LOVE OF PLACE: TOWARD A CRITICAL PACIFIC STUDIES PEDAGOGY

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Growing up in Hawai'i, I was raised with aloha 'āina. Loosely defined as "love of place," aloha 'āina is a way of being *in* and *with* the world. It is built on relationship and stewardship. In this article, I will use aloha 'āina to reflect on my role as a Pacific studies teacher and on what responsibilities educators may have to confront our common challenge and most dire threat: the destruction of the natural environment. I will articulate "love of place" to a critical Pacific studies pedagogy, one that addresses environmental issues, contributes to the well-being of the Pacific (people, land, and sea), and harnesses the power of Indigenous ways of knowing to do so. Reflecting on past teaching experiences and on previous articulations of Pacific studies, I will then argue that we must cultivate "love of place" to help students turn unfamiliar Pacific spaces into places of meaning.

In modern Kanaka Maoli[1] movements, whether those centered on the protection of sacred spaces or on the larger goal of independence, old Indigenous concepts are often rearticulated to fit contemporary circumstances. One such concept that both endures and continually evolves in these movements is "aloha." In its simplest explanation, aloha is "love." It is both the affection we show others and the act of doing so. However, for many of us raised in resistance movements, aloha is a way of being. Renowned kumu hula (hula teacher)

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Olana Ai perhaps said it best: "Aloha is the intelligence with which we meet life" (Meyer 2003, ii). A couple of years ago, in the midst of efforts to protect Mauna Kea, the tallest mountain in Hawai'i, and to halt the proposed construction of the Thirty Meter Telescope on its summit, aloha was used in new ways. It was not only articulated to other concepts, like "kapu" (taboo), but also given more expansive meanings. On the mountain, kia'i mauna (protectors) adopted a code of behavior called "kapu aloha," which is a commitment to act with aloha and to not engage in violence (against other people, the earth, or even material structures); it is to remain steadfast and staunch but to also keep peace. At the same time, off the mountain, the word aloha showed up on new pieces of resistance and identity merchandise. One particular hat that gained popularity had the words "Aloha will save the world" embroidered on its front. Our Hawaiian "intelligence" was being extended to everyone, everywhere.

I begin this article with these reflections on aloha because they provide insight into how old concepts are made (often strategically) to function in contemporary contexts. Of course, this is certainly nothing new. In fact, Epeli Hau'ofa (2008) argues that it's "what we [Pacific peoples] have been doing all along . . . constructing our pasts, our histories, [and I would add, our futures]" by deliberately selecting the narratives, concepts, and cultural beliefs that suit our agendas (61). This process of construction can also be called articulation, which James Clifford (2003) describes as "the political connecting and disconnecting, the hooking and unhooking of elements—the sense that any socio-cultural ensemble that presents itself to us as whole is actually a set of historical connections and disconnections" (45). Positing that cultures are not single, static entities but rather sets of ideas that can be attached, removed, and reconsidered to meet our specific needs, articulation theory is a useful tool for thinking about our cultural concepts and how they can be continually made anew. In fact, it provides space for understanding how and why meanings of words like aloha shift over time or how they can be attached to messages of encouragement while at other times grafted to ideas and products that can be damaging to the concept itself.

Aloha, for example, is arguably one of the most used and abused words in the Hawaiian vocabulary today. While it is highlighted, celebrated, and deeply embodied, in other words, it also has a complex history of misuse. In her exploration of aloha, Keiko Ohnuma (2008), for instance, critiques state constructions of aloha and discusses the many ways it has been used against Indigenous Hawaiians, particularly when aloha becomes a tourist attraction, an expectation, and therefore a means of rendering any and all types of resistance to the state and its many oppressions as being out of line with the "aloha spirit" (374). Aloha has also been co-opted and commercialized in other ways, showing up on everything from huge plastic tubs of soy sauce to advertisements for pest

control services, these instances only growing in frequency. Yet, even while issues of cultural misappropriation are rife in our society, aloha is still a deeply cultural concept. As Stephanie Nohelani Teves (2018) explains, "Aloha is something we Kānaka Maoli continue to believe deeply in, fiercely protecting and defending aloha above other Hawaiian concepts as the essence and personification of who we are" (1). Therefore, if disarticulated from the now-ubiquitous attempts of companies to brand their products with "aloha," I believe it can be given new empowering meaning and function not only in Hawai'i but everywhere. With this said, I am aware of the threat of further co-optation. Even if presented in ways that align with Hawaiian values and customs and in ways that bolster a respect for land and people effectively, there is the chance that more of our words and phrases—like kapu aloha mentioned earlier and aloha 'āina to be discussed—may be taken and used to our detriment. Aware of this risk, however, I hope that my proposals ahead, particularly in regard to aloha, will allow me to educate others on more appropriate ways to use it.

Aloha, as seen in the opening example, can be both a driving force for Hawaiian sovereignty specifically and, in other spaces, a timely reminder for the rest of the world as we confront concerns impacting all of humanity. One such concern that aloha speaks to is the rapid decline of our natural environments. The hat reading, "Aloha will save the world," offered ancient intelligence for modern disaster and devastation. Although it came out of a movement to protect one mountain, it spoke for all mountains, all lands, all rivers, and all oceans. Thus, the hat prompted me to think about all of the sources that feed us physically, spiritually, and psychologically and how an old concept can be used to protect them. Further, it motivated me to consider my roles and responsibilities as an educator and how I can harness the planet-saving potential of aloha in the classroom for the betterment of our environments.

In this article, I will therefore critically reflect on my role as a teacher of Pacific studies, on past articulations of Pacific studies itself, and, perhaps more important, on what I think can (or perhaps should) be incorporated into our pedagogies. More specifically, I will explore aloha as it relates to 'āina (land or place) and how aloha 'āina, or a general "love of place," can be a potentially powerful tool and motivator in the classroom. Understanding that Pacific studies is not ethnocentric or nationalistic, it is not my goal to propose that distinctly Hawaiian concepts be included in every Pacific studies curriculum. Rather, it is to demonstrate how we can use Indigenous concepts—and, more specifically, Indigenous ways of relating to place—and articulate them to pedagogy. With the state of our environments and the constant devastations they suffer, I will argue that a feature of Pacific studies should be our conscious and critical consideration of our region's environments and how we, as humans, sometimes protect them and at other times become complicit in their destruction. To do so,

I will explore the *what*, *why*, and *how* of my personal teaching approach: what "love of place" is, why I think it can be transformational, and how I attempt to cultivate it in the classroom by helping students turn faraway and unfamiliar spaces into places of meaning. It is my hope that this article will contribute to evolving conversations about our aims and agendas as educators and, further, that it will help us work toward a critical Pacific studies pedagogy, one that confronts the challenges posed to our shared environments, contributes to the wellbeing of the region, and harnesses the power of Indigenous ways of knowing, like aloha ʻāina, to do so.

Pacific Studies

In 2010, Teresia Teaiwa wrote, "Pacific Studies shall be interdisciplinary, account for indigenous ways of knowing, and involve comparative analysis" (116). I have read her statement many times over the years. I've even taught her words and used them to not only guide my work in the classroom but also explain to others what it is I do as a teacher of Pacific studies. However, if I'm being honest, I've always struggled with part of her suggested prescription. How exactly does one "account for indigenous ways of knowing"? What does that mean? Before delving into her suggestion, I will note that the topic of Indigeneity itself and how it functions (or not) in different Pacific Island contexts is worthy of an article on its own. In forthcoming work, I examine some of the specific colonial contexts, like the settler colonial Pacific, in which Indigeneity not only matters but has to matter (Case, forthcoming). I also consider those places where Indigeneity may not only be inappropriately applied to islands—like the independent Pacific—but may also come with negative connotations that some islanders do not wish to be associated with. In this article, however, I am more concerned with what it means to take concepts, perspectives, and values from different Pacific peoples into the classroom. The term "Indigenous" is therefore being used to refer to those Pacific peoples whose ancestry comes from the original inhabitants of the region.

My use of "Indigenous" is not intended to oversimplify it or to deny its many complicated meanings. It is, instead, used to align with existing literature about Pacific studies. In her suggested tenets, for example, Teaiwa called for an acknowledgment of "Indigenous ways of knowing," seeing value in knowledge from the region. She also made clear that any kind of Indigenizing agenda, or attempt to incorporate cultural perspectives, should lead to exchange, dialogue, and meaningful critique. Even while supporting her insistence that we "account" for Indigenous ways of knowing, however, I still wonder if that's enough. As an educator, I believe that our Pacific ontologies and epistemologies not only should provide content for our courses—and opportunities for

constructive consideration and critique—but should provide structure for them as well. They should not only be part of *what* we teach, in other words, but also drive *how* and *why* we do what we do in the classroom.

Although I have not been teaching Pacific studies for very long, I knew from the first course I taught that the ways of knowing I was raised with would undoubtedly influence who I would be as a teacher. As a Hawaiian, many of my interactions with the world have been facilitated by the lessons I learned from my people and from ʻāina. I live my life by the belief that there is no separation between people and land—not only that we are related but also that our fates are intertwined. Growing up, my parents modeled aloha ʻāina. They cared for the ʻāina, and they were staunch in their commitment to protect it, not only because land provides necessary resources for human survival but also because land has its own life and is important in and of itself. I grew up being taught how to interact with, how to treat, and how to truly love ʻāina. Although I did not learn the actual term "aloha ʻāina" until much later in my life, it is what has and what continues to guide everything I do. In her own teaching of Pacific studies, April Henderson observed that it is not only us, as teachers, who walk into the classroom carrying our own concepts and ways of looking at the world; our students do as well. When speaking about Samoan concepts like vā fealoaʻi, for example, or relational space, she finds that although some students are unfamiliar with the term, they "will immediately recognize how the concept manifests in their daily life as soon as it is explained" (Alefosio and Henderson 2018, 403). This was my experience with aloha ʻāina, both when I learned it as a term that spoke to my daily experiences and when I recognized that it would be part of every classroom I'd teach in.

When I first began teaching Pacific studies, I carried aloha ʻāina with me, not because I had already thought about its potential in the classroom but because it's part of me. In fact, in drawing attention to the possible limitations of articulation theory, I'd argue that I cannot be disarticulated from aloha ʻāina because it is what I am and what I do. Over the years, as I've taught Pacific studies in both Hawaiʻi and Aotearoa New Zealand, I have learned that aloha ʻāina is truly expansive. Aloha ʻāina, as Kamanamaikalani Beamer (2014) explains, is "holistic," as it "links social, cultural, and ecological justice" (13). In other words, it's not just about caring for the environment but also about critically examining our human interactions with it. Aloha ʻāina, therefore, has helped me to extend the same love I have for my place in Hawaiʻi to the rest of the Pacific. Although aloha ʻāina has its own specific connotations in Hawaiʻi,[2] I believe that a general "love of place" is something all people can develop, nurture, and act on and, further, that cultivating it in the classroom is crucial if we are going to be more conscious of our environmental concerns.

Twenty years ago, Zane Ma Rhea and Bob Teasdale (2000) asked what role university academics have to play in preparing our students for the future

and, more critically, in preparing them to cope with the most rapidly changing environment humankind has ever experienced (12–13). Reflecting on my own teaching, I often think about what I am preparing my students for and whether, as Teaiwa (2014) reflected on before me, we are giving them the tools to be the kind of intellectuals they want to be: competent in the status quo, agents of change, or both (52). While I know it is not my role to turn students into change makers, lobbyists, or activists, I often ask myself if we, as Pacific studies educators, have a responsibility to cultivate genuine care and concern for the natural world and, more pointedly, for our region's environments. In my attempts to be reflexive—and to follow Teaiwa's (2017) charge that we engage in reflective writing, constantly thinking about our teaching and innovations so that we can add to our understanding of what Pacific studies is and what it can be for our students and for ourselves—I believe that asking these types of questions is important, as it helps us challenge and/or push previous models of Pacific studies if and when necessary (271–72). Given the consistent decline of the environment and the current and growing climate change crisis, the question of what role academics have to play in preparing our students to cope with the state of the planet seems all the more urgent. In fact, I would argue that rather than waste any time asking whether we have a role, we should already be engaging in conversations of how we are going to fill it.

Our Pacific is littered with examples of environmental devastation, with our lands and waters being used and abused for everything from extensive mining to overdevelopment to military training and with some of our islands being the most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change even while being some of the smallest contributors to greenhouse gas emissions. Environmental destruction in our region provides evidence for the fact that Pacific Islands have long been used as "sacrifice zones," or places "that somehow don't count and therefore can be poisoned, drained, or otherwise destroyed, for the supposed greater good" (Klein 2014, 169). The controversial Thirty Meter Telescope mentioned in the opening of this article, for instance, is often framed as something that will benefit all of humanity. This, of course, is at the expense of the people who regard Mauna Kea as an ancestor and of the mountain itself. After World War II, the Marshall Islands were bombed 67 times by the United States as part of its nuclear testing program (Aguon 2008, 19). Again, this was claimed to be for the greater good. In regard to climate change, Tuvalu, has become a place where the most devastating effects can be observed, studied, recorded, and later used to not only prove the reality of climate change but also caution the rest of the world. This is the environmental and political context that many of us live and work in. Therefore, I believe that a critical Pacific studies pedagogy must be one that confronts these challenges. By cultivating a "love of place," we can shift our perspectives, bringing our environments to the forefront, and in the

process, hopefully, provide motivation for protective action. To do so, however, our pedagogy must be one that empowers students to believe that they have the ability—and perhaps even the responsibility—to act.

In his often-referenced article "Rethinking Pacific Islands Studies," Terence Wesley-Smith (1995) speaks about empowerment. He outlines three rationales for Pacific studies programs and discusses how an "empowerment rationale" could contribute to efforts aimed at decolonizing Pacific studies. Twenty years later, he writes that "few would challenge the central place of the empowerment rationale in Pacific studies" (Wesley-Smith 2016, 163). However, he also notes that what "empowerment" means is debatable and, I would add, will likely depend on who you're talking to and where they happen to be in the Pacific. For some, an agenda aimed at empowerment could be about embracing Konai Helu Thaman's (2003) encouragement that we work toward decolonizing Pacific studies by "reclaiming indigenous Oceanic perspectives, knowledge, and wisdom that have been devalued or suppressed because they were or are not considered important or worthwhile" (2). At the same time, it could also be about centering Pacific Islanders and our lived experiences. As David Gegeo (2001) suggests, perhaps "it's about us. It's about us Pacific Islanders ourselves and who we want to become. It's about our ontology, and what we want to create for our future generations" (182). For others, empowerment could be more practical in encouraging us to "understand the region in ways that will make people better off" (Firth 2003, 140). Regardless of the exact aim, as Teaiwa (2010) notes, we must be cautious of an empowerment rationale leading to "exclusion and domination" and must remain critical of all perspectives, even Indigenous ones (117).

My personal pedagogy, therefore, fits somewhere in the space between all of these ideas. It *is* aimed at empowering students by prioritizing our concerns and reclaiming and centralizing our Indigenous ways of knowing. At the same time, it is not about excluding those who are not of Pacific Island heritage and/or privileging one culture, one language, or one way of knowing over another. My choice to use aloha ʻāina as a pedagogical tool in the classroom comes from my belief that "love of place" is universal and is something that can be encouraged through acknowledging (and choosing to act on) the unique ways in which Pacific Islanders relate to place. Further, I believe it can be a motivator for another kind of empowerment: one that inspires action (whether through creative expression, direct activism, storytelling, or any other medium that centralizes our environmental concerns). As Glenn Albrecht (2006) explains, clearly acknowledging the causes of environmental distress allows us to confront them in our own ways, which in itself is an empowering experience (36). This can be a challenge in the classroom, however. As transient spaces, we often do not have the time to "engage students in the actual work" (Aikau, Goodyear-Kaʻōpua, and Silva 2016, 159). In other words, we cannot engage them in the work of

protecting ʻāina. What we can do, however, is help them develop a deeper love for the Pacific so that they can act on that love if/when they choose to do so, perhaps doing as the hat prophesized: saving the "world" (even the smallest pieces of it) with aloha.

Aloha ʻĀina

While the term aloha ʻāina comes from my ancestors, I believe its meaning and its intention can speak to all people. At its core, it is about having aloha, or love, for your place. This love requires constant work, dedication, and loyalty. Although ʻāina is often used to refer to land specifically, it is better understood as "that which feeds" and is therefore encompassing of all of our sources of sustenance (Blaisdell 2005, 10). I grew up living aloha ʻāina, viewing the land and the ocean as ancestors, not just in theory but in practice. As Katrina-Ann Kapā Oliveira (2014) discusses, Kānaka Maoli have complex cosmogonic genealogies that link us to the natural world and that remind us of our place in it (1). Understanding our genealogical relationships with the environment, I therefore talk with, pray to, and love ʻāina deeply. To "love," however, is not just to show affection. It is to carry the responsibility to protect ʻāina and to persevere in our dedication to do so, even when it's difficult and even when our places are threatened (as they often are). Importantly, however, aloha ʻāina is not just an action; it is also a way of being. It is both a noun and a verb. According to Taiaiake Alfred (2016), this is something seen in many Indigenous languages where the names and titles people are given are actually responsibilities that imply doing (98). Aloha ʻāina is a means of being situated *in relation*—genealogical and otherwise—to ʻāina and is a title that requires work. We can show our aloha for ʻāina, in other words, but we truly become aloha ʻāina, or loyal stewards of place, and live up to that name when we act on our love for it: tending to it, caring for it, and treating it as family. The kiaʻi mauna who were referenced earlier, for example, stand to protect Mauna Kea because aloha ʻāina is both what they are and what they do.

Although aloha ʻāina is an old concept, it can be rearticulated to contemporary contexts and can also be linked together with theories and perspectives from other places and peoples that both reinforce and expand its meanings. In Hawaiʻi, aloha ʻāina is about what we call "ea," or life, breath, and sovereignty. While ea operates in specific ways in the context of Hawaiian independence movements, here it can relate to the life, breath, and sovereignty of ʻāina itself. Aloha ʻāina, in other words, is about safeguarding the earth's right to continually grow, reproduce, and regenerate, acknowledging that ʻāina cannot and should not be relegated to the singular role of "natural resource" for human use. This kind of stewardship is not unique to Hawaiʻi. All around the world, people are

making efforts to protect the rights of the earth. In 2012, Bolivia passed the Law of Mother Earth, essentially establishing rights for nature, including the right to maintain life (Villavicencio Calzadilla and Kotze 2018); closer to home, in 2013, the double-hulled voyaging canoe *Hōkūleʻa* embarked on the Mālama Honua worldwide voyage with the goal of inspiring all of "Island Earth" to remember our role as stewards tasked with the responsibility to care for it and protect the planet for future generations (Polynesian Voyaging Society n.d.); in 2014, Te Urewera in Aotearoa was declared a legal entity, followed by the Whanaganui River in 2017 (Sanders 2018); and today there is a growing movement asking the United Nations to adopt a Declaration of Rights of Mother Earth with a similar aim to acknowledge that nature has inherent rights (RoME 2019). These movements are ultimately about changing the way we currently interact with ʻāina.

While movements like these can and have been viewed with skepticism, I believe that they are critical in challenging "the predominant western frame of thought [that] non-human animals and ecosystems have always been treated as things, property intended for human use and exploitation" (Boyd 2017, 220). Although government-led conservation efforts—like the establishment of national parks, as explored by Tracey Banivanua-Mar (2010)—are sometimes criticized for being driven more by government interests than actual care for the environment, I believe that legal frameworks that recognize the life and agency of the earth are crucial because they wake us up and encourage us to see our surroundings in new ways. Additionally, they provide space for Indigenous peoples to foreground our ways of relating to place, revitalizing "long-suppressed Indigenous cosmologies that offer a different, and many would say far healthier, vision of humanity's relationship with the rest of the natural world" (Boyd 2017, 220).

As Naomi Klein (2014) explores, one of the most potent and empowering ways of relating to place "is surely strongest in Indigenous communities" (342). She believes that these communities live with a fierce and ferocious love of place, or a deep connection to ʻāina, and that this is what is needed to protect our environments. With that said, my intention here is not to lock all Indigenous peoples—as ambiguous as that term may be—to an "eco-Indigenous" identity or to reduce Indigeneity to a now-archetypal (and perhaps stereotypical) "closeness to nature" (Sissons 2005, 17). Rather, my aim here is to argue that many Indigenous peoples, including many Pacific Islanders, have what Klein (2014) believes we need for the earth. In our many vast storehouses of Indigenous wisdom, there are lessons on how to interact with and treat ʻāina and, perhaps most important, lessons to help us understand *why* this is essential.

To borrow terms from Klein (2014), aloha ʻāina, for example, is about embracing a "regenerative" mind-set and abolishing an "extractivist" one. "Extractivism,"

she states, "is a nonreciprocal, dominance-based relationship with the earth, one purely of taking. It is the opposite of stewardship, which involves taking but also taking care that regeneration and future life continue" (169). In its recognition of "that which feeds," aloha ʻāina inspires constant reflection on how a place sustains us and, more critically, how sustenance can come only when we tend to ʻāina, allowing it to grow, produce, and create. Only taking, in other words, will lead to destruction. Using Indigenous ways of knowing in our classrooms and centralizing them, we can frame Pacific landscapes, seascapes, and skyscapes differently, replacing the assumption that they are mere "resources" and re-presenting them as having life and agency on their own. At the same time, we can use these concepts to also frame our responsibilities in the classroom: our students are not at universities to simply extract knowledge, and we are not just there to give it. Education itself is reciprocal and should be like the places we value: regenerative, life giving, reinforcing, and inspiring.

Cultivating "Love of Place"

What Is "Love of Place"?

Driving a regenerative mind-set is "love of place." In 1972, geographer Yi-Fu Tuan (1990) coined the word "topophilia" to refer to "the affective bond between people and place or setting" (4). More loosely defined, it is a love of place and "encompasses how we feel about and participate in the communities that are part of the places where we live and [create or] recreate" (Krasny and Tidball 2015, 34). While topophilia may not be an innate human quality, ecologists believe that biophilia, or an inherent love of life, is. Biophilia is the want to preserve life; it is our evolutionary want to survive and to do what we must to ensure our survival. As Marianne Krasny and Keith Tidball (2015) explain, biophilia may seem surprising when "all around us we see, hear, and even smell and taste the opposite" (28). Destruction is everywhere. We do not have to search long to find examples of lands destroyed, waters polluted, sites desecrated, animals endangered, and essential human resources contaminated in our region and in the world. Amidst all of this, however, they argue that humans still seek life and, in doing so, must become aware of the environments they live in and how they contribute to or threaten their quality of life. Having awareness of the way a place "feeds" you—contributing to your well-being physically, culturally, spiritually, or psychologically—is what then leads to topophilia. Thus, we all have the capacity to love and appreciate place, even if we are not aware of it. My ancestors called this aloha ʻāina, and they acted on it and taught us how to do the same.

Although it may not be called by the same name in other parts of the Pacific, I believe that many Pacific Islanders share—or at least have contained in their stories or histories—a sense of topophilia that comes either from having direct familial relationships with place or from their acknowledgment of the earth as a unique life, deserving of care and protection. Contemporarily, many Pacific poets have drawn on these connections and sentiments in their work, providing evidence of topophilia in the region. Tongan poet Konai Helu Thaman (2003), for example, gives the earth and its creatures agency: "these islands the sky / the surrounding sea / the trees the birds / and all that are free / the misty rain / the surging river / pools by the blowholes / a hidden flower / have their own thinking" (14–15). Everything in nature, in other words, has unique thought and is therefore deserving of respect. In her collection of poetry, Marshallese poet Kathy Jetnil-Kijiner (2017) recounts a genealogy of earth, ancestor, and people. She writes about Liwātuonmour, an ancestress of the Marshallese, who took the form of a stone that a missionary later threw into the ocean: "And she herself turned. And welcomed the earth. That churned and birthed her" (8). The earth, therefore, is life giving and the ancestor of everything. In her book of translated poems, Kanak poet Déwé Gorodé (2004) not only refers to the land as mother but in one poem also gives her character: "she loved this land this earth / nurturing belly / gentle milk breast mother / this earth this land" (22). Given the enormity of the Pacific and the great diversity of our languages and cultures, I will not assume that these ways of looking at, regarding, and treating place are exactly alike or interchangeable. What I will suggest is that they speak to a general "love of place," one that comes from Indigenous ways of knowing and relating to ʻāina.

Why Should "Love of Place" Be Cultivated?

Cultivating "love of place" is essential if we going to empower students to confront the environmental challenges facing the Pacific and contribute to the well-being of the region. Doing so, however, is not easy. When I began teaching Pacific studies at the University of Hawaiʻi–West Oʻahu in 2017, for instance, I had Kanaka Maoli students who identified as Hawaiian but who did not consider themselves Pacific Islanders. They were rooted in ʻāina but detached from the region. The vast majority of my students in Hawaiʻi, however, were the descendants of sugar plantation laborers who migrated to the islands in the mid- to late 1800s from the Philippines, China, Japan, Portugal, Korea, and Puerto Rico. Thus, their attachments to place were complicated: they did not conceive of themselves as being from the ʻāina of Hawaiʻi, but they also had little connection to the places of their ancestors. When I taught Pacific studies at Victoria University of Wellington in Aotearoa New Zealand in 2015 and

2016—the university I have since returned to—many of my students were of Pacific Island descent, the largest portion being Samoan, then Cook Islands Māori and Tongan, with a few Fijian, Niuean, Tokelauan, and Tuvaluan students. They were a mix of New Zealand–born students and students coming to the country on scholarship. Thus, even though many identified as "Pacific peoples" in New Zealand, their attachments to place were equally complex and varied. I also had non-Pacific students who were trying to grapple with their positionality. Given the diversity of each classroom, therefore, it can be difficult to nurture a love for the region, especially for those students who feel they have no place in it. Following Teaiwa's (2017) advice, therefore, I always start the term with where my students and I happen to be in the Pacific. Then, slowly, I attempt to bring as many of "those twenty thousand islands, and so much more, to us" (267). I do this with the hope that students will come to embrace the range and fluidity of their identities or, as Vilsoni Hereniko (1999) explains, will come to know that their understanding of self is always influenced by place and therefore always in "continual reconstruction" (419).

Starting with where my students and I are means drawing on prior experiences of aloha ʻāina, topophilia, or "love of place," in order to cultivate that kind of affection for the place we are in, even if it is new to us. Doing so requires giving students the chance to consider how a place "feeds" them. While teaching in Hawaiʻi, for example, I recognized that many of my students felt disconnected—geographically, politically, and conceptually—from what they considered the Pacific to be. Therefore, we started with where we were: the university, in Kapolei, in the district of ʻEwa, on the island of Oʻahu. In one class exercise, I'd have students go outside to observe and comment on their learning environment. I would ask them to consider the area, not just the immediate university campus but also the wider district, and think about how it "fed" them, or about how ʻāina somehow contributed to who they were, regardless of where they came from. In doing so, they would have to practice being attentive: listening, feeling, and becoming increasingly aware of their surroundings. Finally, I would have them reflect on whether they considered the university to be a Pacific place of learning and what that even meant (or could mean).

This exercise established some common ground among the students, giving all of them one shared place to observe and reflect on. This is not to imply that I could or even desired to "Indigenize" students, providing them with the chance to claim or stake belonging to place. To do so would be to contribute to the ongoing dispossession of Kānaka Maoli from ʻāina, something that Kali Fermantez (2012) argues all Hawaiians have experienced in some way (98). Rather, it was to make them critically aware of where they were and what it meant to be there, whether they were Indigenous to that place or not. The responses I got from this assignment were both enlightening and concerning.

Many of the students had never sat long enough to consider their campus critically, to question what was there before, how the land was used, or even why it looked the way it did. Many critiqued the fact that despite being advertised as an "Indigenous place of learning," there was nothing besides the garden and hale (an open, thatched and lashed house) that made it appear "Indigenous," perhaps providing evidence for Alfred's (2016) assertion that "universities are intolerant and resistant to any meaningful 'indigenizing'" (88). Others remarked on having no engagement with the wider community and admitted to knowing very little about the area. Some expressed frustration about the ongoing and controversial Honolulu Rail Transit Project, costing billions of dollars, potentially disrupting significant cultural and archaeological sites, and becoming an eyesore for the people. We therefore spent time thinking about Kapolei, where the university was situated, the wider district of ʻEwa, and the histories that brought each of us there. Starting with where we were helped my students to see that we all had a connection to place, that we could all consider it critically, and, further, that if we were honest about our relationships to place (whether those relationships were deep, emerging, or severely ruptured), we could also experience the power of ʻāina to heal (Fermantez 2012, 99).

The class exercise opened space for discussions about displacement, inequality, settler colonialism, and the legacies of agricultural practices that stripped the land of nutrients. All of this could be seen and felt in their surroundings. Recognizing this made them more aware of how ʻāina had to be altered and how people's attachments to place had to be disrupted to make their work on that campus possible. While it was not—and certainly is not—my goal to make students feel bad about being *in* particular places, having a critical awareness of them often makes students reflect on their own experiences of aloha ʻāina, thinking about how they respond to change, destruction, or displacement in their own places. In the process, some grow to have more compassion for places they may not have cared about previously, while others also begin to nurture an appreciation for them. Using this exercise and building on it, I would then spend time slowly turning our attention to the larger Pacific. Whether my students felt connected to the Pacific or not, they could not deny the fact that they were *in* it, that their lives were somehow being shaped by it, and that they, in turn, could also be part of shaping its future.

This awareness of place, as Kathleen Dean Moore (2016) writes, is what leads people to wonder about them, to be curious about them, and to want to get to know them better. This wonder, she further argues, "can lead to love, and love can lead to protective action" (79). While I do not expect my students to become activists or environmentalists or to carry the weight of the Pacific on their shoulders, I do believe that we can at least help them to become more aware of place so that they can develop a deeper love for the Pacific and act on

that love should they choose to do so. Echoing the statement embroidered on the hat I spoke of earlier, Klein (2014) believes that this kind of love is necessary if we are going to save the planet from destruction. Therefore, in the context of Pacific studies, I believe it is part of my responsibility to the region not only to use "love of place" in the classroom but also to encourage it in my students. To do this, I believe it is imperative that we give our students opportunities to engage with place, or to truly consider the many ways that ʻāina feeds them and, further, how the destruction of ʻāina will ultimately impact their lives.

How Can "Love of Place" Be Cultivated?

Love of place can be cultivated when faraway, unfamiliar, or seemingly insignificant spaces become places of meaning. Although many of us often use "space" and "place" interchangeably, Tuan (1977) makes an important distinction between the two: "'Space' is more abstract than 'place.' What begins as undifferentiated space becomes place as we get to know it better and endow it with value" (6). What he means is that space becomes place when it has meaning to the person considering it. Understanding this is key for cultivating a "love of place." If our students are going to care about the Pacific—which, as a concept, can be quite abstract for some of them—we have to ensure that our classrooms provide opportunities for them to give Pacific spaces meaning. This, of course, is not a simple process. As teachers, we can teach *in*, *about*, and even *for* the Pacific, but, as Teaiwa once said, "Without the benefit of direct personal experience across and between islands . . . Pacific Studies can set students up to pass academically without experiencing any transformative learning about themselves and/or the Pacific" (Teaiwa and Moekaʻa 2018, 198). Avoiding this trap is difficult when we cannot physically take our student to places in the region so that they can, as they do in my university exercise, feel, observe, and critically consider the space they're in. Therefore, I seek to give ʻāina meaning in other ways, ways that ultimately come from how Indigenous Pacific peoples relate to place.

To encourage meaning making in my classrooms, I frame the land, the ocean, and all of its creatures as being active and as having agency. In this framing, for example, the ocean, as Michelle Huang (2017) describes, "resists its role as passive repository" for all of our needs (and for all of our waste) (102). Instead, it becomes the Oceania that Wendt (1976) speaks of in his work, mysterious and always changing: "whenever we think we have captured her she has already assumed new guises—the love affair is endless" (71). While teaching in Hawaiʻi, I had my students look at examples that could attest to the mana (power) of the ocean and its creatures. In our discussions of voyaging and migration, for example, we talked about Vicente Diaz's (2011) explanation of "the big fish" and

of the seafaring practices of Carolinian voyagers who relied on chants to find their way:

> It is the song of the specific seaway between the Central Carolines and the Marianas. Among other things it names the sea creatures, land, and watermarks between the two regions. Among other things, the chant says to look out for *ikelap*—the big fish—which, when sighted, would indicate that you were east of Guam, the southernmost island of the archipelago. (22)

We also looked at more contemporary examples of ocean voyaging in the work of Ben Finney (1999), who writes about oceanic spaces like Te Avamoʻa in Raiʻātea, Tahiti, as being sacred passageways where access to the shore could be allowed or denied, sometimes by the ocean itself. Finally, in later weeks, we considered new plastic "migrators" of the sea and studied the power of the ocean to heave and hurl things back at us in its never-ending "recursive-but-active motion" (Huang 2017, 102). In these three examples, the sea becomes a place where things happen and where sea life is framed as having knowledge and abilities; it becomes a place of change and action, a place with its own agency.

Looking at the ocean in this way often helps students to challenge their prior assumptions of the Pacific. What some may have thought was empty space around scattered islands becomes an active place of meaning, which gives more weight to Hauʻofa's (1994) often-referenced "sea of islands." This is particularly important in Hawaiʻi, where many of my students were educated in a system that privileges continental perspectives and consequently frames islands as being fixed and enclosed and the islanders on them as being limited and parochial (Roberts and Stephens 2017, 13). In my classes, I seek to do as Brian Russell Roberts and Michelle Ann Stephens (2017) encourage and "decontinentalize" my approach, making the islands and the ocean connecting them the main points of focus (13). This turns our attention to spaces previously "dismissed for their smallness" and re-presents them as always-evolving, ever-changing places that are open and connected to the world (35). In the process, our sea of islands is reconfigured and acknowledged for what Roberts and Stephens (2017) term its ultimate "unknowability," thus humbling all of us who seek to study and understand her and feeding the endless "love affair" Wendt spoke of decades ago (23).

Aloha

Reflecting on my teaching experiences so far, I cannot say that my approaches are always successful or that all students leave with fires in their bellies to

protect our lands, waters, oceans, and skies. What I can say is that, if anything, they do walk away knowing that the Pacific is a deeply meaningful place. At the least, this makes some of them a bit more understanding and compassionate. For others, however, it leads them to consider protective action, whether through writing, sharing, teaching, creating, or protesting. Ultimately, my approach is about building on prior experiences of "love of place" and using it to encourage empathy. Without empathy, we will be numbed to the destruction and devastation around us, especially if and when we believe it does not impact us directly. As a teacher, I refuse to allow distance or assumed disconnection from the wider region to be an excuse for not acting for the betterment of the Pacific: land, ocean, and people. Rather, I insist on grounding my teaching in aloha, or a deep sense of understanding, compassion, and love that feeds our will to act. Love, despite all of its misgivings, "may be [one of] the most revolutionary ideas available to us" (Kelley 2002, 11). Therefore, I harness it. I do not hide my love for the region; instead, I use it to fuel everything I bring to the classroom and everything I hope for my students.

Whether they respond to the aloha they themselves feel for the Pacific or the aloha they recognize in the stories of Pacific Islanders, my hope is that my students leave Pacific studies knowing that no matter how naïve, overly optimistic, or perhaps even cliché it may sound, love can be a powerful motivator and agent of change. Aloha, in other words, perhaps will save the world. I hope that this knowing empowers them, letting them know that "love of place" is always theirs to develop, to nurture, and to grow. As Klein (2014) and Moore (2016) argue, this kind of love is what leads to action for environmental justice, and given the state of our world, we need that kind of action. We need people who are able to take their sense of aloha ʻāina, topophilia, "love of place," or whatever they call it and extend it to the region, seeing all places as active, life giving, nurturing, and deserving of respect. While we may not be able to engage our students in the actual work of making the Pacific better, perhaps a critical Pacific studies pedagogy is one that empowers them with love so that they can do so on their own.

NOTES

1. Kanaka Maoli will be used to refer to people of Hawaiian ancestry and will be used interchangeably with "Hawaiian" throughout. Note that Kānaka Maoli, the pluralized version of Kanaka Maoli, will also be used where appropriate.

2. As a noun, aloha ʻāina can be used to refer to a Hawaiian patriot or nationalist. It has been at the foundation of Hawaiian resistance movements against imperialism for more than 100 years.

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