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A LETTER FROM THE GUEST EDITORS: MEDITATION ON HAWAI`I AS THE PIKO

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A Letter from the Guest Editors: Meditation on Hawai`i as the Piko

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This special issue is to engage the NCORE community in respectful and joyful dialogues, situating your temporary presence in Hawai`i within the broader historical, social, cultural, and political contexts influencing the education and well-being of our people. The articles featured in this special issue are arranged in honor of the piko from which we draw inspiration, radiating from the center of our physical and metaphorical landscape and land-sea continuum outwards into our oceanscapes.

Welina mai e nā hoaloha heluhelu,

We curated this special issue to engage the NCORE community in respectful and joyful dialogues, situating your temporary presence in Hawai`i within the broader historical, social, cultural, and political contexts influencing the education and well-being of our people. As such, we invite you, dear readers, to consider this special issue as a meditation on Hawai`i as the piko,¹ the navel or center, of the Pacific: a place of origin, connection, a nexus/hub. Within this piko, we carefully consider the ways in which Kānaka Maoli educational movements connect to native nation-building; how community organizations are shifting literal and metaphorical landscapes in Hawai`i to support the present and future of this place; and how education in Hawai`i both informs and transforms Native nation-building here and across the Pacific. Most importantly, as you journey to, and are temporarily hosted by, this `āina (land, that which feeds), we encourage you to consider how organizations like NCORE, and yourselves as individuals, contribute to Native Hawaiian liberation.

¹ We credit Dr. Lilikalā Kame`eleihiwa for this framing. She developed a course she titled Hawaiian Studies 107: Hawai`i: Center of the Pacific at University of Hawai`i Mānoa as one of the first courses for the Center for Hawaiian Studies in the mid-1980s. Since then, Hawaiian Studies 107 is offered at all our campuses and remains one of the most popular courses across the University of Hawai`i System.

‘O Hawai‘i, Ka Piko o ka Pākīpika

To provide a more nuanced understanding of Hawai‘i, as the piko of the Pacific, we cast a wide net to include scholars, and their ‘ike (knowledge, experience, insight), from many parts of our community, including graduate students, community/organic intellectuals, cultural experts, academicians, and those who embrace multiple ‘ike across these identities. Our authors also come from a variety of places in Hawai‘i, the U.S. continent, and the Pacific. In this approach, we spotlight the endurance and strength of our diverse community, connected by a fierce love for the land and hope for ea Hawai‘i and ea Pasifika guided firmly by the past. The articles featured in this special issue are arranged in honor of the piko from which we draw inspiration, radiating from the center of our physical and metaphorical landscape and land-sea continuum outwards into our oceanscapes (Oliveira, 2014). Thus, we begin by centering works that are particularly place-based, from Keawa‘ula to Mauna Kea, and spiral outwards across the islands and across the depth and breadth of our community’s survivance. We feature scholarship on Native Hawaiian birthing practices, the experiences of ‘ōpio (youth) and adults moving through the public education system, and the complexities within public and private education. In this special issue, we voyage throughout the Hawaiian archipelago (acknowledging a focus on O‘ahu) and across the Pacific through a survey of Pacific Studies in Hawai‘i to the northern Pacific to the islands of Palau. These scholarly works are punctuated by reflections and community spotlights from elders, community leaders, and teachers, who offer us a glimpse into their na‘au-work (of the heart, mind, guts, intuition) and the impetus for their labor. In this way, this issue features the wisdom and educational pursuits taking place across our islands.

“Mai ka Piko o ke Po‘o o ka Poli o ka Wāwae, a La‘a ma nā Kini ‘Ehā o ke Kino”²: A Joyous Counterstory from Hawai‘i to the World

In the midst of organizing this special issue, we were greatly impacted by two major and on-going events. Families and communities in Maui were devastated by a deadly wildfires³ on August 8, 2023 which claimed the lives of 101 people in Lāhainā. Our communities continue healing from the wounds and heartbreak of that event, while serious questions have been raised about the efficacy of emergency management procedures and water management regulations, the impacts of climate change, and the role of settler colonialism which dewatered Lāhainā, the first capital of the Hawaiian Kingdom, for centuries transforming it from a wetland to an arid landscape prone to wild fires (Klein & Sproat, 2023; Korman, 2023). Meanwhile, we continue bearing witness to the most recent brutal efforts of October 7, 2023 by the Israeli government towards Palestinians, which also draws upon settler colonial logics so reminiscent of violent U.S. policies towards Indigenous people of the U.S. continent, Alaska, and the U.S.-affiliated Pacific as well as the illegal overthrow of the Hawaiian Kingdom in 1893. For us, these devastations sit heavily in our na‘au not only for the deaths of innocents and their descendants; not only for the destruction of lives, livelihoods, and ancestral places but also for the continuing inhumanity we witness (and experience) in places like Hawai‘i and Palestine. We are thousands of miles apart yet tied together by decades and

² “From the crown of the head to the soles of the feet, and the four corners of the body. An expression used in prayers of healing. The four corners are the shoulders and hips; between them are the vital organs of the body” (Pukui, 1983, #2066).

³ We would also like to acknowledge the Kula wildfires.

centuries of settler violence as well as by Indigenous resistance and resurgence. Consequently, our na'au also led us to frame this issue as a joyful counterstory to the ruins of settlerism; as a small and powerful voice recounting the beauty and hope found in our collective actions around liberatory education even as these tragedies and injustices continue to unfold. Our hope is these mo'olelo will be a modest contribution to our collective healing by remembering and evoking the strength and wisdom of our ancestors, foregrounding the work we are doing in and with our communities, celebrating our successes, and continuing to dream our dreams of abundance.

Issue Guidance

While this issue explores a wide range of topics from a diversity of folx, there were parts of our community that are not explicitly featured, which we know are incredibly important to the story of Hawai'i's past, present, and future. Among these areas are the mo'olelo of LGBTQ+ communities and disabled communities in Hawai'i as well as more mo'olelo from across nā kai 'ewalu and other parts of the Pacific also represented in Hawai'i. There are many other intersections we have, undoubtedly, missed, and our hope is for *The Journal Committed to Social Change on Race and Ethnicity (JCSCORE)* to feature these critical contributions in forthcoming issues. Moreover, we would also like to enthusiastically encourage you, dear reader, to dive into other scholarly venues, social media, and popular media because these mo'olelo are also readily available⁴. And, in truth, we are but one in a beautiful chorus of voices singing about Hawai'i.

We are also mindful of other Pacific communities drawn to this piko through migration, militarism, and social change from island nations under Compacts of Free Association (COFA) with the United States. We send love to our siblings in the northeastern Pacific, the Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas and Guåhan south to Palau then west to the Federated States of Micronesia (Kosrae, Pohnpei, Chuuk, and Yap) as well as those from the Republic of the Marshall Islands. We also recognize the Samoan community, which has been drawn to our piko for over 70 years, in a circular migration extending from American Samoa and Independent Samoa, through Hawai'i, and east to the U.S. continent.

Finally, there are three important writing conventions we would like to bring to your attention prior to your reading:

Translation: The editors left this decision to each author. Some authors provide a short translation for Hawaiian (or other) words, while others do not since many Hawaiian words are not easily understood in a few English words. For both approaches, we see this as an opportunity for you to seek out the deeper meaning of these words, and the ideas they convey, using the many free online resources to gain an understanding of these words. A high-quality and accessible online Hawaiian language resource is wehewehe.org - and through Ulukau, the platform for wehewehe.org, you may also

⁴ A few resources we recommend for LGBTQ+ focused issues are "From a Native Trans Daughter" by Dr. Kalani'ōpua Young, *Ask the Brindled* by Dr. No'u Revilla, and Kahala Johnson's interview about the Hale Mana Māhū at Mauna Kea on the *Native Stories Podcast*. While Native Hawaiians constitute a significant population considered "disabled" in Hawai'i (see Kukahiko et al. in this issue), majority scholarship is written by non-Hawaiians. This is an area requiring research attention for Kānaka. However, see Seto et al. (2018) "Examining the Association Between Different Aspects of Socioeconomic Status, Race, and Disability in Hawaii" and Yamamoto et al. (2015) "Standing Behind and Listening to Native Hawaiian Students in Transition."

freely access a treasure trove of resources on nā mea Hawai'i ("Hawaiian things") from tradition mele (songs) and oli (chants) to mo'olelo and a vast database of 19th century nūpepa.

Hawaiian: In this special issue, "Hawaiian" embraces two definitions. First, "Hawaiian" refers to those autochthonous people of the Hawaiian archipelago. Authors also use a variety of other terms to describe the aboriginal people of Hawai'i like Kanaka (Kānaka, plural), Kanaka Maoli, Kanaka 'Ōiwi, 'Ōiwi, and Native Hawaiian (or native Hawaiian, which specifically refers to those beneficiaries of the Hawaiian Homes Commission Act of 1921). Second, "Hawaiian" also refers to citizenship in the Hawaiian Kingdom regardless of genealogical ties to the Native people of Hawai'i. In Hawai'i, "Hawaiian" almost always refers to Native Hawaiians or something related to Native Hawaiians. We do not use it to describe people who are local to Hawai'i who are not Native Hawaiian (like "Californian") and anything that might be associated (or perceived to be) with Hawai'i (like "Hawaiian" pizza).

Diacritical Marks: Modern Hawaiian language uses two diacritical marks to assist non-native speakers with pronunciation: 'okina and kahakō. An 'okina (glottal stop) is typographically represented as a reversed apostrophe and indicates a break between two vowels when spoken. A kahakō (macron) is typographically represented as a line over a vowel and indicates an elongated vowel sound when spoken. You may notice that authors may or may not use diacritical marks in this issue. There may be instances where the word is spelled the same but have different pronunciations because they are different words. For example, 'aina (meal) and 'āina (land). More recently, authors quoting traditional sources will leave the writing in its original form, usually without diacritical marks but sometimes including early (and inconsistent) versions of these marks. Finally, there are also authors who prefer to write like our kūpuna and leave it to the reader to figure out the context and meaning.

Ha'ina 'ia mai ana ka Puana: "Ka 'Ulana 'ana i ka Piko"⁵

We close with a cultural grounding, or re-centering, if you will. Songs hold great value in Pacific cultures, and there is no better way to connect to a place and its people than to sing the songs that are meaningful to them. Kaulana Nā Pua (originally titled "Mele 'Ai Pōhaku," or "The Stone-eating Song") is one of the most celebrated resistance songs in Hawai'i composed by Ellen Keho'ohiwaokalani Wright Prendergast shortly after the overthrow. This mele, also known as "Mele Aloha 'Āina" (the patriot song), was first published in 1895 to relay her people's annexation protest to the United States:

Kaulana nā pua a'o Hawai'i (Famous are the children of Hawai'i)
 Kūpa'a ma hope o ka 'āina (Ever loyal to the land)
 Hiki mai ka 'elele o ka loko 'ino (When the evil-hearted messenger comes)
 Palapala 'ānunu me ka pākaha (With his greedy document of extortion)

Pane mai Hawai'i moku o Keawe (Hawai'i, land of Keawe answers)
 Kōkua nā Hono a'o Pi'ilani (Pi'ilani's [Maui] bays help)
 Kāko'o mai Kaua'i o Mano (Mano's Kaua'i lends support)
 Pa'apū me ke one Kākuhihewa (And so do the sands of Kākuhihewa [O'ahu])

⁵ From the title of Dewhurst et al.'s (2013) article, "Ka 'Ulana i ka Piko (In Weaving You Start from the Center): Perspectives from a Culturally Specific Approach to Art Education."

‘A’ole a’e kau i ka pūlima (No one will fix a signature)
 Ma luna o ka pepa o ka ‘ēnemi (To the paper of the enemy)
 Ho’ohui ‘āina kū’ai hewa (With its sin of annexation)
 I ka pono sivila a’o ke kanaka (And sale of native civil rights)

‘A’ole mākou a’e minamina (We do not value)
 I ka pu’u kālā o ke aupuni (The government’s sums of money)
 Ua lawa mākou i ka pōhaku (We are satisfied with the stones)
 I ka ‘ai kamaha’o o ka ‘āina (Astonishing food of the land)

Ma hope mākou o Lili’ulani (We back Lili’ulani)
 A loa’a ē ka pono o ka ‘āina (Who has won the rights of the land)
 *(A kau hou ‘ia e ke kalaunu) (She will be crowned again)
 Ha’ina ‘ia mai ana ka puana (Tell the story)
 Ka po’e i aloha i ka ‘āina (Of the people who love their land)⁶

Dear readers, as you voyage to our islands, and are hosted by NCORE, find this song on YouTube⁷ and sing along. Take this song home, and play it for your loved ones. Remember Hawai’i, and tell the stories of people who fiercely love their homeland.

Ke aloha ‘āina,

E. K. Wright, N. A. Salis Reyes, & N. A. Saelua, nā Luna Ho’oponopono a me A. N. Reyes, Hoa Kāko’o ma Honolulu, O’ahu, Hawai’i

⁶ Kaulana Nā Pua (Famous Are The Flowers) by Ellen Keho’ohiwaokalani Wright Prendergast.
https://www.huapala.org/Kau/Kaulana_Na_Pua.html

⁷ProjectKULEANA’s rendition featuring an intergenerational cast of performers is among our favorites:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bhibLQFebpQ>

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