

**Ho`i Hou iā Papahānaumoku:  
A History of Ecocolonization  
in the Pu`uhonua of Wai`anae**

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO THE GRADUATE DIVISION OF THE  
UNIVERSITY OF HAWAI`I IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIRMENTS  
FOR THE DEGREE OF

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

IN

AMERICAN STUDIES

DECEMBER 2008

BY

Trisha Kehaulani Watson

Dissertation Committee:

Mark Helbling, Chairperson

Paul Hooper

William Chapman

Jon Kamakawiwo`ole Osorio

Carlos Andrade

We certify that we have read this dissertation and that, in our opinion, it is satisfactory in scope and quality as a dissertation for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in American Studies.

DISSERTATION COMMITTEE

---

Chairperson

---

---

---

---

## Abstract

For the indigenous people of Hawai`i, well-being derived directly from their relationship to their land, and as such, the economic, social and physical ailments that plague them today are symptoms of their separation from their land and traditional lifestyle. This separation resulted from ecocolonization, a new theory created in this dissertation. Ecocolonization is the process by which indigenous people collaterally suffer the effects of the seizure and destruction of their natural resources by an outside political force, in this case, western settlement in Hawai`i. This dissertation looks at how Hawaiians speak of their own land and their relationship to it to explore the impact of ecocolonization in Wai`anae by employing indigenous epistemologies, specifically Hawaiian epistemologies. The theory of ecocolonization is then developed and used to explore the history of Wai`anae. We see how Wai`anae residents work to keep it as a pu`uhonua, or sanctuary, for the Native Hawaiians who live there. We learn westerners who stole the waiwai or wealth from Wai`anae through the seizure of land and water and how this led to economic devastation in the district. We look at the complete seizure of Mākua Valley and reflect upon the site as a symbol of how the Hawaiian family unit has been dismantled. We look at the relationship between healthy land and healthy people and analyze the use of poor health as a means of keeping Hawaiians colonized. Ultimately, the ills we witness in Hawai`i today among `ōiwi can only be cured when the land and natural resources of Native Hawaiians are returned to them, such that they may restore the traditional practices that first granted them well-being; for prosperity will only return to Hawaiians when we ho`i hou iā Papahānaumoku, return to Papahānaumoku.

## Contents

Introduction: Ecocolonization and the Pu`uhonua of Wai`anae	1
Ka Leo o Ka `Āina: The Voice of the Land	35
Ke Kulanakauhale o Wai`anae: Wai`anae, City of Refuge	67
Mālama Mākua: Ku`e i ka ma`i na waho mai (resistance to sickness)	164
Kumuhea: Ecocolonization and the Epidemics of the Native People	124
Conclusion: Ho`i Hou iā Papahānaumoku	214
Bibliography	228

**Introduction:**  
**Ecocolonization and the Pu`uhonua of Wai`anae**



© David Muench/CORBIS

Wai'anae Coast in the 1960s

There once lived two sisters, twin sisters, on the coast of Mā`ili in the district of Wai`anae. Famed for their beauty, they were loved by many. So it would be fated that one of the sisters would capture the attention of a chief from the region, who sadly could not distinguish the woman he loved from her twin sister. Legend tells us that a mo`o (sacred dragon-like creature common in Hawaiian tales) came along and transformed all three into hills. Those hills are Pu`u Mā`ili`ili`i, Pu`u o Hulu Kai and

## Hoi Hou iā Papahānaumoku

Pu‘u o Hulu Uka. The hills can be seen today, where the chief continues to look longingly upon the sisters, attempting to distinguish his love from her sister.



Pu‘u o Hulu sits in the foreground while Pu‘u Mā‘ili‘ili‘i can be seen in the distance.

© Trisha Kehaulani Watson

While this mystic image of Wai`anae is common among residents, it is not so common among outsiders. Just as residents of Wai`anae are quick to recount stories of Wai`anae's rich history and magic, non-residents are also very quick with their stories about Wai`anae. Their stories are far less affectionate; they are in fact vicious and cruel. Many of those judgments are made publicly, on blogs.

One recent example came on July 9, 2008, after a jury convicted Les Schnabel Jr. of Manslaughter after less than a day of deliberation.<sup>1</sup> The prosecutor asked for the

## Introduction

maximum sentence of 20 years in prison. The conviction arose from an incident that occurred in 2007 at a beach park out in Wai`anae. Tourist and potential law student, Christopher Reuther, arrived in Hawai`i, and on the day of his arrival, went out to a beach in Nānākuli. Various reports say he was warned not to stay at that park.<sup>2</sup> He was also warned about taking pictures of beach residents. He did both anyway. After taking a picture of Schnabel without his consent, Schnabel confronted Reuther.<sup>3</sup> Schnabel attacked Reuther, punching him once in the head. Reuther fell, hitting his head on his rental car as he fell. Reuther died two days later from his injuries.<sup>4</sup>

Reuther's death was a tragic event, but also a telling one. The various responses it garnered from the community were very revealing. Blogs popped up quickly. One blog dedicated to the incident posted an article, "Killed for being Haole." The article read: "Why did Christopher Reuther have to die less than 24 hours after visiting Hawaii? Because he was racially profiled and attacked. His crime? Being white and on a beach typically researched (sic) for locals."<sup>5</sup> Other blogs expressed similar sentiments. The blog for the Honolulu Advertiser included comments like "he needs to be in jail and his bloodline stopped...PUT HIM IN JAIL NOW PROTECT THE CITIZENS OF THE STATE FROM ANIMALS LIKE LES SCHNABLE JR HE IS A REPEAT OFFENDER."<sup>6</sup> While these comments can be considered to be typically made for any local community, many were specific to Wai`anae:

i been living here for 16 years and I cannot understand why locals in wainnae feel they are so tough and they hate when tourists go there, they live on the beach ,do drugs commit crimes, like kill people, rob and steal, then all of a sudden they get arrested and go to trial, take anger management, AND MIRACULOUSLY they are healed I hope this guy gets the MAX 20 YEAR TERM, so him and his drug buddies, who are probably still in WAINNAE, being criminals can learn form his case.<sup>7</sup>

## Hoi Hou iā Papahānaumoku

These comments reflect a distinct and geographically located bias against the people of Wai`anae. There appears little effort to understand the area better, as the last blogger could not spell Wai`anae correctly, conversely spelling it wrong twice and with the same incorrect spelling.

Unfortunately, the negative image of Wai`anae, as a place where “locals... feel they are so tough ... live on the beach, do drugs commit crimes...” has become an increasingly predominate one. The comments were similar after fires destroyed the homes of campers living on the beaches. “Kids in Waianae are not trustworthy because ...do i even have to explain? What scumbags, I hope their parents get some punishment for being too dumb and overweight..”<sup>8</sup> These views represent a perspective held by outsiders about Wai`anae.

The conflict in these two views, one of Wai`anae as rich and sacred and the other as dangerous and downtrodden, represents a larger tension that has existed in Wai`anae for hundreds of years between residents and outsiders. In the early years of foreign contact, the conflict was between native residents (kama`āina) and those who sought to control land and resources in the region. Towards the end of the Hawaiian Monarchy in the 1890s, the conflict escalated as entrepreneurs and military interests influenced land-holdings in the area. Eventually, during the territory years in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, military interests would lead to radical shifts in landownership and economic activity in Wai`anae, serving as the precursor for nearly one hundred years of social and physiological deterioration of the native population. While community dialogues about the conditions in Wai`anae may currently revolve around crime and homelessness, this dissertation traces these contemporary concerns back to

## Introduction

their origins. Upon review of this tumultuous history, we find the origin of this conflict to be a struggle common to native communities: it is a struggle for land.

This dissertation begins with the visible strife in Wai`anae today. The problems that persist in Wai`anae are multi-faceted: homelessness, poor health, poverty, economic depression. This dissertation quickly moves through the contemporary crises back to a history that reveals a very different Wai`anae. Through newspaper accounts, stories and song, a rich and beautiful Wai`anae right beneath and coming up through the cracks of what presently exists is discovered. A population of culturally mindful and astute people who have fought to protect their natural resources for centuries is found. The reverence shown these residents is the perpetuation of a tradition in which residents of this community have long celebrated their land. This dissertation shows how economic and social struggles in Wai`anae today are tied to the historical land struggles of the past.

We begin with the strife because it is where I, as a researcher, began. It is the easiest thing to see. Suffering and disadvantage run rampant in Wai`anae. I first went out there to look at it, to understand it. As a Native Hawaiian, I felt tremendous obligation to help other Native Hawaiians. I did not grow up in Wai`anae. I grew up in town, about an hour away, but in a completely different world. I lived in a single family home with my parents and brother. I went to an elite private school. I went to college, then on to graduate school. By comparison, thousands of children and young adults in Wai`anae live in tents, climbing from the beach each morning to go to school. Many homes are broken. Health problems are common. It is an unimaginable life for me, even today.

Hoi Hou iā Papahānaumoku

Somewhere between high school and college I started spending a lot of time in Ewa Beach, outside Wai`anae. (There was a boy who became a husband.) The area looked nothing like the Mānoa, where I grew up. Mānoa was cool and mountainous. The streets were wide and clean. Neighbors were mindful, quiet, and considerate. I have never been the victim of a home invasion. Ewa Beach by comparison was miserably hot and dry. It stank from the smell of the nearby landfill and pig slaughterhouse. People shouted or turned up the television regularly when airplanes approached for their landing, directly over the houses. Most houses had bars on the windows, often installed after multiple break-ins. I didn't even know such places existed on my island.

Upon entering graduate school, I learned about environmental justice. Environmental justice is the social movement and academic area of study that looks at the disproportionate placement of locally unwanted land uses are sited in or near disadvantaged communities. I decided to write my master's thesis on environmental justice on the Leeward Coast to bring attention to the things I saw in Ewa Beach. My master's thesis studied the grave disproportionate placement of the island's hazardous land uses in Ewa and Wai`anae. I continued the study of environmental justice while in law school. I completed law school and entered into my PhD program. Less than two years into the program, my husband was diagnosed with a rare cancer of the fat cells called liposarcoma. There are one in three hundred cases in the United States each year. The average age of onset is sixty. My husband was twenty-eight. No doctor had any reasonable explanation for his rare diagnosis. They could only speculate that it was the result of environmental factors.

## Introduction

Upon returning from Houston, where my husband was treated at the M.D. Anderson Cancer Center, I became increasingly aware of a similar devastation occurring on the Leeward Coast. Suddenly it seemed that rare cancers were everywhere. I started to spend more time in Wai`anae. It was hardly the Wai`anae of my childhood where my uncle took me out on his boat with my dad when I was seven years old and taught me to fish. The most obvious difference was the tents. There were tents everywhere. People were clearly living on the beach, as opposed to just camping out there for a few days. There had already been some people living on the beach, but things seemed different now. There were more people, more families. I felt compelled to understand what was going on. I felt compelled to find some explanation, if there was one.

I found myself in Wai`anae as a conflicted researcher. I was both insider and outsider. I had very real and personal connections to this community from my family ties and my relationship to Ewa Beach, where my son attended a preschool that required the children to bring bottled water due to fears that drinking tap water might make the children sick. I found myself deeply empathetic to what the people in Wai`anae were going through. My relationships enabled the research in that I formed ties to people in the community that contributed. There is no doubt that the empathy I felt limited in my capacity to be objective. Perhaps researchers who study people, particularly native communities, should have more than an interest or fascination for the communities they study; they should genuinely feel affection for that community. Although my personal history makes me biased, that bias drove the research and

Hoi Hou iā Papahānaumoku

compelled me to discover a Wai`anae beyond the newspaper headlines, and through that effort I found a community that was truly magical.

### A Magical Wai`anae

Wai`anae seeps with magic. It is so named for the plentiful mullet (`anae) that run through its fresh water (wai) streams. Its landmasses are the bodies of legendary figures. Its caves housed our gods. Our chiefs and leaders loved this place. From the stories of Wai`anae we learn we are beautiful and ferocious people and that we have been since the beginning of time. Wai`anae embodies the Hawaiian people at their most beautiful. And perhaps this is why, for the honor and preservation of this unparalleled beauty, that in Wai`anae our most resistant and ferocious selves subsist.

We are the land. He Hawai`i au. I am Hawai`i. And the story of Wai`anae is about a people who fought for the land; fought for themselves. Children who have refused to abandon their mother, Papahānaumoku. Wai`anae shows me that the story of the land and the story of the Hawaiian people are one story. We are the land. We are Hawai`i. This is the story of what happened to Wai`anae; its transformation from a repository of traditional culture to a place trampled by foreign interests; to the site of a modern-day conflict between Hawaiians who fight to protect nohona Hawai`i (Hawaiian lifestyles) and those who find these lifestyles encumbrances upon the manifestation of development.

Hawai`i is a sacred place ravaged and dominated by blasphemy. And her people, the Native Hawaiian people, were born of her womb; so suited is the name Papahānaumoku, Papa who gives birth to islands. Like most of the indigenous people of the world, `ōiwi (another name for Native Hawaiians meaning “of the bones”) view

## Introduction

the earth upon which they reside as their mother, or *terra mater*. As children of a sacred earth, kama`āina dutifully served and cared for their land. In return, Papahānaumoku blessed them with enough natural resources so that her children could live prosperously. Among her many blessings to her people was her grandson, Hāloalaukapalili. Hāloalaukapalili came to the Hawaiian people from her daughter, Ho`ohōkūkalani. Hāloalaukapalili's common body form, the kalo plant, would be the staple food of the Hawaiian people for thousands of years. For the indigenous people of Hawai`i, well-being derived directly from their relationship to their land, and as such, the social, economic and physical ailments that plague them today are symptoms of their separation from their land and traditional lifestyle. This separation resulted from ecocolonization, the process by which indigenous people collaterally suffer the effects of the seizure and destruction of their natural resources by an outside political force, in this case, western settlement in Hawai`i by foreigners (also referred to herein as "haole" or "hoa`āina"). Therefore, the ills we witness in Hawai`i today among `ōiwi can only be cured when the land and natural resources of Native Hawaiians are returned to them, such that they may restore the traditional practices that first granted them well-being; for prosperity will only return to Hawaiians when we ho`i hou iā Papahānaumoku, return to Papahānaumoku.

Yet, before we can begin our journey to return to Papahānaumoku, we must first understand the ways in which we have been separated from her and what this means for the Hawaiian people. We focus here on one moku, the district of Wai`anae on the island of O`ahu. This dissertation looks at how the environmental destruction and changes in the land led to the social and economic devastation that exists in Wai`anae

## Hoi Hou iā Papahānaumoku

today. In this historical analysis, we find that the history of the environment in Wai`anae are inseparately tied to the history and welfare of the native people, and the people of Wai`anae constantly fought to protect their land and resources since foreign contact, demonstrating a consistent awareness of the impact the changes to the natural resources around them would have on their well-being.

The contestation over Wai`anae reflects an effort to maintain the region as a place of refuge and import for its residents. A study on the health of Wai`anae explains: “*Health for Hawaiians is experienced as a pu`uhonua or safe palce.* The relationship between a sense of place and health was experienced as *pu`uhonua*, or safe place. The concepts of safety, security, comfort, and refuge are captured in this final theme. Participants created for themselves a *pu`uhonua* because of the way they lived their lives. They became a *pu`uhonua*, because the place they live, Wai`anae, was a *pu`uhonua*.”<sup>9</sup> Control and protection of Wai`anae as a sacred space serves multiple functions of the people of Wai`anae. Defining Wai`anae speaks to more than the opportunity for a group of people to recognize the value of the space in which they live; it allows for their well-being. It allows the entire community to identify themselves, and the resulting conflict for that space is more than just a land dipute – it is a struggle for identity and existence.

Papahānaumoku and the ideology she symbolizes represents more than the spirituality of the Native Hawaiian people; it embodies the way in which indigenous peoples view the world. As philosopher Micrea Eliade writes:

An Indian prophet, Smohalla, chief of the Wanapum tribe, refused to till the ground. He held that it was a sin to mutilate and tear up the earth, mother of all. He said: “You ask me to plow the ground! Shall I take a knife and tear my mother’s bosom? Then when I die she will not take me to her bosom to rest.

## Introduction

You ask me to dig for stone? Shall I dig under her skin for her bones? Then when I die, I cannot enter her body to be born again. You ask me to cut grass and make hay and sell it, and be rich like white men! But how dare I cut off my mother's hair?<sup>10</sup>

Smohalla made this statement in the late 1800s, reflecting a timeless Native perspective on the earth as mother and natural resources as familial relations. Aunty Loretta Ritte, famed Hawaiian activist, echoed a nearly identical sentiment close to one hundred years later in reference to Papa (a shortened form of Papahānaumoku). In opposition to the continued military bombing of the island of Kaho`olawe, she said,

First I'd like to say *aloha* and welcome you to our home. My name is Loretta Ritte and I'm speaking as a Hawaiian and as a native of this `āina. One thing I've learned from my *kūpuna*'s as a Hawaiian is the great respect for the `āina, for the `āina is the giver of life, of life. And if we do not respect the land, then where would we be? How do we take care of Papa, our earth? By filling her pores with concrete, her beauty, so she cannot breathe? By digging into her, drilling into her, bombing her, to leave wounds and scars on this earth. Is that how we take care of our land?<sup>11</sup>

Papahānaumoku represents more than just physical land; it reflects the well-being of the Native Hawaiian people. These statements reflected a common philosophy native people shared about ecological conservation. Clearly, these statements were not meant to be taken literally. American Indians were brilliant farmers, as were Hawaiians. Of course they cut grass. Hawaiians dug into the earth, as did American Indians. These statements were protests to American imperialism, which threatened native lands and culture. They were protests to commodification of native resources, which resulted in the removal of natives from their land and the systematic destruction of natural resources necessary of the survival of indigenous civilizations.

When Papa is not well; we are not well. When we cannot care for Papa; we cannot care for ourselves. `Ōiwi and Papa share a fundamentally symbiotic

## Hoi Hou iā Papahānaumoku

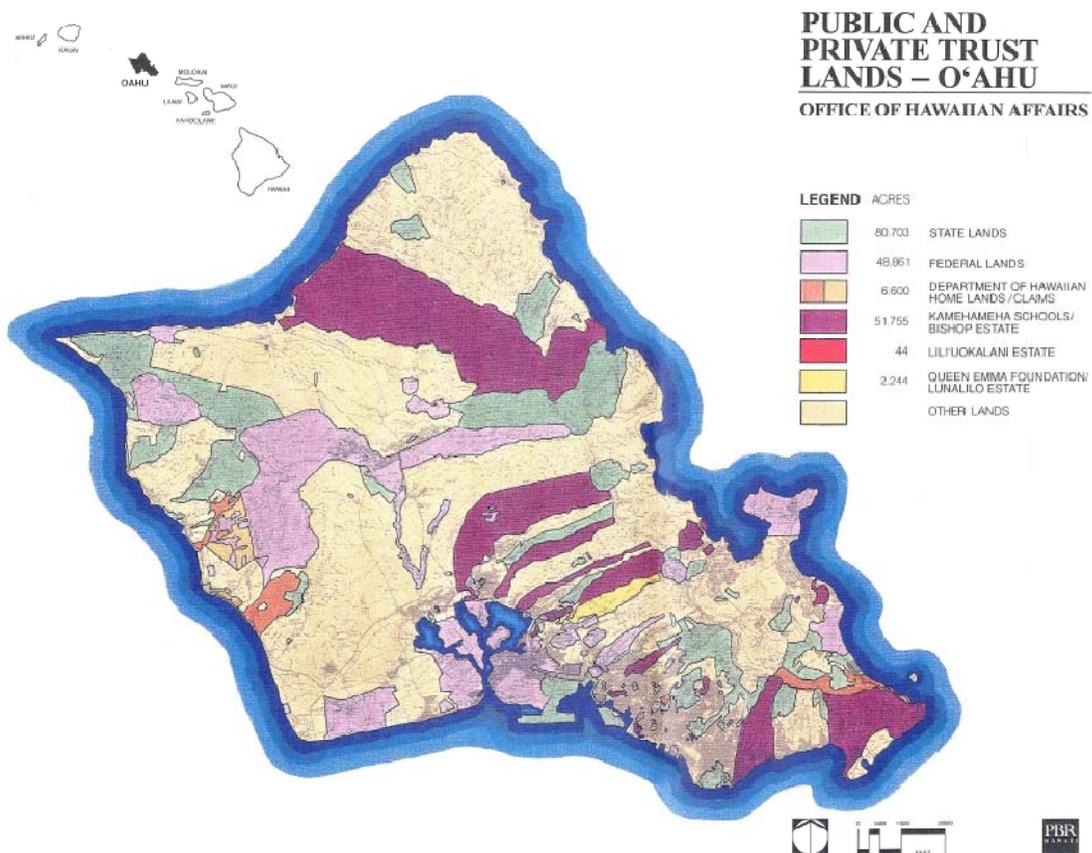
relationship; one cannot survive without the other. When we rediscover our relationship with Papa; we rediscover a relationship to ourselves as Hawaiian people. Our return to Papa begins with the identification of our spaces and resources as sacred. For indigenous people, establishment of a sacred sphere of beliefs provided more than just ideologies and norms that contributed to traditional societal understanding of the world around them. It codified critical knowledge regarding natural resource management and sustainability. When native people identified a space or resources as “sacred,” it identified and protected natural resource necessities.

Within the native community, identification of sacred resources manifests itself through a creation of a discourse of texts and oral literature. This discourse was and now again threatens to be highly problematic for non-resident foreigners for the following reasons:

- a) Identifying sacred sites and resources allows for the exclusion and alienation of foreigners from those resources;
- b) It engenders the perpetuation of culture and community, which may in turn galvanize a social or political movement in opposition to the interested foreign power(s);
- c) It may facilitate conflict over these resources between the natives who sustained the resources and the foreigners who covet them for their own economic gain;
- d) Self-identification is a form of self-determination that serves to psychologically and culturally empower a community.

## Introduction

Ultimately, the conflict in Wai`anae stems from a community that seeks to empower itself and the foreign powers, particularly the state and federal governments, who control a considerable amount of the land in Wai`anae and are interested in maintaining control over Hawai`i's natural resources.



**Figure 1.** Note the large tracts of land controlled by the State and Federal governments in Wai`anae, located on the Western Coast of the Island of O`ahu. Source: Office of Hawaiian Affairs (2006).

Land ownership or control is only one issue in an elaborate system of problems facing the Wai`anae community today. Equally disturbing and threatening are the grave physiological and economic problems facing the community's residents. In the following section, we review the geography, demographics, economic status and other

## Hoi Hou iā Papahānaumoku

social conditions of Wai`anae, focusing in particular on the Native Hawaiian population. Histories on land holdings and the control of natural resource management are discussed at in Chapters Two and Three. Analysis of the health conditions of the residents is discussed in Chapter Four.

### Demography of Wai`anae Today



Figure 2. This modern map of the Wai`anae moku and its current nine ahupua`a shows the geographic location of the region. These boundaries differ from district boundaries that existed at the time of first foreign contact, although it was not uncommon throughout pre-contact Hawai`i for boundaries to change due to changes in political climates. Photo from DZM Hawai`i (2008).

Today Wai`anae is not well, although this was not always the case. Prior to contact, Wai`anae was a thriving hub of political activity. As with all of Hawai`i,

## Introduction

foreign contact would bring devastating changes to this region. As Samuel Kamakau describes the arrival of Captain Cook and foreigners,

The seeds that he [Captain Cook] planted here have sprouted, grown, and become the parents of others that have caused the decrease of the native population of these islands. Such are gonorrhea, and other social disease; prostitution; the illusion of his being a god [which led to] worship of him; fleas and mosquitoes; epidemics. All of these things have led to changes in the air which we breathe; the coming of things which weaken the body; changes in plant life; changes in religion; changes in the art of healing; and changes in the laws by which the land is governed.<sup>12</sup>

If these changes began by the time Kamakau wrote his text, they have only become more pronounced and devastating in the decades since. The “Wai`anae Ecological Characterization” study conducted by the Hawai`i State Government Department of Business Economic Development and Tourism states:

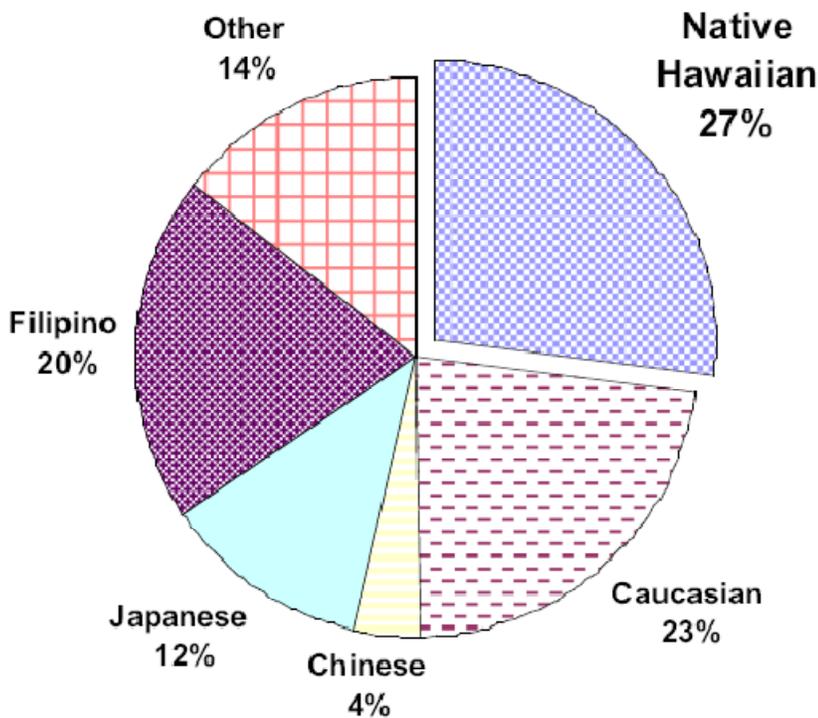
Over the past 150 years, Wai`anae has seen dramatic changes in its land cover and natural resources as a result of the introduction of western values, among them land ownership and monetary value. The demise of the sugar industry left large agricultural districts subject to urban sprawl. Urban growth and watershed impacts, such as the loss of native forest and the diversion of water, have resulted in increased water pollution, soil erosion, and runoff, which have been detrimental to Wai`anae's ocean and coastal resources. Mullet (anae), the fish for which the area was named, are not as abundant due to altered coastal and estuarine habitats.<sup>13</sup>

Today Wai`anae's population continues to struggle to maintain the sustainability of the region. The number of residents in the region is greater than at any other point in its history.

At the time of the 2000 census, the population of the Wai`anae moku was 42,259. Within the moku, Wai`anae was the most populous community, with 32 percent of the population (more than 13,000 people) residing there. Lualualei was the next most populous, with close to 8,000 residents (19 percent of the Wai`anae moku's population).<sup>14</sup>

Of these 42,259 residents, the majority are Hawaiian. The study explains, “People of the Wai‘anae moku represent a diversity of racial and ethnic backgrounds, including Hawaiian, Caucasian, Filipino, Japanese, Samoan, Chinese, Korean, Vietnamese, African, and other Asian and Pacific Island races. More than 40 percent characterize themselves as being of two or more races. More than 62 percent of moku residents consider themselves Hawaiian or part Hawaiian.”<sup>15</sup> This is disproportionately high compared to the state average.

### Resident Live Births by Ethnicity of Mother, Year 2000



**Figure 3.** The percentage of births in Hawai‘i, comparable to the percentage of Hawaii residents with Hawaiian ancestry, is approximately 27%, whereas the percentage of residents in Waianae with Hawaiian ancestry is 62%, over twice the state average. *Source: Office of Health Source Monitoring, Hawaii State Department of Health / Native Hawaiian Data Book, Office of Hawaiian Affairs (2002)*

## Introduction

Compare this with other locations on O`ahu. The concentration of Hawaiians in Wai`anae far exceeds other regions on the island.<sup>16</sup>

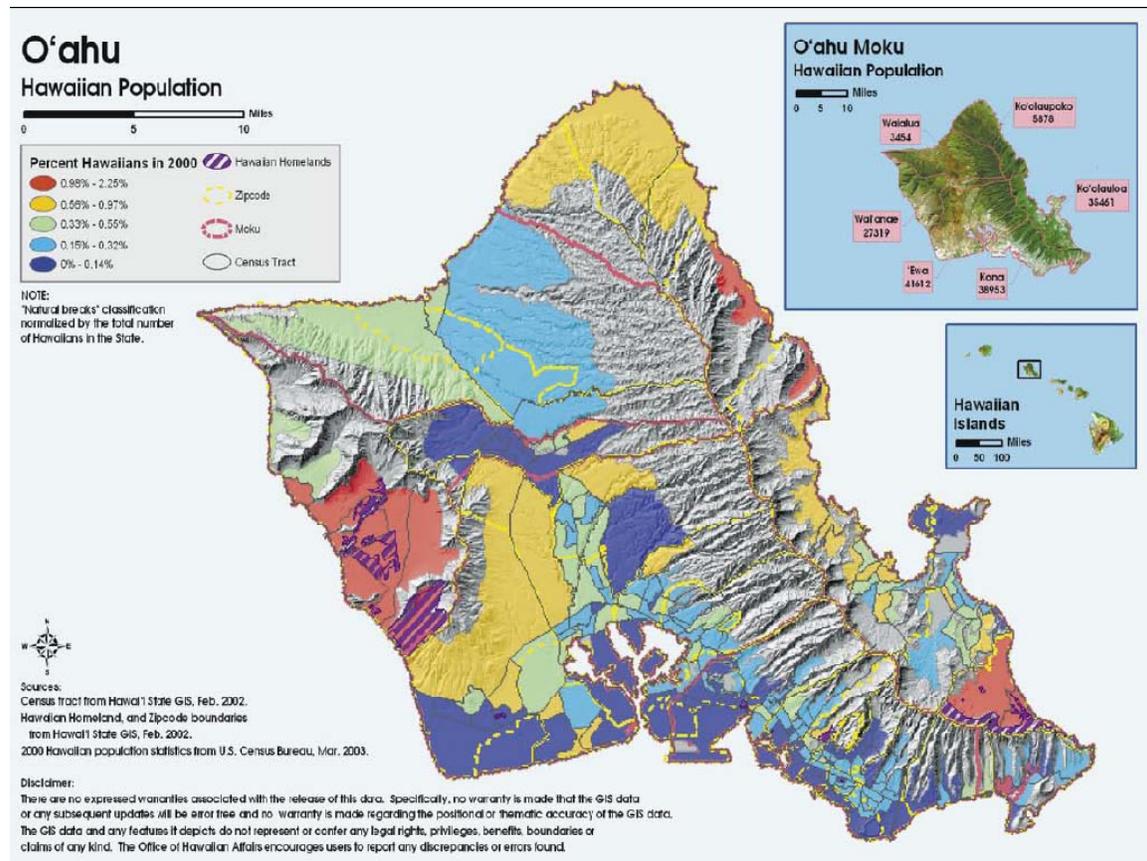


Figure 4. The distribution of Hawaiians residing on the island of O`ahu. Source: *Native Hawaiian Data Book, Office of Hawaiian Affairs* (2006)

The residents of Wai`anae also struggle economically. The study describes the following: “The median household income and per capita income of Wai`anae residents are \$42,451 and \$13,029, respectively, lower than those of O`ahu residents and State of Hawai`i residents. The percentage of residents living below the poverty level, 21.9 percent, is more than double the percentage of O`ahu residents as a whole (9.9 percent below the poverty level).”<sup>17</sup> Wai`anae also sees an extremely high number of residents become houseless. Nonetheless, as one article reads: “While on paper,

Hoi Hou iā Papahānaumoku

Waiʻanae's problems may seem overwhelming, its ability to organize as a community is unmatched on the island."It's not that we want to scream 'Poor Waiʻanae!'" Katy Kok [Nani O Waiʻanae director] says. "We have a great pride in this lower income area."<sup>18</sup> Community pride and activism are a critical part of Waiʻanae's identity.

Activism in Waiʻanae responds largely to the systemic oppression historically imposed upon this community, oppression that this dissertation will illustrate contributed significantly to the conditions that exist today. While various scholars dispute the effectiveness or futility of such activity, I argue that activism, regardless of its ultimate political impact, has intrinsic psychological value for the community. The great threat to any community is not oppression but inaction. When a community become so downtrodden by institutionalized prejudice and discrimination that its members no longer even bother to act in an (perhaps futile or even superficial) effort to preserve their own emotional well-being, then we go from being the oppressed to the defeated. Once defeated, we lose the will and capacity to pass our virtues and knowledges to the next generation, as those mired in apathy lose faith in their virtues and thereby lose the will to pass them on to others. This is how cultures die. Note one tale from a kupuna in Waiʻanae: "Daddy spoke beautiful Hawaiian and I would often ask him why we weren't taught to speak the language. I was able to understand and only speak a little bit. Today, speaking Hawaiian is a lost art. Daddy said we would have to learn English because that was the times."<sup>19</sup> As a result of Hawaiian parents who stopped teaching their children Hawaiian because "that was the times," language and other cultural practices declined among Hawaiians.

## Introduction

There is little dispute that Wai`anae today faces some of the most oppressive and destructive conditions anywhere in Hawai`i. Unlike the rest of the island, they confront poverty and violence regularly. In this regard, their actions, both social and ideological, are in sync with many communities across the world that mobilized in response to institutional inequity. As Frances Fox Piven and Richard A. Cloward explain,

lower-class groups have little ability to protect themselves against reprisals that can be employed by institutional managers. The poor do not have to be historians of the occasions when protestors have been jailed or shot down to understand this point. The lesson of their vulnerability is engraved in everyday life; it is evidence in every police beating, in every eviction, in every lost job, in every relief termination. The very labels used to describe defiance by the lower classes – the pejorative labels of illegality and violence – testify to this vulnerability and serve to justify severe reprisals when they are imposed. By taking such labels for granted, we fail to recognize what these events really represent: a structure of political coercion inherent in the everyday life of the lower classes.<sup>20</sup>

Therefore, it is necessary not only to identify these institutionalized structures of political coercion, their histories and modern day forms, but also to devise a method of constructing a counter narrative. There needs to be a way to study Wai`anae that moves past the pejorative labels and internalized frustrations into the subverted history and culture of traditional Wai`anae. To accomplish this I will use mele, oli, cultural practices, mo`olelo and other traditional sites of knowledge.

### Theoretical Orientation: Ecocolonization

Ecocolonialism is the theory I have created which refers to the process by which western forces simultaneously colonize indigenous natural resources and the First

Hoi Hou iā Papahānaumoku

People who inhabit that environment. The colonization of these two entities cannot be separated.

The theory of ecocolonization, a theory that I primarily locate in Hawai`i and among the history of its People, derives from a need among Hawaiian academics to develop theories and methodologies that center on this place. Ecocolonization speaks of the land and its indigenous people as a single unit, although the patterns of colonization throughout the world have not treated them as such. Imperial ideologies, without an appreciation of this fundamental link between the people and land, sever them in discursive discussions. They talk about the land and the people as separate entities when they are not. Understanding the ways in communities remain socially dysfunctional requires a serious investigation into the damage done to surrounding natural resources.

Hawaiians came from the land. We are literally, “the children of the land.” We are the land, as children are their parents. In describing the significance of this, Kumu Hula Pueo Pata says the following:

When Hawaiians ask who the parents are of another, they query, "Na wai `oe (literally, who made you OR to whom do you belong?)" Looking at mana`o on land issues along with our word kama`āina, our kupuna have left us ways with which to view our relationship to our lands.

"Kama`āina" literally means "land child", and is therefore taken to mean "Native-born, one born in a place, host." However, those familiar with our Hawaiian language would see more in the way of mana`o behind this simple word. A "land child" or "child of the land" implies that such a child has a parent... a parent to whom the child belongs or by whom [the child] was created. It's an interesting concept to think of a person as belonging to, or having been created by, the land. How could this be?

\* \* \*

## Introduction

"Na wai `oe? To whom do you belong... who made you?" "Na Kauahi au. I belong to Kauahi... he made me." This kind of interaction clearly makes it known that the person questioned is a descendant of Kauahi. As Hawaiians, genealogies play a direct role in determining our descent from our ancestors and our relationship to those around us. As the vast majority of our ancestors could have traced their lineages back to specific gods and places beyond the horizon, we could thus determine the amount of mana that we inherited. Such bequeathals anciently determined our social statuses ranging from ali`i to maka`ainana.

"Na wai `oe? To whom do you belong... who made you?" "Na Kauahi au. I belong to Kauahi... he made me." Kauahi descended from Keahi, Keahi from Nalehu, Nalehu from `Aunaki, and on and on. This hypothetical genealogy could continue all the way back to, say, the human Pele who was later deified into the goddess we know of today... and hence to her mother Haumea or her father Kane-hoa-lani, etc. All those of true ali`i blood are guaranteed to have genealogical links like this back to the gods.

Wahi pana, being physical forms or remains of our godly or human ancestors are still revered today as honored kupuna. Places named for the deeds of our godly or human ancestors are thus treated as heirlooms handed from one generation to the next. This hill IS Pele... Pele IS my ancestor... this hill IS a form of the ancestor from whom I descend. "Na wai `oe? To whom do you belong... who made you?" "Na Kauahi au. I belong to Kauahi... he made me... and he came from Keahi, who came from Kalehu, who came from `Aunaki, who came from Pele." Because Pele made me, I belong to her... because this particular land feature is one of her forms, I belong to it. I am literally a "kama`āina"... a "child of the land".

Such traditional relationships between kama`āina and the land lend testament to their deep respect and reverence for the lands upon which they reside and by which they are surrounded. Grandparents give birth to parents, parents give birth to children, children give birth to grandchildren. Each generation is nourished in many forms by the generations above it. As forms of our ancient ancestors and their deeds, the land still nourishes all those who live upon it, both kama`āina and foreign. However, as direct descendants of those venerated kupuna, do we still recognize ourselves as their kama (children)? Do we still treat and respect them as such? For that matter, can we still recall our connection to them in unbroken lineal descent from them to us? The answers to those questions lend to the differences between "kama`āina (children of the land)" and "kupa (citizen, native)".

All in all, because of some of the things mentioned about, our ancestors of old passed on the traditional concept that we belong to the land... not the land to us. We are taught to tend and care for our kupuna because they did the same for us. We are also taught to tend and care for our `āina because it does the same for us

in both its capacity as forms of kupuna and also as a source of immediate life-sustaining necessities. Such concepts strengthen our identities as "kama'āina"... "children of the land".<sup>40</sup>

This fundamental notion, “we belong to the land... not the land to us” is echoed in most environmental theories. Yet, ecocolonialism differs from these theories in that it contends that the Native people of a land have a fundamentally different stake and relationship to land than other groups, who may also support environmentally-friendly policies. Most lands have kama'āina, children of the land. Those children, the indigenous peoples of that land, typically have familial relationships with that land tracing back thousands of years. From this unique relationship, the very identities of those peoples are directly tied to their ancestral lands.

The relationship between someone and their ancestral land is a profound one because it speaks to one's history and identity. This relationship is amplified when one is raised on his or her ancestral land. For Hawaiians, this is our only home.

Understanding our history and culture comes directly from understanding the land. The Native belief system taught Kanaka Maoli that the Native people were born from the kalo plant. This became pivotal to the ways in which Hawaiians understood their entire world. As Professor Manu Meyer explains, “Taro cultivation is a spiritual/environmental facet of epistemology. If people are linked to the shadowy figure of a far and distant past and yet make that shadowy figure tangible and present every day they cultivate and partake of its manifestation, this can't help but validate and inform issues of context and values.”<sup>41</sup> Our very sense of ourselves, our identities, does not exist separate from our land. Just as the western world appreciates the importance of genealogy, here, in Hawai'i, the land is our genealogy. Ecocolonialism specifies that

## Introduction

if you want to understand the people of Hawai`i, the Kanaka `Ōiwi, you must understand the land.

What happened to the Hawaiian people is a model of ecocolonization. The misperception is that the United States colonized the Native people, that the colonization of Hawai`i derived primarily from the desire to colonize the indigenous population. This simply isn't the case. The colonization of Hawai`i stemmed from the United States' need to control Hawai`i's natural resources, namely its waters, ports, and lands. The "civilization" of the Native people simply became a way to control people while exploiting natural resources. Colonization, in any location, has never been about the betterment of First Peoples; it has always been about gaining acquisition over the resources controlled by those Peoples.

The decision to coin the term "ecocolonization" at a time in academia when identifying Hawai`i as "colonized" is highly problematic for some scholars. I think it would be a grave error to distance ourselves and our discourse from the peoples and places impacted by colonization. The greatest illusion of colonization is the perpetuation of the myth that colonization is primarily political. As with most things, Westerns controlled the discourse on colonialism. Westerns first identified the discourse as political when it was truly economic. Colonization is driven by economics, not politics. At the core of colonialism's methodological web is a need for resources. The "colonization of Hawaii" was a struggle for resources; political occupation is only one of many problematic results. Compare this to Albert Memmi's comment on colonization: "the intelligent members of the bourgeoisie and colony had understood that the essence of colonization was not the prestige of the flag, nor cultural

Hoi Hou iā Papahānaumoku

expansion, nor even governmental supervision and the preservation of a staff of government employees. They were pleased that concessions could be made in all areas if the basis (in other words, if the economic advantages) were preserved.”<sup>42</sup> More evidence of the holistic machine of colonization is modern day realities of western dominance.

We can often better appreciate the past by grappling with the end result.

Samuel Huntington identifies a common picture of the west today:

The West is the only civilization which has substantial interests in every other civilization or region and has the ability to affect the politics, economic and security of every other civilization or region. Societies from other civilizations usually need Western help to achieve their goals and protect their interests. Western nations, as one author summarized it:

- Own and operate the international banking system
- Control all hard currencies
- Are the world’s principal customer
- Provide the majority of the world’s finished goods
- Dominate international capital markets
- Exert considerable moral leadership within many societies
- Are capable of massive military intervention
- Control the sea lanes
- Conduct most advanced technical research and development
- Control leading edge technical education
- Dominate access to space
- Dominate the aerospace industry
- Dominate international communications
- Dominate the high-tech weapons industry.<sup>43</sup>

If we at least appreciate that this is the status of the west today, we can perhaps begin to move past the ruse of democratic propaganda which couches our understanding of Hawai`i’s past in terms of the realities of Hawai`i’s colonial present.

Evidence of ecocolonialism presents itself over and over throughout history.

The European seizure of Africa combined the colonization of the land and the people

## Introduction

through the naked aggression of the slave trade, in which people were treated as property. Only slightly more subtle, the colonization of the Native American Indians, under the guise of the efforts to civilize and Christianize the Native people, proved to a largely successful effort to seize the vast natural resources of the Americas. When the Native American proved to be unfit for civilization, they were viciously slaughtered as colonizers gleefully seized lands emptied by epidemics and evictions. Throughout the Pacific, European and American explorers claimed Pacific Island nations on behalf of western nation states. As David Hanlon explains of American activity in Micronesia:

Following Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, Raymond Williams defines ideology as “an articulated system of meanings, values, and beliefs” that can be abstracted to serve as a worldview for any social group. This definition will serve our purposes well enough, especially as we amend it to account for the historically specific circumstances of American colonialism in Micronesia. It is perhaps one of the functions of a national ideology to mask the crude objectives of self-interest and to deny the violence of conquest that precedes and makes possible the colonial act.<sup>44</sup>

Ecocolonization attempts to unmask the western ideologies that persist today and dismantle the system of meanings, values and beliefs that contributed to the dismemberment of native people and their natural resources. We apply Hanlon’s analysis to the circumstances of resource seizure in Wai`anae and look at how native stories were replaced by foreign narratives. The result was the theft of thousands of acres of lands and irreplaceable natural resources that have yet to be returned.

### Ecofeminism: Theoretical Roots

Ecofeminism is, in the words of Noel Sturgeon, “a movement that makes connections between environmentalisms and feminisms; more precisely, it articulates the theory that the ideologies that authorize injustices based on gender, race, and class are related to the ideologies that sanction the exploitation and degradation of the

environment.”<sup>45</sup> Ecocolonization derives from this theory. Ecofeminism demonstrates an appreciation for the treatment of people and its relationship to the treatment of the environment. Ecocolonization, though, does not build upon ecofeminism as much as it attempts to explain its historical roots. Whereas ecofeminism articulates how western ideologies that reinforce notions of dominance over nature contribute to ideologies of dominance over marginalized groups, ecocolonization points out that these conflicts developed first from western ideologies that contributed to the domination of western settlers over Native Peoples throughout the world.

Yet, ecofeminism serves as an appropriate basis for ecocolonization because both theories have practical goals. The goals of ecology are equally influential here.

Charlene Spretnak writes,

The technological experts of the modern era, with their colleagues in business, government, and the military, are waging an antibiological revolution in human conduct. The moral systems of Western ethnics and religion are nearly powerless in this struggle because those systems themselves are largely devoid of ecological wisdom. The crying need right now – if we have any hope of charting a postmodern, posthumanist, and postpatriarchal transition to the Age of Ecology – is for a new philosophical underpinning of civilization. We need an ecophilosophy that speaks the truth with great immediacy in language that everyone can understand.<sup>46</sup>

This goal begs for coupling with the academic movements of indigenous people.

Indigenous people, who draw continuously from “ecological wisdom” in their living and scholarship, contribute much to ecofeminism. Ecofeminism also demonstrates an appreciation for linking academics and community activism. For Native Peoples, this link has long been a reality.

None of this should imply that ecofeminism has not been moving towards an ecocolonization orientation for some time. Ecofeminism draws tangentially from

## Introduction

indigenous wisdoms. In “Speaking for the Earth: The Haida Way,” Gwaganad of Haada Gwaii recounts her people’s experience with foreigners, a story familiar to the indigenous peoples of the world.

So the people came. We tried their way. Their language. Their education. Their way of worship. It is clear to me that they are not managing our lands well. If this continues, there will be nothing left for my children and my grandchildren to come. I feel that the people governing us should give us a chance to manage the land the way we know how it should be.<sup>47</sup>

The people of Haada Gwaii, renamed by British colonizers as the Queen Charlotte Islands and located in the Northern Pacific Ocean off the coast of British Columbia, share a concern for their land reminiscently similar to the concern expressed by indigenous Hawaiians. Gwaganad says of her environment: “So I want to stress that it’s the land that helps us maintain our culture. It is an important, important part of our culture. Without this land, I fear very much for the future of the Haida nation. . . . I don’t want my children to inherit stumps. I want my children and my grandchildren to grow up with pride and dignity as a member of the Haida nation. I fear that if we take that land, we may lose the dignity and the pride of being a Haida.”<sup>48</sup> This demonstrates how indigenous knowledges already play an important role in ecofeminism. Yet, ecofeminism does not specifically recognize how colonization serves as a basis for all the injustices tied to the dominance of western ideologies.

It is important to begin making this history known. In this regard, bringing Indigenous Peoples together, in scholarship and in activism, is extremely important. When these groups are brought together, we see how patterns of oppression repeat themselves throughout history. For example, the similarity between the pleas of the Native Haida and the Native Hawaiian hardly need be pointed out. Yet, ecofeminism

Hoi Hou iā Papahānaumoku

makes no explicit connection between colonization and the resulting dispossession of Native Peoples and the environment. Ecofeminism instead sees a larger connection between the discrimination against all “suspect classes” (race, gender, class) and environmental destruction. Ecocolonization allows Indigenous Peoples to appreciate how western ideologies contributed to the devastation of land and cultures throughout the world. It becomes a space in which to share stories. Share successes. Reinforce knowledges. Vent anger. Overcome grief.

Therefore, ecocolonization focuses explicitly and exclusively on the relationship between the colonization of indigenous peoples and the colonization of the environment. As the product of a western ideology that attempts to commodify, and thereby exploit, all resources (both human and environmental), ecocolonialism is the continuing root of all the problems identified and addressed by ecofeminists.

Many of these ideas are shared in Donald A. Grinde and Bruce E. Johansen’s text *Ecocide of Native America: Environmental Destruction of Indian Lands and Peoples*. *Ecocide* focuses on the environmental devastation caused by the western world to Native environments and how this devastation is tied to the genocide of Native American Indians. As Grinde and Johansen put it: “To appreciate the impact of the environmental crisis on Native Americans, it is necessary to understand the earth from a Native American perspective – as sacred space, as provider for the living, and as a shrine for the dead. Ecology and land are intimately connected with Native American spirituality, which entails that land is not regarded merely as real estate, a commodity to be bought, sold, or exploited for financial gain.”<sup>49</sup> Ecocolonization differs from this in its focus upon Native Peoples and the social problems facing these communities today.

## Introduction

It further extends these problems and applies them to Indigenous Peoples throughout the world. The ecocolonization of Native Peoples is a global problem.

### Ka `Aina Kapu o Wai`anae

There are many wahi pana remaining in Hawai`i today, but of all of them, it was Wai`anae that gave us fire.

It was Wai`anae that gave us fire.

As the progeny of those who in our legends were the keepers of our fire, the people of Wai`anae today carry that fire in their bellies. It reminds us of their great import and power. This fire ignites them. It warms them. It protects them. For Wai`anae has always been in great need of protection. As all things sacred and special, the things of Wai`anae have always been coveted by those who were not of Wai`anae and therefore not entitled to them. From its coastal waters to its mountaintops, there was no inch of Waianae not actively sought by outsiders from first contact. Wai`anae's post-contact history is one of struggle and survival. No single district has undergone greater assault from foreigners than Wai`anae. No people have suffered more as a result.

The relationship between Wai`anae and the Hawaiians who live there perseveres in spite of great adversity. It is a testament to the relationship between Native Hawaiians and the land they love so dearly. In Wai`anae, where our fire was born, the people cling to the earth as an infant does his mother. There is no telling where one begins and the other ends, this mother and her child. There is only noting that one will not exist without the other. That embrace is a place of refuge, a pu`uhonua.

This dissertation explains how Wai`anae remains a pu`uhonua for Hawaiians. Wai`anae's status as a pu`uhonua derives from the ability of its residents to preserve many of the pre-contact values and traditions that originated there. This success stems largely from the perpetuation of nohona Hawai`i (Hawaiian lifeways) in the moku. Na Hawai`i o Wai`anae continue to maintain some control over the landscape of Wai`anae: both physical and ideological. Whereas in many locations throughout Hawaii, `ōiwi have been unable to maintain control of their land, resulting in the alienation from native Hawaiians and one hanau (place of birth), Hawaiians in Wai`anae have been able to remain pili to their `āina. This closeness, both physical and spiritual, allows for Wai`anae to be a kulanakauhale pu`uhonua.

Throughout the dissertation we discuss the physical and ideological landscapes of Wai`anae. By looking at the ways in which Hawaiian concepts and ideologies remain dominant in the region, evidence of a significant degree of agency reveals itself. Unlike other regions of O`ahu, traditional beliefs that intertwine myth and place are still actively taught and the lessons of these traditions are actively practiced. As a result, Wai`anae becomes both a physical and ideological pu`uhonua; Wai`anae is a place where Hawaiians can be Hawaiian.

The dominance of nohona Hawai`i in Wai`anae further allows for the maintenance of a more traditional relationship between the land and the Hawaiian people. While later chapters will show that foreign powers went to great lengths to alienate the people of Wai`anae from their land, examples of resistance are also presented. Thus, whereas Wai`anae remains the frontline of the struggle between Native Hawaiians and imperial America, it is also the site on O`ahu where Hawaiian

## Introduction

values are best protect and preserved. It is one of the many places where Hawaiians on O`ahu are likely to find those who still practice our culture; it is where we must look to learn how to ho`i hou iā Papahānaumoku when we achieve the freedom to make this return.

When we call our one hanau a pu`uhonua, we are empowering ourselves. We are claiming in native tongue and discourse what we have (momentarily) lost in title. We are dismembering foreign acts of occupation and imperialism. We declare that the mana of a place exists independent of “ownership.” We resist western imperialism and all the ills among our people that have followed.

Ku`e! We resist! And from this resistance we can regain our footing. This allows us space to heal. This gives the land time so she can heal and restore herself. Onipa`a! We stand our ground! We maintain control and stewardship over our aina, over our resources. Holomua! We push forward and flourish, into the past, into the future!

---

<sup>1</sup> “Guilty Verdict in Manslaughter Trial,” available at <http://www.honoluluadvertiser.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20080710/NEWS20> (accessed August 16, 2008).

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> “Killed for Being Haole” available at <http://www.hawaiiitopia.com/?p=41> (accessed August 16, 2008).

<sup>6</sup> Honolulu Advertiser Blogs, available at <http://www.honoluluadvertiser.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20080710/NEWS20/807100366&s=d&page=61#pluckcomments> (accessed August 16, 2008).

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> “Homeless Lose Tents in Waianae Brushfire,” Honolulu Advertiser Blogs, at <http://www.honoluluadvertiser.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20080917/BREAKING01/80917066&s=d&page=2#pluckcomments> (accessed October 1, 2008).

<sup>9</sup> Mary Frances Mailelauli`i Oneha, “Ka maui o ka `oia a he maui kanaka: an ethnographic study from an Hawaiian sense of place,” *Pacific Health Dialog*, Vol 8, 2002, 309-310.

<sup>10</sup> Mircea Eliade, *Sacred and the Profane: the Nature of Religion*, (New York: Harcourt, 1957), 138.

<sup>11</sup> Nā Maka o Ka `Āina, Kaho`olawe Aloha `Āina (Video Transcript), on file with author.

<sup>12</sup> Samuel Kamakau, *Ruling Chiefs of Hawai`i* (Revised Edition), (Honolulu: Kamehameha Schools, 1992), 104.

<sup>13</sup> “Wai`anae Ecological Characterization,” Community Report, DZM Hawaii and Nation Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, at <http://hawaii.gov/dbedt/czm/initiative/wec/index.htm> (accessed March 16, 2008).

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> The study notes:

The Wai‘anae moku has a high concentration of Native Hawaiians. More than 62 percent of moku residents consider themselves Hawaiian or part Hawaiian. Of moku residents reporting only one race, about 22.9 percent are Native Hawaiian, compared to only 5.6 percent of the population for O‘ahu, and 6.6 percent for the State of Hawai‘i. Caucasians and Asians make up a significantly smaller percentage of the population within the moku than for O‘ahu as a whole.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> Dawson, T. 2000. "In Battered Waianae, Community Organizes to Save Environment, Health." *Environment Hawaii* 10(9). <http://www.environment-hawaii.org/300cov.htm> (Accessed October 30, 2007).

<sup>19</sup> Wai‘anae Coast Culture and Arts Society, *Ka Po‘e Kahiko o Wai‘anae*, (Honolulu: Topgallant Publishing Co., 1986), 3.

<sup>20</sup> Frances Fox Piven and Richard A. Cloward, *Poor People’s Movements, Why They Succeed, How They Fail*, (New York: Random House, 1979), 25-26.

<sup>40</sup> Cody Pueo Pata, Personal Communication (on file with author).

<sup>41</sup> Manulani Aluli Meyer, *Ho‘oulu: Our Time of Becoming: Hawaiian Espitemology and Early Writings*, (Honolulu: Ai Pohaku, 2003), 98.

<sup>42</sup> Albert Memmi, *The Colonizer and the Colonized* (Expanded Edition), (Massachusetts: Beacon Press, 1991), 6.

<sup>43</sup> Samuel Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*, (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1996), 81-82.

<sup>44</sup> David Hanlon, *Remaking Micronesia: Discourses over Development in a Pacific Territory, 1944-1982* (Honolulu: UH Press, 1998), 4.

<sup>45</sup> Noel Sturgeon, *Ecofeminist Natures: Race, Gender Finist Theory and Political Action*, (New York: Rutledge, 1997), 23.

<sup>46</sup> Charlene Spretnak, “Ecofeminism: Our Roots and Flowering,” *Reweaving the World: The Emergence of Ecofeminism*, eds. Irene Diamond and Gloria Feman Orenstein, (San Francisco: Sierra Club Books, 1990), 10-11.

---

<sup>47</sup> Gwaganad, *Speaking for the Earth: The Haida Way, Healing the Wounds*, ed. Judith Plant, (Toronto: Between the Lines, 1989), 77.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid, 79.

<sup>49</sup> Donald A. Grinde and Bruce E. Johansen, *Ecocide of Native America: Environmental Destruction of Indian Lands and Peoples*, (Sante Fe: Clear Light Publishers, 1995), 4.

**Ka Leo o Ka `Āina:**  
**The Voice of the Land**

‘O ka wai leo mōpua ke lono nei  
E ‘ale, e kūmoho, e hū aukahi

"I hear the sweetly voiced water.  
Let it ripple, Let it rise, Let it flow."

‘Ōlelo No‘eau (C. Pueo Pata)<sup>1</sup>



© Library of Congress

By the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the people of the Leeward Coast would find themselves laboring in hot, dry fields. Laboring the plantations wore on the Native people. The work beneath the unforgiving sun surely took its toll on them physically and spiritually. The mele of this era provide new insight into Wai`anae as foreigners came and changed the land. Above all else, it demonstrated in important description why kama`āina of Wai`anae considered their land sacred. The mele spoke of winds and valuable water sources. They chronicled and celebrated a revered history. It fuels the modern day

Ho`i Hou iā Papahānaumoku

people of Wai`anae and reinforces their effort to have their place recognized as a pu`uhonua. This chapter looks at the reverence expressed for Wai`anae by its residents, particularly through song. Then the impact of foreign contact is examined to illustrate why the conflict over recognition of Wai`anae as a sacred place is critical to the restoration of the land and the people.

‘Those who sing, “know”’

Before the missionaries arrived with the written word, Hawaiians bound their knowledge in song. As with many indigenous cultures throughout the world, Hawaiians appreciated song, chant and story telling as important pedagogical devices by which knowledge could be taught and transmitted between generations. Australian researcher Fiona Magowan speaks of her research on women’s songs in Galiwin’ku:

In northeast Arnhem Land, men and women frequently comment that ‘Those who sing, “know”’. Accomplished singer and clan leader Wilson Ganambarr had firmly advised me of the importance of ‘knowing’ through song shortly after I began fieldwork at Galiwin’ku (Elcho Island) in 1990 in search of women’s song traditions. I had asked him whether I might be able to learn songs performed by women performed by women, and he had advised: ‘You must first learn my songs [manikay], my uncle’s songs, my mother’s mother’s songs and my mother’s songs from me in that order and then you may learn women’s songs.’<sup>2</sup>

From her experience, she concludes:

In Yolngu life, stories (dhāwu) are often told in song as a means of making sense of the world and everything in it. Wilson’s insistence that I should learn his songs first was a way of telling me his stories. Thus, I learned his clan songs and stories simultaneously, as a mixture of practical skills that included knowledge of the landscape; the anticipated outcomes of hunting and gathering exploits; and acts of ancestral intervention. His songs always paralleled his storytelling as he used one genre to support the other in order to validate the ‘facts’. Wilson’s story and song versions were born of personal, collective and ancestral experience, and gave rise in turn to new experiences in their telling as he attempted to locate me in the web of Yolngu knowledge.<sup>3</sup>

## Chapter One

Before foreigners came with their pens and papers and codified land boundaries, mele and oli identified Hawaiian spaces.

Fundamental to the well-being of Hawaiians is our ability to express ourselves in traditional voices: traditional language, crafts, and practices. I ka `ōlelo no ke ola, i ka `ōlelo no ka make – in the words there are life, in the words there are death. Navigation, art, mythology all play important parts in the identity of Native Hawaiians because they are traditional expressions of the Native self. Our histories, particularly the violences of colonization and the frustrations of oppression, are often more freely expressed through artists' mediums.

Native Hawaiians did not use western written communication tools prior to foreign contact. The Kanaka Maoli relied for thousands of years oral traditions. Oli and mele hula served as musical and artistic expression, transmissions of history and forms of education. Kumu Hula John Keolamaka`ainanakalahuiokalani Lake explains: “The oli and the mele hula are the basic forms of musical expression in precontact Hawai`i. Chanting, through the oli or mele hula in its function and interpretation represents the inexplicable mysteries of the deepest levels of physical and spiritual union in humankind and our relationship to nature.”<sup>4</sup> Therefore, understanding oli and mele hula make hundreds of years of discourse created and transmitted by Native Hawaiians available to modern Hawaiians. In academia, this discourse is a necessity when studying Hawaiian history.

Mele hula and oli were not just entertainment or art. They became historical repositories of Hawaii's pre-contact social and political history. Kumu Lake explains:

Hawaiian society was stratified into social, political, and religious levels and governed by strictly defined hierarchy. This society was subjected to the strictest form of order, bound by the mana and kapu concepts. Mana is the Polynesian concept of divine power instilled in every person. Kapu was a system of privileges and prohibitions that governed everyday Hawaiian life. These two concepts were indelible marks regulating Hawaiian behavior and attitudes. The kapu and the mana of the mele (chant) lie in its test – its `olelo.<sup>5</sup>

Mele therefore played an important role in the education of the Native Hawaiian people.

Translations of mele and other Native texts are limited by the practice of translation. As written in the Preface of *The Echo of Our Song: Chants and Poems of the Hawaiians*, Alfons L. Korn explains:

The introduction of this book is entirely implied in the wording of its title. We think of it as a book of echoes, muffled echoes, because, as everyone knows, no translation of a poem can achieve quite the same results as the real thing. Just as an echo can never take the place of the original voice so a poem-in-translation, however much it may try to become a “reasonable” facsimile, can never take the place of the living poem, in its primary language, and as known to its native audience.<sup>6</sup>

To this end, it is really about the echoes of Wai`anae. It attempts to discover who she was and the journey she took to her present day condition. This effort relies heavily on the way her current kama`āina see her. In Wai`anae, chants spoke of distinct land features. The oli “Ka Li`a” reads:

Ala ka li`a i Honouliuli  
I ka wai ha`aheo kau i ka lani  
Lālani nā pu`u nā kualono  
Nā pae kuahiwi o Ka`ala  
He `ala ka mau`u o ka nēnē  
Ka ho`opē a ka hau o Līhu`e  
Hu`i koni i wai o Kuenelua  
Hene `aka Kalena i Hale`au`au  
`Au ana Pu`uohulu ma mua  
Kokoike i ka `ike a ka `ōnohi  
Kilohi i ke kaha o Waimānalo  
I ka nehe a ke kai i Nānākuli  
Ua `ūlili nonono wela i ka lā  
Ke kula o Mā`ili e waiho nei

## Chapter One

I 'ane'i mai nō ka Waikōloa  
Kahi i la'i ai me Hālonā  
Ha'ina 'ia mai ana ka puana  
'O Lili'uokalani nō he inoa.<sup>7</sup>

Translation:

The one so desired is at Honouliuli  
Where the geyser of water spouts proudly to the heavens.  
The hills and mountain ridges are lined up in a row.  
The cluster of mountains of Ka'ala.  
Fragrant are the grassy blades of the nēnē  
Drenched in the dew of Līhu'e  
One gets tingly by the chill of the water of Kuenelua  
Where Kalena slopes gently to Hale'au'au  
Pu'uohulu fares up ahead  
Where a patch of rainbow was immediately seen.  
Glancing at the area of Waimānalo  
The sea was swaying at Nānākuli  
Where the sun was glowing in heat  
Upon the plain of Mā'ili laying there.  
The Waikoloa comes this way  
To stay contentedly with Halona.  
The story is told  
In honor of Lili'uokalani.

Written in 1898, this name chant for Queen Lili'uokalani begins at Honouliuli travels through Līhu'e and ends at Hālonā, in the back of Lualualei. These boundaries, from Honouliuli to Kaena, are no longer the boundaries for the Wai'anae district, but serve as so for the purposes of this dissertation. This use of these boundaries reveal not only the use of mele to identify places and their characteristics, but the endurance of oral knowledge. Uncle Kimo Alama explains about this mele:

This is one of the 6 chants that was composed in honor of Queen Lili'uokalani, commemorating one of her train rides to the Waiālua side of O'ahu. One of her courtiers, Ellen Kekoahawaikalani Prendergast, composed this set of mele at her home, Puahaulani Hale, on July 14, 1898. The places mentioned in their are on O'ahu's western leeward coast. Honouliuli is the western-most ahupua'a (land division) of the district of 'Ewa that separates 'Ewa from Wai'anae district. The 'Ewa plain was where artesian water was discovered and was used to irrigate sugar cane there. Ka'ala is O'ahu's highest elevation at over 4,000 feet above sea level in the Wai'anae Mountains. Below Ka'ala on the opposite side of the

moutain range are the places and things mentioned in the following 5 lines. Līhu`e, where present day Schofield is, was the ancient capital of the O`ahu kingdom where the fragrant nēnē grass was found on the plains there. These places were once part of the old (approximately 15th century) Wai`anae boundaries. From the train when riding along the coast before coming to Kahe Point, Waimānalo is near the `Ewa and Wai`anae border where the landfill is located today. Looking ahead, Pu`uohulu hill is seen jutting out to sea. Nānākuli is situated at the beginning of the Wai`anae district boundaries. Beyond Pu`uohulu is Mā`ili. The Waikōloa is a wind that originates from Mount Ka`ala and is known throughout the vicinity as far as Mokulē`ia, Līhu`e and surrounding areas. Hālonā is found at the back of Lualualei Valley on the Nānākuli side.<sup>8</sup>

Today the Wai`anae Coast extends from Kahe Point, near the Southwest Point of the Island (Kalaheo), to Ka`ena Point, the Western most tip of O`ahu. For the purposes of this dissertation, we will use the boundaries identified by the native people in their songs, which includes portions of Ewa and Wai`anae Uka,<sup>9</sup> the majority of which today is known as Wahiawā. The importance of this is to emphasize that for a very long time, Wai`anae was a very different region with an abundance of resources available to its residents. Much of the history has been lost as to how Wai`anae went from a very rich region to the struggling area it is today. Place names like Līhu`e or Kalena are rarely used today, despite the fact the next chapter will show that less than one hundred years ago, the people of Wai`anae fought hard to protect these places from the U.S. Military during the Territorial Era.

The follow up oli of Ka Li`a speaks of places more commonly known today as parts of Wai`anae. The oli “Wai`anae” explains:

‘A`ohe ka heluna o Wai`anae  
Me ka nui lau holu o Pōka`i  
I ahona i ka `olu o ke kiawe  
I ke ahe a ka makani he Kaiāulu  
Ua inu i ka wai pi`i a ka māhu  
I ka wai aniani o Kamaile  
Ka maile lau li`i kō Ko`iahi  
‘O ka lei hinahina kā i Mākaha

## Chapter One

Ka popohe a ka pua nohu i ke kula  
E memelu i ka lā o nā Kea‘au  
Lālau nā lima o ka malihini  
Hopu i ke one kani o Mākua  
Ha‘ina ‘ia mai ana ka puana  
‘O Lili‘uokalani nō he inoa.<sup>10</sup>

Translation:

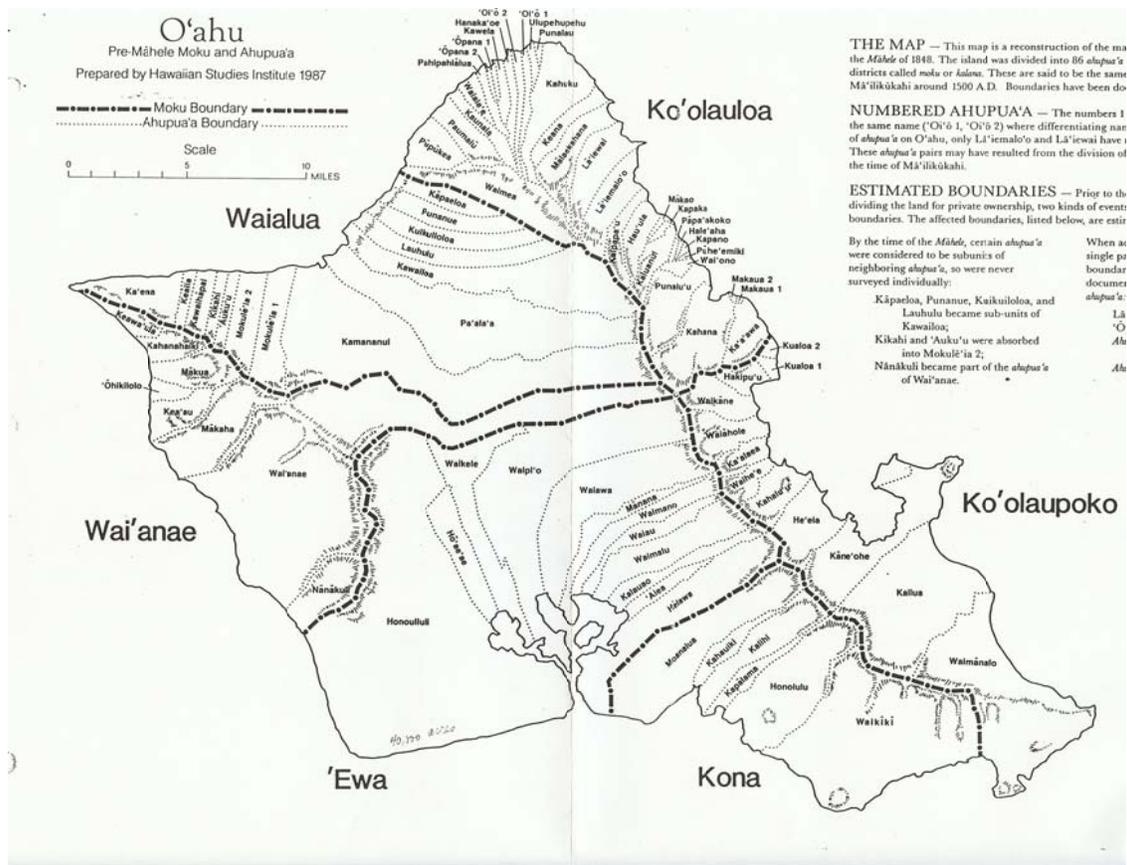
There is no amounting to Wai‘anae’s delights  
With the swaying coconut fronds at Pōka‘i  
How fortunate it is for the cool grove of kiawe  
And for the gentle blowing of the Kaiāulu.  
We took drink of the distilled libation,  
The glassy water of Kamaile.  
The dainty-leaved maile is Ko‘iahi,  
The lei of hinahina is Mākaha’s.  
The perfectly formed nohu blossoms upon the plain  
Is golden hued in the sun of Kea‘au.  
The hands of visitors grasp  
To hold the sounding sands of Mākua.  
The story is told  
In honor of Lili‘uokalani.

This oli speaks of the coconut fronds for which Pōka‘i Bay was famed. It speaks also of various ecological features which identified places in Wai‘anae. Uncle Kimo writes: “The places in this chant are on O‘ahu’s western leeward coast. Wai‘anae was famous for its coconut grove at Pōka‘i where the tastiest coconuts were said to be found. That Kaiāulu is Wai‘anae’s cool sea breeze. The *maile* at Ko‘iahi has been well known for its sweetness and fine leaves and is famous in poetry. The *hinahina* is the beach heliotrope and the *nohu* is also a beach plant that has yellow flowers. The sand at Mākua is very dry and makes a dull “whoof” sound when stepped upon in the dry summer months.”<sup>11</sup> This oli emphasizes how Native people embedded knowledge about the land into the various forms of their oral histories. Native Hawaiians stored ecological knowledge in various forms of their oral histories: mo‘olelo, oli, and mele. By storing knowledge in stories, chants and songs, this population ensured the education of critical knowledge about

## Ho'i Hou iā Papahānaumoku

natural resource management to the next generation. In a sustainable environment, such knowledge proves critical to the existence and perpetuation of the community and provides a foundation for creating an alternative narrative about the history of Wai'anae.

The importance of the tie between Wai'anae Kai and Wai'anae Uka cannot be emphasized enough. By the time statehood arrived in 1959, Līhu'e would no longer be considered part of the Wai'anae district, despite the fact that Wai'anae historically maintained a critical spiritual, political and ecological connection to the area.



**Figure 5.** As this map shows, the original Wai'anae boundaries extended mauka all the way to Ko'olauloa. Source: Hawaiian Studies Institute, 1987

## Chapter One

The area now occupied by Schofield Baracks was known as Līhu`e. The common use of the name has been lost, but mele still refer to this place name. Mele reveal the relationship between Līhu`e and the rest of Wai`anae.

“Lei Līhu`e”

Lei Līhu`e i ke kupakupa me ka nēnē  
Lei Nene`u i ka `ala o ka līpoa  
Lei o Malaea i ka nalu ha`i o ke ala  
Lei hoi oe i ka ulu nui o Pōka`i

I ke ahe`olu (i ke ahe`olu) a ka makani  
He Kaiāulu, he Kaiāulu  
I Ke kolonahe mai ā ka hau i ka pō la`i  
Aheahe`olu, aheahe`olu

Lei Mākua i ke one`ōpiopio  
Lei Ko`iahi i ka maile lau li`ili`i  
Lei Ka`ala i ka ua a ka nāulu  
Lei ho`i`oe i ka ulu nui o Pōka`i

Translation:

Līhu`e’s lei is of the *kupukupu* (fern) and *nēnē* (grass),  
Nene`u’s lei is the fragrance of the *līpoa* (seaweed),  
Malaea’s lei is that of the surf that breaks in formation,  
You, Pōka`i, certainly wear the coconut trees as a lei.

In the gentle blowing (in the gentle blowing) of the breeze,  
(Called the) Kaiāulu, Kaiāulu,  
In the gentleness of the cool breeze in the calm nights  
So pleasantly comforting, so pleasantly comforting.

Mākua’s lei is of the freshly washed sand,  
Ko`iahi wears the lei of daintly-leaved *maile*,  
Ka`ala’s lei is of heavy, sudden showers,  
You, Pōka`i, certainly wears the coconut trees as a lei.<sup>12</sup>

This mele provides an excellent description of natural resource features. In many cases, the only places where description of elements of the land that may no longer be there.



## Chapter One

from Kāne`ilio Point, spanning the shore area of Neneu and Honua.” Source: Hawaiian Studies Institute.

Yet, in 1918, after the overthrow of the Hawaiian monarchy and establishment of the Territorial Government, United States President Woodrow Wilson seized a land portion of the bay in Wai`anae. The Pacific Commercial Advertiser reported of the action:

Under executive order issued by President Wilson several days ago another big area of Territorial shore land has been over as a military reservation, which may take in as much as nine miles of beach in the Waianae district and will also include a portion of the Waianae plantation. A remarkable feature in connection with the order and action of the Hawaiian department is that it went into effect without the knowledge of Land Commissioner H.G. Rivenburge and Governor McCarthy only heard of it yesterday, interesting that the former administration carried the thing through and either forgot to mention it when Governor McCarthy took office or deemed it too unimportant to place on record.<sup>13</sup>

This would only be the beginning of the fight for Pōka`i Bay and the Wai`anae Coast. In 1948, the Army would attempt to grab another 1.12 acres of Pōka`i Bay for military manueveurs, ingiting an uprising from the community in response.<sup>14</sup> This was in addition to the 103.6 acres that had already been taken two years before.

In 1916, the military would take two sites in Wai`anae as “camp sites.” One site, in Nānākuli, consisted of 39.6 acres. A second site, in Mākaha, consisted of 64 acres. Of the Nānakuli site, the Brigadier General R. K. Evans, Commanding Hawaiian Department, Territory of Hawai`i, remarked in his survey “this area is covered with a thick growth of algaroba, and is apparently of value only as a source of fire and as a mediocore pasture.”<sup>15</sup> The Mākaha survey was similar, stating that “this area is a sandy beach, covered with thick algaroba. It apparently has no other value than as source of fire wood.”<sup>16</sup> Yet, the survey also notes that all the boundaries are perennial streams. This demonstrated the disconnect between the foreign view of the land and the native view of the land, for as a community that relied upon fishing for food, access to the sea was

Ho`i Hou iā Papahānaumoku

critical. The military saw this land with minimal value; the natives saw necessary resources. Taking of coastal property was devastating. This was particularly true of Pōka`i Bay.

Pōka`i Bay was very important to the Wai`anae community. Many local residents speak of how the Bay was famed for its coconut groves, which indicate the presence of more water than flows through the area today.

Wai`anae was the town and at Pōka`i Bay; we would go swimming all the time. Actually Pōka`i Bay was originally Mā`alaea Bay and all of the coconut trees that are planted around the bay was supposed to have been given by a prince of Tahiti, when he came for a visit to the bay. The bay actually started from where the Ka`aupuni Stream runs from in the back of the Union Service Station, up to the Japanese Hongwanhi School and where the Catholic Church is. It is one large coconut grove, hence the song of Mā`alaea Bay: *“Leo o Mā`alaea, i ka nani o Ka`ala, ke ho`i oe ika nui o Pōka`i”* which means the breaking of the waves at Ma`alaea and behold the beautiful coconut trees at Pōka`i.<sup>17</sup>

When we turn to the stories of the people, we discover the tremendous natural wealth in the pu`uhonua of Wai`anae. Conversely, surveys done by the Territorial government or the US government find these lands with little value. Yet, the United States Presidents issued dozens of Executive Orders Setting Aside Land for Public Purposes through the State of Hawai`i giving the U.S. government and Territorial Government ample motive to find these lands with little value.

Over the years, residents from Wai`anae have pled to various authorities to stop the seizure of their resources. In the next chapter, we see how residents involved the courts in the 1800s to protect land rights. In the third chapter, we will see the current chapter of these efforts, which involves the community’s plea to the federal court to stop military training in Mākua Valley. In 1948, Wai`anae residents were pleading to the county to intervene and stop the Army’s seizure of Pōka`i Bay.<sup>18</sup> After months of pleas

## Chapter One

and protests, the city would condemn the property, paying \$8,000 for the 1.12 acre parcel, giving residents a right of way to the Bay.<sup>19</sup> Still, the devastation from military use of the Coast proved to have devastating long term effects, including the loss of the coconut groves which were a community resource for residents.

Collectively, the use of mo`olelo and mele provide an important foundation for the various land conflicts that have taken place in Wai`anae. Whereas secondary resources allow for reconstructing historical conflicts, primary resources from residents, particularly Native Hawaiian residents, illustrate why these resources were so valuable to the community. It contributes to understanding why these conflicts were so significant to the community. Mele help enhance our contemporary understanding of these places as multi-faceted natural and cultural resources. Therefore, they do more than allow for a historical reconstruction of what existed, but allow the creation of an inventory of resources that have been taken away from the community without reparation or restitution. When we begin to take stock of these resources, we are better able to analyze the social dysfunction that exists in Wai`anae today. Another resource whose absence has lastly and long-reaching impacts in the community is water, or wai.

### Waiwai: The Natural Wealth of Wai`anae

The history of any place in Hawai`i can largely be understood through understanding the history of its water. Water is life in Hawai`i. Handy, Handy and Pukui explain in *Native Planters*, “Water, which gave life to food plants as well as to all vegetation, symbolized bounty for the Hawaiian gardener for it irrigated his staff of life – taro. Therefore, the word for water reduplicated meant wealth in general, for a land or a people that had abundant water was wealthy.”<sup>20</sup> Acknowledgement of the critical

Ho`i Hou iā Papahānaumoku

necessary of water to traditional Hawaiian living was recognized in a 1981 study prepared for the National Park Service Natural Landmarks Program, Department of Interior, in which researchers wrote in their section on water entitled, “Water of Kane; Water of Life”:

“...Where is the water of Kane?  
Yonder on mountain peak ...  
Where the rivers sweep ...  
Yonder, at sea, on the ocean ...  
A well-spring of water ...  
The water of life!”

The ancient Hawaiians saw life reflected in pairs: for every creature or (sic) land there was a creature in the sea for every event on land, there was an event in the ocean. There is a certain wisdom to this concept of the relationship between land and sea for freshwater in Hawaii has but one source, rainfall, and that as modern scientists visualize it is the source of all water, as it cycles between land and sea.<sup>21</sup>

Our genealogy linked us to the wisdom referenced here. As Hawaiians, our mo`okū`auhau make us part of the history. We are an element of our culture. Without us, our histories and cultures do not exist. As Māori scholar Charles Royal explains:

The individual, therefore, is the contemporary, physical world expression of their whakapapa. That is why, in my view, Māori people are the primary representations of their history. We are irrefutable products of it. We are bound inextricably into whakapapa fabric. And once bound, we can not leave except by consciousness. That is, we are always physically connected to our whakapapa but we can remain ignorant of it. The researcher/learner brings together fragments of information which reconstruct the spiritual and intellectual sides of whakapapa, what I can “whakapapa consciousness.” And it is the reconstruction of whakapapa consciousness that preoccupies much Māori activity today.<sup>22</sup>

Just as the Māori are the products of their history and culture through their whakapapa, Native Hawaiians are the products of their history and culture through their mo`okū`auhau. The wealth of ancestral knowledge embedded within Hawaiians through their mo`okū`auhau can never be accessed by those without that genealogy.

## Chapter One

Why is mo`okū`auhau so important? It inseparably weaves us into the past, present and the future. It seams us into this land and its people. This history and relationship allows for traditions to survive; it allows the fishing traditions of Wai`anae to continue.

There are places in Hawai`i known for their waiwai: Hilo, Mānoa, Hanalei. The term waiwai serves as another example of the intimate relationship between Hawaiians and their `āina. It commonly means wealth. Yet, its root word, wai, means fresh water. Therefore, when Hawaiians identified a place as waiwai, or wealthy, they referenced the amount of fresh water a particular place received. People in traditional Hawai`i understood the receipt of an abundance of fresh water to be a sign of approval or blessings from akua. This belief still remains among farmers and other maka`āinana, who always praise the arrival of rain as it feeds crops and brings life to the land. The general public also embraces remnants of this belief, as people are commonly heard referring to a light rain as a blessing from Hawaiian gods.

Wai`anae may have never been as waiwai as Mānoa or Hanalei, yet it was waiwai. This seems particularly difficult to believe today, being that kula lands dominate contemporary Wai`anae. Yet, maps, mo`olelo and mele reveal a different history of the waiwai of Wai`anae. Wai`anae was historically a place of tremendous spiritual, cultural and natural wealth. As earlier chapters identified, much of the natural wealth currently sleeps dormant in the district. Yet, the population who resided in pre-contact and early Kingdom days there did so successfully such that the region proudly reared exemplary chiefs and warriors, as a clear sign of prosperity and good health, which signaled abundant and healthy natural resources. For as with all places, the wealth and well-being

Ho`i Hou iā Papahānaumoku

of Wai‘anae stemmed from its water and natural resources, which in turn allowed for a vigorous sustainable economy. The traditional economic barter system of early Hawai‘i allowed for residents to provide their families with all the necessities of life: health, shelter, and sustenance. Wai‘anae, blessed with great fishing on its coast and regular stream flow in its mauka regions, surely resulted in ahupua‘a that were truly waiwai.

From the mountains to the sea, the waters of Wai`anae provided for its people. Wai‘anae, known for being the birthing place of Māui, the deity which fished the Hawaiian islands from the sea, is famed for its fishing traditions. For many of us Hawaiians, we are taught through experience. We learn of our history through mo‘olelo. We learn our culture through practice. In this regard, fishing becomes more than a mechanism of obtaining food, but it becomes part of our cultural practices. These cultural practices become particularly important for a place like Wai‘anae because not only are oral histories and cultural traditions preserved through these activities.

Wai`anae, like any place in Hawai`i, cannot be fully appreciated or understood without understanding the ways in which its Native people described it. As Kumu Hula Pueo Pata explains:

In Hawai`i nei, all of the islands, moku, `ahupua`a, `ili, mo`o, pauku, kihapai, kauhale, etc., and their topographical features, along with the surrounding oceans, celestial levels, etc. have Hawaiian names. These names not only have function in dubbing the place, but many times help in recording that place's features and/or histories.

It is easy to see how places with names like "Ke-alia (the place of salt encrustation)", "Maka-wao (beginning of the forest)", "Ka-lae-huku (jutting point of land)", and "Kai-lua (place of two sea currents)" have thus been named for their topographical features.

Names which record human-related events in our history would include "Wai-luku (waters of destruction [thus named after a bloody battle])", "Wanana-lua

## Chapter One

(two prophecies [once uttered at that place]), "Uku-mehame (payment of mehame wood)", and even "Puna-lu`u (spring dived for [where fresh water was obtained from springs bubbling from under the ocean])". God-related events in our history which resulted in pana names include "Wai-kau (suspended water [when Kane made water appear from the face of a cliff for his aikane, Kanaloa])", "Pepeiao-lepo (dirty ear [when Kamapua`a ran through lo`i to escape Pele's wrath and resultingly got mud in his ears])", and even "Hana-ka-`o`o (the digging stick is put to work [when Pele began to dig upon the island of Maui]). All of those names record something special in that place's history by humans or gods.

Other types of historical names are the results of when gods, kupua, people, or animals morphed into a specific topographical feature for one reason or another. "Pohaku Eaea (Eaea the rock)" was thus named after Pele entombed her resistant lover, Eaea, in lava; "Papalaua" was a mo`o whose body turned into a mountain when she was killed by Hi`iaka; or even "Ka-iwi-o-Pele (the bones of Pele)", a hill believed to have formed around the human remains of Pele before she was deified into a goddess.

In all, there are other examples of how our pana received their names. However, the examples above are given to lend support to the concept of "kama`āina"... "child of the land". Places named strictly for topographical features are less likely to affect this term. Therefore, attention is now shifted to pana named for history... either for an act, OR for the once-living beings that were responsible for the places' names.<sup>23</sup>

As Pata articulates, geography for Hawaiians was not explained for topographical or geographical features also, but for this place within our oral histories. Places were explained in legend and lore. This brought to life the land which we understood to be the embodiment of our ancestors. Mythology, this lore, lay at the heart of our history and pedagogy.

Wai`anae's geographical features appeared prominently in legends, particularly Mount Ka`ala and Ka`ena Point. Hi`iakaikapoliopole, the youngest and most beloved sister of Pele, chants to Mount Ka`ala when she travels through the region on her quest to retrieve Pele's lover Lohiau from Kaua`i. Emerson explains the import of the Ka`ena area in legend:

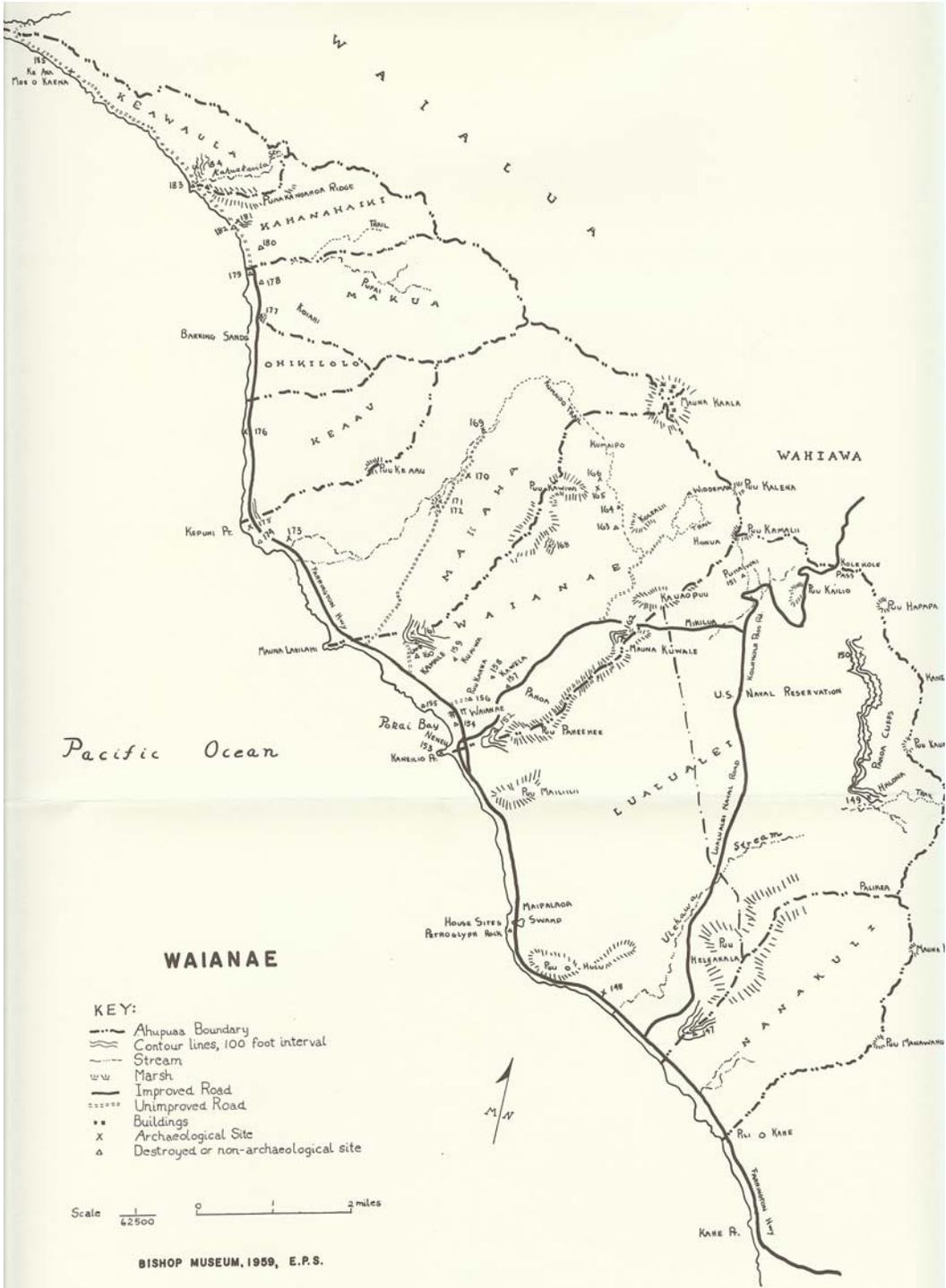
## Ho`i Hou iā Papahānaumoku

The story of Cape Ka-ena, that finger-like thrusts itself out into the ocean from the western extremity of Oahu, touches Hawaiian mythology at many points: Its mountain eminence was a *leina uhane*, jumping-off place, where the spirits of the deceased took their flying leap into ghost-land. Here it was that the demigod Mawi (sic) had his *pou sto* (sic) when he made the supreme effort of his life to align and unite the scattered group of islands; and here can still be seen Pohaku o Kauai, the one fragment of terra firma his hook could wrench from its base. Here, too, it was that Pele stood when she chaffed the old demigod for having lured her on, as she supposed, with drum and fife to the pursuit of Lohiau; and now her sister Hiiaka stands in the same place.<sup>24</sup>

Yet, Wai`anae's import extended far beyond traditional legend into more modern

Hawaiian history.

Chapter One



© Bishop Museum (reprinted in *Sites of Oahu*)

## Ho`i Hou iā Papahānaumoku

Nothing has been more devastating to Hawai‘i than capitalism and commerce. More dangerous than any other ideology to arrive with the westerns, even more dangerous than their ethnocentric, colonizing mindset, was the belief that *anything* could be brought or sold. It remains an absurd and irresponsible belief. Yet, this belief remains central to our government and our economy. And it continues to the people and natural resources of this ‘Āina. The legal changes that took place after 1840 (including the Māhele, the Masters and Servants Act, and the Reciprocity Treaty) would ensure the fall of the lāhui. Once the government legalized commercialization and capitalism, the Native people – who had no understanding of these absurd foreign ideologies – stood no chance in protecting their traditional rights. Surely the nobles could not have known how treacherous and deceitful the foreigners would become. Assigning blame, particularly to the Native leaders of the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century, serves no purpose now. All we can do is try to understand and fight to restore our culture and ‘āina. For it was a lack of understanding that led to the fall of the lāhui in the first place. May we never be that naïve again.

### Ho`iho`i hou ā ke kūlana o ka nohona (restoring the standard of living)

One place exemplifies what restoring the ‘āina can do for a community; this is Ka‘ala Farms. Located in the uplands of the Ka‘ala mountains, Ka‘ala Farms runs environmental and educational programming modeled after the ahupua‘a system.

Director and founder Uncle Eric Enos explains:

The practice of organizing the land through *ahupua‘a* is central to traditional Hawaiian culture. Within these districts, the ancient Hawaiians lived in a kinship system that included the *kalo*, or elder brother that nurtured and fed them, and the land, or ‘āina. The *ahupua‘a* stretched from the mountain watersheds out to the reefs, and within them the *po‘e kahiko*, or people of old, had everything they needed to nourish their

## Chapter One

bodies and their spirits. The *ahupua'a* is not only a method of organizing the land, it also encompasses much of the traditional Hawaiian way of life, from spiritual beliefs to resource management. It is the concept that shapes our work at Ka'ala.<sup>25</sup>

Enos' work with Ka'ala Farms illustrates more than how successful 'āina based programs can be in Hawaiian communities. Enos' work emphasizes the critical importance of water restoration in the revitalization of Hawaiian health and culture.



(c) Trisha Kehaulani Watson

This is Ka'ala Farms in 2006, yet Uncle Eric explains:

Back in the 1970s, this same tract of land was covered with dry brush. Early cultural sites were lost among the weeds, and the water had been rerouted to serve urbanization and to irrigate introduced agricultural products. For many of us in Wai'anae, the landscape of our lives was not much better. Many of us found it difficult to relate to the curriculum in the schools. Drugs and alcohol took many of our young people and parents, and jobs were hard to come by. Many of our youth and their families from generations back felt disconnected from traditional ways of knowing and being and found it hard to define themselves as men and women in the roles that were offered them.<sup>26</sup>

Therefore, the history of Ka‘ala Farms today involves a struggle to regain the use of land and the restoration of water to the area; it is a struggle to protect a sacred place as a pu`uhonua. In Ka‘ala, as in most of Wai‘anae, government and private interests diverted fresh water necessary to the cultivation of kalo and other vegetation. The land dried up and the native vegetation went dormant as a result. Lo‘i terraces became overgrown with dry bush and foreign plants. Yet, beneath the brush, the physical structure of traditional Hawaiian irrigation practices remained. In the case of Ka‘ala, once community members regained control and usage of the land, they were able to remove the overgrown brush to identify where the old lo‘i were located. Perhaps the best way to understand Wai‘anae and the devastation that occurs there comes from understanding how the plantations, and now the City, deprives that area of water. Hawaiians say “Mōhala i ka wai ka maka o ka pua,”<sup>27</sup> unfolded by the water are the faces of the flowers. This spoke of how the people thrived where the water flowed freely. As Hawaiians understood how critical water was to our way of life. One resident recalls about the valley she lived in: “Oh they get plenty food up there [in the valley]. The cows they get all kinds, fern, grass, anything. Everybody says this place is a dry place. Not in the valley. The valley is always green. It always did rain up there. ... They have the whole valley. The whole valley is theirs. Its all green and rich with this stuff. They shouldn’t take it away from us. Most of it used to be green, too.”<sup>28</sup> When the plantations began to divert water from the ahupua‘a that needed it, valleys and regions dried up. The people suffered. This is the implications of the conflict between Hawaiians who identify a place as sacred and foreigners with economic interests in the resources. When and where Hawaiians lost these conflicts, the people and the `āina suffered.

## Chapter One

This phenomenon, the drying up of ahupua‘a and the drying up of the people, is best seen in the unused terraces at Ka‘ala Farms. Whereas the history of Wai‘anae is perhaps best understood through its legends, its suffering is certainly best understood in the tales of its people and the devastation in its land.

The State should immediately begin to reverse the land seizures that occurred under the Organic Act and subsequent legislation. Ranching and plantations proved unsustainable industries. When they failed, the people of the region were the most impacted, as they were not the ones who possessed financial surpluses that allowed them to weather economic storms. The maka‘āina must be allowed first and foremost the ability to feed themselves and their families. This was our most critical native right. And under foreign law, we have seen this basic right stripped from the people through the seizure of land and the diversion of water sources. These policy practices lie at the heart of native economic devastation. If we want native people to thrive in economically and environmentally sustainable ways, we must return the land and the water so that it can be put back into production.



(c) Trisha Kehaulani Watson

The value of Ka`ala is recognized by many. In a report identifying the Wai`anae Range as a priority one landmark site, researchers acknowledges:

This proposed landmark site extends from Makua to Palikea along the crest of the Waianae Range and comprises a narrow, serpentine ridge with extremely steep slopes, particularly on the southwestern exposure. Nanakuli, Lualualei and Waianae are great amphitheater-headed valleys on this southwestern exposure. At the northwestern end of the high Wai`anae crestline, Mt. Kaala interrupts the sharp ridgeline and presents a nearly flat plateau, roughly a mile across, supporting a bog. Mt. Kaala is Oahu's highest elevation at 4,025 feet above sea level. Kolekole pass, at an elevation of 1,600 feet, forms the low point along the Wai`anae crestline. Puu Kailio, just below the pass, is the firepit of the ancient Wai`anae caldera. Farther south along the ridgeline the steep cliff face or pali continues on the southwest facing slope, whereas the northern and eastern slopes are more gentle although they too are deeply incised by amphitheater-headed valleys. Palikea at the southern extremity of the

## Chapter One

high Waianae ridge crest is a pyramidal shaped peak reaching an elevation of 3,098 feet above sea level.

The crest of the Waianae Range is an erosional ridge of considerable antiquity as far as the island of Oahu is concerned and supports important terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems.<sup>29</sup>

This reflects many of the songs about Ka`ala, that speak of its majesty. Many mele have been composed for Ka`ala.

From mele, we learn about not only the value of the mountain to Wai`anae, but that people knew of its distinct winds with specific names. One song, “Beautiful Ka`ala,” preserves such a name, the name of the wind Kaiāulu:

Huli aku nānā iā Ka`ala  
Kuahiwi kaulana kū kilakila

Huli aku nānā iā Wai`anae  
He nani i ka maka ke `ike aku.

`O ka pā kolonahe me ke aheahe  
Makani kaulana e ke Kaiāulu.

Ha`ina `ia mai ana ka puana  
E ola e ke kama e ke Kaiāulu.

Ha`ina `ia hou mai ana ka puana  
Nani Ka`ala kau i ka hano.<sup>30</sup>

Translation:

Turn about towards Ka`ala,  
(That) famous mountain standing so majestically.

Turn about towards Wai`anae,  
Lovely for the eyes to behold.

The soft blowing is so gentle,  
(Of the) well-known breeze, the Kaiāulu.

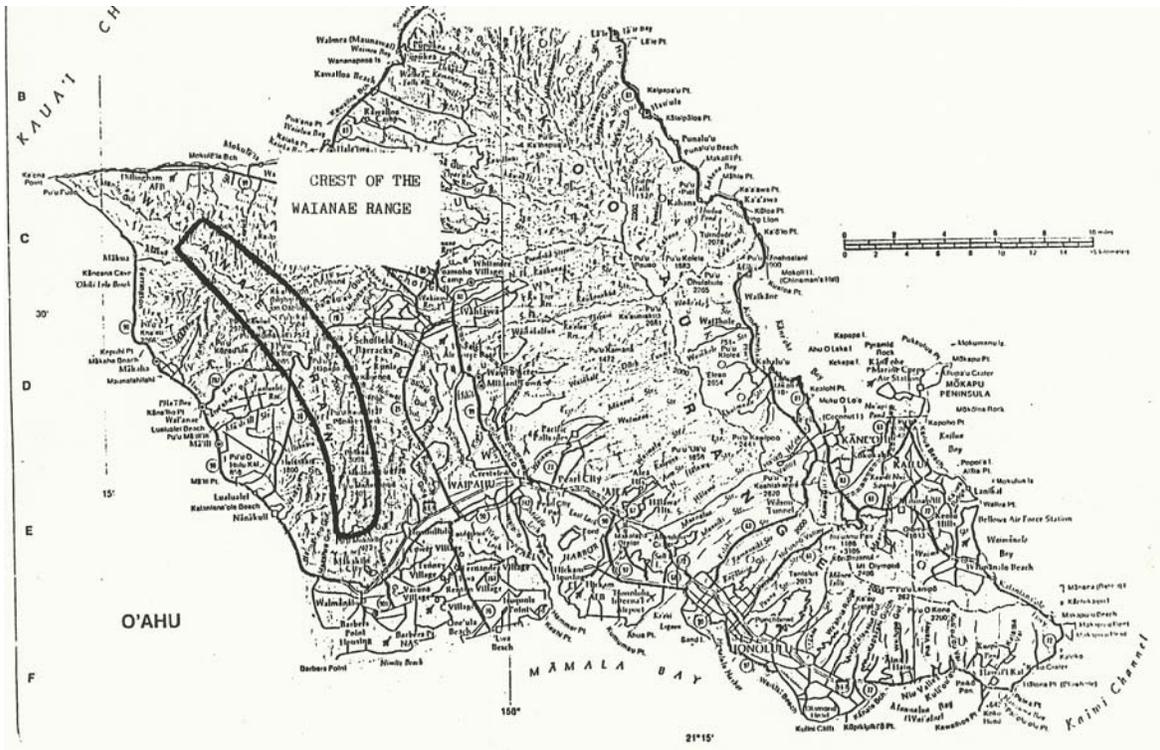
The story is told:  
May a good life be for the child of the Kaiāulu.

## Ho`i Hou iā Papahānaumoku

The story is told once more of  
Ka`ala's beauty held in honor.<sup>31</sup>

This song not only speaks of the majesty of the mountain, it also speaks of the breeze that blows distinctly on the sea coast of Wai`anae, the Kaiāulu wind. Unlike the foreigners, who did not necessarily identify natural resources or the landscape the same way the Native people did, Hawaiians identified winds, waters and places by their proper names. These distinctive names allowed the people to associate specific winds or waters with appropriate natural resource management practices.

Although foreigners would also find Ka`ala valuable. The next chapter recounts from the military would gain control of this resource for military purposes. As we see in the chapter on Mākua Valley, certain geographic or ecological features (which would often be present in song or myth), would tell the people when they could productively fish, plant or gather. Yet, Mākua would be taken too. Therefore, without addressing the unilateral and systemic taking of land from Wai`anae during the Territorial Era for the U.S. Military, it is unclear how any part of Wai`anae, from the land to the people, can begin to recover from such an extreme history of naked imperialism.



© University of Hawai'i

There is no disputing that Wai'anae possesses tremendous natural resources. The crest of the Wai'anae Range is considered a particularly valuable natural resource. It was proposed as a natural landmark site, noting: "The crest of the Wai'anae Range is an erosional ridge of considerable antiquity as far as the island of Oahu is concerned and supports important terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems."<sup>32</sup> The range provided critical support to the water of the region.

We know that private land ownership began with westerns, but the idea that water could be taken from a region also began with the westerns. As Handy, Handy and Pukui explain: "Inalienable title to water rights in relation to land use is a conception that had no place in old Hawaiian thinking. The idea of private ownership of land was likewise unknown until Kamehameha's autocracy, established as a result of the intrusion of foreign concepts, set up the figment of monarchy, a polysocial pattern alien to the

Ho`i Hou iā Papahānaumoku

Polynesian scene theretofore existing.”<sup>33</sup> Ideology changed Wai‘anae. As the plantation owners sought to divert naturally flowing water sources to feed thirsty sugar crops, lo‘i dried up. The people of Wai‘anae began to turn to the source of food that they had always turned to in times of crises, the sea. The people of Wai`anae are able to tell us of the various ways in which their traditions were taken away.

Wai‘anae is no longer waiwai: in water resources, in land for its people, in wellness and in economic resources. And for Hawaiians who understand wai o ke ola, the water of life, means also that water is life, all these problems began when the economic ambitions of American capitalists burned so hot that it dried the waters of Wai‘anae. Therefore, a great deal of the harm that Wai‘anae sees today derives from the pilfering of its water resources and the resulting inability of the people to restore their traditional economy and sustainability.

Aia i hea ka Wai a Kane?

E ú-i aku ana au ia oe.  
Aia i-hea ka Wai a Kane?  
Aia i-lalo, i ka honua, i ka Wai hu,  
I ka wai kau a Kane me Kanaloa--  
He wai-puna, he wai e inu,  
He wai e mana, he wai e ola.  
E ola no, e-a!

One question I ask of you:  
Where flows the water of Kane?  
Deep in the ground. in the gushing spring,  
In the ducts of Kane and Loa,  
A well-spring of water, to quaff,  
A water of magic power--  
The water of life!  
Life! O give us this life!

- Traditional

## Chapter One

Maps of Wai‘anae Kai identify hundreds of open and productive lo‘i in the mauka area of that ahupua‘a. Even more revealing than the identification of large areas of kalo cultivation is the identification of numerous streams in the area. Numerous streams ran throughout Wai‘anae Kai. The streams were perennial and ran year round to allow for year round cultivation of kalo for the regions. Modern geological surveys also evidence the presence of abundant groundwater flowing through a now dangerous dry region.



© United States Geological Survey

A 1971 hydrologic atlas of Wai‘anae reveals how extensive tunneling caused the streams that once feed the region to run dry.

All streams [in Wai‘anae] are intermittent at low altitudes. Under natural conditions, stream flow was probably perennial above an altitude of about 600 feet in Mākaha Valley, Wai‘anae Valley, and the northern part of Lualualei Valley. Ground water discharging from dike compartments constituted this flow. Development of the water by extensive tunneling and diversions to pipelines since the early 1900’s in Wai‘anae Valley, 1935 in Lualualei Valley, and 1945 in Mākaha Valley, has reduced the flow to the extent that streams are now perennial only above an altitude of about 1,000 feet.<sup>34</sup>

The tunneling and diversions to pipelines in the 20<sup>th</sup> century stole the water that fed the people of Wai‘anae to feed plantation fields where Hawaiians and immigrants slaved away under treacherous conditions.

Yet, as a kula region is how Wai‘anae is known today. Many of the places sung have dried up. Many of the songs have gone silent. It is an ironic silence, because so known is Wai‘anae today for its dry lands that its own people identify the origin of the name Nānākuli from its residents who “looked silently” because they had no food or water to share with visitors who called. It seems that even within their community history, Wai‘anae knew itself as being poor and impoverished. Yet, as shown, it had not always been that way. The natural devastation that occurred in Wai‘anae resulted largely from ecocolonization and the settlement of foreigners in the region.

---

<sup>1</sup> C. Pueo Pata, ‘Ōlelo No‘eau.

<sup>2</sup> Fiona Magowan, “Crying to remember: Reproducing personhood and community,” *Telling Stories: Indigenous History and Memory in Australia and New Zealand*, Eds. Bain Attwood and Fiona Magowan (Australia: Allen and Unwin, 2001), 41.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 43.

<sup>4</sup> Kumu Hula John Keola Lake, “Chanting, the Lyrical Poetry of Hawaii: Na Mele oli a me Na mele hula” (on file with author).

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Mary K. Pukui and Alfons L. Korn, Preface, *The Echo of Our Song: Chants and Poems of the Hawaiians*, Translated and ed. Mary K. Pukui and Alfons L. Korn, (Honolulu, UH Press, 1973), ix.

<sup>7</sup> J. Kimo Alama Keaulana, *Class Materials from Hawaiian 394: Papa Mele Wahi Pana* (Summer 2003), Unpublished, Used with Permission from Author, (on file with author).

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> “Big Shore Land Area at Waianae Taken by Army,” *The Pacific Commercial Advertiser*, July 6, 1918, p. 1, 2<sup>nd</sup> section.

<sup>14</sup> *Star Bulletin*, May 25, 1948, p. 1.

<sup>15</sup> Brigadier General R. K. Evans, Commanding General, Hawaiian Department, Honolulu, Territory of Hawaii, Personal Letter to Lucius E. Pickham, October 3, 1916, Hawaii State Archives, (on file with author).

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> Wai`anae Coast Culture and Arts Society, *Ka Po`e Kahiko o Wai`anae*, (Honolulu: Topgallant Publishing Co., 1986), 85.

<sup>18</sup> *Star Bulletin*, April 24, 1948, p.1.

<sup>19</sup> *Honolulu Advertiser*, May 25, p.1.

<sup>20</sup> E.S. Craighill Handy, Elizabeth Green Handy with Mary Kawena Pukui, *Native Planters in Old Hawai`i: Their Life, Lore, and Environment* (Honolulu: Bishop Museum Press, 1991), 57.

- <sup>21</sup> University of Hawai`i, Natural Landmarks Survey of the Hawaiian Islands, Prepared for the National Park Service Natural Landmarks Program, Department of the Interior, July, 1, 1981, 32 (on file with author).
- <sup>22</sup> Charles Royal, “Māori People as Primary Representation of Māori History,” Unpublished, 1996, Used with Permission from Author, (on file with author).
- <sup>23</sup> Kumu Hula Pueo Pata, Personal Communication, October 1, 2005 (on file with author)
- <sup>24</sup> Nathaniel Emerson, *Pele and Hiiaka: A Myth from Hawai`i*, (Honolulu: Star Bulletin, 1915), 13.
- <sup>25</sup> Eric Enos, “Cultural Learning at Ka‘ala: Building Community Through Hawaiian Skills and Values”. [http://www.prel.org/products/paced/nov02/ms\\_kaala.htm](http://www.prel.org/products/paced/nov02/ms_kaala.htm), (accessed August 10, 2007).
- <sup>26</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>27</sup> Mary Kawena Pukui, “2178,” *‘Ōlelo No‘eau: Hawaiian Proverbs & Poetical Sayings*, (Honolulu: Bishop Museum Press, 1983), 237.
- <sup>28</sup> Marion Kelly and Sidney Michael Quintal, “Cultural History Report of Mākua Military Reservation and Vicinity, Mākua Valley, O‘ahu, Hawai‘i,” 1977:22, (Honolulu: Dept. of Anthropology, Bernice P. Bishop Museum, April 7, 1977).
- <sup>29</sup> University of Hawai`i, Natural Landmarks Survey of the Hawaiian Islands, Prepared for the National Park Service Natural Landmarks Program, Department of the Interior, July, 1, 1981, 134 (on file with author).
- <sup>30</sup> J. Kimo Alama Keaulana, Class Materials from Hawaiian 394: Papa Mele Wahi Pana (Summer 2003), Unpublished, Used with Permission from Author, (on file with author).
- <sup>31</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>32</sup> University of Hawaii, Natural Landmarks Survey of the Hawaiian Islands, Prepared for the National Park Service Natural Landmarks Program, Department of the Interior, July, 1, 1981, 134 (on file with author).
- <sup>33</sup> E.S. Craighill Handy, Elizabeth Green Handy with Mary Kawena Pukui, *Native Planters in Old Hawai‘i: Their Life, Lore, and Environment* (Honolulu: Bishop Museum Press, 1991), 63.
- <sup>34</sup> USGS, Ground Water in the Wai`anae District, Oahu Hawaii, 1971, Available at: <http://pubs.er.usgs.gov/usgspubs/ha/ha358> (last visited July 25, 2008).