring the death of whomsoever he chose" (Dibble 1909:84). Another account more starkly portrays the tension between the positive and negative spirit activity. In this example the dreamer combats numerous spirits in what is depicted as a life and death struggle. In the dream the spirits attempt to force the unwilling dreamer and his companion to plunge into the inescapable depths of the spirit world.

As they stood on the rock they were surrounded by spirits who used every effort to make Paele face the sea. Had he once turned in the direction the spirits behind him would have pushed and forced him to jump into the vast deep of the spirit world. Then his fair companion held him, and together they struggled against the wiles and force of the spirits. He kept his face toward the mountain and thus got away from the perilous spot. (Emerson 1902: 14)

The appearance of certain symbols in dreams could also signify bad tidings. In Hawaii to dream of a canoe (*moe wa'a*) was considered an omen of bad luck, even death. A dream of losing a tooth was also considered an omen of death, indicating the death of a relative (NK 1979, 2: 180,181; Handy and Pukui 1972: 129; Kamakau 1964:56).¹⁴ The perceived cause of bad dreams in the Hawaiian mind lay, in part, in the perception of dangerous and troublesome spirit activity, although it was also thought that certain foods produced nightmares (NK 1979, 2:171, 173; Pukui and Elbert 1971:395). A prolonged absence from the body made it more difficult for the dream spirit to return to its body; if the dream spirit found itself unable to return at all, death would result (NK 1979, 2:206n). As Emerson writes: "Souls frequently wandered away from the body during sleep or unconsciousness. If reconciliation was not

made, it travelled to Ku-a-ke-ahu, the brink of the nether world of spirits . . . , whence it plunged (*leina uhane*) into Ka-paa-heo" (Malo 1951:114n).¹⁵

In Hawaii the innate mischievousness of the dream spirit was thought to contribute greatly to the probability of its becoming the target of a human or spirit adversary. The following incident reflects a common cultural presupposition in Hawaii that had the spirit stayed where it was supposed to be it would never have got into trouble in the first place. In this incident a Hawaiian wakes up when he finds himself being strangled by a woman whom he recognizes as living some distance away.

To be sure her body was asleep in her own house at the time. All are agreed on that point. It was only one of her spirits up to those pranks, but the spirit was seen and recognized from its close resemblance to the physical body to which it belonged.
(Emerson 1902: 10)

At one level Hawaiians had a very pragmatic perception of the dream. At this level dreams were believed to be guided by a strict pact between the human and spirit realms. This pact was based on the principles of *kapu* (taboo) and family ties. Underlying this pragmatic perception of dreams was a deeper esoteric principle that ultimately reflects on the divine nature of the dream. The dream not only reflected a contractual relationship between spirit and human realms but was also perceived as a gift from the spirit realm to the human realm.

Conclusion

While the dream in Hawaiian culture reveals itself to be a mythic state where gods, spirits, and the dreamer did battle, there were more prosaic dimensions to the dream play. On closer inspection one finds that the dream holds up a mirror to the culture and we see that the laws of the waking world about such things as class, family ties, and status combine in dreams too. More specifically dreams have been shown to be a significant experience in Hawaiian culture. Dream interpretation and the use of the dream in ritual stand out as two culturally significant activities whose common purpose was to aid and heal. In their most exalted form, dreams allowed the Hawaiian to contact the numinous. Kepelino concludes his "Dream Lore" on this esoteric aspect of the dream. He writes that the dream was considered a messenger, thus:

The dream is not the thing to be thought of but the deep thought underlying it is what the spirit sees. It is said in the stories of Hawaii that the dream had great wisdom, deep knowledge, an appearance like that of a god. But its wisdom and knowledge are impossible to the body, hence the spirit reveals in dream the unknown things to come. (Kepelino 1932: 122)

This passage illustrates the sophistication and complexity with which the dream was viewed in Hawaii. Freud's classic statement that the interpretation of dreams is the "royal road to the unconscious" is perhaps not much removed from Kepelino's interpretation of the dream.

In this brief study the dream has emerged as an illuminating and significant part of Hawaiian cultural history. The evidence of the role of the dream in Hawaiian culture, although fragmented, shows that lack of documentation does not necessarily equate with a lack of historical significance. This point is particularly true of dreams that by their very nature are initially private--that is, personal, individual experiences--but nevertheless may have profound implications in the public-religious domain. In this article the search for the role and significance of the dream in traditional Hawaiian culture has only just been embarked upon. It will remain for further studies to construct a typology of the dream in Hawaiian culture and to place the Hawaiian dream in the context of other Polynesian studies of the dream.

NOTES

1. Stephen uses this term to aptly describe the dream in culture (1982: 118).

2. He refers here in particular to the work of Jackson S. Lincoln on American Indians, *The Dream in Primitive Culture* (1935), and the earlier, more general work of Edward B. Tylor, *Religion in Primitive Culture* ([1871] 1958).

3. William Ellis is one of the more renowned missionary writers of this period. His work in Hawaii produced his most interesting and factual study, *A Narrative of a Tour through Hawaii*. While this book preserves a strong missionary flavor it also contains a wealth of information in condensed form on Hawaiian beliefs and legends (Leib and Day 1979:7). Emerson and particularly Rice were notable ethnographic writers at the turn of the century.

4. Trance states, like visions, are at times difficult to differentiate in the literature. For instance, periods of prolonged or extended sleep might be more properly termed a trance. In the literature, trance states often characterize journeys to the underworld where a life and death struggle between the person in trance and spirits may take place. For an example of a trance-sleep state, see Emerson 1902:13-14.

5. Besides Hawaii, information regarding dreams comes primarily from the eastern islands, noticeably New Zealand, Pukapuka, Easter Island, and Tahiti. The cultural emphasis on dreams in Eastern Polynesia (over Western Polynesia) is in keeping with Aarne Koskinen's survey of supersensory knowledge in Polynesia, in which he finds knowledge of dreams to be slightly more common in Eastern Polynesia than in Western Polynesia (1968:80). Given the linguistic and to some extent cultural differences between Eastern and Western Polynesia (Krupa 1982:4), a finding of a cultural emphasis on the dream in Eastern Polynesia may have some credence, but any conclusions should be carefully drawn. Although it is certainly evident that some islands placed more significance on the dream than others, perceived cultural differences regarding dreams may be due to the nature of historiography. A lack of emphasis on the dream in Western Polynesia, and particularly in small islands throughout Polynesia, may well be due to a lack of documentation. It is probably more than coincidental that those islands which show a greater cultural emphasis on dreams are also those islands about which there is substantial documentation.

6. In using Kepelino as a foundation source for this study, some problems arise. Criticisms have been leveled at the text, particularly where suggestions of a Christian influence emerge. If a Christian-biblical influence is evident in Kepelino's traditions, his section on dream lore does not appear to be unduly affected. Except for a passing analogy to the catechism, no obvious biblical elements emerge in the section on dreams.

7. Given the context of the rest of Kepelino's passage on dreams, I take him to mean that dream interpretation, rather than dreaming, was "taught" here.

8. The concept of *'ohana* embraces a dispersed community of relationships based on blood, marriage, and adoption ties (Handy and Pukui 1972:2).

9. It is conceivable that the *wehewehe moe 'uhane* could also be designated as a class of *kahuna*.

10. How the *kilokilo 'uhane* fitted into the category of *kahuna kilokilo* is not clear, but perhaps they were considered specialists who read or interpreted the appearance (characteristics) of a person's spirit. Kamakau lists a number of *kilokilo* specialists (1964:8).

11. The following list contains the eight *kahuna lapa'au* classes that Kamakau enumerates: (1) midwifery, (2) diagnosis and treatment of certain childhood ailments, (3) lancing and closing of the fontanel, (4) diagnosis through the use of pebbles and the ends of fingers, (5) those who could see at a glance "through the eyelashes"--using insight and critical observation, (6) treatment through magic, (7) treatment through sorcery, and (8) treatment of the spirits of illness.

12. The Hawaiian understanding of the dream experience, although classically conceived as the wanderings of the dreamer's spirit, was also understood as the experience of being visited by spirits during sleep, Pukui, Haertig, and Lee write of " *'Ike akua nei ku'u*. My spirit saw . . . my spirit visited" (1979, 2: 170).

13. Alternatively dreams may be considered nonsensical. These "confused" (*pupule*) dreams are considered "devoid of *'aumaikua* messages" [NK 1979, 2: 171].

14. The canoe's connection with death can perhaps be related (in part) to the fact that canoes were once used as coffins (Judd 1930:11). Similarly, teeth have connections **with** death in the practice of mourners' knocking out their teeth as a sign of grief (NK 1979, 2: 181).

15. Ka-paa-heo was described by Emerson as a “barren waste” inhabited by “famished ghosts” (Malo 1951:114n).

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[NK] See Pukui, Haertig, and Lee 1972-1979.

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