

# ***Kuleana Lāhui: Collective Responsibility for Hawaiian Nationhood in Activists' Praxis***

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## **Abstract**

Previous studies of “the Hawaiian sovereignty movement” have compared different groups’ positions, elucidating complex constellations of Hawaiian sovereignty organizations yet remaining bound by the limits of state sovereignty discourse. In this article, I reflect on conversations between activists and on specific actions, so as to explore the spaces beyond or beneath the surface of state-based models of Hawaiian liberation. Rather than assuming the state to be the center of political life, I am interested in the ways people enact new relations and forms of social organization. ‘Kuleana’ and ‘lāhui’ are presented as indigenous concepts for thinking about and practicing collective autonomy. This article provides a beginning for exploring how aspects of contemporary Kanaka Maoli (Native Hawaiian) social movement organizing, particularly among independence advocates, may contribute to the development of alliances around anarchy-indigenist principles.

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## **Introduction**

In 1993, as an estimated ten thousand Kānaka Maoli (Native Hawaiians) and our allies marched to the ‘Iolani Palace in remembrance of the centennial of the US military-backed coup against our Queen, it seemed appropriate to talk about a singular “Hawaiian sovereignty movement.” Draped in black, the palace—the Hawaiian Kingdom’s seat of government—and the memory of Queen Lili‘uokalani drew Hawaiians from across the political spectrum. Organizers and visible participant groups included Hawaiian civic clubs, Ka Lāhui Hawai‘i (KLH), and Ka Pākaukau.<sup>2</sup> Representatives of the Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA), a state agency created in 1978 to receive and administer public land trust revenues “for the betterment of native Hawaiians,” also attended. That same year, grassroots organizers convened a people’s tribunal with an international panel of judges that traveled to communities throughout the islands hearing testimony on US crimes against Kānaka Maoli<sup>3</sup>, and

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the US Congress passed the “Apology Resolution” acknowledging that “the indigenous Hawaiian people never directly relinquished their claims to their inherent sovereignty as a people or over their national lands to the United States, either through their monarchy or through a plebiscite or referendum.”<sup>4</sup> While some Kānaka advocated complete independence from the US and others preferred a nation-within-a-nation model of pseudo-sovereignty, “the movement” shared a common goal in raising the consciousness of people in Hawai‘i and beyond.

The efforts to raise awareness about injustices for Kānaka Maoli and our country have been successful in many ways, but little concrete political gain has been secured in the last sixteen years. We still do not control our national lands, the Crown and Government lands of the Hawaiian Kingdom that comprise nearly half the total land area in our archipelago. Some argue that the problem is a lack of unity among Native Hawaiians. “If they could just agree on what they wanted, they might get it.” This position assumes that first we Kānaka Maoli would collectively decide, for example, whether we want US federal recognition or the restoration of our independence. Then we would press for that option in the appropriate arena—whether the US Congress or the United Nations. Such a strategy locates the source of liberation with the occupying state or other external political bodies.

This article challenges the popular argument that disagreement is the primary roadblock for Hawaiian self-determination. One major problem is that our people’s revolutionary energies have become stuck in what Richard Day calls a *politics of demand*. Such an orientation to social action “assumes the existence of a dominant nation attached to a monopolistic state, which must be persuaded to give the gifts of recognition and integration to subordinate identities and communities.”<sup>5</sup> In this mode of politics, the state is assumed to be the center of political life, and people seek sanction within an already assimilative, disempowering and unequal framework. Day and others have proposed that the intersections of anarchist, feminist, and indigenist organizing suggest another way. Underscoring the ways people recognize the authority within themselves, emergent anarcha-indigenist scholarship and activism values the multiple and rhizomatic nature of 21<sup>st</sup> century anti-imperialist movements.<sup>6</sup> Affinity across diversity is preferred over unity that demands hierarchy and exclusion.

In this article, I discuss the ways Hawaiian notions of *kuleana* (authority and obligation based in interdependence and community) and *lāhui* (peoplehood) emerge from the conversations and work of Kānaka Maoli activists and our non-indigenous allies. I suggest that a liberatory praxis based on *kuleana* and *lāhui* offers forms of belonging, collective authority and social organization that stem from

indigenous cultural practice rather than a state-centric paradigm. The questions that drive this essay grow from a desire to bring together two distinct, but related, sets of conversations that have increasingly occupied me over the last few years. In my activist life, a group of Hawaiian independence advocates have been discussing how to put the “move” back into the Hawaiian movement and how to *enact* independence rather than *call* for it. What should independence look like? How can we mobilize against an extremely well-funded, organized, state-supported apparatus that is framing US federal recognition of Native Hawaiians as *the* answer to more than a century of military-backed denial of Hawaiian self-government and desecration of land?

At the same time, in my academic life, I was introduced to an international group of scholars and activists beginning to articulate “anarcha-indigenism” as a set of pathways for bringing about “post-imperial futures”—that is, “a more just and peaceful world” that moves beyond the violences of continued imperialism through sustainable practices and resurgent action.<sup>7</sup> How can we build upon existing spaces of indigenous resurgence and autonomy? In what ways can we push the boundaries of the academy? How do we evolve protocols for interaction and solidarity across differences of race, gender, sexuality, class, nationality, and other forms of identification? How do we *unsettle* settler state authorities, without replicating the violences and exclusions we aim to stop?

My method in this paper differs from previous studies on contemporary Hawaiian political movement that compare different legal strategies or sovereignty groups’ positions against one another. In “Kū’ē and Kū’oko’a: History, Law and Other Faiths,” Jonathan Kamakawiwo’ole Osorio discusses the way two sovereignty initiatives, Ka Lāhui Hawai’i and the Council of Regency, employ mutually exclusive interpretations of Hawaiian nationhood, one based on ethnic indigeneity and the other based on national identity.<sup>8</sup> While he sees these as distinct, conflicting strategies, he finds that both place faith in the law. Although ambivalent about the extent to which systems of law can create justice, Osorio argues Kanaka have trusted in the law for over 160 years and should continue our shared tradition of fashioning our own laws. Kauanui adds to the understanding of Hawaiian sovereignty claims by further explicating two distinct independentist positions; one calling for decolonization under UN protocols and the other for de-occupation through the Hague Regulations.<sup>9</sup> Both Osorio and Kauanui imply a desire to imagine political relationships beyond the limits of state sovereignty and point toward “a liberatory vision that exceeds the legal paper trail.”<sup>10</sup> While their studies help elucidate complex constellations of Hawaiian sovereign claims (for which much more critical scholarship

is needed), the focus on law has not allowed for exploration of the spaces beyond, or perhaps beneath, the surface of state sovereignty. By examining fully articulated legal strategies or positions, neither does more than suggest that such spaces and imaginaries exist. I attempt to pick up from where their important work has left off.

I focus squarely on the ways Kānaka enact sovereignty on the ground through political organizing, exploring conversations between activists and considering the process of their planned actions. I look at two specific issues around which Hawaiians have organized in the past five years: 1) the seized lands of the Hawaiian Kingdom, currently controlled by the State of Hawai'i, and 2) the protection of kalo (taro), the traditional staple food and elder sibling of Kānaka Maoli, from genetic engineering and patenting. By placing activist dialogue and practice at the center of the analysis, I hope to cull innovative ways of thinking and living Kānaka Maoli identity and politics. I attend to the ways these Hawaiian loyalists speak about kuleana, lāhui, and their visions of the past and future. It is in the process of these mobilizations, rather than in the final positions enunciated, that revolutionary potential is located. Throughout the article, I track relays between Hawaiian activist and academic sites of discourse, discussing connections and constitutive tensions across these two interdependent fronts and considering the usage of digital communication networks.

This article is also a beginning for exploring how aspects of contemporary Kānaka Maoli organizing may contribute the development of a shared anarcha-indigenist network that widens the horizons of possibility for post-imperial futures. In that vein, I look for articulations, absences, provisional affinities, and outright rejections of indigenism, anarchism and feminism within current Kānaka Maoli political discourse. How can international conversations around “anarcha-indigenism” bring useful ideas and alliances to Kānaka engaged in movements for self-determination? At the same time, localized struggles reminds us that such a framework cannot be universal or hegemonic. Day’s notion of an *affinity for affinity*, built through “non-universalizing, non-hierarchical, non-coercive relationships based in mutual aid and shared ethical commitments” seems a productive way to think about existing and potential alliances within and between our movements.<sup>11</sup>

### The ‘state’ of the Hawaiian movement

Hawaiian movement discourse shifted specifically toward sovereignty claims in the mid-1980s, consolidating earlier actions to protect land, language, and local subsistence lifestyles. Sovereignty discourse among activists developed in conjunction

with a growing number of academic treatises, primarily historical and political analyses of American imperialism and colonialism in Hawai'i.<sup>12</sup> More than two decades of renewed energy around Hawaiian nationhood and sovereignty have produced a rich field of activist and academic ideologies, governance frameworks, and organizing networks in cooperation and, at times, in conflict.

What concerns me is the way sovereignty discourse has contributed to shifting emphasis and energy away from direct action land struggles—confrontations on the 'āina (land, literally “that which feeds”) over its usage—toward court battles, state and federal legislation, and research about historically-appropriate legal strategies. Moving back and forth between these various terrains is important, and all these aspects of the movement have been valuable in some way. However, each terrain brings its own sources of mana (power).

The 'āina holds the most mana for Kānaka 'Ōiwi. After all, it was the actions of people defending their lifestyles and relationships to 'āina that at one time catalyzed and defined the Hawaiian movement. For example, while court action figured into the major land struggles that energized the Hawaiian movement, residing on the land prefigured legal action. Moreover, in cases like the Sand Island, Waimānalo and Mākua evictions, Kānaka Maoli explicitly challenged the jurisdiction of those courts to try Hawaiian citizens.<sup>13</sup>

The move away from direct land struggle toward legal claims for political status has not yet secured significant changes in the lives of everyday Kānaka Maoli nor restored control of and benefit from our national lands to 'Ōiwi Hawai'i (indigenous Hawaiians) or Hawaiian nationals (citizens of the Hawaiian nation-state). This is an important reason for pause and reflection. What is our base of power and are we caring for that relationship?

In 2009, the most visible positions across the spectrum of advocacy for a Hawaiian nation view the state as the primary framework for seeking justice, making decisions, and leading our people forward. Among those who seek less disturbance to the status quo, the Office of Hawaiian Affairs (a state agency) and the Council for Native Hawaiian Advancement (a private, non-profit organization) support recognition under US federal law, within a framework of domestic dependent sovereignty. Advocated by Hawai'i's congressional delegation and governor, this position sees federal recognition as the culmination of a process of reconciliation, as called for in the 1993 Apology Law and the 2000 reconciliation report, *From Mauka to Makai: The River of Justice Must Flow Freely*.<sup>14</sup> Through such a process, a “Native Hawaiian governing

entity” could be formed to exercise limited autonomy, subject to the plenary power of the US Congress. No land has ever been attached to any version of this bill.

Among those who support Hawaiian independence, a number of groups assert the continuity of the Hawaiian Kingdom, and as such, have organized bodies for enacting continued sovereignty of the Hawaiian State.<sup>15</sup> Advocates call for either decolonization or de-occupation of the islands under international law, citing the fact that Hawai’i was unequivocally recognized as an independent state through international treaties with Britain, France and the United States since 1843. Kauanui provides a fuller discussion of the differences between the strategic invocation of both the right to indigenous self-determination under US domestic law and Hawai’i’s right to self-determination under international law. Within these two major positions in Hawaiian sovereignty discourse, federal recognition proponents seek permanent integration with the US state, while Hawaiian Kingdom representatives make claims for permanent recognition by the international system of states.<sup>16</sup>

My aim is not to evaluate these positions. Rather I argue that emphasizing “claims” and diverting the majority of our energies toward fighting for them on the state’s terrain marginalizes non-state based conceptions of the lāhui Hawai’i. We need to pay more attention to ways of enacting contemporary Hawaiian independence that are not solely based on Western statist forms. By focusing solely on state sovereignty claims, we can easily overlook the ways Kanaka communities are currently organizing to meet social needs in spite of the lack of a functioning state apparatus that represents us. In other words, I am not arguing that Hawaiians should give up our claims to a recognized, independent state, but the post-colonial world reminds us that political independence in and of itself will not automatically lead to a post-imperial future grounded in *aloha ‘āina*—a familial and mutually beneficial relationship with the land.

The Hawaiian enthrallment with the state system is neither unique nor surprising. Writing of indigenous social movements in Latin America, Hale generalizes that “oppressed peoples, in the vast majority of cases, have no alternative but to wage struggles for rights and redress using the language, the legal and political tools, and even the funding of their oppressors.”<sup>17</sup> These languages, concepts and strategies pose serious constraints, even though social movement actors subvert and alter intents and meanings of dominant forms and lexicons. Indigenous scholars have long argued that notions of sovereignty need to be broadened and rethought for our communities.<sup>18</sup> But if, as Soguk argues, “indigeneity still remains captive to the logic and fortunes of the territorial nation-state system and global capitalism,” what can an

anarcha-indigenist analysis offer for helping us imagine and realize worlds beyond these horizons?<sup>19</sup> And what does the contemporary praxis of Kanaka Maoli teach us about thinking beyond the state?

### Lāhui, Land, and Law

In this section, I discuss the ways participants in a coalition for Hawaiian independence, called Hui Pū (to join together), articulate and practice *lāhui*, peoplehood or nationhood. Comprised of activists and intellectuals with diverse visions for the future of an independently-governed Hawai'i and different opinions on the process for restoring national independence, the Hui Pū originally coalesced around collective opposition to US federal legislation that would cast Native Hawaiians as "indigenous people of the United States." Thus, their discussions also shed light on the tensions around indigeneity and Hawaiianness in contemporary activist and academic discourse. The group has maintained an adamant position against the State of Hawai'i and US governments' control and exploitation of seized Hawaiian national lands. Because participants reside on different islands within the Hawaiian archipelago and different states within the US, the group conducts the majority of its discussion and organizing by email. I have been active with Hui Pū and a subscriber to the listserv since fall 2005.

In late January 2008, Keli'i "Skippy" Ioane, long-time Kanaka independence organizer, musician, poet-philosopher, Vietnam veteran and leader of the King's Landing Village on Hawai'i island, encouraged Hui Pū members to resist a proposed land settlement between the State of Hawai'i and the state's Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA). The settlement, if approved by the legislature, would have transferred \$200M in property and cash to OHA to make up for nearly thirty years of unpaid revenues due that agency per state law and derived from the corpus of Hawaiian national lands currently held by the state. Popularly misnamed as the "ceded lands," the illegally seized Hawaiian Kingdom crown and government lands total 1.4 million acres and account for approximately ninety percent of state-controlled lands. Seen by many Kānaka as a mere drop in the bucket, the settlement would have transferred a mere 209 acres in three parcels plus a one-time payment of \$13 million in exchange for a release on all future claims stemming from the last thirty years.<sup>20</sup>

As Kanaka Maoli independentists contemplated this deal produced out of four years of closed-door negotiations among state officials (including OHA representatives),

loane recalled Hawaiian activists deliberating over whether to accept the 1980 Consent Decree.<sup>21</sup> That decree included a compromise which limited the US Navy to bombing one-third, rather than the entirety, of Kaho'olawe island and allowed monthly, Navy-regulated access to Kaho'olawe by Hawaiian cultural practitioners and other members of the Protect Kaho'olawe 'Ohana.<sup>22</sup> Writing to the Hui Pū, loane used the metaphor that people, both in 1980 and 2008, will move according to the "temperature of water present in the peoples souls...boiling, luke warm or cold." Only this time, as a kupuna (respected elder) rather than a young leader, he was less inclined to try to heat people up. Instead he encouraged each to "move as their temperature bades them."<sup>23</sup>

loane's contribution offers us a genealogical analysis of Hawaiian political movement since the 1970s, highlighting a particular notion of "lāhui" based in collective action. His account of key shifts in the focus, strategy and leadership of the Hawaiian movement track the movement of the movement. According to loane, the contemporary Hawaiian movement was created in large part by maka'āinana (commoners residing on the land) and working class people—"welfare warriors and farmer/fishermen"—who engaged in land occupation and got arrested for their confrontations with state power. It began on lands like Kaho'olawe, places where Kānaka Maoli and other kama'aina (local people of the land) were living, fishing, farming, hunting, gathering and practicing traditional ritual ceremonies. Lawyers and academics later used the momentum generated by those direct confrontations to move the primary sites of action and contention from the 'āina to courtrooms and legislatures. In loane's recounting, elements within the movement distanced the maka'āinana and their terrains of expertise from positions of leadership and focus. Yet it was these people and lands who had catalyzed the movement in the first place.

in the times gone by, back in da day, when the kaho'olawe gang was made up mostly of welfare warriors and farmer /fishermens we used to have what back then we used to call a LAHUI. that was before ka lahui you understand. and we were faced wif a similar situation but not quite the same. there was varying degrees of how we as a ohana should proceed for or against the consent decree. us from the moku pele was against the decree, but in the end, we lost. what i been gain from that was that the college people and the legal beagles been come after all the arrests and land occupations that the welfare warriors and farmer/fishermens been do for create the movement and then run wif da ball. well at that lahui that we had in punalu'u ka'u i ask to speak and what i said was that there was 3 different temperatures of water present



in the peoples souls that was there and that is how whatever spirit moves them moved them to behave. and that was boiling, luke warm, and cold. that being that whatever you felt was you degree is how you ass would follow. and i feel that is still true to the degree. this time i think that everyone should move as their temperature bades them to do. what happened back then in the day was that the leadership been move from the aina to the courtroom. the welfare warriors were deleted and delegated back to the streets with nothing but a sense of aina spirit cause we still there for most part today except we kupuna now. ernie how, what i going do this time is try not to be deleted and go move to the courtroom ahead of schedule. for me i no wish ernie body kanaka hard luck, but i going move wif my village people according to the temperature of my soul. i wish all water the determination to proceed.<sup>24</sup>

“Deleted and delegated,” the maka’āinana and the ‘āina remain. How then could the coalition reconnect the welfare warriors, the subsistence fisherman, and the ‘āina, so that they might lead collective Hawaiian action? loane suggests going to the courtroom “ahead” of the politicians by taking those very leaders of OHA to court. Yet ultimately he states he will discuss the issues with the people of his local community and move as they collectively decide. loane recognized and respected the diversity of the hui (group), and the often tenuous nature of disembodied email communication about deeply personal and political issues, by concluding his email without judgment: “i wish all water the determination to proceed.”

Importantly, loane makes a distinction between the lāhui that gathered to make decisions about the occupation of Kaho’olawe in the late 1970s and Ka Lāhui Hawai’i, which instituted a formal governance structure and articulated a master plan for achieving sovereignty in the late 1980s.<sup>25</sup> The earlier lāhui came together to decide how to proceed, in continued protest or in negotiation, with the US Navy over the bombing of Kaho’olawe. The latter, Ka Lāhui, set out to be an institutionalized, representative governing body working toward self-governance under US federal policy for Native Americans.<sup>26</sup> This is an important difference in terms of thinking about how lāhui is defined and how Hawaiian collective identity is understood and lived. In the first instance, loane’s lāhui was constituted through direct action for aloha ‘āina and collective decision-making. People came together to block the US military’s use of Kaho’olawe as a training and target range, and they engaged in direct decision-making about how to deal with the Navy. This made them a lāhui, and it is this formulation he implicitly privileges in his narrative. In the second instance,

membership in the lāhui was defined through conventional citizenship; one could vote or hold representative office. Full citizenship in Ka Lāhui was limited to Kānaka Maoli, while non-Hawaiians could be honorary, non-voting citizens. But Ioane spends little time focusing on this model, except to invoke it as a foil.

Generally speaking, in the Hawaiian language, “lāhui” refers to a great number of people, sharing a common connection and a collective identity. The prefix “lā-” can be a contracted form of “lau,” meaning leaf or a plant’s manner of leafing out, and it is often used to shorten the name of a plant, as in “lā’ī” (leaf of the kī, *Cordyline terminalis*) or “lā’ō” (leaf of kō, sugar cane, *Saccharum officinarum*). “Lau” also means many or numerous and is often used poetically to refer to an unquantifiable number of people or beings, as in the countless gods or descendants.<sup>27</sup> “Hui” can be used as both noun, meaning a society, organization, association, or team, and a verb, meaning to join, unite, mix, or combine. Thus, the components of the word lāhui suggest both a singular, organic body with branches that nourish the whole and a gathering of distinct, pre-existing elements combining to form a new entity.

Pukui and Elbert include the following English translations of the word lāhui: “nation, race, tribe, people, nationality; great company of people; species, as of animals or fish; breed, national or racial.”<sup>28</sup> In the context of highly charged political struggles for control of land, people, and other forms of wealth in Hawai‘i, the shades of difference between these meanings intensify. Hawaiians are variously defined as a racial group within a multiethnic state of the US, an indigenous group with contemporary rights to self-determination because of our continued presence on the land for millennia, and a national group based on descent from the citizenry of the modern Hawaiian Kingdom founded in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century.

Osorio underscores the “paradoxical terrains” in which Kānaka Maoli think, write and act upon our collective identity, arguing that questions of identity are at the crux of struggles for land and power in Hawai‘i.<sup>29</sup> Focusing on the 1887 Bayonet Constitution, Osorio describes ways in which the category of race (intertwined with class) became embedded in laws that stripped Kānaka Maoli of land and political enfranchisement. His mo‘olelo is a caution to Kānaka Maoli against becoming too focused on devising responses to colonial laws, particularly when they try to define us as a people. Such preoccupations with law, he argues, fragment the lāhui and can undercut our nationalist movements. Law alone can never adequately answer the question of who we are. Instead, Osorio argues Native self-definition is a matter of cultural and physical survival, emphasizing genealogy and nationality over race and blood quantum. Such a notion of lāhui is taken up by Ioane and inflected with

anarchistic tones, as he highlights the importance of village-based decision-making and collective action.

Interestingly, Ioane's non-legalist vision of *lāhui* comes in the midst of an independence activist e-forum in which many have taken up the discourse of "Hawaiian national" identity, focusing on the continuity of the Hawaiian State as the primary expression of *Ea* (sovereignty, life, breath) for Kanaka 'Ōiwi. For some, Hawaiian nationality is an outright rejection of the legal identity category of "indigenous," defined by a people's statelessness. Proponents of this view vigorously underscore the existence and international recognition of a Hawaiian State since the 1840s. This perspective developed as Kanaka intellectuals moved back and forth between academic research, public protest, and community education and outreach.

Scholars like Lam, Kauanui, and Sai have effectively shown that Hawaiian legal claims must be seen through the lens of international relations rather than US domestic law.<sup>30</sup> Such research has afforded independence activists more ammunition with which to argue against US assertions of jurisdiction over Hawai'i. This includes challenging OHA and State of Hawai'i, which derive their legitimacy through US authority. For example, Dr. Kekuni Blaisdell draws upon years of collective research on the applicability of international law on the Hawaiian situation in his public statement opposing the possible OHA land trust revenue deal, stating:

The state of Hawaii, as part of the U.S. federal system, has no authority to allocate any land of the sovereign Hawaiian Nation to any party other than the rightful owners... If the state government sincerely desires to address the issue of the lands, it must do so through international law, particularly the Law of Occupation, Law of Restitution and Law of Self-Determination. Under the International Law of Occupation, the United States must end its occupation, assist in the restoration of the Hawaiian national government and return all occupied national lands to that government.<sup>31</sup>

While it is important to utilize an International Relations (IR) framework to question popular and naturalized views of Hawai'i as unquestionably part of the US, it is equally important to maintain some critical distance by which to view the imperial legacies of IR itself. In terms of Hawai'i's political situation, such a critical perspective can be maintained by examining the tensions between the categories of the national

and the indigenous, rather than seeing them as mutually exclusive ways of defining Hawaiianess.

Sai argues justice for Hawaiian nationals is possible under the international laws of occupation, governing the relations between sovereign states.<sup>32</sup> I refer to this below as *the de-occupation thesis*. In recognizing this history and committing to this legal strategy, he asserts a particular identity for Hawaiians, defined strictly by law: “Native Hawaiians are not an indigenous people within the United States with a right to internal self-determination similar to Native American tribes, but rather comprise the majority of the citizenry of an occupied State with a right to end the prolonged occupation of their country.”<sup>33</sup> While his position opens up valuable legal avenues for Hawaiians, its insistence on and faith in the international legal system as the only means for justice is insufficient in a few ways. It deals with a single axis of oppression—the suppression and occupation of a state (the Hawaiian Kingdom) through a prolonged occupation by another state (the United States). Thus, the ways power and oppression function through multiple axes of oppression is overlooked, and as a result, the multiple terrains of struggle on which national liberation movements should be waged are minimized against the terrain of the international system of states. Moreover, by asserting that Hawaiian nationality and indigeneity are mutually exclusive, as defined by law, the complex layers of identity articulated by ‘Ōiwi Hawai‘i are glossed and discounted. Kānaka Maoli are not an indigenous people of the United States. We are indigenous to Hawai‘i. The Hawaiian Kingdom government itself recognized the distinct status and genealogy of the Native people. Complete disavowal of indigenous identity can also foreclose alliances and affinities Kānaka Maoli have already made with other indigenous peoples throughout the world who share common visions, ethics and challenges.

The de-occupation thesis and the accompanying privileging of Hawaiian nationality (citizenship) over indigeneity (genealogy or ethnicity) have been mobilized in both exclusive/elitist and inclusive/broadly-empowering ways. For example, some proponents assert that because Hawaiian state sovereignty still exists under the international laws regarding occupation, no activist movement is needed to restore the nation and throw off US imperialism. Instead the liberation of Hawaiians must be entrusted to international law experts who subscribe to a particular strategy of de-occupation. In contrast, an anarcha-indigenist theory and praxis registers a concern with understanding and alleviating multiple axes of oppression, and it emphasizes the collective mobilization of the people themselves, in direct action for their own liberation.<sup>34</sup> Coulthard, drawing heavily on Fanon, reminds us that unless the people themselves rise up to change oppressive dynamics of power, any formal changes in

political status will be largely ineffective and, potentially, meaningless in terms of their lived day-to-day experiences.<sup>35</sup>

The stark binary Sai draws between Hawaiian State Sovereignty and Hawaiian Indigeneity, perhaps necessary in certain legal and academic contexts, is rendered more fluid when mobilized by Hawaiian independence activists. They breathe *ea* (life, breath, sovereignty) into the discourse. Hui Pū members assert Hawaiian national identity in ways that suggest a nation—a *lāhui*—based on commitments to autonomy, non-oppression, and respect. They also call for action, collective decision-making, non-participation in oppressive settler institutions, and examination of the lived struggles of everyday people. All of these are values and strategies that resonate with anarchist, feminist and indigenist principles.<sup>36</sup>

Expressing her thoughts about the main message to be communicated in a Hui Pū-organized press conference against the OHA settlement bills, R. Kawehi Kanui cites the case *Lance Larsen and Keanu Sai* brought to the Permanent Court of Arbitration at the Hague.<sup>37</sup> Here she suggests that Hawaiians who aim to address our people's social problems under the auspices of the occupier state, namely OHA, step aside:

OHA and all the other entities are third parties. If anything, that should be the focus and not all the other issues...I would like to suggest a tighter press statement that speaks to the 3rd party conflict as well as using the occupiers laws against them, talking about the recent court opinion on this issue and the issue of who are the Hawaiian people. We are nationals with a plan and want OHA to step down and be replaced with those who are for independence that make up the Hawaiian people...The world court case established that the Hawaiian Kingdom does exist, merely occupied. Third parties should not have a place at the table, only *indigenous* native Hawaiians. Thank OHA for the work they've done, but now it's time that OHA trustees be replaced with native Hawaiians who can better the conditions of our people by putting them on the land, a roof over their heads, food on the table and better jobs the 'ohana can use to care for their own people.<sup>38</sup>

For Kanui, Hawaiian national identity and indigenous cultural identity are not mutually exclusive. In fact, her statement highlights that denial of Hawaiian sovereignty under US occupation has not been equally detrimental to all descendants of Hawaiian Kingdom subjects, which included people of various ethnicities. In

Kanui's view, it is the indigenous people who have suffered the greatest hardships under US occupation, and it is these social conditions that must be addressed. Like the *maka'āinana* of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Kanui recognizes the importance of an independent government that will recognize the distinct status and identity of *Kānaka Maoli*.

At the same time, Hawaiian loyalists like "Tane" describe the Hawaiian Kingdom—past, present and future—as "progressive" and inclusive. He envisions our practices of nationhood as sharply contrasting the exploitative, racist, and greedy tendencies he sees characterizing the United States.

Let's be very clear that the Hawaii Nationals are not indigenous people of the United States of America. This is an absurdly sick conceptual notion. The Hawaiian Kingdom is a multi-ethnic country like any other; it was at the time of the US invasion and occupation as it is today. Blood quantum is an ongoing US WASP racist tool which they practice and is not that of the Hawaiian Kingdom. Our mainstream society is the progressive Polynesian Hawaiian and not the aggressive, racist WASP. Unlike the USA, the Hawaiian Kingdom does not promote the doctrines of manifest destiny, expansionism, hegemony, imperialism, and covetedness.<sup>39</sup>

Tane both pushes against racialized, blood quantum definitions of Hawaiian identity and against US authority over the islands. His comment that the "Hawaiian Kingdom is a multi-ethnic country" asserts the historical continuity of Hawaiian sovereignty, in the face of a US federal recognition model that aims to create a domestic-dependent nation exclusive to Native Hawaiians. It is worth also remembering that although the Hawaiian Kingdom of the 19<sup>th</sup> century was a multi-ethnic country, *Kānaka* leaders of that time did not adopt the kind of contemporary multicultural ideology that asks us to be "color-blind" or to celebrate cultural difference while ignoring lived inequalities.

Foster Ampong points out the ways these lived experiences of inequality among *Kānaka* produce a diversity of national identification, but a common concern with survival. He suggests building on this commonality and bringing people together in an *Aha* (council), respecting diverse backgrounds and political affiliations. The vision would be to ground *Kānaka*, whether they identify as American or Hawaiian citizens, in a common opposition to external attempts define the relationships that constitute the *lāhui Hawai'i*.

It's hard for many of us who are sincere and passionate about our Cultural and National Identity, all the while struggling to feed/clothe/shelter our family in this contradictory society. We are Hawaiians living/making our way on both sides of the "Nationality Line" where one Nationality, us Kanaka Maoli, live on and are of these islands; and the Belligerent Invader/Occupier, the USA/State of Hawaii, whom are not of these islands coerce, intimidate and brainwash Kanaka Maolis that they are United States Citizens. I understand, respect and aloha each and every Kanaka Maoli who is forced live/survive in this manner by the hypocrisy and perversion of the United States of America and State of Hawaii. I believe very strongly that together, in tandem, from both sides of the "National Line" we can work in unison to achieve our goals.<sup>40</sup>

By focusing on addressing our social problems, Kānaka Maoli can build our collective capacities and relationships. Perhaps in this work, new identifications and consciousness will emerge.

Articulating one strategy for asserting our nationhood and caring for our people, "Laweleka" emphasizes the importance of raising the Kingdom over crafting responses to the settler state's laws. She rejects recognition-based approaches to settler-indigenous relations, and instead she calls Hui Pū to consider non-participation in the occupier's political system.

I fail to see any logic in jumping into anything just because they [OHA and the Governor of Hawai'i] are moving in that direction...if we continue to enter into their cat and mouse game as if Keanu and Lance hadn't gone to the Hague and we continue to say we need recognition from those who now occupy our country then we know nothing about who we really are, do we? We live here within the Kingdom and there are no other laws that really apply here while within the limits of this Kingdom. So what? I suggest we all start following Kingdom laws and stop playing on both sides of the fence.<sup>41</sup>

One recent action organized by the Hui Pū blends the approaches of relationship-building across diversity and purposeful non-recognition of settler state laws in a non-elitist, non-hierarchical practice of lāhui-hood. In early 2009, Independence-supporters gathered at the 'Iolani Palace grounds to honor our chiefs and ancestors

who are buried there and to symbolically re-weave the nation to wholeness. The lived practice of weaving the lāhui parallels Ioane's formulation, discussed earlier in this section. The event was also set against the political backdrop of State assertions of control over lands, to the exclusion of Kānaka Maoli.

In the last two years, the State of Hawai'i government has been increasingly and aggressively pushing its claim to sovereignty over the Hawaiian Kingdom's illegally seized national lands. First in 2008, under a Republican governor, the State of Hawai'i asked the US Supreme Court to rule on whether the State had the authority to sell the aforementioned lands, granted to it by the US federal government at the State's founding in 1959 and held in trust as the so-called "Ceded lands."<sup>42</sup> Kānaka Maoli argue that the integrity of this corpus of lands must be protected while there is still dispute as to their status. Second, later that same year, the State's Board of Land and Natural Resources passed regulations that forbid the gathering of 25 people or more at the 'Iolani Palace and its surrounding grounds without a permit. The new rules also outlawed protest signs and tents. Thus, the State attempts to regulate and dissuade the staging of Kanaka Maoli political events on the grounds, which are frequently used for that purpose. They were also addressing two attempts by Hawaiian independentists to assert sovereignty over the palace and its grounds by occupying earlier that year.

In the wake of those two State decisions, respected elder of the Hawaiian movement and member of Hui Pū, Kīhei Soli Nīheu, put out a call for direct, provocative action at the Palace. In response, a number of the younger members, led by Andre Perez and Keli'i Collier, organized *Ho'ā 'Ākoakoa* ("a convergence in unity," as translated by Perez). This spiritual, purposeful gathering aimed to bring people together and remind participants of our connection with that place—as both a burial site of our chiefs and a symbol of our nationhood. Fully aware that our gathering would bring state forces to impose the new regulations on large groups on the palace grounds, organizers explicitly envisioned a spiritual and religious approach to asserting our right to assemble there. Kānaka Maoli have maintained a relationship with 'Iolani Palace as "a site of spiritual grounding and political resistance," in Collier's words, for generations.<sup>43</sup> Perez saw it as essential to respond to the occupier state's actions by strengthening our relationship with this "beacon of our nationalism."<sup>44</sup> The event aimed to get people to talk to and teach one another, as well as to participate in spiritual ceremony.

Participants brought ti-leaves—noted for their protective, cleansing and healing properties—rather than protest signs, and we conducted protocols asking our gods



and ancestors for forgiveness and protection before entering the palace gates. Organizers arranged the group into a mobile pu'uhonua (a place of refuge and safety, especially in times of war). While state enforcement officers prepared for possible confrontation behind one of the buildings on the grounds, our procession entered the gates and chanted as we moved toward the burial mound. Perez noted that organizers wanted enforcement officials to see and hear us coming. Thus, the pū (conch shell) was blown and ki'i (carved wooden images) were held high. These signs were also intended to cue officers that the 'ākoakoa was spiritual and ceremonial in nature.

Once arriving at the mound, the cultural education and collective work really began. People were asked to weave the ti-leaves they brought from their respective homes together in a continuous lei (garland), and because some had never done this before, people got to teach each other. As we worked, we were encouraged to talk with each other, sharing knowledge and opinions on the "Ceded lands" court case and other current issues affecting our lands and peoples. Instead of typical rallies at which individual speakers impart knowledge to an audience, this 'ākoakoa was about conversation. Additionally, whereas ceremonial cultural events can sometimes exclude those who haven't been able to learn how to chant or prepare offerings, this event was organized specifically to begin teaching those things to all who were present. We literally and figuratively wove the bonds that connect us to each other and to the 'āina. This was a practice of lāhui, in which hierarchy was minimized and inclusion maximized, as long as one committed to the collective work. Both Kānaka Maoli and settlers participated.

State forces exceeded the forty or so Hui Pū members present. However, they did not press a confrontation or even approach us. Collier believes they were confused by the group's actions, making lei and talking to each other. He says it was an important lesson for state law enforcement officials, which included Kānaka Maoli: "you can't profile every group that comes to the Palace to exercise our own authority." Perez believes that the officers may have "seen the absurdity of their presence" because of what he describes as the "dignified nature" of the gathering. Why would armed officers be necessary to "protect" the palace from Hawaiians gathering to practice our cultural and religious rights?

When the lei was completed, the group offered this ho'okupu (ceremonial gift) together. A material manifestation of our collective mana (energies, power), the lei was so long that it encircled the mound several times. Collier explains that the value-creation was multi-layered: relationships were strengthened, people learned concrete

cultural skills, relevant political issues were discussed in a non-didactic style, and people could see the product of our collective work. Moreover, there was a sense of non-violent victory over armed state law enforcers.

This action of the Hui Pū and its approach to anti-elitist social movement grounded by indigenous spiritual and cultural practice offers a model for those interested in nonhierarchical, sustainable social organization beyond the state framework. Paralleling the strategies embedded in the *Ho‘ā ‘Ākoakoa*, Smith describes Native Feminist political projects that engage in “making power,” or building organizations and relationships that “model the world we are trying to create.” She writes that, in the creation of such autonomous zones, “there may be skirmishes with the state, but conflict is not the primary work of these groups.” Furthermore, she emphasizes that the key is to *proliferate* and network these zones.<sup>45</sup> In Hawaiian terms, we must *ho‘oulu pu‘uhonua*, grow and connect our places of refuge. Such a strategy of caring for the nation subverts patriarchal models of the nation-state that marginalize and obscure crucial parts of our *lāhui*.

### Kuleana and Kalo: Caring for our elder sibling

My aim is to encourage Hawaiian social movement away from a *politics of demand* (that puts the settler state at the center) and toward resurgent practices of independence and self-determination (that put the interdependence of land and people at the center). In the last few years, the efforts to stop genetic modification and patenting of *kalo* (taro)—the elder sibling and staple food of *Kānaka Maoli*—provide powerful examples of social movement that can empower communities through a reconnection to land and indigenous culture. In particular moments, organizers have also seen the ways diverting too much energy toward state-based approaches, like legislative lobbying, can stifle and frustrate the movement’s momentum.

In this section, I explore the ways *kuleana*, a Hawaiian notion intertwining authority and responsibility, is articulated and practiced in the efforts to “*mālama Hāloa*” (care for the taro) against commodification and genetic manipulation by university-based researchers, biotech corporations and state government.<sup>46</sup> I continue to look for the potential dialogues and affinities Hawaiian activism may have with anarcho-indigenist projects. In this effort, I draw on a notion of authority articulated by Bakunin, and I think about the ways *kuleana*, emerging from *Kanaka Maoli* resistance to GMOs, suggests *gendered* practices of authority. I attend to the gendered dimensions of

mobilizations against genetic engineering of Hawaiian taro by discussing both the analyses of gender put forth by these activists and the ways their activism is itself gendered.

The notions of *kuleana* discussed here offer two useful dimensions for those interested in post-imperial futures and the social movements that work to create them. First, the practices of “*mālama Hāloa*” provide an alternative to approaches to social action that cast confrontation and defense as the domain of men, and nurturing and care as the domain of women. Instead these *kuleana*—to nurture *and* to defend—are intertwined and practiced by people of multiple gender identifications. Second, traditional practices of *kalo* cultivation, including subsistence farming and the sharing of diverse varieties between farmers, parallel other indigenous agricultural systems. Together, such systems provide a diverse set of alternatives to industrial food production based on monocropping and a private property framework. *Kuleana*, then, might be pursued as a useful alternative to *ownership*.

Anarchism is commonly misunderstood as rejecting all authority and forms of organization or order. Instead, Bakunin suggests that human societies respect two forms of authority: 1) the power of natural laws, and 2) voluntary authority and subordination that shifts between people dependent upon context and each individual’s expertise. About the former, he writes:

What is authority? Is it the inevitable power of the natural laws which manifest themselves in the necessary linking and succession of phenomena in the physical and social worlds? Indeed, against these laws revolt is not only forbidden—it is even impossible. We may misunderstand them or not know them all, but we cannot disobey them; because they constitute the basis and fundamental conditions of our existence; they envelop us, penetrate us, regulate all our movements, thoughts and acts.<sup>47</sup>

For *Kānaka Maoli*, our *kuleana* is understood in the context of our genealogies, which tell us about the basis of our existence. In Hawaiian oral and now literary tradition, the origin of both *kalo* (taro) and *kānaka* (humans) is told in the genealogy of *Papahānaumoku* (“*Papa*, who gives birth to islands”) and *Wākea* (whose name refers to the broad, open expanse of sky). In their story, the islands of the Hawaiian archipelago are children of the matings of *Papa* and *Wākea*—sometimes with each other, and sometimes with others.

The births of kalo and kānaka were outcomes of the creation of gendered spheres of ritual worship and everyday behavior with regard to food under the 'Aikapu system. Under the 'Aikapu, men and women ate separately, and women were not allowed to eat or prepare certain foods representing male gods nor to sleep with men on specific nights of the moon dedicated to male akua (gods).<sup>48</sup> Women and men worshipped their deities in distinct but corresponding places. According to some traditions, the 'Aikapu was created so that Wākea could have an incestuous mating with their daughter, Ho'ohōkūkalani, without Papa knowing. The offspring produced from this mating was stillborn. The child, named Hāloanakalaukapalili, was buried in the earth, and from that spot the first kalo plant sprang forth. Ho'ohōkūkalani subsequently gave birth to a second child also named Hāloa, after his elder brother. He is known as the first kanaka and a great chief. Thus, kalo and kānaka originate out of a moment in which the kuleana of kāne (men) and wahine (women) was being redefined for that era.

If, as Bakunin suggests, human societies are subject to natural laws, the genealogy of Hāloa tells us something about what Kānaka Maoli recognized as natural law. Sexual union is powerful and sacred. Hawaiians recognize the natural law that life can be produced out of those unions. According to this genealogy, our kūpuna did *not* recognize any natural or social law that two people are bound to stay together because of such unions, particular not if other ethics have been breached.

It is important to note that in various versions of the story when Papa discovers her kāne has had sex with their daughter, she leaves for Kahiki and engages in new relationships. Papa and Wākea had also previously mated with others. This underscores the fact that their relationship should not been seen or described as "marriage" in the Western sense, which connotes subordination of the female as property and exclusive relations for a lifetime. The kuleana of a Hawaiian woman does not include being obedient or submissive to her kāne. In fact, the story tells us that a woman doesn't need to stick around if her man is having secretive relationships with others.

The story does communicate a core truth or "natural law" that Kānaka 'Ōiwi recognized as defining our kuleana: the binding relationship of mutual interdependence between kalo and kānaka, as elder and younger sibling respectively. The health and well-being of Kānaka Maoli and of Hāloa, the kalo, are intimately tied. Through our cultural practices of breeding and propagating kalo, our kūpuna (ancestors) were able to sustain a population of approximately one million

people in the islands with no imported foods. Hāloa, in turn, has enabled our ancestors to thrive for thousands of years. Together, they interwove a rich cultural heritage with ecological and social health.

In light of that connection, it is no surprise that after the arrival of Captain Cook and subsequent European merchants and missionaries, the population collapse of Kanaka 'Ōiwi corresponded with a severe decline in kalo. It is estimated that in 'Ōiwi Wale ("Only Natives") times, kalo covered at least 20,000 acres (90 square kilometers) over six islands in the Hawaiian archipelago. But by 1900, after about a century of intense contact with foreigners, only 1280 acres (5.2 square kilometers) were recorded in kalo production. Today, after more than a hundred years of US occupation, less than 400 acres (1.6 square kilometers) are planted in kalo.<sup>49</sup> If kalo's presence has declined by 98% in the islands, who holds the kuleana to mālama Hāloa?

In 2005, the same year that kalo production hit its lowest total output since statistics on taro yields were first recorded across the islands, Hawaiian community leaders discovered that the University of Hawai'i (UH) had acquired patents three years earlier on varieties of Hawaiian kalo crossbred with a Palauan variety. UH licensed the patented varieties to a handful of farmers with the stipulation that they would not be charged royalties for a three-year period.<sup>50</sup> The strategy, scientists argued, was to protect the taro from potential diseases that could harm "the industry." They decided, without consultation with the Hawaiian community, to take the kuleana of "protecting" the kalo.

Once this information spread through the relatively small community of people who steward *lo'i kalo* and *loko i'a* (taro fields and fishponds), Kānaka and non-Kānaka committed to traditional and organic farming practices organized a full-blown movement to "Mālama Hāloa." Hawaiian cultural practitioner and long-time community organizer Walter Ritte was among the leaders of a series of actions that pressured the University of Hawai'i to relinquish its patents on hybrids of Hawaiian kalo. This included chaining and blocking the doors of the School of Medicine, marching across the main road running alongside the UHM campus, dismantling the garden outside the University administration building, and permanently reclaiming that space by building an 'ahu (altar) to honor Hawaiian kūpuna.

At all of these actions, the messages were made clear in signs and chants in both English and Hawaiian: "You can't own our ancestor! We won't allow it!" and "Hell

no, GMO!” Protection of the elder sibling and the genealogy of Kanaka Maoli are seen as the kuleana of the people themselves. Alapa’i Hanapā put it succinctly:

Ownership of taro is like slavery ... we have demanded the UH give up its taro patents and return these varieties to Hawaiians. We are the custodians who have guided the appropriate use of kalo for millennia as a benefit for all people of Hawai’i.<sup>51</sup>

In the Hawaiian context, traditional systems of food production, economic distribution and environmental protection preserved the biodiversity of the islands, maintained fresh water resources, and assured the physical health of humans and other species far better than the industrial food systems dominant in American agriculture.

While the opposition to genetic engineering and patenting of kalo has been called “anti-science” by their political opponents, Chris Kobayashi, a female taro farmer from Hanalei, Kaua’i, who was heavily involved in the protests against UH patents, suggests that opposition is not simply against working with scientists. Rather, it is an opposition to ownership and the relations of power that such a system creates.

As a farmer, I strongly object to patents on taro or any other crop. Why should farmers have to pay for huli [the upper part of the root, used for replanting]? Our taxes have helped to fund UH. Some of us have been co-operators with UH on different taro research programmes including breeding, cultivation and diseases. More importantly, how can anyone claim ownership of plants that have evolved and been selected or bred by farmers for specific environmental conditions and desirable properties over generations?<sup>52</sup>

In her statement, she specifically opposes a system by which indigenous knowledge and farming practice is transformed into individual ownership.

Many opponents of genetic engineering of kalo have called it an affront to Hawaiian cultural, in contrast to capitalist, values. Ritte and others have likened the genetic modification and patenting of kalo to the Māhele, the process by which land was privatized and individual interests divided out as a way to allow for capitalist penetration, in the name of protection from external threats. In contrast, at hearings to create a statewide moratorium on genetic engineering of Hawaiian varieties, farmers like Jim Cain of Waipi’o highlighted thousands of year-old practices of

breeding and sharing kalo among practitioners, now both indigenous and non-indigenous.

Outside the legislative chambers, activists put their critique of commodification another way: “Stop pimpin’ Hāloa!” Thus, ownership of taro is not just like slavery, but also like another form of gendered capitalist exploitation of bodies: prostitution. Their analysis exposes the state university and government as “pimpin’” the male, Hāloa, for high-rolling corporate biotech johns, and puts an interesting twist on Trask’s “Lovely Hula Hands: Corporate Tourism and the Prostitution of Hawaiian Culture,” in which she argues against the mass-based tourist industry that prostitutes feminine representations of Hawai’i.<sup>53</sup> Additionally, activists who represent Hāloa as the elder sibling who cannot speak for himself—and thus requires protection from impending exploitation of his sexual and procreative power—also adapt traditional Hawaiian views of birth order and rank.

The focus of movement energy toward passing a legislative bill that would put a moratorium on genetic modification of kalo was incredibly successful in that thousands of pieces of testimony poured forth from across the islands in support of a moratorium. However, in the last two sessions of the state legislature, a moratorium bill has never been passed, thus leaving those who mobilized that wave of voices frustrated and letting those who testified leave feeling disempowered and ineffectual. Relationship-building and critical consciousness-raising seem to be the more lasting accomplishments.

The grassroots efforts to mālama Hāloa dovetail with other investigations into the ways multinational biotechnology corporations like Monsanto, Dow and Syngenta are utilizing lands across various islands in the Hawaiian archipelago for unregulated, open field testing of genetically-modified crops, particularly corn. In an early effort to increase public awareness about the experimentation these corporations were doing on Hawaiian lands, the Hemowai brothers of Moloka’i island released an episode of their popular public access television show discussing open field testing of GMOs, particularly by Monsanto corporation.

Utilizing an anarchistic form of media activism, in an unabashedly masculine and confrontational style, the Hemowai brothers broadcast sharp political analyses of issues impacting Hawaiian lands, people and culture. With a population of just over 7,000, Moloka’i issues receive little attention in the mainstream media across the larger islands. Through their show on Maui county public access station, AKAKU, the pair bring more visibility to Moloka’i issues, especially important for an island that

lacks significant representation in state and county decision-making bodies. Their fierce messages of resistance against development, foreign encroachment, and local collaboration with corporate power has gained significant esteem among young Hawaiians and locals reeling at the pace by which Hawai'i is being transformed and local communities disempowered by overdevelopment at the hands of multinational corporations whose owners and decision makers reside offshore.

"Making Monstas: Our Story of GMOs," opens with a genealogical analysis of biotech corporations, Monsanto and Dow, sparked by two simple questions that get straight to the point about kuleana: "Who the f— you? And where the f— you from?" Through these critical questions, the Hemowai brothers expose Monsanto and Dow as major producers of Agent Orange during the Vietnam war and highlight the legacies of environmental pollution left in American cities where industrial chemical production was located. Driving from place to place, the pair show viewers how close GMO test fields are to elementary schools, community parks, housing for the elderly, and the local community college. The episode concludes with a powerful call for Moloka'i residents to take up their kuleana by phoning or visiting the land owners and government officials who allow these companies to operate. "They no give a f— about us, these companies. They no give a f—, and we gotta know that," states Lieutenant Laho.

Framing their resistance as defense of the 'āina, the Hemowai brothers often speak in metaphors of battle against efforts to buy, sell or otherwise compromise the integrity of Hawaiian culture for money and individual gain. What is less visible in their television programs are the aspects of their daily lives that provide a foundation for the contention and confrontation—maintaining a traditional Hawaiian loko i'a (fishpond), teaching school children about marine ecology, and caring for their own families. These aspects of Hawaiian masculinity, apparently, don't make for particularly exciting television. In that sense, like Hawaiian State discourse referenced in the previous section, important aspects of 'Ōiwi masculinity and femininity are sometimes marginalized when metaphors of battle and war are mobilized.<sup>54</sup>

"Protection" of native foods and a people's capacity to grow and relate to those foods on their own terms demands not only metaphors of confrontation and violent self-defense, but also of nurturing and procreation. From a traditional Hawaiian perspective, both war and peace—fighting to defend and nurturing growth—have male and female manifestations. Whereas under the 'Aikapu, it may have been the case that women did not prepare certain foods representing male gods, Kānaka are now living in a different time. For example, in a situation where our people's population



has rebounded, yet Hāloa has continued to decline, people of various genders and ethnicities should be engaged in the work of mālama Hāloa. If we are going to restore our ability to feed ourselves as a nation, we will need to rethink gendered divisions of labor and enlist all the help we can get.

Perhaps what is most promising in the efforts to “mālama Hāloa” is the diversity of activism and identification, not merely allowing for but *demanding* a multiplicity of approaches across gender and ethnic lines, and strengthening international indigenous networks. Demonstrations at Bachman Hall, the administrative center of the University of Hawai‘i system, included both destructive acts and creative acts, led by kāne, wahine, and mähū (variously understood as transgendered, two-spirited or third gender), and legislative hearings brought indigenous people from the various nations in the Americas testifying about their experiences with the genetic modification of corn and wild rice.

The farmers who came out to protest university-held patents remind us that within diversity, kuleana should be respected. That is, we might think of the Hawaiian notion of kuleana as sharing an affinity with Bakunin’s notion of mutual, shifting authority. Bakunin argues that because no person can hold any large portion of human knowledge, authority must be shared with respect to those who develop expertise in particular areas. He envisions it shared in this way:

If I bow before the authority of the specialists and avow my readiness to follow, to a certain extent and as long as may seem to me necessary, their indications and even their directions, it is because their authority is imposed on me by no one, neither by men nor by God...I bow before the authority of special men because it is imposed on me by my own reason... I receive and I give - such is human life. Each directs and is directed in his turn. Therefore there is no fixed and constant authority, but a continual exchange of mutual, temporary, and, above all, voluntary authority and subordination.<sup>55</sup>

We in Hawai‘i might consider blending this voluntary and mutual authority with older Hawaiian practices of governance and decision-making about our natural resources and relations, as outlined by Kumu John Ka‘imikaua. In his description of the ‘aha councils, it is the practitioners themselves who lead in decision-making for they had the most intimate and in-depth knowledge of particular resources. In the current context, for example, local farmers would have greater kuleana in decision-making

about kalo and local land and water usage than legislators or biotech executives who do not reside in or have a personal relationship with those areas. Small farmers would voluntarily engage the expertise of scientists on the farmer's terms, rather than the other way around.

*Kuleana* should be more fully explored as a principle for building post-imperial futures that carve autonomous spaces outside of the capitalist, private property system by looking at traditional practices of providing food for the people. For example, mahi'ai kalo (taro farmers) have always sustained healthy kalo production by sharing *huli*, the remaining segment after the leaves and corm have been cut from which a new plant can be propagated. Similarly, seed exchange is widely practiced by indigenous farmers throughout the world. What if economic responsibility was defined by the amount we shared, rather than the surplus amount monopolized and hoarded? By looking to the indigenous practices that sustained people for millennia, we can locate hope and concrete strategies for creating post-imperial futures. After hundreds of generations of thriving on these islands, Kānaka Maoli clearly articulated one of the most powerful natural laws, to which we are all subject: he ali'i ka 'āina, he kauwā ke kanaka. The land is a chief, and the people are her servants. This kuleana is upon all people, whether we recognize it or not. If we fail to respect this authority, we will not survive as a lāhui Kānaka.

## Conclusion

In the wake of heated protests against patenting kalo at the University of Hawai'i, Kānaka gathered without mass media coverage to establish a permanent Hawaiian presence and sacred space just outside the university administration building. In contrast to earlier actions, the tone was decidedly to *ho'oulu* (nurture growth) and to *ho'omana kūpuna* (to honor the elders and ancestors). A few hundred people passed stones from hand to hand along the mile-long stretch of road between Kānewai lo'i and Bachman Hall. The stones had been brought from locations throughout the islands. Some were being returned after an action in which protestors destroyed the garden outside Bachman Hall a few months earlier. The ahu, or altar, built with these stones still stands not only to remind UH administrators that Kānaka Maoli are always present. It also remains as a place that demands on-going kuleana, responsibility to maintain and care for the ahu and the ancestors honored thereby. For kuleana does not end when the protests are over. Similarly, the lāhui cannot be seen as an inert thing, fully captured by states or laws regarding identity or sovereignty. The actions and words of activists discussed in this article remind us that Hawaiian social movement is at its best when, rather than demanding that the land be given back to

Hawaiians, it is getting Hawaiians back on the land.<sup>56</sup> Through the continued cultivation of those relationships, we may see a post-imperial Hawai'i.

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Among, Foster: Hui Pū, Jan. 25, 2008.

Ioane, Keli'i: Hui Pū, January 28, 2008.

Kanui, R. Kawehi: Hui Pū, Mar. 16, 2008.

"Laweleka": Hui Pū, Jan. 19, 2008.

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#### Personal Interviews

Collier, Keli'i : July 2009.

Perez, Andre: July 2009.

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> He kanaka 'ōiwi Hawai'i au. 'O O'ahu ku'u one hānau. I am a mom, a proponent of Hawaiian independence, a writer, a co-founder of a Hawaiian culture-based school, and a woman of the ocean.

<sup>2</sup> Ka Lāhui Hawai'i was the largest sovereignty organization of the 1990s, at its height, claiming approximately 20,000 registered citizens. Ka Pākaukau is an independence advocacy group made up of representatives from various organizations and families. For more on the differences in strategy between OHA, KLH and Ka Pākaukau in the 1990s, see <http://www.sovereignstories.org/articles/article-100years.htm>

<sup>3</sup> See Merry, Sally Engle. (1996). Legal Vernacularization and Ka Ho'okolokolonui Kanaka Maoli, The People's International Tribunal, Hawai'i 1993. *PolAR: The Political and Legal Anthropology Review* 19 (1), 67-82; and Churchill, Ward, Sharon H. Venne and Lilikalā Kame'eleihiwa, eds. (2005). *Islands in Captivity: The International Tribunal on the Rights of Indigenous Hawaiians*. New York: South End Press.

<sup>4</sup> US Public Law 103-150, adopted November 23, 1993.

<sup>5</sup> Day, Richard. (2005). *Gramsci is Dead: Anarchist Currents in the Newest Social Movements*. London and Toronto: Pluto Press and Between the Lines. (p.14).

<sup>6</sup> Alfred, Taiiaike. (2005). *Wasase: Indigenous Pathways of Action and Freedom*. Peterborough, Ontario: Broadview Press; Smith, Andrea. (2005). *Conquest: Sexual Violence and American Indian Genocide*. Cambridge: South End Press; Coulthard, Glen. (2007). Subjects of Empire: Indigenous Peoples and the 'Politics of Recognition' in Canada. *Contemporary Political Theory* 6, 437-460.

<sup>7</sup> Many of these discussions took place at the Indigenous Leadership Forum 2007, hosted by the Indigenous Governance Program at the University of Victoria, British Columbia, and at an International Studies Association Venture Research Workshop, titled "Post-Imperial Futures: Anarchism, Indigenism and Feminism in Critical International Relations Theory," organized by Jaqueline Lasky in 2008. The notion of "post-imperial futures" I cite here comes from Lasky's paper, "Indigenism, Anarchism, Feminism: an Emerging Framework for Exploring Post-Imperial Futures in International Relations." A shortened and revised version of that paper serves as the introduction for this issue.

<sup>8</sup> Osorio, Jonathan. (2004). Kū'ē and Kū'oko'a (Resistance and Independence): History, Law and Other Faiths. *Hawaiian Journal of Law & Politics* 1, 92-113.

<sup>9</sup> Kauanui, J. Kēhaulani. (2005). The Multiplicity of Hawaiian Sovereignty Claims and the Struggle for Meaningful Autonomy. *Comparative American Studies* 3(3), 283-299.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid, Kauanui, p.295.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid, Day, p.9.

<sup>12</sup> See Dudley, Michael Kioni and Keoni Kealoha Agard. (1990). *A Call for Hawaiian Sovereignty*. Honolulu: Na Kane o ka Malo Press; Hasager, Ulla and Jonathan Friedman. (1994). *Hawai'i: Return to Nationhood*. Copenhagen: International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs, Document No. 75; Kame'eleihiwa, Lilikalā. (1992). *Native Lands and Foreign Desires: Pehea la e pono ai?* Honolulu: Bishop Museum Press; and Trask, Haunani-Kay. 1993. *From a Native Daughter: Colonialism and Sovereignty in Hawai'i*. 1st ed. Monroe, Maine: Common Courage Press.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid, Merry.

<sup>14</sup> United States. Department of the Interior and Department of Justice. (2000). From Mauka to Makai: The River of Justice Must Flow Freely: Report on the Reconciliation Process between the Federal Government and Native Hawaiians.

<sup>15</sup> Numerous websites representing various organizations asserting the continuity of the Kingdom exist. For examples, see the Hawaiian Kingdom government's Council of Regency at <http://www.hawaiiankingdom.org/>, the sovereign and independent Hawaiian nation at <http://www.hawaii-nation.org/>; the Kingdom under Akahi Nui at <http://www.freehawaii.org/>; the Hawaiian Kingdom Government under Mahealani Asing <http://www.higovt.org/>; the reinstated government of Hawai'i under Prime Minister Henry Noa at <http://www.hawaii-gov.net/>; information on the Kingdom of Hawai'i at <http://www.pixi.com/~kingdom/>; and Reinstated Hawai'i at <http://www.reinstatedhawaii.com/index.htm>.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid, Kauanui, 2005.

<sup>17</sup> Hale, Charles. (2006). Activist Research v. Cultural Critique: Indigenous Land Rights and the Contradictions of Politically Engaged Anthropology. *Cultural Anthropology* 21(1), (p. 111).

<sup>18</sup> See Alfred, Taiaiake. (1999). *Peace, Power, Righteousness: An Indigenous Manifesto*. Don Mills, Ontario: Oxford University Press; Barker, Joanne, ed. (2005). *Sovereignty Matters: Locations of Contestation and Possibility in Indigenous Struggles for Self-Determination, Contemporary Indigenous Issues*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press; and Ibid, Smith (2005).

<sup>19</sup> Soguk, Nevzat. (2007). Indigenous Peoples and Radical Futures in Global Politics. *New Political Science* 29(1), (p. 3).

<sup>20</sup> Van Dyke (2008) provides a thorough exposition of the history of the Hawaiian national lands, specifically the "Crown lands" and discusses the legal basis by which the Office of Hawaiian Affairs should annually receive revenues from the Public Lands Trust. According the 2008 proposal negotiated by OHA, two land parcels on O'ahu and one on the Big Island with a tax assessed value of \$187 million, plus \$13 million in cash, would have been transferred to that office. The measure was not passed.

<sup>21</sup> In 1980, a settlement Consent Decree and Order was reached in the Aluli et al. vs. Brown suit, which had been filed by the Protect Kaho'olawe 'Ohana (PKO) in Federal District Court in 1976. Aluli et al. V. Brown (civil suit no. 76-0380).

<sup>22</sup> See <http://www.kahoolawe.org/history.html>.

<sup>23</sup> Ioane, Keli'i, email to Hui Pū group, Jan. 28 2008.

<sup>24</sup> Ioane, Ibid.

<sup>25</sup> The Consent Decree between the US Navy was signed in 1980. For further information on the Consent Decree, see [http://www.kahoolawe.org/home/?page\\_id=6](http://www.kahoolawe.org/home/?page_id=6).

<sup>26</sup> Ka Lāhui Hawai'i adopted their constitution in 1987. See "Ka Lahui Hawai'i: A Native Initiative for Sovereignty" at <http://www.hawaii-nation.org/turningthetide-6-4.html>.

<sup>27</sup> Pukui, Mary Kawena and Samuel H. Elbert. (1986). *Hawaiian Dictionary: Hawaiian-English and English-Hawaiian*. Revised and Enlarged edition. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid, Pukui and Elbert, p.190.

<sup>29</sup> Osorio, Jonathan Kamakawiwo'ole. (2001). 'What Kine Hawaiian Are You?' A Mo'olelo About Nationhood, Race, History, and the Contemporary Sovereignty Movement in Hawai'i. *The Contemporary Pacific* 13 (2), 359-379.



<sup>30</sup> Lam, Maivan C. (2000) *At the edge of the state : indigenous peoples and self-determination*. Ardsley, NY: Transnational Publishers.; Kauanui, Kehaulani. (2005). Precarious Positions: Native Hawaiians and US Federal Recognition. *The Contemporary Pacific* 17(1): 1-27; and Sai, David Keanu. (2008). A Slippery Path Towards Hawaiian Indigeneity: An Analysis and Comparison Between Hawaiian State Sovereignty and Hawaiian Indigeneity and Its Use and Practice in Hawai'i Today. *Journal of Law and Social Challenges* 10.

<sup>31</sup> Blaisdell, Kekuni. "Say no to the transfer of lands of the Hawaiian Nation" Honolulu Star-Bulletin, Sunday, February 3, 2008. Online edition: <http://starbulletin.com/print/2005.php?fr=/2008/02/03/editorial/commentary2.html>

<sup>32</sup> Ibid, Sai.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid, Sai, p.32.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid, Lasky.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid, Coulthard.

<sup>36</sup> For example, see the special issue of *New Socialist Magazine* on "Indigenous Resurgence," issue 58, Sept/Oct 2006, available at <http://www.newsocialist.org/index.php?id=1005>.

<sup>37</sup> See <http://www.hawaiiakingdom.org/world-court.shtml>.

<sup>38</sup> Kanui, R. Kawehi, email to Hui Pū group, Mar. 16, 2008.

<sup>39</sup> Tane, email to Hui Pū group, Dec. 9, 2007.

<sup>40</sup> Ampong, Foster, email to Hui Pū group, Jan. 25, 2008.

<sup>41</sup> Laweleka, email to Hui Pū group, Jan. 19, 2008.

<sup>42</sup> On March 31, 2009, the Supreme Court of the United States found in favor of the State of Hawai'i. The decision, rejected by many in the Hawaiian community, asserts that the State of Hawai'i has the authority to sell lands from the "Ceded lands" trust.

<sup>43</sup> Collier, Keli'i, Personal interview, July 2009.

<sup>44</sup> Perez, Andre, Personal interview, July 2009.

<sup>45</sup> Smith, Andrea. (2008). American Studies Without America: Native Feminisms and the Nation-State. *American Quarterly* 60 (2), 313-314.

<sup>46</sup> Young defines kuleana as "a received sense of ancestrally-based responsibility." See Young, Kanalu. (2006) Kuleana: Toward a Historiography of Hawaiian National Consciousness, 1780 -2001. *Hawaiian Journal of Law & Politics* 2, 1-33.

<sup>47</sup> Bakunin, Mikhail. (1882). What is authority? URL: <http://www.panarchy.org/bakunin/authority.1871.html> [Accessed 7/25/2009].

<sup>48</sup> Ibid, Kame'eleihiwa.

<sup>49</sup> Cho, John, Roy A. Yamakawa and James Hollyer. (2007). *Hawaiian Kalo, Past and Future*. Honolulu: Cooperative Extension Service, College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources, University of Hawai'i at Mānoa. (p. 3-4).

<sup>50</sup> See Wong, Sterling Kini. (2006). Patents Pounding. *Ka Wai Ola o OHA* 23 (3). URL: <http://www.oha.org/pdf/kwo06/0603/16.pdf> [Accessed 3/20/2008].

<sup>51</sup> Ritte, Walter and Bill Freese. (2006). Haloa. Seedling, URL: <http://www.grain.org/seedling/?id=441> [Accessed 3/20/2008].

<sup>52</sup> Ibid, Ritte and Freese.

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<sup>53</sup> Trask, Haunani-Kay. (1993). "Lovely Hula Hands: Corporate Tourism and the Prostitution of Hawaiian Culture." In *From a Native Daughter: Colonialism and Sovereignty in Hawai'i*. 1st ed. Monroe, Maine: Common Courage Press.

<sup>54</sup> For a fuller discussion of Hawaiian masculinity, see Tengan, Ty P. Kāwika. (2008). *Native Men Remade: Gender and Nation in Contemporary Hawai'i*. Durham: Duke University Press.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid, Bakunin.

<sup>56</sup> Most recently, I was reminded of this by Kaleikoa Ka'eo, who spoke at Lā Ho'ihō'i Ea (Sovereignty Restoration Day), July 26, 2009, at Thomas Square in Honolulu.