Hawaii's Last Queen, Liliuokalani
Enthrallingly Exotic: Victoria and Liliuokalani

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A Golden Jubilee, complete with dignitaries from around the globe, dazzling displays of wealth and power, and formal, awe-inspiring ceremonies: this might seem an unlikely place to begin a friendship, but at least one of the participants in the festivities left believing a lifelong friendship had been formed. More believable, perhaps, than the genesis of an attachment during the hubbub of the event is the impact of such a Jubilee on those who attended, and a lasting influence on these attendees that would alter the course of coming events. Queen Victoria’s Golden Jubilee, held in 1887, marked not only a milestone year of her reign but also the myriad achievements of the massive and thriving British Empire, newly expanded to include India. Victoria and her country were eager to
share their achievements and success with the world, and to showcase British power along with the monarch most aligned with British success. This monarch, Victoria, increasingly associated herself not only with Britain but also with the exotic, as she grew ever more interested in foreign lands and individuals; it was this interest that spurred the development of her relationship with Liliuokalani, the sister of Hawaii’s King Kalakaua and next in line for the throne. These two women met for the first time during Victoria’s Jubilee, and, at least to Liliuokalani, seemed to instantly bond, as the two appeared to find each other equally and enthrallingly exotic. Queen Victoria’s fascination with the exotic helped prompt her to invite the Hawaiian monarchs, including Princess Liliuokalani, to her Golden Jubilee; the meeting between these two women and the impact of the Jubilee exerted an ultimately tragic influence on Liliuokalani, while the visit of the Hawaiians merely fed Victoria’s enchantment with foreign cultures.

The allure of exotic cultures and peoples for Queen Victoria began at a very young age, when, as a young queen, she began collecting traveler’s tales, engravings, and other accounts of places that she as ruler could not visit. Victoria relished other customs and cultures, and avidly sought any opportunity for contact with those from exotic lands.¹ For Victoria, Hawaii provided a natural outlet for these curiosities during the early years of her reign, as the relationship between Hawaii and Britain had always been an exceptional one. After

¹ Marina Warner and Victoria, *Queen Victoria’s Sketchbook* (New York: Crown Publishers, 1979), 139.
Kamehameha the Great hoisted the British flag over his house and royal canoe, the British helped him to unify the islands and made him the first king of Hawaii.\(^2\) Thus began Hawaii’s unique relationship with the British, in which sincere admiration of a more powerful nation helped to gain and maintain British support.\(^3\) The similarities between the monarchies of the two nations - both were constitutional monarchies- only increased the connection that Hawaii felt to Great Britain.\(^4\)

During Queen Victoria’s reign, the affection between the two nations flourished. Hawaii, always a matriarchal society in which women were held in high esteem, viewed Victoria with veneration and adulation as the powerful sovereign of a sister nation.\(^5\) While Hawaii had long held fairly good diplomatic relations with Great Britain, occasional attempts by various British authorities to gain control of the islands had somewhat damaged the relationship between the two nations. Queen Victoria was careful to express as early as 1847 that she valued the relationship with Hawaii, and held an “important Interest [sic] . . . in maintaining unimpaired the friendly Relations [sic] which so happily subsist between Great Britain and the Sandwich Islands.”\(^6\) An exchange of letters in

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\(^2\) This was partially a political maneuver on Kamehameha’s part, as he attempted to bring the islands under his control and unite them.


1860 between the Hawaiian king Kamehameha and the queen regarding the establishment of an Anglican church in Hawaii provides one example of the growing contact between Victoria and the Hawaiian monarchs. When Kamehameha appealed to the queen for aid in establishing this church, “requesting (her) Majesty’s approval of the establishment of the Anglican Episcopal Church,” he gained great respect for the Hawaiians from the queen.\(^7\)

Victoria’s interest in the Hawaiian Islands as an exotic land, not as a world power or important nation, led her to correspond with the rulers of the islands even towards the beginning of her reign. She developed a close relationship with Queen Emma of Hawaii, due to a common interest in improving education and to commonality established through loss. Victoria referred to Emma and herself as “sisters in grief” after the death of Emma’s son, for whom Victoria had served as godmother.\(^8\) By 1881, when Kalakaua, king of Hawaii, visited Great Britain, the ties between Britain and Hawaii were so resilient, and the bond of friendship formed between Queen Victoria and the King so strong, that the Queen appointed him an Honorary Knight Grand Cross of the Order of St. Michael and St. George, a large honor for the ruler of a small exotic nation.\(^9\)

Although this relationship between Hawaii and Britain, specifically between the monarchs of the two nations, was somewhat exceptional, Hawaii was not the only exotic realm Victoria explored through diplomacy or

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\(^7\) Kuykendall, Volume 2, 89.  
\(^8\) Ibid., 94.  
\(^9\) Ibid., Volume 3, 233.
relationships. Victoria pursued a similar, yet somewhat different, policy with India; she established individual relationships with Indian nobility and rulers as she did in Hawaii but also brought India under her rule as opposed to treating it as an equal sovereign nation. Victoria had assumed the position of Empress of India in 1877, an experience that she relished and described to her eldest daughter: “It was a great day with you and a glorious eventful one in India. Everything went off most admirably! I had two long telegrams on the first from the Viceroy which reached me that same evening. My health was drunk at our table and at my others in the house as ‘The Queen and Empress of India’.”

Victoria’s interest in India did not end with her assumption of the title of Empress, but rather it gradually expanded; this fascination became part of the celebrations surrounding her Golden Jubilee. Immediately prior to her Jubilee, the Queen hosted a six-month long Colonial and Indian Exhibition, for which she commissioned paintings of her Indian subjects and had several of them visit. The Queen referred to her Indian subjects as “beautiful,” and did all she could to learn about the land that she was empress of, yet had never seen. Thus, the Queen’s growing ties to India began to render her Hawaiian connections less unique and less binding.

Generally, Victoria tended to find those from more exotic lands both beautiful and enthralling: one observer who traveled with Kalakaua to England in

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1881 and witnessed Queen Victoria’s interactions with him commented that she and the aristocracy were “always charmed with some new sensation”\(^\text{12}\) and that “no other foreign sovereign who had visited England spoke it [English] so fluently.”\(^\text{13}\) In her relations with India and her other exotic realms, the Queen seemed drawn towards the naturally and authentically exotic; her affection toward the Hawaiian monarchs may have partially been based upon their insistence on continuing in their own traditions and language, even as they related with the world as a whole, and partially founded in her love for all other cultures.\(^\text{14}\) In her affection for the Hawaiian monarchs, as well as her Indian subjects, the Queen went against the traditions and prevalent attitudes of her times in how she treated those of different ethnicities. Not only did she treat the Hawaiian monarchs well, but she also treated her Indian subjects and servants with respect, defending them and helping them to advance.\(^\text{15}\) A visitor’s account of the islands, written using the personal experiences of Leavitt H. Hallock when he visited the islands under the reign of King Kalakaua, reveals the normal perspective of Victoria’s time. He referred to the Hawaiians as “mere children, with no good judgment.”\(^\text{16}\) While some attributed this positive view of exotic peoples to the Queen’s genuine love of different societies and cultures, others

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\(^{13}\) Ibid., 225.

\(^{14}\) Mathur and Swoboda, 12.

\(^{15}\) Warner, 203.

believed that the Queen used exotic peoples and monarchs to enhance her own prestige and to impress on other nations her power. One Indian subject, upon meeting the Queen and seeing the many exotic peoples and monarchs surrounding her, commented on “what a great power the Queen must wield when she can command such an array of illustrious personages to attend upon her.”\(^{17}\)

Regardless of the Queen’s motivations for her relationships with the Hawaiians and her Indian subjects, her interest in them and their cultures remained atypical in its respect and genuineness.

While Victoria’s relationship with Hawaii obviously did not begin in 1887, it was then that her acquaintance with Liliuokalani began, during Liliuokalani’s visit for the celebration of Victoria’s fifty years of reign. This Jubilee became a landmark in British history and celebrated both an icon and an era:

There had been other royal jubilees in the history of Great Britain, but none had surpassed that of the year 1887, when the whole land, together with the distant colonies and every quarter of the globe where the British flag waves, rang with the voice of jubilation that the great woman who had ennobled the crown was spared in health and strength to celebrate the fiftieth year of her reign.\(^{18}\)

The invitation to such an important event caused quite a stir in Hawaii. King Kalakaua saw the trip as an opportunity to better diplomatic relations with

\(^{17}\) John Rusk, *The Beautiful Life and Illustrious Reign of Queen Victoria:* A Memorial Volume. An Accurate and Authentic Account of the Late Queen of Great Britain and Ireland and Empress of India, Relating the Incidents and Events of Her Public and Private Life, Together with a Summary of the Splendid Achievements of Her Reign, Sketches of Royalty, and the Leading Statesmen of Her Time. Also a Concise History of England and Her Colonies During the Victorian Era ([Chicago?): K.T. Boland, 1901], 278.

\(^{18}\) Ibid., 299.
England. This was something he greatly desired, as he attempted to recreate the Hawaiian monarchy to resemble European monarchies, in the hope that a more Westernized monarchy might receive more respect from imperialists and businessmen. Eventually, Liliuokalani was chosen to attend the Jubilee with the queen of Hawaii, Kapiolani, who spoke no English and was therefore not able to go on her own.\textsuperscript{19}

Liliuokalani and Kapiolani, while fully aware of the significance of the Jubilee, did not come prepared for the experience awaiting them. At the Jubilee, Victoria made sure that the two Hawaiian royals were treated as the European aristocracy. Victoria viewed the two Hawaiian women as true monarchs, welcoming them with an escort that included one of her carriages, a military escort, and a band.\textsuperscript{20} Liliuokalani describes this in her book \textit{Hawaii’s Story by Hawaii’s Queen}:

As we landed from the steamer, directly on our left was a military escort which consisted of about one hundred of the soldiers of Her Majesty Queen Victoria. These had arrived from Southampton that very day, and were specially detailed to do us honor. They were a splendid body of men; and as we passed along in front of them to our carriages, they presented arms and saluted the queen, while the band which was with them played the well-known strains of the British national anthem, “God Save the Queen.” Then the party moved up the dock, at the gateways of which, or entrance to the city, we were met by the lord mayor of Liverpool, with his attendants. He was decorated with the insignia of his office, and welcomed us to the city of which he was the official head.\textsuperscript{21}

The treatment of the Hawaiian royals surprised them, for such pomp was not

\textsuperscript{19} Allen, 195.
\textsuperscript{20} Ibid., 204.
\textsuperscript{21} Liliuokalani, \textit{Hawaii’s Story} (Rutland, Vt: C.E. Tuttle Co, 1972), 137.
typical of Hawaiian culture, and the American diplomats to Hawaii had treated
the monarchs as inferiors, not as royalty. A number of other exotic subjects had
come to the Queen’s Jubilee, representing her interest in the British Empire’s
growing exotic elements, and all of these subjects were treated well.
Representatives from India, Persia, Siam, and other British outposts all came to
pay their respects to such an influential monarch.22 Liliuokalani describes both
her accommodations during the Jubilee and some of the other exotic monarchs in
attendance:

Rooms were assigned to us at the Alexandra, where there were many
other members of the royal families of the distant world. Amongst these
were Prince Komatzu of Japan; the Siamese Prince, brother of the King
of Siam; the Prince of India; and the Prince of Persia. At other leading
public houses were quartered the princes and princesses of the nations of
Europe.23

Not confined to the formal ceremonies, the splendor of the Jubilee and its awe-
inspiring impact on spectators began the instant the Hawaiian women arrived.

With such a reception from the British and with the long history of
friendship between the Hawaiian and British monarchs, the invitation to an
audience with Queen Victoria did not surprise the two Hawaiian royals. As
Liliuokalani states in her later book, “Arrangements were made for us to present
our felicitations in person at Buckingham Palace on Monday at one o’clock in the
afternoon. At twelve precisely of that day, Queen Victoria and her suite entered
London . . . ”24 Victoria had been traveling and attending ceremonies

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22 Allen, 204.
23 Liliuokalani, 141.
24 Ibid., 142.
continuously as the Jubilee approached, and the week of the Jubilee left her with even more commitments. Queen Victoria detailed these many demands on her time and the strain that these audiences placed on her in a letter to her eldest daughter: “But I shall [dread?] all this ‘Royal Mob’ as Louis calls these tremendous royal assemblages, that which I dislike nothing more. But I personally cannot do much entertaining. I am not able for much.”

Given the tremendous strain the Jubilee placed on the elderly Victoria, she probably did not look forward to the visit with the Hawaiian monarchs as much as Kapiolani and Liliuokalani did. Liliuokalani and Kapiolani waited with bated breath until at the appointed time “an officer came from the palace, and Queen Kapiolani and I, attended by Colonel Iaukea and Mr. Synge, took our departure for the hall of the reception. We were shown into a large room, where some of the princes had already arrived . . . .” What Liliuokalani would perceive as her friendship with Victoria, a perception that would have a large impact on her life, was about to begin.

From its inception, Liliuokalani’s and Victoria’s relationship affected the two women extremely differently. On the surface and to an outside observer, both women appeared to form an equally solid bond; however, Liliuokalani and Victoria assigned differing importance to their meeting almost immediately. During their meeting, Kapiolani and Liliuokalani sat next to Victoria and discussed the 1881 visit of Kalakaua to England, along with other rather trivial

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26 Liliuokalani, 143.
and informal matters. Liliuokalani appears to have cherished every moment of the visit with Victoria, writing a detailed and lengthy description that emphasized the personal nature of her newly formed relationship with the Queen:

Her Majesty Victoria greeted her sister sovereign, Kapiolani, with a kiss on each cheek, and then, turning to me, she kissed me once on the forehead; we were asked to be seated, the two queens sitting together on the sofa and engaging in conversation, which was translated by Colonel Iaukea. In the mean time I occupied one of the chairs. Queen Kapiolani expressed her congratulations on the great event of the day, and her gladness that the Jubilee found Her Majesty in good health, and added her expressions of hope that she might live many years to be a blessing to her subjects. The Queen received her good wishes with a like spirit of cordiality, thanking her for coming so far to see her, and then went on to speak with enthusiasm of the pleasure she had taken in meeting her husband, my brother, King Kalakaua. She said she had been much pleased with him, and had never forgotten his agreeable visit. . . Queen Victoria then entered into a little conversation with me, confining her remarks chiefly to educational matters, and asked me with some detail about the schools of the Hawaiian Islands. We then rose to make our adieus. The two queens exchanged kisses as before, and the Queen of England again kissed me on the forehead; then she took my hand, as though she had just thought of something which she had been in danger of forgetting, and said, “I want to introduce to you my children;” and one by one they came forward and were introduced. After this I hesitated a moment to see if she had anything further to say to me, and finding that she had not, I courtesied to her and withdrew. . . Thus terminated my first interview with one of the best of women and greatest of monarchs.

While Liliuokalani focused on the personal relationship between two equally royal women in her meticulous account of the visit, Queen Victoria gave far less information in her journal about her visit with the Hawaiian royals, including them in a long list of her activities for that day: “I went at once into the Picture Gallery . . . Afterwards I received the Queen of Hawaii, and then saw, in quick succession, the Japanese Prince Komatsu and the Siamese Prince, and finally the

27 Siler, 133.
28 Liliuokalani, 145.
Persian Prince, who speaks no English.”[29] Victoria may have enjoyed the company of Liliuokalani, but did not assign the same importance to the June 20th audience as Liliuokalani did.

The next day, the day of the Jubilee ceremony, Victoria continued to assign more significance to the Hawaiian visitors than the status of their nation warranted, as she did most of her other exotic visitors. Liliuokalani records her perception of their status as a result of a relationship with the Queen in her description of the Jubilee ceremonies:

On the following, or great day of the Jubilee, we were to be present in the morning at the historic church of Westminster Abbey; . . . To us was accorded the most unusual honor of an escort drawn from the Life Guards of Her Majesty Queen Victoria. This was scarcely expected but we were told that it had been especially granted to the Queen and Crown Princess of Hawaii. When we spoke of the high appreciation we felt of this and all the attentions we had received, we were assured in response, that, as we had come such a long distance to do honor to the occasion, Her Majesty had thought that the least she could do was to provide for us special honors. We were given one of the queen’s own carriages, with horses and drivers, during our stay in London.[30]

The honors paid the Hawaiians continued during the Jubilee ceremony itself, as the Hawaiian royals were yet again seated near the Queen, in the choir quite close to where the actual ceremony occurred.[31] Liliuokalani describes this: “In the centre of the great edifice, there was a raised platform, or dais, to which we were conducted. Soon after us a most prominent party arrived, and were also seated on the dais. We found them to be the kings, queens, princes, and

[31] Siler, 136.
princesses from several of the European countries.” By all accounts, the Jubilee was a colorful ceremony filled with exotic elements. One eyewitness details the “bright hues of military uniforms and the scarlet and ermine of the judges.” He also describes the many exotic dignitaries in attendance, including the Hawaiians:

The black lambswool kalpack of Malcom Khan, the Persian envoy, and . . . Rustem Pasha, the Turkish ambassador, were very conspicuous amid the brilliant throng . . . The Indians formed a magnificent group, blazing in rose diamonds. These were the Thakur Sahibs of Gomdal, of Lieuri and of Moroi, the Maharajah of Kuch Behar, and the Rao of Kutch. Above all was the Maharajah Holkar of Indore, who seemed to be a mass of emeralds and brilliants. Almost at the same time the Sultaneh of Persia, Prince Komatsu of Japan, and other Eastern princes were conducted to their places in the sacrarium, where also the Queen of Hawaii was allowed to have a place. She wore a large number of Hawaiian orders.

This list of exotic representatives reveals Victoria’s personal interest in the exotic, for many of the dignitaries mentioned did not hold important enough positions to fully justify an invitation to an event such as the Jubilee. The Jubilee ceremony and its formality deeply impressed upon Liliuokalani the thought that monarchs were divinely appointed and sustained. One moment during the ceremony in particular struck her as especially meaningful, and confirmed this impression of monarchy as anointed by God:

Thus the grand pageant of religious worship proceeded; and while uprose the prayers of the vast assembly, invoking the blessing of the Almighty upon the head of the great British Empire, a gleam of God’s sunshine penetrated through one of the windows, and finding its way from the casement across the grand temple, illuminated with its radiance the bowed head of the royal worshipper. It was a beautiful emblem of divine

32 Liliuokalani, 153.
33 Rusk, 303.
favor, and reminded me of the coincidence of which mention has been made that occurred at the moment of the coronation of my brother in Hawaii.  

Victoria’s Jubilee conveyed many concepts to those in attendance: her love of the exotic, her success as queen, the majesty of the British Empire, and how she viewed her peers and family. Liliuokalani, avidly and closely watching the revered Queen, did not overlook these subtle messages that threaded throughout the ceremony.

Although the ceremony left these myriad insights upon the many spectators and visiting royals, Queen Victoria’s impressions of the day of the Jubilee were quite different. When giving her impressions, Victoria admitted that “This very eventful day... will be very difficult to describe” but also that “all went off admirably.” After lengthy descriptions of her family’s attire and seating arrangements, she attempts to describe some of her actual thoughts and observations during the ceremony, beginning with her entrance:

I walked slowly up to the Nave and Choir, which looked beautiful, all filled with people. The Royalties of highest rank were seated within the altar rails. I sat alone (oh! Without my beloved husband, for whom this would have been such a proud day!) where I sat forty-nine years ago and received the homage of the Princes and Peers. The service was very well done and arranged.

Victoria appears not to have fully absorbed the pageantry and spectacle of her Jubilee or the impact of the service. Her comments over the Jubilee in a letter to her eldest daughter are equally vague and brief: “I was dreadfully tired last night

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34 Liliuokalani, 155.
35 Victoria, Letters of Queen Victoria Volume 1, 323.
36 Ibid., 324
and the heat all day including the very fine ceremony of yesterday was quite overpowering. I could do nothing but pant. Today is a great relief but I feel now the effect of the great fatigue of this last fortnight which has been incessant.”

With such imprecise descriptions of the ceremony, the highlight of the Jubilee, it seems indicative of Victoria’s interest in the Hawaiian and in the exotic that she mentions the gift given to her by the Queen of Hawaii in her accounts of the day. Victoria only found a few gifts interesting enough to list in her journal, and spent the most time detailing the gift from Kapiolani: “The Queen of Hawaii gave me a present of very rare feathers, but very strangely arranged as a wreath round my monogram, also in feathers on a black ground, framed.” While Victoria obviously did not feel that Liliuokalani and the Queen were close personal friends, she did at least show enough interest in them to mention them in her account of the full day’s events.

As the Jubilee celebrations drew to a close, Liliuokalani and Victoria spent a bit more time in the same place, not in private audiences but in public celebrations and gatherings. At one of these gatherings a few days after the ceremony itself, Liliuokalani recorded her final impressions of the monarch she had come to so greatly admire:

I had had an opportunity to impress upon my mind the appearance of the Queen of England, and to look at her as a woman... She was a well-proportioned, gracious, queenly woman. I would not call her handsome; yet she had a kind, winning expression on her face which gave evidence of the gentle spirit within. This was to be our final interview, and the afternoon with its pleasures soon passed away; we bid adieu to our royal

37 Victoria and Victoria, Beloved and Darling Child, 53.
38 Victoria, Letters of Queen Victoria Volume 1, 325.
hostess, wishing her with all our hearts many, many more years of
prosperity as a sovereign, and content and peace as the woman whose
name is respected and loved wherever the sun shines throughout the
wide, wide world.\textsuperscript{39}

The demeanor and personality of Victoria, as well as the affection that
Liliuokalani watched her people exhibit towards her, strongly tinted
Liliuokalani’s conception of royalty, as her definition of the role of monarch
shifted to align with Victoria’s position and actions as Queen. An observer to the
Queen’s Jubilee articulates one aspect of Victoria’s role as queen that
Liliuokalani had come to regard as particularly crucial:

\begin{quote}
The Queen was the central figure, the loved presence to whom all eyes
were turned, and her advance was marked by loud and enthusiastic bursts
of cheering. Her Majesty was deeply affected. With radiant looks she
continued to bow right and left, and seemed to read in the faces of the
people the signs of that loyal trust.\textsuperscript{40}
\end{quote}

This trust created a “grand tempest of loyal and affectionate enthusiasm which
continued to the very door of the Abbey, where kings and princes, peers and
prelates, waited to join with the royal house in prayer and thanksgiving.”\textsuperscript{41}

Liliuokalani departed from the Jubilee with not only what she viewed as a
relationship with Victoria, but with a new idea of what it meant to be “royal”
inspired by the unchanging love, adoration, respect, and ceremony surrounding
Queen Victoria.

Liliuokalani’s visit to the Jubilee came to an abrupt end when a group of
American businessmen attempted a military overthrow of the Hawaiian king.

\begin{thebibliography}{9}
\bibitem{39}Liliuokalani, 173.
\bibitem{40}Thomas Archer, \textit{Our Sovereign Lady Queen Victoria: Her Life and Jubilee},
\bibitem{41}Ibid.
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Liliuokalani learned of the attempt immediately after returning from the Jubilee celebration where she had said her goodbyes to Queen Victoria.\footnote{Allen, 208.} Liliuokalani describes her reception of the news:

> Returning to our hotel, we received news which changed at once the current of our thoughts. This was of the revolutionary movement, inaugurated by those of foreign blood, or American birth, in the Hawaiian Islands during our absence. It was indeed a case of marked ingratitude; for this rebellion against constituted authority had been brought about by the very persons for whose prosperity His Majesty Kalakaua had made such exertions, and by those to whom he had shown the greatest favors.\footnote{Liliuokalani, 173.}

The Hawaiian monarchs immediately made their way back to Hawaii to attempt to remedy the situation. While Kalakaua did maintain his throne until his death, the challenges to Hawaiian rule did not end with his death. Liliuokalani had scarcely assumed the throne when American annexationists forced her to abdicate. Liliuokalani then turned towards the Queen she saw as her friend, Victoria, for aid in recovering her throne. Given the support and respect shown to Liliuokalani at the Jubilee, she had come to view the Queen as a personal friend, and expected aid from the Queen. Thus began several attempts to gain England’s support in restoring the Hawaiian monarchs.

Liliuokalani writes about one attempt to gain England’s support after the overthrow of the monarchy. She wrote that an emissary, Judge Widemann, sent by Liliuokalani to seek support in Europe, “returned with only a verbal statement to the effect, that, while on his way to England, he had heard that that nation was
sending a message of recognition to the Republic of Hawaii.\textsuperscript{44} This seemed a reasonable expectation, for British opinion was generally against annexation of the Hawaiian islands; British periodicals expressed concern with the disregard shown for the rights of Liliuokalani and over the unseemly haste to complete the annexation. However, unknown to Liliuokalani, these concerns and objections were not enough for the British to intervene and possibly jeopardize the Anglo-American relationship.\textsuperscript{45} So, Liliuokalani continued her appeals to Victoria. She sent a letter to Queen Victoria on January 31, 1893, asking for the “friendly intercession and mediation” of the Queen to restore the Hawaiian Queen or to arrange for the installation of Liliuokalani’s niece as ruler. Liliuokalani did not receive the hoped for response- rather, Queen Victoria simply sent the letter to the Foreign Office without comment.\textsuperscript{46}

This came as a surprise to Liliuokalani, who, from her perspective, had every reason to believe that Victoria would come to her defense. A statement made by Victoria fifty years previous had indicated the Queen’s view of the islands as independent and rightfully sovereign, and had declared towards the Hawaiian monarchs sentiments of “unvarying friendship and esteem” and the wish that the Hawaiian monarch be “treated as an Independent Sovereign.”\textsuperscript{47} Other officials within the British government, including Lord Palmerston, had

\textsuperscript{44} Liliuokalani, 259.
\textsuperscript{45} Merze Tate, “Twisting the Lion's Tail over Hawaii”, \textit{Pacific Historical Review} 36.1 (Feb. 1967): 39.
\textsuperscript{46} Allen, 230.
Miller

Enthrallingly Exotic

previously and publicly stated “that the British government desired the Hawaiian people to maintain proper government and preserve national independence.”48

Given these past statements of support and the honors shown the Hawaiians at the Jubilee visit, Liliuokalani understandably believed that the British would help her in her cause to regain the throne and to preserve her sovereignty. Liliuokalani was not alone in her firm belief that the British would intervene on her behalf, for the American annexationists themselves also assumed that the British would protest the forced abdication of Liliuokalani, or at the very least question the landing of U.S. marines in Hawaii.49

However, in holding this belief Liliuokalani again misinterpreted British thoughts and policy. Concurrent with these statements of support, a British official had stated that “the greatest service he could do the King [referring to the current Hawaiian monarch, Kamehameha V] would be to disabuse him of the idea that England would interfere actively [sic] to prevent the annexation of the Islands to the United States, as I had no authority to pledge my government to such a course.” This fell perfectly in line with the true British policy of verbal and diplomatic support (not military) for a sovereign Hawaii, as long as such a policy would not offend the powerful United States.50 An even more blunt statement about the true British position was made six years prior to the Queen’s overthrow, around the time of the Jubilee in 1887: “I do not suppose that we

49 Tate, “Twisting the Lion’s Tail Over Hawaii”, 28.
50 Tate, “Great Britain and the Sovereignty of Hawaii”, 333.
could oppose to extremities the cession of the whole Hawaiian Group to the U.S.
while we are so particular about Islands 1,000 to 2,000 miles distant from
Australia and New Zealand.” This statement, made by the Foreign Office, shows
that although Victoria had always harbored friendly feelings towards the
Hawaiian monarchs, and had even engaged them on a personal level on occasion,
this did not in any way affect the political decisions of the British regarding
Hawaii. Thus, Liliuokalani’s impassioned plea to Victoria went unheeded, as
political concerns superseded camaraderie.

Although the meeting with Liliuokalani at the Jubilee did not affect
Victoria’s political actions, it drastically affected Liliuokalani’s thoughts and
actions. Even prior to meeting Queen Victoria at the Jubilee, Liliuokalani had
held her in high esteem. In 1881, a British ambassador in Hawaii wrote that “Her
Royal Highness the Princess Regent” (Liliuokalani) had “shewn [sic] me much
attention since her appointment as Regent of this Kingdom” as well as
“manifested an earnest desire to draw closer the relations between Great Britain
and the Hawaiian Government.” Liliuokalani also expressed to Wodehouse a
“hope that the Anniversary of Her Majesty Queen Victoria’s Birthday would this
year receive a marked celebration.” With this respect already in place before the
beginning of their relationship and the Jubilee visit, the day of the Jubilee itself
had an enormous influence on Liliuokalani’s views of how the monarchy should
function. The ceremony and majesty surrounding the occasion impressed upon

51 Tate, “Twisting the Lion’s Tail Over Hawaii”, 36.
52 Kuykendall, Volume 3, 240.
her that monarchies were divinely appointed and created by God, and should thus be respected. She began to grow determined to bring the same respect shown to European monarchies to her own Hawaiian monarchs.53

This shift in perception of the monarchy was dramatic, and entirely new to Hawaii. During Liliuokalani’s childhood and young adulthood, the true power in Hawaii was not with the Hawaiian monarchs. The foreigners in Hawaii held most of the power due to their economic connections.54 At various times during Hawaii’s existence as a monarchy, British, French, Russian, and American flags flew over the islands, showing the extent of the foreigners’ power over the islands.55 Hallock’s travel account reveals why foreigners believed they should overthrow the monarchy and hold all power within Hawaii: “With few exceptions the natives seem not capable of managing a business of much magnitude, and all important matters of finance are in the hands of white capitalists.”56 Traditionally, this had been the world’s view of Hawaiians as a whole, including the monarchs. After seeing the Queen’s Jubilee and the respect traditionally given to European monarchs, Liliuokalani chose to claim that discontent with the rule by foreigners was universal among those residing in Hawaii, and that the people longed for the restoration of the rightful monarch:

Those of foreign ancestry not in sympathy with the revolutionists, those whose daily comfort had been disturbed or whose business had been

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53 Allen, 207.
54 Ibid., 69.
55 Eugene Burns, The Last King of Paradise (New York: Pellegrini & Cudahy, 1952), XXV.
56 Hallock, 51.
made unprofitable or ruined by the rich and powerful missionary party, appealed to me and my friends to restore the old order of things, that prosperity might again smile on the majority, instead of being locked up in the bank accounts of a very few.57

The first and most drastic effect of Liliuokalani’s relationship with Victoria had been a complete reshaping of her view of herself as queen and of the powers of her office.

However, in recreating herself as a British-style monarch, Liliuokalani harmed her attempt to retain her throne as opposed to helping to secure her position as a respected monarch. The adoption of British customs such as travel, ceremony, or funding for the monarch through the government made many native Hawaiians uneasy. Since the monarchy had just recently (as of 1880) started requiring funding from the legislature, many Hawaiians viewed travel, even to an event like the Queen’s Jubilee, an unnecessary expense.58 Furthermore, the close ties between the Hawaiian monarchs, of whom Liliuokalani was the last, and Britain did not make only native Hawaiians uneasy. American imperialists and businessmen saw the invitation to the Jubilee, and other earlier visits to England, as just another link in a chain binding Hawaii to Great Britain, and thus not to their interests.59 Hawaiian natives feared the loss of their unique culture and tradition, and did not fully understand the new concepts and traditions that their monarchs introduced in emulation of Great Britain.

The apparently close relationship between Hawaii and Great Britain,

57 Liliuokalani, 255.
58 Allen, 154.
59 Kuykendall, Volume 2, 201.
particularly between Liliuokalani and Victoria, created more consternation among the Americans living in the islands than among the native Hawaiians. The supposed friendship between the two monarchs created a fear that Victoria was using Liliuokalani to gain access to control of the islands. The Washington Post articulated these views immediately after the overthrow of Liliuokalani. The Post asserted that Britain and Hawaii had used every means possible to link their two nations, and that Liliuokalani’s attempt to gain a new constitution (the event that triggered her overthrow) had been instigated on Victoria’s advice. Other press sources argued that England had “had her covetous eyes” on the islands for many years and that “Through a far sighted diplomacy she had endeavored to create an English sentiment there. An Englishman is the husband of the deposed Queen, and their daughter is now in England, feted at Queen Victoria’s court.” This last statement, though blatantly disregarding fact by referring to Liliuokalani’s American husband as British and her niece as her daughter, reflected the unease that Liliuokalani’s emulation of the British had caused.\footnote{60 Tate, “Twisting the Lion’s Tail Over Great Britain”, 29.}

Another source, a United States committee on foreign relations, further showed this unease:

This policy [desire to link Hawaii to Britain] accounts for the intrigues that have been constantly set on foot by British subjects and officials in Hawaii, and for the presence there at this juncture of Kaiulani, who is the daughter of an Englishman, was educated in England, and is properly in full sympathy with the English people and the British government . . . if Great Britain is not industriously and openly engaged in fomenting this concerted movement for the destruction of the Republic and the restoration of the Monarchy on its ruins, her agents and the Princess, her protégé, are kept conveniently near at hand to fasten her power upon the islands when a pretext arises for protecting the lives and property of
While Victoria never indicated an intent to bring Hawaii into the British Empire, nor did any British officials, the mere relationship frightened Americans who feared an increasingly powerful Great Britain. Due to these fears, Liliuokalani’s visit to Britain and encounter with Victoria during the Jubilee, along with a stronger alignment with British policies after the Jubilee, did not bring about the increase in power that she had envisioned but rather weakened her position.

Liliuokalani did not merely adopt the thought processes of Queen Victoria—she actively began to create a persona for herself that imitated the actions of Queen Victoria. After seeing how “the mighty outburst of enthusiasm which greeted the Queen, as loudly in the colonies and India as in the United Kingdom, gave new strength to the monarchy” and how “the Sovereign was definitely regarded as the living symbol of the unity not merely of the British nation but of the British Empire,” Liliuokalani determined that if she were to create a personality that mirrored Victoria’s, she would be loved and respected as well. From a young age Liliuokalani had decided to win the affection of her people and of those who might oppose her and her people. Her visit to England merely strengthened her determination to create a self and public persona that would win favor with all. The pomp and ceremony, along with the love and affection shown Victoria by her people, made Liliuokalani even more determined

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61 Tate, “Twisting the Lion’s Tail Over Hawaii”, 43.
62 Kuykendall, Volume 3, 342.
63 Allen, 44.
to increase the power of the Hawaiian monarchy. She hoped that by becoming like Victoria, she might strengthen her hold on the throne.\textsuperscript{64} Liliuokalani thus justified her numerous progresses throughout the islands as necessary, for “At all of these places the people who came to receive us were delighted to have the opportunity to show their loyalty and manifest their love.”\textsuperscript{65} She modeled the more extravagant aspects of her reign and the material displays of power after Queen Victoria’s Jubilee, in an attempt to legitimatize her position and the power of the monarchy. Liliuokalani created crowns, robes, and jewelry to further show their status. Liliuokalani’s diamond butterfly pin, purchased in London during the Jubilee, provides one example of this.\textsuperscript{66}

Liliuokalani also used self-fashioning in a more political, rather than superficial, manner, especially in her book \textit{Hawaii’s Story by Hawaii’s Queen}. Throughout the book, Liliuokalani presented herself as a second Victoria, in an attempt to establish herself and her position. Liliuokalani legitimized her right to the throne through emphasizing her genealogy as she utilized techniques of other Western monarchs.\textsuperscript{67} Liliuokalani emphasized the similarities between herself and Victoria, including a long-standing relationship with the British royal family

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\textsuperscript{64} Siler, 147.
\textsuperscript{65} Liliuokalani, 223.
\textsuperscript{66} Margaret Homans and Adrienne Munich, \textit{Remaking Queen Victoria} (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 149.
\textsuperscript{67} Robin L. Bott, “I Know What is Due to Me: Self-Fashioning and Legitimization in Queen Liliuokalani’s \textit{Hawaii’s Story by Hawaii’s Queen}”, \textit{Remaking Queen Victoria}, ed. Margaret Homans and Adrienne Munich (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 140.
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and material displays of power and culture. In her book, Liliuokalani spent ten chapters detailing her trip to England for the Jubilee, the most chapters spent on any part of the narrative in an attempt to align herself with Queen Victoria. She seemed to be suggesting that she is the equal of the British monarch, the former master of the Americans, and thus not one to be made a subject to the Americans. Liliuokalani deliberately tied herself to the concept of a divinely chosen monarch that she had seen Victoria enact during her Jubilee, referring to herself in an official protest to Hawaii’s cession to the United States as “Liliuokalani of Hawaii, by the will of God named heir apparent on the tenth day of April, A.D. 1877, and by the grace of God Queen of the Hawaiian Islands on the seventeenth day of January, A.D. 1893, do hereby protest against the ratification of a certain treaty . . . .” Liliuokalani made a final and more political claim that overtly tied her to Victoria in her response to the criticisms for her attempt to restrict and control the opium trade in Hawaii, arguing that “The British government has long since adopted license instead of prohibition, and the statute proposed among the final acts of my government was drawn from one in use in the British colonies; yet I have still to learn that there has been any proposition on the part of the pious people of London to dethrone Her Majesty Queen Victoria for issuing such licenses.” The American annexationists had used these criticisms to justify their revolution, and Liliuokalani hoped to silence

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68 Bott, 140.
69 Ibid., 143.
70 Liliuokalani, 354.
71 Ibid., 241.
their criticisms and destroy their credibility through aligning herself yet again with Queen Victoria.  

However, despite the attempts to create similarities between the two rulers, vast differences remained. Victoria held unchallenged power, while Liliuokalani lost power daily. As one empire swelled, the other crumbled. Liliuokalani’s perception of Victoria as a monarch fully supported and funded by her nation was incorrect, and her attempt to emulate this through her tours funded by the state shows her acting on this false impression. The lavish Jubilee that Liliuokalani attended was not fully funded by the British government, but mainly by Victoria herself. The Chancellor of the Exchequer had declared “the government would give no grant to Her Majesty in aid of the proceedings with the exception of the charge for fitting up and preparing the Abbey for the ceremony.” The queen herself bore almost three-quarters of the total expense, including the cost for the ceremonies inside the palace and for the reception of foreign royalties. Liliuokalani, not knowing this, had come away from the Jubilee with the mistaken idea that being a true monarch meant receiving large amounts of funding from one’s country, an idea which opened her up to much criticism. Liliuokalani also misjudged her audience- her increased alignment with Queen Victoria did not cause her American enemies to respect her more, but to see her

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72 Bott, 150.
73 Siler, 123.
as an aspiring tyrant.\textsuperscript{75} The writings of one American, Senator Lodge, showed the negative effects of the relationship between Hawaii and Great Britain on the monarchy’s longevity:

British sympathy is with the royalist government, because England can more readily control it, because it is a government in her interest and not in ours, and because they would like to establish British commercial supremacy in those islands. . . They are acting in their own interest and their whole course in the Pacific shows that for commercial and military reasons they are grasping every island they can get.\textsuperscript{76}

Liliuokalani’s attempts to grow more like Victoria gave her enemies more ammunition to use against her, while alienating her supporters. Liliuokalani was described as a woman who “failed to understand the character of the Anglo-Saxon” and who “had all his [referencing her brother Kalakaua] defects of character, and, in addition to them, a blind stubbornness of will which he did not have. She had sworn to support the Constitution, but soon engaged in a conspiracy to overthrow it and establish one which increased her personal prerogatives.”\textsuperscript{77} An 1898 book fully exposes the downside of Liliuokalani’s increasing alignment of the Hawaiian monarchy with the British: “It is claimed by many that she was under English influence. While visiting in London, she was entertained by Queen Victoria.”\textsuperscript{78} His comment on her proposed new constitution, one that would give her more power, reveals just how badly Liliuokalani miscalculated her audience: “That constitution was to be a return to

\textsuperscript{75} Bott, 151.  
\textsuperscript{76} Tate, “Twisting the Lion’s Tail Over Hawaii”, 42.  
\textsuperscript{77} Armstrong, 289.  
\textsuperscript{78} Bott, 151.
absolute monarchy, a constitution that would deprive every white man, unless married to a Hawaiian woman, of the elective franchise, and which made the property of the whites alone assessable for taxation— a far more tyrannical measure than that which caused of forefathers to throw off the British yoke.”

Clearly, Liliuokalani’s association with the British did not give her the power and status that she desired, but undermined her position more. A final unexpected negative consequence of Liliuokalani’s self-fashioning came through different views of Queen Victoria. While Liliuokalani viewed Queen Victoria as an active ruler, critics of the Hawaiian monarchs (of Kalakaua and later of Liliuokalani) viewed Queen Victoria as a largely symbolic figure, with little role in government. A critic stated that “We have just seen the Jubilee of Queen Victoria, and if Kalakaua would follow her example, he might reign as long.”

Liliuokalani’s alignment with Victoria proved to be her downfall rather than her salvation, for as she strove to emulate the woman she saw as her friend, her actions led to misunderstandings and the alignment of political forces against her.

As tragic as the consequences of the Jubilee meeting were for Liliuokalani, the significance of the encounter for Victoria remained fairly slight. Victoria’s fascination with exotic peoples grew ever stronger in the years following the Jubilee, but it grew more focused on India specifically. Immediately following her Jubilee, Queen Victoria engaged two Indian servants,

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79 Bott, 151
80 Ibid., 152.
81 Siler, 142.
Abdul Karim and Mahomet, partially in an effort to learn more about Indian culture and to learn the language. A palace observer described Victoria as “as excited about them as a child with a new toy.”

Victoria treated these new Indian servants with more deference than she did her other servants - she enjoyed their presence and did whatever was needed to ensure that they would stay. A journal entry from August 11, 1888, provides one example of this:

Am making arrangements to appoint Abdul a munshi, as I think it was a mistake to bring him over as a servant to wait at table, a thing he had never done, having been a clerk or munshi in his own country and being of rather a different class to the others. I had made this change, as he was anxious to return to India, not feeling happy under the existing circumstances. On the other hand, I particularly wish to retain his services, as he helps me in studying Hindustani, which interests me very much, and he is very intelligent and useful.

Victoria’s interest in the exotic did not end with the acquisition of exotic peoples to surround her. In 1892, Victoria oversaw the creation of the Durbar Room, for which she hired Indian craftsmen to create a room entirely decorated by the exotic, which had the intended purpose of housing the Queen’s growing collection of exotica. A visitor to Queen Victoria’s court, in the 1890s, was struck by the many exotic elements the Queen included in her everyday routine. He provides this description of her at breakfast: “Everything on the table was gold. . . and she was eating a boiled egg in a gold egg-cup with a gold spoon. Two Indian Khitmagars in scarlet and gold remained motionless behind her chair,

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84 Mathur and Swoboda, 27.
while outside a page and a Scotchman in a kilt waited till she rang." As enchanted with the exotic as Victoria had been when she met Liliuokalani in 1887, she grew ever more enthralled with the exotic in the years following the Jubilee. However, the political complications involved in continuing a relationship with Liliuokalani helped to shift Victoria’s main focus from all exotic nations towards only exotic countries within the British Empire.

The intersection of the lives of Victoria and Liliuokalani seemed to be merely a chance meeting at a celebration that emphasized their inequality as leaders. One queen ruled the largest and most powerful empire in the world, while one soon became queen of a tiny island nation struggling to maintain its sovereignty. Liliuokalani, out of perceived similarities and out of the foundations laid by Liliuokalani’s predecessors, believed that a lasting friendship had been formed, while Victoria remained aloof—polite, but not emotionally engaged. This encounter changed the lives of both women—but not at all in equal amounts, for while Victoria saw Liliuokalani as merely another exotic individual who could provide insight into a broad world Victoria would never see, Liliuokalani came to view Victoria as the embodiment of royalty. Liliuokalani’s attempts to emulate Victoria ultimately helped speed the fall of the Hawaiian monarchy, and the potential friendship between the two women fell into disrepair as one’s attempts to save her country brought about political conflict, the forfeiture of a kingdom, and finally the loss of a longtime champion and possible friend.

85 Victoria and Warner, 195.