

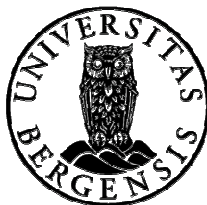
The social meanings of hula

Hawaiian traditions and politicized identities in Hilo



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Thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the M.A. degree
Department of Social Anthropology, University of Bergen
June 2010



Front cover photograph: “Hula - Na 'Olelo O Ka Pu'uwai, *Hula - The Language Of The Heart*: Champion dancer Haunani Paredes moves to the chant *Kui Wailua*, from the legend of Pele, the Fire Goddess, and Pele's sister, Hi'iaka” (Braun 2008), used with the permission of the photographer. © Randy Jay Braun, <http://www.randyjaybraun.com/woh.html>.

*Hula is the language of the heart, therefore the heartbeat of the
Hawaiian people*

- King David Kalākaua

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Acknowledgements

When studying hula in Hawai'i as an outsider, open heartedness and patience from your teacher and fellow hula students is crucial for your understanding and continuing participation in the tradition. Without their welcoming embrace you stand alone in interpreting a tradition and a system of meanings far beyond your understanding. From the uttermost bottom of my heart, with the warmest *aloha*, to my kumu hula and my hula sisters for their unique kindness, their open hearts, sense of adventure and inspiring patience, '*o wau nō me ka mahalo*. Thank you for our shared time in joy and sorrow, *mahalo nui* for teaching me the true meaning of *aloha* and for letting me take part in your lives. I humbly ask your forgiveness for replacing the names of some of you throughout this thesis, and wish to express my understanding for the importance of the meaning behind your names. I have carefully chosen pseudonyms that reflect my perception of your personalities: *Akela* - noble, *Alamea* - precious, *Hokulani* - star of heaven, *Halia* - memory of a loved one. I want to also thank my Hilo 'ohana; Holli, Matt and Jason, for sharing the joys, frustration, adventures and love of everyday life in Hilo. I miss you all every day. *Aloha a hui hou*, may there be love between us until we meet again.

Even though it goes without saying, I wish to proclaim that I take full responsibility for any inaccuracies or omissions evident throughout the following pages.

I would like to thank my supervisor Edvard Hviding for inspirational thoughts, meaningful conversations and an enthusiastic approach to this project. Thank you for always being positive, for your faith in my analytic abilities and for your unconditional kindness throughout this entire process. I would also like to thank Tom Mountjoy for careful reading and helpful guidance in the final rounds of my writing. Thank you for your time, your wisdom and encouraging words. Thank you to the Bergen Pacific Studies Research Group, for a warm welcome into an inspiring research environment. Thank you for informative group meetings and for the opportunity to attend local and global conferences concerning contemporary challenges in Pacific Anthropology. Thank you also for encouraging words and enthusiasm in discussions about this project.

Thank you to the Anthropology Department at University of Hawai'i at Hilo, and especially to Peter Mills, Kathy Kawelu, Kale Langlas and Fiona McCormack, for helping me during the first few weeks of my fieldwork. Thank you all for your time and knowledge.

A special thanks must be given my fellow masters students; Martin Ølander, Tove-Lise Inderberg, Tone Sandøy, Silje Rørlien, Jørgen Hatløy and Bjørn Gausdal, thank you all for making every day different, for the laughter, the support and your smiling faces that have met me every morning throughout the past year. I am proud to call you all my friends.

Thanks also to Richardo del Pozo and Marit Kjeksrud Amundsen for encouraging me to be social outside the department, to Julie Elisabeth Risnes for proofreading the final draft, and to Ida Høgberg Jensen and Monica Bentsen for your warmth and patience as my roommates throughout the past six months. Thank you all for your support and encouragement.

Finally I want to thank my family; my brother Mats Holtan Torgersen, and my mother Synnøve Holtan, for always being there for me, supporting and encouraging me in all my choices and for having faith in me through everything I do. I love you both very much.

And last, but certainly not least, I want to thank my my fellow master student and dearest friend, Annicken Lundgård. You have made my days brighter for the past four years with your colourful personality, insightful thoughts, beautiful smile and admirable courage. Without you my world would be gray, and I am forever grateful for our friendship. *Aloha nō wau iā 'oe.*

Eilin Holtan Torgersen
Bergen, June 2010

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Introduction

In Hawai‘i dance traditionally functioned to promote prestige, power, status, and social distancing. Today Hawaiian dance has an added political dimension in that knowledge and understanding of this cultural form are valued as an ingredient of ethnic identity.

Adrienne Kaeppler (1993:234)

Introduction

The hula is a Hawaiian tradition and dance with deep roots, a challenged history and enormous popularity in Hawai‘i and throughout the rest of the world. While originally having the function of preserving stories, legends and myths of the past, it has faced many interpretations and ascribed meanings throughout a history of colonization, impacts of tourism and struggles for the preservation of Hawaiian indigeneity. It has functioned both as a metaphor for the feminine, the strange and exotic, and as a metonym for Hawaiianness, both for outsiders and for Hawaiians themselves. When studying this tradition one is encouraged to not only devote oneself to the bodily challenges of the hula dance, but to the social, philosophical and spiritual attributes of the hula tradition. While learning Hawaiian history, myths, legends, cosmology, language, kinship systems and relationships between people and land, the hula tradition teaches its students what it means to be Hawaiian in the setting of the increasingly American and international Hawai‘i.

I want to use this chapter to provide an introduction to central themes and problems in this thesis. While presenting my main arguments on hula and Hawaiian identity, I will also briefly introduce anthropological theories that will be used in promoting these arguments. Through a short presentation of existing research on the Hawaiian hula tradition I seek to position my contribution to the study of hula dance and Hawaiian identity. I will also present the advantages and challenges of my method of research and give a brief description of my

use of the Hawaiian language. Finally, an introduction to all following chapters will be presented by means of a chapter outline in the latter part of this introduction.

Central themes and problems

According to the Hawaiian Homes Commission Act of 1921 the term *native Hawaiian* refers to “any descendant of not less than one-half part of the blood of the races inhabiting the Hawaiian Islands previous to 1778” (Kauanui 2008:2, Hawai‘i Nation 2009). In this act approximately 200,000 acres of land spread throughout the main islands were allotted by the U.S Congress for leasing by *native* Hawaiians (Kauanui 2008). Apart from defining *Hawaiian* in biological terms this act also defines who does, and even more important, who does not have rights to land in Hawai‘i. Based on this act and its consequences J. Kēhaulani Kauanui has written a book that “critically interrogates the way that blood racialization constructs Hawaiian identity as measurable and dilutable” (2008:3). Kauanui writes about the differences between a Hawaiian genealogical system and an American “colonial imposition of blood quantum” (2008:3), and claims that the importance of blood quantum was originally suggested by colonists through bureaucratic legislations and bills. Currently, the state of Hawai‘i still defines *native* Hawaiian as someone who has at least 50 percent Hawaiian blood (Kauanui 2008:2). However, Hawaiians, as a biologically pure ethnic group, are disappearing more with every generation that passes. It might therefore be necessary now and for future matters to redefine the terms for being Hawaiian.

Hawai‘i is a melting pot of ethnic groups and traditions, a result of labour immigration during the sugar industry era. Very few Hawaiians have a hundred percent Hawaiian blood, in fact, of the approximately 1.28 million people living in the islands, less than 10 000 can say they have (Britannica 2009). Every Hawaiian I have ever met has some kind of preference when it comes to their identity; a common trait being that they are all Hawaiian, which in this case means they claim a “belonging” to the place and space of Hawai‘i, and exclude those they define as non-Hawaiians from this notion. The differences lie in the definition of what is Hawaiian and in to what extent they consider themselves Americans. Sometimes Hawaiian identity is overlooked in an effort to embrace western modernity and ideals, other times Hawaiian identity completely overshadows western identity. One can therefore with confidence say that identity in Hawai‘i often is defined by situation and becomes visible across boundaries (Barth 1969). Identity is, according to Barth’s classic perspectives on

ethnicity (1969), created in the social processes of ascription and self-ascription, meaning that your identity is defined by yourself and others when in social interaction. Hawaiian identity becomes visible in interaction with other ethnic groups, but is often also claimed when in interaction with other Hawaiians, and especially through evidence of high blood quantity. Biology has become a major means for identification and whether or not this trend has been created by Hawaiians themselves or by other ethnic groups, it is often mentioned in situations where identity becomes important.

After the 1970s, the decade for political movements, for opposing the nation state and for redefining ethnic groups and minorities, being Hawaiian was something people started to be proud of, instead of hiding behind layers of Americanness. During the last forty years people have explored the Hawaiian part of their identity by learning the Hawaiian language and taking up traditions like hula dancing or canoe racing. Today both traditions are bigger than ever and even stretch into the sphere of sports and competitions outside the islands. Hawaiian music has also spread to the far corners of the World once again, only this time, as opposed to the *hapa haole* (half white)¹ music of the 1940s and 1950s, it contains lyrics about Hawai‘i written in the Hawaiian language. Hawaiianness has never been more visible to the world.

Resistance, identity and the continuity of cultural forms

Even though the 1970s was the decade for exploring and projecting one's Hawaiianness, Hawaiian resistance against the colonial powers, and Hawaiian identity-making, have a long history. According to Jonathan Friedman (1993) these processes started as early as the mid 19th century and have been present in the islands ever since. Resistance was back then for example promoted through disobedience of missionary banning of the “heathen” tradition of hula. According to Friedman (1993:740) there was also in the beginning of the 1820s “an open opposition to missionary morality on the part of a faction of the ruling aristocracy”. Friedman further gives an account of the *hulumanu* who consisted of “a group of young men in the entourage of [Kamehameha III]”:

[The hulumanu] were renowned for their open and direct resistance to the missionary morality, and for several drives to revive ancient pastimes, such as *hula*, medicine and rituals. Much of

¹ *Hapa haole* means *half white* (Pukui and Elbert 1986) and is used to define a mix of Hawaiian and western traditions. It also defines individuals with a mixed biological ancestry. The hapa haole style was highly visible in music and dance in the 1940s and 1950s.

the opposition to the converted and pious members of the royalty was expressed in symbolic terms, in extravagance, public drinking or in offensive acts. (1993:740-741)

The *hulumanu* disappeared by the 1850s, but resistance and social protest continued through different prophetic based movements like the *Hapu cult* of the 1840s and numerous cults worshipping the goddess Pele (Friedman 1993:741). According to Friedman (1993:744) Hawaiians must have become more and more aware of their Hawaiian identity after the *Great Māhele*² in 1848 (Chinen 1958), a land division act King Kamehameha III signed that placed foreigners in positions to buy Hawaiian land, and certainly after the overthrow of the monarchy. Friedman (1993:744) argues that “Hawaiian resistance is not a new phenomenon, but it was carried out and developed during a long period of increasing American hegemony in the islands”.

During all these times, though not always so visible to the public, hula people, that is the people who practiced hula and were involved in the hula tradition, continued passing on knowledge to younger generations. Sahlins (1993:8) argues that “the hula as a sign of Hawaianness, of the indigenous, was not born yesterday nor merely as the construction of the Hawaiian Visitors Bureau and prurient Haole interests”. Throughout the missionary era, they continued teaching hula away from the public arena and the missionary centres, ignoring the excommunication they were facing if the word about their hula practices spread. Throughout the monarchy period, the annexation process, both World Wars and the statehood process³, they passed on knowledge to dedicated students that managed to continue the tradition. In addition to being banned, the hula experienced even larger bumps in the road when facing a brutal depopulation caused by the waves of western diseases hitting the islands in post contact times. A big part of hula knowledge was lost in these times, but the parts that survived are the origins for the *hula kahiko*, ancient hula, we see today. Needless to say, processes of development and modernity have also taken their toll, but the hula has survived and is still being passed on to young hula students of today.

Considering at the continuity in the hula tradition I can certainly say that I will not treat the hula as an *invented* tradition⁴ (Hobsbawm and Ranger 1983). I will however treat it

² The Great Māhele is a land division act Kauikeaouli, King Kamehameha III, signed in 1848. Māhele means division, portion, section, zone, lot, piece, quota, etc. (Pukui & Elbert 1986). This act will be further discussed in chapter four.

³ For a historical overview of important periods and events, see chapter two.

⁴ Hobsbawm (1983:1) presents invented tradition as “taken to mean a set of practices, normally governed by overtly or tacitly accepted rules and of ritual or symbolic nature, which seek to inculcate certain values and norms of behaviour by repetition, which automatically implies continuity with the past.” Invented traditions are fairly recently created, but claim anchorage in the distant past. Hobsbawm (1983:2) also argues that *tradition*

as a tradition, by which I mean, following Kaeppler (2004:294), a “continuous process - constantly adding and subtracting ideas and practices, constantly changing, constantly recycling bits and pieces of ideas and practices into new traditions”. In my attempt to define the hula as an authentic continued Hawaiian tradition I turn to a debate on cultural authenticity that was played out between three scholars of the Pacific region during the early 1990s; Roger Keesing, Jocelyn Linnekin and Haunani Kay Trask. Graham Harvey and Charles D. Thompson (2005:20) have described the debate “in a nutshell” in *Indigenous Diasporas and Dislocations*; “Keesing and Linnekin were keen on asserting the inauthenticity of certain cultural and political phenomena in the contemporary Pacific, and Trask was refuting their authority and legitimacy as arbiters of indigenous culture”.

Keesing suggested that indigenous peoples of the Pacific *created* pasts and “myths of ancestral life” as symbols for postcolonial nationalism and indigeneity (2000:233). Strongly supporting Hobsbawm and Ranger’s (1983) argument on invented traditions and questioning the authenticity, the genuineness, of indigenous traditions, Keesing believed that these created mythical pasts invoked and enhanced indigenous identity. He also suggested that the spiritual relationship between people and land throughout the Pacific could only be a result of land struggle and alienation imposed by the colonial powers:

In Fiji, contemporary Hawai‘i, New Caledonia, the Solomon Islands, New Zealand, and Aboriginal Australia, land has become a powerful symbol of identity and a site of contestation. An ideology and attachment to and spiritual significance of the land could achieve such prominence only in a historical context of invasion and colonization. (2000:241)

Trask (2000) ventures, in light of this article, into a rather heated discussion with Keesing. Her argument is with Keesing’s notion on inauthenticity in and invention of indigenous traditions and values, in which she heavily criticises the voice of western scholars in non-western societies:

Among Hawaiians, people like Keesing are described as *maha‘oi haole*, that is, rude, intrusive white people who go where they do not belong. In Keesing’s case, his factual errors, cultural and political ignorance, and dismissive attitude qualify him perfectly as *maha‘oi*. Unlike Keesing I cannot speak for other Natives. But regarding Hawaiian nationalists, Keesing neither knows whereof he speaks, nor, given his *maha‘oi* attitude, does he care. (2000:255)

must be distinguished from *custom* in that tradition is characterized by invariance whereas custom leaves no room for innovation or change.

Trask (2000:261) also criticizes Linnekin for initially claiming that tradition is fluid; “its content redefined by each generation and its timelessness may be situationally constructed” (Linnekin 1983:242), but later moves on to criticize Hawaiians for a “reconstruction of traditional Hawaiian society in the present”. Trask argues that “what constitutes ‘tradition’ to a people is ever changing” and that “culture is not static, nor is it frozen in objectified moments of time” (2000:261). While agreeing that Hawaiians were transformed “drastically and irreparably” with colonization, she also argues that “remnants of earlier lifeways, including values and symbols, have persisted” (2000:261). Thus Trask’s definition of Hawaiian cultural forms, symbols and values emphasizes continuity, an argument Friedman also supports:

[...] there is plenty of evidence for a continuity of cultural forms in transformation, as well as fundamentally authentic relation between the producers of cultural forms and their conditions of existence. Building walls, reviving the *hula*, and the current Hawaiian movement are not, in this view, inventions, but transformations of culture. Invention implies discontinuity and pays little regard to the cultural conditions of cultural creativity. (1993:749)

In further definition of cultural forms, and more specifically, the hula tradition, Kaeppler (2004) attempts to verify the hula as a *recycled tradition*. She argues that the hula in its many forms is recycled in order to fulfil certain needs, and that the newer versions thus are not simply invented but broken down to inhabit a new form, meaning and function (Kaeppler 2004). Though seeing Kaeppler’s argument, I find it necessary to rephrase her definition in order to understand the hula tradition. Using the definition *recyclable* instead of *recycled* opens up the possibility for future change within the tradition along with the transformations it has already undergone. Based on Trask’s, Friedman’s and Kaeppler’s definitions of cultural forms and traditions in Hawai’i, my argument will be that the hula is a cultural form, and a tradition, subject to change when influenced by development, modernity and public demands, and its authenticity is found in its continued history.

Knowledge, blood and Hawaiian identity

During my fieldwork in Hawai’i I found that knowledge about and dedication to Hawaiian cultural forms were often looked upon as qualified factors for defining Hawaiian identity. A person with great knowledge within Hawaiian history and tradition, and in my case

particularly knowledge about hula, accumulates deep respect from the rest of both the Hawaiian and non-Hawaiian population. My *kumu hula* (hula master) born and raised in Hilo and an excellent example of this, is a large portion Japanese and a tiny portion European by blood, but seems an ever lasting source on Hawaiian history and traditions. She is highly respected by my hula sisters and by hula people outside our *hālau hula* (hula school) and practices Hawaiian traditions and philosophy of life to a greater extent than any other person I have met.

Building on Kauanui's work on blood quantum in relation to colonialism, sovereignty and indigeneity (2008), and on Jonathan Friedmans work on politicized identities and the continuity of cultural forms (1992a, 1992b, 1993), I will argue that Hawaiian identity should not be defined by blood but rather by a possession of knowledge, and that the obsession with blood quantum is rooted in the relationship between Hawaiians and the legislative colonial power. I seek to portray ways in which a sense of Hawaiianness is created among residents in the Hawaiian Islands today, and what this identity marker entails. What requirements need fulfilling to be able to call one self Hawaiian? What is the more important; blood quantum or knowledge of Hawaiian traditions? I also seek to unravel ways in which knowledge is accumulated and continued throughout generations and how it to some extent can outrun the importance of blood quantum.

My main argument, following Sahlins (1985) theories on Hawaiian society as performatively structured, will be that Hawaiian identity, in its self-ascribed form, is produced and reproduced by acts that signify it, and is thus performatively structured. Hawaiian identity is a product of performance, or acts that promote identity traits, and is constantly reproduced through these acts. I will argue that hula dance is a part of the performative structure, in the sense that by performing hula, you produce and reproduce what it means to be Hawaiian. In light of this argument I maintain that engagement in and dedication to the hula tradition enhances Hawaiian identity. With hula you self-ascribe and project Hawaiian identity through performance, and you are ascribed Hawaiian identity by spectators of your performance.

Existing research on hula dance

A lot of writing has been done on the hula as a dance form and cultural expression. The first written documentation of hula dance was produced by explorers from the Cook expedition who explained in their journals that Hawaiians very much liked to dance and used a

considerable amount of time dancing: "'The young women spend most of their time singing and dancing, of which they are very fond' observed David Samwell, minor Welsh poet and surgeon of the Discovery" (Sahlins 1993:8). Later written documentation on the hula is found in the description and illustration of the hula tradition by Emerson in *Unwritten Literature of Hawai'i: the Sacred Songs of the Hula* (1998). Major studies have been conducted by scholars like Amy Ku'uleialoha Stillman, Adrienne Kaeppler and Mary Kawena Pukui, considering the history, form and function of hula. All three have attempted to trace the hula as far back in history as possible, and have written well documented articles and monographs containing exclusive material from documents found in the Bishop Museum Collection in Honolulu. Pukui has with Dorothy Barrere and Marion Kelley provided thorough documentation on the history of hula dance in *Hula: Historical Perspectives* (1980). Pukui has also been the leading scholar in standardizing the Hawaiian language and with Samuel Elbert she published her first Hawaiian dictionary in 1957, a source that has later become the number one authority for the Hawaiian language.

When it comes to anthropological studies of the hula, the leading scholars within the field are Stillman and Kaeppler. Both have written books and articles on ancient forms of hula and analyzed the dance and the tradition on both anthropological and ethnomusicological levels. Kaeppler (1993) writes about the ancient form of *hula pahu* in *Hula Pahu: Hawaiian Drum Dances*, where she thoroughly analyzes and illustrates both the history and movement patterns of different hula pahu traditions. She argues that the hula pahu tradition has only been "tenuously associated with the Hawaiian renaissance. Because of its specialized background, the limited number of practitioners, and a lack of source materials, there are few places and people from which to learn" (Kaeppler 1993:234). The hula pahu were originally ritual dances in honor of the state gods, e.g. Kāne, Kanaloa, Kū and Lono, but has been transformed when facing the challenges of Christian values, into honouring ancestral gods⁵ (Kaeppler 1993:2).

Stillman (1998) has conducted a thorough study of the *hula 'ala'apapa*, an ancient form of hula which she breaks down and analyzes in detail in the same manner as Kaeppler in her analysis of the hula pahu. Stillman's (1998) analysis contains a history of the dance form, selection of chants, description of instruments that accompany the dance, an account of sacredness and religious aspects and a comparison to other types of hula. In addition to the study of the hula 'ala'apapa Stillman has written extensively on the hula tradition, concerning issues of the globalisation of hula and the spread of Hawaiian cultural forms outside the islands (1999); Hawaiian hula competitions (1996), in which she emphasizes how hula

⁵ This will be further discussed in chapter three.

competitions originally are designed to preserve the hula, but have rather been nurturing its transformation and providing modern interpretations of the ancient tradition; and she has written several pieces on the music, *chant* and *mele* (song), that accompany hula (e.g. 1982, 1987, 1989, 1994, 1995, 1996, 1998).

Both Kaeppler and Stillman have approached hula as a valued ingredient in ethnic identity, as exemplified by Kaeppler:

Recently, cultural identity has begun to take on a more political dimension as it has been transformed into a visual aspect of ethnic identity. Dance as part of a political construction, can be an aural and visual statement of distinctiveness – and in some cases divisiveness – and need not be associated with cultural understanding. More ethnic Hawaiians are beginning to appreciate and champion the importance of their heritage. More and more Hawaiians – male and female – are studying *hula* in order to become part of the ethnic movement. (1993:255)

My approach to the hula tradition will to a greater extent follow Kaeppler's notion of hula as part of a political construction of identity, than as a dance form. Building on these previous works of Stillman and Kaeppler, my analysis will thus contribute more in the debate on the social meanings of hula, and on hula as ethnic identity marker, than to the analysis of the dance itself.

Methodology

Choosing research objective

Music has always been a part of my life ever since I was a toddler sitting on my dad's lap while he played the guitar. Growing up I always performed songs in school productions and concerts but eventually grew a little shy and started exposing my voice exclusively to the shower curtain. Stepping out of the shower, I started singing on stage when going to folk high school in 2003-4, and after that started picking up instruments that fascinated me. When travelling to Hawai'i via an international student exchange program during my B.A. in 2007, I found myself captivated by the sweet relaxing sounds of the ukulele, steel guitar, slack key and falsetto techniques, and became very fascinated with the elegant movements of the hula dance. While writing my B.A. essay on nationalism and social protest in Hawai'i I became aware that Hawaiian music and dance are both connected to Hawaiian identity and decided to focus on this relationship in my M.A. project. Thus, with my project approved by the

Department of Social Anthropology in Bergen, I travelled to Hilo in 2009 and became absorbed in the hula tradition for six months.

Participant observation and experiential ethnography

Participant observation has been the main method of research in social anthropology since Malinowski climbed down from the ‘veranda’ and went to live amongst the ‘natives’ of the Trobriand Islands between 1915 and 1918 (Singer 1985). This method of collecting information has been praised and critiqued both within and outside the field of anthropology, and the fine line between subjectivity and objectivity, the balance between mere observation and “going native” (Geertz 1988) can sometimes be challenging to find. The way in which a fieldworker chooses to use the anthropological debate on this subject and the outcomes of it is somewhat based on personal preference and academic backgrounds. However, there is an agreement about using yourself as a pawn in your own research. How far you should go to collect the information you need depends on the nature of the project you are working on and also moves the discussion into that of ethics. However, when no ethical lines are being crossed, are you free to be as much a participant as you prefer to be, or will this completely overshadow your objectivity?

Seeing that my project has revolved around the social meanings of hula dance, a physical as well as spiritual tradition, the need to have a very active participation became crucial to my understanding. By choosing the methodological approach of experiential ethnography I was able to understand the social life of hula on a level I would never be able to reach through mere observation. Experiential ethnography is, according to Sands, a method in which:

the ethnographer actively and intensely participates in the culture as one of its members. Instead of writing a narrative that focuses on the relationship of experience to the ethnographer, the fieldworker attempts to access the cultural reality of all cultural members, not only through his or her experiences but also through canvassing other cultural members. (2002:124)

I adopted an experience based methodology in which I became a very participating observer and an “insider” (Geertz 1974:28), using my own body as a tool for understanding my cultural surroundings. According to Sands (2002:123), “living through the body, the ethnographer can access feelings, ambiguities, temporal sequences, blurred experiences, and other aspects not uncovered through participant observation.” By dancing side by side with my fellow hula

students and subjects of my study, I experienced what they experienced, in the sense of bodily challenges, spiritual influences and psychological effects within the settings of practice, dining together and performance.

This methodological approach has been crucial in my study of hula and Hawaiian identity. However, it is important to emphasize that experiential ethnography should not enable the ethnographer to make his or her own experience the focus of the written work. Sands (2002:124) argues that “the ethnographer’s experience is not the central focus of the ethnography [, i]nstead, it validates the experience and behaviour of many or most cultural members”. Tamisari elaborates with her experiential approach to Yolngu dance:

Far from interpreting the significance of Yolngu dancing from the recess of my idiosyncratic experiences, my participation in dancing – indeed making and negotiating political and emotional statements about my increasing involvement with others – brought to light aspects of Yolngu performances which would have otherwise been beyond my grasp, both at the level of experience and of analysis. (2000:276)

In the process of experiencing the hula as an insider I additionally conducted fieldwork with the aid of interviews, attending and observing events, field notes and the life histories of my informants. My interviews were usually open ended and conducted through conversation rather than fixed interview settings. Seeing that I at an early stage discovered that my subjects of study seemed uncomfortable with the “staged interview situation”, open ended interviews seemed less strained on both mine and their parts.

Another important part of my fieldwork was the attending and observation of events that involved Hawaiian music and dance. While usually maintaining an observer role at these events; writing field notes, using a tape recorder and taking pictures, I decided to *perform* music at the weekly “Open Mic Night” at a pub in Downtown Hilo, in order to gain access into a group of Hawaiian musicians. While not only challenging my physical abilities, which were usually my biggest hindrance when dancing, I pressured myself psychologically way beyond my comfort zone, in standing alone on a stage with a guitar in my hands, singing to a large group of strangers who initially had shown no interest in interacting with me. With my whole body shaking like recently poked jelly and an unnaturally stabile vibrato attributed to my voice, I managed to come off as humble to the strangers and thus gain their respect through my talent. I was instantly embraced as part of the group and invited to jam with several of the regularly attending musicians.

The most important part of my fieldwork, in which my method of research became most advantageous, was the decision to join a hālau hula. I was lucky and was embraced by a traditional and incredibly knowledgeable kumu hula who had recently started an *ūniki* (graduate) class, which I later found out meant a class that trains hula dancers to become kumu hula. Thus I had been so lucky to be accepted in a hula class where my hula sisters were all at advanced levels of dancing, and a class that not only taught you how to dance, but everything there is to know about my kumu's hula tradition. However, my presence was not equally welcomed by all, and a couple of students stopped showing up after a while because I was there, primarily, I was told, because of my skin colour and visitor status. In the beginning my patience was tested in every class as most of the other students were sceptical to my presence, but after a couple of months of humble approaches on my part, and with getting to know me, they eventually accepted me as part of the group.

Understanding meanings through movement

Tamisari has, in her analysis of the meanings of Yolngu dance, documented her initial experience with dancing:

Like Yolngu toddlers, I learnt how to dance before I could properly speak one of the local languages of Northeast Arnhem Land and like them I was encouraged to observe (*nhaama*) the dancing movements of older people and later to imitate them (*yakarrman*). (2000:276)

Isadora Duncan, a world known modern dancer from the early 1900s, once stated: "If I could tell you what it meant, there would be no point in dancing it" (Bateson 1972:137). My starting point as a hula dancer was that of a very narrow knowledge base on movement systems and meanings, and a very clumsy and uncoordinated body that had not been engaged with serious dancing at any level before, but was still in rather good physical shape and could endure the hard knee bends, back rolls and strain on my thigh and core muscles. Given this physical base, it took me quite some time to get all the movements right. However, the meanings of the movements stuck with me rather quickly. Without knowing the Hawaiian language before engaging in hula, I found it easier to understand the words when I put them into describing movements.

In my first hula class my kumu put me in the middle of the group to make sure I had dancers I could imitate on all sides. There were no introductions to feet or hand movements and I was left to try and follow my hula sisters as a way of understanding the basic steps of

hula. The very first step I learned was the basic hula step, in which you move your feet from one side to the other on three out of four beats. On the fourth beat you rest. This is the number one basic rhythm of hula. After getting this step under control I started concentrating on hip movements by moving my hips in a vertical and tipped over figure eight. It took me my whole six month stay to figure this movement out, and I still have a long way to go to make it look decent. I eventually understood that my knees must be held in a bent position throughout most of the dances to be able to move with the characteristic swaying motion of the dance. While focusing on my feet-work and trying to discover my hips, I also started learning basic hand movements. The first movement I understood was how to pick a flower, in which I use both my hands, palms facing down, to grab hold of imaginary flowers and flip my hands over to make the shape of a flower bud.

As much as I could document hand movements, feet combinations and dance choreographies by writing them down or arrange them in tables and systems after observing dancers on stage or in practice, I would never be able to understand the hard work that lies behind every hula without dancing it myself. I would never understand just how much practice someone who has never danced before needs to be even a decent hula dancer, this also a level I obviously could never reach during only six months of dancing. I would also never get the kind of access to what was going on ‘backstage’ (Goffman 1959) as I did by joining a hālau, or gain any kind of trust to my own interest in learning about Hawaiian traditions. As it is, Hawaiians are rather sceptical to *haole* (white) people, and it has been challenging to get people interested in talking to me. For instance I faced a major challenge in getting Hawaiian young men to talk to me about hula dance, as they either would not speak with me at all, or approach me with romantic interests, resulting in my having to break off the connection. Thus the empirical part of this analysis will not emphasize gender issues in the hula tradition.

I was told that due to the history of interaction between haole tourists or immigrants to the islands and Hawaiian locals, my pale face is associated with ruthlessness, disrespect, exploitation and egoism, and does not inspire locals to talk to me. However when I have stated my intentions, emphasized my genuine curiosity and stripped off all layers of academic scepticism, habitual cultural traits and general whiteness, I have been accepted and to some extent embraced by informants.

Language and orthography

This thesis is written in English, my second language, because it feels more natural to discuss problems involving Hawaiian hula in the language I have used during my fieldwork. While in Hilo I was surrounded by three languages: English, Hawaiian Creole English, or Pidgin, and Hawaiian, one of which I spoke fluently. For me it was not appropriate to try to speak Pidgin but very important to understand it, and as much as I would love to be able to speak Hawaiian, the restricted length of my fieldwork did not allow me to learn more than what I needed in order to understand what was going on in my hula class. The Hawaiian language is poetic and rich with metaphors in which natural features are used to describe feelings, personality traits and moods. In order to completely embrace a Hawaiian understanding of social, physical and spiritual surroundings it is crucial to learn this language. As Trask (1999:114) puts it: “Not merely a passageway to knowledge, language is a form of knowing by itself; a people’s way of thinking and feeling is revealed through its music”.

Throughout this thesis I will use a variety of Hawaiian words, and to make it easier for the reader I will present each word with italic styled letters the first time they are mentioned. A glossary will be provided as an appendix at the end of the thesis. For all my translations I will use the *Hawaiian Dictionary* written by Mary Kawena Pukui and Samuel H. Elbert (1986). The Hawaiian alphabet has 12 letters also found in the latin alphabet; a, e, i, o, u, h, k, l, m, n, p, w. It also contains the ‘*okina* which is a glottal stop, and considered a separate letter, marked throughout this thesis with an upside down apostrophe. The *kahāko* is a macron placed above the vowel to make the letter longer. Finally, all Hawaiian words end with a vowel.

A terminology for social categories

Before embarking upon the remaining chapters of this thesis there are several terms and definitions I wish to problematize and unravel. There are many terms used to describe people who live in the Hawaiian Islands and to clear up any confusion I will here give a brief explanation of the main terms used in this thesis:

Hawaiian

A person who is born in, or has genealogical ties to the Hawaiian Islands. Throughout this thesis I will use the widespread normative notion that to be Hawaiian you also need to have knowledge about, and live according to, Hawaiian history, traditions and philosophy.

Native Hawaiian

This definition has had increasingly politicized meaning since the Hawaiian Renaissance and the birth of the Hawaiian Movement. Following the Oxford English dictionary, *native* (adj.) is defined as *of, connected with, the place of ones birth*, and a *native* (noun) is defined as a *person born in a place, country* (Ruse 1988). In struggle for land this term has been added to *Hawaiian* to promote a claim on behalf of the Hawaiian people on the Hawaiian Islands. Used interchangeably with *Hawaiian*, *Native Hawaiian* has also been ascribed the meaning of someone with at least fifty percent *pure* Hawaiian blood. I will stay clear of this definition throughout this thesis except when authors of cited work have used the definition in their argument, and define people that claim a connection to Hawai‘i as *Hawaiians*.

Indigenous Hawaiian

I will use this definition to refer to Hawaiians as a people before western contact.

Local

This term is rather vague and confusing to an outsider in Hawai‘i. Throughout this project I have interpreted *local* to mean a person of non-(pure)Caucasian biological ancestry, resident, but not necessarily born in the islands, and of higher social status among Hawaiians than *haole*. *Local* can also be used in reference to *Hawaiian*, but not necessarily. *Local* can often be used as a defining term when a person’s Hawaiian background is not established.

Haole

White person. This term can be used as a neutral definition for white people, or with negatively charged meanings with racist undertones for white people who do not *belong* in Hawai‘i. The meaning of *haole* is contextualized and might be experienced as offensive and threatening in some situations, while in others, *haole* is simply a way of identifying a person’s appearance.

Chapter outline

Throughout this thesis I will analyze the social meanings of hula using analytical tools such as established theories in anthropology, ethnographic writings about Hawai‘i and hula, and interpretations from my own fieldwork in Hilo. By weaving together my own observations with comparable ethnography and theories I wish to unravel some of the complexities and politics of hula and ethnic identity in Hawai‘i.

Chapter One: Introduction

This chapter introduces the central themes and problems of this thesis. In order to place the hula tradition within the anthropological landscape I have turned to the mid 1990s debate between Keesing (2000), Trask (2000) and Linnekin (1983) on the invention of indigenous traditions. I have suggested that the hula is a living tradition that is continuously produced and reproduced, and is valued as an ingredient in the process of forming a Hawaiian identity. I have also suggested that Hawaiian identity is ascribed and self-ascribed across boundaries, following Barth’s (1969) classic theories on ethnicity. This chapter has also presented existing research on hula dance, and given an account of my method of research.

Chapter Two: A Hilo au (I was at Hilo)

The second chapter will introduce the reader to my field of research. By presenting the geographic, demographic and topographic features of the islands I aim to bring the reader into the Pacific, and into the Hawaiian Islands. In the spirit of hula, I will use a Hawaiian chant to tell the story of where I have done fieldwork and where I came to know hula. I will provide essential background information, significant place names and historical events, and I will also give a presentation of my hālau, *Hālau Hula o Halia*. A brief overview of hula history as well as an introduction to the cultural resurgence in the 1970s, known as the Hawaiian Renaissance, will be presented in the latter part of the chapter.

Chapter Three: Native dance and foreign desires: In search of authenticity in hula dance

This chapter will dive into the hula tradition of Hālau Hula o Halia, and explore the joys, experiences and challenges that lie in being a student of hula and a master of hula. While using this hula tradition as an example for hula in Hawai‘i, I seek to provide an understanding of the complexity and comprehensiveness of the hula tradition, and move away from an understanding of hula as merely a dance form. Further the chapter explores the relationship between the Hawaiian hula and the international community. Looking into different meanings of hula throughout the world I seek to provide a reason for why authenticity in the hula tradition has been a subject of debate. Using knowledge from my hālau as well as written works of Amy Ku‘uleialoha Stillman, Haunani Kay Trask and Jane Desmond I will focus on what is authentic to the Hawaiian hula dancer and why this is different from what is authentic for the tourist industry and the international community.

Chapter Four: Dancing the land: Relationships between people, land and hula

This chapter will focus on the connection between Hawaiians and the land, and how the hula tradition can enhance this connection. Hawaiians have always had a very close relationship to the land, though this relationship has been challenged on several occasions by different developmental issues. Using the theories on the meanings of landscape by Hirsch (1995), Morphy (1993, 1995), Küchler (1993), Bender (1993) and Toren (1995), I will argue that the Hawaiian landscape is defined and understood by people through cosmology, legends and history, and revealed through the process of memory. Hawaiians associate their history and present with place names and topographic features and express a very strong identification with their birthplace or place of residence. I will also argue that hula, through various chants and songs, describe myths, events and the landscape of the Hawaiian Islands and thus strengthen the relationship between people and land. Following Toren’s (1995) work with the Fijian landscape I will emphasize that the dancer dances the land through various descriptive movements and that she/he thus becomes part of the land.

Chapter Five: Children of the land: Hula as Hawaiian identity

This chapter will promote a critique of the fifty percent blood quantum rule that was established through the Hawaiian Homes Commission Act of 1921. I will argue that this legislation is one of the reasons why some Hawaiians are so concerned with blood quantum as a unit for measurement of being Hawaiian. Further, I will use knowledge about Hawaiian history and traditions as an argument for being just as (if not more) Hawaiian than someone with a high percentage of blood and little knowledge about their cultural heritage. While maintaining that the obsession with blood quantity was inflicted on Hawaiians with American and western influence, I will present the Hawaiian traditional way of looking at genealogy, a system in which spiritual kinship constitutes the greater part over biological kinship. Using empirical examples from my own fieldwork, the writings of J. Kēhaulani Kauanui, Barth's (1969) theories on ethnic identity, and Sahlins' (1985) theories on performative structures, I seek to provide an alternative for defining Hawaiianness through the discussion of spiritual and biological kinship, and Hawaiian identity as produced and reproduced through hula performance. I will argue that Hawaiian identity becomes visible across social boundaries and is created through actions that signify it. I will also argue that the hula is a part of a performative structure in that by performing it you produce and reproduce what it means to be Hawaiian.

2

A Hilo au: I was at Hilo

Field location and ethnographic context

A Hilo au e la, Ho‘olulu ka lehua lā

A Wailuku e lā , I ka lua kanaka la

A Haili e lā, I ke kula manu lā

A Pana‘ewa e lā, I ka moku lehua lā

A Lele‘iwi e lā, ‘Au‘au i ke kai lā

A Moloka‘i e lā, ‘Ike ala kāhi lā

A Mauna Loa au lā, I ka lua ko‘i hala lā

Ha‘ina mai ka puana lā, No ka lani nō he inoa lā

He inoa nō Kauikeaouli

At Hilo, I gather the lehua⁶

At Wailuku, The man-destroying pit

At Haili, A plain inhabited by birds

At Panaewa, with its grove of lehua trees

At Lele‘iwi, I swim in the sea

At Moloka‘i, I see one road

At Mauna Loa, is the adze quarry

Tell the refrain, In the name of the chief

The name-song for Kauikeaouli

Introduction

A Hilo Au is a chant written for Kauikeaouli, the son of Kamehameha I and the ruler of the Hawaiian Kingdom for 30 years from 1824-1854 (Daws 1968). Kauikeaouli took the name Kamehameha III and is best known for his resistance towards Christianity by bringing back Hawaiian traditions like the hula; for lifting the penalties for adultery and sleeping with his sister, following ancient Hawaiian tradition; for writing the first constitution; and for proclaiming the Great Māhele, a land division act that enabled foreigners to own land in Hawai‘i. The latter action made Kauikeaouli one of the most important *ali‘i nui* (high chiefs) in Hawaiian history, measured by the consequences of this act. When Christian *ali‘i* (chiefs) witnessed the immoral life of Kauikeaouli they forced him to restore the Christian values of former queen Ka‘ahumanu. As a means for protest, he turned to alcohol and abandoned

⁶ Flower of the ‘ōhi‘a tree, native to Hawai‘i, and often used in hula. It is said that if you pick the blossoms from the ‘ōhi‘a tree, it will rain.

affairs concerning the state, and at the same time losing some of his authority to the missionaries (Barnes 1999:44).

A *Hilo au* is a name chant⁷, and as with many other Hawaiian chants, it takes its listeners on a journey, following Kauikeaouli's footsteps from Hilo on the Big Island to Molokai. It is often performed with a form of hula called *hula pa'i umauma*, a chest beating dance in which the dancers use their palms to beat their chests following a specific rhythmic pattern and hand motions to describe the meaning of the chant. This is one of the first chants I learned to dance and because of its ability to guide you through the landscape on the Hilo side of the Big Island I want to use it to describe my field of research. While firstly placing the Hawaiian Islands within the World, presenting geographic location, population statistics and its rich landscape, I will secondly specify my location and present, by ways of the chant, a guided tour throughout the town of Hilo. After introducing my field location I will give an account for important historical and political events in Hawai'i and provide a short version of the comprehensive history behind the hula tradition. Finally I will elaborate on the Hawaiian Renaissance, a cultural re-awakening that took place in the 1970s in Hawai'i, and claim its importance to the cultural awareness that is present in Hawai'i today.

The Hawaiian Islands and the city of Hilo

Geography and topography

In the middle of the Pacific Ocean between 15 and 20 degrees north of the equator rises the Hawaiian ridge that connects over one hundred inhabited and uninhabited islands. Located on top of the Pacific Plate they constitute the most northern part of the Polynesian Triangle. The volcanic chain is one of the most remote island chains in the world and is located about 4 000 km southwest of California (Brittanica 2009). The eight main islands vary greatly in size from the Big Island, or Hawai'i, which is approximately 10 438 square kilometres, to Ni'ihau, approximately 180 square kilometres in size (Britannica 2009). The oldest island is Kaua'i which is said to be over 5 million years old. All main islands have been created from volcanic activity and on the Big Island lies the most active volcano in the world, Kilauea, which has had a constant lava flow since its breakout in 1983. The state capital and the biggest city in

⁷ A name chant is written to honour the name of its beholder; in this case in honour of Kauikeaouli.



Map of the eight main islands of Hawai'i (Worldatlas 2010)

the islands is Honolulu, which is located on Oahu and holds about a million people when including the surrounding area (Britannica 2009). Compared to the second biggest city, Hilo, Honolulu life is fast and consumed by western capitalism and the tourist industry. In Hilo on the other hand, people lead a slower, more local way of life.

A Hilo au e la, Ho'olulu ka lehua la

At Hilo, I gather the lehua

Hilo is a rather small town on the north-eastern side of the Big Island, though second biggest in the state with about 40 000 inhabitants (Britannica 2009). As one of the wettest places in the world with a lack of typical tropical paradise white sand beaches, it is not the most touristy place, but holds a very charming Hawaiian lifestyle not easily accessed other places in the Hawaiian Islands. Hilo people are hard workers, dedicated family members and have a loving connection with their hometown that lies at the bottom of the slopes of the

approximately 4200 meter high Mauna Kea. Being a part of this world, it is not hard to understand the passion residents have for this place; Hilo's beauty with its lush vegetation, pounding waterfalls and smell of sweet plumeria⁸, is divine.

A Wailuku e lā , I ka lua kanaka la

At Wailuku, The man-destroying pit

Downtown Hilo, known for its beautiful buildings; many of which are on the National Register of Historic places, is located right across the Singing Bridge when going east on Kamehameha Avenue. The Singing Bridge reaches across Wailuku River, a river that is best known for separating two major lava flows from Mauna Kea and Mauna Loa, and for drowning random swimmers by dragging them down into a complex system of lava tubes. During my stay, a local college boy was victim of Wailuku's cunning wrath during a jump session at Boiling Pots, a section where the river is descending via a series of deep pools. He was dragged down into a lava tube by a current, and never managed to fight the powers of the water. According to a Hawaiian myth, Boiling Pots is the resting place of a large mo'ō (a lizard-like creature) who wakes up when the river is "boiling", that is when the water levels are high, and drags its victims down beneath the surface. Warnings about dangerous waters in this river should thus not be taken lightly. However, Wailuku River also features popular sights like Pe'epe'e Falls, the already mentioned Boiling Pots and Rainbow Falls, all breathtakingly beautiful natural features that are frequently visited by both tourists and locals.

On the riverbank of Wailuku lies the Wailuku Inn, a bed and breakfast place that is situated in a large Victorian style house on top of a hill. Surrounding the hill, a lush rainforest provides privacy to the property, and even though the Wailuku Inn is close to Downtown Hilo, it seems completely separated from car noise and busy weekdays. On the Wailuku Inn *lanai* (porch) I danced hula '*auana* (modern hula) every Wednesday. My kumu offered classes here in order to introduce the Inn visitors to the hula, in its Hawaiian form.⁹ Therefore the number of participants was never consistent, and on several occasions we had an audience while rehearsing.

Parallel to the Wailuku River runs State Highway 200, starting with Waianuenue Avenue that takes you up to Rainbow Falls, overlapping Kaumana Drive, which brings you by the town of Kaumana, and finally ends in Saddle Road, the only road that crosses the

⁸ Flower with a very sweet scent often used in flower leis.

⁹ Different types of hula will be presented in chapter three.

island between the mountains Mauna Loa and Mauna Kea. About half-way up towards the town of Kaumana is number 612, Kaumana Drive. This was my house that I shared with my ‘ohana (family); three college kids from the mainland, for six months. Though I originally wanted to live with a Hawaiian family to get closer to everyday life in a Hawaiian household, my living situation proved to be an advantage as I gained access through my roommates to both Hawaiian and non-Hawaiian students. This access enabled me to discuss matters of identity, tradition and interaction between Hawaiians and non-Hawaiians in relaxed situations where these topics were a natural part of our conversations. Through my household I also got to participate in growing vegetables and fruits for eating purposes or for trade at the Hilo Farmers Market, and with this develop a closer relationship to my natural surroundings whilst growing increasingly aware of the meaning of a reciprocal relationship to land.¹⁰

A Haili e lā, I ke kula manu lā

At Haili, A plain inhabited by birds

Moving further east from Wailuku and Waianuenue in Downtown Hilo, in an area that once stretched over a plain but is now a residential area, you find Haili Street. Though no longer famous for holding a large density of birds, Haili Street is probably the place throughout Hilo with the highest density in churches. Alongside this street lies also the Lyman Museum, a museum that holds a permanent missionary exhibit, and various changing exhibits with a concentration on Hawaiian content.

Further down the street is the Keawe Pub. Keawe Pub was one of my main locations for observing Hawaiian music performances, both professional and amateur, and for experiencing spontaneous hula dancing. Attending Hawaiian Music Night and Open Mic Night every week I gradually gained access to the inner circles of amateur artistic life in Hilo, and witnessed everything from random people playing blues or *jawaiian*¹¹ music, to recording Hawaiian artists like Kaumakaiwa Kanaka‘ole playing soft, yet hardcore protest music. The Keawe Pub is only one of many places in Hilo that offers Hawaiian music and open mic nights, and is also one of many scenes for hula dance.

A little further down Haili Street lays the Palace Theatre, a historic theatre that is run and maintained by a non profit organization. The Palace Theatre is one of the larger scenes in Hilo for events such as concerts, music festivals, international film festivals, plays and dance

¹⁰ Relationship to land will be further discussed in chapter four.

¹¹ Jawaiian is a music category that has become popular in Hawaii in recent years. The music is a mix of reggae, r&b and Hawaiian island music.

recitals, and has hosted recording artists like the Makaha Sons. The theatre also hosts *Hawaiiiana Live!*, a show originally established as an offer for cruise liner tourists. The show features host Leilehua Yuen, and Bob Alder playing the famous Hilo Palace pipe organ, and aims to teach the audience about the expression *Hawaiiiana*, which, according to Leilehua, means *the very best of Hawaiian culture*.

Moving south-east in Downtown Hilo you pass surf shops, souvenir shops, a natural foods store, furniture and interior design shops, musical instrument shops, restaurants and finally at the end of the Downtown “strip” you find the Hilo Farmers Market. Throughout the market, which is located at the end and on both sides of Mamo Street and has its busiest days on Wednesday and Saturday, you can find all kinds of fruits and vegetables, food stands that offer free samples of their products, flower stands with the most wonderful tropical flowers, a therapeutic massage stand and lots of arts and crafts. Originally the Hilo Farmers Market was an outlet for the produce of local farmers. However, the market grew bigger and the demand for fresh island grown food products exceeded the local farmers’ abilities to produce. Thus, today much of the products at the Farmers Market are imported from both the other islands, and from international businesses. However, local farmers, small businesses and sole proprietors still use the market to sell and market their products. The Farmers Market is also a social scene, where you always run into people you already know, and make new acquaintances based on continuous trade or general small talk. My household traded *bhut jolokia*, also known as Indian ghost pepper and the spiciest pepper in the world, with a man who made incredibly popular salsas and dipping sauces. Seeing that we were the only producers of this particular pepper in Hilo at the time, the salsa guy gladly provided us with top quality salsa and dipping sauce whenever we provided him with fresh peppers. Also, the biggest businesses at the market would uphold a good customer relationship by maintaining a high level of recognition and provide continuing customers with freebies and “special prices”, thus also ensuring the customers return.

A Pana‘ewa e lā, I ka moku lehua lā

At Pana‘ewa, with its grove of lehua trees

Moving even further south-east, following Kino‘ole Street towards the area of Pana‘ewa, the University of Hawai‘i at Hilo and Hilo Community College stretch over the Manono Campus and the Upper Campus. As a former exchange student at the University of Hawai‘i I was qualified to gain access to the University Library’s General and Hawaiian Collections. At the

University I also got to talk to my former professors, who guided me in the right direction by recommending further readings and referring me to important informants among the University staff and students. Since my last exams as an undergraduate at the University of Hawai‘i were conducted only a year before returning for my graduate fieldwork I was still listed as a current student and was notified via e-mail about on-campus events of interest, i.e. Hawaiian Club meetings and student hula classes. The University Campus also provided event information and notifications through several large poster boards, which I checked regularly and from which I got information about the hālau I later became part of. With access to the on-campus Student Life Center I was provided with a large dance studio, in which I could practice my hula, which, unlike my kumu’s house, featured mirrored walls. Throughout my fieldwork the University of Hawai‘i campus proved to be an invaluable source for information.

Hālau hula o Halia

Further south-east of Hilo in the area of Pana‘ewa lies my kumu’s house. This area used to be covered with forest vegetation, but is now in continuous residential and industrial development. The house has been in my kumu’s family for a long time, and is the place where she grew up. The property is about 20x20 metres and contains a paved single parking lot, trees and bushes of different kinds, and the rest is covered by a green lawn that is usually drenched in rain water transforming the ground into a slippery mud slide. Like on most Hawaiian properties, ti plants¹², both green and red, have been planted in the outer corners to provide protection for the property, the house and its residents. Next to the entrance a *jabuticaba* tree, a fruit-bearing tree also called Brazilian Grape tree, stretches about 3.5 metres towards the sky. In the back of the property you can find a drying rack for clothes, and even more flowers and bushes. On the other side of the house is a carport that, judging by the definition, should function as a shelter for my kumu’s car. However, this area is filled, floor to ceiling, with boxes and all kinds of indefinable “stuff”, much like her car, in which I found what looked like an entire tree once.

Up towards the entrance is a ramp under which a stray cat and three kittens reside. On the right side is a recycling station with four different trash cans and on the other side is a bushy tree with compost at its roots. The entrance has, like nearly all Hawaiian houses, a

¹² The ti-plant (*Cordyline terminalis*) is a woody plant with a long stalk and tightly clustered oval shaped long green leaves. It has been used in traditional medicine as a way to reduce fever, and in cooking, both for eating and for wrapping food. It is also widely used within the hula tradition for costumes and lei, and is believed to bring good luck. It is common to bring a piece of ti when travelling on airplanes, and to plant ti around your house so Pele, the fire goddess, will spare your property and your house during a lava flow.

screen door outside the front door. When my kumu is home the screen door is usually closed while the front door is only closed while she is sleeping. All windows are composed by shutters, made from several glass plates, and have screens on the outside. The shutters are usually open, allowing a cool breeze to pass through the house and play the wind chime outside the front door in the evening. Through the front door, you enter into a small room in which two couches are placed in a ninety degree angle against the walls, a wardrobe is placed next to one of the couches, and a desk with a desk chair, a computer and a printer occupies the space against the third wall. Shelves with books, pictures and knick-knack fills the space above one couch, while a framed certification from my kumus ūniki¹³ class and several hanging pictures decorates the wall above the second couch. Next to the front door is a Hawaiian lunar calendar with detailed explanations about events and rules to follow during the different moon phases.

Entering through an opening draped with thin white fabric you find the living room and kitchen, and the room in which I spent most of my time when at my kumus house. Within the living room is a piano and several hula instruments in one corner, accompanied by a CD player and a huge stack of Hawaiian music CDs on the right hand side. On the floor is a *lauhala* mat (a mat made from the leaves of the Hala, or pandanus, tree) and several pieces of furniture are scattered throughout the room. The walls are covered in different Hawaiian art pieces, photographs and the *Kumulipo* (a Hawaiian creation chant) is placed right above the piano. The kitchen counter is somewhat organized and colourfully filled with my kumu's recycling projects, i.e. with cereal boxes, tin cans and bottles of different kinds. The kitchen shelves are stacked with foods of both homemade and grocery store origins, and the cabinets holds bags of rice, jars of *jabuticaba* and *liliko'i* (passionfruit) jams and cooking pots and pans. In the middle of the kitchen, separated from the kitchen counters, is a gas stove with four burners, and counter space on each side. Most of my hula classes were situated in this room. When dancing we would shove away furniture into the kitchen and use the floor space in the living room. My kumu would sit on the floor next to the CD player and we would face her from the floor in front of her. When we were finished dancing, we would replace the furniture and cook dinner in the kitchen. The rest of the house consists of two bedrooms, a laundry/storage room and a bathroom placed in the far back, none of which I spent any considerable amount of time in.

¹³ Can be translated as graduation. When you ūniki in your hālau, your kumu gives you permission to call yourself a kumu hula, and to start your own hālau.

A Lele‘iwi e lā, ‘Au‘au i ke kai lā

At Lele‘iwi, I swim in the sea

Leaving my kumus house in the Panaewa area, moving towards Hilo Bay, you pass the Afook Chinen Civic Auditorium and Edith Kanaka‘ole Stadium, both primary arenas during the Merrie Monarch Festival, which is the largest hula festival in the islands and the most prestigious hula festival in the world. Hilo has hosted this festival since its establishment in the early 1960s. The stadium is originally designed as a tennis stadium that seats about 3500 people, but is used for several kinds of events like martial arts competitions, concerts, graduation ceremonies and the Merrie Monarch Hula Competition. The Civic Auditorium hosts during the Merrie Monarch Festival a Hawaiian arts and crafts fair that offers hula supplies, music instruments, books and knick knacks for decorative purposes.

Moving further down towards the bay, crossing Kamehameha Avenue, you reach Liliu‘okalani Gardens, a Japanese styled park named after Hawai‘i’s last queen. On the south side of the park runs Banyan Drive, a road that is framed by Banyan trees, planted by famous people, on both sides. Each tree has a sign with the name of its planter, and names such as Amelia Earhart, Franklin D. Roosevelt and Richard Nixon have made this road a popular tourist site in Hilo. Banyan Drive also takes you by all major hotels in Hilo, which are conveniently clustered in this area right on the shores of Hilo Bay. On the other side of the park lies Moku‘ola, or Coconut Island, which according to a Hawaiian legend is a part of Maui. Functioning as a place of refuge for warriors in ancient times, the island was destroyed in a tsunami in 1946, but has later been restored, and now has a paved pathway around the island, bathroom facilities and several benches with superstructures. Moku‘ola is the location for the Kamehameha festival, a Hawaiian cultural festival that is part of the larger Kamehameha Day celebrations, and for the opening ceremony of the Merrie Monarch festival.

Following Banyan Drive and moving further east in Hilo is the harbour area through which cruise liners and cargo ships provide Hilo with tourists and all kinds of necessary cargo. On the other side of the road from the harbour lies Hilo International Airport, the only major airport on the eastern side of the Big Island. Further out towards the ocean you pass Hilo’s most popular beach parks, starting with Keaukaha Beach Park, Onekahakaha Beach Park, Four Mile Beach Park, Richardsons Beach Park and finally, at the crossroads of dead end Leleiwi Street and Kalaniana‘ole Avenue, Lehia Park. None of these parks have white sand beaches, but offer great snorkelling opportunities to those who would like to discover the underwater world of Hilo.

A Moloka‘i e lā, ‘Ike ala kāhi lā

At Moloka‘i, I see one road

A Mauna Loa au lā, I ka lua ko‘i hala lā

At Mauna Loa, is the adze quarry

Many Hawaiians express that Moloka‘i is the most Hawaiian of all the islands, and it is here a truly Hawaiian life is being lived. Moloka‘i is quiet, with a lack of large department stores, high buildings and large roads with rushed traffic. Created from the two volcanoes Mauna Loa and Kamakou, Moloka‘i is located between the island of Maui and the island of Oahu, and is probably best known for hosting a leper colony from the late 1800s up until 1969. Compared to Oahu, this island might as well be a hundred years away. Compared to the Big Island, and especially Hilo, the difference is much smaller. Although Hilo is larger in population and in size than any city on Moloka‘i, the slow pace Hawaiian life is much the same. As with connections to Moloka‘i, and the island of Ni‘ihau up north, connections to Hilo are also usually proudly announced by the average Joe in the street as well as by musicians and artists on stage both in Hilo, on other islands, and outside the Hawaiian Islands. Being from Hilo is of high value to Hawaiians, and was something even I experienced as a very positive trait when visiting other islands.

Ha‘ina mai ka puana lā, No ka lani nō he inoa lā

Tell the refrain, In the name of the chief

He inoa nō Kauikeaouli

The name-song for Kauikeaouli

A brief history of politics in Hawai‘i

In ancient times¹⁴ Hilo was known and appreciated for its coastal land, its many streams and rivers, and the fertility of the land. Many indigenous Hawaiians lived in this area and Hilo is mentioned in many chants and legends from that time. In the 1700s Hilo became a center of political activity under the rule of King Kamehameha I, the first chief who managed to gather all the islands. Because of its lush vegetation and long coastline, Hilo was the perfect location for producing war canoes, and for setting out on conquering quests. Kamehameha thus used Hilo as base during his efforts in gaining political authority over all the islands.

¹⁴ The time before Captain Cook arrived in Hawai‘i in 1778 is usually referred to as *ancient times*.

During the 19th century several important events took place that changed Hawai‘i for all time. In 1848 there was a remarkable shift in land ownership as Kamehameha III, or Kamehameha III, realized an economic advance would never happen if he followed the land divisions of old (Chinen 1958:15). The Great Māhele shifted the land from being a communal trusteeship to private ownership (Chinen 1958). It also promoted a shift in power, as anyone now could come to Hawai‘i and buy land. The distance between the ali‘i and the *maka‘āinana* (people of the land or commoners) grew larger as the ali‘i no longer demanded a portion of the harvested crops and the *maka‘āinana* no longer could turn to the ali‘i for protection. White westerners gained more power as they now could own land, and the relationship between indigenous Hawaiians and western newcomers started to get a little tense. The Great Māhele will receive further elaboration in chapter four.

After the privatization of land, Hilo soon became a plantation town as the sugar industry grew in the islands. Americans and Europeans came to Hawai‘i, bought land and started a plantation industry with workers imported from all corners of the world. Japanese, Filipinos, Samoans, Portuguese and even Norwegians migrated to the islands, and the ethnic diversity that was created during these times is the main reason for Hilo being a melting pot of ethnic groups today. Simultaneously as new people came to the islands, indigenous Hawaiians were fighting battles against western diseases. From an estimated 300 000 to 1 million indigenous Hawaiians at first contact in 1778, the population decreased to under forty thousand by 1890 (Trask 1999:6). As Hawaiians gradually became a minority in their own lands the Caucasian and Asian populations were growing.

A growing European and American sugar elite started making their way into politics and swiftly outnumbered the Hawaiian political elite. In 1876 the sugar elite managed to establish a reciprocity treaty between the U.S. and Hawai‘i in order to lower the tax on sugar. According to Beechert (1985:79) “the planters knew that if Hawai‘i became part of the protected U.S. market, the amount of the duty they now paid would become a guaranteed profit”. The treaty also gave the U.S. the right to use Pearl Harbour as a military base, thus enabling an extension of the U.S. military border from the west coast to the middle of the Pacific Ocean. The reciprocity treaty was renewed for seven years in 1887, based largely on the same reasons it had been initiated. King David Kalākaua was during the renewal process “forced to accept a drastically revised constitution which reduced the monarchy to a figurehead and radically restructured the government” (Beechert 1985:83). The monarchy was fading, slowly alienated from sovereign power while the Caucasian sugar elite grew more powerful, as landholders and with obtaining high positions within the government.

In 1893 Queen Lili‘uokalani’s government was overthrown by these sugar elites after several protests from the Queen herself, and from the Hawaiian political elite who formed the protest organization Hui Hawai‘i Aloha ‘Āina (Silva 2004:130). The Queen was imprisoned for some five months in her room at Iolani Palace, the royal palace, and was never again restored to the throne (Trask 1999:15). An illegal annexation was finalized in 1898 under President William McKinley, and, finally, statehood was declared in 1959. Hawai‘i became the 50th state of the United States of America.

A historical overview of hula

To be able to discuss the hula in any sense it is necessary to provide a short historical overview of the role of the hula in Hawaiian society. However, it is difficult to give a mainstream account of this history as there are many very valuable versions to be considered. In Hawai‘i, the saying *‘a‘ohe i pau ka ‘ike i ka hālau ho‘okahi* – all knowledge is not contained in only one school - is commonly used around the aspect of knowledge, and is especially used within hula, to remind people that all knowledge is valuable and that there is no right or wrong way of doing things. Hawaiians have a very strong oral tradition and knowledge about hula has found its way to hula dancers of present times through channels of various *kupuna*¹⁵. However, as missionaries of the 1820s forbade hula, a lot of this knowledge was lost, and the so called ancient hula we see performed today are mere interpretations of the chants that survived the Calvinist missionaries extermination of this “‘heathen’ and ‘lascivious’” dance (Barrère, Pukui & Kelly 1980:1).

There is some written documentation on what the hula was like when James Cook and his men arrived in 1778. As mentioned in chapter one, David Samwell, a minor Welsh poet and the surgeon of *the Discovery* noted that “the young women spend most of their time singing and dancing of which they are very fond” (Beaglehole 1967:1181). However, as for written documentation on the oral traditions of ancient Hawai‘i there is one book that has somewhat become a bible¹⁶ for hula dancers. *Unwritten Literature of Hawai‘i, the sacred songs of the hula* was written by Nathaniel B. Emerson, the son of Reverend John S. Emerson

¹⁵ Kupuna means grandparent, ancestor, relative or close friend of the grandparent’s generation, grandaunt, granduncle (Pukui and Elbert 1986).

¹⁶ The word *bible* is here used as a synonym to *the most authoritative book in the field*, and has nothing to do with the Holy Scriptures of Christianity.

who came to the islands as a missionary in 1832 (Emerson 1998:4). As suggested in its introduction by Keone Nunes and Glen Grant,

Hula described by Emerson was not the lascivious gross idolatry perceived by his missionary parents, but the poetry of a race that transcended cultural differences and distances with the voice of human passion, joy, fear, triumph and love. Correctly stressing that *hula*, song and chant was the opera house, library and cultural center for the Hawaiian people [...]. (1998:7)

Emerson opened his mind to the Hawaiian way of life more than his parents had done before him and with this gained access to wise kupuna and *kākāʻōlelo*¹⁷ (Emerson 1998:6-7). He collected chants, songs and hula and wrote them down at a time when Hawaiians lost many valuable sources of knowledge to different diseases that challenged the islands post-contact.

The missionaries arriving in the islands in the 1820s sought to Christianize aliʻi and *aliʻi nui* to make easier the transformation of the Hawaiian Islands from a, in their opinion, heathen to a Christian community. Makaʻāinana would by default follow their aliʻi and conform to whatever rules the aliʻi set for them. As so, the queen regent Kaʻahumanu, a Hawaiian woman, “issued an edict forbidding public performances of the hula” in 1830 (Barrère, Pukui & Kelly 1980:1). The queen died, however, in 1832 and in the years to come this edict was ignored (Barrère, Pukui & Kelly 1980:1). During the following years there was some uncertainty as to how Hawaiʻi should be ruled and the regent king Kamehameha III swayed back and forth between the Calvinist way and the Hawaiian way before he abandoned his own ways and “the kingdom returned to the domination by Calvinist beliefs and concepts” (Barrère, Pukui & Kelly 1980:1). However, the hula was continued in hidden areas away from the seat of the throne and the missionary stations.

In 1851 public performances of hula became more controlled and required a licence and a rather heavy fee from the performer. In the 1860’s hula schools started to appear throughout the islands and the aliʻi revived an old tradition of having “hula people, or poʻe hula, available to provide entertainment”¹⁸ (Barrère, Pukui & Kelly 1980:1). The *poʻe hula* were the ones responsible for keeping the art of hula alive and who passed on knowledge that

¹⁷ Kākāʻōlelo means orator, person skilled in use of language, counsellor, adviser, storyteller, oratory, to orate.

¹⁸ In older times a hula dancer was not just a dancer but a storyteller, a news caster and an entertainer. Their dances were often embodied narrations about myths, events, people of old and whatever was happening in a neighbouring village. My kumu once said that they can to some extent be associated with the news casters of old Europe who ran around in the streets shouting out news to town residents. This is also why the art of chanting cannot be looked upon with ease, the tremendous memory and articulation skills of chanters is something that needs years and years of practice and is highly respected in Hawaiʻi.

became the hula kahiko we see today (Barrère, Pukui & Kelly 1980:1). A real shift in the banishment policy was seen under the reign of David Kalākaua. For his coronation ceremony in 1883 and his birthday celebrations in 1886 hula dancers prepared a wide repertoire of hula dances ranging from the traditional dances to dances that were composed and choreographed for these special occasions (Barrère, Pukui & Kelly 1980:50-52).

After the Kalākaua reign the Hawaiian Islands were annexed in 1897 by the United States after an illegal overthrow of the throne in 1893. During Liliu‘okalani’s house arrest she composed many well known Hawaiian songs and contributed greatly to the Hawaiian Music we hear today. After the annexation the hula tradition had another set back. However, after a quiet decade or so, the entertainment business began to show interest in the dance. According to Barrère, Pukui & Kelley, the hula became a:

feature of carnivals and pageants and then became entrenched as standard entertainment for Hawaiians. It had undergone a radical change, from that of a dance form subordinate to the poetry of the chant to which it was danced, to a style of dancing in which gesture became the important features. (1980:64)

The people of the hula traditions expressed with frustration that the hula projected to the world was nothing like the *real* Hawaiian hula, and continued to dance the hula in its ancient form away from the public in private hālau hula (Barrère, Pukui & Kelley 1980).

The entertainment and tourist industries expressed throughout the beginning of the 1900s an escalation in demand for *hula girls* to entertain island visitors. By the end of the 1920s the hula was as commercialized as ever, and dominated by the newly formed hapa haole hula. According to Desmond (1999:97) within this time period “the hula and the image of the hula girl had replaced the allure of natural wonders as the primary signifier of Hawai‘i”. Instead of promoting pictures of natural features the hula girl was now put in focus in marketing tourism in Hawai‘i. An attempt to revive the hula and Hawaiian traditions in its original form was made by George Mossman in the 1930s with the founding of Lalani Village. Mossman’s village consisted of traditional Hawaiian grass huts and a *heiau* (place of worship) all of which he built himself. Kanahale (1979:1) defined the village as the first Hawaiian culture center, as Mossman “offered classes in language, chant, hula, crafts and some of the ancient rituals”. However, Mossman did not quite provoke a cultural renaissance with his efforts in the 1930s. Kanahale writes;

I remember him as a great white kahuna^[19] (he didn't look Hawaiian at all) who had a booming voice which seemed to grow louder whenever he spoke Hawaiian. But he was a tragic figure as neither the public, Hawaiians included, nor Waikiki was ready for what he hoped would be a great cultural awakening. His was a voice in the wilderness that could not be heard above the din of oaths of allegiance to America. (1979:1)

This was a time when being different was not the “in-thing” to do, and when ethnicity was an unspoken word (Kanahele 1979:1). Throughout the 1940s Hawai‘i functioned as a place for R&R, rest and recuperation, for American soldiers, and hula dancers became objectified as sensual bodies on display (Desmond 1999), as will be further discussed in chapter three.

In the 1950s Malia Solomon developed a similar concept to that of Mossman's village and called it Ulu Mau Village (Kanahele 1979:1). However, according to Desmond (1999:134), Hawai‘i still was not ready for a cultural resurgence and Hawaiian traditions remained suppressed and hidden for another twenty years, during which the “era of mass tourism” began. Commercial jet travel was developing throughout the 1960s and travel to Hawai‘i was suddenly quick and affordable. Now not only the social elite, but also the middle class could travel to Hawai‘i, and the demand for hula girls to entertain the visitors had never been bigger. Almost simultaneously and triggered by “the rise of ‘ethnic pride’ movements on the mainland”, a new interest in Hawaiian traditions and cultural practises was being formed, and “the late 1960s and early 1970s marked the beginning of what is known as the Hawaiian Renaissance” (Desmond 1999:134-135, Kanahele 1979).

The Hawaiian Renaissance

The late 1960s and 1970s are known for political movements of peace and human rights, i.e. the hippie movement fighting for peace in Vietnam and expressing hostility against the government, the gay movement fighting for equal rights and the right to express difference, and the feminist movement fighting for political and economic liberty for women. In the wake of the black civil rights movement of the 1950s and 1960s, the “age of ethnicity”, ushering a fight for civil rights, emphasized that “there was nothing wrong in maintaining one's ethnic identity and, certainly, nothing un-American about it” (Kanahele 1979:2). Already in the 1960s Hawaiians “showed an increasing concern for their political rights and grievances and

¹⁹ Priest, sorcerer, magician, wizard, minister, expert in any profession (Pukui and Elbert 1986).

their cultural identity” (Kanahele 1979:2). With John Dominis Holt’s *On Being Hawaiian*, published in 1964, the Hawaiian’s place in history was reaffirmed and re-remembered. The establishment of the State Council on Hawaiian Heritage in 1969 proved a recognition on part of the State of Hawai‘i, that the culture should be perpetuated in its manner.

Hawaiian culture and traditions were starting to re-emerge, and, as Kanahele argues;

There were other Hawaiian cultural happenings such as the growth in the popularity of Hawaiian canoe paddling, the emerging and comeback of the male hula, the formation of Hui Kukekuka and Hui Na Opio and similar cultural groups, all by the late 1960s. And finally, the first political demonstrations that began with Kalama Valley in early 1970 when protesters sought to prevent Bishop Estate from ousting a pig farmer.²⁰ (1979:2)

Throughout the 1970s Hawaiian music also sprung back to life and young people started turning to this instead of the rock music that followed the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s in continental U.S. More young and old people started to learn how to play slack key and steel guitar, and radio stations were devoting more time to Hawaiian music. The Hawaiian Music Foundation was set up in 1971 as the first organization to perpetuate Hawaiian music (Kanahele 1979:3).

Another exciting aspect about this period was “the revival of hula kahiko and male hula” (Kanahele 1979:4, Desmond 1999:135). Dancing hula had for a long time been considered feminine, and males that danced were often looked upon as “sissies” (Kanahele 1979:3). However, the tables turned during the 1970s and male hula once again became masculine, and very popular. The interest in hula kahiko was also beyond anything seen before during the 20th century and the hapa haole hula of the 1930s, 1940s and 1950s was ignored by Hawaiians who wanted to learn hula. Kanahele argues that Hawaiians during the 1970s took back the hula from the tourists and once again made hula Hawaiian;

It is important to note that today’s interest is greater for the ancient than the modern or hapa-haole hula. The more traditional the dance, the keener the interest. It is as if people want to get as close as they possibly can to the first hula that Kaka did. And because of this, I think the Hawaiians have finally retaken the hula from the tourists. (1979:4)

The establishment of pageants and hula competitions like the Merrie Monarch Festival, the King Kamehameha Hula Competition and the Prince Lot Hula Festival strengthened the non-

²⁰ This incident will receive further elaboration in chapter four.

tourist presence of hula as did programs and workshops sponsored by state and local organizations that sponsored training workshops for hula teachers (Desmond 1999:135). Several hālau hula were established in this period, lead by kumu hula who had learned the ancient hula from their kupuna and who took in students for ūniki training. Combined with the popularity ancient hula now held, this would ensure the survival of the hula tradition. The students who graduated from their ūniki classes, formed hālau hula of their own based on the tradition they had been taught by their kumu, and passed on the knowledge to new students. The efforts of this time period are the reason hula is as extensive as it is today.

During the renaissance the Hawaiian language was also given much attention, and the University of Hawai‘i established a Hawaiian studies program in which Hawaiian language played a great part. The program has developed and is today extended into involving a language program at MA level, being the only indigenous language in the U.S. with such high status and ensured continuity. Additionally, a renewed interest in canoe racing appeared during the renaissance as island high schools organized the first canoe racing league, laying the groundwork for a sport that today is very popular among Hawaiians (Kanahele 1979:7). A fascination for ancient Polynesian navigation techniques also developed during the 70s, and resulted in a well known canoe voyage to the south Pacific. The Hokule‘a, a double hulled canoe launched from the island of Oahu, sailed from Hawai‘i to Tahiti with the help of traditional navigation skills. The voyage was originally an experiment to “disprove the accidental-voyage theory of Polynesian settlement”, and ended up being one of the most important events during the renaissance (Linnekin 1983:245).

Last but not least, a Hawaiian movement formed to protect the destructions of the sacred island Kaho‘olawe by the U.S. Military (McGregor 2007:250). In 1976 first efforts were made to stage an occupation of the island “as a means to draw national attention to the desperate conditions of Native Hawaiians” (McGregor 2007:251-252). In 1990, the bombing of Kaho‘olawe finally stopped after over a decade of hard work on behalf of the Hawaiian movement.

The Hawaiian Renaissance continued for years after Kanahele wrote his speech in 1979. It laid the groundwork for the cultural awareness and widespread cultural practice in Hawai‘i today. In the case of hula, the cultural revival in the 1970s was of uttermost importance for ensuring survival and continuance of the tradition.

Concluding remarks

Throughout this chapter I have introduced Hilo and Hawai'i as my field of research by presenting important locations for my fieldwork. By using the chant for Kauikeaouli my intention was to firstly recreate the guided tour of Hilo I visualized when learning to dance this chant, but also introduce Kauikeaouli as an important political character in Hawaiian history. His importance will become increasingly evident in chapter three where I discuss the consequences of the Great Māhele, the land division act he signed in 1858. This chapter has also provided important historical and political events within the Hawaiian Islands and within the hula tradition, finishing off with the invaluable cultural revival called the Hawaiian Renaissance.

Throughout the next chapter I will present the Hawaiian hula tradition in its Hawaiian form, and in the form that has been adopted throughout the world. While discussing the impact of tourism on the tradition I will explore the desire for authenticity within the hula tradition and within the tourism industry.

3

Native dance and foreign desires

*In search for authenticity in hula dance*²¹

Our much referred to notion of authenticity means different things to the anthropologist and to the individual engaged in the forging of a cultural identity. For the former it is a question of originality or even aboriginality. For the latter it is a question of identity itself, a relation between the individual subject and the culture. Authenticity in this case refers to the state of integrity of the members of an identifying group. Inauthenticity would thus consist in the relative alienation from the cultural model, a lack of engagement, a social distance with respect to the values and categories embodied in a tradition or program of action.

Jonathan Friedman (1993:761)

Introduction

When announcing my plans for my MA project to friends and family in Norway I often got the reaction “aaahh, you’re gonna wear grass skirts and coconut bikinis while doing the hulahula and drinking tropical drinks on the beach?” I also got this reaction from foreign visitors to Hawai‘i and from people I met on my way from Norway to Hawai‘i, and it got me thinking that the international image of the Hawaiian hula hasn’t changed much in remote parts of the world since it was created in the early 1900s. In Norway, I have been invited to Hawai‘i themed parties where girls wear raffia skirts, plastic lei and bikini tops, and clearly try to promote a *sexual* and *tropical* image of a hula dancer. Hula dancer is also a popular

²¹ The title of this chapter is played off the title of the book *Native Lands and Foreign Desires* by Lilikala Kame‘eleihiwa (1992).

Halloween²² costume, and a quick search through various online costume distributors shows the very same image. Growing up in Norway, a very remote place to Hawai‘i, and having never lived in the U.S, the Pacific region or East Asia before moving to Hawai‘i in 2007, my image of the Hawaiian hula was a perfect match to the one I have described above. In my mind I contained an understanding of hula as a counterfeit tourist attraction. Clearly my image was overall insufficient, but it represents the general idea of hula outside the Hawaiian and international hula community.

After living in the islands for a year in 2007 I returned to Norway with an impression of hula that was still to be corrected when I went back in 2009. During my year of international exchange I didn’t study hula at all and the only information I had was based on touristy hula shows, *lū‘au*²³ and sovereignty demonstrations that took place within my year as a resident. Based on these scarce observations I got a distinct impression that the kahiko dances were profoundly more authentic than the ‘auana dances. To me it seemed the ‘auana dances were strictly for tourists and the kahiko style was the *real* hula danced by and for Hawaiians. Like a group of visitors and audience to the Hula Kahiko Series in Volcano National Park, Hawai‘i Island, put it when explaining why they had chosen this particular event: "We wanted to see real native *hula* and not that touristy stuff" (Volcano Art Center 2009). Looking back at this impression I realize I am not the only visitor to the islands that has approached the hula in this manner at some point, and it is a very interesting contribution in the debate on authenticity in hula.

In this chapter I want to describe the relationship between the Hawaiian hula tradition and the international image of hula dance. While arguing that the two are rather different I will also emphasize their connectedness to one another and suggest they are both part of a bigger whole. Hula has, like many other traditions, been questioned on its level of authenticity, as already mentioned in chapter one. In relation to the overall argument of this thesis, a discussion on authenticity within the hula tradition becomes important when hula is considered a key ingredient in Hawaiian identity. When searching for authenticity in such a complex tradition, as Friedman (1993) also argues, it is crucial to consider from whom the desire and demand for authenticity comes. I will argue that while the international community

²² Halloween is a catholic holiday that celebrates saints and martyrs. In the U.S. Halloween is celebrated on the 31st of October when children dress up in costumes and make candy rounds in their neighbourhood, during which they exchange candy for a promise to not perform pranks on their neighbours. The American way of celebrating Halloween has taken place within the U.S. for many decades, but within the last 20 years or so the tradition has been adopted by several countries outside the American continent.

²³ A *lū‘au* is a Hawaiian feast featuring traditional Hawaiian food and “exotic” drinks like Kalua Pork and Mai Tais and entertainment. This feast is offered by resorts throughout the islands as a tourist attraction.

finds authenticity in a hula performance as long as the dance is kahiko style and the dancers are wearing the proper traditional *native* attire, Hawaiians find authenticity in the genealogy of hula and in the connection between the dance, the chant being performed and its place in Hawaiian history. I will argue that when searching for authenticity in a complex tradition like the hula, it is important to look at the history and continuity of the tradition. I will also suggest that answers to the question of authenticity in the hula tradition are not found in the relationship between the tourist industry and the Hawaiian hula, but rather in the relationship between the dancer and the tradition. However, it is important to consider that authenticity often is determined in the eyes of the beholder, and thus means different things to an outsider than to a dancer. Throughout this chapter I will give an analysis of the hula tradition, and of what being a student of this tradition entails. Further I will elaborate on the relationship between the hula and the world, and finally discuss the role of tourism and history in relation to a question of authenticity in the hula tradition.

Hula in Hawai‘i: the tradition

Origins

In Hawai‘i, the roots of the hula tradition are old and grow deep. Originally the hula was used as entertainment, but also as a vehicle for maintaining the stories of old. The dancing was always led by a chanter and/or drumbeats of various kinds. Seeing that Hawaiians at this time did not have a written language the language of hula kept the myths and stories alive and the movements were reinforcement to the words of the chant. Creating a visual image of the story to accompany the chant made it easier for people to remember.

People who had knowledge about the hula tradition and were skilled in performing were called hula *people*, not *dancers*. This linguistic twist indicates that knowing hula didn’t only mean knowing how to dance. The hula people were entertainers, newscasters, flesh and blood historical resources and were always up to date about what happened in and around their village. They were an absolute necessity for the survival of Hawaiian myths and history and as Nunes and Grant put it in the introduction to Emerson (1998:4); “When a *kupuna* (elder) dies, a library has burned to the ground”. Throughout challenges like first interactions with colonialists, missionary excommunication and banning, and industrial development, hula people have preserved the hula tradition by passing on knowledge to dedicated students.

*Kumu hula and kuleana*²⁴

The responsibility that follows the title of *kumu hula*, hula master, is not to be taken lightly, though this title is subject to misuse. To become a kumu hula, your level of knowledge about the tradition must be elite and you must understand the responsibility you have to pass this knowledge on to younger generations. Learning this is a process that starts at a young age in which dedication and endurance are key factors. According to the late Uncle George Na‘ope;

In the old days, Hawaiian children were selected at a young age to devote their lives to the hula. They were dedicated to Laka, the goddess of the hula and lived sequestered for years in their hālau (hula school) under the strict teachings of the kumu hula, a master and teacher in the hula arts. Students were not to be tainted by any other influence, and it was not until they graduated, often in their teens, that they were even allowed to mingle with anyone outside their hālau. (2006:20)

Though dancers that strive to become kumu hula today are usually not shielded from the world outside their hālau, their level of dedication combined with the stringency of their kumu is what determines the possibility for them to ūniki; graduate. Usually, dancers that become kumu hula have been brought up surrounded by Hawaiian traditions in their everyday lives and this way of living comes natural to them. However dancers who do not possess Hawaiian traditions as embodied habits can still accumulate this knowledge through serious dedication and become respected kumu hula.

As already mentioned, to become a kumu hula you must ūniki from your hālau. This process can take a long time depending on both the teachings of the kumu and the dedication of the dancer. Stillman has shared some thoughts on the process in her *On the kuleana of a kumu hula*²⁵ in which she lists 127 questions you should be able to have a positive answer too before considering yourself a kumu hula. Though all kumu have different terms for graduating their students, Stillman’s list has been presented as a guide to the study of hula on several hālau websites. I was presented with this paper on my first day of hula class and was instructed to read it thoroughly. What is important to understand during the graduation process is that once you become a kumu hula, you make a lifelong commitment to the hula tradition. You will forever have responsibilities towards your kumu hula’s teachings and to your own students, and you become a priceless part of the preservation of hula.

²⁴ Responsibility.

²⁵ See Appendix B.

The ūniki process ends when your kumu thinks you are ready to go through the ūniki ceremony. In my hālau this ceremony usually took place at midnight. As a dancer you would perform your entire repertoire of dances, songs and chants and be judged, based on your level of knowledge and dancing skills, by my kumu. After the performance we would gather to enjoy a meal together, where we would eat a whole pig if we were many and a whole fish if we were few. The reason for eating the whole animal, including eyes, brain, heart, and liver, was to accumulate its senses and wisdom, and to bring this wisdom into our own teaching. The ceremony also included a name giving section in which the dancers were given Hawaiian names based on their personality traits. This name was well thought through by my kumu after getting to know her dancers over several years in hula class. When the ceremony was over my kumu would arrange a public performance in which the dancers again would perform their repertoire, and at the end of this performance the dancers would have ūniki'ed and with that recieved kumu's permission to start their own hālau.

Making a living

The market competition in the hula business is hard and living off the salary of a kumu hula can sometimes be challenging. Depending on what status you have as a kumu within your local community and on how long you have had students in your hālau, the salary and amount of students differs. My kumu had only just started getting serious with teaching hula. Though she finished her uniki training and officially became a kumu hula in the mid 1980's, she always had a job on the side of her hula teaching. However, in the fall of 2008 she suffered a bad heart attack that required surgery for her to recover, and her doctor ordered her to remove stress related factors from her life. She had to quit her job, and started working as a fulltime kumu hula. Living in a very modest house on a property that had been in the family for many years, she had a simple lifestyle to which extravagance was a foreign concept. She held two kahiko classes at her house every week and one 'auana class at a Bed and Breakfast place located on the banks of Wailuku River in north western Hilo. The kahiko classes cost \$100 a month and the 'auana classes were a "donations only" deal.

During my six months in the hālau the students came and went as they pleased. The only student who was there almost²⁶ every class was me, everyone else were gone for longer periods at a time. This caused my kumu's income to be very unstable and she eventually had to supplement her hula classes with what she called freelance cultural classes. The cultural

²⁶ I missed a couple of classes due to inter-island travelling.

classes usually entailed teaching *lei*²⁷ making, *lauhala*²⁸ and chanting, or having “talk story” sessions in which she would perform pieces of Hawaiian history and mythology.

Though living off the salary of a kumu hula can be hard, there are many examples of kumu who make a very decent living on the incomes from their hālau. These kumu usually have hula classes and workshops on a daily basis, and some are also dedicated musicians and recording artists (e.g. Keali‘i Reichel) in addition to their work with hula. Some of these full time kumu work with hula at a competing level and train their advanced dancers solely for competitions and big productions.

Before anyone can become a kumu hula you have to be a hula student, a *haumana*. As already mentioned being a haumana takes a great deal of dedication and focus, as diving into a tradition as comprehensive and complex as the hula tradition can be rather challenging.

Haumana – a student of hula

Hula Class April 3rd,

I am a little late as usual, completely conformed to Hawaiian time and can never seem to get to anything on time anymore. For today’s potluck I have made Norwegian style pancakes with blueberry jam and powdered sugar sprinkled on top. I have also brought my homework from last class, a headpiece and *kupe’e*; anklets and wristlets made out of weeds, ferns and flowers I found in my backyard. As I approach my kumu’s house I start going over the chant I have to do before entering her house, hopefully Hokulani will be there to do it with me. Today I expect we are going to work on our program for the Merrie Monarch performance; three dances, one chant and a song I have to sing (why am I doing this to myself again?...). I walk to the door and shout “huuuuuuiii!”, a preferred way to let people know you are at their door, and all my kumu answers is “you have to chant!”. Alone, oh no, how does that chant go again? Hmm... Kunihi ka mauna i ka la‘i e ao Waialeale la i Wailua... As I finish my chant my kumu replies with a welcoming chant and I realize my chanting has been accepted. I enter the house, get a big warm hug from my kumu and greet my hula sisters with the same warm hug. I get my pa’u on, sit down in the circle, chant Pule a ka haku (Our Father) and my kumu talks to us about Merrie Monarch for a while. Then we warm up, get our costumes on and go through the program. I’m definitely getting more confident on my dancing now; even though my movements will never match Hokulani’s gracefulness, I at least have the choreography down

²⁷ A lei is a garland of flowers, leafs or ferns.

²⁸ Lauhala is the art of weaving the leaves of the *hala* tree. It is usually used to make hats, mats, bracelets or even purses.

so I won't make a fool out of everyone. I have to say though that I do favour our kahiko dances and that the 'auana often seems a little silly to me (like this one song where you are supposed to tell a story about riding a donkey and you slap your behind and shake your head to explain the stubbornness). However, my kumu has told me repeatedly that a good hula dancer doesn't favour the one over the other and is equally graceful when dancing either. I have asked her in several ways and on different occasions if kahiko is not more traditional and authentic than the 'auana and she has told me I have to remember that the hula is a living tradition made to tell stories. As the stories and the time changes, so do the dances. "To understand the relationship between the hula, time and authenticity you have to study our history." This is why every time we learn a new dance we have to study everything about the story it is telling. People names, place names, the time period (politics, fashion, language being used) and the purpose of telling this particular story. After an hour and a half of dancing, we finish up, sing Hawai'i Pono'i, Hawai'i's anthem, and Ho'onani, a customary hymn for appreciation, before we eat while watching a DVD that summarizes the past 30 years of the Merrie Monarch festival. Hula class lasted for around five hours today.

As a student of hula you quickly learn that the dancing, the physical and performative part, is only a small part of what the hula tradition entails. Firstly, when joining a hālau you do not simply join a hula school, but you are incorporated in a family, your hālau becomes your 'ohana. The 'ohana is the fundamental unit in the Hawaiian kinship system and consists of immediate and extended family. Family is not only determined in biological terms, but includes adopted and fostered members. Thus, in the case of the hālau, your kumu becomes your kupuna ((authoritative) elder) and your fellow dancers become your hula sisters and brothers. Like in any other family you are responsible for your family members and it is expected that you partake in their lives and in return share your life with them.

Even though the hula tradition reaches far beyond the physical aspect, performance is the part that is unquestionably more visible to the public. There are many different types of hula. Today, hula has been divided into two main categories; hula 'auana and hula kahiko, also known as modern hula and ancient hula. Within the ancient hula, or hula kahiko, there are several different types that should be mentioned. To begin with, the three basic ancient dances hula pahu, *hula ku'i* and hula 'āla'apapa provide the starting point for the kahiko dances we see today. The hula pahu dances were, according to Kaeppler (1993:2), originally a part of heiau, or temple, rituals and were danced in honor of "the *akua* - Kāne, Kanaloa, Kū and Lono – the 'state gods', who had been recognized by all Hawaiians and were intimately involved in Polynesian cosmology and the ordering of Hawaiian society". Kaeppler separates

the original pahu dances from the hula and terms them *ha'a*, which she translates to *ritual movements*, performed only by men (1993:6-8). After the overthrow of the Hawaiian religious system in 1819, by the Hawaiians themselves, the rituals were transferred to honour 'aumākua²⁹ (deified ancestors) who had not been overthrown, such as Pele, Laka and Kapo (Kaeppler 1993:2). During the nineteenth century the ha'a was however discarded from the Hawaiian language and all structured movement was defined as hula (Kaeppler 1993:8).

The hula pahu dances are defined by a certain rhythmic pattern and by certain chants. They are danced to the beats of the *pahu drum*, a “single-headed cylindrical membranophone that stands vertically, the carved footed base [, traditionally from coconut or breadfruit wood,] raising the spectrum above the ground”, and is covered with a “tightly stretched shark skin which [is] lashed with cordage made from coconut fiber and *olonā* (*Touchardia latifolia*)” (Kaeppler 1993:5-6). The movements of the hula pahu originally objectified or embodied the work of *kahuna* (priests or spiritual mentors) and was according to legend, brought to Hawai'i, along with the pahu drum, from Tahiti by La'amaikahiki.

The hula ku'i originated in the Kalākaua era, and had its first public appearance during the coronation ceremonies of King Kalākaua in 1883 (Emerson 1998:250). The hula ku'i is accompanied by mele, and usually instruments like the guitar, the 'ukulele, the taro patch fiddle or the mandolin (Emerson 1998:251). The piano can also accompany this hula, by itself, or in combination with the mentioned instruments. The dance style is softer than the hula pahu, yet not as soft as the modern 'auana. Stillman (1998:3) categorizes the hula ku'i as a modern form of the *hula 'ōlapa*, a form of hula that was danced to the beat of the ipu drum and accompanied by chant instead of mele. Kaeppler (1993:4) however, presents different usage of the term 'ōlapa, where some use it to refer to dancers rather than to a type of hula, as a way to separate the dancer from the *ho'opa'a* (musician). Others have used the term to separate the hula of the Kalākaua era from the hula 'āla'apapa.

The hula 'āla'apapa is an ancient hula that is accompanied by chant, and danced to the rhythm of the double gourd *ipu*, *ipu heke*, with “vigorous and bombastic” movements (Stillman 1998:3). The dance is performed in a standing position, and the ho'opa'a is responsible for both the rhythm and the chanting. The 'ōlapa/ku'i dances and the 'āla'apapa dances are very much alike to the untrained eye, but differences lie in the movement and rhythmic patterns and the flow of the chants.

Other types of hula that can be considered under the umbrella term hula kahiko are the *hula 'ili'ili*, dances where stone pebbles are used for rhythm by the dancers; *hula pū'ili*,

²⁹ 'Aumākua will be further elaborated on in chapter four.

dances in which the dancers use bamboo rattles; *hula Pele*, dances dedicated to Pele; *hula pa'i umauma*, chest beating dances; *hula 'ulī'ulī*, dances that are accompanied by feather gourds, carried and played by the dancers; and *hula ma'i*, procreation dances for the chiefly class. As already mentioned, most hula pay tribute to 'aumākua. As one of my hula sisters told me: "Most hula are a tribute to Laka, most chants are about Laka". However, the Hilo tradition is known for its focus on Pele, the fire goddess, and most hula from this tradition are thus tributes to Pele; e.g. Holo Mai Pele, a renowned hula performance that tells the story of the rivalry between Pele and her youngest sister Hi'iaka.

The hula ku'i of the Kalākaua era inspired the modern hula we see today. Hula 'auana are always accompanied by mele, and have soft and floating movements. The 'auana is also inspired by the hula of the 20th century up until the late 1960s, including the hapa haole styled hula mentioned in chapter one, and the mele performed are often from this time. The hapa haole hula was usually sung in English and addresses "such concepts as going to a hukilau (fishing festival), a little grass shack, or lovely hula hands" (Kaepler 1972:44). However, many hula 'auana are performed in Hawaiian, as a result of the cultural renaissance, but still have less spiritual content than the hula kahiko dances. The costumes of the hula 'auana are different from the kahiko costumes, which usually involve a *pā'ū* (hula skirt) and a top to match the *pā'ū* for female dancers, and a *malo* (loincloth) for the male dancers, as well as anklets, wristlets and a headpiece made from traditional hula plants and flowers. The 'auana costumes often involve *mu'umu'u* (long dress or gown) for women and black pants, a shirt and sash for the men. The women often have large headpieces made from flowers and greens and may wear shoes as part of the costume. The kahiko dances must always be danced barefoot, and the dancer is not allowed any jewellery or excessive makeup.

As a student of hula, you must know the difference between these dances and be able to place them within the right time period. The correctness of your performance will be judged from whether or not the chant or mele is interpreted correctly and to what degree you are correctly dressed. In order to prepare yourself for a performance you must therefore do research on the mele or chant you are performing, addressing every word of importance, such as place names, people, flowers, historical setting and natural features. Additionally your kumu should tell the story behind the mele or chant before you learn to dance it, in order for you to understand what you are dancing. This is the most important part of being a hula dancer; to understand the story and to retell it to others through the dance. As one of my hula sisters, Akela, put it: "hula is all about storytelling, movements that tell a story. It has *always* been about telling stories".



Hālau Hula Kahikilaulani performing under the direction of Kumu hula Rae Kahiki Fonseca at the pā hula³⁰ in Volcano National Park, Big Island, May 2009.

The costumes you use during a performance are usually made within the hālau. Every dancer makes his or her own skirts, instruments, headpieces, leis, wristlets and anklets, and several other crafts related to hula. For everything you make you have to gather material from your surroundings, and you thus need to know what to look for. In hula class you learn what the different plants, trees and flowers within your hula tradition means, and where to find them. When you find them, you must chant for permission to take the materials you need, and these chants are also learned in hula class. Through this process you learn to have a deeply respectful relationship to land, and you learn how to coexist with your natural surroundings. You also learn how to be environmentally friendly, with an emphasis on recycling and on showing respect for all living creatures, and live your life according to the *aloha spirit*.

The aloha spirit is, together with the concept of ‘ohana, the foundation of a Hawaiian lifestyle. The concept of aloha is a philosophical concept that addresses social relationships

³⁰ Hula platform, stage.

and the relationship between people and land. The word *aloha* has many different meanings³¹, but the basic meaning of the aloha spirit is to show love, kindness, respect and patience towards other people and to your natural surroundings. When you utter the word aloha, it is not simply a word that enables you to greet someone on the same level as the English *hello*. When saying aloha, you make a promise of love and respect, and you demand that the same love and respect is given in return. It is thus an expression, but also a demand for reciprocity in the relationship. The aloha expression encourages a dialogue, and functions as a bond between two parties. An example that illustrates this use of aloha can be seen in the expression *aloha a hui hou*, in which *a hui hou* means *until we meet again* and the whole expression translates to *may there be love between us until we meet again*. When transferred to daily activities such as *driving with the aloha spirit*, it means you should care for your fellow drivers, letting people pull out in front of you when in traffic etc. *Aloha* does not have the same meaning in Hilo as it does in Waikīkī, as *aloha* within the tourism industry has become a merchandise, a brand, and the number one selling concept of every store and tourist operating company in and off the islands (Ohnuma 2008).

In addition to learning about the aloha spirit and about a respectful relationship between people and land, you learn about Hawaiian spirituality, myths, legends, history and cosmology in the hālau. Usually the different hālau have varied takes on this as some have a Christian tradition to follow alongside the Hawaiian tradition. In my hālau this was done by incorporating the Hawaiian cosmology into the Christian hymns and prayers that followed our tradition. Instead of thanking the Christian God, we thanked the Father, i.e. the Forefather, in our prayers, thus implying that our prayers were in honour of our ancestors. You also learn about Hawaiian creation myths, about the akua (the state gods) and the ‘aumākua, the ancestral gods. Spiritually you learn that hula connects you to the land through the beating rhythm of your feet, the swaying movements of your hips and the descriptive motions of your hands. You learn that the land needs the hula, as much as the hula needs the land. This will be further discussed in chapter four.

When training hula kahiko there are certain places and situations one should avoid. As a kahiko dancer you are very susceptible to the works of spiritual powers. Your mind is open while in training and you are at constant risk of being possessed by spirits. As my kumu said: “the spirits can jump you!” Therefore it is important that a kahiko student stays away from

³¹ According to Pukui and Elbert 1986 aloha means love, affection, compassion, mercy, sympathy, pity, kindness, sentiment, grace, charity; greeting, salutation, regards; sweetheart, lover, loved one; beloved, loving, kind, compassionate, charitable, lovable; to love, be fond of; to show kindness, mercy, pity, charity, affection; to venerate; to remember with affection; to greet, hail.

situations and places that they have little control over. The student must stay away from alcohol and drugs that make them lose control over their body and mind, and they should stay away from churches, graveyards and funerals or dead people. If these are situations they cannot avoid, they have to undergo a purification ritual afterwards to rid themselves of unwanted spirits that have entered their personal space³².

Hula competitions

Merrie Monarch Week, Thursday April 16th 2009,

While sitting in the audience during the intermission of the Merrie Monarch Miss Aloha Hula Competition, I am feeling rather underdressed as I am wearing a pair of green Capri pants, a grey top, orchid flowers in my hair and a black hooded college jacket covering my shoulders (the Edith Kanaka'ole stadium gets a little chilly at night because of the open sidewalls that enables the wind to pass through). Around me are fellow spectators dressed up in mu'umu'u, with lei around their necks and hats decorated with beautiful headpieces made out of several different flowers and greens. The audience ranges from small children to great-grandparents, from males to females and from Hawaiians to Chinese, Japanese and haole. One of the sections has been reserved for the competing hālau, and is filled with hula troops sitting in bulks and wearing the same outfit to express their troop belonging.

During this week, Hilo has pulsed with life, and the hotels down at Banyan Drive are all fully booked. The hālau that compete are of course staying in Hilo throughout the week, and also visitors from the mainland (Continental U.S.), Japan and the other islands have come to celebrate this week of hula. Earlier today I was observing a performance down in the lobby at the Hilo Hawaiian Hotel by a local hālau in which the keiki (children) dancers, all dressed up in hula skirts, flower lei and ankle and wrist kupe'e, completely flabbergasted everyone in the audience with their innocent charm when they, after their wonderful performance, presented us with a plumeria lei and a kiss on the cheek while uttering "Aloha". These performances have taken place all week at the Naniloa Volcanoes Resort around noon and the Hilo Hawaiian at 1 pm, and have included both Hawaiian hula performed by several different local and visiting hālau, and tongan dance performed by the Free Church of Tonga. At different venues around Hilo Hawaiian entertainment and arts and crafts fairs have been set up as part of the festival. On Saturday there will be a parade through downtown as well as performances by local hālau at Kalākaua Park, where we will perform four dances.

³² See chapter four, page 84.

The Miss Aloha Hula contestants have danced through their hula kāhiko performances, in which they chanted when making their entrance onto the large pā hula (hula stage), and performed a chant which their kumu chanted and pa‘i’ed (beat the rhythm) either with the ipu heke or the pahu drum. The costumes were carefully chosen to match the chant and their choreography seemed flawless (to me). I could not tell that the dancers were nervous, though I am sure they were, and it is clear that these dancers have practised hula for a long time. At the beginning of the ‘auana section, the crowd is vibrant, the dancers beautiful and the deep respect for hula within the crowd and from the contestants has transformed the stadium into an almost spiritual space.

Another aspect of being a haumana is the participation in hula competitions. Preserving hula has become a top priority for the hula community since the late 1960s and one way this has been done is through the establishment of hula competitions and festivals. The most prominent hula competition within and outside the islands is the Merrie Monarch Festival Hula Competition, a competition that was established in 1971 as a result of the Hawaiian cultural resurgence in the late 1960s and early 1970s (Stillman 1996). Hālau participate in this competition by invitation only, and competing thus carries prestige and status within the hula community. Participating hālau get the chance to show their skills in both group ‘auana and kahiko as well as individual ‘auana and kahiko in the Miss Aloha Hula Competition, and the hula seen in this competition is in great contrast to what you see in most tourist shows in Waikīkī. The seriousness of this event is noticeable both within the audience and with the dancers on stage, and the production is far less dramatic when it comes to lighting and sound effects, which are often significant parts of lū‘au performances.

Witnessing parts of the competition (Miss Aloha Hula) live, and parts of it through a television set at my kumu’s house, I was lucky enough to enjoy the event both with and without professional comments in the background. Realising that my analytic eye was blurred by my amazement and excitement for how lively and vibrant this event was for both audience and participants during the Miss Aloha Hula night, my kumu’s interpreting of the dances, the costumes and the chants during the Hula Kahiko night provided me with the ability to look at hula competitions with criticism, and understand the criteria mentioned over for judging a hula performance. Seeing that the group kahiko and ‘auana dances are synchronized to the smallest of movements, the performances leave very little room for originality within the movements of individual dancers. Choreography becomes more important than interpretation and re-narration of the story, thus overshadowing the general purpose of the dance.

Competitions like the Merrie Monarch also encourage hālau to practice the same dance for a longer period of time.

Stillman (1996:361) argues that “the intense rehearsal schedule of the most competitive groups in the weeks prior to major events belies, to some extent, the espoused rhetoric of ‘sharing’”. She also argues that hula competitions have become important in the preservation of hula, but have simultaneously contributed to transformation of the tradition:

Because hula competitions provide venues of high visibility and prestige for hula performance, these events have played an important role in the preservation and perpetuation of the hula tradition. At the same time, those very competitions have also provided the stage for performative innovations that have transformed the hula tradition. (Stillman 1996:358)

My kumu once told me some of the competing hālau rehearse the same dance for a whole year, and expressed a critical attitude towards this practice as she was concerned for the broadness of the dancers’ repertoire. She believes that when practising this kind of teaching the hula tradition is challenged on its original philosophy; to preserve and tell stories, as well as the responsibility of the kumu hula to convey *all* knowledge.

Hula competitions have thus had both positive and negative effects on the hula tradition, and Stillman (1996:375) concludes: “for all the controversy they can provoke from time to time, and for all the changes they have already effected in the hula tradition, hula competitions have in fact become robust celebrations of flourishing Hawaiian cultural practices”. They have also played an important part in projecting Hawaiian cultural practices to the world outside the islands, as competing hālau and audience travel from mainland U.S., Japan and other countries to participate and attend. Hawaiian hula has a large community outside the Hawaiian Islands and throughout the next section the meaning of hula within these communities will be addressed.

Hawaiian hula and the World

The relationship between the Hawaiian hula and the international community has for a long time been predominated by the tourist industry’s commoditization of the tradition by creating a cash economy of performance by insiders for outsiders (Desmond 1999:3). Putting all kinds of local bodies on display for visitors to the islands, the industry soon became familiar with

the foreign desire to witness a *native* and *traditional* ritual performed by *native* performers (Desmond 1999). As a result of the tourist industry, hula changed from being a daily activity and lifestyle to becoming a source of income for hotel resorts as well as performers and teachers of hula. The purpose of the hula in the tourist industry was to create an image that sold tickets to visitors, and the main purpose of the tradition, the story telling, was set aside.

In tourist agency advertisement Hawaiians were projected as “delightfully” primitive through arranged photographs and postcards of bare-breasted hula girls in grass skirts, and distributed throughout the world (Desmond 1999:6-7). Generally from around 1915 to the late 1960s - early 1970s, and especially during the 1920s and 1930s, it was represented to mainland U.S., Europe and Asia as a vulgar and sexualized, yet innocent and soft form of dance, and was dominated by hapa haole hula girls wearing coconut bras or tiny bikini tops and grass skirts. During the years after the bombing of Pearl Harbour in 1941 the islands witnessed an increase in military presence as sailors and servicemen waited here to be shipped out to war in the Pacific. The large groups of young men were entertained by dancing hula girls and many of them carried arranged photographs with the girls or tattoos portraying sensual hula girls when they were finished serving (Desmond 1999).

On this feminine and sensual image of the hula dancer Trask writes:

Hawai‘i – the word, the vision, the sound in the mind – is the fragrance and feel of soft kindness. Above all, Hawai‘i is “she”, the Western image of the Native “female” in her magical allure. And if luck prevails, some of “her” will rub off on you, the visitor. (1999:137)

Desmond uses this argument when analyzing the relationship between hula and the tourist industry and continues:

Trask’s “soft kindness” is [the] key. The hula girl is sexy, yes, but never aggressively so. The innocence associated with the Edenic trope prohibits knowing, aggressive deployment of sexual allure, making the hula girl nonthreatening to men and women alike and associating her more with sensuous heterosexual romance than with sex per se. With her dark hair, bare skin, grass skirt, beckoning smile, and graceful gestures over swaying hips the hula girl image evokes the feminized lushness of the tropics: accessible, hospitable, beautiful, exotic and natural. (1999:11-12)

This feminisation and sexualisation of the hula dancer became the primary image of Hawai‘i projected to the outside world. Restoring the idea of the *noble savage*³³ European and mainland American visitors came to Hawai‘i expecting to find innocent indigenous people who were not corrupted by western materialism and who maintained a close relationship with nature. Desmond writes;

With the exception of some missionary denigrations, Hawai‘i and Hawaiians have emerged during the two hundred years since contact with whites as exemplars of European soft primitivism’s imaginary of an Edenic ideal. While there are some shifts in this image historically, the more remarkable thing is its durability. (1999:11)

The tourist industry focused on capturing the hula dancer in a powerful natural environment and staged photo shoots at the foot of massive waterfalls or captured the silhouette of a hula girl standing in the ocean against a breathtaking sunset. Desmond gives an example of this “staging of the natural” and of the construction of the hula girl image in what she calls “natural native in Nature”, with the relationship between famous dancer Tootsie Notley Steer and photographer Edward Steichen;

Steichen wanted a “natural” look and went to great lengths to create staging techniques. He told Steer to stop trimming her hair, to cut off her long fingernails and to stop using fingernail polish. [...] Steichen posed Steer against dramatic natural features like waterfalls. (1999:102)

This staging of the natural became even more visible in the famous and long running Kodak Hula Show; a Hawaiian cultural show that was established in the late 1930s and ran for over 60 years. The dancers were placed on a stage portraying a “natural” environment with grass huts, swaying coconut trees and white sand. The Kodak hula show was created by the Kodak Company and one of its main purposes was to offer a *natural* and *native* setting for visitors to capture with their cameras. Located in the Waikīkī area of Honolulu, the show was provided with a tropical and natural setting that attracted tourists from all over the world for decades.

³³ *The Noble Savage* is an idea that was mainly used by philosophers, and especially Jean-Jacques Rousseau, in Europe in the late 18th century (Cranston 1991). According to Conklin (1995:696) the noble savage comes from a “long tradition of Euro- American thought that identifies certain non-Western “primitives” as innocent and free of corruption, in contrast to the West’s destructive materialism. At the core of this primitivist ideal was the dream of “people dwelling in nature according to nature, existing free of history’s burden and the social complexity felt by Europeans in the modern period””. Though the use of this idea has been decreasing since its peak in the Romantic Era, it has not disappeared.

Waikīkī

In downtown Honolulu following the seaside from Ala Moana Shopping Center via Ala Moana Boulevard and Kalākaua Avenue, lies the district of Waikīkī. The small area is surrounded by water with the Ala Wai Canal on the north eastern side and the Pacific Ocean on the south western side. According to Expedia (2010), online search engine for travel accommodation, 86 hotels and resorts are located here, and knowing that the places I have stayed while visiting Waikīkī were not on this list it is safe to assume that the list of accommodation alternatives goes much further than 86. This area hosts over 4.5 million visitors every year and is the number one distributor of Hawaiian cultural tourism.

When staying in Waikīkī you can plan an entire day of entertainment by looking through the Honolulu Weekly, a free paper you pick up at the information desk at the airport. Waikīkī performances take place at different hotels and resorts and if you want, you can sit for hours listening to Hawaiian music and watching hula dancers perform. The entertainers are often the *crème de la crème* of Hawaiian performing artists, and the quality of the music and dance is superb. During my stay, the hula platform in the middle of Waikīkī near the Duke Kahanamoku Statue came to life with performance from Oahu hālau three times a week. This event was especially popular and you had to come early to find a place to sit. The hula of this event ranged from *keiki* (kids) to *kupuna* (elders), from *wahine* (women) to *kāne* (men) and the repertoire usually contained both ‘auana and kahiko dances.

Most other hula performances I have seen in Waikīkī (except for the lū‘au) have a repertoire of ‘auana dances. Often there are only one or two dancers on stage performing as part of a Hawaiian music act. Of the performances I have observed in Waikīkī restaurants and bars the dancer has not been the main attraction, but is offered to the audience as a “special treat” in addition to the musicians on stage. In stark contrast to the Kewae Pub in Hilo, where hula dancers spontaneously popped out of the audience crowd to dance if they knew a song, most of the dancing in Waikīkī was professional and arranged. Only on one occasion I witnessed the band encouraging the audience to dance if they knew the song and a hula dancer from Kona walked up on stage and danced a beautiful hula, for which she was heavily applauded by the audience. The Hilo bar performances were always more in touch with the audience and more relaxed than the Waikīkī performances, which in turn were solemn and promoted tranquillity.

As I understood it, the Hilo performances were designed mainly for Hawaiians and were loud, lively and heartily, whereas the Waikīkī performances were designed for visitors, low key and staged in calm settings with candle lights and tiki torches to create a romantic

mood for sweethearts and honeymooners. An exception to these settings are the lū'au that provide very dramatic shows featuring sound effects and special lighting on their stages. I never experienced any of the lū'au in Waikīkī first handed, but I experienced one at a major resort in Kaua'i, in which the production featured a large group of professional dancers and a very dramatic performance of the coming of the Polynesians to the Hawaiian Islands. The dancers performed not only the Hawaiian hula, but other Polynesian dances like the Tahitian tamure, and their costumes were designed to promote sensuality as the female dancers wore raffia skirts and coconut bikinis and the male dancers wore malo and were rubbed in coconut oil, both arousing enthusiasm within the audience.

Hula in Japan

A connection between Hawai'i and Japan was mainly established when migrating Japanese came to Hawai'i to work in the sugar industry. While some of the work migrants chose to stay in the islands after their contracted work was done, some went back home to Japan bringing with them pieces of Hawaiian culture. Hawaiian music, especially, enjoyed great popularity before it was officially suppressed during World War II (Stillman 1999:60).

In the 1980s there was a resurgence of Hawaiian culture in Japan, and hula became more popular than it had been ever before. The hula trend started when community cultural centres offered hula classes for housewives as "a form of low impact aerobics exercise" (Stillman 1999:60). Kurokawa (2004:82) argues that the slow and soft movements of the hula and the fact that the dancers were usually barefoot gave elder women a chance to exercise when the younger generations danced jazz, flamenco or exercised with aerobics. The elder women enjoyed this manageable form of exercise not only because of the physical activity, but also because the Hawaiian music accompanying the dances made them a little nostalgic; "While enjoying the physical training and relaxation of hula, these women also found a sense of spiritual rejuvenation, much of which came from listening to the music that had been in vogue in their youth" (Kurokawa 2004:82). These classes also became popular among the younger generations and formed the basis for a new interest in hula in Japan. Soon dancers began to pay attention to trends in Hawai'i as well as attending hula competitions and observing the competitions that took place overseas (Stillman 1999:60).

Starting in the mid 1980s young hula dancers travelled to Hawai'i to find teachers who would welcome them to their hālau and teach them hula kahiko dances (Stillman 1999:60). The shift in popularity from the 'auana dances to the kahiko dances was a result of the kahiko trend that followed the Hawaiian Renaissance in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Soon

Japanese hula students started to invite hula instructors to visit Japan and conduct workshops, and they adopted the *iemoto* system, which is “the hierarchical institutionalization of the Japanese guild system”, to their hula tradition (Stillman 1999:60). Adding this feature to the hula tradition made it a little bit more Japanese and separates the Hawaiian hula from the Japanese. As it is, several hula troops in Japan are viewed as branches of “the Hawaiian master instructors hālau in Hawai‘i, and lower levels of students (i.e., at the beginning or intermediate stages of proficiency) are taught by assistant instructors” (Stillman 1999:82). As mentioned earlier, in Hawai‘i kumu hula offer ūniki classes, in which the students aim to graduate in the art of hula and become a kumu hula with a hālau of their own. The students will become independent hula instructors with roots in one tradition but with their own independent and autonomous hula school (Stillman 1999).

The hula tradition in Japan is thus not identical to, but strongly influenced and inspired by, the hula tradition in Hawai‘i. Kurokawa argues that;

The Japanese view of Hawaiian performing arts has changed over time, from an admiration of the modern sophistication of the West to a nostalgic yearning for the spiritual connectedness lost in the rapid modernization of Japanese society after World War II. Despite this change, the history shows a persistent sense of desire for Otherness that underlies the Japanese fascination with Hawaiian performing arts and exerts a strong influence in shaping the characteristics of a unique Japanese "Hawaiian" sound. (2004:iv)

As with the Japanese “Hawaiian” sound in music the Japanese hula has managed to become unique. For example, Japanese musicians started to write Japanese lyrics to Hawaiian songs in order for the hula dancers and enthusiasts to better understand the connection between song and descriptive movements (Kurokawa 2004:83-84). It is also different from the Hawaiian hula in that Japanese are not as interested in learning about Hawaiian culture as they are in learning to dance hula. One can therefore assume that hula in Japan is generally limited to being a dance and not a complex tradition as it is in Hawai‘i. That is not to say that there are not Japanese dancers who indulge themselves in Hawaiian culture and make it their main goal to understand hula the Hawaiian way. One of my hula sisters, and a Japanese exchange student to the University of Hawai‘i, joined the ūniki class my kumu offered to solely capture the essence of Hawaiian hula in Hawai‘i.

Hula in continental America and Europe

Since Hawai‘i first became annexed by the U.S. in 1897 and further made state in 1959, there has been a flow of both Hawaiians and mainland Americans back and forth between the islands. Mainlanders came to the islands intrigued by the tropical climate and job opportunities in the tourist business as well as the sugar, pineapple and macadamia nut industries. Hawaiians left for the mainland to settle with their families and to find new professions. As a result of this migration Hawaiian communities outside the islands were created, especially in California, into which Hawaiians brought hula, and the tradition thus grew within a Hawaiian atmosphere. Though the Hawaiian communities were influenced by American popular culture, the hula managed to remain Hawaiian. With the connections to Hawai‘i through family and friends the mainland Hawaiians managed to stay up to date on the hula trends and a selection of Californian hālau have been invited to compete in the Merrie Monarch Festival.

The spread of hula in mainland U.S. started in California and according to Mele.com, a well known website that has promoted and managed Hawaiian music and hula since 1995, the state has a total of 186 hālau³⁴. While California is definitely the largest hula state outside Hawai‘i³⁵ the hula has also spread throughout the rest of the U.S., to Canada and to Mexico, the last in which hula is rather big. According to Stillman (1999:62) hula in Mexico was developed without the involvement of Hawai‘i-based instructors, but a relationship to Hawai‘i has later been established through inviting such instructors to judge in competitions. This relationship has given both dancers and instructors the opportunity to “forge associations for future development” (Stillman 1999:62).

In Europe the existence of hālau hula is not quite as highly promoted as in the Americas, but they do exist here as well. According to Stillman (1999) the hula emerged in Europe in the 1980’s paralleling the increased popularity hula had in Japan. As with Japan, the spread of hula was influenced by the popularity of Hawaiian music in Europe between the First and Second World War. Today, about 7 hālau hula altogether are found in France, Finland, Austria and Italy. 5 registered hālau can be found in the Netherlands and 16 hālau have been registered in Germany.

³⁴ The two following sections are based on data from Mele.com (2010), accessed electronically through <http://www.mele.com/resources/hula.html>.

³⁵ According to Mele.com Hawai‘i has 175 registered hālau, which is less than California. However, when taking into consideration the area size and population numbers and density of Hawai‘i compared to California, it is safe to say that hula is bigger in Hawai‘i. The state of Hawai‘i has a rather modest total area of, according to Britannica, 16 734 square kilometres, as opposed to California with its 410 858 square kilometres. Its estimated population in 2008 was 1 288 198, while California’s estimated population was 36 756 666 the same year (Britannica 2010).

I have found only one person in Norway who offers hula on a regular basis, and she mixes it with Kahi Loa, a massage technique, and Huna, which is a healing technique based on natural abilities that focus on stress relief and on giving peace to the mind (Aloha Senteret 2010). Here the hula is offered as an alternative therapeutic treatment of stress, and its function can be compared to that function of yoga in western society. Nevertheless, the instructor has learned her hula from a Hawaiian-based instructor and seems very dedicated to maintaining the Hawaiian tradition by teaching her students the history and meaning of the chants, mele and dances. Her teachings also aim to educate her students about the Aloha Project;

The Aloha Project was conceived by Serge Kahili King in 1973 as a way to join the people of the world together in a spirit of Aloha to bring about physical, emotional, mental, environmental, social, and spiritual harmony based on the wisdom found in Hawaiian philosophy and culture (Aloha Senteret 2010).

The hula found in Aloha Senteret is different from hula in Hawai'i, Japan and the Americas by the way it is incorporated in an alternative medical treatment program.

Today, with the spread of hula throughout the American continent tourists generally have a wider knowledge about the difference between the hula you see in Waikīkī resorts, the hula you see in competitions and the hula you see in more low key performances in local bars or at local events. However, tourist shows and advertisement remain the number one source of information about hula for visitors and outsiders unless they express a deeper interest for the tradition and seek different stages for hula performance.

Hula, tourism and authenticity

A prostitution of hula dance, or a challenge to preserve the tradition?

Though the tourist industry did not wipe out the hula tradition it is safe to say that it has imposed a huge impact. Trask writes;

In the hotel version of the *hula*, the sacredness of the dance has completely evaporated, while athleticism and sexual expression have been packaged like ornaments. The purpose is entertainment for profit rather than joyful and truly Hawaiian celebration of human and divine nature. (1999:144)

Trask argues that corporate tourism in Hawai‘i is promoting the prostitution of Hawaiian culture (1999:140). She compares the commoditization of Hawaiian culture to the body of a female prostitute, emphasizing that every piece of it can be sold for the right amount of money (1999:140-146). While Trask strongly argues that tourism has destroyed Hawaiian culture, I will, in the case of hula, approach tourism with a slightly more positive attitude.

While agreeing with Trask that tourism definitely has taken its toll on Hawaiian culture, I believe Hawaiians have found ways to adjust to this phenomenon and use it to their advantage. Tourism played a big part in the cultural revival of the 1960s and 1970s. By simplifying and sexualising hula for three decades in advance I believe the tourist industry took part in waking the hula people and encouraged them to bring back the hula of old, after decades of being kept in the shadows. It seems the trend promoted by the tourist industry might have given Hawaiians a last push towards building the hula tradition we see today. So, instead of destroying hula the tourist industry might have made Hawaiians aware that they must grab hold of the kahiko style hula and the complexity of the tradition to ensure its survival. Another important aspect about the tourist industry’s influence on hula was the development of a new style, hula ‘auana, that teachers and performers brought with them throughout the 1970s along with the born again kahiko styled dances. While arguing that a lot of knowledge about hula was lost during the years when the missionary style and hapa haole style dances were predominant, I also believe the hula as a dance form became richer and more comprehensive when accepting these styles as authentic forms of hula. Today, most hula dancers recognize the modern, and some would say touristy, ‘auana dances to be as important to the tradition as the kahiko dances.

Nana i ke kumu means *look to the source* and is a commonly used expression in Hawai‘i. To understand a performance you have to understand the story the dancer is trying to recount through movements. You also have to understand from whom the dancers learned her/his hula. Who is their kumu, and who is their kumu’s kumu? To be able to measure the authenticity or originality of a performance it is necessary to study the history of the dancers’ hālau combined with the history of the chant or mele she/he is performing. To understand the authenticity of the tradition, you must look to the relationship between the dancer and the hula.

Searching for authenticity

An interesting aspect in the “search for authenticity” in hula dance is that the tourist industry has been, and continues to be, completely dependent on the notion of authenticity. Tourists seek the kahiko performances, which in their eyes are the more authentic or *real* hula, as can

be seen in the example of the visitors who expressed themselves about the performance in Volcano National Park on the Big Island, mentioned in the introduction to this chapter. In Waikīkī one of the most popular hula shows for tourists is the one that takes place under the banyan tree next to the Duke Kahanamoku Statue, in which different hālau provide group performances of both kahiko and ‘auana dances. For most tourists this performance seems more authentic than the bar performances. However, instead of treating the tourist performances in restaurants, bars and lū‘au as separate less authentic units, it is important to understand it as part of a larger and more complex tradition. The performers at tourist shows are in my experience concerned about showing a part of the tradition to make the audience curious to find out more about it.

Aurélie Condevaux (2009) has written an analysis on the relationship between Māori culture, tourism, identity and authenticity, and is especially concerned with the way the performers present themselves in tourist shows;

Most of the younger performers were not afraid to provide a stereotyped image of themselves, because they stress that what is shown during performance is only one part of their culture. According to one of the performers, Melany, for example, the impressions generated by the shows should ideally encourage tourists to learn more: “I think it’s good to have a glimpse into the culture just to say how it was; and hopefully it encourages people to maybe go further with that. If they could just really go beyond that and find out, you know really how it was, it would be nice”. (:154)

As with the Māori cultural performances, hula in tourist shows is presenting only one part of the tradition. This part is not less authentic than the rest of the tradition because it is not a separate unit. When asking Akela, one of my hula sisters who has been dancing since she was a baby and is working at the Hawaiian immersion school³⁶ in Hilo, which was more authentic of the modern and touristy hula ‘auana and the more traditional hula kahiko she answered; “They are both equally important and equally authentic, the one is only older than the other, that’s all”. As mentioned earlier in this chapter; when asking my kumu the same question she answered; “You have to remember that the hula is a *living* tradition made to tell stories. As the stories and the time changes, so do the dances. To understand the relationship between hula, time and authenticity you have to study our history”. An interesting thought in the debate on hula authenticity is that I never once heard my kumu nor my hula sisters mention

³⁶ The Hawaiian language immersion program was established in 1987 and focuses on teaching all subjects in the Hawaiian language. It also incorporates education in Hawaiian traditions in the course plan.

authenticity. The subject was only discussed whenever I brought it up. My obsession with authenticity was not shared by my group of hula people. However, they always guided me towards history in my effort to understand the relationship between hula and authenticity, and told me my problem could not be analyzed without the help of history.

Friedman (1993:761) discusses authenticity as a relationship between the individual and the culture, in the forging of a cultural identity. For the individual, authenticity in this sense refers to “the state of integrity of the members of an identifying group” (Friedman 1993:761). Inauthenticity would consist of the “relative alienation from the cultural model, a lack of engagement, a social distance with respect to the values and categories embodied in a tradition or a program of action” (Friedman 1993:761). Authenticity is thus a relationship between the individual and the culture, which intensity weakens or strengthens the cultural identity. However, for outsiders, authenticity means *original*, or to some extent the *aboriginal* (Friedman 1993:761), and based on this *they* decide where authenticity is found. Looking at what they believe is the original structure of hula dance, usually involving kahiko styled dances, they ascribe authenticity based on their impression of the performance. The question of authenticity in a certain tradition is rarely communicated from its beholders but rather from outsiders having experienced an expression of the tradition as visitors, spectators or remote audience (e.g. through television, internet or movies). However, even though the demand for authenticity in a hula performance is greater from the outsider, the importance of it remains greater for the dancer him/herself. As long as there is a dedicated relationship between the dancer and the hula tradition, the tradition remains authentic for the dancer.

Concluding remarks

Giving a brief introduction to the hula tradition I was presented with during my six months as a haumana in Hālau Hula o Halia, this chapter has created an image of the complexity that lies in Hawaiian hula. By also presenting the meaning of hula outside the Hawaiian Islands, I have intended to promote an understanding of the different forms of hula throughout the world today. Throughout this chapter I have argued that the international image of the hula dance and the Hawaiian hula are not two separate units, but rather parts of the larger hula tradition. The hula ‘auana, or modern hula, is for hula dancers as important as the hula kahiko, ancient hula. The authenticity of this tradition lies in the eyes of the beholder, and whereas outsiders usually search for authenticity in the appearance of a performance, the dancer finds

authenticity in the engagement in and dedication to the hula tradition. Authenticity, according to Friedman (1999:761), for an anthropologist or other analyst of culture, is a question of originality or aboriginality. However, for an individual, authenticity becomes important in the forming of a cultural identity and can be found in the relationship between the individual and the culture. The correctness of a performance lies for the dancer in the relationship between the dance, the chant and its place in history, following their hula genealogy. For an outsider, visitor or tourist, the correctness of a performance is often measured in whether or not the dance is kahiko or 'auana styled.

Throughout the next chapter I will discuss the connections between Hawaiians and land, and between hula and land. What is the Hawaiian way of being in the landscape, and how is the hula tradition an important part of the relationship between modern Hawaiians and the Hawaiian landscape?

4

Dancing the land

Relationships between people, land and hula

Wakea (sky father) and Papa (earth mother) lived together in the time of *pō*, the time of darkness. Together they created the sun, the moon, the ocean and the islands. Wakea mated with their daughter Ho‘ohokukalani, maker of the stars in the heavens, and their first offspring, Hāloa Naka, is born deformed and without breath. Hāloa Naka is buried, and from the grave springs the first *kalo* (taro) plant. The second child born of Wakea and Ho‘ohokukalani, Hāloa, is the first human; sibling to the *kalo* plant, and predecessor to the Hawaiian people.³⁷

Introduction

In Hawaiian creation myths, people are connected to land through genealogy in that people and land have the same forefathers. Before westernization of the Hawaiian islands, the people of Hawai‘i were deeply involved in a reciprocal relationship to land. They looked upon the land as a living physical and spiritual part of their world with strong connections to ancestors, deities and gods. Usually common people lived with their extended families on single plots of land their whole life, and the place in which they were born became a significant part of their identity.

When residing in Hawai‘i for shorter or longer periods of time, it is close to impossible not to be taken by the beauty of the natural surroundings. Lush green vegetation, crystal clear turquoise coloured water, mighty mountains and powerful waterfalls are only a few of the many natural features one is able to appreciate in this corner of the world. Bearing this in mind, it is easy to imagine that people in Hawaii have a close and caring relationship to the

³⁷ Notes from hula class February 25th 2009 on one of several Hawaiian creation myths.

land. However, today, most Hawaiians have abandoned this lifestyle and have embraced the western system of land ownership in which land is commercialized.

With this chapter I seek to explore the relationship between people and land in Hawai‘i. By providing a historical context for this relationship, and a discussion of the term *landscape*, I wish to give an impression of how Hawaiians experience their surroundings. How do Hawaiians interact with the landscape today and how does the landscape interact with Hawaiians? I will emphasize that this relationship is dialogical and that the landscape is reflected in the eyes of its beholder. Further I wish to portray ways in which hula reconnects people in both spiritual and physical ways with the traditional relationship to land. While arguing that Hawaiians have been removed from their original reciprocal relationship to land through various laws and legislations, I will emphasize that hula operates as a channel through which one can re-establish this relationship. Throughout the chapter I also wish to create an understanding of how the connection to land constitutes a significant aspect of being Hawaiian.

Hawaiians and land

Land divisions of ancient Hawai‘i

According to McGregor land was not privately owned in Hawai‘i during pre-contact times and times of the ruling chiefs:

The chiefly class provided stewardship over the land and divided and redivided control over the districts of the islands among themselves through war and succession. A single chief controlled a major section of an island or a whole island on the basis of his military power. (2006:26)

The largest unit of land was the island, which in turn was divided into a number of districts called *moku* (Chinen 1958:2). The districts were geographical subdivisions only, without assigned administrators, and their quantity varied according to the size of the island. The ali‘i nui, was the main landholder of the island. He divided his land into land sections called *ahupua‘a*, and put lower ranking chiefs (*konohiki*) in charge of the land section (McGregor 2006:26).³⁸ The lower ranking chiefs were often related to the high ranking chief,

³⁸ The following two sections are built on McGregor (2006:26-28).

but the common people working the land, the *maka‘āinana*, were rarely related to the lower ranking chiefs. The land section ran from the top of the mountain and all the way down to the ocean, following the geographic features of the valley. These land sections were divided into smaller sections called *‘ili*, on which extended families, or *‘ohana*, resided. The *‘ili* was either divided into plots of land according to the distinct resource zones of the *ahupua‘a* or ran from the mountain all the way down to the ocean. Each *‘ohana* was guaranteed all the resources they needed even if they resided and belonged to an *‘ili* that was located on the waterfront and could not provide for example timber or medicinal plants. They were allowed the use of resources in the entire *ahupua‘a*, and also in other *ahupua‘a*. However, even though they for periods at a time would visit other *ahupua‘a* to gather plants, foods or materials, they rarely moved away from their *‘ili*.

The common people provided for their extended families mostly with resources cultivated on their *‘ili*. However, they were also obligated to cultivate plots of land that were reserved for the higher and lower ranking chiefs. In addition, they also had to pay an annual tribute to the chiefs, for example in the form of food, woven mats, containers made from stone or wood and feathers for the production of cloaks and decorated helmets for the high chief rank. They were also expected to provide “labour service and products from the land upon the request of the high chief or [the lower ranking chief]” (McGregor 2006:28). While the common people were loyal and provided the chiefs with goods, the chiefs in return were concerned with taking care of their people and securing their well being. The chief was responsible for managing the production on the land, and for regulating the use of resources. According to a well organized system, certain plants, fish or animals were put under taboo’s directing the people not to hunt them for selected periods at a time. This was done in order to uphold resource diversity and secure the survival of different species. The chiefs were also in charge of the spiritual connection between the common people and the gods. They were the ones to perform rituals of various kinds to please the gods who controlled the land and the power of nature. The chiefs were therefore indispensable in the relationship between people and nature.

The Great Māhele of 1848

On the account of efforts from Kamehameha I, a chiefly born warrior from the Kohala district on the island of Hawai‘i, the islands were united in 1810 (McGregor 2006: 31). Kamehameha became the *mō‘ī* (sovereign ruler) over all the islands, and the most prominent individual landholder ever seen up until that time in Hawai‘i. When the islands were introduced to a

western system of rule, Hawai‘i was defined under the governmental definition *kingdom*, and the mō‘ī with his closest family were defined as the *royal family*. The royal family continued sovereign rule over the islands for several decades, and faced growing challenges in land distribution with the expanding foreign population. After increased pressure from European and American settlers King Kamehameha III, Kauikeaouli, decided to take several actions to establish new laws concerning land rights. These political actions resulted in 1848 in what is known as the Great Māhele, a land commission act that enabled foreigners to own land in Hawai‘i (Chinen 1958). The commercialization of land was incomprehensible to Hawaiians at first, seeing that land to them was not something you could buy for money, because land did not belong to anyone. It existed equally with and alongside people. However, the relationship to land as it were changed indefinitely and soon Hawaiians adapted to the new land situation, and started doing wage labour on local sugar plantations or local ranches instead of cultivating their own food (McGregor 2006:40).

As already mentioned in chapter one, the Reciprocity Treaty of 1876, established by the European and American sugar elite, gave the U.S. military the right to use Pearl Harbour as a military base, thus making even more land inaccessible for Hawaiians. The annexation in 1898 disconnected land from Hawaiian sovereign power completely, and statehood in 1959 further encouraged this disconnection that would soon become the number one inspiration for activism and land struggles on behalf of the Hawaiian population.

Hawaiian struggle for land rights – the Kalama Valley case

According to Trask (1987:127), after the statehood initiation in 1959 “burgeoning tourism led to an overnight boom in hotels, high cost subdivision and condominium developments, and luxury resort complexes which necessitated ever-growing demands for land”. Soon only about twenty percent of Hawaiian residents could afford the new housing units that were built. The rallying cry was thus in the beginning of the 1970s “land for local people, not tourists”, and the aim was to preserve the agricultural land as opposed to turning it over to resort development and subdivision use (Trask 1987:126). However, landlords rich in land, but poor in capital made land use decisions based on possibilities for profit rather than focusing on preserving the rurality of agricultural Hawai‘i. Bishop Estates, one of the largest holding landowners in the islands who used their lands as “a funding source for the maintenance of [Kamehameha Schools], a private educational institution for Hawaiian children”, made a deal with “industrialist Henry Kaiser in the 1950s to develop their entire holdings on O‘ahu’s east side” (Trask 1987:128,129).

In this area, Kalama Valley is situated, a valley that used to be inhabited by pig farmers and agriculturalists. As Bishop Estates engaged in development of the area, they issued eviction notifications to the inhabitants and demanded they would relocate to other areas in O‘ahu. While the residents were out working or looking for other places to live, the Bishop Estates reserved the right to bulldoze their houses as they claimed the residents “had received notices” (Trask 1987:135). The Bishop Estates seemed to have failed to recognize that plots of land where pig farmers and agriculturalists could continue their livelihood was either not available at all, or too costly for the residents to afford it. By bulldozing the properties, the Bishop Estates did not only remove the residents from their homes, but also from their sustainable livelihoods. These actions did however not go by unnoticed:

Holding a banner lettered in bold colourful strokes Kōkua Hawai‘i (“Help Hawai‘i”), some three dozen non-violent protesters were arrested for trespassing on private land on May 11, 1971, as they sat atop the last unbulldozed house in rural Kalama Valley on the Hawaiian island of O‘ahu. They were well aware that, in the words of one of their young leaders, Linton Park, “Hawaiian history was being made” by the very act of their resistance. (Trask 1987:126)

The Kalama Valley case turned out to be the start of a long lasting struggle to protect Hawaiian lands from development and its residents from eviction; the beginning of the Hawaiian Movement. A group of activists consisting of University of Hawai‘i employees and students, and members of the Kalama Valley community started protesting the actions of the Bishop Estates. “With the TV cameras rolling they entered house after house in an effort to stop the bulldozer. But to no avail” (Trask 1987:134). The activist group continued their protest and soon the police started to get involved, arresting protesters to ensure continuing development. However clear the message was from the protesters, the development of Kalama Valley continued with the construction of “roads, expensive, large houses, a golf course, and a sewage station” (Trask 1987:150). All residents were evicted and all houses were bulldozed and the majority of the residents moved in with relatives, established camps on the beach, or moved to other islands that experienced less developmental pressure.

The problem of homelessness and frustration over land loss is still highly visible in Hawai‘i today. According to the award winning documentary *Noho Hewa: the wrongful occupation of Hawai‘i* by A. Keala Kelley (2008), approximately three thousand Hawaiians live in camp settlements on Hawaiian beaches. As a visitor you will not have to travel far from Honolulu and Waikīkī to see these settlements; following the Farrington Highway from Honolulu and up the coast towards Waianae on O‘ahu the beaches here are very visibly

occupied by settlements of tents and mobile homes. Having been evicted from their homes due to developmental or economical issues and been forced to establish these settlements, beach settlers are now facing a new challenge; they are being evicted from the public beaches and are thus running out of options of where to stay (Kelley 2008).

Though the majority of the Hawaiian population has abandoned the spiritual and deeply respectful relationship of old, they clearly still have very strong opinions about the land loss situation they find themselves in, opinions that are often projected through anger and frustration towards tourists and visitors. Seemingly, the relationship to land has become more physical, and one of ownership instead of coexistence. Dudley (1990) argues that the traditional relationship to land is an underlying driving force within Hawaiian tradition. He claims that Hawaiians today still are driven by a desire to protect the land, but they may not be aware, as this is a trait deeply rooted in a traditional Hawaiian world view that revolves around mutual respect between people and land, and emphasizes a dynamic dialogue:

To understand Hawaiian thought, one must first realize that the Hawaiian truly experiences the world differently. One who believes that the fish can hear, who asks plants for permission before picking their flowers and who thinks he is related as family to many of the species of nature surrounding him, obviously experiences and reacts to the world differently from one who does not. In the Hawaiian view the world is alive, conscious and able to be communicated with, and it has to be dealt with that way. Man participates in a community with all of the species of nature, a community in which all beings have rights and responsibilities to one another. (1990:xi-xii)

This worldview, Dudley argues, is the motivational factor for protest, though the loss of land is what is always mentioned by the protesters:

Today, if one were to ask Hawaiians protesting “development” to name the cause of the strong feelings which motivate their actions, they might mention the loss of their lands or recount the many injustices they have suffered over the last century. But while many might not mention it they are also compelled to act on a much deeper level by their traditional world view which has formed their conviction of what should be the proper, caring relationship between man and nature. That world view is a basic influence motivating their protest. (1990:xii)

Whether aware of this basic influence or not, many Hawaiians become territorial and express anger towards outsiders when portraying their relationship to the land. This anger is especially

directed at tourists, but also affects residents who were not born in the islands. Several incidents during my stay, in which this attitude was projected towards tourists and foreign residents, were certainly expressions of frustration on behalf of the local population from having to share the islands with nearly seven million visitors each year (Trask 1999:16).

One of these incidents struck me as particularly powerful: I was up at Rainbow Falls, a beautiful waterfall surrounded by lush vegetation and one of the top tourist sites in Hilo, to gather banyan leaves for my hula class. Alongside the waterfall and the river is a path that leads down to a huge banyan tree in the back and down to the river bank should you choose to follow it. In front of the waterfall is a paved viewpoint that stretches down to a paved parking lot. The largest bus companies and tourist operators in the island offers tours to see this beautiful site, and on this particular day a group of elder tourists had made their way up to the falls. While walking back down the path to the parking lot I heard the whining of car tires and a car speeds through the parking lot, only barely clearing the elder people making their way across the parking lot towards the viewpoint. A local girl was hanging out the window of the car screaming with the uttermost power of her voice “Fucking haole’s!! Go back to where you fucking came from!! We hate you and don’t want you here!! Fuck you haole’s!!” Obviously in rage, the local girl expressed with words what many Hawaiians feel about visitors and outsiders. Her protest is clearly rooted in frustration over the constant presence of tourists at Rainbow Falls but still not visibly connected to an influence of the basic Hawaiian worldview. However this may well motivate her frustration.

Dudley (1990:xi) argues that the traditional Hawaiian philosophy of a reciprocal relationship between people and nature has not been taught to Hawaiians for several decades. On a general bases Dudley might be right. However, it is important to emphasize that this way of thinking *is* taught in many hālau hula, and is available to whoever is interested and dedicated enough to obtain this knowledge. Given the popularity hula holds, it is safe to say that this philosophy reaches many young and modern Hawaiians. Students of hula strive to regain the spiritual relationship with the land through respectful and caring interaction as will be further discussed throughout the latter part of this chapter.

Incorporating land in personal identification

While relationship to land is commonly experienced through notions of protest, ownership and rights, other, less frustrated, methods to bring people closer to the traditional relationship to land are also frequently used. An example can be seen in the use of Hawaiian names. The use of Hawaiian names either as first names or middle names has had continuous importance

in Hawai‘i, and escalated throughout the Hawaiian Renaissance up until today. One aspect through which this is highly visible is through the naming and renaming of children and adults. The naming of children is usually done in accordance to personality traits the child inhabits from birth, or qualities the parents or kupuna want the child to possess. The names are usually metaphors, where natural and spiritual features are often used to explain personality traits. While some children hold on to the names they are given at birth, others might be renamed as they grow if the name does not fit their personality. Naming can therefore be seen as a process, in which you either grow into your name, or your personality repels the name and you must be renamed. Most Hawaiians have a story behind their name, and Alamea, one of my hula sisters, shared hers with me one day we were making ti leaf lei:

I was born Piilani Kawailehua (climbing to the heavens on the raindrop of a lehua blossom) [last named removed], named by my grandmother Annie (dads mom). In second grade, age 8, my mom had it legally changed to [first and middle name removed] (the rays of the sun entwined in the necklace of love) [last name removed]. She told me that I needed to change my name because I was having nightmares about dying. I used to dream that I was stuck in a raindrop, that in essence was a drop of blood because of the tinge of the red lehua and the raindrop, and was dying, and I would start to ascend, wherever; heaven, paradise? I don't know but wherever you go after you die, the direction was up. This scared me when I was little and my mom too so we went and saw a kahuna [spiritual mentor] and he asked about my name and who named me. First he said that Piilani alone is a heavy name to carry for anyone as it is a name of royalty from the island of Maui. That is why Maui is known as Maui a Piilani (Maui of Piilani) and Big Island is known as Hawaii Moku O Keawe (Hawaii Island of Keawe). Both Piilani and Keawe were the last rulers of both islands before Kamehameha united them. So in essence the best people to have these names are those from that family line and royalty. Second the correlation between the dream and my name was undeniable and he felt that the best way to stop the dreams was to rename me, and they needed to be stopped, because in Hawaiian culture many times your dream is more than a dream, it can actually be an out of body experience. So, none of us wanted that and we decided to do a rebirth ritual.

The process of renaming me went with me going to Ka`u with my mom to do a *hi`uwai* with the kahuna and her. A *hi`uwai* is a cleansing and rebirth ceremony where the person who is being reborn is dressed in a pareo [wraparound skirt] and enters a river or the ocean (I was in the ocean) and is prayed over by the kahuna to cleanse and take away all bad mana and in my case the name not meant for me. I was then completely submerged under water three times (much like a baptism) and upon resurfacing the final time was reborn but unnamed. You then wait for a sign for a name. Luckily my sign came in the form of an *`iwa*

[frigate] bird which was flying overhead in the sky. The sky was completely overcast and there wasn't a ray of sunlight anywhere but consequently enough as we watched the bird the clouds formed a ring called a *wana* in Hawaiian where the sun's rays shone through. I remember being cold and then when that happened just feeling so full of warmth and my mom and the kahuna did too and he told us that the feeling was more than just the heat and warmth from the sun but it was the feeling of love. As you can see my name has love twice in it and it represents the love we felt that day from the gods and the love a mother feels for her child and likewise.³⁹

More often than not Hawaiian names represent some aspects of love, respect and connection to nature. As mentioned, a Hawaiian name is more than just a name; it reflects the personality of its beholder. It also reflects what family you are from and can sometimes reflect what place you are from. Within the hula tradition, it is common for the kumu to either re-name or add a Hawaiian name as a middle name to his or her students when they *ūniki*, as they evolve so much during their time as students that their names no longer fit them. It is expected that you use your new name exclusively, or as part of your full name.

Landscape and anthropology

The term *landscape* has within the field of anthropology been used in different ways in analyses of people's interaction with their surroundings. In social sciences landscape has shifted from being just about nature and topographic features to also being a cultural idea and process (Hirsch 1995:3). According to Hirsch (1995:1) the term has been "used to refer to the meaning imputed by local people to their cultural and physical surroundings". Hirsch (1995:2) further argues that there are two kinds of landscape, the first being the landscape we initially see, and the second being the landscape that is produced through local practice. This second kind of landscape becomes recognizable and understandable through interpretation of and knowledge about these local practices. Keesing demonstrates how this definition can be applied to the landscape as perceived by the Kwaio of Malaita, Solomon Islands:

The landscape of the Kwaio interior appears, to the alien eye, as a sea of green, a dense forest broken periodically by gardens and recent secondary growth, and an occasional tiny settlement. Steep slopes and small peaks, limestone outcroppings and sinkholes, slippery red clay, rain fed

³⁹ Alamea, February 6th 2009.

streams, form a broken physical world. To the Kwaio eye, this landscape is not only divided by invisible lines into named land tracts and settlement sites; it is seen as structured by history. (1982:76)

In relation to my experiences as a fieldworker within a hula community in Hilo, Keesing's second kind of landscape became visible to me gradually as I learned more about the hula tradition. Before entering this space of knowledge I could only apprehend my initial surroundings as natural and topographic features. However, Hawaiian landscapes are, like the Kwaio landscape, also structured by history. Kealakekua Bay on the south-western side of the Big Island represents a good example here; Kealakekua is scenically beautiful with its turquoise coloured crystal clear waters and frequent visits from spinner dolphins, hammer head sharks, colourful fish and *honu* (sea turtles), still it is best known as the place in which Captain James Cook died during a skirmish between Hawaiians and visiting European explorers. This changed the landscape of Kealakekua forever from being a bay rich with resources, into being a landmark for a continuous important historic event.

In addition to being structured by history, the Hawaiian landscape is also structured according to cosmology. For example, the most active volcano in the islands, Kilauea, is recognized by Hawaiians as the home of Pele, the goddess of fire in Hawaiian cosmology, and is often depicted with her powerful image in which her hair represents the lava flowing down the mountainside. Cosmology is also used in the interpretation of Australian landscapes. Morphy (1993, 1995) interprets the landscape of northern Australia in accordance to both the impact of colonialism and to aboriginal cosmology. He argues that the landscape of northern Australia can be understood to have two different forms; one is the landscape that is represented in colonial maps, where place names have been given based on the actions of humans, the other is a landscape that has been formed by ancestral activities. In relation to the second landscape form, Morphy argues;



Olga Schevchenko (2009): *Sacred fire of Pele, Goddess of Hawai'i Volcano*

As elsewhere in Australia, the physical form of the earth is believed to have come into being through the actions of ancestral beings who travelled the earth from place to place, leaving

evidence of their actions in the form of topographical features. [...] The land, taken as a whole, was the land over which ancestral beings hunted and gathered, and every aspect of the landscape can be thought to have connotations of the ancestral beings – the scents and sounds and flavours that they too experienced. (1995:187-188)

The ancestral landscape of Australia, as described by Morphy, is very similar to the ancestral landscape of Hawai‘i. Kupihea (2004:81) describes the Hawaiian landscape as triggered by memory: “[...] out in the valley, travelling in the open air beneath blue skies, surrounded by ancient rocks and flowing water, the spirits of our ancestors are everywhere, waiting only for our memories to bring them to life”. When interacting with the landscape, consciously using memories and knowledge, ancestral tracks and spirits become visible. Memories are triggered by the recognition of topographic features that are linked to ancestral activities: “When these memories are triggered by the familiarity of the sight of mountains, the sky, and the rivers that tell our origin, then our ancestors become part of the eternal landscape itself” (Kupihea (2004:81).

Küchler (1993:85) is also concerned with the role of memory in relation to landscape and argues that landscapes *of* memory, that is landscape as an inscribed surface typically represented in art from the European Renaissance, are rarely found outside the western context. In landscapes *of* memory the beholder is placed at a distance, looking through “a framed window to a narrative, substitute world” that “size upon and validate personal or social memories” (Küchler 1993:85-86). When looking at landscapes *as* memory, landscape is “implicated as template in the process of memory-work” (Küchler 1993:86). In other words, landscape in its visual form becomes a part of the process of remembering and forgetting (Küchler 1993:86). Like Kupihea, Küchler argues that the landscape is revealed through the process of remembering.

Bender argues that landscape has to be contextualized, as people understand and engage with landscape depending on specific time, place and historical conditions:

People’s landscapes will operate on very different spatial scales, whether horizontally across the surface of the world, or vertically – up to the heavens, down to the depths. They will operate on very different temporal scales, engaging with the past and with the future in many different ways. (1993:2)

Landscape according to this is thus often understood subjectively, based on a personal perception of space and time. In the case of Hawai‘i the understanding of landscape often

depends on positioning, and the landscape's powers and expressions are reflected in the eyes of its beholder. In Hawai'i a visitor will have a very different take on the landscape than a resident, and a resident who is engaged in and dedicated to a traditional relationship to land will have a very different take on the landscape than a resident who is not indulged to a similar degree in this relationship will.

Hula and landscape

Dancing the land

Throughout the Pacific region, the relationship between people and land is continuously changing. Traditional relationships in which people depend on the products of the land have in some cases changed into the land being merely a space for development. However, while this change has created a distance between people and products of the land, the land itself cannot be alienated (Toren 1995:175). On this note, even though Hawaiian lands were commercialized with the Great Māhele, people were never separated from the land. During the past thirty to forty years, many Hawaiians have strived to re-establish a more traditional relationship to the land; some have gone back to living a traditional life of subsistence farming,⁴⁰ while others have found this relationship through knowledge about Hawaiian traditions, like the hula.

According to Toren, villagers in Fiji pay tribute to the relationship between people and land by incorporating place names and natural features into both traditional and modern performing arts:

Fijian villagers emphasize direct embodied experience of the land: seeing, touching, hearing, and smelling. In old *meke* songs that accompany narrative dances and songs that are more lately authored and sung to guitar music, they regularly celebrate their villages and countries by name, the song of the birds that live there and the smell of flowering trees and plants that grow there. (1995:176)

The same can be said about Hawaiians. While interacting with the land like Fijian villagers, through seeing, touching, hearing and smelling, they also represent and interact with the land through hula dance. During my six months as a hula kahiko student, two metaphors for

⁴⁰ see McGregor 2006.

describing the swaying movement of hula were frequently repeated. They both portray the positioning of the dancers' body within the landscape, following the swaying, flowing movements of natural features. One described the hula movement as a lava flow moving in a slow and soft motion down the mountain side. The other described the hula dancer as a coconut tree swaying gently in the wind. Both these metaphors are closely connected to landscape and describe the dancer as a natural feature, incorporated into the landscape. As Kaumakaiwa Kanaka'ole (2009) describes it: "If I can move my hips and my hands the way the tree does, then the tree and I are the same, we are one for that moment". As a hula dancer you *dance the land* and you become the land, by embodying the chants that place you in a Hawaiian natural and cultural landscape. You experience and interact with the landscape through the dance:

Hula Class May 8th 2009,

"Eilin, your coconut tree is out of synch", my kumu told me as I was focusing on separating the movement of my upper body from that of my lower body. "Your hips must move to the right when your swaying arm moves to the left. Your hips are the stem and your arm is the leaves. Close your eyes and feel the wind swaying your body, *be* the coconut tree!" I tried again but still my lack of coordination challenged me. "No, no, no, stop. Start again by just swaying your hips like you were standing on a cliff by the ocean, moving with the touch of the wind. Now, add the arm movement and sway!" I looked over at Hokulani, who apparently had no problems with this movement, then tried to close my eyes and just follow the beat of the ipu and eventually felt that I was swaying in the wind like a tall coconut tree. "Yes, like that, now you *are* the coconut tree!"

In addition to the main swaying movements of hula, many hand movements represent natural features. Small adjustments, invisible to the untrained eye, might tell the difference between soft or hard rain, attitude can describe the difference between the mightiness of a mountain and a streak of lightning. When dancing to a chant or mele describing flowers, your hand motions may display the picking of flowers, grabbing flowers with both hands, palms down, and turning both palms up to form the figure or a flower bud. When describing trees, mountains, the sun, the moon or anything taller than you, you keep your hands over your head while holding your head in an upward angle following the movements with your eyes:

We worked on descriptive movements for almost two hours today. My kumu picked on even the smallest of inconsistencies with all of us, and even when five of us got it right and one did not, we had to do it over. We were dancing Rainbow Falls, a waterfall situated above Hilo, and we were trying to get the drizzling rain movement that describes the drizzle of water you feel on your skin when standing close to the falls right. “No, that is not drizzling, that is pounding”, my kumu repeated over and over as we strived to describe drizzling rain with our fingers. I got it right after a couple of tries, but Hokulani struggled a little so we all did the movement over and over for around twenty minutes. During our second dance, to a chant about King Kalākaua, we practiced the sentence “ka uwila ma ka hikina ea (like lightning in the east)”, where the lightning is described by both arms up against the sky and your eyes following your hands. My kumu explained: “Now, the movement for lightning is a lot like the movement for mountain. However, a streak of lightning is more dramatic in nature than a mountain and thus your movement will of course have to be more dramatic. While not just placing your hands up towards the mountain, you more dramatically “throw” them up against the sky, to describe the streak. Instead of just mimicking the lightning you must *be* the lightning”.

While doing descriptive movements with your hands, eyes and facial expressions, your hips sway to the beat of the drum in the shape of a vertical figure eight and like a coconut tree swaying in the wind. Your movements should be constant and soft, yet precise and powerful. The rhythm of your feet mimic the heartbeat of the landscape, and an *‘uehe*, a step in which you push both knees forward with a quick raising of your heels while you continue the swaying of the hips from side to side, entices the earth to open up or to crack. The feet “pound on the earth to entice her” (Kanahele-Frias 2006). Kanahele-Frias claims that hula upholds the close relationship to land, through physical (with dance) and spiritual (with chants and ritual offerings) interaction, and addresses this important spiritual connection:

If we do not continue to dance and continue to stir the earth, or entice the earth, with the down beats of the ipu, the earth will stop producing. And, if we stop dancing and participating in the forest, in terms of our exchange of vegetation and our offerings... If that dies, or if we are not allowed to do that, then we die. People say that our tradition dies, but that is not the truth of it. The truth of it is that we go into total spiritual exile. (2006)

By dancing you entice the land to produce, and if you stop dancing, the land will stop producing, and the spiritual connection will be lost. The hula is thus a vital connection, an “unseen umbilical cord”, between people and land (Kanaka‘ole 2009).

Chants and spirituality

Like the Fijian songs and meke, as explained by Toren (1995:176), Hawaiian mele and chants regularly refer to places or natural features such as flowers, trees, mountains and water. Through hula dance, these places and features are represented in movements and choreographies that accompany the chant or mele. Hawaiian mele and chants usually use metaphors in which natural features describe personality traits for the place or person of the chant or song, as can be seen in Kāwika, a name chant for King David Kalākaua:

Eia nō Kāwika ea	This is David
ka heke a‘o nā pua ea	The greatest of all flowers
Ka uwila ma ka hikina ea	Like lightning in the east
Mālamalama Hawai‘i ea	That brightens Hawai‘i
Ku‘i e ka lono Pelekāne ea	News reached England
Ho‘olohe ke ku‘ini ‘o Palani ea	Also heard by the French queen
Na wai e ka pua i luna ea	Who is this flower of high rank?
O Kapa‘akea he makua ea	Kapa‘akea is his father
Ha‘ina ‘ia mai ka puana ea	Tell the refrain
O Kalani Kāwika he inoa ea	King David, is his name

King Kalākaua was a very popular king, and many chants have been written about him. In this particular chant he is described as the greatest of all flowers. Flowers are often used in chants as a metaphor for people. As the flowers are the children of the tree, the people are the children of Hawai‘i. King Kalākaua was respected for his power, but also for his delightful personality and his cognomen is *the Merrie Monarch*. He was described as the powerful light of Hawai‘i that shone out to the far corners of the world, and was recognized by the royal families of Europe.

Other chants and mele describe places, like the chant used in chapter two, A Hilo au, and Hilo Hanakahi, a mele that celebrates features of the land in the districts of Hawai‘i Island:

Hilo Hanakahi i ka ua Kanilehua	Hilo of Chief Hanakahi, in the Kanilehua rain
Puna paia ‘ala, i ka paia ‘ala i ka hala	Puna of fragrant bowers, bowers redolent of hala
Ka‘ū i ka makani, i ka makani Kuehulepo	Ka‘ū in the wind, the dust stirring Kuehulepo
Kona i ke kai, i ke kai mā‘oki‘oki	Kona at the sea, the sea of patchwork hues

Kawaihae i ke kai, i ke kai hāwanawana	Kawaihae by the sea, the softly whispering sea
Waimea i ka ua, i ka ua Kīpu‘upu‘u	Waimea in the rain, the melting Kīpu‘upu‘u rain
Kohala i ka makani i ka makani ‘Āpa‘apa‘a	Kohala in the wind, the buffeting ‘Āpa‘apa‘a
Hāmākua i ka pali, i ka plai lele koa‘e	Hāmākua on the cliffs, cliffs where the tropic bird soars
Ha‘ina ka puana, i ka ua Kanilehua	Tell the story in the refrain, of the Kanilehua rain

In addition to celebrating places, important historical events and people, and the spiritual powers of natural features, chants also function as a way of communicating with the land. For generations chanting has been used in efforts to call on the weather or to calm the sea. My kumu told me a story from some years back, where the Merrie Monarch judges had decided that all the participating hālau were to do the same chant, a chant that called on heavy rain and stormy weather. Half way through, a powerful thunderstorm broke out and cut the power throughout Hilo, leaving the audience and the competitors in the dark for two hours.

Chanting is also used when asking for permission to take something from the land, i.e. plants and flowers for decorations, leis and hula costumes. You should communicate with the land through chants, and make sure you do not take flowers or leaves from areas that have a scarce selection in your plant of choice. Through the chant you ask the land for permission to use its “children” as part of your costume. In practical terms this is done by chanting before picking for example the lehua flowers of an ōhia tree. If the flowers fall out of your hands and to the ground, you should leave them, as this is a sign that the children, flowers, are not yet ready to be separated from the mother, the tree.

Another way of communicating with the landscape is through spirits and omens that can guide you in your decisions. Like with the naming ceremony mentioned earlier in this chapter omens and signs may appear to tell you what to do next, or to tell you that the timing is right or wrong. During a cleansing ritual I took part in, a sign in the form of a honu (sea turtle) told me my timing was right:

Hula Class, July 3rd 2009;

My kumu told me to bring my swimsuit to class today, and I thought, since the weather has been so warm lately, we were gonna have hula class at the beach. However, as always, she surprised me by taking me to 4 mile Beach Park to do a purification ritual with me. Throughout the past two weeks I have struggled a little bit with my mind as I have gotten the news that my cousin and one of my best friends from folk high school have passed away. I

skipped hula class one time to be in the presence of my friends and ease the constant turmoil happening in my head. As I told kumu my reason for skipping class, she told me we would talk about it next time, and now it seemed that the talking was more a very personal, peaceful and mellow ritual that would free me from the spirits that linger in my mind. As we were driving towards the beach she told me about the ritual and the reason for doing it and warned me that I might feel a little spacey and lightheaded when we were done. Since I am a sceptic by nature I just muttered “aha” and “mhm” to this and figured this fact surely would not apply to me.

“This is usually done at night, right before sunset, but it is okay to do it now. You have to look for an omen, a sign that this is the right day to do it.” Ehm, omen? I twisted my mind around natural omens and started thinking about a rainbow. Maybe there will be a rainbow? Nope, no clouds anywhere in sight... As my kumu rambled on about the sights on the side of the road I started thinking of how many different things could be interpreted as an omen or a sign, and secretly wishing she could just tell me what my omen would be. We got to the beach and stepped down into the water. I hovered on the surface for a while because for some reason I found the water particularly cold that day. After a minute or so I saw a huge shadow coming towards me under water and a gigantic honu (about 1.5 meters long and 1.2 meters wide) came up to me and started brushing against my legs and playing in circles around me. I was amazed, normally honu find humans very boring and cruise by you only to keep on cruising toward something more exciting, but this one was truly interested in me and hung out with me for at least 15 minutes. After being caught up in this wonderful creature my kumu said to me that this was my omen and that my lingering spirits were ready to be shown the way to the light. I dived under the surface, three times for me, three times for the lingering spirit and three times for the rest of the world and kept a mental image of a bright place where the spirit could reside. After I was done I felt incredibly at peace and very spacey. The sceptic in me definitely got a thorough core shake...

While lingering spirits are believed to be lost and need guidance to get to where they are supposed to be, ancestral spirits may linger in the physical world to provide guidance and protection for their family descendants. These spirits are called ‘aumākua and they have the ability to shape-shift. Through shape-shifting they manifest themselves in the landscape through plants, animals or minerals. The relationship the living have to the dead in Hawai‘i is one of deep respect, and families treat their land manifested ancestral spirits with great care. For example, when a family’s ancestral spirits are manifested in shark, the members of this family might care for the shark by feeding them and ensuring their protection. By giving this kind of care and attention, they secure a reciprocal relationship with the land.

As a student of hula you learn to interact with the land by providing what the land needs in order for you to receive what you need. Like my kumu put it: “you take care of the land and the land takes care of you”. In modern times, environmental awareness has been incorporated into this relationship. The respect for land should be shown through caring for all living creatures, by for example showing the cockroach the door instead of ending its life with a roach trap, and an additional focus has been put on recycling and on avoiding littering. Although this is something many Hawaiians care about there are also many who do *not* care, but can still be very concerned with land rights and ownership. Creating a sort of double standard, hostility might be projected towards visitors who litter, followed by driving an enormous truck that spews out huge amounts of pollution, while throwing cigarette buds out the window, to visit the closest American fast food restaurant. Confusingly enough, these types are usually the ones who are most concerned about stating their Hawaiian identity, as will be further discussed in chapter five.

Concluding remarks

Following the theories of Hirsch (1995) and Keesing (1982), I have argued that the Hawaiian landscape is perceived differently from an insider point of view than an outsider point of view. Following Morphy (1993, 1995), Küchler (1993), Kupihea (2004) and Bender(1993), I maintain that for an insider, the landscape is defined and understood by people through cosmology, legends and history, and revealed through the process of memory, whereas for an outsider, the visual aspect of the landscape becomes the primary perception. Hawaiians have a close relationship to land, and whether it is portrayed as the traditional reciprocal relationship of old, or through notions of ownership and rights, the connection between people and landscape is very strong. Dudley (1990) argues that this relationship is part of a basic Hawaiian world view, a view that all Hawaiians inhabit but are not aware of since it is not taught to Hawaiians today. However, most hālau hula teach their students about both the traditional relationship of old, and the basic Hawaiian world view, and considering the popularity hula holds, it is fair to say that this world view *is* taught to many Hawaiians today. Hula dancers also connect with the land through the dance. By dancing the land they become a part it, incorporated, as their movements flow with the landscape.

As already mentioned, while most Hawaiians do not practice a respectful reciprocal relationship with the land, they usually have strong opinions about ownership and rights, and

protection of the land. However, following Hawaiian traditions, your relationship to the land is manifested in interaction and coexistence, and in efforts to care for the land as it cares for you. It is this relationship that is considered to represent the genuine Hawaiian view of existing within the landscape, and it is this relationship that is learned to students of hula.

Throughout the next chapter I will discuss how hula, through its connections to, and embodiment of, land, and its place as one of the most comprehensive Hawaiian traditions with continuing linkage to pre-contact times, can function as a key ingredient in the forming of Hawaiian identity. I will present an argument in which knowledge about and dedication to the hula tradition, compared to a focus on biological genealogy and a fifty percent blood quantum claim, can serve as a determining factor and an alternative political platform for defining Hawaiian identity.

5

Children of the land

Hula as Hawaiian identity

For Hawaiians, to live and eat from a certain land makes a person one in substance with the land, in the same sense that a child is of his parents' substance (in Hawai'i by birth and by nurture). A stranger is thus metamorphosed into a child of the land by equal title to the people "born to" it (as we also might say).

Marshall Sahlins (1985:xi)

Introduction

Hawaiian identity has become problematic. While Hawaiians were originally identified as a biologically self-perpetuating indigenous group in possession of unique cultural traits, colonialism and repopulation of the Hawaiian Islands has taken its toll on the definition of Hawaiian identity. After decades of change, intermixing of ethnic groups; both culturally and biologically, and suppression of Hawaiianity, Hawaiians started yet again to promote their Hawaiian identity during, and in the wake of, the Hawaiian Renaissance. Today identity in Hawai'i is often a question of politics and is measured in biological terms with an emphasis on blood quantum. State law and regulations encourage these defining terms by including or excluding individuals from state and private programs such as Hawaiian Home Lands and Kamehameha Schools, based on a fifty percent blood quantum rule (Kauanui 2008). However, according to Kauanui (2008:32), blood measurements are usually excluding rather than including, and are therefore not sufficient in the attempt to identify Hawaiians.

Sahlins (1985) argues that by living and eating off a certain land, a stranger may become transformed into a *child of the land* in Hawai'i. He also argues that "[...] in Hawai'i one may *become* a "native", i.e., by right action. Having resided a certain time in the community, even strangers become 'children of the land' (*kama'āina*); the term is not

exclusively reserved to the native-born” (1985:xi-xii). Seeing that I, through my main argument, claim that you can enhance your Hawaiian identity by dedicating yourself to the hula tradition, I believe that what Sahlins wrote about the ‘children of the land’ in 1985 is still applicable in contemporary Hawai‘i. Being Hawaiian is reflected in the relationship to land shown in the previous chapter, and about a worldview that is deeply rooted in traditional social relationships and kinship ties. I will argue throughout this chapter that anyone can become a child of the land in Hawai‘i with dedicated engagement in the traditional reciprocal relationship to land, and knowledge about Hawaiian traditions, myths and history. I will also argue that hula, as a dance, tradition and lifestyle connects people to a Hawaiian worldview, a deeper understanding of basic Hawaiian principals and to a complex history of interaction between people and land. Through dedication to hula you can accumulate knowledge about Hawaiian history and traditions, and incorporate this into your modern everyday life. I will also suggest that Hawaiian identity is actively constructed and reconstructed through acts and practises that signify it, and that the hula can be viewed as such an act. While addressing the challenges that lie in defining Hawaiian identity, I seek to promote a social and political platform for measuring Hawaianness that differs from the blood quantum definition.

Hawaiian identity

Identifying the group

Early in my fieldwork I was invited to a middle aged Hawaiian man’s home in Waianae, O‘ahu, to take part in the very American tradition “Super Bowl Sunday”. My friend had been so kind to invite me to experience the Hawaiian way of celebrating this day with a potluck⁴¹ barbeque and a whole roasted pig that they had started barbequing at 3.00 in the morning. On our way to the barbeque he started asking me about what kind of blood I had running through my veins. I told him that as far as I know my blood is a hundred percent Norwegian and he was close to speechless with the exception of saying “whoa brah!” as he looked at me with amazement and made me feel more “special” than ever. I asked him later what kind of blood he had running through his body and he was careful to emphasize that he was over 50 percent Hawaiian. After this the conversation turned to Hawaiian history and American presence in Hawai‘i and he laughed at me when I said that there had been Polynesian people in the islands

⁴¹ A potluck is a meal and a social gathering in which people gather and contribute different dishes.

since between 300 and 750 A.D.⁴² “Nah, there was no one here before about a hundred years ago!” After this he praised the American military presence in Hawai‘i⁴³, saying he wished there was even more, and opened up a can of Bud Light while cheering for the Arizona Cardinals in their game against the Pittsburgh Steelers. I was amazed by his split identity with one leg firmly planted in his biological Hawaiian roots, and the other so obviously connected to his American-Hawaiian surroundings. I realized there was a contradiction between the importance of preserving a bloodline; biological pureness, and of preserving a history, traditional knowledge and way of life.

My kumu has a completely different take on biology based identity and told me constantly that she did not care about the blood quantum of the students who wanted to learn about Hawaiian traditions, as long as they were learned and continued into the next generation. For her, blood is irrelevant, and she firmly believes it is the traditions that define Hawaiians. However, Hawaiian identity is for some only rooted in ones blood quantity and I have found that mentioning the percentage of pure Hawaiian blood becomes more important to those who do not practice a traditional Hawaiian way of life. Many of my informants have certainly had a high percentage of Hawaiian blood, but it seems they are more confident about their identity and do not need to make this a crucial point when meeting me, who neither have Hawaiian blood nor is raised to live a Hawaiian traditional lifestyle.

Identity can be looked at from several perspectives including Cohen’s culture as identity (1993:196), in which culture functions as a system of meanings with which people identify and thus make the world meaningful, and make themselves meaningful in the world; and Anderson’s ([1983]1994) imagined community as identity, in which a national consciousness and identity becomes evident through shared experiences, histories, symbols and a shared language. However, I will choose to focus on identity as a social process, following Barth’s (1969) theories on ethnic identity, in which ascription and self-ascription across social boundaries become determining factors for Hawaiian identity. Following this, I choose to treat *Hawaiian* as an individual, part of an ethnic group.

Barth (1969:10-11) lists a set of definitions as “generally understood in anthropological literature” in which ethnic group: “1. is largely biologically self-perpetuating[,] 2. shares fundamental cultural values, realized in overt unity in cultural forms[,] 3. makes up a field of communication and interaction[, and] 4. has a membership

⁴² The arrival date for Polynesian voyagers in Hawai‘i is heavily debated by historians and archaeologists.

However, there is an agreement that Polynesians have been present in the islands from between 300 and 750 A.D.

⁴³ One of the soul causes of the Hawaiian Movement, mentioned in chapter two and four, has been, and continues to be to protect Hawaiians land from the U.S. Military.

which identifies itself, and is identified by others, as constituting categories of the same order”. Further Barth engages in a discussion on the concept of culture, which he describes as “nothing but a way to describe human behaviour”⁴⁴, in which he emphasizes that the “cultural stuff” is a product of the ethnic group, not the other way around (1969:9-11). Thus cultural traits do not define the ethnic group; they are produced by the ethnic group. In this sense, Hawaiians create Hawaiian culture, but Hawaiian culture does not create Hawaiians.

Though agreeing that Hawaiians create Hawaiian culture, my main argument is in slight disagreement with Barth when promoting Hawaiian identity as measured by dedication to and participation in Hawaiian traditions; the tradition enhances the ethnic identity. Thus, access to membership in the group is gained through your engagement in Hawaiian traditions. As Barth (1969:12) also argues: “Given the emphasis on the culture-bearing aspect, the classification of persons and local groups as members of an ethnic group must depend on their exhibiting the particular traits of the culture”. Following my argument, that you become more Hawaiian by being dedicated to Hawaiian traditions, like hula, this can surely be applied as an ingredient in the definition of Hawaiians as an ethnic group. However, Barth criticizes this approach as he claims culture is subject to change and can therefore not define the ethnic group. What *can* define an ethnic group, according to Barth, is however the “characteristic of self-ascription and ascription by others” (1969:13).

Seeing ethnic groups as a form of social organization, individuals are organized within the group based on their most general identity, “presumptively determined by [their] origin and background” (Barth 1969:13). Ethnic identities, self-ascribed and ascribed by others, become visible and are used in social interaction as negotiating factors in defining difference. During ascriptions and self-ascriptions some cultural traits are used to emphasize difference, while others are ignored. Barth (1969:14) divides these cultural traits in two categories: 1. “overt signals or signs – the diacritical features that people look for and exhibit to show identity, often such features as dress, language, house-form, or general style of life[; 2.] basic value orientations: the standards of morality and excellence by which performance is judged”. Further he argues that being part of an ethnic group thus implies being a certain kind of person, with a basic identity, and it implies “a claim to be judged, and to judge oneself, by those standards that are relevant to that identity” (Barth 1969:14). By maintaining the boundaries that are created through ascription and self-ascription one maintains the definition

⁴⁴ This is something Barth himself has criticized later (1994:10) when saying that culture is fundamentally important for human life, as humans, through their abilities to create culture, create their own lived reality. He also argues that “culture cannot be considered as complete, separate and internally homogenous units. On the contrary, different people’s constructions of reality are never the same: within a country, within a local community, and even within a family” (translated from Norwegian in Barth 1994:10).

of the ethnic group. The cultural traits within the group may change, but the dichotomization between insider and outsider continues. Agreeing with Barth, it is clear that it is across boundaries Hawaiian identity becomes visible. In social interaction with outsiders the self-ascribed identity is even acted out through statements in which Hawaiians often express their ethnic background as a claim for belongingness as opposed to the outsider.

The forming of a *new* identity becomes valid only through the recognition of others, and ascribing Hawaiian identity to oneself is not sufficient in gaining entry into the ethnic group. Additionally others must ascribe you Hawaiian identity before you become a member of the group. This process is confusing in Hawai'i seeing that the general definition of Hawaiian is decided by state law to be an individual of at least a fifty percent blood quantum, as will be further discussed below. Ethnic identity has become strictly biological and physically measurable. Barth (1969:15-16) argues that "ethnic groups only persist as significant units if they imply marked difference in behaviour, i.e. persisting cultural differences". Through maintaining Hawaiian traditions like hula, especially in the wake of the Hawaiian Renaissance, as previously argued, Hawaiians have created a recognized distinction to other ethnic groups. However, the problem lies in the excessive focus on blood quantity, biological background, in favour of a cultural background. Individuals with over fifty percent blood who do not adopt any of the cultural traits of the ethnic group are still regarded as more Hawaiian by the majority than individuals with less than fifty percent who conform to these cultural traits. As Hawaiians have not been "biologically self-perpetuating", following Barth's first point (1969:10-11), but rather mixed with other ethnic groups, biological background becomes problematic in defining ethnic identity.

The fifty percent blood quantum rule

According to Kauanui (2008:2), the "contemporary legal definition of 'native Hawaiian' [is] a descendant with at least one-half blood quantum of individuals inhabiting the Hawaiian Islands prior to 1778". Further she claims that this definition originates from the Hawaiian Homes Commission Act (HHCA) of 1921. In this act the U.S. Congress allotted about 200 000 acres of land spread throughout the main islands for leasing by eligible native Hawaiians (Kauanui 2008:2). The act was an attempt on behalf of Hawaiian elites to "encourage the revitalization of a particular Hawaiian demographic" (Kauanui 2008:3). However, when using blood "racialization"⁴⁵ logic in defining Hawaiian identity, the U.S. Congress also defined what was *not* native Hawaiian, and thus excluded a group of people

⁴⁵ Kauanui uses this expression to describe "the process by which racial meaning is ascribed" (Kauanui 2008:3).

from rights to this land. Hawaiians who could not trace at least fifty percent indigenous blood in their biological genealogy were therefore not eligible for land plots.

Today, the state of Hawai‘i continues the use of the fifty percent blood quantum rule in decisions and evaluations on claims of indigeneity (Kauanui 2008:3). While originally managed by the U.S. Congress, the HHCA was transferred to the state in the statehood process in 1959. Through the state Department of Hawaiian Home Lands, applicants for land lease turn in primary documents that prove level of Hawaiianess, i.e. birth certificates, “marriage certificates, certified death certificates, and records in relation to baptism, marriage, divorce, military service, [...], as well as hospital and employment records from the State of Hawai‘i Archives, state courts, public libraries, and U.S. census records” (Kauanui 2008:4). There are still 20 000 “native Hawaiians” on the waiting list for leasing land, and only 8000 have been granted leases since 1921. In 1997, amendments to the act allowed for direct descendants with a quarter Hawaiian blood, to become successors under the lease. However, these amendments did not open up the lands for “those who can prove one-fourth Hawaiian ancestry, as direct lessees” (Kauanui 2008:5). Thus, to be eligible for land lease you either have to prove at least a fifty percent blood quantum, or be a direct descendant with one fourth Hawaiian blood from someone who has already been approved for land lease.

The focus on blood quantity is not unique to the Hawaiian case and has been used when measuring group belonging with American Indian tribes for several decades. According to Strong and van Winkle (1996:555), blood quantum has been used in specific cases since the Sauk and Fox treaty of 1830, and has been “codified in various forms in many of the tribal constitutions and by-laws written as a result of the Indian Reorganization Act of 1934⁴⁶, which defined tribal members and nonenrolled Indians through a mixture of descent, residence, and ‘blood’”. They further argue that blood quantum “(often 25 percent) is the most common criterion of membership” (Strong and van Winkle 1996:555). The Washoe, an American Indian tribe that resides in California and Nevada, is among the tribes that use blood reckoning in defining identity. However, blood has not always had the importance in Washoe identity it has today. According to Strong and van Winkle (1996:556) Washoe identity, before the “massive disruptions and dislocations in the 1860s [...] was fluid, dynamic, situational, and embedded in a matrix of social, cultural, economic, political, and linguistic practices and orientations.” Instead of focusing on biological kinship like today, kin

⁴⁶ The Indian Reorganization Act defines the term “Indian” as “including all persons of Indian descent who are members of any reorganized tribe now under Federal jurisdiction, and all persons who are descendants of such members who were, on June 1, 1934, residing within the present boundaries of any Indian reservation, and shall further include all other persons of one-half Indian blood” (Baca 1988:230 IN Strong and van Winkle 1996:567).

membership depended on the “existence of named and unnamed role relationships and expectations among a set of individuals” (Strong and van Winkle 1996:557).

Contemporary Washoe identity consists of two overlapping forms; one following the pre-colonial pattern of social identity mentioned above, and the other following the discourse of official tribal membership in which the only quality considered is that of at least one quarter degree of Washoe blood (Strong and van Winkle 1996:558). The latter becomes more important than the former in official business such as tribal roll and political participation, however, when individuals listed on the tribal roll fail to meet the standards of the former identity form they become subject to criticism and marginalization. Both forms are thus important ingredients, and it seems the former is more practical than the latter, which seems more bound to official rights and regulations. As Strong and van Winkle (1996:555) emphasizes; “blood quantum, important as it may be, is never the sole marker of Indian identity.”

Kauanui argues that as long as the fifty percent rule, including the 1997 amendments, continues to define Hawaiian identity from blood quantum, Hawaiians will continue to see this rule as an “authenticating criterion for Hawaiian identity”:

Many Hawaiians and non-Hawaiians have become invested in blood quantum as proof of indigeneity and rely on the fractionalizing measurements of one’s “blood amount” as a marker for cultural orientation and identity, even though the racial categories this logic depends on are the product of relatively recent colonial taxonomies. (2008:5)

However, as shown by the example with the middle aged Hawaiian man at the beginning of this chapter, blood quantum is *not* always a marker for cultural orientation. Thus Hawaiian ethnic identity should not be defined in these terms.

Hawaiian kinship as identity

According to Kauanui (2008:40) “Hawaiians identify themselves through their ‘*ohana* – extended families – affiliations, and island locations. They use genealogical relationships to establish a collective identity through the social nexus of ‘*ohana*”. During my time with Hālau Hula o Halia, I learned that being Hawaiian is not biologically measurable. Like my hula sister, Akela, told me:

Auntie Halia's tradition teaches you that being Hawaiian cannot be measured by blood. It is important to consider the Hawaiian concept of *hānai*⁴⁷ when discussing Hawaiian kinship. Following Hawaiian tradition it is common to foster children when their biological parents cannot take care of them. These children become just as big a part of your family's genealogy as the biological children. Kinship in Hawai'i is thus more about spirituality than biology. Your soul also has a genealogy, and even though your blood is not Hawaiian, your soul can be. This is confusing to many Hawaiians because institutions like Kamehameha Schools and Hawaiian Home Lands demand a certain amount of Hawaiian blood for you to be a part of their programs.

In pre-contact times Hawaiians were very familiar with the practice of *hānai* (adoption). If a woman had given birth to three children and the family next door only had one child, it was very common for the woman with more children to give one of them away to the other family. *Hānai* was used as a survival technique as it was easier to feed and give attention to two children than to three, and has had continued importance up until present times. Talking to my kumu about this she told me: "Hānai takes precedence over blood. Also it is important to remember that your spirit is much older than you and that while your body might look different now, your spirit may be Hawaiian." Then she told me a story of a haole woman from the mainland, "she was almost as white as you!", who won round trip tickets to Hawai'i on a radio show. She came to Hawai'i, and never went back. "Now she's one of the most Hawaiian people I know. When your spirit is Hawaiian, you are drawn to this place. For all *you* know, *your* spirit might as well be Hawaiian", my kumu told me.

Hawaiian kinship is thus, according to my kumu, not biologically, but socially conditioned, and the connection to place and ancestors may just as well be a spiritual one. According to Handy and Pukui,

Hawaiian kinship is made up of grandparents, grandchildren, blood ties, spouses, paternity, adoptive parents, plural mating, adoptive platonic marital relations, engrafted relationships, sons and daughters, nephews and nieces, brothers, sisters, and cousins, parents, uncles and aunts, relatives through marriage, fostering, adopting, and categories of friendship. (in Kauanui 2008:48)

Blood ties are here represented as part of the definition for kinship but they are not primary. 'Ohana, extended family, the genealogy of the 'ohana and social relationships are more

⁴⁷ *Hānai* means foster child, adopted child, to raise, rear, feed, nourish, sustain etc. (Pukui and Elbert 1986)

important in defining kinship and in defining Hawaiian identity. The ‘ohana functions as a central unit through which people create co-dependent relationships, identify themselves and seek support. Through the ‘ohana you are also made aware of your genealogy and your connection to ancestors. Kauanui (2008:41) argues that genealogical connections “are inherently about rootedness by putting the recognition of ancestors back in “ancestry” – and therefore, connecting Hawaiians to the ‘āina (land)” as opposed to blood quantum that “works to deracinate” in determining whether someone is “Hawaiian enough”.

As discussed in chapter four the connection between Hawaiians and land is very strong. The land is considered a part of Hawaiian genealogy in that the kalo plant is believed to be a sibling to the Hawaiian people. According to Kana‘iaupuni, Malia, and Liebler (in Kauanui 2008:51), researchers have found, in the case of Kanaka Maoli, “that in questions of identity, place plays a critical role through Native Hawaiian traditions and customs that weave together physical, spiritual, and social ties to the land and sea”. However, today, not many Hawaiians practice a traditional relationship to land, but rather focus on the ownership of land. In order for land to become an important ingredient of Hawaiian identity it is however crucial to understand and experience the land through the reciprocal and dialectical relationship of old, i.e providing for the land as it provides for you and communicating with the land through chants and movement. This relationship can be experienced through hula.

In several different manners, hula brings the dancer closer to the land. Through movements, chants and the physical connection to land with growing and collecting materials for instruments, lei and garments, the hula dancer gains knowledge about the land and about the reciprocal relationship between people and land. Hawaiian identity is deeply rooted in this relationship, as the land is part of their genealogy. McGregor mentions three important aspects on being Hawaiian:

“Aloha ‘āina, aloha ke akua, aloha kekāhi i kekāhi” (love and respect the land, love and honor God, love and look after one another, these are the three important things our kūpuna always ask us to remember): this was another mantra of Uncle Harry. From him I learned that one who understands and lives by these precepts embraces the world of Native Hawaiians. (2007:2)

In relation to Hālau hula o Halia all three of these aspects are applicable. And even though this particular hālau has a religious connection to Christianity, the other two aspects are, I dare say, *always* in the philosophy of a hālau. In light of this I argue that through the promotion of prominent knowledge about, and spiritual connection to land, and the relationship to other

people, hula enhances the dancers' Hawaiian identity. By embracing the hula tradition, they also embrace "the world of Native Hawaiians".

Performing a sense of self

Solomon (2000:258) argues, based on his work with the Chayantaka in Bolivia, that "[...] musical performance is a practice for embodying community identity, inscribing it on earthly landscapes as well as in the landscapes of the mind". As with the Chayantaka, who sing places and landscapes with the lyrics of their music, and perform their connection to these places by singing, Hawaiians project their connection to landscape and places through hula performances. When hula dancers "dance the land" they connect and identify with their landscape through the embodiment of chants that tell the stories of places and of a mythical past. The hula therefore becomes a space in which you manage place, your connection to that place and to a personal as well as collective identity. Solomon further argues:

Performance occasions are the opportunities to call into being the social body and landscape of one's own community in front of representatives of other such communities. Performance creates the space for calling into being the differences that makes a difference – the differences between communities. (2000:276)

Solomon emphasizes in this paragraph how the performance becomes a space in which differences between communities become visible. The performance becomes a social boundary between two different social groups. Since the hula is such a visible and highly appreciated tradition both within Hawai'i and outside the Hawaiian Islands the "differences that makes a difference" are frequently exposed both to members of the same community and to members of other communities less similar than the ones Solomon uses in his analysis. The performance becomes a space in which one forms a personal and collective identity. Especially in relation to tourist performances where the majority of the audiences are outsiders to the ethnic group and thus the differences become visible, the hula performance becomes a space for managing identity. The ethnic boundary (Barth 1969) becomes visible between the performer and the audience, over which ascribed and self-ascribed identities are created. In these tourist performances the question of authenticity from the audience perspective often enhances or diminishes Hawaiian identity. In kahiko performances the audience is more likely to ascribe Hawaiian identity to the dancer than in the 'auana

performances. The dancer however will self-ascribe Hawaiian identity equally in both performances.

Through movement, costume, chant and music the dancer projects a historical, mythical and natural landscape that to the audience is unique because of the differences to their own sense of landscape, and to the dancer for its place within the hula tradition. Looking closer to the signature movements of different hālau, a performance also contains the differences between hula dancers in relation to their place in the hula tradition. Stillman (1996:375) suggests that “the act of performing the hula is an act of situating oneself within the hula tradition; the further act of doing so on a competition stage is an acknowledgement of that stage’s significance for displaying the Hawaiian cultural tradition that hula embodies”. The competition stage is thus to a greater degree a space in which personal identity as a hula dancer is formed, while simultaneously being a space for displaying Hawaiian culture and a collective Hawaiian identity.

An interesting development in recent years concerning hula as producing ethnic identity can be seen in the male hula, and especially within the kahiko dances. Before the Hawaiian renaissance, dancing hula was viewed as a feminine activity, where the only males who danced were considered *māhū*, that is, “effeminate males, gay men, and/or transgendered women” (Tengan 2008:152). The hula was thus not masculine enough for the men to participate in the tradition. However, this has changed, as it seems contemporary Hawaiian men have become more concerned with their ethnic identity than with their masculine identity or, rather, projecting one’s ethnic identity has become the ultimate masculine. Thus the male hula, the kahiko styled and especially the war dances, as an expression of ethnic identity is considered masculine. An example of this can be seen in The Hawai‘i Rainbow Warriors, the football team of University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa, who has picked up the ha‘a dances, which are similar to the Māori haka dances, and perform these out on the field, and in front of the other team before a game.

Hula as part of a performative structure

Sahlins (1985) argues that Hawaiian society is performatively structured, i.e. social relationships are continuously made out of practices, rather than prescriptively structured, i.e. a structure of bounded groups and conclusive rules that prescribe the way people act and interact. He further argues that in performatively structured societies “[...] circumstantial happenings are often marked and valued for their differences, their departures from existing arrangements, as people may then act upon them to reconstruct their social conditions”

(1985:xii). A performative structure is a relationship that deems the act as creating the social form. By arguing that one may become a child of the land, or kama'āina, by nurture or hānai (foster, adopt) as well as by being born to it, Sahlins suggests that kinship is not biologically fixed but relationally constructed in Hawai'i. You can become a parent through birth, but also through fostering. Further he suggests that parents and children are "composed of the same thing whether by the reproduction of substance or its common consumption" and that a person whose food comes from a certain land is a child of it (Sahlins 1985:29). In this sense belongingness to the land is determined by the relationship between the person and the land. Hawaiianness is created through the act of consuming land. In relation to this I suggest that Hawaiian identity, in its self-ascribed form, is produced and reproduced by *acts* that signify it.

The hula is a part of the performative structure, and may function as a method for incorporation and exclusion, and the reconstruction of a sense of community. By dancing you become more Hawaiian; the act (dancing hula) defines the social form (Hawaiian). However, it is important to emphasise, as I have done throughout this thesis, that being a hula dancer entails much more than movement in a choreographed pattern. Knowledge about Hawaiian history, cosmology and traditions are equally important parts to being a hula dancer. However, it is through the performance your knowledge is projected, thus it is the performance that becomes linked to being Hawaiian. The performance reproduces the social form. Hula thus functions as an expression of Hawaiianness and by performing it you produce and reproduce what it means to be Hawaiian.

Concluding remarks

The politics of Hawaiian identity has been a subject of debate with both Hawaiian and non-Hawaiian scholars since the cultural revival of the 1970s. The need to identify Hawaiians as an ethnic group, and to some extent an indigenous group, is within politics rooted in rights to land and to advantageous programs within housing and education. The result has been a Hawaiian identity that is defined by state law as based on a fifty percent blood quantum rule similar to rules of identity in North American Indian tribes. However, with diminishing numbers of biologically "pure" Hawaiians, this definition is overall insufficient for Hawaiian identity. Hawaiian identity has become measurable from a dedication to Hawaiian traditions and especially through the practice of a reciprocal relationship to land, following old Hawaiian traditions. With the hula tradition one learns about this relationship through

Hawaiian history, myths and cosmology, and also through a more physical relationship based on knowledge about and collecting of different materials for costumes and hula implements. When dancing myths and histories with connections to place names and topographic features the hula dancer embodies the land, and thus identifies as part of the land.

I have suggested that Hawaiian identity is a product of social processes in which ascription and self-ascription become defining categories. It is across boundaries and in social interaction Hawaiian identity becomes visible. A hula performance becomes a space in which one negotiates ethnic identity based on the self-ascribed Hawaiian identity and place within the hula tradition, as well as ascription of Hawaiian identity from the audience. In tourist performances Hawaiian identity becomes more visible to the audience through hula kahiko dances, but the dancer's self-ascription is not grounded in the difference between the kahiko and the 'auana dances.

The social meanings of hula, as have been shown throughout this thesis, are many. However, in relation to the meaning of being Hawaiian, it functions as an including and excluding structure that is used to create a sense of community. Through performance, the hula is valued as an ingredient in the processes that define Hawaiian identity. Hawaiian identity is produced and reproduced through acts that signify it. It is a part of a performative structure, and is acted out through involvement in Hawaiian traditions such as the hula. Through hula, the dancers perform what it means to be Hawaiian in past, present and future; in the islands and in the world.

Appendix A

Hawaiian Glossary

<i>Ahupua'a</i> =	Land division usually extending from the uplands to the sea.
<i>Akua</i> =	God, goddess, spirit, ghost, devil, image, idol, corpse.
<i>Ali'i</i> =	Chief, cheifess, officer, ruler, monarch, peer, headman, noble, aristocrat, etc.
<i>Ali'i nui</i> =	High chief, high cheifess, <i>nui</i> = big, large, great, greatest, a lot, most, maximum, etc.
<i>Aloha</i> =	love, affection, compassion, mercy, sympathy, pity, kindness etc.
<i>'Auana</i> =	To wander, drift, ramble, go from place to place
<i>'Aumakua</i> =	Family or ancestral gods, deified ancestors who might take the form of animals.
<i>Ha'a</i> =	A dance with bent knees.
<i>Hālau</i> =	<i>def.</i> Long house, as for canoes or hula instructions; meeting house. Used often when naming hula schools, i. e. <i>Hula Hālau O Kou Lima Nani E – School of Lovely Hula Hands.</i>
<i>Hānai</i> =	Adopt, foster.
<i>Haole</i> =	White person, American, Englishman, Caucasian, entirely white.
<i>Hapa haole</i> =	Half white.
<i>Haumana</i> =	Student, pupil, apprentice, recruit, disciple.
<i>Heiau</i> =	Pre-Christian place of worship, shrine.
<i>Hi'uwai</i> =	Water purification ritual/feast.
<i>Honu</i> =	Sea turtle.
<i>Ho'opa'a</i> =	Musician.
<i>Hulumanu</i> =	Court favourites of Kamehameha III.
<i>'Ili</i> =	Land section. Usually a subdivision of an ahupua'a.
<i>Ipu</i> =	The bottled gourd, a wide spreading vine.
<i>Ipu heke</i> =	Gourd drum with a top section.
<i>'Iwa</i> =	Frigate or man-of-war bird.
<i>Kahiko</i> =	Old, ancient, antique, primitive, long ago, beforehand. Plural: <i>kāhiko</i> .

<i>Kahuna</i> =	Priest, sorceres, magician, wizard, minister.
<i>Kākā‘ōlelo</i> =	Orator, person skilled in the use of language; counsellor, advisor, storyteller, oratory, to orate.
<i>Kalo</i> =	Taro.
<i>Kama‘āina</i> =	Native born, one born in a place, host.
<i>Kāne</i> =	Man, male.
<i>Keiki</i> =	Child.
<i>Konohiki</i> =	Headman of an ahupua‘a land division under the cheif.
<i>Kumu</i> =	Bottom, base, foundation, basis, title.
<i>Kumu hula</i> =	Hula master, teacher.
<i>Kuleana</i> =	Right, privilege, concern, responsibility, etc.
<i>Kupe‘e</i> =	Bracelet, anklet.
<i>Kupuna</i> =	Grandparent, ancestor, relative or close friend of the grandparents generation, grandaunt, granduncle.
<i>Lānai</i> =	Porch, veranda, balcony, booth, shed.
<i>Lauhala</i> =	Pandanus leaf.
<i>Lū‘au</i> =	1. Young taro tops, especially as baked with coconut cream and chicken or octopus. 2. Hawaiian feast named for the taro tops always served at one.
<i>Maha‘oi</i> =	Bold, impertinent, impudent, insolent, nervy, cheeky, rude, forward, etc.
<i>Māhele</i> =	Division, portion, section, zone, lot, piece, quota, etc.
<i>Māhū</i> =	Homosexual, hermaphrodite.
<i>Malo</i> =	Males loincloth.
<i>Maka‘āinana</i> =	Commoner, populace, people in general; citizen, subject.
<i>Mele</i> =	Song.
<i>Mō‘ī</i> =	King, sovereign, monarch, majesty, ruler.
<i>Moku</i> =	To be cut, severed, amputated, broken into.
<i>Mu‘umu‘u</i> =	A loose gown.
<i>Pa‘i</i> =	To slap, spank, beat, hit, clap; to print, publish; to snap, as pictures; to break, as a taboo.
<i>Pahu</i> =	Box, drum, cask, chest, barrel, trunk, tank, case, etc.
<i>Pā hula</i> =	Hula troupe, hula studio, place reserved for hula dancing.
<i>Pā‘ū</i> =	Womans skirt, <i>pā‘ū hula</i> = hula skirt.
<i>Po‘e</i> =	People, persons, personnel, population, assemblage, group of, company of.

<i>‘Ohana</i> =	Family, relative, kin group, related, extended family, clan.
<i>Uehe</i> =	Hula step.
<i>‘Ukulele</i> =	Leaping flea. String instrument.
<i>Umauma</i> =	Chest, breast.
<i>Ūniki</i> =	Graduation exercises, as for hula, lua fighting and other ancient arts.
<i>Wahine</i> =	Woman, female.
<i>Wana</i> =	A ray of light.

Appendix B

On the Kuleana of a Kumu Hula

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January 2008, ver. 5

The title of Kumu Hula commands great respect. At the same time, there has emerged great concern that the title has come to be used too freely, and without understanding or awareness of the kuleana (responsibility) that the title carries. The title itself has a history, and that history is not entirely crystal clear. There were kupuna in the 1960s, for example, who did not use the term kumu hula; instead they applied the designation loea to revered masters’ and only to revered masters.

In the Hawaiian Dictionary by Pukui and Elbert, the definition of “kumu hula” does not have the all-encompassing sense of current usage. Consider how the Hawaiian Dictionary presents the definition of kumu:

1. Bottom, base, foundation, basis, title (as to land), main stalk of a tree, trunk, handle, root (in arithmetic); basic; hereditary, fundamental. Kumupali, base foot of a cliff. ‘Ike kumu, basic, fundamental knowledge. Ali‘i kumu, hereditary chief. Alanui kumu, main street. ‘Auikumu, nominative case. Kumu kāhili, staff of a kāhili. Kumu nalu, source of waves, as where surfing starts. Mai ke kumu ā ka wēlau, from trunk to tip [all, entirely]. (PPN tumu.)

2. Teacher, tutor, manual, primer, model, pattern. Kumu alaka‘i, guide, model, example. Ka‘u kumu, my teacher. Kumu ho‘ohālike, pattern, example, model. Kumu hula, hula teacher. Kumu ku‘i, boxing teacher. Kumu kula, school teacher. Kumu leo mele, song book. Kumu mua, first primer.

3. Beginning, source, origin; starting point of plaiting. ho‘o kumu To make a beginning, originate, create, commence, establish, inaugurate, initiate, institute, found, start.

4. Reason, cause, goal, justification, motive, grounds, purpose, object, why. Kumu no ka ‘oki male, grounds for divorce. Kumu ‘ole, without reason or cause. He aha ke kumu i ‘eha ai kou wāwae? What is the reason for your foot hurting?

The term kumu hula is ensconced within the second sense of kumu; a teacher who is a guide or model. Fundamentally, viewing this sense of teacher through the first definition affirms an understanding that a kumu is a foundation. The proverb “I ola nā lālā no ke kumu”

underscores the vital life-giving function of a foundation to that which it generates and supports: The leaves live because of the trunk.

In hula, the kumu hula is a repository of knowledge.

A kumu hula is a conduit of the hula tradition.

A kumu hula has learned the tradition from those who came before.

A kumu hula continues to learn as more information becomes available.

A kumu hula passes on the tradition to those who will carry it into the future.

Each kumu hula has many kuleana.

A kumu hula is responsible to his or her own kumu hula.

A kumu hula is responsible to his or her own haumana.

A kumu hula is responsible to the mele and hula in his or her own care.

A kumu hula is responsible to the community for whom hula matters.

A kumu hula is responsible to the stories, memories and histories related through mele and hula.

A kumu hula must be vigilant about what is done in the name of hula.

It is the kumu hula's kuleana to cultivate respect in and for hula.

A kumu hula cultivates respect for the hula tradition.

A kumu hula cultivates respect for all of the items used in hula, including costumes, implements, teaching materials, the instructional space, and the performance space.

A kumu hula cultivates respect for those who are dedicated to respectful practice of the hula tradition.

A kumu hula cultivates respect for the Hawaiian people as keepers of the tradition.

A kumu hula cultivates respect for the Hawaiian language.

A kumu hula cultivates respect for the āina where the hula originated.

A kumu hula cultivates respect for the ancestors whose efforts kept hula a living tradition.

The way that kumu hula are trained has evolved tremendously within a matter of two or three decades, a short time indeed in the centuries-old hula tradition. Yet while the specifics of the training of kumu hula have changed, the overall aspiration of kumu hula has remained constant: to honor the kuleana to safeguard and pass on knowledge about hula.

The status of "kumu hula" has always been one that is earned through the recognition of peers and the respect of haumana. The title is never bestowed by oneself onto oneself. The title should never be taken by anyone without a personal connection to a kumu hula. A kumu hula is someone who has received the blessing of his or her own kumu. Those who have been privileged to earn his or her kumu's trust understand why that trust has been earned, why it is sacred, and why it must never be broken.

There are many many hula teachers in the present whose journeys have not included the formalized and ritualized training structures that have emerged since the 1970s renaissance of Hawaiian culture and language. There is no question that their accomplishments and contributions have entitled them to our respect. To their students, they have served as foundations. Because of their efforts, the hula tradition remained alive. And through their commitment to hula, many have, in fact, acquired and mastered the knowledges necessary to be foundations to their students in the present.

The thoughts assembled here offer ways of thinking through the kinds of knowledges and understandings that could be useful to kumu hula. It is not a checklist for becoming a kumu hula. The specifics of that process belong solely to those responsible for ensuring its integrity.

By putting these thoughts forward, I hope these points and questions foster deeper awareness and informed dialogue on the varied dimensions of hula, and greater respect for the knowledges that kumu hula draw on in perpetuating this venerable tradition.

These thoughts are based on conversations with many folks over the years, and I am very grateful for their patience with me as well as their ana‘o. However, all responsibility for the thoughts and opinions expressed here rests with me.

Questions on Hula Knowledges

1. Do you understand why hula is meaningful to Hawaiian people?
2. Do you understand why mele is important to hula?
3. Do you understand why mele is meaningful to Hawaiian people?
4. Do you know how to do research on mele?
5. Do you know how to confirm the accuracy of lyrics, resolve discrepancies, and remedy deficiencies?
6. Do you know how to identify the haku mele of chants and songs?
7. Can you perform the dances you are teaching?
8. Can you pronounce correctly the titles of the dances you perform and teach?
9. Can you pronounce the lyrics correctly?
10. Can you explain the content of the dances you are teaching?
11. Can you translate a mele?
12. Do you know where to look for translations?
13. Do you know the differences among various Hawaiian-English dictionaries? Do you know why it matters?
14. Do you understand the concept of kaona? Do you understand its levels and its limitations?
15. Do you understand the proverb i ka ‘ōlelo ke ola, i ka ‘ōlelo ka make?
16. Do you understand how the words of mele have power?
17. Do you know traditional hula vocabulary?
18. Do you know the names for basic feet in your teacher’s tradition? And in at least one other tradition?
19. Do you know how to analyze dance movement?
20. Do you know how to finetune students’ dancing?
21. Do you understand the concept of muscle memory in your teaching?
22. Do you know how to diagnose and correct student errors and/or bad habits?
23. Do you know what is appropriate to teach for different age groups?
24. Do you know how to explain what the hula is to your audiences?
25. Do you know how to explain what the hula is to potential clients?
26. Every hula performer is a cultural ambassador. Do you know how to respond when strangers laugh and do “air wave” hand motions?
27. Do you know how to prepare your students to respond when strangers laugh and do “air wave” hand motions?
28. Can you play ‘ukulele?
29. Can you operate a CD player?
30. Can you operate an iPod?
31. Do you know how to select music for hula?

32. Do you know where to look for music?
33. Do you know how to speak into a microphone effectively?
34. Do you know how to give instructions to musicians?
35. Do you understand our moral imperative to support Hawaiian music recording artists by recommending that your students purchase CDs instead of circulate copies—thereby depriving the artists of fair compensation for their labor?
36. Can you pronounce the names of the hula implements correctly?
37. Do you know the conventions of ki‘ipā for the various implements?
38. Can you perform or teach a hula auana using single or double pu‘ili?
39. Can you perform or teach a hula ‘auana using single or double ‘uli‘uli?
40. Can you perform or teach a hula ‘auana using ipu heke ‘ole?
41. Do you know how to care for hula implements?
42. Do you know how to select appropriate lei for dancers?
43. Do you know how to make lei?
44. Do you know how to care properly for lei?
45. Do you know how to select plant materials for lei?
46. Do you know how to gather plant materials for leimaking in an environmentally sensitive way?
47. Do you know how to combine plant materials in lei?
48. Do you know how to select costumes?
49. Do you know how to make costumes?
50. Do you understand color significance in costumes and lei?
51. Do you know how to secure costumes and lei on dancers?
52. Do you know names of flowers for each island?
53. Do you understand how to use costume styles to enhance dancers’ bodies?
54. Do you understand how to use costume styles to enhance the dance movements?
55. Do you know how to care properly for costumes?
56. Can you oli?
57. Can you pa‘i an ipu?
58. Do you know the names of the rhythms played by the ho‘opa‘a?
59. Do you know which rhythms are traditional to ipu?
60. Can you pa‘i a pahu?
61. Do you know which rhythms are traditional to pahu?
62. Do you know why the rhythms for ipu and pahu are not interchangeable?
63. Do you know when a mele should be accompanied by one and not the other?
64. Do you know the protocols surrounding the use and placement of ipu heke?
65. Do you know the protocols surrounding the use and placement of the dancer’s implements?
66. Can you perform or teach a hula noho using kuhi lima?
67. Can you perform or teach a hula noho using pa‘i umauma?
68. Can you perform or teach a hula noho using ‘ili‘ili?
69. Can you perform or teach a hula noho using kala‘au?
70. Can you perform or teach a hula noho using pu‘ili?
71. Can you perform or teach a hula noho using ‘uli‘uli?
72. Can you perform or teach a hula noho using ipu?
73. Do you know how to create new hula ‘auana?
74. Do you know how to create new hula kahiko?
75. Do you know how to choreograph using the hula implements?
76. Do you know how to create new implement rhythms? Do you understand when it is appropriate to do so?
77. Do you know how to create new hula steps? Do you understand when it is appropriate to

- do so?
78. Do you know vocabulary for types of mele?
 79. Do you understand why certain types of mele are more appropriate for hula than others?
 80. Do you understand why certain types of mele are not appropriate for hula?
 81. Do you understand the differences among different styles of oli?
 82. Do you understand which styles of oli are appropriate with which kinds of mele?
 83. Do you understand which styles of oli are appropriate in which kinds of situations?
 84. Do you know the protocols for ordering chants and hula within a traditional hula program?
 85. Do you know names of plants for the kuahu hula?
 86. Do you understand the role of pule in your teaching and performing endeavors?
 87. Do you know how to address Laka?
 88. Do you know how to address Kapō‘ulakīna‘u?
 89. Do you understand why sacred dances are surrounded by kapu?
 90. Do you understand why some dances and mele are more sacred than others?
 91. Do you know how to focus your students’ attention?
 92. Do you know how to treat your own kumu with respect?
 93. Do you know the sources of the hula and chants you learned from your kumu?
 94. Do you know your kumu’s hula genealogy?
 95. Do you know who are historically significant sources in hula lineages other than your own?
 96. Do you know how to treat your fellow kumu hula colleagues with respect?
 97. Do you know how to treat other people’s kumu with respect?
 98. Do you know how to treat haumana of other kumu hula with respect?
 99. Do you earn the respect of your haumana instead of expect it?
 100. Do you earn the trust of your haumana instead of expect it?
 101. Do you know how to nurture passion for hula in your haumana?
 102. Do you know how to nurture haumana to become responsible for their hula knowledge, skills, implements, and costumes?
 103. Do you know how to recognize and cultivate a haumana’s passion when s/he demonstrates it?
 104. Do you know how to assess whether a student is adequately prepared to be trusted with increased responsibility?
 105. Do you know how to protect your students from negative energy?
 106. Do you know how to protect your reputation?
 107. Do you understand why your kumu taught you the way s/he did?
 108. Do you understand why knowledge is sometimes withheld from students?
 109. Do you know the proverb ”A‘ohe pau ka ‘ike i ka halau ho‘okahi”?
 110. Do you live by it?
 111. Do you know how to offer evaluation and criticism constructively?
 112. Do you understand your kuleana to speak up when something is not pono?
 113. Do you understand when it is not appropriate to speak up when you see something you think may not be in the best interest of hula?
 114. Do you understand your kuleana to maintain the skills and knowledge you have received from your kumu?
 115. Do you understand why some dances must be maintained exactly in the style in which it came to you?
 116. Do you understand what is hewa about taking an existing choreography and changing parts of it?
 117. Do you strive for new knowledge beyond what you received from your kumu?

118. Do you understand your kuleana to pass on the skills and knowledge you have received so that it does not end with you?
119. Do you empower your students to exceed your own knowledge and capabilities?
120. Do you understand your kuleana to impart skills and knowledge only when haumana are ready to receive it?
121. Do you understand your kuleana to share your skills and knowledge with your community?
122. Do you understand your kuleana to continue to learn about mele and hula on your journey through life?
123. Do you understand the kuleana to contribute to the hula tradition?
124. Do you know vocabulary for Hawaiian values?
125. Do you live by them?
126. What is your motivation for being or becoming a kumu hula?
127. A kumu is a foundation. Do you possess sufficient knowledge and passion to be a foundation in hula for your students?

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