



The Pacific Institute
BRIGHAM YOUNG UNIVERSITY HAWAII



0275-3596 (200703/06) 30:1/2;1-B

Pacific Studies



Vol. 30, Nos. 1/2-March/June 2007

Pacific Studies

Special Issue

Women Writing Oceania:
Weaving the Sails of Vaka

Vol. 30, Nos. 1/2-March/June 2007



PACIFIC STUDIES

A multidisciplinary journal devoted to the study
of the peoples of the Pacific Islands

MARCH/JUNE 2007

Anthropology
Archaeology
Art History
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Ethnomusicology
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IN ASSOCIATION WITH THE POLYNESIAN CULTURAL CENTER

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This publication is printed on acid-free paper and meets the guidelines for permanence and durability of the Council on Library Resources.

ISSN 0275-3596

ISBN 0-939154-77-3

PACIFIC STUDIES

WOMEN WRITING OCEANIA

WEAVING THE SAILS OF VAKA

GUEST EDITORS

CAROLINE SINAVAIANA

J. KĒHAULANI KAUANUI

In loving memory of

Grace Mera Molisa



Darlaine Mahealani Dudoit

--sister writers and wahine toa--

Alofaaga,

Sa oulua lalagaina upu e faamalie ma laei ai tagata o le Ala Moana ma ua taunuu ai le alagaupu, e au le inailau a tamaitai. Lenei ua oulua faamalolo i le manumalo, ao oulua galuega e matou te mau ai seia oo i le gataaga. Soifua ma ia manuia.

You have woven words to clothe the people of Oceania and fulfill the proverb, "...e au le inailau" (Women weave without ceasing, until the job is completed.) May you rest now in triumph, and your work hold us until the end of time. With love and respect, we wish for you all blessings.

A Pacific Studies Special Issue

VOL. 30, NOS. 1/2 (MARCH/JUNE 2007) • LĀIE, HAWAII

SPECIAL ISSUE

WOMEN WRITING OCEANIA:
WEAVING THE SAILS OF VAKA

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PACIFIC STUDIES

SPECIAL ISSUE
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WEAVING THE SAILS OF VAKA

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March/June 2007

PROLOGUE

THE FIRST TASK FOR ANY PEOPLE is to survive. In the aftermath of Oceania's colonial history, one of the most critical challenges to survival is the preponderance of serious illness, whether physical, emotional, or spiritual. At the beginning of the twenty-first century, we find ourselves plagued by high rates of stress-related disease, such as cancer, cardiovascular disorders, alcoholism, drug abuse, obesity, diabetes, domestic violence, and mental illness, for example. As editors of the following collection of work by Oceanic women, we reaffirm our commitment to the belief in the importance of telling our stories, of joining our voices, as one necessary antidote to the residual toxins lingering in the neo/colonial present.

In our own specific contexts, as activist/scholars located in the "academy," we can personally attest to the physical and emotional toll exacted by the demands of multiple allegiances: to our ancestors, to our cultural and political communities, to our *aiga* and *'ohana*, to our sisters, to our countries, and to our profession. As Pacific Islanders, as indigenous women of color—as members of those woefully under represented minority groups in academics—we experience first hand every day the often overwhelming demands of such competing allegiances. Thus, in our specific social locations, we share in the lot of our larger cultural communities. We witness our peoples being overrepresented in prisons, destroyed by physical and social pathologies, buried at younger and younger ages. Thus, survival as Pacific Islanders in our historical moment remains an open question—definitely, a risky business.

In the process of working on "Women Writing Oceania," each of us has had occasion to experience first hand the daunting personal cost of our high-risk, high-stakes work in the world. While the collection was originally

intended to come out several years ago, publication had to be delayed significantly due to debilitating illnesses that beset us both en route: breast cancer in one instance, and in the other, immune disorders, injuries, and clinical depression. Thankfully, we are both on the mend now and deeply grateful for the loving kindness of family, friends and colleagues.

During that unscheduled interim, we were further reminded of the fragility of our lives and times by the loss of two giant figures in Oceania's intellectual life: Darlaine Mahealani Dudoit and Grace Mera Molisa. Therefore, it is with great *aloha* and *soifua tele lava* to each of them that we dedicate "Women Writing Oceania."

It is with profound gratitude to our ancestors, *atua*, and spiritual teachers that we have survived to (help) tell the tale.

Caroline Sinavaiana
University of Hawai'i at Mānoa

J. Kēhaulani Kauanui
Wesleyan University

May 2008

Waimanalo Litany

Caroline Sinavaiana

for Mahealani Dudoit, in memoriam

The scarred body moves
in green water,
brown arms slicing

a canvas of blue
green ocean sky.
Spirits of *moana*

pasifika, have mercy
on us. Traceries of
frame drawn by white-

tailed tropic birds,
koa'e kea etching
blue space above

our spiky nest of
coconut palm &
lauhala, casuarina

& *naupaka kahakai*.
Spirits of the *Ko'olau*,
have mercy on us.

Jellyfish filaments
of pain tattoo the
sleeping swimmer,

sharp awakening to
see a father with three
children body-surfing

Pacific Studies, Vol. 30, Nos. 1/2—March/June 2007

Reprinted, with permission, from Caroline Sinavaiana, "Waimanalo Litany," *Rattapallax* 10 (2005): 83.

& throwing sticks to
a wooly dog. Spirits
of *Makapu'u*, have

mercy on us. They
ride off on bicycles
& leave McDonald's

wrappers behind on
the shore. The marked
body moves in green

water. Spirits of
Waimanalo, grant
us peace.

INTRODUCTION

Caroline Sinavaiana
University of Hawai'i at Mānoa

J. Kēhaulani Kauanui
Wesleyan University

AS COEDITORS OF THIS SPECIAL ISSUE OF *Pacific Studies*, we have been most fortunate in the opportunity to survey a wide array of path-breaking work by Pacific Islander women. From the outset, our objective has been to assemble a collection of work that reflects the wide range of expressive forms—creative and scholarly writing, personal essays, and visual art—being produced by indigenous Oceanic women in the twenty-first century, our shared historical moment.

Through the project title, “Women Writing Oceania: Weaving the Sails of *Vaka*,” we mean to mark a historical continuum of women’s cultural labor, both intrinsic and emergent, across vast reaches of space and time. As a central instrument of oceanic life, the *vaka* (ocean-going canoe) is a key metaphor for our ongoing journeys, both literal and figurative. While traditional voyaging is often presumed to be a male domain in many parts of the Pacific, we here invoke a female lineage of sailors exemplified by Pele, Nafanua, and Ne’i ni Manoa, for example, as voyagers in command of their own vessels. We call upon those genealogies of mobility and weave the sails for our own voyages. A second more subtle, but profound, aspect of mobility informs the actual production of the sails, generally overseen and performed by women, in an involved process of harvesting, treating, and plaiting pandanus. As the weavers of sails, that is, wind-powered “engines,” women’s social power is materially associated with the actual generation of mobility itself. The divine

associations are there as well, as women can be understood to partner with the heavens in the negotiation of kinetic power through various types of winds. It is in symbolic frameworks such as these that we locate contemporary writing and art-making in Oceania. Work such as that included here is a sail, woven with words and images, that is, moving our societies and regions into the future.

In October 2000, we first sent out a “call for papers and artwork” for “Women Writing Oceania.” In that solicitation, we specifically note that the special issue’s working theme would be “gender, sexuality, and identity,” where we described the overall concept as:

the exploration of emerging identities for us as women, as these are being constructed, challenged, claimed and/or re-inscribed in our own thinking, writing and lives. We are using the category of Gender in the sense of socially constructed roles for females, males and/or other genders but apply the concept in the broadest possible terms, referring to ways in which that western category gets challenged, redefined or “bent” by Oceanic traditions of relationship not only between women and men, but also between same-gender, bi-sexual and/or androgynous partners.

We also suggested that possible areas of focus might include topics such as female archetypes in traditional legend and mythology; the cultural politics of gender identity in relation to ethnicity, rank and class, and/or sexuality; the “neo-” or “post-” colonial female body being scarred or otherwise marked by dynamics of internalized oppression; the tensions between traditional and modern roles for women and girls between village and town, homeland and metropole; the politics of representation, as Native women and girls are portrayed in film, literature, and popular culture in any number of problematical ways; women’s leadership in different community and political contexts; gender, nationalism, and decolonization; self-determination and sexual desire; Pacific feminisms; gendered migrations and diasporas; and so on.

Interestingly, we received fewer contributions that specifically explore sexuality, even though our call explicitly marked our interest in this topic. That outcome suggests that indigenous women of Oceania are not yet ready to take these discussions public. Yet, women across multiple boundaries of difference are certainly engaged in dialogues about sex, sexuality, and sexual desire. Among us are women identified as women-loving women, men-loving women, and women attracted to or intimately involved with either men or women. While we do not think the long history of colonial exoticization of Pacific women has overdetermined the refusals to explore sexuality as a topic ready for publication, they have to some degree contributed to our silence.

That is, the legacy of colonial representations, vis-à-vis tourism and/or militarism, that would come to racialize Pacific women as carefree in our sexuality, has perhaps made us think twice about what we are willing to commit to print. Still, we also need to acknowledge the cultural restrictions and protocols that also work to limit such discussions in public spaces. The works herein that do “go there” have challenged these boundaries in refreshing and empowering ways.

The working definition of “Oceania” in this collection reflects Epeli Hau’ofa’s reinscriptions of the “Pacific” region in his formative article, “Our Sea of Islands,” which (re)collects New Zealand/Aotearoa, aboriginal Australia, and Hawai’i into an Oceanic family of indigenous cultures along with the other island peoples of Polynesia, Melanesia, and Micronesia. We believe that, as indigenous women and artists of our region, we can continue to lead the way in restoring balance to our respective societies by joining forces with each other in such collaborations as the one presented here. To achieve the goal of solidarity across our vast ocean spaces and histories, we believe this collection marks an important step in helping to dismantle arbitrary colonial categories like “Mela/Poly/Micro-nesia,” which have worked to divide us against each other for far too long. That said, we are well aware that our representation of women from different regions across Oceania is limited geographically and is “Poly-heavy.” Surely, part of this is due to our own social positions as Polynesian women and reflects our own geographical and professional networks which are tied primarily to and through Hawai’i, Samoa, and Aotearoa/New Zealand. Also, we have become keenly aware of the circuits of distribution of print media and cultural production that reflect routes with colonial origins. For example, the British Commonwealth nations tend to publish, receive, and sell books and materials produced by writers who also reside in British Commonwealth countries; New Zealand bookstores are more likely to have works by indigenous Canadians than those in the United States. And rarely does Hawai’i see the creative works published by those in Fiji. Nonetheless, our objective for this project is a collection of expressive and academic work highlighting the many voices with which we speak and sing as indigenous women of Oceania.

We also wish to acknowledge scholarly writing and research that have come before this project and serve as genealogies for the contributions herein. This is by no means an exhaustive list but instead should serve as a point of departure for taking stock of scholarly works that feature the study of women in Oceania: *Toi Wahine: The Worlds of Maori Women*, Kathie Irwin and Irihapeti Ramsden (eds.); *Daughters of the Island: Contemporary Chamorro Women Organizers on Guam*, Laura Torres Souder; *Nā Wāhine Kapu: Divine Hawaiian Women*, Lilikalā Kame‘eleihiwa; *Family and Gender in the Pacific: Domestic Contradictions and the Colonial Impact*, Margaret

Jolly and Martha Macintyre (eds.); *From a Native Daughter*, Haunani-Kay Trask; *Sites of Desire, Economies of Pleasure: Sexualities in Asia and the Pacific*, Lenore Manderson and Margaret Jolly (eds.); *Sustainable Development of Malignant Growth? Perspectives of Pacific Island Women*, Atu Emberson-Bain (ed.); *Women's Studies International Forum*, special issue on "Migrating Feminisms: The Asia/Pacific Region," Kalpana Ram and J. Kēhaulani Kauanui (eds.); *Bittersweet: Indigenous Women in the Pacific*, Alison Jones, et al. (eds.); *Te Pua: The Journal of Puawaitanga*; *Mana Wahine Maori: Collected Writings on Maori Women's Art*, Ngahua Te Awekotuku; and *Women's Voices on the Pacific: The International Pacific Policy Congress*, Lenora Foerstel (ed.).

Creative writing by Oceanic women that has helped to play a formative role in our thinking and writing includes: *Miss Ulysses of Pukapuka*, Johnnie Frisbie; *Baby No Eyes* and *Cousins*, Patricia Grace; *You, the Choice of My Parents*, Konai Helu Thaman; *Black Stone*, Grace Mera Molisa; *The Bone People*, Keri Hulme; *Where We Once Belonged*, Sia Figiel; *Searching for Ne'i Ni Manoa*, Teresia Teaiwa; *The Conversion*, Victoria Nālani Knuebuhl; *Civilized Girl*, Jully Makini; and *Tahuri* and *Ruahine: Mythic Women*, Ngahua Te Awekotuku. Other key creative writers include Nora Vagi Brash, Momoe Von Reiche, and Haunani-Kay Trask. Again, this is not meant as an exhaustive listing but, rather, as one threshold on an emerging literary tradition in Oceania. We also wish to acknowledge here the crucial contribution of Marjorie Crocombe to Oceanic Letters. Her decades of sponsorship and patronage of writing workshops at the University of the South Pacific in Suva, from the 1970s onward, led to the emergence of countless new writers from the South Pacific.

In "Women Writing Oceania," certain themes recur, resonate, and flow across boundaries of genre and geography. Questions of cultural identity and lineage, location and dislocation, loss, struggle, and transformation recur and echo in these pages. As contemporary writers and artists, we take our places among a global sisterhood of thinkers engaged in the practice of reinscribing our own identities and histories. We join a global community of thinkers actively engaged in the critical work of reinfusing a battered world with the ancient wisdom traditions of indigenous peoples.

The work is organized along thematic lines: Lineage, Location & Dislocation, Identity, Negotiation, and Reinscription. Being all too aware of the problematic nature of imposing categories on expressive works, let us hasten to say that these particular frameworks are meant to suggest clusters of possible meaning and relevance. While such categories are clearly overlapping in nature, they might be usefully employed in pointing to key issues at work today among Oceanic societies in general.

Lineage

In her essay “*Tumuge’ Pâpa’* (Writing it Down): Chamorro Midwives and the Delivery of Native History,” Christine Taitano DeLisle explores questions of lineage between women and elders and their daughters. She focuses on the multiple responsibilities and applications of the push to document family stories and memories. Empowered as a young girl to write and document in the service of family, community, and their people’s history, DeLisle describes how she was charged to write by the women in her family. In doing so, she explores the politics of proficiency given the value of English in U.S. assimilationist strategies in Guam, female genealogies of literacy and labor, questions of authority and authorship, and community understandings of legitimacy, respectability, and authenticity. Her essay discusses the commitments embedded in liberatory scholarly work dedicated to narrativizing the history of Chamorro women through a look at the process of writing on Chamorro nurse-midwives who underwent medical training and certification by the U.S. Naval Administration of Guam in the first half of the twentieth century. DeLisle explores the theme of women’s laboring hands and regulation of women’s labor in attending to women in childbirth via U.S. colonial rule and its modernizing projects. In reflecting upon the professionalization of Chamorro midwives, DeLisle traces her personal ambivalence regarding her own professionalization as a writer.

In *Piharamata Tumahai Smoking Her Taho*, Tahitian photographer Marie-Hélène Villierme expands the notion of lineage to include that of reinscription. As visual antidote to the simplistic distortions of dusky maiden stereotypes, this image gives us a Polynesian woman whose eloquent countenance suggests any number of complex narratives more in keeping with the multivalent histories of Oceania.

“My Pigeon/La’u Lupe ‘Ua Lele” by Caroline Sinavaiana works with the idea of lineage in polyphonous ways as well. A kind of “personal translation” of a traditional Samoan folksong, the poem moves from original Samoan, to literal translation, and finally to idiosyncratic version which aspires to join in a long line of cultural transmission. Here is writing that works from traditional lyric with the project of making it “new,” not only in form but in content, in this instance, by engaging sentiments of loss and longing to the service of a daughter’s elegy for her mother.

Location & Dislocation

One of the key issues raised in contemporary discussions of lineage is that of location and dislocation. With the steady movement of Oceanic peoples over the last fifty years, from traditional village settings to those of town and city,

often in countries far away from the motherland, have also come the innumerable challenges of diaspora. Traditional belief systems, religion, and educational practices are turned on their heads, and the resulting experience of inexplicable loss can often become debilitating. In Kim Meredith's short story, "Living Small," we meet Luisa, a bright young woman living in a New Zealand city with her husband and five children. We ride on the #746 bus with Luisa as she makes her weary way home after working two jobs—one of them, as a telephone sex worker—and attending a university lecture. After a day which has begun with her feeling like a "ghost mother" (Meredith, this volume, 38) as she sets out the toothpaste for her still-sleeping children, Luisa watches the passing sights on the bus route, landmarks that call up various milestones from her life in the busy city. In Meredith's evocative images, we can experience the longing for an earlier, more expansive time and place, the nurturing "sounds of the old house and the feeling of being enveloped by people" (this volume, 36).

In addition to such enervating kinds of multitasking required of Pacific Islanders in the diaspora, other critical challenges lie embedded in the assimilationist narratives of Western educational systems. In their collaborative piece, "Dialoguing Across the Pacific: *Kūkākūkā* and the Cultivation of *Wahine Maoli* Identity," a mother and daughter team of activist/scholars exchange letters between Hawai'i and California, where the daughter Noelani Goodyear-Ka'ōpua is attending graduate school at a large, prestigious university. Conducting their *kūkākūkā* (talk-story session) through email, daughter and mother—a professor, social worker, and health researcher in Honolulu—Lana Ka'ōpua, explore certain challenges and implications of Western education for Hawaiians. Their choice of format itself, the *kūkākūkā*, reflects a growing concern among indigenous intellectuals to engage forms of communication that are more culturally appropriate (and accessible) to their Native communities. Ka'ōpua expands upon this point in her introduction, "As thoughts can be miswoven when there is no discussion, so it is with our identities as *Wahine Maoli*, Native Hawaiian women, and the ensuing choices we make about how to live in this world" (this volume, 48). As the two women reflect together on their respective processes of self-discovery as Hawaiian women and cultural activists, Goodyear-Ka'ōpua articulates her aspiration to facilitate "change and create the space for new growth. Making way for a change in the established order, changes that are much needed in our *one hānau*. Decolonizing our *'aina*, our minds, our spirits . . . directing our energies toward such changes" (this volume, 50).

More symbolic sites of dislocation lie within the complex relationships between religion and education, tradition and modernity, Samoa and the West, parent and child. In her short story "Silauni'i," Jacinta Galea'i gives us a tale of two village girls, both daughters of Christian ministers, with uneasy

relationships to the social expectations imposed upon preachers' kids: "We live in village people's eyes/setting examples for village kids' lives" (this issue, 64, 65). The narrator spins a tale of her friendship with the singular Silauni'i who was "free," unlike her: "free of straight lines and even pigtails" (Galea'i, this issue, 65). When Silauni'i is beaten by her minister/father for failing to get a 100% on her Samoan grammar exam, the narrator grieves for her friend in bewildered solidarity. Galea'i's lyrical narrative touches lightly on the wounds of abusive authority and childhood confusion at the arbitrary nature of cruelty lurking in the adult world.

In another incarnation of this village tale, the two young girls might be sisters, as Tusiata Avia evokes them in her poem, "Village princess." Only here, the "princess" sister abdicates her ceremonial position in favor of running off to Colorado with "a white guy called Randell...[getting] a scholarship / and a job as a body-piercer" (Avia, this issue, 68). Here is a contemporary voice reclaiming and declaring itself, a female voice reinscribing its place in both the village and in worlds beyond the malae.

One of the most important contributions of indigenous writing and art-making is that of (re)locating ourselves in our respective worlds, whether in- or outside of Oceania proper, in ways that are congruent with traditional cultural frameworks of value and ethics. In Ngahua Te Awekotuku's piece, "Maori Women Researching Ourselves," we can find exploration of the sensitive territory of indigenous researchers, in this case Maori women, working on their own. She examines the legacy of self-determination within research fields and questions of access to knowledge within Maori worlds such as tribal trust board meetings, *marae* gatherings, or at the kitchen table with elders. The essay focuses on the tension between the universal appeal of humanity vis-à-vis the search for knowledge versus tribal specificities such as customary laws restricting access to knowledge that demand protective measures to prevent exploitation, commodification, and transgression of cultural boundaries. Te Awekotuku highlights conflicting expectations when one attempts to abide by indigenous research protocols and expectations as well as those presented by the academy vis-à-vis professionalization and authority. Indeed as she shows, such competing imperatives can often leave Maori women—and by extension other Pacific women researchers—in precarious positions.

Identity

At the thematic heart of much Oceanic writing and visual art lie troubled questions of personal and cultural identity. Given the monumental impacts of colonial projects on Oceania for the last two centuries, writers and artists

continue to work through the myriad implications of cultural alienation on a coherent sense of self and other. As we intermarry or partner with those of other races and religions, as youth lose touch with the wisdom of elders, as significant numbers of women assume public roles of leadership, who is it that we are becoming? And what relationship do our altered identities bear to a traditional sense of self and other? Such questions are engaged by almost every contributor in this volume from a wide range of perspectives and possibilities.

One cluster of poems and short fiction explores the complex landscapes of love and intimacy in a time of neo/colonial uncertainties. For example, in her short story, "Manowai," Victoria Nālani Kneubuhl gives us a tale in which emotional loss opens a pathway to cultural reawakening. In the narrative, we meet Kanoe, a self-identified *hapa*-Hawaiian woman in flight from her husband, a philandering English professor afflicted with insecurities about his wife's emerging success as a writer. Fleeing the emotional abuse of her marriage to the elitist American, Kanoe takes refuge in a family homeplace on the island of Hawai'i. There, her mysterious encounter with a young Hawaiian man becomes a catalyst for a cultural deepening and newfound sense of empowerment. Part of "the truth that lay just under the skin of being Hawaiian" (Kneubuhl, this issue, 86) that the story points to is the complex dynamics of mixed-race partnerships in the charged political climate of neo/colonial milieu.

Several poems in the collection explore similar themes as they delve more explicitly into the intimacies of romantic love and power relationships. For example, in "nudity I-IV," Teresia Teaiwa deftly overturns the ethnic slur against Pacific islanders, "coconuts," with verbal play and satire. Here romantic intimacy and politics are as necessarily intertwined as lovers. In a similar vein, Ku'ualoha Ho'omanawanui's "Ka Lawai'a" touches on the exquisite betrayal of intimacy when "traditional culture" becomes a weapon of manipulation. These poems weave their own kind of sail to take us across emotional seas of great tenderness, as well the fearless exploration of difference. In Konai Thaman's "It Began with A Question," the speaker admits that while "it wasn't my place / to decide which new notes / the earth must sing" (this volume, 106) she is willing nonetheless to venture into unknown worlds of culture, geography, and the heart. In "Not Exotic" by Lisa Kahaleole Hall, we have the clear pleasure of sexuality, like the bright taste of green mangoes, of eros between women in a "season of late ripening" (this volume, 107).

J. Kēhaulani Kauanui's piece, "Blood and Reproduction of (the) Race in the Name of *Ho'oulu Lahui*—A Hawaiian Feminist Critique," discusses the politics of blood identification versus genealogy and identity as they implicate Hawaiian nationalism, in particular, Hawaiian women. Her discussion begins with an autobiographical narrative that offers a scenario emblematic of

the stakes involved in the everyday lives of many Hawaiians. Kauanui traces the legacy of the 50% blood rule used to define “native Hawaiian” imposed by the U.S. government and ways in which that racial criterion affects contemporary issues of reproduction and nationalist culture. She is particularly concerned with the effects of this blood(y) policy, and its attendant discourse, on Hawaiian women with regard to their partner choice as it implicates their child-bearing potential. As an alternative, she urges for a decolonizing renewal of indigenous concepts of belonging grounded in genealogy and place.

Negotiation

Given the myriad ways in which a coherent sense of cultural identity continues to be compromised in our allegedly postcolonial moment, a constant challenge faced by Oceanic peoples is that of negotiating the often bewildering distances between traditional certainties and postmodern ambiguities. The toll of such metaphysical negotiation on a daily basis is a heavy one and remains a major theme in expressive work throughout Oceanic networks. For example, one key element in the experience and writing of contemporary Oceanic women is that of illness and healing, whether physical, emotional, or spiritual. In her poem “Waimanalo Litany,” Caroline Sinavaiana invokes the spirits of a particular location on O‘ahu in order to propose a kind of dialogue of healing between human and elemental worlds. “The scarred body moves in green water . . .” (this volume, 3). But such a process is not a simple one. Layers of history, imbued for example by the alienation and/or destruction of native lands and traditions, envelop the mundane, and ordinary experience mutates into complex transactions in everyday life. The “sleeping swimmer./ sharp awakening” (this volume, 3) at the sight of a local family littering McDonald’s wrappers in their wake points to the necessary interplay of loss and grief, forgiveness and healing. “Spirits of *Waimanalo* / grant us peace” (this volume, 4). In Sinavaiana’s “diagnosis,” the speaker considers the “white mass loom[ing]” from “that sea of shadows / ocean of ultra-sound,” and immediately turns to “dust[ing] off ancient arrows & tighten[ing] the bowstring” by way of response (this volume, 118).

Such themes of struggle and transformation echo in another cluster of poems as well. For example, in Sia Figiel’s poem “The Night Woman,” we find a similar portrait of personal pain being transformed into larger significance. As the outcast “night woman” sheds the indignities of daily life, “She abandons her Day / Skin to feel the Night’s touch / Birthing sons whose gene / ologies hang / From the faces / Of constellations” (this volume, 117).

The next poem, “Shadows dance in my head,” by Cresantia Frances Koya, offers a more impressionistic take on the complex tensions between love and

pain, loss and possibility. The experimental form of the piece—parallel columns of short verse which can be read horizontally as well as vertically—helps to open up the field of intense and otherwise bewildering emotion. “. . . the scent of/ *mokosoi* hangs in/ the air/ . . . And I open my eyes to the wind/ the sky is blue /” but “. . . dogs are howling in my head” (this volume, 119). Here, motifs of Indo-Fijian and Polynesian life are laced together—not a basket, but the most delicate of netting—and hold out images of mourning and love in a time of postcolonial disarray. “The *puja* you never / make / For me / . . . The sitar is loud / and / unaccommodating” (this volume, 119). The poem’s fragmented structure is an apt vehicle for its fractured content: disparate images strewn across the page as though left behind after an explosion. “Was that a gun shot / or a fire cracker . . . / Is that real blood?” (this volume, 119).

Reinscription

Perhaps the greatest cultural work performed by Oceanic writing and art-making is the reinscription of an indigenous world by its descendants. Thus, we might say that the single overarching theme of reinscription bridges all of the pieces in this collection. Important visual artists, for example, whose work serves to reinscribe the disparate worlds of contemporary Oceania, include Jewel Castro, Rosanna Raymond, and Marie-Hélène Villierme. While Castro and Raymond are based outside of Oceania proper, Villierme lives and works in Tahiti. Like all of the contributors in this issue, these artists work explicitly to synthesize the cultural worlds of past and present.

In her personal essay, “Communicating Tradition in Samoan American Art: An Artist’s Reflection,” the San Diego-based Jewel Castro describes her creative process. After training as a painter in the Western tradition, she expanded her generic boundaries by moving into three-dimensional space in the form of installation that she sees as intending “to communicate an idea by transforming a space” (this volume, 123). Describing her large-scale installations as “story-telling environments,” she considers tradition to be her muse (Castro, this volume, 124). Seeing tradition as “holographic” (this volume, 123). Castro’s intention is to connect with viewers through their own particular (and idiosyncratic) experiences of “tradition.” In this collection, we have featured five of her earlier paintings that display a complex range of emotion and position in regard to the idea of tradition. In the gentle, stolid figures of the elder women in *Walking with My Grandmothers* (#1, #2, and #3), Castro creates a sense of emotional peace grounded in self-knowledge of one’s traditional culture. At the same time, a subtle note of longing informs the images with the elusive beauty of impermanence. In the complex

and more challenging perspectives of *Sleep* and *Tradition*, the longing has blossomed into more shadowy regions of melancholy and acute vulnerability.

While *Sleep* might be read as self-portrait, at least in part, the complexities of *Tradition* rather blow the lid off of sentimental notions of culture and tradition. Here we have a distinct ambivalence, verging on irony, about the darker sides of tradition, perhaps, as inscribed on the internal body of the female form. The almost sinister effect of the image can direct our gaze both inward and outward at the same time, surely one of the hallmarks of enduring art. It could, for example, point our attention to the contested terrain of cultural politics in Oceania, in which ideas of traditional and cultural authenticity are used as discursive currency or as rhetorical weapons against others and/or oneself, thus becoming insidious vehicles of cultural self-destruction. The work of Frida Kahlo may come to mind here vis-à-vis ways that pain can be inscribed on the female body as both metaphor and marker—a kind of private scarification as signifier of public conflict. The disturbing power of Castro's *Tradition* is emblematic of an aesthetic style which laces sinewy power with tenderness and gritty reality with grace.

By contrast, in the art of London-based Rosanna Raymond, we find more active qualities of warriorhood informing her portrayals of contemporary Oceanic women. For example, in *Butterfly Thighs Flutter By the Bye*, she gives us a modern-day version of the Polynesian warrior woman. Adorned with tattooed limbs, shell tiara, assorted fibers, and necklace of boar's tusk, she confronts the viewer with a level, unflinching gaze. The open posture—warrior stance—both engages and warns us at the same time. The accompanying super-imposed poem, "Thick Lick," adds a subversive counterpoint to the rich starkness of the visual image. Here is no one-dimensional warrior. Instead the written text gives us the more whimsical, sensual side of this formidable adversary. Raymond's second piece, a photo-collage of the poem "Meet you in Hawaiki"'s second stanza, "Samoa," presents another iconic female figure. Only here, the posture combines openness with longing, the strength that underlies vulnerability. In the embedded stanza, the speaker addresses her motherland from afar: "I was a child lost to you, / but I found you, / Did you have trouble recognizing me?" (Raymond, this volume, 182). In such fine work, Raymond offers complex, emotionally-layered glimpses of diaspora, loss and return, fierce resilience and playfulness.

Konai Thaman's poem "Woven Worlds" honors the crucial work of women, past and present, traditional and contemporaneous, in the weaving of relationship(s) across time and space: "the songs / of our mothers and grandmothers / long continuous lines connecting / east and west / north and south [to] re-create / the world" (this volume, 121).

In addition to creative writing and art-making, scholarly writing is another important vehicle for the cultural work of reimagining contemporary Oceanic worlds. Three essays from different parts of Oceania share the project of reinscribing women's places in society, culture, and oral narrative. In "Speaking Reflections: *Whaikoorero* (Speech Making) and *Karanga* (Welcoming Cry) in Recent Theater by Maori Women," Mei Lin Hansen explores the work of four Maori women playwrights. She brings to light the ways that Maori women's theater has become an alternative site to perform *whaikoorero* (traditional speechmaking), a central feature of Maori protocol usually reserved for Maori, in order for Maori women to articulate their concerns in public space. Hansen theorizes how these playwrights renegotiate gendered locations—marked by geographical displacement, and troubled notions of belonging, along with social distance from tribal homelands. She notes that these writers are concerned with issues of *whakapapa* (genealogy) and its import for their characters' identity and social position. Altering Maori custom, their cultural production opens spaces for new forms of ritualized articulations with an emphasis on restoring the place of importance for *waiata* (songs) and *karanga*. Given a history where *whaikoorero* has been privileged over and above Maori women's contributions, the alternative public spaces engendered through these plays (and their staged production) has allowed room for Maori women to articulate their own grievances in a context fraught with the legacies of colonialism. As Hansen discusses, their creative interventions contribute to the Maori feminist developments that question the devaluation of Maori women's role. Indeed, Hansen's theoretical framework of the "vocal kaleidoscope" enables a fine reading of the exploration and negotiation in these plays through metaphors of the spectacle, refraction, and vivid alternative cultural patterns.

Noenoe Silva's essay, "Pele, Hi'iaka, and Haumea: Women and Power in Two Hawaiian *Mo'olelo*," explores representations of Hawaiian women in legends published by Joseph M. Poepoe in Hawaiian language newspapers between 1861 and 1906. As part of a cohort of Hawaiian scholars committed to indigenous language revitalization, Silva takes us to the archive where she rescues models for Hawaiian women's agency through a feminist reading of these narratives. Indeed, the legendary women she finds are archetypes for Hawaiian gender norms, emphasizing women's power in choosing their partners (including their gender), initiating relationships, and expressing their sexual desires in bold ways. These narratives brought to light by Silva serve as rich epistemological resources, as well as unrecognized Hawaiian literature. Her work recuperates the oral narratives that have suffered symbolic and epistemic violence at the hand of Western containment. Silva offers a

rereading of these two traditional legends by refining previous translations at the service of reclamation and reexamination.

In a similar vein, our interview with Theresa Koroivulaono explores her work on Fijian women as orators, which poses the central question: whether or not they are exceptions to “tradition.” Koroivulaono’s research reexamines the position of Fijian women through the structures of formulaic, ceremonial oral narratives that provide the framework for Fijian rituals and customs. She focuses on recent developments in the practice of a traditional ceremony of paramount importance in Fijian culture, the “Kau Ni Matani Gone,” which marks a person’s first visit to her/his mother’s or father’s village. Koroivulaono argues that the emergence of women as orators in the attendant kinship rituals, albeit in informal settings, calls into question customary definitions of “tradition.” Shedding light on such dynamics of changing gender constructs in Fiji, Koroivulaono’s work challenges our understanding of contemporary gender roles in one area of Oceania. Thus, her research is critical to decolonization projects that dispute the current devaluation of women’s roles in the domestic sphere as insignificant. Koroivulaono also notes that she has been unable to locate any specific authority supporting a tabu against women delivering formal oratory but that the male role as orator has been naturalized and reiterated as fact since “time immemorial” and used to justify and/or explain male domination in Fijian culture. She urges scholars and community members to take into account the colonial transformation of Fijian society and the role Christianity has played in redefining gender roles. She argues that the gradual emergence of women orators in Fiji signifies a departure from typical conventions of ritual practice. In closing, she calls for a more comprehensive study of cultural adaptations in order to unearth other important insights into the nature and dynamics of oratory in contemporary society.

And finally, by way of closing, Caroline Sinavaiana offers “Sarong / Ie Lavalava,” another “translation” poem based on a traditional Samoan folk song. Written after the death of her parents to commemorate their wedding anniversary on Valentine’s Day, the poem negotiates complex forms of distance with echoing motifs from the traditional lyric: journey and return, longing and reunion. Honoring key Oceanic themes of voyage across great distance, the poem makes explicit a communal worldview by expanding its genealogical reach from the personal to the collective, by acknowledging relationship with the natural world—with ocean, heavens, and mulberry trees whose bark provided the first type of cloth (tapa) for human use, “its palimpsest of trees remembering / their lexicon of stars” (Sinavaiana, this volume, 195).

Acknowledgments

Kauanui: I offer thanks and aloha to coeditor Caroline Sinavaiana for her wonderful mentorship, collegueship, and friendship and to Reid Gomez, Lisa Kahaleole Hall, Susan Hirsch, Circe Sturm, and Noenoe K. Silva for their moral support and encouragement of the project. Appreciation also goes to all of the contributors for their creative beauty and talent and to both Dale Robertson and Sharlene Rohter for their assistance, Phillip McArthur and AnnaMarie Christiansen of *Pacific Studies*, and Patricia Hildenbrand of Allen Press. *Mahalo nui loa!*

Sinavaiana: I am most grateful to my coeditor, J. Kēhaulani Kauanui, for keeping the project alive during the year I was incapacitated by chemotherapy and radiation treatments and, more generally, for the pleasure of her company (and competence) on the long road to completing the collection. Kind thanks as well to all of the contributors for the fine gift of their labor and patience with delays, to Rob Borofsky who started the whole thing, to editors Dale Robertson and Sharlene Rohter at for editorial help early on, with special thanks to Phillip McArthur and AnnaMarie Christiansen of *Pacific Studies*, and Patricia Hildenbrand of Allen Press for rescuing the collection with skillful means and élan, to my colleagues and staff of the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa English Department for their unfailing aloha since the beginning. And finally, I extend special thanks to my mother, Agnes Yandall Gabbard, whose death in the middle of things meant that she did not get to see this collection completed but whose lifelong generosity to her hard-headed daughter made such work possible in the first place. With her passing, I see her now joining the great gathering of mothers, grandmothers, great-aunts—our female forebears—who stand behind us, the first generations of indigenous writers from Oceania. I see this lively throng stretching back into the time before writing existed, speaking the words that have brought us into being. *Ia fa'afetai tele lava outou susuga.*



Jewel Castro, *Walking with My Grandmothers #2*. Reproduced by permission.

**TUMUGE' PĀPA' (WRITING IT DOWN): CHAMORRO MIDWIVES
AND THE DELIVERY OF NATIVE HISTORY**

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The Chamorro phrase *tuge' pāpa'* is a command to write it down. Over the years, “writing it down” would come to have different, often conflicted, meanings for me. As a Chamorro woman and writer, *tuge' pāpa'* would also come to mean access to nothing less than a complex Chamorro past and present of which I am a part. This essay considers the multiple applications of *tuge' pāpa'* within that broader enterprise Donna Haraway calls writing as a “freedom project.” It explores the liberating and fraught moments of narrating the history of Chamorro women, especially through the use of family stories and memories. Examples will be drawn from a master's thesis on *i pattered siha*, prewar Chamorro nurse-midwives who underwent medical training and certification by the U.S. Naval Administration of Guam in the early 1900s.

And so our mothers and grandmothers have, more often than not anonymously, handed on the creative spark, the seed of the flower they themselves never hoped to see: or like a sealed letter they could not plainly read.

Alice Walker (1985: 2380)

The hand is an extension of our will, it holds the pen, the brush, the lump of clay. It is both a symbol and a vehicle of communication. Without the hand, the voice is helpless.

Gloria Anzaldúa (1990: xxiv)

WHILE CONDUCTING RESEARCH ON *i pattered siha* (Chamorro midwives)—who underwent compulsory training and licensing by the U.S. Naval

Pacific Studies, Vol. 30, Nos. 1/2—March/June 2007

Government of Guam before World War II—I encountered recurring images of hands.¹ Hands massaging. Hands catching. Hands laying. Hands pushing. Hands being scrubbed. Hands teasing out. Hands kneading. Hands crafting. Hands delivering. My own hands, meanwhile, took notes, turned pages, and pounded the keyboard.

My work as a relatively young “hand” in academia involves archival research and oral interviews with surviving patters² and their families. In my work, I examine naval and native narratives of these women in an effort to contribute to a growing body of critical scholarship on Guam that challenges the hegemony of American colonial discourse on Chamorro identity, culture, and history (e.g., Underwood, 1977, 1987; Bordallo, 1982; Souder, 1992a, b; Diaz, 1993, 1994, 1995, 1998; Hattori, 1996, 1999, 2004; Camacho, 1998; Perez, 1996, 1997, 2001; Kushima, 2001). To do this, I follow the motif and metaphor of working hands to understand another motif and metaphor of colonial rule through the navy’s regulation of Chamorro midwifery: that of delivering the native body from the “decay” of an earlier (and supposedly outdated) religious hegemony under Spanish rule, to the “enlightened” embrace of modern civilization under America.³

But another kindred interest in delivery, in a native delivery of a native ethnography and historiography, also guides my study. How can stories of patters delivering babies—especially those handed down through the narratives and images of women in labor—help guide me as I grasp for a form of representing Chamorro history and culture in a way that does not replicate and contribute to an ongoing colonial regime? In this essay, I dwell on the possibilities and liabilities of such hand-deliveries, especially surrounding a maternal genealogy of urging me to *tuge' pâpa'* or “write it down” whatever it was that needed to be recorded.

Indeed, since adolescence, my grandmother had put my hands to work and had given me the responsibility of writing things down. *Tuge' pâpa'*, she’d say. Write it down! My grandmother knew how to print and sign her name in English at an early age, but having gotten only as far as the second grade, she felt awkward reading, writing, and speaking the language. Instead, she got others like me to do the deed. I would write just about everything on anything for her. Names, addresses, numbers, recipes, and directions on napkins, remittance stubs, money orders, thank you cards, and *chenchule'* (a gift, that today usually comes in the form of money) envelopes. I was constantly writing things down for her.

Even my Chamorro mother, who went as far as high school and studied hairdressing and cosmetology in Oklahoma shortly after marrying my white American father in 1964, felt awkward speaking and writing English. Only

after deciding she couldn't stomach the sight of blood as a candy stripper did she relinquish her dreams of becoming a nurse. She decided to study cosmetology only because, she tells me half-jokingly, she had already bought the white nursing uniform and needed to make use of it. Although having a better command of the language than my grandmother, my mother comes from that generation of Chamorros who still feel awkward speaking "proper" English.⁴ My aunt tells me (again, half-jokingly) that while growing up she and my mom would remind each other, after speaking a few English phrases, to "save some English for tomorrow!"

Even after becoming a successful proprietor of her own salon and beauty supply store some twenty years after first establishing herself as a hairdresser in Guam, there are times my mother feels her English is still not good enough. I think sometimes my mother and my grandmother, even if they didn't know what I was studying in school, were satisfied just knowing that a college degree would mean I could speak and write better English. Or, as my mother would put it, I was good at putting words together. For my grandmother, it meant I could now help my mom with her business.

And so like the dough that stuck to my grandmother's rolling pin while making her famous sweet bread, or the Yigo red dirt that stuck to her hands while working her award-winning garden, or like the semipermanent color that stuck to my mother's hands while dyeing someone's hair, the phrase, *tuge' p pa'*, has clung to my consciousness. Over the years, the concept of writing it down would come to have many different meanings for me.

For example, *tuge' p pa'* has not just been about writing things down for my grandmother and my mother but also for myself. It's not just about writing down names, addresses, and numbers for my grandmother and writing proposals and letters for my mother but also about recording names of great-grandmothers and great-grandfathers. It's been about writing of birthing experiences during my grandmother's time and the revelation for people like my mom who never knew she was a *pattera* baby. I was surprised to discover that my mom didn't know she was delivered by a *pattera* until I began my research and probing into prewar birthing experiences. Why would such things have been kept secret or considered private? And what can I say about my intervention, my role as the writer of these things? Undoubtedly, the process of writing it down has revealed a complex Chamorro past of which I am a part. I would like to think of my scholarship as but one of the many "freedom projects" that features a conscious, if at times ambivalent, desire to write things down,⁵ to claim for myself/ourselves what Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar (quoted in Hirsch, 1990) have called the "authority of authorship" (416).

Such authority is what underwrote the production of the *Hale'-ta* (our roots) series of textbooks produced in Guam by a locally mandated government body called the Political Status Educational Coordination Commission.⁶ As a staffer for the commission, I researched and wrote the first volume of a subseries called *I Manfâyi* (The Wise Ones). The text, a “who’s who” in Chamorro history, features short biographical sketches of prominent men and women and of “unsung” makers of Guam’s history. *I Manfâyi* is a good local example of the authority of authorship as claimed in freedom projects. The very fact that I was collecting stories about what Chamorros did and most especially what Chamorro women did from Chamorros alone was liberating and rewarding. Such local narratives gave credence to a native agency that had long been marginalized or altogether dismissed in canonical representations and even in more local, contemporary histories (e.g., Carano-Sanchez, 1964; Sanchez, 1988; Rogers, 1995).

At face value, the project required that I read between the lines to ascertain native agency where colonial texts had stripped it, or to listen carefully to the stories handed down by descendents, and to take them and write them into liberating possibilities for posterity. It is this multiple process of handing down, these multiple forms of delivering what Alice Walker identifies as the “anonymous” narratives of baking, gardening, hairstyling, and delivering babies that I think constitute what she also calls the “creative spark.” To the extent that these involve what Marianne Hirsch (1990) identifies as “maternal narratives,” or “tradition(s) of contemporary writing that defines itself (themselves) as a (grand)daughterly tradition in relation to a complicated maternal past” (415), they become for me authentic and legitimate modes of crafting and articulating Chamorro histories. They are authentic and legitimate because, as a daughter and granddaughter, I am only the latest in an ongoing process of writing down what a Chamorro matrilineage deems important. As Trinh T. Minh-ha (1989) has observed,

The story is older than my body, my mother’s, my grandmother’s.
For years we have been passing it on so that it may live, shift, and
circulate. So that it may become larger than its proper measure,
always larger than its own in-significance. (137)

But, as alluded to earlier, I am also ambivalent about this noble project of writing it down and especially so in the context of writing academia, which I’ve already experienced as a rigid system of standards and rules. Academia, of course, has also been complicit with colonial rule in general, as Edward Said (1978) has critically demonstrated. And, as native Pacific scholars have begun to argue ever since, this complicity between academic writing and

colonialism is especially true in the Pacific Islands and in American territories like Guam (Diaz, 1994; Teaiwa, 1995; Smith, 2000; Diaz and Kauanui, 2001).

And then I also think about people like my grandmother and mother whose experiences have prompted and enabled my labor but who would at the same time find the fruits of this labor—scholarship—potentially intimidating and inaccessible.⁷ Even now, as I continue to examine the intersections of race, empire, and gender in the early twentieth century colonial project in Guam, and what the U.S. Navy called the “long road to rehabilitation,” I am still reminded of an uncle who once told me that instead of writing a thesis on the pattered I should just write a novel about them that “everyone can appreciate.”⁸ Or even still, according to one aunt, I should write children’s books. My family’s point, of course, is that I should write simply, so that everyone might understand what I have to say.

Yet, I’ve also discovered that esoteric and impenetrable writing is not the exclusive villain. Clear, readable prose is also problematic for many reasons. For starters, the political and analytical turn to “discourse” teaches us that language, no matter how clear, is neither opaque nor innocent, and that clarity in expression will always come at the cost of obscuring a counter-narrative. Remembering something entails forgetting something else. This forgetting, or absence, argues Michel-Rolph Trouillot (1995), is “constitutive of the process of historical production. . . . Silences are inherent in history because any single event enters history with some of its constituting parts missing” (49). In the case of my research, much of the present-day discourse about the pattered is consciously about remembering and celebrating their importance, particularly today when the postwar institutionalization of modern health systems on Guam has been a big factor in their phasing-out.⁹

In this context, much is made of the supposed differences between postwar (“modern”) Guam and prewar (“traditional”) Guam, as invoked in the common marker *antes de gera* (before the war). *Antes de gera* life, it seems, was simple. Life was peaceful. Life was tranquil. The war disrupted that lifestyle and forever changed the island and the people. And just as life on that side of the war tends to get idealized or romanticized through nostalgic recollections, figures like the pattered likewise get remembered in heavily affectionate terms that tend to smooth out tensions and conflicts surrounding their lives and practices, especially under colonial surveillance.¹⁰

This postwar nostalgia and celebration certainly has to do with the way that these women and their predecessors, the lay pattered, tended to be marginalized, sometimes demonized, in colonial discourse.¹¹ But is all that we have in writing our recollections a choice between romanticization or demonization? Toni Morrison (1992) speaks directly to this in reflecting

critically about the power of her black consciousness and the place of writing and its potential to replicate oppression. She writes, “I am a black writer struggling with and through a language that can powerfully evoke and enforce hidden signs of racial superiority, cultural hegemony, and dismissive ‘othering’ of people and language. . . . My vulnerability would lie in romanticizing blackness rather than demonizing it” (xi).

In my case, the “vulnerability” that comes from responding to demonization/romanticization would be in forgetting that *antes de gera*, the *pattera* were also the subject of scornful reproach and deep suspicion within different sectors of Chamorro society for their relative mobility and especially their close working proximity to American naval men in particular, or the fact that there were different “classes” of *pattera* depending on the type and level of training and the location of their work. One man, for example, considered his mother a *pattera* simply because she had a midwife’s license and delivered babies during the war. Other *manâmkô* (elderly), I spoke to, however, did not remember (consider?) her as a *pattera* because although licensed, she, they seemed to recall, worked mainly in the hospital and not independently going from village to village the way (real?) *pattera* did. When I pointed to the fact that she delivered babies, one response was that wartime was a special circumstance. Often, in postwar narratives of recollection by family and clan members, researchers, and now codified in publications like *I Manfâyi* (in which I was directly involved), such tensions and differences tend to get washed out in favor of neat, nostalgic, romanticized narratives.

At the same time, there are instances today where such messiness of prewar distinctions—born of colonially imposed and native-ordered social and political hierarchies—carry over into the postwar years, such that on occasion somebody might openly question whether this or that *pattera* was really a “bonafide” nurse. Recalling one such instance, the son of one such *pattera*, Frank Aguero, stood up at a public forum (honoring the *pattera*) and was enraged:

I remember growing up [knowing] that my mother was a midnight wife [sic], or *pattera*, and also a nurse [my emphasis]. Somebody told me a few years ago that my mother wasn’t a nurse. And I said that’s a bunch of malarkey. Now let me tell you something about my mom . . . my mom wore a cap, a nurse’s cap, and she works at the dressing station between [the] post office and Leary School. I remember it so well. She went [from] village to village from Umatac up to Machananao feeding people who were sick. Believe me you when I tell you that I’m very moved of a situation like this, because

my mom is the greatest nurse and midnight wife I can ever honor. Why? Let me tell you why. When all the midnight wife left Agana and fled to the hills during the Japanese time, who remains in Agana? My mom, my mother. She ate a few barley and a little *gadao* fish from time to time and survived. But she made sure she treated all the Chamorros who needed help. All of those years . . . I remember so well because I used to walk from Machananao all the way to Agana to give 'em a few fish, *lemmai* (breadfruit without seeds) and a few *dokdok* (breadfruit with seeds) called "*hutu*" to her. I remember my mom. I'm not degrading some of the midnight wives that are here. And I'm telling you right now that they deserve a lot of credit too. But my mom, everybody knows my mom. And looking around I don't think none of the people that she had delivered [is] still alive at this time. She is better known as "Tan Marian Dogge'." That Marian Dogge' from the Taitano family. That's all ladies and gentlemen. I just want you to know that she is a great person.¹²

Aguero's rage is justified, I think. The person who questioned his mother's status did so perhaps because his mother did not belong to the cohort of Navy nurse-trained women from the *mannakhilo'* or "upper class" families. Or perhaps because Tan Marian Dogge' was not a Chief Native Nurse or did not work exclusively at the hospital. And yet when other "nurse"-trained midwives fled the capital at the outbreak of the war, who remained? "My mother," declares Aguero, emphasizing her presence against those who might deny or dismiss her worth. In his bid to honor his mother and confront such misconceptions of the past (and present), Aguero reminds people that his mother wore a "nurse's cap," the quintessential sign of a nurse. And by pointing out that his mother worked at the dressing station, Aguero implies that Tan Marian Dogge' not only cared for pregnant women in private (less visible, less official?) homes in the villages but treated the ill and injured in public (more visible, official and professional?) spaces. More than recalling her presence to honor her, to include her in the record, Aguero's recollection calls attention to important tensions and differences among the historical experiences of the pattered that tend to get smoothed over in postwar narratives.

Hence, the heroic process of writing down something that someone has selected as important to be recorded, identified by someone as that which should be remembered, needs to also be scrutinized for what gets deselected and forgotten as a consequence. This critical injunction raises very quickly a dilemma for me, the would-be obedient (grand)daughter-writer, beyond

issues of clarity and prose. The need to interrogate motives and interests, to question the choices of and reasons for what to remember and what to forget, becomes a process fraught with questioning nothing less than the intent and the substance of my elders' desires. The predicament for me in cultural context is that this line of questioning begins to position me as “*embilikera*,” nose-y at best, and “*desatenta*,” disrespectful at worst. Although such descriptions would really cut deep, at first, eventually, I think I could probably live with such appellations—I mean, there are other, more biting names that I can think of. But there is the more significant liability that those who matter the most just might stop asking me to *tuge' pâpa'*. And that, I think, would be the worst.

Acknowledgments

Dângkolo na si yu'os ma'âse' to Caroline Sinavaiana and J. Kēhaulani Kauanui for the invitation to submit. *Mas dângkolo na si yu'os ma'âse'* to the pattera and their families for sharing their stories, especially Joaquina Babauta Herrera (“Tan Kina”), Āna Rosario Mendiola (“Tan Ānan Siboyas”), and Rosalia Ulloa Mesa (“Tan Liang”). I am forever grateful to my grandmother Maria San Nicolas Taitano, my mother Maria Taitano DeLisle, and to the next generation handing down the creative spark—Nicole, Gabriela, and Eva, and Maria Sol—for giving meaning to scholarship and to writing it down, and to Vicente M. Diaz, as always, for his love and support, and critical read.

NOTES

1. My research on *i pattera siha* was conducted for a master's thesis, in which an earlier draft of this essay appears. See DeLisle, 2001: Chapter One. The master's thesis itself originated from oral histories of prewar midwives that I conducted for a public history project under the Political Status Education Coordinating Commission from 1993 to 1995.

2. The plural form for pattera (Chamorro midwife) is “*i pattera siha*.” However, when conversing in English and using Chamorro words in between, it's not uncommon to use the singular form of the Chamorro word to also signify the plural.

3. The origin of the word “pattera” comes from the Spanish word “*partera*,” which also means midwife. Hence, the word “pattera” refers not only to those women trained as nurse-midwives by the U.S. Navy beginning in the early 1900s, which my research focuses on, it also refers to their predecessors, the lay pattera of *i tiempón Españót* (the Spanish times). Although the navy called these new trainees “nurse-midwives” or “nurses,” the Chamorros still continued to call these women “pattera” in the American period. As I argue in my master's thesis, in spite of being trained by the navy in modern methods, some

of the nurse-trained pattera continued to practice age-old beliefs used and handed down by their predecessors. For example, some nurse-trained pattera continued to bury the afterbirth and the cord, and relied on traditional massage and medicine and old beliefs surrounding pregnancy and childbirth. For a history of naval health policies in Guam, see Hattori, 2004, based on her dissertation (1999) that includes a chapter on the pattera. My master's thesis coincided with Hattori's dissertation and was completed before her later book publication and revised pattera chapter.

4. Like my grandmother, my mother's first language is Chamorro. My grandmother was among the generation of Chamorros who were prohibited from speaking their native language in public schools.

5. Here, I am working with Donna Haraway's definition of "freedom projects" to describe political and feminist projects that contest traditional narratives of science produced predominantly by white, upper- and middle-class males. See Olson and Hirsch (eds.), 1995: 46. This work continues the work begun by Laura Marie Torres Souder and the effort by one *hagan hãga'* (blood daughter) to "recover the forgotten ones." See Souder, 1992a, for her analysis of Chamorro women's experiences and the figure of *si nana* (mother).

6. See: *Hale'-ta* 1993a, b, 1994, 1995, 1996a, b, 1997. The *Hale'-ta* books are now published through the Department of Chamorro Affairs.

7. Here, I think of what Kamala Visweswaran (1994) says about her grandmother's response (confusion?) to the academic work she is doing—to the misunderstandings, missed understandings stemming from language, generational, cultural and class barriers (xii). Also pertinent here is an article by Teresia Teaiwa (1995) who expresses her ambivalence and commitment to doing native Pacific Studies within the field of Cultural Studies, and who has grappled with the "desire to contribute real work . . . and the impulse to refuse the burden of (native) representation" (68–69). I, too, have grappled with being in the (privileged?) position of, as Vince Diaz reminds me, "delivering the cultural goodies" for other peoples' consumption (pers. comm., December 1995).

8. The master's work on pattera and public health has pushed me to look deeper at relations between native Chamorros and the U.S. Navy—especially white Navy wives—and Chamorro investments in American modernity. Part of the more recent work, "Native Lives/Navy Wives: Landlooking in the Upper Michigan Peninsula and the Guam Flag," was presented at the following conferences: "Remaking Asia Pacific Studies: Knowledge, Power and Pedagogy" at the University of Hawai'i, Manoa, 2–5 December 2002; "Rethinking Pacific Studies" at the University of California, Santa Cruz, May 2004; "Race Matters" at Columbia University, 15–16 April 2005.

9. See Cruz 1997, 2001.

10. I argue in my thesis (2001), for example, that pattera who were scrutinized by the navy, themselves became surveyors of the native population, (re)articulating the navy's discourse on health and cleanliness, and enforcing rules, particularly among pregnant Chamorro women. Getting Chamorro women to comply with navy procedures (such as getting them to see the doctor in the clinic at the beginning of their pregnancy) was at times difficult, potentially confrontational for the pattera. In other instances of modern surveillance, the pattera, who was expected immediately after the birth to accurately fill out birth

certificates and submit them to the Department of Public Health, ran the risk of neglecting family obligations (Note: It was not unusual for the pattera to stay away from her family two or three consecutive days before, during, and after a delivery). One pattera indicated that on one occasion, the recording and reporting of vital statistics would have to wait so that she could check on her family (92).

11. The lay, older pattera of Guam's Spanish era were transplanted by the younger, nurse-trained pattera. The former were represented in prewar naval writings as primitive menaces to society, and hence they needed to be replaced by the younger, "more adaptable" cohort trained by the U.S. Navy. In the postwar years, modern discourses on health, together with institutional forces, eventually contributed to the phasing-out of nurse-trained pattera, as well.

12. "Forum on Guam's *Pattera*: Their Story and Legacy," at which I served as Moderator for the "Woman, Culture, and History" panel. Sponsored by the Guam Humanities Council. Government House, 11 April 1997. Coincidentally enough, Agüero's reference to his mother as a "midnight wife" is fitting because pattera delivered babies during all hours of the day. However, I think such a reference is really more of an indication of "English, the Chamorro way."

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Marie-Hélène Villierme, Piharamata Tumahai *Smoking Her* Taho. Reproduced, by permission, from Marie-Hélène Villierme and Dominique Morvan, *Visages de Polynésie/ Faces of Polynesia*, 18.

Mauri

Alice Te Punga Somerville

A round white wreath
tied with a silver cord
hangs in front of my window.
Most people who know me well
still haven't seen it there
even though it's been in my every home.

My mother made it for me
while I read Alice Walker
and my aunty tried to die.
Her last breaths are held in my wreath:
they rustle the white fabric
and make it tap against the open window frame.

I guess you could say
it's just the wind that makes it move
I guess I could say that too.

But my spirit wouldn't agree
because it hears her still,
whispering to me.

Pacific Studies, Vol. 30, Nos. 1/2—March/June 2007

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My Pigeon, from the Samoan

Caroline Sinavaiana

La'u Lupe 'Ua Lele

La'u lupe ua lele, lele 'i le vao
maoa,

Talofa e i la'u pele, la'u pele
'ua leiloa.

Ta'aga e a teine o lo'o 'ua gasolo mai
O'u mata e tilotilo 'e te le 'o sau ai.

My Pigeon

My pigeon has flown into the
dense forest.

My dear, my darling is lost.

Here come the young girls walking,
My eyes look, but still you have not
come.

(Traditional)

**

for my mother

The air rushes
with your leaving,
wings brushing tall
trees in long shadow.

Your heart trails light
tracing forest path
its dim way to
fragrant altars

of maile and moso'oi.
I wait near deep
woods and watch
for you.

Pacific Studies, Vol. 30, Nos. 1/2—March/June 2007

Reprinted, with permission, from Caroline Sinavaiana, "My Pigeon," eds. James Thomas Stevens and Caroline Sinavaiana, *Mohawk/Samoa Transmigrations* (Oakland, CA: Subpress, 2005), 57, 59.

LIVING SMALL

Kim Meredith

THE SEVEN-FOUR-SIX BUS MOVED AHEAD like a fat snake through the city's main streets. Stopping abruptly, it twisted left toward the curb, swelling with office workers, lawyers, tourists, and students. The engine charged as the bus veered right to join the line of traffic, slowly winding its way through to the outer suburbs.

It was hot and sticky; the urge to pull open a window weighed against the smell of exhaust fumes that would pour in. Luisa sat at the very back, sandwiched between a teenage boy, his head tilting back and forth as though loosely attached, music blasting into his ears from headphones, and a neatly dressed woman carrying a large bouquet of wilted red roses.

Along the outskirts of the city, students and business suits alighted, Luisa remembering when she and Ielu lived here in her grandparents' villa after they were married. It was like most houses in this neighbourhood then, teeming with large families and friends, the comings and goings observed from verandas.

There was ma Isa, cousin Tupu, and his wife Serena, Uncle Gerhart and his wife Celia, and the young girls Veronica and little Luana, who went to the Catholic girls' school nearby returning home on the weekends.

She missed the sounds of the old house and the feeling of being enveloped by people. They threw a party the summer she graduated from university, the house flowing with music, family, neighbors, and a few classmates. Her grandmother's speech was unexpected. Clutching her eldest son Gerhart's arm for balance, Isa stood from her armchair, her short stature prominent amidst the tall figures crowding around. Waiting for the room to fill with

silence, Isa's index finger nestled against the tiny groove above her top lip to shush everyone. Her voice trembled slightly from age. "Luisa," she began, her head shaking slowly from side to side, "She's a dreamer."

She told of the past few years when she had come across her granddaughter alone at the kitchen table in the middle of the night, surrounded by piles of books and paper. First, she decided Luisa must be suffering from an illness of the mind, which came maybe from her late husband Joseph's side, a madness eating away in here, she said pointing to her head. But as time wore on she found herself waking routinely at night, drawn to the quiet activity in the kitchen. She sat up with Luisa, out of concern she told herself, but there were questions that begged asking. What was so important to keep her awake during the night; why couldn't it wait till the morning?

Grandmother and granddaughter, both armed with hot mugs of tea soon resembled student and teacher. The nights running into weeks and months, light discussions built toward arguments. Luisa argued that dead philosophers' visions helped create modern civilization, while Isa simply argued that the daily toil of human beings had trudged them to this very day with the help of God.

"My granddaughter has courage, the courage to make a path and follow her dream. I think maybe that comes from my side of the family."

There was a chorus of laughter and the raising of glasses as they toasted Luisa. Ielu had squeezed her hand, only making her cry more.

"Where'd you get to?"

Stepping out from behind the crowd of standing passengers was a woman from work. So far they had only waved in passing, Luisa struggling to match the new names and faces. She shuffled close to the window as the young woman with curly hair filled the seat next to her, her bare solid arms overlapping toward Luisa's thin limbs. The proximity gave them the appearance of close friends.

"You had that far away look on your face, like you were daydreaming."

Luisa laughed, her weariness receding as she turned to face her coworker. "It's that place, makes you brain dead," she responded kindly.

"You don't have to tell me. So. . . what's a lady like you doing there?"

Luisa swallowed hard, recalling the manager, a dumpy woman reeking of a floral deodorant that barely disguised her persistent perspiration. She had made small talk peering over Luisa's shoulder while she filled in her personal details.

"Don't worry," the manager said reading her expression. "It's just talk, that's all. You'll be OK love."

They rode along for a few moments in silence, Luisa sensing her companion's eagerness to talk.

"It's Luisa, eh? That's pretty. Everyone calls me Bar. You wanna know how I ended up at Emcet?"

Luisa nodded, sunk back into the seat's vinyl cushioning feeling the heaviness of exhaustion. At 5:30 a.m., she'd risen to make lunches for the children, pouring bowls of cornflakes, gathering clothes into piles, and searching under beds and chairs for separated shoes. In the bathroom, she lined everyone's toothbrushes along the vanity top, a spread of paste on each. She felt like a ghost mother, knowing Ielu wouldn't wake them for another two hours. She rushed over notes, dressing casually in jeans and one of Ielu's shirts tied around the waist, then set out for the bus stop across the street to head into the city.

By 7:00 a.m., she was standing by a white board teaching foreigners to speak English with a Kiwi twang. Luisa abandoned the text books for clippings from the morning newspaper. Her students were mostly male and mesmerized reading aloud from the sports pages, the older Asian businessmen willing to read the golfing articles several times over.

By midday, she was glad to be alone with an hour to kill, before walking up the hill to the university. She missed the last lecture of the day, her decision to stretch out across the benches ending in sleep. She was roused by other students trying to get past, waking awkwardly to catch herself lightly snoring, her mind racing ahead to her 3:30 p.m. shift. Emcet was a fifteen-minute walk up through the domain, Luisa arriving with her lungs bursting.

The hydraulic squish of brakes brought her back to Bar's voice in midsentence; the bus stopped for passengers.

"So you see, it's so me. I figure I'm an expert on human behavior. I've always wanted to do social work. Here's to those crazy lonely bastards we're paid to talk to all day."

The few remaining passengers were staring, Bar's voice carrying the length of the bus.

"You can add the people there as well . . . that supervisor," Luisa said referring to the woman who occupied the cubicle next to her. Although Luisa had only observed the tip of her blonde head, she'd become familiar with her honey-toned voice in the past fortnight, running at full speed building to a high crescendo.

"She's outrageous, her mouth, I've never come across . . .," Luisa faltered, embarrassed although not exactly sure for whom. Bar came to her rescue.

"Come across a dominatrix? Oh yeah. She's played that stupid twat for almost two years."

Luisa's jaw dropped.

"You should see your face," Bar laughed. The urge was too great; Luisa joined in, laughing like an overly excited schoolgirl.

Bar looked beyond her, past the window, reaching across to ring the bell, a blanket of giggling hysteria covering them. She got up and stepped out of the bus doors, her fleshly figure moving elegantly in a black lycra dress.

"I'll see you tomorrow," Luisa called out, still grinning. Bar waved from the pavement, her smile transforming her plain face. Luisa watched as she walked toward a small cream stucco house surrounded by Pohutakawa trees that were just beginning to flower.

Telu came into view minutes later as Luisa's bus pulled into their street. He was standing outside by the front of their house in a misshapen hat attacking the weeds surrounding the letterbox. She could tell he was upset by the way he grabbed furiously at the green shoots.

"Baby," he sighed. "Your kids are driving me crazy."

"My kids now?" Luisa laughed at her husband.

He explained that Ant had woken crying for her, searching the house, inconsolable until Louise the eldest promised to take him to the park after school. Jeff couldn't find his homework. Tino refused to take his antibiotics. And he had to bribe Stevie to shower.

"You want a cuppa?" Luisa asked escaping indoors.

**

"Ooh, I just love your hair," came a voice through the cubicle wall.

Luisa checked her watch, only a few minutes till the shift finished. She was finally getting into the swing of things or so she thought, gathering her books, shifting her bag next to her, ready to leave on the hour.

"Shut the fuck up, you talk when I tell you to."

A mixture of warmth and uneasiness arose in Luisa as she scanned the plain walls dotted with instructional posters

"A ringing phone should be answered in three rings."

"Never leave your phone alone; that call is paying your wage."

"Speak clearly with a smile; always leave the caller wanting more."

"They're not going to help you any. Hi, I'm Robyn." It was the voice from next door. "I was talking to you before. Your hair, it's gorgeous, I've always wanted long curls."

The introduction hung in midair, Luisa unprepared for Robyn's girth stretching across the door frame like a lumpy mattress hanging over a bed. She wore a baby doll blue dress, layers of flesh running into crevices. Luisa cringed as she forced herself up from her seat. Robyn's modest but large

image was far from the mental picture she had painted over the past few weeks. Luisa had wrongly assumed anyone so blatantly immoral like Robyn would have the physical features that commanded instant attention. She wasn't sure whether to feel relieved or silly.

"Thank you," she finally stammered, Luisa's arm stretching forward to shake Robyn's tiny hand. "Your hair, it's . . . lovely," she returned the compliment.

The large woman beckoned to Luisa, folding her arm into her own as they joined the shift of women preparing to leave.

**

Ielu accused Luisa of being too serious, they'd met at a mid-Christmas dinner late one evening, in a Malaysian restaurant in the upper back streets of the city. Luisa was tipsy, talking across the table at her girlfriends about the arts degree she planned to start the next year. Coming from a large family she said politics was a natural choice, the years of constant negotiation.

"We were good Catholics, fish and chips every Friday night, no big deal," her wrists making sweeping gestures in the air.

"Ugh, uh. Wrong," she answered herself. "If I went to get the tomato sauce, it was all over. By the time I came back from the kitchen, my brothers had eaten everything."

Her friends were enjoying Luisa.

"You had to present your argument, why everyone should have a turn. See, see . . . politics," she needled away like an excited schoolgirl. There was a small round of applause, Luisa rising to take a bow.

Ielu made his move. "I think you're missing the point," he butted in, placing his drink on the table and taking the chair next to Luisa. "It's convincing them they didn't need sauce."

She turned quickly, her nostrils flaring, preparing to confront the stranger. Facing him she saw the daring in his eyes and the smile behind them. It was true.

Luisa looked for meaning in every aspect of her life. When the dirty laundry piled up, she believed their life had too much clutter. No mail for several days meant they were spiritually stranded. Any plumbing problems reflected their own blockages brought about by outstanding debts and unfulfilled promises. She cried the weekend the toilet became blocked, apologizing to the plumber for calling him out, remaining with him while he stabbed inside the bowl with a long steel pipe, like a madman fishing.

"I can't blame anyone else . . . you told me not to rush in . . ." Luisa began.

Ielu was busy in the kitchen trying to prepare a meal while their youngest, Ant, drove toy trucks around his feet. “Baby let it go. Who even cares?” He guessed there was more to her tears than the overflowing sewage.

“I’m trying to finish this chapter on social change—instead I keep seeing these freaks sitting at home, one hand on the phone and the other on their . . .”

“Jesus,” Ielu stepped out from the kitchen careful not to trip over the toys parked in the doorway, raising a wooden spatula high in protest. “We’ve been through worse.”

Luisa’s studies had cost them, unable to fit full-time work around such a busy schedule. At first they appeared shipshape, but as time went by, they paid bills only when services were threatened. When a notice arrived warning of their car’s pending repossession, Luisa waded into their financial nightmare. They were relieved when the first offers of extra work came her way. Luisa was shaking her head.

“It doesn’t mean anything,” he kept on. “Those bimbos are filling your head with mush.”

“It’s not like that. Once you get to know them, it’s different,” Luisa argued.

Ielu went back to the haven of his stove. He loved cooking and preferred it to most of the tasks around the house, grateful that his wife was busy elsewhere.

“I’m part of that world, even though I feel like a tourist, and the work . . . well, think of the material,” Luisa added.

Ielu came out and hugged her. He kissed her forehead while she poured over her thesis on the computer screen.

“Why am I doing this?” She asked out loud.

He walked back to the stove top adding slices of beef to the dish, the pan smoking with the introduction of the new ingredients.

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The summer sky was clear, dusk still several hours away as the small group of women began emerging from the lift of the basement office. It was just after 6:00 p.m., Luisa’s wispy figure trailing behind the single file cutting a path down the narrow side streets out to the main road. She blinked hard, her eyes adjusting to the natural daylight, relieved to be at the end of another tiresome day.

Luisa enjoyed hanging back. It gave her the chance to examine the shapes and postures of the others; and besides, she wasn’t sure if she wanted to be seen out with them. She checked her reflection in the bold shop fronts they were passing, searching for any noticeable similarities with the women who were now separating into motorists and bus passengers.

“I mean I’ve read about it, but I wouldn’t know how to clear my mind, I’ve always got stuff going on.”

Robyn’s latest quest for losing weight was meditation; she had been canvassing her coworkers on the subject. Luisa felt inside her bag for coins along the groove of the bottom edges, wishing she had driven. They reached the bus stop. She checked over her shoulder watching for the seven-four-six.

“And then you’ve got to chant, like mom, mom. You ever done that, meditate?” Robyn called back to Luisa.

Luisa recalled the meditation group, the early evenings spent chanting. The moments she would open one eye and check the group, feeling almost foolish to find everyone still, like sleeping bullfrogs, herself unsure.

“No,” she replied.

Although the bus shelter was empty Luisa knew better than to take a seat. She had quickly noticed the natural hierarchy among her workmates. The women arranged themselves in order of service. The two eldest, both nearing their late sixties had been with the company for most of its four years. They were the first to take seats on the long smooth aluminium bench. Robyn simply left no room for the others.

Watching the two elders, Luisa couldn’t help thinking of her old aunties. Sheila, who was fond of passing photos of her grandchildren around the lunchroom, was unremarkable in a crowd, plain and straight as an arrow. Luisa had warmed to her instantly. And energetic Jean, widowed twice, flirted at every opportunity, saying it kept her young. Callers sent gifts to the pair regularly in the vain hope of meeting them.

She heard the roar of the bus as it appeared at the top of the hill, but it was a car horn that made her look across the street.

“They’re coming to training,” her husband yelled across the traffic.

“We going football,” Ant and Stevie sang out to their mother. “You coming?”

Luisa dashed over shaking her head, careful of the vehicles whizzing past. She reached in the back, her hand brushing the heads of her babies.

“Mummy’s gonna take the bus,” she told her family. “It’s been a long day and watching a bunch of old men pretending they’re still boys doesn’t compare with a nice cup of tea and putting my feet up.”

Ielu laughed watching his wife as she sprinted back to the bus stop.

She had to work her way to the rear of the bus hopeful of a seat, the driver cramming the passengers in so tightly they didn’t need to hold onto the overhead handles to keep their balance. There was still a queue of people when the bus doors closed. As they started to pull away Sheila and Jean emerged from the stranded group yelling frantically at the driver. He pleaded his

passenger limit was full. In return, they banged against the door, their large bags battering against the window. People were laughing.

The driver's apologetic tone soured as they hurled a battery of obscenities against him. "You ladies ought to act your age."

Luisa's embarrassment rose as Sheila ran onto the road chasing after the bus, her upturned finger proudly displayed, her hair hanging over her eyes so that she appeared faceless. There was a break in the traffic and the bus lurched forward. Sheila grew smaller as they advanced up the street.

Luisa felt badly that she'd said nothing but changed her mind on hearing some of the passengers laughing about her workmates. A feeling of dread ran down her spine landing heavy in the pit of her stomach. Suddenly the tiny pin she imagined that kept her body intact—held her soul together when the world was rushing at her—worked itself free. She had glimpsed in those women something familiar, what she feared most—that her dream, the years of hard work, the late nights of poring over text books and staring at a computer screen had led here—a dead end.

Luisa fought back tears and stilled the tremble within. Her legs were starting to give way. She felt herself sinking at the thought she was Sheila, Jean, and all the other women put together. The heat from the other passengers pressing on her was unbearable. The driver braked sharply, causing Luisa and those around her to reach for anything solid. The air became stifling and warm, her breath coming quickly in shallow gulps. She remembered her grandmother all those years ago telling everyone how proud she was of the granddaughter who had gone to university.

"I'm a fraud," thought Luisa.

The other passengers began jostling around her but there was no room to move.

Luisa began to fall. An outstretched pudgy arm pulled her up and over to a seat.

"Crikey girl, you all right!"

Luisa started apologizing. "I don't know. . ."

"You're not . . .," Bar started. "You're not up the duff?"

She shook her head baffled, feeling awkward noticing the stares of the other passengers.

"What you looking at?" Bar admonished those around her.

They rode along in silence for a few minutes before the dam burst; Luisa babbling about everyone expecting big things, how she couldn't let them down, and if only they knew how ordinary she really was, living a small life with big dreams. And the men for whom she felt only disgust. Being forced to get them off.

Bar listened then pressed the bell. She led them off the bus and hailed a taxi.

“Come on, I know just the thing.”

It was a short walk through a series of one-way streets before they arrived at a group of flats on the border of an industrial park. They climbed to the third floor and Luisa was grateful that Ielu had the small ones with him. Bar strode along like a mother hen, and Luisa’s shoulders slumped forward. Feeling beyond repair, she followed closely not wanting to disappoint her younger friend.

They stopped at a door surrounded by cacti and other succulents. There was a strong smell of lavender from a small potted bush, where Bar unearthed a door key.

“Mum, just dropped in for a cuppa,” she yelled as they stepped over the threshold.

They walked through a dim well-kept kitchen into a foyer mobbed with ballerina dolls and old family photos before coming into a cosy lounge. It opened to a small veranda, which jutted out to overlook a block of workshops and small warehouses. A woman’s voice beckoned them out.

It was the stout figure of Robyn.

“Your mother?” stammered Luisa.

“How do you think I got the job?” Bar answered.

Mother and daughter laughed as they seated Luisa and poured her a beer. She shook her head, but there was no refusing. Bar filled her mother in, and Luisa pretended not to listen as she watched some men next door unload boxes from a container. She found their repetitive actions restful and soothing

“You need to get your eyes checked,” Robyn said turning toward her.

“I don’t understand,” said Luisa.

She led Luisa to the foyer. With her left foot she kicked the dolls out of the way to reveal portraits of her children, her sisters, and nephews and nieces. There were faded news clippings of a beautiful teenager in a satin ballet outfit, her blonde hair pinned perfectly into place. It took Luisa a few moments to work it out.

“It’s you.”

“You think you’re the only one with dreams,” said Robyn. “I’ve watched you, cowering away on your telephone too scared to say boo!”

“Too scared to say fuck,” Bar interrupted. “Hell, I’m surprised you’ve still got a job, you make any of them fullas come?”

Luisa looked away. She’d never really discussed the phone sex with anyone other than Ielu and even then the details were kept sketchy.

“I’m proud of what me and my baby does,” Robyn said pulling Bar in close.

“Yeah, beats working the picture theaters,” her daughter added dangling a cigarette between her fingers.

These women . . . they had seen right through her. Luisa started crying. They had so little to spare, yet they were baring their souls in a bid to shore her up.

Robyn strained to stand on the tips of her toes and brought her small feet together, raising one leg to extend the point, gliding a hand in an arc motion overhead. After being widowed in her twenties, she had buried her dreams of dancing on the stage.

"I know where I'm at, and her," Robyn said beating at her pendulous breasts while turning to her daughter. "This is my girl!"

Bar had tied her hair in plaits, which made her look like a young girl. "She's got a mouth on her."

"Abso-fuckin-lutely," Bar crowed.

"She gets the job done though, best time average in the whole company. Fullas ringing up from all over the show and who they asking for? My baby girl."

"But you," Robyn was turning on her coworker. "You've pissed me off right from the start," her face contorted, the bridge of her nose tensed up. "You've got something going for you, I know," Robyn was on a roll. "You're one of those smart ones. Bet you were an 'A' student right through school. A year from now you'll have forgotten all of this. And us."

Luisa sipped gingerly at her drink, wiping at the condensation as the glass fogged over. Her thesis would be finished in six months. So far there were no offers. The only possibility was an internship with one of the main television networks. Life would be different.

"You haven't got the stomach for this, have ya?"

Luisa had to agree.

They didn't speak and for a few minutes the only sound made came from the television in the next room. Luisa crossed the room, placed her arms around Robyn and sunk into her, squeezing her tight.

"You might be onto something. The meditation . . . It helps. Relaxes you," she said into Robyn's shoulder.

Her head was shaking as Robyn's sobs grew, Luisa felt as though she were clutching herself, their pain so familiar.

"Maybe," Robyn tried composing herself. "Look at us. We make a pair." They were both crying and laughing.

"You dry those tears love," Robyn told her. "Finish your drink. That family of yours be wondering where you got to."

"No hurry," Luisa surprised herself hearing the words out of her mouth.

"Choice!" said Bar running in. "Time for another beer."

She headed to the fridge door pulling it open. Her mother exchanged a knowing glance with Luisa, the sort parents do when they're feigning annoyance.

The two women were back out in the street; they were silent as they made their way along the factories toward the main street, daylight seeping away. Luisa checked her watch. She could still smell the lavender, and the faded photos of dreams danced in her mind. She smiled at the thought of her grandmother and Robyn and imagined their unease with the other. They were definitely from the sisterhood, Luisa thought. Her grandmother had soldiered on till the final moment. Robyn would be like that. They were the plodders who somehow made everything possible for women like Luisa.

It wasn't long before the seven-four-six came whirling around the corner. Bar climbed aboard and began hunting her pockets for fare. Luisa placed her money on the tray.

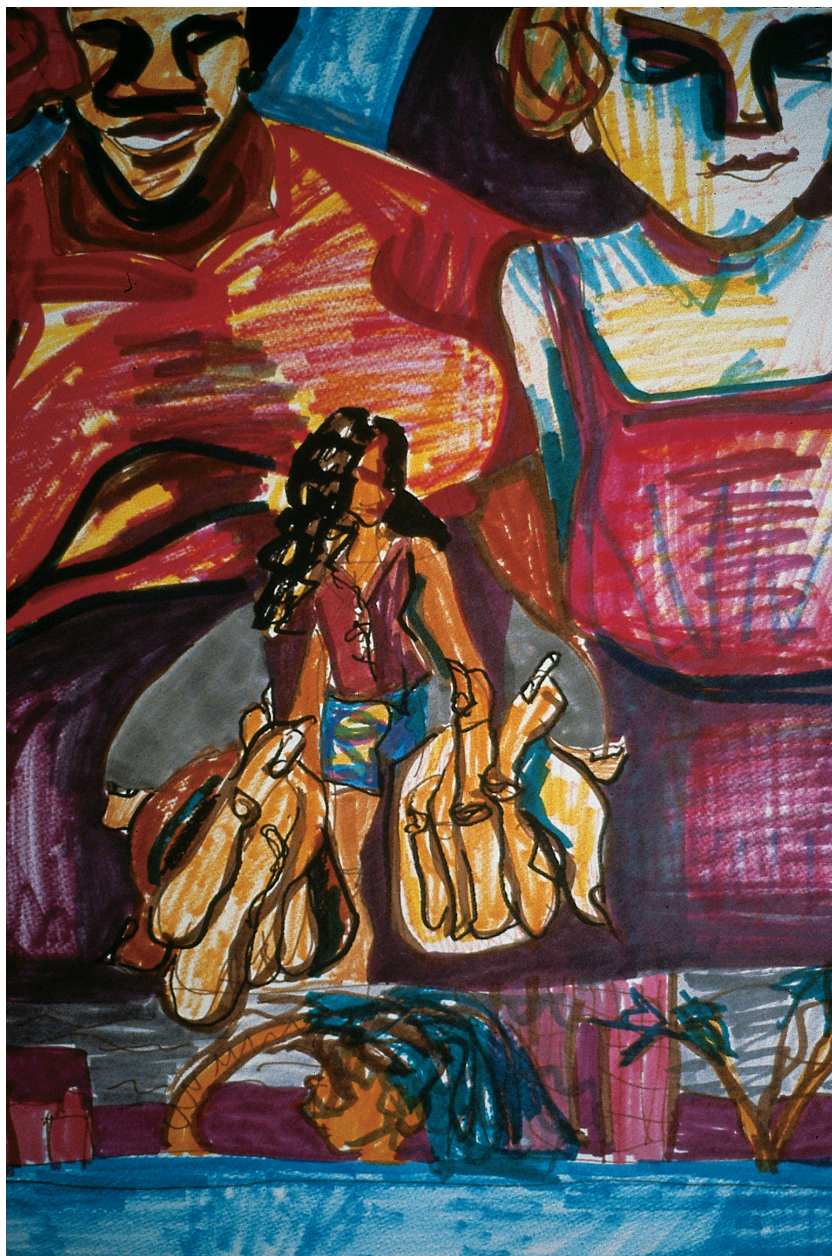
"This is for my friend and me."

The younger woman smiled and led them toward the rear of the bus. She told Luisa of her dreams one day to open a stall at the weekend markets selling odds and ends as well as jewellery she had made herself.

"Well, why not?" Luisa encouraged her.

"Yeah, why not," Bar repeated.

The bus moved away from the drab of the factories toward the outskirts of the city, through the green belt of parks and reserves, before slowly making its way out to the suburbs.



Jewel Castro, *Walking with My Grandmothers #1*. Reproduced by permission.

**DIALOGUING ACROSS THE PACIFIC: KŪKĀKŪKĀ AND THE
CULTIVATION OF WAHINE MAOLI IDENTITIES**

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Hilihewa ka mana'o ke'ole ke kūkākūkā. As thoughts can become miswoven when there is no discussion, so it is with our identities as *Wahine Maoli*, Native Hawaiian women, and the ensuing choices we make about how to live in this world. Other recent collaborative articles by *Kānaka Maoli* have used *kūkākūkā* to refer to face-to-face “talk-story” sessions. This *kūkākūkā* is different, as one of us is living in Hawai'i and the other in California. We used e-mail and telephone conversations to enable *kūkākūkā* spanning distances of time and space. As we communicate across generations and across our ocean home, we explore what it means for us to be *Wahine Maoli* in our respective positions as *'ohana*, activists, and academics. Through *kūkākūkā*, we weave the sails of our beings together in a generational continuum of family stories. The letters that follow are selections from this ongoing process.

Dear Mom,

Huge waves have been pounding the Santa Cruz coast for the last couple of days. A big swell came out of the west on Friday and hasn't let up since. We continue to make our daily trips to the ocean, but we have to settle for being spectators since the water is way too cold to even think about jumping in. I miss being able to watch Hina crawl around bare-bottomed in the sand like when we were home for Christmas break. I miss being surrounded by family, drama and conflict included. Now it's back to business as usual with school and dealing with the cold weather. Having the Pacific Ocean right

down the hill from us is our major source of comfort and connection to home, even if it is only on the cold fringes of the Pacific “rim.”

This afternoon, I took Hina for a leisurely walk along West Cliff Drive. We watched the waves crash on the outside. It wasn't a clear day but not too foggy either. High clouds blanketed the sky so that you couldn't really see any blue, and the light of the sun was diffused so that everything seemed to have a silvery wash of color over it. Hina and I lingered at a point along the cliffs. I tried to get her to notice the waves at their breaking point, saying “NALU” to her excitedly. She humored me for a while but kept getting distracted by the birds flying overhead. I was explaining to her how the waves that we were watching were kind of like her name, Kaiakahinali'i, the ocean waters that cause chiefs to tumble down. At nine months old, she may not have comprehended my story completely, but I knew that she could feel the power of the ocean.

As we stood there together, mother and daughter, I flashed back on the moment I first felt we connected while she was in the womb. It was the day before Nā Wahine o Ke Kai 1999 ... my second crossing of Ka'iwi channel from Moloka'i Island to O'ahu. Our canoe paddling crew was staying at the Kaluakoi Hotel on the west end of Moloka'i. Most of the women were resting up for the race the next day. On that still afternoon, I couldn't sleep and needed to be alone. I hadn't told any of my crew that I was four months pregnant, for fear that I wouldn't be allowed to race. Besides feeling isolated by my secret, I wanted to connect with that *āina*, that island, and with all the sources of *mana* that I would have to draw upon in making this crossing. I walked along the south side of Kepuhi Beach, which is capped by a large rock outcropping. I climbed about five minutes up to the top of the rocks, overlooking the beach and the channel. Walking across the rock toward the water, I looked out over the horizon. I prayed and meditated, speaking in hushed tones to my baby ... letting her know that we would be making this journey across the ocean together.

In a moment when my mind was clear and silent, the word *kilo* came to me. I took it as an indication that the *'ano* of my baby was going to be that of a kilo—a keen observer, a seer, a stargazer, one who sees what others may not. In my understanding of the Hawaiian language, a word added after kilo would elaborate upon what someone might be specifically trained in observing. A *kilolani* would watch the movements of the sky, perhaps making predictions. A *kilo makani* would observe the winds in navigating a canoe. A *kilo aupuni* would be a political expert. A *kilo i'a* might observe fish movements from high places and direct fishermen below. In any case, I knew that this baby would be a child of the ocean. A traveler, a voyager.

A few months later, I found the name “Kaiakahinali'i” as I was researching Hawaiian oral traditions and mythologies. The name stayed with me, making

its way into my consciousness even when I moved on to reading and thinking about other things. Literally translated, “the ocean waters that cause chiefs to fall down,” it is associated with the traditions of Pele and her family voyaging from Kahiki to the islands we call Hawai‘i. A flood, a powerful wave, not necessarily destructive, but cleansing. A sign of one who can bring change and create the space for new growth. Making way for a change in the established order, changes that are much needed on our *one hānau*. Decolonizing our *‘āina*, our minds, our spirits. As we continue directing our energies toward such changes, we also want to nurture our child to extend that work in ways that we may not yet have imagined. Kaiakahinali‘i—a name of hope and promise.

This name remained in our hearts for several months. We continued to research, pray, and observe, waiting for *hō‘ailona*. As the birth drew closer, I held in my secret wish for a girl, to whom I wanted to give the name Kaiakahinali‘i. I wanted a girl child who would never forget her power as a *Wahine Maoli*. Two weeks before Hina was born, I found out that the name of the rock I had stood on before making the Moloka‘i to O‘ahu crossing was called “Kaiaka.” It was a final affirmation that the baby’s name should be Kaiakahinali‘i.

The first time I crossed the Ka‘iwi channel, paddling together with nine other strong and dedicated women, I drew upon the memory of my Popo; your mom, my Chinese grandmother who taught me so much about a love and a stillness that continually informs who I am as a Hawaiian woman. Anytime I felt weak or out of focus, I would try to feel the power of her presence surrounding me. The second time I crossed the channel, I called upon the power of the relationship between me and my unborn child, who had just begun to cause a slight bulge in my abdomen.

You and I have talked about how to cultivate the relationships between the generations of our family’s women, even those who aren’t physically with us anymore. Today as I stood on the cliffs with Hina, feeling quite sad to be on the other side of the Pacific from my home in Hawai‘i, I wondered how I might draw on those relationships to get through another quarter of graduate school. How will I make time to spend with my daughter? How will I be able to talk regularly with my sister as she faces the struggles of adolescence? How will I work through the doubts about whether my work at the university will serve communities of *Kānaka Maoli*? How do I make the familial, the academic and the activist aspects of my life work together? I’m hoping that with so many years of experience in balancing these things, you might talk me through this. I miss you and look forward to hearing from you soon.

Me ke aloha pumehana,

Noe

Dearest Noe,

Yes, I've been feeling sad, too—missing you and feeling your pain at being far away from home. Through the power of your words, I hear the waves pounding against the coast of Santa Cruz. Through your eyes, I look out onto the Pacific Ocean and strain to see beyond the horizon. It is there at the edge of the California Coast that Hawai'i can most be felt. From that vantage point, Hawai'i seems close, although not nearly close enough, and the spiritual pain that comes of separation from the source of our nurturance seems almost unbearable at times. It is when looking out upon the ocean that our sensory memories are activated, and one must work to dull the ache for our home in Hawai'i. I am with you, Beloved Daughter, and feel blessed by my connection with such a strong and loving Wahine Maoli. You give to your daughter what I was less able to give to you—an intimate knowledge of the rising and crashing *nalu* and a native pathway that will guide her to the fullness of Kaiakahinali'i (the ocean waters that cause change and create a pathway for growth). Even more remarkably, you do this all from outside Hawai'i.

Listening to the waves always relieves my mind of the daily stresses and has been a pathway for me to connect with our family stories. We have often spoken of Taipo, your maternal great-grandmother, Yuk Ngan. She was a woman born with a fire that could not be extinguished, and tonight I remind you of the story that we both heard as we were growing up: the story of a little girl who was born in the Kingdom of Hawai'i and spent her earliest years on the sugar plantations of the Hamakua Coast. The little girl was bright and wanted to learn about the world beyond the plantation. Yuk Ngan was six years old and in the first grade when her teacher praised her motivation and aptitude.

The parents of Yuk Ngan were immigrants who came to the Land of the Fragrant Hills seeking respite from the grinding poverty of south China. They were contract laborers, sojourners who hoped for a speedy return to the homelands of Kwantung. But the work on the sugar plantations gave them an income that was below subsistence levels. Yuk Ngan was seven years old when her parents determined that they could no longer afford the luxury of schooling. They reasoned that a female child had no need of book learning. After all, what other future was there for a poor Chinese girl except to marry and raise a family?

So, Yuk Ngan's youthful vigor was channeled into caring for younger siblings, in gathering bottles to wash and sell, in laundering the clothes of others. Many years later, your Taipo would recall that she had cried herself to sleep as a child and had prayed that her desire for learning about the world would not be extinguished by the harsh, tedious life of the plantation. With time,

Yuk Ngan found ways to satisfy her desire for learning, and much later, as a mother, she would speak of her sense of deferred gratification. Her children, both male and female, would have all the education they desired. In addition to their formal education, Yuk Ngan taught the children about life. She mentored her children through stories painted against the backdrop of social inequality. Through her love and simple, yet poignant, eloquence she passed on a legacy of engagement with the world.

This is the vision Yuk Ngan nurtured in her children. For me, it is a vision of passion, of a flame that never went out. Tonight I leave you with the fire of your Taipo. May it warm you across these many miles and fan the passion in your *na'au*, darling Daughter.

Me ke aloha pau'ole,

Mom

Dear Mom,

I remember these stories of my Taipo that you have told me many times. They give me comfort, guidance and inspiration. When I am at home in Hawai'i, I often sit at the graves of Taipo, Yuk Ngan, and my Popo, Dorothea Sui Kum, mulling over current struggles, sharing with them new events in my life, thanking them for enabling me to be who I am. After my graduation from University of Hawai'i, I took all of the *lei* I received and placed them upon the graves of these two women ancestors. I wanted to honor the fact that the completion of my BA was not just a personal accomplishment; it wouldn't have happened without them. Whenever I surf my favorite spot on the south shore of O'ahu, I look up toward Pūowaina, where Popo is buried, and know she is with me.

It wasn't coincidental that the first paper I wrote in grad school was about Taipo, about the certificate of identity that she was issued after the United States forcefully annexed Hawai'i. The certificate marked her Chineseness, making her seem absolutely alien to Hawai'i. Yet I remembered your stories about how she walked the shores of Hilo Bay as a child and Popo's stories of how she often heard her mother, Yuk Ngan, speaking Hawaiian with her Native Hawaiian neighbors. Yuk Ngan was not a Wahine Maoli, not Native Hawaiian, but she did have a certain connection to the lands and people of O'ahu and Hawai'i Islands that were communicated to me by those stories about her. I wanted to understand how our family stories became resources for developing a resistant and radical consciousness for the women in our family.

Writing about Taipo gave me comfort. The culture of graduate school at the University of California, Santa Cruz, felt foreign to me. I felt like everything I knew and valued had been erased, in part because I didn't understand the language of this academic site. In my seminars, people threw around

names of theorists as though everyone should already know them. Writing about Yuk Ngan's certificate of identity brought me back to my own genealogy. It reminded me that the theorists of my academic genealogy include the women of our family who formulated their ideas through love and daily struggle.

Just when I was feeling empowered by what I had written, a white female professor challenged my essay. "This sounds like a celebratory assimilationist narrative. The deferred dream of the poor mother who sacrifices her own needs to help her family and then works to give her children the Western education she didn't have. The children then go on to become successful participants in American society. How is your story any different?" she asked. I was profoundly challenged by her question. Inside, I felt these stories about Taipo had led me to a radical consciousness—a feminist, antiracist, anticolonial consciousness, and most centrally, a commitment to Kanaka Maoli liberation. But I couldn't articulate how these stories of my Chinese great-grandmother connected with my own Native Hawaiian identity and my commitment to Hawaiian sovereignty. I'm still struggling with how to talk about local (in this case, Chinese) attachment to the land, without eliding indigenous Hawaiian land claims. How do I reconcile these two connected, but different, heritages within myself? I've been bugging over all of these things since I read your last email.

Our experiences with schooling, with the formal educations that Taipo felt was so important for us to have, seem quite relevant to these questions. In school, I had to learn to keep my Native Hawaiian identity at the fore precisely because I was within educational systems that often tried to educate a commitment to Hawaiian land and people out of me. Maybe part of our politicization and resistance to assimilation was a backlash against those systems that work to assimilate. There was a disjuncture between what we were taught in school and what we were taught by the family stories about Taipo's life struggle against poverty, the long genealogies of Wāhine Maoli on our Hawaiian side of the family, and our own lived experiences as Native women. Perhaps we learned by observing the profound difference between the proper Hawaiian girls we were supposed to be in school and the empowered Wāhine Maoli we could potentially become. Just some thoughts. I'd love to hear what you think and feel. Hina sends her hugs.

Love you lots,

Boo

Dear Daughter,

Taipo's story of stolen education is one of survival, protracted struggle, and transcendence. It helps us to understand how historical circumstances

influence our place in the world. Her stories stand in stark contrast to the view that the only history worth learning is that which focuses on “great men,” nobility and aristocrats, the wealthy and powerful—the kind of history that we all must study in our formal educations. Her stories were acts of resistance, and they challenged the kind of class-biased history taught in most school systems. She would not let her voice be subjugated by the manifest discourses of the American Dream and the Great Melting Pot of racial diversity.

Taipo, your great-grandmother, was not formally educated so she did not use terms like this. However, it was through her efforts that all her children were educated. Thus, it was Taipo’s daughters who questioned the inconsistency of the American Dream for women of color as they came of age in the early to mid-twentieth century. They criticized the plantation economy of Hawai’i that forced their father to close his small business and return to a position as a wage laborer in order to support the family. They introduced historical incidents to my cousins and me, telling us their perspective on the infamous Massie Case of 1931–1932 and criticizing the “justice” of a territorial legal system that functioned to protect the interests of a wealthy, white elite at the expense of Hawaiian and Asian working people like themselves. They noted the irony of a society that stamped *e pluribus unum* (i.e., out of diverse origins emerge a single people united in democracy and justice for all) on the face of its coins, while systematically discriminating against people of color living in Hawai’i and in the continental United States.

As you can see, Taipo was a teacher to her children in the truest use of the term. In recounting her stories, she provided an alternative narrative that demanded action on the part of her daughters, and a generation later for me as well. Whenever I think about these stories, I am encouraged to be honest about what I learn from my own life experience, to trust the critical questions that arise when I juxtapose this experience against what I have been taught in my formal education and, ultimately, to stand up and articulate this perspective that comes from the strength of all that I know, from all the sources of knowledge available to me. Talk with me about your critical reflections, your truth. From the strength of your na’au, tell me what being a Native woman, a Wahine Maoli, means to you.

I send my thoughts to you with love,

Mom

Dear Mom,

You ask me to write about what I mean by “Wahine Maoli identity.” As I have struggled for the words to come up with a description or a definition, nothing seems to quite make sense or be enough. Meditating on my

experience of becoming a Wahine Maoli, the memory of one sensation keeps coming back to me—the sweet fragrance of *pikake*. Strands and strands of fresh pikake.

For a long time, I understood my Hawaiianess as a lack or a loss. Not because I felt that it was shameful or inferior to be Hawaiian. Quite the contrary, I have been fortunate to grow up in a generation taught to be proud of being Hawaiian. Perhaps it was because Hawaiianess was becoming a more highly valued commodity that, as an *‘ōpio*, I understood who I was as a Hawaiian through a recognition of what I lacked. I lacked all of the things that I thought marked an “authentic” Hawaiian youth.

I had no living Hawaiian *kūpuna* with whom to connect. Your dad, Lyman David Ka‘ai Ka‘ōpua, died when you were only a toddler, so the only extended family I knew growing up was our Chinese family, the Chuns. I didn’t have a kupuna to speak to me in Hawaiian or to tell me stories of old Hawai‘i. I had no Hawaiian first cousins or aunts and uncles. I had no lived connection to my Hawaiian ‘ohana.

So, there was always an emptiness I felt in association with my identity as a Hawaiian. As I learned more in college about the history our people have suffered—land alienation, theft of our government, massive deaths due to haole-introduced diseases, language loss, and persecution for practicing cultural traditions—I felt that sense of loss and mourning even greater. At twenty years old, it was out of a desire to fill that emptiness that I set out to find out more information about our Hawaiian lineage. I thought that, if I could just find out who my ancestors were, where they lived and what kinds of lives they led, then I might have a better sense of my own direction in life.

More fulfilling than the tedious process of gathering birth and death certificates were the times I spent meeting and talking with family members whom I had never connected with previously. Aunt Amelia Ka‘opua Bailey graciously shared with me stories about her parents (my great-grandparents) and her brothers and sisters (including my grandfather). One afternoon stands out in particular. As we sat at an old wooden table in the quiet coolness of her Mānoa house, she crafted a lei of story with memories of her mother’s death.

When Aunt Amelia was a little girl, her mother, Kamila Aina Ka‘ōpua had a massive brain hemorrhage while her infant child played on the bed beside her. Aunt Amelia remembered being told that she was too young to attend her mother’s funeral service. While her father and elder siblings went to the Catholic Church where her mom was an active member, Aunt Amelia was left at home with a relative. Her memories centered on a moment at dusk when her large ‘ohana gathered for the wake at their Kalihi home. The house

was packed with many relatives and friends who had come from various parts of O'ahu and Hawai'i Islands to grieve the passing of Aunty's mom. As the bowing sun shed a reddish light throughout the house, Aunty heard the deep, guttural chanting of an elder female relative from Kohala offering a *kanikau* as she slowly walked the length of the parlor to the coffin that was covered with open strands of fresh pikake. Knowing the small white flower was Kamila's favorite, Aunty's father had blanketed his wife's coffin with the flower. Aunty remembered being overpowered by the scent, by the chant, and by the weight of the gathering's grief. As she told me the story, she looked out the window toward the thick trees of Mānoa Valley. It seemed her ears were again filled with the vibrato of the lament and her breath filled with the sweet, consuming aroma of pikake. For a moment, I too felt these overwhelming sensations. I wondered if these memories had often come back to Aunty over the years of practicing her art as a lei-maker, perhaps working with pikake flowers from time to time.

While Aunty's story was filled with sadness at the loss of her mother, she wove other stories about the joys of her mom's life around that memory of her mother's wake. She told me how, after her parents had moved to O'ahu from Kohala, their family's house became a place where Big Island relatives would stay when they came to visit or pass through Honolulu. Her mom also had folks from her church over to the house regularly. The Ka'ōpua house in Kalihi became known for the good fun parties that lasted several days and particularly for the good music they all played together.

I heard Aunty's story about my great-grandmother's death to be both about the sadness of her loss and a testament to the fullness of her life. Woven into the lei of her story were lessons about how her mom maintained many close connections with her 'ohana on the Big Island, as well as building a new community on O'ahu. It told of how her mom connected those networks of people across time and place through her *aloha* and her love for life, music, and her family. I was honored that Aunty had bestowed this lei of story upon me.

A few nights later, I was sitting at my computer typing the stories about my great-grandmother, Kamila Amina Ka'ōpua. All was quiet except for the clicking of the keys of the keyboard. Then slowly, gently, the smell of pikake arose in my nostrils, growing ever stronger until so intense that I could almost feel its scent on my skin. I walked outside onto the *lānai* to see if there was a breeze. Maybe someone was walking by with lei, I thought. But there was only a warm stillness. Unable to dismiss the fragrance, I knew that I had been graced by the presence of my great-grandmother. Perhaps she was letting me know that as a Wahine Maoli, I have never been alone, that my Hawaiianness was never just about what had been lost, but that it had to be about fullness and celebration as well.

I tell Aunty's story again now as my own and give this lei to you, my mama, as a way of talking about what it means for me to be a Wahine Maoli. The sweet scent of pikake, still faintly in my nostrils, reminds me of the way I want to live in this world, both remembering and mourning what has been lost and celebrating the abundance of what we still maintain as Native people. Claiming a Wahine Maoli identity is, for me, about cultivating a deep spiritual connection and political commitment to the 'āina, the *kulāiwi*. Such connections allow us to both revel in the beauty of the Ko'olau Mountains and to be wrenched by the pain of walking on the bombed-out earth of Kaho'olawe Island or of driving by Kapa'a Quarry and seeing the 'āina be devoured and ground up to make concrete for buildings and highways that will cover our sacred burial sites. It is about being able to laugh and sing and dance with our brothers and sisters, whether we're jamming music at the *lo'i* or clubbing down by Aloha Tower. It is about standing with those same brothers and sisters to fight the powers that continue to steal our educations, our lands and the food off our tables. For me, being a Wahine Maoli is about balancing the joys and the pain of being Hawaiian in a way that allows us to act for social change, based on a grounding in our traditions and stories. It is about the bittersweet smell of the pikake.

As I continue along this process of becoming a Wahine Maoli, I want to remember that we are at all times surrounded by the power of the women who have lived before and will live after us. I try to live my *'Ōiwi Hawai'i* identity out of the fullness of my genealogy. I try to nurture confidence that I have a place and a people and a history from which to begin speaking and acting in the world.

Me ku'u aloha nui,

Noe

Aloha pumehana e ku'u Kaikamahine—

I send the warmest of love to you, dearest Daughter—

You invited me to reflect upon being Wahine Maoli, and so I sit now in these hours of the early evening to put some of my thoughts to words. I am in your childhood bedroom from which I can easily see the mist shrouded Ko'olau Mountains. The hectic events of the week quickly fade into a comfortable haze, and the words of your sister's *mele* about Kāne'ohē move gently through me...

Helele'i ka ua 'Āpuakea

Mai ka lani polū

Akaaka a mānoa

Piha me ka'ōpua

A ka 'eleao o ka lā

The ‘Āpuakea rain is sprinkling over this part of Kāne‘ohe now, and the sunlight filters through the clouds that sit as *lei po‘o* atop the Ko‘olau. Before my eyes, the trees and plants grow more lush and green from the rain and the Ulumano wind blows down from the mountains.

Puhi ka makani Ulumano

Mai nā kuahiwi uliuli

Ikaika a maluhia

‘Ale‘o me ka pohihihi

Ma luna o ka ‘āina

As I witness the Ko‘olau in its life-giving mystery, a wave of gratitude washes through me, and I say a silent prayer to *Ke Akua*: Thank you Great Creator for giving this beautiful place to which I can return each day. Thank you for blessing me with two nurturing mothers—the strong, yet gentle woman who gave me human life, and the powerful, comforting ‘āina that each day awakens me to spiritual life.

Who I am is part of where I am in physical-spiritual place. Ko‘olaupoko—this place is alive in my *na‘au*, this place grounds my sense of being when I journey to “foreign” places or struggle with the sense of fragmentation that can come of being Wahine Maoli in a society that rewards Western ways of knowing and being. In the presence of the Ko‘olau it is easy to remember why we named you Noelani. For like the heavenly mists that sit as lei around the Ko‘olau, your life is a precious lei from *Akua*, a lei of sweet fragrance to the life of your family.

My memories of Ko‘olaupoko run deep. Through the collective memory passed on as family story, I see the *lawai‘a* of our family—my grandfather, James Ka‘ōpua and my father, Lyman—walking in shallow waters on this coastline. My mother’s family also came to make their home on this side of the island and during my childhood, Kahalu‘u Valley became a regular gathering place for the extended family. On the winding road behind the old Hygienic General Store, our family built a flower nursery, cultivated fruit trees, and raised animals of all sorts. Here, my uncles raised game birds and taught me about the science of breeding, training, and yes, fighting, cocks. The uncles also kept horses and some of my fondest childhood memories are of riding horseback through the tall grasses that hugged the narrow trails. Occasionally, we hiked to gather mountain guavas for making jams and jellies. On these hikes, we lingered at the shallow freshwater ponds to watch the tadpoles or to splash in the icy mountain streams. Remembering those days, I am keenly aware of the abundance we enjoyed in the family homes on the road behind the Hygienic Store. While we had our troubles, secrets, and tragedies, those are stories for another day. What I remember here is the humble, hardworking family whose closeness to the land and to each other made life seem plentiful.

In sharp contrast to the idyllic days of childhood, my adolescence and young adulthood were confusing and painful ones. Privileged by private, upper class education, I learned to love academic inquiry and rigor. However, over time I was able to step back and realized how school-learning was altering my view of the world and in the process, taking me further and further away from my loving family and their resourceful, yet humble, lifestyle. I began to feel burdened by a profound sense of disconnection that I could not easily put into words. Back then, I only knew that I could not reconcile “what” I still valued from my childhood with “who” I was being socialized to become. It felt like a brutal choice.

I saw myself thinking and doing things that my family seemed unable to understand. After my freshman year in college, I remember sitting at the kitchen table with Uncle Norman. He was genuinely interested in what I was studying and how I was making sense of it. Although I kept it to myself, I found our differences to be terrifying. On the afternoon of that conversation, I really got in touch with how my education could take me on a trajectory far removed from all that was embodied in the Kahalu‘u lifestyle—all that was vital to me from childhood.

Shortly after the kitchen table epiphany, I “dropped out” of the private university that I had attended as a freshman. Six months later, I found myself among hundreds of other undergraduates who waited to enter Klum Gym, the site of registration for the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa. In those days, Klum was in the midst of a large quarry and seemed always to be under a cloud of dust. As students, we waited in long lines that snaked their way around the perimeter of the gym. Upon entering the gym, there were more lines, a line for each course we hoped to take. Here I waited to obtain the colored cards that would allow me a place in one of those huge undergraduate classes that met in Varsity Theater or some other cavernous auditorium. “This is different,” I remember thinking to myself. I found the difference uncomfortable, as well as exciting and so wonderfully far away from the shady quad in the more exclusive private college I had just left.

“Our history, our way”... In the spring of 1972, I took my first class in the fledgling Ethnic Studies Program. By this time, the program was already a hub for university students who had a different view of how the university-educated might serve the community. Through involvement with the program, my worldview was opened in ways that surpassed my greatest expectations. I joined classmates in learning from local communities struggling with issues of land, housing, and loss of a land-based lifestyle. I had read about the Kalama Valley struggle a year or so earlier. The Kalama Valley struggle had set a precedent of standing up to fight back against development that served a few at the expense of many. As students, we learned about the

farmers' struggle through reading and discussion, as well getting up at 4:00 a.m. to slop farmer George Santos' displaced pigs. Real life—it brought a vitality and immediate relevance to questions like: Who does development serve? How can it better serve all the people? What are the options? We learned and practiced critical skills in community development. Learning about the historical struggles of ethnic people, including Hawaiians, in Hawai'i was an important part of my emerging consciousness. The slogan of the Ethnic Studies Program was "our history, our way" and reflected the emphasis to liberate the subjugated perspective of people's history. It was a historical perspective against which I could contextualize our own family stories, and working within the community became a vehicle for using my education as a tool to work toward the empowerment of marginalized communities. For the first time in my educational career, I was able to integrate my adult learning with the values instilled through my early childhood. Becoming a mother only made learning and work seem more important—now there were young lives, a visible sign of the future. What kind of life did I want you to inherit? As a mother and an activist, I took you to university sit-ins and even to the tent-city organized by the tenants and small farmers of the Wai'āhole-Waikāne Community Association as they resisted eviction.

Puhi ka makani Ulumano

Ma luna o ka moana polu

'Olinoino a 'olu 'olu

Kolo me ka'olu

Ma ke kapakai

Nearly thirty years have passed. The Ulumano wind still blows over the ocean, yet many things have changed for me as I have settled upon my life course. My work has evolved into areas related to health and well-being of Native Hawaiian communities. As a social worker, health researcher, and university instructor, my role in communities has changed, but my belief in serving and learning from and with our communities has not changed. In the last two decades, you and your sister have grown to young adulthood, and you have given birth to your own daughter, Kaiakahinali'i. You and your sister, Kulamanu, have benefited from the Hawaiian Renaissance, and your children will learn from you how to speak in our mother tongue. A new generation of committed activists like yourself and your colleagues in the charter school movement, are unafraid to learn new skills that will strengthen our Native Hawaiian communities to perpetuate Hawaiian language and tradition. At the age of sixteen years, Kulamanu, your sister, already understands the spiritual power of the 'āina. Together, you will forge a new place for our vision of a Native epistemology that will broaden the way we educate our young. *Mahalo Ke Akua*. I am moved to tears by what you can do, and it gives

me deep satisfaction and pride. Always remember how precious you are to me, Noe. Remember even when my days of walking the ʻāina are only memories that you share with Kaiakahinaliʻi's children.

So much remains to be done, but while the direction is clear, the course is often very arduous as we continue to walk with our feet in two worlds. I am so glad that we can share learning and that we can continue to connect in a loving and meaningful way despite the miles that separate us. I am thankful for electronic mail and long distance telephone lines, but more importantly, I am so thankful that we have this kūkākūkā.

Your loving Mama

Dear Mom,

Your letter brought back so many memories for me. Memories of my two-year-old self tagging along with you to the university, being puzzled by the strange shapes and diagrams as I flipped through your school binders, making up stories to go along with the unintelligible characters on the thin pages of thick books, and playing on the stones in front of the University of Hawai'i campus center. I remember Dad taking me home one night when you were arrested at a demonstration. I remember carrying signs around the Witecks' house and chanting, "The people united will never be defeated," not having any clue what it meant but enjoying yelling it really loudly.

In later years, I remember sitting and coloring in your office at Queen Lili'uokalani Children's Center or at group meetings with you and your social work colleagues. I remember reading in your office at Hale Kipa youth services or at the Sex Abuse Treatment Center. (No wonder I learned how to be quiet and enjoy books!) And I remember with great fondness traveling with you to a conference on HIV/AIDS in Aotearoa: sitting in on panels, staying at the marae, meeting other Pacific Islanders working for their peoples' health and sexual rights. I didn't have the language to articulate what I was learning back then. In hindsight, I realize how much I was picking up and internalizing about the possibilities and responsibilities to create social change, just by being around your work. Watching you, I grew up with a model of a Native Hawaiian woman, raised by her Chinese aunts and uncles, committed to ending suffering in her communities and specifically working for the health, founded upon self-determination, of *Kanaka Maoli Hawai'i*.

These lessons live with me, even when I feel most assaulted and alienated by the foreign academic system in which I currently work. By "foreign," I mean an educational system that does not affirm multiple indigenous ways of knowing, understanding, and living. Most of the time, to survive up here in graduate school, I disconnect with a part of myself. I disengage my na'au

when I sit in many of my seminars, keeping my mouth closed because of my discomfort with integrating what I feel and know in my na‘au with the academic language that has currency here.

Many of these thoughts and emotions were brought to the surface for me this weekend at a conference on campus called “Decolonizing Methodologies and Beyond: Constructing Indigenous Methodologies” (Anonymous 2001). As I sat in the circle, looking at more Native PhDs than I had ever seen in my life, I felt for the first time since I’ve been in grad school like I could open myself up. So many people spoke so powerfully, integrating their po‘o and their na‘au, integrating their own indigenous ways of understanding with their Western academic training. This demanded that one listen in a different way. And it was incredibly rigorous both intellectually and emotionally. I felt inspired, vulnerable and completely drained by the end of the weekend. Perhaps most powerful for me was being in the presence of three amazing Hawaiian women—Kū Kahakalau, Manu Meyer, and Ku‘ulei Maunupau. They embody everything I mean when I think of being Wahine Maoli. True wāhine of the ‘āina, of the people. True to themselves, their akua and their ‘ohana. Speaking always from the intelligence of their na‘au.

I facilitated the panel on indigenous pedagogies that Kū and Manu presented on, and, at one point, brought Hina to sit with me. She grabbed at my hair, took the pen from my hand, chewed on it, and then dropped it on the floor. She climbed off my lap, took a couple of steps into the circle, gave a coy smile to the folks sitting next to me, and then toddled back over and grabbed onto my leg again. I’m sure she was a little distracting to some, maybe even irritating. But, so what? It was so important for me to bring her into that space. At eleven months old, she doesn’t comprehend what’s going on in the same way adults do, but I know that something will stick with her, and I want her to grow up knowing that she can occupy a political and academic space if she wants. She has a *kuleana* to uphold for her people, for Kānaka Maoli Hawai‘i, just as we do. I want to help her cultivate a Wahine Maoli consciousness, guided by our ancestors and our family stories, connecting to the *kulāiwi*, committed to our people.

Me ke aloha ana ‘ole,

Noe

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GLOSSARY

akua—god, spirit, divine, supernatural

aloha—love, compassion

Hilihewa ka mana'o ke'ole ke kukakuka—a Hawaiian proverb loosely translated as "thoughts become miswoven when there is no discussion"

hō'ailona—sign, omen

Kanaka Maoli—a Native term to describe the indigenous people of Hawai'i, used interchangeably in this *kūkākūkā* with "Native Hawaiian," "Hawaiian," and "'Ōiwi Hawai'i"

kanikau—a chant of mourning or lamentation

kilo—as a noun "kilo" can be translated as a stargazer, a reader of omen or a seer. As a verb, "kilo" means to watch closely with focused intent, to examine, observe, or forecast.

kūkākūkā—to discuss; discussion

kulāiwi—native land or homeland, referring to the place where the bones of one's ancestors are buried

kuleana—responsibility, privilege, right

kūpuna/kupuna—elders, grandparents, ancestors; "*kupuna*" is the singular form

lānai—porch, veranda

lei—garland or adornment, often made with flowers or shells

lo'i—wetland taro field

mana—power, life force, spiritual or supernatural power

nalu—ocean wave

na'au—seat of emotions, intellect, intuition; located in the intestinal region

one hānau—native homeland, birthplace, literally "sands of birth"

pae āina—archipelago, here referring to the Hawaiian islands

pikake—jasmine flower

Popo—Cantonese expression for maternal grandmother

po'o—head

Taiipo—Cantonese expression for great-grandmother

'āina—land, literally translated as "that which feeds"

'ano—character, disposition, tendency

'ohana—extended family

'ōiwi/'Ōiwi Hawai'i—native/Native Hawaiian

'ōpio—youth, juvenile, adolescent

Silauni'i

Jacinta Galea'i

Her name is Silauni'i
She was named after the village of Launi'i
Her parents added—*Si*—to *Launi'i* to make *Silauni'i*
Ministers do that
Samoans do that
Name their children after places, events, and things.

Sifitiuta

Petesa

Leone

Simalua

San Diego

San Francisco

Seattle

Silauni'i is my friend
She - the village minister's daughter
I - the hospital chaplain's daughter
We live in the village people's eyes
setting examples for village kids' lives

“Ministers' kids,” the village people whisper. “Some of them are the worst.
Owned by Satani.”

A'o le teine e tusa ma ona ala,
aua a o'o ina teine matua o ia e le toe te'a ese ai o ia.

Silauni'i is quiet, but I saw her through her saveveveve hairdo. This meant she got up in the morning and entered the village without combing her hair. During those days, I walked beside Silauni'i and asked myself a lot of questions. I wanted to sink my teeth into her answers. To gnaw on them. To tear them into bits and pieces. Other days, she entered the village with one pigtail hanging on the left or right side of her head. The sides were different each time. They provided me food for thought. Food about her. Me. Us.

One day, Silauni'i had two pigtails on the top of her head separated by zig-zag lines. One pigtail was bigger than the other. When Silauni'i wasn't looking, I stared at her pigtails and asked myself, "Don't the flyaways bother her? What about the zig-zag lines and uneven pigtails?"

Stuck on Silauni'i's zig-zag lines, I couldn't see that Silauni'i was free. Free of straight lines and even pigtails.

Silauni'i constantly blew her nose on her school uniform, t-shirt, fingers, and hands. On those days, I stayed quiet.

But if Silauni'i didn't like to comb her hair, she sure did make up for it with her white teeth.

Whiter than white
Whiter than mine

Zig-zag lines, white teeth, and uneven pigtails
Silauni'i—the minister's daughter—is my friend
We live in village people's eyes
setting examples for village kids' lives.
Maybe not for hair or snots
but for white teeth
Whiter than white.

Ask Silauni'i a question and she answered with a smile. Provoke her and she answered with another smile. Call her names—bad names—and she smiled whiter than white.

That summer, Silauni'i and I moved to level three in A'oga Samoa to learn Samoan Grammar. "O i le fale e malolo. Faitau mai le itulau e tasi e o'o i le luasefululima. E fai le su'ega i le aoauli," the minister told our class. I marked chapters one and two for the quiz.

The house was empty when I got home, so I fixed a sandwich. On one slice of bread, I spread butter and on the other I spread peanut butter. In the middle, I sliced a ripe banana. Then I poured milk from a can of Darigold into a glass, scooped in four spoons of Fijian sugar, and added water. Then I went to my sister's room and lay on my mattress. I liked eating while lying down. My mother said that only old ladies ate in bed, but I ate my sandwich

the way I always did. I folded it in half so I could get to the middle. Because my father always said that there were children starving in the world, I learned to eat all the hard parts of my sandwiches. The bottom before the top. I also liked drinking while lying down, but I could never get the sweet milk to go down right. So I was always forced to raise my head off the pillow. I looked at my sister's clock: 11:00 am. Three hours to study for the grammar quiz.

While rolling back and forth on my mattress, I drew a straight line and then a curvy one on the wall with my dirty feet. Satisfied, I opened my grammar book. My book was thin like most of my books for A'oga Samoa. Nobody had ever told me that Samoan Grammar existed. The first page read: London Missionary Society. They had translated Samoan language into Roman script and missionary Pratt wrote the first Samoan Grammar book.

That afternoon, I didn't realize how starved I was. I ate and ate the naunas, veapes, soanaunas, and soaveapes, finishing the two chapters that afternoon.

That afternoon, the minister quizzed us on chapters one and two.

"Ia sauni mai. O le a fai le su'ega," he said to us. I waited for him to read the questions.

Fesili muamua. O le a le fuaiupu?

Fesili lona lua. O le a le nauna?

Fesili lona tolu. O le a le soaveape? I wrote everything I had memorized earlier about Samoan grammar.

After the quiz, Silauni'i and I played in our seats while the minister corrected our work. The seventh-grade boys sat two cement poles from us. Their closeness was intoxicating. Catching the seventh grade boy look my way, I flipped my right pigtail and pretended to read my book.

"Ia, soso mai i luma," the minister said, passing out our notebooks.

O le tama poto e fialia ai lona tama,
a'o le tama valea e fa'anoanoa ai lona tina.

Slap.

Slap.

Slap dance.

Backhand.

Tu'i

Po

Her head slammed against the back wall and then the cement pole
tears dripped and then poured
her tears

my tears
our tears

Po!
Slap!
Po!

Her body shook
My body trembled
Our bodies rattled
Uncombed hair
zig-zag lines
uneven pigtails
dripping snot
white teeth

Whiter than white got a beating in front of everybody at A'oga Samoa that afternoon.

Somebody got a 100 pasene on their Samoan grammar quiz. But it was not the minister's daughter.

S-E-T-E-X-A-M-P-L-E-S-F-O-R-V-I-L-L-A-G-E-K-I-D-S

The Bible says, when one part of the Body suffers every other part suffers.

Village princess

Tusiata Avia

My sister was a taupou
so when our parents gave up
caring whether I'd ruined myself
she was still climbing out the windows
at 28.

Our cousin gave up her long golden hair
for my sister's headdress.
She was beautiful dancing
her pale brown arms oiled
and us, a thousand
glinting in her mirrored forehead.

She ran away to Colorado
with a white guy called Randell.
She got herself a scholarship
and a job as a body-piercer.

No one talks about titles now
or going to Amerika.

GLOSSARY

taupou—virgin, titled, unmarried woman who holds a ceremonial position in the village

Pacific Studies, Vol. 30, Nos. 1/2—March/June 2007

Reprinted, with permission, from Tusiata Avia, "Village princess," *Wild Dogs Under My Skirt* (Wellington: Victoria University Press, 2004), 54.

MAORI WOMEN RESEARCHING OURSELVES

Ngahuia Te Awekotuku
University of Waikato

This essay, originally titled “Maori Women and Research: Researching Ourselves,” was the closing keynote address at a Student Symposium organized by the Maori and Psychology Research Unit at the University of Waikato, Hamilton in August 1999. Most of the people attending were Maori and female, and I spoke to, for, and about us. The speech was transcribed from an oral address with transparencies, and has been revised here for this publication.

Tui, tui, tui tuia....

Weave the magic, weave the story, weave together...

THE TITLE OF MY PRESENTATION TODAY is *Maori Women and Research: Researching Ourselves*. Rather than look at the huge perceptual challenge of being a researcher of whatever ethnicity working on Maori women’s issues, I thought I would focus on Maori women as researchers researching ourselves. So I ask, what does research mean for us as Maori people? I found a statement made by Te Rangi Hiroa to his friend Sir Apirana Ngata in February 1931:

Kua mutu te wa kia Te Peehi ma, kua riro ma taua, ma te Maori, taua korero (The time for Best is over; we as Maori should take responsibility for researching our world for ourselves.)

It is left to us to straighten up what has been written by our *pakeha* (non-Maori person of European descent) pioneers. This was written in 1931, and described what was happening two or three generations ago. Yet ironically,

for whatever their reasons or motives, the pakeha continues to pioneer. Or plunder, depending on how one sees it. And their output is “authoritative” and prolific. So what do we do about it? How do we deal with these pioneers? We can only do that by producing our own work. But how?

At a conference on Maori research at Massey University in 1998, the Ministry of Women’s Affairs offered a workshop for Maori women doing research. It was cancelled at the last minute, leaving one and a half hours to fill. I offered to facilitate a discussion session. It was challenging and difficult and also immensely exhilarating; with between sixty and eighty women wandering in and out while Waimarie Nikora recorded their comments on the whiteboard and Karyn Kee transcribed these to her PowerBook. Some of these comments form the basis of this paper; and to you all I am sincerely grateful. I will now discuss some of the questions raised and also cover many others of my own.

Being Maori and Being Female

The first issue is being female and being Maori and what all that means. What are we? Who defines us? How do we fit into our communities? Why are we reminded constantly that we must always be humble? Why are we told to be feminine? Does a city-born Maori woman have the same hassles as a rural one? How do traditional protocol issues and expectations influence our behavior, and our choices? Why are we often silent, particularly in my tribal area, Te Arawa? Does being voiceless have advantages? Like, if we’re not noticed we can get on with the real work? Now what exactly does that mean in the context of doing research, and the type of issues and realities that Maori women researchers have to cope with? And what about age differences and the interaction between generations? How does a twenty-one-year-old starting out on her first self-directed study approach a *kuia* (elderly woman, grandmother)? How does she make herself trusted? How does she convince these *kuia* that she is worthy of their information? What does she do? Especially when she is told, “*Kaore te kumara e korero mo tona nei reka.*” (The sweet potato does not talk about how tasty it is.) If you can’t bite it, how will you know?

The Roles of Women in the Maori World

From there we come to the whole idea of rights and roles of women within the *hapu* (clan or subtribe; also means pregnant) and tribal environments. The daughter of the matriarch who sits on the *marae* (ceremonial space of

community plaza) and organizes things for the community is seen as someone who could be really important one day. Does this mean she gets more attention than someone whose mother is an urban factory hand? How do you deal with that contrast? Does one woman have more value than the other in the eyes of the community? Or are they seen in different ways? Does age make any difference? If you wore a skirt instead of trousers to that first crucial encounter, would that be better? If you need a *pae arahi* (guide, mentor) to introduce you, should it be an older close relation? What happens if that person misrepresents you? How do you choose the right one? Does a *pae arahi* make access easier? Similarly, there is the issue of Maori men having greater access because they are men and their questions may be received with more bemused tolerance; because what they are doing is serious *mahi* (labor, work), they can never be a *nuisance asking questions*. Or seen as *just hanging around being nosy*. Males are expected to ask questions, and have them answered, because they are men.

By doing what we are doing, we are perceived to be transcending our femaleness, our *wharetangata* (womb, also a metaphor for women), our biological destiny. We are daring to move beyond it. And when we realize how incredibly important and exciting the work can be, how vital to the *iwi* (tribe), that makes it all worthwhile. It makes the pain almost bearable, because after the process is the outcome; which is good. I urge you to think about that.

Maori Women in the Academy

Such relativities and relationships also occur between academic women. Many of us have been hurt by watching a pakeha female researcher visit our old people, spend hours or even days with them, and then go back to the office with all the data and write it up, while the very same people whom we have been trying to get around and squeeze even the tiniest morsel of information out of won't talk to us. What do you do about things like that and where does that put you in relation to the pakeha researcher? What does that sort of reality do to relationships within academia? It does a lot of damage. It causes a lot of pain. It slows down our work, and sometimes even stops it.

This problem engages us all. I recommend a book called *Sister Girl* by Jackie Huggins, an aboriginal historian, which talks about her struggle to be engaged and recognized as a valid voice. Similar voices may be heard in Pacific history; notable examples are Lilikalā Kame'eiehiwa and Haunani-Kay Trask and their work in the Hawaiian context. Other native women scholars and women of color record their experiences in anthologies edited by Anzaldúa, Silvera, and Camper, and bell hooks consistently and aggressively confronts the academy in her many works. Here in Aotearoa, there is a growing canon, with such writers as Linda Tuhiwai Smith, Leonie Pihama,

Kathy Irwin, and contributors to the periodical *Te Pua*, a scholarly vehicle for Maori women commentators. Tuhiwai Smith pays particular attention to *kaupapa* (agenda) Maori research as a paradigm, and I urge you to check this out, if you haven't already. With each other, we address these issues of exclusion and control, and we attempt to resolve them by discussion and strategic coalitions.

And often we judge, or monitor, ourselves. What will Maori accept from or do about other Maori women? Do we have an image of ourselves that we do not like or that we find hard to deal with or that makes our research project or our expectation of it more difficult than it actually is? What do you do if you do not fit into the ideal or the expected image of what a Maori woman is, or how she should behave? Or even, how she should look, dress, speak, and present? To what extent are we hard on ourselves and each other? Is some sort of self policing part of our being women, being Maori, being Maori women?

Tapu and the Nature of Prohibition

Much of this concerns *tapu* and the nature of prohibition. How many of us were told by our *kuia* or *koroua* (elderly man, grandfather): *Oh, I can't tell you that, it's tapu*. And then you find out from another *kuia* that, *They didn't know anyway; they're just saying that because they don't know!* So you end up in this really comic bind of wanting to prove something but you cannot because of your respect for elders. You know that the information is there but whom do you go to? Here is a personal and rather fraught example. In my own thesis research I approached two of my uncles. One—a master carver—said to me, “If you go and see him I'm not going to talk to you, waste my time.” And the other one, who was an arts administrator, said to me, “That man's not local. He's not from around here. You mustn't go and talk to him. He doesn't know anything about our *whakairo* (carving, wood sculpture, ornamentation). He might give you funny ideas.” Because I was doing research on tourism and *whakairo*, both views were essential. And so here I was with one uncle saying I won't talk to you if you talk to him, and the other saying you go anywhere near him and that's it!

This was crazy. I did not know what to do. My supervisors weren't much help. I checked with the uncles' families, talked to my aunts and my cousins, who helped me out. When one uncle was gone I went to see the other one, and when that *koroua* was home but the other one had gone away on a trip then I talked to him. Because I was based miles away (actually in Hawai'i!) and not living at home, I got away with it. I don't know if I could do that now! And I would certainly never recommend that my students do that, either!

Tapu is also about prohibition. One salient and ongoing issue for women is *mate marama* (menstruation). This is particularly crucial in areas of museum research or research related to matters of *wairua* (spirit, spirituality).

What can we ask? When is an appropriate time to raise it? How can we keep ourselves safe, our participants safe, and the information safe? Is it about pollution, and do we pollute what we are doing? Is there an actual, inherent, risk? To us? To our work? To our participants? How do we deal with this one?

In feminist and Wiccan scholarship, such concerns become empowering and celebratory. For Maori, they become somewhat restrictive and difficult. Here is a telling and immediate example. I was asked to bring ten or so photographic slides of Ta Moko, people with ornamented skin, to this symposium. I wanted a small container, instead of a clunky carousel. So I was in the bathroom and I saw this! (At this point, speaker flourishes a small, sturdy 35-mm slide-sized cardboard box discreetly labeled “Carefree.”) Immediate confusion. *It is so practical! The slides fit perfectly! Oh Ngahuaia, just forget it.* And that is a classic example. I know that most of my pakeha woman colleagues would have no problem.

Yet for me, through its association, that small box simply could not contain images of people with Ta Moko, particularly slide images of ancestral portraits. Convenience gave way to cultural imperatives.

What was interesting too was my reaction. Despite tourism, and guiding and dancing for overseas guests, as young girls in Ohinemutu village, we were brought up with a very clear indication of what was right with regard to things like *mate marama*, things like the biological reality of our being female. We were taught how to get in and out of an open air mineral bath and not reveal a thing, though we were quite naked. We were taught about respect by older women; our mothers, grandmothers, aunts. And now, we ask, how does this affect our ability to do research as females? Are there pathways that are closed to us? Are there certain aspects of knowledge that will be beyond our reach because we are women? Are there particular elements within the Maori conceptual reality and research arena that are not for us to investigate?

This is an ongoing concern for all of us Maori women doing research. Are there things we are not allowed to do? Places we should not explore? Does this affect all of us, or just those with a traditional upbringing, or who wish to assert a traditional upbringing?

Again I reflect on my own journey. A curatorial position came up in a provincial museum—my own hometown. As I thought of applying, I was told by the kaumatua involved in the interview process, “Don’t bother, girl. It is wrong for women to touch our *taonga* [treasure, valued object or idea].

We will not have it.” He then explained to me very carefully that it was *unseemly* for women to be engaged in certain types of museum work, *because they bleed*. Choking on the blood of rage and disbelief, I withdrew. A few months later a similar vacancy occurred in another city, and I was successful. And I must note here that the paramount chief of that region is a wise and utterly inspiring woman, who honored me with her discreet support and encouragement.

Knowing the Knowledge Keepers

Incidents like this raise the question of access to knowledge in the Maori world. Why are the knowledge keepers there at all? In whose interests are they being protective? What rights do they have to restrict or retain access? Who owns what we want? Whom is it for? Here we have issues, not only of intellectual property, but in the Maori context, of *kaitiakitanga* and *whakapapa* (genealogy). We need to consider arguments put up by people like Moana Jackson, Charles Royal, and various other Maori researchers that only those who are of a particular descent line should have access to the information related to that descent line. This is an exciting area, fraught with challenges to the sensitive researcher. On the one hand, we have the universal scholars who say we are all human beings and knowledge belongs to everybody and we should all get into it and enjoy it and work at it for the betterment of humankind. On the other hand, we have this discriminating and consciously protective environment that says that only those who are *uri* or descendants of the knowledge makers can determine the future of this knowledge.

I think that is a dynamic that we are going to see more and more, not just within the mainstream but also within the Maori Academy, particularly with the growing muscularity of *wananga* (place of advanced learning). It is going to be really exciting. I see it as a challenge. I know that there will be blood on the floor and on the marae. It will require passion and perhaps a little craziness to take on these issues. But it will be worth it. This is what being an academic is about.

There are interesting questions here about the control of knowledge. Do the people who control the knowledge need to maintain some version—their version—of *mana* (authority, power, charisma)? Is it about *mana*? Are *mana* and *matauranga* (knowledge) synonymous? What is the relationship between what you know and who you are? Foucault and others have drawn attention to the link between knowledge and power. But within the Maori context, issues of knowledge and of power can be complex indeed. As I have already noted, there is an issue of restrictions on the information given to Maori women.

Growing up in Te Arawa in the fifties, I remember that the ones who were regarded as the keepers of the correct record were the elderly women. If an orator incorrectly recited whakapapa, if he made an error in his *tauparapara* (introductory recitation in oratory), certain women—an aunt, an elder sister, his wife—would gently correct him. That was their right. If he persisted, or reacted adversely to a woman's counsel, they would humiliate him. This was effected by much louder verbal interruption, or by starting a full-throated *pao*, or dynamic chant, with other *kuia*. Such a right indicated that they, too, had the knowledge and the training. This convention is rare today, particularly in the Waiariki region where it was once so pronounced. So, what has happened? What is going on? How has what was once regarded as an essential female role been allowed to discontinue, to effectively fade away? Is this about language? Or does this reflect the diminishing perception of the male/female roles as complementary, and the reinforcement of a more male-centered power base to which women make no active contribution? And what does this say about the development of Maori knowledge—*matauranga Maori*—for future generations? What does this mean?

Matauranga Maori: Maori Knowledge

Matauranga Maori is one of the issues here. In the nineteenth century and early decades of the twentieth, much compiling of Maori knowledge was done by people like Grey, Best, and all those others whose information came from Maori sources. For example, if you consider Grey's material, much of that was done by Maihi Te Rangikaheke, and the Maori text is substantively different from the English. Much has been lost in the translation, or shameless bowdlerization, of the *koroua's* words. One fine example is the story of Hinemoa and Tutanekai. We are continually reminded that this is the greatest romance of all time, which is why it is such a popular tourist tale, presented in song, dance, and active storytelling. Hinemoa defied her parents, and swam the midnight waters of the lake to win her flute-playing beloved, Tutanekai. Yet people overlook some critical elements. *She* swam to him. *She* took the initiative. He was much more interested in Tiki, his comely male companion, so to get Tutanekai's attention, in Rangikaheke's version, Hinemoa masqueraded as a man. She presented herself with a male voice and sent Tutanekai's friend back up to him and then lured him down as a male, not as a woman. That story offers an intriguing perspective on sexuality and gender roles in the ancient Maori world; yet we are left with a quaintly colorful telling of the "Great Maori Romance." I bet that is the first time most of you have ever heard the other version, but if you look at the original text

in Maori, it is there. And there are others waiting for someone else to decode them, to rediscover their true form.

And we need to ask this question, too—were these narratives restricted? Were they coded, only to be truly known and then reinterpreted by the few? What versions were given to the pakeha recorder? Who made those first Maori-to-English translations? Did our old people censor or rearrange material, and do they continue to do so? Is there still a sense that knowing this information may perhaps be threatening to us? Can knowledge be dangerous? Consider for example, whakapapa, land ownership or the location of *wahi tapu* (sacred place) and *urupa* (cemetery, burial site). If it is dangerous, then who is at risk? Should certain ideas remain secret to a particular family or hapu? I deliberately refer here to *ideas*, not to facts like the whereabouts of paru for dyeing flax fiber, or which landmarks indicate the best fishing spots at sea. I am discussing ideas that may be menacing. Yet we cannot afford to lose them. These are the questions that perplex us every day as Maori researchers, as young Maori in the Academy.

Te Reo Maori: The Language

Another important issue to address here today is Te Reo Maori, a knowledge of the language. How much do we miss out on through our own *kuwaretanga* (ignorance)—simply by the fact of where and when we were born, and the misguided goodwill or deluded protectiveness of those to whom we were born? Is it important to be fluent in Te Reo or to have Te Reo as your primary tongue to get the very essence of the information conveyed? Dr. Miria Simpson, writing in her preface to the history of the Maori Women's Welfare League, *Te Timatanga Tatou Tatou*, for which she was the Maori language interviewer and editor, offers a lucid insight about language—the language used during the sixty-six interviews.

The aim here is to preserve that frankness...

Swinging back and forth between Maori and English, the *talk* comes *straight off the page*, complete with here and there the inevitable repetition and the occasional slip of the tongue....

With little imagination, the reader becomes aware of the differences in the thought process when “thinking Maori” changes suddenly to “thinking English” and back again. Is it a conscious change?

...like lightning....it eludes me.

Imagine what it does to second language speakers or to other conscientious punters! I think that's all I'll say on that.

Challenges for Maori Women in the Academy

What about the loneliness and the challenge of being an active researcher? Life as a Maori woman academic can often be lonely. It goes with the territory. It is a challenge, and it is hard because so much of the time you are isolated, or you feel isolated from your family and significant others, unless, of course, your work involves them, and that raises its own questions. A common question is how do you cope if you leave your partner behind? What if you get the better grades or higher honors? What happens to the man? I think that too is a really interesting question, and for many of us I know it's a very painful one, because not only are the children involved in the process of Mum getting a degree, but the husband or partner is as well. What becomes of him or her? How do they cope? In the process there is a risk of the researcher falling over, and of the project falling over too.

At the discussion group mentioned earlier, all the women said
Oh, you just get up again ... you just get up again and you keep going. You get up again. You get on and you do it. You just don't sit around wondering about why you're doing it and whom you're doing it for, but you look at your own values and your motivation and you get up there and you do it and you complete it. You have to.

It is about endurance. It is about courage. It is about taking risks. It is about being mad enough to go out there, put your head on the block and follow your dreams. Just keep doing it because it is fun and it is, I think, not a thankless exercise but in many ways a great and exciting one.

Difficulties also occur in the institutional environments in which many of us choose to take those first scary steps into the Academy. Everdina Fuli writes in "Wanaia e Koe te iti Kahurangi":

The library was another area I was terrified of using. I remember standing in line waiting to be issued a book by the librarian. I was totally ignored by the librarian and made to feel embarrassed while the Pakeha male student behind me asked to be served. That incident sent me home crying and feeling whakama. It took me a while to return to the library, let alone to attempt to use the library to its fullest capacity. The humiliation suffered made me feel both utterly disempowered and abused racially.

Everdina kept going. After her cry, she came back and gained her first two degrees, and is now working full time as a researcher.

Conflicting Expectations

My final theme is conflicting expectations and what happens when our people realize our research skills may be useful to the whanau, hapu, or iwi. For most of us there's a sense of affirmation, of reward. *We're recognized. Hey, they know we're here Oh, I can now give my skills back to the community,* and the next thing this happens. The relations or their appointee will turn around and say

Wait on, you've got to do this and this and this. Go and see this one and don't talk to that one, she's all wrong, and I want you back at seven o'clock tomorrow to do the Xeroxing and pick up the key from Uncle So-and-so but don't tell him what you'll be doing, you just get that key. That's my job to tell him and I'll be in later on.

You end up with various pressures, but it is part of the belongingness, of belonging to the iwi, of having the experience and the joyous affirmation of giving back. This is, I think, a huge part of the reason that we undertake study programs and pursue degrees in the disciplines of social science. It is another way of helping—with specialist skills and acquired knowledge. It nurtures the community in its own way.

But within the iwi context, one must learn never to push oneself forward, particularly if you are a woman. You have to know your place. You must not be seen to be aggressive. You have got to wait to be invited. And if an alpha male pushes in front of you, well, he gets the goodies first, or exhausts the source, or tires out the elderly participant, and that is that. For if you sit back with a PhD or Masters and wait to be invited, all the boys with BAs will score the jobs, or muscle in and write their essays en route. This becomes a real issue for women in the Maori world. How many of us have seen guys who have not even completed their degrees get the jobs at home? It becomes a very cruel and ironic situation, because you know you should be pleased for them, but you also want to say, *Hey, but I've got a BA Honors (or a graduate diploma, or a Masters). What about me?*

Another difficulty is that the whanau assumes that because you are at varsity, you have got loads of time. *You just go to school, you know. So Mummy gets sick? Hey, you come home and look after her. Or, Okay, somebody has to take a child to the doctor in Auckland. You do it. You're just at school. You're the girl, too. It's your role, you know that.* And along with pressures like that, there is also among some of us and our families the idea that you are doing it for yourself, that study is actually very selfish. So that when you are asked to do things for the whanau you should be grateful they're

taking notice of you. It can seem very mean-hearted and inappropriate to assert yourself. Not Maori. And who wants to be seen as behaving like a pakeha?

Political protest and radical activism have been part of the western tertiary learning environment for centuries. For many of us, it is an integral element of the varsity experience. Combined with the flax roots initiatives on the home front, many graduates find themselves considering the various approaches to social change and benefit for the iwi. One wonders what is more effective long term—radical protest and immediacy with the iwi, or maintaining one's corporate or professional identity and working at that elevated level? Can we work effectively both ways? For many of us this becomes a real issue. My resolution is that we are all different, and we choose carefully what we do, and whatever we do we must be good at. But often that too becomes political or subject to the whims of the funding machine. It also relates to who gets noticed and who doesn't, and what gets noticed and what doesn't. And we end up trapped by the fable of the sweet potato, that tasty *kumara*, all over again.

We frequently get asked what we are doing, and how does it make things better for Maori. How do you best explain a research project to your immediate whanau or to the people whom you most want to get involved? We have seen some very good examples of those types of processes today, in the presentations. They are there and we have enjoyed them; their next step is with the iwi.

He Taniko: Borders and Conclusions

And now I come to the end of my presentation, to the hem of the garment I have woven with you. Figuratively, He Taniko: borders and conclusions. Taniko is a plaiting/weaving technique of multiple colored strands. Originally, it was brought from the Otherworld by Niwareka, the faerie wife of the mortal human Mataora, who acquired the art of Ta Moko, engraving skin, from her father Uetonga. So both these creative traditions are entwined. Taniko, however, is unique to the Maori world. No other culture and no other known society on the planet does taniko, only Maori. I think this is quite wonderful. It gives us a place in world art history. But it also, I think, explains and manifests in a very elegant way the metaphor of knowledge, the metaphor of gathering strands, the metaphor of creating and lending and, ultimately, producing something of beauty, of color, of impact.

Taniko was used as a border on *kaitaka* or draped chiefly garments of very finely processed flax. Taniko formed the front panels and the lower hems, not the collars that we see in Gottfried Lindauer's painting of nineteenth-century

kuia and kaumatua. These images were actually constructed. They were not real. Maori never wore the hems of their garments up around their chins. But Lindauer thought it looked better that way, and our old people were very accommodating models, so they tipped the kaitaka upside down and sat there with the hems around their chins thinking, *this Pakeha is very strange*. So now we have this amazing example of misinformation coming to us a hundred years later and many of our own new designers think that the taniko should be worn shoulder high, whereas traditionally, it should be down around the feet.

Which ever way up, taniko is about bordering so we come to the idea of bordering conclusions, and the principal conclusion that I'd like to offer you for today is that, as all of the presentations revealed, we should take heart. We should not give up. Whatever may happen, particularly to us as women, we must keep going. We must not lose our motivation. We must not slacken our discipline. We must hang in there. Because research is also about following our dreams. About achieving what we want, for our children, for ourselves, for those yet to come. The papers presented at this symposium reflect those dreams, and also reveal how the words exchanged between those two koroua six decades ago are in the process of being realized. Keep going. Continue to produce your work. And do it well, as best you can. And never ever stop dreaming, questioning, wondering.

So I conclude with the words of a great twentieth-century visionary, scholar, composer, and inspirational leader, Te Puea Herangi.

Te ohonga ake I oku moemoea, Ko te puawaitanga o te whakaaro
(I awake from my dreams; and they blossom into ideas, they are realized).

Kia ora tatou katoa.

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MANŌWAI

Victoria Nālani Kneubuhl

20 June

Dear Frank,

It was my error that in the beginning I ignored your egocentric personality and your self-promoting ambition. It was my error to think that somehow love might transform us both. I am, however, leaving you for two other reasons. Just so there is no misunderstanding, they are as follows: I am sorry that you aren't what you want to be, and at one time there was a lot I would have given up for you, but I will not sublimate what I know to be my real voice to satisfy your idea of what you think I should be writing, or what you wish you could write. Furthermore, I am sick of pretending that your "critical analysis" is really anything more than thinly veiled abuse.

It has recently been called to my attention that you are, again, screwing one of your students. I learned this from one, Esmerelda, whom you apparently used to be screwing, but dropped for (and I quote Esmerelda here) "the bimbo-slag from Vassar." At this point, you are lucky I am leaving you and not slicing out your heart while you sleep.

Kanoe

The Kona sun shines without mercy. As Kanoe raises her hand to shield her eyes from the bright light, the strap of her heavy bag digs into her shoulder. Her friend Charlene arranged the rental of this house. It belongs to Charlene's uncle, Robert. Robert met Kanoe at the airport and is now lifting her suitcases out of his blue pickup. Looking up at the cracked wooden steps, at the screen door, the weathered green boards, the dark veranda and the large

Pacific Studies, Vol. 30, Nos. 1/2—March/June 2007

Reprinted, with permission, from Victoria Nālani Kneubuhl, "Manōwai," *Mana* 11 (1995): 23–44.

open windows, she thinks for a moment that the house would like to swallow her up. It doesn't matter. What matters to Kanoe is that it is far away. She feels exhausted by the heat and the anger gnawing at the back of her neck. On the veranda, the shade offers her immediate relief. She opens the screen door for Robert who seems miles away out in the blinding sun. Slowly, he makes his rickety way up the stairs.

"Too hot today," he mutters.

"Pardon?"

"The sun, too hot." He blinks, stepping through the door.

Kanoe watches Robert's truck rattle down the dirt road, throwing up a veil of dust over the naupaka and coconut trees as he vanishes down and around to the house he shares with Luisa. Minutes later Kanoe stretches out on the veranda puné. With the sound of waves breaking across her thoughts, her heartbeat slows to a different rhythm. Relieved of the heat and the sun and Honolulu, she easily tumbles into sleep.

24 June

At first, he told me I was like the moon, and I was flattered that someone saw me as a splendid, illuminated being standing out in the darkness. Later I transfigured into the shadowy twin, the taunting reflection of his own voice. I accept, I accepted, out of gratitude and guilt, but now we both face the lives we cut out of each other: our paper doll selves with detailed outfits that we can put on and take off by means of shoulder tabs, constructed by such complex needs, that we hardly know anything except what the other isn't giving.

The hot spell with no trade wind continues. Heat cuts through everything. Kanoe can't focus. The sun has become a fat, round, inflated dictator, burning on her brow, moving her eyes, her thoughts. Turn here. Look over there. See, I am the sun. I am all powerful. After sunset comes the softer light of the moon, transforming the lava into its spirit landscape, and twisting the ocean into a honeycomb of silvery mirrors. Here is the night. Kanoe steps off the stairs, into the new world.

While Robert and Luisa are snug in their house, they talk it over. "What I want to know Robert, is how come she's here by herself?" Luisa won't drop the subject.

"Luisa, she's okay."

"How you know that?"

"If my niece Charlene *says*, then she *is*. Charlene said she just needs to get away." Irritation creeps into Robert's voice.

“From what?”

“I’m not nosy, Luisa.”

“What you know? She might have one boyfriend who like kill her. Then he comes and shoots us all up.”

“You watching too many cop shows.” Robert heads for the refrigerator and a beer.

“I saw her walking around at night. I don’t like it.”

After a long cool swallow, Robert recovers his calmness. “Go over, talk to her. She’s a nice girl.”

Following Robert’s suggestion, the very next morning, Luisa makes cornbread and marches off in the direction of Kanoe’s house. The smell of Luisa’s cornbread hovers above the table as Kanoe pours the tea.

“Eat now, while it’s hot,” Luisa urges.

“Thank you.”

Yellow crumbs sprinkle on to the table. Kanoe puts a pile of papers on top of her typewriter.

“You writing letters?”

“No, poems.”

“Oh, so you write poems?”

“And stories.” Kanoe wipes the cornbread crumbs into her hand.

“Stories, oh good, I like stories. You know, I thought you was one haole girl, cause I only saw you from far away. You know, I thought you was one of those local haoles whose madda thought would be cute to give her baby girl a Hawaiian name cause she was born here.”

“Have you and Robert been here long?” Kanoe grasps for a polite, get-acquainted type question.

“I was born here, little ways down the coast.” Luisa begins fingering her spoon. “But I met Robert in Honolulu where I went for work after . . . I mean *during* the war.”

“It must have been nice to grow up here,” adds Kanoe.

“Not like Honolulu. You know anyone out here?”

“No.”

A fly comes into the room. Kanoe watches it on the table, rubbing its front legs over a crumb. The heat rises out of the still morning. Light strengthens in the room reflecting off the white window sills.

“Why you come here all by yourself?” Luisa can’t help herself.

Kanoe feels the knot in her stomach rise up to her throat. The sunlight flashes. Her mind forms the explanation she has kept in reserve, prepared for just such an occasion, but her voice can’t say the words.

“I wanted . . . to get away from him . . . my husband!”

Luisa reaches over to wipe the tears from Kanoe's eyes. "Shh. Never mind me. I just one old busy body, cannot mind my own business. Here, you have some more tea."

Later, outside, Luisa shows Kanoe the remains of three house sites and a canoe shed. She says that most of the people, in the old days, lived up mauka where it was cool and the streams flowed easily with water. Only a few families lived here on account of the heat. People who loved and worked the sea.

"My grandmadda's house not far from here. Stubborn old woman. She never even like to go Hilo. Waste time, she said, everything good is here."

"When did you say you left?" Kanoe asked.

"Me? I went Honolulu, wartime. I went to help my Auntie. She had one store down Kaka'ako, you know, family store. I only worked little while for her. You know, family business, bad pay, long hours. I got a job dancing hula in Waikīkī. Wartime, get plenty jobs like that for girls. Good job, you know, good pay, I never knew I could make so much money. Nice people, nice costumes, all daytime work too, cause had blackouts then, yeah?"

Kanoe imagines Luisa young, smiling and fresh, swaying to a hapa-haole tune, her movements eagerly devoured by servicemen, those short-haired boys from the mainland. Boys, wanting a glimpse of an exotic, imaginary Hawaiian paradise. Is this the theme, with a more sophisticated twist, that Frank really wanted? Luisa was excited by her paycheck. I was in love with a brilliant and well-known academic. Innocent with love and success, we didn't know what we were exchanging. Kanoe watches Luisa's shifting expressions as she talks on about her surroundings. Kanoe sees her as ancient one minute and young the next as the sunlight and palm shadows alternate across her face. I didn't notice at first how beautiful she is, thinks Kanoe. She knows it too, and she only lets it out a little at a time. Maybe she knows, maybe she always knew what those boys were thinking, and maybe she chose to act out their little visions of paradise. Maybe she knew how to guard the truth, the truth that lay just under the skin of being Hawaiian. What truth?

Luisa's voice slices through her thoughts. "So maybe we come over tomorrow and you can eat fish with us because Tiny always brings too much."

"Oh, sure. I love to eat fish." Kanoe's good girl responded instantly.

Kanoe found a path in the lava. She thought she was only wandering when her feet began to follow something, and the following turned into a trail. Barely discernible, it led over the desolation of lava. Beyond a sharp hill, she arrived at a spot of black sand big enough to make a beach. There stood a grove of coconut trees and the eternally pleasant sound of the tradewinds rustling through long, sinewy leaves. Under the stand of trees, the earth held

fresh water that had found its way from the distant mountain rain forest. Being close to the ocean, somewhere underground the fresh water joined with the sea and surfaced as a deep pond, a cold, brackish water pond. In ancient times, just as today, this pond would not be used for drinking water, but for the pure pleasure of immersing the body. Kanoe takes off her clothes and dives in. Body heat collides with coldness and produces a delicious sensory shock. She swims. She is swimming. She is swimming everything away. Exhausted and laying on the warm black sand, images of Frank descend. Frank, tenderly brushing back the hair from the face of the Vassar bimbo. Frank, breathing his warm breath in her ear, the way he did. Kanoe thinks of these things, and for the first time in months, she is not consumed by rage.

Robert turns the fish over. The hibachi's grill sizzles, sending up a small burst of sea smoke. He leans back in the lawn chair, takes a swallow of his beer and muses, "Tiny always brings too much fish." Kanoe puzzles over the fact that she instinctively knows that Tiny is not tiny at all but immensely fat and continually has to work at keeping his pants pulled above his butt line.

After dinner, the three sit on Kanoe's lanai. She and Luisa slouched down against the wall on the punē'e. Robert sits grandly in an old wicker chair, smoking a cigar and blowing rings. The rings float slowly out and disappear on a backdrop of stars. Auntie Lu (Luisa now insists Kanoe call her this) is going on about her daughter who married someone (Bob) in the service and now lives in El Paso, Texas. The daughter, Lilia (Lily in Texas) has three kids. Auntie Lu obviously feels cheated because she can only be a real grandmother for two weeks every year. Robert tells her to talk about something else. She tells him to shut up. He tells her she's a yappy old myna bird always boring everyone with senseless chatter. Kanoe asks Auntie Lu if they have any other children. Robert fixes a look on Auntie as two smoke rings float out of his "o"-shaped lips. Auntie's eyes get larger and brighter, captivated by the translucent doughnuts. Kanoe's seeing shifts from Luisa's shimmering stare to the pale white circles expanding and drifting out. Luisa's answer seems far away and as soft as the air the smoke is floating in, "No, only one."

Robert's voice pulls her back. "Kanoe, try go look in your ice box. Us country folks always thirsty."

Days pass in idleness. Kanoe drifts in and out of her own anger, sometimes so far out that she finds herself staring at the blank page and not knowing how much time has gone by minutes or hours. At other times, she engages in little activities that distract her, looking for shells, watching for birds, counting the waves in a set. Her tolerance for the heat improves, but she usually feels the

best in the cool early morning hours. On one of those mornings, Auntie Lu and Robert came to see if she would like to go to town.

“I was going to that pool to swim,” she informs them.

“What pool? What you talking about?” Auntie’s voice is sharp.

“That one by the lava, you must know it.”

“Oh, that one,” she says slowly.

“Kanoë, you shouldn’t swim alone,” says Robert as he shifts his feet in the sandy dirt.

“Yeah, you come with us to town instead, and I’ll go with you this afternoon.” Kanoë feels slightly annoyed and invaded but agrees to go.

Auntie Lu says she’ll get car sick with three in the front, but of course she refuses to let Kanoë be the one to sit on the truck bed. Robert spreads out a mat for her, and before they drive off, he kisses her tenderly on the cheek, a gesture which embarrasses and touches Kanoë deeply.

Town proves uneventful. Robert gets his social security check and a tank full of gas while Luisa makes the weekly shopping and gossip rounds. Kanoë buys some food and a Time magazine. On the way home, Kanoë falls asleep until they hit the bumpy dirt drive that takes them over the lava to the shoreline. Between the bumps and clangs of the old truck, Kanoë asks Robert if the pool has a name. Robert turns his smooth, round face toward her. His hair is white like the moon.

“Manōwai. They say it’s place for ‘aumākua. It used to be kapu to everyone but one family, big ali’i. Even today, nobody around here like swim there. Luisa no like that place.”

Manōwai, Manōwai, thinks Kanoë, the shark’s water. There are no sharks in brackish water. It’s my place. It’s my place now.

June 27

Got home from town. Too cloudy to go to the pool. Fell asleep, again. Dream: I’m watching a hula show with Frank’s lawyer friend, Jim. Jim really likes it, and says Frank told him all about it. I realize that I’ve forgotten I’m married to Frank and have been away a really long time. I panic. I quiz Jim about where Frank is. Jim says Frank now lives with one of the dancers. I ask him for Frank’s phone number, and he hands it to me on a little scrap of white paper all squashed up like a ball. It feels like my only line to the real world, but then it starts bouncing. I chase it as it bounces into my desk trash can and as I reach for it the trash can spreads out into water and the paper disappears.

In the following days, the wind picks up and the sea turns choppy. White caps fly everywhere, unusual for a June sea. Robert says, “Auntie Lu is in one of

her moods. She no like nobody for talk to her. You can help me pull in the net?”

They walk a short ways over the lava to a small cove. Kanoe slips on her tabi and enters the windy sea. They are chest deep in the water gathering up the net. Kanoe watches Robert, his back toward her, a brown freckled back like the one her father carried her on when she was small. Kanoe used to try to count the number of freckles on her father’s back, but always gave up because there were more freckles than she had numbers for. She remembers Kawela Bay on the north shore of O’ahu, the house where her family went in the summer. She would help her father with laying, checking, and pulling in his fishnets. Sometimes she would help him repair them when they were torn. Once she watched her father, spearing and killing an octopus. His back moved in a rhythm as his arms pounded and pounded the life out of the slippery creature while ink spilled all around. He must have seen the discomfort on her face when he came back to the beach.

“It’s okay, baby, this is to feed us. We don’t do this because we like to kill things. We only take what we need to eat.” His voice was gentle and reassuring.

She remembered what her father said, but later when the octopus was cut up and cooking in a big steaming pot, she wondered about how the octopus had lived under the sea, if it had neighbors and things humans have, little things that made it happy. As the steam from the pot rose faster and thicker, it suddenly occurred to her that living, just living and minding your own business, could be dangerous. When it was done, she ate pieces of the octopus from a blue and white Chinese rice bowl, and felt guilty about how much she enjoyed it.

Frank hates octopus but can eat it in public quite naturally. Frank thinks he loves the ocean, but Kanoe knows his love is tainted with arrogance. Frank will never be at home in the sea. He is not related. Instead of a kindred spirit, he is a conqueror, wanting to rise above and tame the elements. He loved it when his old friends from the midwest came to visit and he could reveal the Pacific to them: sailing, kayaking, wind surfing, an endless round of water activities in which Frank could set himself apart from them and, best of all, could tell them things they didn’t know. Kanoe could never bring herself to trust Frank in the ocean. Her focus returns to Robert and the sea and the net and the familiar task she lovingly performed every summer with her father at Kawela Bay. As Kanoe watches Robert, she misses her father who has been dead now for several years. Robert, my father, and me, she muses, we are Hawaiians in the sea, and it is different.

In silent partnership, they take the net up on a flat part of the lava and begin to pick out the limu and small fish entangled in the nylon mesh. A chill

moves through Kanoe. She turns to see the slow moving fin of a shark slipping into the cove. A trickle of water from her wet hair runs down the left side of her face, down the curve of her neck and off her shoulder.

“Robert,” she whispers.

Robert looks up from his work, tracking the movements of the shark. The fin moves closer. Robert picks out one of the best fish of the catch and walks out to the edge of the lava. The shark is very close now. Robert throws the fish. She can see the large fin. Gliding in, the shark takes the fish in one fluid movement, barely disturbing the water. They watch as he circles a few times then returns to the deeper sea. Quietly, they return to cleaning the net.

“No tell Auntie, okay? She just get more upset.” Robert speaks without looking up.

“Has the shark come before?”

“Yeah, used to come plenty. Not so much now.”

Robert still doesn't look up, and Kanoe returns to silence.

At home in the shower, Kanoe smooths the soap over her limbs with her hands and thinks about being a shark with blue and silver-black skin, with sharp teeth and a fin cutting and gliding through the water. She imagines herself in a shark body and Frank paddling in his kayak. She makes a pass, overturning his flimsy vessel in the water. He tries to recover it, but the wind blows it quickly beyond his reach and out of sight. Now he is in her element, completely vulnerable, with nothing to hold onto. He sees her crisp fin cut across the water. She circles him for some time, relishing his fear as it vibrates toward her, and then, she moves in. How would he see her if there was nothing he could do to hurt her? How would she look at him if she had the power to annihilate him?

After dinner, she finds an old book about Hawai'i just after statehood. There are pictures of Hawaiian women in tight pareu printed holokū and big red hibiscus flowers in their hair. One of them looks like it could be Luisa. They are singing by a grass house near the sea while other women dance in ti-leaf skirts. There are other pictures too of the happy, new state; someone surfing with a dog on the board and Diamond Head grinning in the background; streamers and the harbor on boat day. The pictures make it look like nothing bad ever happened in Hawai'i, like people live vacation lives free from worry. Kanoe has a feeling something is missing, not just from the pictures, but everywhere. Something's being left out on purpose. She closes the book, drops it on the floor next to the bed and pulls her old kihei over her, the one she's had forever. Everything gets farther away, Frank, their life, everything. Everything is just a small floating island moving toward a horizon. A coolness passes through her as if she were hollow. There is the last sound of a single wave breaking, and sleep takes her in.

Along with the blustery wind comes a swell from the south, and the sea heaves and turns. The sound of the breaking waves drown out everything. Kanoe tries to have a conversation with Robert on the beach, but they both end up yelling so they give up. Kanoe takes a walk along the coast, her thoughts struggling in volume to be heard over the sound of the sea. One thought, she thinks, all I might need is one thought. At this particular moment if I could only have the one perfect thought, a bolt of lightning would cut through everything and leave me clean and fresh. Her mind begins to turn over and over like her surroundings to look for that one perfect thought. Squinting her eyes she looks out to sea and thinks she sees a fin in the water. Her eyes scan the white caps. She walks a few steps, looks and thinks she sees it again. She's not sure and strains to find it, but soon every shadow appears to be a fin and a great army of fins are conjured up on the restless water, a thousand sharks swimming in force to an unknown destination. Without really knowing why or how, Kanoe finds herself at the pool. The sky has clouded over, and she is staring at her inky reflection. Picking up some small black pebbles, she drops them slowly, one by one into the water. The little circles grow wider and wider, and the whole pond reverberates to her intrusions. A slender brown hand with long graceful fingers gently touches Kanoe's shoulder.

"You shouldn't come here by yourself," Auntie Lu whispers. Kanoe is struck by how young and perfect her hand looks.

"Why not, Auntie Lu? It's so beautiful. The wind isn't here."

"Something could happen, an accident, something like that. Who would hear you?"

It strikes Kanoe, that it's not just Auntie Lu's hands that look young, but something about her whole being. It's like she could be my sister if you just felt her presence. Yes, she thinks, my sister who is worried about me and wants to tell me to be careful. Auntie Lu and Kanoe sit on the edge of the pool.

"This is beautiful, you're right." Auntie gazes at the rocks and palms that encircle the pool.

"Very, romantic, if you ask me." Kanoe's feet, moving in opposite directions, make circles in the water.

"Why you say that? Romantic. Not good."

"I don't know. It just came out, Auntie. Tell me why people stay away from here."

"Cause so many stories. People say this place kapu, religious kind stuff happen here, you know, chief kind. People say they still come here at nighttime. People say they seen lights, hear chanting, that kind stuff. Then, there was that time. Was some women coming here for pick limu. One of

them was pretty young, and she had one baby. Just one young mama with a sweet baby. They put the baby down under that tree on one blanket and they went pick limu. They wasn't very far away maybe ten yards something, not far. They was talking and laughing and picking limu and then one looked and couldn't see the baby and the mama was screaming and she ran over and they saw one trail like somebody come from the ocean or the baby went crawl down to the water and then they saw one shark swimming slowly out to sea with the baby."

"But how *did* the baby get into the water?"

"I dunno," Auntie Lu answers listlessly.

"How awful to have your baby eaten by a shark."

"I never said the shark *ate* the baby," snaps Auntie Lu. "I said the shark *took* the baby. Let's go now."

On the way home they walk in silence while Kanoe's mind is distracted by too many thoughts and voices, as if someone with a remote control was randomly changing the channels in her head. Auntie Lu invites her for dinner, but Kanoe thanks her and says she would like to go home.

The wind kept blowing, horribly and steadily, for the next two days. Kanoe stayed in the house watching things fly by. She saw Auntie Lu and Robert on the beach talking loudly, but she only heard the muffled sounds of their conversation that the wind threw her way. They looked over at her house as if they were deciding something about her. Yes, she thought, they were talking about me, and they might be watching my house even though I can't see them.

As the windy day blew on, Kanoe withdrew. She felt the wind emptying her out. Even Frank, the keeper of her anger, could be blown away. She wondered where she really was. She saw the dried coffee on the bottom of the cup, those crumpled up clothes on the floor, the dirty dishes in the sink, evidence of some presence. Maybe, she thought, I have just been sitting here for a long time and secretly growing, like a seed packed down in the pressing earth, silently squeezing out tendons and fibers beyond my body. Maybe I'm branching out and the roots are restless for something to feed on, for some way to keep the seed alive and connected. She saw her hand holding a pen and writing on a piece of white paper in a language someone knew once but is now considered dead.

She wakes to a day of perfect stillness, not knowing how long she'd been sleeping, thinking at first she was still dreaming. The sky is blue and the ocean swells now break crisp and evenly. The sunlight crystallizes every object into clear focus. Kanoe gets out of bed. Into her net bag goes a towel,

a visor, sunscreen and a book. She pulls on her swim suit, wraps a pareu around herself and heads straight for the pool. She spreads her towel out half way between the pool and the sea and settles into the warm sand.

Closing her eyes she sees an image of Frank in his office, the day she first met him. She remembers admiring his Ivy League, East Coast looks, his wire rimmed glasses. Frank always loved an admirer, and in the beginning, Kanoe drank in his every move. He prized her attention and her quick mercurial mind that traveled so gracefully in the world of ideas. That she was an island girl and part-Hawaiian made it even better for him. She made him different from the others. He was no longer just another transplanted mainland professor with a blonde wife and pale-limbed children. He was connected. But after three years of marriage, when Kanoe began to really write, Frank “felt something was missing in the relationship.” When others began to take her seriously and praise her work, he told her she’d become “indifferent” and “disconnected.” When she got published in a well-known magazine, he had the first affair. Then came the promises of never again, the “if you’d only been more . . .” Kanoe stops these thoughts because they always made her stomach queasy. Maybe he just doesn’t want a wife who is a successful writer, and because he’s a professor of English, he just can’t bring himself to admit it.

Kanoe listens to the sound of the waves. They seem subliminal and far away at first, but the sound gets clearer, as if she is waking up, yet she knows that she hasn’t been sleeping. She is very aware of her body sitting up and looking out at the brilliant water. Out there in the waves someone is surfing. A young, dark man rides in and paddles out. Kanoe watches from her towel. He turns around, sitting on his board. Is he staring at her or just looking her way? She sees her sunvisor by the water’s edge. Did she drop it there or was it blown by some little wind? Kanoe gets up and walks down to pick it up before the water takes it away. It seems like miles. She knows he is watching. Bending down, she reaches to take it in her hand, but the wind picks it up and blows it in the water. Kanoe stands and watches as the white spot floats out to sea.

The young man is paddling swiftly toward the floating visor. Kanoe looks away nervously. If I just don’t look, she reasons, if I look up mauka at the solid green hills, maybe he won’t be there. He’ll be gone like something at night you thought was under your bed. She turns back, and like a sleight of hand he is quickly there. He’s walking out of the water holding out the white visor. He’s looking straight at her, staring, not the way Frank would stare at a woman. He looks her over as if she is an enchanting curiosity, something bright and fresh in a store window. Now his face changes. It is warm like the day’s sun on her body, because, she hears herself think, he has the most

beautiful smile, the most even and perfect white teeth she has ever seen. “Kapua,” he says in a soft and even voice. “I’m Kapuaokekai, and this must be yours.” He hands her the visor.

In another second, he is on his board paddling away. Kanoe watches his arms move into the water, his back shifting in rhythm with every stroke. He turns and waves. As if pulled by a string, her hand rises. She waves back. He flashes that smile again, turns quickly on his board and paddles away, down the coast.

The night before, Luisa had a dream and she told it to Robert: A boy and a girl are swimming with sharks. The sharks explain to them that certain sharks are related to certain people on land. “When you forget who your relatives are, that’s when the killing starts,” they tell the children. A big shark swims by. “You see him,” the sharks say. “His mother was walled up in Pu’uloa when they built Pearl Harbor. So sad.”

Since it is the Fourth of July, Robert and Luisa have insisted that Kanoe eat dinner with them. Luisa comments on Kanoe’s sunburn.

“I hiked down the coast, quite a ways today,” she lies. For a second, she questions the lie, but the lie and the question just as easily slip away.

“Robert,” moans Auntie Lu, “too bad we no more firecrackers.”

“Luisa you too old for fireworks.”

Robert is cooking spare ribs on a grill. They are all sitting in a hala grove that has been cleared out and fixed up to look like a little picnic area. They even have a stand for torches. Smooth bits of white coral are spread over the ground and each hala tree is surrounded by a ring of rocks like a planter. The picnic table and benches are painted white and so are the old wooden Adirondack chairs that have been brought from the porch. Kanoe listens to the breeze in the hala leaves, a quicker more restless sound than when it moves through coconut fronds. Luisa has gone in the house to warm up some noodles. Robert clears his throat, a male signal that Kanoe recognizes from childhood meaning something serious to follow.

“Kanoe, Luisa’s sister in Miloli’i, she’s really sick. The husband like us come stay little while, help him.”

“Oh.”

“Yeah, but see, Luisa, I know she like go, but she’s saying maybe she no can go, and I know it’s cause she worried about leaving you here.”

“Leaving me? I’ll be fine. I’m a grown up.”

“She worried about you swimming alone, having one accident.”

“She really has a thing about that pool, huh Robert?”

“Yeah. See, so I figure, if I talk to you and you make promise you no go to the pool while we gone, then I can tell Luisa, then she no worry, then we can go visit the sister and help the sister’s husband and everything’s ok.”

“Okay, I promise, you can tell her.”

“Hey, thanks, Kanoe. Funny kind things she fix her mind on. Here, taste this.”

Robert cuts off a piece of meat and puts it in Kanoe’s mouth. It tastes of grill and gristle and barbecue sauce. Kanoe looks closer at the little picnic garden. There is a sea shell stuck in the small hollow of a tree and in its pattern she thinks she sees a tiny figure whirling and dancing around. The piece of driftwood down by one of the roots looks like a snake, curled around a log, peacefully sleeping. She sees that the rocks have been carefully chosen and placed, some of them with faces of women, some like animals and some like veiled creatures, alive now, but not quite formed. There is a whole world here in this garden, beyond, just beyond where she and Robert are drinking beer and cooking and having a regular conversation.

“Too good how she did that, yeah?”

Kanoe is aware that Robert has been watching her while cooking his spareribs.

“Takes a while to notice. Some people never even see. Luisa made all the things here. She finds them on the beach. She says they call her, and then she asks them if they like come to the garden. If they say yes, then they even tell her where they like be. Too good, yeah? Kinda like one whole party out here.”

Luisa comes out of the house with the noodles just as Robert plunks the done ribs in a big bowl. Luisa says she can’t figure out why Hawaiians like to celebrate the Fourth of July. “Captain Cook never even get here till 1778. Nothing to do with us.”

“Hell,” says Robert, “just one excuse for eat something good we not supposed to.”

The next morning, Robert took Kanoe to the store to get groceries. Since they will be away, they insist that Kanoe buy a lot of food. Luisa even cooks a huge pot of stew that she pours into separate plastic containers to store in her freezer. Kanoe is supposed to come to their house and get some whenever she wants. That afternoon, they depart for Miloli‘i. Robert shows Kanoe the special watering can in the shed to use on the delicate ferns that hang under the eaves.

“Now, you remember about the pool, yeah?” Robert looks at her nervously.

“Don’t worry, I’ll remember.”

Kanoe savors their formal, country goodbyes. As the truck drives away down the sand and gravel road, she feels a sense of finality descend with their departure.

Kanoe has turned and turned and turned in the sun until her skin reflects the colors of her father and grandmother and all those who came before her. The day after Robert and Luisa left, Kanoe again encountered Kapuaokekai at the pool. Since that meeting, she has been with him day and night. She hasn't tried to explain it to herself. She hasn't even thought about it too much. She finds one moment moving into the next and each moment a little more pleasant than the last one. So she continues because of the pleasure and the pleasantness, the calm and sense of well-being, are too much to make her even consider resisting. In the midmorning light she turns on her towel, and her brown fingers reach over to trace the ridge of his backbone. Kapuaokekai. She likes his feminine name. She loves the curve of his neck as it slides on to his shoulder, and she loves it that cautiously spreading down his back, are freckles. Kapuaokekai, her rider of waves, with the beautiful white smile. He's started to tell her about his grandfather.

"He said things had changed so much from the way they used to be. It made him sad."

"What kinds of things?" Kanoe asks.

"The way people thought about things."

"Well, how did they think?" Kanoe is always interested in stories about the past.

"My grandfather said, before, people weren't so scared about Hawaiian things. They weren't scared to talk to their ancestors who had passed away. They weren't afraid of interacting with the guardians—the 'aumākua, or the spirits of the forest, or the other living creatures in the world. Everyone knew they were related. Sometimes it was a blessing to be—to have those kinds of friends, protectors. Do you understand what I'm talking about?" Kapua stops talking and looks at her. She has been listening with her eyes closed in the sun.

"Yeah," Kanoe rolls over on to her side and opens her eyes. "But what exactly did he say changed them?"

"When the foreigners came," Kapua begins, "the attention of the people became caught up in all the new things they brought to our world—like cloth and metal and guns—all of those things we didn't have. Then came the ideas about the god of the foreigners who was a jealous god and didn't want to share the world with the gods of any other place. Each place this god came to, he claimed as his and didn't want any other kind of competition. His followers began to change the old stories to make people afraid of the things they had formerly loved and the ones who had been their protectors. They made up and told stories over and over again about how any person who befriended or invited any of the old ones into their lives was ruined and contaminated by the contact. They made up stories about people going mad,

producing evil children, killing or eating their own friends and family—terrible stories.”

“What did your grandfather say it was really like?” Kanoe sees Kapua’s brow is tensed. “Tell me.”

“He said we were all friends. We brought joy into each others’ lives. We gave each other things, special things.”

The world exists for Kapua in a way Frank could never comprehend. Kapua has learned to see the world as his family has seen it living for many generations in close and intimate contact with the sea. Gently and carefully, Kanoe meets that world. Names—he names everything. All the fish, all the limu, all the rocks, the currents, tides, the shades of light from the sun and moon—they all have names. Every face of the sea, every wind, all the waves, all the clouds, all the skies, all have names. All have names in the lyrical language of their shared past, names that surely know themselves for what they are: sounds of the voice. Only with the sound of the voice are things named with life. Kapuaokakai, we are in a dream, she thinks. Give the dream a name. Give us life.

There are only two important things for Kanoe at this moment in her life, Kapua and the pool. Frank, her writing, and her anger have become silent and unimportant. In the evening, Kapua catches fish for her and cooks them on a rock in a fire. He brings ‘opihī, sweet crabs, even lobster. They lie in the moonlight and watch the pool change faces under the passing clouds, watch those little drifts of wind on the water, and listen to the voices underneath the glassy finish. This is what we all need, she tells herself, undivided attention, peace. She thinks she would just like to lie here and watch him ride the endless waves, swim in the pool, eat, make love, and never see anyone again.

At one point there is something Kanoe wants at the house. Kapua doesn’t want to go there. She coaxes him. She takes him by the hand and leads him down the lava path saying it will just take a minute. He follows reluctantly away from the pool and the beach. They make love in her bed, but the bed seems too small. In fact, Kanoe thinks he doesn’t exactly look right in the house with its walls and squareness, and under the roof, his eyes lose a certain quality of light. She picks up her pen.

“I love to write,” she tells him.

“Later,” he whispers, “lots of time, later.”

They walk back to the pool, past Robert and Luisa’s house.

“Maybe I should stop and water their plants,” she tells him. “I promised.”

Kanoe stands on tiptoe to get the key from the hanging fern. When they enter the house, the living room seems big and cool and inviting. Kanoe goes

to take care of the plants. Kapua looks around the house, and when Kanoë returns, she finds him examining the collection of framed photographs on the desk near the kitchen. He picks up a picture of Luisa.

“This is her when she was young?” Kapua’s fingers softly trace her image.

“Yes,” says Kanoë.

“My father was in love with her when they were young.”

“So he lived close by?”

“Uh-huh.”

“Did she know it? Know he loved her?”

“I don’t know, they were really young. Who is this?” Kapua had picked up the picture of Lily.

“That’s her daughter. She lives in Texas.”

“Any others, sisters, brothers?” His voice is quick, almost eager.

“No, but here’s a picture of Luisa and Robert today.” Kanoë shows him a snapshot of the couple standing in front of Luisa’s picnic garden. “She still looks so young.”

“She’s still beautiful,” he murmurs.

“She is.” Kanoë likes it that he finds this older woman attractive.

“Is she kind, Kanoë?”

“She has moods, but mostly she’s very nice.”

“Like you, Kanoëlehua.”

That afternoon, Kanoë dreams in the sun. She dreams she is walking by the sea in a strange place. It is a sunny and warm morning. The ocean is blue and clear. She comes to a place that is like a beachside attraction, like a museum, where for a small fee, a person can get into a tank with a shark. She sees a man in a tank with a huge shark. They lie close together and look like they are in some kind of intimate communication. The scene changes. There is another exhibit. Now the shark is all tied up and made to sit in something like a chair, bent over and bound up in cruel ways. Kanoë becomes very upset. She screams that they can’t do this. “This is our ‘aumākua and he must be free,” she cries.

Sitting straight up and crying, Kanoë wakes from the dream. Kapua is right there. She tells him about the terrible dream. She buries her face in the warm curve of his neck, and he sings to her as he rocks her back and forth. The tune is strange and haunting and comforting, like something she’s heard a long time ago and is just remembering again. Kanoë listens to his voice and the lapping of the waves weaving together in a safe and protective lullaby. The bad dream fades. Kapua tells her that tonight will be a special night. The moon will be as full as it can be and together they will watch it rise out

of the depths of the ocean, bright and ripe and brilliant. The two of them will be alone with the moon, the water and the light.

12 July

What I want to write. I can't.

Kanoe was first conscious of a heavy feeling in her head and a throbbing sensation in her right ankle. It was only after a few days of Luisa's care that her focus returned enough to write a simple line, but every day after that the writing came faster and smoother and better than before. It was a soothing and familiar activity. She remembered nothing after Robert and Luisa left for Miloli'i. The doctor said she just might never recover those memories.

"So what's a few days out of your life?" he told her. There's more than five days in mine I wish I could completely forget."

She saw some things written down in her journal like a list, the kind she makes when she's thinking of a story, but she couldn't remember the story she was thinking of. There was something about a man, a young man, a house that's too big, and looking at photographs.

"We found you by that pool." Luisa tells her what happened. "With a gash on the head and blood on your face and inside your hair. You was just sitting there with your feet dangling in the water, and you was staring into nothing and never even knew who we was. You talk, but no make sense, and you never even know your name."

The ambulance came. In the emergency room, Kanoe was treated for shock and exposure. She had a sprained ankle and possibly a concussion, but they let Robert take her home on the promise that one of them would stay with her at all times for a few days.

"We so happy we never find you floating face down in that pool. But sorry," Luisa speaks most kindly, "had to call Robert's niece for find out where your husband for call about the medical insurance. So now he knows. Sorry." Robert adds that Frank has been calling and wants to come see if she's all right.

"You like him come, I tell him, okay. You no like, I tell him go to hell," Robert tells Kanoe.

"He can come. But tell him he has to stay in town, not here."

That night before bed, Kanoe looks over the notes in her journal, trying to make sense out of the pieces.

"Maybe I was, I don't know. Maybe I just snapped . . . Auntie Lu, thank you for saving me."

"We didn't save you, baby. I just wish we didn't leave you alone."

"I should have listened to you."

"No worry. It's pau, finished now. Everything's okay. You sleep."

Early in the morning while it was still dark and cool, Kanoe wakes up from a dream. She turns on the small light by her bed and looks for a pencil and her journal. Luisa was already up, sitting in a chair and watching the first bits of light coming into the day.

“What you want Kanoe?”

“I had a dream. I want to write it down.”

“No write. First, tell. Tell me your dream, I want to hear.”

“I am asleep by the pool. A young man is there. He is handsome and kind, and he lies on top of me so I can see his face framed by the bright sun, like a halo. He asks me if I would like to have a baby. I say sure. He says we have to do it in the pool, or it won't come out right. He carries me to the pool. First there is a full moon, but then it goes behind a cloud and it gets dark. There are torches all around, and I know someone is holding them, but I can't see who it is. We undress and slide into the water. We swim around each other in circles, coming closer and closer together until we slip into each other. The water is cool and smooth on my skin. I feel something for just a moment like a spark, a flame, a falling star shooting up and into me. Then everything changes. I am leaning on a large smooth rock near the pool. There is another rock, perfectly placed for me to brace my feet on. My belly is growing. I watch it get larger and larger before my eyes. The young man smiles and kisses me and tells me that the baby could come anytime now. Then off in the distance I see a tiny light getting closer and closer. It's you, Auntie Lu and Robert, coming with flashlights to see what I'm doing. Then I get confused and afraid. I try to get up, but he keeps me from moving. He says I'll hurt myself and the baby. I get away and start to run toward you, but an intense pain seizes my stomach, and I think I fall. Yes, I fall, and then I'm back leaning on the rocks feeling as if my belly will burst open at any moment. And there's blood, blood in my hair, blood on my hands and blood between my legs. There are a series of snapping sounds, one after another and everything is like a silent movie in slow motion. I am tenderly carried by invisible hands, washed in the pool and placed back on the rocks which are clean and smooth again. The torches begin to go out one by one and I watch the young man walk away. I see his broad and beautiful back in the moonlight, the sway of his hips, back and forth as he moves away. He turns back and I see his hands are cupped as if he holds something precious. He smiles a beautiful smile and a strong wave of love opens up every part of me. He turns away and enters the sea.”

“It's good to tell your dreams,” Auntie Lu said after listening with great interest. “My grandma always said.”

Kanoe looks into Luisa's face and she seems so incredibly beautiful. Her eyes are great and dark and deep, illuminated by a timeless light. She smiles,

and in an instant Kanoe sees sorrow, compassion, and love pass over her face all at once. Luisa lets out a sigh, strokes Kanoe's hair and tells her to go back to sleep.

Kanoe wakes again, rested. She is far away from her old battles. Sunlight has lost its old, sharp edge, and the wind is sweet and pleasant. Kanoe gets out of bed and roams around the house, not worrying about or trying to remember what is past. Robert has gone to town to bring Frank for a short visit. She feels no tension or anxiety about his visit. Although there might be things I want from Frank, she muses, he has nothing I really need. Today she is sure about her path, sure she will never have to beg for anything, ever again. Unexplainably, she feels taken care of, not by any particular person, but by something else, something quiet and kindly, something like this very day.

Auntie Lu sits on the veranda knitting for one of her grandchildren in Texas, while Kanoe lies on the punē watching the sea. Kanoe remembers thinking when she was a little girl that there was one place where all the waves in the world came from. She thinks she pictured it somewhere around the South Pole. What or who generated the waves was of no great importance. What did matter greatly to her was that they continued to proceed, one after another, on their course to each shoreline, reef, island, beach, and cliff from this one great wellspring of waves. And still, thinks Kanoe, they continue arriving. From their long and rolling journeys, waves arrive in a timeless consistency that will long outlast my little human life. Auntie Luisa hums quietly in her chair as she gets on with her work.



Jewel Castro, *Sleep*. Reproduced by permission.

teresia teaiwa

niudity (I)

by the light
of a kerosene lamp
skin looks
very different
somehow

somehow
a flame trapped in glass
can still throw shadows across
the surface of my body

by the light
of a kerosene lamp
coconut oil
with a scent of tiare
makes so much sense
somehow

somehow
thislightthisoilthisskin
can'thidemynakedness
somehowsomewheresomebodyisnotlovingme

niudity (II)

you think this is tough?
this is just the husk of the coconut,
baby.
wait til you meet the shell.
but after that,
the sweet flesh
will make all this work worthwhile.
and then maybe you'll want to do it again?

niudity (III)

from *the penguin dictionary of oceanic verse* (forthcoming):

niud—v. (past tense) n.

1. (v.) to have made something “niu,” or in other words, to have turned something into a “coconut;” e.g. “The evil sorcerer *niud* our hero.” <<Voice: You pathetic coconut!>> 2. (v.) to have known previously; e.g. “The evil sorcerer already *niud* that the heroine would come to rescue the hero.” 3. (n.) to be without clothing; e.g. “The heroine arrived in the *niud*, taking both the evil sorcerer and the hero completely by surprise.”

niudism—n.

1. a whole philosophy based on the value of being turned into a coconut; e.g. “Our heroine was the embodiment of an ancient philosophy called *niudism*.” <<Voice: May the coconut be with you.>>

niudist—n.

1. one who has the qualities of a coconut. 2. one who follows the philosophy of niudism; e.g. “The evil sorcerer had once been a *niudist*, too, but he had gone over to the dark side.”

niudity—n.

1. a state of being turned into a coconut, and not being recognised as oneself; as distinct from being naked, in which case one is without clothes, and is immediately recognised as oneself; e.g. “Neither the hero nor the evil sorcerer recognised the heroine because of her *niudity*. (And because the hero had been *niud*, the heroine had a hard time recognising him, too, at first, but she did in the end.)” 2. a form of clothing, a disguise or filter or mask or husk; e.g. “And so, since they didn’t recognise her, the heroine in her *niudity* went on her merry way and left the evil sorcerer and the hero to their own devices.” 3. a song, often an expression of joy or relief; e.g. “And as she went she sang a sweet *niudity*. . . a *niudity* of freedom, of liberation from men. . . a *niudity* of independence, and of being single. . . a *niudity* for singular women wherever they may be.”

niudity (IV) or crudity (I)

I want to write this poem
about what it means to be niud
what it means to niud

Instead I will write this poem
about what it means to be screwed
what it means to be screwed

And this poem that I will write
about what it means to be screwed
has a lot to do with what it means to be niud

Niud. Screwed. Niud. Screwed.

I don't think I'll write that poem after all.

It Began with A Question

Konai Helu Thaman

it began with a question
no one has asked before
will you wait for me

my bones belonged
in another time
my lips were sealed by the sea

it wasn't my place
to decide which new notes
the earth must sing

for the world was weary
the sky pale
and the stars I could not see

but I said yes
and placed my faith
on the rock that noticed me.

Pacific Studies, Vol. 30, Nos. 1/2—March/June 2007

Reprinted, with permission, from Konai Helu Thaman, "It Began with A Question," *Book of Love* (Suva: Mana Publications, 1999), 11.

Not Exotic

Lisa Kahaleole Hall

Im recovering my taste
for mangoes
fleshy sweet musky undertoned
explosions
extra bite
in early stages
shoyu dipped
vinegar spiced green crunchy
sharpens
tongues later
mellows deep juice
squirting lips hand face
a fantasy
of slick sweetness

You're no peach never have been
You're a sharp tongued vinegar edged
mango girl
I'm tentatively
tasting

In a season of late ripening
I'm waiting for
the soft warm stickiness of the sun
that first bite

Ka Lawai'a

ku'ualoha ho'omanawanui

Why do I always feel
like
you are baiting me?
Waiting for me to bite
your carefully
baited hook
and swallow
bitterness
sharp and metallic
Like a fisherman
you troll familiar waters
spitting kukui
carefully chewed
leaving a visible trail in the water
a hunter's path
of destruction
Lies disguised as promises
slipping so easily from your
kukui-oiled tongue
Pressing into each newly revealed
fold of ke 'āpapa
your long sharp spear
pierces the soft
and forgiving flesh
Of gullible
and suspecting
he'e
Today some use a glass-bottomed box
modern conveniences
You find too cumbersome
Sometimes
tradition
is the better snare.

Pacific Studies, Vol. 30, Nos. 1/2—March/June 2007



Jewel Castro, *Tradition*. Reproduced by permission.

**BLOOD AND REPRODUCTION OF (THE) RACE IN THE NAME
OF HO‘OULU LĀHUI—A HAWAIIAN FEMINIST CRITIQUE**

J. Kēhaulani Kauanui
Wesleyan University

I RECALL BEING IN HONOLULU for my thirty-first birthday and making plans to go hear some live music with a friend who is a professor there and is also Hawaiian. We were comparing notes as to which family members would be coming along when I mentioned that I planned to bring a date. Her first question was whether or not he was Hawaiian. “No,” I replied, “Filipino, from Brooklyn.” She looked terribly disappointed and told me I had better drop him fast. I explained that we had just met and this would be our third date. She again told me to lose him and find a Hawaiian man so I could have Hawaiian children. I made it clear that it was a date, not a fertility-planning event, and reminded her that any child born from me would have to be Hawaiian, regardless of the background of any man. She rolled her eyes and said, “You know what I mean. You’d end up diluting your genealogy!” I asked her how a lineage could possibly be diluted since it either existed as a relationship or not. She admitted, “I know, I know, but still!” Still.

A few days later the same friend told me a story about an upsetting encounter she had had the night before. Two close friends of hers, a married couple, revealed that their son had a crush on her daughter. My friend told them in no uncertain terms that she did not want their son coupling with her because he is not Hawaiian. They were insulted and confused; they had been friends since before their children were born. My friend told me how upset the couple was because they didn’t understand her issues. Neither did I. How, I asked her, after all her research on Hawaiian genealogies, could she think of her daughter conceiving children with a non-Hawaiian as limiting?

She yelled back, "I want Hawaiian grandchildren!" How, I wondered, could they *not* be Hawaiian?

I found my friend's position quite unsettling. It seemed as though she were imposing her racial anxieties onto me, as though I did not measure up enough to make my potential offspring count in any meaningful way. Her cautionary tales were meant to be instructive: there I was, like her, an adult, light-skinned Hawaiian whose alleged deficiencies might be somehow corrected by the production of offspring with more "Hawaiian blood" than ourselves. However misguided, her concern for me is understandable, given that fact that the state of Hawai'i currently defines "native Hawaiian" by a fifty-percent blood quantum rule. Blood quantum classification is a fractionalizing measurement that entails the assumption that blood amount indicates one's cultural orientation. The basis of my friend's pressure on me is a direct legacy of this racist policy.

The fifty-percent rule is a legal definition that originated in a U.S. Congressional policy—the Hawaiian Homes Commission Act of 1921. In the Act, approximately 200,000 acres of land were allotted for residential, pastoral, and agricultural purposes for eligible "native Hawaiians" who met the blood rule, defined as those "descendants with at least one-half blood quantum of individuals inhabiting the Hawaiian Islands prior to 1778." The Act was originally proposed as a way to rehabilitate the Hawaiian people, who were suffering rapid depopulation that was linked to colonialism, disease, poverty, and urbanization.

My family resides on part of these lands—Anahola is part of the Hawaiian Home Lands territory, all of which was formerly part of the Crown and Government Lands in the Kingdom of Hawai'i. My father grew up in Anahola and has been on the waiting list for a homestead lease of his own since 1974. I myself do not qualify for the program as an original lessee, but I would be able to inherit my father's lease if he is eventually able to secure one, only because the U.S. Congress amended the Act to allow for direct descendants to inherit family leases so long as they meet a one-fourth blood quantum criterion.

Because the "one-half" requirement endures as the main standard, Hawaiian people are now classified into two categories, the "fifty percenters" ("native Hawaiians") and the "less than fifties" ("Native Hawaiians"). Most Hawaiians contest the federal and state definition of "native Hawaiian" because it is so exclusionary. The rule also undermines our indigenous cultural practices that define identity on the basis of one's genealogical ties. However, as my opening story illustrates, many are still invested in blood to prove their indigeneity. These concerns with "measuring up" reflect a growing angst among Hawaiians that is extremely troublesome and all too common. There are many alarming examples.

During a long-distance phone call from Honolulu, an activist friend who is also Hawaiian asked me in desperation, “What are we gonna do when the full-bloods die out? How will we define our *lāhui* [people]?” I feel despair when I think of his unease, yet I am also critical of his assumptions and their implications. What he was suggesting is that *piha kānaka maoli* (“full” Hawaiians) currently define who Hawaiian people are as *lāhui*, and that our future rests with them. An impossible burden indeed; here, the demand for the “full-blood” or *piha* Hawaiian has crossed over beyond the mere symbolic. My friend’s anxiety—and that of many Hawaiians—is a haunting refrain. In Hawaiian nationalist contexts, one often hears the political leaders cite numerical figures of Hawaiians’ racial mixtures as an index of Hawaiian extinction. *Piha* Hawaiians are rarely explicitly named unless in relation to their predicted demise.

Prominent sovereignty activist Kekuni Blaisdell, M.D., along with Noreen Mokuau, frequently warns that “today there are less than 8,000 *piha kānaka maoli* (pure Hawaiians) remaining.”¹ Blaisdell also reiterates predictions that by the year 2020 there will be no more *piha kānaka maoli*. Linked to these recitations, many Hawaiians, including Blaisdell, who is a long-term independence activist, urge Hawaiian people to *ho‘oulu lāhui*—to reinvigorate the nation of Hawaiian people. While replenishment among Hawaiians can certainly be achieved through a variety of means, the call to *ho‘oulu lāhui*, more often than not, is a call to procreate and bear more Hawaiians, preferably the “more than fifties.” My worried friend was clearly taking refuge in the imaginary need for the authentic sign, with the “pure” body as ultimate referent.²

Because blood is often used as a metaphor for ancestry, blood quantum and genealogy are often thought to be one and the same. But even though blood has evolved as a figure of speech for ancestry in Hawaiian contexts, blood quantum classification is very different from Hawaiian genealogical practices—which function in substantially different ways. As an administrative logic, blood quantum fragments by dividing parts of a whole, severing unions, and portioning out blood “degree.” The definition of Hawaiian identity on the basis of blood logics was an American conception, a colonial policy developed through experience with American Indians. This policy presupposed long-term patterns of assimilation and assumed that blood is a qualified measure of relatedness.

Moreover, blood logic works to displace a discourse and recognition of Hawaiian sovereignty. Hence, the political question of who counts as Hawaiian is fraught with histories of contested entitlement and colonial dispossession, now persisting in neocolonial state practices. The current blood quantum rule is not only abstract and arbitrary, it is restrictive. How can a

fraction represent whom one's ancestors are, where they may have come from, with whom they were affiliated, and what those relationships were? Blood quantum schema can never account for the ways that genealogy connects Hawaiians to one another, to place, and to land. *Genealogy makes nonsense out of fractions and percent signs that are grounded in colonial moves marked by exclusionary racial criteria.*

In reclaiming a place in Oceania, many Hawaiians are emphasizing their genealogical connections to all Pacific peoples. Hawaiians' traditional form of considering who belongs emphasizes lineal descent over and above constructions of blood. Hawaiian genealogical practices are much more fluid and strategic. Hawaiians continue to invoke their lineage at specific moments appropriate to their own social positioning. In other words, genealogy is about quality, not quantity; it is the quality of the connection that counts, not the "distance" in relation to some mythic purity. Genealogy is used to establish a collective identity and emphasize shared ancestry through the social nexus of *ʻohana*. In Hawaiian kinship forms there are no exclusive boundaries between defined sets of relatives or bounded descent groups associated with land. Instead, there is social flexibility where there are no determinate kinship groups or rigidly prescribed relationships. Hawaiian kinship is forged through bilateral descent, whereby people relate to each other by connections made through their mothers and fathers equally. Moreover, descent can be traced in a myriad of ways, even as those genealogical practices have changed over time and adapted to new historical circumstances.

There is a revitalization of genealogical practices among Hawaiians. I believe this is an attempt to assert cultural sovereignty within the current neocolonial context, where issues of place and belonging are threatened, while indigenous political status is under continuous assault. Blood quantum policy affecting Hawaiians *originates* in our land dispossession by the United States. Moreover, in the Hawaiian case, blood quantum is incommensurate with sovereign recognition. Blood quantum modalities are *always* about allotment in relation to the *individual*, whereas genealogy emphasizes the continuing *collective* political claims of indigenous descendants.

Still, there needs to be more critical analysis of the ways we as Hawaiians continue to deploy discourses of blood quantum; it is to our detriment and propagates uneven gendered impact in negative ways. The continued legal "demand" for Hawaiians who can document their blood quantum at fifty percent or more has in turn fueled angst among many Hawaiians. Their fretfulness is evidenced in the nationalist calls to "replenish the race" by reproduction. These calls have significant bearing on Hawaiian women as well as the transformation of genealogical reckoning. Perhaps more importantly, it is Hawaiian women who are calling on other Hawaiian women.

At a feminist family values forum, sovereignty leader Mililani Trask also made note of this push, stating that “There is a saying in the Hawai’ian [sic] culture that you can marry whomever you wish, but mate with your own kind. In this way, we regenerate our numbers.”³ The heterosexual arrangement of Trask’s dictate is unmarked, but let us be clear: within the current laws of the state of Hawai’i—and throughout most of the United States—Hawaiians cannot marry whomever they wish to marry if that person is someone of the same sex, though there are various forms of same-sex unions within Hawaiian cultural histories.⁴ Still, the concern Trask articulates here is one of recovering from mass Hawaiian depopulation. She explains that “When Cook arrived there were one million Kānaka Maoli [Native Hawaiians]; a generation and a half later, at the time of the U.S. overthrow, 39,000 of us remained. Today we are 200,000 Kānaka Maoli. You see that our population is increasing, because we love each other.” Here population recovery is the impetus for her call for physical reproduction, not a concern for bearing sons for the nation that has characterized so many other nationalist struggles, which are seeped in domineering patriarchal leadership. But these calls to ho’oulu lāhui certainly have an uneven gendered impact and beg for an indigenous feminist critique.

Trask is not alone in marking the impetus on reviving a people. In the collection *Autobiography of Protest in Hawai’i*, Hawaiian sovereignty activist Lynette Cruz offers a point that speaks volumes to the issues of pedagogy and reproductive behavior. Cruz also evokes a set of alarming statistics, noting that “It has been projected that by the year 2044, there will be no more Hawaiians with fifty percent or more Hawaiian blood. This means, in effect, there will be no more Hawaiians by our definition, and the federal government no longer has to deal with us as a people.”⁵ It is not clear why Cruz says “our definition,” given that Hawaiian genealogical practices are far more inclusive in defining who counts as Hawaiian. As for lessons for other Hawaiians, Cruz maintains that “When we talk about educating people we’re talking about educating them *right now*. Time is short. We’re telling people, especially Hawaiian women, that we need to have some Hawaiian babies from Hawaiian men who are full-blooded. We need to have these things documented. This is one strategy that we can use to make sure that Hawaiians do not become extinct by somebody else’s definition.”⁶ Clearly, Cruz’s plea has a sense of urgency. But who are the “we” that need the babies and why? Where is the collective and material support that should come with such a demand? What about Hawaiian men? Supposing that Hawaiian women were interested in (ful)filling such a tall order, what would be the method of doing so? And what about those Hawaiian women who would not want to sleep with *any* man? It is as if people expect Hawaiian women to tap full-blood men on the shoulder and call them out into the bush for a quickie. These

calls unwittingly promote objectification and the fetishization of “full-blood” bodies. And this encouragement in terms of mate selection and breeding is nothing less than a form of eugenics. Why not instead infuse Hawaiian political projects with a similar sense of urgency toward the goal of wresting definitions of Hawaiianness away from state-imposed neocolonial definitions as a profound course of self-determination?

Cynthia Enloe, feminist scholar of gender and nationalism, acknowledges that “Women in many communities trying to assert their sense of national identity find that coming into an emergent nationalist movement through the accepted feminine roles of bearer of the community’s memory and children is empowering.”⁷ Indeed, reproduction as part of Hawaiian women’s self-determined autonomy is potentially empowering as a form of resisting the over-determined narratives of Hawaiian dilution. The legacy of depopulation has contributed to Hawaiians’ status as a minority in Hawai‘i. This history, along with the assault on Hawaiian families via state policies and discourses, shapes our concerns about blood quanta criteria and notions of indigeneity and makes it no surprise that Hawaiians are feeling concern about bearing children with more “Hawaiian blood.” But Hawaiian women’s reproductive rights must be reserved without the alternate construction of Hawaiian women’s bodily agency as a site of inevitable betrayal.⁸ What other baby could come from my womb, so long as the genetic material also comes from me—regardless of my partner choice—if not a Hawaiian child?

I believe we must stop reproducing these colonial legacies. If not, Hawaiian women will continue to bear the brunt. We need to turn to our own Hawaiian philosophies about who we are. Instead, too many of us are internalizing colonial notions of race and reproduction—all of which work to suppress the freedom of Hawaiian women.

We know who we are. Hawaiians are a people who have historically treasured and relished our encounters with outsiders. And, sometimes to our own detriment, we have a long track record of incorporating those people who have come to our shores because we are an inclusive people. Yet many people, including other Pacific Islanders, point to our Hawaiian mixed-ness as evidence of our dissolution instead of a sign of our cultural resilience and integrity. We should explore the endurance of Hawaiian indigenous identities, regardless of blood quantum and the dominant insistence that those who do not meet the fifty-percent blood rule become honorary whites (or Asians, for that matter). Moreover, it would serve us to remember that we are a voyaging people, willingly exposing ourselves to other peoples and cultures the world over. If we yet can reclaim our own sense of who we are, we can move further away from the burden of blood that is dividing us. Maintaining blood

discourses is a form of violence—both epistemological and spiritual—because it ultimately contributes overall to *all* Hawaiians' erasure.

Let us think of broader meanings of ho'oulu lāhui that serve us, as we are now. When King Kalākaua enshrined this motto to increase and preserve the nation, he knew our survival was at stake. Let us restore attention to ancestors through more thoughtful and meaningful conceptions of our common ancestry. Let us remember our genealogy in relation to our connection to the spirit world of our *kūpuna* (elders and ancestors) and *ʻaumakua* (family deities).

Acknowledgments

Mahalo nui to Circe Sturm for her thoughtful feedback and encouragement on a draft version of this essay and to Caroline Sinavaiana for her *manaʻo* as well as editing assistance on this piece.

NOTES

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The Night Woman

Sia Figiel

*for Tere and Mānoa with love,
and for Pounamu, that you might understand. . .*

The Night Woman endures
the stares of Day
People who point
fingers at her
throw stones at her
spears at her
(smiling as she bleeds. . .)

The hurt of the Night
Woman is buried in her
silence
Her pain hidden
in her laugh

For she alone knows the secrets of the Moon
the stars
the sea
the land

And in that place
Where the sea meets the land
She abandons her Day
Skin to feel the Night's touch

Birthing sons whose gene
Ologies hang
From the faces
Of constellations

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Reprinted, with permission, from Sia Figiel, "The Night Woman," *SPAN* 50/51 (April and October 2000): 129.

diagnosis

Caroline Sinavaiana

in that sea of shadows
ocean of ultra-sound,
a white mass loomed

from long grass
waving like seaweed
streaming in dim

currents. the doc said
chances are 50/50, &
rain declared war

on the wind. at home
i dust off ancient arrows
& tighten the bowstring.

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Reprinted, with permission, from Caroline Sinavaiana, "diagnosis," *Rattapallax* 10 (2005): 83.

Shadows dance in my head, Cresantia Frances Koya

! Shadows dance in my head	The puja you never make For me	Was that a gun shot or a fire cracker exploding?	dance in my head
Bodies of motion	The gold rosary binds you to what you desire	Is that real blood?	Bodies of motion
Like words on a clearwhite page	You are strange . do you know that?	She was naked beneath the folds of tapa	Like words on a clear white page
Thick oils smooth on my skin	This ballet must stop	I knew you couldn't wait to touch her	Thick oils smooth on my skin
And the scent of mokosoi hangs in the air	The music dies and you continue to dance	Almost as if to check if she was real and not something I had conjured up	And the scent of mokosoi hangs in the air
Your breath is warm	The sitah is loud and unaccomodating don't you think?	She was everything I was not and I had to close my eyes	Your breath is warm
And I open my eyes to the wind	I try to remember	To stop myself from claiming something I knew was never mine ! Shadows	And I open my eyes to the wind
the sky is blue	what it was you asked me but it is all a blurr		the sky is blue
dogs are howling in my head	Of sounds and movements		dogs are howling in my head
In an otherwise painful silence			In an otherwise painful silence~
where are you ?			
The dia burns in your eyes daily			

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Reprinted, by permission, from Frances Koya, "Shadows dance," *Of Schizophrenic voices* (Suva: Pacific Writing Forum, 2003), 28–29.



Rosanna Raymond, *Butterfly Thighs Flutter By the Bye*.

Woven Worlds

Konai Helu Thaman

for Kate

yesterday
i watched
your hands
weave a dream
across my memory
bringing order and texture
to that pile of *voivoi*
still there
filling the *fale*
that once was home

today
i watch your hands
move across the page
across the canvas
across the room
releasing energy
arranging tapestries
symphonies of touch
and colour

each day
we come
together to weave
feelings experiences images
to sing the songs
of our mothers and grandmothers
long continuous lines connecting
east and west
north and south
and re-create
the world

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Reprinted, with permission, from Konai Helu Thaman, "Woven Worlds," *Book of Love* (Suva: Mana Publications, 1999), 17.

**COMMUNICATING TRADITION IN SAMOAN AMERICAN ART:
AN ARTIST'S REFLECTION**

Jewel Castro

MiraCosta College and Mesa College

Last millennium I was there—
With every laughter of sunlight
With every whisper of wind
With every beat of sound
I saw you standing
On the edge of nowhere
This millennium I am here—
With every ripple of thought
With every pulse of feeling
With every rhythm of life
I see you smiling
On the edge of everywhere.
Déjà vu.

Momoe Malietoa Von Reiche,
“Marius,” from *Tai heart of a tree*.

I REMEMBER AS A CHILD watching my Great-Aunties Maofa and Tuiamafua perform the *sasa* (seated Samoan dance) in a crowd of other aunties and cousins. Their powerful claps and slaps were sometimes quick and rapid-fire. Other times just a loud threesome—slap, slap, slap—the last one like an exclamation point. Then every so often, a quiet ruffling. And if my eyes had been closed I would pop them open to find their hands flicking out movement while their knees bounced the beat from a cross-legged position.

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The force of their gestures always surprised me because in life my old aunties were my gentle brown marshmallow women, all soft and sweet. But when they danced, every part of their being became charged with youthful energy. They almost became sexy. Big knowing smiles lit their faces, like secrets. Their heads moved side to side, up and down, flowers dancing from gigantic buns of hair. Then in exact coordination their voices would shout a resounding, "SHOO!" Some say that *sasa* were traditionally performed to offer encouragement to the men before war or to celebrate the success of war or some other collective endeavor. When *sasa* are performed today, they resound like a great gathering and shoving of positive energy. Rows and rows of women, chanting, slapping, and flicking hands in synchronized percussion. I have no doubt that the *mana* (spiritual power) is at work when these dances are underway.

Those dances were personally transforming for me; a time when my family's tradition was re-enacted, taught, and absorbed. A time when I identified myself unconditionally as one of these women. One of these Samoan people. Even though I was probably no more than eight years old and, in terms of ancestry, half Samoan. Now as a Samoan American artist I revisit such transformative experiences often in my work as a way of communicating the notion of tradition. Tradition is my muse. I look for the variety of places where tradition manifests. For example, it is present in the inflection of speech, the smell of skin, the body's posture, the style of clothing and hair, the choice of food. It is in choice of color, style of warfare, of music, of making art. Tradition is holographic, blending time and space and experience. It is present in every human culture. For this reason I have found it fruitful to use the search for Samoan tradition in my art. People viewing my work may not understand Samoan culture. But there is a universal understanding of tradition. And so a mutual flow of communication can begin. I communicate tradition as I understand it, and viewers are receptive to the degree that they can relate it to their own experience.

I approach all of my work as a painter because that is where I began and how I understand the process of making art. However, my form of artistic communication has evolved to the art genre of installation. Installation art generally exists in some kind of three-dimensional form. Unlike sculpture, however, installation intends to communicate an idea by transforming a space. It can be as simple as a cup against a wall, or as elaborate as a theatrical set. Often it is site specific and displayed for a limited time at only that location. The architecture of the site challenges the artist either to obscure it from the final art form, or to use it to lend a layer of meaning to the piece. I usually build an installation for a specific site, with the intention to obscure it, but in such a way that it is portable and can expand or reduce to suit many other site configurations. That way it can travel, making the work available

for viewing by as many people as possible. My installations are large scale. And I like to call them story-telling environments. My intention is that viewers should move through them as actors on a stage do. But instead of relating to furniture and assorted props, they must maneuver through a space that is primarily constructed from paintings, drawings, sculpture, lights, scent, and sound. I try to tease as many senses as possible in order to assist viewers to access altered states of reception. I do this because when I think of tradition—its sights, sounds, smells, and tactile qualities—I think of an all-encompassing internal and external environment.

My formal education was made extraordinary, thanks to master painter Faith Ringgold (<http://www.artincontext.com/artist/ringgold> and <http://www.faithringgold.com/>). Faith teaches at the University of California in San Diego, and she basically got me into graduate school. There is no point in trying to say it any other way or to explain more. Except perhaps to say that Faith is probably the most forthright and courageous person I have ever met. She was my advisor, and from the beginning gave me a sense of confidence and hope. She encouraged me to direct my focus onto my own life experience. “Express your own truth,” she would say. I had thought I was already doing that. But she was not satisfied and urged me to dig deeper. There is something about Faith’s big black eyes that makes you understand you have to do something immediately. It’s also in her voice. I would sit in her studio spellbound while she melodically spoke treasures of instruction. That resonant voice would fill her big white studio like a rhythmic chant. As she spoke she sort of swayed from side to side working across a new painting. There was something comforting and vaguely familiar about all of this. Even when almost panting from the mania of graduate school, I could not help relaxing into absorb mode when sitting in her studio. Faith does not simply go to a canvas and work. While she was creating her American Collection, I studied her technique very closely. When Faith is painting, a wide grin settles on her face and she literally loves her work up until it’s done. After stirring colors into new colors in little paper cups, she pushes the watery pigments deep into the fibers of her canvas. Layer upon glittering layer. Stirring up color, swaying to and fro, pushing color on, urging the composition into life. Faith Ringgold definitely has mana.

I have watched Faith flesh out her stories into enormous paintings. Visual stories that did not require, but could include, text. Stories specific to her African American experience. Her process is a synthesis of her western European art education, her investigation of African art forms, and her experience as an African American woman/artist. Once I understood that, a revolution took place in my own creative process. It allowed me to relax. To feel secure about working from a more intuitive place. Once that happened, my Samoanness began to spill out.

There are aspects of my work that were inspired by my maternal grandfather. He was the late Reverend Suitoanu of the Galea'i family. He was from the village of Fituita in Manua, and he established the first Samoan Congregational Church in Honolulu in the 1950s. He did the same in San Diego by 1956, and later in Oceanside, CA, and on up the west coast to Seattle. He was a powerful figure in the Southern California Samoan community, and to this day if you mention his name among local elders, many almost swoon retelling stories of his accomplishments and leadership. The church was virtually his home. My grandfather and grandmother, some or all of their seventeen children, countless grandchildren, and extended family all resided in a small house on the church grounds. Aspects of its location are an important element of my work today. For instance, the sound of the choirs rehearsing in the church is always present in my work because even if you were not in the church when rehearsal was ongoing, the sound of it would drift into the house from all of the windows. Those voices are part of my experience.

And the deep raw quality of the harmonies would immediately send me into another consciousness. The sound is similar to Tibetan chants. It affects more than the ears. It is percussive and vibrates through the skin. I can feel it down into my DNA and interpret it as one of those holographic aspects of tradition. That sound must have been present when my great-great-grandparents lived. And when viewers hear it in my installations, they often relate how emotional it makes them feel. And that is what I am trying to do. To scrape raw an emotional response from the viewers so that they can begin to relate to what I am trying to communicate. Usually I record the choirs who actually sing at my grandfather's old church in what is now called Barrio Logan in South San Diego. But I have also used the wonderful voices of choirs from churches in various areas near Oceanside in San Diego's North County. Representing the church, no matter what its denomination, is important to me because it is the cornerstone of Samoan culture in the diaspora. My cousin's daughter explained this well recently when she said, "If we don't recognize somebody walking down the street, someone will say, 'Oh that's so and so from such and such church.' And then we know who they are." And as an elder further explained, "We used to identify a person by the village they were from. Now we do it by the church that they attend." So often I will let architectural aspects of the church influence the way I construct my installation spaces.

I remember spying my grandfather in his office just before Sunday services. He was a large, 300-pound man, and cloaked in a black minister's robe he looked formidable. Everything about him was thick. Especially his feet. His feet were so wide and thick I do not remember ever seeing him in shoes, and certainly if he did wear them they must have been uncomfortable.

He had thick snow-white hair, which always seemed strange because his skin was so smooth and young looking. On those Sunday mornings, unknown men would be seated around him, and by his tone I could tell the conversation was important. For some reason he frightened me at these moments. I perceived him as formidable and not especially friendly then. All of us children understood not to pester Grandpa before church. But after the services, after all of the strangers had left the house, if he happened to see me he would gather me into his great body for a big hug and always had a loud, belly-jiggling, deep-in-the-chest laugh. And then I loved him again. And I would give him a big kiss on the cheek and then move out of the way as one of my aunts would serve him lunch.

I was not raised in the fa'a Samoa, or traditional ways. My only exposure was when my mother and father brought me to my grandparents' house. Once you walked through their front door, it was as if you had stepped into a Samoan fale. I tended to think that my grandfather worried about my not being raised in the culture. Many times he would bring me into his office and point to a large map on the wall, indicating the places where our family still lived, where my mother was born. "Do you know what this is?" he would ask me expectantly. "The island of Manua, where my Mom was born," I would recite proudly for him. "Some day you have to go there with me and meet all of your family," he would say. This exchange happened many times. And season after season I would watch him prepare to go to the islands to take care of church business or to bring a choir over for an event. I wondered which of the family would meet him there. When I was nineteen, my grandfather asked me to make the trip to American and Western Samoa with him. It felt like an honor because there were so many grandchildren he could choose from. Often he brought other members of the church with him, too. But we went on this journey alone. And I recognized this trip as something he had always intended, like a deeper initiation into the family. The memories of it fill a special place in my heart, especially because he died shortly thereafter.

Many years later I wondered if I were able to take people into this memory space, what would it look like? And this became the impetus for my installation *Talalelagi, Samoa* (Story of the Skies, Samoa). The layout of *Talalelagi, Samoa* begins with a blue entrance hallway that reduces in size like a funnel. The floor of this hallway is treated in a way to suggest the texture of fine mats, and it continues like a pathway throughout the rest of the installation. The viewer follows it and exits the small end of the tunnel, entering a large gallery on the other side. The mat-like pathway winds and loops in and around paintings and sculptures and assemblage pieces that suggest memories. Although they are fragmented ideas, they flow together as though they are all part of

one whole. Again, I wanted to convey an imaginary place that is within me. The viewer is enveloped by images, scent, sound, and lights, which I hope convey some understanding of my experience and my emotional response.

Having men as inspiration for my work is rare and apparently reserved for my family members. The usual source of my creative imaginings is women. At the beginning of this statement I described my great-aunties. These loving women, especially Auntie Maofa, are so much a part of my deepest understanding of what it is to be a fine, completely evolved human being. However, it is Auntie Maofa's sister, my grandmother Tinei, who is most often referred to in my work. She is often my mental model. Because Tinei was a reverend's wife, she had to behave publicly in a very reserved manner. She always wore big, wide-brimmed hats. The more flowers on them the better! She was a big woman. Tall, large boned, and heavy. But not fat. Just big. Even with her size she moved in a smooth, graceful manner that seemed natural rather than learned. Her size and movements are things that I often consider when making parts of my installations, whether they be paintings or sculptures. There was a certain dignity about her even when she was walking across the church parking lot. I have noticed this dignity also was present in the circle of women around her. I try to convey that in my art.

Tinei had another side, a private side, what the family likes to call comically cruel. For example, when I returned from the trip with Grandpa, I told her of a lagoon we visited. She related that it had been the spot where she taught my mother about leeches. My mother had been three or four years old and had joined my grandmother as she fished. Grandma would stab the fish through with the filed-down point of a long strong stick. Then she would pull it out of the water and bite it in the head to kill it. She was in the process of doing this when she noticed my mother was playing with a leech. She told my mother to discontinue this activity, but my mother was absorbed, and continued to investigate these water creatures. After no response to her repeated reprimands, my grandmother got so angry that she threw a leech on my mother's back, whereupon my mother began jumping around and screaming in terror. When my grandmother finished telling me this story she nearly fell out of her seat laughing. I was appalled. But in the end I witnessed a relaxed beauty and mischievous side to her that I had never seen. I appreciated her telling me this story as if I were an old friend, and I imagined what she must have been like in her youth. That moment became the inspiration for my mural-sized painting, *Legend of the Leech*.

There was one thing about my grandmother that fascinated me more than anything else. She had the *malu* (ceremonial women's tattoo). It was customary for an auntie to massage my grandmother's feet and legs with baby oil. I loved this procedure because I loved the smell, and my grandmother looked

so beautiful and restful when this was happening. One day when I was quite small I noticed that she had blue-green marks just above her calves. To my amazement they traveled in patterns over and around and above her knees. They traveled to the top of her thighs and were intricate, and in some places the pigment covered large areas. I asked her about her malu and she said she had received it at about thirteen years of age. As she described the painful procedure, it made me squirm. I asked her about the designs, and she said they told stories about the family. The notion of those designs communicating information about my family has truly influenced my art making. Here was story-telling in the skin, not just on top of it. Tradition. In my work I am always considering how to make the images saturate the surface of whatever I am using. In more ways than I can mention here, my grandmother influences my work every day.

As I consider my family and the people who inspire me, I constantly return to the women. Their relationship to Samoan tradition inspires me. The women are the undisputed keepers of the knowledge of who is who and who was who. My search is ongoing to discover what their roles were in history, how they have changed over time, and what has remained constant. In his accounts of the war of 1893 in Samoa, Robert Louis Stevenson reported two incidents, in which a woman “dragged her skulking husband from a hole and drove him to the front. Another, seeing her lover fall, snatched up his gun, kept the headhunters at bay, and drew him un mutilated from the field.” This description of Amazonian Samoan women seems accurate to me today, as I consider the women in my living family, in the community, and those from our distant past. They were/are not delicate flowers for the pleasure of the likes of Gauguin. The women I know are warriors. They fight to protect their children. They fight to sustain their churches. And those following the fa’a Samoa fight to save their culture. They are formidable in size, strength, and personality. And that understanding is what I try to convey in my work, particularly in my installation, *Red House/The Daughters of Salamasina*. This work concentrates on the women in my family and the presence of women in Samoan history through contemporary times.

Traditional Samoan art forms such as *siapo* and tattoo are also something I refer to often when making my work. Although trained to make paintings in the western European sense, I am interested in the idea of staining a surface to achieve an image, much like the process for creating designs on *siapo*, and tattooing the skin. This interest was also bolstered by my study of Faith Ringgold’s work. Like Faith, I use layers of watered-down acrylic paints to create paintings. I usually work flat on the floor, letting the media pool and dry at will. Texture is also important to me. I usually try to emulate the

texture of siapo, that rough, wrinkled, and uneven quality of hand-beaten mulberry paper. I also refer to the work of the late Samoan siapo artist, Mary Pritchard. I love how Pritchard's work, even with that geometric restraint consistent to siapo designs, has a definite sense of intuitive abandon. There appears to be little or no prior measurement or layout. She seemed to know just how far to move her hand before finishing a section so that all of it fit perfectly together as a balanced whole in the end. I wish I had had the opportunity to talk about this with her. She must have had a great deal of mana.

I have written at length here about my paintings because I consider myself a painter first. But another integral part of my installations is sculptures. Sometimes they depict a character from my past, such as a calico pig I made friends with in Western Samoa. Other times they help to suggest elements of landscape, or the presence of ancestors, such as the stone-like women in my *Red House* installation. Lately, I am considering the notion of sculptural paintings, and only time will tell where that takes me. There are many other things about my family and Samoan culture that influence my work, but all of my work is designed to suggest my sense of ambiguous time and space in relation to the multi-present aspects of tradition. My work is a combination of Western artistic training, investigations of traditional Samoan art forms and history, and personal experience as a Samoan American woman/artist. And my hope is that this work will inspire young Samoans to search for their own answers about the contributions made by Samoans throughout history so that they can communicate them to future generations.

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Jewel Castro, *Walking with My Grandmothers #3*. Reproduced by permission.

**SPEAKING REFLECTIONS: WHAIKOORERO
(SPEECH MAKING) AND KARANGA (WELCOMING CRY) IN
RECENT THEATRE BY MAAORI WOMEN**

Mei-Lin Hansen
University of Auckland

This essay suggests that contemporary Maaori/bicultural theatre is becoming a potent site for the articulation of Maaori women's aspirations and concerns. Drawing on Maaori women's biographical *koorero* from four plays performed between 1986 and 1997, the essay presents a kind of "vocal kaleidoscope." This vocal kaleidoscope reflects the complexities of balancing a contemporary existence with a traditional past. Rena Owen's *Te Awa I Tahuti*, Riwia Brown's *Roimata*, Renee's *Jeannie Once*, and Briar Grace-Smith's *Nga Pou Waahine* render audible gender and cultural identity issues pertinent to Maaori women. Pieced together, the reflective voices of these waahine koorero help locate points of symmetry and refraction in Maaori women's experience.

It is a strange place the one I inhabit. I am that terrible place we have run from and I am this place. I am the town and I am the Mahia. For a long time I was neither one nor the other but now I know I am both. (*Jeannie Once*, Act 2, Scene 6)

SINCE FEBRUARY 6, 1934, when it was first officially commemorated, New Zealanders across the nation have participated in annual ceremonies recognizing the 1840 signing of the Treaty of Waitangi¹—a document that lays the foundation for the social, political, and economic relationship between the indigenous Maaori and British Crown in Aotearoa (New Zealand). Annually on February 6, Maaori and Government officials meet to discuss their relationship and remind each other of Treaty obligations.

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Conventionally, the focus of these meetings has been a *poowhiri* (welcoming ritual) held at the Northland home of the signing of the Treaty, *Nga Puhī's* (Northland tribe) Waitangi.

Poowhiri rituals are commonly performed on *marae* (meeting area of a tribal group) and are often used to initiate official *hui* (meetings or gatherings). They form the base of many bicultural events in Aotearoa and more importantly have for centuries been the traditional format for the welcome/greeting between Maaori tribal groups. Unsurprisingly then, a poowhiri forms the crux of the official activities on Waitangi Day.

The poowhiri at Waitangi, in line with traditional practice, runs in accordance with *Nga Puhī* dictates. Tribal groups in other areas of Aotearoa follow varying protocols depending on their distinct *kaupapa* (philosophy/strategy) and histories. With few tribal exceptions, Maaori women are not permitted to perform the *whaikoorero* (speeches of welcome) that construct the centrepiece of the poowhiri. Maaori *tikanga* (custom) and *kawa* (protocol/ceremony) dictate that the public speaking arena of the *marae paepae* (sacred area in front of the meeting house) is reserved for Maaori men, who through title of their gender can use their voices in *whaikoorero* to represent their people. While delivering *whaikoorero*, men “expert in the art of oratory” (Barlow 1991:85) simultaneously reflect upon and construct their identities. From the *paepae's* public platform, male elders recite the *whakapapa* (genealogical line) of the local *iwi* (tribe/people); recall tribal histories; explain the significance of proverbs; and declaim ancient chants, each recitation a vocal chromosome in the genealogical body of Maaori identity. In a majority of *iwi* throughout the country, Maaori women have developed recognition that *whaikoorero* is a form of articulation prohibited to them because of their gender. *Nga Puhī* is not alone in this exclusionist gender practice. On many *marae* in nineteenth-century Aotearoa and certainly today, Maaori women were not “permitted to occupy a place on the *paepae*, the reason being that [they] may diminish the *mana* (integrity/prestige) and standing of the elders who are expected to protect their families in times of war and peace” (Barlow 85).

Added to the gender controversy associated with poowhiri is the generally contentious nature of recent Waitangi Day commemorations. Frequently at Waitangi, conflict occurs between the Crown's representatives and sectors of the Maaori community. These political tensions receive major media coverage. Consequently, politicians have found that a smooth, convivial meeting with Maaori at Waitangi can raise their political profiles and court Maaori favor. Similarly, Maaori pressure groups realize that Waitangi Day commemorations form a useful site for the public airing and extended circulation of grievances. A *New Zealand Listener* article describes through

the eyes of a Maaori *kuia* (elderly Maaori woman) the shattered progression of events during Aotearoa's 1998 Waitangi Day commemorations:

The way Kawera Sydia Marsh saw things, it happened like this. She had made the karanga that welcomed Helen Clark onto the marae at Waitangi, where the Labour leader had been invited to speak. Three men spoke in welcome. Then Marsh began to speak again. "E *hine* [woman/lady], I'm the one that paves the way for you." But, as Clark rose to reply, Titewhai Harawira interrupted. Labour MP Tariana Turia heard her say, "You, sit down." Karewa: "Harawira, she stood up out of turn and time. She and her daughter walked halfway down the floor. She said, 'No way am I having a *Pakeha* (white New Zealander) woman to speak before me.'" (Watkins 1998:24)

Tim Watkins rather dramatically describes how the formal rituals of Maaori *poowhiri* were, in 1998, interrupted and temporarily halted by Titewhai Harawira and members of the activist group *Te Kawariki*. Harawira's reasons are clear. She wanted to highlight to male elders of *Nga Puhi* their blatant, hypocritical disregard for Maaori women's voices. By making special allowance for the leader of Aotearoa's Labour Party, Helen Clark, a woman of *Paakehaa* ancestry,² to speak from the *paepae*, the male elders were (according to Harawira), relegating Maaori women to the lowest point on the vocal scale. Harawira's actions³ called attention to the selective muting of Maaori women's voices and the hypocritical preference for and fostering of the voices of *Paakehaa* men and women.

In addition to raising awareness about the gender divide inherent in the *poowhiri* ritual, Harawira's actions cast reflection on contemporary sociopolitical issues. Upon signing the Treaty of Waitangi in 1840, Maaori became subjects of the British Empire and were forced to exist under colonial rule and law. A common argument in Maaori feminist circles suggests that since this time, Maaori women have been afforded fewer privileges than their male counterparts have. In other words, the social status commanded by Maaori women in traditional Maaori society—in terms of rights to land ownership, chiefly title and so on—has suffered since the social changes wrought by the signing of the Treaty. It is thus not surprising that, with the rise of Maaori feminism and the increased consciousness of the colonial condition, traditional Maaori practices performed during the process of formal welcome onto marae have been the subject of question and controversy. Feminists, historians, artists, critics, anthropologists, politicians, activists, journalists, and academics have attempted to explain, and to counter, the current gender rigidity that still pertains to these rituals.

Among the myriad forms of artistic expression pursued by Maaori women in an attempt to address this perceived gender imbalance, theatre—especially over the last twenty years in Aotearoa—has gained much prominence. This essay suggests that Maaori women are using contemporary Maaori/bicultural theatre as an alternative site for public, formal performances of *whaikoorero* and *karanga*, thereby exploiting theatre's potential to function as a powerful site for the articulation of aspirations and concerns.

In what follows, the crossovers, mirrorings, and blendings of Maaori women's voices, *marae tikanga* and theatre, are observed and analyzed. First, the cultural protocols associated with the gendering of *whaikoorero* and *karanga* practices in *poowhiri* rituals are explored. Following this, some of the implications of these gendered practices on Maaori women's communication and expression are presented. Finally, Maaori feminist work is reflected upon and set alongside a close-analysis of four plays performed between 1986 and 1997. Reflective fragments from Rena Owen's (Ngati Hine) *Te Awa I Tahuti* (1986), Riwia Brown's (Ngati Porou, Te-Whanau-a-Apanui, Nga Puhī, Taranaki) *Roimata* (1988), Renee's (Ngati Kahungungu) *Jeannie Once* (1991), and Briar Grace-Smith's (Nga Puhī, Ngati Wai, Scottish) *Ngaa Pou Waahine* (1997) are laid alongside each other to resemble a vocal kaleidoscope. This piece-by-piece reflection renders audible gender and cultural identity issues pertinent to Maaori women. Fixed together, the reflective voices and associated cultural, social, and political issues help locate points of symmetry and refraction in Maaori women's experience.

The vocal kaleidoscope metaphor serves several purposes. Immediately, the image evokes the refractory relationship between the *vocal*—Maaori oral traditions—and the *kaleidoscopic*—the spectacle of theatrical and ritual performance. Maaori culture is an oral culture, but the translation of Maaori mythology, legend, folklore, *whakapapa*, *whaikoorero*, *karanga*, and *waiata* (song/song poem) for the stage depends upon a vibrant alchemy with the visual/dramaturgical. Framed kaleidoscopically, the voices extracted from the plays suggest a shattering and reordering of discourses that have previously kept Maaori women contained. The symmetrical repatterning of these individual voices into a chorus provides a delicate and carefully structured looking glass through which the articulation of Maaori women's culture and gender identity issues can be closely scrutinized. In its containment of free-floating and loose particles of speech, this kaleidoscopic essay intimates the possibility of recurring, *ad infinitum* configurations of the voices contained within. The essay presents only one possible arrangement of the reflective voice fragments. As with a kaleidoscope, there is the potential for the voices to be fitted together in any number of alternative patterns or formations. More abstractly the fragments of *marae-tikanga* encompassed by the visual

kaleidoscope—particularly the practices of *whaikoorero* and *karanga*—work in a hybrid combination rather than as distinct, separate parts of a larger ritual, thus producing new, alternative expressive modes. Finally and perhaps most importantly, the image also encapsulates the possibility of continually changing social patterns and assemblages through the refraction of *marae* practices, Maaori women's voices, and theatre.

Somewhat restrictively, the vocal fluidity alluded to through the kaleidoscope imagery cannot be applied to the gender roles in the *poowhiri* ritual. One of the most frequently cited reasons for the continued gender division pertaining to the *poowhiri* ritual is based on Maaori concepts of *tapu* (sacred/forbidden) and *noa* (free from *tapu*) and on the perception of Maaori women as *whare tangata* (house of humankind/womb). According to most tribal conceptualizations, the platform from which male elders speak, the *paepae*, is sacred. Situated to the side of the *marae-atea* (sacred forecourt in front of the meeting house), it represents the realm of *Tumatauenga* (god of war), and traditionally women, as *whare tangata*, place themselves and the future of the tribe at risk by speaking in this realm. Rather than speak there, they must wait until they enter the safer realm of *Rongo* (god of peace). Therefore, speech making in the sacred realm of *Tumatauenga* has by and large been the provenance of Maaori men. In her MA thesis, Annabel Mikaere (1995) elaborates on Maaori women's role as *whare tangata*, suggesting that the gender restrictions around *whaikoorero* were not because women were perceived as less capable or worthy than men but rather:

It was in recognition of the fact that they were the *whare tangata*, and that by exposing themselves to possible harm on the *marae-atea*, the future of the *whaanau* (family) and *hapuu* (extended family/sub-tribe) might be endangered. The dread of the *whare ngaro* (empty/lost house/childless) and the belief that it was often the result of *maakutu* (curse/magic) reinforce the suggestion that the crucial factor in the non-participation of women in the *whaikoorero* was the need to protect the *whare tangata*. (67)

Even if it is the case that Maaori women's *whare tangata* status requires protection and therefore their presence on the *paepae* puts the *iwi* at risk, what still remains unclear is the privileging of the male-centered *whaikoorero* over female forms of articulation such as the welcoming cry, or *karanga*.

The *kai-karanga* is the female performer of the *karanga*. Highly spiritual and ritualistic, the *karanga* forms the initial vocal contact between the *tangata whenua* (local people) and the *manuhiri* (guest/visitor), acting as a vocal pathway connecting these two bodies of people with their respective

ancestors. During formal welcoming procedures the women's voice in the throes of karanga is among the first to be heard. The intonated, lyrical call between female hosts and manuhiri acknowledges the ties linking past, present, and future, it addresses living and dead, in a voiced remembrance of the ancestors who watch over proceedings. Barlow says "women are the well-spring of tears. They bear the burden of sorrow for the pain and suffering experienced in life." He likens the women's karanga to "the cry of a woman when she gives birth to her child" (39). Often described as mournful and haunting, the karanga functions in gendered terms as the feminine moment in the poowhiri ritual. Women are responsible for demonstrating and reflecting the "pain and suffering," the emotional and spiritual burdens of their iwi.

It is crucial to realize that along with the whaikoorero, karanga can also play important roles in the shape and structure of poowhiri proceedings. Maaori feminist Ngahua Te Awakotuku (1991) reflects on the power inherent in the female call or karanga and in so doing reinscribes karanga with oratorical and performative significance. She describes the role of the kai-karanga as "the chanter, the mourner, the composer; the female voice which lifts the tone, and sharply defines the intention of a gathering, the focus of a ritual" (107). Karanga, waiata, physical gestures, and silence are also often employed by Maaori women to counter the centrist power of whaikoorero.

Mikaere argues that, while in precontact Aotearoa Maaori society maintained greater balance between genders (where for example, the karanga in its complementary role with the whaikoorero helped maintain the gender balance implicit in everyday Maaori life), present day Aotearoa resembles a heavily skewed set of scales. Commentators argue variously that with the introduction of patriarchal, Judeo-Christian ideologies, the mana of *waahine* (females/women) Maaori was diminished and consequently the karanga devalued. A powerful and important form of expression open only to Maaori women, the karanga was superseded by a contemporary focus on male whaikoorero.

Because the value placed on female vocal practices is reduced, dialogue around restoring power to women's voices and extending women's articulation in marae proceedings often becomes a discussion of the restrictions and limitations faced by women in relation to whaikoorero. This unbalanced focus has been so pronounced that those in favor of making Maaori women's voices more audible in marae proceedings have only recently shifted their debates from the preeminent place of the whaikoorero to detailed examinations of alternative vocal and nonvocal options available to Maaori women. Personal, autobiographical anecdotes about women's alternative expression on marae are now receiving attention, and are being recorded in research papers and theses where they are received by a wider audience.

Over the last fifty years in Aotearoa, with a rising social consciousness, the blossoming of *mana waahine Maaori* (Maaori feminism),⁴ and the achievement of a more equal footing between the genders, and due to the diminishing numbers of competent Maaori male orators, space has been created for waahine Maaori to question the dominant role *tane* (males/men) have gained as spokespeople for the Maaori community. Mikaere quotes Kathie Irwin (1992:17), who notes the hypocrisy in the rigid interpretation of the male's place in whaikoorero:

the changes continuously being made to *marae* show Maaori women...that our culture can and is being changed daily, and that many of these changes accommodate the needs of men⁵ and the links that they have with each other across cultural boundaries. The role and status of women remains petrified, like a slab of rock, unchanging, immobile, inflexible, whilst everything around us in our culture is rapidly changing.

Although once the formal welcome is over, men and women receive equal speaking time in the safety of the *wharenui* (central meeting house), the tendency for the poowhiri ritual to become a symbol of the whole of Maaori culture creates outsider perceptions of gender imbalance. This tendency to view poowhiri as a metonym for Maaori culture has forced a dangerous slippage of the gender patterns played out in *marae kawa* into everyday Maaori life. Mikaere says

Maaori women's inability to employ a particular form of speech, the *whaikoorero*, during one particular part of the *marae* ritual is broadened into an almost blanket silencing of Maaori women.
(153)

In the early 1980s, several Maaori theatre practitioners exploited the implicit understanding that the *marae* and its associated rituals were interpreted as symbolic representations for the whole of Maaori culture. They launched attempts to recapture the physical and spiritual essence of the *marae* inside traditional, Western theatre venues.⁶ This type of theatre was given the label *marae theatre*. Audiences and performers were expected to participate in selected parts of *marae kawa*. The shrill cry of the *karanga* would accompany audiences as they entered the theatre space. Often, *waiata* would be sung. Significantly, in being adapted for a theatrical context, the process was often abbreviated so that a performance of the play occurred where once the whaikoorero would have begun. After removing their shoes,

the audience would take their places in a renovated theatre space, which was usually made more intimate by placing the seating in a circular fashion. In this way the traditional forum for Maaori performance—the marae atea and paepae—were transplanted to a new space in which rules from both venues worked in tandem. Marae theatre ushered in a relocation and reconsideration of traditional marae kawa. Oftentimes the strict gender divisions usually practiced in relation to marae kawa and poowhiri protocol had the potential to be subverted. By creating a halfway zone between the theatre of the marae and the theatre of theatre, Maaori women playwrights, directors, actors, and characters are able to communicate using hybrid forms of whaikoorero and karanga. They exercise their voices in a blending of the two most dominant forms of public performance during poowhiri, thereby reformulating them into a discourse that is powerful for Maaori women.

Three of the four plays that provide the impetus for this paper are descendants of this marae tradition. Although only one play, *Nga Pou Waahine*, considers a reconstitution of the paepae and wharenui in the theatre space, each of the plays carries significant remnants of the marae into the performance. Written and performed in the 1980s and 1990s, the plays have their base in Maaori theatrical aesthetics and practices of that time. Rena Owen's *Te Awa I Tahuti*, Riwia Brown's *Roimata*, and Briar Grace-Smith's *Nga Pou Waahine* follow on from the playwrights' involvement with Maaori theatre practitioners interested in marae-style theatre. Through a similar network of acquaintances, both Brown and Grace-Smith have been influenced by the blend of Western theatrical tradition and marae kawa.⁷ Owen has worked as an actor alongside Brown and her brothers; her work draws on legend, waiata, and *haka* (fierce rhythmic dance). Renee's play on the other hand is written in a conventional, social-realist mold, and is more directly feminist in its leanings, incorporating moments from Aotearoa's social history. Her plays highlight the personal, domestic lives of women during different periods of Aotearoa's history.⁸

Propelling the narrative of *Te Awa I Tahuti*, *Roimata*, *Jeannie Once*, and *Nga Pou Waahine* are the voices of Maaori women. In a kaleidoscopic patterning and borrowing from the traditional oratorical skills of the whaikoorero and the pain and suffering reflected in karanga, dialogic reflections in the plays are re-visioned and revoiced.

In *Te Awa I Tahuti* a Maaori woman prison inmate, Toni, receives counseling from a Paakehaa, Mrs. Bottomley: she reveals a past torn apart by an abusive father and the suicide of her older brother, Frankie. Toni uses *koorero*, karanga, waiata, and *haka* to prepare herself for her imminent release. The play ends with Toni telling Mrs. Bottomley of a dream about her recuperation, and the restoration of her mana waahine Maaori.

Unlike Toni in *Te Awa I Tahuti*, the eponymous heroine in *Roimata* has lived most of her life in her East Coast home. The play follows the relationship between Roimata, the country bumpkin, and her half-sister Girlie, the townie. Roimata's relationship with two Maaori men—Eddy, a gang member, and Kevin, a Salvation Army Cadet—serve the playwright's exploration of cultural identity and gender.

In a feminist rewriting of Aotearoa's pioneer history, Renee's work *Jeannie Once* recasts the commonly accepted histories accompanying settlement. It examines the universal reassignment of gender roles wrought by the new demands of settler society and tangentially the social relationships developing in Aotearoa between an immigrant people and their indigenous counterparts. As it comments on the enforcement of nineteenth-century Judeo-Christian practices, it portrays the results of social restrictions upon newly immigrated colonials and indigenous women of the time. Martha's story is developed in one of the play's subplots, its narrative placement underlining the marginal existence of Maaori women in nineteenth-century Aotearoa. In her bid to surmount the impact of imperialism in early colonial Aotearoa, Martha's voice becomes a foreboding precursor of the enigmas of cultural identity expressed in the other three plays.

Grace-Smith's *Ngaa Pou Waahine* uses a series of monologues delivered by six different characters to tell the story of two waahine separated by time. Waioira is a woman of myth and legend, an exponent of the Moa People and a strong role model for her descendent, Kura. Kura lives in an urban, 1990s Aotearoa. As she struggles to remember her past and parentage, she uses the voice of a newer urban generation, a generation of *tamaiti whangai* (adopted child) attempting to re-establish whakapapa and genealogical connections in an increasingly forward-looking world. In narrative form and design, *Ngaa Pou Waahine* is the most stylized of the four plays.

In all the plays the characters explore, in various vocal, physical, spiritual, and emotional ways, their social, political, and cultural positions in Aotearoa society. Upon resituating themselves in the public arena of the theatre, the playwrights, actors, and characters use koorero to inform the audience of women's presence, and the relevance and insistence of their issues.

Martha's Cave

In *Jeannie Once* (1991), Renee tries to map out how the privileging of male-centered koorero impacts on the Maaori servant girl Martha. As Martha takes cover in a seashore cave she attempts to reconcile the divergent geographies that map her compound identity. She acknowledges she is a sort of hybrid,

an intersection between the “terrible” town and her ancestral/Maori home, the “Mahia,” a melding of a place she fears and a place she believes she will grow to love. Her reflective speech reveals a threshold existence precariously balanced on the sharply mirrored edge of in-betweenness.

Along with Martha are two Paakehaa companions, Jeannie Brannigan and Alec McPherson, who have become willing accomplices in Martha’s escape from her puritanical guardian, Reverend Charles. Jeannie and Alec become an audience for Martha’s koorero (speak/talk/quotation/narrative) about her identity: through their presence Martha’s erstwhile private, internal contemplation, her autobiographical koorero, transforms into an outward expression, a self-representational performance or proclamation. Theatrical allusions are fitting here. Through this scene, Renee sets up a tidy analogy between Martha’s cave and the inherent freedoms and functions of theatre space. Martha, albeit briefly, takes center-stage for a small audience of two. While her autobiographical koorero is not immediately a public utterance, it is the implications of her speech and the intent behind it that will eventually receive public attention. The cave’s transitional location provides a safe forum for Martha to articulate her thoughts—just as marae theatre in its flexible, assemblage form allows Maaori women to speak and thereby break from rigid interpretations of traditional practices. Martha’s declarations are communicated to Jeannie and Alec—Paakehaa/non-Maori—who in the theatre analogy are proxies for the audience. Because of their location in the cave and their willingness to attend to Martha’s speech, Jeannie and Alec are recipients of previously withheld insights. The shared experience of Jeannie, Alec, and Martha (or read in keeping with the theatre analogy, the audience and the spectacle) reshapes understandings about Maaori/Paakehaa relationships and Maaori cultural identity. Listening to Martha’s speech, and placing themselves in Jeannie’s and Alec’s position, the audience is keyed into issues of hybridity, alienation, and dislocation that constitute Martha’s identity. Upon leaving the safety of the cave, Jeannie and Alec (the audience) can reflect upon Martha’s articulations and share them more publicly with others.

Martha’s koorero from the cave usefully illustrates the way privileged, liminal, unbound spaces and the promise of the public reception of ideas combine to produce an effective oratorical medium for the articulation of Maaori women’s voices. In Aotearoa, especially since 1980, the apparently limitless representational promise of drama and the theatre space have been used by Maaori women playwrights to counter the gender and cultural restrictions commonly presented to them by patri-centered Paakehaa and Maaori worlds. The theatre has become a platform from which Maaori

women—be they playwrights, actors, or characters—can use their own forms of *whaikoorero* to articulate their ancestral connections, their sense of belonging to both Maaori and Paakehaa cultures, their specific, personal experiences and the allegiances these foster between Maaori women. Through the permissible promise of theatre, Maaori women playwrights and performers employ multifarious expressions in the process of recasting and replacing the gender rigidity that has become a contentious and dangerously resounding echo of the *poowhiri* process.

Martha's choice of the cave as a refuge, and also as a safe place for public proclamation, is both physically and psychologically appropriate. The cave, like Martha, rests in "a strange place." It is on the threshold between the outskirts of the town and the edges of the beach, providing a natural platform for the contemplation and articulation of her existential quandaries. As a location on the threshold, the cave becomes a potent site, a "space of one's own" to house Martha's oration. From the cave's liminal space, Martha is at her most vocal and most revealing. Within the shelter it affords, she is free from the cultural and gender restrictions associated with her Dunedin birthplace and her *marae* destination. Because it rests on the intersection between Martha's two worlds it becomes a boundary-less site. Its liminal geographic location makes the cave a veritable womb of potentialities, a site within which the birthing, growth, and expression of her newly developing identity can be safely and confidently explored. In Martha's case, the cave's "nowhereness" is the perfect place in which to practice her own form of *whaikoorero*—a blend of the pain and suffering expressed in *karanga* and the identity-strengthening content of formal Maaori oration. From a place where she is free from societal restrictions, she can more powerfully inform the members of that society about her psychological and physical plight.

As already intimated, theatre—and more specifically *marae* theatre—contains the transformational qualities so valued in Martha's cave. In theatre contexts, Maaori women's voices are buttressed by the representational liminality or in-betweenness proffered. The following "spoken reflections" from the four aforementioned plays conform to the idea that theatre provides a space where conventional, traditional gender performances can be reformulated and reframed. When arranged thematically and placed side by side, significant fragments from Owen's, Brown's, Renee's, and Grace-Smith's plays demonstrate how theatre—dramaturgically and thematically—fosters the development of strident women's voices that undercut and question patriarchal, imperial, marginalizing discourses. The "spoken reflections" demonstrate how characters can employ multiple expressive modes such as *whaikoorero*, *karanga*, and *waiata* to negotiate their understandings about

identity and belonging. Marae theatre and its descendents, including the four plays analyzed below, complicate traditional, marae gender patterns by erecting a threshold where mores, rules, and kawa can be appropriated, disregarded, subverted, and importantly opened up for critical inquiry.

Mothers and Fathers

Kei hea te maatua?: *Where are the parents?*

Traditional Maaori society sustained families in which *tamariki* (children) would consider their grandparents, aunts, and uncles to be the equivalent of parents. Tamariki brought up by their grandparents were known as *whangai* and more often than not were seen as privileged.

Post-1840 Aotearoa saw the steady encroachment of colonial laws and policies upon traditional Maaori practices such as whangai adoption. Increased urban dwellings and strict enforcement of state adoption regulations normalized the concept of the nuclear family to the detriment of traditional Maaori *whanau* structures. The negative results of such blanket practices are evidenced in the plays' whangai figures—Roimata from *Roimata*, Martha from *Jeannie Once*, and Kura from *Nгаа Pou Waahine*. Their explicit confusion over, and debilitating desire to locate, birth parents signals a sad deconstruction of traditional Maaori concepts of *whanaungatanga* (relationship/kinship), through a cultural normalizing of Paakehaa family structures. Paradoxically, the characters tend not to embrace whangai status but rather see the discovery of birth parents as an answer to the location of self and more largely, the solution to confused connections with Maaori culture.

In addition, whangai experience complications because of Paakehaa/Maaori relationships. Roimata, Toni, Martha, and Kura (who has surrogate parents in her Aunt Lizzie, who is Maaori, and Uncle Walt, who is Paakehaa) deal with the difficulties of bicultural relationships. In their kooreroo they express a cultural confusion that obliges them to question their belonging. The playwrights' concerns to lead their characters to their *turangawae* (home/standing place) and an acceptance of self as Maaori, albeit in a Paakehaa-dominated world, speak for many Maaori women in contemporary society who are dealing with fluctuating identifications.

Separated from her parents at a young age, Roimata is raised by her grandparents. Although she loves life with her Nan she also spends desperate moments with her inquiring about the secrets of her father's past, hoping that her own will be revealed. In Scene One, Roimata quizzes her grandmother about her parents' relationship and about how she fits in:

ROIMATA is...interested in pursuing this conversation about her father.

Nan: They were different, he was a Paakehaa.

Roimata: Because he was a Paakehaa?

Pause. NAN senses her interest, tries to make light of it.

Nan: No. He wasn't Maaori. He couldn't live here. He took her to the city. You know what I think about the city.

Roimata: What about Dad?

Nan: No mountains, no rivers, no trees.

Roimata: Nan, what about my father?

Nan: No God.

Roimata: Nan.

Nan: They went to the city and got married.

Roimata: Then what?

Nan: Then you. I went to get you to bring you home. Your mother, she argued but she wasn't very well. The city is no place for a child or anyone.

Roimata: When did she come home?...

Nan: Your mother, she came home to die.

Roimata: What about my father? (167–168)

Roimata's half-sister Girlie has been brought up by her birth mother but knows that she and Roimata share the same father. However, as an only child in a single-parent family she is acutely aware of the stigma attached to her birth. In Scene Two, Girlie reveals her disdain and unhappiness at the lack of a true father figure:

They had me before dad married Roimata's mother. So I'm his bastard. Not as big a one as that father of mine. When he died, he explained it all in his will. My mum knew all about it, but she didn't say anything. When she did talk, she said Roimata's mother was a sick woman and it would only be time before dad [*sic*] would come back. (170)

Although in *Te Awa I Tahuti* Toni's formative years were spent in a village atmosphere with her whanau and members of her hapuu ever present, tensions exist in her relationship with her Maaori father. Toni's description of her father is nostalgic and proud:

Beautiful. Proud Maaori. He's a big man. Everyone knew J. K. Spoke at all the social functions. He was a Maaori Elvis Presley in his day. (151)

Sadly, these romantic constructs are shattered by her later revelation that she is "scared of him" and that he said she'd "never get anywhere" (154).

Jeannie Once's Martha, like Roimata, must cope without birth parents. With her father a Paakehaa whaler and her Maaori mother buried, she is left in the care of a Paakehaa couple, Mrs. Charles and her husband the Reverend. Prominent in Martha's mind is the lack of any real whanau:

My mother died and my father told Mrs. Charles a whaling ship was no place for a child. I don't know what happened to him. I only know that Mrs. Charles said my mother was from the Mahia. (30)

Finally, in *Nгаа Pou Waahine* Kura experiences the pain of separation from her birth mother and the difficulty of surviving in a household where parental love is at a minimum. Although in Scene Two Kura's Uncle Walt expresses his great love for her, she believes that not knowing her birth parents means that something is missing. Speaking of her Aunt Lizzie and Uncle Walt she says:

I see them now as complete strangers, the same way you see someone you pass on the street, or waiting for the train....I need to know about my mother, about my home. I need to know. (20)

Along with her own experience, Kura's words reflect the combined parental longings in Girlie's, Toni's, and Martha's lives. Kura's emotionally succinct expression reveals the cursory and transitory connection she has with her adoptive parents. Added to her perceived expulsion from her whanau is her desperate demand to learn about her mother and her home. Her koorero is an obvious indicator of the confused genealogical terrain she currently inhabits. Her experience as a tamaiti whangai and Girlie's, Toni's, and Martha's experiences of violent or absent parents leaves these waahine with troubled notions of belonging and whakapapa.

Home and Away

Locating the papakainga (original home)

In Owen's, Brown's, Renee's, and Grace-Smith's plays, relationships to and distances from the papakainga provide an accurate measure of the distances

that must be bridged before characters feel assured about vocalizing their identities. In an authorial strategy that locates Girlie, Toni, Martha, Kura, and Lizzie (respectively) in dramatic, physical and psychological territories ripe for exploring gender and cultural identity, the characters develop and learn from the geographic dis/location, transition, and migration they experience. Spiritually and physically separated from their papakainga and their understandings of originary identities, the waahine, through geographical and critical distance, are given permission to koorero themselves into their own understandings of where they belong. Through their koorero they fashion audible calls that facilitate a psychological and physical relocation of their cultural identities. The binding powers of karanga become evident as, through expressions of grief, suffering, and healing the women unite the dichotomous worlds they inhabit.

During her rehabilitation Toni admits that since she left at the age of eighteen she has not returned home:

Left my village when I was eighteen. I lived in the city for four years.
Auckland. I arrived in London beginning of 1980. I ain't seen the
sun for five years. (137–138)

As she reveals more about herself through autobiographical koorero, her descriptions of an idyllic Northland childhood reveal that her understanding of Maaori identity is umbilically connected to ideas of home:

Every weekend we used to go to the beach—the whole tribe. Nine
kids in my family. Five boys, four girls, all a year apart... Beautiful
beaches—clear blue sky...

...

Bottomley: Sounds idyllic. [slight pause] Was it always like that?
[pause] Nine children. That's a big family.

Toni: Maoris—that's how our culture survives. Catholics as well.

Bottomley: Things must have been difficult with so many of you?

Toni: We had each other. Ngapuhi, that's my tribe. The winterless
north. We lived on the land and seas. They don't care about what
I've done. Just want me to go home. They still love me. (137–138)

Roimata leaves her East Coast home and ventures to Wellington, a place her Nan despises. In Wellington Roimata attempts to piece together the remnants of her identity by accessing memories of her father through her half-sister Girlie. Roimata permanently carries her papakainga with her as she adjusts to city life. Synonymous with traditional papakainga values,

Roimata is a mother, caregiver, and cultural storehouse, presented as a twentysomething kuia. Conversely, Girlie, who has lived her life distanced from any notion of papakainga, only learns of the rural home through Roimata's stories. Girlie's meeting and subsequent koorero with Roimata, and the pain and personal experience they share become a catalyst for Girlie's reassessment of her staunch urban identity:

Roimata: She gave me a good home.

Girlie: The one that dad left you? What's it like?

Roimata: It's not flash, but it's home. You should come and see it sometime.

Girlie: Maybe I should come and suss it out. (172–173)

Roimata: When I read your letter to nan she said you should come back home.

Girlie: Did she?

Roimata: Yes, she did.

Girlie: She was a wise old lady. She brought you up okay.

Roimata: Why don't you? You said you wanted to. Just for a look?

Girlie: Maybe I should. There's nothing keeping me here. (217)

Martha superimposes her experiences at her papakainga, the Mahia, on her assumptions about her mother's people. As with Toni in *Te Awa I Tahuti*, a synchronicity exists in Martha's psyche between ideas about the land and the people who inhabit it. Her feelings about belonging and origins are formulated around this blend. As she speaks, she talks herself closer to the Mahia and closer to her mother's people. For Martha, this simple articulation gives voice to the space between what she sees as a restrictive, marginalizing Paakehaa existence and a spiritually and culturally accepting Maaori one:

I felt as if the land and the sea had been waiting for me. It was the strangest feeling. Everything, the white sand where the shellfish bury themselves, the rocks, the little pools, all seemed so familiar. *She stops, brings herself back to the present.* (30)

She “want[s] to go back to the Mahia. To [her] mother's people” (40).

Lizzie has spent a large part of her adult life attempting to divorce herself from her papakainga. Her self-imposed distancing and ambivalence towards the sterility, dryness, and uncompromising nature of home stem from a rejection of her Maaori identity. The dominant discourses of Christianity and consumer capitalism have bred self-loathing in Lizzie. She views home and any associations with it negatively.

I'll never go back home. WETAS. All I can see are the wetas. The ground's like hard clay and full of cracks...It's backward there and so are the people. If I stayed I'd have turned out the same. (14–15)

In her first speech in *Nga Pou Waahine*, Kura locates herself in a void-like hallway, lacking in any ordinary anchor points or stable identificatory signs. Although she desires to return to her original home in the hope of rediscovering the essence of who she is, her koorero suggests that goal is drastically remote:

I have this dream. I'm only little and I'm in a hallway that never ends. Questions. I have so many questions. But how long do I have to wait for the answers? (20)

A common theme traced in the plays then is the tension between a traditional rural existence, where whanau ties and community are strong, and what is represented as an alienating urban existence. In all cases the papakainga becomes an icon for a lost, distant or yet-to-be-discovered sense of self. However, it is too simplistic to suggest that for all these women the rural home provides an idyllic retreat. The plays address the difficulty Maaori women experience in attempting to navigate the terrain between the romantic ideal offered by “home,” the often-restrictive, oppressive, negative physical and psychological boundaries home erects and the difficult, alienating effects of city life. Once they leave the papakainga, the women achieve a critical distance. They inhabit a zone in between their rural and urban identities. It is only in this space that they can begin to koorero about how they fit in. The urban spaces foster the discovery of a separate, individual voice (the voice of the “I”), and the papakainga represents the space for the voice of the “we.” Upon returning to the papakainga, the waahine are more prepared vocally to deal with the restrictions and boundaries that may exist. Their newly developed voices contribute to renegotiations of the gender and cultural vocal relationships practiced at home.

The representational layers of theatre, the fact that the shadowy embodiments and real-life concerns of female actors and playwrights lie just beneath the characters' on-stage presence, mean that the plays' representative canvas extends beyond the obvious level of character. Heard as a joint chorus, these public orations concerning a paradoxical love for and ambivalence towards the rural papakainga encourage a wider reassessment of social assumptions regarding Maaori identity. Read together as a series of diverse attempts to navigate the terrain between the rural and urban, old and new identities, the voices expose a complex division and encourage a renegotiation or reconsideration.

Colonialism and Mana Waahine Maaori

I taenga mai o te Paakehaa: *The arrival of the Paakehaa*

Although the plays, excepting Renee's, are set in the 1980s and 1990s, the characters' social conditions reflect the state of affairs faced by Maaori women in the 1970s world Te Awekotuku describes:

Maori woman in New Zealand society...suffers a multiple dilemma...being female is enough...usually she is working class. She forms the major part of an unskilled and underpaid factory labour force; she must meet daily the economic demands of raising a larger than average family, and supplementing her husband's comparatively low income...setting up a house in a new housing development, and coping with the pressures of being away from the whanau. (46)

Te Awekotuku describes a skeletal, sinewy existence. For the most part, the plays depict a contemporary society extant atop crumbling social foundations. A great deal of pain articulated in the plays stems from negative domestic experiences. As they embody these women's experiences, the actors vocalize (in karanga fashion) the effects of colonial values, ideologies, and practices upon their domestic and family lives.

The whanau relationships represented in the plays detail the dysfunctional, isolating, economically and socially stressful lives of urbanized Maaori women. The plays expose and reflect upon the demanding position Maaori women face within family structures. Mixed parentage, confused notions of what constitutes whanau, the dismantling of traditional *hapu* and *iwi* structures are obvious concerns voiced in the waahine's koorero. Significantly, all the plays transfer their koorero from the restrictive, private, closed-door, domestic domain, into a public space. As they karanga, the waahine enact a plea for reassessment of their own conditions and those of Maaori as a whole.

In all four plays, along with recognition of mana waahine, are examples of an extreme power imbalance between men and women. Sociological flukes and ideological value systems mean that identifying as Maaori and woman ensures a marginalized, relatively powerless social status. In the stories of Roimata, Toni, and Martha, men are responsible for psychological and physical abuse. The plays pose questions about the gendered distribution of power. By communicating their stories in the social realist mode, using contemporary situations, the plays enact and the characters embody a critical

space. They become the site of revision and question, allowing for analysis of daily domestic situations and gender relationships.

Te Awa I Tahuti reflects an ironic state of affairs highlighting a modern-day shift in gender dynamics. As mentioned earlier the whare tangata status of Maaori women prevented them from performing whaikoorero in marae situations. However, this gender-determined denial was considered a form of protection (waahine were to be protected from the potential danger associated with speech making in the realm of Tumatauenga). Although by shifting outside of these strict Maaori structures Toni has successfully developed a voice, her position is precarious. Too often, her newly found vocal power must be employed in expressions of the consequences of lack of protection and lack of tane Maaori respect for the mana of waahine Maaori:

By the time I was five I had pulled all my hair out—I could never do anything right. So unpredictable...Never knew where you stood...I was such a hysterical child...I wasn't sure how to be. Felt like I was in the way. Like I should be sorry for being born...Everything's wrong with me, it's my fault. I wanted to be close to him, yet I was so scared of him - ...I couldn't figure out what was right, wrong, good or bad...Ah. He said I would never get anywhere. I guess he was right. (154)

Both Eddy, a gang member, and Kevin, a Salvation Army recruit, live by codes that demonstrate institutionalized forms of cultural belonging. Brown has located Roimata outside the trappings of institutional codification so that she is in a position to remind Eddy of the damage his mindset causes. Roimata negates his judgmental assumptions by reminding him of her ancestral connections and whakapapa. Eddy's ability to reason calmly with Roimata is limited; instead he is reduced to making physical threats in an attempt to silence her. Roimata's vocalization of her sensitivity, spirituality and cultural knowledge produces a powerful barrier against Eddy's threats of physical violence.

Eddy: I'm not afraid of anything. Not like that Pakeha in brown skin.

Roimata: What's that supposed to mean? At least he turns his dreams into reality. I've grown up with our people and most of them are hard-working, good family people. They would identify more with Kevin than you.

Eddy: You don't know what you're talking about. You better go before I do something I regret. (208)

In her life with Reverend Charles, Martha is located at the lowest point of a social hierarchy that privileges white men and seriously undermines the position of women and Maaori. In the Reverend's eyes, Martha's inferior social position stems from her gender and is inseparable from the inferiority connected with her race. The Reverend's treatment of Martha as nothing more than a servant and his daily attempts to convert her to Christianity undercut the foundations of her identity, exacerbating her already troubled self-image. After she is wrongly accused of burning Reverend Charles' bible, Martha flees from the home to find support from women she has only just met. Importantly, while highlighting Martha's conflicted existence, Renee also places in her dramatic shadow, Mrs. Wishart, a Paakehaa woman suffering from male domination.

Martha: The Reverend mustn't find me!

...

Martha: He has accused me of burning his Bible! He says I will be locked up because I burned it! He says only mad people burn that book!

Jeannie: My God Martha, you didn't.

Martha: I did not! But Mrs. Wishart just stood there and said nothing!

Jeannie: Hush Martha, hush.

Martha: Large, small, pain is all. That is my world. (40)

By replacing the language, by reformulating originary myths and legends and by denying waahine any redress for the misappropriation of land, colonial practices contribute to the desecration of mana waahine Maaori. The plays combat colonialism's continued effects through invocations of female whakapapa. Rather than making formal, highly embellished orations about their female lineage, the waahine in the plays recite parts of their whakapapa using everyday language. Understandings about mana waahine are joined with daily experiences enabling the women to illustrate knowledge of an illustrious line of female *tupuna* (ancestors). The plays also reflect the broader social responsibility women must assume to ensure the survival and continuation of the whanau, and by extension, Maaori cultural practices, tikanga, kawa, and values. Toni, Roimata, and Miro express in varying degrees their roles as cultural *kaitiaki* (guardians) and their umbilical connection to their female tupuna.

Toni takes it upon herself to provide some cultural education for Mrs. Bottomley, asserting; "I'm a Maaori. I have mana—pride. Spent most of my

life understanding your culture. About bloody time you understood mine” (134). She also recalls the strength of her Paakehaa mother, who despite a violent husband raised her children as best she could:

Thinking about my Mum...Always there. I used to feel sorry for her. Never talked a lot...She worked morning till night. At the end of the day, we'd rub her head, brush her hair, rub her feet. She loved it, until Dad came home. I'm never gonna have a life like my Mum's. (151)

In addition, Toni remembers her grandmother's home and the feelings of safety she experienced with her:

My grandmother spoke very little English. Hard like the ground. She knew the land like the back of her hand. (149)

While learning about each other, Girlie and Roimata also learn about their Nan. Again, the safety and security of home are made synonymous with the strength and mana of a female descendant:

Girlie: Dad? He talked about you all the time to my mum. Used to really piss her off.

Roimata: He never tried to see me.

Girlie: He probably did, but that Nan of yours wouldn't let him, I bet. Look at that letter I wrote, she held on to that for a couple of years at least.

Roimata: She would have done what she thought best. She gave me a good home.

Meanwhile, Kura slowly unravels Miro's stories: these help her ascertain a sense of self and also key her into the whakapapa that has for years been kept from her. Kura's female ancestor Waiora becomes a central figure in Kura's understanding of her strong Maaori lineage:

Miro: Aae, too aataahua hoki, just like your tupuna, Waiora. She was magic, Kura. She had a mane of red hair that danced around her waist and she had fairy's eyes. She lived in a time when the Moa People walked this land. They were a tall and proud people, an iwi full of kings and queens...Ko te wairua o te moa too raatou kaitiaki, and they had nothing but respect for those great birds...Waiora...grew to become a clever girl who loved to play tricks and dance.

But her greatest gift was foresight...And when their enemies would attack, Waiora kept the Mōa People safe. (25–26)

...

That is you, Te Atakura. One day you'll understand. (38)

Kooreroo and Karanga

Kia waiata ahau i tooku waiata: *Singing my own song*

At least ten years separate *Te Awa I Tahuti* and *Ngāa Pou Waahine*, but these two plays both tap in similar ways a unique, powerful mode of storytelling and articulation that remains distinct to Māori culture and that is predominantly a female practice. I have mentioned the female prerogative to draw on silence, waiata or physical display as alternative modes of expression. Hiwi and Pat Tauroa in *Te Marae: A Guide to Customs and Protocol* (1986) note that in order to shape the passage of the poowhiri, Māori women may in extreme circumstances interrupt a man in whaikōrero by initiating a waiata to cut short his oration. Waiata have a notable historic prominence for Māori women's expression. In the past and now reverberating through popular forms is the practice of transforming topical issues into waiata as expressions of protest, agreement, and so on.⁹

In *Te Awa I Tahuti* and *Ngāa Pou Waahine* waiata embellish and underline the narrative themes. The essential importance of the waiata in these plays is that they are delivered in Māori. The logistics of performing in *te reo Māori* (Māori language) and the contentiousness surrounding the gender restrictions on whaikōrero are partially addressed when waiata are used to articulate opinion and emotion. Additionally, through their lyrical and musical content, waiata successfully perform the pain and suffering, the cyclical emotion tied to birth and death, otherwise expressed through karanga. In effect, waiata become the voice of the threshold, helping playwright, actor, and character alike to use an indigenous voice for the articulation of multiple emotions and positions.

Toni breaks into waiata at several times in *Te Awa I Tahuti*, each waiata moving her closer to a reconciliation of the isolation she has experienced since leaving her village, and the togetherness she knew as a child in her Northland home. Waiata are psychological restoratives: they voice what is presented as an unspeakable divide and carry her back home while allowing her to dwell elsewhere.

In *Ngāa Pou Waahine*, Kura's ancestress Waiora sings an opening lament welcoming the audience to a space, which might be seen as resembling a skeletal wharehau and paepae. Throughout the play songs emphasize

and reintegrate the profound importance of a female lineage, as well as the threads of strength, mana, and dignity retained in the waahine genealogical line. Two waiata, one sung by Waiora and the other by Kura's birth mother Miro, karanga to the ancestors, address the iwi and enhance the restitutive motifs running through the play. For example, Miro sings

Auee taku whero/Alas my dear one
Ka huri taku mata ki aku tuupuna/I turn to face my ancestors
E okioki mai ana/in the final resting place
Maaku rawa koe e tuku/It will be me that will send you
Kia tapu ai i raro ngaa tohunga o Ngaati Kookoowai
/To learn among the knowledgeable ones
E noho taha i too puna wai/To grow beside the spring
Te awe o Te Waiora/the origin of Te Waiora
E tohu nei e ngaa tae/that indicates the colours
Kei runga i te ao/upon the earth
Ara ake ana Te Atakura/Rise Te Atakura
Mai te puna ao roa/from the very depths
Ki te ao maarama/into the world of light.

Importantly, waiata in both plays are being used to prompt the audience. Punctuating the play, the waiata shift the language and register from a colloquial, fundamentally English discourse to one that is deeply historical, cultural, and spiritually rich. Barlow details the centrality of waiata in Maaori thought and learning:

Waiata was one of the principle methods of teaching and learning in the *kura waananga* or school of sacred knowledge. It ranked along with genealogy and incantations as a principal means of disseminating prized knowledge. (151)

Because women sing waiata to the audience and simultaneously give themselves voice in the worlds of the plays, they directly reclaim the genealogical and educational functions of whaikoorero. In addition, the pain and sorrow reverberating through the high-pitched call of the karanga is seamlessly reflected in the often mournful music at the root of these songs. Although many of the waiata are especially composed for the plays, they reflect and extend a Maaori tradition steeped in cultural history. They are audible signs that carry tribal, mythological detail while encapsulating and performing some of the functions of karanga and whaikoorero. Ultimately, they communicate with the audience in ways that transport them beyond simple dialogue.

Koorero mai!*Speak!*

Spread over a period of eleven years and performed at different theatres in Aotearoa, Toni's, Roimata's and Girlie's, Martha's, and Kura's koorero, karanga, and waiata have only ever been heard as solo performances, never as a chorus. The vocal kaleidoscope presented in this paper re-presents their voices as a fragmented chorus, in the hope that the joint aspirations and concerns underlying the koorero are revealed. A central refrain reflected in the plays has been the desire to achieve recognition of cultural and gender identity through vocal communication. In *He Reo Hou* Roma Potiki (1991) says:

Maaori drama is about communication, about learning to communicate with our own people. Maaori playwrights decide on the story they want to tell, work on that content, and then share it with Maaori and others. (11)

Given Potiki's statement about the fundamental communicative purpose of Maaori drama, it is clear that these speaking reflections project, in addition to the contemporary social concerns raised, a vital need for Maaori women to locate and exploit new sites for vocalization. Read together, the voices encourage transgression of cultural boundaries and an employment of alternative forms of communication in spaces outside of marae contexts. In an interview with John Huria (1997), the playwright Hone Kouka comments on the powerful blend between Maaori tikanga and the theatre. He acknowledges that the theatre will develop:

by way of people who have a strong knowledge of Maaori concepts. This knowledge enables abstraction from a social practice, rather than straight representation of a social practice. It leads to a less mimetic performance, almost expressionistic in its focus on an essence seen through the ritualised lens of tikanga and kawa. (4)

But, how do stylization and abstraction of marae tikanga and kawa assist with Maaori women's articulation? In some ways the partial transplantation of the marae into the theatre space contributes to a re-culturation. In this transposed, truncated form, the marae is rendered less functional, less traditional/conventional, and in being released from its original function the object is partially denuded of its cultural relevance. Its function becomes

artificial, too extrapolated from its traditional purpose, making the ritual enacted in its new site less potent. On the other hand, the semitransplantation and the stylized abstraction release the marae from accompanying contingencies and restrictions and the conventions of gender and cultural performance. Re-presenting substantial fragments of the marae complex, tikanga, and kawa in a theatre venue frees up modes by which the marae can be formulated. In being open to new interpretations, the marae maintains its important function as vocal platform, but becomes flexible and accommodating, allowing Maaori women to articulate important political, cultural, and gender phenomena in a contemporary, public context. Viewed by Maaori and non-Maaori audiences, these new gender patterns alter the previously restrictive metonymic relationship between marae tradition and perceptions of Maaori culture. Rather than a dangerous slippage occurring between the rigid gender roles observed in traditional poowhiri and general Aotearoa society, the fluidity of marae practice in the theatre space encourages a positive perception of Maaori social interaction.

NOTES

1. Barlow says “The Treaty of Waitangi is the founding document of this nation: it signified the bringing together of two people—the indigenous Maaori tribes and the British Crown—into one nation. The Treaty was signed on 6 February 1840 at Waitangi in the Bay of Islands” (1991:134). Every year since, this date has been set aside for celebrations commemorating the signing.

2. According to Barlow the name Paakehaa “was given by the Maaori to the white-skinned immigrants who came from the United Kingdom and settled New Zealand” (1991:87). For an analysis of Paakehaa identity in contemporary New Zealand society see further King 1985 and Fleras and Spoonley 1999.

3. For reports on Harawira’s actions during the 2000 Waitangi Day commemorations see *The New Zealand Herald* (2000), 28 Jan. p 2; 31 Jan. p 10; 2 Feb. p 8; 4 Feb. p 3; 5 Feb. p 3; 7 Feb. p 3; 18 Feb. p 11; 27 Nov. p 8 and *Listener*, 21 Feb. 1998, p 24; 29 Jan. 2000, p 24.

4. Although the roots of mana waahine Maaori are embedded in traditional Maaori mythologies and social practices, only since the mid-1970s has it developed as a strong, political Maaori feminist movement. Maaori filmmaker Merata Mita describes mana waahine Maaori in the following way: “a Maaori concept which exceeds the boundaries of feminism and incorporates a dimension of spirituality emanating from the primary element of Hine-ahu-one. I am Maaori, I am woman, I am family, I am tribe...” (Mita, 1994). For some valuable discussions of mana waahine Maaori and other issues pertinent to Maaori feminism and society within a postcolonial frame see further Hohepa 1993; Irwin 1993; Jenkins 1988 and 1992; Kupenga et al 1993; Nepe 1992; Pere 1982; Pihama and Mara 1994; Smith 1992; Smith and Taki 1993; Sykes 1994; and Szasz 1993.

5. Irwin (1992) is referring to adaptations made to marae protocol in order to accommodate Paakehaa men and non-Maaori speakers. It is not uncommon to witness Paakehaa men on the paepae using speech notes and speaking in English, while competent female Maaori speakers remain silent.

6. On marae style theatre see Nelson 1963; Samsoni 1986; and Balme 1993 and 1999.

7. Riwia Brown's brothers Rangimoana and Apirana Taylor are strong advocates for marae style theatre. Apirana Taylor's writing featured as part of *Te Rakau Hua O Te Wao Tapu*, an Arts Festival program in Wellington, March 1990. Grace-Smith, after an early career in acting, worked with He Ara Hou in the development and production of Roma Potiki's *Whatungarongaro* (1990), which was performed in adapted-marae style.

8. *Jeannie Once* forms part of a trilogy of plays focused on three generations of women in different moments in Aotearoa's social history. The plays *Wednesday to Come* (1985) and *Pass It On* (1986) complete the trilogy.

9. Waiata were not only used during the poowhiri but were a part of many formal and informal occasions. Grace-Smith's plays often contain waiata specifically composed to reinforce on-stage action. For a more comprehensive presentation of waiata in traditional contexts, see Ngata 1980; McLean and Orbell 1979; and Orbell 1991.

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PELE, HI'IAKA, AND HAUMEA: WOMEN AND POWER IN TWO HAWAIIAN MO'OLELO

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This paper examines two Hawaiian *mo'olelo* published in Hawaiian in 1861 and 1905 for representations of powerful female characters. These characters are seen to be human, divine, and parts of the landscape all at once. The paper argues that the elaborated stories as literature have been lost in the processes of colonialism that eroded and nearly eradicated the Hawaiian language; the stories have been replaced with caricatures, distorted translations, and other simulacra that work to reinforce stereotypes about Hawaiians. A successful revitalization of the Hawaiian language that allowed most people to be able to read this literature would work as a powerful antidote to the poison of cultural imperialism.

THE MO'OLELO, AS ORIGINALLY WRITTEN, in all their length and complexity, have been made absent, not only through such translations, but as a direct result of the colonization of Hawai'i by the United States; colonizers usually impose their own language on the colonized, and, in the case of Hawai'i, as it is for so many indigenous peoples, the language itself has been very nearly exterminated. Most Kānaka Maoli³ cannot read these mo'olelo that were written by their own ancestors.

The loss of the language and the consequent loss of the literature have facilitated the ubiquitous deployment of stereotypes of our people: both men and women as silly and lazy natives, prone to partying and living on welfare, and women as welcoming, sexually available, powerless hula maidens. The representations in our ancestral literature are a direct and effective challenge to such stereotypes. They allow us to see that those stereotypes must be the

creation of the foreigners' minds, who project both their desires and the unwanted abject parts of themselves onto the colonized (McClintock 1995), since they have no truth in the self-representations of our recent ancestors. The mo'olelo represent women and men as fully human—intelligent beings that struggle with each other for power and for *pono* (social harmony). The mo'olelo relate Kanaka thought, history, geography, beliefs, and humor.

Furthermore, stories act as psychic frames within which we make sense of the events of the world; we translate experiences and the actions of ourselves and others into understandable narratives based on the stories we hold in our minds (Edelman 1995). As Paula Gunn Allen says, "For all of us, Indian or not, stories are a major way we make communal, transcendent meaning out of human experience" (Allen 1989, 8). Kānaka Maoli need to free our ancestral stories from the captured state, such that they become healthy frameworks for our own communal self-understanding, antidotes to the poisonous stereotypes of the colonizers. It is through the mo'olelo that we may clearly understand ourselves as linked to our ancestors and our land.

We are in the midst of a university-centered movement to revive the language, with the ultimate goal perhaps being, as Joshua Fishman put it, to reverse the language shift (Fishman 1991) so that the *'ōlelo kumu*, the original language, again becomes the primary language for Kanaka 'Ōiwi. Presently there are at least a few hundred, mainly university-trained, people who are able to read these mo'olelo as they were written and published in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Although several hundred children attend Hawaiian immersion primary and secondary schools, literature of the type I discuss in this paper is not commonly part of the curriculum, partly because of the difficulty of the language. My hope is that many more people will become fluent in speaking and reading our heritage language, such that these mo'olelo will soon become an integral part of the common cultural base.

In the nineteenth century, Hawaiian was the vernacular in *Hawai'i nei*, and Hawaiian literature flourished in the mother tongue. Editors of Hawaiian language newspapers fostered the writing of literature in their papers from approximately 1860 to about 1948, when the last Hawaiian language newspaper ceased publication. Mo'olelo were sometimes said to have been translated from the oral tradition; however, it is important to understand that the written forms of mo'olelo were authored. That is, each of the authors of the many mo'olelo wrote their own versions, using both mnemonic devices from the oral tradition and literary devices that developed over time. They signed their work, usually with their own names, and sometimes with pseudonyms. Mo'olelo appeared in very specific historical contexts as creations of authors who were often also political actors.

The body of literature is distinguished by mo'olelo of powerful female deities. Although some mo'olelo were written and published beforehand, the publication of the first “Moolelo no Hiiakaikapoliopole” (1861–1863 in serial form) was in the newspaper *Ka Hoku o ka Pakipika* and, thus, part of the Kanaka Ōiwi's claiming of the power of the press for themselves (Kapihenui 1861). *Ka Hoku o ka Pakipika* was the first newspaper owned, written, and edited by Kanaka Maoli, and so it was the first that was free of the colonizing censorship of the Calvinist missionaries, who had controlled the press until that time (Silva 2004). The mo'olelo of Hi'iakaikapoliopole—a mo'olelo about the *akua wahine* (female deity) of the volcano, Pele, and her heroic youngest sister Hi'iaka—was a landmark event in the writing and publication of Kanaka literature, because of the relatively unexpurgated nature of its narrative and the long *mele* (song or poetry) included, some of which worships Pele (see Ho'omanawanui 2007). A half-century later, Hawaiian literature may well have reached its peak with Joseph Mokuohai Poepoe's publication of many long mo'olelo, including his “Moolelo Hawaii Kahiko” in his own newspaper *Ka Na'i Aupuni* in 1906. In “Moolelo Hawaii Kahiko,” Poepoe recounts and analyzes several different *mo'okū'auhau*, cosmogonical genealogies, by earlier authors. Within one of the mo'okū'auhau, that of Wākea (the Expanse, usually glossed as Sky Father), he relates “Ka Moolelo o ko Wakea ma Noho ana ma Kalihi—Ka Loaa ana o ke Akua Ulu o Kameha'ikana” (The Mo'olelo of Wākea and Family's Residence in Kalihi—the Obtaining of the Breadfruit Deity Kāmeha'ikana). Despite the emphasis on Wākea in the title, the main character in this mo'olelo is not Wākea, but his wahine, the *akua* Haumea, her manifestation as the Breadfruit Tree deity, and her war to restore pono (right balance of relations) to the island of O'ahu.⁴ In both cases, the authors along with opinion writers in their papers stressed that mo'olelo were important for young people to understand who they were and to have *aloha* for their *'āina*—love for their land and their own people. Poepoe wrote,

Ua hoalaia ae keia hana e ka Mea Kakau no kona makee a minamina maoli i ka moolelo e pili ana i na hana, ka nohona, ame na manao o ko Hawaii nei poe kupuna i hala aku i ka po. (1906: 1 February)

(This work was commenced by the Author because of his desire and true appreciation of the mo'olelo about the deeds, the lives, and the thoughts of Hawai'i's ancestors who have passed into the night.)

The importance of these stories of powerful female deities to contemporary Kanaka women has been noted previously, especially in a speech by Mililani Trask (1986), in the short treatment, *Nā Wāhine Kapu: Divine*

Hawaiian Women by Lilikalā Kame‘eleihiwa (1999), and most recently in *Holo Mai Pele* by Pualani Kanaka‘ole Kanahale (2001). Trask’s speech emphasizes the value of hearing the stories orally from *kūpuna*, because a grandmother will make the moral lessons therein explicit to the young listener. Kame‘eleihiwa’s book is a catalog of the many female deities in Hawaiian religion, accompanied by contemporary examples of strong Kanaka women who have been inspired and strengthened by the stories. Kumu hula Kanahale’s book is a commentary on the hula drama and television program by Hālau o Kekuhi about Pele and Hi‘iaka.⁵ My own contribution to this ongoing analysis of our literature, in this essay, is a more detailed examination of the two mo‘olelo about Pele and Hi‘iaka and Haumea as they appeared in print in the original Hawaiian.

Neither of these mo‘olelo has had a complete translation done, although Nathaniel B. Emerson used Kapihenui’s “He Moolelo no Hiiakaikapoliopole” as the basis for his English-language book called *Pele and Hiiaka: A Myth From Hawaii* (1993 [1915]). John Charlot notes that “long sections of [Emerson’s] book are more or less loose translations or summaries of Kapihenui” (1998, 61), but Emerson did not credit Kapihenui with authorship of the original. Ku‘ualoha Ho‘omanawanui provides a detailed examination and analysis of this in her 2007 dissertation. Emerson acknowledged that “this story, has, in part, been found in serial contributions to the Hawaiian newspapers” but did not name Kapihenui or any of the other Kanaka authors whose work he poached (Emerson 1993, v). This failure to credit the Kanaka authors in itself aids the colonizing project, as it hides the existence of Hawaiian literature from the view of the English reader, thus portraying Hawaiians as uneducated and backward (i.e., as people who did not write). As Walter Mignolo explains, imperial agencies inscribed “the idea that people without writing were people without history and that people without history were inferior human beings” (Mignolo 1995, 127). A previous book of Emerson’s on this topic (*Unwritten Literature of Hawaii*, 1909) was published by just such an imperial agency, the U.S. Smithsonian Institution’s Bureau of Ethnology, which contributed significantly to the development of scientific racism (Baker 1998). Besides these acts of cultural imperialism, Emerson also directly contributed to the armed coup d’etat, preceded and supported by an invasion by the U.S. military that ended the Native constitutional monarchy and established a colonial oligarchy in Hawai‘i.⁶

Emerson’s Eurocentric translation in flowery Victorian-era prose and poetry portrays Hi‘iaka as less powerful than she appears in the original. He continually refers to this akua wahine who rescues men and defeats sharks and other fierce beings, as a “little girl,” “little maid,” and other such diminutives (e.g., Emerson 1993: 1, 15). Poe’s “Kāmeha‘ikana” has not

suffered a similar treatment and, as far as I know, has never been translated into English. What I offer here is not a translation, but an examination that includes my (necessarily abbreviated) interpretation of the two mo'olelo.

Before we begin, I would emphasize that, although I am discussing two specific works in this paper, there are many versions of each of these mo'olelo written by different authors from different islands. There is no one authoritative version of any of these mo'olelo; indeed, such an idea would be antithetical to Hawaiian epistemology (see Ho'omanawanui 2007). The people of old said, "A'ohe pau ka 'ike i ka hālau ho'okahi" (All knowledge is not exhausted in one school) (see Pukui 1983: 24).

Images of Pele

First, let us look at Kapihenui's "He Moolelo no Hiiakaikapoliopole." Although the title and main character of the mo'olelo is Hi'iaka, the opening scenes describe the akua wahine Pele in important ways; hence, we will begin with her. The mo'olelo begins when Pele suggests to her many younger sisters that they all go from their upland home, inside the live volcano Kīlauea, down to the shore to fish. Pele herself is understood to be the volcano and to be a woman at the same time. She is an akua with *kino lau* (multiple bodies). She is also the head of a family both human and superhuman, which still has living descendants, as witnessed by Kapihenui's statement in the first paragraph, "aole kekahi o kona lahui me kakou, aia no lakou ma Kilauea i keia wa" (none of her people are here [with me on O'ahu], they are in Kīlauea [on Hawai'i] at this time) (Kapihenui 1861: 26 Dec.). In the mo'olelo, the others who physically live with her in human and divine form are her sisters, whose names are all variants of "Hi'iaka." The subject of our mo'olelo is the youngest, named Hi'iakaikapoliopole, or Hi'iaka in the bosom of Pele. The family has brothers (and parents, cousins, etc.) but they appear in this mo'olelo as living apart from the sisters. All of them share the fluid identities as human, divine, and landscape all at once.

When Pele and company arrive at the shore, they see the young woman Hōpoe dancing at the shoreline, accompanied by a young man, Hā'ena. The name of the place is also Hā'ena. Pele is delighted with the dancing and calls to her younger sisters to reciprocate. None of them respond except the youngest, Hi'iakaikapoliopole, who chants of her own pleasure at watching Hōpoe's hula. Hi'iaka is so taken with Hōpoe that she forgoes fishing with her sisters and goes to stay with Hōpoe to dance and surf.

In the next scene, we can see the fluidity of Pele's identity as landscape and woman: she announces that she is going to sleep, and that no one is to wake her no matter how long she sleeps. If they must awaken her, only her

brothers, Keowahimakaakaua, or Hi'iakaikapoliopole are allowed to do so. Pele rules the family in a manner befitting a volcano: the penalty for disobeying this order is death. She then wraps herself in the *pāhoehoe*, the smooth lava rock of the landscape, creating Pu'upāhoehoe, or Pāhoehoe Hill. Kapihenui says she put on (*aahu*) the pāhoehoe as her *kapa*, her wauke cloth covering; thus, the place she did so is still called Kapa'ahu (Covering of Kapa) at Pu'upāhoehoe.

In the following sequence we see Pele as spirit and as related to many other divine land and animal beings. In her sleep state, Pele hears the sound of *pahu hula* (hula drums). She is attracted to the sound and follows it across the islands and channels all the way from the easternmost island where she begins to one of the westernmost, Kaua'i. When she cannot locate the source of the sound, she becomes irritated. In the channel between O'ahu and Kaua'i she meets Pōhakuokaua'i (Rock of Kaua'i), who Kapihenui tells us is her *kupunakāne* (grandfather). She accuses Pōhakuokaua'i of purposely annoying her with the sound of the drums, and threatens to kill him. Pele, true to her volcanic nature, acts arbitrarily and irrationally when angry. This is merely the first incident that reveals this aspect of her.⁷ This episode is also another example of rock or landscape being presented to the reader as a living, sentient being. Pōhakuokaua'i is an actual rock, a feature of the oceanscape, visible today.

When Pele does find the source of the drums, we see her as a vibrant, beautiful, desirable, and desiring young woman. Lohi'au, the handsome young *ali'i* (ruler) of the island of Kaua'i is playing the drum along with his *kumu hula*, Mapu, and his *aikāne*, his friend (and/or lover), Kahuakaiapaoa.⁸ Pele adorns herself magically in the fragrant leaves and flowers of her homeland and then makes a dramatic entrance into the hula festival, chanting. No one knows it is the *akua wahine*, Pele, but they all see that she is beautiful, and, so the people push Lohi'au outside of the building to meet her. He is young and shy, and she chants again and then uses divine power to draw Lohi'au to her. The two then go to Lohi'au's house alone and remain there for five days and nights without emerging for food or to rejoin the hula festival. Kapihenui assures the reader that they do not have intercourse, but "o ka ihu no ka honi, o ke kino hoi aole launa aku" (they exchanged breath at the nose, but the bodies did not meet). Pele then must return to Hawai'i island—she cannot remain indefinitely in her "uhane" or spirit form. She instructs Lohi'au to wait, and she will send a woman to fetch him, promising him that they will sleep together when he arrives in Hawai'i. She also places a *kapu* on his body, that he must not sleep with anyone else, and promises that, after five days and nights with her "pa i kela kihi o Kilauea, i keia kihi o Kilauea" (having been touched by every corner of Kilauea [her land =

herself]), she will free the kapu, and he will have other women. The other women she hints at are her sisters. Pele as woman, but at the same time as akua, here is fully in command: she follows her desires and sets all the rules of this relationship. Lohi'au is rather helpless, as he does not realize that she is akua. (His name means "slow.") When he sees that Pele has left, he disobeys her order to wait for the messenger, is overcome with sadness, and hangs himself (Kapihenui 1861: 26 Dec.).

Later on in the story we again see the other side of Pele as the volcano, irrationally raging, and consuming the landscape. When her messenger, Hi'iaka, seems to be taking too long to bring Lohi'au back, Pele overreacts with volcanic fury, destroying the lehua grove and the person that her sister loves best. Let us turn now to that sister, who is the central character of the mo'olelo.

When Pele returns to her body in Hawai'i, she sends a messenger, the magical young woman, Pā'ūopala'e, to bring Hi'iaka back to Kīlauea from where she is staying with Hōpoe. Hi'iaka has super senses; hence, she knows that she may not see Hōpoe again. As she returns, she sings songs of love and grief for the impending loss of her aikāne. In these mele, Hi'iaka is seen as a master *haku mele* (composer), who weaves together the imagery of the forest and the elements to express her feelings. The first mele is this:

He ua kui lehua ko Panaewa
 He ua ma kai kui hala o Puna,
 A[l]oha—e,
 Aloha wale Koloa—e,
 Na mauu i moe o Malei. (Kapihenui 1862: 1 January)
 (Pana'ewa has a lehua-striking rain,
 Seaward is a rain that strikes the hala of Puna,
 Beloved,
 So beloved is Kōloa,
 The grasses of Mālei that slept.)

Although I have translated the word "kui" in the first two lines as "striking" and "strikes" (i.e., "ku'i"), it is just as possible to read it as "stringing" and "strings" (kui) or, as "Pana'ewa has a rain that strings lehua flowers into lei" and "Seaward is a rain that strings the hala flowers of Puna into lei." The "strike" meaning conveys the feelings of sadness and grief, while the "string" meaning denotes the closeness of the relationship. Furthermore, "Pana'ewa has a lehua-striking rain" could be read as Hi'iaka's own prophecy that she will engage in a fierce battle with Pana'ewa, since "lehua" also means "warrior." Thus, Hōpoe, whose name is described in the dictionary as "fully

developed, as a *lehua* flower” (Pukui and Elbert 1986, 82), is closely associated with the *lehua*; in other versions *Hi'iaka* names her “*Hōpoe*” after the name of her favorite grove of *lehua*. The “*hala*” is the flower of the pandanus, but “*hala*” also means to pass and to pass away into death. The poet uses the place name *Kōloa* to signify that the love between the two was fulfilling: “*kō*” means to be fulfilled or satisfied, and “*loa*” means “very.” (*Kōloa* as a place name probably refers to a type of sugar cane.) The use of words with these double, even triple, meanings demonstrates the composer’s mastery of Hawaiian poetics. The last line uses the metaphor of sleeping grass to suggest that the two had slept together. The next section of verse emphasizes their romantic relationship:

He lei moe ipo,
Aloha mai ka ipo,
He ipo no—e.
(A lover’s lei,
Beloved is the sweetheart,
She is a lover.)

We understand *Hi'iaka* in the beginning here, then, as woman who is a skilled composer, a lover of the beauty of the forest, and a lover of the woman *Hōpoe*. It is important not to impose the contemporary categories of sexual identity onto *Hi'iaka* or *Hōpoe*, however. In this Hawaiian world, since there was no need to restrict or regulate such activity, the categories heterosexual, homosexual, and bisexual were never created in the language (Foucault 1990, 26–30). In this and other Hawaiian *mo'olelo*, romantic love between people of the same sex is presented as a normal practice of everyday life rather than as an identity marker. In the stories, such love relationships are cherished by those engaged in them and are supported by others. An understanding of these relationships as valuable in our ancestors’ culture assists us in understanding ourselves as healthy when we, too, cherish such relationships.

When *Hi'iaka* returns to her sisters, *Pele* orders the sisters, one after another, to go and fetch *Lohi'au*. They all refuse because they are afraid of traveling the long distance to *Kaua'i*. But they do not say so, they just cry in fear. *Kapihenui* writes “*Aole hoi e hiki ke hai aku i keia mea, i ko lakou kaikuaana no ka makau*” (It was not possible to tell this, to their older sister, about the fear) (*Kapihenui* 1862: 2 January). In other words, it was not acceptable to *Pele* that her younger sisters be afraid of anything. *Hi'iaka* does not cry; she immediately agrees to go on the long journey, sacrificing her own love affair to assist *Pele* with hers. *Pele* commands her, “*kii no a loa a Kauai*

. . . lawe mai a hiki i Hawaii nei, mai moe olua, mai honi, mai iniki, mai lalau aku a lalau mai, o make olua ia'u" (Go and find him on Kaua'i, bring him here to Hawai'i, the two of you must not sleep together, don't *honi* [exchange breath at the nose], don't pinch, don't hold each other, or the two of you will die because of me). Hi'iaka agrees but has two commands (*kauoha*) of her own: the first is that if Pele erupts, she must not destroy Hi'iaka's favorite grove of lehua and, second, that she must not destroy her aikāne, Hōpoe. Pele agrees to these demands.

Hi'iaka leaves on her journey but stops and turns around many times, "no ka nui aloha oia nei i na kaikuaana, no Kalua, a me ka uluwehiwehi o ka aina" (because of so much aloha for her older sisters, and for Kalua [the crater] and for the lush verdure of the land). She sings of her love and her sadness at having to leave her sisters and the land of Hawai'i. Pele is merciless as she admonishes Hi'iaka to just go. Along the way, Pā'ūopala'e (skirt of lace fern) joins Hi'iaka as a traveling companion. At this point, Pele reveals the name of Lohi'auipo (lover Lohi'au) to Hi'iaka, saying that now "aohe ou mea nana e hoopilikia o ke alanui, nau ka make na ka wahine, aohe make a na kane" (you have nothing to cause you trouble along the way; you have the power of death; it is woman's power; men will have no power of death, i.e., no power to kill you). As Charlot has pointed out, this signals that their "power is specifically female" (1998, 57).

Not long after the journey begins, Hi'iaka and Pā'ūopala'e enter Pana'ewa. Pana'ewa is a dangerous, uninhabited forest area but also a monstrous being who threatens to kill and eat them. Hi'iaka battles Pana'ewa and tires. He tires, too. Pele can see all this and finally calls "na Hoaiuku kane a me na Hoaiuku wahine" (male gods and female gods) telling them "e kokua i ko kakou kaikaina" (go and assist our sister). They arrive and in one smack (*muka*), Pana'ewa is dead. In one further battle, the Hoaiuku are again called to assist her, and, thereafter, Hi'iaka is able to fight all of her battles without further intervention except for the necessary prayers and ceremonies.

Hi'iaka is then joined by a young human woman, Wahine'ōma'ō, who accompanies her the rest of the way. Still on Hawai'i island, they come to Makaukiu, a *hula'ana*—an impassable sheer cliff to the sea. Wahine'ōma'ō and Pā'ūopala'e want to swim it because that would be a lot faster than detouring inland around the cliff, but Hi'iaka explains that Makaukiu has appeared in the water as a shark, and he will kill them if they go in. The two young women are very stubborn, however, and are not persuaded. Kapihenui writes that Hi'iaka thinks of the two like this, "he mau kane laua, he wahine no keia" (they are men, I am a woman); she thinks this "no ko laua hooko ole mai i ka ia nei olelo aku ia laua" (because of their not fulfilling what she told them) (Kapihenui 1862: 16 January). It is only when they enter the water and

the huge shark rears up that the two believe Hi'iaka. Hi'iaka then battles and kills the shark. I am not sure exactly what the statement of the two being like men is meant to convey, but it is likely that it is meant to be a humorous jab at men being stubborn or failing to listen, within this very women-centered tale. Ku'ualoha Ho'omanawanui has pointed out that Lohi'au is similarly portrayed as causing his own despair by failing to listen and obey Pele's instructions (pers. comm. 2001).⁹

Hi'iaka and her companions have many more adventures on the way to Kaua'i and back. She greets many relatives along the way, who are landscape features like Pōhakuokaua'i mentioned above. She brings Lohi'au back from the dead and sails back to Hawai'i. In the meantime, Pele, in one of her volcanic furies, has broken her vow and destroyed both Hi'iaka's beloved lehua grove and her aikāne, Hōpoe. Hi'iaka is grief stricken and angry. She waits until they are in the presence of Pele to violate the command not to touch Lohi'au, and a battle ensues between the sisters. Lohi'au's aikāne Kahuakaiapaoa arrives to try to save the poor man, who is caught between the fighting sisters. In the end, he is not saved. Our impression of Hi'iaka at the end is that of a strong, intelligent young woman who has come of age in the journey. She has experienced love affairs, tested her wits in battle, and survived a fierce conflict with her older sister. She has observed the religious protocols in order to heal human beings. She has relatives who are sharks, *mo'ō* (supernatural lizard-like creatures), cliffs, and rocks. She is divine with supernatural powers, but experiences the full range of human emotions, and is able to express them in exquisite poetry and song. She is a heroine whose battles and loves transform her and whose story teaches us about what is pono in spiritual and human relationships.

Haumea and the akua 'ulu Kāmeha'ikana

The mo'olelo of Kāmeha'ikana is a narrative, interspersed with *pule* (prayers) and a few mele, that highlights Haumea's relationship to the land and the breadfruit tree. It also is a narrative that teaches about an ali'i who does not behave in a pono manner. The mo'olelo celebrates Haumea's power as a female force and a deity who assists in childbirth but who is also responsible for conducting warfare to restore pono.

The story, which I summarize here, begins with Haumea and Wākea, who are living in the back of Kalihi Valley on the ridge called Kilohana. The living is good: banana, yam, taro, and other food plants grow wild in the forest; and the seashore provides shellfish and seaweed. One day Haumea decides to go fishing at the shore at He'eia, and Wākea decides to gather food in the forest. Wākea cuts down a ripe bunch of bananas and is promptly arrested by guards

of the ali'i named Kumuhonua. They tie him hand and foot, telling him he is being taken because he has stolen the bananas. They send a messenger to Kumuhonua to ask what to do, and Kumuhonua says to kill him by baking him in an *imu* (earth oven). They take him to a place near Waikahalulu stream (an area now considered part of Honolulu) and tie him to a breadfruit tree.

Meanwhile, Haumea looks up at Kilohana and sees first the arch of a rainbow and then rain that completely covers the ridge. She suddenly understands that Wākea has been taken and worries for his life. She prepares to leave but first picks up a *pōhuehue* vine and twines it around her head. This vine is significant, according to the *'ōlelo no'eau* (figurative saying), "*kā i ka pōhuehue*," which refers to the practice of striking the *pōhuehue* vine to make surf rise dangerously when one's enemy is in the sea (Pukui 1983, 146). She goes to look for Wākea, first at Kilohana. As she leaves the forest there, she gathers palapalai fern and other greenery to adorn herself, including lehua flowers and maile. Finally, she takes *tī* leaves and drapes them across her *puhaka* (waist). The greenery and flowers are the same important ones that hula dancers associate with the female deities of hula (Abbott 1992, 117), who are the other major female deities in Kanaka traditions. Isabella Abbott says further that women draped themselves in *tī* leaf when they had to break *kapu*, as protection (Abbott 1992, 115). Haumea uses the *tī* here in a similar way as symbolic protection for the coming battle with Kumuhonua.

Haumea arrives at the stream named Pūehuehu. There she meets a man named Kali'u, who tells her that the smoke she sees is coming from an *imu* and that a man is about to be killed in it. He notices her beauty and how it is enhanced with the forest greenery. They discuss what has happened to Wākea. Haumea then delivers this soliloquy:

He maia ulu wale ko ke kuahiwi, he maia ma ka nahelehele, he inai na ke kini, ame ka puku'i o ka manu. No ke aha hoi i kapu ole ia ai ka manu i ka maia a kapu iho la hoi i ke kanaka? Hoouna ka hoi ua 'lii nei o oukou i kona poe kanaka, e kiu i ke kanaka e kii ana i ka mea a kona lima i luhī ole ai; a hoouna ole ka hoi oia i na kau kia manu ana e pu-lehua a e ahele i ka manu ai maia? He aha la kana. Ola ka manu ai maia, ola no hoi ke kanaka ai maia. Noonoo ole no hoi ua 'lii nei o oukou, he maia ke kanaka, a kona la no hoi e hua iho ai, hua no. (1906: 9 May)

(The mountains have bananas that grow wild, there are bananas in the forest, which is food for the people and for the flocks of birds. Why should the banana not be taboo to the birds, but taboo to people? That ali'i of yours has sent his people to watch for people

taking something that his hands have not worked to grow; but he doesn't send any bird catchers to snare the banana-eating birds? Why? The bird who eats bananas lives, and the person who eats bananas lives. This ali'i of yours has failed to consider that the person is a banana tree, whose day will come to fruit, and it will fruit.)

This speech of Haumea's tells us that Kumuhonua is an oppressive ali'i and why. The relationships are pono when people can gather food freely in the forest, just as the birds do. The land is there to feed the people as well as the birds. If Kumuhonua or his people had cultivated the banana, then they would have a right to the fruits of their labor. But to claim the wild bananas is an overstepping of his *kuleana* (his sphere of authority and responsibility) and, thus, not pono. It is also likely that the banana bunch is a metaphor for the people of the area and that Wākea's taking of the banana is prescient and symbolic of his and Haumea's subsequent takeover of the rule of the island. To rule an island is often expressed as *'ai moku*, (island-eating).¹⁰

Kali'u expresses sadness that the man is to be killed; hence, Haumea asks if he would help her rescue Wākea. He agrees. She asks him for *'awa* (kava), which he has, but, he says, there is no water in this stream except when it rains. She tells him to go get the *'awa* and to chew it and that she will work on getting water. She looks around until she sees a very large rock and then tells Kali'u that she will pick up and throw the rock into Waolani stream, which will make the spray from the stream cover the mountains, and then there will be water in Pūehuehu (*ehu*, meaning spray). Kali'u is amazed and says that not several sets of forty men could lift the rock. Haumea tells him to watch; she will say a pule; and then he will see that the rock will become just a little *pali pohaku* (rock cliff) in her hand. She then prays to her ancestors named Palila'a, Palikomokomo and so forth. While she is saying the pule, the words flutter in her mouth and her hands slap the rock, making the rock move like a branch swaying in the wind. She throws the rock, calling out to the akua, Kāne. The people in the vicinity hear a roar, feel the earth shake, and then see a fog rising over Waolani stream. Then Kali'u sees water coming out of the side of Pūehuehu stream, which creates a deep pool underneath.

In this section, we can clearly see the relationships being expressed among the woman, Haumea, the deity Haumea, and the land, which is represented by the names beginning with "Pali" (cliff) and the rock, which is repeatedly called a "pali pohaku," as well as the akua Kāne, who is called "Pohaku-o-Kane" (Rock of Kāne). Haumea can lift the rock because the rock is in her genealogy—it is family to her. She explains to Kali'u:

A o Paliku ame na pali apau au i lohe ai i kuu pule i uhau ai au i ka awa o kaula, oia na inoa o ko'u mau kupuna mai ka po mai. A o Paliku, oia kela pali e pale ana ia Koolau-poko ae nei ame Koolau-loa. Ua heaia kela pali mamuli oia kupuna o'u, a o ke poo nohoi ia o ko'u mookuauhau. (Poepoe 1906: 21 May)

(Palikū and all the pali [names] that you heard in my prayer that I offered up with our 'awa are the names of my kūpuna from the pō.¹¹ Palikū is also that cliff that separates Ko'olaupoko from Ko'olauloa. That cliff was named after my kupuna, and that is also the head of my genealogy.)

Haumea's explanation also hints to us that the mo'olelo is about power that is tapped into through prayer to deified ancestors, who are also features of the landscape, and that power is legitimated in their world through mo'okū'auhau (genealogy). We are reminded here that this mo'olelo is presented within a larger work of various mo'okū'auhau.

After Haumea's success at obtaining water through throwing the pali pōhaku, Kali'u mixes the 'awa with the fresh water and gives it to Haumea. Again, she offers up a pule, to the many akua: "na kini, na ka mano ame ka lehu o ke akua" (the multitudes, the four thousand, and the four hundred thousand akua). When she looks at the cup, there is a small rainbow (*punohu*) over it. She gives the cup to Kali'u, telling him to drink, and saying the rainbow was a sign that Wākea was alive. It is also important to note that, while she is the deity, she is a human woman at the same time, and hence she does not drink the 'awa but gives it to Kali'u to drink. It is within this complex of mo'olelo about Papa (Haumea) and Wākea that the 'ai kapu (sacred or restricted eating) is established: within those rules, certain foods and religious ceremonies are reserved for ali'i only, contributing to their status, and thus helping to legitimate their power; and certain foods and ceremonies are reserved for men only, for the same reasons. In this story, the 'awa ceremony is conducted by Haumea, but the 'awa itself is consumed by the man. 'Awa is consumed by women in ceremonies in hula (Abbott 1992: 115), as in the Pele and Hi'iaka mo'olelo, because Pele and family, the deities of hula, do not follow the 'ai kapu (Ho'omanawanui, pers. comm. 2001). Thus, they offer women a religious alternative to the 'ai kapu. Pele and Hi'iaka's mo'olelo disrupts the 'ai kapu, while Haumea's mo'olelo inscribes and reinforces it.

After the ceremony, Haumea instructs Kali'u to send his extended family to Kilohana and wait there. She goes to find Wākea and meets with a group of people; once again, they notice her beauty and that she is "ohu i na lipolipo o ka wao-kele" (adorned in the dark greenery of the rainforest). They greet

each other warmly; the people ask her if she is the wahine of the man who will be roasted in the imu, and she tells them the story. She tells them she wants to see the face of her kāne, and they respond that they will go with her and that she should be able to see him (Poepoe 1906: 16 May). When Wākea sees her, he begins to cry. A red glow then appears around Haumea's head, apparently as a sign of her supernatural nature and perhaps as an omen of what is about to happen. One of the women approaches the guard to ask if Haumea may *honi* (exchange breath at the nose, a traditional greeting) her kāne. When the guard agrees, Haumea tells the woman, "Ua ola oe a me kou ohana" (You and your family are granted life!) Haumea then approaches the tree where Wākea is tied up; tears are still falling down his cheeks. Haumea then poses as if to *honi* Wākea but instead strikes the tree so hard that it makes a thundering sound, making the earth shake. The tree then opens up like the mouth of a large cave, and the two disappear inside (Poepoe 1906: 17–18 May).

Here Haumea is the most powerful character in the story; she is an archetypal female force who rescues her seemingly helpless and tearful mate. In other parts of the cycle, and in other mo'olelo, the male characters are more powerful. That the female is powerful here is indicative of the sense of balance of male and female power that is characteristic of Hawaiian world views.¹²

Haumea and Wākea emerge on the other side of Waikahalulu stream, and go back to Kilohana, where Kali'u and his large family are waiting. Haumea gives Kali'u's people land to settle on, on the other side of the mountain, and she instructs them in what to learn to prepare for the coming war with Kumuhonua. The men are to learn club warfare, spear-throwing, and wrestling, while the women are to learn net-throwing (an art of war), *lua* (a martial art), and short spear-throwing. Haumea also promises to help the women with childbirth and to plant the childbirth medicine plant for them. Once again, we should notice that, while the men and women are to learn separate arts, the women are expected to learn certain arts of war; they will not be left defenseless, nor are they portrayed as weaker in any way. Haumea, the prototypical mother and goddess of childbirth (Beckwith 1970, 285) instructs women to become warriors as well as mothers (Poepoe 1906: 21 May).

To conduct the war, Haumea takes the battle to Palikū, the place that also names her genealogy; once again, her familial relationship to the land is of the utmost importance. It is in Palikū that she is the most powerful. A kahuna, who says his "mo'okahuna" or genealogy of kahuna training is also Palikū, joins them, after being rebuffed by Kumuhonua. At Palikū, Haumea leads Wākea and their entire retinue into a cave hidden inside the mountain, while

only she remains outside. When Kumuhonua's forces arrive, they see the whole landscape from the mountain to the cape at the shore covered with women holding *kukui* nuts (candlenut) in their hands. The warriors are confused at the sight and send a messenger to ask the women where Wākea's warriors are (Poepoe 1906: 7 June). The messengers meet with a beautiful woman, who tells them she is Wākea's wahine, and not to bother looking for Wākea, but that "aia ka loa ma ka ikaika" (the finding will be through strength), that is, only in battle would they locate Wākea, or, "You will have to fight me to get to them." Kumuhonua's forces then move forward to attack but meet a hail of kukui nuts, which hit them on the foreheads, knocking them out and killing them (Poepoe 1906: 8–9 June). Earlier we saw Haumea as goddess of childbirth, here as a fierce warrior in battle. Her female power can be used as a force to kill or to create life. The choice of kukui nut is symbolic of Haumea's use of intelligence as her weapon, as the nuts were used "for lights; hence, the [kukui] tree is a symbol of enlightenment" (Pukui and Elbert 1986, 177); further, that the nuts specifically hit the foreheads (*lae*) of the warriors makes the point more obvious, as the word "lae" also signifies wisdom or intelligence (Pukui and Elbert 1986, 189).

The battles continue, and in the end, Kumuhonua is killed by Kali'u's barbed spear. Pono is restored to the land, and the people are said to live peaceably with each other (ua noho alohaia na kanaka) under Haumea and Wākea's rule.

Conclusion

Hi'iaka and Haumea have many important characteristics in common. They both use pule and mele in ceremonies to connect with 'aumākuā and other akua. This adds to their already considerable strength and intelligence and shows how their polytheistic, ancestor- and land-based spirituality, is conceived of as a necessary and beneficial facet of life. Similarly, both are closely related to the land as family: Hi'iaka to the volcano Pele, the rock Pōhakuokaua'i et al., and Haumea to the cliffs and rocks of Palikū. They are also conceived of as the ancestors of living Kanaka Ōiwi today. Their female powers include the power to kill as well as to heal. They both work to restore pono to the life of the people, which manifests in different ways. Hi'iaka clears the land of dangerous elements, such as the evil forest mo'ō, Pana'ewa, and the shark Makaukiu, while Haumea engages in battle to depose the bad ali'i, Kumuhonua.

Moreover, both mo'olelo contain an abundance of Hawaiian place names that are no longer in use and do not appear in the reference work *Place Names of Hawaii* (Pukui, Elbert, and Mookini 1974). Many original place

names in Hawai'i have been replaced with English names or forgotten even more completely than the mo'olelo have been. Knowledge of these places and their names restores us by reestablishing the connections to our ancestors' thought, language, and way of life. Kīhei de Silva, on the liner notes for an album reclaiming one of the ancient names, expressed this well:

We live in a time of un-naming, in a time when old names for the land—names given in honor, happiness, and sorrow—have been set aside for marketing jingles that commemorate little more than a desire for sales. . . . We who learn and love these old names are, therefore, people of two worlds, residents of rival geographies. We lead our lives on the congoleum, concrete, and tiff-green crust of Hawai'i's Bay Views, Crest Views, Soda Creeks, and Enchanted Lakes. But when our souls wither and thirst, we seek nourishment in that other, deeper geography. (de Silva 1993)

The mo'olelo, replete with the ancient geography, like the songs de Silva celebrates, “fashion for us a piko, a lifeline of sweet affection, by which we are connected to our source and to our future” (de Silva 1993). This source is not only the land itself, but our ancestors' relationship with it. This spiritual and familial relationship to the land is important for Kanaka Maoli self-definition. While represented in news media and everyday stereotyping as a people who do not fit in to Western society, who suffer from a preponderance of social ills, the mo'olelo represent Kanaka as an ancient people descended from deities, descended from the land itself, and connected to it. Linda Tuhiwai Smith has observed that “Many indigenous creation stories link people through genealogy to the land . . . to birds and fish, animals, insects and plants. To be connected is to be whole” (Smith 1999, 148). The mo'olelo have the potential to restore this memory and sense of wholeness.

The mo'olelo also represent two different ways of religious life, although they share relatives (in some versions, Haumea is Pele's mother), and both pray to Kāne and other akua. Haumea represents the ali'i system of religion, as explained above, and Hi'iaka belongs to the Pele tradition, whose practitioners do not follow the 'ai kapu.

Other important commonalities in the mo'olelo are the physical beauty of the akua, their use of the forest plants for adornment and protection, and the related concept of *kino lau* (multiple bodies). Pele has a variety of *kino lau*: the volcano, a young woman, an old woman, storms, and so on. Haumea's mo'olelo is in part the story of the creation of a particular *kino lau*, Kāmeha'ikana, the breadfruit tree deity that saves them. When Haumea touches the tree, she gains mana from the tree, and the tree is simultaneously

transformed into the deity. Pele, Hi'iaka, and Haumea all adorn themselves in the greenery of the forest, with many of the same plants that are still offered today at *kuahu* (altars) of the hula deities (Abbott 1992, 117). The greenery are kino lau of those hula deities. That one can attire oneself in the body of the deity, and can thus “put on” the qualities of the deity is the important concept.¹³ The gathering and donning of the greenery, accompanied by solemn ceremony, continues today in many *hālau hula* (Pukui 1980, 71, 90).

The Haumea mo'olelo, moreover, if well-known, might change the commonly held view that the four male *akua nui* were the only important ones to historical figures such as Kamehameha. It is well-known, for example, that Kamehameha inherited the akua Kūkā'ilimoku—a form of the male akua nui Kū—which assured his ascent to power. Kūkā'ilimoku, glossed as island-seizing Kū, is a deity of war and government, but he is not the only such deity. This is a translation of something Kamakau wrote, in a text not included in *Ruling Chiefs*,

The breadfruit tree became the goddess Kāmeha'ikana, a goddess famed from Hawai'i to Kaua'i for mana and for seizing governments. Kāmeha'ikana . . . became a goddess for Kamehameha during his reign (Kamakau 1993, 13).¹⁴

Haumea's mo'olelo also adds to our knowledge about women's power within the 'ai kapu system, which restricted women's eating as well as their access to certain *heiau* (temples) and their rituals. Although Haumea observes the 'ai kapu in the mo'olelo when she gives the 'awa to the man Kali'u to drink, she is clearly in power. The 'ai kapu, therefore, is not presented as a patriarchal system within which women are subordinated to men. It is a more balanced system in which men and women have different roles within which they gain and exercise power.¹⁵

Finally, the fact that the mo'olelo were skillfully written by our ancestors in and of itself reveals the lie of stereotypes. Many people in Hawai'i and elsewhere do not realize that mo'olelo exist in written form, or they believe that the mo'olelo were passed down in oral tradition, unchanged by the authors' artistry. This reflects a romanticized view that the moment prior to European contact (anthropology's zero point) was the last moment of authenticity, that all our mo'olelo, mele, and mo'okū'auhau existed in that moment, pure and unchanging, unadulterated by the West. Greg Denning writes, “the politics of the zero point is to be seen in our school textbooks over a hundred years. The authentic aborigines were the picaninnies and the nomads, not those down the street” (2001, 209). The idea of unchanging mo'olelo

originating before the zero point is another fiction posing as the authentic that hides a century and a half of writing in Hawaiian (cf. Vizenor 1998). Before writing, however, the mo'olelo always did change, because the culture was alive. Charlot has shown how the Hi'iaka cycle was added to by redactors, and the Haumea mo'olelo is embedded within mo'okū'auhau, which were regularly affected by politics (Charlot 1998; Kamakau 1991, 4). Then in the nineteenth century, the authors, "those down the street" (the real natives obscured by the idea that the only authentic culture existed before writing), gave the mo'olelo new life in print. It is a lingering injury of colonialism that Kanaka Maoli today know of Shakespeare, Melville, and Hemingway but not M. J. Kapihenui and Joseph M. Poepoe. Our recovery from the harms of colonialism includes understanding that our ancestors prior to writing created magnificent works of orature and also that our more recent ancestors subsequently created many works of written art.

The mo'olelo in this essay are just two of the many that provide us with important information and inspiring images of women. The movement to revitalize the Hawaiian language must grow so that this wealth of literature can become the cultural resource that it should be. The representations of the people in the mo'olelo together with the beauty and accomplishment of their eloquent renderings in print are like Pele, who destroys and creates in the same act. They destroy the lies that we have been told about our ancestors and simultaneously re-create stories that present women, and all of our ancestors, as complex beings—strong, powerful, and intelligent.

Acknowledgments

I am grateful to Kaleikoa Kā'eo for guiding me to the mo'olelo of Kāmeha'ikana and impressing its significance upon me and for the conversations that led to this paper. I thank J. Kēhaulani Kauanui, Manulani Aluli Meyer, and Esther Figueroa for their helpful readings of drafts of the paper and Caroline Sinavaiana for editorial assistance. I also appreciate the insights from conversations with Noelani Arista, John Charlot, Jorge Fernandes, Jonathan Goldberg-Hiller, Ku'ualoha Ho'omanawanui, Anne Keala Kelly, Sankaran Krishna, Michael J. Shapiro, Houston Wood, and Lia O'Neill Keawe, Margaret Maaka, Kekeha Solis, Ty Kāwika Tengan, Sam No'EAU Warner, Annette Ipo Wong, Laiana Wong, and the other members of Ho'ōla Nā Iwi Indigenous Research Institute. I am deeply grateful to the members of the Department of Hawaiian and Indo-Pacific Languages for their generous gifts of time and to the Department of Political Science, both of the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa, for continual support.

NOTES

1. The word “Western” is problematic within a Hawaiian worldview, since the “West” lies to the “hikina,” the East. I have no other word, unfortunately, that includes English language and literature as well as its genealogy in Europe.

2. In the foreword to *Ka Po'e Kahiko*, the volume on “culture,” Dorothy Barrère writes, “In 1931 Bishop Museum sponsored the systematic translation of all of Samuel Kamakau’s articles on Hawaiian history and culture that had appeared in the weekly newspapers *Ku'oko'a* and *Ke Au 'Oko'a* from October 20, 1866, to February 2, 1871. Two manuscripts resulted; one, containing his historical material was published in 1861 by The Kamehameha Schools, under the title *Ruling Chiefs of Hawaii*. . . . The other manuscript contains Kamakau’s account of the material and social culture of the Hawaiians before and during the early period of acculturation to Western ways, and is in the library of the Museum.” She does not make clear, however, that Kamakau did not make the distinctions between “history” and “culture.”

3. “Kanaka Maoli” is one way of saying “Native Hawaiian” in Hawaiian; “Kanaka Ōiwi” and simply “Kanaka” are others. I use them interchangeably. “Kanaka” is the singular and generic, and “Kānaka” is plural.

4. I hesitate to use the common translation “wife” for “wahine,” because of the many connotations that go along with it that are foreign to the Hawaiian world being represented in the mo'olelo. Larry Kimura has noted that “Whenever Hawaiian is translated into English, the English words used add cultural connotations to the idea conveyed, while eliminating intended connotations and meanings of the original Hawaiian” (1983: 182). “Wahine” here does mean life partner, but with a different set of gender roles than is attached to the word “wife.” Similarly, I will use “kāne” for male life partner, rather than translating it into “husband.”

5. Hālau o Kekuhi was established by Kanahēle and her sister Nālani Kanaka'ole to keep “alive chants and dances that had been passed down in their family through seven generations” (Tani, “Preface” in Kanahēle 2001).

6. See letter from N. B. Emerson et al. to Sanford Dole, “President of the Provisional Government,” which reads, in part, “We the undersigned desire to offer our services to the Government as a company of sharpshooters, in case of any emergency that may require our assistance” (Foreign Office and Executive Files, 1893, Overthrow, Hawai'i State Archives).

7. Pele is also similar to tricksters in this respect. Vizenor, quoting Jarold Ramsey, notes that “native tricksters are imaginary figures” whose episodic career is based upon hostility to domesticity, maturity, good citizenship, modesty, and fidelity of any kind” (1998: 29). Louis Owens explains that the purpose of trickster stories is to “mock and taunt us into self-knowledge” (1998, 32).

8. “Aikāne” meant a close companion of the same sex, with sexual relations implicit. Al'i often took talented dancers as aikāne (Kame'eiehiwa 1992, 47). Although kāne (man) is an integral part of the word, Hi'iaka's relationships with both young women, Hōpoe

and Wahine'ōma'ō, are described as "aikāne" in the mo'olelo, and are implicitly sexual and/or romantic. In contemporary Hawaiian, aikāne now means "friend" with no sexual implication (Pukui and Elbert 1986: 10; Sam L. No'eau Warner, pers. comm. 1998).

9. I am hesitant here because it is tempting to apply interpretations about male and female behavior based on stereotypes from my own time and culture, but such interpretations are in danger of being anachronistic and foreign.

10. I am indebted to Lia Keawe, Kekeha Solis, Ty Kāwika Tengan, Annette Ipo Wong, and others of Ho'ōla Nā Iwi for pointing out this additional meaning of the taking of the bananas. In addition, Kame'eleihiwa has pointed that it also possible to interpret Wākea's action as overstepping *his* kuleana, since Kumuhonua was ali'i over the island. I agree. However, it seems to me that the lesson Haumea is imparting is about pono and that she considers Kumuhonua as not pono.

11. The pō is where our ancestors of the deep past originated, where we come from and also where we return to at death.

12. See the discussion of female power and the attempts by males to counterbalance it through imposition of the 'aikapu in Kame'eleihiwa (1992, 33–40).

13. I am grateful to Ku'ualoha Ho'omanawanui for this insight.

14. Kāmeha'ikana is mentioned several times very briefly in *Ruling Chiefs*, but her mo'olelo is not told and her importance is not emphasized there the way that it is in the book titled *Tales and Traditions of the People of Old*.

15. The 'ai kapu is always discussed as a restriction on the eating of certain foods by women. But in Kamakau's account of the end of the 'ai kapu, he notes "I ka pō mua o ka Mō'i Liholiho i hiki ai i Kailua, 'o ka 'ai noa nō ia i ka loko 'ilio noa a nā ali'i wahine" (The first night that the Mō'i Liholiho arrived in Kailua, he ate freely of the internal organs of the dog, [which was previously] free to the female ali'i); this suggests that there were restrictions on men's eating of certain foods as well. This should alter the perception that the 'ai kapu was put into place to subordinate women (Kamakau 1996, 211).

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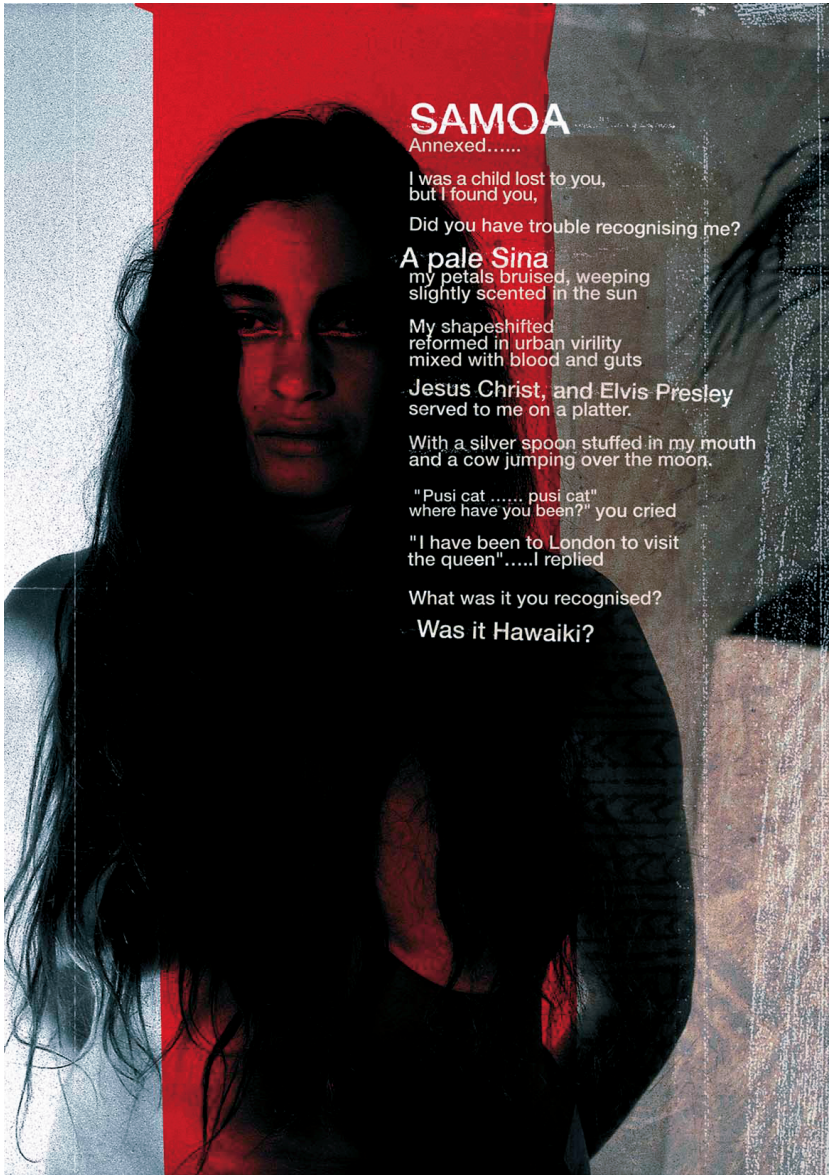
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Rosanna Raymond, 2nd stanza, "Samoa," from *Meet you in Hawaiki*.

**FIJIAN WOMEN AS ORATORS: EXCEPTIONS TO
“TRADITION”? THERESA KOROIVULAONO INTERVIEWED
BY CAROLINE SINAVAIANA AND J. KĒHAULANI KAUANUI**

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This interview examines the position of Fijian women through the structures of formulaic, ceremonial, oral narratives that provide the framework within which Fijian rituals and customs are enacted. A specific ceremony, the *Kau Ni Matani Gone*, which marks a person’s first visit to her/his mother’s or father’s village, informs the discussion on changing gender constructs. Research included fieldwork in Fiji and involved both the examination of written history and conducting interviews to collect information on Fijian oral traditions and history. Examining the position of Fijian women in modern society with recourse to traditional elements that have defined their identity provides the basis for gender constructs that more accurately reflect contemporary patterns and roles.

We are interested in your work on Fijian women, gender, and decolonization. What got you started on this area of inquiry? How did it come about?

As part of a research project, in 1999, I made my first visit to my father’s village on Matuku Island in the eastern province of Lau, Fiji. On the occasion of a child’s first visit to either parent’s village, a special ceremony called the *Kau Ni Matani Gone* (literally, “taking the face of a child”) is performed

to mark the event. Following these formal rituals in the ceremonial pavilion we call *vakatunuloa* (a construction of wood, corrugated iron, and leaves) my mother, aunt, and other female relatives accompanied me in a symbolic visit to extended clan members, in order to reaffirm our traditional kinship ties. Upon entry into the house, we were welcomed with a *tabua* (whale-tooth) presentation from the male head of the hosts' household. This was in keeping with gift exchanges that reaffirm kinship or historical ties. In return, our party presented gifts of *gatu* (barkcloth), *ibe* (mats), drums of kerosene, and *tabua* to the hosts. In the absence of any adult males, my mother and aunt performed the formulaic oral narratives which acknowledge gift exchanges.

What were the circumstances that enabled your mother and aunt to perform those particular ceremonial roles?

The adult males who had accompanied us were drinking *yaqona* (kava) with our hosts in the ceremonial pavilion. So, when we went to visit relatives, the only males accompanying us were my younger brother and a cousin, neither of whom felt competent enough in reciting the oral narratives. So, based on their status as elder female relations, my mother and aunt assumed the orator's role and recited the narratives from their memories of past ceremonies. As the head of our informal "delegation," my mother began with introductory remarks. Then my aunt followed with the fuller recitation of the appropriate narrative that expressed our gratitude to the hosts and acknowledged our kinship ties with them.

How unusual is it for women to take on that role in this particular ceremony?

In my experience, this was the first time it had ever happened. I should emphasize that our ritual was not conducted as part of the formal presentations in the ceremonial pavilion. In the formal context, the customary male orators are present. In our informal context, the women assumed the orators' role and followed the same narrative formula that men would have used. After the formal ceremonies, many villagers described their observances of this shift away from traditional practice. Some had witnessed women orators speaking at other ceremonial gatherings, but they noted that such occasions were extremely rare and always took place away from the main ceremonial pavilions. Others informed me that they have noticed this shift happening in the last ten years or so.

What were the most common examples of such cases?

Typically, they take place in residences when visiting parties exchange presentations with their host families. I should mention that these informal visits take place following formal ceremonies, for example, to mark births, deaths, marriages, and first visits. When the main ceremonies are completed in the formal pavilions, groups of participants then disperse on a round of informal visits in order to acknowledge and reaffirm relationships in the village.

Can you say more about the distinctions between the formal and informal social visits? Are women better positioned to assume orators' roles in informal settings?

Yes, this shift I am discussing is limited to informal settings. The significant change here, however, is that for the first time women can speak as orators at all, without recrimination. Men continue to speak as orators in both formal and informal contexts.

Formal ceremonies usually involve larger groups of people, whereas informal gatherings involve fewer people and take place in residences following the formalities in the public pavilion. The break between formal and informal parts of ceremonial gatherings is marked by a shift from oratory and a respectfully silent audience to the informal register of social conversation. If there are ancillary rituals involved, for instance, another type of informal visit to neighboring households, they would take place at this juncture. I think it's interesting that even in such ancillary rituals, the honorific language of formal ceremony is used.

I am hopeful that eventually, we will see women orators speaking in the formal ceremonies as well. Just as a significant shift has occurred in the extension of the *Kau Ni Matani Gone* ceremony (to include first visits to both mothers' and fathers' villages), women orators may not be such a far-fetched notion!

So, it seems that even though the women performing this role are going against generally accepted ideologies, they do so without worrying about being reproached?

Prevailing Fijian cultural ideology and scholarship would categorize examples such as the one I share here as exceptional and not worthy of record or scrutiny. In this way, my research challenges traditional Fijian beliefs in regard to the requisite gender for orators in formal ceremony.

What about published scholarship on gender roles and Fijian society—what is the state of the literature and prevailing understanding of women’s place in their villages?

Throughout most of Fiji’s written history, the position and role of Fijian women in society has reflected the traditional view; that is, women do not play a significant role in ceremonial presentations. Nayacakalou’s views (at best) represented prevailing views at the time, that is, the 1950s. For example, R. R. Nayacakalou cites his 1950s fieldwork on the main island of Viti Levu to support his claim that “the women did not count for much in such situations.”² Nayacakalou was the only other man present in his host’s delegation, which was otherwise comprised of women. Such a dismissive view of the role of women in ceremony exemplifies a commonly held belief in contemporary Fijian society. In Fijian ceremonies, gender roles fall distinctly into speaking and nonspeaking spheres. Generally, men deliver the formulaic oral narratives and drink kava while women amass and redistribute traditional wealth items and cook and clean for large numbers of people over several days. Both are equally important but due to the “insignificance” attributed to the domesticity of women’s roles, we have been misrepresented.

You, then, are working to restore the official record and rescue these experiences that illuminate shifting gender norms in contemporary Fijian villages?

Yes, I am interested in tracing sociological changes and the resulting impact on orally transmitted knowledge, with an initial focus on the performance of oral narrative in the *Kau Ni Matani Gone* ceremony. I think that the aforementioned gender shift is a prime illustration of one way in which oral traditions change over time. I also see the so-called exceptional cases as tangible evidence of the dynamism, which characterizes oral traditions. However, I have found it risky to go against the grain of conventional thinking by suggesting that indigenous Fijian women can and do assume roles as orators in formal tradition. By doing so, I open myself to the scorn and consternation from Fijian men and women elders who generally believe that only men can act as orators in formal ceremony, a notion that has persisted, largely unchallenged, until recently.

In my own fieldwork in Fiji from 1999–2000, I witnessed a number of ceremonial presentations, ranging from welcoming ceremonies to communal fundraising events, in which the orators and spokespersons were exclusively male. However, I believe that this commonly held perception masks some important factors.

If men serve as the formal orators and spokespersons, what role are women seen as fulfilling?

In regard to formal ceremonies and rituals, men appear to make the important decisions about time, place, exchange gifts, and venue. This perception is understandable, given the predominance of men's voices in family, tribal, and community meetings. As a participant-observer at family and tribal meetings, I witnessed the men generating and facilitating gatherings, with women actively contributing to the discussion. The women were especially influential in the final decisions on important matters, such as how much to spend for exchange gifts, what types of tapa or mats to present, and any decisions involving Western currency. The actual practice of custom on a daily basis reveals a more complex system of power dynamics between genders than at first meets the eye! My central interest here lies in the ways in which oral traditions adapt to changing conditions in the social milieu.

Can you say more about traditional beliefs that prevent women from performing ceremonial oratory?

Many Fijians believe that our traditional ceremonies have existed since time immemorial. They also typically believe that men are superior to women in decision-making situations.

What about definitions of tradition which underpin the continued belief in adhering to ceremonial customs and rituals "in theory" if not always "in practice"?

That's an important question. I am interested in the internal cultural tensions about the shifting boundaries between traditionally defined gender roles in Fiji. I want to understand how male-centric conceptualizations of "tradition" work to confine women within limited definitions of social roles, despite the contrary evidence of expanding leadership roles for women in recent times.

What about social changes that have led to other transformations in the ceremonial protocols?

Because residential patterns in precolonial times were predominantly patrilineal, the *Kau Ni Matani Gone* ceremony was originally performed to mark a child's first visit to his/her mother's village. Thus, first visits to the father's village were extremely rare, since children were typically residing in their fathers' villages. Traditionally, kin-groups and common descent were

“determined by the principle of patrilineal descent.”³ So, residential patterns tended to favor the patrilocales. At the same time, there were in fact exceptions to this rule, when men would reside in their wives’ villages. Much of my information here is anecdotal. But it is safe to surmise that generally, while there exists a number of rules that govern any type of human behavior, there will also be exceptions. With cultural “norms” especially in oral cultures, for one reason or another, a generally observable pattern, like patrilocality may change due to a family feud or a visit turning into a number of years due to a man’s potential for assistance/expertise at house building or planting. Moreover, when the movement of Fijians from rural to urban areas sharply increased in the early 1900s, more and more children were being born and raised in areas where they had few if any kinship connections at all. Consequently, the ceremony began to be performed in both fathers’ and mothers’ villages. So, here is an example of tradition changing in response to altered sociological circumstances. As the movement of Fijians from villages into urban areas continues to increase, so too does the propensity for cultural adaptation. On the one hand, conventional beliefs constitute a collective ideology based on knowledge passed down by successive generations. On the other hand, daily adaptations to imported or impinging ideologies have significant potential to destabilize ceremonial customs and practices.

Is there resistance to this change in terms of risking the violation of ceremonial tabus?

This particular change appears to have unfolded gradually and without incident. A number of elders attest to the fact that *Kau Ni Matani Gone* ceremonies have been performed in both mothers’ and fathers’ villages for at least two decades. Neither ethnographic studies, such as *Nayacakalou’s*, nor anecdotal reports, suggest any opposition to the change in venue for the ceremony. However, the relative ease that this change has occurred is not reflected in other spheres—a case in point being women as nonorators on (formal) ceremonial occasions. When I asked people what would happen if women did perform ceremonial oral narratives, they would invariably recapitulate the traditional position, that is, that women did not recite these narratives on ceremonial occasions.⁴ This might sound contradictory. But, the point should be made that it is not unusual to trivialize or even disregard changes that happen “on the ground” as it were, when they appear to challenge what is perceived as a traditional construct. With modernity and the real threat it poses in most, if not all, cases of further eroding indigenous cultures, it is understandable that we will fiercely protect what is “ours.” But it is equally, if not more, damaging to presume that oral cultures and traditions are static and exist today in their primordial states. To propagate

this view is to deny the very premise upon which the culture has survived to the present day; its organic ability to absorb and continue.

Is there a tabu against women's speaking rights in formal oratory?

I have not as yet been able to locate a specific authority supporting any tabu against women delivering formal oratory. During my 1999 fieldwork in Fiji, most of the cultural "experts"—adults and elders—I interviewed, both in rural and urban areas, reiterated the "fact" that male orators had been the norm since time immemorial.

My own questioning of such a norm then, at the service of Western academic enquiry, borders on transgressing Fijian tradition. So, I was somewhat uncertain and indecisive in my enquiries about any negative sanctions resulting from women "breaking" with tradition in the context of oratory.⁵ Whenever I asked what sorts of misfortune or adversities might befall female orators, people were vague and noncommittal. Instead, both men and women would emphasize the "fact" that orators were male.

The main reason I raise the issue of tabus here is that an important aspect of Fijian oral tradition is the role of negative sanctions against transgression of the rules governing the performance of ritual. Among Fijians, it is widely acknowledged that sudden illness or death, especially of a child, can be forms of retribution by the *vu*, ancestral gods, for such a transgression. For example, should a family lodge a false claim to a chiefly title, the sudden loss of a child or other grave misfortune would typically be seen as a sign of disapproval by the *vu*. The usual antidote and corrective to restore balance with the *vu* involves a symbolic presentation of *tabua* or *yaqona* (kava) to the other contending parties, as a positive step toward reconciliation and resolution of the conflict. Otherwise, these conflicts can continue for years.

I would also add that many Fijians, living as they do in predominantly Christian society, may not publicly acknowledge the existence of such tabus and their ensuing sanctions. If the conversation is being recorded for publication, people would more generally tend to characterize such beliefs as superstition. The fact remains, however, that fear of offending the *vu* acts as a powerful deterrent to radical changes in tradition.

Still, I have yet to find any record, either written or oral, of adverse consequences such as curses or mysterious mishaps, befalling families whose women had spoken as orators.⁶ Moreover, some people report having witnessed women delivering the formal ceremonial narratives⁷ in instances when no adult male was present or when the woman was a high-ranking chief. In the latter case, the female chief might have her spokesman or orator to deliver the major address, but she herself can deliver a short, formulaic utterance of acceptance.

How do people justify or explain male domination as being acceptable within Fijian culture?

People sometimes refer to the Fijian origin narrative as evidence. For example, in *The Fijian Ethos*, Ravuvu includes a Fijian origin myth of Ratu-mai-Bulu.⁸ Here, Ravuvu asserts a superior role for males, based on certain features of the narrative. In the myth Tomaniivi, the female half of a dual-gendered entity, disobeys the male-half god's order not to eat a particular bunch of bananas. Tomaniivi gives the fruit to her children, with the top half (or head) of the banana going to her son, and the bottom half (or tail) of the fruit going to her daughter. Ravuvu argues for the symbolic association of head/tail in the myth with mind/male/superior and nurture/female/inferior in society.⁹ It is interesting to note the androgynous nature of the humans at the beginning of the narrative. Distinctions between genders, including the imputed superiority of males, appear to develop later in the storyline. In an earlier work, *The Fijian Way of Life* (1983), Ravuvu elaborates on this assertion of male superiority.¹⁰ To support this claim, he cites the prominence of patrilineal kinship, a view which reflects prevailing social attitudes in the early 1980s.¹¹

On the other hand, I would argue that such views are inaccurate in their portrayal of Fijian women as subordinate members of their communities. While patrilineality may still be regarded as a defining construct of Fijian identity, the role of women in other spheres must be reconsidered in light of changing sociological conditions and ideological constructions. Without doubt, the most fundamental single challenge to traditional systems was the advent of colonization. In island nations such as Fiji, tradition “—especially as reflected in the idiom of chiefliness—stands for the natural, authentic expression of Fijian identity as against western modes.”¹² In a similar way, the role of Fijian women as accumulators and distributors of traditional wealth, as organizers and participants rather than orators in ceremonial contexts, represents a tradition within specific cultural contexts. For example, in the rituals that constitute funeral rites, it is the exclusive domain of women to accrue *tabua*, *ibe*, and *gatu* for use and redistribution. While these items are generally understood to “belong” to families/households, women as custodians of traditional wealth are directly responsible for these decisions.

What about other changes in the ceremony?

In all ritual gift exchanges, the nature of the gifts has changed. In addition to the traditional *tabua*, *ibe*, and *gatu*, introduced items such as tinned fish and meat, drums of kerosene, flour, and sugar are also exchanged. Unlike

other innovations, these adaptations have been absorbed into Fijian tradition without resistance. For example, in cases of opposing claims to chiefly titles, contention tends to be vigorous and often results in long-standing and bitter family feuds. Fijian hereditary systems favor the male line, although not exclusively. Chiefly title typically passes from one brother to the next before being bestowed on the younger generation. With the introduction of western education and forms of wealth, the English system of primogeniture was adopted by some families, which then led to animosity and conflict between rivalling families or factions.

In the Kau Ni Matani Gone ceremony, prescribed oral narratives continue to frame each ritual performance. For the most part, women's participation remains primarily supportive and preparatory in relation to the accumulation of wealth, both traditional and nontraditional, for the ceremony. While their participation behind the scenes is crucial in terms of ritual procedure, their contributions do not include any formal vocalization during the ceremony proper.

If one considers the "virtue of oral sources"¹³ as authentication of social obligation, then the role of women as silent participants is a given. However, with colonization, demographic patterns underwent substantial changes. People moved in large numbers from villages with tribal/kinship connections to urban areas largely devoid of such comprehensive kinship networks. Thus, the role of women in their families changed as well. For the first time, women as well as men participated in a wage economy, as opposed to village divisions of labor that had men planting and hunting and women fishing and looking after households. This profoundly changed social situation led to fundamental changes in traditional gender roles as well, including those governing ceremony and ritual.

In regard to the role of women in the ceremony at its inception, I have found no substantial information from the literature or the oral tradition. One interview in Vuci village left me with the impression of trying to read pages floating under water.¹⁴ It was an "undisputed fact" that the ceremonial first visit to a mother's village symbolized the revered position of women, through their child-bearing function. If there are other originary facets of the ceremony, they have disappeared over time. From such interviews, it again became clear to me that such questions about origins belong to the context of academic enquiry.

Is it possible for you to give us more of a sense of what the Kau Ni Matani Gone ceremony entails?

In general there are four stages in the ceremony. These begin with the arrival of the visiting party, comprised of the child and members of the father's

mataqali (subclan or lineage) at the mother's village. The *vakasobu* (arrival) involves a presentation of *tabua*, the traditional item of highest value, from the hosts to the visitors as a formal invitation to enter the village. The adult males are then directed to the ceremonial pavilion, which has been specially erected for the occasion. Women and children are directed to nearby accommodations where the child is dressed in *tapa* and mats, the traditional ceremonial attire for rituals. This ceremonial dress is gender-neutral, with variations occurring only if the child is of noble birth.

The *qaloqalovi*, or thanksgiving, to the gods for the safe passage of the visitors is marked by the presentation of the *tabua* from hosts to visitors. The visitors in turn present *tabua* to their hosts in gratitude. The *sevusevu* (first fruits of harvest), consisting of *yaqona* (kava root) is presented by the visitors to their hosts as a sign of good faith. Together these rituals comprise a standard cluster of introductory ceremonies conducted during formal occasions in general. One ancillary ritual that might follow the introductory ones is the *kida*, in which the hosts present *tabua* to the guests as a mourning tribute to all those who have died in the past. Here we can see the ritual gesture marking the central significance of ancestors and history within the cultural framework of Fiji.

The *kidavi*, greeting to the child, consists of a series of exchanges of traditional and nontraditional gift items. These include *ibe*, *gatu*, bolts of cloth, and food. Each exchange is usually marked by reciprocal presentations of *tabua*. The *kidavi* is exclusive to the *Kau Ni Matani Gone* ceremony and constitutes its most distinctive feature vis-à-vis the oral narratives that frame these gift exchanges. In these, as in all gift presentations, the narratives have been passed down by oral transmission from one generation of orators to the next. While modern scholars have transcribed and translated some narratives, oral transmission remains the traditional method of instruction. Recently, male peer groups exchange such information more informally. In any case, the tradition remains officially situated in the domain of men.

Can you say more about Fijian Ethos and the *Vasu* Relationship?

Vasu refers to the relationship of a child to his/her mother's kin-group and village or patrilineage and explicitly marks matrilineal or affiliate links between mothers and their children,¹⁵ as opposed to those between fathers and their children. For example, to describe where I'm from, I would say *Yaroi* (village), *Matuku* (island), *Lau* (province). The same answer would be given by my father and his children. However, I would also add that I am *vasu* to Ono-I-Lau, my mother's island. If we shared the same mother, my

siblings would add the same response. My father, on the other hand, would cite his mother's village, and likewise my mother will name her mother's village as her *koro-ni-vasu* (village to which one is a *vasu*).

There are certain types of social relations characterizing this relationship, the most notable being the implied kin-group. For example, a child who is a *vasu* may take from her *vasu*'s allocation of traditional gifts and wealth, such as any movable property, food, pigs, cattle, or anything else they may fancy.

The proliferation of writing about contemporary Fijian society appears to have eroded the oral transmission of certain customs and traditions. In field interviews, people emphasized the importance of *vasu*, but with little reference to kin-based responsibilities and power structures associated with matrilineality. The act of naming one's *vasu*, which in effect shares privileged knowledge with outsiders, appears to signal indulgence by the *vasu* family members or village toward the child or adult who claims the *vasu* status.

Until the late nineteenth century and the advent of colonialism, a chief could trust the members of his *vasu* to provide assistance in times of war. Over time, the strength of the *vasu* relationship has been eroded by the imposition of the English patriarchal system, which reinforced certain male-dominant notions embedded in traditional Fijian ideology.¹⁶ Thus, a predominant theme found in western scholarship, both by indigenous and nonindigenous writers, strongly favors males over females in discussions of gender politics.

In conclusion, what do you make of it all?

The gradual emergence of women orators in Fiji (albeit within informal contexts) constitutes a significant departure from traditional conventions of ritual practice. More comprehensive study of cultural adaptations such as this offers the potential to reveal important insights into the nature and dynamics of oratory in contemporary society.

NOTES

1. R. R. Nayacakalou, *Leadership in Fiji* (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1975), 76 (hereafter, Nayacakalou, 1975).

2. R. R. Nayacakalou, *Fijian System of Kinship and Marriage* (Auckland: Auckland University College, n.d.), 3.

3. Work in progress. Fieldwork, May 1999–February 2000. Suva, Fiji (hereafter, Fieldwork, May 1999).

4. Work in progress. Fieldwork, July–September 2000. Suva, Fiji (hereafter, Fieldwork, 2000).

5. Fieldwork, 2000. Interviews with informants were carried out in Vuci village, Tailevu, on the main island of Viti Levu and also on Matuku Island in the eastern province of Lau. In both cases, informants professed no knowledge of adverse conditions when the change in the purpose of the ceremony became apparent in early 1900s. Some informants had even forgotten that the ceremony had originally been performed only for a child's first visit to his/her mother's village. Generally, informants expressed reluctance when questioned about changing traditional customs and practices. But, if change was affected and there didn't appear to be severe consequences like death or illness to individuals and family members, then the changes were viewed with tolerance and acceptance.

6. Fieldwork, 2000.

7. Asesela Ravuvu, Vaka I Taukei [:] *The Fijian Way of Life* (Suva: Institute of Pacific Studies of the University of the South Pacific, 1983) (hereafter Ravuvu, 1983).

8. Ravuvu, 1983.

9. Ravuvu, 1983, 1.

10. Ravuvu, 1983, 23.

11. Ravuvu, 1983.

12. Fieldwork, May, 1999.

13. Fieldwork, May 1999.

14. Fieldwork, May 1999.

15. Nayacakalou, 1975, 16.

Caroline Sinavaiana

‘Te Lavalava

‘Te lavalava teu teu fa’a Samoa
E sulu le siapo, e ma’eu, ema’eu le manaia
‘Ia la’u penina ma la’u pa’aga ‘ua malie o
Sau ia ‘ua ‘ou le toe fai lo to;

O le’a seu lo’u va’a e malolo,
Lafoia ia le taula ‘i fanua ‘ua leva le po.

Sarong

Adorned in a Samoan lavalava,
wrapped in tapa, you are striking. Your fine beauty
my pearl and my partner, it is pleasing.
Come here. I shall say no more.
My canoe will rest, its anchor thrown onto land,
and it’s getting late.

(Traditional)

**

Sarong

for my mother and father

Trailing bright design,
your shawl of elegance unwinds—
its palimpsest of trees remembering
their lexicon of stars—
and swaddles my boat,
joining sailor to your shore.

Pacific Studies, Vol. 30, Nos. 1/2—March/June 2007

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Victoria Nālani Kneubuhl was born of Hawaiian, Samoan and Caucasian ancestry in Honolulu. She holds a Bachelor's degree from Antioch University and a Master's degree in Drama and Theatre from the University of Hawai'i. As a playwright, she has had plays produced locally, nationally, and internationally. Her anthology, *Hawai'i Nei, Island Plays*, was published by the University of Hawai'i Press. She received the Hawai'i Award for Literature in 1994 and the Cades Award for Literature in 2006. Her novel *Murder Casts a Shadow* will be published by the University of Hawai'i Press in 2008.

Theresa Koroivulaono has worked as an instructional designer at the University of the South Pacific (USP) since November 2002. She completed a Bachelor of Arts (in English) at the University of Auckland in 1996 and a Master of Arts (Honours) in 1998. Ms. Koroivulaono is currently also completing her PhD with the English department of the University of Auckland. In 2005, Ms. Koroivulaono completed USP's Certificate in Teaching English as a second language (Cert. TESL). Her research interests include examining systems of teaching and learning in

oral cultures, designing learning materials in economically challenged learning environments and developing multi-modal learning materials.

Cresantia Frances Koya is of mixed ethnicity including Indian-Arabian, Samoan, Scottish, and Solomon Islander. She is a member of the Fiji-based Niu Waves Writers Collective. In 2003, the Pacific Writing Forum published Koya's first collection of poetry called *Of Schizophrenic Voices*. She is currently working on a number of projects, including a satirical novel on marriage and finding love in the Indo-Fijian community, and a compilation of short stories that recounts her mother's youth in Samoa. She is also collaborating on a collection of poetry with two other Fiji-based women. After seven years of teaching, Koya co-founded the Post Script writing collective to nurture young writers. She works as a Lecturer in Education at the University of the South Pacific. She has twin daughters with Tongan Artist Lingikoni Vaka`uta.

Kim Meredith was born in Auckland, New Zealand in 1965. Her ancestry spreads to Samoa, Tokelau and Portugal. She takes inspiration from her parents Ielusalema and Rita Sina Meredith when writing. She is married to jazz arranger/composer Kingsley Melhuish and has a daughter, Courtney, and two sons, Cyrus and Pelemoni.

Rosanna Raymond is a performance/installation/body adornment artist and writer. A New Zealand-born Pacific Islander of Samoan descent, she is currently living and working in London, UK, where she is active in establishing dialogues with museums and institutions focusing on the issues of Pacific Modernity and concentrating on her writing and art practice. Her works are held in the collections of museums around the world. Over the past few years, she has been published as a poet and is the Creative Director for the Pasifika Styles exhibition for the Cambridge University Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, where she was the Leverhulme artist in residence.

Noenoe Silva was born in Honolulu and is of Kanaka Maoli descent. She is the author of *Aloha Betrayed: Native Hawaiian Resistance to American Colonialism* (Duke University Press, 2004). She currently serves as Associate Professor of Political Science, and affiliate faculty in Hawaiian language at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa. She teaches research courses in Hawaiian, as well the first courses in political science in the Hawaiian language.

Caroline Sinavaiana is Associate Professor of English at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa, where she teaches Oceanic and Comparative Literatures, and Creative Writing. Her poetry and criticism appear widely, and creative work includes several collections of poetry, *Alchemies of Distance* (Subpress, 2002), *Mohawk/Samoa: Transmigrations* (Subpress, 2006), and a new collection of poems and essays. Scholarship includes a study of Samoan comic theater (forthcoming from University of the South Pacific). Sinavaiana serves on the Editorial Boards of *The Contemporary Pacific*, and *Meridians: a Journal of Feminism, Race and Transnationalism*, and as Regional Liaison for the Ford Foundation Doctoral Fellows Program.

Ngahuia Te Awekotuku, MA (Hons), PhD, teaches research at the School of Maori & Pacific Development, University of Waikato, Hamilton, New Zealand. She has been a Maori cultural activist for over three decades. Her interests are heritage issues, the arts, gender, cultural studies and traditional knowledge. She has served on various governance boards in the arts, and the academy, and has worked as a museum curator, art historian, and repatriation consultant. Published work includes *Mana Wahine Maori: Selected Writings in Maori Women's Art, Culture & Politics* (1991), and *He Tikanga Whakaaro: Research Ethics in the Maori Community* (1991). Ngahuia's first collection of short fiction, *Tahuri*, appeared in 1989. Her second book of stories, *Ruahine: Mythic Women*, was released in 2003. Her next major work, *Mau Moko: the World of Maori Tattoo*, is currently in press.

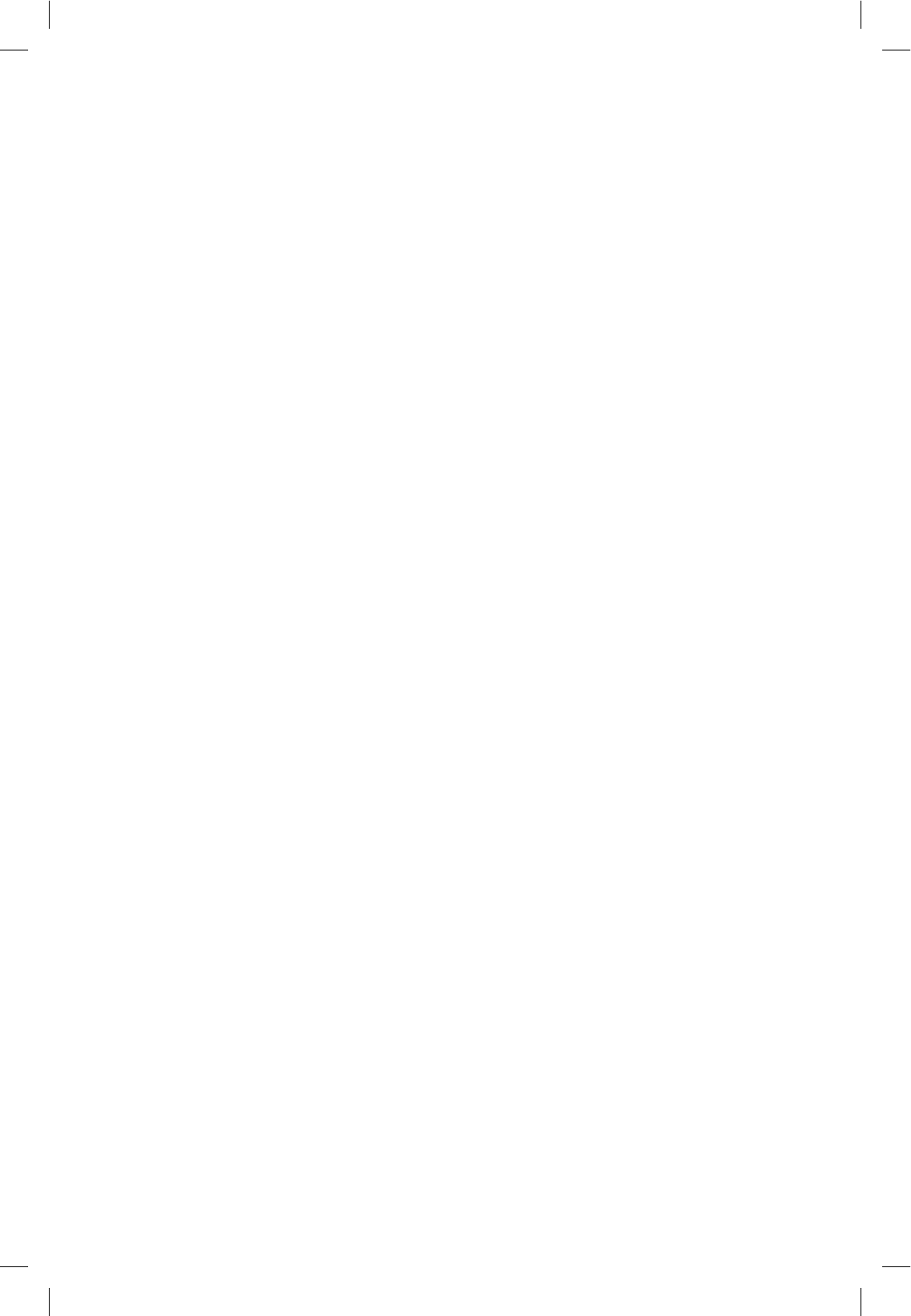
Alice Te Punga Somerville (Te Atiawa Ki Waiwhetu/Pakeha) (MA, University of Auckland; MA, PhD, Cornell University) comes from Aotearoa New Zealand. Her dissertation looks at the comparative critical contexts of Maori writing in English, and she has published on Maori learning support and mixed race Maori/Pakeha writing. Some of her own poetry was collected in the recent anthology *Whetu Moana: Contemporary Polynesian Poems in English*. She is a lecturer at the Victoria University of Wellington.

Teresia K. Teaiwa was born in Honolulu, raised in Fiji, and now lives in Wellington, New Zealand. Her mother is African American and her father is of Banaban and I-Kiribati descent. Her first collection of poetry, *Searching for Nei Nim`anoa* was published by Mana/South Pacific Creative Arts Society (1995). In 2000, she and Sia Figiel released a CD of their spoken word titled *TERENESIA*. She was a founding member

of the Niu Waves Writers' Collective in Suva, Fiji. She has performed poetry in Auckland, Bangkok, Guam, Honolulu, Lower Hutt, Medellin, New York City, Niue, Porirua, Santa Cruz (California), Suva, and Wellington.

Konai Helu Thaman is Professor of Pacific Education and UNESCO Chair in teacher education and culture, at the University of the South Pacific (USP). Born and raised in Tonga, Konai obtained her BA in Geography from Auckland University, MA in International Education (University of California, Santa Barbara), and PhD in Education from the University of the South Pacific. She has been on the staff of USP since 1974 and has published academic as well as creative writing, including five collections of poetry. Her main academic interests include indigenous education and theorizing Pacific concepts of education, sourced from Pacific cultures and epistemologies. Her KAKALA framework is being used by students and researchers in Aotearoa and the Pacific islands in an attempt to center Pacific epistemologies and values in their work. She is married and has two adult children and one grandchild.

Marie-Hélène Villierme was born in 1966 in France to a Polynesian father and an Italian mother. She grew up in Tahiti and relocated to France to pursue her studies. She spent three years at the school of "Beaux arts" in France, then attended a photography school, the "75," in Brussels for three more years. As a Polynesian photographer, she aims to reveal through her work a socio-cultural view of modern Polynesia in full mutation. Villierme's publications include *Tata'u, Polynesian Tattoo* (1992), *Faces of Polynesia* (1996), and *Tangata, a Polynesian community* (2005). She also teaches photography to college students.



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