The Return of Kū?

Re-membering Hawaiian Masculinity,
Warriorhood, and Nation

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In 1791 the chief Kamehameha erected and consecrated the massive stone temple Pu‘ukoholā Heiau (on the island of Hawai‘i) in order to fulfill a prophecy telling that all of Hawai‘i would be his if he built a house for Kū, the god of state, male generative power, and sometimes war. By 1810 Kamehameha had unified the archipelago and established the Hawaiian Kingdom. Over the next two hundred years, though, American imperialism in the Pacific led to a prolonged settler occupation of the islands (Fujikane and Okamura 2008; Kauanui 2008a; Sai 2008; Silva 2004; Trask 1999). On the 2010 bicentennial of Hawaiian nationhood, Kānaka ‘Oiwi Maoli (Indigenous Hawaiians) lifted up new prayers for reunification and restoration. In June the last three remaining temple images of Kū stood together for the first time in nearly two hundred years at the Bernice Pauahi Bishop Museum (Honolulu) when two of the statues returned to the islands from their present homes in Massachusetts and London. This special exhibit was titled E Kū Ana Ka Pāia (The walls shall stand upright), a line from another prophecy chant that speaks of “the loss and return of the Hawaiian government through the unification of the people to form the walls of the restored nation” (Ayau and Tengan 2002:186). That same month the ‘Aha Kāne Native Hawaiian Men’s Health Conference gathered over six hundred men from across the islands and the U.S. continent to discuss their roles and responsibilities as the metaphorical cornerstones of these walls. The opening ceremonies took place at the Bishop Museum, where chants, prayers, and dances invoked the mana (spiritual power and authority) of Kū. Two months later many of these same men traveled to Pu‘ukoholā Heiau to make offerings of ritual items and embodied performance—prominent among them warrior dances with carved spears—that celebrated the completion of a four-year effort to rebuild the walls that had fallen during a massive earthquake in 2006.

These events highlight the political stakes of gender and cultural performances in Hawai‘i. As Wolfe has noted of settler colonialism, “invasion is a structure not an event” (2006:388) and one that operates under a logic of eliminating Natives (either physically or culturally) in order to replace them with non-Natives on “emptied” lands. Hall explains that such strategies of erasure include “the deliberate destruction of non-heteronormative and monogamous relationships, the Indigenous languages that could conceptualize these relationships, and the cultural practices that celebrated them” (2008:278). While recognizing that “gender oppression has been a mode of imperialism in the history of Hawai‘i,” Kauanui points out that “the nationalist struggles over the meaning of precolonial history with regard to both gender and sexuality constitute a significant political ter-
rain within the context of Native Hawaiian decolonization” (2008b:283). Taking these Indigenous studies and Native feminist insights as a departure point, I ask what it means for Hawaiian men to link claims of masculinity to those of sovereignty. What is gained and what is lost when the restoration of both Hawaiian nationhood and men’s authority is called for in the return of Ku? 

Among the core groups participating in the 2010 events was the Hale Mua (Men’s House), a grassroots organization on Maui and O’ahu that emerged out of the Hawaiian cultural nationalist movement in the 1990s with a focus on training Hawaiian men to be community leaders through the practice of Hawaiian warrior traditions. This essay draws on personal involvement and ongoing ethnographic research that I have carried out with the group since 1997, which I have published on more fully elsewhere (Tengan 2008a). My central argument here is that performances of Indigenous masculinities enact both the possibilities and the limits of decolonization. Gender performances in settler societies emerge from the conditions of colonization and the struggles of Indigenous Peoples to persist and thrive as nations on their homelands. Bodies figure centrally in the gendered work of decolonization, for it is there that alternative forms of being and acting—in the Hawaiian case, those based in e a (sovereignty, life, breath), genealogy, and mana—are re-membered. However, a failure to critique Indigenous masculinities enables the perpetuation of settler heteropatriarchy and ultimately constrains the possibilities of Indigenous freedom and sovereign expression.

This chapter begins with a brief sketch of the historical and sociological contours of the Hawaiian community and the Hale Mua on Maui. I follow that with a discussion of how ceremonies that invoke Ku foreground the ideological dimensions of reclaiming Indigenous masculinity in the service of nation building. Then I focus on the Hale Mua’s body-strengthening routines and their intersections with broader discourses of violence and enactments of gender and culture through dance. It is through these ritual and bodily performances that Hawaiian masculine and warrior subjectivities come to acquire new meaning. I end by considering the possibilities and problems that these reformulated identities hold for social and political change.

A Sketch of Hawaiian History and Community

According to Hawaiian mo’olelo (stories, histories, narratives), the first Oceanic voyagers came to Hawai‘i some two thousand years ago and eventually established a highly stratified chieftaindom. Yet once Hawai‘i was put on the global imperial map with Captain James Cook’s arrival in 1778, change was much more rapid. Despite international recognition of the Hawaiian Kingdom’s independence in 1843, the nation suffered an overthrow backed by the U.S. military in 1893 and an annexation in 1898—both done illegally. White American sugar barons and missionary descendants thereafter ran the Territory of Hawai‘i like a plantation, as Hawaiian leaders worked to reverse the population collapse that saw some 90 percent of their people swept away by epidemics. World War II brought further changes, including the empowerment of second-generation Japanese American veterans and labor leaders who secured statehood in 1959 and led the political and economic shift from agribusiness to militarism and tourism (McGregor 2007).

Native Hawaiians renewed their cultural pride and political consciousness during a period of renaissance and protest in the 1970s, and by the 1980s a vibrant cultural nationalist movement flourished (Trask 1999). The recuperation of old identity terms such as Kanaka Maoli (Real People) and Kanaka ‘Oiwi (People of the Bone) indexed new political and cultural claims of Indigeneity (Ayau and Tengan 2002; Blaisdell and Mokuau 1994). A protest march and rally in downtown Honolulu attended by fifteen thousand people, a People’s International Tribunal (Ka Ho’okolokolonui Kanaka Maoli), and an apology from President Bill Clinton and the U.S. government marked the 1993 centenary of the illegal overthrow. The return of lands and sovereignty seemed imminent.

However, in 2000 the U.S. Supreme Court ruling in Rice v. Cayetano that failed to recognize Indigenous Hawaiian claims to sovereign status fueled a backlash of “color-blind” lawsuits aimed at dismantling the few programs, entitlements, and rights that Kanaka Maoli had secured under American occupation. The U.S. senator Daniel Akaka pushed forward a bill to protect against these attacks by redefining Hawaiians as members of a Native nation; a number of activists and intellectuals contested both the “Akaka Bill” and the color-blind attacks as threats to broader claims of
Hawaiian sovereignty. In the post-Rice era, Kanaka Maoli and their allies throughout the islands and on the continent organized in new ways to imagine and struggle for a more just and sustainable future for all peoples of Hawai‘i (Okamura 2008; Kauanui 2008a; Howes and Osorio 2010).

Such transformed visions of a new social order offer hope to Ōiwi, who experience severe economic and political marginalization in their homelands and increasing growth in the diaspora. In the 2010 U.S. Census, Kānaka Ōiwi numbered 52,777, some 45 percent of whom lived on the continent (Hixson et al. 2012:16). The 289,970 residing in Hawai‘i made up 21 percent of the 1.36 million residents of the state, making them the fourth-largest ethnic group, behind whites, Filipino Americans, and Japanese Americans (Nieze 2011). In 2000 Hawaiians had the highest rates of unemployment, poverty, and incarceration of all major ethnic groups in Hawai‘i (Kana‘iaupuni et al. 2005:80–87). They constituted the second-least likely group “to work in a managerial or professional capacity” and the “most likely to be employed in construction, extraction, and maintenance positions and in production, transportation, and material-moving occupations” (Kana‘iaupuni et al. 2005:84–85). Jonathan Okamura also found that “Native Hawaiian men [were] substantially underrepresented as management and business specialists” whereas Hawaiian women were “employed at parity” in these high-status jobs; conversely, Hawaiian men were overemployed in service work and women were at par (2008:47, 48–49). As far as health statistics went, Hawaiians overall had the highest rates of obesity, early morbidity, depressive symptoms, suicidal tendencies, and certain other “risky behaviors” (especially among young adults) (Kana‘iaupuni et al. 2005:94–98, 111–13, 197–203); they also had the second-highest infant mortality rates (Kana‘iaupuni et al. 2005:157).

At the same time, owing in part to increased self-identification as well as the ability to mark multiple races on census forms, the Native Hawaiian population grew 9.1 percent between the 1990 and 2000 censuses and another 31.4 percent in 2010 (Kana‘iaupuni et al. 2005:129; Hixson et al. 2012:6). As Kauanui (2008a) has noted, a return to “genealogical reckoning” of Indigeneity, rather than adherence to the settler logics of blood quantum classification, has enabled Hawaiians to contest the discourses of disappearance that dominated the early twentieth-century debates over “rehabilitating” the Native. Though no longer considered a “dying race,” Kanaka Ōiwi of the early twenty-first century continued to struggle in a context in which identity mattered in new and important ways. This was especially the case for Hawaiian men, who above all others were thought to be “missing” and whose “return” highlighted one of the many gendered aspects of decolonization.

**Kō I Mua: Cast Forward into the Men’s House**

U.S. colonial discourses of incorporation in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries were heavily gendered, rendering Hawai‘i’s lands and people as the feminine “hula girl” waiting to be taken by the masculine Uncle Sam (Ferguson and Turnbull 1999; Imada 2012; Tengan 2008a:50). Hawaiian men were typically erased from this picture; if they were represented at all, it was as either overly domesticated or irreparably dysfunctional—both forms of discursive emasculation that denied them manhood in a modern society (Tengan 2008a:10–11).

In a related but different way, Native Hawaiian nationalism in the late twentieth century was also gendered as feminine. Women’s leadership in the decolonization movement was noted widely (Trask 1999), even to the point that men (who had been active throughout) were perceived as absent and thus called upon to be more engaged (Tengan 2008a:12–13). The animating question of “where are the men?” led to the formation of the Hale Mua (Men’s House).

Their story begins with a commemoration held at Pu‘ukoholā Heiau in 1991, the bicentennial of its construction in 1791. Since 1972 the heiau (temple) had been a National Historic Site under the management of the U.S. National Park Service; the 1991 event entitled Ho‘oku‘uki‘ahi (To Unify As One) sought to redefine the space as a center of Indigenous Hawaiian mana (spiritual and political power), rather than an object of U.S. imperial state power. In an effort to again petition the heavens for Hawaiian unity, a committee led by the Maui carver and storyteller Sam Kā‘ai (b. 1938) conducted new ceremonies on the heiau and assembled a group of men called Nā Ko‘a (the Warriors or the Courageous Ones). Many of the Nā Ko‘a members later became involved in the revival of the Hawaiian fighting art known as lua, which began with a series of seminars and lua schools sponsored by the Bishop Museum. Taking up the production of carved weaponry and
and house building, fighting, sailing, lovemaking, fathering, and providing for the family. Those taking a functionalist approach to culture and society argue that when the 'aikapu system and the hale mua ended in 1819, men lost their way and have remained adrift in society ever since (Nunes and Whitney 1994; Paglinawan et al. 2006:62–63; Pukui et al. 1972, vol. 2:230). This notion is problematic and works to perpetuate a colonial discourse of masculinization—in effectual or absent men—and a gendered logic of settler elimination. The loss of the hale mua was only one of a number of factors that contributed to the social decay experienced by Hawaiian men, not all of whom were equally affected. With that said, the hale mua metaphorically serves as a useful model for action and transformation by providing an idealized space for the performance of embodied and discursive practices associated with feeding, praying, and rearing.

The basic aim of the Hale Mua on Maui was to establish a cultural foundation for Hawaiian men by creating a safe space for learning and practicing culture, engaging in the ritual process of self-transformation, and establishing networks among the men. The general premise of the group was that colonization and modernization had led to a loss of Hawaiian life and culture, especially for the men. By reestablishing a Hale Mua, men would gain a deeper understanding of their history and acquire the skills, knowledge, and courage to be more effective as members and leaders in their families and communities. With its specific focus on warriorhood, the Maui group trained its men in Hawaiian martial arts, ceremonial conduct, carving, chant, and dance. The yearly activities of the Mua typically corresponded with the precolonial Hawaiian ritual calendar that devoted eight months of the year (approximately February/March–September/October) to the activities of Kū, god of war, industry, farming, fishing, governance, and political maneuvering, including war. The remaining four months (approximately October/November–January/February) celebrated Lono, god of fertility and peace, through the Makahiki harvest festivals; all work ceased, and the people engaged in sport, games, hula, relaxation, and the giving of offerings. Much of the discussion that follows references the Kū season of 2002, which included weapons-crafting workshops in February, the Wehe Kū ceremony in March, weekly meetings between April and August, the Pu‘ukoholā event in August, and a closing ceremony in September.

The active membership in 2002 fluctuated between twenty-five and
thirty-five in any given week. Most of the men were middle class, though there were a few working- and lower-middle-class men as well; most came from working-class families and were thus upwardly mobile. The median age was in the midforties, though there was fair representation of different age groups between thirty and sixty. I assumed (incorrectly, as I discuss at the end) that all were heterosexual. Though the men held a wide range of occupations, just over half were government salaried workers. The majority of the men in the group could claim at least one ancestry in addition to Hawaiian; most could claim two or three. Most of the men felt a dual sense of alienation—from Hawaiian culture because of their Americanization and class status and from American culture because of their Hawaiian ethnic background and upbringing. A desire to find one’s place was a common theme running through the discussions, as many of them had experiences of travel and mobility. Anxieties of status, education, and violence underlay men’s motives for transformation and were worked out, importantly through bodily and discursive practices of re-membering.

Re-membering Hawaiian Masculinities

The Hale Mua provided its members with a ritual space that allowed them to learn and perform those ‘Oiwi traditions and practices that rooted them in a deeper genealogy of place as Hawaiian men who must live and work in a settler society—even if it was one they sought to transform—outside of the sanctuary of the Hale Mua. The body figured centrally in activities such as wearing a malo (loincloth) or dancing with a spear (which I will discuss below). As Farnell (1999) notes, bodily processes produce new forms of knowledge that exist and work in ways that both complement and go beyond the contemporary understandings of culture as symbolic system. It is this quality of embodied discursive action—the active signification, enactment, and production of identities through bodily movements and engagements—that makes groups such as the Hale Mua such potent sites for identity and self-formation.

Importantly, these practices involved an active re-membering of community—a “reaggregation of members” (Myerhoff 1982:111) connected and bound by a shared past and homeland recalled through performance. Thus the Mua’s ceremonies, dances, chants, routines, and stories became fertile grounds for re-membering masculinities, which can be understood as a gendered memory work that facilitates the formation of group subjectivities through the coordination of personal memories, historical narratives, and bodily experiences and representations (Tengan 2008b).

In her discussion of re-membering masculinities across Oceania, Margaret Jolly writes that such an approach seeks to “connect men’s sexed bodies with individual and collective processes of memory, in continuing conversations between pasts and presents” (2008:6). Commenting on Connell 2005 and Butler 1990, Jolly notes that embodied performances of gender “can both reproduce and subvert” the “privileged scripts of culture, nation, and heterosexual desire” that are found in “hegemonic masculinities”—the models of being a man that are “broadly accepted as dominant” (2008:5). In settler societies such as Hawai‘i, Indigenous “male potency emerges in relation—and sometimes in resistance—to the hegemonic forces of colonialism and contending imperial models of masculinity” (Jolly 2008:11). Yet as Vicente Diaz points out, “tackling” such formations requires careful attention to the ways that American and Native Pacific cultural elements may collude in “hypermasculinist and homophobic performances” (2011:91), particularly those of warriorhood.

For the remainder of this essay, I will focus on the ways that the Hale Mua actively re-members Hawaiian masculinity through embodied discursive action—particularly body-strengthening routines, interpersonal greetings, traditional tattoos, fighting arts, and ceremonial practices. These practices foreground mana, (sovereignty, life, breath), and genealogy and are central to understanding (and critiquing) the masculinities performed in the ritual invocations of Kū and the weekly meetings.

Kū Rising: Structures of Mana

The Wehe Kū (opening of Kū season) ceremonies officially began the 2002 cycle of activities for the Hale Mua. Inspired by the ceremonies at Pu‘ukoholā, the Wehe Kū on Maui took place at the historically and spiritually deep heiau of Pihanakalani (Gathering Place of the Chiefs) and the chiefly complex Halekilo (House of Images). The March 30 gathering took place at 4:00 a.m., with the men dressed in malo (loincloths) and kīhei (shoulder cloaks) and carrying the wooden spears they had carved in Feb-
uary. The first half of the ceremony consisted of a recitation of prayers and genealogies, a ceremonial blessing of weapons, and a greeting of the rising sun with chant. The second half involved a ritual sharing of ‘awa (kava) and food, followed by a discussion of the work that would be carried out that year in order for the men to take up their responsibilities in the family and community. The season of Kū had begun.

In the Hawaiian pantheon of gods, the Kū/Hina pair represents the male/female duality of the sexes that organizes the universe in the cosmogonic genealogy chant the Kumulipo (Liliuokalani 1978 [1897]; Beckwith 1972; Kameʻeleihuia 1999:2–4; Valeri 1985:12). Kū, whose name means “standing, upright, erect,” encompasses all the male gods (and their properties) and represents the male generating power; Hina, whose name means “to fall, topple, or lean over” and references the moon (mahina), presides over the female deities and represents female fecundity and the power of growth and reproduction (Beckwith 1970:12–13; Pukui et al. 1972, vol. 2:112; Valeri 1985:12). As Lilikalā Kameʻeleihuia remarks, “The Hawaiian world was... divided into female and male domains of work, and was considered pono, correct and righteous, when there was a balance between the two. When there is balance in the world, the ancestral Akua [Gods] are pleased, and when there is perfect harmony in the universe, people are protected from all harm” (1999:4). Not only is Kū defined with and in opposition to Hina (and vice versa), but also if either is missing, the whole of society suffers. As Pukui et al. explain, “Kū, the masculine, is always accompanied by Hina, the feminine,” and together the two “symbolize the balance embodied in well-being” (1972, vol. 2:118, 147).

Kanaka Maoli seeking to return well-being to the self and society have used the metaphors of duality and balance between Kū and Hina as models for thinking. One of the primary philosophies of the lua (Hawaiian fighting art) seminars was that of understanding how the balance of Kū/Hina guided not only attacks and counterattacks but also the embodiment of both the masculine and feminine in each individual; indeed, the word “lua” itself means “duality” or “two, second” (Paglinawan et al. 2006:19). As the ‘ōlohe (lua master) Richard Paglinawan explained in an interview when the classes began, “Lua is in harmony with nature. You go with the flow of things, and you use it to your advantage. Lua is fluid, like hula. Hula and lua at one time were almost one and the same because men were the danc-
ers. Lua was the ‘hard’ part, hula is the soft. So you could relate it to yin and yang, or Kū and Hina” (Clark 1993:10). In this frame, the masculine lua complemented the feminine hula. Kyle Nākānelua credited much of what he learned about Kū/Hina balance, and his subsequent focus on the Kū, to his experience with lua.

Importantly, the connection to the mana (spiritual power and authority) of Kū comes through the physical embodiment and performance of it in ritual and in training. As Wende Elizabeth Marshall has pointed out in her review of anthropological literature on mana, the Pacific term has been interpreted in numerous ways, including Roger Keesing’s rendering of it as a “quality of efficacy manifest in visible results” (1984:149) and Brad Shore’s (1989:140) association of it with a “generative potency [and] the sources of organic creation” (Marshall 2011:4; see also Tomlinson 2006). Highlighting the performativity of mana, Marshall Sahlin’s writes that it “is the creative power Hawaiians describe as making visible what is invisible, causing things to be seen” (1981:31). For Kameʻeleihuia (1992:46–49), the route of Kū—success in politics and warfare accompanied by the construction of massive heiau—was one of the two traditional paths (the other being genealogy) to mana that would justify a chief’s rule over the land. In the present-day context of the Hawaiian nationalist movement, Hawaiian mana is invoked in a number of ways as a direct challenge to American imperial power (Goodyear-Kaʻōpua 2013:207; Marshall 2011:6; Trask 1999:91–92).

As a gendered project, the effort to reinvigorate the mana of Kū ritualizes resistance to the perceived colonial emasculation of Hawaiian men and the Hawaiian nation (cf. Sinha 1995). As Nākānelua described it, “Because we’re a male, masculine-oriented group, our imi [searching] is towards the masculinity of the culture because there’s been so much femininity. And again, not that femininity is bad; everything has its place and its time. No laila [Therefore]... if you believe everything has its place and time, then it should hold true to da fact that there should be a place and a time for the mana Kū. There’s a time for healing, there’s a time for building mana” (Nākānelua 1999). The idea of building is important here, for if decolonization entails healing, it also demands an active rebuilding of nation, place, and hale (house). Yet in the name of cultural reclamation, the project of revitalizing the mana Kū runs the risk of inscribing the Kū/Hina and male/female dichotomies with the valences of strong/weak and dominant/sub-
like Ku who care for them. The full measure of the god’s care is recognized in the full measure of names, and must be understood in that broad context” (Friesen 1992:22). These tropes of “Ku the war god” are also used to change colonial subjects into savages and bloodthirsty male warriors. The primary goal of Na Koa was to restore courage and discipline, not violence. As Ka’ai and Nākānelua sought to decouple the concept of Na Koa from violence and war, so too did they seek to place Ku in the larger context of his multitude of being. When men re-membered the mana of Ku, they too would be upright members of the community ready to rebuild the nation. This was precisely the goal of the Ku exhibit and the opening of the ‘Aha Kāne Native Hawaiian Men’s Health Conference in 2010.

Embodying Sovereignty, Ancestors, and Land

In 2002 the Hale Mua o Maui met once a week from 5:30 to 8:00 p.m. at a harborside property consisting of a meeting hall and a grassy area. When the men arrived, many wore pā’ūi (waist wraparounds) and greeted each other with the honi, a traditional practice of touching of noses and exchanging breath. Training began with prayers and chants that were followed by warm-ups and stretches. A more rigorous routine of ho‘oikaika kino (body-strengthening exercises) followed, much of which incorporated the seven-foot wooden spears that members had carved. When that was finished, various dances and martial sets were covered, including those that would be performed at Pu‘ukoholā. The last part of practice ended in sparring, which was in preparation for an upcoming sham battle that would also take place at the heiau. Though padded spears and protective gear were utilized, the training was hard and would leave men with cuts, bruises, sprains, and sometimes broken bones. Practice ended with discussion, prayer, and a final exchange of honi.

Ho‘oikaika kino primarily works to achieve pono (balance, well-being) by strengthening the body, mind, and spirit. American ideals of beauty and health shape the ways in which preoccupations and obsessions with the body are articulated by Hawaiians today, especially since the dominant sexualized images of Kanaka men and women in the tourist industry are those that conform with Western standards of slim but shapely physiques, straight hair, and facial features that are “Polynesian” but mixed with those
of Anglos and/or Asians (Desmond 1999; Imada 2012). Yet for ‘Ōiwi (as is the case with many other Indigenous Peoples), the colonial experience of decimation from diseases and epidemics continues to attack the cultural and psychological immune system of the Kanaka body politic and far outweighs any concern over appearance.

The colonization of the Hawaiian body manifests itself not only in culturally defined regimes of sexuality and propriety but also in more viscerally distressing ways through obesity, diabetes, cancer, and other health-related problems (Marshall 2011; McMullin 2010). These often culminate in high mortality and suicide rates, which for Hawaiian men approach epidemic proportions (Blaisdell and Mokuau 1994; Cook et al. 2005). Likewise, the structures of late capitalism and Hawai‘i’s dependence on imported foods and goods (as well as the forced removal of Hawaiians from the islands) maintains this bodily malaise to such a point that for many Hawaiians disease has become something endemic to their culture. Thus the project of decolonization can proceed only by recovering and healing the body.

In the Hale Mua, as in the Hawaiian health organizations that Marshall (2011) and McMullin (2010) described, the well-being of the Hawaiian people includes as its core component the vitality of the culture, and as such, many of the activities are culturally based and include a metapragmatics of healing the nation through healing the culture, identity, and soul of the “sick” people. In addition to the process of healing, the more aggressive projects of anticolonial and nationalist resistance require assertions of strength and power, both culturally and bodily. For the Hale Mua, these are gendered as inherently masculine and essential for the remaking of Hawaiian men, particularly as their presence has been obfuscated by colonial discourse.

One of the most profound and yet understated performances of a remembered ‘Ōiwi masculinity is in the honi nose greeting. While some of the older men in the group remember their grandparents greeting each other with the honi, most people in Hawai‘i no longer use it. It is now practiced primarily among Native Hawaiians who have been involved in cultural revitalization activities, and particularly among men. In part, this return to the honi has been inspired by interactions with the Indigenous Māori of Aotearoa/New Zealand who had maintained that tradition; indeed, much of the project of reconstituting Hawaiian masculine subjectivities has come in a trans-Oceanic dialogue with Māori (Tengan 100:8:12:13–65). Beyond this, though, the honi itself enacts a form of decolonial being, for the Hawaiian term “ea” that means breath and air also translates to “sovereignty,” “life,” and “to rise up” (Goodyear-Ka‘ōpua 2013:6. Pukui and Elbert 1986:36). When members of the Hale Mua stand and exchange breath in the honi, they are also asserting their sovereign presence that settler colonialism has failed to eliminate. The act affirms their bonds of solidarity and membership, particularly as the honi involves a closeness and intimacy that might otherwise be disavowed in more normative settings.

Nākēnelua urges members to stand up and take charge of their own health. He speaks with a conviction and authority that earn the men’s respect not only because he is articulate but also because he literally embodies those qualities, ethics, and attributes that he urges others to take up. Years of training in sports, the military, martial arts, and the fire department and working in the taro patches have given him a muscular, tanned physique. Through his training as a firefighter and other training in health care, he has taken as his kuleana (area of responsibility) the health and welfare of Hawaiians on the personal, professional, and political levels; in fact, when he was a member of the sovereignty organization Ka Lāhui Hawai‘i, he was in charge of the Maui caucus’s Department of Health (Nākēnelua 2002).

Nākēnelua also wears a number of traditionally designed tattoos that represent his ancestral lineage and visibly mark his body as a Hawaiian one. This becomes even more impressive when one discovers that Keone Nunes, a Hawaiian tattoo practitioner who uses rituals, protocols, and handmade tools and needles, placed these markings on Nākēnelua in a manner that was more painful and meaningful than if done at a tattoo parlor with a machine. Many of the men come to not only respect but also identify with Nākēnelua through the life experiences he shares in talk story, and a number of members over the years have followed his example and had their genealogies tapped into their skin during group tattoo workshops. As Keith Camacho notes, “Indigenous genealogies exceed American spatial and temporal parameters by recalling older and foraging newer connections of peoples and places” (2011:xiii). The genealogical tattoos connect men’s bodies to ancestors and islands that preceded settler occupation. It is through a kinship of lived experience and intersecting lineages that the Hale Mua infuses ea into a re-membered genealogy.
Fig. 8.4. Kyle Nākānelua (center) chants the opening lines of the Mahaʻu ritual dance at Puʻukoholā Heiau, August 2010. His kākau (tattoos) are visible on his leg, chest, and arms; less visible in this image are the kākau that go down the left side of his face. Photo courtesy of Joey Cordino.

Two particular aspects as they relate to bodily experience and performance are worth extended discussion here: violence and dance. It is through the gendered remaking of these practices that Nākānelua is most successful at lowering men’s defenses and opening them up to new experiences.

The Violence of Modernity

The problem of violence and unusually high incarceration rates among Hawaiian men has long been a topic of great concern in the Kanaka Maoli community. In 2000 Hawaiians between the ages of twenty and forty-four had the highest rates of suicide among the major ethnic groups in Hawai‘i (Kana‘iaupuni et al. 2005:113). The rates of confirmed child abuse or neglect were three to four times those of the other major ethnic groups, and Hawaiians were twice as likely as others to report physical, sexual, or emotional abuse on a Department of Health Survey (Kana‘iaupuni 2005:63–64). While representing about 20 percent of Hawai‘i’s population, Hawaiians made up 38 percent of the in-state prison population and 41 percent of Hawai‘i inmates housed in out-of-state facilities (OHA 2006:171, 175). There is a danger in reproducing such data without accounting for biases in collection and other possible flaws in methodology, and I do not seek to present this as proof of endemic Hawaiian violence. Nonetheless, these are disturbing figures that unfortunately correspond to given notions of Hawaiians, which themselves serve as the source of efforts to locate alternative ways of healing and transforming (cf. O’Neill 1996). They are also relevant because, as many studies of masculinities elsewhere have shown, violence is one of the most fundamental and problematic ways in which men define and embody subjectivity (Bowker 1998; Connell 2005:81–86).

One of the more promising aspects of the reemergence of the pā hula (fighting art schools), Nā Koa (the Courageous Ones/Warriors), and the Hale Mua (Men’s House) is their potential to provide men a place in which violence born of hurt, pain, and lack of cultural identity can be transformed into a more productive form of energy. It is also a place where members can see and meet other men who can help in the process of both healing and constructing a different idea of masculinity. Such a theme was prominent in the interviews I conducted with Puka Ho, a thirty-seven-year-old Manu County lifeguard. While contemplating the increase in his desire to learn about Hawaiian history and language, he also discussed his new understandings of being a man:

HO: A lot of values dar Kyle [Nākānelua] puts out there fo da guys in da Hale Mua is, you know, basically take care your family, take care your stuff… do what you gotta do, do what you tink is right. And I tink him fo dat, because if I… I nevah run into dis bunch of guys, I probably would be still drinking beer aftah work everyday, and instead of tinking about what I do and how I do it.

TENGAN: So you feel it’s had a real positive impact on your life?

HO: Well, yea, real positive impact, because when I was younger, I grew up, my dad would drink every night, come home bust up my maddah, bus me up, you know, send my maddah to one hospital. So you know da kine role models, that’s how you figure, oh, well, I goin get oldah, I goin work, come home drunk. And Nākānelua wen show dat there’s anadah path fo take (Ho 2002).
Significantly, Ho described seeing a different vision of mature Hawaiian masculinity that contradicted his own previously held and embodied notions. Though I would not consider Ho’s experiences the norm for most of the men, he certainly was not alone. Three others in the group told me they had grown up in homes where beatings were more common than not, and one of them even left home when he was seventeen and lived on the beach for a while before he had a stable job. He didn’t blame his father for that behavior; for he knew that “life was hard and that’s how they were,” an indication that the larger structural forces were as much (if not more) of a contributing factor as individual or cultural means for coping. He also credited Nākānelua and the Hale Mua for helping to alter his perspective.

Richard Bissen Jr., the forty-year-old chief prosecutor of Maui (now a circuit court judge), also grew up in a family where violence was “natural,” though in his case it was usually among the older men, who would get into fights with each other. Family violence was even seen as predestined, since his mother’s maiden name was Nākoa. Like Ho, he spoke of the way Nākānelua helped to change his ideas about warriorhood and violence:

There’s varying interpretations of [Nākoa]. The way my mom had interpreted their name ... “the warriors” ... was like “the fighters” because there was a lot of fighting within the family. I mean a lot of hard-headed Hawaiians who ... were stubborn, and resorting to physical violence was a natural thing ... But when Nākānelua explained it he said, “You know, it doesn’t have to mean ‘the warrior’ meaning, like the violence.” The way they wanted the term to be understood was “the courageous.” And, the best example they gave, which is what has stuck with me, is the courage to be a young Hawaiian male, and to wear a malo [loincloth] in public, and to say, “This, I am not ashamed of who I am or what I stand for.” And it’s that you have the courage to live your belief. (Bissen 2002)

Those familiar with the feature film Once Were Warriors (1995) might find parallels in the discourse of transforming violence by recourse to warrior cultural traditions that inculcate discipline, pride, and self-esteem, thereby transforming violent energies into productive ones. Indeed, many men find hope for the younger generations in the Hale Mua precisely on this basis. Along these lines, Nākānelua has spoken to inmates at Maui Communi-

ty Correctional Center and staff members from Child Protective Services. Others, such as Ka’iana Haili on Hawai’i, have used the hale mua concept to develop full curricula for domestic violence, substance abuse, and prison programs. Among other things, Haili holds that “our male ancestors were warrior/healers” and “to be either you had to learn the balance; in order to kill we learn to heal—Kū and his many forms are balanced in both death and life.” While rooting the men in the cultural practices of land stewardship and taro culture, he also advocates a political and structural understanding “that as long as we allow others to determine the fate of our aina [land] we will be at the top of the list.” (email to author, December 26, 2006.) Sally Engle Merry noted this sort of discourse in the program of a Native Hawaiian pastor (also in Hilo, Hawai’i) who “talked about the ideal warrior as a person violent in war but not at home” and “discussed male violence from a perspective of the Hawaiian sovereignty movement as well as Christian ideas” (2006:46).

While the possibilities for positive transformation of violent masculinities are there, they are limited and rely largely on the tailoring of the Hale Mua model to the needs of the group. The majority of the men who were in the Hale Mua at the time of my primary research were older men with steady jobs who, as thirty-nine-year-old accountant Clifford Alakai (2002) framed it, had “structure in their lives”; they were not the at-risk youth or otherwise marginalized men who would perhaps benefit most from the community and identity the Hale Mua offered. Moreover, Nākānelua was quite clear, as Ho noted, in stating that you had to “take care your stuff” first before dedicating your time to the Mua, and he did not present the Hale Mua as the panacea for all the social ills and problems that Hawaiian men face. The issue of gendered violence will not solve itself overnight and will require approaches on multiple levels. While part of that may involve a return of sovereignty and land, it must also include interventions into the structures of domination in the domestic space.

Within the group, though, the men’s embodied experiences suggested that the most effective means of reforming masculinities defined through violence was refiguring warrior and masculine subjectivities through body-reflexive practices. R. W. Connell defines this as a process wherein bodies act as “both objects and subjects of practice... the practice itself forming the structures within which bodies are appropriated and defined” (2005:61).
This was precisely the appeal that lua, warrior arts, and the whole regime of physical training (ho'iokaika kino) held for remaking masculinity in the Hale Mua. As Nākānelua explained of the training routine, "It is very Kū oriented…. It makes men feel really good—no different, no different from the formation of the ka'ate dojos, no different from shoto-kan, or kung-fu, or anything like that. It just, it's a way for men to develop their physical prowess and their thinking abilities, their strategic abilities, to practice their leadership roles" (Nākānelua 1999). Through such body-reflexive practices, men came to perform and know themselves and their bodies in a new way. Some had familiarity from previous experience in (as well as popular stereotypes of) the martial arts, and this worked to also make the process of coordinating 'Oiwi ideals and movements into redefined practices of "fighting." The other primary area where this was worked out was in dance.

**Dancing as Men**

One of the most notable changes brought about by the Hawaiian renaissance in the 1970s was the rebirth of men's dancing, largely tied to the revival of the ancient (kahiko) forms of dance. The Hawaiian scholar George Kanahele contrasted the "authentic" ancient form to the "modern or hapa haole (half-foreign)" one, which had become "an accommodation to the tourists" used to "advertise the charm of the islands" with "a smiling hula lassie" (1982:15). In ways similar to the Hale Mua's reclamation of "real" cultural traditions of warrihood, the "return of the male dancer to his rightful place" (Kanahele 1982:15) was a refuting of the colonial feminization, commodification, and "prostitution" of the modern form in the tourism industry (Trask 1999). In 1977 Kanahele remarked, "I remember as a kid no local boy would be caught dead dancing the hula for fear of being called a sissy, but now you're likely to get popped in the mouth if you imply that a male dancer, who may be on the football team, is a sissy. Something must be happening to change this deep-set attitude" (1982:15). Two years later he added, "Male dancers have also become favorites of local audiences, both men and women, although the squeals of glee I hear when the men come on stage wearing a modern style malo [loincloth] come mostly from the wahines [women]. John Lake tells me that invariably it is the male dancers who get the biggest applause" (1982:15). It's notable that Lake, who had a Hawaiian club at the all-boys Catholic St. Louis High School, was a part of this movement, as he later came to be the primary ritual specialist at Pu'ukoholā (see Tengan 2008a: ch. 2, 3). Lake, along with others such as Darrell Lupenui and John Ka'imikaua, did much to change the image of hula as feminine, and today men are very prominent in hula competitions, such as the Merrie Monarch Festival, held annually in Hilo, Hawai'i, which is televised statewide and streamed live on the web.

However, many of the men in the Hale Mua still associated hula with women and māhū (effeminate males, gay men, and/or transgendered women), as have other scholars (Robertson 1989). Nākānelua was one of those football players dancing hula in school (Maryknoll, a Catholic school), but he felt that it was only because he was a starter on the team that nobody teased him. Coming from a working-class neighborhood in downtown Honolulu, he hung out with boys who defined their masculinity through toughness and fighting. He recalled that when he was invited to join a hālau (hula school), he declined because he felt he would have to "duke it out every day" with the "rugged" guys he hung out with.

It was precisely this rejection of the "feminine" form of hula that led some members to search for something more "masculine" in the Hale Mua. Jacob Kana, a thirty-one-year-old power plant worker who was raised in the rural taro farming and fishing village of Kahakuloa, recalled his discovery of the Mua as such:

I really liked the group because, first of all it's like, ah, just a bunch of men, eh, just all local braddahs just gettin' togeda and stuff. That, to me, dat's what we need, dat's what was missing, all dis time. Cause like everybody else, like da wahines li' dat, dey had hula and stuff li' dat, but to me was, I dunno, I nevah like hula. Hula wasn't my ting, was more, I dunno, I used to tink was soft. Was, and, I dunno if dat's wrong or what, but da's what I used to tink, so I nevah did like join hula. But to me nevah have notin' fo' men. (Kana 2002)

Keenly aware of this perception, Nākānelua tried to emphasize the masculine and strong aspects of dance, often by highlighting the martial aspects. He also focused on the ha'a forms, which were understood to be more sacred, serious, and rigid and thus less secular, playful, and soft. Included in his rep-
get plenty martial moves; I could see it 'em. And dat's what wen' kinda attract me to dat. ... I mean I no like dance da hula, but oh, dat buggah look like one good technique or sometim" (Ho 2002).

The concerted effort to redefine dance was a reaction to the continued appropriation of the hula as a commodity spectacle and the consequent performance of it as such. The latter includes a cultivation of homogeneity of body types, appearances, and movements in groups that perform in tourist venues and in local competitions. Jane Desmond argues that a "physical foundationalism" operates in touristic discourse and posits the body as "that which is really 'real,' a repository of truth" through bodily performances (1999:xiv). She notes that "bodies function as the material signs for categories of social difference, including divisions of gender, race, cultural identity and species" (1999:xiv). Bodily performances serve as the final authenticator of the commodity of difference, and thus the industry highlights the "centrality of the performing body, binding notions of 'facticity,' presence, naturalism, and authenticity together under the sign of spectator corporeality" (1999:xv). At sites such as the Merric Monarch Festival, which has become a spectacle visited by tourists and locals alike, both male and female dancers are heavily sexualized. The young, muscular males evoke the "squeals of glee... from the wahines." This body type corresponds to the touristic image of the domesticated and sexualized beach boy and Duke Kahanamoku (see Desmond 1999; Ferguson and Turnbull 1999:38; Tengan 2008a:ch. 1; cf. Walker 2011). For the middle-aged, heavier men in the Mua who came from a tough upbringing and contested such touristic images, the "deep-set attitude" against the popular visions of hula remained.

While many of the men may have kept their distance from what they considered feminine dance, Nakānelua nonetheless maintained hula forms in the repertoire of movements he taught, though with a "masculine" emphasis. Such was the case with the Moloka'i Kā. Nakānelua learned the dance when he was in intermediate school at Maryknoll, where he performed it as a courting dance in which the boys would chase the girls across the stage. In the Hale Mua he changed it to reflect more of the tough, aggressive positioning that would speak to other men:

If you talking about, you know, trying to impress a woman, then your movements are, you know, kinda gallant, yeah, and prancing...
you’re a man, and you wanna make an impression on a man—whether it be a boss, or a coach, or guys on a team dat you wanna be a part of and stuff, you know—den you gotta crank up yo’ testosterone, you know, you gotta show up yo’ balls, you gotta be there. So, when dat ‘a’ano [attitude] comes out of you, yeah, your attitude changes, your body motions change, you tend to stiffen up at different points along da way. A different emphasis on da hand. . . . your mana is projected different. (Nakānelua 1999)

Thus Nakānelua did not disavow the hula but rather sought to reclaim it as a practice done by and for Hawaiian men, not for tourists or for women. Again, the focus was on remaking masculinity and doing so through traditions and practices that were real (cf. Goodyear-Ka‘ōpua 2013:219–23). Reflecting on the spear dances we had been learning, Nakānelua explained their significance for cultural and historical consciousness:

We come from a culture that was, nothing was written. So history was in the song, history was in the dance, history was in the prayer. And the commemorations of things that happened are brought forth, are brought back to life, are relived. . . . through the dance. . . . We thought . . . why not do a pahua [spear dance] with a traditional Hawaiian ike [spear]? . . . So we made ’em, and den we danced wit it. And dat was it. No great show, no grand performance in front of throngs of people, just for ourselves. Just to say, we participated in it, just to say we did it, and it was done; it can be done, just for ourselves. (Nakānelua 1999)

Nakānelua was not entirely forthcoming in his statement that there is no show in our activities for the dances at Pu‘ukoholā were certainly done in front of an audience (see Tengan 2008a:ch. 3). Yet his main point about whom these activities were done for is valid: the ritual performance of dance was meant to bring about a transformation of the self-by reconnecting with history and with the fellow performers of that collective story. By performing genealogy, ea, and mana, the ritual and embodied processes of the men worked to further the goals of culturally and politically remembering Hawaiian nationhood, which itself was undergoing important changes and transitions.

The Politics of Hawaiian Masculinities: Struggling to Balance Kū and Hina

While the project of transforming and remaking masculinity through ritual holds great promise, it also presents a set of important issues that need to be dealt with. Michael Messner (1997) notes that a variety of men’s movements in the United States, such as the mythopoetic men’s movement, the conservative white Christian revival of the Promise Keepers, and the African American men’s Million Man March are backlashes against feminism that utilize essentialist discourses to reclaim traditional (patriarchal) roles that have been lost. In racialized masculinity politics, the struggle against race and class oppression often supersedes the struggle for gender equality, and women of color suffer most. Messner argues that the transformative potential of masculinity politics is severely limited insofar as many of the movements end up working to reconstitute patriarchy (1997:73).

As Native Hawaiians move forward in the collective pursuit of reclaiming nation, it is imperative that we take seriously the gender politics that threaten to divide men and women. In an effort to situate the personal and political project of the Hale Mua within the larger context of gender imbalance, I evaluate the extent to which the Hale Mua serves to (re)inscribe a patriarchal order that is not Maoli. In his review of recent Indigenous feminist thought, Scott Lauria Morgensen notes that “Indigenous feminism is key to Indigenous criticism not just for explaining colonialism’s conditioning by heteropatriarchy but because Indigenous feminist practices of articulation are methodologically crucial to transforming settler colonial power” (2011:770). A critical aspect of this evaluative project is to interrogate how masculinity is performed and toward what ends in the contexts of exclusive ritual space vs. secular space. I ask the question, What does balancing Kū and Hina mean in these different sites?

When the Hale Mua gathers for workshops, ceremonies, and training, it provides men a safe space for learning and practicing Hawaiian identity and community in ways that would not be possible in other educational institutions, in workplaces, or at home. In this way there is some resemblance to the mythopoetic men’s movement, which Michael Schwalbe argues is essentially a search for commonalties among middle-age, middle-class white men who have experienced a type of spiritual bankruptcy as workers in the
American capitalist society (Schwalbe 1996, 1998). In relation to the Hale Mua specifically, Morgensen has asked “to what extent [their] methods were informed by a 1990s moment in which mythopoetics addressed perceived failures in hegemonic manhood with a turn to Indigenism, as well as how Kanaka Maoli rearticulated this moment with commitments to decolonization” (2011:771). Though Nākānelua denied any knowledge of the mythopoetic men’s movements, Morgensen’s questions are on point. In the Hale Mua, the activities and discourse focus on men’s relationships to each other and to the family and community more generally. Invocations of Kū are meant to strengthen cultural identity, reconfigure practices marked by violence, and encourage responsibility and upright moral behavior and leadership as Hawaiian men. The Hale Mua spaces are ritually separated from the normal work and family spheres—the space of (partial) liminality between neocolonial society and the vision of a traditional Indigenous one (see Tengan 2008a:ch. 2; Turner 1959). Ritual process reorders status relationships and allows men to relate in ways that might otherwise not occur given their differences in class, education, geographic mobility, and cultural knowledge. In this context, restoring Kū is about re-membering various qualities of masculinity and manhood he represents that are inclusive of the diverse men that come to the Mua. Yet as inclusive as this space is meant to be, the articulation of decolonization with aspects of hegemonic manhood leave open the possibilities for an uncritiqued colonial heteropatriarchy to reemerge in practice.

Leaving the Hale Mua, men reenter a neocolonial order where ritual and ceremonial meanings are vacated and Kū clashes with Hina. In one particularly relevant example, Hawaiian men (not of the Hale Mua) involved in the construction of a traditional thatch house as part of an urban development project prohibited women from participating since house building was traditionally a male activity. Maria Ka’imipono Orr, a Native Hawaiian archaeologist who was an invited guest at the groundbreaking, noted that she and another Kanaka Maoli woman who was one of the regular construction supervisors felt “put out.” She exclaimed in an email, “Barring women from building hale or participating in building one, is not only a waste of potential energy, etc., but an act of oppression . . . first this seemingly innocent kapu [prohibition] . . . then what next?!” The White, Protestant, males weren’t/aren’t the only beings on this planet to be oppressive in their dominant thinking and behavior. I feel like we’re taking a giant step backwards!” (Orr, email to author and others, March 20, 2001). This example represented a patriarchal assertion of power and authority, for it prevented the participation of women who contributed to the project. The rules of kapu make sense only when they operate as part of a whole structure organized by the logic of Hawaiian kapu. When they are taken out of that system and implemented only in decontextualized and abstracted pieces, friction emerges because the other piece that made kapu pono (correct) are not there to support it.

Noenoe Silva, a professor of political science and the director of the Indigenous Politics Program at the University of Hawai‘i, asks, “Does mana kane [men’s mana] have to exclude or oppress women, or be perceived as excluding or oppressing women? What’s interesting from my point of view is that the late 19th c. Kanaka men did not seem so very invested in oppressing women—they supported and appreciated the Hui Aloha ‘Āina wahine, and went on to support women’s suffrage. And they wrote down those awesome stories about [goddesses] Hi‘iaka and Papa” (Silva, email to author, May 3, 2001).11 Silva’s remarks are accurate, and the historical record does in fact demonstrate that women had access to mana, rank, and power in ways that complemented men’s access (Kame‘eleihiwa 1999; Linnekin 1990; McGregor 2003). It is also useful to note that the case of the Hui Aloha ‘Āina, the men and women each had their own separate organizations and kuleana (responsibilities). I would suggest that this is one of the reasons their leaders could work together when it came to making decisions and organizing mass protests.

Ideology aside, the problem for men of the Hale Mua who are being “cast forward” as leaders is whether or not, or to what extent, their assertion of authority and mana requires a diminishment of women’s authority (cf. Hokeshiru 2012). Does Kū rising depend on Hina’s lying down? Do they need to be separate categories? When I asked Nākānelua directly, he responded, “Does the Mua advocate for total male dominance of the society, and the suppression of females? . . . This Mua doesn’t advocate for that. What . . . the Mua advocates in regards to the male sex is, it’s very important for a male to have a duty to have a responsibility. . . . It gives him a sense of well-being. That’s what we’re advocating. That a male pick up his responsibility . . . the advocacy is not for the suppression of the female spirit.”

Though this practice sounds good in theory, we must be wary of the
contexts in which "responsibilities" are defined, understood, and practiced. There are echoes here in the discourse found in the Promise Keepers, who similarly advocate for men to pick up their responsibility as men and leaders. This call then gets taken up and used by individual men in a political fashion to support antifeminist and antigay projects through fundamentalist reading of the Bible and a call to return to "traditional" family values (Messner 1997:22-35). Such a model cannot serve to cast our people forward. I find some comfort in the fact that there is no fundamentally patriarchal or homophobic discourse in the invocations of Kū and Hīna, though calls for "restoration" of Kū can easily morph into ones for "elevation above" Hīna.

J. Kēhāului Kauanui, a professor of anthropology and American studies at Wesleyan University, has posed the following critical questions:

I guess it bothers me that the Hale Mua are attempting to reach for a moment in our genealogy that is seen as more "culturally pure" and measuring it to their status now without accounting for ways they were more empowered under the colonial system than Hawaiian women. Why such a selective genealogy? . . . Am I sensing a sort of defensiveness on the part of Hawaiian men? If so, it makes me wonder about potential resentment that may be brewing. . . . Is it that men are contesting arguments that posit that Hawaiian women are seen as the primary leaders? Or, that the men agree that women are the leaders and are contesting that leadership and asserting their own? (Kauanui and Tengan n.d.)

The selectivity comes from the present context of the cultural nationalist movement as one that privileges identity and knowledge from the remembered precolonial period, precisely as a means for addressing the current malaise of the neocolonial present. The issue of how or if men have benefited from the patriarchal bargain of colonial modernity is an important one; some have, some have not. Most of the men in the Hale Mua come from working-class families, even if they are currently middle class. Yet for many who now occupy that position, their status has come with (or created) a deep sense of alienation from the community. It is this struggle to reestablish connections with other men and community that leads most of the men to look to older forms of being and acting, forms in which men could still relate in the Hale Mua of old.

However, Kauanui is correct in identifying a certain level of resentment that is brewing. In part, this is a response to women leaders' discounting of men's leadership. The level to which discourses in the Hale Mua manifest this sort of reactionary tone varies. Most talk about male leadership tends to be along the lines of claiming responsibility in family and community, and men are less concerned with discrediting women than they are with validating men. There have been times, however, when men have made statements such as "Wahine need to step aside." This discourse assumes that leadership in the community is a zero-sum game, wherein the emergence of male leadership requires the removal of female leadership. This amounts to an assertion of patriarchy and reproduces the same structures of oppression and hierarchy that disempower individuals along the lines of race, class, gender, sexuality, age, body, and so forth. When it emerges, it suggests that patriarchy is what is needed to right society. In my experience, this kind of talk is less frequent than the concern with work, family, and community, but its presence is a cause for concern.

The oppositional nature of discourse on gender works against the establishment of balance and complementarity that we need. On the part of the Mua, one of the shortcomings of focusing only on Kū in the men's discursive practices is that the Hīna in each of us is disavowed. The space of the Hale Mua is almost completely heteronormative. In response to my query about the issue of homophobia in the group, Nākanelu responded,

I've seen serious cases of homophobia, and I have not seen that in the Mua. . . . We've had homosexuals in the Mua, bisexuals in the Mua, we have heterosexuals in the Mua—we got a file of them in there and that's ok too. And I haven't heard anybody speak against it. I'll tell you what though . . . there was certain issues addressed in regards to understanding homosexuality and certain individuals had a need to understand it, personal issues. . . . We discussed it, and it was addressed from a cultural point of view utilizing certain kīno lāu [manifestations] of certain akua [gods]. For example, you got this whole māhī thing going on, like taro is one male plant, but yet get babies. . . . Well, what I look at is culturally . . . our kūpuna looked at that as one higher state of being. So, if
we’re studying this and we’re taking a look at this, how is there a fear for homosexuality? You know I don't see it, I don’t see it.

His mention of “homosexuals” in the group surprised me, as I assumed all members were heterosexual; however, the fact that they remained close does suggests that the openness of the Mua was more on an individual than a collective basis. At the Aha Kāne Native Hawaiian Men's Health Conference in 2006 (see Tengan 2008:22), one of the keynote speakers was Hina Wong (now Hina Wong-Kalu), a māhū (transgendered woman) who has emerged as a vocal and visible leader in the Hawaiian education movement and other realms of activism and politics. I was glad that the committee brought her in to physically remind the five hundred men gathered there that Kū did not need to exclude Hina. Yet the reception was mixed; some were enthusiastic; others were put off and walked out. The problems of heterosexism and homophobia (as well as transphobia) in our community are real, even if they are not as pronounced as those in other areas that do not share a (transformed) tradition of acceptance (Tengan 2003). While the 2010 Aha Kāne succeeded in increasing the participation of young boys, it failed to provide a space for māhū. However, the 2008 Aha Kāne saw the return of Hina (in body and in discourse), as a panel discussion on māhū featured Hina Wong-Kalu, her Tongan partner Hema Kalu (who identified as a straight male), and me. Participants there expressed their gratitude for having a space for talking about alternative genders and sexualities, which were still being marginalized but at least were being acknowledged.12

I began this exploration of Indigenous performances of masculinity and warriorhood with prophecies that tell of nation building through embodied ritual and cultural action. By reconnecting to these histories and practices, the Hale Mua seeks to re-member ways of being based in mana, ea, and genealogy. I end this essay with another story, also from an earlier time and place (Pukui 1995:8). When Kū the god was living as a human, famine had brought his family to the brink of starvation. He told his wife, Hina, that the only way their children would survive was if he went on a journey. He then stood on his head and disappeared into the earth. Her tears watered that spot, and from it grew the 'ulu (breadfruit) tree whose fruits saved the people. The three Kū images that were reunited in 2010 were carved from this very wood. As Sam Ka'ai noted, “These are the fragments that went away and survived. It would be a great occasion to admire and become familiar again with that which was shaped by our ancestors” (Tengan 2010:14). The return of Kū perhaps signals a new reshaping of our men in the image of our forbears, one that stands tall to provide for the survival and pono (well-being) of our nation.

Still, the ‘ōiwi community has a long way to go toward achieving a real balance of Kū and Hina. Arguments over who has been oppressed more have become unhelpful; both men and women suffered, and differently. The strength of the Hale Mua lies in the work it does with men and the transformations of self in a social context of and for men. The extent to which new understandings of the balance between Kū and Hina may emerge is questionable. Perhaps the metaphors being used are the wrong ones to begin with. Kū and Hina were only two of the forty thousand gods. The hale mua of old was in fact dedicated to Lono, the god of peace and fertility. He too took many forms, including Kīkūpua, the pig god and chief of the Hale Mua men also dance of in the Maha‘u. In practice and in ideology, the group has begun to look toward different models for thinking offered by male deities other than Kū, such as Lono, Kane (god of life and freshwater), and Kanaloa (god of the ocean). Hopefully the group will begin to celebrate female deities such as Pele and Hi'iaka as well. The Hawaiian community as a whole has always recognized and celebrated the diversity of being that is manifested in the different body forms of the gods, people, and land, and the fact that moves have already been made in the Hale Mua to explore this diversity is encouraging. Kū and Hina are useful to the extent that they help Hawaiians to reflect on the ever-present struggle to seek balance and complementarity. True, many men feel there is a long way yet to go before men's places or roles are restored, however the nation defines them. Perhaps when the work of rebuilding Kū is done, Kanaka men will be ready to move on to a new embrace of Hina.

Notes

1. In this essay I focus only on the Maui group. Around 2005 a group of Hale Mua members living on O'ahu who were originally part of the Mau group formed their own organization called the Hale Mua o Kāali, which I am a part of. We participated with the Maui group in all of the events described here.
2. Teaiwa (1999) coined the term "militourism" to highlight the articulation of militarism (which secures American state power and secures Hawai‘i as a place that is open for business) and tourism (which works to both disguise U.S. military occupation and profit from it).

3. While data from the 2010 Census is still being analyzed, the social, economic, and health trends do not appear to have changed drastically since 2000 (Kamehameha Schools 2011a, 2011b).

4. This calendar is organized primarily around male gods and the chiefly religion of the ‘aikapu (sacred eating) that privileged them; women’s worship, such as that of Pele on Hawai‘i Island, did not adhere to this structure. Some variation in counting the months and celebrating Makahiki has also been noted across the islands. Makahiki today is commonly observed beginning in November and going through January. For more on the Hawaiian division of the year, see Malo (1951:30–36, 141–49). For a political analysis of the juxtaposition of Kū and Lono in the year, see Kame‘elehiwa (1992:44–49).

5. In 2003 the documentary Skin Stories: The Art and Culture of Polynesian Tattoo aired on PBS. Nākānehua and Nunez (and a number of others from the Mua) were featured in the segment on Hawai‘i. The PBS companion site for the film included Nākānehua’s own story and his discussion of the Hale Mua (Pacific Islanders in Communication 2005).

6. The more common vernacular used in the islands and by most of the men in the Hale Mua is called Pidgin, officially Hawai‘i Creole English (HCE). Emerging from the plantation camps and from the need to communicate across language barriers, Pidgin has become a marker of “local” (typically nowhite, working-class) identity for people who were raised in Hawai‘i. Okamura’s (2008:119) survey of 126 University of Hawai‘i students found that men claimed to speak Pidgin more frequently than women. This supports my assertion that for men, Pidgin marks a similarly ethnic and “tough” vision of local masculinity. Pidgin has acquired a number of valuations, many of them negative (e.g., Pidgin as “broken” or “bad” English) (Sato 1991; Tamura 2008). However, Pidgin is legitimate language, and a number of scholars and writers have put enormous effort into validating and maintaining its integrity (Da Pidgin Coup 2008). Most of the men I spoke with used Pidgin to varying degrees, reflecting the HCE continuum today (Sato 1991). For those who spoke Pidgin in interviews, such as Ho, I used an “eye dialect” spelling approach, which is a modified English writing system (the alternate is the Odo orthography, which is a phonetic spelling system).

7. By “top of the list” Ha‘ai means the top of the lists of poor life conditions resulting from poverty, described above.

8. The translation of “māhū” is difficult, for the term is used colloquially (and not consistently) to refer to effeminate males, transgendered persons, gay men (and sometimes lesbians), and physical hermaphrodites. My usage, derived from the way men in the Hale Mua usually think of the term, is primarily in reference to effeminate males, gay men, and transgendered women (male-to-female); however, the term may also be applied to transgendered men (female-to-male). In their Hawaiian Dictionary, Pukui and Elbert define the term as “homosexual, of either sex; hermaphrodite” (1986:226). Debates over the conceptualizations and place of māhū split the Native Hawaiian community in the months preceding the November 2013 passage of the Hawai‘i Marriage Equality Act, leading Mana magazine to run a cover story on māhū in its February/March 2014 issue (Snow 2014). In the essay, Kaumakaiwa Kanaka‘ole states that the appeal of the creative arts and hula for some māhū (including herself) is that “it’s the closest we as a third gender can get to procreation” and that it is a space marked as “noa (free, not taboo)” where certain genders allowed people to “be a little more outridian . . . and accepted so” (Snow 2014:27).

9. Such appropriations do not go uncontested, though, either in Aotearoa or in Hawai‘i. In a fashion that ironically mirrored the All Blacks’ struggles with intellectual property rights over the “Ka Mate” haka they had traditionally performed (Hokowhitu, this volume; Jackson and Hokowhitu 2002; Tengan 2003), the University of Hawai‘i football team, over half of whose players are Samoan or Hawaiian, found itself in a legal and moral quandary at the end of their 2006 season when it was forced to abandon its use of the All Blacks’ new haka that had been developed and copyrighted directly in response to the Ngati Toa tribe’s contention of the All Blacks’ use of their ancestor’s haka (Tengan and Markham 2009). Also, the narrow definition of the haka as a war dance is a mischaracterization; “haka” is a generic term for dances. This mirrors the misidentification of Kū as only “the god of war.” See Linnckin 1997 for discussion of other forms of commodified hypermasculinity, especially on T-shirts sold to both locals and tourists.

10. Such a sentiment has been repeated by others who find that the comparison to and emulation of Māori forms has gone so far that Hawaiians try to ho‘omaoni (act like a Māori). Interestingly, there is less anxiety surrounding the use of the Marquesan Maha‘ui. I would suggest that this has partly to do with the fact that Marquesans are not held up as the exemplars of Polynesian masculinity in the same way Māori are.

11. The Hui Aloha ‘Āina was a Hawaiian patriotic league with both men’s and women’s auxiliaries that was active in organizing against American annexation between the years 1893 and 1898. The epic stories of Hi‘iaka and Papa appeared in Hawaiian nationalist newspapers in the nineteenth century. See Silva 2004.

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Bone-Deep Indigeneity

Theorizing Hawaiian Care for the State and Its Broken Apparatuses

GREG JOHNSON

This complaint is based on the failure of Kawaiahaʻo Church and various public entities to fulfill their legal obligations pursuant to HRS Chapter 68, the public trust doctrine, Native Hawaiian rights, and HRS Chapter 343. In this instance, government entities have failed to act with a level of openness, diligence and foresight commensurate with the high priority commanded under the laws of our state.

DANA NAONE HALL, Complaint, Civil No. 09-1-1828-01, Hawaii First Circuit Court, 2009

The new world disorder of drained economies and exhausted governments is revealing a novel dynamic in some performances of Indigeneity, one in which Indigenous citizens become caretakers of law amid the failings of states. I have been following how this is taking shape in Hawaiʻi with regard to burial laws, and I have observed similar dynamics unfolding in a number of American Indian contexts. Comparative studies of Indigeneity suggest that shared structural realities and broadly common Indigenous interests may produce similar, if uneven, results elsewhere (see Niezen 2003; Povinelli 2002; de la Cadena and Starn 2007). First Nations Peoples and the Maori, for example, have long-term experience shoring up nation-state shortcomings (Maaka and Fleras 2005).

Native Peoples have worked long and hard for political and legal gains within democratic nation-states over the past forty years, if not longer. Of necessity, many Indigenous actors have pursued their goals through the avenues and channels of tedious administrative law. For them, the