

I KAHIKI KE OLA: IN KAHIKI THERE IS LIFE
ANCESTRAL MEMORIES AND MIGRATIONS IN THE NEW PACIFIC

BY

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In a research interview a canoe builder reminisced about making ‘aha (or cord made of braided coconut husk) and how it was used to lash the pieces of a canoe together. He then prompted me to think about the metaphoric ‘aha that I was creating in my work and the many strands—from my home in Hawai‘i and from the wider world in Kahiki—which I could bring together to make my cord stronger. His words inspired the creation of this thesis. Therefore, before exploring the many strands of this research, I would like to thank the people who contributed fibers to my ‘aha, making it thicker and hopefully capable of lashing together something useful for the future.

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ABSTRACT

While exploring different topics and issues—examining everything from the importance of our Pacific genealogies, to the analysis of Hawaiian language literature, to the power of prophecies and predictions for the future, to the need to be reflexive in the creation of culture, and finally to the act of building a nation—each chapter of this thesis is connected by one shifting concept: Kahiki. Furthermore, they are joined by the idea that there is life to be found there. As an ‘ōlelo no‘eau, or a Hawaiian proverb, states, “Aia ke ola i Kahiki,” “Life is in Kahiki”. This adage has served as the foundation of this research and each chapter has been written with the belief that there is life—in the form of reconstructed knowledge, new interpretations, and growing understandings—to be found in Kahiki.

Encapsulated in this one term are our ancestral memories of migration. When islanders traveled to different parts of the Pacific region, they maintained knowledge of their homelands. Although the names of these homelands differ throughout the Pacific, the concept is the same: islanders knew that their life in a particular place, a particular group of islands, was dependent on other places and peoples that although out of sight were never completely out of memory. After generations, however, the specificity of these “homelands” was blurred, and one name came to represent the genealogical connection that people shared with other places in the Pacific. What was Pulotu for some, therefore, became Hawaiki for others, and eventually became Kahiki for my ancestors in Hawai‘i. Thus, Kahiki became a general term for all lands in the region outside of Hawai‘i, and more importantly, became a way for Hawaiians to explain their existence to themselves. In later generations, however, particularly when people from other parts of the world came to Hawai‘i, Kahiki became a term used to refer to *all* lands beyond Hawai‘i’s shores.

This thesis, therefore, studies the life of this one concept through time: looking at it as part of our Pacific genealogies, as presented in oral traditions; examining it as a means of making nationalistic statements, and sometimes, even as a means of justifying colonialism in the nineteenth century; and then exploring contemporary articulations and engagements with Kahiki, particularly in the era following the Hawaiian renaissance, when a group of men on the Big Island of Hawai‘i built a single-hulled canoe, brining tools, teachers, and knowledge from Kahiki to give new “life” to their people. Studying the way this one concept has shifted through time provides a means of understanding how people in each generation used one term to make sense of their experiences. Furthermore, it gives us the chance to examine our

contemporary movements and to reengage with Kahiki in a way that will empower us to do and be more for our people, our region, and the world.

INTRODUCTION

Aia ke ola i Kahiki: Life is in Kahiki

E hoopuka me ka hopohopo ole a me ka wiwoole. (Hooho, “Ae!”) Ua pau ko kakou noho
mumule ana. (“Ae!”)¹

[Speak without worry and without fear. (Shouts, “Yes!”) Our time of sitting speechless is
over. (“Yes!”)]

Just a few short months after the illegal overthrow of the Hawaiian kingdom, Joseph Nāwahī (1893), one of the founders and presidents of the Hui Aloha ‘Āina, or the Hawaiian Patriotic League dedicated to supporting the deposed Queen Lili‘uokalani, delivered a speech before an audience of fellow patriots. His words, later printed in the loyalist newspaper, *Ka Leo o ka Lahui*, encourage the people to raise their voices without worry and fear and to resist sitting any longer in silence (p. 3). Between shouts of agreement, he posed questions urging them to think about the state of their nation, and more importantly, their desires for the future:

He makemake no anei oukou e hoihoi hou ia aku ko oukou Moiwahine Liliuokalani ma luna o kona noho kalaunu? (Hooho kupinai mai ke anaina: “A—e—! Ae! Hoihoi koke aku no i keia wa!!!”) Ano, ua hiki mai ka wa a kakou e hoike aku ae ai i ko kakou manao aloha aina oiaio. (Hooho ia mai, “Ae!”) Mai makau, mai hopohopo, aole he mea nana e hopu ia oukou no ko oukou hoike ana i ko oukou manao...

[Do you not have a desire to see your Queen Lili‘uokalani returned to her throne? (The audience shouts, echoing, “Yes! Yes! Return her now!!!”) Now the time has come for us to show our true thoughts and love for the land. (It is exclaimed, “Yes!”) Do not be afraid. Do not worry. There is no one who will capture you for sharing your ideas...]

As political scientist Noenoe Silva (2004b) argues, one of the primary strategies of resistance used by the Hui Aloha ‘Āina in the nineteenth century was “to organize and communicate through newspapers” (p. 16). The technology of print gave them spaces to express and share their loyalty and their aloha (love) for the ‘āina (land). Thus, generations later, the newspapers now provide a record of people raising their voices, speaking—and even

¹ Although modern orthography includes the use of the ‘okina, or glottal stop, and the kahakō, or macron, most texts that come from the Hawaiian Language newspapers do not. Therefore, quotations from these texts will be presented without these markings. My own writing, however, will use these diacritical marks to aid in pronunciation and interpretation. Also, in supporting the “movement to resist making the native tongue appear foreign in writing produced in and about a native land and people,” any text appearing in Hawaiian will not be italicized (Silva, 2004a, p. 13). Unless otherwise noted, all translations appearing in brackets are my own.

shouting—for their future. As if answering the urgings of Nāwahī, writers in the newspapers seem to call out, “Yes,” refusing to “noho mumule,” or to sit speechless.

In the same issue, as if responding to his call, a composer named Kekoahiwaikalani (1893) published a mele, or song, entitled, “Ka Lanakila o Hawaii” or “The Victory of Hawai‘i” (p. 4). What “victory” she may have been referring to specifically is unclear. However, in the song rings the truth of a people who would not be extinguished. The composer, better known by her full name, Ellen Kekoahiwaikalani Wright Prendergast, was a friend of the Queen and the same woman who composed the famous protest song, “Kaulana Nā Pua,” or “Famous are the Flowers,” a song that despite being written shortly after the overthrow in 1893, “remains a favorite political statement of bitterness and rebellion for the people of Hawai‘i who seek a return to sovereignty” in contemporary times (Nordyke & Noyes, 1993, p. 29). In this lesser-known mele, one that continued in the stream of her previous songs, she wrote:

Aohe kupueu o Kahiki,
Nana e hoonioni mai;
Ua ewe, ua mole, ua paa,
Eia i ka piko o Wakea. (p. 4)
[There is not one mischievous person from Kahiki
Who will shake us;
We are rooted, we are grounded, we are steadfast,
Here in the navel of Wākea.]

Despite their situation and the fact that their Queen had recently been removed from her throne, she believed that no one from Kahiki, or from lands beyond their shores, could shake them. They were pa‘a, solid and secure. And more importantly, they were rooted and grounded in the “piko o Wākea,” or the navel of one of the oldest ancestors of the Hawaiian people. This song—just “one of more than fifty mele lāhui [or songs for the nation] written and published in the first five months of 1893”—expressed her staunch commitment to aloha ‘āina, or to be a patriot acting upon her love and loyalty to the land and nation (de Silva, 2012). Her words move me, and as this introduction will reveal, they motivate me to do this work as a contemporary aloha ‘āina, raising my own voice and continuing her fight.

The concept of aloha ‘āina, a driving force for this thesis, is complex and therefore not easily translated into English. Loosely interpreted it means, “Love of the land or of one’s country” and is therefore often explained as “patriotism” (Pūku‘i & Elbert, 1986, p. 21). A

number of contemporary Kanaka Maoli² scholars agree, however, that the term cannot simply be equated with “patriot” for it expresses much more than a love for the land, but an unwavering commitment and an active and constant loyalty to all that the ‘āina represents: our sources of sustenance, our health and well-being, our political freedom, our stories and histories, and in short, our life and survival as a people and as a nation (Goodyear-Ka‘ōpua, 2013, p. 32; Kikiloi, 2010, p. 75; Silva, 2004b, p. 18). Furthermore, as political scientist Noelani Goodyear-Ka‘ōpua (2013) explains,

The concept of aloha ‘āina has been a root of Hawaiian resistance to imperialism for over one hundred years... the *aloha* part of this phrase is an active verb, not just a sentiment. As such, it is important to think of aloha ‘āina as a practice rather than as merely a feeling or a belief. (p. 32)

Thus, aloha ‘āina is a way of *being*, a way of living and consciously working to protect our ‘āina. Kekuewa Kikiloi (2010), a Hawaiian Studies scholar, explains that “The ‘āina sustains our identity, continuity, and well-being as a people. It embodies the tangible and intangible values of our culture that have developed and evolved over generations” (p. 75). Moreover, aloha ‘āina is based on viewing the land as a living ancestor. Thus, our kuleana (responsibility) to protect it stems from the way Kānaka Maoli understand our familial relationship to the ‘āina as a provider and as a foundation of our experiences.

Although the concept of aloha ‘āina is distinctly Hawaiian, the deep sense of loyalty and commitment that people have for their nation is quite indicative of nationalisms that have been experienced and enacted throughout the world. In his seminal work on the origins of nationalism Benedict Anderson (2006) explains that although the concept of a nation, a nationality, and even of nationalism itself are quite hard to define, the political entity of the nation—an entity that is “imagined” and therefore created—promotes deep attachments that can inspire those who belong to it to make personal sacrifices, to even die for their country if they need to (p. 6-7). Nations, like the Lāhui Hawai‘i, or the Hawaiian Nation that both Nāwahī and Kekoahiwaikalani spoke up for, are “imagined communities.” They are “*imagined* because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion” (p. 6). The idea of a nation, therefore, allows people to be connected by that sense of attachment and belonging to a single entity, regardless of whether they will ever

² The term “Kanaka Maoli” will be used to refer to any person who is ethnically Hawaiian, regardless of their percentage of blood quantum. The politics and usage of this term, as well as others, will be discussed at a later point in this introduction.

truly meet or know one another. It is what pushed those who stood listening to Nāwahī's speech to declare, "'Ae," to stand up for their Queen, to raise their voices fearlessly, despite the fact that they may not have known who was standing next to them, or further, who would come to read the newspaper days or even generations later, sharing in their same sense of commitment to aloha 'āina. Perhaps further explaining this sense of deep attachment and responsibility to the nation, Hawaiian Studies scholar, Jonathan Osorio (2006), states that for him, being Hawaiian is knowing that he is not American. Moreover, "It isn't just ancestry and it isn't just cultural proficiency; being Hawaiian is ultimately about not wishing to be anything else" (p. 23). This staunch commitment to being Kanaka Maoli first and foremost, and to working towards the betterment of the nation together, is grounded in a belief in shared kinship, one rooted in the 'āina.

'Āina, however, is more than just the land. Kekuni Blaisdell (2005), a longtime leader in the Hawaiian Sovereignty Movement, states, "'āina means 'that which feeds'.³ No laila [therefore], 'āina is Papa, our Earth Mother, including *wai* (all waters), *kai* (all seas), Ka Moananui (Oceania), and beyond. 'Āina is also Wākea, our Sky Father, *ea* (air), *lani* (all heavens, all suns, all moons and all stars), and beyond" (p. 10). It is all that sustains us: land, water, *and* sky. Hawaiian educator and epistemologist, Manulani Meyer (2003), expands this interpretation even further arguing that the inclusion of the Pacific Ocean within a Hawaiian's view of home essentially stretches the metaphor of 'āina to *all* of our sources of sustenance, whether physical, spiritual, emotional, or otherwise (p. 101). Thus, to speak of 'āina, or that which feeds, is to look beyond the physical ground that we dwell upon and to honor all of those sources that "feed" us, and to aloha 'āina, is to stand to protect them.

In Kekoahiwaikalani's mele mentioned above, the poetic reference to Wākea seems to support this expansive understanding of aloha 'āina. The phrase "piko o Wākea," after all, links Kānaka Maoli to both the land that we stand upon *and* the ocean that our ancestors traversed in their migrations to the islands. Kekokahiwaikalani's (1893) invocation of Wākea could have been a reference to Mauna Kea, the tallest mountain in the Hawaiian archipelago, in the Pacific Ocean, and if measured from the sea floor, in the world. It is also known as "Mauna a Wākea," or "The Mountain of Wākea." As cultural historians and researchers Kepa and Onaona Maly (2005) explain, "It is the first-born mountain son of Wākea and Papa, who

³ This interpretation is supported by renowned Hawaiian scholar Mary Kawena Pūku'i and anthropologist E. S. Craighill Handy (1998) who argue that 'āina speaks to the act of "feeding": "The term '*aina* represented a concept essentially belonging to an agricultural people, deriving as it did from the verb '*ai*, to feed, with the substantive suffix *na* added, so that it signified 'that which feeds' or 'feeder'" (p. 3).

were also progenitors of the Hawaiian people. Mauna Kea is symbolic of the *piko* (umbilical cord) of the island-child, Hawai‘i, and that which connects the land to the heavens” (p. v). Thus, the “*piko o Wākea*” can be interpreted as the summit of the mountain, which is the highest point on land that connects people with the heavenly realm of Wākea, whose domain is said to be in the sky. However, “*piko o Wākea*” is also a reference to the equator, a location that lies outside of Hawai‘i, somewhere in the larger Pacific Ocean (Pūku‘i & Elbert, 1986, p. 329). Thus, although Kekoahiwaikalani’s mele may have used the poetic reference as a means of connecting the people—seen as rooted and standing steadfastly upon the highest point of the land—to their ancestors, it may have also connected them to a distant past, one that stretches out to the sea from which our people came.

As a contemporary aloha ‘āina, I am simultaneously moved and intrigued by these references for they represent the complexities of what I have set out to explore in this thesis. What initially drew me to Kekoahiwaikalani’s mele was her use of the term Kahiki, the central subject of my research. In 1893, she strategically used Kahiki—a place once honored as a point of origin for Hawaiians—as a means of separating herself and her people from nations abroad. No one from “outside” could threaten them; they would be victorious in their efforts, strengthened and motivated by their commitment to each other, the land, and the nation. Her conviction stirred my na‘au, or the very seat of my emotions. Like Nāwahī, she was a true aloha ‘āina, a true patriot, dedicated to the life of the land and the future of her people. Reading her words and the “‘Ae” of the audience who stood and listened to Nāwahī’s speech, I was stirred to be like them: strong and passionate, with a never-fading sense of responsibility and commitment to my people and our home.

However, as a Kanaka Maoli living 122 years after their words were printed in the newspaper, I also found myself wanting to give voice back to Kahiki, or to write, sing, and even shout about it. Kekoahiwaikalani’s reference to Kahiki created a separation, one based on resistance, between the Hawaiian Islands and the rest of the world, including, quite significantly, the Pacific Ocean. In the nineteenth century, Kahiki was a term commonly used to refer to any and all lands beyond Hawai‘i’s shores. Thus, although older interpretations, as seen in oral traditions from the past, often present Kahiki as the place that migrating islanders left in their journeys to Hawai‘i, the nineteenth century—a politically and culturally tumultuous time—saw the birth of new interpretations that spoke to new experiences. No longer was Kahiki just a Pacific homeland or a place of origin; it was now also used to refer to the home countries of all of those who were not Hawaiian, including those who came to

take our land and our kingdom. Thus, Kekoahiwaikalani's (1893) declaration that "Aohe kupueu o Kahiki / Nana e hoonioni mai" or that "There is not one mischievous person from Kahiki / Who will shake us" politicized the term, creating a binary between us and them, inside and outside, here and out there (p. 4). However, as I read through her mele and even sang it out loud, I saw an opportunity. In the last line of her stanza, at the very "navel of Wākea," holding tightly to the umbilicus linking the past, the present, and the future, I recognized a chance to complicate that division and to perhaps even blur that supposed boundary between Hawai'i and Kahiki. Furthermore, I recognized the space to expand the concept of aloha 'āina, stretching our understanding of responsibility, loyalty, and love out to beyond our shores, embracing *all* of our sources of sustenance: from the "piko o Wākea" positioned on the summit of our tallest mountain, connecting land and sky, all the way down to the depths of the sea, to the equator lying beyond the limits of our sight.

While exploring different topics and issues—examining everything from the importance of our Pacific genealogies, to the use of Hawaiian language resources, to the power of prophecies and predictions for the future, to the need to be reflexive in the creation of culture, and finally to the act of building a nation—each chapter of this thesis is connected by this one shifting concept: Kahiki. Moreover, they are joined by the idea that there is life to be found there. As an 'ōlelo no'eau, or a Hawaiian proverb, states, "Aia ke ola i Kahiki," "Life is in Kahiki" (Pūku'i, 1983, p. 9). This adage has not only become the title of this introduction, as the entry point into this thesis, but more than that, it has served as the foundation of my research. I have written each chapter with an unwavering belief that there is life—in the form of reconstructed knowledge, new interpretations, and growing understandings—to be found in Kahiki and that these sources of sustenance motivate our efforts to aloha 'āina.

Each chapter has therefore been produced knowing that although my ideas may one day be challenged, as they should be, there is value in examining Kahiki and the way that it has shifted through the generations. Studying it as a Pacific homeland, for example, all the way to its use as a means of separating us from the rest of the world, and particularly from colonial powers, as seen in Kekoahiwaikalani's mele, provides a means of understanding how people in each generation used one term to raise their voices and to speak to their experiences. Anthropologist and filmmaker Elizabeth Lindsey (2006) argues that this is the power of interpretation: each generation has the right to use the values inherited from their kūpuna (ancestors) to interpret their worlds, their connections, and their responsibilities in

ways that suit them contemporarily. In fact, a dream for Hawai‘i, she states, would be to “know that all knowledge, all reason, all theories, and all ideas are simply interpretations” (p. 17). The point to be made, however, is that *we* can do the interpreting, that we can challenge past representations and assumptions made about our people—including any “derogatory and belittling views of indigenous cultures [that] are traceable to the early years of interactions with Europeans”—and that we can posit new ideas (Hau‘ofa, 1994, p. 149). Further, it gives us the chance to examine our contemporary movements and to reengage with Kahiki in ways that will leave us empowered to *do* more and to *be* more as true aloha ‘āina.

This introduction will therefore present Kahiki as a place of life and sustenance, a place from which Kānaka Maoli can continue to draw strength and inspiration. Further, it will briefly introduce some of the many voices presented in this thesis and will preview each individual chapter while also providing a means of understanding some of the conscious choices that I have made in terms of content, methodology, and theory. It is my hope, however, that this introduction will do more than serve as a guide to the topics explored in the five chapters of this thesis. As a researcher and a writer, and more so as an aloha ‘āina, I would also like this introduction to highlight the idea that to conduct such research is to become an *active* contributor to our intellectual heritage. It is to give of ourselves, to not simply gather ideas and concepts and to present them in written form, but to use ourselves as the binding agent, bringing elements together by giving of our own life and breath. As educator Kū Kahakalau (2004) explains,

As a Native Hawaiian, I bring to every task my *mana*, my personal power, which includes all my strengths: physical, emotional, intellectual, and spiritual. I also bring with me my personal skills and experiences, my hopes, my dreams, my visions, and my ancestral endowments, including the wisdom that my ancestors share with me while I sleep, as well as the knowledge my many teachers have imparted to me. These cumulative experiences influence my behavior as a researcher, scholar, educator, administrator, native practitioner, composer, grassroots organizer, and social activist.
(p. 22)

Who we are informs our research; it shapes the concepts that we explore and the work that we produce. Therefore, as Pacific Studies scholar April Henderson shares with her colleague Teresia Teaiwa (2010) in conversation, I maintain that “I am so deeply implicated in the communities that I work in and among that I can’t even pretend objective distance... [and] I aspire to craft work that is resonant and useful” (p. 423). I have therefore created this thesis

with the hope that it will be another voice, answering the call of Nāwahī, speaking before a group of patriots, urging them to speak up without worry or fear and to resist sitting speechless. I have constructed this thesis to give expression to our stories, both in the past and the present, and to hopefully provide another way of looking at our lives and our histories so that we can be empowered as a people, as a nation, and as a region, finding strength in Kahiki to forward in our movements.

My firm belief that “Aia ke ola i Kahiki” is what led me to this research—conducted in two corners of the Pacific, Hawai‘i and Aotearoa—and is what has compelled me to write this thesis. It has inspired my thoughts, guided my actions, and focused my voice. In the process, I have found strength in those kūpuna who lived with passion and an unwavering dedication to their people. They courageously gave voice to their situations, using concepts from the past and reshaping them to fit their lives. It is because of their work that I know that my people shall never be silenced. I therefore write for my ancestors who raised their voices, bravely; for my family, who continues to speak, shout, chant, and sing in celebration of who we are; and for my descendants who will one day come to learn from our actions and take on the responsibility to aloha ‘āina, sharing in that same sense of belonging to a great lāhui. No one shall shake us, for ua ēwe, ua mole, ua pa‘a, we are rooted, we are grounded, and we are, and will continue to be, steadfast from the summit of the highest mountain to the depths of our great sea of islands⁴.

Kahiki

This thesis was written in Kahiki. It was birthed in a land far away from my home. While it was difficult to separate myself from the “piko o Wākea,” or from the mountain that I gazed upon almost every day of my life growing up on the Big Island of Hawai‘i, I realized that I needed to cross another “piko o Wākea,” or the equator in the ocean, in order to understand Kahiki on deeper levels. In other words, if I was going to study Kahiki as a place beyond the shores of my home, then I needed to *go* there, not just intellectually, but physically and spiritually. Making that journey, I would find, would bring me closer to “home,” closer to understanding my place, my role, my responsibilities, and truthfully, myself. What I came to realize in the process is that my life and my dedication to aloha ‘āina is intimately tied to the

⁴ “Our Sea of Islands,” an essay by Epeli Hau‘ofa (1994), encourages us to view Oceania as a “sea of islands” rather than a group of isolated islands in a far away sea. It promotes an optimistic view of our region of the world and is therefore a perspective that will be embraced in this thesis.

life of other islands and other islanders in this Pacific Ocean. Though it has a complicated history, Kahiki is that link. It is what connects us and what “feeds” us.

Encapsulated in this one term, Kahiki, are our ancestral memories of migration. When islanders traveled to different parts of the Pacific region, they maintained knowledge of their homelands. According to historian Greg Denning (2007), as people moved, “Each generation had passed on to the next generation the knowledge, experience, and wisdom with which they had imprinted their human spirit on their landscapes and seascapes. This was the Homeland to which a first people would look back after their next step” (p. 289). Although the names of these homelands differ throughout the Pacific, the concept is similar: islanders knew that their life in a particular group of islands was dependent on other places and peoples that no matter how distant, remained in their collective memories. After generations, however, as Māori Studies scholar Peter Addis (2012) argues, “although memories of real homelands and ancestors inevitably faded, their importance was not reduced, even if the details changed” (p. 17). When the specificity of these “homelands” was blurred, one name came to represent the genealogical connection that people shared with other places in the Pacific. What was Puluotu for some, therefore, became Hawaiki for others, and eventually became Kahiki for my ancestors in Hawai‘i⁵. Historian Kealani Cook (2011) explains that after migration and voyaging between the islands ceased “...the individual names of southern lands slowly drifted out of the popular consciousness, [and] conflated into Kahiki, the Hawaiian pronunciation of Tahiti” (p. 3). Thus, Kahiki became a general term for all lands in the region outside of Hawai‘i, and more importantly, became a way for Hawaiians to explain their existence to themselves.

Anthropologist Valerio Valeri (1985) describes Kahiki as “the invisible place...out of which come the gods, ancestors, regalia, edible plants, and ritual institutions—the life of the Hawaiians and the means to reproduce it” (p. 8). However, it is not so much that Kahiki is “invisible” as it is unlimited and unrestrained, much like the ocean in which it originated. There are many stories of gods and heroes, of chiefs, priests, and prophets, and of ancestors traveling between Hawai‘i and Kahiki. Thus, it is a place. However, it is not bound to a specific location. Rather, it is the general understanding that life in the form of people, ideas,

⁵ Denning (2007) argues that Puluotu is a homeland located somewhere west of the Fijian Islands, a location from which some of the first Polynesians in the west would have migrated (p. 289). Hawaiki, he further explains, comprises the lands of Samoa, Tonga, and Fiji, a general area in the Pacific where Polynesians in the east would have migrated from. Hawaiki is also a central concept in Aotearoa where the Māori have many oral traditions that recount their connection to this homeland. Like Kahiki, however, it does not have a specific location but is more of a concept of origin and connection.

and sources of sustenance—be it physical, spiritual, intellectual, or cultural—may have originated elsewhere in the Pacific before coming to our islands aboard double-hulled canoes (Beckwith, 1970, p. 6). Therefore, Kahiki could refer to Tahiti, as Cook (2011) hints above. However, it could also refer to Sāmoa, to Fiji, or even to Aotearoa, the land upon which I pieced this research together. As a Kanaka Maoli of Hawai‘i, I can therefore say that I wrote this thesis in Kahiki and that there is indeed life to be found there/here.

It was in Kahiki, for example, that I was able to truly connect to the idea of a homeland and to experience, first-hand, the way that my attachment to a particular place continues to feed my perspectives and to influence my voice, no matter how far away from it I may be. It gave me the chance to think about my kūpuna, the first ones to migrate from Kahiki to Hawai‘i, who brought with them memories of their home, memories that would become so deeply entrenched in the Hawaiian consciousness that we continue to honor them today. This connection to homeland became even more apparent when I began to write this introduction. During the early writing stages, a group of Kānaka Maoli and other supporters stood upon the “piko o Wākea,” the tallest mountain in our archipelago, a contested site that has for years been at the center of debates over astronomical advancement and cultural destruction (Osorio, 2010, p. 20). A year prior, the University of Hawai‘i—an institution that I am both an alumna and a past-employee of—had voted to sublease land on the summit of Mauna Kea for the construction of a Thirty Meter Telescope (TMT). When I began writing my introduction, contemporary aloha ‘āina stood upon that mountain, dedicated to protecting it and to putting an end to the further desecration of our land, our people, and our ways of life.

Living thousands of miles away, I felt useless. I was in Kahiki, in Aotearoa, yearning to plant my feet on the “piko o Wākea.” However, I had crossed another piko; I had crossed the equator and was now an ocean away from my homeland. In that moment of crossing, my Hawai‘i became my “Kahiki.” It became the place that I held in my heart, the place that life came from, the place that cultivated my attachments to ‘āina and that inspired my aloha. It became the place that I would always shout for, raising my voice courageously as my ancestors did, putting my words to print as those who wrote in the newspapers did, and standing steadfast, rooted, and grounded in the knowledge and guidance of those who came before me. It was my physical separation from Hawai‘i that taught me something about how my kūpuna may have dealt with leaving their homelands, how they may have perhaps articulated their aloha for more than just the lands they migrated to but for the lands from

which they came, and for the ocean that connected them. It reminded me, as noted kumu hula (hula teacher) and scholar, Pualani Kananele (2005) argues, that “Some natives have primal instincts so embedded that despite generations of exposure to the thinking mind and ‘civilization,’ ancestral behavior surfaces” (p. 25). Perhaps that sense of aloha ‘āina that I felt in my na‘au, that sense of commitment to protect a homeland, even while an ocean away, was something that my kūpuna once experienced. Perhaps it was an “ancestral behavior” surfacing, or resurfacing. Being in Kahiki allowed me that.

Coincidentally, that is when I found Kekoahiwaikalani’s mele during a search in the Hawaiian language newspapers, which then led me to Nāwahī’s speech. That is when I realized that no matter how far from home I am that I can still honor, protect, and cherish it. Distance, after all, does not separate us from kuleana. In fact, these experiences taught me that my responsibility as an aloha ‘āina is to more than just the land that nourished me in Hawai‘i, but to the entire region that nourished my people and my ancestors for generations. Although I knew why I had left Hawai‘i—to embark on a three-year journey to research and write this thesis—it was near the end of the writing process that the meaning of this work became a bit clearer. It was as if Nāwahī stood before me, urging and calling me to act, and as if Kekoahiwaikalani sang gently into my ear, reminding me to remain steadfast. I had been examining Kahiki as a means of better understanding myself and the roles and responsibilities that I have to not only my home but also to my ancestral homeland of Kahiki. Such study, therefore, led me to truly consider the role that we *all* have to aloha all that “feeds” us now and all that will continue to sustain us far into the future. That is our kuleana; it is to stand and raise our voices, protecting both Hawai‘i and Kahiki, wherever that may be in space and time.

Kanaka Maoli

Part of fulfilling this responsibility is to maintain a relationship with Kahiki, which can be done both through exploring and interpreting stories and values from our kūpuna, while also actively using them to shape our work. This thesis will therefore make use of the term Kanaka Maoli⁶, (to be used interchangeably with other terms like Hawaiian or Native Hawaiian) in an effort to make connections between Hawai‘i and Kahiki. As Blaisdell (2005) argues, “Kanaka Maoli is not only a deep, but a broadening, metaphor” (p. 11). In other words, while the term is often used to refer to the indigenous people of Hawai‘i—kanaka

⁶ Note that the plural form of Kanaka Maoli, which is Kānaka Maoli, is written with a macron above the first “a”. This will be used throughout the thesis when referring to Hawaiians as a group.

meaning “human being” and maoli meaning “real, true, or genuine”—it also has Pacific links⁷. Therefore, on one hand, I use the term to celebrate modern nationalistic movements that have reclaimed Kanaka Maoli and have used it to honor our connections to ‘āina and our right to self-identify. It also aligns with other contemporary Kanaka Maoli scholars who make use of the term as an expression of aloha ‘āina and a statement of support for nation rebuilding (Blaisdell, 2005, p. 10; Goodyear-Ka‘ōpua, 2014, p. 2; Tengan, 2008, p. xii). On the other hand, Kanaka Maoli is used as a means of remembering our connections to Kahiki, or to other places in the Pacific, where indigenous peoples use similar terms to self-identify. Blaisdell (2005) explains, as we have “relearned that Kanaka Maoli is the name by which our ancestors identified themselves” we have also relearned that this is the same as “*Tangata Māori* in Aotearoa, and *Ta‘ata Māohi* in Tahiti and Rapa Nui” (p. 11). Therefore, while my use of the term is by no means meant to imply that *all* indigenous people of the earth can call themselves Kānaka Maoli, as that term has specific political and cultural implications *in* Hawai‘i, it is to remind ourselves that there are others in the region who have a similar way of viewing themselves in relation to the ‘āina. Thus, to use the term is to support their own efforts and to hopefully strengthen a regional awareness of each other based on our connections to land and to one another.

Pacific Studies

While I perhaps could have stayed in Hawai‘i and found a home for my research there, studying Kahiki and Kanaka Maoli connections to the Pacific region drew me to the emerging field of Pacific Studies for the spaces that it would open for me. As Valeri (1985) explains, Kahiki can be interpreted as “all that is distant in time and space,” or all that is “abroad” (p. 8). In reading his words, I realized that to examine a rather enigmatic concept like Kahiki is to cross “temporal oceans,” to travel to distant times and spaces, to journey between the past, the present, and the future, paying close attention to the spaces between, or to the spaces that connect (Goodyear-Ka‘ōpua, 2013, p. 189).

Thus, it seemed fitting, especially as I began my research journey, to be in Pacific Studies, an interdisciplinary field that would allow me to work in those spaces. In fact, Graeme Whimp (2008), a past student of Pacific Studies at Victoria University of Wellington

⁷ “Maoli”, in Hawaiian, can also be translated as “Native, indigenous, aborigine” (Pūku‘i & Elbert, 1986, p. 240). As noted in the *Māori-Polynesian Comparative Dictionary*, this term and its interpretation is similar to Māori in Aotearoa, Maori in Tahiti, Maori in the Marquesas, and Maori in various parts of the Tuamotu Archipelago (Tregear, 2014, pp. 211-212).

(the same program where I am completing this thesis) argues that to be interdisciplinary is to work in the *vā*, or in those spaces between:

The location of a Pacific Studies... would have to be found uniquely in the *vā*, the space between, the separation that connects, the expression and real meaning of its “inter-ness”: the *vā* of the disciplines, the *vā* of the separate countries, lands, peoples, and cultures of the Pacific, the *vā* of those entities and the disciplines, the *vā* of the individual Native studies, and the *vā* of the Pacific and the rest of the world... A transformative Pacific studies would always operate in the “inter-,” in the *vā*... (p. 412)

Since part of my research is focused on blurring, or perhaps even complicating, the supposed boundary between Hawai‘i and Kahiki, I needed to position my work there, in the in-between, and needed to learn how to navigate those spaces.

This required me to travel to these spaces, both physically and intellectually. After beginning my doctoral journey in Aotearoa, I quickly realized that if I had stayed in Hawai‘i that I would have risked remaining in one particular mindset, guided perhaps by one particular discipline, which would have restricted my ability to navigate between, and more importantly, to see how separation can actually connect rather than divide. Terence Wesley-Smith (1995), a scholar in Pacific Islands Studies, argues that interdisciplinary work “sees connections between political, cultural, economic, social, linguistic, or spiritual phenomena, rather than emphasizing their separateness” (p. 128). Thus, although the interdisciplinarity of Pacific Studies makes it difficult to define or contain—in fact, Teaiwa (2010a) states that “in one sense almost anything can qualify as Pacific Studies so long as it is located in the Pacific or is about Pacific people”—it is also what makes it potentially transformative (p. 112).

Pacific Studies, as Teaiwa (2010a) further notes, “reflects the tensions and contradictions as well as the wealth and breadth of the geographic area of our studies” (p. 112). Thus, it does not focus on one location in isolation; it is not nationalistic or ethnocentric, but seeks connections (p. 115). It looks toward a common identity—not necessarily to promote cultural homogeneity, which as Oceanian scholar Epeli Hau‘ofa (1998) reminds us is “neither possible nor desirable”—but does so to encourage cooperation and a shared kuleana to the region, which embraces a broadening sense of aloha ‘āina: “A common identity... would help us to act together for the advancement of our collective interests” (p. 393). This is what distinguishes it from Native Studies, like Māori Studies or even Hawaiian Studies, the latter being a field that I both studied and worked in. These fields

tend to focus on one place, which is both important and incredibly influential in terms of nationalistic efforts. Pacific Studies, however, seeks to position its work, even while perhaps focusing on a particular location, within larger discussions from the region, engaging in conversations that can support collective movements. Thus, as the topic of this research and the questions that I wanted to explore required that I exist in the space between, I sought to produce a thesis that will be useful to both Pacific *and* Native studies programs, embracing the idea of “Kanakanaka Maoli” in the sense that we are all, no matter which island group we come from, somehow truly grounded to a piece of the region. It is that connection to a particular homeland, whether it is to where we were raised or to where our ancestors came from, that motivates this work. It grounds it, giving it roots, while also allowing it to travel, “far into the past ahead, leading on to other memories, other realities, other homelands” (Hau‘ofa, 2008, p. 77).

My physical travel to “Kahiki” and the way that my home then became the “Kahiki” that continues to feed and sustain my work in a new land, located my research in the *vā*, in the space between. Moreover, it pushed me to work with those supposedly fixed points, or those places between which the *vā* exists, as not being fixed at all, but as being fluid and perhaps even negotiable. In other words, this thesis posits that Kahiki, and even Hawai‘i to a certain extent, are shifting concepts: changing and evolving with the people. What it means to be attached to either place depends on context. Therefore, if “a strong sense of cultural identity” from a Hawaiian perspective, “links people to their homeland,” then our identities themselves are always in flux (Kikiloi, 2010, p. 75). In fact, as professor of English Houston Wood (2003) explains, “Indigenous identities in the region have traditionally embraced much more fluidity than the imported Euro-American concepts of identity allow” (p. 343). Thus, what Pacific Studies afforded me was a certain degree of freedom to embark on a journey of exploration—an exploration of self, home, nationhood, and regionalism—while expanding prior assumptions and articulations and actively creating new ideas and interpretations of belonging, responsibility, and even aloha ‘āina.

Further, as Wesley-Smith (1995) explains, Pacific Studies gave me the chance to find my area of interest—or to settle on the topic of study that most stirred my *na‘au*—and then to find the methods, methodologies, and theories that would suit that research: “Interdisciplinary work is distinguished first, and most obviously, by defining its objects of inquiry without reference to established disciplinary boundaries” (p. 128). Thus, although I did not initially plan to conduct oral history interviews, for example, my research led me

there, and inspired me to explore culturally responsible ethnographic practices and the positioning of the researcher *in* the research. It pushed me to challenge myself to not view literary analysis, for example, as being somehow separate from the collection of personal stories, but to see how each influenced the next, and more so, how voices from the past and the present—as presented in songs, speeches, texts, translations, and interviews—can speak to one another. It forced me to *listen* to those conversations in order to get a *feel* for where my research needed to go, and to then follow that inspiration. Though this may make it hard to place my thesis in terms of disciplinary boundaries and expectations, that is the point. As literary theorist and philosopher Ronald Barthes argues, “Interdisciplinarity consists in creating a new object that belongs to no one” (qtd. in Wesley-Smith, 1995, p. 123).

Although the content of this thesis speaks primarily to my home in Hawai‘i, the focus on Kahiki makes it somewhat accessible to any person and place beyond our shores. Though Kahiki may have initially been a Pacific homeland, nineteenth century articulations stretched its meaning to include *all* lands and *all* peoples outside of Hawai‘i. Thus, the interdisciplinary nature of my work should open it up to be received by anyone who is able to find a piece of it that speaks to them. It should address a range of issues and concerns in the region and should work to empower through the cultivation of connections and the recognition of a shared responsibility to our sea of islands. However, even that should not restrict it to the Pacific alone. As Hau‘ofa (1998) reminds us, the ocean is not only what connects us as a region but is also what connects us as humans on earth:

As the sea is an open and ever-flowing reality, so should our oceanic identity transcend all forms of insularity, to become one that is openly searching, inventive, and welcoming. In a metaphorical sense the ocean that has been our waterway to each other should also be our route to the rest of the world. (p. 406)

Thus, although my work focuses on the region, it is my hope that by examining issues and inquiries that are relevant to much larger audiences that the examples found in my home and in my ancestral homeland will also be applicable to the wider “Kahiki,” even beyond Pacific waters.

Therefore, incorporated into my thesis are voices from around the world, both from within and outside of the region. There are Native American and other indigenous scholars whose histories and articulations of colonialism have helped me to translate and interpret the experiences of my own people. There are Māori scholars whose works with oral traditions and with Māori language newspapers have both inspired and sustained my own research.

There are also African scholars, like Ngũgĩ wa Thiong’o from Kenya, and Afro-diasporic theorists like Frantz Fanon, whose works have become staples in post-colonial discourse. Further, there are many scholars who have worked *in* and *with* indigenous communities, even while perhaps not being *of* them, and whose ideas have also informed my own. Research about Kahiki provides space for such inclusion and for blurring the sometimes unhelpful dichotomies between insider and outside, or native and non-native, acknowledging works for their value and, as Thiong’o (1995) argues, “their relevance to our situation, and their contribution towards understanding ourselves” (p. 439). While some of the sources that I include may be a bit controversial—particularly with such figures as Fanon—I hope that my positioning of their works will contribute to a larger conversation. In this thesis, their words are given the space to dialogue with Kanaka Maoli intellectuals from the past and the present, writing in both Hawaiian and English; with Pacific writers, scholars, and creators; with anthropologists, historians, philosophers, and theorists; with activists, cultural practitioners, dancers, composers, and builders; with revolutionaries. The resulting dialogue, I believe, occurs at a space between: between disciplines, cultures, regions, islands, people, and even times.

Dialogues

Hawaiian Language Newspapers

The many dynamic “conversations” contained in this thesis represent the variety of sources that I drew from. Initially, I was content to keep my research in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, examining articulations of Kahiki during times of great political, cultural, economic, and social change, and analyzing them within the larger context of emerging nationalisms shaped by print cultures (Paterson, 2010, p. 105). Thus, I turned to a series of Hawaiian language newspapers produced between the years 1834 and 1948, accessing them primarily in digitized form⁸, and aimed to use textual analysis as my primary method. Choosing these sources as the kahua, or as the foundation of my research, was a conscious choice, one made to prioritize and honor the work of Hawaiian intellectuals.

⁸ Prior to being digitized, Hawaiian language newspapers were only available on microfilm or in various archives in Hawai‘i. Now, thanks to initiatives started in the late 1990s, many of these historical papers can be accessed online. My research utilized Ho‘olaupa‘i, the Hawaiian Nūpepa Collection available on Ulukau, the Hawaiian Electronic Library (www.ulukau.org) and the Office of Hawaiian Affairs’s Papakilo Database (www.papakilodatabase.com).

As Silva (2009) explains, just a few years after the Queen was illegally overthrown—when Nāwahī made his speech before a crowd of patriots, and when Kekoahiwaikalani published her mele—the Hawaiian language was banned as a medium of instruction in 1896:

Among the devastating effects were that several generations of Kānaka Maoli starting in the early twentieth century, could not understand, speak, read, or write in the language of their parents and grandparents. To this day, most Hawaiian children grow up with no knowledge that they come from a long line of intellectuals. (pp. 43-44)

As Hau‘ofa (2008) argues, the banning of our language—similar to the suppression of te reo Māori in Aotearoa—was “deliberately engineered to destroy memories and cultures and thereby absorb the vanquished more smoothly into the dominant cultures” (p. 70). My choice to use Hawaiian language resources, therefore, was made in order to provide a way of looking back at the past as a means of reinterpreting and reconstructing it for the present. It was a choice made in order to honor the intellectual genealogy that we come from as Kānaka Maoli, to draw on the memories recorded in the words of influential Hawaiian scholars, and to give their works contemporary relevance and meaning.

With such work, however, come issues of interpretation and translation. As Hawaiian language scholars Liana Wong (1999), Puakea Nogelmeier (2010), and Bryan Kamaoli Kuwada (2009) have each explored, there are historical problems and contemporary limitations in translation. Some problems result from the assumption that there can be a one-to-one correspondence between Hawaiian and English, or that concepts presented in Hawaiian can be translated literally (L. Wong, 1999, p. 95). In fact, the very belief that a “literal” translation is even possible promotes the idea that there can be a “good” translation “that does not interpret, but gives only ‘actual’ meanings of the words” (Kuwada, 2009, p. 58). This denies the fact that the Hawaiian language is full of homophones, or words with many different meanings. Thus, in the act of translation, “translators” are actually interpreting, giving one possible meaning of a word that may have more than one meaning, any (or all) of which could make sense in a single context. In Hawaiian expressions, there was mana, or power, that “came from the meaning of a Hawaiian word and from variant definitions of the same word” (Young, 1998, p. 12). It was considered a skill, therefore, to be able to use a single word to evoke multiple meanings at the same time. English translations, including my own presented in this thesis, cannot capture this.

Research conducted in the past couple of decades has shown that translations of a handful of key Hawaiian texts, now considered canonical, are highly problematic, thus

leading some contemporary scholars to not only be leery of translation but wholly opposed to it. A prime example is the work of noted nineteenth century scholar Samuel Mānaiakalani Kamakau. Both Kuwada (2009) and Nogelmeier (2010) point to the fact that his narratives were decontextualized, edited, and reassembled in ways that drastically altered the original texts. Unfortunately, with the decline of Hawaiian language came the need to rely on these English translations, as faulty as they may have been, which essentially led to problems in research, and furthermore, in understanding Hawai‘i’s past. Even with knowledge of these historical problems of translation, however, there are contemporary limitations for even the most proficient of Hawaiian language speakers today. As L. Wong (1999) argues:

...the fact that there has been a general abandonment of the language by the community in the period between the turn of the century and the advent of the recent revival efforts suggests that there are few people left, if any, who can access that older knowledge with any sort of assurance of accuracy. (p. 103)

Furthermore, for many of us researching and using Hawaiian language resources today, we cannot avoid the fact that “our frames of reference and our worldviews have diverged greatly from those shared by the original users of the salvaged language” (p. 103).

Therefore, any translations that I present in this thesis are intended to stand as mere interpretations of texts produced in previous generations. I present them cognizant of the issues of translation but maintain that they are still essential in order to give those who do not speak Hawaiian an idea (rather than a literal account) of what is being discussed. To support this careful consideration of the original text, I have chosen not to include modern orthography in my presentation of old texts that do not use it. In other words, kahakō (macrons) and ‘okina (glottal stops) are only included if the text that I have drawn from made use of them. The simple inclusion of one of these markings, where it does not already exist, can privilege one definition over another. Thus, while I do present my own interpretations, those who are able to read and understand Hawaiian will be able to access the text as presented in its original form⁹, giving them the opportunity to interpret it themselves.

Attempting to interpret these texts—as a contemporary Kanaka Maoli, aware of my position as a second language learner who came to Hawaiian at the university level—has been both a challenge and a privilege. As I read through the newspapers, looking at everything from stories and commentaries, to chants and prayers, and even to prophecies, I

⁹ I have only made minor edits in terms of spelling, namely splitting certain words into two, as they are commonly spelt today, rather than leaving them as one as often done in the newspapers. This editorial decision does not change the meaning of the words. Rather, it simply helps to make the selected text easier to read.

found a means of both honoring the work of the scholars who came before me while also using their words to better understand my life, my people, and our place. As I read, for example, I realized that Kahiki was being used rhetorically to push individual agendas. Some, like Kekoahiwaikalani (1893) used it as a means of resisting foreign encroachment by separating herself and her people from the rest of the world. Others, however, used it as a means of justifying American imperialism. These later articles seemed to claim that if “Aia ke ola i Kahiki,” that perhaps America was that “Kahiki” bringing life in the form of new ideas, religious beliefs, attitudes, and values. Examining their interpretations inspired me to offer my own.

In the first three chapters of this thesis I track the complex usage of Kahiki, exploring it first as part of our Hawaiian and Pacific genealogies, second, as a means of making nationalistic statements, and third, as a way of supporting the colonialist agenda.

Those writing in the newspapers created their own realities, drawing from the past to make sense of their present. Hau‘ofa (2008) argues that “all social realities are human creations—and that if we fail to construct our own realities other people will do it for us” (p. 60). Unfortunately, with the banning of the Hawaiian language and the eventual rise of the English language to a place of prominence and prestige, those social and cultural constructions from the past were ignored and later forgotten, and in their place, representations by outsiders become dominant. As Nogelmeier (2010) explains, this took place elsewhere in the Pacific as well, particularly in Polynesia, as English or even French-language sources were “given credence over those available in Hawaiian, Samoan, Māori, or the multiple native languages in French Polynesia” (p. 17). Thus, this research—focused on Kahiki and its use as a central concept for understanding our place, our roles, and our experiences—endeavors to look at those social realities, to see how people of the past understood their world, and then to use that knowledge to inform our own.

Oral Traditions

A key feature of writing in the Hawaiian language newspapers, and something that I have both emphasized and utilized as a method in my own writing, is the incorporation of oral traditions. In her examination of our hulu kupuna, or our intellectual ancestors, Silva (2009) notes that some of the mid-nineteenth century writers (particularly those contributing to the first Hawaiian-controlled newspaper, *Ka Hoku o ka Pakipika*) stressed the importance of these sources as they were “the first to take the oral traditions and create literature from

them” (p. 46). They used chants, prayers, proverbs, riddles, prophecies, and stories to inform and guide their own narratives. It should be noted, however, as Teaiwa (2010b) reminds us, that while oral traditions did influence the creation of written texts, Pacific written literature did not have “ a single and oral genealogical origin” (p. 731). Thus, although I rely heavily on oral traditions (as presented in written texts), I do so aware of the many other literacies of our kūpuna—including the ways they “read” the land, sea and sky, or the way they carved stories into wood and stone—and how these literacies may have also informed the literature that was produced.

Wanting to honor the work of our hulu kupuna and their oral traditions, however, I do place emphasis on them by not only using them as sources of information, but by truly viewing them as a foundation for my research. Each chapter in this thesis is named for a particular line taken from a mele (song or chant); a wānana (prophecy); a pule (prayer); or an ‘ōlelo no‘eau (proverb). Each chapter is also preceded by lines taken directly from the newspapers and these line are then used to somehow guide the direction of the chapter itself, bringing seemingly disconnected sources, ideas, and conversations together into one space. This same method was applied to this introduction. The title comes from an ‘ōlelo no‘eau and the lines presented before I begin my own narrative come from a newspaper article that I felt would best guide my writing in this portion of my thesis, a piece that places emphasis on raising our voices and refusing to sit in silence. This introduction, therefore, is led by the idea that we as Kānaka Maoli and as Pacific Islanders must use our abilities to speak, write, and sing in order to give life to our experiences, creating, as Hau‘ofa (2008) reminds us, our own social realities before anyone else has the chance to do it for us.

Furthermore, using oral traditions and giving them a place of prominence in each chapter denies any notion that they are unreliable sources of information, somehow inferior to written texts. As a life-long student of hula, someone who was raised learning chants and dances that not only pre-date my birth, but pre-date the introduction of literacy in Hawai‘i, I have always known the value of oral traditions. They are not merely myths or grandiose stories; they teach us about the values and perspectives of our people. They are our ancestral memories. As Hau‘ofa (2008) argues, Pacific histories once tended to “marginalise almost all of our pasts by considering them not history, merely prehistory, to be dealt with by folklorists and a dwindling number of archeologists and linguists” (p. 63). However, “the much maligned oral narratives are as reliable or unreliable, biased or unbiased, as are written documents for sourcing history. We do know that all sources are contestable; otherwise

history is complete and closed, which is nonsense” (p. 63). Thus, the Hawaiian language newspapers provided me with the space to not only honor my intellectual ancestors who wrote their histories down, but to also honor the oral traditions—some of them coming from and being inspired by Kahiki—that were used to build an understanding of the world around them.

Oral History Interviews

Although I was initially content to keep my research in the past, or to look at, for example, articulations of Kahiki as they were presented in oral traditions and in nineteenth and early twentieth century discourse, I later realized a need to bring my thesis into the present. About six months into my research journey, I made a trip back to my beloved Hawai‘i, the land that had since become my “Kahiki”: the place from which I drew life. Although I had not anticipated finding inspiration for a pivotal part of my thesis there, it was my trip back home that changed my thinking and that motivated me to not only honor stories from the past, but to honor our stories now.

While in Hawai‘i, I found myself at a meeting of canoe builders. Twenty years prior, these men built Mauloa, a twenty-six foot outrigger wa‘a (canoe) entirely out of natural materials. Their mission then was to revive the art of canoe building, including all of the ceremonies and protocols that go with it. As I sat with them, listening to their spoken memories, their canoe sitting just beside us needing repairs and maintenance, I watched some of them weep and heard the urgency in their voices: this story needed to be recorded; it needed to be told, heard, and used. I had been around this canoe since I was a little girl, chanting to it, dancing for it, celebrating it in song and story. Therefore, as I left that meeting, one that I had not even planned to be at, I knew that I had found what my thesis was missing: contemporary voices, refusing to sit speechless, telling their stories of strength, revitalization, and hope.

Thus, just short of a year later, I returned home again to speak with these men—as many as were willing to talk to me—and to conduct oral history interviews with each one individually¹⁰. I saw a space and a need for such work, and therefore found ways that their

¹⁰ I spoke to 10 of the canoe builders. Unfortunately, a few men had already passed away by the time I conducted these interviews while the rest were either unreachable or declined to participate. I also interviewed three others, all women, who could provide “outside” perspectives on the men’s canoe-building project or who could speak more generally about Kahiki. Additionally, I had many informal conversations with people who worked with the canoe indirectly and also collaborated with an artist, Ed Kayton (who has been a part of the the canoe family for years) in creating a small, children’s book about Mauloa.

stories could come into conversation with stories from the distant past, both those recorded in print and those maintained in oral traditions. Interviewing them gave me the chance to create a record that could then be shared, and furthermore, become a source of knowledge for the future. As Hau‘ofa (2008) reminds us, for many Pacific Islanders,

Most of our remote and so much of our recent pasts are not documented and therefore lie outside of the purview of mainline history... We have to bequeath to future generations more memories of our recent past and our present than we ourselves remember of our remote pasts. We must remember and reconstruct as much of our pasts as we can to present to the future. (p. 69)

While Hawai‘i did have a rich literary tradition in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in which thousands of pages of text were produced in the Hawaiian language, we can only make assumptions as to the great amount of information that was not written down, not somehow maintained, and therefore lost. Thus, it is our responsibility to give to the future more than what is available now, to follow in the footsteps of those who *did* record our stories, and to add to them. It is our duty, furthermore, to find those stories that speak of connection—like the old oral traditions and narratives about Kahiki did—for they speak of our place and our responsibilities in the wider world, then and now.

The story of these canoe builders was one such story of connection. I was drawn to it for the deeply symbolic ways that it connected Hawai‘i to the rest of our sea of islands, and further, to the rest of the world. When islanders migrated across the Pacific, they traveled upon large, double-hulled sailing canoes, capable of not only carrying people, but also the plants, tools, and other items deemed necessary for starting a new life in a new land. Thus, a single-hulled canoe like *Mauloa* would never make the physical journey between Hawai‘i and Kahiki. Instead, it would travel in other meaningful ways. In the last two chapters of this thesis I tell the story of *Mauloa* through the words of those who built her and honor the sources of inspiration, knowledge, and practical skills that came from Kahiki. Before the construction of this *wa‘a* the practice of canoe building had all but ended in Hawai‘i. Thus, new life, in the form of a teacher from Kahiki, made the canoe’s construction possible. *Mau Piailug*, a Satawalese navigator who played a pivotal role in the resurgence of long-distance sailing and wayfinding in Polynesia in previous years, came to Hawai‘i in the early 1990s to teach these men how to take a step back, or how to build a canoe from the ‘āina, before traveling on the sea.

As I listened to their stories, often crying and laughing with them, I was struck by the power of their memories. Most of my previous work had dealt with analyzing written texts. Therefore, I found it empowering, and honestly a bit daunting, to sit before people and to not only gather their stories, but to have an *active* role in what they would share and further, in what we would create together. As historian Valerie Raleigh Yow (1994) explains, the term “oral history” is often used interchangeably with other terms like life history, life story, and personal narrative. What each term implies is that “there is someone else involved [the researcher] who inspires the narrator to begin the act of remembering, jogs memory, and records and presents the narrator’s words” (p. 4). Therefore, what oral history as a method allowed me to do was give the canoe builders the space in which to retell their stories in a new time. As educationist Kim Etherington (2009) argues, new knowledge can be created in this space because “the stories people tell about their lived experiences, and the meanings they give to those experiences over time...might change and develop as their stories unfold” and further, “This kind of knowledge construction invites us to pay attention to the details of local stories and the contexts in which they are embedded” (p. 225).

Therefore, since Mauloa was built just over twenty years ago, these oral history interviews gave the canoe builders the opportunity to not only share their stories but to also reflect on them. In other words, while I was interested in recording their experiences and recollections of the past, I was also quite interested in how they felt about that time and how they came to interpret their experiences years later, giving their memories new meaning in contemporary contexts. Their stories, therefore, gave me the space to work with multiple layers of meaning and understanding about their lived experiences, paying attention to how time and shifting contexts can influence how those experiences are read. Just as writings from the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries reveal what was important to people at those points in time, the oral histories interviews exposed new issues and concerns teaching me about what was important twenty years ago, what motivated the building of this wa‘a, and also the agendas of contemporary Hawaiians who can continue to use this canoe as a vehicle of empowerment, connection, and aloha ‘āina. Thus, in the last chapter, I not only record the stories of these canoe builders but also actively use them as a means of making statements about our people, our region, and our duties to this sea of islands and to the larger world, now and into the future.

It should be noted that while a majority of the interviews were conducted in English—indicative of the generation that many of the canoe builders come from, before

Hawaiian language revitalization efforts really began—their use of English is heavily influenced by other languages. Thus, I have made efforts to honor their voices by presenting transcriptions of their stories as closely as possible to how they were relayed. Many of the men used Hawai‘i Creole English, more commonly known as Pidgin, a language that rose out of Hawai‘i’s plantation era when laborers from various parts of the world—including Kānaka Maoli—needed a way to communicate. Today, “Pidgin has become a marker of ‘local’ (typically non-white, working class) identity for people who were raised in Hawai‘i” (Tengan, 2008, p. xi). Thus, although transcriptions of their stories may read a bit awkwardly to those who are not accustomed to Pidgin, I believe that presenting them as they were relayed honors their contemporary voices and the history of the languages they use.

Scholarship from “Kahiki”

As I began analyzing these varied sources—from oral traditions, to Hawaiian language texts, to oral history interviews—I found a range of voices. As if all answering the call of Nāwahī, they each had something to say, a message that would be shared with me, fearlessly. Therefore, I found life as I journeyed into another type of Kahiki, to places distant in space and time. In order to make sense of these many voices, however, and to bring them into conversation at the vā, I began to pull on a variety of sources produced by scholars from a wider Kahiki comprising the rest of the world. I began with Māori and Pacific sources, looking at how the concept of a homeland had been studied, understood, and used to push agendas in other parts of the region. I then stretched myself to look at the works of other indigenous scholars to both help me make sense of what I was studying, and further, to help make this work more applicable to people both in the Pacific and beyond.

Key authors from the region, whose works not only informed my introduction but my entire thesis, were scholars like Albert Wendt and Epeli Hau‘ofa. Wendt’s 1976 essay, “Towards a New Oceania,” reconfirmed that I could pull from a variety of sources to create something new for the region, and in effect, actively create “a new Oceania.” His words reminded me that there was purpose in searching for Kahiki, for that homeland, or that place “where our hearts will find meaning” (p.73). He empowered me to create new ideas, to not “over-glorify the past” but to use it as a means of inspiring the present (p. 76). The present, he argues, “is all that we have and we should live it out as creatively as possible” (p. 76). Thus, his work provided a foundation for my own. As I wrote, I kept his words close, knowing that whatever I created—even if and when it will be challenged—will give

expression to our experiences *now*, as Kānaka Maoli and as Pacific Islanders, seeking ways to empower, influence, create, and thrive.

Hau‘ofa’s 1993 essay “Our Sea of Islands,” followed by his 1998 work, “The Ocean In Us,” and later, his 2008 essay, “Pasts to Remember,” provided a foundation for connecting my thesis to the larger region. My view of the Pacific changed when I first read “Our Sea of Islands” as a young undergraduate student seeking to find connections with other islands and other islanders. I had never truly witnessed, until then, the great power and influence of perspective. He advocated that we as Pacific Islanders cease seeing ourselves through the representations of outsiders as being too small, too isolated, too poor, and therefore too immobilized to do anything to better our situation. “Smallness,” he argues, “is a state of mind”:

There is a world of difference between viewing the Pacific as ‘islands in a far sea’ and as ‘a sea of islands.’ The first emphasizes dry surfaces in a vast ocean far from the centers of power. Focusing in this way stresses the smallness and remoteness of the islands. The second is a more holistic perspective in which things are seen in the totality of their relationships. (p. 153)

Using his words as motivation, I set out to seek those relationships, to truly work at the “inter-” and to create at the space between. Kahiki was my avenue. It was my means of seeing our world as more than just the islands that we stood upon, but as the entire ocean that featured in our stories, songs, written texts, and memories.

Drawing on Hau‘ofa’s ideas about a regional identity, however, meant that I first needed to better understand a national identity. This was so that I could begin to work at the vā, or at the space between these concepts, and not see regionalism as a replacement for nationalism but rather as “something additional to other identities that we already have, or will develop in the future, something that should serve to enrich our other selves” (Hau‘ofa, 1998, p. 393). Benedict Anderson’s book, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, provided a framework for examining the development of a national consciousness, its connection to print culture, and more specifically in the case of my own research, the production of newspapers. Thus, it opened a space in which I could consider my own work as a means of supporting nationalistic agendas. While helpful, however, his work is also a bit problematic. In his reflections on Anderson’s book, anthropologist Peter Wogan (2001) argues that *Imagined Communities* is “premised on a fundamental opposition between print and orality... print is associated with cognition,

universalism, monolingualism, and permanent memory, whereas orality is paired up with its opposites: emotion, particularism, multilingualism, and transience” (p. 404). These assumptions about orality and literacy are, according to critics, quite Eurocentric in that they imply that print enables groups of people to conceptualize the nation, whereas orality only inspires emotional attachment to it (p. 405-406).

Moreover, Wogan’s (2001) critique also looks at the issue of language. Anderson (2006) argues that nations need a common language and that print culture can be instrumental in the creation of “monoglot mass reading publics” (p. 42). Multilingual orality is therefore “perceived...as an inherent threat to the nation, though still necessary at the emotional level to generate attachments to the nation” (Wogan, 2001, p. 406). While the Hawaiian language newspapers were produced in one language, allowing for a mass of people to all read and understand the same information being disseminated, this eventually changed. With the banning of the Hawaiian language in 1896 the number of competent Hawaiian language speakers slowly declined and nearly disappeared until revitalization efforts began in the 1970s. Thus, Anderson’s argument for monolingualism does not fit either a contemporary Hawaiian context or contemporary Hawaiian nationalism. Some Kānaka Maoli today can and do speak, read, and write Hawaiian. Therefore, even though many Hawaiians do not understand the language of their ancestors, expressions of nationhood are disseminated in both Hawaiian and English, or sometimes even in a mix of both. Thus, while I do use his work, I am aware of the Eurocentric bias of some of his premises as well some of the critiques of his structuring of nationalism and how his ideas are not always applicable to Hawai‘i.

In his analysis of a Māori collective identity, Lachy Paterson (2010), who has focused much of his research on mid nineteenth century and early twentieth century Māori language *niupepa* (newspapers), explains that some of Anderson’s arguments regarding print culture and the development of nationalism do not apply to Māori society at the time. Anderson’s claim that the development of nations involved being freed from monarchies, for example, does not apply to either the Māori or the Hawaiian context. Additionally, as was the case in Hawai‘i, not all newspapers were produced to promote a Māori collective consciousness centered on bettering the lives of Māori. In fact, some newspapers were produced to “change Māori thought and behavior” and were therefore used as agents of civilization (p. 108). Paterson nevertheless sees Anderson’s work as helpful in providing a “theoretical framework” or a “starting point” for understanding the collective consciousness that

eventually developed in the newspapers (p. 120). My use of Anderson's work somewhat reflects Paterson's approach: I am aware of some of the criticisms of *Imagined Communities*, and while I would argue that Hawaiian society in the nineteenth century does not completely reflect Anderson's portrayal of developing nations, his work is useful in understanding the role of print culture in widening the reading audience and therefore allowing writers to "speak" to a larger community.

In addition to Anderson, other key voices in this thesis came from various Native American tribes and even from distant lands in Africa. Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o and Frantz Fanon, for example, provided me with a theoretical foundation for understanding and working through some of the issues and concerns raised in the stories I read and the memories I collected. As I began sorting through my sources, trying to truly listen to the many conversations emerging between them, I found these scholars from Kahiki useful in providing me with the language to support what I was thinking, feeling, and trying to accomplish in my work. As educator Linda Tuhiwai Smith (1999) argues, for indigenous researchers "Critiques by feminist scholars, by critical theorists, by black and African American scholars have provided ways of talking about knowledge and its social constructions, about methodologies and the politics of research" (pp. 5-6). So it is with the African, Native American, and even the non-Indigenous scholars that I draw upon in my thesis. Their work was utilized as a means of linking distant voices, experiences, and conversations and bringing them into one space, somewhere in the vā, where I could use them to create new knowledge.

Kenyan writer and scholar Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o (1993), for example, gave me the space to reconsider the center, to question its position, and to even move it. In his book *Moving the Centre: The Struggle for Cultural Freedom*, he speaks to issues such as language and literature, colonialism and racism, and even physical, economic, political, cultural, and psychological survival. Though his work is centered on experiences in Africa, as it should be, readers around the world are given the opportunity to connect to it, and more importantly, to draw on whatever information presented helps us to understand our own situations. His observations on the "Imperialism of Language," for example, provided a means through which I could begin to understand the experiences of my own people. The suppression of our indigenous languages by colonial powers, he notes, was a deliberate attempt to suppress the "culture and history carried by these languages" (p. 31). Thus, to prioritize, or to recenter sources produced in the language of my ancestors was to not only revive it but to also

provide a space in which we can reengage with pieces of our culture and history that have been ignored. This, he argues, is pivotal to our survival, which I have learned through his writing, is important on multiple levels.

Language, literature, and even work like that presented here in this thesis may not contribute to our physical survival. As Smith (1999) explains in terms of this type of work, Taking apart the story, revealing underlying texts, and giving voice to things that are often known intuitively does not help people to improve their current conditions. It provides words, perhaps, and insight that explains certain experiences—but it does not prevent someone from dying. (p. 3)

Thiong'o's (1993) words helped me to understand, however, that while my research may not help Kānaka Maoli, Pacific Islanders, or even people in the wider Kahiki to feed themselves, to pay their bills, or to save their families, it can contribute to our survival on other levels. It can, for example, work on cultural and psychological levels. Recentering our stories, histories, concerns, and contemporary experiences restores dignity to a people who, for generations, have suffered the effects of cultural and historical degradation. This kind of work, therefore, “should provide hope and confidence for all peoples that pursuit of dignity and cultural survival is not only possible, but perhaps the only really meaningful human endeavor” (Osorio, 2010, p. 17).

One book that Thiong'o himself saw as instrumental in “moving the center” is Frantz Fanon's *The Wretched of the Earth*, and more specifically, his chapter entitled “The Pitfalls of National Consciousness” (Lazarus, 2011, p. 179). In fact he states that in the 1960s, “when many countries particularly in Asia and Africa were demanding and asserting their right to define themselves and their relationship to the universe from their own centres” Fanon “became the prophet of the struggle to move the centre” (Thiong'o, 1993, p. 2). Though a controversial figure, what is perhaps uncontroversial is that Fanon's work “served as a central node of focus, discussion, and dispute in the institutionalisation and consolidation of postcolonial studies during the 1980s and 1990s” (Lazarus, 2011, p. 161). His appeal to past and contemporary scholars, however, is based on the particular ways in which he is read, which is also what makes him simultaneously fascinating for some and problematic for others. As the editors of *Fanon: A Critical Reader* state, “Fanon has been attacked under a number of fashionable political designations such as misogynous, homophobic, anti-black, anti-Caribbean, anti-Arab, and petit bourgeois” (Gordon, Sharpley-Whiting, & White, 1996, p. 6). Some of the problems found in his work can be attributed to the fact that for many of

us, including myself, our only access to his words is through English translations, which some have argued, are “seriously flawed” and have therefore led to misreadings (Gordon et al., 1996, p. 6). They do not, however, take away from the fact that he was a revolutionary thinker whose ideas have influenced many around the world.

His influence on scholarship, as mentioned previously, is largely determined by how he is read. As professor of English and Comparative Literary Studies, Neil Lazarus (2011) explains, the “postcolonial” Fanon that many of us regard is a social construction, something that certain scholars engaging with his work created. In the emerging field of postcolonial studies, previous readings of Fanon that focused on his liberationist and revolutionist movements as well as third-worldism were “unsuitable to this emerging field’s ideological project” and therefore, “it was necessary to construct a new one: a ‘postcolonial’ Fanon, a Fanon not for or of his own time, but rather for and of ‘ours’” (Lazarus, 2011, p. 165). This new “Fanon” could suit emerging scholarly agendas as postcolonial readings of his work could then focus on the text, for example, without considering the topic of violence, something that liberationist readings emphasized: “The Third Worldist Fanon was an apocalyptic creature; the post-colonial Fanon worries about identity politics...but he is no longer angry” (qtd. in Lazarus, 2011, p. 165). It was this later Fanon that I initially came to know.

My own introduction to his work was through a postcolonial lens. Thus, while I do use his text to address issues of identity, nationalism, and cultural renaissance, I do so cognizant of the problems of translation attendant on the texts of his that I use, as well as the many debates surrounding his work and how it is read. I read his words aware that there may be a disconnect between the actual Fanon and the postcolonial construction of Fanon that I first came to know as an undergraduate. Thus, I position my own work within one of the later stages of Fanon studies, as outlined by the editors of *Fanon: A Critical Reader*. They argue that there are four stages. The first stage was comprised of various early reactions to, and applications of, his work; the second was characterized by a biographical emphasis; the third focused on the political significance of his writings; and the fourth linked it to postcolonialism (Gordon et al., 1996, pp. 5-6). Though, because engagement with his work is far from over, they argue that there is also a fifth stage of Fanon studies occurring today: “This stage consists of engagements with the thought of Fanon for the development of original work across the entire sphere of human studies. Its purpose is neither to glorify nor denigrate Fanon but instead to explore ways in which he is a useful thinker” (p. 7). This is

where my work fits. It does not seek to make statements about who or what he was, but rather to use his words to inform and support my own. As will be seen, particularly in the last chapter of this thesis, Fanon's words helps to facilitate one of the many dynamic conversations occurring at the vā. Thus, I am indebted to these scholars from Kahiki for the ways in which they assisted me in explaining this research to myself.

At the Vā

Bringing these many voices together at the vā has been both the challenge and the reward of producing the five chapters of this thesis. As I wrote each one, I tried to lead the dialogue that emerged while also sitting back and listening to it. Thus, my own writing methods mimicked some of the methods employed in my research. While conducting oral history interviews, for example, I remained flexible, open to the possibility of discovering something that I could not have anticipated. Following Yow (1994), my personal strategy was to begin with broad questions because "The advantage of the broad question coming at the beginning of a line of questioning is that the narrator follows his or her own thought processes or paths of association" and because "You can learn much that you did not even guess about before the interview, including a new framework in which to view this topic" (p. 41). I used the same approach in my writing, beginning with a broad topic and then allowing the sources to speak to me, telling me where they needed to go. Thus, I like to think that while writing the five chapters of this thesis that I guided their direction as much as I was being guided: they were guided in that I used myself and my own experiences and interpretations as the binding agent, bringing all of these voices, stories, and sources of information together; and they guided me as I gave sources the space to inspire me, and further, to direct where each chapter needed to go.

The first chapter, for example, begins with a line of a chant that I learned as a young girl, one that speaks of the genealogical connection between Hawai'i and Kahiki. In it, Hawai'i is positioned as a child of Kahiki, perhaps a metaphor for the memories of migration that linked my ancestors with other people and places in our sea of islands. Thus, the chapter takes inspiration from this idea and explores Kahiki as a concept with a mo'okū'auhau, or a genealogy, of its own. This genealogy, like our own family lineages, is a contemporary construction. In tracing our ancestry, after all, we have choice: we can choose to emphasize certain lines, ancestors, and events in our family histories over others. Furthermore, our genealogies can be enacted and embodied for particular reasons, either to push certain

agendas, or to assert our ties to place, people, and culture. Kahiki is the same. It is literally part of our genealogy as the “parent” of Hawai‘i. However, it also *has* a genealogy as its usage and its varied meanings can be traced through time. Chapter 1 therefore explores some of the strands of Kahiki’s complex mo‘okū‘auhau and offers new ways that we may be able to reengage with Kahiki as a part of our genealogies in contemporary times.

Following the opening chapter, the remaining portions of this thesis look at different aspects of that mo‘okū‘auhau. The emphasis of each chapter, like our lineages, was consciously chosen for particular purposes: to use Kahiki as a means of exploring topics that I felt were relevant and important and that spoke to our situations *now*. Chapter 2, for example, pays particular attention to the nineteenth century, when the technology of writing was introduced, and when oral traditions and other knowledges were transferred to print. It therefore looks at a layering of voices found in the texts produced and offers a possible approach for analyzing and working with this rich literature. Drawing on examples from the newspapers, and more specifically, migration stories about travel between Hawai‘i and Kahiki, I use this approach to examine how oral traditions were used within written narratives to promote particular perspectives tied to nationhood, regionalism, and aloha ‘āina.

Building on the previous chapter’s emphasis on oral traditions, Chapter 3 then looks at a particular type of oral tradition: the wānana, or prophecy. More specifically, it tracks the life of two prophecies as they are interpreted, reinterpreted, and even debated over time. Both wānana are connected to Kahiki. Therefore, I explore the various ways they are interpreted by Kānaka Maoli writers and thinkers in different social, political, and cultural contexts, and further, how Kahiki is used to make particular statements in those contexts. Looking at the political and social nature of these prophecies, past and present, this chapter also comments on their role in contemporary movements to regain ea, or sovereignty, in the islands.

Chapter 4 then picks up on these comments and begins to emphasize more contemporary concerns, introducing the story of the canoe builders interviewed during my research journey, and paying particular attention to the practice of ethnographic writing. In this chapter, I begin to incorporate some of the voices of these builders, using their words to comment on the roles and responsibilities of researchers and the various positions that we take—both consciously and sometimes unconsciously—as we work within our own communities. I also use their stories and their unique engagement with Kahiki to speak to our larger kuleana to the works that we create and the potential roles that they will come to play in future dialogues in Hawai‘i, the Pacific region, and the wider world.

The last chapter of this thesis then builds on the previous one, placing emphasis on the process of canoe building, and in particular, the journey towards building Mauloa. In it, I position Kahiki—and the resources brought from there—as an integral part of the creation of new “life” in the form of a canoe. Through the canoe builders’ stories I then make suggestions for understanding the importance of this canoe within the contexts of cultural renaissance and evolution, political sovereignty, and decolonization. This is done with the hope that the stories shared with me, and the many sources of knowledge coming together into dialogue in this thesis, will teach us not only about our responsibilities to the ‘āina we stand upon, but to all of those sources that sustain us at home and beyond.

Although presented in a particular order, these chapters overlap and speak to, with, and often times, even back to one another. Therefore, it is my hope that their sequencing will not take away from the idea that each individual chapter links the past, the present, and the future, and more importantly, that each chapter somehow works at the *vā*, or the space between. Interwoven with the words of each person whose ideas, theories, perspectives, and stories enhanced this work is my own voice. As Kahakalau (2004) mentions above, “I bring to every task my *mana*, my personal power, which includes all my strengths: physical, emotional, intellectual, and spiritual. I also bring with me my personal skills and experiences, my hopes, my dreams, my visions, and my ancestral endowments...” (p. 22). They are what bring this thesis together. Through my examination of Kahiki, I was able to work between the spaces that this research opened for me, giving voice to various stories, ideas, thoughts, and hopes for the future. Answering the call of Nāwahī, I therefore refuse to sit silent, letting these words and this thesis give new life to our people, our region, our connections, and our potential, from the summit of the “piko o Wākea” to the depths of our great sea of islands.

CHAPTER 1
He Kanaka Hawai‘i, He Kama Na Kahiki: Hawai‘i is a Man, A Child of Kahiki
Constructing a Genealogy

Ua hanaia keia Kamaaha ana me ke akamai loa, aole hiki ke ike ia kahi i hoomaka ia ai a me
kahi o ka pau ana.

[The binding of the sennit cord was done so ingeniously that both its starting point and its
ending point could not be seen¹¹.]

It is said that an intricate bind of sennit, or cord made from braided coconut husk, once served as the motivation for an epic voyage across “ke kai kāwahawaha o ka Moana Pākīpika,”¹² the furrowed waters of the Pacific Ocean. According to one account, a great chief named Mo‘ikeha came home one evening to find that his wife, Lu‘ukia—so enraged at rumors that he had been defaming her in public—had decided to bind herself from the waist to the thighs in an intricate weave (Fornander, 1916, p. 113). It is said that the binding around her was so complicated that the ends of the cord were impossible to find, resulting in no visible beginning and no apparent end. Distressed at the hiding of her “wahi hūnā” or “hidden places,” he ordered his canoe be made ready and prepared to depart his home in Kahiki, telling his son, “E holo kaua i Hawaii, no ka mea, e naauaua ana wau i ke aloha o ka wahine Luukia, a nalo kaupaku o kuu hale Lanikeha nei la, a laila pau ka manao ana ia Tahiti” (Fornander, 1916, p. 115). [Let us set sail for Hawai‘i because I am going to wander in grief over my love for Lu‘ukia, and when the highest point of my house, Lanikeha, has disappeared, I will no longer think of Tahiti¹³].

In other accounts, the intricate binding was not the motivation for his voyage but rather the act that made his journey possible. According to one story, Mo‘ikeha’s older brother, Olopana, had the wondrous and magical ability to sleep for an entire year at a time. Therefore, during one of his lengthy rests, Mo‘ikeha not only resided with Olopana’s wife, Lu‘ukia, taking her as his own spouse, but also coveted his prized lei hulu, or feathered lei, that were said to have been reserved for only the highest of chiefs. Wanting to protect these

¹¹ This line comes from “He Moolelo no Kila a Moikeha,” a story recorded by Olopananuiākea (1913) and printed in the Hawaiian language newspaper, *Ka Holomua*.

¹² This reference to the Pacific Ocean also comes from Olopananuiākea (1913).

¹³ Although Fornander’s account is presented in both Hawaiian and English, I provided my own interpretation/translation of the Hawaiian text. It should also be noted that although Fornander names Tahiti, that other sources cite “Kahiki” as Mo‘ikeha’s homeland. Despite being similar in appearance and pronunciation, Kahiki and Tahiti are not exact equivalents. Tahiti refers to a specific place in Central Polynesia, while Kahiki is a general term used to refer to lands outside of Hawai‘i, which does include, but is certainly not limited to, Tahiti (Tregear, 2014, p. 57).

lei—an act that could simultaneously secure their position as rulers—Mo‘ikeha ordered that they be guarded. Yet, as an adventurer, he also had other desires that conflicted with his ability to protect them:

I kela manawa nae a laua e noho nei, ua ulu aela ka manao i loko o Moikeha e hele makaikai aku ma ka moana nui akea... No laila, ia ia e noonoo nei no keia huakai hele makaikai a huli aina hou, ke noonoo pu la o ia no kahi e maluhia ai kela mau leihulu... No ka mea, i ko Moikeha noonoo akahele ana, ua hooholo ihola o ia, ina e lilo ana kela mau leihulu i kekahi alii okoa aku, o ka lilo ana ia o Tahitikaialeale holookoa ma lalo o ka noho alii a me ka hoomalu ana a ia alii. (Olopananuiakea, 1913, p. 3)

[While he and Lu‘ukia were living together, however, a great desire to travel the wide and expansive ocean grew within Mo‘ikeha... Consequently, while he contemplated this journey to visit and search for new lands, he also thought about where the lei hulu could be kept safely... After all, in his careful considerations, he concluded that if the lei were to fall into the hands of another chief, that all of Tahitikai‘ale‘ale would fall under the reign and protection of that chief as well.]

Mo‘ikeha therefore secured the lei within a long calabash, binding the gourd closed with an intricate weave of ‘aha, a cord made of sennit. It was done so cleverly that the ends of the cord were impossible to find, impossible for everyone, that is, except for Mo‘ikeha himself, the one who lashed it. Confident that the lei were protected and that the gourd would not be opened until he returned, Mo‘ikeha then ordered that preparations be made for his voyage, and after one anahulu, a span of ten days, he departed his home and sailed across the ocean.

As seen in many oral and written accounts of the past, there are disagreements in the stories of Mo‘ikeha’s life. In fact, there are often drastic differences concerning everything from his origin—some say that he was from Hawai‘i while others say that he was from Kahiki—to his position in his own family—sometimes he is the older brother of Olopana while at other times he is the younger sibling (Beckwith, 1970, p. 352; Finney, 1991, p. 387; Fornander, 1880, pp. 9-10; Nakaa, 1893a, pp. 353-354). Pacific historian Niel Gunson (1993) argues that variations represent the fact that not *all* people of a particular cultural group “shared the same cultural heritage” (p. 143). In other words, there were often variations between districts, regions, or islands, and what was stressed in each version could have been indicative of what mattered to a particular community, family, or even individual. Thus variations, rather than being impediments to finding one true version, actually provide the

space for exploring the contexts in which such stories were maintained, recorded, and interpreted.

Anthropologist Sally Engle Merry (2003) argues that when oral accounts are written down the resulting “texts do not speak directly about historical events but are interpretations of events by socially situated writers. They are shaped by the circumstances of their production and given meaning by readers who impose their own interpretations on them” (p. 44). The story of Mo‘ikeha is one example of this. Differences regarding where he came from, his position in his family, and even what motivated his exploits across the ocean can all serve as indicators of what mattered to those who perpetuated his story before the advent of literacy, who later recorded it in print in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, and further, who continue to remember his story today. When these accounts were first being written down, as Gunson (1993) further explains,

It was a common 19th century practice to assemble myths from various districts or regions and treat them as if they were episodes of one narrative. This means that if a number of variants were gathered the editor would not keep to one but simply select the most entertaining details from all. (p. 143)

While this means that the resulting texts cannot necessarily be read as fact, it does *not* mean that they should be ignored and disregarded as mere fable. After all, there is value in examining the “diversity of interpretive frames used in the production of each one” because “the various versions of the story reflect the configurations of power in which they are produced” (Merry, 2003, pp. 44-45).

My own interactions with Mo‘ikeha’s story came through a variety of sources: first, through chanting and dancing to oral traditions that celebrated his travels, and second, through the printed page. If I were to examine the context in which I was first introduced to Mo‘ikeha as a young girl, it was in the early 1990s, in the wake of the Hawaiian Renaissance, a movement beginning in the late 1960s and early 1970s when “a renewed sense of identity and history as to what it meant to be a Hawaiian began to emerge” (Tengan, 2008, p. 53). In the next few decades, significant efforts were made to revitalize the Hawaiian language, to renew interest in Hawaiian customs, arts, and performance, and to reengage in political discussions and movements towards sovereignty. Today, one of the most celebrated stories of the Hawaiian Renaissance is that of the revival of long-distance sailing and non-instrument navigation in Hawai‘i, an effort that later inspired similar movements throughout Polynesia.

Although there are many stories recounting the voyaging feats of Pacific peoples, the designation of these stories as oral traditions, often times including fantastical elements (as seen previously in Olopana's ability to sleep for an entire year), meant that they were frequently discredited and consequently regarded as myth. This, as anthropologist Ben Finney (1991) explains, implies "that they are imaginary constructs with little or no basis in actual events" (p. 390). Unfortunately, as skeptics believed that the stories were far too incredible to be true, the voyaging abilities of Pacific peoples were doubted and their assumed "technological inferiority" was seen as a primary indicator of an inability to purposely and repeatedly migrate across the Pacific. Thus, as Finney (1991) remembers, "In order to investigate the disputed characteristics of the double canoe, as well as the even more debated accuracy of noninstrument navigation, in 1975 we reconstructed a large, double-hull voyaging canoe to conduct realistic sailing and navigational trials" (p. 391). The success of the modern, double-hulled canoe, *Hōkūle'a*, had significant impacts on the way that Kānaka Maoli came to see their pasts, and further, themselves. As Nainoa Thompson (2007), one of the original crew members and eventual navigator of the canoe, explains, "*Hōkūle'a* is a canoe of change. Even though we didn't know it, it became the change—not that we were necessarily seeking it—but it became the change anyway" (p. 10).

I was introduced to Mo'ikeha and his voyaging adventures in the light of *Hōkūle'a*'s success. In the 1990s, I was a young girl being taught to dance and chant of his travels as further proof that Kānaka Maoli came from a long history of courageous and skilled ancestors, without whom we would not exist. Thus, the way that his story was re-presented to me reflected the cultural and political environment of the time: a couple of decades after the start of the Hawaiian Renaissance and the equally important (and often complimentary) Hawaiian Movement, sometimes called the Hawaiian Sovereignty Movement, which "began as a battle for land rights but would evolve, by 1980, into a larger struggle for native Hawaiian autonomy" (Trask, 1987, p. 126). Therefore, retelling and even celebrating stories like that of Mo'ikeha had power: the power to restore dignity. It was a means of healing from the effects of what author and political thinker Ngūgĩ wa Thiong'o (1986) refers to as the "cultural bomb": "The effect of a cultural bomb is to annihilate a people's belief in their names, in their languages, in their environment, in their heritage of struggle, in their unity, in their capacities and ultimately in themselves" (p. 3). Thus, what was emphasized in Mo'ikeha's story as it was reiterated to me was contextually shaped, and is therefore reflective of the "interpretive frames" used in its (re)production (Merry, 2003, p. 44).

Years later, I began to read about Mo‘ikeha, traveling with him on the printed page. In the versions I encountered, I came across the ‘aha, the intricate bind of coconut cord that either motivated or made his voyaging possible. Although I had learned about the ‘aha, and particularly about the “pā‘ū o Lu‘ukia,” or Lu‘ukia’s chastity belt made of sennit, these elements were not emphasized as much as his voyaging exploits were. His role as a traveler with the ability to traverse the open ocean without modern instrumentation supported the political and social currents of the time. Thus, when I reengaged with his story years later through text, I found new elements and new purposes for those elements. This chapter will therefore use particular pieces of his story, including the intricate weave of ‘aha, as a means of exploring issues that are reflective of today’s environment.

Mo‘ikeha’s story is much like that tight bind: there are many intricate, detailed, and complicated strands. The only one who knows the truth is the one at the origin of the story: Mo‘ikeha himself. And in some instances, he is the only one who knows how to untangle that tight weave of coconut cord. Therefore, rather than trying to do so ourselves, searching for accuracy, or one true version, over meaning, this chapter will use the ‘aha as an apt metaphor for arguing and demonstrating that our time would be better spent examining the binding—looking at how the strands cross, knot, and intertwine—to see what truly matters: *why* these stories endure; *what* they reveal about the past; *what* they teach us about ourselves as Hawaiians and as Pacific Islanders; *how* they were used in previous generations; and further, *how* we can continue to use them now and into the future.

The binding in Mo‘ikeha’s story is symbolic because it is not the beginning or the end that matters as much as the middle. In other words, it is not so much *why* he left that is as important as the fact that he *did*, and more so, that his journey across “ke kai kāwahawaha” connected distant peoples and places, setting in motion events for the future. Like Mo‘ikeha, we are the connecting piece. We are the middle portion of the bind that links that obscure beginning with that always progressing end, that links ancestors with descendants, that links yesterday with tomorrow. Although what we connect is unclear—existing somewhere between primordial obscurity and future uncertainty—the point is that we have a participatory role to play as that middle portion of the bind. As such, and embracing a perspective of ocean voyagers like Mo‘ikeha himself, we are the piko, the center, and must therefore understand ourselves “in relation, particularly in genealogical relation” (Goodyear-Ka‘ōpua, 2013, pp. 189-190). The ‘aha is representative of that.

We are the portion of the cord that *actively* connects and that *actively* nurtures the relationship between. As epistemologist Manulani Meyer (2013) explains, “relationships are not nouns, they are *verbs*... Relationship as verb infers the *intentional quality* of connection that is *experienced* and remembered” (p. 98). In other words, being a section of the cord is an action, not just a state of existence. It is the act of “reach[ing] back selectively to deeply rooted traditions: creating new pathways” (Clifford, 2013, p. 7). It is the process of constantly looking back to the past and creatively reinterpreting it for new contexts. As the ‘aha was being lashed around Lu‘ukia, or woven around the gourd holding the feathered lei, it was tied, knotted, and *selectively* woven back into pieces of itself. This is symbolic of the *action* of remembering, one done to create and maintain relationships with particular pieces of the past that help us to live out, explain, and understand our present. Thus, in this chapter, I will actively make connections between different eras, drawing on specific strands of story, knowledge, and custom from the past, essentially adding fibers to the cord.

A central concept for this work, therefore, is that of mo‘okū‘auhau, which can be roughly translated as genealogy. Mo‘ikeha’s story is one piece of a complex mo‘okū‘auhau of connected people, places, ideas, and events, one that is as layered and multi-faceted as the binding itself. Thus, the function of the cord is to connect: to connect multiple generations, to connect people to their environments, to connect the past with the future, and to connect ideas with actions. The same can be said for our work as scholars in the present: we add strands, lengthening the cord of the previous generations, and how those strands will then be worked with in the future will be decided by those who will continue this work for new purposes and new agendas in the years to come. What we create today, as we actively link pieces of the past and present, will come to represent who we are *now*: our frames of reference, our contextual interpretations, our evolution, and even our struggles. The history we create, after all, “always represents the present in the ways it re-presents the past” (Denning, 1989, p. 134). Thus, in our creative re-presentations, we become part of a genealogy, or part of that story with an unclear beginning and an undetermined end. Like our genealogies, however, as long as people actively find meaning in the past, continually adding fibers to the cord, then it will never have an end. Mo‘ikeha’s ‘aha teaches us this, and therefore lays a kahua, or a foundation, for approaching our work. I did not create this thesis, for example, with the intention of providing concrete answers or of discovering solid truisms, as such an endeavor is a prescription for stagnation. I did so, rather, to add to the cord, or to the genealogies that allowed for the birthing of my own life and consciousness today.

Nā Mo‘okū‘auhau: Genealogies

Quite important in the story of Mo‘ikeha is the fact that he was a chief. In remembering the past, and in looking back at our genealogical connections, we can choose to exalt *certain* ancestors over others. While anthropologist Elizabeth Lindsey (2006) reminds us that our ancestors are always with us and that we need not look far, or search beyond ourselves, to find them, the kūpuna we call upon is a reflection of which ancestors we *choose* to remember (p. 10). Therefore, before I progress, it should be noted that genealogies were often evoked as expressions of mana, or power, and therefore served as a means of justifying claims to leadership and land. As prominent Hawaiian scholar Mary Kawena Pūku‘i and anthropologist E. S. Craighill Handy (1998) explain, “Hawaiians...who had any claim to distinction memorized and passed on to their following generations their genealogies, and these had a very important function in the determination of precedence and right... genealogy was, in fact, a carefully and critically guarded historical science” (p. 196-97). This does not mean that commoners could not or even did not know their mo‘okū‘auhau. What it does mean, however, is that those genealogies that we remember today are often those that were remembered for a reason. Mo‘ikeha was a chief, someone of rank and status. According to ethnologist Abraham Fornander (1880), he descended from the Maweke line of ruling chiefs who arrived in Hawai‘i in either the tenth or eleventh century (p. 2-3). Thus, his story and his genealogy were intentionally perpetuated as they had political and cultural function.

This exaltation of chiefly genealogies and histories was by no means unique to Hawai‘i. Thus, when looking at oral traditions and written texts from the past, we must be mindful of the fact, as Gunson (1993) argues, that what people perpetuate may only be “what their chiefs wish to believe happened in the past” or what events, births, deaths, and ideas solidified their status. Oceanian scholar Epeli Hau‘ofa (2008) expands this notion, stating:

Most of our ancient and even our recent oral histories are about the lives and heroic deeds of our great chiefs, their families, and kin groups. Our histories, cultures, and group identities are focused almost entirely on them. Without them we have only few roots, because the lives and deeds of the majority of our peoples have been erased from memory... Nevertheless, they are a major component of our heritage and so we must carry them all, the good and the ugly, for only then can we learn properly from our histories. (p. 70)

As I examine oral and written accounts from the past, I am therefore aware of the sort of aristocratic lens through which much of the past is presented. I am also aware of the fact that

the process of writing oral traditions down meant that they would be further adjusted to meet particular needs, even if they were no longer purely to support the ruling class. Thus, what I have are interpretations, in spoken and written form, and what I create is nothing more than another interpretation further shaping the story to be told. What I and other researchers do, therefore, is add to the cord, selecting which pieces to intertwine with in order to reveal new knots and strands.

Thus, it is important, as scholars working towards actively connecting pieces of the past and present, nurturing and creating relationships, that we do so conscious of the genealogies that we enact, embody, and create. As Pacific and Māori scholars Selina Tusitala Marsh and Alice Te Punga Somerville (2009) state, “we live in a region in which histories and genealogies provide the structure not only for how we have come to be here but also for where we will go. Genealogies tie us in with our ancestors but also provide a mechanism to recognize connections with our contemporaries” (p. 2). Thus, if we are open to examining them and in looking back at the complexities of our many mo‘okū‘auhau—however partial and selective this task may be—then we have the opportunity to not only learn about and discover (or rediscover) pieces of ourselves, but to actively create meaning.

In the story of Mo‘ikeha, for example, particular versions claim that he came from Kahiki, traveled to Hawai‘i, and then settled there, becoming a chief and ancestor for Kānaka Maoli. In this thesis, I have deliberately chosen to focus on Kahiki as a genealogical construct and have made a conscious effort to explore connections between Hawai‘i and our ancestral homeland in the Pacific. My choices are reflective of the social and political contexts in which I was raised. Furthermore, the lines of genealogy that I *choose* to focus on over others indicate how my upbringing, my education, and my experiences have prioritized certain agendas over others. Thus, in this portion of my thesis, I use the metaphor of the ‘aha to examine Kahiki not only as a part of our genealogy, as indicated in the title of this chapter, but also as a concept with a genealogy of its own. As touched upon in the Introduction, articulations of Kahiki shifted over time as people used a single concept to explain their existence to themselves. Thus, Kahiki provides a record of change as different generations of people used it to give expression to what *their* upbringing, *their* education, and *their* experiences made important in their lives. It is this complex genealogical record that I trace, paying particular attention to the way that the many strands of this mo‘okū‘auhau interweave with one another, or sometimes knot and twist, revealing new information about ourselves and our people.

While presenting this kind of work we have to be cognizant of our position as *creators* of culture. Moreover, we have to be careful of our position as academics, or as those who create scholarship. However small or large the reach of our work may be, we must remember, as historian Greg Denning (1989) states, that “the words human beings speak cannot be unspoken... Nor can the discoveries human beings make about living be de-discovered” (p. 138). Instead, they become part of the ‘aha, always present. Regardless of how deeply buried they may be in the weave of rope they are always connecting one section, or one strand, to another. Thus, this chapter and this thesis as a whole were created while constantly reflecting on a question posed by Hau‘ofa (2008): “How and for what purposes are we directing our people’s thinking and memories?” (p. 70). My intent here is not necessarily to shape people’s thinking but rather to give them fibers to add to their own mo‘okū‘auhau.

He Kama Na Kahiki: A Child of Kahiki

A particular portion of our collective mo‘okū‘auhau as Kānaka Maoli takes us back to Mo‘ikeha. In various accounts of his voyage, it was after crossing the furrowed waters of the Pacific Ocean that he arrived in Hilo on the Island of Hawai‘i¹⁴. It was there that his navigator and orator, Kamahualele, stood aboard the deck of their canoe and chanted:

Eia Hawaii, he moku, he kanaka,
He kanaka Hawaii—e
He kanaka Hawaii;
He kama na Kahiki. (Poepoe, 1906b, p. 1)
[Behold Hawai‘i, an island, a man,
Hawai‘i is a man,
Hawai‘i is indeed a man,
A child of Kahiki.]

Kamahualele’s words celebrated a genealogical connection between Hawai‘i and Kahiki, a name often referenced in stories as a “distant ancestral homeland,” or the place that seafaring islanders left as they migrated to Hawai‘i (Kikiloi, 2010, p. 84). Yet, Kahiki as a point of origin or a homeland is as veiled in mystery as the beginning of the ‘aha, the lengthy sennit cord binding our existence. However, despite its obscurity—or perhaps it is precisely *because* of its obscurity—we can maintain that we are not only children of Kahiki but that we *are* Kahiki.

¹⁴ Although it is popularly held that this chant was recited when the canoe first sighted land off the coast of Hilo, some say that this occurred in Ka‘ū, the southern-most district of Hawai‘i Island (Beckwith, 1970, p. 354).

Pualani Kanaha (2005), a renowned kumu hula, claims that she has two convictions in life: the first is that she is Hawaiian, and the second is that she is the land just as much as the land is her (p. 22). This sense of kinship is exemplified in Kamahualele's mele. As he chants that "Hawai'i is an island, a man" he makes it known, as Hawaiian Studies professor Kekuewa Kikiloi (2010) states, "that there is an implicit cultural correlation between the islands and man from a Hawaiian worldview" (p. 83). Thus, if Kānaka Maoli are deeply connected to the land—further explaining the concept of aloha 'āina explored in the Introduction—then it makes sense to view the 'āina as part of our genealogies and part of ourselves. We are both born of the same source, Kahiki. If we can be the land, we can also be Kahiki, no matter how mysterious it may be.

The undefined nature of Kahiki gives us the space to posit such ideas. Today the famous words of Kamahualele and his genealogical recognition of Kahiki continue to speak *to* us as we continue to speak them, and continue to give us meaning as we continue to give them function. We embody traces of Kahiki just as we embody and carry traces of our ancestors. Thus, although Kahiki eventually became a term used to refer to *all* lands outside of Hawai'i, representing everyone and everything "out there," I would argue that its location is not only external but internal as well. It is not always "far away" or "beyond the horizon," as popular definitions and interpretations explain, but is something that is also *in* us: pumping through our veins, moving through our hearts, stirring in our guts. However, as Hawaiians, we have to actively remember its existence and remain conscious of our relationship with it in order for it to have continued relevance in the external world.

Psychological anthropologist Jeannette Marie Mageo (2001) examines such conscious remembering within the context of colonial and postcolonial experiences. Because historical erasure is a strategy of colonialism, we may not always be conscious of what we "forget": "Much has been forgotten in the memories of colonized and colonizing societies: values, violence, lifeways, personal stories. But colonialism also compelled both parties to this historical experience to construct memories about what had been lost" (p. 8). This means that in contemporary times we have the ability to construct memories about what was "forgotten" and to attach those new memories to old ones in order to push our individual or collective interests. The role that Mo'ikeha's story played in my own "remembering" of our ancestors' navigational and sailing capabilities is evidence of this. Long-distance voyaging had all but ceased in the islands prior to 1976, and knowledge of how to navigate was "lost." However, as scholar, poet, and activist Haunani-Kay Trask (1993) reminds us "what is 'dead' or 'lost'"

is not the custom but the people practiced it (p. 60). Thus, there is always an opportunity for revival. Once we change our thinking around the concept of “loss” we can construct new narratives of gain, revitalization, and renewal that work against the pressures of colonial erasure and “forgetting.”

Kahiki provides a means of doing such work. As parts of this chapter explore, the familial connections between Hawai‘i and Kahiki may have been disrupted or “lost” to a certain extent, particularly when other agendas necessitated the remembering and the re-presenting of narratives that emphasized roots over routes. However, as an ancestor and as an ancestral homeland, Kahiki is part of our genealogies. As part of the ‘aha, it is never lost. Those who actively worked with its strands in the past are gone. However, the existence of Kahiki itself is constant, whether we remember it contemporarily or not. Therefore, as the word “kahiki” implies, the search for meaning and the creation of memory requires that we go inward. Rather than depart, always searching externally, we must also “hiki,” or “arrive.” That is the nature of mo‘okū‘auhau. It is an arrival at who we are. In order to discover (or rediscover) pieces of our lives and the stories of our people, we must begin with us, the carriers of our ancestors, the living extension of our genealogies, and the ones with the responsibility and the power to find and make meaning for ourselves.

Ka Hiki: The Arrival

As a concept, Kahiki gives us the space to engage in dialogue about our ontology, or our existence and our social reality. As Pacific educationalist Kabini Sanga (2004) argues:

When considering indigenous Pacific research, there is an ontological debate, which is based on two opposing assumptions, as follows:

1. That the social world for people is tangible and external to their cognition, whether or not they perceive this.
2. That the social world for people is intangible and internal to their cognition.

(p. 44)

According to Sanga (2004), an indigenous understanding in the Pacific—which includes Hawai‘i—assumes the latter, that “‘reality’ is subjective to the context and people... [and that] ‘Reality’, in this instance, is what people ‘make of it’. It changes” (p. 44). That is why Kahiki, broken down into its root words “ka” and “hiki”—“ka” being a definite singular article usually translated as “the,” and “hiki” having various interpretations—is so important. To “hiki” is to arrive, to arise, to appear, or to reach a particular location, whether physical,

mental, spiritual, or emotional. “Hiki,” however, is also used to indicate that something is possible, or that it can be done (Pūku‘i & Elbert, 1986, p. 69).

These interpretations are all embedded into this one name. Therefore, Kahiki not only carries the power and the influence of an ancestral homeland, but also the positive connotations of endless possibility and heightened arrival. This, of course, is my contemporary interpretation of the name Kahiki. Whether or not these meanings played a role in the naming of our ancestral homeland is uncertain, and may never be confirmed. However, the power of names, as political scientist Noelani Goodyear-Ka‘ōpua (2013) reminds us, is that “the kind of knowledge embedded in the name is developed intergenerationally. Thus, the name itself becomes a vehicle for transmitting knowledge across generations” (p. 189). It becomes a vehicle for transferring memories from the past and for offering new memories from the present.

The late Hawaiian Studies scholar Kanalu Young (1998) noted that the ability to recognize the various meanings of one word at the same time, and have each of those meanings make sense contextually, is a key feature of Hawaiian oral and written expression: “Repeated expressions of [a] word...in contexts that fit any of its definitions incorporated the *mana* [power] of those alternate meanings. The homonyms work together to strengthen all definitions” (p. 33). The point, therefore, is that each time its name is spoken—or even sung or written—each of those interpretations can be evoked, and more importantly, can be reinterpreted and represented for a new time. Therefore, if viewed ontologically, Kahiki’s meaning and value is created internally, as it is thought about and felt.

Furthermore, to learn about Kahiki at the most basic level—as a word—is to learn about the people who engaged with this concept through the generations. John Charlot (2005), a scholar of Hawaiian and Pacific religions, explains that language and culture are connected and that, in fact, “One learns a culture by learning a language” (p. 211). However, it is not that you can learn about a static group of unchanging customs and traditions, but rather that *through* language you can get a sense of how culture was refashioned at different times and in various contexts. In fact, Hawaiian language scholar Liana Wong (1999) argues that even language itself evolves to incorporate new terms and expressions suitable for articulating new experiences (p. 103). My own interpretation of Kahiki, therefore, is indicative of the culture that I am living and creating now, which as Wendt (1976) argues, is the “only valid culture worth having” (p. 76).

What our current cultures reveal, therefore, are the ways in which our peoples have made sense of our lives and experiences. Ontologically, as we seek to explain our reality, we make connections and form or maintain relationships. First Nations Studies scholar, Margo Greenwood (2013) explains that “*Relationship* is at the core of indigenous knowledge(s)” (p. 99). Thus, for many indigenous peoples, to know the world is to understand it *in* relationship (p. 99). It is to seek out those connections that make knowledge meaningful and then, once they are identified, to nurture, enhance, or even adjust them as necessary. The connections that I make between Kahiki, genealogy, the cord in Mo‘ikeha’s story, and all of the people, places, ideas, and events that will be explored in this thesis will come as a result of my attempt to build on past relationships and to create new ones: to strengthen my connection to ancestral wisdom as I actively find a place for it in my life, both internally and externally. When we engage with knowledge, we create a relationship with it. It may not always be a peaceful or even an enjoyable experience. However, if we are impacted by the interaction then we are changed by the relationship, and as a result, have given that knowledge new function.

Ke Kama‘aha: The Lashing

What first prompted me to think this way, and to see and act in “genealogical relation,” was my interaction with Mo‘ikeha’s story (Goodyear-Ka‘ōpua, 2013, p. 190). I was intrigued by the way that the verb, the action rather than the product, was emphasized in the statement cited at the outset of this chapter. It was not the cord itself that made Mo‘ikeha’s voyage possible. Rather, it was the ingenious lashing, or the action of kama‘aha—“kama” meaning to tie, bind, or wrap and “‘aha” being the term for cord—that filled him with enough confidence to journey across the sea. Additionally, I was struck by the idea that the cord could have no obvious beginning and no clear end. Genealogies, after all, can be the same. Although Kānaka Maoli can cite stories recounting the creation of the universe, going all the way back to the ultimate “beginning,” we would be remiss not to admit our own shortcomings in interpreting them.

The Hawaiian genealogical chant, “Kumulipo,” is one prominent example. It begins with and in pō, a space of deep darkness. As historian Kealani Cook (2011) explains,

According to Hawaiian genealogies, Pō came before anything else and birthed the rest of the universe. Pō was the ancestor of the Hawaiian people, the *akua* [gods], and even the *ao*, which in different contexts could mean light, daytime, the temporal

world, and/or the present post-Pō era. As such, Pō was a space/time/being of great power, importance, and reverence. (p. 38)

Despite its significance, however, pō is also unclear, perhaps something that can be attributed to its “darkness”. According to the chant, in the beginning, there is only heat. Nothing can be seen; there is only something to be felt¹⁵. Thus, even though Hawaiians may chant about the birth of life in the “Kumulipo”—beginning in pō, continuing with the creation of sea life and land life, and finally witnessing the birth of the human race—we may never truly “see” that beginning. In other words, it will always be a bit obscure because we are so far removed from it.

Additionally, as folklorist and ethnographer Martha Beckwith (1972) states, “The language [of chants like the “Kumulipo”] is often archaic, containing many words completely unknown to modern Hawaiians” (p. 37). Therefore, our understanding of the text, and consequently our understanding of the beginning of creation as outlined in it, will always be a modern construction. The stories and the lessons that are conveyed in genealogical chants such as this “are dependent on how we arrange and interpret them” (Tau, 2012, p. 25). Furthermore, even if based on deep cultural knowledge, our interpretations will always vary. The way that we *feel* about pō, for example, will differ depending on who we are and where and when we come from. However, variations reflect the minds that created them, the times and spaces in which they were composed, and furthermore, the perspectives of those who continued to interact with them at different points in history. Thus, the obscurity of the beginning, or that metaphoric tip of the cord, means that rather than “holding rigidly to a single concept” that we can, as Beckwith (1972) encourages, allow for “a wider range of analogy” (p. 41). We can actually interpret, reinterpret, and interact with that genealogy, giving it new life.

If we think of mo‘okū‘auhau as a cord being lashed continuously—constantly intertwining with itself—this means that although the “beginning” gets covered by layers of ‘aha, it will always be part of our existence. We cannot escape our genealogies, just like we cannot escape our pasts. To try and do so would be to attempt to dismember ourselves—a rather violent endeavor. Thus, we should try to work *with* our mo‘okū‘auhau, learning from them and extending them. This even applies to our intellectual genealogies. As tempting as it

¹⁵ The first few lines of the “Kumulipo” state, “O ke au i kahuli wela ka honua / O ke au i kahuli lole ka lani / O ke au i kuka’iaka ka la” (Beckwith, 1972, p. 45). Charlot (1983) interprets these lines to mean, “The current of time when the earth turned hot around / The current of time when the firmament turned counter / The current of time when the sun stood beshadowed” (p. 128).

can sometimes be to cast aside the influence of particular ancestors, especially when it comes to decolonization in Indigenous societies, Pacific Studies scholar Teresia Teaiwa (2014) reminds us that even “Sovereign intellectuals have nothing to lose by admitting that some white men, white women, and white people are part of our genealogies of thinking whether we like it or not” (p. 52). Our intellectual ancestors—and for many of us who are of mixed heritages, our actual kūpuna—contributed fibers to our ‘aha. Therefore, whether their influence was positive or negative does not mean that they are not part of making us who we are. The power, then, lies in our ability to use them to frame our worlds and to interpret our pasts, or to wrap and weave them into the strands we choose to work with. In other words, we can shape our mo‘okū‘auhau.

As a genealogical concept, Kahiki is evidence of this; it has been adjusted to fit shifting times and contexts. Although it may have referred to a specific location at some point, as Cook (2011) explains, it seems that over time the various islands of the Pacific conflated, to be known collectively by the same name: “Hawaiians retained a strong cultural memory of their general migration from the south, often referred to generically as ‘Kahiki’” (p. 193). Although it is sometimes still held that Kahiki is Tahiti, given the fact that Kahiki is its Hawaiian pronunciation, Cook’s (2011) assertion regarding its use as a more general term is supported by scholarship from the nineteenth century. Some writers from that era do use Kahiki and Tahiti interchangeably. However, as explained by one of the leading scholars of the time, Samuel Mānaiakalani Kamakau (1866a), Kahiki was often used to refer to other lands outside of Tahiti: “Ua kapa aku ka poe kahiko o Hawaii nei i na aina Borabora, a me na aina haole, o Kahiki ka inoa” [The ancient people of Hawai‘i called the lands of Borabora and other foreign lands Kahiki] (p. 1).

Speculation, however, continues to surround not only Kahiki’s location in the Pacific but its place in Hawaiian genealogies as well. In an account by nineteenth century writer, G. W. Nakaa (1893b), he explains, “...he lehulehu wale ka poe i holo mai i anei mai Kahiki mai a hoolaha kanaka” [...incredibly numerous were the people who traveled here from Kahiki and spread, increasing the population] (p. 1). Migratory tales maintained in both oral traditions and written texts confirm this. The nineteenth century Hawaiian Language newspapers, for example, are littered with stories about great voyages from Kahiki to Hawai‘i, and back again, suggesting that travel did not end after the initial settlement of the islands. Although more recent scholarship by Finney (1991) suggests that Kahiki is not an ancestral homeland for the Hawaiian people, but rather a place that brave chiefs and

adventurous sailors left when they traveled to an already-settled Hawai‘i, some older accounts contradict this (p. 387). Nakaa (1893b), for example, recounts the story of a man named Hawai‘iloa:

Kaulana loa o ia i ka holo moana ana, a no Kahiki mai o ia, a ma kana huakai e holo ana i ka hikina, ua pae mai o ia ma anei; ua olelo ia, aole kanaka ma anei [i] ia wa. Ua holo aku o ia a ua hoi hou mai i anei me kana wahine, a hoolaha kanaka ihola ma anei. (p. 1)

[He was famed as a sailor, and was from Kahiki, and on one of his voyages heading east, he landed here. It was said that there were no people here at that time. He therefore left and later returned with his wife, eventually populating this place.]

Further complicating Kahiki as a concept—some believing it to be an actual location, like Tahiti; others viewing it as a fantastical place from which came gods and heroes; and others using it as a general term for all lands in the Pacific—is the fact that it continued to change as people sought to understand their reality and make sense of their experiences.

Although Kahiki once had a Pacific base, in the nineteenth century it became a term used to refer to *all* lands outside of Hawai‘i, including places like America, Europe, and Asia, suggesting that when Hawaiians encountered foreigners from beyond the Pacific, they used existing language and concepts to make sense of them. Consequently, as interaction with foreigners increased and as Kānaka Maoli began to witness its impact on their ways of life, Kahiki could be found at the center of discussions and debates about nationalism and nineteenth century threats to Hawaiian sovereignty, topics that will be explored in Chapter 3 of this thesis. An article printed in the Hawaiian Language newspaper *Ka Nupepa Kuokoa*, for example, demonstrates how Hawaiians reinterpreted statements regarding Kahiki based on their new political situations. This article reexamines a series of prophecies, some of which were made before the first non-Polynesians even arrived in the islands. In reference to a wānana, or a famous prophecy by a man named Kala‘ikuahulu, it states,

O Kalaikuahulu no kai olelo aku... “E make ana au, i noho aku auanei oukou a i hoia mai he waa kahuna mai ke kai mai, o Kahikimakalike ka inoa, hopu iho oukou a paa, o ke kahuna ia, aole e eha ka ili, a e lilo aku ana keia aina ma lalo o Kahiki.”

(Kuokoa, 1893, p. 3)

[Kala‘ikuahulu is the one who said... “I am going to die, but if you folks live and if a canoe of priests, named Kahikimakalike, arrives from the sea, then grasp it and hold

fast to it for there will be a priest for you. Your skin will not be hurt [as in battle] and this land will one day be controlled by Kahiki.”]

This prophecy was said to have been uttered before a chief named Ka‘ahumanu and her sisters. Ka‘ahumanu, a prominent figure in Hawai‘i’s history and wife of the famous Kamehameha I, was born in the 1700s, before the arrival of the first Westerners, and died in the mid 1800s a converted Christian, having “grasped” and “held fast” to the new “priest.”

While we cannot know how Kala‘ikuahulu’s words were interpreted by the chief and her sisters, the writers of *Ka Nupepa Kuokoa* state: “A o ua Kahiki la, o Amerika Huipua” [As for this Kahiki just mentioned, it is the United States of America] (Kuokoa, 1893, p. 3). Given the political context of the time in which the article was published, this interpretation of Kahiki makes sense. It was printed in April of 1893, just a few short months after the illegal overthrow of the Hawaiian Kingdom. Although interpretations like this complicate our understanding of Kahiki, they demonstrate the ability of each generation to extend the genealogy, adding new ideas to the cord. We may not always agree with their past interpretations. However, we cannot escape their place *in* the bind, or in the intricate action of kama‘aha, and cannot deny the fact that any discomfort we may feel at Kahiki being used to essentially justify colonialism is only in retrospect, based largely on who we are and what we know *now*. We cannot blame our kūpuna, or fault them for what we believe would have been the right way or the right choice (Huihui, 2014, p. 248). We will never know what they experienced. Thus, we can only learn from them.

As an example of the bias often found in our contemporary interpretations, in my initial exploration of Kahiki, I gravitated towards older meanings, particularly those that seemed to celebrate a homeland based in the Pacific. Contemporarily, it was a concept that I and other Kānaka Maoli could use to reaffirm our relationships with other islands and islanders in this furrowed ocean. It was a means of combating notions of our worlds as being small or limited and was a vehicle towards what Hau‘ofa (1994) calls “world enlargement”:

The idea that the countries of Polynesia and Micronesia are too small, too poor, and too isolated to develop any meaningful degree of autonomy is an economic and geographic deterministic view of a very narrow kind that overlooks culture history and the contemporary process of what may be called world enlargement that is carried out by tens of thousands of ordinary Pacific Islands right across the ocean... (p. 151)

I focused intently on Kahiki as being that genealogical link that could both enlarge our worlds and expand our notions of self. I saw it as a means of cultivating hope, of

reconnecting to the region and therefore celebrating the many routes that our ancestors traveled and the many paths that we can continue to travel as we work towards the betterment of our Pacific peoples.

These were the interpretations that best fit my agendas as a modern Kanaka Maoli, one who experienced both the effects of great cultural loss and the impacts of contemporary cultural renaissance, topics that will be explored in Chapter 4 and 5 of this thesis. However, I could not ignore the fact that Kahiki had changed and that new readings of it had been woven into our history. Therefore, I had to begin to examine those intricate and complicated binds, even those that I did not initially want to accept, in order to see what they could reveal about the times in which they were created, and further, how those times and interpretations influence us today. This changed the way I see Kahiki. As a concept, it is so layered and multi-faceted that trying to lock it down to *one* interpretation, metaphorically searching for its tip, will indeed be an endless task of unraveling and attempting to untie an impossible bind. Therefore, our time would be better spent examining Kahiki as it relates to us today, recognizing that it is part of this complex mo‘okū‘auhau linking people, places, ideas and events in a complicated web of relationships.

Ka Pilina: The Relationship

Examining this genealogy allows us to, as stated earlier, focus on particular aspects of it, asking and potentially providing answers to important inquiries: *why* has Kahiki as a concept endured; *what* does it reveal about the people who interacted with it through the generations; *what* can we learn from the way it shifted and changed; *how* is Kahiki understood today; *how* do we continue to maintain our relationship with it and *why*? As Cook (2011) asserts “...students of the Pacific have much to gain by examining how islanders understood and developed those relationships” even on symbolic and metaphoric levels, because “a purposeful analysis of such relationships broadens and deepens our understanding of how Pacific Islanders viewed the world and their place in it” (p. 22). To know our place in the world is to know our mo‘okū‘auhau, the role that it plays in our lives, and the role that we play in it.

A Hawaiian understanding of genealogy is about relationships; it is about connectedness, not only to one’s own family, but to the land and the larger environment as well. As educator Nālani Wilson-Hokowhitu (2012) understands it, “Mo‘okū‘auhau is fundamental to Hawaiian epistemology, to our Kanaka Maoli sense of knowing and being in

the universe” (p. 138). Further, it is about being able to locate yourself. This sense of placement comes with recognition of both rights and obligations. Through mo‘okū‘auhau, “Hawaiians saw [and see] our link to place, our role in history, and our sequence in genealogy” (Meyer, 2003, p. 144). This is why genealogical lines have been used politically and quite strategically for generations, particularly by chiefs justifying their status as rulers, and later by contemporary Hawaiians justifying their claims to land, place, and indigenous rights (Wilson-Hokowhitu, 2012, p. 141; Young, 1998, pp. 30-31). This is quite similar to what educationist James Graham (2005) states in terms of whakapapa and the Māori concept of tūrangawaewae, literally meaning “a place to stand” (p. 86). It is through our genealogies that we are linked to particular places and it is this sense of belonging that both affords us with rights and gives us certain responsibilities.

In the same chant that Mo‘ikeha’s navigator recited upon their arrival in Hawai‘i, there is mention of a significant figure in Hawaiian genealogies, one often regarded as a progenitor of not only the Hawaiian people but also the land upon which we reside. She is a figure often mentioned to stake claims to place: “He kanaka Hawai‘i...Na Papa i hanau” [Hawai‘i is a man...It was Papa who bore him] (Poepoe, 1906b, p. 1). There are many chants that reference Papa’s union with Wākea and her subsequent “birthing” of the Hawaiian Islands. However, in his analysis of these stories, historian Joseph Poepoe (1906c) states,

...i ka moolelo o ka Papa hanau ana mai i keia pae moku...ua kuhihewa kekahi poe, o ia mau hoike ana mai a na mele, no ko Papa hanau maoli ana mai ia i keia mau pae moku, oiai nae o ka mea pololei maoli he mau kuauhau ia e hoike ana i ko Papa hanau ana i kana mau keiki. (p. 1).

[...in the story regarding Papa’s birthing of this archipelago...some people have misinterpreted what is shown in these chants to be Papa’s actual delivery of the islands. However, in truth, these are genealogies revealing the birth of Papa’s [human] children.]

Papa herself was from Kahiki (Kamakau, 1866a, p. 1). Therefore, although her story is often used in conversations of rootedness—claiming that Hawaiians have always been here, that the islands were created first and Hawaiians birthed second, establishing a sibling relationship between land and people—the truth is that our genealogies include rootedness, or movement, leaving us “with a range of attachments to land and place—articulated old/new traditions of indigenous dwelling and traveling” (Clifford, 2013, p. 59). Te Punga Somerville (2012) explores similar issues in the Māori context, asking, “How do Māori articulate and

negotiate the rather difficult intersection between discourses of migration (we came from Hawaiki on waka [canoes]) and claims to indigeneity (we've always been here)?" (p. xxi).

Many contemporary Kānaka Maoli find themselves in the same position, particularly because of the social and political status of their people today. As geographer Kali Fermantez (2012) writes:

One of the incredible ironies for Native Hawaiians today is that we often find ourselves literally or figuratively out of place in our own homeland... I argue that all Native Hawaiians have experienced some kind of literal and/or figurative displacement given the physical and discursive dispossession of the last few centuries. We have been "dissed" —disrespected, disenfranchised, and disconnected. (p. 98)

In a context characterized by great cultural loss, genealogies can therefore be used strategically to assert a connection to place, which is essential in the process of replacing displaced natives. These connections to land can then be drawn upon to make statements about sovereignty and indigenous rights. Claiming to have always been here, for example, or to have descended from the woman who first birthed the islands and then the first humans to occupy them—siblings of those islands—is to claim a true sense of indigeneity, which should then afford you with certain rights. The term indigenous, as professor of medicine Kekuni Blaisdell (2005) explains, means "*rising within*" (p. 11). Thus, the question becomes: does Kahiki interfere with this notion? If Hawaiian origins reside in lands *outside* of Hawai'i, and not *within*, how does that affect our relationship to a particular place and our understanding of our roles and responsibilities to it? Furthermore, if mo'okū'auhau is indeed tied to a sense of obligation to the place that we descend from, what does it mean to be linked to an undefined place with origins in "ke kai kāwahawaha o ka Moana Pākīpika"?

In Hawai'i's current political and social context, it makes sense to focus more on roots than routes, or on the idea of "always being here" versus "coming from someplace else." Although Kānaka Maoli have many stories and genealogies, "There is not one accepted founding cosmological narrative of the Hawaiian world" (Kauanui, 2008, p. 43). Therefore, even though the "Kumulipo" and narratives involving Papa and Wākea have come to be prominent cosmological narratives remembered in the islands today, there are other stories that Kānaka Māoli can choose from when asked about their origins. This, of course, includes stories of migration. However, these latter memories are usually evoked for particular reasons and in specific contexts, not often those focusing on indigenous rights, land, and power. Therefore, although the existence of multiple narratives gives us choice, it also creates certain

tensions between roots and routes. As the history of Kahiki reveals, however, we can work with our genealogies to attempt to relieve them.

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, for example, interpretations of Kahiki as a Pacific homeland were reshaped and reinterpreted to fit the needs of the time. As Poepoe (1906g) argues in a serial newspaper column on history in Hawai‘i:

...ua manao ia he wahine o Papa mai na aina e mai; aole hoi ia no Hawaii nei. Ina nae e nana ia ka manao maoli o ka huaolelo o “Kahiki,” ma ka manao o ka poe kahiko, aole ia pili wale no i ka inoa aina, e like me Tahiti, a i ole e like paha me na aina e. Aka, he huaolelo pili o Kahiki, ma ka manao o ia poe, i kekahi kukulu o ka aina e like la me Kahiki-ku a me Kahiki-moe. O Kahiki-ku o ia no ka aoao hikina o ka aina kahi e puka mai ai ka La. A o Kahiki-moe hoi, o ia kahi e kapoo ai ka La. (p. 1)

[...it was believed that Papa was from other lands and not from Hawai‘i. However, if the true meaning of the term “Kahiki” is examined, considering the ideas of the ancient ones, then we will see that it was not simply associated with place names, like Tahiti, or even other lands. Rather, according to these people, Kahiki is a term associated with the cardinal points of the land, like Kahiki-ku and Kahiki-moe.

Kahiki-ku is the east side of the island, where the sun rises. And as for Kahiki-moe, it is where the sun sets.]

Poepoe builds on the terms “kū” and “moe,” meaning to “stand” and to “sleep” or to “lie down” respectively, to explain his use of Kahiki as an indicator of direction. Kahikikū is where the sun can rise and kū in the ao, or the light of day. And Kahikimoe is where the sun returns to moe in pō, the darkness.

Of great importance in Poepoe’s record is the fact that he was able to challenge notions of routedness, disputing the idea that our oldest ancestors came from afar, and incorporating concepts of rootedness by reframing his interpretation of Kahiki. One can only make assumptions as to what prompted this shift in understanding, or what motivated him to write about Kahiki in this way. A simple reading may indicate that Poepoe was an aloha ‘āina, a patriot and a supporter of the Hawaiian Kingdom, who may have presented a new understanding of Hawai‘i’s genealogical connections in order to push a nationalist agenda, one based on a sense of true indigeneity. However, complicating his article is the fact that he surprisingly became pro-annexationist in 1895 (Silva, 2009, p. 48).

Even in taking a stance that supposedly supported the eventual military occupation of Hawai‘i by America, however, Poepoe remained a staunch supporter of the Hawaiian

language, and worked tirelessly to record the knowledge and customs of his ancestors (Poepoe, 1905a). In fact, before publishing this piece in 1906, he joined the Home Rule political party, one founded by those who had previously fought against annexation (Silva, 2009, p. 49). Therefore, Poepoe's identity as a writer, editor, and politician was in no way fixed. Rather, it was varied, and like our own identities in the present, it was as shifting as the ocean that the famous Mo'ikeha once traversed. Therefore, to say that his piece was either pro-nationalist or pro-annexationist is to perhaps miss the point that at some moment in history he was moved and even felt empowered enough to reframe his understanding of Kahiki, arriving at a new level of understanding, one that he could use to strengthen his relationship with his home and his mo'okū'auhau. He became the middle of the bind, linking the past and the future, possibly searching to offset the displacement of himself and his people by twisting and working with the genealogy of ideas woven before him.

Although Kahiki changed, and although it may continue to change and take new shape as *we* work with it, it is clear that Kahiki will always be part our genealogy, no matter how obscure or undefined it may be. In fact, it is so much a part of our complex weave of 'aha, so tightly bound into our concepts of self and the way that we see the world, that we would be better to learn from it than to try and cut it away. As Mo'ikeha's navigator continued his chant aboard their canoe, he spoke about the metaphoric severing of Hawai'i from the rest of the Pacific:

Na pulapula aina i paekahi.

I nonoho like i ka hikina, komohana.

Pae like ka moku i lalani.

I hui aku, hui mai me Holani.

Puni ka moku o Kaialea ke kilo.

Naha Nuuhiwa, lele i Polapola.

O Kahiko ke kumu aina.

Nana i mahele kaawale na moku.

Moku ke aho lawaia a Kahai.

I oki ia e Kukanaloha.

Pauku na aina na moku

Moku i ka ohe kapu a Kanaloha. (Fornander, 1933, p. 2)

[The offspring of land appeared in a row.

Arranged evenly, from east to west.

The islands were positioned in a row.
Joining together with Hōlani.
Kaiale‘a, the navigator, went around the island.
Nu‘uhiwa was separated, flying to Borabora.
Kahiko was the source of the land.
It was he who separated the islands.
Cut is the fishing line of Kaha‘i.
Severed by Kūkanaloa.
Sectioned off are the lands, the islands.
Cut by the sacred bamboo knife of Kanaloa.]

While my contemporary mind may not be able to grasp all of the many layers of kaona, or hidden meaning, in this lengthy section of chant, I can focus on key names and concepts presented in it. First, there is the idea that Hawai‘i, as a line of islands, is joined together with Hōlani. Hōlani is defined as a mythical place, and therefore much like Kahiki, does not have a specific location (Pūku‘i & Elbert, 1986, p. 77). Thus, it is possible that the chant refers to a relationship with lands outside of Hawai‘i, like Hōlani, a location that could certainly fall into the category of places known collectively as Kahiki. Secondly, there are clear references to other places in the Pacific. Nu‘uhiwa, for example, is a reference to Nukuhiva in the Marquesas, and Polapola, a reference to Borabora in the Society Islands. The chant implies that they were once connected to Hawai‘i, this line of islands running in a row from east to west. Third, the islands were separated by Kanaloa¹⁶, known in Hawaiian history as the god of the ocean. Therefore, perhaps the severing of these islands and their separation was symbolic of the disconnection that comes with migration and movement. Perhaps it is not speaking about the physical separation of landmasses but more about the affected relationships between the people who lived and continue to live on them.

These relationships and subsequent separations have had great impacts on concepts of self and on the construction of—or perhaps also the avoidance of—personal, cultural, national, and even regional identities. To claim a common genealogy that links you to *one* defined place rather than to an entire region, for example, allows you to adopt a particular consciousness, one aimed at meeting the needs of the immediate location you are in and the

¹⁶ Although his history and his role is different in each location, Kanaloa—known as Tangaroa in Aotearoa, Tagaloa in Sāmoa, Tagaloa in Tonga, Taaroa in Tahiti, Tanaoa in the Marquesas, and Tangaroa in Mangaia, Cook Islands—is usually regarded as “one of the great deities of Polynesia, the Lord of the Ocean” (Tregear, 2014, pp. 463-464).

immediate population that you work with as opposed to a larger, almost unrestricted region of people, places, and migrations. However, as Hau'ofa (1998) argues for Pacific populations, there is value in both: in maintaining loyalties to place while also embracing a regional identity (p. 33). This identity, he explains, should be “grounded” in the ocean: “An identity that is grounded on something so vast as the sea is, should exercise our minds and rekindle in us the spirit that sent our ancestors to explore the oceanic unknown and make it their home, our home” (p. 33). His words therefore challenge islanders to be like the adventurous Mo'ikeha, to embrace our Pacific identities not only for the benefit of our own people at home but also for the betterment of *all* peoples in our wider home, the furrowed waters of the Pacific Ocean.

Nā Kuleana: Responsibilities

To accept a regional identity is to accept another strand of our mo'okū'auhau. It is to know that we are tied to more than just the lands upon which we stand, that the ocean connects rather than separates, and that we have kuleana, or obligations, to the region, no matter how vast and expansive it may be. In fact, the vastness of our ocean should empower us, and like strands added to the cord, it should strengthen us. If we bring fibers from each and every place in the Pacific and lash them to our growing genealogy, it will be that much thicker, will speak of that many more people, and will celebrate our connections and collective obligations to the region. An unfortunate reality of our Pacific people, as Hawaiian studies professor Jonathan Osorio (2010) explains, is that “Pacific Islanders are less and less in control of their own destiny as we become more integrated into the global economy” (p. 19). He argues that the hallmarks of many of our cultures—including emphasizing cooperation, honoring genealogies and relationships, and respecting the land and each other—are being “assaulted by the Euro-American ethos of individual achievement and profit” (p. 19). Thus, we have much to gain by remembering and *acting* upon our relationships.

Remembering our shared responsibility to the region, I believe, will help us to heal from those assaults. However, it must start with “ka hiki,” with the arrival inward to our kūpuna and our mo'okū'auhau. Lindsey (2006) argues that for Kānaka Maoli, empowerment and transformation begins with us: “If our current conditions are not what we want, then we must become the changes we seek. If what we want is an empowered Hawaiian nation, then we must first become strong in and of ourselves” (p. 13). The same goes for our regional connections. If we want an empowered Pacific, then we have to start with our people and

must remind them that it is possible to honor both roots and routes, for both and *all* are in our genealogies. This will encourage a shared sense of commitment and loyalty to not only our individual nations, but to a larger regional nation. Although “imagined” and created, that is the point (Anderson, 2006, p. 6). We have the ability to imagine a Pacific that is transformed.

This does not mean, however, that we must lose any sense of national identity or loyalty to our people. What it means is that we can use that sense of commitment to one nation and employ it to aid in nationalist movements elsewhere. It means that we can expand our efforts to protect the land we live on and the ocean surrounding our islands to also protect those of our ancestral homelands in the wider Pacific Ocean. However, it is up to us, as Hau‘ofa (1998) further argues, to do so *actively* with purpose:

...in order to give substance to a common regional identity and animate it, we must tie history and culture to empirical reality and practical action. This is not new; our ancestors wrote our histories on the landscapes and the seascape; carved, stenciled and wove our metaphors on objects of utility; and sang and danced in rituals and ceremonies for the propitiation of the awesome forces of nature and society. (pp. 406-407)

In other words, we must continue to bind our existence to this region through actively lashing, weaving, and working with strands: strands of history, language, culture and politics, roots *and* routes. Our regional identity cannot be nominal. It must be functional, as it must push us to act for the empowerment and the transformation of our entire region.

One such figure who perhaps embraced that shared regional identity in the early twentieth century was John Tamatoa Baker, a part-Hawaiian, part-Tahitian, part-Caucasian supporter of the Hawaiian Kingdom who also served as governor of the Big Island of Hawai‘i. In his dissertation on Kahiki and the relationships between Hawaiians and other Pacific Islanders during this period, Cook (2011) writes:

In 1907, halfway between annexation and World War I, John T. Baker left Hawai‘i to tour Polynesia... He was concerned by the weakness of a *lāhui* [nation] divided by colonial politics, the wellbeing and status of Native Hawaiians in a plantation economy, and the ability of the *lāhui* to retain the cultural ties that bound them together in an American imperial culture hostile to the very existence of Natives. The voyage allowed Baker to put these issues into a much broader context...of a much larger Polynesian *lāhui*, connected and validated by shared culture, values, colonial contexts, and relationships to the land. (p. 334)

During Baker’s Polynesian tour of Tahiti, Fiji, Rarotonga, Aotearoa, Sāmoa, and Tonga, Cook (2012) argues that he attempted to draw on the strength of a regional identity. Like Mo‘ikeha before him, he traveled between Hawai‘i and Kahiki, maintaining relationships and memories of his home while exploring and learning from the larger ocean.

Before departing Aotearoa and heading to Tonga, Baker celebrated these relationships, gifting some of his hosts with “a number of Hawaiian songs that spoke of the Hawaiian connection to Kahiki, which were published in Hawaiian and Māori” (Cook, 2011, p. 344). Following the printing of an interview that he gave with the Gisborne-based Māori language newspaper, *Te Pipiwharauoa* in October of 1907, three oral traditions were printed in the following issue, the first of them being the very chant that Kamahualele chanted aboard Mo‘ikeha’s canoe as they arrived outside of Hilo, on the Island of Hawai‘i:

Eia Hawaii, he moku he kanaka,
Anei Hawaii, he moku, he tangata,
He kanaka Hawaii—E!
He tangata Hawaii—E!
He kanaka Hawaii,
He tangata Hawaii,
He kama ka Kahiki,
*He tama na Tahiti.*¹⁷ (Tipiwhenua, 1907, p. 4)

In giving this chant to his Māori hosts, Baker extended the life of not only Mo‘ikeha’s story but of Kahiki as well. Through his travels, these words also traveled, migrating across the Pacific. On the pages of *Te Pipiwharauoa*, they appeared in two indigenous languages of the region without English as an intermediary.

Therefore, for contemporary Hawaiians and Māori, and for other Islanders as well, the printing of this mele was a powerful act. As Veincent (2014) clarifies, for contemporary Islanders, revisiting the languages and the ideas of our ancestors holds great potential:

We are now faced with globalized issues such as cultural loss and language assimilation, climate change, rising tides, fresh food deserts, fish depletion, soil erosion, water quality, and peak oil. Our way of life and our very existence in the Pacific is threatened. As *mana moana* we are bound by a collective regard and internal responsibility to perpetuate our knowledge systems so that we are in fact maintaining the key pillars that have allowed us to thrive and sustain ourselves in our

¹⁷ I have not provided a translation for these lines since the Hawaiian language lines have been translated in a previous part of this chapter and the Māori language lines are an interpretation of the Hawaiian.

ocean homeland for thousands of years. Our language holds this knowing. Our people hold these practices. (p. 3)

We have much to learn from the way our ancestors articulated their experiences and the ways that they understood their world. We have much to learn from their actions. As people of this Pacific Ocean, we must remember, for example, that we are each “he kama na Kahiki,” each “a child of Kahiki.” Therefore, perhaps Baker’s intention was to remind people of that. Over one hundred years later, his travels, lashed together with the chant of Kamahualele and the multiple interpretations and recitations of Kahiki, continue to remind us of that relationship. Thus, we cannot continue to stand upon our shores alone, staring at the ocean as that metaphoric knife that severed our islands and people, but must find ways to traverse it once again, whether in words and texts, in dance and chant, or in art and scholarship.

Beginning with our own work as Pacific scholars, we can start this process by changing the way that we work *with* and *in* the region. In recent history, we have witnessed the result of separation, or the cutting apart of the islands with Kanaloa’s bamboo knife: relationships to Kahiki have been strained and even difficult to maintain. In fact, once concepts of rootedness began to take precedence over those of routedness, the relationship may have even been neglected. Further, I would even argue that modern movements to remember roots can and do often challenge those movements that seek to honor routes, resulting in tensions that we must be aware of. In academia, the disciplines of Hawaiian Studies and Pacific Studies are prime examples of this. As Pacific Studies scholar Teresia Teaiwa (2010a) states,

...it is time to acknowledge that Hawaiian Studies, Maori Studies, and other such projects are more aptly described as Native or Indigenous Studies rather than Pacific Studies and that the differences between Native Studies and Pacific Studies are not just in the geographic or demographic objects of study, but in the ideological underpinnings as well... nationalistic ethnocentrism is more likely to emerge from Native Studies than from Pacific Studies. (p. 115)

My own work is at the intersection of these disciplines. It is where my nationalistic sentiments and my stance as an aloha ‘āina can intertwine with my desire to make this work relevant both in and out of Hawai‘i.

Though Pacific Studies as a field is still quite undefined, and is about as fluid as the furrowed ocean that Mo‘ikeha once traversed, it certainly is not concerned with one nation or one people alone, without looking at the relationship that these people have with the larger

Pacific. Native Studies programs, on the other hand, can sometimes focus so intently on one area that relationships with the region are secondary, if and when acknowledged at all. Therefore, although my work focuses on Hawai‘i and Hawaiian concepts, it is done so with the intention of always linking back to Kahiki. It is my link to Hawai‘i, my metaphoric “place to stand,” or as Hau‘ofa (2008) phrases it, the “piece of earth to which I belong,” that motivates this work (pp. 76-77). In fact, it is this sense of belonging that makes this type of research and scholarship a responsibility. However, at the same time, it is the genealogy that I am a part of, the one that includes the place and concept of Kahiki that necessitates my continual examination of Hawai‘i *within* the larger context of the Pacific. Examined genealogically, just as we would not be here without our ancestors, there would be no Hawai‘i without Kahiki. Therefore, my right and my responsibility is to work at the intersection of these disciplines, in the *vā*, nurturing and strengthening the relationship between with reason and purpose.

Unfortunately, Kānaka Maoli are so accustomed to maintaining relationships with actual places and people that we may no longer know what it means to remain connected to a non-specific place. What are our obligations, for example, to Kahiki, a mysterious entity with no clear form, no visible body, and no defined ground to stand upon? The story of Papa, a prominent figure in Kamahualele’s chant, is often evoked as a means of reminding Kānaka Maoli of our responsibility to care for the land upon which we stand—Papa being celebrated as the “earth mother” from which we came, and the land being regarded as our older sibling (Young, 1998, p. 29). Kahiki challenges this, forcing us to consider that we are not only accountable to the land, but to the entire region, the sea included.

In his “rethinking” of the past, Young (1998) states, “It is the traditional consciousness that ocean is an extension of island. From shoreline to horizon, ocean is definable as ‘homeland’” (p. 4). This perspective is supported by the Hawaiian value of ‘eko‘a, or opposites, a poetic device often employed in old chants, songs, and prayers. Common references are made to linked pairs like ‘āina/moana (land/ocean), uka/kai (upland/sea shore), luna/lalo (up/down), or loko/waho (inside/outside). However, as Charlot (2005) explains, “In Hawaiian literature, pairs of opposites are often used to express completeness” (p. 255). Therefore, I would argue that this is similar to the relationship between Hawai‘i and Kahiki. It is not an us/them binary, or the concept of “here” being separate from “out there.” Rather, evoking Hawai‘i and Kahiki in the same space is about looking at our worlds holistically. Kahiki is what completes us: there is no Kahiki without

Hawai‘i, and vice versa. Therefore, for Kānaka Maoli, Kahiki may be a way of connecting to and maintaining a relationship with the larger Pacific Ocean. We come from the ocean and the ocean is *in* us (Hau‘ofa, 1998). It is the region that makes us complete. Therefore, we are obligated to it.

As Kamahualele demonstrated aboard Mo‘ikeha’s canoe, perhaps our responsibility is to nurture the relationship by honoring it and by continually acknowledging Kahiki’s place *in* our lives and in our world. The chant, for example, celebrated Kahiki as a parent, without whom life would not exist in Hawai‘i. It was then used to explain what was an event, or an experience, that greatly impacted those aboard: the separation of people from their homelands. The use of this single concept, and the way that it was changed to meet the needs of people at different points of history—people who needed the language to explain their experiences—gives Kahiki new life in each generation, ensuring that it is remembered. In the Tongan context, anthropologist Tevita O Ka‘ili (2005) examines the concept of *vā*, which is “the space between” people or things. As he explains, this “space” must be nurtured, and in the Tongan practice of “*tauhi vā*,” we must work to keep good relations with other people and places that we are connected to genealogically, no matter how separate we may be from them in space or time (p. 92). The conscious reference to our genealogies, as demonstrated in the deliberate incorporation of Kahiki into the way Hawaiians articulated their existence through time, helps to remember and add to it.

What this teaches us is that there is a need to maintain these old relationships and that we must always remember our mo‘okū‘auhau. Using the concept of *vā*, the ocean that seems to separate the islands and their people—severing ties like the sacred bamboo knife of Kanaloa—is actually what connects them. However, I would argue that maintaining a relationship with Kahiki, even after generations of separation and even when the specificity of Kahiki has been obscured, does not mean that we have to give up our nationalism, or that we have to deny our connections to specific places. Rather, I think it means that we have to continue to learn from these relationship, to see how Kahiki—meaning how other places in the Pacific—can help us to continually make sense of our experiences, and vice versa. For example, how can this thesis be bound together with work being done in other parts of the region, not to simply celebrate possible commonalities, but to also look at key differences and to explore what those differences reveal about our epistemologies, our specific cultural values, and our unique experiences as people who are connected, but who have also lived separately for generations?

I study Kahiki because I feel obligated to the region, to the same waters that Mo'ikeha traversed, and the same waters that link our islands. However, I do so knowing that I have chosen to intertwine my ideas with *certain* portions of my genealogy. In other words, while I know that Kahiki can be used to refer to any and all lands outside of Hawai'i, my political and social experiences as a contemporary Kanaka Maoli have encouraged me to revisit older interpretations of the concept to see if I can effectively use them to empower my people and our Pacific relations today. This does not mean that I have rejected the genealogy of this term, or that I have strategically forgotten that Kahiki has a history that was once tightly bound to colonial agendas. Rather, I have used that to inform my current understanding and to speak to *how* and *why* I see Kahiki as I do today: as a concept it must do what it always has done; it must speak to our experiences. It must have value so that it will be maintained, twisted and knotted with new ideas far into the future. The point is that the genealogy, like the sennit cord, must never have an end. My ideas will not be the end, and they should not be. If fact, if work like this helps to empower our people in any small way, then Kahiki *will* change again as future generations transform. It will be reinterpreted and rearticulated to fit and explain new times. The point, however, is that this tight bind—or this constantly evolving mo'okū'auhau that twists and turns and ties tightly—provide the motivation and perhaps even the opportunity for those of the future to do as Mo'ikeha once did: to travel upon the furrowed waters of the Pacific Ocean, courageously facing the waves as they sometimes crash and sometimes embrace, bringing their concepts with them to new shores.

CHAPTER 2
Hānau Kahikikū, Kahikimoe: Born is Kahikikū, Kahikimoe
Layering the Literature of our Ancestors

E hoi oe i Kahiki a e hoouna mai oe i ka poe pono i Hawaii nei e ao i ka'u poe keiki i ka
palapala.

[Return to Kahiki and send the proper people here to Hawai'i to teach my children how to
write.]

When noted Hawaiian scholar Joseph Poepoe (1906e)¹⁸ wrote a biography of Kamehameha I, the famed Na'i Aupuni, or Nation Conqueror—for whom the newspaper that Poepoe contributed to was named—he relied upon the very skill of palapala, or the art of writing, that Kamehameha once requested be brought from Kahiki, or from lands beyond their shores (p. 1). Thus, in his own work as a writer and as a newspaper editor he used the ability to transfer thought and memory to print, a valuable skill that the high chief himself was said to have desired years before. According to Poepoe's account, it was when the British Captain George Vancouver left Hawai'i after his third visit to the islands in 1793 that Kamehameha demanded the captain send able teachers to instruct his “children,” meaning his nation, how to write. Thus, Poepoe's text presents a telling meeting of times, technologies, and perspectives. As a writer, he records his rendition of a conversation between a high chief and his foreign advisor and friend. His text, however, is the result of an introduced medium that Kamehameha had welcomed more than a hundred years prior. What his work represents, therefore, and what this chapter will hopefully reiterate, is how—to borrow a phrase by professor of Canadian literature, Renée Hulan and Native Studies professor, Renate Eigenbrod (2008)—the “layering” of voices, including those written, spoken, and remembered, promoted the creation of a nineteenth century literature aimed at particular nationalistic agendas (p. 11).

¹⁸ Note that there is some uncertainty regarding the authorship of this particular text. Some believe it to have been written by Joseph Poepoe, the editor of the newspaper in which it was printed. (Kuwada, 2009, p. 61). He was himself a prolific writer and contributor to the newspaper. Others believe it to be Ho'oulumāhiehe who wrote a version of the story of Hi'iakaikapoliopole—the younger sister of Pele, the famed goddess of the volcano—which was printed in the same newspaper (Silva, 2010, p. 240). Ho'oulumāhiehe claims ownership of the Kamehameha text in a small note printed at the closing of another story printed in *Ka Na'i Aupuni* (Hoouluamahiehe, 1906, p. 3). My decision to cite Poepoe as the author of this text, however, comes from my involvement with a project aimed at translating the biography into English. Although we may never be completely certain about the authorship of this text, our team of translators acknowledged a theory that Ho'oulumāhiehe is a pseudonym for Joseph Poepoe and therefore refer to Poepoe as the author.

When printing of the serial biography began in 1905 in the inaugural issue of the newspaper, *Ka Na'i Aupuni*, the editorial team commented on the name of their paper and the man for whom it was named. They made remarks about his accomplishments, including his unification of the Hawaiian Islands under a single rule, and used his leadership as a model for all Kānaka Maoli to follow. They did what our people have always done, or as Hawaiian language translator Bryan Kamaoli Kuwada (2009) explains, they “looked to the stories of their ancestors’ lives for direction in their own lives” (p. 54). More specifically, they looked to Kamehameha I as an example for how to live and advance in their own time:

Ua hala o Kamehameha, aka o na mamo a ka lahui kanaka i hoolokahi ia ai e kona puuwai koa a wiwo ole hoi, eia no ia ke ola nei a ke puka nei no i keia wa. Aole i pau. Ua pau ka Kamehameha mau hakoko ana me kana mau ihe laumeki—ua pau kana oniu ana i kana pololu—ua hoomaha i ka moe kau a hooilo kana mau hooikaika ana, a o ka hana i keia wa, ua ili ihola ma luna o ka lahui Hawaii o keia mau la e nee nei. Na ka lahui o keia wa e na'i i aupuni no lakou—na ka lahui o nei manawa e hakoko i nohona no lakou—a na lakou no hoi e paio aku...("Ka na'i aupuni," 1905, p. 2)
[Kamehameha has passed, but the descendants of the nation of people united by his brave and fearless heart continue to live and emerge in this time. They are not gone. Kamehameha's fighting with his barbed spears is over—the whirling of his long spear is finished—his struggles have been put to rest as if hibernating in winter, and as for the work of today, it has fallen upon the Hawaiian nation of this time. Today's people will conquer a nation for themselves—it is today's people who will battle for their own existence—it is they who will fight...]

Those publishing the newspaper knew that their struggles were different from those of the famed warrior and leader who fought with weapons and who sought the counsel of gods, priests, and prophets during his rule. They knew that their lives did, and would, present them with new situations and issues not experienced by Kamehameha himself. Yet, they maintained that like the *Na'i Aupuni* before them that their kuleana, or responsibility, was to secure a nation for themselves, one that would ensure their continued existence. Thus, they positioned themselves as a “wahaolelo hou o ka lahui,” or as a new mouthpiece for the nation, one that would continue to fight, not with spears in battle, but with the skill of palapala (p. 2).

The printing of this particular biography, for example, was done with purpose. It was not simply to record the life and achievements of one of Hawai'i's most illustrious chiefs.

Rather, as Poepoe (1905b) explains, it was done with the hope that those reading would consider Kamehameha I to be equal in strength and fame to other great leaders in history, including Alexander the Great, Julius Caesar, Napoleon Bonaparte, and George Washington (p. 1). Further, it was to establish him as someone with international appeal, someone who more than just Kānaka Maoli could find interesting or even inspiring:

Ua olelo ia, ma waena o na kanaka a pau e noho ana ma luna o na mokupuni liilii o ka Polonesia e hoea ana hoi i na ailana o Malaea e hapapa aku no i na kaiaulu o Asia, aole i ike ia kekahi kanaka nona na kulana kamahao a kupanaha o ke ola e like me ke alii nona keia moolelo, o ia hoi o Kamehameha I. (p. 1)

[It is said that between all of the people living on the small islands of Polynesia, extending all the way to the islands of Malay, and reaching out to the communities of Asia, that there is not known another man whose status is as extraordinary and as astonishing as the chief for whom this story is told, that being Kamehameha I.]

Thus, more than just celebrating the life of a famous chief, it seems that the biography could serve a larger function: to centralize the stories of our ancestors, and our ancestors themselves, as relevant and purposeful guides for the present and the future. Moreover, following in the legacy of Kamehameha himself, famed in history for uniting the islands, the act of writing his story down and “layering” it with contemporary voices could encourage and support a deep sense of communion and a dedication to the lāhui, or nation, something that professor of International Studies Benedict Anderson (2006) argues is indicative of nationalism.

Kamehameha I saw the value of new technologies, including that of writing. Thus, his simple request before Captain George Vancouver proved that he was a man who looked ahead, one who anticipated the potential changes to be experienced in years to come, and who therefore made preparations for them. This perhaps influenced his son, Kauikeaouli (Kamehameha III, who ruled from 1825 to 1854) who years later declared, “He aupuni palapala ko‘u,” meaning “Mine is a nation of literacy.”¹⁹ His statement suggests, as political scientist Noelani Goodyear-Ka‘ōpua (2013) states, that “education and literacy were seen as critical elements of a modern Hawaiian nationhood and subjecthood” (p. 16). Thus, Poepoe’s inclusion of Kamehameha’s conversation within his written account resulted in the layering of multiple voices, both written and spoken, which together could encourage kānaka of the

¹⁹ A longer version of this ‘ōlelo no‘eau states, “He aupuni palapala ko‘u; ‘o ke kanaka pono ‘o ia ko‘u kanaka.” Pūku‘i (1983) translates this to mean “Mine is the kingdom of education; the righteous man is my man” (p. 64).

time to not only value palapala, but to use it as a means of conquering a nation for themselves.

Although the introduction of writing after his death in 1819 resulted in dramatic change, both positive and negative, Kamehameha's foresight at least demonstrated that we could learn new technologies and eventually come to use them to our advantage. Poepoe, for instance, used the medium of writing to push particular agendas. Although print was initially introduced and used by missionaries to convert Hawaiians to Christianity—and although the earliest Hawaiian language newspapers were certainly established to support a missionizing agenda—Kānaka Maoli did come to embrace this technology as a means of empowering their people (Nogelmeier, 2010, pp. 76-77; Silva, 2004c, p. 32). Publishing a biography about a noted chief, for example, one whose life ended nearly a hundred years before, was done to urge Hawaiians to value their language, stories, and people. This, I would argue, supported a growing sense of nationalism in the nineteenth century, and furthermore, continues to inspire a strong sense of commitment to the lāhui today.

As a “wahaolelo,” or a mouthpiece for his nation, Poepoe (1905a), for instance, discusses the incompetence of the younger generation and how writing could help to counter the decline of cultural competency and historical knowledge witnessed in his time:

Ua ike ia o ka Lahui Hawaii opio o ke au hou e nee nei, aole loa i paa ia lakou ka moolelo o ko lakou lahui iho... ua nele maoli no kakou i ka moolelo e apo koke mai ai la hoi na opio o ka aina i lilo ai lakou he mau lua huna waiwai e hoomomoa ia ai ka moolelo aloha o ko kakou aina kulaiwi nani. (p. 2)

[We have seen, in terms of the youth of today's Hawaiian nation, that they do not know the history of their own people... we are completely lacking in a history that the youth of this land can readily grasp so that they may become repositories in whom the beloved stories of our great ancestral land may be protected.]

His comments were intended to encourage a new generation of Kānaka Maoli to not only know their history but to read the newspaper and to use it as a means of connecting to, and learning about, their ancestors, both recent and distant. His writing therefore expressed a sense of urgency, a need to record the past in order to maintain it. However, as touched upon in the Introduction, and as will be explored in this chapter, the act of writing involved a process of interpretation and analysis, further supporting the idea that we not only learn *about* the past but construct and reconstruct it in the present. Palapala, the skill that Kamehameha

requested, helped Kānaka Maoli to build the past in meaningful ways, and further, to lay their voices upon those of the past as they thought about and prepared for the future.

It was this layering of voices, and more so, the ability that those of the present have to “add their own culture-specific layer,” that led me to choose the title of this chapter (Hulan & Eigenbrod, 2008, p. 11). The line “Hānau Kahikikū, Kahikimoe,” or “Born is Kahikikū, Kahikimoe,” comes from a mele, or chant, that speaks of the birth of the islands and therefore, the creation of our world. According to noted nineteenth century historian David Malo (n.d.), this line tells of the emergence of two layers of the atmosphere above earth: “‘O kahi mai ka honua aku, a mai ka moana aku, e moe aku ana ma ka nānā ‘ana aku a ka maka, a pili aku i ka ‘alihi aouli, ua kapa ‘ia ‘o Kahiki-moe ia pō‘ai” [As for the area extending outward from the land and outward from the sea, laying where the eye traces the edge of the sky, this circle is called Kahiki-moe] (p. 12). And further, “‘o ka ‘alihi aouli e hui ana me ka ‘alihi moana e pi‘i a‘e ana i luna, ua kapa ‘ia aku o Kahiki-kū ia pō‘ai” [as for where the edge of the sky meets with the edge of the sea, the portion just above this is called Kahiki-kū] (p. 12). Kahikimoe can therefore be interpreted as the horizon, and Kahikikū, as the space of sky just above it (Pūku‘i & Elbert, 1986, p. 112). Although interpretations of these zones sometimes disagree—in fact, as discussed in the previous chapter, Poepoe (1906g) believed that Kahikikū and Kahikimoe were the names for two cardinal points, Kahikikū being where the sun rises, or stands, in the east, and Kahikimoe being where the sun sets, or lays down, in the west²⁰—there seems to be some level of agreement that they refer to spaces that although not tangible, seem to define “the limits of the visible from the Hawaiian archipelago” (Valeri, 1985, p. 9).

The root word in these two layers of the atmosphere—or as Hawaiian studies professor Kekuewa Kikiloi (2010) interprets them, these two points that “highlight boundaries that stretch to both east and west horizons”—is “Kahiki” (p. 87). As explored in previous portions of this thesis, Kahiki is a complex term that was used in past generations to explain everything from ancestral origins in the Pacific to the existence of people and places beyond our sea of islands. Furthermore, as anthropologist Valerio Valeri (1985) argues, Kahiki refers to “all that is distant in time and space” (p. 8). Thus, the names Kahikikū and Kahikimoe contain that same idea of “distance,” or of being “out there” and thus perhaps mark a boundary between what is visible from the Hawaiian Islands—all the way to the

²⁰ The two suffixes “kū” and “moe” mean to stand and to sleep or to lie down respectively. Thus, they are being interpreted, at least in the case of Poepoe’s writing, as indicators of what the sun does at different cardinal points.

horizon and the levels of the sky above it—and all that is not visible beyond those boundaries, located somewhere in “Kahiki”. Not being visible, however, does not imply a lack of knowledge or understanding. Kānaka Maoli, for instance, maintained memories of Kahiki long after they left it. After inter-archipelago travel ceased, Kahiki then became the “invisible place out of which come the gods, ancestors, regalia, edible plants, and ritual institutions—the life of Hawaiians and the means to reproduce it” (Valeri, 1985, p. 8). Therefore, although it may not have been seen, it was *known* as a sacred space residing beyond the edge of the sea and sky, beyond Kahikimoe, lying flat on the horizon, and Kahikikū, standing just above it.

Important in the line of chant that I have chosen is the fact that these two layers of the atmosphere are birthed; they are created. According to the mele, it is Papa herself, the woman credited with giving birth to the Hawaiian Islands, who first creates these regions:

A [o] Wakea o Kahikoluamea—a—e
 O Papa, o Papa-hanau-moku ka wahine
 Hanau Kahiki-ku, Kahiki-moe
 Hanau Keapapanuu
 Hanau Hawai‘i, he moku makahiapo
 He keiki maka-hiapo a laua (Poepoe, 1906f, p. 1)
 [And it was Wākea of Kahikoluamea
 Papa, Papahānaumoku was the woman
 Born was Kahikikū, Kahikimoe
 Born was Ke‘āpapanu‘u²¹
 Born was Hawai‘i, a first-born child
 It was their eldest child]

In terms of birth order, Kahikikū and Kahikimoe are older than the islands themselves, establishing the idea that their creation marked the limits of the visible world for a Hawaiian standing upon the land and therefore formed the space within which Hawai‘i itself could exist. Thus, the title of this chapter takes inspiration from this line of chant because it represents all that can occur—or all that can be birthed, constructed, or created—when we are

²¹ Ke‘āpapanu‘u may be another name for what Pūku‘i and Elbert (1986) refer to as Kahiki-ka-papa-nu‘u, or the layer of the atmosphere positioned above Kahikikū. In other versions of this mele, or chant, this line is then followed by “Hānau Ke‘āpapalani,” which could be another name for Kahiki-ka-papa-lani, the layer of the atmosphere above Ke‘āpapanu‘u (p. 112). Poepoe’s version, for some reason, does not include this line. Above Kahiki-ka-papa-nu‘u is Kahiki-kapu-i-Hōlani-ke-ku‘ina (Malo, n.d., p. 12; Pūku‘i & Elbert, 1986, p. 112). Please note that there are other variants of these names, including Kahikiike‘āpapanu‘u and Kahikiike‘āpapalani (Manu, 1884, p. 1).

aware of the spaces in which we work, and further, of the positions that we consciously take as we look out towards the horizon of our worlds and consider our relationship with all that is “beyond.” This, I would argue, can be instrumental in focusing our approach towards analyzing Hawaiian language literature, particularly that which was created in times before our birth, or times that although we may not have “seen” or experienced ourselves, can continue to influence our lives.

Additionally, Kahikikū and Kahikimoe, in their very nature as layers of the atmosphere, stand as a metaphor for the layering of voices seen in Hawaiian language literature of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. They build upon and support each other. However, because there are no clear lines drawn across the sky, these layers—along with other identified levels of the atmosphere, including Kahikiike‘āpapanu‘u, Kahikiike‘āpapalani, and Kahikikapuihōlanikeku‘ina—seem to blur into one another. The literature produced in previous generations reflects this. As Hulan and Eigenbrod (2008) explain, “The process of writing down oral stories adds layers of meaning through recording, transcribing, translating and editing for the page” (p. 7). Consequently, the Hawaiian language literature that we read today is a stacking of representations, interpretations and translations. Therefore, like the multiple levels of Kahiki, all with somewhat indistinct borders, so too can the layers of literature be blurred, making it somewhat difficult to determine the “redactional activity” of each writer, or more specifically, what was added, reordered, or adjusted by each person who engaged with a particular text and re-presented it through time (Charlot, 1977, p. 479). Therefore, examining this type of literature requires that we attempt to look at the multiple layers, trying to un-stack them, moving them around to see each one for what it contributes to the overall story being told and what it reveals about the times and spaces in which it was created.

Using Kahikikū and Kahikimoe as a metaphor for looking at this rich literature can also serve other functions. Although they appear to be somewhat fixed, these layers of the atmosphere are flexible. After all, their position depends on where *we* are at any given moment. The zone of Kahikimoe positioned at the horizon, for example, moves as we move. With each step towards it, it moves further away, shifting spaces and perspectives. Thus, I would argue that viewing our literature as a layering of voices, like the layering of the sky, is productive in that it also encourages us to push boundaries, to *move* ourselves so that the limits of our thinking may also be pushed and challenged. One way to push ourselves is to remember, as Pacific Studies scholar Teresia Teaiwa (2010b) notes, that Pacific literature did

not evolve from orature alone (p. 734). In other words, it has other roots in the visual, or in stories that were tapped, carved, woven, painted, or scarred. Therefore, as she further argues, “Liberating Pacific literature from a singular and oral genealogical origin opens it up to multiple sources of inspiration and diverse forms of engagement” (p. 731).

Thus, although much of our Hawaiian language literature, like Poepoe’s text, seems to reflect a layering of oral and written voices alone, there are other roots of knowledge that should be considered. This includes what Goodyear-Ka’ōpua (2013) calls “land-centered literacies,” which essentially push the boundaries of “outmoded understandings of literacy as simply about reading and writing printed text” (p. 34). In other words, our kūpuna were literate in so many other ways: reading the stars, sky, and clouds, and reading the landscape and seascape. I would even argue that such “literacies” extend to the reading of dreams, visions, and ancestral memories. Accepting the idea that these literacies also influenced the written texts that were produced therefore encourages us to engage with this literature in new ways.

Reading and understanding the name Kahiki, for example, urges us to remember that the simple mention of a single name evokes all of the intergenerational knowledge embedded in it (Goodyear-Ka’ōpua, 2013, p. 189). Names, after all, often told the stories of a particular location, or honored some of the events or people connected to that place. According to Kikiloi (2010), “Place names therefore are important reference points, which can prompt dormant memories to be remembered” (p. 79). Thus, Poepoe’s recording of Kamehameha’s request that the skill of palapala be brought from Kahiki, not only layers a written text onto an oral account, but also onto another type of place-based “text”. This expands the possibilities of our engagement with Kamehameha’s short statement in front of Captain George Vancouver. As the Introduction emphasized, perhaps palapala was to become another source of “life” found in Kahiki. As this small example hopefully demonstrates, recognizing the sometimes unspoken layers of our literature pushes the boundaries of our own thinking, broadening the potential scope of our stories.

This chapter will therefore present a possible approach for examining some of the rich Hawaiian language texts created in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, particularly in the Hawaiian language newspapers that were printed between 1834 and 1948. According to political scientist, Noenoe Silva (2008), in this span of a little more than a hundred years, Hawaiians produced knowledge, opinions, literature, political and religious discourse, and debates in print, leaving an extensive archive, including nearly 80 newspapers

now preserved on microfilm and digitally, and an uncounted number of books. It is time we find out who these Hawaiian writers were and how they influenced history in our land. (p. 108)

In the following sections I will therefore move through the layers of the atmosphere, starting at the horizon and traveling upwards, taking small moments to pause somewhere the *vā*, or in middle of each individual space, seeing what I can learn from each one. It is my hope to take a Hawaiian perspective of the world and to use it as a means of exploring the world of creation captured by palapala and to engage with some of the many-layered voices and sources of inspiration that can be found at each level.

As I read and engage with these texts contemporarily, I am aware of my own layering, or of how my thesis will add new interpretive layers onto older texts. Therefore, I do this work cautiously and aware, even, of the potential damage that can be done in the process (Hulan & Eigenbrod, 2008, p. 7). While I stress the existence of a nationalistic agenda in nineteenth century texts, for example, I am careful not to quickly resort to a postcolonial lens for analyzing this literature contemporarily. As filmmaker and professor of Indigenous literature Tasha Hubbard (2008) explains, “there is often emphasis in postcolonial discourse on Indigenous writers ‘writing back’ or responding directly to colonialism and dominance of Western thought” (p. 141). Such an approach can suggest that our literature may only exist as a response to colonialism (p. 143). Therefore, while I do incorporate postcolonial theory into my own contemporary readings, I also try to resist the temptation to view nineteenth century nationalistic literature through this lens *alone* and attempt to look at it through Indigenous values and perspectives as well. Thus, I invite readers to think beyond the page, beyond the boundaries of the visible, to imagine all that this rich literature meant to those who once engaged with it and all that it continues to mean to not only contemporary Kānaka Maoli but even to those from nations abroad. Furthermore, I invite them to position themselves *in* the literature, finding the ways that it can inform, define, and create our worlds as we stand upon the land, gazing outward to Kahikikū, Kahikimoe, and beyond.

Kahikimoe: Prostrate Kahiki

In an attempt to use Kahikikū and Kahikimoe as a guide for literary analysis, I will return to the root of their names, “Kahiki,” and more specifically to a series of stories recounting travel to and from this mysterious location. The printed texts that I will examine were produced by one of the most noted Kanaka Maoli scholars of the nineteenth century, Samuel Mānaiakalani

Kamakau, and were printed in the Hawaiian language newspaper, *Ka Nupepa Kuokoa*, in 1866. Although my analysis uses these nineteenth century texts as a base, my examination will take me through multiple layers as I also attempt to identify some of the older sources of inspiration embedded into these texts, some of the new nationalistic layers added on by Kamakau, and then even some of the contemporary layers offered by modern scholars who have engaged with these texts in recent times. As I cannot deny my own position as the one examining this literature, I will also turn a reflexive gaze on to myself, looking at what I draw from this literature today and why.

Before moving through these layers, and pushing their boundaries, we must first briefly look at the Hawaiian language newspapers and their place in history. Between the years 1834 and 1948, Hawaiian language newspapers were printed and distributed in the islands. The earliest newspapers, however, were mission controlled. In fact, up until 1850, “American Protestant missionaries ran the only Hawaiian language press,” thus drastically impacting the type of material that was printed and the agendas that they pushed (Chapin, 1984, p. 51). This early period of the newspaper production was nevertheless fruitful, with some of the first Kānaka Maoli scholars beginning to emerge and use the newspapers as a vehicle for translating their knowledge to print during shifting times:

In this same period, the lāhui Hawaii [Hawaiian nation] was experiencing severe decimation as the result of epidemics and other abrupt changes in lifestyles. The old rules (*kapu*) did not always fit into this new situation. The writers for the newspapers saw opportunities to pass on and preserve knowledge in print. They also created new knowledge, new rules, and new genres of writing in their individual works and, more importantly perhaps, through printed debate and argumentation. (Silva, 2008, p. 107)

In the 1860s a native press was established and the amount of cultural knowledge shared by Kānaka Maoli writers grew. New newspapers provided even more opportunities for them to engage “crucial questions about culture, knowledge, and politics” and to share their views with larger audiences (Silva, 2008, p. 107). Writers whose voices may have been somewhat stifled by the missionizing agenda of the earlier newspapers were then able to truly write *for* and *about* themselves, using palapala as a means of engaging the nation. According to Anderson (2006) print “made it possible for rapidly growing numbers of people to think about themselves, and to relate themselves to others, in profoundly new ways” (p. 36). Thus, although the writers may not have ever met or known their readers, they were able to speak to

them, sharing their views, and promoting a sense of belonging to the same nation spread across districts and islands.

Similar to movements occurring in other parts of the world, scholars of the time embraced writing as a way to maintain and preserve their stories, especially when “repositories of oral tradition were dying out” (Mahuika, 2012, p. 81). Thus, although orature was not the only root of the literature they produced, a key characteristic of their writing was the inclusion and re-presentation of chants, songs, prayers, and proverbs that had been handed down between generations before the introduction of literacy. As time passed, many of the authors also began to expound on these oral traditions, offering their own contemporary interpretations and explanations of them. This is something that became quite common in writing of the time as people were losing the ability to understand older sources of knowledge and as their level of cultural competency began to decline as a result of drastic societal change. Through the newspapers, therefore, new emerging nineteenth century scholars were able to not only present these older sources but to also analyze them in the same space.

It is important to note that prior to producing these written texts, Kānaka Maoli relied on customs like hula to transfer knowledge. Ethnomusicologist Amy Stillman (2007) explains hula as a “performance tradition that combines choreographed dance movement and melodic recitation” (p. 223). Although hula was not the only vehicle for transmitting history, it was one that I would argue allowed for the blending of oral traditions with those that were also visual and spiritual. As a life-long student of hula, I grew up learning an art that was multi-layered, bringing together knowledge maintained in mele, or poetic songs and chants, with that woven into lei (garlands) for adornments, beat or stamped onto kapa (tapa) for garments, and choreographed for the body in performance. Therefore, a great amount of historical knowledge could be embedded into one choreographed dance or one melodic recitation.

Renowned kumu hula Pualani P. Kanahale (2005) states, that hula was a “tool to educate ourselves, telling us who we are. The hula was also a vehicle, capable of pitching you into another world, into that event for which the mele was composed” (p. 25). Because hula was “soulful” and because dance was “ritual,” it brought together so many different elements so that the dancer could *become* the dance, capable of transporting you to another space or time, taking “you from these islands to the world, to the universe” (P. Kanahale, 2005, pp. 26-27). “If you hula,” as P. Kanahale (2005) explains, “you belong to the universe”

(p. 27). Therefore, you belong as much to the land that your feet dance upon, as you do to the horizon that your voice chants for, and to the layers of the sky that your hands feel, shape, and move. Hula is about connectedness.

Therefore, it is this same idea of connectedness that I attempt to bring into analyzing this literature. In other words, I seek the relationships between the mele, or the poetic text—without which “there is nothing to interpret gesturally”—and the places, people, and times that those mele speak about (Stillman, 2007, p. 223). Furthermore, I seek relationships with other sources of knowledge encoded in those mele, including information maintained through land-based literacies, as mentioned previously, and then transferred in even the mention of a single name. Thus, although I am aware that mele and other oral traditions were not the sole source of inspiration for the written texts produced in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, I turn my focus to them now as a primary resource for writers of the time. Moreover, I use them to explore the relationship between these many layers of knowledge and our expressions of identity today. Stillman (2001) argues that “For Hawaiians, the hula encodes and transmits key knowledge about the historical past through which they define themselves. The narratives fashioned out of such memories become narratives of self-image on which Hawaiians stake claims of affiliation” (p. 189). These mele, therefore, not only teach us about the times, places, events, and people that they were composed for, but about the people who engaged with them, who wrote them down, who analyzed them, and who generations later, attempted to fashion an understanding of self through articulations from the past.

Samuel Mānaiakalani Kamakau engaged with mele and used them to build his narratives. Although he was just one of many Hawaiians who published regularly in the Hawaiian language newspapers in the nineteenth century, he is one of only a small group whose works have been translated into English. Thus, his writing not only provided a foundation for scholars who followed him, like Poepoe cited at the outset of this chapter, but for generations of Hawaiians who would eventually come to engage with his work in both the Hawaiian language and in English. Unfortunately, as touched upon in the Introduction, there are many problems with translation, and because of it, contemporary scholars have been leery of over-relying on these translated texts (Kuwada, 2009, pp. 55-61; Nogelmeier, 2010, pp. 124-128).

Among some of the dangers of translation is the assumption that texts can be translated literally, or that there exists a one-to-one correspondence between languages (L.

Wong, 1999, p. 95). Translation always involves interpretation, which is shaped by the translator and his or her own frames of reference. Thus, choosing just one of many possible meanings for a single word reduces the potential impact of that text. For a single word like *Kahiki*, for example, translation can completely ignore the idea that, as Hawaiian language scholar Liana L. Wong (1999) explains, “there exists a spiritual aspect in Hawaiian language that imbues words with more than referential power, which would suggest that they were created by means other than mere human fabrication but perhaps through divine intervention” (p. 102). *Kahiki* is one such term, tied to the gods, connected to our migrating ancestors, and linked to our homeland, and perhaps even to our “place of spiritual origin, where our souls are thought to return after death” (Kikiloi, 2010, p. 84). No one-word translation can capture this.

Other problems are evidenced in Kamakau’s texts. When he began printing his *mo’olelo*, or his historical narratives from the years 1865 to 1871, particularly about Hawai‘i’s ruling chiefs, he also included “descriptions of material culture and cultural practice next to or within historical vignettes as appropriate” (Kuwada, 2009, p. 56). Unfortunately, as Kuwada (2009) explains, when his work was translated, “his narrative was extensively edited and reordered in a manner consistent with Western understandings—that bore little resemblance to his original text” (p. 56). Thus, a key argument here—one that is supported by many contemporary Hawaiian language scholars—is that we must return to the *kahua*, or to the foundational text from which the translation came. According to Kikiloi (2010), “The layered meanings within these texts make it critical that the researcher have a background in language to understand the intricacies, many of which are difficult or impossible to translate. These intricacies are called *kaona* ‘hidden meaning,’ but they can also be referred to as veiled expressions” (p. 79). Therefore, we must analyze the text printed in the Hawaiian language, and further, the oral traditions that were cited within them, and must endeavor to build our contemporary understanding from there.

This, unfortunately, is not an easy task. As a result of history, use of the Hawaiian language drastically declined and almost disappeared in the twentieth century. Thus, the level of fluency required to access the incredible amount of information recorded in these newspapers also declined²². As Puakea Nogelmeier (2010), a Hawaiian language translator

²² Nogelmeier (2010) argues that in the years following the establishment of a native press in 1861 that “nearly 6,000 pages of Hawaiian-language newspapers were printed, the equivalent of 60,000 or more typescript pages of writing” (p. 65). Thus, if the entire period of literary production in the Hawaiian language is taken into account—namely the years between 1834 and 1948—then there is an even greater amount pages, and therefore, an even greater amount of material that is not being accessed.

and scholar, explains, this has led to an overreliance on a “discourse of sufficiency” or “a long-standing recognition and acceptance of a small selection of Hawaiian writings from the 19th century as being sufficient to embody nearly a hundred years of extensive Hawaiian auto-representation—Hawaiians writing for and about themselves” (pp. 1-2). In past years, those who were interested in studying history in Hawai‘i, but who lacked the ability to read Hawaiian language texts (many even lacking any knowledge of their existence), had to turn to a handful of translated texts—Kamakau’s work included—as being representative of everything that was produced in Hawaiian in the late nineteenth to early twentieth centuries. This led to serious issues in historical research. As a result, because most recent accounts about Hawai‘i have failed to utilize these Hawaiian language texts, “every form of history written, every cultural study undertaken, and every assumption made over most of the last century should be revisited in light of those neglected sources” (Nogelmeier, 2010, p. xi). This movement back to the Hawaiian language texts, and perhaps more importantly, back to the oral traditions and other sources of knowledge that they record and build upon, is essential in the process of reconstructing our pasts.

Furthermore, it is crucial in the process of centralizing our stories and of restoring dignity to our people as it gives us the opportunity to acknowledge and honor the literary heritage of our ancestors, one that is often ignored. As Silva (2010) explains,

...the loss of our ‘ōlelo [language] has resulted in the lack of acknowledgement of our kūpuna as intellectuals, artists, and authors who produced works of history, geography, politics, and literature... Because most Kānaka Hawai‘i during the 20th century could not read the books and especially the newspapers written in Hawaiian, and because education was a primary site of socialization into American culture, we have collectively lost the sense of our kūpuna in these capacities. (p. 238)

Although using an introduced medium, our kūpuna essentially indigenized palapala, using it to push their own agendas. Therefore, reexamining historical accounts regarding Hawai‘i—particularly those that relied on a small amount of translated works—is indeed essential because it allows us to recognize that Kānaka Maoli not only created and maintained oral traditions but that they also wrote and created a rich written heritage. They embraced a new technology and used it as another means of constructing and distributing knowledge for the nation.

With all of this in mind, I have chosen to focus on a number of Kamakau’s Hawaiian language texts rather than translations. Not only do his writings come from the incredibly

fruitful period of literary production following the formation of the native press in 1861, but they also showcase the skill of the writer in stringing together pieces of oral traditions (and other older literacies) with contemporary analysis. The texts that I will focus on were originally published in the longest-running Hawaiian language newspaper, *Ka Nupepa Kuokoa*, a paper that was established in 1861 and that “showed the political, economic, and racial mazes of the century’s last decades” (Chapin, 1984, p. 53). Five years after the paper was established, on October 20th 1866, Kamakau started his serial column originally entitled “Ka Moolelo o Kamehameha I” [The History of Kamehameha I] that ran for four and a half years. Rather than focusing on this work in its entirety—as that would go far beyond the scope of this chapter—I will be focusing on a subsection of this history entitled, “No ka hiki mua ana mai o na Haole ma Hawaii nei” or “Regarding the First Arrival of Foreigners in Hawaii.” In what could appear to be a lengthy digression, Kamakau leaves the topic of Kamehameha I to discuss an era of travel between Hawai‘i and Kahiki. For five issues, he records the story of one Polynesian traveler after another, beginning with Papa herself, and finally ending the section with an introduction to the European, Captain James Cook.

This particular section has been studied previously by Silva (2004a, 2004c) and Nogelmeier (2010), both of whom have been pivotal in bringing awareness to the amount of information housed in the Hawaiian language newspapers. Therefore, it is not my goal to restate what they have already concluded, but rather to view their work as another interpretive layer that informs my own reading, and to then add on to their analyses so that we can begin to engage with new questions and considerations as we move forward in this field of study. Both Silva and Nogelmeier speak to the distortion that occurred in the translation process from Hawaiian to English and comment on how a failure to acknowledge the Hawaiian language text has and will continue to result in a missed opportunity to understand Kamakau as an scholar, someone who Silva (2004c) argues, “deliberately contested haole [foreign] historiography and its methods (by relying on oral traditions)” (p. 9). His use of oral traditions not only positioned them as important resources but also proved that they could be made relevant to inform the discourse of his time. Thus, as contemporary scholars, we have much to learn from Kamakau, his methods, his approach, and his perspectives.

In the early years of the Hawaiian language newspapers, particularly in those that were mission-controlled, it was common to find articles concerning what was “pono” or righteous. However, rather than speaking of a old Hawaiian view of pono, which involved

balance, well-being, and harmony with the akua (gods), the ‘āina (land), and with fellow kānaka, they introduced a “pono hou” “or the new morality or puritanical Christian sense of what constitutes rightness or righteousness” (Silva, 2008, p. 110). The newspapers were therefore filled with statements like, “Ina olelo kekahi i ka olelo lapuwale, olelo lealea paha, kuamuamu paha, wahahee paha, hula paha, olioli paha, kake paha, kela mea keia mea like a pau; Mai manaio ia ua pono kana olelo” [If someone speaks foolish words, perhaps uses frivolous speech, swears, maybe lies, and perhaps dances, chants, and plays with language, or all other things of that nature, do not think that what he says is right.] (Haanio, 1838, p. 84). Hula, once a highly regarded vehicle for cultural transmission, was degraded and seen as something that was not pono, and was therefore looked upon with the same contempt that someone would hold in judging liars and fools. Despite the abundance of such statements essentially doubting the validity of oral traditions maintained through hula, Kamakau (1866a) maintained that they provided valuable information *from* the past *about* the past and that they were relevant to Hawaiians of the time. In fact, he built his entire discussion regarding Kahiki on the fact that the names of lands outside of our archipelago can be found in chants and songs:

Ua nui no ka poe o Hawaii nei i holo i na aina o Nuuhiva, o Bolapola, o Upolu, o Sawaii, o Holaniku, o Holanimoe, o Hakukake, o Lalokapu, o Kuukuu, o Malimali, o Muliwaiolena, o Maokuululu, a me na aina e ae i holo ia e ka poe kahiko o Hawaii i ka makaikai; aia ma na kaa, a me na mele wanana, a me na pule e loa no ka nui o na aina.” (p. 1)

[There were indeed many Hawaiians who traveled to the lands of Nu‘uhiwa, Borabora, ‘Upolu, Savai‘i, Hōlanikū, Hōlanimoe, Hakukake, Lalokapu, Ku‘uku‘u, Malimali, Muliwai‘ōlena, Maokū‘ululū²³, as well as other lands that were traveled to by the ancient ones of Hawai‘i; most of these places can be found in stories, prophesizing chants, and prayers.]

Thus, unlike some of his counterparts, and even unlike some modern historians who are quick to dismiss oral traditions—often because of a failure to see “oral tradition as more than merely myth” and to “consider not only their viability as historical documents but also the deeper insights they reveal about people, their cultural practices and epistemological frameworks”—Kamakau embraced them (Mahuika, 2009, p. 133). He saw their value as the

²³ Although I have added diacritical markings to proper names in my English translations, it should be noted that these markings represent my interpretation of the names. Therefore, variations may exist in other sources.

kahua, or the foundation, of his narrative. Like Kahikimoe lying on the horizon, they provided a base upon which other layers could be built.

Examining the work of authors like Kamakau eventually led to the multi-layered approach that I use when analyzing Hawaiian language literature of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. When I look at Kamakau's text, for example, I recognize at least three possible spaces for analysis and interpretation. After completing a brief survey of the context in which the text was published, the first space for analysis is the oral tradition that was composed in the original language of the people, passed down through a sacred process like hula, and then recorded in print. Examining these poetic texts also involves pushing the boundaries of the printed text to consider what other types of knowledges are embedded in them and what they have to reveal.

Because writers often used mele and other oral traditions to center their own narratives, it is where analysis must begin. Such work, however, requires that the researcher understands the language because as historian and anthropologist Jan Vansina (1965) explains,

...it is impossible to carry out this work of interpretation without a thorough knowledge of the language in which the text is composed... it is absolutely essential for the historian to be acquainted with the language and with the culture of the people he is studying. (p. 75)

Beginning an analysis here gives us the chance to look at the oral tradition first and then to move towards a deeper examination, seeking to further understand how and why oral traditions were transferred from performance to writing; how they were shortened, cut, and decontextualized; and how they were offered to new audiences for new purposes. Further, it pushes us to look at other sources of knowledge embedded into those mele, like words and phrases that were first inscribed on our landscapes, seascapes, and skyscapes, and then captured in print, carrying their many layers of meaning with them.

The second space for analysis involves looking at the oral tradition *and* the author's commentary together. This is an optimal site for examining the emergence of rhetoric in the nineteenth century, or the strategic use of ancient oral traditions within larger narratives. In his study of Hawaiian literature, religious scholar John Charlot (1977) utilizes form and redaction theory, commonly used in biblical studies, and speaks about the power of the redactor to string traditions together to make particular statements: "A single story unit as a whole can thus be used within a larger redactional complex for some purpose other than

itself” (p. 487). Kamakau certainly took advantage of this power. He pieced together snippets from a wide variety of stories concerning Hawai‘i and Kahiki and placed them within a larger narrative about Hawai‘i’s ruling chiefs to reveal his insights on nineteenth century Hawai‘i, its relation to the past, and its impact on the future.

In the third space for analysis the text must be examined to uncover its contemporary value. As Pacific historian Niel Gunson (1993) argues, “Throughout Polynesia the historical traditions offer great scope for reinterpretation if we are prepared to understand them in the context of social evolution and change and not treat them as static and unchanging forms” (p. 158). This idea is key to an effective analysis of Hawaiian language literature today. Although committed to writing, we cannot and should not assign these texts one fixed meaning. As much as possible, we should treat them as entities that are just as fluid as the dances that kept them alive for generations, and perhaps, even just as indefinite as the mysterious Kahiki that sometimes inspired them. Like Kamakau who was able to add layers of meaning on to ancient oral traditions, we too have the ability to utilize these same narratives to represent new ideas and expressions of identity today. We have the potential, like the redactors, recorders, and writers of the past, to reinterpret and re-present these stories—effectively constructing our pasts—beginning at Kahikimoe, at the horizon of our understanding, and expanding from there.

Kahikikū: Standing Kahiki

Sitting upon Kahikimoe is Kahikikū, an upright Kahiki that begins to move into the sky, into the realm that dances and moves above our heads. Thus, it is here that I will begin to move into the literature. In the following sections, I attempt to demonstrate how I have used this multi-layered approach towards analyzing Hawaiian language literature with the hope that such an effort will support larger movements towards not only honoring oral traditions as valuable and important sources of knowledge, but also centralizing the stories and lives of our ancestors as guides for those of us living today. As the following sections will hopefully reveal, analyzing Hawaiian language literature of this kind and using it as a means of reconstructing the past is an avenue towards securing and defining a nation for ourselves, a goal and a challenge once posed by the editors of *Ka Na‘i Aupuni*. Furthermore, it is my hope that as I move upward into the multiple layers of the atmosphere, always building my analysis on what came before, that I will simultaneously dive deeper into the depths of Kahiki, that indefinable place in space and time, so that we can get closer to our origins, and

as a result, closer to understanding ourselves, our responsibilities, and our modern movements in this sea of islands.

Therefore, I will utilize sections of Kamakau’s piece “No ka hiki mua ana mai o na Haole ma Hawaii nei” [Regarding the First Arrival of Foreigners in Hawaii], and more specifically, his account regarding Papa, in order to demonstrate the complexity of this literature at every level. According to Kamakau (1866a), the first traveler to make an actual journey to Kahiki—versus someone who was said to have come to Hawai‘i from the sky or some other location—is Papa: “O Papa, ua olelo ia, ua holo i Kahiki, no ka mea, o kona mau makua o Kukalaniehu a me Kahakauakoko, no Nuumehalani, he aina i ka pali ku, a ma laila o Papa e hoopahaohao ai i kona kino a lilo i mea opiopio hou” [As for Papa, she went to Kahiki because her parents, Kūkalani‘ehu and Kahakauakoko were from Nu‘umehalani, a land of tall cliffs, and it was there that Papa transformed her body into that of a young person] (p. 1). After introducing her, he then cites a small portion of “Mele a Pāku‘i”—the same origin chant cited in the title of this chapter—as memorized by a famed genealogist named Kala‘ikuahulu:

Ma ka Kalaikuahulu, ke kanaka akamai loa i na mea kahiko a me na moololo a me na mookuauhau, penei kana:

‘Hoi mai Papa mai loko o Kahiki,

Ku inaina lili i ka punalua,

Hae manawa ino i ke kane o Wakea.’ (p. 1)

[Kala‘ikuahulu’s account—a man quite proficient in things of the past, and in stories and genealogies—goes like this:

‘Papa returned from Kahiki,

Bitterly jealous of her punalua²⁴

Ravenous with anger towards her husband, Wākea.]

These three lines—a very small section of a much longer genealogical chant telling of the birth of the islands—records Papa’s return to Hawai‘i from Kahiki. A close reading, even for someone unfamiliar with the rest of the text, can reveal a number of things: first, that a woman named Papa made a trip from a place called Kahiki; second, that she was married to a man named Wākea; and third, that Wākea had another spouse of whom, at one time, Papa was terribly jealous. This is the kahua, the foundation. Breaking the tradition down to the simplest and most basic assumptions to be gained strips it of any fantastical nature, which in

²⁴ The term punalua referred to two people, either two men or two women, who shared the same spouse. Therefore, Papa’s punalua was another women who also had a relationship with Wākea.

turn, opens the text up to be read as a metaphor. Thus, rather than engaging in often fruitless discussions regarding the facticity of events contained in an oral tradition, we can actually begin to talk about what makes the tradition important and what its continued existence means for the people.

Deconstructing the text in this way, as philosopher and educator Futa Helu (1999) posits, reveals the “‘historical’ kernel” of oral traditions (p. 259). In his work on mythology in the Pacific, Helu argues that in analyzing our oral traditions certain elements characteristic of them must first be identified and eliminated:

...in purely oral transmission the desire for novelty, i.e. distinction in presentation, becomes compulsive and takes precedence over accuracy. This opens the door for distortion and actual occurrences begin to transcend the boundaries of possibility to become fantastic and magical. The required methodology therefore would essentially consist in elimination of events or characteristics which are logically impossible....
(p. 259)

It is only after eliminating these elements, he argues, that one can arrive at the root of the story. Although such a deconstructive approach may appear to strip the text of any sacred or deep, cultural value, I would argue that it actually accomplishes the opposite: it opens the text up to be read for its varying, and often deep, metaphoric interpretations. At the same time, it allows us to reengage with the text as being flexible, or as something with multiple layers of meaning that can be identified, interpreted, and even embodied (as in hula).

This short section of chant, for example, reveals Kahiki as a place that can be traveled to, a place beyond the shores of Hawai‘i that although beyond the limits of our sight, can still be reached. Exploring the name itself, however, reveals other layers of meaning. According to linguist Samuel H. Elbert (1976), when places are named in stories and other traditions “in their imaginations people ally the place with amusement and affection to the wondrous events of the past” (p. 124). In other words, the mention of a name evoked feelings and memories attached to that place. Thus, the landscape was storied and names were therefore an access point into all of the knowledge they contained:

Hawaiians named taro patches, rocks and trees that represented deities and ancestors, sites of houses and *heiau* (places of worship), canoe landings, fishing stations in the sea, resting places in the forests, and the tiniest spots where miraculous or interesting events are believed to have taken place. (Pūku‘i, Elbert, & Mo‘okini, 1974, p. x)

Names were therefore a way of remembering. The mentioning of Kahiki in the chant above is an example of the power of a single name. Kahiki was a place of origin, a place named in genealogies connecting Hawai‘i to the rest of the Pacific. It was known as a place of life and sustenance. Therefore, Papa’s journey to Kahiki and back to Hawai‘i holds profound meaning. The place she journeyed to, in other words, was one that remained in memory because it had significance to those who remembered it individually and collectively (Mageo, 2001, p. 1).

As the name of a Pacific homeland outside of Hawai‘i, Kahiki also encourages an exploration of Pacific cognates. Whether similar names can truly be considered cognates, or whether they have “coincidental correspondence rather than genetic correspondence” is debatable (Pūku‘i et al., 1974, p. 278). However, exploring such words can potentially reveal new layers of meaning. “Tawhiti,” for example, is the Māori word meaning “distant, far off; widely separated” and “Tahiti” is the Tahitian word meaning “to transplant, to remove a thing from its original place” (Tregear, 2014, p. 499). Thus, if looked at together with Kahiki, they support the feeling of distance that Kahiki evokes. At the same time, however, they also allude to the same idea of separation from a place of origin. Kahiki, after all, was where Papa came from. Therefore, in her travels to Hawai‘i, she became distanced from her homeland, transplanted, as if uprooted from the earth, so that she could then place her roots elsewhere, becoming the progenitor of another group of people.

Before presenting the three lines of chant, Kamakau (1866a) comments on Papa and her journey to Kahiki. When Papa returned to the land of her parents, as Kamakau notes, she was able to transform her body, making it youthful again. In following Helu’s (1999) approach, transforming your own body is beyond the limits of any normal human ability. Therefore, we must return to the basic assumptions discovered in the chant and must build our understanding of these fantastical elements from there. This allows us to sift through the mythological pieces and search for the kaona, or the hidden meaning of the text. This task can be quite revealing and liberating for, as historian Noelani Arista (2010) states, “*kaona* is something of a hidden package waiting to be unwrapped by the deserving, knowledgeable listener or reader” (p. 666). Thus, in an analysis of Hawaiian language literature, once the mythological elements are not read as being valid statements of actual accounts, the kaona is more accessible. Once, for example, we get beyond trying to determine whether Papa could *actually* transform herself, we can make theories as to what that statement means metaphorically.

However, it should be noted that kaona is not always easily accessible, thus Arista's (2010) use of the terms "deserving" and "knowledgeable" in the statement above. In other words, if you had a certain level of cultural competency, the kaona could be more easily unwrapped and understood. As poet and scholar Brandy Nālani McDougall (2011) explains, through the "multilayered use of metaphor, puns, and allusion" kaona allows for a "dynamic exchange between the composer and the audience" (pp. 100-101). However, the audience or the reader must have some understanding of those metaphors in order to understand the depth of the message being conveyed. Thus, it is with full acknowledgement of my own possible inadequacies as a contemporary Hawaiian scholar—one who may perhaps not know all of the ancient puns and allusions used by my ancestors—that I present my own reading, one that builds on my foundation in hula and in scholarship, but one that may have its own limitations as I attempt to reach back into a distant place in space and time.

Further limiting my abilities is the fact that oral traditions were often shortened as authors sometimes chose specific sections to cite rather than recording entire mele. Kamakau was no exception. From a lengthy genealogical chant he decides to cite just three short lines. Thus, although the oral tradition is used as key evidence of travel between Hawai'i and Kahiki, future scholars are left with gaps as the chant is decontextualized and then recontextualized for a new purpose. As a result, rather than seeing the oral tradition in its entirety, we are only allowed to see it as it relates to Kamakau's agenda, thus viewing the mele through his interpretive gaze. This is one of the legacies of archives, which as Stillman (2007) explains, can be described as "any collection that was gathered together for the purpose of preservation" (p. 225). When collections are assembled—whether in the newspapers, in book form, or in personal diaries—they are reflective of those who assemble them, as "in these spaces are stored records deemed worthy of preservation" (p. 227). Ultimately, what is deemed important enough to be preserved is open to interpretation. Thus, the records that we pull from today will always be somewhat shaped by those who created them. Filling the gaps left by these archives therefore requires further research on our part, research that will hopefully result in locating a record of the entire oral tradition that was cut, especially if it has become somewhat obscure and is no longer being performed and maintained in hula. Fortunately, "Mele A Pāku'i," the mele that Kamakau cites, was recorded elsewhere *and* is still being chanted and performed throughout the islands. Unfortunately, the same cannot be said for a vast number of oral traditions that we may never be able to truly recover.

Although Kamakau may not have been able to see the potential dangers of shortening oral traditions, other Hawaiian scholars of the time did. In a time of rapid change—a time often characterized by great hardship and sorrow—Hawaiian intellectuals were advocating for the maintenance of cultural knowledge. As seen previously, they actively encouraged people to return to their stories, to learn their history, and to know who they were and where they came from. In fact, in the first Hawaiian language newspaper to be edited by Hawaiians for Hawaiians, *Ka Hoku o ka Pakipika*, a man named Joseph Ho‘ona‘auao Kānepu‘u (1862) wrote of a time when future generations of Hawai‘i would want to read the stories of their people. According to Silva (2009), “he was a regular contributor to the Hawaiian-language newspapers, and one of the most ferocious and consistent defenders of the papers and of Hawaiian language, culture and indigenous knowledge” (p. 45). He had enough foresight in 1862 to encourage writers to record oral traditions and to think of the past that they could create for the future:

He manaolana ko‘u e kakauia me kona ike a pau loa, me ke koe ole o kekahi ike ona [...]. E makemake ana ka hanauna Hawaii o na la A. D. 1870, a me A. D. 1880, a me A. D. 1890, a me A. D. 1990. (p. 1)

[I hope that stories will be written with all of their details and that authors will not leave portions out [...]. The generations of A. D. 1870, of A. D. 1880, of A. D. 1890, and of A. D. 1990 are going to want them.]

Over 150 years later his words still ring true. We, of this time, *do* want that knowledge. We do want those stories *and* we want them in their entirety, without sections left out, so that we can make meaning of them for ourselves. We not only want to know how those of the past understood their lives but want to use that past so that we can better understand our own. When I began exploring this literature, I realized that what the authors did to record their ideas of the time is precisely what we continue to do today: use the past as a source of guidance for understanding and living out the present. Thus, while I analyze Kamakau’s account, I recognize the limitations present in terms of language and fullness. However, I am also aware of the potentially significant lessons, metaphors, and sources of wisdom to be drawn from it.

As I read Kamakau’s words, for example, and return to the story of Papa, I wonder if the only place where Papa could find rejuvenation was in her homeland, or the land of her ancestors. In other words, perhaps she needed to return to Kahiki to find a sense of balance, security, or connection. Or, perhaps Papa herself is a metaphor and is representative of all of

those who first settled in Hawai‘i. Maybe they maintained a memory of a land called Kahiki to remind them that they had roots elsewhere and that despite being distant or separate, that that they could draw on the strength of other places to survive. All of these possibilities can be linked to Papa’s journey to Kahiki and back. They may not be verifiable theories. However, that is the point. What an analysis of this literature allows us to do as readers is to seek these possible layers of kaona, or deep meaning, to find relevance for ourselves. As a dancer and as a researcher, I can now look at the words that I have chanted many times before with new eyes and listen to them with new ears. I can begin to understand for myself why Papa’s story was so important, why it survived the generations, why it was recorded in print for those of the nineteenth century, and further, why it is still important for us today. Such considerations can then move us to the second space for analysis, and in terms of this chapter, into the next level of the atmosphere, where our examination can expand to include more elements at Kahikiike‘āpapanu‘u.

Kahikiike‘āpapanu‘u: Kahiki, the elevated stratum

While the term “‘āpapa nu‘u” can be used to refer to a “high station,” the term “‘āpapa,” without its reference to “nu‘u” or height, can be used to refer to parallel stratum or flats, and in particular, to coral flats in the ocean (Pūku‘i & Elbert, 1986, p. 28). Thus, even as an analysis of Hawaiian language literature may seem to travel in one direction alone—looking at, for example, a chronological “layering” of voices, ideas, and interpretations—the terminology chosen to guide this chapter indicates that movement can occur in multiple spaces and directions. Our movements, in other words, can take us forward and backward, up and down, and even in between; while ascending into the sky, we can also travel into the depths of the ocean, searching for meaning in every movement. This is characteristic of the second space for analysis where the oral tradition can be viewed in relation to the author’s larger narrative, which can lead us into new spaces and places of discovery.

In his text, Kamakau strategically places his account regarding the arrival of foreigners within his larger narrative about Kamehameha I. This is not entirely evident in his translated text, however, because as Nogelmeier (2010) states, those who translated his works into English—including John Wise, Mary Kawena Pūku‘i, Thomas Thrum, Lahilahi Webb, Emma Davidson Taylor, and others—each had varying levels of experience in translation and interpretation (p. 125). Thus, in their re-presentation of Kamakau’s narrative, they took certain interpretative licenses. Their assumption that Kamakau sometimes jumped from topic

to topic, for example, even digressing for long periods of time before returning to his original story, resulted in an extensive editing and reordering of his original narrative (pp. 131-143). Therefore, when translations were completed, parts of his Hawaiian text were shifted around and separated between four English books, the primary basis of separation being the belief that some parts of his text were historical while others were purely mythical. What resulted was a missed opportunity to understand Kamakau. In his analysis of Māori literature, historian Te Maire Tau (2012) argues that, "...to Māori, the mind that composed the tradition is more important than the tradition itself" (p. 15). The same can be said for any writer. Thus, to reorder Kamakau's work and to take it out of context completely eliminates any chance to understand his mind or to examine why he pieced his narrative together as he did. Further, it limits our ability to learn about the time in which he lived and the often-tragic situations that those of his generation had to deal with.

In reference to this particular section of text, Nogelmeier (2010) argues that Kamakau's placement of the travel narratives was deliberate as it followed his discussion of Kalani'ōpu'u (Kamehameha's uncle) during the time of Captain Cook's arrival:

Prior to introducing Captain Cook, Kamakau spent four full weekly columns explaining the Hawaiian mind-set of the time concerning foreigners and the existence of foreign lands. His sequencing of the narrative therefore situates Cook's arrival as part of a continuum of Hawaiians' understanding about historical contact with the world beyond the horizon—not as an unprecedented, isolated event. (p. 135)

When seen in context, Papa's story and the stories of all the famous gods, priests, chiefs, and navigators that appear in Kamakau's text take on new meaning. No longer are they just part of a random and simple list of figures who traveled to and from lands beyond Hawai'i. In context, they are those who predated Captain Cook, those who had the ability to traverse the great open ocean before a European—who has too long been known in history as the one who "discovered" Hawai'i—even reached our islands. Therefore, it is in this context that Cook is situated, rather than the other way around: "It is to this substantial genealogy of travelers that Kamakau adds the story of Captain Cook, purposefully disrupting the story told by haole [foreigners] that Cook appeared magically and suddenly as a unique phenomenon" (Silva, 2004a, p. 20). He is repositioned intentionally.

Thus, read in the context of the nineteenth century, a text such as this could have had great impact. Speaking about figures like Papa who found rejuvenation in her origins could have been used deliberately to spur Kānaka Maoli of the time to do the same. Faced with

great societal change, it is possible that Kamakau included his subsection regarding Kahiki to remind his people that they not only came from a history of great explorers and travelers, but that their ancestors—who were often demeaned and degraded by outsiders—were a people to be respected. While we may never know what motivated Kamakau to produce a text in this way, we cannot assume that his actions were unconscious. Rather, we must give ourselves the space to consider his work in the context of the time in which he wrote, examining the messages that could have been distributed as he made the active move to first acknowledge his voyaging ancestors who knew of distant lands and peoples *before* giving lengthy consideration to Captain Cook.

This is significant considering the fact that his work was printed in a newspaper, which essentially meant that a new community of readers could discuss it. Explaining ideas presented by Anderson (2006), Māori language scholar Lachy Paterson (2010) states:

The very act of reading print, say a newspaper, allowed an individual to imagine him or herself as part of a larger population, all reading the newspaper at the same time. People became more aware of commonalities of the group whilst its members effectively remained strangers. Thus one's sense of belonging was not primarily centered on a small group of people all of whom you knew, but a larger, 'imagined' population, such as the nation. (p. 107)

According to Anderson (2006), nations are “imagined” precisely because “the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members...yet in the mind of each lives the image of their communion” (p. 6). Thus, they are connected by a shared sense of belonging to the same community, and more so, in their dedication to it. A hallmark of nations, as Anderson (2006) argues, is the “remarkable confidence of community in anonymity” (p. 36).

Importantly, if Kamakau's text was therefore read within the context of a growing Hawaiian nation—or by a group of people who although perhaps strangers, could read the same text and feel the same sense of belonging to a community—then his work takes on new meaning. His narrative was not merely intended to act as a salvage text, or one seeking to preserve the remnants of a dying culture—like many early ethnographic works endeavored to do—but was one intending to *move* people, or one meant to mobilize them as they worked towards bettering the life of their nation.

Palapala, therefore, enabled Kānaka Maoli to give written expression to their situations and experiences, disseminating them to a population all dealing with the effects of

Western contact. As Paterson (2010) further explains, the coming of Europeans in the New Zealand context forced Māori “to accommodate the concept of different peoples with different languages and cultures” (p. 105). Contact with foreigners, therefore, meant that new articulations of identity were often built on notions of difference between themselves and the new settlers. Furthermore,

The development of a Māori ‘national’ or collective consciousness, always partial and mitigated by tribal identities, was a response to Pākehā settlement and colonialism in New Zealand and, as with emerging nationalisms in other societies, this was shaped by print culture, in particular newspapers. (p. 105)

A similar story can be told of Hawai‘i. An evolving print culture allowed Kānaka Maoli to discuss and intellectualize their “difference,” and consequently, to build a collective consciousness through their belonging to the same nation. Despite being islands apart and perhaps never seeing each other, readers of the same newspaper—and even more specifically, readers of Kamakau’s serial column—could belong to the same community, sharing in the experience (Silva, 2004a, p. 88). They did not need to agree on the content or even have the same loyalties to the nation or the same insights about the future of their people. After all, no culture, and further “No national culture is homogeneous” (Wendt, 1976, p. 77). They could, however, belong to the same “imagined” community, engaging in discussions or even debates about topics like Kahiki, their origins, and their ancestors.

Within this context Kamakau’s strategic ordering of narratives regarding Kahiki is quite significant in that it encourages dialogue and plays on both notions of difference *and* similarity to promote discussion. After introducing his subsection on foreigners arriving in Hawai‘i, he notes that the travel narratives to be explored will be split into two categories: “ka moolelo o na kanaka maoli o Hawaii nei i holo i Kahiki” [the accounts of Hawaiians who went to Kahiki] and “ko Kahiki mai i holo i Hawaii nei” [those of Kahiki who came here to Hawai‘i] (1866a). Kamakau then makes the very important distinction that all of these people, regardless of which category they fit into, “aole lakou i kapa ia he ahole, a he haole” [they were not called āhole or haole] (1866a). “Āhole,” the name of an endemic fish, was sometimes used to refer to foreigners who, like the fish, had light skin. (Pūku‘i & Elbert, 1986, p. 8). “Haole,” similarly, was also used in reference to those who were foreign. Thus, read in the context of an emerging Hawaiian nation and an emerging national consciousness, this statement is quite revealing of Kamakau’s perspective. Although some of the ancient travelers were not born in Hawai‘i—like Papa who came from Kahiki—they were not

categorized with the āhole or the haole, as Kamakau perhaps believed that they were neither light-skinned nor completely foreign.

This perspective is central in interpreting both the oral traditions and the commentary that Kamakau records. It gives the reader insight into some of the social and political debates of the time period including questions about what was considered truly foreign. In a Māori context, according to Paterson (2010), “colonialism had conditioned them to accept a racialized world” (p. 122). Perhaps then Kamakau’s attempt to categorize those from Kahiki as not being the same as the haole was his attempt to build a larger consciousness, one that was not only national, but one that celebrated regional connections. Such a consciousness would build on genealogy and the fact that figures like Papa, who is often regarded as an ancestor of the Hawaiian people, came to Hawai‘i from Kahiki, that indeterminate place in which life for our nation began.

Using the skill of palapala Kamakau not only spoke *to* the nation through the newspapers, but also used his narrative to expand his readers’ thinking *about* that nation. His strategic positioning of Captain Cook provided the space for revisiting our migrating ancestors, for celebrating their stories and remembering their achievements. Furthermore, it created an opportunity to talk about Kahiki and to consider our relationships with those “beyond” Kahikimoe. In using oral traditions and building upon all of the deep cultural knowledge embedded in them, he emphasized genealogical connections to the Pacific and thus, enlarged our worlds. Emphasizing such connections, as professor of American studies Kēhaulani Kauanui (2008) argues, is a move towards “reclaiming a place in Oceania” (p. 12). His text pushed the boundaries of the imagined Hawaiian nation, and opened them to embrace Kahikikū, Kahikimoe, and Kahiki itself, expanding our worlds and possibilities. Looking at a reordered translation of Kamakau’s text would result in missing these layers of meaning. Thus, it is imperative that we examine the work in its original state, within the context in which it was produced. Only when this is complete can we move to another level of examination, namely to Kahikiike‘āpapalani, one of the higher points of the atmosphere.

Kahikiike‘āpapalani: Kahiki high in the sky

Kahikiike‘āpapalani is said to be positioned high in the sky, almost directly above our heads (Pūku‘i & Elbert, 1986, p. 112). Thus, it moves us to another possible level of understanding and awareness as we continue to examine the lives and stories of our ancestors. The term “lani,” interestingly, can be used to refer to both the sky, or to a high spiritual realm, as well

as a chief, or someone of significant rank. Thus, its position seems to demand a level of respect. While some could argue that my deconstructive approach towards analyzing Hawaiian language literature perhaps strips the stories and the lives of our ancestors of any sacred nature, I believe that my treatment of this literature—and the consideration that I pay to its origins, to the voice of the author, and to the relevance that it has in our lives today—actually honors it. To seek the value of old stories and to recognize their contemporary significance, for example, ensures that this literature will always have a place in our movements as indigenous people. This, I would argue, raises the lives of our ancestors to a position of regard—not so that they are out of reach and cannot be touched, critiqued, and analyzed—but so that they can be respected as sources of wisdom and guidance for now and far into the future.

Thus, in the third layer of analysis, building on the previous two, we have the opportunity to look at how this literature affects us today. After discussing Papa, for example, Kamakau (1866b) introduces a long list of famous travelers. There is ‘Ulu, for whom it is said “ua pau loa o loko o Kahiki ia ia, ua ike o ia i na aupuni a pau o ka honua” [all of Kahiki was known to him, he visited all of the nations of this world] (p. 1). There is Kaha‘i who travels to Kahiki in search of his father, Hema, and for whom it is said in chant, “O ke anuenuē ke ala o Kahai...Ae Kahai i ke koiula a Kane” [Kaha‘i’s trail is a rainbow...he bypasses the rainbow-hued trail of Kāne²⁵] (p. 1). There is the priest, Pa‘ao, the prophet, Makuaka‘ūmana, and the chief, Pili, who are said to have come from “Wawau a no Upolu a me na aina ma ka Hema aku, o ia paha na aina i kapa ia e na haole o Nu Zilani” [Vava‘u, ‘Upolu, and from the lands to the far South; perhaps those places being what the whites now call New Zealand²⁶] (p. 1). There is the famous traveler, Mo‘ikeha, mentioned in the previous chapter, who taught his son, Kila, “i ke ano o ka holo moana a me ke kilo hoku” [the practice of sailing and navigating] (Kamakau, 1867a, p. 1). Then there are the gods, including Kāne and Kanaloa, for whom “Ua olelo pinepine ia ma ka moolelo kaa o a me na pule, a me na mele a ka poe kahiko a pau, mai Kahiki mai” [it is frequently stated in legends, prayers, and songs of all of the ancient ones, that they came from Kahiki] (Kamakau, 1867a, p. 1).

This is but a snapshot of Kamakau’s complex record of travel narratives. He includes other figures; he draws on longer, more detailed chants; he presents dialogue between

²⁵ This is a reference to death. Thus, because Kamakau calls this a wānana, or a prophesy, it could be interpreted to mean that Kaha‘i would not die in Kahiki, but would return to Hawai‘i.

²⁶ There are many theories regarding Pa‘ao’s place of origin. Some place him in Samoa and Tonga, as there is ‘Upolu in Samoa and Vava‘u in Tonga, while others place him in Tahiti, as ‘Upolu and Wawa‘u are said to be ancient names in the Society Islands.

characters; and records some of the many motivations for travel to and from Kahiki. Additionally, as noted earlier, he comments on the word “haole,” or foreigner, effectively complicating our contemporary understanding of it, and as a result, forcing us to question our notions of indigeneity. Thus, the potential for analysis is great. When looking at the entire section about foreigners, and further, the entire series on history in Hawai‘i, the amount of knowledge that can be pulled and produced from this work is immense. What this therefore means for those of us studying Hawaiian language literature today is that there are no limits to what we can draw from these texts. Kamakau played with the positioning of stories, with the selection of oral traditions, and with the inclusion of personal insights, and as a result, was able to present his thoughts about the time.

As Kānaka Maoli of the twenty-first century we are now able to apply our own interpretive layer to see what this means for us, for our ideas about Kahiki, for our concepts of homeland, and for our understanding of identity. Perhaps what we think of identity needs reexamination. Perhaps it is not as fixed as we often believe it to be but is as fluid as the ocean that Papa once traversed. Although she may have birthed our islands—perhaps metaphorically meaning that she is one of our oldest ancestors—Papa herself was connected to both Hawai‘i and a land beyond our shores. This very idea can lead to a rearticulation of identity for Hawaiians today. Like ‘Ulu, we can travel the entire world and still know how to return home, wherever that may be. Like Kaha‘i, we can follow desired paths and break through obstacles. Like Pa‘ao, we can remember and connect to the islands of our ancestors. And like Mo‘ikeha, we can maintain this knowledge and hand it down so that no matter where our children go, they will know how to return to us. This type of thinking transforms an analysis of Hawaiian language literature from an exploration of the past to one that explores the past in order to understand and construct the present, seeking its future value.

Growing up in the hula, I like to think that I constructed and reconstructed the past each time I danced and chanted about some of these notable figures. I knew of Mo‘ikeha and Kila, of Pa‘ao and Makuaka‘ūmana, of Kāne and Kanaloa, and even of Papa and her partner, Wākea. I knew them through movement and action. Thus, I traveled *with* them, and often *as* them, as they made their way abroad to Kahiki and then back again to the shores of my islands. As my body interacted with their stories, I learned that while performing choreographies that came from distant times and while chanting words that were composed long before my birth, my movement was, and will always be, a contemporary interpretation.

The performance, for example, will always have new meaning when enacted in different contexts, situations, places, and times.

The art of palapala added new layers of meaning to these performed traditions. It gave people the opportunity to record oral traditions for later retrieval. Additionally, it gave authors of the past the chance to analyze them, to disseminate their thoughts, and to push their agendas to new and wider audiences across the archipelago. Further, it now gives us the space and time to reengage with them years later. Without palapala, without the very skill that Kamehameha requested from the British Captain George Vancouver, some of these mele and other old oral traditions may have been lost. Fortunately, we can now pull them from the page contemporarily, finding new meaning for them in a new world, giving them voice and movement once again.

As Stillman (2007) argues, this is the act of “re-mem-bering” (p. 230). It is the act of using our mele in a new time. Such “re-mem-bering,” she explains, highlights the fact that “poetic repertoire can be used, but it cannot be used up” and that performers therefore “have the means to re-member poetic repertoire” and to “do so in the context of remembering that serves contemporary needs rather than merely replicating past circumstances” (p. 232). In other words, while texts can be old, the performance will always be new. It will always have new meaning given the social, political, and cultural circumstances of the people living at that time. That is the beauty of these texts. As a dancer and as a researcher, I can interact with this literature on multiple levels: seeking the written text to engage with it in particular ways and seeking the performance to embody it in other ways. Each has its place and purpose.

Thus, working with Hawaiian language literature requires that we look at these multiple levels of meaning and that we engage with the text as dancers would, seeking connections: moving back and forth, swaying between the spaces that bridge the past, the present, and the future; the performance and the text; the hula and the page. When we approach analysis in this way we have the chance to be transformed. This, as Pacific historian Greg Dening (1989) writes, can make the study of literature and history quite “liberating”:

There would not be many among us who in publishing a book or article, giving a lecture, making some religious or secular witness does not discover something of self in the presentation... Making, telling, singing, performing, dancing histories is the same. Know the past, know yourself personally, culturally. Express your knowledge of the past, present yourself personally, culturally. (p. 138)

Exploring stories of the past gives us the chance to truly know ourselves. It gives us the chance to consider our place as we work towards securing a nation for ourselves while also simultaneously expanding that sense of nationhood to find a place for ourselves in the wider Oceania. Like Kahikimoe lying flat on the horizon, we must start at the kahua, at the foundation, and must then push ourselves to move through the many layers of meaning added on through time. Such an examination pushes us to also question ourselves and to consider the role that we play *in* the literature as we engage with it contemporarily and carefully add our own interpretative layer. It is with this idea that I will continue to chant about Papa, will continue to use my body to tell her story, and will continue to write about her, using the skill of palapala that Kamehameha requested for his “children.” I will continue to sing and write their stories, knowing that they meant something to those who remembered and memorized them, to those who recorded them in print, and to those who will carry it on to Kahikikū, Kahikimoe, and all that lays beyond the limits of our visible world.

CHAPTER 3
No ke Kai kā ho‘i ua ‘Āina: This Land Belongs to the Sea
Prophecies, Politics, and Progress

Oiai ka wanana ke ku mau la i mua me ke aalii ku makani la, e pa ke Kona, aole e hina, ua
kokolo ke aa o ka wanana, mole i ka honua.

[Since the prophecy continues to stand, like an ‘a‘ali‘i²⁷ bush in the wind, the Kona gusts may
blow, but it will never fall over; the roots of the prophecy have crept forward, becoming
rooted in the earth.]

It is said that prophets had no need to “hoopilimeai” or to attach themselves to chiefs just for the sake of living. In other words, prophets would make a proclamation, announcing something that would affect individuals or even entire nations, without necessarily fearing any potential consequences that their words would bring. They were “He poe makau ole” or a fearless people who lived with the knowledge that “Ina make, make no; ina he ola, ola no” or that if they were to die, that they would die; and that if life was their fate, that they would indeed live (Lionanohokuahiwi, 1916, p. 2)²⁸. As they were believed to possess the divine gifts of foresight and observation, they were highly regarded and therefore often consulted and usually taken quite seriously. Sometimes their words spoke of blessings, of victory and triumph. At other times, their words spoke of doom, of unavoidable chaos and change. And on rare occasions, their words spoke of an indefinite time, giving them a long life and many generations to spread their roots, as writer Kamakaia (1916) explained above, digging into the earth where they are still regarded, referenced, and used to understand events of the past, present, and future.

A few prophecies in particular—specifically those coming from the years following first contact with the West—have had lasting impacts, creeping their way into nineteenth, twentieth, and even twenty-first century discourse. Prophecy, “whether it stems from *‘ike pāpālua* or *hākilo pono*²⁹, from mysterious gift or keen observation, becomes more dramatic and is long-remembered when it concerns hero or ruler or great happenings. Hawai‘i—as

²⁷ “He ‘a‘ali‘i kū makani mai au; ‘a‘ohe mea nāna e kula‘i” is a popular ‘ōlelo no‘eau, or Hawaiian proverb, often used to refer to a resilient person. Those who used it to refer to themselves boasted, “I am a wind-resisting ‘a‘ali‘i; no gale can push me over.” The ‘a‘ali‘i, a native hardwood, is known for being able to withstand the harshest winds (Pūku‘i, 1983, p. 60).

²⁸ The author, Lionanohokuahiwi, also went by the names Kawaikaumaiikamakaokaopua or Kalokuokamaile when contributing to the newspapers.

²⁹ “‘Ike pāpālua” is the ability to “see double,” or to see beyond what is visible, often into the spiritual realm. It is to have “supernatural knowledge” or “extrasensory perception” (Pūku‘i & Elbert, 1986, p. 97). To “hākilo” is to observe closely (Pūku‘i & Elbert, 1986, p. 49).

does every culture—has its famed prophets and often-retold prophecies” (Pūku‘i, Haertig, & Lee, 1972b, pp. 270-271). Yet, the long life of these specific prophecies, I would argue, may have as much to do with the fact that they were addressed to chiefs and rulers as with the fact that they speak to altered situations and dramatic change. As James Lewis (1988), a scholar in new religions, argues, a prophet’s vision becomes a “new story” for the people, a new story for changing circumstances that perhaps old stories cannot explain. In his study of shamans and prophets in Native American cultures, he states:

When unprecedented natural or historical events radically disturb the culture’s lifestyle, the older stories become at least partially inadequate in that they fail to address the new circumstances... The changed circumstances brought about by this contact are precisely what a prophet addresses his message to, and his revelation can be understood as a new “story” which includes an explanation of the altered situation in its narrative. It can do what old stories cannot: offer a comprehensive account of what have become the most pressing concerns of the culture. (p. 226)

The Hawaiian prophets and prophecies that have endured are those that sought to explain and foretell the result of new circumstances. Further, they are those that continue to speak to new concerns as they are just vague and open enough to constantly be remolded and reinterpreted to fit changing times.

As explored in previous chapters, Kahiki, as a concept, is like these wānana, or prophecies. While being somewhat “rooted in the earth,” it keeps spreading, finding new spaces and new ideas with which to converge. As it defies one, agreed-upon definition, it is open to multiple interpretations and can therefore be used continuously to speak to new situations, encounters, and concerns. Thus, it is not surprising that a few of the old prophecies that have survived the centuries also mention Kahiki and draw upon some of its many interpretations to speak to new times. What Kahiki has always done is give Kānaka Maoli a way to explain and understand ourselves and our relationship to the outside world. However interpreted, Kahiki was a way of articulating, or giving expression to the idea that there were, and will always be, people and places beyond our shores that have the potential to impact us, whether positively, negatively, or both. Therefore, the power of Kahiki lies in the ability of each generation to actively mold it to suit their agendas so that they need not be passive recipients of change. They can use Kahiki to either work with that change or to combat it, whatever their need may be. Thus, the evolution of Kahiki as a concept has provided a record

of the evolution of a people, or how Hawaiians have changed, adapted, and sometimes even been pushed to resistance through their interactions with lands and peoples beyond.

The prophetic revelations of famous kāula, or prophets, have served a similar function. They have given people the space to consider and even attempt to understand their lives across time. Although the art of prophesizing, of reading natural signs, and of taking account of omens was a practice that pre-dated Western contact, many of the prophecies that we continue to reference today come from the tumultuous period of first contact, when the interaction with strangers from the sea forced Hawaiians to consider what impact these “kanaka keokeo,” or these white people, would have on their existence (Wise, 1923b, p. 2). As political scientist Willard Johnson (1996) explains, in Native American societies, “Prophets appeared when indigenous peoples were exposed to alien conditions brought by the new settlers” (p. 575). Thus, although the prophet played an important role prior to the coming of these new settlers—often seen as necessary to a chief’s success, foretelling his death or his survival, his defeat or his victory—those prophecies that have endured are those that speak to *more* than just that time, or more than just that individual chief’s rivalry or conquest. This has given them a certain degree of timelessness, allowing them to crawl into, and even across, the centuries.

As John Henry Wise (1923b), a writer, editor, senator, and Hawaiian patriot explains, “Aole paha he lahui ma ke ao nei i loa mai ka ike a me ka makaukau wanana e like me ka lahui Hawaii” [There is perhaps not one nation in the world that has a knowledge and a skill of prophecy like that of the Hawaiian nation] (p. 2). As a life-long student of hula, I grew up chanting the words of one of these wise prophets without knowing its full history, without knowing how it was interpreted and used through the generations, sometimes even to the detriment of my own people. It is my hope, therefore, that an examination of these prophecies, and of the role of the prophet in the past and the present, will lead to a deeper understanding of our history, of the complicatedness of our stories, and further, of how and why their words about interactions between Hawai‘i and Kahiki are still a necessary part of our existence. As a researcher, I am aware of the ground—or of the earth holding the roots of prophecy together—that I am treading upon. I am no prophet. I am no seer of the future. I cannot predict where my people will be in the years to come. What I am, however, is someone who can cultivate hope where those roots are grounded so that our people may stand as the ‘a‘ali‘i kū makani, the steadfast ‘a‘ali‘i that bends but does not break in the wind.

I nui ke aho: Take a deep breath

Prophecy comes with anticipation, with the need to make a decision to either wait for what seems to be an unavoidable, pending fate, or to act against it. Whether good or bad, there is a time in which the fulfillment of that prophecy is unknown, when a chief may not know, for example, if the words of his *kāula* were accurate and he would live, or whether they were faulty, and he would indeed perish. However, a period of waiting does not necessarily need to be one of inaction. A chief, for example, could choose to heed the words of his *kāula* or not. Thus, each prophecy, although possibly foreseeing an inescapable future, does come with a degree of agency, a moment when you can prepare to either face the future or try to alter its course. The title of this section comes from a famous prophecy uttered by a man named Ka‘ōpuluhulu, sometimes called Keōpuluhulu, before his death in either 1782 or 1783³⁰. In his fateful words, there was a plea, a sort of push to take a deep breath and to prepare for what was to come. What would happen upon the exhalation of that breath, however, was, and is still, subject to debate.

According to nineteenth century scholar Samuel Kamakau (1867c), Ka‘ōpuluhulu called out his last prophecy when he realized that his son, Kahulupue, would be killed by the officers of Kahahana, the then reigning chief of the island of O‘ahu: “I nui ke aho a moe i ke kai! No ke kai ka hoi ua aina” [Take a deep breath and lay in the ocean, for this land belongs to the sea] (p. 1). Many have pondered the meaning of these words, wondering about which land he spoke of, and who from the sea would come to take it. The ambiguity of his vision, however, is what has allowed it to be interpreted in many ways at different points in history. What is not always understood about this prophecy, however, is the role that agency played in the death of Kahulupue, and soon afterward, the death of Ka‘ōpuluhulu himself.

As was mentioned earlier, prophets were said to be “he po‘e maka‘u ‘ole,” or a fearless people. If death was the proper route to the fulfillment of a prophecy, then they faced it. On the day of their passing, as Kamakau (1867c) recounts, Ka‘ōpuluhulu prayed, asking that his fate be revealed. He then turned to his son and said, “Ke olelo mai nei ke akua, e make ana kua, a eia no nae i ke alanui o ke ola, a eia no hoi ke alanui o ka make la” [The gods are telling me that we are going to die, and here is the road to life, and here is the road to death] (p. 1). Despite the urgency of their situation—Kahahana was to meet them on that very day, which could result in their death—Ka‘ōpuluhulu knew that they still had a choice.

³⁰ Captain James Cook arrived in Hawai‘i in 1778. Therefore, by the time Ka‘ōpuluhulu uttered his prophecy Hawaiians would already have interacted with these foreigners and begun to make assumptions as to the effect they would have on Hawaiian lives.

They could choose to stay and die, or to escape and live. Thus, he asked his son to decide and when his son chose the path to life, he responded, “Ina kua e hele ma kau alanui e manao nei, aole e ku ka makaia i ke ao, a i make kua, ku ka makaia i ke ao. E make ana ke alii, e lilo ana ke aupuni, aohe pua alii o Oahu e puka i ke ao; e aho no kua ma ke alanui o ka make” [If we are to travel down the path you are choosing, then we will not find vengeance in this world, but if we die, then we will find vengeance. The chief [Kahahana] will die, his government will be lost to him, and he will have no chiefly descendants enter this world; it would be better for us to travel the road to death] (p. 1). What this heartbreaking story teaches us is that even in prophecy, even in great anticipation of the unknown, there is choice; there is the chance to heed the warning of the wānana or to ignore it. The fearless prophet Ka‘ōpuluhulu chose to follow his prophecy even when it led to his own death, believing that it was the better path to travel for those to come.

Thus, in the following sections, I will make conscious choices. I will choose to follow particular paths, traveling them to see what they reveal about our ancestors and about ourselves. Like Ka‘ōpuluhulu’s own decision, some of my choices will not be made easily. Rather, they will be made out of necessity, as I am confident that sometimes the harder path must be traveled if our work is to be of the most use to those of the future. The paths to be tread upon in this chapter will be located and identified through the examination of two prophecies, that of Ka‘ōpuluhulu introduced above, and another by a famous kāula named Kapihe who was believed to have uttered his prophecy almost thirty years after Ka‘ōpuluhulu and his son met their death. These men are arguably two of the most renowned prophets in the history of Hawai‘i, their words not only considered at their time, but also heavily discussed in the Hawaiian language newspapers of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries when issues of civilization, assimilation, and annexation abounded. Their prophetic visions have even made their way into contemporary discourse about nationhood, sovereignty, and indigenous rights.

Each section of this chapter will therefore draw upon particular lines from these two prophets, providing the space to do more than analyze their visions, but to actively use them to shape and direct current discussions. In presenting these prophecies, I am aware of my own shortcomings. I am not like Ka‘ōpuluhulu and Kapihe; I am not a skilled observer of natural elements, I have not memorized the clouds and their meanings, as kāula once did, I am not a reader of omens, nor have I been gifted with divine inspiration. What I am is a researcher, a student of history, and a woman of culture, who believes that any path towards

the future starts in the past. Therefore, my hope, as the molder of this thesis, is that readers will take a deep breath with me, preparing for all that will come to light as we exhale together, giving ourselves the chance and the space to examine these prophecies fully, acknowledging the multiple paths that our people have traveled and how they have influenced us today.

In the following sections, this chapter will touch upon some of the complex tensions existent in discourses of religion, nationalism, and indigeneity. Further, it will use the prophetic visions of Ka‘ōpūlupulu and Kāpihe as an avenue for exploring how Hawaiians have dealt with these tensions, not necessarily always resolving them, but finding ways to either work with them or to strategically resist them. In these discussions, Kahiki will play a central role as an avenue through which Hawaiians in the past and the present can continue to articulate a sense of belonging to their place and to the wider world. Kahiki will also allow us to take the sometimes undesirable path of examining ourselves, from our chosen identities to our ethnic make-up, as composites of the past and the present, of the “inside” and the “outside,” and even, of Hawai‘i and Kahiki, all at the same time. It is in this chapter, therefore, that we will see that as contemporary Kānaka Maoli—most of us of mixed ethnicity, and most of us traveling multiple roads at home and abroad—we are at once the path to our own life and the path to our own demise. It is time we understand that and choose which one to follow. I nui ke aho. Take a deep breath.

No ke kai kā ho‘i ua ‘āina: This land belongs to the sea

When Wise (1923b) printed his article on past prophecies in the early twentieth century, he provided a key piece of advice to Kānaka Maoli then and today: “e nana hou aku no i mua” [look ahead once more] (p. 2). While he examined the prophecy of Ka‘ōpūlupulu, who he referred to as Keōpūlupulu, he urged readers to not settle on one interpretation of the famed prophet’s vision. In other words, although some may have argued that his prophecy was fulfilled by certain events, he urged readers to look forward. And when others claimed that the prophecy was then fulfilled by new events, he urged again, “e nana aku i mua,” [look ahead] (p. 2). His article proved that there were multiple ways that Ka‘ōpūlupulu’s words could be interpreted and that these interpretations were not limited to a certain time or situation. With that said, Wise’s analysis of this prophecy did indeed end at a particular point, signifying the time in which he lived. Therefore, this chapter will argue that we open it up again, looking forward once more, to see what else the vision of this wise kāula can reveal.

In Kamakau’s (1867b) rendition of the story, Ka’ōpuluhulu is the prophet of Kahahana, the reigning chief of O’ahu. When Kahahana gains his position, Kahekili, the ruler of Maui makes a request for significant pieces of land on the new chief’s island. As Kahahana was raised in the Maui chief’s court from childhood, he thinks it only appropriate to please his guardian and grant him his request. Ka’ōpuluhulu, however, knows the value of these lands, and the role they play in worship and ritual sacrifice—both seen as essential elements to a chief’s successful reign—and therefore predicts that if Kahahana agrees to Kahekili’s demands, that this will result in his demise and the loss of his kingdom. Thus, Kahahana heeds the words of his kāula and denies the demands of his prior guardian, Kahekili.

The influence of Ka’ōpuluhulu as a prophet was undeniable. In fact, it is said that when Kahahana was chosen as the next ruler of O’ahu, that “aole no i keakea ia, aole no hoi he alii, aole kahuna, aole kakaolelo, no ka mea, ua ae ke kahuna o Kaopuluhulu” [no one objected it, not any chiefs, not any priests, and not any counselors, because the priest Ka’ōpuluhulu had already given his approval] (Kamakau, 1867b, p. 1). The chief of Maui, Kahekili, was very much aware of the prophet’s power and sway in the court of O’ahu. In fact, Ka’ōpuluhulu’s younger brother, Kaleopu’upu’u, who served as Kahekili’s prophet, advised him that the only way to gain the lands he desired on O’ahu was to get rid of Ka’ōpuluhulu: “Aia a make o Kaopuluhulu, a laila, o ka lilo ka hoi ia o ke aupuni o Oahu” [As soon as Ka’ōpuluhulu is dead, then the kingdom of O’ahu will be yours] (Kamakau, 1867c, p. 1). The younger brother of this great and influential prophet therefore devises a plan against Ka’ōpuluhulu, advising his chief to use ‘ōlelo wea and ‘ōlelo ‘imihala, or words to tempt Kahahana away from his prophet, and words to find fault with the famed kāula. Therefore, when Kahahana informs Kahekili that he will not be granting him land, the chief responds by saying:

Kupanaha! Kupanaha maoli no o Kaopuluhulu. Ua haawi mai no o Kaopuluhulu i ke aupuni o Oahu ia’u, aka, no kuu nana aku ia oe, i ke keiki a ko’u kaikuahine, a o oe na’u no hoi i hanai, no laila, aole au i lawe i ke aupuni no’u ma kana haawi ana mai— a o ia no ke kipi o ke aupuni, a he kaili aupuni ia. (Kamakau, 1867c, p. 1)

[Amazing! Ka’ōpuluhulu is truly amazing! Ka’ōpuluhulu offered the kingdom of O’ahu to me; however, because I care for you, the child of my sister, and because it was you that I raised, I did not take the kingdom for myself when he offered it to me—he is the true rebel of your dominion, and he is a nation-snatcher.]

Enraged at Ka'ōpūlupulu's supposed treason, Kahahana leaves the advisement of his prophet, and as a result, becomes a trying chief and a heavy burden on his people. Even after banishment, however, the kāula, committed to his role, tries to warn Kahahana that he will lose his kingdom if he continues to rule in an unjust manner. Despite this act, Kahahana ignores him, and Ka'ōpūlupulu departs, returns to his family, and tattoos their kuli, or knees, the black ink on their bodies becoming a symbol of the chief's "ho'okuli," or deafness.

Thus, Ka'ōpūlupulu wore Kahahana's disobedience on his body, carrying that symbol even when he faced his own death. As explained previously, Ka'ōpūlupulu knew that his passing would come, especially as Kahekili continued to pour lies into the ears of the O'ahu chief. However, he faced it, choosing the path of death instead of the road to life, offering his child, and all of those who could hear him, one more prophecy: "I nui ke aho a moe i ke kai! No ka kai ka hoi ua aina" [Take a deep breath and lay in the ocean, for this land belongs to the sea] (Kamakau, 1867c, p. 1). Many have pondered the meaning of these words, not just in the context of Ka'ōpūlupulu's death and Kahahana's reign, but even in the larger contexts of conquest, cultural change, and eventually, occupation.

As suggested in the previous chapter, Kamakau's own recording of this story must be analyzed within the time that he was writing. Kamakau wrote in late 1860s, a time when the number of foreigners was indeed increasing, and when waves of newcomers from the ocean were certainly coming to take and own their land. By 1860, as political scientist Noenoe Silva (2004a) explains,

...the Hawaiian kingdom was on its second Western-style constitution, and although the ali'i [chiefs] were firmly in charge of the throne a colonial two-tiered structure was developing across the main institutions of the land, with the Europeans and Americans on the top tier and the Kanaka Maoli at the bottom. Following the Māhele³¹, Europeans and Euro-Americans began purchasing large tracts of land. At the same time many maka'āinana [commoners] became alienated from their traditional lands by these political and economic processes. (p. 45)

Thus, we can only make assumptions as to why Kamakau recorded this story, and further, what a prophecy like this could have meant to a population of Hawaiians who were witnessing the loss of their 'āina (land) and the loss of their people. They had suffered multiple epidemics in past decades, and as a result, were literally dying of diseases and

³¹ The Māhele of 1848, as Kauanui (2000) argues, "was instrumental in the overall displacement and dispossession of Hawaiians. Under King Kamehameha III, it transformed the Hawaiian communal land tenure system into a private property system" (p. 95).

metaphorically sleeping in the sea where there was no breath for them, no life. The power of this particular prophecy, therefore, is that it spoke to different situations and significant changes experienced by multiple generations of people, making Ka'ōpūlupulu's words both timeless and extremely important.

In his article, Wise (1923b) explains that after the prophecy was uttered “ua nui ka nune ia o ka manawa e hoea mai ai ka hooko ia ana o keia wanana” [the time in which that wānana would be fulfilled was a source of great speculation] (p. 2). In time, some believed that Ka'ōpūlupulu's words were fulfilled when Kahekili eventually took over the island of O'ahu. As he and his people came from Maui, they were seen as coming from the kai, the sea. However, as more years passed, others argued that the prophecy was truly fulfilled when Kamehameha I, eventually came and took control of O'ahu. As he too was from a different island, he and his people were also seen as coming from the ocean, thus proving the prediction that the land would one day belong to the sea. However, Wise (1923b) then explains that in 1857 an intelligent Hawaiian scholar pushed people to look even further, beyond the conquests of Hawai'i's many rulers:

A eia ka wehewehe a kekahi kanaka Hawaii naauao i keia makahiki 1857 e pili ana i keia wanana a Keopulupulu [Ka'ōpūlupulu]... O ka lilo, aole ia he mau olelo e hiki e manao ia e paa ia ana no e kekahi kanaka Hawaii. O ka lilo, oia no ke kaawale ana aku i loko o na lima o kekahi poe okoa loa, o ia hoi he lahui okoa aku ma waho o na Hawaii... E lilo ana ke aupuni i na kanaka keokeo a e noho ana na kanaka i loko o ka hale o ka i'a. E pau ana na alii i ka ohi ia a koe ka holopapa, a e puka mai ana he hanauna hookuli, a o ia ka mea nana e hooneoneo i ka hanauna kanaka. (p. 2)

[And here is what a wise Hawaiian man explained in the year 1857 regarding Keōpūlupulu's prophecy... As for the taking [of our land], this is not something that we can think was accomplished by a Hawaiian person. This loss, or the separation, is in the hands of an entirely different nation, an entirely different race outside of Hawaiians... The government is going to be lost to the white man and the Hawaiian people will live in houses with fish. All of the chiefs will be taken over until they are defeated, and a generation of deaf³² will be born, and that is what will lead to the desolation of this generation of people.]

³² The word “ho'okuli” was not only used to refer to those who were literally deaf. It could also be used in reference to those who feigned deafness and were therefore seen as disobedient (Pūku'i & Elbert, 1986, p. 180). Thus, it is likely that this prediction did not refer to a generation of Hawaiians with hearing impairments, but to perhaps an unruly generation of Hawaiian youth. It could have also predicted potential changes to be experienced by Kānaka Maoli, including the loss of language (the metaphorical loss of “hearing” or the ability

(Wise, 1923b) credits these words to Samuel Kamakau, one of the most prolific writers of the nineteenth century who was “held as a respected voice among his peers” (Nogelmeier, 2010, p. 108). In 1867, as opposed to Wise’s recording of 1857, Kamakau (1867d) did indeed record these words. However, rather than claiming them as his interpretation of Ka‘ōpūlupulu’s prophecy, he presents them as the actual words of the prophet himself. Whether this is a rendition of the first prophecy or a different one entirely is uncertain. However, Wise seems to believe that these were Kamakau’s predictions for how the initial wānana would be fulfilled and therefore attempts to explain them further. These words warrant exploration as they not only speak to the time in which Kamakau lived, but also to the era in which Wise was writing and engaging with these ideas years later. Thus, to explore this wānana is to explore the potential effects of this prophecy in the past, the present, and the future, in the nineteenth, the twentieth, and even the twenty-first centuries.

As for Kamakau’s first statement, that the government will be taken over by “kanaka ke‘oke‘o,” or white people, Wise explains that it is perhaps more important to discuss the loss of political control than to look solely at the loss of land, for the two are intricately bound:

O ka aina ka mea oi aku o ka makamae... Aka ma kekahi aoao nae hoi, o ke aupuni a me kona hoopono ana ka mea oi aku, no ka mea ina e lilo kela a koe mai ka aina, aole he waiwai o ka aina no ka mea o ka poe nana e hoopono mai ana i ka paa aina ana ka poe mana ma kela aina. (p. 2)

[The land is what is truly precious... However, on the other hand, the government and its administration are even more important because if that is lost and all we have left is the land, then there is no value in having the ‘āina because those that will control who has land are the people who hold the power there.]

As explored in Chapter 2, what the above statement reveals is a layering of thought, spanning multiple generations. Ka‘ōpūlupulu made his predictions in 1782 or 1783, not long after first contact with the Western world in 1778; Kamakau recorded and expanded upon them in 1867, having witnessed the drastic effects of such contact; and sixty-six years later, Wise interpreted these statements while living in a radically different time. The two authors came from different eras, one predating the illegal overthrow and annexation of Hawai‘i in 1893 and 1898, and one shouldering the burdens of those acts years later. Thus, while Kamakau’s

to comprehend Hawaiian) and the loss of a cultural literacy with which to understand certain values and customs.

statements must be considered in the context of the 1860s, Wise's interpretation of them must be read through the lens of the 1920s, another complicated and historically important time.

One of the most significant events to occur in the 1920s was the passage of the Hawaiian Homes Commission Act (HHCA) in 1921, a piece of legislation that Wise himself, in his role as senator, played a pivotal role in. In her doctoral thesis, American Studies scholar, Kēhaulani Kauanui (2000) explains:

The policy precursor to the HHCA was first described as the “Hawaiian [*sic*] Rehabilitation Bill, first proposed by Senator John H. Wise... In 1919, the bill was introduced to Congress as an attempt to revive the Hawaiian population then suffering from high mortality rates and poor living conditions in Honolulu tenement housing. The homesteading proposal thus began with a desire to rehabilitate dying Hawaiians, a goal seen as an American social and moral responsibility. (pp. 86-87)

The initial idea was that if Hawaiians could once again gain access to land, that they could farm, work, feed themselves, and contribute to the overall rehabilitation of the nation. Between its introduction in 1919 and its passage in 1921, however, the bill was drastically altered and what resulted, after a significant amount of debate and a fair deal of compromise, was a new definition of what constituted a “Hawaiian” and a bill that had, as Kauanui (2000) argues, “no statement of purpose”: “Even though it was initially meant to promote native welfare by providing homesteads and financial aid, the rehabilitation section was ultimately relegated to a minor role in an omnibus bill that secured congressional approval to restructure Hawai‘i’s land laws” (p. 180). Thus, given his intimate connection to the bill, Wise’s comments could perhaps be seen as a way of using the prophecy to reflect on this piece of legislation. In the 1920s, it was not enough to talk about the loss of land; Kānaka Maoli had to look at who controlled the land, knowing that those in power could determine who had access. If Hawaiians were dying, lying in the sea of death, they needed the land and the ability to access it in order to achieve any level of restoration.

In the same issue in which Wise printed his overview of Ka‘ōpūlupulu’s prophecy, he also authored a piece entitled, “He lahui hou ana anei ko Hawaii nei?” or “Is Hawai‘i going to have a new race of people?” (Wise, 1923a, p. 2). In this article, he begins by stating that “O ka loa ana he lahui hou i loko o kekahi aupuni, aole ia he mea hou ma na moolelo o ke ao nei” [Having a new race of people in a particular government is nothing new in the histories of the world] (p. 2). He then cites examples from Germany, England, and America, commenting on how the incoming of migrants to a new land often results in the decline of the

“lāhui kumu,” or the original race, and the growth of a “lāhui ‘oko‘a,” or a different race of people. With all the recent emphasis put on blood quantum—particularly with the decision that only those of “not less than one-half part of the blood of the races inhabiting the Hawaiian Islands previous to 1778” would be eligible for HHCA benefits—Wise then turns his attention to the subject of koko, or blood, a controversial topic in the 1920s, and as a result, a terribly controversial topic even today (Kauanui, 2000, p. 171).

According to Wise (1923a), Hawaiians had lived for hundreds of years without any contact with lands and peoples from beyond the Pacific and therefore no race of people to “hoololi ae i kona koko,” or to change their blood (p. 2). Importantly, Wise makes a distinction between races from the Pacific, specifically Polynesia, and nations from beyond this region of the world, stating, “I ka manawa he mau makahiki ma mua aku o Umi a Liloa, ua komo mai paha kekahi mau kanaka mai ka Hema mai, aka o ka lahui Polonesia no, a aole no i loli no hoi ke koko o na Hawaii” [Many years before ‘Umi a Līloa³³, some from the south did come to Hawai‘i, but they were of the Polynesian race and therefore the blood of Hawaiians did not change] (p. 2). If we draw on old interpretations of Kahiki as a homeland—or as the place that seafaring Polynesians left as they migrated to Hawai‘i—this statement makes sense. As mentioned in the Introduction, an old ‘ōlelo no‘eau, or Hawaiian proverb, states, “Aia ke ola i Kahiki,” or as Mary Kawena Pūku‘i (1983), a noted twentieth century Hawaiian scholar explains, “Life is in Kahiki” (p. 9). Therefore, if the source of life was in Kahiki—whether this source was seen as the akua, or the gods, or as the ancestors from which Hawaiians descend—then it makes sense that Wise would not see the mixing of koko Hawai‘i, or Hawaiian blood, with other races from the Pacific as contamination, but rather as a path to life.

As Kauanui (2000) explains, Wise was not the only one to feel this way. In fact, one year after Kamakau wrote his article in 1867, initiatives were carried out to rehabilitate the Hawaiian race, one suffering the effects of introduced diseases and death rates that far surpassed birth rates³⁴:

³³ ‘Umi a Liloa was a great chief of Hawai‘i Island who is said to have lived and ruled in the fifteenth century.

³⁴ In 1867, Kamakau (1867i) commented on the decline of the Hawaiian race, noting that “I ka manawa i hiki mai ai na misionari i Hawaii nei, ua emi mai na kanaka a ua hapa mai” [When the missionaries arrived here in Hawai‘i, the population decreased by half] (p.1). Further, in a section of writing that was apparently left out of translated versions of his newspaper text, Kamakau (1867h) then states that in terms of the mass death experienced after contact that, “O ke kumu i loa mai ai keia poina a me ka hooneo ana hoi i ka lahui Hawaii nei, ua maopopo, o na haole no ka poe pepehi lahui” [the reason for this terrible misfortune and the devastation of the Hawaiian nation is clear: the haole foreigners are a race who kill nations] (p. 1). Sovereignty leader Kekuni Blaisdell (2005) incorporates estimates from historian David Stannard, stating “Currently, in Ka Pae‘āina (the Hawaiian Archipelago), our total resident population is 1.2 million people, but only 20% are

Rapid Hawaiian depopulation was far from new in the islands. As early as 1868, Hawaiian kingdom government funds were appropriated to import laborers of “Polynesian stock, as it was felt this infusion would result in at least partial rehabilitation of the rapidly decreasing Hawaiian people”... Advisors to King Kalakaua, such as Walter M. Gibson and others, were “intent on preserving the indigenous population by injecting a cognate of kindred people in the Hawaiian community and sustaining the numerical power base of the monarchy.” (p. 102-103)

Although these efforts had little success, they provide a revealing interpretation of indigeneity in not only the 1860s, when Kamakau was writing and publishing in the Hawaiian language newspapers, but in the 1920s as well, when legislation was being promoted to rehabilitate the people, not only in terms of their health, but in terms of their koko. Over time, ideas about “mixing” with other islanders from the Pacific changed and as blood quantum became a key determiner of indigeneity, the more “pure” blood you had, the better. As Kauanui (2000) further explains Wise himself was a Hawaiian of fifty-percent blood quantum, who eventually saw the best avenue to rehabilitation in the creation of more Hawaiians who could benefit from the HHCA. Thus, he pushed for the increase of blood quantum through the “mingling” of part-Hawaiians with full-blooded Hawaiians who could literally increase the race, not just through the birth of new children, but more importantly, the birth of children with a higher percentage of koko from the “lāhui kumu,” or the original race of people, which by this time, no longer included our migratory relations from Kahiki (p. 177).

By the time Wise (1923a) wrote his article on race relations in Hawai‘i, intermarriage was a common occurrence. However, the rapid pace at which it occurred resulted in radical consequences, which were only predicted to get worse:

E hoomaopopo mai kakou, na kanaka Hawaii, i keia mau kumu ano nui e hoololi ia nei ko kakou koko mai ka piha i na makahiki pokole wale no he 145. Ua komo ia maila nae e na koko okoa a ua loli aela, a ina e mau io ana—a ma ka nana aku, aole he alanui okoa ae a kakou e manao aku ai—e nalowale ana a ma kahi o keia koko, e ulu ae ana he lahui hou me ke koko okoa aku mai ke koko mai o na kanaka kumu o keia aina. (p. 2)

Kānaka Maoli. What was the population at the time of the U.S. armed invasion in 1893? Approximately 40,000 out of a total 90,000. What was the population in 1778? About 400,000 according to Cook, but perhaps as high as 1,000,000 according to Stannard” (p. 13).

[Let us remember, Hawaiians, the rather large reasons that, in a short 145 years, our blood is being decreased from full. It has been infiltrated by different bloods and it has changed, and if it continues in this way—and in considering it, there does not appear to be another path—then it will disappear completely and in the place of this blood, an entirely new race of people will grow with a blood different than that of the original inhabitants of this land.]

Thus, if we look back at Ka‘ōpūlupu’s prophecy and heed Wise’s advice that we “nānā aku i mua” or look ahead without focusing solely on the era in which the wānana was uttered, then we can perhaps offer a new interpretation, one that not only speaks to the 1780s, to the 1860s, or even to the 1920s, but to today as well. Perhaps his prediction that the land would one day belong to the sea did speak of Kahekili’s conquest. Perhaps it did speak of Kamehameha’s later battle and victory over the island chiefs. Perhaps it did speak of the incoming of foreigners, the overthrow, and the eventual illegal occupation of Hawai‘i. The point to be made is that perhaps it spoke to *all* of it. And further, if the wānana can be applied and used to explain such radical change and previously unknown circumstances, then we should be able to continue to use this prophecy to explain our situation today.

In contemporary Hawai‘i, being a mixed-raced Hawaiian is common. In fact, as Wise predicted, there are scarcely any full-blooded Hawaiians remaining. Thus, in Ka‘ōpūlupu’s words, there is the complicated matter that those “from the sea,” or those foreign nations who infiltrated our lands and who eventually took over, are now *in* us, running through our veins, being born in our children. I myself am mixed and according to HHCA regulations, I do not qualify for homestead land because I do not meet the blood quantum requirement. Therefore, what does that say about my indigeneity, about my rights to land, about my sense of identity and belonging? If blood quantum is the primary means of measuring one’s connection to the “lāhui kumu,” or to the original race, then I am composed of more “lāhui ‘oko‘a,” or different races from the “sea” than I am of the lāhui that birthed my Hawaiian ancestors. My personal story is a common one, proving that what the HHCA did was establish strategies of separation, forcing us to face “challenges to our racial ‘integrity’ that aim to undercut our genealogical ties... challenges [that] are tied to popular notions of cultural authenticity and biological difference through the use of blood quantum” (Kauanui, 2008, p. 2).

Such “notions of cultural authenticity” were legislatively constructed and therefore indicative of the fact that Kānaka Maoli live under a system that was not designed for their benefit. According to scholar and activist Haunani-Kay Trask (1993) “Under foreign

control,... we are by every measure the most oppressed of all groups living in Hawai‘i, our ancestral land” (p. 16). Such oppression involves the state’s denial of our right to identify ourselves. In a contemporary Canadian context, Native Studies scholar, Chris Andersen (2013) explains, “...state classifications like those found in the census are fundamentally *impositions of administrative necessity* rather than passive recordings of pre-existing identities” (p. 627). In other words, the categories in which indigenous peoples are often expected to fit are constructed and usually do not reflect the range of our identities or our attachments to ancestry. Thus, if and when expected to use blood quantum as an indicator of indigeneity, we are made to define ourselves according to a politically created classification system that does not account for other ways of identifying.

In the 1980s, as Andersen (2013) further explains, Statistics Canada incorporated a new “self-identification” question to the Canadian census, asking about more than ancestry or ethnicity, but about identification with one’s ancestry. While the question and its results are problematic—particularly because of the fact that it fails to measure a range of identities and because the motivation for such a question was to provide statistical data about which population of Aboriginals continues to “lag” behind the non-Aboriginal population—the question did make an important distinction between ancestry and identification. Those who have indigenous ancestry or blood, for example, are those who may have ancestors who were indigenous but who may feel “little or no day-to-day resonance” with those ancestors (p. 637). Those who self-identify, on the other hand, do so because of that resonance: because despite blood quantum or state-imposed categories, they maintain a connection to their ancestry and are motivated by it.

These types of distinctions frame my contemporary perspectives and give me the space to understand that state-constructed notions of identity need not define my own sense of indigeneity. Building on older concepts of genealogy (as explored in Chapter 1), I am confident that blood quantum can never measure a person’s connection and commitment to the community, to the islands, and to the knowledge, perspectives, values, and practices that make us who we are. Thus, in terms of Ka‘ōpūlupulu’s words, I would argue that they actually provide us with an avenue towards working through and working with the complicatedness of our current story, including issues and challenges of identity and indigeneity that continue to affect our people. As touched upon previously, when Kamakau (1867d) presented Ka‘ōpūlupulu’s prophecy and when Wise (1923b) interpreted his words years later, they spoke not only of the loss of the government but also of the possibility that

Hawaiian people would one day live in “ka hale o ka i’a,” or houses with fish, that all of the chiefs would be taken over and defeated, and that a generation of deaf would be born, leading to the desolation of the people. These predictions, I would argue, can shed light on the past, and can bring us some perspective and direction for the future.

The peculiar notion of living in “houses with fish,” as Wise (1923b) explains, actually speaks to the radical changes that Hawaiians experienced after losing their land. He notes that for most Hawaiians of the time that this phrase will make little sense and may seem awkward. This awkwardness, however, is a direct reflection of how losing ‘āina leads to a loss of practices and values connected to the land. According to the old folks, Wise states, “aole he pono o ka noho ana o ke kanaka i loko o ka hale e malama ia ana ka ia. Aka, i keia la ke ike nei kakou aole wahi noho ole ia e ke kanaka Hawaii ma muli mai keia o ka noho nele ana o na kanaka” [it was not proper to live in the same house in which fish [and food in general] was kept. However, in this time, we are seeing that there is no place that is not occupied by a Hawaiian and this is due to the fact that they are living in deprivation.] (p. 2). In other words, due to the influx of foreigners, Hawaiians were being made to live in conditions that they were not previously accustomed to, thus altering their lifestyles, their practices, and even their attachments to place.

As Trask (2004) argues, after first contact in 1778, the Hawaiian world slowly “collapsed from the violence of contact” (p. 11). This included, as she explains:

...disease, mass death, and land dispossession; evangelical Christianity; plantation capitalism; cultural destruction, including language banning; and finally, American military invasion in 1893, and forced annexation in 1898. During the course of little more than a century, the *haole* [foreign] onslaught had taken from us 95% of our Hawaiian people, 99% of our lands and waters, and the entirety of our political sovereignty. (p. 11)

As Trask (2004) states, contemporary Hawaiians are therefore born into “captivity”: we are born into a system that does not support us, and after the 1920s, we are defined and separated by blood quantum, those of us who are at least fifty-percent Hawaiian being labeled as “Native,” and those of us of less blood, seen as not Native (p. 11). This means that our very sense of identity and belonging is determined by a method of ordering and separating that was not born of Hawaiian perspectives. As explored in Chapter 1, mo‘okū‘auhau, or genealogy, linked you to a place and a people and then it was your kuleana, or responsibility, to act upon that connection and to contribute to your people. Thus, the separation of

Hawaiians from a certain way of life—which included access to land and their ability to maintain cultural practices and lifestyles—left them deprived, dispossessed, and homeless in their own homeland. It left them living odd lives, as if in a house with fishes, drowning in the depths of their new reality.

Borrowing from Frantz Fanon, Trask (2004) explains that this is the result of colonialism, and as Fanon articulates it, a sort of “peaceful violence” (p. 9-10). Trask elaborates that peaceful violence,

...kills without a sound, without a passing notice. Indeed, most of the oppression and violence people of color experience is hidden from view. In our case, more Hawaiians live below the poverty level than any other ethnic group in Hawai‘i. More of our people are in prison, are homeless, or are undereducated. Is this a violent situation? Of course. (p. 10)

In other words, when we neglect to challenge the current system and stop questioning it, we become victims of peaceful violence. When we stop asking ourselves why our people’s indigeneity is calculated in percentages and our connection to land determined by blood rather than genealogy, we have become victims of peaceful violence. And, worse, when we begin to think that this is our fate, that we have no opportunity to choose a different path, to propose an alternative, or to alter the course that our people are traveling, then we have become *agents* of that same violence used to oppress us.

Therefore, perhaps this is where the other predictions that both Kamakau and Wise covered are useful for understanding our present and our future. Our chiefs were indeed taken over and defeated, conquered and dethroned. Yet, their stories endure. While they were by no means perfect, we do have a history of great chiefs and monarchs who left behind a legacy of strength. Therefore, although their positions of power may have been usurped, it was not without resistance. Our history is littered with examples of not only chiefs, but of Hawaiian patriots who fought for the continuance of a people and a way of life. Therefore, contemporary Kānaka Maoli, no matter their blood quantum, are in the position where we can choose what to do with that past and how to use it for the betterment of our futures. We can be a “hanauna ho‘okuli” or a new generation of “deaf” Hawaiians who will ignore the teachings of our ancestors. We can give into the system that continues to oppress and separate us, and we can give into “peaceful violence” with complacency. *Or*, we can seek ways to work against it, using the examples of our kūpuna. If we look to Ka‘ōpuluhulu, we realize that even in prophecy there is choice. We can choose the road to the continued death

and dispossession of our people, continuing to allow ourselves to be defined and divided, or we can choose the road to life: restoring our breath, rehabilitating our nation, and making a conscious effort to be awake, to be alert, and to act.

What Ka'ōpūlupulu's prophecy teaches us is that there is power in our choice. Yes, many of us are mixed, many of us travel paths both at home and abroad, and many of us carry multiple histories in our veins. I, for one, descend from people who fought against annexation on one side of my family and people who supported it on the other. History, like our genealogies, is messy. However, that does not mean that we cannot use that complexity to our advantage. As Pacific Studies scholar Vilsoni Hereniko (1999) argues, a way out of getting trapped and caught in the notion of conflicting identities is to “realize that there is nothing shameful about having two or more identities, or an identity that is a composite of multiple cultural backgrounds” (p. 150). Further, we must realize that “Who we are is always in process” (p. 161). In other words, we have the choice to live in the often-binary constraints of a foreign system—letting an institution of power dictate who is and who is not native—and to continue to believe that our fate has already been decided: dispossessed, displaced, disempowered, and discouraged. We can believe, if we want to, that Ka'ōpūlupulu's prophecy was fulfilled, that we have lost everything, and must therefore simply accept our futures, living in houses with fish, laying in the sea, dying while our lands are stripped from us.

Or, we can be empowered and encouraged by his words. We can choose to use our mixed identities to move us forward. We can, as Hereniko (1999) explains, harness the tools and inspirations of our complicated stories, fighting in the contemporary world, letting our cultural roots crawl and spread outward while also digging deeper into the earth: “Only then will Islanders have a chance of succeeding in their attempts to confront the legacies and challenges imposed by the dominant culture” (p. 153). Further, we can recognize that we *are* a “lāhui hou,” that we *are* indeed a new race. We carry the koko of our Hawaiian ancestors in our bodies, and at the same time, we embody new nations and new notions of who we are. We are at once “inside” and “outside,” at once from Hawai'i and from Kahiki, at once of the earth and of the sea. Therefore, let *us* be those of the sea who will come to take the land. Let *us* be that new nation, carrying new ideas of nationhood. Let *us* know that lying in the ocean need not be a prescription for death. As Pacific Studies scholar Teresia Teaiwa states at the opening of Epeli Hau'ofa's seminal work, “The Ocean In Us,” “We sweat and cry salt water, so we know that the ocean is really in our blood” (Hau'ofa, 1998, p. 392). Let *us* use that and

be empowered by the idea that perhaps when Ka‘ōpuluhulu told his son to take a deep breath and to lay in the ocean, that perhaps he was telling him to lie in wait until the time came to rise, to leave the sea, and to walk upon the land once again, reconnecting to it and restoring it. If we think of the wānana of this wise prophet as being fulfilled, then we have already lost hope, choosing the path to our own demise. But if we choose to find encouragement and to use his words to understand our struggle, then we can travel, instead, a path to life.

E iho ana ‘o luna: What is up shall come down

While Ka‘ōpuluhulu’s prophecy teaches us about choice, another famous prophet named Kapihe teaches us how to act upon these choices, even when we may be criticized for it. In perhaps the earliest written record of Kapihe’s prophecy, La’anui (1838) describes him as a “kanaka wahahee” or a lying, deceitful man who declares before the great chief, Kamehameha I, that “he huwi [*sic.* hui] na moku, he ola na kupuna, he ihoiho ko luna o ka lani i lalo nei, he pii ae ko lalo nei i luna i ka lani, a he pi aku ka wai, peahi aku ka peahi, ola ka mai o ia la” [The islands will unite; the ancestors will live, those in the sky above shall come down; those here below shall ascend into the sky; and the water will be sprinkled; the fan will be fanned; and the sick of today shall live] (p. 83). As John Charlot (2004), a scholar of Hawaiian and Polynesian religions, explains, given the fact that the prophecy was made *after* Kamehameha’s unification of the Hawaiian Islands under one rule, “Kapihe’s prophecy is one of the few surviving expressions of Hawaiian dissatisfaction with Kamehameha’s reign” (p. 376). Thus, La’anui—writing just twenty-seven or so years after Kapihe uttered those words—was quite hostile in his reaction towards the kāula. He was a supporter of Kamehameha who perhaps believed that “if Kapihe prophecies [*sic.*] the *future* joining of the islands, he implies that somehow they have not yet been adequately unified by Kamehameha’s conquests and reorganisation of the government” (p. 376). Furthermore, the fall of those “in the sky,” or those of higher rank, could have been read as the eventual collapse of Kamehameha’s rule. Thus, La’anui is harsh in his criticism of the “kanaka wahahee,” or the man with the slippery mouth.

La’anui’s reaction, however, is indicative of the power of Kapihe’s prophecy. Like Ka‘ōpuluhulu before him, his words are vague and open enough to speak to multiple situations, crawling across the generations. In modern recordings and recitations of the wānana—one that I myself have chanted on many occasions—there seems to be an agreement that no matter how the prophecy is interpreted and no matter the situation that it is

being used to explain, there is an overarching anticipation of reversal, or of an overhaul of the way things currently are, whether positive or negative. As the popular chant begins, “E iho ana ‘o luna, e pi‘i ana ‘o lalo,” or what is up shall come down, and what is down shall rise up. Thus, even though we may not know what or who is on top, or even what or who from below will eventually come to take its place, we can believe that there is always a time for change, no matter how radical it may seem, and that such change will always come with adversity.

As a contemporary Kanaka Maoli, having both witnessed and lived with the effects of colonialism, occupation, and cultural oppression, I have often chosen to interpret these words as hopeful, as a cry for restoration, justice, and independence. However, this is reflective of how my upbringing has shaped my reading of history and my construction of the past. In more recently exploring Kapihe’s words, I have learned that his wānana was not always interpreted in this way. In fact, he was sometimes challenged. Therefore, the power of kāula, once again, lies in their ability to be “po‘e maka‘u ‘ole,” or fearless people, willing to critique a system, a government, or an establishment of power, even when knowing they may be criticized or harmed. Kapihe was called a “kanaka wahahe‘e,” or a liar, one with a mouth like that of a he‘e, an octopus: slippery and slimy. Yet, like Ka‘ōpuluhulu, he was committed to his role as a seer of the future, knowing that no matter how difficult the path, what he had to say, and the impact that it could eventually have on the future, made it a worthy path to travel. Even when criticized, therefore, he walked a path to life, giving his wānana time to crawl across the centuries, embedding itself into the ‘āina, while also continuing to explain our lives and our changing stories. Perhaps, in each generation, there will always be a time when what is up shall, and may perhaps even need to come down. We must be prepared, then, to act, even under the harshest of circumstances.

In the next section I will track the life that Kapihe’s prophecy has lived in print so that we can better understand the life that it has lived in performance and protest, in politics and in efforts towards progress. Many versions of the kāula’s proclamation exist today. What is not often known, and not often recognized, however, are the multiple interpretations that also exist. While many contemporary Hawaiians have chosen to see Kapihe’s words as hopeful—often accepting his prophecy as an expression of their own dreams for the future of the lāhui—as La‘anui’s comments reveal, his words were not always embraced. In fact, although we often chant and recite his wānana in protest to social and political injustices, and in the hope that we will gain some ground in our fights for sovereignty, Kapihe’s words were at different times used strategically to accomplish the exact opposite: to support the

abandonment of religious beliefs and the conversion to Christianity; to support America's military takeover; to support the dethroning of our last reigning monarch; and to support the illegal incorporation of Hawai'i into the United States. Furthermore, as the next section will reveal, Kahiki once again played a central role in such discussions, sometimes being used as a means of justifying colonialism, thereby complicating our histories, our stories, and our lives. Yet, as Kapihe teaches us, even in the messiness, there is a way to reverse the current situation, to alter it and to shake it up, so that we can find a path towards life for the future. E iho ana 'o luna. What is up shall come down. It is time for change.

E pi'i ana 'o lalo: What is down shall rise

Nearly thirty years after Ka'ōpuluhulu uttered his famous words, Kapihe proclaimed what would arguably become one of the most important prophecies in the history of Hawai'i. It is said that he declared his wānana in an era referred to as “Kanī'aūkani,” or the “Sounding of Coconut Ribs.” This name was given to the time when the great chief Kamehameha I returned to the island of his birth. According to one account, he had spent nine years on the island of O'ahu and then set out in 1811³⁵ to return to Hawai'i Island (Poepoe, 1906a, p. 1). It was following his return—in a time named for the sound that the chief's kāhili, or feathered standards, made in the wind while standing erect on his canoe—that Kapihe uttered his wānana.

Unlike Ka'ōpuluhulu's prophecy for which there are only a few variations, many different versions of Kapihe's proclamation exist today. Following the introduction of writing in 1820 and the subsequent establishment of a printing press in 1834, some of these versions were written down in the Hawaiian Language newspapers. The famous words of this kāula were then interpreted, analyzed, criticized, and even used rhetorically to make social and political statements, often not even related to the time known as “Kanī'aūkani.” The prophecy therefore took on a new life in print and could be found crawling and rooting into discussions about ancient customs, Christianity, the loss of land, and nationalism. Through time, it was interpreted as both a warning for the future, foreseeing collapse, and as a sign of hope, always depending on the author and his or her own political and social agendas at the time.

Although some, like La'anui, were hostile in their reactions towards the kāula, others embraced him, and while Hawaiian Language newspapers were being produced—in the 114-

³⁵ Some accounts say this occurred in 1812.

year span between 1834 and 1948—many referenced him and used his words in their social commentary, and later, in their efforts to support the lāhui, or the growing Hawaiian nation. The ways Kapihe and his wānana were treated in text give us a glimpse into the minds of those who recorded his words, and further, into the time periods in which they lived. As Merry (2003) argues, “Reading each account in the context of the conditions of its production reveals something of the time period and its preoccupations” (p. 56). Kapihe’s prophecy took on new meaning in each recording because of the authors who engaged with it, who found meaning in it, and who used it to make specific points. Thus, their words allow us to see into some of the most significant changes that Hawaiian people experienced and endured over the past two hundred years, and more importantly, into what they thought and how they felt about them. This gives contemporary Hawaiians like myself a foundation for understanding ideas about nationhood, resistance, and sovereignty as they exist today.

The life of this wānana, as La’anui explains, began when Kapihe recited his prophecy before a chief who had recently unified separate island chiefdoms under a single rule. Other accounts of the time period known as “Kani‘aukani” speak of how upon his return to Hawai‘i Island, “Ua kukulu ae o ia i mau hale no na akua ona a me na kahu akua ona” [Kamehameha built houses for his gods and for those who would take care of them] (Kamakau, 1870, p. 1). This included the “akua malihini” or the war gods of other islands that he had acquired in his conquests. Thus, Kapihe’s prophesizing of “he ihoiho ko luna o ka lani i lalo nei, he pii ae ko lalo nei i luna i ka lani” or that those in the sky above will come down and that those here below will ascend into the sky, could have been read as a direct reflection of the elevated positioning of Kamehameha’s many akua, or gods, thus foretelling the end of an entire belief system.

Just seven years after “Kani‘aukani” came the end of the ‘aikapu, or the set of taboo that governed the political and spiritual lives of the people. As Kamakau (1867g) explains “He mea kupanaha, a he mea hiwahiwa lua ole ka hoohiolo ia ana o na kapu alii, na kapu akua, a me na kapu a na kahuna” [The overthrow of the chiefly taboo, the godly taboo, and the taboo of the priests was a truly remarkable and incomparably astonishing event] (p. 1). Kamakau’s choice of the word “ho‘oliolo” means that those old beliefs, including the physical and spiritual structures that Kamehameha erected for his gods, were made to “hiolo,” or were made to tumble over, implying that there was conscious choice and action involved. Thus, what was up was indeed brought down, and it was that reversal of “those above” and “those below” that brought about significant change for Kānaka Maoli. What

exactly comprised “ko luna” or that above and “ko lalo” or that below is subject to debate. In fact, according to Kame‘eleihiwa (1992), the overthrow of the ‘aikapu “was not a conversion from Hawaiian *Akua* to the Christian *Akua*. It was a destruction of the old *Akua* in favor of nothing!” (p. 80). In other words, it was not that the “ho‘ohiolo” of the old beliefs and gods came with the immediate rise of Christianity, but rather than the ‘ainoa (the name given to the time following the overthrow of the ‘aikapu, “noa” meaning “free of taboo”) “created a kind of religious void” that Christianity could eventually come to fill (Kame‘eleihiwa, 1992, p. 68).

While Kapihe’s prophecy could have certainly referred to the falling of the “old gods” and the subsequent rise of Christianity, however, it could have also referred to any number of changes that took place in the nineteenth century. After the first utterance of Kapihe’s wānana in 1812 and the end of the ‘aikapu in 1819 came the introduction of writing just one year later with the arrival of some of the first missionaries and the development of an alphabet. Within a few short years, then ruler Kauikeaouli Kamehameha III declared “He aupuni palapala ko‘u” [Mine is a nation of literacy] (Pūku‘i, 1983, p. 64). Kauikeaouli’s declaration spoke to the rapid pace with which a majority of the population eventually became literate. In fact, within just two decades, Hawai‘i was believed to have one of the highest literacy rates in the world (Nogelmeier, 2010, p. 71). According to Hawaiian Studies scholar Jonathan Osorio (2006), by “1893 we were practically 100% literate and very much informed about the political issues of the day” (p. 21).

With the rise of literacy, however, came the fall of something else. As historian Helen Chapin (1984) explains, “A revolutionary technology acts abrasively and destructively on older forms of culture. Nineteenth Century Hawai‘i was the scene of intense value conflicts and radical change” (p. 49). While the chiefs were said to view literacy as another means of communicating amongst themselves and with the people, the missionaries viewed their teaching of reading and writing as part of the “civilizing” process, supporting the goal of converting the so-called uncivilized Hawaiians to Christianity (Silva, 2004a, p. 32). This agenda was especially apparent in the earliest Hawaiian language newspapers that, up until 1850, were run by American Protestant missionaries. While the new technology of print certainly provided opportunities and spaces for Hawaiians to write and contribute, their words were often used to push the missionizing agenda. As Hawaiian language scholar Puakea Nogelmeier (2010) explains,

In the mission papers—such as *Ka Lama Hawaii*, *Ke Kumu Hawaii*, and *Ka Nonanona*—and even in the early years of the government-sponsored *Ka Hae Hawaii*, requests for cultural or historical information were often couched in statements about how sharing such information would allow readers to appreciate the progress of the Hawaiians from “*na‘aupō*,” or ignorance, to “*mālamalama*,” or enlightenment of civilization and religious awareness. (p. 76-77)

In his article, for example, La‘anui reflected upon his memories of Kamehameha, showing his support of the ruler and his dissatisfaction with Kapihe’s words. La‘anui’s examination of his own past, however, is immediately followed by another article written by a fellow Hawaiian writer, Haanio (1838), who examines the “*wā hou*,” or the new era, and the “*wā kahiko*,” or the times of old, times that chiefs like Kamehameha had become representative of. After listing some of the primary differences between these two times—which all seem to be guided by introduced ideas about what was proper Christian behavior including marriage before sexual relations, wearing certain types of clothing, and having wooden rather than grass houses—Haanio (1838) asks, “*Eia kekahi manao ninau ia oukou, o ka wa pono i ko oukou manao, o ka wa kahiko anei, o ka wa hou paha? I ko’u manao o ka wa hou ka pono loa*” [Here is an inquiry for all of you. Which is better, in your opinion, the times of old or perhaps the new times? In my opinion, the new time is far better.] (p. 84).

Thus, even while Kānaka Maoli were allowed to reflect upon the past, the early newspapers were structured so that many of these remembrances were then followed by statements about how the past was indeed “*pono ‘ole*” or somehow unjust or wrong. It should be noted, however, that the use of the term “*pono*” in Haanio’s article is quite complicated and that no translation can truly embody the complexity of that single term. As Silva (2004a) explains:

The reduction of the language to writing was meant to, and did, facilitate the process of conversion to Christianity. It was in the production of the religious texts in Hawaiian that the word “*pono*” must first have been used to translate such Christian concepts as “*righteousness*,” which previously had no referent in the minds of the Hawaiians. Whereas *pono* had been used previously to describe the ideal behavior of *ali‘i* and other concepts such as balance, completeness, and material well-being, it now took on the foreign connotation of conforming to Christian morality. (p. 33)

These early papers therefore set the tone for much of what was produced afterward. With such a strong missionizing agenda, some Hawaiian writers became critical of their own people and the missionaries could arguably have perceived this denigration as success.

The influence of Christianity was certainly reflected in later recordings of Kapihe’s prophecy. In a version printed in 1860 the words of the famous wānana change, most notably to include reference to “ke Akua” or a single god. The article, like La‘anui’s, also criticizes Kapihe—now representative of an old and unjust time—calling him “he pupule” or a crazy person. According to the account, Kapihe’s prophecy is as follows:

E hui ana na aina	[The islands will unite]
E iho mai ana ko ka lani	[Those of above will come down]
E pii aku ana ko lalo nei	[Those of here below will rise up]
E iho mai ana ke Akua i lalo nei	[God will come down]
E kamailio pu ana me kanaka	[He will speak with the people]
E pii mai ana o Wakea i luna	[Wākea will rise up]
E iho aku ana o Milo ³⁶ i lalo	[Milo will go down]
E noho pu ana ke Akua me kanaka	[God will dwell with the people]

(S, 1860, p. 31)

What this 1860 recording reveals, however, is that conversion to Christianity—despite its obvious influence—was not as successful as it sometimes appeared. While this rendering of the wānana does include a reference to “ke Akua,” it also refers to Wākea and Milu, two figures that pre-date the arrival of foreigners. Wākea is often regarded as one of the first and oldest ancestors of the Hawaiian people. More than a progenitor, however, he also played a significant role in the “birth” of the universe. Wākea’s domain was believed to be in the sky while Milu was said to dwell in the underworld. Thus, the return of Wākea to the realm above and Milu to the realm below could have been interpreted as a restoration of “pono” as Hawaiians once knew it: a return to balance, or a return to a sort of “cosmic order” that had been disrupted (Charlot, 2004, p. 377).

Therefore, even with the obvious reference to Christian teachings, which perhaps influenced the way Kapihe’s prophecy was recorded, traces of older belief systems could still be detected. Thus, in reading back and examining these historical texts it is quite clear that Kānaka Maoli did not completely abandon their old beliefs and values, even while many of them adopted the Christian concept of “pono” and tried to live their lives according to it. In

³⁶ This may either be a typo or an alternate spelling of the more common, Milu.

fact, as Pūku‘i et al. (1972b) explain, some Hawaiians “only partially accepted the new faith; only partially disavowed the old gods... And some—even to this day—manage to believe in and accept both God and the *akua* [the many Hawaiian gods]” (p. 300).

Having room for aspects of more than one belief system was not unique to Hawai‘i. In a Samoan context, for example, historian Toeolesulusulu Damon Ieremia Salesa (2014) argues that although early missionaries often “sought out images of Samoan gods, sacred places, sacred knowledge and sacred practices, in order to deliberately and publicly desecrate and destroy them” that “Most of the time this was done not to show that ancestral Samoan spirits or powers were fictitious or imaginary, but in order to demonstrate the omnipotence of the Christian God” (p. 147). In other words, early teachings did not necessarily deny the existence of other gods but merely sought to make them inferior to the single Christian God. Thus, they still had a space, albeit a lower one. Thus, to worship them was to perhaps believe in an inferior belief system made up of lesser deities. This “space” left for older Hawaiian or Samoan gods, however, meant that people could choose to either abandon one or the other, or to live with both. What the 1860 rendition of Kapihe’s prophecy perhaps reveals, therefore, is that people were dealing with a multitude of gods, including the new Akua, and trying to determine their place.

While a modern reading of this account—particularly with the “coming down” of Akua and the rising of Wākea—could certainly support arguments about nineteenth century Hawaiian resistance to colonization, the existence of older beliefs and values could also simply represent the blending of ideas—from the both the “wā kahiko” and the “wā hou”—that occurred at the time. Fortunately, this mixing of belief systems was documented in the newspapers, especially in the 1860s, when Hawaiians began running their own printing press, writing *for* and *about* themselves. This decade marked a new reversal of “that above” and “that below.” Kānaka Maoli, whose voices were being controlled in print, were ready to rise up and to speak about—and sometimes speak back to—what they witnessed occurring in their own homeland.

As I have already discussed, the 1860s brought about great change: changes in land tenure with the Māhele of 1848 and the Kuleana Act of 1850, which signified a move towards private land ownership; changes in government, with missionaries coming into positions of power; changes in the economy, with the expansion of the sugar plantations and the arrival of immigrant workers; and changes in the community, with Hawaiians continuing to suffer the effects of introduced diseases. Grappling with such massive change, as Silva

(2004a) explains, perhaps inspired Hawaiians to use the “revolutionary technology” that had been introduced to them a few decades earlier:

In this struggle among the mō‘ī [the king], other ali‘i nui [high chiefs], the maka‘āinana [commoners], missionaries, and planters of various types, newspapers would become the main battleground for competing discourses. For forty years the mission controlled the power of the printed word in Hawai‘i. The missionaries used this power not just to save souls but to assist in the progress of plantation/colonial capitalism, to control public education, to mold government into Western forms and to control it, and to domesticate Kanaka women. Then, in 1861, to the shock and outrage of the missionary establishment, a group of Kānaka Maoli, maka‘āinana, and ali‘i together, transformed themselves into speaking subjects proud of their Kanaka ways of life and traditions and unafraid to rebel. (p. 55)

The establishment of the independent press in 1861 marked the beginning of what Nogelmeier (2010) calls “a major shift in the power over knowledge” (p. 84). Hawaiians were taking positions as editors, writers, and contributors. They were producing texts for and about themselves, insisting that they be heard. With such insistence came the first newspaper to be edited by Hawaiians, *Ka Hoku o ka Pakipika*, a paper that arguably set the tone for an emerging national voice that would find its base in print. Those who created this paper, therefore, were like Kapihe who challenged the system and called for a reversal.

One year after being established in 1861, a new version of Kapihe’s prophecy appeared in *Ka Hoku o ka Pakipika*. This version, like the 1860 recording, continues to combine Christian teachings with older beliefs. What is interesting, however, is the obvious increase in critical engagement with the prophecy. Whereas previous writers seemed to simply report on Kapihe’s words, offering small comments and personal insights, the author of the 1861 version, Kauako‘iawe (1862), takes time to analyze it:

E iho mai ana ke akua e noho pu me kanaka, a e pii aku ana hoi ko lalo nei i luna, a e hui ana hoi na pae moku mai Kahiki a Hawaii nei i hookahi. Penei nae ka hoailona e hiki mai ai ma mua: hookahi kanaha la e pouli ai; a laila, e ua mai ka ua, a kui ka hekili, a olapa ka uwila, a pio mai hoi na anuenue ehiku. I laila e ike aku ai kakou i ka poe make e ala mai ana mai na ilina mai, a e ike aku kela kanaka keia kanaka i ko lakou poe makua, a me na hoahanau i make e ma mua. (p. 1)

[God will descend to dwell with the people, and those here below will ascend, and the archipelagos, from Kahiki to Hawai‘i, will be united as one. This is the sign that will

come before this: there will be forty days of darkness, and then rain will fall, thunder will crash, lightning will flash, and seven rainbows will appear arched. It is there that we will see the dead rise from their graves, and each person will see his or her parents and cousins who died before.]

Aside from being much longer than previous versions—and the fact that Kauako‘iawe places Kapihe’s prophecy *before* Kamehameha’s unification of the islands—his rendition also includes new elements. Whereas La‘anui’s account spoke of the eventual unification of “moku,” or islands, and the 1860 version used the term “‘āina,” or land, Kauako‘iawe’s article speaks of “pae moku,” or archipelagos. Adding to the complexity of his account is the fact that he attempts to include specifics, saying that lands from Kahiki to Hawai‘i will be as one. Kahiki, as past scholarship has indicated, is not a specific location (Finney, 1999). Rather, as explored previously, it was a concept; it was the very idea of origin and was often celebrated as a place where life began. Thus, Kauako‘iawe’s inclusion of Kahiki is interesting as it draws upon genealogy and being connected, or reconnected, to an ancestral homeland.

It should be noted, however, that because the meaning of the term Kahiki also changed that this therefore impacted Kauako‘iawe’s analysis. Despite the clear use of “pae moku,” which is a group of islands and not a continent, Kauako‘iawe draws on a newer interpretation of the term Kahiki, which by that time, was often used to refer to any land outside of Hawai‘i, continents included (Pūku‘i & Elbert, 1986, p. 112; Tregear, 2014, p. 499). In reference to Kahiki, he states, “ua hui hoi na aupuni kanaka i hookahi, mai Amelika, a me na aina ano kanaka e ae; eia pu me kakou” [other nations of men, from America and other inhabited places, have become as one; they are here with us] (p. 1). In his interpretation of Kapihe’s words, therefore, the unification of Kahiki and Hawai‘i was fulfilled with the arrival of Americans and other foreigners.

When examining this particular version of Kapihe’s prophecy, without Kauako‘iawe’s analysis, it could appear that Kapihe was referring to the eventual unification of archipelagos in the Pacific, from Kahiki to Hawai‘i. In fact, in retrospect, this version could appear to support a stance of resistance against American encroachment, as Hawaiians would rise up and join together with their relations, or those, as previously explained, who were seen to be of the “same stalk.” However, looking back from a particular “vantage point,” as professor of African literature Isabel Hofmeyr (2013) explains, can obscure the conditions in which the text was initially produced (p. 7). Furthermore, to view the text

through the lens of resistance can privilege contemporary voices and ideas over those of the past. I myself have been guilty of this: of searching for resistance, of searching for something to make modern Hawaiians feel righteous. Merry (2003) argues that “For Kānaka Maoli...rewriting the history of their encounter with Europeans and Americans is crucial to contemporary efforts to recuperate cultural identity and assert claims to sovereignty” (p. 46). However, in our “rewriting” of history, or in our re-presentation of the past, we must be aware of our modern interpretive lens and mindful of how it shapes our constructions. Further, we must be open to reading texts in the contexts in which they were produced. In examining Kapihe’s prophecy, for example, I have learned that we must acknowledge the multiple paths that people have taken, acknowledging the effects that drastically different circumstances had on their thinking, choices, and actions, whether we agree with them or not. Reading these historical texts and trying to understand them in the contexts in which they were created, therefore, is critical. It requires looking back through the minds of those who wrote them, no matter how difficult it may be, so that we can begin to understand what some Kānaka Maoli thought and felt at the time.

Such a complicated history, however, is certainly not unique to Hawaiians, or even to Hawai‘i in general. In his study of Māori language newspapers, Lachy Paterson (2006) states, “Some of these Māori voices in the newspapers reflected opinions that do not always sit comfortably with views of history in which (good) Māori tribes resist (evil) Pākehā colonialism. Such histories tend to marginalise those Māori who did not actively resist colonisation as having been duped or indoctrinated” (p. 12). Kauako‘iawe could arguably fit into such a category. His words may not sit comfortably with Kānaka Maoli, especially with contemporary aloha ‘āina who are fighting for sovereignty and indigenous rights. However, in reading his words and trying to understand them in the context in which they were written, we can get a sense of the complicated situations he was dealing with.

Kauako‘iawe’s account, and the newspapers in general, “are valuable because they leave a record of more than one perspective” and it is important that different voices—both those that appear to resist colonialism and those that seem to support it—be heard (Paterson, 2006, p. 17). Their voices not only speak to their experiences as individuals, but to the complex experiences of an entire nation of people facing radical change. This is why prophecies like that of Ka‘ōpuluhulu and Kapihe are so important, and why they have the ability to spread their roots and crawl into, and across, the generations: they give us a means

of understanding and articulating our stories, including the new circumstances and situations that old stories simply cannot explain.

Therefore, what Kauako‘iawe’s text provides is an invitation, to readers then and to readers today, to dig into the many possible meanings of the wānana: “he olelo nane ka Kapihe” [Kapihe’s prophecy is a riddle] (p. 1). He therefore suggests that rather than reading the wānana as a literal account it would be more valuable to search for the hidden meaning in the text. Kauako‘iawe certainly did so. He analyzed the words of this famous kāula and used them to make sense in his life and what he was learning and experiencing as a Hawaiian in the 1860s. Kauako‘iawe’s work, as Oceanian scholar Epeli Hau‘ofa (2008) explains, is indicative of “what we have been doing all along,” which is “constructing our pasts, our histories, from vast storehouses of narratives, both written and oral, to push particular agendas” (p. 61). Thus, peering into his article is important because, although it may not push the resistant, anti-American agenda that many who chant Kapihe’s words today would like to see, it does provide evidence that taking a narrative from the past and interpreting it, or reinterpreting it to make a point, is nothing new. It is what people have been doing for generations: they create the past, or as historian Te Maire Tau (2012) describes, they think their pasts into being (p. 25). And that, as Kapihe teaches us, is having the courage to act, no matter what the consequences may be.

In later decades, writers continued in this tradition, leaving a record of how the time periods in which they lived influenced “how they explained themselves to themselves” (Tau, 2012, p. 25). In 1897, one year before the illegal annexation of Hawai‘i to the United States, a brief conversation about “Na Wanana i Hooko ia,” or “Prophecies that have been Fulfilled,” appeared between two newspapers. The first article was printed in *Ke Aloha Aina*, a paper started by Joseph Nāwahī who was a staunch opponent of annexation and a firm “aloha ‘āina,” or patriot. “Aloha ‘āina, then, meant more than an abstract or emotional love for the ‘one hānau’ (birth sands). For Nāwahī and the other po‘e aloha ‘āina, it meant that people must strive continuously to control their own government in order to provide life to the people and to care for their land properly” (Silva, 2004a, pp. 141-142). It was in this paper, one named for patriotism to the Hawaiian Nation, that the discussion of wānana began with an article written by “Na Kiai o ka Po,” (1897) or “The Guardians of the Night.”

These kia‘i (guards or caretakers) list a series of prophecies made in the “wā kahiko” and then provide evidence of their fulfillment. In their version, Kapihe’s wānana is as follows: “Ke hoes aela, a ke nalo ihola, a ke nalowale loa akula, ke pii aela ko lalo, a ke iho

ihola ko luna” [Arriving, passing, disappearing, what is below is rising, and what is above is coming down] (p. 1). In reflecting on this prophecy first uttered in the time of Kamehameha, they state, “Ua hooko keia wanana ma muli o ka nalowale ana o ke Aupuni Moi Hawaii i ka 1893. Elua, ke pii aela ko lalo, ke iho ihola ko luna, ua hooko ia ma ke kaili ia ana o ka noho alii mai ka noho Moiwahine ana o Liliuokalani, a pii aela ka makaainana lopa a lilo i Peresidena” [This prophecy was fulfilled with the loss of the Hawaiian Nation in 1893. Secondly, in terms of that of below rising and that of above coming down, this was fulfilled with the seizing the throne from Lili‘uokalani’s reign, and the advancement of a peasant commoner³⁷ to the role of President] (p. 1).

Despite the realities of their time—their Queen, Lili‘uokalani, was imprisoned and overthrown in 1893, and the threat of annexation to the United States was looming—the Kia‘i o ka Pō choose to close their article with hope for the lāhui. In their text, they reference a man named Kahimakaualele who, according to the kia‘i, had once predicted that “he make no ke kalo,” or that the kalo, the taro, would perish (p. 1). The kalo is arguably one of the most important plants in Hawai‘i, not just because it was a staple in the Hawaiian diet, but because of its place in Hawaiian genealogies. The kalo was said to be the first child of Wākea and Ho‘ohōkūkālani. Some accounts claim that it was born as a root while others claim that it was stillborn (Beckwith, 1970, pp. 297-298). Either way, the child was buried at the east end of the house and it was from this burial that the first kalo plant sprouted. The second child of this union was the first Hawaiian. Thus, the kalo and the Hawaiian are related as kaikua‘ana, the older sibling, and kaikaina, the younger. What Kahimakaualele’s prediction represents, therefore, is not just the death of the kalo, but the death of the people: when the kalo, the one that provides and nurtures the younger sibling, perishes, so does the nation.

While the kia‘i admit that Kānaka Maoli have suffered great loss, they conclude with hope: “ua make ka lahui, ke alii, a me ka aina, ua like me ka make o ke kalo. Aka, ua ola hou no ma kekahi ano” [the nation, the chiefs, and the land have been defeated, like the perishing of the kalo. But, it lives again in some ways] (p. 1). At the end of their article they combine this bit of optimism—as small as it may be—with a famous line uttered by Kamehameha I, the one who first heard the words of Kapihe: “E nai wale no oukou i kuu pono aole pau” [Continue to strive, my people, for my good deeds are not yet complete]³⁸ (p. 1). The authors

³⁷ This is a reference to Sanford B. Dole.

³⁸ Another version of this famous phrase is “E na‘i wale nō ‘oukou e nā ali‘i, i ku‘u pono a‘u i na‘i ai ‘a‘ole loa e pau” [Continue to strive, O chiefs, for the good that I have achieved, it is not yet complete] (Desha, 1996, p. 304).

then appear to reclaim “pono,” or to resist Christian concepts of “righteousness” while examining what it means in a new context: “Ka pono hea ia? Pono Aupuni Moi, Lahui Moi, Aina Moi, Nohoalii Moi?” [Which “pono” is this? The pono of the sovereign government, the sovereign nation, the sovereign land, the sovereign throne?] (p. 1). Then, in perhaps an effort to answer their own questions, and to offer a bit of hope to their fellow aloha ‘āina, they combine these two ideas, stating: “ola ke kalo i ka pono a Kamehameha” [the kalo lives in the order of Kamehameha] (p. 1).

What their words provide is an avenue for resistance, for restoration, and for sovereignty. If the po‘e aloha ‘āina, or true patriots, would follow in the path of Kamehameha, the famous chief who unified the islands, then perhaps the kalo and the people would live again in a true state of pono: balanced, connected, and healthy. Yet, their sentiments of hope for the nation were not embraced by everyone. A couple of weeks later, in *Ka Nupepa Kuokoa*, the longest-running Hawaiian language newspaper, a response appeared written by “Na Kiai o ke Ao,” (1897a) or “The Guardians of the Light.” The deliberate choice of name here is quite telling. Pō and Ao were complementary opposites. According to Cook (2011), “pō” could refer to “the night, generic darkness, and the time/being that was the primordial darkness... [which] came before anything else and birthed the rest of the universe” while “ao” “could mean light, daytime, the temporal world and/or the present post-Pō era” (p. 38). Like other terms, however, pō and ao were heavily Christianized. Pō became representative of the pre-Christian, pagan and uncivilized era, and ao became representative of a time of enlightenment. Given their nationalistic stance, the “Kia‘i o ka Pō” could have been looking at older understandings of pō as a place of birth, creation, and rebirth. As revealed in their response, the “Kia‘i o ke Ao,” on the other hand, stood for newer understandings of ao as a space of civilization.

The “Guardians of the Light,” respond with an article entitled, “Ahea la pau ke kuhihewa o ka lahui,” or “When will the erroneous suppositions of our nation be over” (p. 3). The authors of this article go through each wānana listed by “Nā Kia‘i o ka Pō,” giving their assessment and reactions. In reference to Kapihe’s prophecy, they state, “Pololei oe” [You are correct] (p. 3). In other words, they agree that the words of this famous kāula were fulfilled with the loss of the nation and the seizure of the government in 1893. What they disagree with, however, is “Nā Kia‘i o ka Pō’s” attempt to combine the words of Kamehameha and Kahimakaualele, both of which, according to these guards, were not true wānana as these men were not true kāula. They then criticize the “Guardians of the Night”

saying, “mai puni i na pelo no ka hoohui aina” [do not be fooled by their tall tales about annexation] (p. 3). As obvious supporters of annexation, the “Guardians of the Light” try to persuade readers to not be swayed by the resistance of the aloha ‘āina and then record the words of two sisters whose sentiments they use to push their own agenda:

Pane aela kekahi wahine aloha aina: “Aole au e make a noho hou ka Moiwahine ma ka noho Moi.” Eia ka pane a kona kaikaina, he hoohui aina oiaio: “E make e ana ia a me a’u, aole loa e hoi hou ae ka Moiwahine ma ka noho Moi.” Ke manaoio nei au o ka pane a ke kaikaina ka pane pololei. Na’u no e kiola aku i na alii mai ko lakou mau noho alii ae. (p. 3)

[One woman patriot responded: “I will not die until the Queen returns to her throne.” Here is the response of her younger sister, a true annexationist: “Both she and I will die before that because the Queen will never return to the throne.” I truly hope that the reaction of the younger sister is the correct one. I myself will throw the chiefs out of their positions.]

“Nā Kia’i o ke Ao” were staunch pro-annexationists. In fact, in a follow up article, they state, “o ka hoohui aku ia kakou me Amerika, o ia ka hana kupono nou, e Hawaii, e hana ai” [joining together with American is the right thing for you to do, O Hawai’i] (1897b, p. 1). Their position thus influenced the way they interpreted Kapihe’s words. While both articles agree that Kapihe’s prophecy was fulfilled with the overthrow of the Queen in 1893, they disagree on whether or not this was a positive or negative event for the people. Thus, in the months preceding the illegal annexation of Hawai’i, this small debate was but one example of many that filled the newspapers, and whether the writers were standing as “aloha ‘āina,” as patriots, or as “ho‘uhui ‘āina,” or pro-annexationists, the fact remains that each voice contributed to larger discussions on nationhood, resistance, and sovereignty, all of which have influenced contemporary discourse.

Today, the famous words of Kapihe are often interpreted as a wānana that has not yet been fulfilled. In other words, although many reversals of “ko luna” and “ko lalo” did occur in the past, Kapihe’s prophecy may still foretell the turning of events and times in the present and in the future. In 2006, the Bishop Museum’s Hawaiian Hall featured a new exhibit called “Ho‘ohuli,” which means to turn over, to turn around, or to change. In the middle of the exhibit is a grand mural created by 24 students coming from a few Hawaiian-focused Charter schools as well as the all-Hawaiian Kamehameha Schools on the Island of O‘ahu. These students joined together with 14 Native Hawaiian artists to honor the words of Kapihe.

“Noelle Kahanu, a Bishop Museum specialist and one of the organizers of the project, said that by examining the chant, the Ho‘ohuli exhibit ‘gives Hawaiians a chance to talk about social justice and sovereignty issues in such a way that other exhibits don’t really allow’” (S. K. Wong, 2006, p. 17). In response to the mural, some have argued that Kapihe’s prophecy “has inspired generations of Native Hawaiians convinced that the chant’s kaona, or hidden meaning, foretells their community’s triumph over adversity” (Carvalho, 2006).

Looking back, however, reveals that the words of this famous kāula were not always accepted. In fact, they were not always interpreted positively, as something that Kānaka Maoli could find hope in. However, that does not take away from contemporary renderings of the prophecy. As the mural showcases, “E iho ana ‘o luna, e pi‘i ana ‘o lalo, e hui ana nā moku, e kū ana ka paia” [What is up shall come down, what is down shall rise, the islands will unite, the walls will stand]. When groups get together to chant his words, they often end with some sort of statement, bringing the people together with one purpose: “E ola ka lāhui Hawai‘i [Let the Hawaiian Nation live]; “E ulu nā kanu o ka ‘āina” [Let the children of the land grow and prosper]; “E ola nā ‘ōiwi Hawai‘i” [Let the Hawaiian people thrive]. Therefore, our dreams and hopes are tagged on to the end of Kapihe’s prophecy, giving expression to our current issues, struggles, and stories.

Thus, reciting it—given the life that it lived in print and the many ways that it has been presented, interpreted, and used over the past two hundred years—gives it that much more meaning and depth. When we know the history of these prophecies, for example, and the multiple paths that their roots have traveled, we can stand stronger, like the resilient ‘a‘ali‘i that does not break in the wind. Ka‘ōpuluhulu taught us that we always have choice, even when it seems that our fate has been decided. And Kapihe taught us that we can act upon those choices, always questioning the systems that work against us, and always believing that there is an opportunity for reversal and change. That is empowering. It speaks to our agency. Therefore, although cultural constructionists and some Native scholars are usually positioned in opposition to one another—often because of the belief that, as cultural anthropologist Jeffrey Tobin (1994) argues, “the vogue for cultural construction arguments appears as a hegemony-preserving reaction to decolonizing movements”—I believe that some of them would agree that we *can* and *do* construct our cultures (p. 126). More so, I think they would at least agree—despite the politics of power involved—that we construct the meanings of our cultures in the present (Handler & Linnekin, 1984, p. 286; Linnekin, 1992, pp. 250-251).

Therefore, any belief that Hawaiians should look to some sort of pure or untainted version of these prophecies, and any claims that they are using them inappropriately, are built on the idea that cultures are static, bound, and immovable. Such views block us from seeing “the modernity that every culture seeks if it is to live” (Denning, 1989, p. 136). In other words, it denies us the ability to grow and change, which is essential if cultures are to survive. Thus, contemporary Kānaka Maoli can be empowered by the fact that, as interdisciplinary scholar James Clifford (2003) explains, “Articulations and disarticulations [and perhaps even rearticulations] are constant processes in the making and remaking of cultures” (p. 45). New elements that meet the needs of the people will be added on just as antiquated ideas that no longer suit them will be taken off. It is part of the process of culture, something that all people do, regardless of cultural background.

Where does that leave Kapihe, the famous kāula who stood fearlessly before the chief Kamehameha I, and declared his prophecy in the time of “Kani‘aukani”? He still remains at the heart of discussions about who Hawaiians are and where they will go in the future. His prophecy has been used in arguments about chiefdoms, Christianity, the loss of land, annexation, resistance, and most recently, restoration and justice. Despite the twists and turns, or the multiple paths of discourse that this prophecy has traveled, however, we can be inspired. I feel personally empowered, for example, by the way Hawaiians chose to engage with Kapihe’s words, even if they were sometimes used to push agendas that eventually hurt and dispossessed my people. I am inspired by the way Hawaiians in the past sought to explain their lives and to understand their futures, even when they may have been criticized. I am moved by their action, by their choice and agency. And I am moved by their conscious effort to be involved and to contribute to discussions. Their words, like roots crawling through the generations, give me an even stronger earth to stand upon, to resist upon, to insist upon. Their words ground me. And perhaps most importantly, their words teach me that there is space for each Hawaiian, at some point in their life, to become “he poe makau ole,” or a fearless person, standing for whatever it is they believe in, questioning whatever system they think needs to be changed, and following whichever path they feel will bring a better future. The legacy of our Hawaiian prophets, and all of the messiness of their stories, has at least taught us that much. E pi‘i ana. Let us rise, fearlessly.

CHAPTER 4
Pehea ka ‘Aha a Kāua? How is our Cord?
Ethnographic Practices from In Front of, Behind, and *In* the ‘Aha

O keia aha, o ia hoi o Aha Ula, o ia ka aha hoailona no ka hiki e hooko ia a hooko ole ia paha kekahi hana nui i makemake ia.

[This cord, also known as “The Red Cord,” was one that signified whether or not a great and desired task could be fulfilled.]³⁹

To place faith in a braided strand of coir, one believed to have prophesizing powers, is not as far-fetched as it may seem. Before we enter the world, we are dependent on a cord, one that connects us to our mother, that nourishes us, and that sits at our umbilicus to survival. It is at the piko, the navel, that we are connected to all of those who came before us and all of those who will come after in a genealogy that spans, and will continue to span, generations. Thus, perhaps it is no coincidence that an ‘aha, a cord fashioned together with fibers from the coconut, would be used by Kānaka Maoli to not only foretell the future, but to verify genealogical connections and therefore rights and responsibilities.

In the eighteenth century, a noted soothsayer named Kapoukahi shared a prophecy about the eventual unification of the Hawaiian Islands. If Kamehameha I, a reigning chief on the Island of Hawai‘i, was to truly become “Ka Na‘i Aupuni,” or “The Nation Conqueror,” he would have to first build a house for his war god, Kūka‘ilimoku. This house was to be located at Pu‘ukoholā⁴⁰. Thus, at the instruction of Kapoukahi, Kamehameha ordered that the heiau (temple) be rebuilt and strengthened, and when it was secure, that a sacrificial offering be made to consecrate it. The chief’s priests and prophets knew that the one to appease the heiau would be Keōua Kūa‘ahu‘ula, Kamehameha’s cousin and rival from the district of Ka‘ū. Therefore, when it was decided that someone should journey to Ka‘ū to fetch him, an ‘aha was consulted to determine who the proper messenger would be.

As noted historian Joseph Poepoe (1906d) explains, the specific cord that was used was called ‘Aha ‘Ula, and “He aha kapu ma kona lawelawe ia ana ma kona mau ano a pau” [In all the ways that it was used, it was a sacred cord] (p. 1). Thus, it was handled by ali‘i (chiefs), or those of high rank. In the story of Kamehameha, the ‘Aha ‘Ula was suspended between two tall pillars, two chiefs positioned at each end, pulling until it was taut and secure. They even affixed long ti-leaves to their hands so that they could grip, pull, and work

³⁹ This line comes from “He Moolelo o Kamehameha I” by Joseph Poepoe (1906d).

⁴⁰ Pu‘ukoholā is located in Kawaihae, on the Island of Hawai‘i.

with the cord without tearing their skin. When it was ready, the question was asked: Would Kamehameha himself travel to Ka'ū to speak with his cousin?

Faith was placed in the sacred cord and as priests prayed over the ritual, Kamehameha was made to stand beneath the 'aha. He stood there for hours, from the morning until the setting of the sun, while everyone waited for a sign. If the cord broke or fell, then it would be interpreted as an approval, as confirmation that Kamehameha himself would make the journey to Ka'ū. However, the 'Aha 'Ula remained fixed, unmoved. Thus, the procedure was repeated, the 'aha stretched and pulled tight again and again, until someone stood beneath it and it broke, falling to the ground, telling all of those gathered who would fetch the appeasement for Kūka'ilimoku's house at Pu'ukoholā. There were no words, only interpretations. The cord itself did not speak. It was observed and answers were found in observation. An 'aha that remained fixed could determine someone's fate, just as an 'aha that broke or fell could decide the destiny of another.

In other similar rituals, the 'Aha 'Ula could be used to identify a chief's rank. After being suspended between two poles in front of the entrance to a chief's house, the 'aha made of braided coconut husk was watched (Ilihia, 1895, p. 1). When an ali'i approached the residence, as nineteenth century scholar Samuel Kamakau (1869) explains, "...he hoailona ka aha e maopopo ai ke alii nui. Ke haule wale ka aha i lalo, a laila pii aku ke alii nui ma luna o ka aha. Aole o ia e komo ma lalo o ka aha, ua laa o ia i ke kapu..." [The cord was the sign by which a high-ranking chief could be identified. If the cord fell to the ground then the chief would step over it. He did not enter the house by having to move beneath the cord [as lower-ranking chiefs would] because he was made sacred by tapu.] (p. 1). It was as if the 'aha itself could recognize rank and thus, like the people, prostrated before those who were kapu.

It seems, like the cord connecting a mother to her fetus, that perhaps there was no need for words because all that was needed for survival could be found *in* the 'aha, whether a cord of veins and vessels, or one of amassed coconut fibers. The 'aha somehow supplied answers and seemed to possess a knowing that our contemporary minds may no longer be able to understand. How is it that an 'aha became a prophet of sorts? How is it that a strand of coir was believed to be able to detect genealogy and act in accordance with established social rules, falling to the ground when appropriate? While written records tell stories of the 'Aha 'Ula, they often do not recount the thought processes that went into its preparation, use, or significance. Thus, we are left to guess and to piece together a past based on what strands remain.

What we put together, however, or braid together like a new ‘aha, is of our own creation. We simply cannot escape the fact that like the ‘aha being consulted for answers, the knowledge being sought after was often located in those doing the seeking. Knowledge resided in their interpretations of the ‘aha. Thus, what I present here is my interpretation, my ‘aha, braided together with strands from the past and from the present, strands from my home in Hawai‘i and from afar in Kahiki. In this chapter I will look at contemporary uses of ‘aha as markers of boundaries surrounding cultural spaces and will use these cords as a metaphor for examining how we position ourselves, and how we are sometimes positioned, in our work. Thus, the ‘aha will be given new function.

As anthropologist Ty Kāwika Tengan (2008) observed, the ‘aha was given new purpose and meaning at Ho‘oku‘ikahi, a commemorative event that took place in 1991 at Pu‘ukoholā Heiau, the same culturally-significant place of worship featured in Kamehameha’s story previously. Ho‘oku‘ikahi was “an opportunity to revitalize cultural and spiritual traditions,” specifically those pertaining to men and male roles (p. 64). According to Tengan (2008), after years of disconnect, many Kanaka Maoli men felt that they had “lost their place and role in society” and were therefore eager to revitalize male customs and practices as a means of remaking and reinvigorating themselves as Hawaiian men (p. 5). Thus, “Taking up the production of carved weaponry and the practice of martial arts, these warriors for the nation would embody the aggressive posturing of identity that came out of the cultural nationalist movement,” a movement dedicated to securing sovereignty for Kānaka Maoli that started a couple of decades prior (p. 4-5). Their events and exercises, however, were carried out in an entirely different context and environment than that of Kamehameha I. Thus, while at Pu‘ukoholā, they gave the ‘aha new function by setting up sennit rope boundaries to mark “ceremonial space,” keeping particular people in and keeping others out (p. 110).

Just a year later, the ‘aha served a similar function when another group of Hawaiian men sought to revitalize the practice of canoe building. While relearning all of the processes and protocols of this art, they draped a sennit cord around their workspace. The ‘aha was thin. In fact, if not hung between a series of tall, wooden stakes and if not adorned by the occasional dry ti-leaf, it may have faded into the background, barely noticeable. Although delicate in appearance, however, the presence of the ‘aha was thick with intention: it marked a boundary, a separation of spaces. Within the circle it created, each man pledged to do the work of a kālai wa‘a, a canoe carver. Outside of the circle stood spectators and supporters,

watching their movements. Though they were there with the men, they were not allowed to cross the boundary created by the ‘aha. Thus, the existence of the cord created two spaces and two realities that the men would move between as they built their canoe.

When I began interviewing these canoe builders twenty years later, wanting to record their stories and to examine their engagement with the concept of Kahiki, I became very much aware of the presence of metaphoric cords that either seemed to separate me from them, keeping me on the outside of their sacred space, or seemed to invite me in, to share in the space the ‘aha created. Thus, I was moved to examine the ‘aha and use it as a means of turning a reflexive gaze upon myself as a researcher, considering my role in this work. As a result, what will come together in this chapter will be my interpretation of those spaces. And in my observations and reflections I will create a new ‘aha—a cord that I work with my hands, that I rub against my thighs, that I imbue with the sweat of my palms and the moisture of my skin—one that will stand as a record of contemporary thought processes inspired by a genealogy of events and ideas connecting me to the past. It is my hope that this ‘aha will shed light on our rights and responsibilities as researchers and writers working within our own communities, and more specifically, from in front of, behind, and sometimes, even *in* the ‘aha.

He ‘Aha Kahiko: An Old Cord

In my lifetime, generations after Kamehameha I, we no longer have a chieftainship and we no longer consult cords, placing those of high rank at each end to pull, stretch, and secure them. We no longer determine rank or genealogy by asking people to approach the ‘aha and then to make symbolic gestures, entering houses either above or below them. Thus, the entire context in which the ‘Aha ‘Ula was used and understood is no more. So what becomes of the ritual once the context in which it was practiced no longer exists? What happens when it, as philosopher Jonathan Lear (2006) asks, ceases to be “an intelligible act—in the sense that there are no longer viable ways to do it”? (p. 32). What then do we do with the ‘Aha ‘Ula?

When a people are faced with such loss, as Lear (2006) outlines, they have three choices: they can keep performing the ritual even though the context in which it was originally practiced no longer exists and those of the current generation may no longer know what it was once intended for; they can invent new purposes for the ritual, giving it new meaning in contemporary times; or they can give the ritual up altogether (p. 36). While losing such practices is indeed a great loss for any people, the true tragedy comes with the loss of

perspectives, or the points of view and processes of thought that went into those practices. As psychologist Michael Chandler (2013) argues:

...the point to be developed here is that if any fulsome sense of indigenous identity is to be maintained, it will need to rest its case more upon the *processes* than on the fraying *contents* of culture – more upon identifying and inhabiting indigenous ways of knowing and meaning making than upon any more transient efforts to archive even a whole museum full of increasingly antique cultural shards. (p. 84)

In other words, to lose the physical and tangible ‘aha is one thing. To lose the idea—or the way that a people thought about rank, genealogy, or even destiny as linked to a cord—is another type of loss entirely. What do you do, for example, when you can make ‘aha but you no longer know why you are making it? What do you do when the strands of your own cultural identity, braided or twisted together by history, begin to come apart? When your own ‘aha frays, is there a way to put “it” back together?

Lear’s (2006) first two options for coping and dealing with cultural loss rely upon recontextualization. To continue a practice when and where there is contextual breakdown requires that the practice be allowed to exist in a new one. This is where writing is both revolutionary and a bit paradoxical. My own writing about the ‘Aha ‘Ula, for example, is problematic in that I have no lived experience of it. My understanding of the ‘aha as chiefs sometimes used it comes from written texts alone, and these texts were often created to “salvage” the remnants of a culture in rapid transition. As interdisciplinary scholar James Clifford (1986) explains, “Every description or interpretation that conceives itself as ‘bringing culture into writing,’ moving from oral-discursive experience (the ‘native’s,’ the fieldworker’s) to a written version of that experience (the ethnographic text) is enacting the structure of ‘salvage’” (p. 113). The writings I study come from this tradition, birthed out of necessity as people were witnessing the loss of rituals, knowledge, and customs. When such cultural loss occurs, sometimes “the only hope is to write it down in the hope that future generations may bring ‘it’ back to life” (Lear, 2006, p. 52). Thus, the practice, like that of the ‘Aha ‘Ula, is made to exist in print: a new context accommodating cultural change and loss.

Poepoe (1905a) himself, the author of Kamehameha’s story cited earlier, once reflected on such cultural loss and advocated for the creation of a written history through which younger generations could learn about who they were:

Ua ike ia o ka Lahui Hawaii opio o keia au hou e nee nei, aole loa i paa ia lakou ka moolelo o ko lakou lahui iho. No ke aha mai ke kumu o keia hemahema o keia au hou

e nee nei? Hookahi wale no haina: ua nele maoli no kakou i ka moolelo e apo koke mai ai la hoi na opio o ka aina i lilo ai lakou he mau lua huna waiwai e hoomomoa ia ai ka moolelo aloha o ko kakou aina kulaiwi nani. (p. 2)

[It is known that the youth of our Hawaiian Nation today do not know the history of their own people. What is the cause of this incompetence in this new era? There is only one answer: We completely lack a history that the youth of this land can easily grasp so that they may become repositories within which this cherished history of our beautiful homeland may be maintained.]

Yet, as Poepeo insisted that Hawaiians of the early twentieth century write their history down—other authors even pushing for the recording of customs, practices and cultural knowledge—the very act of writing implies that the contexts in which these things were originally maintained were challenged or changed completely. In Hawai‘i, as in other parts of the world, history was once passed down orally—through chants and proverbs, through storytelling and riddles, through speeches and memorized genealogies—and was also maintained in other visual repositories—in carving, weaving, stamping, and design (Teaiwa, 2010b). And customs were maintained through practice. Unfortunately, when a culture changes and stops relying on these vehicles of cultural maintenance, knowledge begins to get lost, thus necessitating recontextualization. You only need to write about the ‘Aha ‘Ula, for example, if it is no longer being used because it no longer makes sense to use it. Thus, the question becomes, what do we do with the written texts? Furthermore, what is “it” that we are trying to find in them, or trying to bring back to life, and is it even possible to do so?

The very notion of cultural revival, or in the case of history in Hawai‘i, cultural “renaissance” relies upon recontextualization (G. Kanahele, 1982). Although current members of a particular culture may strive to make an epic “return” to tradition or to the past in general, as novelist and scholar Albert Wendt (1976) explains, such “re-entry” is impossible for “There is no state of cultural purity (or perfect state of cultural *goodness*) from which there is decline” and to which one can return (p. 76). Thus, as he further argues, “Our quest should not be for a revival of our past cultures but for the creation of new cultures...” (p. 76). These new cultures can be firmly rooted in and influenced by the past but will always be an expression of where and who a people are in the present.

When we begin to view culture as fluid and evolving, never static, we engage with written texts differently (Wilson, 1999, p. 2). We cease believing that we can use them to bring “it”—whatever “it” is—back to life, and realize that we are only meant to use them as

guides to live the culture that we are currently living. We stop looking to Poepoe (1906d), for example, as a means of reviving the ‘Aha ‘Ula as it connects to chiefs and prophecies, and we begin to ask ourselves how an old cord can be used in a contemporary context, or how we can find meaning in it for our lives today. Regrettably, as anthropologist Joseph Genz (2011) points out, this can strip a particular practice or piece of cultural knowledge of what made it significant in the first place (p. 5). If the ‘Aha ‘Ula is used, for example, but is no longer connected to chiefs, does it continue to be an “‘aha kapu,” or a “sacred cord”?

Recontextualization necessitates such inquiry. Yet, it also gives us the opportunity to transform what we write, recognizing that we cannot create salvage texts with the hope that what we document will one day be revived. Such a perspective relies upon the false notion that cultures are bound or static. Similarly, we cannot write simply to describe difference, as ethnographies once endeavored to do. Such a practice implies that there is an assumed standard that all cultures be measured against, a standard that has traditionally been located in places of colonial power and has therefore led to the belittlement of indigenous peoples around the world (Hau‘ofa, 1994, p. 149; Simpson, 2007, p. 70). Rather, what we write must critique those establishments of power while also effectively recording our thought processes and our points of view as shaped by both modern contexts and history. They must be texts that future generations can learn from as they continue to add ideas, concepts, and practices to an ever-growing strand of coir, effectively recontextualizing *our* culture for their own agendas, just as we have done with the culture of those before us. Like our ancestors, therefore, we must endeavor to make and constantly re-make culture.

He ‘Aha Mana: A Powerful Cord

In the creation and re-creation of our cultures, we continually bring the past into the present, interpreting it for new times, contexts, and agendas. At the start of this chapter, for example, I set out to explain a ritual that I have never personally observed. I therefore connected the ‘aha to the piko, or the umbilical cord, attempting to pull on something that both my readers and I can understand contemporarily in order to make sense of a past that I am far removed from. This is one of the tasks of ethnographic work: to “make the (often strange) behavior of a different way of life humanly comprehensible” (Clifford, 1986, p. 101). My work seeks to find meaning in the past, or more specifically, to find ways that the past can inform and enlighten the present and can be a vehicle for social, political, and cultural change. Yet, my writing is limited by the fact that in many respects, I no longer have the cultural literacy with

which to understand pieces of the past. As the often-quoted phrase goes: “The past is a foreign country; they do things different there,” or as Larry Zimmerman (1992) further explains, though we may descend from the people we wish to describe, though we may live with and interact with the communities we work for, and though we may speak the language, practice certain customs, and carry core cultural values, “We may travel to the past,... [but] we will never actually be part of it because we are strangers from the present” (p. 1). Thus, the past will always be a modern construct because we interpret and reinterpret it based on who we are *now*. This is a powerful concept.

As this chapter will reveal, my decision to use the ‘Aha ‘Ula, and cords in general, as a metaphor for exploring issues of identity, colonialism, renaissance, and even academic scholarship was a conscious choice. Its very reduction from a useful tool to metaphor, however, means that I have given ‘aha new function because I no longer relate to them in the way that some of my ancestors once did. I do not consult cords for answers or use them to determine the rank of those in my company. I do not even use ‘aha for more practical purposes: to lash my canoes, to secure my houses, or to make tools and weapons. Rather, I use the idea of the ‘aha: I use the idea of consulting cords and of interpreting them to inform my thoughts about culture; I use the idea of lashing things together and of braiding or twisting strands to influence my thoughts about theory and methodology; and as will be seen, I use the idea that ‘aha may be used in new ways to further my thinking about cultural renaissance and how it can empower people while also entangling them within a complex mass of strands.

The fact that my use of the ‘aha can also result in abuse, or actually damaging it as a practice or a ritual of the past, is a risk that I cautiously take as a writer and a researcher. Critics may be offended, for example, at my attempt to understand the ‘Aha ‘Ula and to use a “sacred cord” in a modern and secular context like academia, and they may be leery of my effort to use cords as a means of exploring our work as academics, and the ways that we can position ourselves in front of, behind, or within ‘aha to find the tensions that exist as we pull, stretch, and attempt to secure them for our own use. I maintain, however, that there is value in reading and observing the ‘aha in new ways. It is my sincere hope, therefore, that the ‘aha I create in my work bring to light some of the political, cultural, and social tensions that exist in our communities, even if they cannot yet be resolved (Wood, 2003, p. 340). The point is that we are made aware of their existence even if it means, like cords ripping through our

palms, that they cause us great pain as we tug at them. Sometimes it is only when we can feel that pain that we will be moved to heal it.

While my goal is certainly not to offend, I realize that in taking full advantage of the power to make and remake culture for our own agendas, that some of what I may present will not sit comfortably with those that I write about and write for. However, like a rough strand of coconut husk, one that scratches at the skin and pokes at the palms, we must be willing to sit in the uncomfortableness, even if just momentarily, because like ‘aha, our histories are messy. They are complicated and they include complex entanglements. Recognizing them, however, will give us the space to work through them, to take the strands apart so that we may examine the pieces and later rebraid and recreate an ‘aha that works for us and an empowered future. That is the goal of my work. As Oceanian scholar Epeli Hau‘ofa (2008) reminds us, “How one reconstructs the past...is a political act—a choice from valid alternatives made for particular purposes” (p. 63). The purpose here is empowerment, and more than that, it is one of liberation: freedom from the historical entanglements that have long kept people tied to a past—or, more specifically, to an interpretation of a past created in establishments of colonial power—that no longer serves them, if it ever truly did.

As a researcher, and more so as a Kanaka Maoli working with members of my own community, I often find myself bound to this idea of empowerment, as if it is a kuleana (responsibility) that I have inherited, one that was given to me almost without choice. This is because, contrary to the what we are often taught about agency, sometimes “*Kuleana*... choose us rather than the other way around, and it comes as a gift from our *kūpuna* (ancestors both living and deceased)” (Tengan, 2005, p. 252). This does not mean, however, that kuleana is easy. In fact, it is quite the opposite. When chiefs stood under the ‘Aha ‘Ula, consulting the cord for answers about their future, they interpreted the movements of the red cord, and lived out their responsibilities, even if or when it may have caused them harm. In the end, it was about the larger picture, about the whole, rather than the individual. This is what kuleana is about. In Hawai‘i, it is a shouldering of both the benefits and the burdens that come with being Kanaka Maoli today (Fermantez, 2012, p. 110). Even while I inherit this sense of kuleana, however, how I act upon it, how I interpret it, and how I see it fulfilled is up to me. My own view of empowerment, for example, is one that requires confronting tensions and living with the strands of messiness that history has left us with so that we can work through them. My own view of empowerment is not one of ignoring complications, but is

one in which we shoulder the burden of saying what must be said and doing what must be done, even if it is controversial or a bit uncomfortable at first.

This idea of kuleana has influenced the way I see myself, my culture, and more importantly, the work that I produce for and about that culture. In my ethnographic work, I have had to study myself as much as I have had to study others, often simultaneously, acknowledging that my own reading of a specific event—whether in the past or the present—is reflective of my perspectives, or epistemologically, how my upbringing in particular social, cultural, political, and even natural environments has influenced how I experience the world around me (Meyer, 2003, pp. 157-158). My own goals and objectives as a researcher and a writer, for instance, were motivated by specific events, some occurring years, even generations, before my birth, and others occurring more recently. Thus, my work is indeed motivated by this sense of kuleana, or an inherited responsibility to my people. For those of us working within our own communities, therefore, we must be aware of the genealogy of events, stemming from the past, that has prioritized certain agendas over others, and how this then plays out in what we create, or in the case of the ‘aha, what we twist or braid together.

As political scientist Stewart Firth (2003) explains, for example, the roles and responsibilities that we believe we have to a specific place and people are largely determined by where we happen to be. In the context of the Pacific, this means that what we determine to be important research endeavors will be shaped both by the history of the people and places that we study as well as our physical, emotional, cultural, and even spiritual connections to them. “In Hawai‘i,” for instance, “it is impossible not to feel a sense of loss—the loss of cultures radically modified, if not swept away altogether, by the events of the last two hundred years—and so the sensibility becomes one of grieving for what is lost, and retrieving, restoring, and celebrating what can be regained” (p. 139).

As a result, in my homeland, issues of renaissance and identity have been paramount since the late 1960s and early 1970s when Hawaiians began striving to regain what was lost in previous generations (G. Kanahale, 1982, 1986). As scholar, poet, and activist Haunani-Kay Trask (1999) explains,

Because of the long dominance of American imperialism here—including the banning of the Hawaiian language in 1896, a forced change in citizenship from Hawaiian to American with the [illegal] U.S. annexation of Hawai‘i in 1898, and the near-total imposition of foreign ways and thoughts—our traditions, our Native voices, literatures, and oratures have been silenced or extinguished altogether. (p. 17)

Research aims in Hawai‘i are enormously political, and as a result, studying Kānaka Maoli today often involves working *within* their political and cultural movements—whether you support or critique them, or both—as they try to regain and reassert their rights as indigenous people. In societies that have not experienced such loss, there is less emphasis—if any at all—put on recovering whatever “it” is that was lost in the first place, or whatever strands of culture are seen as fraying. Thus, the needs for research vary from place to place and what appears to be a frivolous endeavor in one location can be hugely transformative in another. Examining the ‘Aha ‘Ula, for instance, and using it as a metaphor for exploring concepts of cultural transition, rapid and often violent change, and even modern renaissance, may not make sense in particular locations. In Hawai‘i, however, as Trask (1999) notes, “What we have lost, as Hawaiian people and as the Hawaiian nation, shapes my vision and provides the context for all I write” (p. 19). This is why research in, about, and for Hawai‘i, as explored in Chapter 1, cannot be separated from the genealogy of events and ideas that birthed it.

Yet, acknowledging this genealogy requires both working with the strands that can be strategically utilized to promote particular agendas while also recognizing those strands of history we often wish we could hide. For example, in my own fieldwork, I interviewed a group of contemporary Hawaiian canoe builders. Just over twenty years ago, they embarked on a voyage of learning that would lead them to build *Mauloa*, a single-hulled outrigger, *koa*⁴¹ canoe, using nothing but materials that would have been available to their ancestors prior to European contact. Their story, lashed together with rope like the pieces of their canoe, is one of men empowering themselves as they sought and found spaces to work in, spaces that allowed for their reengagement with male roles, and further, their recognition of male responsibilities to themselves, their families, and their communities. I was initially captured by their story for the unique ways that they engaged with *Kahiki*. As explored in previous chapters, the meanings and interpretations of *Kahiki* have shifted and changed over time. Thus, I saw their story as a means of examining contemporary interactions with *Kahiki*. Yet, what I did not realize initially is that my motivation to record their stories and to examine their work was driven by a history that I often accept without critical analysis.

Since the 1970s and the launching of the double-hulled sailing canoe, *Hōkūle‘a*, the canoe itself has become a symbol of Hawaiian resurgence, pride, and cultural identity. In his extensive work in both leading and documenting this phenomenon, anthropologist Ben Finney (1991, 2006) explains that what initially began as an experiment to prove the

⁴¹ *Koa*, or *Acacia koa*, is a large forest tree endemic to Hawai‘i.

intentional rather than accidental settlement of Polynesia by sea-faring islanders, quickly turned into a cultural movement. The canoe, and Hōkūle‘a specifically, became “a Hawaiian icon, an attention-grabbing symbol of past glories and future hopes that brought tears to the eyes” (Finney, 2006, p. 299). Since then, it has continued to influence Kānaka Maoli and other islanders throughout the Pacific. In fact, as historian Greg Dening (1994) notes, the canoe is “an icon of all sorts of continuities of identity, an icon of conjoining past and present. . . island peoples can recognize themselves in *Hokule‘a* and embroider that recognition with all sorts of rebirths” (p. 118). Thus, it has become a common image and metaphor, often used to evoke feelings of cultural pride, identity, and togetherness; to combat notions of cultural weakness; to stand in opposition to past representations; and to motivate and inspire islanders to view their worlds as wide and expansive rather than small and limited (Diaz, 2011; Hau‘ofa, 1994). In fact, islanders continue to flock to the canoe with enthusiasm, tracking the most recent voyages of Pacific fleets as they retrace ancient migratory routes and create new ones.

This fervor for the wa‘a (canoe), however, has both liberated us and bound us in certain respects. In her reflections on writing about culture, anthropologist Kirin Narayan (1993) argues that “‘natives’ tied to particular places are also associated with particular *ideas*” (p. 676). In other words, when so much writing and research is dedicated to certain concepts or cultural phenomena, examining them becomes normalized. It becomes as natural, for example, to study the canoe and cultural renaissance in Hawai‘i and in Polynesia as it has become to go “to India to study worship, the circum-Mediterranean region for honor and shame, China for ancestor worship, and so on, forgetting that anthropological preoccupations represent ‘the temporary *localization* of ideas from *many* places’” (p. 676). Thus, I cannot ignore the fact that the recent past, filled with examinations and celebrations of the canoe, has greatly influenced what I deem important and worthy of study. What this means, and what we often want to ignore, is that with such emphasis put on certain topics, others are either left on the side or forgotten completely. This is one of the challenges of contemporary research: What deserves examination? Is it only those tokens or symbols of culture that have already been deemed significant, having been bound to the people through past scholarship? And if these are the topics we wish to examine, how can we at least move the conversation forward?

Recognizing that my work is both motivated by loss and influenced by history took me back to a key lesson learned in studying the ‘Aha ‘Ula: answers were not located in the cord itself, but in those doing the observations. In other words, knowledge was and is located

in those doing the seeking. Thus, the canoe, like the ‘aha, is not inherently important. It is not inherently sacred. Rather the hulls of a double or single-hulled canoe, like the strands of an ‘aha, are *made* important and are *made* sacred through our interactions with them and through our interpretations of them. This controversial idea is not new. In fact, anthropologist Jocelyn Linnekin (1983) angered many when she made the bold statement arguing that “The *Hokule‘a*’s significance is not given from aboriginal Hawaiian culture; the voyaging canoe has no intrinsic meaning as a ‘central artifact’” (p. 249).

At the time, her words were regarded as a clear attack against a growing dedication to native nationalism and fights for sovereignty, and along with fellow cultural constructionist, Roger Keesing (1991), she therefore found herself in the middle of a debate with Haunani-Kay Trask (1991). What the debate revealed is that our words cannot be divorced from our position. Although previous scholarship by Pacific academics like Wendt (1976) had already discussed the need to create and re-create culture, the notion of invented traditions and cultural construction as presented by Linnekin (1983, 1991, 1992) and Keesing (1987, 1989) offended Pacific people, especially because it came from non-native anthropologists who have, for too long, attempted to speak *for* and *about* native peoples. In his analysis of the debate, Jeffrey Tobin (1994) concludes that “We are not free to choose the location from which we write,” or in other words, “We must pay attention to the context in which we produce knowledge” (p. 132-33). Linnekin could not escape her identity as a non-native anthropologist critiquing nationalism, no matter how sound her arguments may have been.

Similarly, I cannot escape the location from which I write. I am a Kanaka Maoli who has been immersed in nationalist movements since I was a child. However, this does not mean that my words will not still anger, confuse, or even offend my own people. In fact, my position as someone *from* the communities I write about may garner even harsher criticism than that directed towards the “white” anthropologists, or those who have misrepresented and belittled us for so many years that, although appalling, it is what we have come to expect from them (Smith, 1999). In other words, my position as a Hawaiian with a kuleana to her people—including her ancestors and future generations—seems to automatically align me with those who critique cultural construction. Yet, I maintain that it is productive to untangle these strands of history, even those that anger and confuse us, so that we can truly work towards empowerment. Is it not possible to be empowered by the fact that we can create cultures, that we can use the past strategically to push our own agendas, as we have always done, or that we can use the teachings of our ancestors to help us find meaning for our lives

today? The ‘aha, for example, *is* important because we have made it so. The canoe *is* significant because of all that we have made it stand for, because of all that we have made it represent. That is powerful *and* empowering.

I do not pretend that what I present in this chapter will be readily accepted based on my position alone. I do not claim that being Kanaka Maoli will grant me immediate approval from other Hawaiians. In fact, I know that my words may be difficult and may even cause pain. Yet, I believe that to be critical, while also being culturally informed, is to be on a path towards transformation. In his discussion of Make‘e Pono Lāhui Hawai‘i, or the Hawaiian Student Liberation Union at the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa, Hawaiian Studies scholar Kekailoa Perry (2014), explains that the group knew the importance of reflexivity and critical analysis, taking inspiration from human rights activist Malcolm X who once said, “All of us should be critics of each other. Whenever you can’t stand criticism you can never grow” (p. 279). I take inspiration from these words. I work *with* and *in* a community that is engaged in a continuous battle for identity, rights, and place. I do not divorce my work from this context. In fact, it is this context that feeds it. However, I do not romanticize culture nor do I suspend critical analysis because I believe that such an approach allows me to truly examine our role in the creation of cultures. It also allows me to even momentarily escape the seducing fervor of cultural renaissance inspired by past generations, so that I may look at myself, my people, and my culture from multiple positions: in front of, behind, and even in the ‘aha. This allows me to be critical while also striving for empowerment. It is a complicated and messy process. Yet, it is possible and it is necessary.

Ma Mua o ka ‘Aha: In Front of the Cord

As a Hawaiian, I do not claim to be an authoritative “insider,” nor do I believe that my work should be viewed as any more or less “authentic” than that of non-Hawaiians researching in the same spaces. I do not subscribe to the false dichotomy between insider and outsider or native and non-native (Narayan, 1993, p. 671). What I do claim, however, is my positionality, or more specifically, the ways that I can sometimes position myself within my work even while sometimes being positioned in it by others. In my fieldwork, for instance, I interviewed a group of Hawaiian men, each of them older than myself, who took part in a canoe-building project in the early 1990s, a project that largely involved men engaging in male roles. As a woman of a younger generation, my work therefore required me to be aware of the ‘aha that existed between my research participants and myself and inspired me to

continually ask, “Pehea ka ‘aha a kāua?” [“How is *our* ‘aha?”]. This question comes from the line of a pule, or prayer, entitled “He Pule Niu” or “A Prayer for the Coconut.” Recorded by missionary writer, Nathaniel B. Emerson (1897), in the Hawaiian Language newspaper, *Ka Nupepa Kuokoa*, the prayer encourages an examination of the ‘aha, and more specifically “ka ‘aha a kāua,” or the cord that belongs to both of us (p. 3).

This single line inspired me to reflect on my research process, on my interviewees, and more so, on the various ways that metaphoric ‘aha were used and strategically placed. It motivated me to constantly ask myself, “Pehea ka ‘aha a kāua?” In each interview, in each conversation, in each emotional moment, where was the cord placed? How did it either grant me access or deny me entrance to certain spaces, stories, or memories? If secured over my head, like the ‘Aha ‘Ula, would the cord fall to the ground as confirmation that I could proceed with my probing questions? If tied before me, at a doorway to the past, would I be made to move beneath or above the rope, or would I be left outside, standing curiously? Depending on the interview, there were times when the rope was draped around us, when we seemed to both stand in front of it, within the same circle. Yet, there were other times when the rope was pushed between us, and I was made to stand behind it, allowed to peer into, but not enter, spaces that my age, gender, or even experience would not allow me to penetrate. At other times, it seemed that we each grasped an end of the rope, tugging and pulling each other along, the rough strand ripping at our skin, each of us giving and taking, contributing to the knowledge being shared and created between us.

I became aware of the existence of these metaphoric cords in my very first interview. As I sat down with Milton Bertelmann (2013), affectionately known as Uncle Shorty, who was one of the leaders and initiators of the canoe project, I quickly found myself immersed in his individual story. Yet, through his words, I found the story of so many men, who like himself, were searching for a sense of identity, something that had been lost in previous generations. Uncle Shorty was part of the Hawaiian Renaissance, which, as historian George Kanahele (1982) explains, was “a rebirth of artistic and intellectual achievement accompanied by a revival of interest in the past, and an increasing pursuit of knowledge and learning” that took place in the late 1960s and 1970s (p. 1). This was motivated by similar movements occurring across America at the same time as “a wind was blowing that carried a message of renewed power among American minorities—blacks and Native Americans—and the wind began to buffet young Hawaiians” (Low, 2013, p. 74). Accompanying this “rebirth” was a new political consciousness and commitment to creating change in the Hawaiian

community, one still struggling with the effects of colonialism, tourism, and military occupation. These men, therefore, were part of what Kanahale (1982) refers to as a “psychological renewal” or a “purging of feelings of alienation and inferiority” that were common in their parents’ generation, feelings that came as a result of introduced ideas of Christian morality that combated their own beliefs, along with belittling representations in text, the banning of their language and customs, and the overall rhetoric of colonization (p. 1).

For Uncle Shorty, the wa‘a (canoe) was his vehicle to “renewal” and to connection or reconnection to a culture that he felt separate from. As one of the original crew members of Hōkūle‘a, and one of the first students of Pius Mau Piailug—a navigator from Satawal in the Caroline Islands of Micronesia, who came to Hawai‘i to guide the Hōkūle‘a on its maiden voyage to Tahiti in 1976 and later returned to teach a select number of Hawaiians how to navigate themselves—Uncle Shorty was in the thick of the renaissance, and more specifically, the growing interest and enthusiasm for canoes. Much of his lifetime, as he explains, had been spent “yearning to go back to the past” and shedding the introduced idea that the past was something to “move aside” or to move on from, something to abandon (2013). The canoe, for him, made the past “real,” something that he could experience rather than just read about, something that he could embrace rather than running from.

However, his path towards reconnection would not end with that initial voyage to Tahiti. For him, it was just the beginning. With the success of Hōkūle‘a came a desire to build a canoe, to actually take a few steps back to learn the processes and protocols of canoe building as once practiced by his ancestors. Therefore, together with fellow navigator, Nainoa Thompson, who Uncle Shorty credits with being the “dreamer” and visionary for the project; his brother and canoe captain, Clayton Bertelmann; and a group of other dedicated Hawaiian men, he embarked on a voyage to build a wa‘a using natural materials. What initially began as a dream to build a double-hulled canoe, however, was eventually altered when it was realized that the natural environment was so drastically different than the one that existed in previous generations. Koa trees large enough to build a double-hulled, long-distance sailing vessel were not as easy to find. Therefore, the plans were adjusted and the result of this dream was Mauoa, the single-hulled, outrigger canoe built and launched in 1992.

When I sat down with Uncle Shorty, he seemed to invite me to share in his memories, particularly those about Mau Piailug, for whom the canoe was named. Papa Mau, as he was

often referred to, came back to Hawai‘i in the early 1990s to teach these men how to build a wa‘a. Canoe-building had long been abandoned as a practice in the islands, perhaps signifying that it had not been recontextualized or continued when it no longer made sense to continue it (Lear, 2006). As he spoke, however, he seemed to comment more on the renaissance and on its place in the future than he did about the actual canoe. As a result, it quickly became evident that the canoe was the vehicle upon which he and I would explore certain concepts together. Thus, it was as if he allowed me step over the ‘aha, entering into the house of his memories, a house built upon the small deck of his wa‘a, traveling upon a fluid and shifting ocean. It was there that I was permitted to sit as his feet, collecting his stories and truly sharing in the journey.

Papa Mau, as he remembers, thought the men were “crazy” and so far disconnected and influenced by Western culture that they were lost. This motivated Uncle Shorty as well as all of the men involved; it pushed them. Yet, in their enthusiasm, certain key lessons were pushed to the side, only to be picked up and realized much later. One of those lessons, as Uncle Shorty recalls, was that of a “home.” In Papa Mau’s words, “Before you build one canoe, you have to make the home” (Bertelmann, 2013). However, in their haste to finish the canoe in a timely manner, especially given deadlines that came with federal funding, they built a canoe and then had no place to put it, leaving it, as he states, “stranded.”

The concept of a “home” intrigued me, not only because of how it can be used practically to house people and objects, but because it highlighted a larger issue central to the canoe renaissance and to the overall concept of cultural renaissance in general: when cultural knowledge is “revived” or “brought back,” it must have a place to be maintained. In other words, it must be recontextualized or molded to fit modern lifestyles; it must be sustainable. Without a place, or without being incorporated into the daily lives of modern Hawaiians, not only the canoe itself, but the entire practice of canoe building, will be left stranded. They will become temporary “nostalgic gestures” rather than living and relevant customs or pieces of cultural knowledge (Lear, 2006, p. 37).

Uncle Shorty’s brief discussion of the “home” was then echoed in my very last interview with a man named Charlie Grace (2014), a man who seemed to once again open the ‘aha and allow me access to every memory, even the messy ones that others may have wanted to hide. When the canoe was built, it was used in educational programs, taken to schools so that children could learn about it, touch it, and see it. However, in the years following its initial launch, it was often left to sit on the shore, and as he recalls, “you cannot

do that.” A canoe must be used. However, to mālama, or to take care of it after it is built is a monumental task, especially for people who do not have the time or the resources to maintain it. “Everybody wants a canoe,” he states, “The canoe looks good. But to take care of the canoe, nobody was doing [it]” (2014). He told me about how many of the canoe builders had to return to their jobs, their families, and their lives once the project was over. Therefore, the maintenance of the canoe became the responsibility of a select few. This proved to be difficult, especially since Mauloa had no permanent home, both in the physical world, and in many ways, in the cultural world as well. Mauloa became a moment, a temporary gesture that was then left to sit, its pandanus sails and its koa hulls eventually falling victim to disuse.

In their words, therefore, I learned a great and difficult lesson about renaissance: we have to find a place for our cultural knowledge so that it can be maintained. However, this can only happen when we successfully recontextualize it so that it makes sense and has contemporary function. The wa‘a must be about more than revival. Once it is built, it must have practical value. Yes, it can continue to be a symbol of identity, strength, and ancestral wisdom. But it must also be used. At the end of my interview with Uncle Shorty, I asked him about his hopes for Mauloa, or what he would like to see for the canoe in the future. At the time, restoration projects to repair and relaunch Mauloa for a new generation of learners had recently been started. Surprisingly, rather than directly answering my question, however, he turned it around, thrusting it back to me:

The question you asked me about where I would like to see Mauloa in the future... I can bounce that question right back: “What do you think?”... You asked me the question and my answer is... It’s your slot in time. We already had our slot... and now it’s your slot. So, whatever that is [that you want Mauloa to be], ... that’s where I am...that’s what I want it to be too. (2013)

Similarly, Uncle Charlie also challenged me to think about my role in Mauloa’s future. As someone who had decided to interview them and who had asked them to share their memories with me, I now had a kuleana, a great responsibility. Knowledge, he argued, is a gift. But it has to be shared. It has to be used. Otherwise, it disappears. Thus, both men invited me into their house, allowing me to sit in front of the ‘aha, within their space, because both of them acknowledged that through inviting me in that they would then leave me with responsibilities.

My kuleana, as I now understand it, is to find a place for Mauloa in the present and the future. This responsibility, however, is one that I must fulfill in unique ways because

although I have been around canoes since I was little girl, and although I have known many of these men since childhood, I am not a canoe builder myself. Rather, I am researcher and a writer. Therefore, my responsibility is to write so that we can learn together. It is not to simply create salvage texts, recording the process of canoe building, but to promote its practice and to create documents that highlight our thinking and our perspectives of culture now, so that future generations can learn from it. Twenty years from now, Kānaka Maoli should not have to embark on the same journey of learning that these men did. Rather, they should learn from them and already have a “house” established, or a place for that knowledge when they are ready to both receive it and use it in their everyday lives.

Ma Hope o ka ‘Aha: Behind the Cord

What became quite clear in a number of interviews was the fact that my research participants and I came from different generations, and therefore, vastly different contexts and experiences. I was born in the 1980s, in the wake of the Hawaiian Renaissance. Therefore, I never knew of a time when I could not be proud to be Kanaka Maoli. I never knew what it was like to want to hide my ancestry. I was close enough to the struggles of the previous generation to understand them and to know how fortunate I was. However, I never personally experienced some of those struggles. That is because of the people, like the canoe builders themselves, who tired of watching their land, customs, people, and nation be destroyed and therefore fought to make a difference. It was their fight that I picked up, that I continued, and that I continue to this day.

As I listened to each man talk about his personal struggles in the fight, however, I learned that while I can sympathize with them, I will never truly know what they experienced. Similarly, those who were born in the decades after me will be even further removed from the renaissance and therefore, even further disconnected from that time of political, cultural, and social awakening. What the renaissance did, therefore, was establish generational gaps, or spaces between people with very different experiences of culture. Thus, like the draping of a cord before the entrance to a house, different generations were made to stand behind the ‘aha, where they could learn about but not participate in the actions of those standing on the other side.

The men who built Mauoa, for example, once had to stand outside of a space blocked off by ‘aha. When they embarked on a journey to learn how to build a canoe, they found themselves “outsiders” to some of their own cultural customs. Thus, the ‘aha they stood

behind, as they peered into their goals and dreams to reconnect, was one established by history: by the colonization of their islands and by the choices that some of their parents or grandparents may have made to stop doing things that were then being considered “old” or “pagan” in a society dealing with Westernization and modernization. It was a thick ‘aha, one that brought together strands from different stories: some spoke of resistance; others spoke of acculturation; some spoke of loss while others spoke of progress. Therefore, for these men in the early 1990s, peering over this thick mass of rope—one bringing together strands from hundreds of years before them—was a humbling experience.

In order to build the canoe the men needed to step into the space that the rope protected. While largely supported, this movement also came with criticism. Hawai‘i was at the tail end of the Hawaiian Renaissance, having experienced a few decades in which significant efforts were made to revive the Hawaiian language; to expand the reach and understanding of hula; to protect the land and the environment from further destruction and development; to engage in political protests and discussions focused on sovereignty; and to rediscover the wayfinding and navigation practices of some of our oldest ancestors. What resulted from these efforts was a renewed sense of pride in being Hawaiian, a feeling that had seemed to escape so many of the previous generations. For some, it was that “psychological renewal” while for others “it [was] a reassertion of self-dignity and self-importance” (G. Kanahahele, 1982, p. 1). Yet, even as young Hawaiians, like Uncle Shorty and the other men, were making strides to reconnect to a culture that they felt separate from, moving towards spaces that were roped-off for centuries, some of their parents and grandparents found such a transition difficult. As a result, as G. Kanahahele (1986) states, while “some Hawaiians, especially those of the ‘renaissance generation’ do not feel inferior at all, ...for almost all of their parents the ghost of racial inferiority still lurks” (p. 22).

Thus, while the renaissance was monumental, especially for how it contributed to the resurgence of a people, it also seemed to create a generational ‘aha, or barrier, between those who refused to “go back to the past” and those who wanted to dig into the past to make sense of their present. One of the builders I spoke with, Maulili Dickson (2014), commented on this divide between the generations, stating:

I explained it to my mother—I think was in the early 90s—why am I getting so involved with this. I’m challenging my family and I’m challenging my existence in my job and home. I might lose my house; I’m on the verge of having financial problems because of it. Why do I continue this? This is not an educated move for me.

One time I sat down with her and my father...I was just telling them that it's going to change the culture. It *is* changing the culture, and people don't realize it, and I'm part of that change... My mother was always the type of person that [was] stuck in the Western way. She was stuck in that and I had a hard time with my Hawaiian spiritual part that I was gaining with all of this, [and] trying to get that across to her. As a staunch Catholic, she was bred to believe that it was heathen or it wasn't proper. Therefore, like Uncle Maulili, some Kānaka Maoli who were inspired by the renaissance of previous decades actually found themselves torn. While they were thirsting for opportunities to learn about their ancestors and themselves, their parents were apprehensive. Thus, many of them had to move into a space blocked off by 'aha, leaving those of the previous generations behind the draped cord, where they could bear witness to their growth, even if they could not understand or support it.

Uncle Charlie Grace (2014) also encountered this generational divide. When we met to talk about Mauloa, he explained that his father was actually quite knowledgeable about Hawaiian beliefs and practices. He, however, made the conscious decision to not enter their space of learning. As he recalls, his father did not want to "touch" the past and therefore, stood his ground, behind the 'aha:

When we was doing the canoe, Mauloa... my father really was into the traditions, but [in the] modern era, yeah, things of old, things speaking of old, you no lālama, you no touch. If you touch, you make sure you take care... He tell me, "When you folks open, make sure you can close. If you thinking now you going come scared, you unsure, you not going...no do. No open... So, understand boy, if you do, you do. If you cannot ho'omaha, rest, with what you open and you cannot hāpai, you cannot carry, don't pick it up."

Uncle Charlie's involvement with Mauloa, according to his father, meant that he would be "touching" old customs and essentially waking them up, bringing them out of the past.

Therefore, his work with the other canoe builders came with a warning, one issued from the outside looking in: to enter the corded-off area, or to enter a space that had not been used in generations, would be to reengage with ideas and beliefs that had been "put to sleep."

Although Grace's father chose to stay out of the canoe house, he let his son go, perhaps to do what he thought he should not or could not do himself. Thus, while Grace moved into the space marked off by 'aha, he left his father behind the cord, carrying his words and warnings with him.

As I listened to their stories, I was made aware of not only the generational divide that existed between these men and their parents, but also the gap that existed between these men and myself. As geographer Kali Fermantez (2012) explains, displacement, or literally and figuratively not having a “place” in your own homeland, “has been experienced differently, by generations of individuals, in various times, in diverse places” (p. 106). Therefore, we are left with cords draped between us, creating divides based on our experiences:

First, there is the kūpuna [elder] generation, our elders and ancestors who lived the culture and were punished and disrespected for doing so. The next group is the mākuā [parent] generation, made up of children of the kūpuna generation. This group was not fully taught the Hawaiian culture and faced assimilation by both the local as well as the broader American culture. The third group is the mo‘opuna [grandchildren] generation, the youth of today. This youthful cohort has benefited from the cultural revival and activism of the recent past and unlike previous generations, feels proud to be Hawaiian. They have a sense of the losses experienced by previous generations but have also inherited empowered, critical, and at times a somewhat entitled stance toward their displacement. (p. 106)

As Fermantez (2012) further notes, these categories and divides are not clear-cut. Sometimes the cords fall and break, waking us up to different experiences, forcing us to recognize our responsibilities. For example, my interactions with these canoe builders made me alarmingly aware of my position as one of the mo‘opuna generation. My parents came from the same group as many of the canoe builders, their parents before them giving them English rather than Hawaiian names, refusing to teach them the Hawaiian language, and doing all they believed was right to ensure that their children would successfully assimilate, becoming American citizens. This was not my experience. Therefore, without being aware of it, I had come to inherit that sense of entitlement that Fermantez talks about, and this made me somewhat fearful for the future.

As each canoe builder recounted their efforts to “return” to the past through building a “traditional” and “authentic” Hawaiian canoe—these terms featuring prominently in almost every interview—I quickly realized that my age and education had separated me from them. I had been taught to be critical of these words; I had learned that notions of “tradition” and “authenticity” bind us to static cultures. As Wendt (1976) argues, to believe that there is only one true way to be an indigenous person—or to assume that there is a “prescribed way [that] has not changed since time immemorial” is “a prescription for cultural stagnation, an

invitation for a culture to choke in its own blood, odour, juices, excreta” (p. 77). Thus, I had to listen to each man, aware that even the terms that they used were indicative of the generation they came from, one that sometimes *did* romanticize the past, one that sometimes *did* make “nostalgic gestures” (Lear, 2006, p. 37). And rather than criticizing them, I had to understand that their experience of displacement was different than my own. I had to honor their work, knowing that I would not have the ability to look at culture, “tradition,” or even identity in the way that I do now had they not come before me. I could not sit in my own entitlement, taking my learning for granted, judging their word choices. Rather, I had to understand that to even engage in discussions about culture and identity, something that those of previous generations were not allowed to do, was a privilege.

Yet with privilege, once again, comes kuleana, or new responsibilities to bear. In one of my initial conversations with Uncle Shorty, he made a comment about the renaissance, saying that we cannot just leave our learning on the side. We cannot learn how to build a canoe once, for example, and then never do it again. We cannot learn how to weave a sail from pandanus and think we have mastered it. Such a mentality will leave us needing to learn all over again, and further, it could potentially leave members of the next generation in need of another renaissance, another awakening. As he spoke about the wa‘a, therefore, I realized that my responsibility to the next generation is to not bestow upon them a legacy of cultural complacency.

In the younger generations there may be a sense of entitlement even stronger than that present in my own generation. Young Kānaka Maoli are growing up speaking the language, sailing canoes, attending Hawaiian-focused charter schools, dancing hula, and practicing other customs. While this is certainly progress—and while it is beautiful to see Hawaiian children proud of who they are—when pride in cultural identity becomes normalized, sometimes there is a loss of urgency. Even G. Kanahēle (1982) predicted such a loss when he wrote about the renaissance in the 1980s, stating:

Ironically, there is some danger in young people growing up in the midst of the Renaissance, and that is they will take the culture for granted. While they may not have any of the cultural hang-ups of their parents, they have none of the hardships out of which comes greater appreciation and commitment. They have grown up a little soft and, perhaps, over time will lose the elan and enthusiasm that go into keeping a culture alive. It’s the old story of success sowing seeds of its own destruction. (p. 29)

As a result, some children today may not have that same “fight” in them that their grandparents had as they are so separate from them and they have little sense of the struggles that previous generations had to go through just so that they could experience culture as they do now.

Thus, my role as a writer and researcher is not to glamorize cultural renaissance, although it certainly deserves recognition, but is to move the conversation forward. When you revive customs that were not practiced by the previous generation, what do you do with them once the “revival” is over? When you build a canoe, for example, what do you use it for? While there are many examples of people who have maintained cultural practices— involving things like fishing, farming, medicine, dance, weaponry, and various other arts— and have successfully taught their children, embedding in them a knowledge of cultural values and perspectives, there is still more that can be done. There is still more that we can do to ensure that our practices, like the ‘Aha ‘Ula, are not left to live a life in print and metaphor alone, but can be incorporated and used to connect generations rather than divide them. Children must be made aware that they do indeed live in a world that continues to make less and less space for indigenous people (Chandler, 2013, p. 86). This includes Kānaka Maoli in our own homeland. Thus, our sense of entitlement should never lead to complacency, or feeling that the fight of past generations is over, but should instead lead to an ever-renewing sense of commitment to keeping our cultures current and relevant so that there will always be a space for them. This, as explained by political scientist Noelani Goodyear-Ka‘ōpua (2014), is the practice of ea. “Ea” is the word for political independence or sovereignty. However, it is also the word for “life” or “breath”. Therefore, “ea is an active state of being. Like breathing, ea cannot be achieved or possessed; it requires constant action day after day, generation after generation” (p. 4).

I Ka ‘Aha: In the Cord

Near the end of my fieldwork, I began to reflect back on my experiences, noticing a pattern in my own process. After each interview, I sat down and made comments on what I had learned—including observations about things that were said and things that were not said, notes about common themes, remarks about surprising reactions to questions, and even reviews of body language—and I found myself making connections between each man’s story. Although each one of them had a different rendition and each one focused on those memories that he found personally interesting or valuable, I could not help but notice the way that their words seemed to speak to each other, or seemed to come together like the multiple

strands of a cord. Their memories did not always fit nicely. Small details like dates, times, or even names sometimes differed and the memory of one at times contradicted the memory of another. Therefore, the ‘aha that came together was messy, even a bit prickly, but it was strong nonetheless. In the end, what mattered more than minute details was the overall sense of pride that each man felt in being a part of Mauloa, or more specifically, being a part of the process that resulted in her construction: from the making of stone tools, to the felling of the tree, to the hauling of the log to the ocean, to the endless chipping away at the trunk, to the lashing, oiling, and finally launching of the canoe.

As I witnessed their stories come together, I began to reflect on my role as the cord marker, as the one braiding the ‘aha, and realized that their words seemed to come together in particular ways because of how *I* thought about them, or how *I* interpreted them contemporarily. As those who made ‘aha often rubbed the coconut fibers against their thighs, they imbued the resulting cord, quite literally, with pieces of their being. Hair, sweat, and skin often became part of the ‘aha, and just as they could not be separated from it, I now cannot be separated from this work. That is both the privilege and the challenge of the writer and researcher, for what I create will inevitably become part of the “consultable record” of what has been said about the topics that I choose to write about, including Mauloa, cultural renaissance, culture, identity, and even ethnographic work in indigenous communities (Geertz, 1973, p. 30). This is essentially the process of articulation, which as James Clifford (2003) explains, is

...the political connecting and disconnecting, the hooking and unhooking of elements—the sense that any socio-cultural ensemble that presents itself to us as a whole is actually a set of historical connections and disconnections. A set of elements have been combined to make a cultural body, which is also a process of disconnection, through actively sustained antagonisms. Articulations and disarticulations are constant processes in the making and remaking of cultures. (p. 45)

This theoretical approach focuses on the assemblage rather than the whole. It looks at the ‘aha for its strands, for example, rather than fixating on the final product alone. In fact, using this theory, the ‘aha is never completely finished. It can be braided and re-braided, new strands added or old ones taken out, and it can be refashioned for new purposes in the present. The point to be made here is that the ‘aha we create—based on our interpretation of the past and our experience of the present—is indicative of the times and spaces in which we

live, and as noted at the beginning of this chapter, the writing that we produce must therefore document the perspectives and processes of thought that went into its creation.

Unfortunately, as Chandler (2013) notes, “most of us are not very practiced in thinking about our ‘thoughts,’ and regularly end up at a loss for words and concepts when we attempt to do so” (p. 89). However, it is essential because as we study the past and work to interpret it for our own use, we have to remember, as Te Maire Tau (2012) argues, that “we think our pasts into being” (p. 25). Therefore, why not leave a record of our thought processes and our perspectives behind to show future generations *how* we thought our pasts into existence, or *how* we made it relevant and for what reasons? Such a record would be extremely valuable, because as Chandler (2013) explains,

...the most trustworthy of available hooks upon which embattled indigenous groups might potentially hang their best hopes for cultural persistence are to be found, not among all of those readily accessible *contents* that once hallmarked life in some earlier historical era, but rest instead upon those distinctive *processes* that continue to set indigenous mental life apart from competing world views, or paradigms, or ways of knowing that dominate thought as it occurs within the cultural mainstream. (p. 89)

Although members of cultures are certainly not homogeneous, such a record would document how Kānaka Maoli experience and interpret the world differently than those influenced by other cultures, and would therefore highlight those values and perspectives that continue to feed the way we explain our existence to ourselves. *That* is something to maintain, and *that* is something to gift to younger generations, because if they can make an ‘Aha ‘Ula, for example, but have no idea how cords made of coconut husk connect to stories of origin⁴², or to genealogy, rank, and responsibility, than an entire belief system has begun to break down and we are left with no “hooks” upon which to hang our hopes (or ropes) for the future. Rather, we are left with cords we no longer know how to tie or how to interpret, and perhaps even more devastatingly, we are left with canoes we no longer know how to sail, or worse, how to guide.

Therefore, this is my attempt to record my thought processes and to document my perspectives, not because I think that my thoughts alone are important, but because I think that they speak to larger perspectives present in the Hawaiian community today. As I began

⁴² Folklorist Martha Beckwith (1970) recounts the story of a demigod named Niuolahiki, or “Life-giving coconut” (also sometimes called Niuloahiki, or “Long-traveling coconut”) that could take multiple forms, one being a coconut tree. He was said to come from Kahiki and can therefore “be regarded as the symbolic expression throughout Polynesia of the blood tie which connects a migrating people to their original ancestral line” (p. 487).

to braid multiple stories together, I thought about the term ‘aha and all of its many interpretations. Although commonly used to refer to various types of cord—including those made from such diverse materials as plant fibers, human hair, or even animal intestines—‘aha has alternative meanings. As a term, it could also be used to refer to a gathering or an assembly of sorts. Therefore, to ask “Pehea ka ‘aha a kāua?” could also be to inquire about the gathering that occurs when two people or two concepts are brought together into conversation. Thus, in my own work, I had to reflect on what—and who—I was bringing into ‘aha as I conducted my fieldwork and as I set out to write this thesis. My goal all along was to find ways to bring strands from the past, strands from the present, strands from my home in Hawai‘i, and strands from afar in Kahiki, into the same space, where I could look at them individually, and then braid them together to see what came of that work. Therefore, I conducted not only oral history interviews but archival research as well, so that I could bring these voices from different generations together to see how the past spoke to the present and vice versa. What I discovered was a reengagement with a core cultural concept, one that shaped the way Hawaiians saw their place in the world; it was a reengagement with Kahiki, one for new times and new agendas.

As was explored in previous chapters, Kahiki is a concept that has shifted and changed over time, having been interpreted and reinterpreted for new purposes. What was once a term used to explain ancestral origins in the Pacific, as seen in many oral traditions, eventually became a term used to refer to all lands outside of Hawai‘i. Thus, what was once a “homeland” in Oceania became a term later referenced in texts produced in the nineteenth century advocating the adoption of a new colonial homeland. Therefore, what could be used strategically to push nationalistic sentiments could simultaneously be used to justify annexation. Tracking the complex and often messy genealogy of Kahiki as a concept, however, allows us to peer into the minds of those who used it to explain and understand their existence. Kahiki itself is not static; it is not bound. Like our cultures and our identities, it shifts and evolves. Studying *how* and *why* it shifts and evolves, however, is valuable as it reveals the thought processes of the people who worked with it, changing it to push their own agendas.

The canoe builders were no different. In their work, they strategically looked to older interpretations of Kahiki, re-interpreting it as a Pacific space, one that we are genealogically connected to. When the kālai wa‘a decided to build Mau Loa, they were armed with enthusiasm and a great desire to reconnect. However, although they knew *why* building the

canoe was so important—because it would give them the chance to engage with male roles, to strengthen their sense of who they were and where they came from, and to learn and do as their ancestors once did—they did not know *how*. Thus, after stepping over the ‘aha, they had to stretch it and widen the circle that they would work in. To do so, they stretched their ropes all the way to Kahiki, back to lands outside of Hawai‘i, back to where the coconut, often used in the making of ‘aha, first came from. This is where they found Papa Mau, who was once again willing to help them.

Papa Mau was not only a navigator but a canoe builder as well. On his island, men still built and used canoes “fashioned with materials that Satawal provided—breadfruit plants for the hull, coconut husks and breadfruit sap for caulking to keep the water out, and sennit rope fashioned from coconut to hold the planks together” (Low, 2013, p. 53). Thus, Mau returned to Hawai‘i to teach the Hawaiian men how to use their own resources to build a wa‘a. However, stretching the rope to allow a non-Hawaiian into their space of learning—especially since many of them had already adopted the rigid assumption that they could build an “authentic” and “traditional” canoe—was both celebrated and criticized. While some applauded their efforts, others made remarks that the resulting canoe was not “Hawaiian” but “Micronesian.” As Uncle Charlie (2014) remembers:

People started looking at the canoe and a lot of people started questioning: this no look like Hawaiian canoe... But when the project was given, they told Mau, “Make canoe.” He said, “Ok.” But nobody told him the design of the canoe. So Mau wen just design the canoe like his home.

As the canoe builders followed Papa Mau and learned from him, they discovered that standing within the ‘aha is a difficult process. Not only does it require you to enter into spaces that have been left untouched for generations, but it also requires you to deal with the onlookers, or those who stand just behind the rope, passing judgments—both good and bad—on your actions.

When I sat down with these men, twenty years after they built their canoe, many of them had seemed to embrace their position in front of the ‘aha, finding ways to defend their work against criticism. One canoe builder, Angel Pilago (2013), spoke about how entering that space required him to make certain sacrifices, including changing his behavior and attitude, in order to work for what he called “inclusiveness,” or a way of bringing identities together. He explains:

We have to be willing to sacrifice parts of ourselves to build composites of who and what we are... Mauloa is a composite, a composite of Micronesian from the West, Marquesan in the East, and Hawaiians in the middle.... [There] needed to be, with all their identities, Pacific identities, there needed to be one canoe that has a universal inclusiveness. That's Mauloa... The only person who had the mana [power] to do that, was Mau. There's no other person in the world who could do that but him.

According to Uncle Angel, it was precisely because Mau came from Kahiki, from outside of Hawai'i, that he was able to help the men stretch their rope to embrace who they were, not just as Kānaka Maoli, but as Pacific Islanders. Thus, although they built a single-hulled wa'a that will never leave the shores of Hawai'i, the men spoke of profound journeys, journeys that allowed them to discover the depths of who they were. Rather than taking them outward, therefore, the canoe took them inward: into the 'aha.

As I braided these strands of thought together, I found that Kahiki was a way of justifying the choices that the canoe builders made and was even a means of breaking them away from antiquated ideas about "tradition" and "authenticity" that had brought them criticism, ideas that they themselves often seemed to be incarcerated by. Yet, that was *my* work. It was a result of *my* interpretation. Kahiki, by name, never came up in an interview. However, although they never used the term specifically, the *idea* of finding help, inspiration, and essentially new "life" in an ancestral place, was often embraced. The men knew that their own story of reawakening and reconnection could not be separated from the story of a man from Satawal, Micronesia. Therefore, they *had* to embrace Kahiki, even if they could not refer to it by name.

This made me more aware of the power that we have to combine elements from the past and the present to create an 'aha that works for us and for an empowered future. In my archival research, I came upon a mele, or chant, about the building of a canoe, one that was recorded in a songbook for Queen Emma, the wife of one of Kamehameha's sons, Alexander Liholiho Kamehameha VI. Although it is not entirely clear when the mele was initially composed, it was dedicated to Queen Emma's brother in law, Lot Kapuāiwa Kamehameha V who ruled in the 1860s. Thus, perhaps during some point in the nineteenth century, or more specifically, the years in which Lot governed Hawai'i, the mele honors Kahiki, stating:

'O ia ka hiki o ka wa'a
Ō ho'okala i Kahiki ke ko'i kua wa'a
Kua i kona wa'a kaikaina nui

That is the origin of the canoe

Do sharpen in Kahiki the canoe carving adze

*Carve out the canoe to be like a great younger sibling*⁴³ (Nogelmeier, 2011, p. 268)

Although recorded generations before—and in just three lines taken out of many—the mele seems to speak to the experience of the canoe builders as if composed contemporarily. The origin of Mauloa was indeed in Kahiki, in a land outside of Hawai‘i. It was from there, from a place and a people genealogically older than Hawaiians, that Papa Mau came to Hawai‘i to teach them how to make their own adze so that they could shape and carve not only their canoe, but themselves as Hawaiian men.

As powerful as this is, the note that I will conclude on is that expressed in the last of the three lines: “Carve out the canoe to be like a great younger sibling.” While many of the men carry a feeling of indebtedness to Papa Mau and his people, and rightfully so, what often gets ignored in renditions of the story is that Papa Mau’s coming to Hawai‘i sparked a bit of a resurgence in his homeland of Satawal. Thus, even while an old proverb states “Aia ke ola i Kahiki,” or “Life is in Kahiki,” we must remember that life also exists in Hawai‘i and that we therefore have the ability to be like the “great younger siblings” of history who brought wonderful things to the world (Pūku‘i, 1983, p. 9). The famous Māui, for example, highly regarded in stories across the Pacific, accomplished a series of great deeds that bettered the lives of his people: fishing up the islands, slowing down the sun, and discovering how to make fire. Therefore, our position as Hawaiians need not always be that of the disadvantaged and displaced or dispossessed younger sibling. We can position ourselves as people to learn from, as people who can accomplish great things. Indigenous peoples from Kahiki—from our relations in the Pacific to those beyond the Pacific Rim—can learn from the struggles and triumphs of our cultural renaissance, careful to not make the same mistakes while also strategically taking the lessons that work for them and their own empowerment.

What I have presented here is my own ‘aha, my very own cord. In the process of creating it, I often felt unsure or uncertain about my direction and was often hesitant about presenting ideas that may not sit comfortably with my readers, especially those that I write about and those that I write for. However, as I wrote, I imagined myself standing beneath the ‘Aha ‘Ula, a cord pulled taut and tied securely above my head, and I pictured myself asking the question: Should I proceed in this fashion—making bold, and even controversial statements; speaking about cultural loss and pushing the conversation of renaissance into new

⁴³ This translation is by the editor of *He Lei No ‘Emalani*, Puakea Nogelmeier.

directions; challenging our ideas about culture and identity; and commenting on the practice of writing as tied to roles and responsibilities? Did I even have a right to do such work? As soon as I asked the question, I heard a snap and saw the once secure rope fall to the ground as confirmation that although this work would be messy, complicated, and even a bit painful, that it was indeed necessary.

CHAPTER 5
I Kahiki Ke Ko‘i: The Adze is in Kahiki
Sharpening Tools and Shaping Futures for Hawai‘i and Beyond

I noho oe i ke kuahiwi a i lohe oe i kekahi leo poha ko‘i ma ka hikina paha, a i ole ma ke komohana paha, i ka po, he haawina laki ia nou.”

[If you sit in the forest and you happen to hear the cracking sound of an adze in the east or even in the west at night, then this is a lucky offering for you.]⁴⁴

Before the introduction of Western materials and tools, building a canoe was not only a laborious process but also one that required an in-depth knowledge of environmental resources, of cultural values, and of protocols, customs, and rituals. This led Kanaka Maoli writers like Kawaikaumaiikamakaokaopua (1922e) to remark, “O ke kalai waa, o keia kekahi o na oihana pookela loa me ka nui o ka ike a me ka noonoo o ke poo e hiki ai keia hana” [As for canoe building, it was one of the most prestigious occupations as it was only with an immense amount of knowledge and a great deal of consideration that that this work could be done.] (p. 7). In fact, it was so highly regarded that in the story of a chief named Kanihomaule from the island of Hawai‘i, he refuses a canoe when offered one, insisting instead that he be granted a canoe builder. When he travels to Maui in search of a kahuna k̄alai wa‘a, or an expert in canoe building, he approaches his relative, Kamehameha I, the famed Na‘i Aupuni, or Nation Conqueror, perhaps sometimes after his unification of the islands in 1810⁴⁵. Kanihomaule is then told, “Ina oe e makemake waa, e hele oe e nana i keia mau waa a pau, a laila lawe oe nou i kekahi waa” [If you want a canoe, take a look at all of these canoes, and then take one for yourself] (Kawaikaumaiikamakaokaopua, 1922e, p. 7). However, he refuses, saying “Aole pela ko‘u manao i hiki mai nei i o olua nei. Makemake au

⁴⁴ This quote comes from a column on canoe building, written by Z. P. K. Kawaikaumaiikamakaokaopua, and printed in *Ka Nupepa Kuokoa* from 26 October 1922 to 15 February 1923. Kawaikaumaiikamakaokaopua also went by the name Z. P. K. Kalokuokamaile and by Z.P. K. Lionanohokuahiwi. “O ia no hoi kekahi o na mea kakau no *Ka Hoku o Hawaii*... a he kanaka makaukau no hoi neia hana he kakau” [He was one of the writers for *Ka Hoku o Hawaii*...and was a proficient in this skill of writing] (“He kamaka [kanaka] ua hala iho nei,” 1942, p. 2).

⁴⁵ Kawaikaumaiikamakaokaopua (1922e) does not provide a date for when this occurred. I am making an assumption that this happened somewhere between 1810, when Kamehameha unified the islands, and 1819, when he passed away. My guess is based on the fact that Kawaikaumaiikamakaokaopua refers to Kamehameha as “Ka Na‘i Aupuni,” perhaps implying that he had already earned that title. Additionally, when Kanihomaule first arrives on Maui, Kamehameha is away on the island of O‘ahu. According to Kamakau (1867f), after uniting the islands, Kamehameha wished to stay on this island, thus perhaps giving a reason for him being there (p. 1). Also, Ka‘ahumanu could have been on Maui at this time because, as Kamakau (1867e) notes, she did have a residence built for her on that island (p. 1).

e haawi mai olua i kahuna kalai waa na'u" [That was not what I was thinking when I came before the two of you. I want you to give me an expert canoe builder] (p. 7).

Kanihomauole recognized the value of having a kahuna kālai wa'a. After all, if you have a canoe but do not possess the knowledge to make one yourself, then you have a finite resource, something that will one day expire. Knowledge, however, if maintained, can ensure that you will never be without. Knowledge of canoe building, for example, will tell you which plants to use, which methods to employ, which tools are best at each stage of the process, and even which signs to look or listen for, like the cracking sound of an adze in the forest that can lead you to the perfect tree. When you hear it, it is said, "E ala ae oe, a e hele pololei ma kahi au i lohe ai i ke kani o ke ko'i, a e loa no ia oe he laau nani a me ka maikai" [Wake up and go straight to where you hear the sound of the adze coming from, and you will indeed find a fine and excellent tree] (Kawaikaumaiikamakaokaopua, 1922a, p. 5).

Generations after Kanihomauole, Hawaiians did indeed find themselves without the knowledge of canoe building, and perhaps like the chief himself, a group of them in the early 1990s then insisted that they not be given ready-made canoes, but that they be given a teacher to show them how to build one so that they could earn the title of kālai wa'a, or canoe builder, themselves. General knowledge of canoe building had long been left to live a life in print, and even more upsetting, any articles that did document the processes and customs of canoe building, like that produced by Kawaikaumaiikamakaokaopua in 1922 and 1923, were largely inaccessible due to declining literacy in Hawaiian. After the banning of the Hawaiian language as a medium of instruction in 1896, people became slowly detached from their language, and "Among the devastating effects were that several generations of Kānaka Maoli, starting in the early twentieth century, could not understand, speak, read, or write in the language of their parents and grandparents" (Silva, 2009, pp. 43-44). This was certainly true of the men wanting to build a canoe. Unfortunately, many of them were not only disconnected from their language, and therefore invaluable textual resources, but from some the customs and practices of their ancestors as well.

The startling realization that Hawaiians did not know how to build canoes actually came at a moment of cultural resurgence; it was in a period of revival that they were made aware of loss. As discussed in the previous chapter, the men who wanted to build a canoe in the early 1990s had been part of a period known as the Hawaiian Renaissance. This resurgence of arts, language, and practices witnessed in the late 1960s and 1970s coincided

with a larger Hawaiian movement, sometimes referred to as the Hawaiian sovereignty movement. As political scientist Noelani Goodyear-Ka'ōpua (2014) explains,

Through battles waged in courtrooms, on the streets, at the capitol building, in front of landowners' and developers' homes and offices, on bombed-out sacred lands, in classrooms and from tents on the beaches, Kanaka Maoli pushed against the ongoing forces of U.S. occupation and settler colonialism that still work to eliminate or assimilate us. (p. 1)

During this time of heightened political and cultural awareness “a renewed sense of identity and history as to what it meant to be a Hawaiian began to emerge” (Tengan, 2008, p. 53). With that renewal came the desire to restore dignity to our people by shedding false notions of inferiority, by repositioning our knowledge, customs, and values, and by using them as a means of strengthening and empowering our people.

As revolutionary thinker Frantz Fanon (1963) argues, this is characteristic of those dealing with the effects of colonization, whether politically or psychologically, or both:

Because they realize that they are in danger of losing their lives and thus becoming lost to their people, these men, hotheaded with anger in their hearts, relentlessly determine to renew contact once more with the oldest and most pre-colonial springs of life of their people...this passionate research and this anger are kept up or at least directed by the secret hope of discovering beyond the misery of today, beyond self-contempt, resignation, and abjuration, some very beautiful and splendid era whose existence rehabilitates us both in regard to ourselves and in regard to others. (p. 209-210)

The canoe, then and now, was a vehicle for such rehabilitation and for the restoration of dignity. It was something tangible that people could look at, touch, and climb upon as they searched for themselves. It was a piece of the past that could be sailed in the present. For years, Hawaiians had been made to believe that they did not have a culture to be proud of. In fact, even though many oral traditions told of the amazing feats of their migratory ancestors who sailed across the open ocean aboard double-hulled sailing canoes, skeptics often “rejected their historical value, some to the point of declaring that they record voyages made in the mind, not at sea” (Finney, 1991, p. 383). This made the task of experimental voyaging—which resulted in the construction of a double-hulled sailing vessel named Hōkūle‘a in 1975, and the first successful voyage between Hawai‘i and Tahiti in 1976—so appealing to Hawaiians. Hōkūle‘a became a physical symbol of cultural pride, a means of

making contact with the past and with the navigational feats of our ancestors, in order to begin the process of rewriting history.

With looking at the past came the need to examine the present. When Hōkūle‘a was first sailed to Tahiti, for example, Hawaiians not only realized that they no longer knew how to navigate—as Mau Piailug, a navigator from Satawal in the Caroline Islands, had to guide the canoe for them—but that they also did not know how to build canoes. Milton “Shorty” Bertelmann (2013), an original crewmember on the 1976 voyage and one of the men wanting to build a canoe in the early 1990s, remembers:

Everybody was so awed with the 1976 voyage. But there’s so much more... That was just like an event for that one time. But from there...it excites all these other dimensions... When we got to Tahiti, everybody went up to Hōkūle‘a and expected to see a koa canoe... But it wasn’t, so right there, it’s like, “Oh, maybe we should make one...” But [Mau] could see right off the bat that we were disconnected, and not only us there at the canoe, everybody.

Therefore, the logical process of reconnection for these men led them to “go back to the past,” as a few of them phrased it. It was there that they believed they could shed the layers of self-contempt and shame lay upon them and their people in previous decades, and could find something to rehabilitate themselves.

Like Kanihomaule before them, however, they did not want the canoe, the final product, without having experienced every step of the process themselves, even those that would be physically draining and spiritually challenging. Therefore, they traveled once again to Kahiki, to lands outside of Hawai‘i, and asked Mau Piailug, who they called Papa Mau, to be their kahuna kālai wa‘a. To them, as one with the all of the skill and knowledge of this “‘oihana po‘okela loa,” this very prestigious occupation, he was “like a living ancestor” or someone who could effectively guide them to the past, taking them on a true voyage of rediscovery⁴⁶ (Kahape‘a-Tanner, 2014, p. 177).

Therefore, as expressed in the title of this chapter, the adze, or the primary tool that allowed them to embark on this journey of learning, Papa Mau himself, was indeed in Kahiki. Thus, when their canoe was complete, it was named Mauloa in honor of their kahuna kālai wa‘a, a man who brought knowledge from beyond our shores and helped Hawaiians to reconnect. Quite significantly, in the Hawaiian language, “mau” means to continue, to

⁴⁶ “Voyage of Rediscovery” was the name given to an actual voyage that took place from 1985-1987 in which Hōkūle‘a journeyed to Aotearoa and back. During this voyage the canoe also made stops in Tahiti, the Cook Islands, Tonga, American Samoa, and the Tuamotus.

persevere, or to endure. When combined with “loa” it means to be eternal, everlasting, or endless. As the canoe is part of the material world, it may one-day rot or breakdown, returning to the land from which it came. However, the knowledge of canoe building and the story of this particular canoe, if maintained, can have eternal impacts.

As a little girl, I was able to witness small portions of this story, standing just behind the sennit cord draped around the canoe house, as the men donned malo, or loincloths, took stone adze into their hands, and chipped away at a koa log brought down from the forest. Their journey is one that has intrigued me for years and is one that I seek to honor in these pages. Like them, however, I will not simply present their words like a complete package, or like a new canoe that I have picked up without laboring over myself. In fact, I would rather view this chapter as an unfinished canoe, one that I have worked to carve and shape, but one that can still be added to or adjusted in the future to accommodate new routes and unexpected journeys. As a writer and a researcher, and even more so, as a Kanaka Maoli, I refuse to just reproduce stories here without going through the process of analyzing them; without positioning them within the larger contexts of cultural evolution, movements towards political sovereignty, and decolonization; and without making a sincere effort to see how the lessons learned in their journey can be used today and far into the future.

As Kanihomaule’s story teaches us, this is our kuleana; this is our responsibility. To ensure our survival, we have to immerse ourselves in the experience of constantly working for ea, or for the life, the breath, and the sovereignty of our people (Goodyear-Ka’ōpua, 2014, p. 3). As one of the canoe builders remarked, you must “give yourself to the culture” and since we know culture to be fluid, shifting, and always changing, such a sacrifice is indeed life-long, one that will be a part of us, a mau loa, forever (K. Manu, 2013). Working towards the betterment of your people is a never-ending process. Yet, I would also argue that since this story is intricately tied to Kahiki, or to lands and peoples beyond our shores, that we must extend our understanding of kuleana to include those spaces that provided the tools and resources for our own becoming and for our constant renewal. This story teaches us that “I Kahiki ke ko’i,” the adze is indeed in Kahiki. Therefore, it is from there that we must begin, and perhaps, it is to Kahiki that we must always return.

E Hana i ke Ko’i Lipi: Make a Sharp Stone Adze

When Kawaikaumaiikamakaopua (1922e) wrote his serial column on canoe building, beginning in the later part of 1922 and ending in the first couple of months of 1923, it is

possible that he may have already predicted the eventual loss of this once esteemed profession, thus motivating him to capture aspects of it in print. In fact, as he notes, by that time customs of knowledge transmission had already begun to shift: “Oiai, o na keiki a na kahuna kalai waa wale no ka poe i loaia oihana, a ua komo akula ko’u wahi luau’i makuakane e a’o kalai waa” [Although the children of expert canoe builders were usually the only ones to inherit this practice, my own father entered into training for canoe building] (p. 7). Thus, perhaps there was a need to alter practices in order to maintain them. Even Kawaikaumaiikamakaokaopua’s recording of canoe building recontextualized this knowledge, making it accessible to those who would not have been permitted to learn it previously, including us today.

While possibly foreseeing the eventual collapse of this custom, he also seemed to speak to the experience of those who would eventually endeavor to build a canoe of their own nearly 70 years later. In regard to those who were practiced in canoe building during the time of his parents and grandparents, he states, “...o ka poe akamai, ua like keia mea he waa me he mea paani lealea na lakou. Aka, ia kaua, ka mea akahi akahi, he hana nui maoli” [As for those skilled people, the canoe was like a fun toy for them. Yet, for those of us who are novices, it is a truly monumental task] (Kawaikaumaiikamakaokaopua, 1922d, p. 5). This was indeed the experience of the men who built Mauloa on the Big Island of Hawai‘i in the early 1990s. It was an enormous job, one that tested them physically, mentally, spiritually, emotionally, and on very practical levels, even financially. Many struggled and felt like they had to “partition their lives into separate spheres”: a sphere literally positioned within a boundary marked by sennit rope in which they could build their canoe; and a sphere outside of that space where they were “still dependent on the capitalist system we live in” (Tengan, 2008, p. 60). Building Mauloa was challenging. However, as I spoke to a group of them twenty years after building their canoe, in retrospect, any sacrifice that they may have had to make was worth the cause.

Having been swept up in the tides of the Hawaiian Renaissance—experiencing, witnessing, and even taking part in an explosion of arts, music, dance, and language celebrating their people—and having participated in new political movements for sovereignty and indigenous rights, many of these men saw building a wa‘a as the next step in their growth. As Fanon (1963) explains, there are multiple phases in a pattern of such cultural evolution among colonized people. In the first phase, the assimilationist phase, “the native intellectual gives proof that he has assimilated the culture of the occupying power” (p. 222). I

would extend this to more than just those often thought of as “intellectuals.” In fact, as explored in the previous chapter, some of these canoe builders experienced conflict and tension within their own families as their parents were of the generation of Hawaiians that sought assimilation as the best route to success.

The second phase, as Nigerian journalist and literary theorist Chidi Amuta (1995) interprets it, is the “cultural nationalist phase” (p. 159). In this phase, “the native is disturbed” and therefore “decides to remember what he is,” rejecting assimilation (Fanon, 1963, p. 222). An inherent problem of this phase, however, is that natives often find that they have been distanced from their cultural customs, practices, and values for so long that any attempt to recover them can result in romanticism (p. 159). Many of the *kālai wa‘a* who built *Mauloa* shared stories that resemble key characteristics of this phase: wanting to depart from colonial teachings and assimilationist agendas in order to journey to the past, where they believed, they would find some sense of truth, something whole and beautiful to help them become stronger and better Hawaiians. They were in some ways trapped by the false notion that they could return to a “traditional” society, as if such societies that are “somehow pure and untouched by the outside world” actually exist (Mallon, 2010, p. 364).

The third phase is what Fanon (1963) calls the “fighting phase” in which “the native, after having tried to lose himself in the people and with the people, will on the contrary shake the people” (p. 222). Following the renaissance and the height of the Hawaiian sovereignty movement in the 1980s and 1990s, this is where we can perhaps find ourselves today: wanting to use the past as a means of educating and reeducating our people, sometimes even about themselves. This is why examining *Mauloa*, twenty years after her construction, and putting the story of this canoe into the larger context of cultural evolution and decolonization is so important. When we can look at a single-hulled canoe, for example, one that will never travel beyond the coasts of our island chain, and one that will therefore never physically travel to *Kahiki* itself, we are able to examine the relationship between Hawai‘i and lands beyond our shores on more symbolic levels. Furthermore, as interdisciplinary historian Vicente Diaz (2011) advocates, we can actually ground ourselves in the canoe and come to “view the mobility of the canoe as a cultural foundation as well as to understand foundational culture in fluidic ways” (pp. 21-22). This, I believe, can help us to prepare for whatever phase is next in our own evolution as we continually look to the past as a source of guidance for our future.

As Fanon (1963) clearly explains, “The colonized man who writes for his people ought to use the past with the intention of opening the future, as an invitation to action and a basis for hope. But to ensure that hope and to give it form, he must take part in action and throw himself body and soul into the national struggle” (p. 232). As a writer and a researcher, and as someone who witnessed not only the birth of this wa‘a but also benefitted from the renaissance and from the many Hawaiian movements of previous decades, this is something I must do. This chapter and this thesis in general, therefore, cannot be a simple act of filling pages and documenting stories. It must be a means of “opening the future” by shaking the people—no matter how hard and uncomfortable it may be—and pushing them to continue to immerse themselves in the struggle. Furthermore, it must be a means of mobilizing them and giving them, no matter how dire their situations, a sense of hope that there is something better to arrive at in the future. As Angel Pilago (2013), one of the kālai wa‘a, quite beautifully expresses, “Mauloa is hope! That’s all Mauloa means. That’s a kaona [a deeper, hidden meaning] of Mauloa. It is hope.”

Therefore, this chapter will seek to act within this third phase of cultural evolution, using the past—both the distant and the more recent—to open possibilities for the future. However, it will not do so naively. In other words, as even Fanon himself realized, this type of action will not change everything as this kind of research has “limitations...in terms of altering the present material conditions of life among the colonized” (Amuta, 1995, p. 159). Critically examining our people, our stories, and our movements has its place. It may not provide instant solutions for the fact that after prolonged U.S. occupation that our people are still being evicted from their homelands; are still being denied access rights to natural resources; are still witnessing the destruction of burials and significant cultural sites; are still fighting for our mountains, our rivers, and our valleys, and now, even for our food against the onslaught of biocolonialism; and are still finding ourselves some of the most impoverished, unhealthy, and uneducated in Hawai‘i (Goodyear-Ka‘ōpua, 2014, p. 1; Trask, 1993, p. 17). It may not fix these problems. However, in such examination we can at least begin to identify the tools that will help us to chip away at them. We are in the process of finding the right stone, fashioning our adze, and sharpening it for all of the work that lies ahead, in this generation and in all of those to come, at home in Hawai‘i, and beyond, in Kahiki.

This chapter will be shaped by the ko‘i lipi, the sharp stone adze that was found in Kahiki and brought to Hawai‘i to build our wa‘a. Each succeeding section will be named for a particular part of the canoe building process, namely at the beginning of its construction, as

recorded by Kawaikaumaiikamakaokaopua, and will highlight stories shared by the men who built Mauloa. Within these sections, I will present an analysis of their reflections, aligning the building of their canoe with the building of a nation, while looking at both the triumphs and pitfalls of such efforts. My hope is that we will be able to look to their stories and effectively use them to discuss larger issues in the past and in the present as we find lessons and revelations for the future. Additionally, this chapter will also pay attention to Kahiki—to where it was positioned, how it was understood and interpreted, and how it may have even been used strategically—to provide insight into where, and even what, Kahiki *was* then so that we can determine where and what Kahiki *will be* for us in the generations to come.

E Huli i ka Lā‘au: Search for a Tree

As Kawaikaumaiikamakaokaopua (1922b) recounts, searching for a tree to build a canoe takes patience and perseverance: “Ma mua o ka pii ana i ke kalaiwaa, he pii mua e huli i ka laau koa i ke kuahiwi. A ina aole loa i ka la mua, pii hou no e huli i kahi e ae” [Before advancing into canoe building, you must first go up into the mountain and search for a koa tree. And if you do not find one on the first day, then return again and search in a different location] (p. 7). For the men who built Mauloa, the process of searching for the tree was a profound one as it seemed to wake them up to the reality that building a canoe, and perhaps even more importantly, building and rebuilding a Hawaiian identity, was not going to be an easy process. In fact, the vast majority of stories shared with me focused on what took place in the Keauhou⁴⁷ forest, before the koa log was ever transported down to the ocean at Hōnaunau⁴⁸ and shaped into a wa‘a, indicating that it was this part of the process that left one of the deepest impressions on the men.

Initially, the plan for these builders was to find two logs large enough to construct a double-hulled canoe much like Hōkūle‘a. Only this time, the canoe was to be built of natural resources rather than the fiberglass and other synthetic materials used on its predecessor. While the goal “was to recover knowledge and skills associated with traditional Hawaiian canoe-building,” the men unfortunately discovered that “the forests of Hawai‘i did not contain koa trees large enough for the hulls of a voyaging canoe” (PVS). Mismanagement, forestry, cattle ranching, and changes in land stewardship had led to our forests being

⁴⁷ Keauhou forest is located on the slopes of Mauna Loa, in the district of Puna, on the island of Hawai‘i.

⁴⁸ Hōnaunau is located in the South Kona District on the island of Hawai‘i. The canoe house is located at Pu‘uhonua o Hōnaunau, which historically served as a place of refuge for lawbreakers and also served as a resting place for the bones of high chiefs. It is now a National Park and tourist destination.

neglected. Therefore, the search for koa trees came with a hard lesson: we had not been protecting our natural resources.

Quite symbolically, the Hawaiian word for the main stalk of a tree, or its trunk—the portion that would be carved into a canoe—is “kumu,” which is the same word for teacher and the same word for reason, cause, or purpose, and source, beginning, or origin. Thus, on almost every level, we had not taken care of our kumu: not the forest, the source of our materials; not the material itself; and not even the knowledge base, or the teachers, who could gift us with this skill. Thus, it was a humbling lesson. As Uncle Angel Pilago (2013) remembers:

In looking for the tree, the habitat was destroyed... It was realized at that time, in the year [or] two years of search[ing] for the appropriate tree that almost no trees existed. There were no trees... Those who were then concerned about the state of our environment then had a statement: In addition to everything else, we need to examine environmental justice. We need to keep our environment safe... We need to manage the resource! You see that's part of the lesson of Mauloa.

Uncle Angel then extended his reflection stating that we cannot just work on maintaining one area, like the forest that Mauloa came from. He therefore challenged me and all others to think about how we can extrapolate that lesson to all places: “What all of us need to do is become good managers of our Pacific resources, ocean *and* earth resources.” Thus, in learning about one forest, he was able to reflect on not only that area, but on the island, the archipelago, and the entire Pacific region. Sometimes, he commented, while fighting against outside encroachment, we forget that we often have to save the environment from ourselves. The search for the tree taught him that and left all of the men with a great burden to bear. Building a canoe starts on land and if you do not manage the land yourself, you will have no canoes to sail, no journeys to make, and no lands to discover or rediscover. Therefore, the life of their canoe, they learned, would mimic their own reawakening as Hawaiian men, the depleted forest somewhat resembling their own depletion and their need to wake up, pay attention, and act.

The search for trees lasted a couple of years, the men gathering every other weekend, or sometimes every third weekend—some men even flying to Hawai'i Island from O'ahu—to go to the forest and look. Any trees that were large enough to build a double-hulled canoe were so deep in the forest that to cut them down and haul them out would be to risk the lives of so many other trees, bringing incredible damage to the forest itself. As the men were

quickly learning lessons in land stewardship, they knew that sacrificing an entire area of the forest for two logs and one canoe project was not worth it. Therefore, their search continued until a group from Alaska, “the SeAlaska Corporation (owned by the Tlingit, Haida, and Tshimshian tribes of Southeast Alaska), offered to donate two Sitka spruce logs” to the Hawaiians (PVS). The trees were humbly accepted and construction was soon begun on a double-hulled canoe to be named Hawai‘iloa.

Although grateful, many of the kālai wa‘a, however, were not content. After spending so much time in the forest in search of a tree—and in many ways, in search of part of their own identity—they refused to give up, for they had not yet found what they were looking for. As one of the men, Maulili Dickson (2014) explains:

We were all stubborn. We didn’t want to [stop] because we were into it already. And I think that’s what motivated us to Mauloa. Because even on the day that we had the ceremonies and we knew that the Indians were going to give us the logs, right then and there, in our minds, we thought, ‘That’s Hawai‘iloa. We’re going for that traditional canoe.’ And then it was downsized: ‘Ok, we can do one single-hulled canoe,’ a coastal canoe, they called it, ‘and we’re doing it in the traditional manner.’

The men, like Kanihomaule before them, wanted the canoe builder rather than the canoe. In other words, they wanted to learn and immerse themselves in all of the processes and protocols, experiencing every ceremony and ritual involved with building a wa‘a. They wanted to do it themselves. This therefore meant that they had to continue their search—this time for a smaller tree—so that they could know that process and learn from it.

The men were in search of much more than a tree, however. They were seeking connection. As one of them, Kaniela Akaka (2013), remembers, “Mauloa...reconnected us to our physical culture *and* our spiritual culture.” As native men feeling alienated from their own customs, they saw the canoe as a vehicle of reengagement, of reawakening, and of reclaiming who they were and all that they could be. As Fanon (1963) explains, this is characteristic of natives who feel lost in the tides of colonialism:

In order to ensure his salvation and to escape from the supremacy of the white man’s culture the native feels the need to turn backward toward his unknown roots and to lose himself at whatever cost in his own barbarous people. Because he feels he is becoming estranged, that is to say because he feels that he is the living haunt of contradictions which run the risk of becoming insurmountable, the native tears

himself away from the swamp that may suck him down... This tearing away, painful and difficult though it may be, is however necessary. (p. 218)

In order to “tear away,” the men literally distanced themselves, isolating themselves in the forest for days at a time. It was there that they could “turn backward” towards their roots, losing themselves in their people, venturing into the thick of the trees as if venturing into their unknown pasts. This process, however, did indeed prove to be painful in many ways.

Looking for a tree woke the men up to the reality that they did not really know how to search, or even what to look for. In their eagerness to find the appropriate tree, they ignored the signs and refused, as many of them remarked, to see what was right in front of them. As Uncle Maulili Dickson (2014) recounts, Papa Mau watched them struggle, watched them search with no success, until he realized that the Hawaiian men needed to learn how to see, and perhaps more importantly, how to listen:

Mau was sitting under the tree weaving something. So the men come back and they're eating lunch and Mau starts...posing us questions: What we looking for out there? Do we know what we looking for? [He said,] 'You already went in the forest. You know where it is. How come you going again? You already looked. You know where it is. Why you out there? You searching for what? What you searching for?' And he was right. We were searching for...our direction, where we going...what the future is. And then he started saying, 'You know you folks sit by this tree all the time, you park by this tree, you lean against this tree, but you not listening to the tree.' That's when he gave us our instructions on how to be grounded, how to look at everything around us, the birds, the forest. He said, 'Even the forest is talking to you and you not listening.' And the sun is shining on the tree when we're there. He says, 'When you folks not here, no more sun, and [then] you come and [there's] light all on top the tree. And everybody tell you and you not looking, you not listening.' So that's when we realized we'd just been running wild in the forest and not really grounded.

This story featured in almost every interview I conducted, the men amazed that they could be oblivious for so long. The tree that would eventually become their canoe was positioned near a road, easily accessible, and was the tree that they would meet under, talk under, eat under, and enjoy as they prepared to go deeper into the forest.

In a profound way, this kumu—this tree and teacher, this source of knowledge—taught them one of the most valuable lessons. Filled with passion and an immeasurable desire to learn about who they were and to remake themselves as Hawaiian men, they thought that

they had to head straight into the depths of the forest and neglected to see what was in front of them, on the outskirts. Thus, they learned that in order to search you must first learn how to see and how to listen. You must know what signs to pay attention to. You must be observant. The forest provided them with signs. Yet, in their haste and in their eagerness, they forged ahead without truly looking around them. Thus, they were indeed, as Uncle Maulili described, impassioned natives “running wild in the forest,” “not really grounded,” searching for their direction, for their future, for their way.

Through their stories, I realized that their search for a tree teaches us to always remember the kumu, not just the physical tree, but the resource. When Uncle Angel challenged us to extrapolate the lesson of resource management to all areas in the Pacific, I believe that he left open the possibility of using that lesson for all types of resources, not just the land-based, ocean-based, or even the physical. What the search for a tree taught the men is that the forests had been neglected. However, to examine such neglect requires that we first ask why we were not made aware of such neglect sooner. We were not conscious of the depletion of our forests, and the decline of koa trees, until we needed them again, until they had function. Knowledge, after all, is maintained if it has use (Meyer, 2001, p. 137). Therefore, when the practice of canoe building, once one of the most esteemed professions, nearly died, so did our sight of the resource, or the trees and the environment needed to build them. Thus, as a people, we were disconnected. Our ability to look for signs and to listen for cues was lost because we thought we no longer needed to look; we thought we no longer needed to listen. However, that changed when we saw our cultural customs as a pathway towards rehabilitation. Suddenly, the canoe had a new function. It had use. It was going to help us to restore dignity to our people. Thus, our resources too had new function in a contemporary time.

Therefore, with such a search, and with an attempt to “renew contact once more with the oldest and most pre-colonial springs of life” of our people, comes the immediate need to take account of our resources and to protect them *now* (Fanon, 1963, pp. 209-210). This includes every type of kumu: the material and the non-material. What the word “kumu” teaches us is that everything is connected. The maintenance of a physical resource—like the kumu, the tree—often depends on the management of a practice and its function in daily life. If that practice is no longer a part of the culture of a people and is not effectively made relevant in changing times, then the kumu, the reason for it has been lost to the people. And if

that reason is lost, then the kumu, the teacher, no longer has a place to teach and that knowledge—including all of the values and perspectives wrapped up in it—are gone.

Thus, running wild in the Keauhou forest taught the men about management, and twenty years later, taught me about connection. Neglecting one resource indicates that you may have already lost another and we cannot wait for moments of resurgence to become aware of that. In other words, as Uncle Shorty Bertelmann told me in one of our conversations, we should not ever need another cultural renaissance. Thus, the responsibility for myself and all of those to come is to learn from this story the importance of resource management, of honoring our teachers and the knowledge they hold, of actively taking part in maintaining customs—knowing that they are the vehicle for transmitting Hawaiian values and perspectives—and of striving to protect the physical spaces and materials that make those practices possible. Each task is connected and dependent on the other for survival. Therefore, as the men searched for a tree to build their canoe, it seems they embarked on a journey of reconnection, discovering the active role that they, and all of us, must play in the making and remaking of our own culture.

E Pule: Pray

The profound lessons learned in their search, however, proved to be just the beginning of the next leg of their journey. As Kawaikaumaiikamakaokaopua (1922c) explains, “...ma mua o ke oki ana i ka laau waa, e pule...” [...before cutting the tree for the canoe, pray] (p. 5). Although it sounds quite simple, this was a detailed process that involved knowing which akua, or gods, to pray to, what offerings to make, and how neglect of the sacred could result in serious consequences. According to his article, there are three gods of canoe building: Lea, a female, and Kūpā‘aike‘e and Mokuhāli‘i, both male⁴⁹. Interestingly, these gods are believed to have roots in Kahiki, thus once again bridging the lives of Kānaka Maoli with lands beyond our shores⁵⁰. For the kahuna kālai wa‘a, the gods were essential. They made his work possible, and as long as he acted appropriately, they could provide him with guidance and strength. Perhaps more importantly, they were not distanced entities, but were believed to be

⁴⁹ Folklorist and ethnographer Martha Beckwith (1970) cites alternative spelling for the names of these akua: Ku-moku-hali‘i, ...Kupa-ai-ke‘e (Kaikupakee, Kupaikēe)” and “Lea (La‘e, Laea)” (p. 15-16).

⁵⁰ According to Beckwith (1970), “Gods are represented in Hawaiian story as chiefs dwelling in far lands or in the heavens and coming as visitors or immigrants to some special locality in the group sacred to their worship” (p. 3). Of these gods, Kū (male) and Hina (female) were said to be earliest arrivals (p. 11). Together they controlled “the fruitfulness of earth and the generations of mankind” (p. 12). As Beckwith further explains, many early gods whose domains were either in the sea or in the forest were given Kū names as Kū was said to preside over them. This is evidenced in the names Kūmoku-hali‘i and Kūpā‘aike‘e. Lea, although not having a Kū name, was also one of these “subordinate gods” (p. 14-16).

with the kahuna kālai wa‘a at every step of the canoe building process as long as he worked to maintain a connection with them: “...aole i nele kekahi kahuna kalaiwaa i ke akua” [...there was not one canoe builder who was without a god] (Kawaikaumaiikamakaokaopua, 1922d, p. 5). Therefore, to be without one perhaps meant that you were not a true kahuna kālai wa‘a, or one knowledgeable in *all* aspects of canoe building, from the physical to the sacred.

This idea of the “sacred” is one that the contemporary canoe builders would have to engage. However, as historian George Kanahale (1986) explains, our concept of “sacred” may differ greatly from that of our ancestors, leaving such engagement to be challenging, and at times, disorienting:

We must recognize a vital difference between what we today mean as sacred as compared with what Hawaiians of old meant as sacred... When we call something sacred, we do so with a mixture of awe, wonder, admiration, or fear. When Hawaiians of old thought of the sacred their responses involved those same emotions but also included potency, danger, prohibition as well. The difference is what constitutes the meaning of kapu [taboo], probably the most powerful regulator of human thought and behavior in ancient Hawaiian society. (p. 38)

For the men who built Mau Loa, one way to ensure that their actions were culturally appropriate was to have advisors, or those who were more in-tune with older interpretations of “religion,” “spirituality,” and “sacred,” and those who could keep them safe as they moved into new spaces. It should be noted that although their teacher, Papa Mau, came from lands beyond Hawai‘i, and while even the gods they prayed to once migrated to Hawai‘i from Kahiki, the men did try to find as many resources at “home” as they could. Although none of the men expressed this explicitly, it seemed that it was important to be able to incorporate certain protocols and ceremonies (including chants, prayers, and expressions) that were developed *in* Hawai‘i, were composed in the Hawaiian language, and therefore spoke to unique experiences and ways of communicating and interacting with the Hawai‘i environment. Thus, in addition to key elders from the community, they also had a man named Keli‘i Tau‘a who would teach them the appropriate chants and prayers using teaching strategies that forced them to immerse themselves in the experience. There were no papers or pencils and there was no time to waste on being concerned about inadequacies, unpreparedness in terms of language and cultural literacy, or even nervousness and shyness.

Rather, they were thrust into experiences, letting their discomfort become their primary teacher.

As the men prepared to cut their tree, certain spaces were declared kapu. Cords made of ‘aha, or braided coconut husk, were therefore draped around these spaces, marking them as culturally significant. Within the circles that they created, prohibitions were set and the men were told to wear malo, or loincloths, and to adjust their attitude and behavior accordingly. In a way, they became contemporary embodiments of a new interpretation of Hawaiian sacredness. To them, acknowledging kapu and being culturally appropriate meant that they had to do things as closely as possible to the way that their ancestors would have done it, or at least to what they *believed* their ancestors would have done. This meant wearing malo, this meant praying and chanting, this meant acknowledging the forest and the other natural entities around them that had mana, or an almost divine sense of power and authority, and this meant changing their thinking and even challenging themselves and their prior notions of religion and spirituality.

As they entered into these spaces, the canoe builders were additionally accompanied by a small group of men called “Nā Koa,” or “The Warriors” or “The Courageous Ones.” These men had previously participated in Ho‘oku‘ikahi, which was as anthropologist Ty Kāwika Tengan (2008) explains, a commemorative event that took place in 1991 [prior to the launching of Mauloa in 1992] at Pu‘ukoholā Heiau on the Island of Hawai‘i. Two hundred years prior, the heiau (loosely translated as “temple”) served as the site upon which Kamehameha I, a chief from the district of Kohala, sacrificed his cousin and rival, Keōua Kū‘ahu‘ula, a chief from the district of Ka‘ū (p. 69). According to a prophecy, one introduced in the previous chapter, Kamehameha would not be harmed in battle if he rebuilt and reconsecrated the heiau. Following the advice of the kāula (prophet), Kapoukahi, Kamehameha therefore completed the consecration of Pu‘ukoholā with the ritual sacrificing of his rival and family member, and in the years to follow, he successfully united all of the Hawaiian Islands under his rule.

As part of Nā Koa, Mason Maiku‘i (2014), explains that Ho‘oku‘ikahi was not just about Pu‘ukoholā and about making amends between the descendants of Kamehameha and Keōua. For him, it was a time of awakening: “Ho‘oku‘ikahi was basically to reestablish the male role...to reestablish and give the male back their identity.” Pu‘ukoholā therefore served as a space in which Hawaiian men could reengage with their roles and responsibilities as men, as it was generally felt, at the time, that such aspects of culture had been neglected

(Tengan, 2008, p. 84). This led to the formation of Nā Koa. Their role was to stand guard at the heiau while dressed in malo, ti-leaf capes, and rope sandals, while grasping pololū, or long wooden spears. This act “appealed to Hawaiian men who felt they no longer have a place of their own *as* Hawaiian men” (Tengan, 2008, p. 80). Donning such attire was a significant act, especially for those men who had never worn malo before. It was part of the necessary process of “tearing away,” as Fanon (1963) has theorized it. The men literally “tore” away layers of colonialism, even pushing particular teachings aside that told them that they had to look and act a particular way to be proper citizens. Without this process, there could be “serious psycho-affective injuries and the result will be individuals without an anchor, without a horizon, colorless, stateless, rootless” (p. 218). Therefore, the men stood their ground, finding their anchor in their own people, in their history, and in their past.

This “tearing away” and this shedding of colonial layers, no matter how temporary the act may have been, was not only meaningful for the men themselves, but also for the women who stood outside of the ‘aha draped around the heiau grounds, watching. Pua Case (2014), my cousin and also my kumu hula (hula teacher) who first introduced me to Mauloa, remembers that when the men began to assert themselves as Kanaka Maoli men, it moved everyone:

They actually started to open themselves to that ancestral, spiritual connection that had been put on the side in all of those banning ways... and they actually, *they* brought that back. They started to pray... when they never would have done that before. *They* did that for us. And [they] put on a malo again, and we all put on a malo with them. For her, seeing the men dressed in loincloths, standing guard, and serving as protectors was empowering. Thus, their efforts to reconnect to their own roles and responsibilities as men uplifted everyone who witnessed their growth, women, children, and elders included. Ho‘oku‘ikahi, as Tengan (2008) explains, therefore worked “Against the colonial discourses of erasure, death, and emasculation, [as] Kānaka Maoli strove to deploy new discourses of spiritual health, vibrancy, and strength” not just for themselves, but for their families, and more importantly, for the generations to come (p. 97).

Thus, it was only appropriate that a few of these men, having experienced their own spiritual reawakening, would come to the aid of those beginning a new journey with the wa‘a. Some of the members of Nā Koa were asked to stand guard as the kālai wa‘a began their work. As Mason Maiku‘i (2014) further explains, the visible presence of Nā Koa made people feel safe. They did not always need to hold spears or weapons. Just physically being

there meant that there were more people who could “hold the light,” as Mike Manu (2013), one of the youngest kālai wa‘a and Nā Koa, phrased it. This meant that they could follow any kapu that were set and could ensure that all of those who were meant to be in that space were kept in and all of those who were not meant to be there, and who could potentially be disruptive, were kept out. They were there to ensure that certain rules and customs, as outlined by their guides and teachers, were followed. Therefore, their presence spoke to the physical embodiment of empowerment. For those men in the forest—the canoe builders, the cultural advisors, and Nā Koa included—they became visible symbols of a culture being revitalized, of a past being restored with dignity, and of a people finding themselves through the customs of their ancestors.

However, this did not mean that entering those sacred spaces of action and thought was easy. In fact, one of those spaces, a small tent in the cold of the forest, is where many of the men struggled to chant for the first time, literally fighting to find to their voice and to speak to the sacred. Outside of the tent stood Nā Koa as well as other men, like Kaniela Akaka, who was training under Keli‘i Tau‘a to be a spiritual advisor. They could hear the men inside, reciting words, and repeating them again and again until they were memorized. However, as Uncle Maulili Dickson (2014) remembers, for the men inside, this was a trying experience:

I think the most moving part up there [in the forest], the challenge, I think, was in the tent the night before the ceremonies [to begin cutting the tree]... Keli‘i says, “Ok, we gotta learn this chant...” [So, we’re in] one small little tent...and we in our malo, and it’s getting cold, and we gotta learn this chant, and we not doing really good at it because it’s late, we no can function, we falling asleep, and our brains are shutting down. Then he starts going, “Ok, we do it one more time and then we go around the circle [and] everybody do it by themselves.”... That took hours and hours and we were trying to help each other. It was “Ia Wa‘a Nui.” That was the first chant we learned. I tell you, that was the hardest thing that we had to learn. [It] was cramming when you’re tired and your brain is shut down already.

Most of the men explained that they had no previous experience with chanting, and for others, no experience with the Hawaiian language. Therefore, to learn a chant with no modern aids, like printed words on a page, and to learn it in a language that history had made feel foreign in their mouths, was a difficult process. However, Keli‘i Tau‘a pushed them. It did not matter if they were uncomfortable, tired, cold, or embarrassed. The fate of their

project and the life of the canoe that they would eventually carve demanded that they perform these rituals, and that they perform them well. Therefore, when ceremonies were conducted the next day for the felling of the tree, they chanted.

As G. Kanahale (1986) explains, ceremonial proceedings in the past were usually accompanied by prayer: "...indeed, it is difficult to imagine a Hawaiian ritual without verbal communication with the gods" (p. 123). Thus, the instruction provided by Kawaikaumaiikamakaokaopua (1922c) that prayers be offered before a tree is cut down was indicative of the great value and importance that Kānaka Maoli once put on prayer, and more importantly, on communicating with the gods that could guide them. Since it was believed that "Gods can help human beings by imparting knowledge to them" but "Such godly help does not exclude human effort," Hawaiians knew that they had to work to maintain a good line of communication with their akua (Charlot, 2005, pp. 103-104). Thus, rituals and ceremonies were performed to ensure that they would be granted with knowledge, strength, patience, and whatever else was needed to complete the task at hand. Therefore, after huddling in their small tent, reciting and memorizing new words, the men chanted their prayer and conducted other rituals before beginning to cut the tree down.

This particular story not only teaches us one way that Kānaka Maoli transferred knowledge prior to the introduction of writing, or the importance of memorization in non-literate societies, but also teaches us key lessons about the sacred and its role in our evolution as indigenous people. There is something about the way that the men had to immerse themselves in the experience, fighting off the cold, and as Uncle Maulili described, combating the fact that their brains were "shutting down," that speaks to the sacred. It speaks to the idea of somehow losing yourself and getting out of your head, so that you can become lost in the recitation and repetition. As educationalist Cora Weber-Pillwax (2001) explains, this type of learning allows for the knowledge to become part of you: "Being there for enough time was necessary for the learning to be integrated into my being... Intellectualization of Indigenous ways of being and knowing can inhibit and/or distort opportunities for Indigenous people to experience connections and personal transformations" (p. 173). In that sense, the almost ritualistic way in which they each took a turn, going around the circle, repeating the same words, forced them to internalize them and to embody them in a way that would not have been possible had they read them from a page.

Additionally, although they took turns performing the chant individually, it seems that it was through the individual act that they became a group, praying communally, learning the

power of intention and concentration. The way that the men attempted to help each other and focused on sending each person positive energy, reinforced the idea of “kūkulu kumuhana.” As Pūku‘i, Haertig, and Lee (1972a) explain, kūkulu kumuhana refers to the “pooling of strengths, emotional, psychological, and spiritual, for a shared purpose,” and further, that “Anytime family, friends, congregation or larger community pray or aspire together, becoming emotionally-spiritually involved in a common purpose, then this quality of solidarity may come into being” (p. 78-79). Quite symbolically, the word “kūkulu” itself means to build or to construct, as a house. Among other definitions, it also means to found, as in a society, or to form, as in an armed unit. Thus, in their tent, they pooled their strengths, emotionally, psychologically, and even spiritually, to come together as a unified group, constructing the kahua, or the foundation of knowledge and experience upon which they would continue to build in the days and even the years to come.

Through learning to chant, pray, and participate in ceremonies, the men learned that their actions could not, and cannot, be superficial. As Fanon (1963) explains, sometimes the native in search of a national culture, and more so, in search of an identity:

...sets a high value on the customs, traditions, and the appearances of his people; but his inevitable, painful experience only seems to be a banal search for exoticism. The sari becomes sacred, and shoes that come from Paris or Italy are left off in favor of pampooties, while suddenly the language of the ruling power is felt to burn your lips... Going back to your own people means...to go native as much as you can, to become unrecognizable... (p. 221).

Therefore, putting a malo on and reciting memorized words has to be about more than mimicry. It has to be about more than romanticism.

For some of the men, it may have begun that way. As Uncle Angel Pilago (2013) recounts, whenever he was told to “feel” something or to pay attention and “see” signs, or to sense the unknown or the unseen, he couldn’t:

He [Keli‘i Tau‘a] telling me to do something and I don’t know what, or telling me to sense something, or do something, see something, hear something. And I’m not. But his chant made me feel like he telling me, “See, hear, taste,” and I’m not. I always wonder about that. But what they would do, as others did, is come and give moments of comfort. That helped us persevere. So, it wasn’t a matter of we being strong, tenacious, not that at all. It was more a matter of we being strengthened by others who had faith in us: “I know it’s hard for you guys, but I know you guys can do it... You

may not fully comprehend what you doing but that's not important.' See, comprehension [is] not really important. Participation is... That's what I learned about his chants.

Without a certain degree of cultural literacy, the men had to operate on faith, knowing that if they participated, and immersed themselves, that their involvement would contribute to the larger goal. That is the idea of *kūkulu kumuhana*, of pooling strengths and giving whatever you have to offer, even it is just your voice, for the larger cause. Upon reflection, twenty years after building their canoe, the profound effect that this event had on the men was unmistakable. Any initial doubt or confusion that they may have felt led them to a higher degree of faith and trust in their gods and in their teachers, which led many of them to grow to embrace prayer and to acknowledge *kapu* and ideas of sacredness in their daily lives.

Through their experiences the men learned a key lesson for all indigenous peoples. As Mason Maiku'i (2014) put it:

It's a *kuleana* [responsibility] and you gotta understand the *kuleana*. You gotta understand *kapu*. You gotta understand protocol. You know, not just go through the motions of it. But, you gotta actually be part of it and you're actually going to live it. So, therefore, your life needs to change, and not just for this one [time]. It's a commitment that you're making for the rest of your life.

Therefore, to have sat in the tent, to have put on a *malo* and braved the cold, to have chanted before the cutting of a tree, and to have acknowledged the gods and the sacred, believing that they would provide you with guidance and strength, was to change your life. If you were not changed, then you simply "went through the motions"; you gave nothing of yourself, and therefore, received nothing in return. Their spiritual growth was not to be saved for roped-off areas, or those spaces that were designated as sacred by draped 'aha made of coconut husk. To contain such growth to a designated zone is to give-in to notion that culture may only exist in marked-off areas deemed appropriate for such practice. Goodyear-Ka'ōpua (2013) examines the establishment of "settler safety-zones," which are state-sanctioned areas designated for cultural practice where "Just enough 'culture' is allowable, so long as it does not threaten or undermine settler-colonial relations of power" (p. 8). To be contained and to feel like your expressions of identity are contained is a tragedy. To contain ourselves to those spaces, however, is another type of tragedy altogether.

Therefore, the men had to consider what would happen when the *malo* came off and they put their Western clothing back on, when they had to leave the forest and return to their

day jobs, and when they no longer had a group of men to chant with when the ‘aha protecting their space was taken down. When I sat with them, years later, it seemed that the bond they created together was as strong as it had ever been—their stories often moving them to tears—the connection between them undeniable. And more importantly, their commitment was one of faith and belief that no matter how depressing the situation may be for their people, that their work did and would somehow continue to make the future better. Many of them spoke of not only their lives, but the lives of their children and grandchildren, and how they were dedicated to ensuring that their descendants would not have to carry the same burdens as they did, and that they would know and *be* Kānaka Maoli in all aspects of their lives, not just within the boundaries of roped-off areas. Thus, even years later, they pushed the limits of “safety zones,” trying to break through them.

E Kua i ka Lā‘au: Chop the Tree

In his serial column, Kawaikaumaiikamakaokaopua (1922b) explains, “Ia oe e maopopo ana e hina ana ka laau, hele mua oe e oki pauku hapuu i uluna no ka laau... He mea ia e uwia ole ai ka laau” [When you know that the tree is going to fall soon, go first and cut some hāpu‘u [an endemic tree fern] to act as a cushion for the tree... This is something that will ensure that the tree does not split upon falling] (p. 7). What such instruction indicates is that preparation is key. The kahuna kālai wa‘a did not only think of the present moment, but each of the moments ahead and how a lack of preparation could be to the detriment of his canoe. He therefore made careful considerations: before you search for a tree, fashion your ko‘i lipi, your stone adze; before you chop down your tree, pray and ask for guidance; before that tree falls, prepare the ground upon which it will land. The contemporary kālai wa‘a, although probably never reading nor perhaps even knowing about Kawaikaumaiikamakaokaopua’s article, made similar preparations, indicating that someone, somewhere in their group, still knew of this practice. Therefore, as one of the men, John Keolanui (2013) remembers, “we had all the hāpu‘u all laid down,” so that the tree would have a place to fall.

Yet, even while planning and preparing for each step ahead, the unexpected, and sometimes even the unimaginable, can happen. This was certainly the case for the builders of Mauloa and their experience in chopping the tree. When the ceremonies were complete and it was time to begin cutting, the men, dressed in malo, took their heavy stone adze—made with stones gathered from Mauna Kea, the tallest mountain in the Pacific—and began to remove

the outer bark from a section near the base of the tree. As Uncle Kaniela Akaka (2013) remembers, the act of cutting away at the tree taught the kālai wa‘a a lesson in sacrifice:

As you chop, you know, as the chips fly, the tree gives up its life. And if you look at that... a fresh cut koa tree, it looks like it's bleeding. It's red. The sap is red at the first cut. But, as you're hitting with those ko'i, the stone adze, with the 'alā [a dense volcanic stone used for adze], those chips are flying and all of us were all bleeding...from the chips, the flying chips. So, both of us were giving, both of us were giving blood to this, you know, to keep our heritage, to keep our culture alive... So [that] was a very special connection that we made with this tree.

For Uncle John Keolanui (2013), who took one of the first strikes at the tree, this idea of sacrifice, entwined with a great sense of kuleana, or responsibility, was felt on multiple levels, physically and spiritually:

Now, we're all bloody, cause the chips, and we only cutting in malo. All the chips flying, and while I'm doing this, I'm taking on the pain of the tree. I can hear the tree telling me, "Endure the pain that I'm enduring. But don't let me die in vain. Keep it going... You drew the first blood... Don't let this just rot from here."

Like Uncle Kaniela, he too understood that they were ending the tree's life as a tree so that they could give it new life as a wa'a. Therefore, once they started to cut, this was something that they would have to continue. There could be no giving up, no quitting halfway, or no buckling under pressure and difficulty. This was a commitment, and in a hauntingly symbolic way, the tree made sure that they would know exactly what it was giving up for them. As they cut it, it cut them back. Both bled. Both made sacrifices. Both embodied that learning, giving of themselves for a larger cause: for remembering the greatness of their ancestors and restoring dignity to their people.

This type of sacrifice is one that must be made for the life of the people in general. If we are to work towards the betterment of our lives and towards the empowerment of our communities, then this requires sacrifice. There can be no half-hearted attempts. There can be no giving up. To do so is to cut the tree and then never carve a canoe, wasting its life. As Haunani-Kay Trask (1993) explains, "colonialism has, as one of its goals, the obliteration rather than the incorporation of indigenous peoples... Our daily existence in the modern world is thus best described not as a struggle for civil rights but as a struggle against our planned disappearance" (p. 26). It was the feeling of being lost—of being swamped, and essentially being drowned in a society that did not honor them, but rather tried to belittle

them out of existence—that drove these men, and those who came before them, to fight. Their building a canoe was a fight, and though some may try to write it off as a purely “cultural” or even nostalgic endeavor, it was highly political. As Trask (1999) argues, “culture is political. Writing, music, painting, dance, and voyaging are profoundly political” (p. 18). When working, writing, producing, intellectualizing, and even creating in a “highly charged area,” as literary theorist Edward Said (1978) phrases it, we cannot pretend that this work is anything but political for it aims to shift the people, to wake them up and shake them, and to create larger, even systemic changes.

The canoe carvers may not have been able to anticipate the impact that their work would have, or all of the lessons that it would eventually teach. Rather they simply knew that if they continued and persevered, no matter the difficulties, that they would be doing something good to bring hope to their people. Therefore, they planned and made as many preparations as possible to ensure their success. After a few days of chopping, some of the canoe builders had to return to their jobs and lives, leaving a small group of five—wearing malo, shedding blood, and carrying heavy stone tools—to continue the work of removing the outer bark of the tree. Those who left faced the unfortunate reality, as Tengan (2008) points out, that despite our progress, people still live in a society in which they can “take the effort of decolonization only so far before risking not only their own livelihoods, but also those of their families” (p. 60). Thus, while many of them expressed sadness at having to leave, they nevertheless felt that it was essential. Prior to dispersing, however, the men had mapped out a schedule for the felling of the tree: each man was to take their turn, giving time on the weekends, until it came down. Thus, everyone was surprised when it fell sooner than expected.

Although the exact length of time is unclear, Uncle John Keolanui (2013) remembers that on either the fourth or fifth day of chopping, the five men who remained in the forest witnessed what can only be described as amazing:

I’m carving this tree and all of a sudden we hear, “Crrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrr.” Deep inside the tree... I look at Tiger⁵¹. I tell um, “The buggah talking to me.”... So we walk up to Mau and Mau is sharpening the stone and he’s chanting. So we stand there and just wait till he acknowledges us, right. So he acknowledges us, “Ho, how come you not working?” I told Mau, “The tree is talking, brah.” He goes, “No, the tree no can be talking. Too early.” You know, it’s only a couple of days... three, four, five days.

⁵¹ Clement “Tiger” Espere, who was one of the crewmembers on Hōkūle‘a’s maiden voyage to Tahiti in 1975, was also one of the men who built Mauloa. He passed away in 2005.

[We were still] only taking the bark... So Angel them was still chipping away on the tree. Then it went, “Craaaaaaaaaaaaaah.” Mau went, “Huh! No, we have to move. We have to move.” So he grabs his ukana [his things] and the sharpening stone... He tells, “Ho, everybody, the tree is talking. He is. He wants to go.”... So all the birds, all the different birds they say you would see, was all on that tree. So much noise at the time, just chirping and singing, and then, poof! Gone... Silence... Then we knew something was up. So I yelled out, I said, “Brah, I going blow this tree down.” So I grabbed the pū [conch-shell horn], then I stood mauka [upland], and I started. Kani ka pū [Sound the pū]. Kani ka pū. Kanu ka pū... The tree started shimmering... Slowly the leaves...like raindrops...just start falling. And then the thing wen shake, just shake... The tree went, “Crrrrrrrrrrrrr.” It spun around... All of the branches folded around and acted like a cushion. And it just fell on the branches... Amazing, amazing, amazing. You know, and everybody, we cried, and cried forever.

For each man who was there to experience it—and even for those who only heard the stories afterward—this was a truly remarkable event. The most common interpretation was that the tree had given itself up to become a canoe, making their mission and their journey seem necessary, even destined. After telling me many stories like the one above—stories full of wonderful and spectacular events—Uncle John Keolanui confirmed that because their words sound almost unbelievable there would, and will always be, skeptics. However, the fact remains—no matter what happened in the forest that day—the tree did indeed come down earlier than it should have. And it did not matter what the men had done to prepare for it—laying hāpu‘u down where they believed the tree would land—they could not have planned for the wonderfully unexpected gift given to them on that day.

Thus, a lesson learned in their story is that of adjustment. Just as important as preparation may be, you also have to be prepared to be fluid, to shift and change as necessary. As Uncle Keoki Manu (2013) phrases it, this means to go with the “nalu,” the waves: “That’s all it is: know what you have, use what you have, and everything around here is all here to help you. You just gotta... just flow. Get in the flow. Nalu [waves].” To him, “going with the flow,” does not mean being uninvolved or even unconscious; it does not mean being a passive recipient of circumstance, without agency. Quite contrary, it means to “get in there,” to be *in* the struggle, to be *in* the community, to be *in* the effort, and to go with it, with your entire being. It means to have faith that whatever direction the nalu is headed in, that you are meant to be there, *in* it, whether the wave is smooth, or whether it is crashing

down upon you. As Uncle Keoki reminds us, you have to know what you have—know your past and what cultural values and teachings are there to help you—and you have to use that knowledge. Use those skills. Use the past as a means of opening the future. However, also be mindful that the unexpected will come, and that when it does, that “going with the nalu,” or allowing yourself to be flexible and open to change is necessary.

This same concept can be applied to the idea of culture in general. If we view our cultures as static and unchanging, then there will never be room for fluidity, for change, or for evolution. As novelist and scholar Albert Wendt (1976) declares,

Our cultures, contrary to the simplistic interpretations of our romantics, were changing even in pre-papalagi times through inter-island contact and the endeavors of exceptional individuals and groups who manipulated politics, religion, and other people...our pre-papalagi cultures were not perfect or beyond reproach. No culture is perfect or sacred even today. (p. 75-76)

Cultures themselves are always shifting. Therefore, to imagine that the next generation can inherit, or should even want to inherit, a set of unchanging “traditions” is to believe that our ancestors never evolved. Our own evolution, however, teaches us that change is necessary and that people have to adapt to shifting times. If culture is “the way of life of a people, including their language, values, and knowledge systems,” then we have to recognize, particularly post-colonially, that these things have changed (Thaman, 2008, p. 462; L. Wong, 1999, p. 103). We do not speak, act, or even think as our grandparents’ or even our parents’ generations once did. Thus, we have to recognize, as Pacific cultures curator Sean Mallon (2010) argues, that the trap of “tradition” and viewing our cultures as static, only “becomes a reality when people choose to act on it” (p. 366). Therefore, rather than acting on such antiquated notions, we have to embrace the fluidity of our lives and thereby give the future room to grow as well.

However, such growth cannot come with a total abandonment of culture. In other words, if we are to survive as people, then we have to at once resist globalization and assimilation while also resisting romanticism. This means that, as Fanon (1963) argues,

We must not therefore be content with delving into the past of a people in order to find coherent elements which will counteract colonialism’s attempts to falsify and harm. We must work and fight with the same rhythm as the people to construct the future and to prepare the ground where vigorous shoots are already springing up. A national culture is not a folklore, nor an abstract populism that believes it can discover

the people's true nature... A national culture is the whole body of efforts made by a people in the sphere of thought to describe, justify, and praise the action through which that people has created itself and keeps itself in existence. (p. 233)

Fanon's arguments touch on a few key ideas that relate both to the work of the *kālai wa'a* as they built their canoe as well as to their place in a larger story of cultural evolution and decolonization. A decolonizing movement, as Konai Helu Thaman (2003) explains, "implies an attempt to reflect critically on the nature, scope, and processes of colonialism... particularly its impact on colonized people and their environments" (p. 1). Therefore, Fanon's words remind us that any attempt to reflect critically on colonialism must result in more than simply countering the colonizer.

In other words, wearing *malo* and praying to Hawaiian gods or even building canoes must be about more than trying to respond oppositionally to colonial teachings. And it must be about more than trying to find, sometimes desperately, some intact state of cultural purity in the past. Rather, as Fanon states, our efforts have to be in-lined with who the people are *now*. We can draw from the past and work to maintain those values, customs, and perspectives that make us distinct. However, we have to recognize that our work in the creation of culture is to also prepare the ground for the generations to come. We may not know how those shoots will grow, or what they will become. Yet, we can make the ground ready, laying *hāpu'u* if that is what is needed, doing what we can to soften any blows that future generations may experience. We cannot prepare them for everything. However, by giving them a base to stand upon, or even a cushion to land upon, we can teach them through our actions, and give them the strength and courage to be fluid in their own cultural evolution.

The men who built *Mauloa* taught me that lesson. To them, I was and still am one of those "vigorous shoots already springing up." After sharing their stories with me, so many of them commented on the need for me to share these stories further. In other words, I could not simply take information from them—symbolically chopping the tree down—without then carving something meaningful from it. When I began speaking to them, I never realized how much of myself I would have to sacrifice, or how much of myself I would have to give in return. Although I did not stand in the forest with them, and although I never felt the physical pain of being cut by the tree's flying chips, while carrying an impossibly heavy adze in my hands, I have had to take on their stories in a way that I never anticipated. They are now a part of me and have become a part of the way I see my culture, my people, and more

importantly, my work. I could never have prepared for that, no matter how much hāpu‘u I spread on the ground to soften any fall. Yet, the experience of “going with the nalu,” or putting my entire being into their story, sharing both laughter and tears with them, praying with them, and dreaming about the future with them, taught me that to be fluid is to be brave. It is to maintain a degree of courage and hope even when the future is unknown.

What their work teaches me, therefore, twenty years after I first greeted their canoe, is that to fight for our cultural survival is to fight for our survival on every level. While cultural initiatives, like the Mauloa project, may not be as highly regarded as efforts for physical, economic, and political survival, as Kenyan author and literary scholar Ngũgĩ wa Thiong’o (1993) explains, culture is the unifying element in any society:

What holds that society together is the culture it develops in the course of its struggles for economic and political survival. Thus, culture is not an extra growth, like say an extra finger. It is an integral part of our growth. It is a product of our growth. It is what a flower is to a tree. The important thing about a flower...is not just its beauty. A flower contains the seeds of the tree’s future growth, its survival. (p. 77)

A healthy culture, therefore, is one that the people develop together as they work towards their betterment on all levels. The kālai wa‘a taught me that their work was, and can continue to be, as important as all other efforts, whether political, economic, or otherwise. What matters is that we continue to create. Interviewing the canoe builders, twenty years after building Mauloa, taught me that we cannot simply appreciate their work in its time. While it played a role in the early 1990s in helping men to reengage with male roles, in reigniting their sense of spirituality and connection, and in awakening them to their responsibilities as men, we have to find the seeds in their work that will eventually sprout new ideas. The men themselves continue to extract lessons from their stories, lessons that they certainly would not have understood twenty years ago. Therefore, my job and my responsibility, now that I have created a relationship with their words, is to locate those seeds, to nurture them, and to lay the hāpu‘u down, perhaps as mulch, to ready the soil for their growth. This is key to our cultural survival, and in many ways, to our survival in general.

I Kahiki Ke Ko‘i: The Adze is in Kahiki

Our cultures, as Thiong’o (1993) explains, carry “the values, ethical, moral and aesthetic by which people conceptualize or see themselves and their place in history and the universe” (p. 77). As explored in this thesis, one of the cultural concepts that Hawaiians engaged with in

order to understand themselves and their place is Kahiki, and one of the goals of these chapters has been to explore Kahiki as it was interpreted at different points in history. More importantly, it has been concerned with how Kahiki has shifted and changed to meet the needs of different generations. These changes, I argue, are the most revealing for they tell us about the people who engaged with this concept and who used it, quite strategically, to make certain statements about their origins, about nationalism, about connectivity, and even about responsibility. These changes, therefore, inform us about the times in which these people lived, and further, about how their ideas contributed to our own cultural evolution.

Thus, the final section of this chapter will return to Kahiki. It will return to the place and idea where everything else began. The previous sections ended with the felling of the tree quite purposefully. First, most of the stories gathered in my interviews ended there, with brief mention of the actual building process that took place after the tree was hauled to the ocean and put into the hālau wa‘a, or canoe house, at Hōnaunau. This is because, for some of the men, they could not commit to actually shaping the canoe on a daily basis when work schedules, family lives, and finances became an issue, thus teaching us once again lessons in sacrifice and in the sustainability of culture in contemporary times. As filmmaker Anne Keala Kelly (2014) explains, such sacrifice takes courage, and “Courage is standing up for what’s right even when you’re broke and afraid” (p. 47). However, that proved to be too difficult for those who had families to care for and when physical and economic survival had to take precedence over the cultural.

Thus, while each man tried to do what he could to complete the wa‘a, the daily task to carve and shape it lay on just a few of them, Papa Mau included. According to a newspaper interview with canoe builder Ernie Reyes, Papa Mau said: “Where are the Hawaiians? They ask me to come over here to teach, but where are they? Too long they live in the modern world. They don’t know what is sacrifice” (Ramirez, 1993). Thus, when the canoe was complete, Papa Mau knew that much more work would need to be done to ensure that Hawaiians could do this on their own: “Mauloa was almost finished, said Piailug, but none of his apprentices had yet mastered using an adze” (Ramirez, 1993). His words therefore remind us that you cannot build one canoe and become skilled in an art that usually takes years to master, and further, that you cannot successfully revive a custom and the protocols and rituals that go with it if you do not continue to practice it. There must be knowledge transmission as strengthening a people through this type of work must continue through the generations.

Twenty years later and Papa Mau's words still ring true. Thus, we have to learn from the story of Mauloa, even from the shortcomings, so that we can grow. The men did what they could do at the time. Therefore, we cannot judge them, but must rather take from their stories the profound lessons that will help us to move forward. As Fanon (1963) argues:

Each generation must out of relative obscurity discover its mission, fulfill it, or betray it... We must rid ourselves of the habit, now that we are in the thick of the fight, of minimizing the action of our fathers or of feigning incomprehension when considering their silence and passivity. They fought as well as they could, with the arms that they possessed then; and if the echoes of their struggle have not resounded in the international arena, we must realize that the reason for this silence lies less in their lack of heroism than in the fundamentally different international situation of our time. (p. 206-207)

The men who returned to their daily jobs and lives and who had to decrease the amount of time spent at the hālau wa'a did not lack desire. They did not lack passion or any sense of fight and urgency. Their lives, however, made carving a canoe in the modern world a difficult task. Thus, our generation must ask questions about how to make such efforts sustainable or how to make a cultural endeavor one that does not have to threaten one's economic or physical survival. Twenty years after Mauloa, this must be our mission. We must, as Uncle Keoki Manu (2013) reminds us, "know what we have and use what we have." We live in a different time and our issues and concerns as indigenous people are gaining ground. People are becoming more aware of our plight. Therefore, there must be more that we can do to ensure that fighting for culture need not directly threaten one's physical or economic health. That must be our contribution now that we have learned and gained from the past.

Papa Mau's words, however, also teach us about responsibility, not only to our own people, but to those outside of our island chain. They teach us about the relationship between Hawai'i and Kahiki, or in this case, between Hawai'i and other lands in the Pacific. Papa Mau was not silent in his criticism of Hawaiians. He was honest and sometimes his words cut: "The first time I come to Hawaii (in 1975), it's lost already" (Ramirez, 1993). In his eyes, we were too modern and perhaps even too lost to be saved. Thus, he shared his opinions openly, even commenting on the kapu that the men abided by in the forest and at the canoe house and how it was to the detriment of their mission to revive canoe building as a practice: "Reyes said, even if keiki [children] wanted to learn canoe making, Western society will put up barricades, like the rope strung around the canoe house. 'Uncle Mau was kind of *huhu*

(angry) when they put up the kapu. He wanted children to come inside...” (Ramirez, 1993). Papa Mau often commented on how teaching had to begin with children and how the Hawaiians he taught were usually too old, too influenced, and even too modern to truly learn from him.

Yet, as Hawaiians, we cannot be offended by his words, but must view his actions as those carried out because of the great sense of kuleana, or responsibility, that he felt to both his own people, and to the entire Pacific. Although Hawaiians regarded Papa Mau as a master and an invaluable resource, his own people sometimes criticized him. As Bonnie Kahape‘a-Tanner (2014), captain of Hawaiian canoe Kānehūnāmoku, remembers, Mau’s own son, Plasito, carries the criticism of his people everyday:

Plasito shared that his first name, which he does not use often, means “my father is not a navigator.” We were all speechless. Plasito explained that his grandmother gave him the name because of the controversies over Mau’s decision to go outside of the culture and come to Hawai‘i and teach this sacred knowledge... We don’t consider the sacrifices that others have lived with so that we in Hawai‘i could have the opportunity to revitalize our voyaging traditions. But now that we know more of the story, it is our kuleana to ask ourselves how we are going to live differently because of it. (p. 177)

We can only make assumptions as to what led Papa Mau to come to Hawai‘i, to risk being criticized and even ostracized to help a people that he already saw as being “lost.” Kahape‘a-Tanner (2014) believes that Papa Mau perhaps foresaw something that no one else could see: “It’s like he knew that his people were going to eventually end up being here. Back in the 70s, who would have thought that eventually there would be waves of migration from Micronesia to Hawai‘i?” (p. 175). She therefore believes that his actions can teach us about how to live together as Pacific people with a shared history, a shared genealogy, and in many ways, a shared future.

Though, I would also extend his actions further. Papa Mau’s coming to Hawai‘i helped his own people in profound ways. As Uncle Charlie Grace (2014) remembers, after coming to the islands and teaching, Mau eventually asked that the Hawaiians build him a canoe for his people: “‘Mau, why you ask for one canoe?’ He said because...what he saw here in Hawai‘i, in 74, is what he see [in] his home now. I said, ‘What you mean, Mau?’ He said, ‘Charlie, when I first come Hawai‘i, first time I come Hawai‘i, I go on the canoe and people ask me to teach. I look around and I no see Polynesians.’” Through time, Papa Mau

observed the same changes in his homeland, his people disconnected from who they were as Satawalese, as Caroline Islanders, and as Micronesians. While in Hawai‘i, he was able to witness how the wa‘a contributed to the resurgence of arts and a revival of pride in Hawaiian customs, values, and perspectives. Thus, he believed that a canoe could perhaps do the same for his people. “Now he see culture [in Hawai‘i]. Now he see Polynesians. But his island disappearing. So...his dream is that now his people see a canoe, a culture, and start to grow like over here⁵²” (Grace, 2014). This teaches us that through sharing and exchange that the many islands of the Pacific can aid each other. Papa Mau witnessed the result of cultural loss in Hawai‘i and therefore tried to prevent that from happening in his homeland. Thus, we in Hawai‘i can serve as a cautionary tale. However, that can only happen if we maintain the relationship between Hawai‘i and Kahiki and are open to learning from our histories.

This relationship with Kahiki, I would argue, is based on a genealogical connection that Hawaiians have with other people and places in the Pacific. We know that we migrated to our islands from elsewhere in our great ocean. Therefore, as explored in the opening chapter, we are indeed children of Kahiki, and as a result, must honor our responsibilities to it. However, as previous chapters revealed, interpretations of Kahiki expanded as Hawaiians’ interactions with the world expanded. Thus, the story of Mauloa does not only honor Kahiki as a Pacific homeland or point of origin for customs, values, beliefs, or even tools, like our adze, but as something much larger. With that said, the second reason that the above sections ended with the felling of the tree is that while I will weave stories of Mauloa’s construction into the remainder of this chapter, I would also like to leave this work a bit open, allowing for readers to engage with the idea of a roughly shaped canoe, one that can still be worked upon, and one that has not yet, and may never, reach its full potential. After all, the concept of Kahiki is like that unfinished canoe.

Each generation is allowed to add something to the wa‘a: to take an element off, to carve a new notch, to lash a new piece, and to change it or make adjustments. As professor and writer, Caroline Sinavaiana-Gabbard (2002) quite eloquently states in her explanation of a Samoan proverb, culture is like a wa‘a, continuously worked on:

The idea is found in the popular folksong and proverb, “‘O le Va‘a fau Pō fau ao,” “The Boat being Built Night and Day.” The basic idea is that culture is like a boat, and every generation gets to add its own planks of wood to the structure... In doing

⁵² Papa Mau’s request resulted in the construction of Alingano Maisu, a double-hulled sailing canoe built by Nā Kālai Wa‘a Moku o Hawai‘i, and launched in Kawaihae, Hawai‘i in 2006. Alingano Maisu was sailed to Satawal and delivered to Mau in 2007.

so, we're not destroying the old system, but adding new options to it. It's the idea that nothing is ever lost. Nothing is ever created or destroyed. We're just making it new. Sprucing up the boat of culture. (24-25)

Thus, my ideas about Kahiki and its place in the canoe builders' stories, and further, its place in our future, are just the latest pieces to be added to the canoe. I will fashion them on with 'aha, knowing that they may, and perhaps even should, be taken off in the future. The point is that Kahiki as a concept, one that has throughout history given us a means to explain our place in the world and in the wider universe, continue to be used, built upon, and sailed across oceans, whether physical or spiritual.

Each of the previous sections—beginning with the search for the tree, moving on to the ceremonial rituals performed before it was cut, and then to the felling of the tree itself—reveal the way that these men interacted with this concept, and how in just twenty years, their ideas have already begun to shift. When the men were searching for a tree, a kumu, they could not have done so without Mau, without their kumu, or teacher, from Micronesia. He taught them how to make 'aha, or how to braid sennit cord, for example, using specific methods from his island, even when those diverged from what some of the men had learned in Hawai'i. He taught them how to carve with an adze and even designed their canoe, bringing elements from both Hawai'i and Satawal into the structure, which resulted in a wa'a like no other. Therefore, Mau himself, their metaphoric adze from Kahiki, brought with him the teachings of *his* people and the canoe builders were then able to take what they learned from him and combine it with teachings from other Kānaka Maoli, like those who still knew how to pray, chant, and conduct ceremonies, or those who still knew how to weave pandanus for sails, or make kukui (candlenut) sealant for the hulls.

Thus, in the canoe builders' attempt to build an "authentic" and "traditional" canoe, they had to embrace Kahiki as part of themselves, as part of the cultural circle that they were creating, in order to justify their actions. Martha Beckwith (1970), a folklorist and ethnographer, describes Kahiki as the "'rootstock' (kumu)" (p. 6). Thus, it was to the kumu—to that teacher, that source, and that point of origin—that they returned for guidance and knowledge. As discussed in the previous chapter, Uncle Angel Pilago (2013) saw Mauloa as a composite, much like the people themselves, of different cultures in the Pacific, of the rootstock in Kahiki *and* of the branches that sprouted in Hawai'i. Mauloa therefore brought them to embrace the idea that they could rehabilitate themselves through acknowledging our genealogical connections to Kahiki. Mauloa, he argues, was necessary as "there needed to be

one canoe that has a universal inclusiveness.” Thus, even while many of the men talked about the need to be “traditional” and “authentic,” and while their words seemed to build on notions of static cultures, they actually changed what those words meant, proving that what is perhaps truly “traditional” or “authentic” is what we make it to be, right now. Uncle Angel saw Maūloa as a need, something that could bring us together again, as Pacific Islanders, showing us that we could find strength and rehabilitation in each other. Such a perspective was true to their time, true to their experience, and therefore, as “authentic” as you can get in the cultural evolution of a people at a particular point in history.

Paramount in Uncle Angel’s words, however, is this idea of “universal inclusiveness.” In a number of interviews, the men began to make comments not only about their Hawaiian people and other Pacific nations, but also about the world. Thus, while I expected the kālai wa‘a to draw primarily on older interpretations of Kahiki—specifically those that would help them to counter any criticism about their canoe not being “Hawaiian” enough—I was surprised to find that they embraced Kahiki on multiple levels, proving that Kahiki as a genealogy of ideas has indeed given birth to even more interpretations to help us in our current journey. When the men had to learn to chant and pray, for example, some of them had to work through inner confusion and turmoil left from generations of conflicting ideas between Hawaiian concepts of spirituality and introduced teachings of Christianity. Kahiki, however, helped them work through this.

As explored in previous chapters, old prophecies often referenced Kahiki, and when some of them were reinterpreted—particularly in the nineteenth century during a time of significant social, cultural, and political change—these prophecies took on new religious significance. The words of a famous kāula, or prophet, named Kala‘ikuahulu, for example, told of a canoe of priests named Kahikimakalike, coming from the sea. The people were told to embrace their teachings for “e lilo aku ana keia aina ma lalo o Kahiki” [this land will one day be controlled by Kahiki] (Kuokoa, 1893, p. 3). Interpretations in the nineteenth century equated Kahiki with foreign lands outside of the Pacific, particularly America, and one of the teachings that this canoe of priests was believed to have brought was Christianity. Thus, many Hawaiians did indeed turn toward these new Christian teachings, leaving some of their descendants with an internal conflict to resolve, especially when they began to once again embrace Hawaiian ideas of the sacred, communicating with Hawaiian gods, and learning old prayers and chants.

This was certainly the case for Uncle Kaniela Akaka (2013). Members of his family wanted him to enter the ministry. However, through his involvement with Mauloa, he soon found himself on a very different path, calling upon Hawaiian deities and guardians, and carrying out rituals and ceremonies. Mauloa, however, helped him to find balance between these seemingly conflicting paths. What Uncle Kaniela realized is that “Our kupuna [ancestors] always felt that the spirit of God was in all things of nature and that...all [of the] things that the *kini akua*⁵³ were, were the many different names, the different forces and parts of God... In prayer, you call those parts to become one whole, one wholesome, one wholly [holy].” Thus, although not mentioning Kahiki by name, what Uncle Kaniela’s story teaches us is that new interpretations and interactions with “lands and places beyond Hawai‘i’s shores” can work to our advantage. They can help us to explain, and to even make peace with, our current existence.

Kahiki shifted and changed as our world shifted and changed. Therefore, the power of Kahiki is in its fluidity. If it were an unchanging concept, it could not help us to make sense of our world and to understand our place in it. Therefore, Uncle Kaniela’s story teaches us that because the total and complete abandonment of certain ideas and concepts associated with the colonizer is not always possible, we can use Kahiki as a means of incorporating them into our lives. Christianity, for example, believed to have been brought from Kahiki, has become a part of our world. Therefore, if we continue to look at Kahiki as a place that provides us with tools, teachings, and resources, as our ancestors did, and if our interpretation of Kahiki now includes all lands and all places beyond our shores, we can find ways to make those teachings from afar work for us. We have always used Kahiki to explain our existence. Uncle Kaniela’s inclusion of both Christian and Hawaiian teachings in his life, and his ability to see them as not mutually exclusive, proves that “embracing teachings from Kahiki,” or from foreign lands need not always be to our detriment. We can use them, mold them, and shift them to make them work for us. Kahiki teaches us that, and that is empowering.

Therefore, Uncle Angel’s words about “universal inclusiveness” not only help us to understand how Kahiki was used in the past and how it used in the present, but also give us the space to think about new interpretations of Kahiki for the future. In my final interview, Uncle Charlie Grace (2014) talked about how Mauloa, a small, coastal sailing canoe, can actually teach us about the world, and further, about our responsibilities to it. When we look at our Hawaiian islands, he argues,

⁵³ “*Kini akua*” is a term used to refer collectively to the countless amount of Hawaiian gods and spirits.

We no look at it as eight islands, eight rocks. Our people looked at it as eight canoes because in order to survive here as they did, they had to take care the canoe, take care of the ocean, for that's where the canoe floats. Without the canoe, you cannot survive. So us, in a sense today, must look at a different philosophy: the planet, the world. Look at it as a canoe because we all ride in one canoe... We only get one canoe and we only ride this canoe for a short time. We don't own it. We never built it. We could not rebuild it. What we do while we ride this canoe is important... We don't ride this canoe forever. So, what we makana, or gifts we have of the canoe, we share it. Time to bring it out. Yeah, time to bring it out. And these things matter, from the earliest concepts. Like looking at Mauloa. Yes, it's a small canoe, considering. But, that small canoe carries the torch that continues.

For Uncle Charlie, Mauloa taught him lessons about how to act as a better human, not just in Hawai'i, not just in Polynesia, and not even just in the Pacific, but in the world. The canoe taught him lessons about protecting and caring for resources, knowing that our time and our actions will directly impact the lives of those to come. Thus, our job is to “look at it bigger,” as he said. “No matter where we from, we all ride in one canoe.” His ideas were echoed by some of the other men, who although were not interviewed together, seemed to come to the same conclusion: that Mauloa must teach us larger lessons about how to live our lives. Thus, what this one wa'a can teach us is that if we protect our kumu—including our environmental, cultural, intellectual, and spiritual resources—that this will have impacts on the world. That is what it means to aloha 'āina. Furthermore, that is what it means, as Uncle Angel remarked, to work towards a “universal inclusiveness.” That is a new interpretation of Kahiki—national, regional, and global—for a new time.

Before conducting these interviews, I had convinced myself that the most productive way to interpret Kahiki was as a Pacific homeland, or as a concept birthed from the Pacific. Nineteenth century interpretations of Kahiki had shown me that opening and expanding the concept too much could result in the misuse of a Hawaiian idea—one deeply entrenched in our thinking—as a means of justifying colonialism. As a modern Kanaka Maoli woman, raised to believe that fighting against the continual threat of colonial erasure was my job and my responsibility, I thought that I would find in the canoe builders' stories confirmation that looking to the past to find older interpretations of Kahiki would lead to our rehabilitation as a people. Their words, however, taught me a profound lesson. Our efforts as indigenous peoples cannot just be about us. Yes, we can fight for ea, or the life, breath, and sovereignty

of our own people. However, we must also align these efforts with similar efforts being made around the world. We must fight on a larger scale, learn from each other, and help where we can. We must therefore take these lessons—those learned through both struggle and triumph—and use them to inspire and create change both at home in Hawai‘i, and afar in Kahiki, wherever that may be.

When Kanihomauole wanted to build a canoe, refusing a ready-made wa‘a, and insisting instead on gaining a canoe builder, he may not have done so in order to teach future generations the importance of process and the value of involvement and immersion. Years later, the men who built Mau loa may not have endeavored to complete such a project so that future generations could align the building of their canoe with the building of a nation, and further, could extend that sense of commitment to the nation out to the region, and even to a much larger “Kahiki”. Those were *my* goals and *my* initiatives. Therefore, all I can truly speak to, twenty years after they built Mau loa, and almost one hundred years after Kawaikaumaiikamakaokaopua wrote his serial column, is what inspired me to record their stories and to use the canoe as a vehicle for such exploration and expansion. The canoe brought me to Kahiki. It allowed me to travel to a concept that is both incredibly old and yet always made new. And in that journey I have learned something that has changed my life and the way I see myself, my culture, and my place.

As Said (1978) quotes in his examination of the Orient, “...men make their own history...” (p. 5). Even the many concepts, perspectives, and geographical orderings of the world, are human constructions. Thus, Kahiki, too, was and will continue to be made in our minds. At some time, generations before my birth, someone created this beautiful idea as a means of explaining the world. Kahiki became a way to understand our origins. In time, it became a term used to explain whatever, and whoever, was outside of Hawai‘i. Yet, we must understand that as a human construction, our interpretation of Kahiki will always be based on our interpretation of ourselves; it will be a reflection of who *we* are right now. Said (1978) understood that. Our representations of anything “out there” beyond ourselves is truly more reflective of us, of the way we see things, and of the influences that have shaped that view. Thus, if we have come to the place where we are ready to see Kahiki not just as a Pacific base, and not just as “the rest of the world,” but rather as a concept that teaches us about our responsibilities—national, regional, *and* global—then that means that we must have evolved as a people. It means that no matter how dire the situation may still be for Kānaka Maoli, we

are at least empowered enough to continue to create meaningful ideas that work to shape and reshape not only our pasts but our futures.

CONCLUSION

Ka Hiki: The Arrival

There is something to be said about arriving. No matter where we are at any given moment, there is always another place—whether in space or time or even in imagination—to go to. That is my “Kahiki.” It is the knowing that I can always “hiki,” that I can always arrive. My research has been a series of departures. I left home, left my piko, and crossed oceans. I left the boundaries of particular fields, and leapt into the interdisciplinarity of Pacific Studies. I used the knowledge, words, stories, images, and metaphors of many sources of inspiration as points of departure for diving, swimming, and sometimes even momentarily drowning in the deep waters of our sea of islands. Upon landing on new shores, however, I always found myself stepping into something new, my ankles embracing lapping currents while my toes buried into shifting sands. There was nothing permanent about my arrivals, for even after getting to different places, I always knew there was somewhere else to go.

Reflecting on the journey of the last three years, I am therefore tempted to ask myself if I truly arrived anywhere or at anything. Did I “hiki” at some sort of new understanding, at some “truth,” at some way of better knowing myself, my place, my people, or my home? Perhaps the chapters of this thesis are evidence of certain arrivals: at new ideas and perspectives. And perhaps they provide some way of tracking my departures, or of examining the routes I traveled in “arriving” at certain conclusions. If Kahiki has taught me anything, however, it is that there is power and an incredible beauty in fluidity, in changing and always arriving at new understandings, new perspectives, and new versions of “truth.” Thus, I have come to embrace the words of John H. Wise (1923b), a true aloha ‘āina, who once encouraged Kānaka Maoli to “nānā aku i mua,” to look ahead, and then to “nānā hou aku nō i mua,” to look ahead once more (p. 2). His words do not encourage us to focus so intently on the future that we forget the past. Rather, they invite us to examine what came “ma mua,” or before us, so that we can know where we are going.

On this research journey, I traveled to the past through pages and voices, through visiting the writings of others and listening to the stories of those who were willing to share with me. Their memories provided me with glimpses into other spaces and times, and in each individual journey I found people, like myself, who were just trying to understand and explain their experiences. They arrived at certain conclusions. Sometimes their words felt as comforting and reassuring as the hand of an elder, holding tightly to my own. At other times, their words made me wince in pain, striking me. No matter their emotional impact, however, I arrived at the knowing that each of their interpretations of the past had the potential to shape

my own. Thus, after learning from their words, ua nānā hou aku nō au i mua, I looked ahead once more to arrive at something new.

Therefore, my current interpretation, my current understanding, and my current “arrival” is this: as Kānaka Maoli we can ground ourselves in Kahiki, in that fluid and shifting concept that recounts all of our landings, all of our arrivals. Oceanian scholar Epeli Hau‘ofa (1998) advocates grounding our identities in the ocean: “An identity that is grounded on something so vast as the sea is, should exercise our minds and rekindle in us the spirit that sent our ancestors to explore the oceanic unknown and make it their home, our home” (p. 393). Interdisciplinary scholar Vicente Diaz (2011) encourages grounding ourselves in our canoes and to “view the mobility of the canoe as a cultural foundation as well as to understand foundational culture in fluidic ways” (p. 21-22). Both push us to stretch, to move, and even to depart our current thinking in order to explore something much larger, expansive, and encompassing. There is power in thinking of our peoples, our cultures, our histories, and ourselves in “fluidic ways.” Therefore, I embrace their ideas and depart from this thesis grounding myself in Kahiki.

Kahiki is our ancestral homeland. With no particular location in space and time, it defies boundaries. At some point, someone departed Kahiki arriving somewhere else, beginning the genealogy of people, places, ideas, and events that we have come to inherit. As their worlds expanded, so did Kahiki. It stretched to include the rest of the Pacific Ocean, and later, the rest of the world. Thus, to ground ourselves *in* Kahiki is to know that our identities are, and will always be, like the shifting sands that we bury our toes into at each arrival, on each new shore. It is to seek the relationships between people and places both at home and beyond. It is to embrace the multi-layered voices of our histories for what they can teach us about ourselves. It is to revisit our concepts of a homeland and to use our commitment, or our sense of aloha ‘āina to one location, to cultivate a culture of hope wherever we are. It is to accept that change and growth is necessary, and that the only thing locking us to certain interpretations of the past is our choice to act upon them. In fact, we can abandon belittling representations and limited expectations of Kahiki, always arriving at new ones. Kahiki is the knowing that “ka hiki,” the arrival, is always possible.

In this thesis, I set out to track the life of this one concept through time, looking at the way it shifted and changed, always revealing something about the people who engaged with it. What I learned in the process is that Kahiki became a way for people to understand their relationships to the Pacific and to the larger world, and perhaps more importantly, became a

means of articulating their responsibilities. My exploration of Kahiki allowed me to see into the hearts and minds of generations of people, all trying to understand their place. What I have learned is that each person—whether using Kahiki as a means of celebrating genealogies, of making nationalistic statements, or even of justifying colonialism—was drawing on this concept in order to do what he or she thought was best for the lāhui. Therefore, my thesis has taught me to not judge or romanticize the past but to learn from it. It has taught me, and shown me, that we cannot and must not settle. Kahiki, in order to live, had to change; Kānaka Maoli had to stretch its meaning in order to make sense of their own changing lives. Thus, what this journey has taught me is that we must continue to use this concept to explain our worlds, leaving behind a record of our own lives, our own experiences, and our own understanding of place and responsibility.

Looking back, I have not presented solid and static truisms. Rather, I have presented opportunities. The word, “hiki,” after all, also indicates that something is possible. Therefore, I view my thoughts as departure points for new arrivals and new possibilities, and have come to view my role as that of a “carver”. Unlike the kālai wa‘a, however, who carved a tangible canoe, I tried to carve and create spaces for future dialogue and discovery. While writing this thesis, my goal was to locate my research in the vā, in the space between disciplines, times, places, and even languages. In the process, I pushed and stretched boundaries—breaking them if necessary—to open new areas of exploration. My research journey led to the understanding that Kahiki and Hawai‘i are not fixed points; they are both shifting and fluid concepts, each influencing the other. When Hawai‘i changes, so does Kahiki, and vice versa.

Thus, what studying Kahiki taught me is that we do not need to accept past representations of ourselves, our people, or our worlds, but that we can use them to understand different times and spaces and then *choose* how they will influence our voices. Thus, I depart this thesis grounding my identity and myself in Kahiki, embracing fluidity and possibility. This does not change my affection for or my dedication to my beloved Hawai‘i. Rather, it deepens it. My kūpuna who wrote, chanted, and danced themselves into existence were empowered to raise their voices, to speak to their experiences, and to leave behind a record of *their* lives. They were not afraid of shifting concepts. They accepted the ability to use ideas from the past to speak to who they were. Therefore, I ground myself in Kahiki, empowered to do the same, anticipating the next shore upon which I will land, toes buried in shifting sands. And I leave you with one small voice, my voice, signing out from the page, greeting you with aloha: I Kahiki nō ke ola.

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