

View from the Mountain: Moloka‘i Nui a Hina

All people climb the same mountain. The mountain, however, has many pathways – each with a different view. A person knows and understands only what he sees from his own pathway, and as he moves, his view will change. Only when he reaches the top of the mountain will he see and understand all the views of mankind. But who among us has reached the top of the mountain? Tomorrow, we too will see a different view. We have not finished growing. Most Hawaiian histories have been written from the pathways taken by foreigners who wrote Hawaiian history as they believed things to be. It was not a Hawaiian view, or from a Hawaiian pathway. These stories that I tell you are from the pathway taken by my family, on Moloka‘i-Kaili‘ohe Kame‘ehua¹

As Kaili‘ohe Kame‘ehua communicates, perspective is relative to context and cultural space. For Kaili‘ohe, the cultural space comes from the island of Moloka‘i Nui a Hina (hereafter referred to as Moloka‘i) and the Pacific region. This article explores diverse perceptions of space and relationships to place within the Pacific region with particular emphasis on the Hawaiian Islands and the island of Moloka‘i.

From my own perspective, standing tall, strong and proud above the steep green sea-cliffs dropping into Pelekunu Valley over the remote north shore of Moloka‘i, I am surrounded by a cultural space where my Pacific, Hawaiian and Moloka‘i genealogy and the natural environment connect. The native forest of Kamakou abounds with ‘ōhia lehua trees, pūkiawe bushes, hāpu‘u ferns, ‘ie‘ie vines, mosses, mist and clouds. From the earth beneath my feet – Papahānaumoku – to the sky above – Wākea – to the ocean connecting island to island – Kanaloa ², I am surrounded by the *kūpuna*, my ancestors. The *kūpuna* and *nā ākua* – the gods – are alive and well from this view on the mountain.

Living on Moloka‘i, the homeland of my father’s lineage, my perception of time, space and place experienced a radical shift from what I had previously experienced in my predominantly Western life away from the Hawaiian Islands. I had not been conscious of the power, or hold,

that the islands of my Indigenous origin had over me. Moloka‘i, and all its entities became my teachers – *nā kumu* – sources of knowledge and understanding. Kamakou Mountain, the most prominent source of *waiwai*³ (abundant freshwater) became a teacher. Kamakou is home to primarily native and endemic plants and trees like the ‘ōhia lehua, which on Moloka‘i is the *kinolau* – embodiment – of Laka,⁴ the goddess of *hula*. The ‘ōhia lehua trees stand tall, bursting with blossoms of salmon, yellow and red. The native ‘ōlapa tree quivers like the gentle movements of a dancer in the misty breezes. The native forest is layered with plants, trees and mosses living symbiotically – harmoniously in balance. They feed and shelter each other like the people of the island. This is how the forest of Kamakou has evolved to live and thrive.

Many of the native plants and trees embody *nā ākua*, such as Laka. Native plants and animals evolved interdependently for tens of thousands of years before the first inhabitants of the Hawaiian Islands arrived, approximately two thousand years ago. The Kānaka Māoli⁵ people of the past and present, through an intimate relationship with the earth, sky, ocean, rocks, birds, and all of the plants and animals of the land and sea, recognised that these life-forms have their own wisdom and significance. For example, in the native forest the *hāpu‘u* fern becomes a nursery for the seeds of the ‘ōhia lehua. It provides nutrients and shelter for the seedlings until they grow into trees; the forest comes to represent the community, in that working together and by feeding and supporting one another, growth and life flourishes.

Kumu Hula John Ka‘imikaua, teacher of oral history and the art of chant and *hula*, links his genealogy of *hula* to the island of Moloka‘i, and speaks of his knowing in the documentary *A Mau A Mau, To Continue Forever*.⁶ He says, “to know the *kūpuna* is to know the land”, meaning that to know and understand our culture and people we must come to know and understand our cultural space, our island homes, including all the elements. The earth-Papahānaumoku, sky-Wākea, wind-ka makani, rain-ka ua, and sun-ka Lā begin our genealogy⁷. Of the *kūpuna*, the *ākua*⁸ are ancestors that have passed-on further back in time and are now a part of the spirit world. The *‘aumākua*⁹ are recent ancestors who have passed and come to us in various animal forms, such as the *manō* (shark), *pueo* (owl), or *‘io* (hawk). The *mākua*¹⁰ are still living in the physical realm.¹¹

To understand the natural environment as a cultural space that allows for genealogical connection, it is important to realise the significance that Hawaiian culture places on intuition. Ka‘imikaua explains that the source of truth is both tangible and intangible and that the *na‘au*¹² (the gut or intuition) can interpret beyond intellect. While everything has its own intelligence, the *na‘au* can feel the spirit of the land, which in turn shaped the hearts and minds of the *kūpuna*. Native Hawaiian epistemology and intelligence is based on truth that transcends the mind and enters the heart and the centre of emotion and knowing, which is the *na‘au*. It is an understanding that derives from *aloha*-love and compassion. Kumu Hula Olana Kaipo Ai poignantly affirms that, “Aloha is the intelligence with which we meet life.”¹³ It is this sense of *aloha* that guides our connection to the natural world.

Kānaka Māoli perceptions of space are deeply embedded in an epistemology that prioritises spiritual relationships with the natural environment. Such Indigenous understandings of space are important to articulate because foreigners have often defined Hawaiian history. In

this article I intend to describe, through my *aloha no Hawai'i nei* (love of Hawai'i) as rooted in my genealogical connection to place; through my Western academic education; and through personal interviews with two Moloka'i women, what I have come to know of the cultural space that is the Pacific and, in particular, the island of Moloka'i.

This article is organised to follow the migrations and voyages across the Pacific Ocean by Polynesian navigators and Western explorers. Seeing that Pacific Islands' navigators were the first to explore their ocean home, the article begins by introducing the reader to selected Pacific ideologies and epistemologies that exemplify a deep connection and relationship to place and ancestry. The next section delves into the contrasts between Pacific genealogical connections and Western exploration as an economic pursuit. The article concludes by exploring the specific cultural space of Moloka'i Nui a Hina as it seeks to decolonise, or return, to its Pacific ways of knowing. The final section is devoted to the cultural space of Moloka'i Nui a Hina, examples of decolonisation, and the voices of two Moloka'i women interviewed about their connection to cultural space and place.

PACIFIC GENEALOGICAL CONNECTIONS

Ka manu kāhea i ka wa'a e holo – The bird calls the canoe to sail.¹⁴

Through a seafaring lineage, Polynesian cultures have developed different interpretations of the islands and the ocean as spatialised concepts. As a crew member on the double-hulled sailing canoe Hōkūle'a, during the Voyage to Rapa Nui in 1999-2000¹⁵, I was humbled by the immensity, temperament and beauty of Kanaloa. Surrounded by 360 degrees of ocean, I found that the canoe became our island and the stars our guide. The navigator of our canoe would visualise the islands coming to the canoe and crew. When land appeared it seemed to be lifted out from the sea by the stars overhead as it rose above the horizon. Wayfinders, such as Mau Pialug, Nainoa Thompson, Ka'au McKenney and Kalepa Baybayan, taught me to view the ocean as a pathway. Navigating on open ocean freeways expands and reconfigures fundamental epistemological principles.¹⁶ For many Pacific Islands peoples the ocean is an extension of the land, which offers food, *re-creation* and transport. The ocean is not a barrier that divides the islands and limits our movement; rather, it is our source of expansion and connection.

Renowned and respected Pacific academic and theorist, Konai Helu Thaman, reiterates these epistemological ideas in her poem, *Thinking*, where she offers the reader a broader Indigenous, Pacific and Polynesian perspective of intellect and knowing. She expresses, just as Ka'imikaua described, a relationship and respect for the natural world and "all that is free".

THINKING

you say that you think
therefore you are
but thinking belongs
in the depths of the earth
we simply borrow
what we need to know

these islands the sky
the surrounding sea
the trees the birds
and all that are free
the misty rain
the surging river
pools by the blowholes
a hidden flower
have their own thinking

they are frames of mind that cannot fit
in a small selfish world¹⁷

Similarly, the theoretical work of Hawaiian philosopher and academic, Manulani Aluli Meyer, reinforces the importance of a sense of place for Kānaka Māoli. In her doctoral thesis, “Native Hawaiian Epistemology, Contemporary Narrative”, Aluli Meyer describes taro cultivation as a “spiritual/environmental facet of epistemology”; an epistemology that “imbue[s] the ‘ohana, or family, with continuity of place and people, and their [Hawaiian] world with relationship.”¹⁸

The relationship that Aluli Meyer depicts is one of reciprocity where the land, ocean and people all give and take. While the land and sea provide an abundance of food, the people must in return be guardians and stewards who *aloha ‘āina*-cherish the land and ocean. The Kānaka Māoli protect and *mālama ‘āina*-care for the land just as they would an elder or a family member for, as stated above, the land and ocean are genealogically connected to the people. Aluli Meyer states:

To understand Hawaiian ontology and its pervasiveness in the form, function and essence of knowing and understanding, one begins and ends in the vista of “that which feeds”. Here, as with most images, “feed” is not only food for the body, but nourishment for spirit, history and sense of place.¹⁹

Throughout the Pacific, cultural spaces are similarly defined through genealogical connections. In a personal interview, Konai Helu Thaman described how Western perspectives differed

from Indigenous Pacific concepts of land or *vanua* (Fiji), *honua* (Hawai'i), *fenua* (Tahiti), and *whenua* (Aotearoa/New Zealand), all of which encompass a holistic and spiritual connection to place. Thaman explains:

It's not just about a piece of soil – it is that – plus all of the other things, all of the spiritual connections – all of the people, all of the relationships, everything, which in English there isn't a word for, so they say "land", but land is a very limited definition of place. Place in most Pacific languages is *fenua* or *vanua* or *honua*. In Melanesia that's what they are talking about, they're not talking about a piece of land. It's a mentality that includes land. It includes everything. It's an integrated notion of place.²⁰

Konai Helu Thaman's background in the Western discipline of geography allows her to critique some Western definitions of space and place as exceedingly limited. She says:

That's what geography is all about. It is about space, spatial differentiation, how one's place is different from another's place. And I thought that they really needed to extend that notion of space and place and things that you cannot observe. [Western] science is all about things you can observe.²¹

The unobservable entities, which inform and fill a cultural space that Konai refers to, include cosmological, genealogical, ancestral and spiritual connections and understandings of place.

EPISTEMOLOGICAL COLLISIONS: PACIFIC AND WESTERN PERCEPTIONS OF CULTURAL SPACE

I Kahiki no ka hao, o ke ki 'o ana i Hawai'i nei.

In the foreign land was the iron; in Hawai'i the rusting.²²

Understanding how early-European explorers of the Pacific perceived their experience is fundamental to deconstructing the European colonial conceptions of space or place that were eventually imposed upon Indigenous models. Early-European explorers described the Pacific region as consisting of remote, isolated islands in the far sea; a perception contrary to Pacific peoples' cultural understandings and connections to their homelands, which did not view the sea as either far or remote. Prior to European arrival, Indigenous Pacific Islanders had come to know and understand the land and ocean as an extension of themselves, and as a part of their genealogy and origin. This quote by Tongan writer and academic, Epeli Hau'ofa, helps reconstruct a Pacific perception of space. He eloquently states:

Oceania is us. We are the sea, we are the ocean, we must wake up to the views that aim ultimately to confine us again, physically and psychologically, in the tiny spaces which we have resisted accepting as our sole appointed place, and from which we have recently liberated ourselves. We must not allow anyone to belittle us again, and take away our freedom.²³

From an Indigenous Pacific Islander's perspective, the Pacific region was/is not made up of islands in the far sea; it is "our sea of islands".

When native peoples began losing rights to their own lands through colonial displacement, they were simultaneously disoriented by the imposition of invisible boundaries and geopolitical borders created by other nations and driven by an opposing occidental worldview. These invisible boundaries were/are the imaginary national and geographical borders created to categorise people and places of the Pacific from a Western imperial perspective. The invisible boundaries also continue to exist in the colonised mind, which engages with a limited perception of our world, spaces, peoples and cultures. An imposed colonial imaginary keeps the people of the Pacific divided and separated.

The definitional imposition of Western classifications began with the first encounters between Pacific Islanders and Westerners through travellers' tales. JR Forster, the naturalist who travelled aboard the *Resolution* on Captain James Cook's second voyage to the Pacific, for instance, became one of the first writers to categorise Pacific Islanders by skin colour and hair texture. His descriptions created the Polynesian and Melanesian distinction that remains to this day, dividing peoples and imposing imagined categories to preside over the islands in terms of Micronesian, Melanesian and Polynesian.²⁴

Western discourses, such as those created through the discipline of anthropology, contributed to the demarcation of the Pacific by providing scientifically "valid" definitions of Pacific population distribution, race, physical characteristics, environmental and social origin, and culture.²⁵ Indigenous peoples worldwide were and continue to be defined via non-Indigenous standards through discourses ignorant of Indigenous ways of understanding the world, such as genealogical and spiritual connections to place, which were in existence prior to colonisation.

Western definitions of the Pacific also enabled Western economic expansion, largely due to the classification of the Indigenous peoples as savage. As described above, the genealogical connections that Pacific peoples had with their lands held no currency within an occidental worldview that defined the islands in terms of "natural resources" and the potential for economic exploitation – a notion far removed and polar to genealogical relationships with the natural environment and values of *aloha 'āina* and *mālama 'āina* – loving and caring for the earth in its entirety.

From the European colonialist perspective, the islands and peoples (or cultural spaces) they encountered lacked the imperial culture through which the colonists had come to view their own lands. European settlers considered the cultural landscape they encountered to be "uninhabited". Through their own cultural lenses, the land was not being exploited because it was not perceived as being controlled and manipulated by humans and did not resemble the cultivated European countryside. Thus the lands were viewed as savage and untamed, as were its peoples. Lands were defined as "unworked" or what John Locke conceived as *terra nullius*.

Linda Tuhiwai Smith writes that "space is often viewed in Western thinking as being static or divorced from time."²⁶ Smith goes on to describe the spatial vocabulary of colonialism as

assembled around three concepts: (1) the line, (2) the centre, and (3) the outside. The “line” is relevant because of its use to map, chart, fence and create boundaries. The “centre” refers to orientation of power, such as the mother country (Europe/United States), churches, ports, stores, and stockades. The “outside” is the most significant to this article because it locates Indigenous lands, peoples and ways of knowing away from the imperial centre, in the margins. It enables the colonial notion of an empty peripheral landscape, or *terra nullius*: uncharted, uninhabited, and unoccupied.²⁷

In terms of colonial exploitation, the early-European colonists’ lack of ancestral relationship or responsibility to care for these “newly discovered” islands led to environmental and cultural atrocities in the Pacific region. The cultivation and farming of lands through Western methods redefined the cultural spaces. For example, although initially Hawai’i was a stopover point from the Americas to Asia, later, when explorers and traders such as James Cook divulged news of Hawai’i’s abundant source of freshwater and fertile land, Westerners came in vast numbers to economically exploit the islands. They brought with them Western diseases and Western ways of viewing the world. Land, for instance, was only valued when subjected to cultivation for cash crops, such as sugar, pineapple or exploited for sandalwood. Western customs influenced and changed Kānaka Māoli perceptions of their cultural spaces by instilling ideas of ownership over the natural environment, and a cash economy. By 1848, with the signing of the Great Māhele²⁸ and the ensuing enablement of foreigners to buy and sell land, Native Hawaiians were rapidly displaced. Many Native Hawaiians were forced to leave their ‘*ahupua’a*’ (ancestral lands) to find work in urban areas.

Historians such as Felix M Keesing and Lilikalā Kame‘eleihiwa present contrasting stories of pre-contact Hawai’i and the events that followed. Keesing conducted research on the history of *Hawaiian Homesteading on Moloka‘i* in 1936,²⁹ whereas Kame‘eleihiwa gave a contemporary Native Hawaiian perspective of the Great Māhele in her book *Native Land and Foreign Desires: Pehea La E Pono Ai?*³⁰ Keesing described the changes to Hawai’i caused by Western influences as inevitable, arguing that:

Western standards of living and commercial attitudes have tended to replace the simpler subsistence economy of the old environment. As early as 1848, the individualistic ideas of land holding brought in by whites prevailed over an earlier feudal-like system.³¹

In contrast, Kame‘eleihiwa believes that the “feudal-like” system that Keesing refers to was in fact a very organised and efficient form of land-management and *mālama ‘āina* (caring for the land).

The displacement of Native Hawaiians eventually led to the United States government establishing the first Hawaiian Homestead³² settlement, a pilot project named the Kalaniana‘ole Settlement, in Kalama‘ula, Moloka‘i. Many Kānaka Māoli lost their ancestral lands and connection to genealogical ‘*ahupua’a*’. Instead, they were *re-placed* on to Hawaiian Homesteads – often dry and remote areas, spaces still occupied today by the progeny of the original Hawaiian Homesteaders. Keesing reflects on the establishment of homesteading, suggesting that “the fundamentals of culture cannot be destroyed easily, even though the

externals may change... it will be seen how things Hawaiian continue to be effective in the lives of homesteaders.”³³ I interpret this quote to mean that Hawaiian culture and epistemology continued to guide the lives and exchanges between the local people within the community, even though Western economic and business ventures “with [their] competitive individualism... represent perhaps the extreme contrast to the old economic system.”³⁴

Competitive economic ventures emanate values that are the extreme opposite of the worldview of the Kānaka Māoli, who had been nourished for centuries without individualistic opportunism. Priorities that maintained a healthy Hawaiian economy were values of *aloha*-love and respect, trust, giving and receiving. When the land has been objectified, consideration of the greater whole, such as the earth in its entirety, including the spiritual connection that defines cultural spaces, is ignored; when the land has been calculated in terms of its ‘natural resources’, holism is lost. Such is the history of Western colonisation of the Hawaiian Islands and the differences between Western and Pacific perceptions of place and cultural space.

MOLOKA’I NUI A HINA: A CULTURAL SPACE

Ua ola loko i ke aloha – Love gives life within.³⁵

Moloka’i Nui a Hina – the island of Moloka’i, child of Hina,³⁶ nourishes, heals and takes care of the needs of the Moloka’i community. In doing so the community is engendered with a feeling of *aloha ‘āina* (love of the land and place); a love that informs and governs the way that many within the Moloka’i community choose to live their lives. Moloka’i is an island located only 25 miles across the Ka Iwi Channel from the city of Honolulu, but it is a world away from O’ahu’s tourist mecca. It is indeed a rare and special space, where the impacts of globalisation and capitalism are minimal and secondary to values of *aloha* for the community, land and ocean. It is a place capable of accepting and healing, nurturing and restoring. This is Moloka’i’s legacy.

There are two primary volcanoes that created the island of Moloka’i approximately two million years ago. The first to erupt was Maunaloa, which is a low shield-shaped dome, located on the west side of the island. The second is Kamakou, which created the east end of Moloka’i. The northeast side, or windward coast, of Kamakou experienced a submarine landslide that created steep, dramatic sea cliffs and a coastline that is rarely accessed except by boats during the summer months. The windward valleys of Kalaupapa, Waikolu, Pelekunu, Wailau, and Hālawā are lush and green with steady flowing streams that provide a healthy habitat for endemic freshwater fish species like the ‘o’opu and hīhīwai.³⁷ The southeast shoreline and valleys of Kamakou are referred to as Mana’e, which is where the majority of Moloka’i’s people lived and thrived for centuries before Western arrival. The Kānaka Māoli were/are farmers of the sea, developing and preserving elaborate fishponds. Moloka’i has over fifty shoreline fishponds from Central Moloka’i east to Mana’e.³⁸ Between Kamakou and Maunaloa east and west there is Central Moloka’i, Kaunakakai Town and the first Hawaiian Homestead community in Kalama’ula, also known as the *piko*.³⁹ It is renowned for its red fertile soil and the strength and determination of the Hawaiian Homesteaders who worked with the land to clear the way for future homestead settlements throughout the Hawaiian Islands.

While the layers of colonisation on Moloka'i are complex and did not begin with Western imperialism, the history of Western colonisation on Moloka'i resembles worldwide impacts of the occident upon Indigenous peoples. Colonisation of the Hawaiian Islands did not end with the usurpation of native lands by foreigners. Policies of hegemonic assimilation also allowed for the colonisation of the minds of many Hawaiian people. This is not to say, however, that all Hawaiian people were simply complacent and stood by and watched the colonisation of their lands and their people. Decolonisation occurred simultaneously with colonisation, and decolonial struggles remain active today.

— Nā Wāhine Koa o Moloka'i – The Brave Women of Moloka'i

I feel like I have a responsibility to the island because we've been privileged to live here and we are a part of Moloka'i. I feel like it is our legacy to protect it (Penny Martin).⁴⁰

Kalama'ula is the place where the women interviewed for this research felt the most deeply and spiritually connected. Penny Martin (Aunty Penny) and Shannon U'ilani Lima (U'i) are two people from Moloka'i that love and embrace their home, families and community, and who live out the way of being in each and every moment. They are activists and, like the women warriors of their ancestral lineage, they fight against the exploitation of Moloka'i's land and people. The epistemologies of Aunty Penny and U'i emphasise our Native Hawaiian ways and, thus, they represent a decolonising perspective.

Decolonial resistance is strong and unsurprisingly tied to the genealogical past. Similar to the sentiments brought forth by Konai Helu Thaman, it is the ancestral entities that enlighten the cultural space that is Moloka'i. The spirits of the land, the *kahiko*⁴¹ (the old ways) are still present, alive and active. On Moloka'i spirituality has played a central role in relation to the identity and strength of the people. Great prophets like Lanikāula (1500 AD) and Kālaipāhoa (1600 AD) counselled visitors from all the islands that came seeking advice. The powerful spirits and spiritual leaders of the island protected the island from warfare and it became a place of retreat. The wisdom of Aunty Penny's *kūpuna*, Kaili'ohe Kame'ehua, whose comment opened this article, speaks of the people standing along Moloka'i's shores. Kaili'ohe recalls:

As a silent army. No fists raised. When the warriors began to beach their boats the chanting began. It began small and became a mighty roar. The warriors threw their spears but they fell short of hitting anyone. Men trying to come onto the beach were falling into the surf choking, unable to breathe.⁴²

This is how Moloka'i became known as "Moloka'i Pule O'o", the island of powerful prayer. Kamehameha I⁴³ and his warriors feared the spiritual strength of Moloka'i and for a time Moloka'i remained independent.⁴⁴

When asked about Moloka'i Nui a Hina and connection to place, U'i spoke of the island as our mother. Here U'i says:

She's the Mama of the Mamas. She's just so Hina. Everything that controls tides or life always has Hina in it. The moon that actually controls the way our cycles move, the cycles of the tides and water. She is the Mama of the water sources. She's going to pull what way the flow is going. Whether it's inside a woman's body, in the ocean or in the sky. And for her to be the mother of this 'āina is very evident.⁴⁵

Aunty Penny and U'i embody the spirit of Moloka'i. They are Nā Wāhine Piko o Moloka'i, women connected physically and spiritually to place. Aunty Penny expresses her connection:

It is more than genealogy that connects us to Moloka'i. It's a feeling. Yeah of course my *tūtū* [grandparents] and all the generations before that, but I feel like I'm connected to Moloka'i physically, spiritually. I feel like there's a cord. I feel like when I come to this island I know that I'm home and there's something magical about it for me. Moloka'i has always been my healing place.⁴⁶

It is abundantly evident that there is a power beyond oneself, which fills the people of the island with wisdom and direction, hope and deep *aloha*. Love of others, the land and ocean are values that actualise a space where people are able to live with a grateful and humble heart. Penny describes this feeling:

I always feel safe here. You come home to heal. You turn around and get connected again. So it grounds you and it heals you. That's why you feel safe here. Part of the safe feeling is in knowing that I can live here. You're not going to starve. I'm not going to die. This 'āina is going to take care of me, this land is going to take care of me.⁴⁷

To *hānai* means to feed, but it also means to adopt, support, and nourish on multiple levels, including the body, mind and spirit. We are fed by *aloha*, 'ike – knowledge, wisdom, guidance, and spiritual fulfilment and clarity. For one to feel supported, secure, safe, protected and provided for, is to have experienced being *hānai*. The people of Moloka'i are fed and nourished by the island – they are *hānai*; this is how the people have survived and flourished. When Aunty Penny described her husband, David's, decision to raise kalo (taro – the staple food source of Kānaka Māoli) she said:

It was something worthy. He [David] was going to bring taro back to the land. We were able to supply healthy food to the community and it was a place that I could take the children, so it was educational, healthy and restorative to Moloka'i and to the culture.⁴⁸

This nourishment and sharing is part of what makes many Native Hawaiian people of today continue to give freely and openly.

Often, foreigners come to Moloka'i and see an underdeveloped wasteland, void of economic endeavours and 'profitable' exploitation of the land and resources. These people are blind. What they fail to understand is that for many Moloka'i locals this way of life is a preferred choice; an alternative way of living to the existence found on islands like O'ahu and Maui. Aunty Penny states:

The very thing that connects you to Moloka'i is what makes you want to protect it. We want to teach more people about it. Not so much to make them want to come here, but so that they'll take care. It makes you want to take care. There's something special about this place. I'm so proud to tell people that I'm from here. It's a really unique place.⁴⁹

Increasingly, however, there are people entering the Moloka'i community with differing values. Aunty Penny continues:

It's a concern for me, too many people and too many of the people that don't know Moloka'i and don't see Moloka'i. To me Moloka'i has already made it, you know. Moloka'i is already there. They don't see that. And it's scary because they have money and they have time.

The new people that are here pretend to know what we know. They think they know what we know and they think that they love Moloka'i the way that we do, but how could they possibly begin to understand what Moloka'i is. They haven't taken the time and if they want to do the things that they say they do, that's not love for Moloka'i, that's love for themselves and for their needs and for what they want.⁵⁰

Many Moloka'i people, like Aunty Penny and U'i, have stepped forth in resistance to development strategies imposed by foreigners who lack understanding. Aunty Penny explains how this began:

I had to learn to go meetings and be heard. I had to learn to be outspoken and to speak up against things. That was not the norm and that was not how we grew up. We trusted them [non-Hawaiian advisors to the island]. We believed them when they told us what would be good for Moloka'i. To question and to challenge was something we had to learn.

Aunty Penny and U'i agree that the very attractions – such as the land and ocean – that draw newcomers to Moloka'i is what the newcomers are going to destroy. Aunty Penny says:

The ones [newcomers] that I am worried about now are intrusive and they are not really connected. They just think they are. They are non-connected in a sense that they see this land as an investment. It is really sad when you see the land as an investment.⁵¹

Foreign investors believe that they are helping the island and the people, but they are ignorant about the notion that Moloka'i people are making conscious choices to reject globalisation and many modern conveniences. Their thinking and protests are not devoid of rationality; rather they are choosing a different path. They are choosing to honour the pathway and values of the *kahiko*, which is the most powerful form of decolonisation and resistance: they are living resistance.

With every colonial pursuit, colonists and foreigners were met with Kānaka Māoli perceptions of the world. Decolonisation is, therefore, not a new project but a process that arose constantly in reaction to the colonial system and as a way of keeping alive the cultural spaces and practices

of Kānaka Māoli. This has become more and more apparent in the past quarter of a century with movements to protect Kaho‘olawe⁵²; revive the ‘ōlelo Hawai‘i (the Hawaiian language); to rebuild ancient *lo‘i* (taro patches) and fishponds; and to prove that Native Hawaiians were knowledgeable way-finders, navigators and sailors of the vast Pacific.

In similar respects, Hawaiian Homesteaders on Moloka‘i live with practices based on values resembling the ways of the ‘*ahupua‘a*. This segment of the Moloka‘i community remains reliant on subsistence agriculture, hunting and fishing to subsidise their income; and a family’s wealth is still measured by their ability to live and give generously. Furthermore, connection to cultural space moved with the ‘*ohana* (families), meaning that contemporary Native Hawaiians now refer to their family homesteads – just as they once referred to their ‘*ahupua‘* – as a space that defines, identifies, provides, protects and offers security and healing. It is important to emphasise that many of the Moloka‘i community continue to sustain themselves through subsistence-based practices and, in doing so, they have a deeper connection to place. All forms of nourishment can be gained from the island. Thus, the goddess Hina not only gave birth to the island, she also feeds and protects its inhabitants. A sense of cultural space comes from a sense of connection and experience. I consider Moloka‘i to be *ka piko*, the spiritual centre or ‘belly button’ of my existence. It is the space where my family can link our genealogy beyond our human community to the rocks, roots, valley, sky and ocean.

HA‘INA ‘IA MAI ANA KA PUANA⁵³: CONCLUSION

INSIDE US THE DEAD

Inside us the dead,
like sweet-honeyed tamarind pods
that will burst in tomorrow’s sun,
or plankton fossils in coral
alive at full moon dragging
virile tides over coy reefs
into yesterday’s lagoons.

Polynesians

Inside me the dead
woven into my flesh like music
of bone flutes:

my Polynesian fathers
who escaped the sun’s wars, seeking
these islands by prophetic stars,
emerged
from the sea’s eye like turtles
scuttling to beach their eggs⁵⁴

Inside us the Dead by the Sāmoan writer and academic, Albert Wendt, is an expression of that which has come before, that which will follow, and a present reflection upon the importance of genealogy, place and space. Many Pacific Islanders and Indigenous Peoples are experiencing a time of healing, cultural renaissance and recovery. We are re-discovering ourselves through the revival of our cultural spaces – our histories, languages and our connections to place. Yet, our very existence as unique people, with unique cultural spaces and understandings, remains threatened by a new form of colonialism, that of globalisation and cultural homogenisation. Contemporary Kānaka Māoli are affected by globalisation and pressures to be economically sustainable and self-sufficient in Western terms. However, this research demonstrates that many Native Hawaiians have not lost touch with their core epistemological values. This work is part of a growing voice that confirms the strength, perseverance and survival of our Kānaka Māoli epistemology and cultural space.

Manulani Aluli Meyer and Konai Helu Thaman both speak of “our time of becoming”. Aluli Meyer’s newest book is called *Ho’oulu: Our Time of Becoming*,⁵⁵ while Thaman ends her poem *Brains and Paddle* by saying that “it is in our becoming that we are one.”⁵⁶ Our time is not coming to an end, rather we are experiencing new beginnings and new conceptualisations or hybridisations of our cultural spaces. It is a time in which we are proud of all that we are, which includes the ability to balance the present complexities of our modern realities with our ancestral pasts. This is how I interpret “our time of becoming”.

At the core of this work is a desire to challenge definitions of Indigenous peoples imposed by Westerners through the reinterpretation and rewriting of our stories. It is the *piko*. U’i shared that “the *piko* is the centre. It is about knowing who you are, where you come from and where you are going to go.”⁵⁷ *Nā wāhine piko o Moloka’i*, the women interviewed for this research are a part of a continuing process of reclamation. They are deeply connected to their past, to Hina and Moloka’i Nui a Hina, their island, ancestors and families. They recognise that the past defines their identity and informs their purpose and direction for the future. The ancestors are guiding our present and future and continue to inform our cultural spaces. This is a deeply spiritual understanding of the world. The ancestors also manifest themselves as the *ākua* in the physical realm; as the land, ocean, plants, animals, wind, rain and elements of nature.

Upon composing *A View From the Mountain*, I had the opportunity to hike through the native forest to the top of Kamakou Mountain where I looked down over Pelekunu Valley. In that moment I asked my ancestors to be with me as I returned to *Te Wai Pounamu* – the South Island of New Zealand where I currently reside. The sun shone on my face, two kao’e kea⁵⁸ birds flew below to their nest along the cliff, and I felt the presence of my ancestors. Inside us the *kūpuna* live.

- 1 K Willis and PJ Lee, *Tales from the Night Rainbow* (Honolulu: Night Rainbow Publishing, 1990), 17.
- 2 Papahānaumoku is the goddess of the earth, Wākea is the god of the sky, and Kanaloa is the god of the ocean.
- 3 *Waiwai* has multiple meanings. It is fresh water, but it also refers to abundance and prosperity. It is the source of life and, from a Hawaiian epistemological perspective, it is of the utmost importance. See MK Pukui and SH Elbert, *Hawaiian Dictionary* (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 1986), 380.

- 4 The art of *hula* and chant connects its genealogy to the goddess of Laka and the island of Moloka'i. Laka is thought to embody plants such as maile, palapalai, lama, 'ie'ie, and the blossoms of the 'ōhia lehua. See L Kame'elehiwa, *Nā Wāhine Kapu – Divine Hawaiian Women* (Honolulu: 'Ai Pōhaku Press, 1999), 36.
- 5 Pukui, *Hawaiian Dictionary*, 127, 240. *Kanaka* literally translates as a human being, individual, person or population and *maoli* translates as native, indigenous, real, true or actual. It is used in the text to describe the first inhabitants of the Hawaiian Islands and their descendants. The Kānaka Māoli and Native Hawaiians are synonymous.
- 6 N Minton, *A Mau A Mau: To Continue Forever* (Honolulu: Nā Maka I ka 'Āina Documentary, 2000).
- 7 For more on Hawaiian genealogy, cosmology and the creation chant see MW Beckwith, *The Kumulipo*. (Honolulu: The University Press of Hawai'i, 1951).
- 8 *Ākua* are either gods or goddesses, but the Hawaiian cosmology links its genealogy to the *ākua* and thus they are also ancestors.
- 9 Pukui, *Hawaiian Dictionary*, 32. *'Aumākua* are personal and family gods, deified ancestors who assume the shape of various animals. They act as guardians that give warning in the form of dreams, visions and calls.
- 10 Ibid., 230. *Mākua* refers to a parent or any of the parents' generation, such as an aunt, uncle, or cousin.
- 11 Minton, *A Mau A Mau*.
- 12 Pukui, *Hawaiian Dictionary*, 257. The *na'au* are the intestines, bowels, guts; as well as the heart, mind, affections and feelings.
- 13 M Aluli Meyer, *Ho'oulu: Our Time of Becoming* (Honolulu: 'Ai Pōhaku Press, 2003),1.
- 14 MK Pukui, *'Ōlelo No'eau: Hawaiian Proverbs & Poetical Sayings* (Honolulu: Bishop Museum Press, 1938), 160. "The bird calls the canoe to sail."
- 15 For more information on the Voyage to Rapa Nui or contemporary Native Hawaiian navigation see www.pvs-hawaii.com/voyages/rapanui, last visited on 1 November 2005.
- 16 M Aluli Meyer, personal communication on 25 August 2005.
- 17 KH Thaman, *Songs of Love* (Suva: Mana Publications, 1999),15.
- 18 M Aluli Meyer, *Native Hawaiian Epistemology: Contemporary Narratives* (Cambridge: Graduate School of Education of Harvard University, 1998), 30.
- 19 Ibid.,33.
- 20 K L K Wilson, "Nā Wāhine Piko o Moloka'i: Pacific Women's Connections to Place" (Unpublished Master's dissertation, University of Hawai'i, Mānoa, 2004), 35.
- 21 Ibid.
- 22 Pukui, *'Ōlelo No'eau*, 128. Literally translated as "In Kahiki (foreign land) was the iron; in Hawai'i, the rusting." The deeper meaning of the proverb is that the foreigner may have been a good person at home, but in Hawai'i he grows careless with his behaviour.
- 23 E Hau'ofa, "Our Sea of Islands", in E Waddell, V Naidu and E Hau'ofa (eds), *A New Oceania: Rediscovering Our Sea of Islands*. (Suva: University of the South Pacific, 1993), 16.
- 24 C Geiringer, "Ko Te Heke Ra O Maruiwi: Theories about the first wave of settlement" in M Reilly and J Thomson (eds), *When the Waves Rolled In Upon Us* (Dunedin: University of Otago Press, 1990), 16.
- 25 It is beyond the scope of this article to provide an in-depth account of the Western demarcation of Pacific Islanders through travellers' tales and anthropological discourse. For further reading see LT Smith, *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples* (Dunedin: University of Otago Press, 1999), especially Chapters 1-4.
- 26 Smith, *Decolonizing Methodologies*, 52.

- 27 Ibid., 53.
- 28 Kamehameha III signed the Great Māhele, which led to the 1850 *Act to Abolish the Disabilities of Aliens to Acquire and Convey Lands in Fee*, which opened the way for Western foreigners to purchase and own Hawaiian land. For more information on the Great Māhele see L Kame'eleihiwa, *Native Land and Foreign Desires: Pehea La E Pono Ai?* (Honolulu: Bishop Museum Press, 1992).
- 29 FM Keesing, *Hawaiian Homesteading on Moloka'i* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Research Publications, No. 12, Vol I (3), 1936.
- 30 L Kame'eleihiwa, *Native Land and Foreign Desires*.
- 31 FM Keesing, *Hawaiian Homesteading*, 13.
- 32 The United States government began awarding Native Hawaiians "Hawaiian Homesteads" in the 1920s on the basis of a blood quantum of 50 percent or more. They consist of acreage in often dry and remote areas of the Hawaiian Islands. Homesteads can be passed down through the generations, but the recipient must have a blood quantum of one-quarter or more Native Hawaiian.
- 33 FM Keesing, *Hawaiian Homesteading*, 16.
- 34 Ibid.
- 35 Pukui, '*Ōlelo No'ēau*, 311. This proverb speaks of the importance of love as imperative to one's mental and physical wellbeing. It is used here to emphasise the importance of *aloha* in Hawaiian culture.
- 36 As a goddess, Hina manifests herself in the form of abundant food from the land and fish from the ocean. In the story of Hina-Puku-'ai (Hina Gathering Food), Hina is said to have filled a calabash with food and food plants, like banana, breadfruit, sweet potato, taro and sugar cane, but while gathering she spilled the calabash and in doing so created the stars and the moon. As the goddess of the moon, Hina dictates the planting and harvesting of food, as well as the best times to fish. Hina also gave birth to the island of Moloka'i and to the coral reefs.
- 37 Pukui, *Hawaiian Dictionary*, 68 and 290. The 'o'opu is an endemic fresh water fish and the hīhīwai is an endemic grainy snail or limpet.
- 38 C Summers, *MOLOKAI: A Site Survey* (Honolulu: Department of Anthropology, Bernice P Bishop Museum, 1971), 3.
- 39 *Piko* is literally translated as the umbilical cord or the belly button; or as genital organs; posterior fontanel or crown of the head; summit or peak. The meaning consists of multiple layers and the word describes connections of past, present and future to both the spirit world and the physical realm. The *piko* is the lifeline; it is the metaphorical pathway to understanding all that has come before, that which has created a foundation for the present, and that which will guide the future.
- 40 Wilson, *Nā wāhine Piko*, 86.
- 41 Pukui, *Hawaiian Dictionary*, 112.
- 42 K Willis and PJ Lee, *Tales from the Night Rainbow*, 24-25.
- 43 Kamehameha I was a warrior and chief who eventually became known as "The Ruler of the Islands" and "Kamehameha The Great". He overpowered the chiefs of all of the Hawaiian Islands, except the island of Kaua'i.
- 44 Minton, *A Mau A Mau*.
- 45 Wilson, *Nā wāhine Piko*, 55.
- 46 Ibid., 58.
- 47 Ibid., 76.
- 48 Ibid., 78.
- 49 Ibid., 84.
- 50 Ibid., 85.

- 51 Ibid., 87.
- 52 Kaho'olawe is one of the principal Hawaiian Islands, which the United States government used as a prison and a military target range for bomb testing until 1994. It is culturally significant to the Kānaka Māoli and rich with archaeology, but the federal government denied people access until 2003. Kaho'olawe is now held in trust for a future sovereign Native Hawaiian entity and managed by the Kaho'olawe Island Reserve Commission.
- 53 Pukui, *Hawaiian Dictionary*, 48. This expression is meant to signify a refrain or repeating of the themes that have been shared.
- 54 A Wendt, *Inside Us the Dead* (Auckland: Oxford University Press), 7.
- 55 M Aluli Meyer, *Ho'oulu*.
- 56 K H Thaman, *Kakala* (Suva: Mana Publications, 1993), 35.
- 57 Ibid., 92.
- 58 Pukui, *Hawaiian Dictionary*, 156. The koa'e kea is the white-tailed tropic bird, also known as the boatswain bird. They inhabit the cliffs of high islands.

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