ABSTRACT

Ahu‘ena Heiau (whose name Burning Altar describes the sacredness of light) is deemed a paramount religious temple rededicated to Lono by Kamehameha the Great at Kamakahonu, the first Capital of the Hawaiian Kingdom. Restored in 1975 under the leadership of Kahu David Kahelemauna Roy, Jr., it is a place honoured by Kānaka ‘Ōiwi (Indigenous Hawaiians) in ways not recognized by the King Kamehameha Kona Beach Hotel on whose ground it now sits. Henry E. P. Kekahuna, noted Hawaiian scholar, produced a series of maps in the 1950s that documented this heiau (traditional place of ceremony) and other significant cultural sites. Kekahuna’s maps reveal a complex, contested landscape of overlapping contemporary and historic features, many of the latter invisible yet still alive in local hearts and memory. The Association for Social Anthropology in Oceania (and indeed anthropology at large) has analogously complex relations with the communities and the region it claims as its particular field of knowledge. The 2014 annual meeting, which convened in the Kamehameha Kona Beach Hotel, provokes a critical assessment of academic practice in light of Indigenous sovereignty, genealogy, senses, memory, and place.

Keywords: Indigenous anthropology, ASAO, Kamakahonu, Ahu‘ena Heiau, Hawai‘i.

This paper was delivered as the 2014 distinguished lecture by Tengan at the ASAO conference at King Kamehameha Kona Beach Hotel, Kamakahonu, Kona, Hawai‘i, on 7 February 2014. Prior to and after the talk, Roy worked with Tengan to edit portions that specifically referenced her own story and the history of Kamakahonu. Roy offers her own mana‘o (thoughts) at the end of this essay.

E hō mai ka ‘ike mai luna mai ē
‘O nā mea hūnā no’eau o nā mele ē
E hō mai, e hō mai, e hō mai ē'

On 17 January 2014, on the 121st anniversary of the illegal overthrow of the Hawaiian Kingdom, Mikahala Roy held a torch at Kailua Pier, where once stood a stone formation resembling a turtle. The ‘āina (land) that this hotel sits on – Kamakahonu (The Eye of the Turtle) – took its name from these stones, which now exists only as a memory.2 Kamakahonu was the final residence of King Kamehameha I and the first capital of the Hawaiian Nation that he established. Kamehameha rebuilt the heiau of Ahu‘ena (Burning Altar), the traditional sacred structure that now serves as the backdrop of the hotel’s evening lū‘au, and dedicated it to Lono, god of healing, peace, and abundance. This was the first of modern-era heiau restored by Hawaiian men, done under the guidance of Mikahala’s father Kahu David Kahelemauna
Roy, Jr. in 1975 (Roy 2014b). Mikahala inherited the station of the Kahu (Spiritual Guardian) of Ahu‘ena Heiau from her father, though since 2007 she has been in major conflict with the business now occupying these lands, and with no assistance from the State of Hawai‘i. Nevertheless, her station compels her to be ever present here; it is who she is in connection to this land. She explains, ‘The Kingdom of Hawaii of the Hawaiian Islands unified by Kamehameha I has ancestry – a long spiritual ancestry that holds all members unified’ (Roy 2014a). This genealogical unification, she states, ‘has the power to transform the energy of this day from one of somber reflection to proactive hope for a bright future for the people of Hawaii. The efforts for the true restoration of the Kingdom of Hawaii originally unified by Kamehameha the Great are underway’ (2014a) (Fig. 1).

Kahu Mikahala’s vision, shared via an email kāhea (call out), was entitled ‘Lands & Seas of Hope’. It recalls the tone and language of the late Epeli Hau‘ofa’s land- (and sea-) mark essay ‘Our Sea of Islands’ (Hau‘ofa 1993). Of course, the ASAO will know this work quite well since the vision came to Hau‘ofa as he left this conference – held at this very hotel – and drove over the expansive Kona landscape to Hilo in 1993. As he stated:

The drive from Kona to Hilo was my ‘road to Damascus’. I saw such scenes of grandeur as I had not seen before: the eerie blackness of regions covered by recent volcanic eruptions; the remote majesty of Maunaloa, long and smooth, the world’s largest volcano; the awesome craters of Kilauea threatening to erupt at any moment; and the lava flow on the coast not far away. Under the aegis of Pele, and before my very eyes, the Big Island was growing, rising from the depths of a mighty sea. The world of Oceania is not small; it is huge and growing bigger every day. (Hau‘ofa 1993:5–6)

The 2009 Association for Social Anthropology in Oceania (ASAO) distinguished lecturer James Clifford found in this and other writings of Hau‘ofa a set of ‘big-enough histories, able to account for a lot, but not everything – and without guarantees of political virtue’ (Clifford
2009:241), which for him pointed to ‘a tangle of historicities rather than a progressively aligned common History’ (2009:246). So too did he find ‘hope, necessarily entangled with more ambivalent scenarios and dystopias’ (2009:248). In a special issue of Pacific Studies focusing on genealogies of Indigenous anthropology, Häfanga ‘Okusitino Māhina paid tribute to Hau’ofa and other important scholars whose passing put them ‘behind us, in the past, yet before us, in the present’ (Māhina 2010:168). Meditating on Indigenous Moana concepts of tā (time) and vā (space) in relation to the ‘cultural and historical tensions . . . within and across social, intellectual, and artistic and literary genealogies’, Māhina explained that:

genealogy is about people who cross paths in physical, emotional, and social ways, culturally ordered and historically altered through intersection and separation. . . . Like all exchange relations, within and across nature, mind, and society, genealogy embraces both conflict and resolution, with resolution itself a form of conflict. (2010:188–189)

Situating himself within this Native Pacific genealogy, Vicente Diaz took a more ‘bottoms up’ approach in clearing a way for an ‘olfactory history’ in his ode to Hau’ofa that was playfully entitled ‘Sniffing Oceania’s Behind’ (2012:326). The primary inspiration for Diaz’s piece was Hau’ofa’s 1987 satirical novel Kisses in the Nederends, wherein the author fictionalized and hyperbolized his real-life experiences and battles with anal fistulae as ‘a way of turning society upside down and inside out and giving it a thorough cleaning’ (Hau’ofa 2008:145). Diaz (2012:328) also breathed new life into Lilikalā Kame‘elehiwa’s oft-quoted explanation of ‘Ōiwi Maoli (Indigenous Hawaiian) conceptualizations of the past (‘Ka wā mamua, or ‘the time in front or before’”) and the future (‘Ka wā mahope, or ‘the time which comes after or behind’”) when she wrote, ‘It is as if the Hawaiian stands firmly in the present, with his back to the future, and his eyes fixed upon the past, seeking historical answers for present-day dilemmas’ (Kame‘elehiwa 1992:22). In pointing to sensory perceptions of times below and behind, Diaz notes that ‘smells are associated with things that are meaningful and people who matter with respect to the (ongoing) past and who, for whatever reasons, are not or cannot be captured or recorded in that supposedly more permanent record called written documents and the visual conventions that underwrite their various claims to authority’ (2012:326–7). Rather than looking at big Histories (capital H), an olfactory sensing of the past ‘allow[s] us to delve instead into the more chaotic social world of the subaltern’ (2012:333). Brandy Nālani McDougall (2014:8) adds that ‘smell can be useful to articulate aesthetics in terms of a legacy or memory, as they often indicate presence despite absence or invisibility’ (Fig. 2).

And so we return to Kahu Mikahala Roy, who took time to welcome a small group of us ASAO conferees to Ahu’enia Heiau on 6 February 2014. The stories she shared are not found on the hotel’s website, or on the ASAO’s 2014 Meeting Information website (although there we do find that we are surrounded by the ‘three S’s of sea, sand, and sun’). Kahu Mikahala has graciously allowed me to share some of her story with you all, and I want to acknowledge her presence in the audience tonight. I want to also thank Mikahala for restoring my own hope that meetings such as this one can in fact create meaningful connections that acknowledge and viscerally engage Indigenous time, space, and place – despite whatever other forms of intellectual inertia and settler colonial logics continue to characterize the ASAO and other organizations and departments that produce what Brodkin, Moren, and Hutchinson (2011) have called ‘anthropology as white public space’.

Yes ASAO, I love you and I hate you. Most people here are very warm and nurturing, and I owe a debt to the organization for helping me and a small group of Pacific Islander scholars flourish in a field that would otherwise see us only as objects. I want to say here that my
critique is not aimed at individuals, but at structures that, well, stink. Blow-ups on listserves were old even when Geoffrey White and I wrote about this back in 2001 (e.g., White and Tengan 2001:383), and yet I continue to hear (second-hand since I am not on it) about new ones. Then there are other things, but I will not linger there. I will point out though that they suggest a broader culture of privilege, especially the privilege of not having to deal on a daily basis with the profound cultural, economic, social, and political consequences of colonization.

I know it is hard work to be decolonial, and so I applaud the efforts of those in this organization that have tried to shift the ASAO in this direction. I thank you for giving me this time tonight, as well as the changes you have made, which include the election of Lisa Uperesa as the next Chair of the association, and the granting of the Pacific Islands Scholars Funds mini-grants to Islanders who wish to register on-site free of charge, as Kahu Mikahala did (Fig. 3).

Kahu Mikahala has so much to share, and I can only touch the surface of it tonight. For hers is a lifelong journey; as she told us yesterday, ‘I search for the channel made fragrant by the maile’. The maile, which was the lei I was given and in turn gave to Kahu at the opening of this distinguished lecture, is an aromatic vine that is used to adorn and honour individuals, and it is ceremonially cut to represent the piko (umbilical cord) of a new home. I would like to now take you on my trip to Kamakahonu. It is worth noting that in contrast to the name of this ‘āina (land), turtles actually have a much keener sense of smell than sight. While I speak, please pass around the container of ‘inamona I have brought, which I will explain the significance of later, and the bag with the pa’akai (salt) and ‘ōlena (turmeric). The latter are cleansing agents, which I may need after I get back to the significance of the ‘inamona. For now, go ahead and smell them. Together, let us see if we might pick up a scent on the trail of genealogy.

THE PATH TO KAMAKAHONU

After finally giving up my boycott of the ASAO and agreeing to give this lecture, I was starting to think of how I could expand upon the points that Tēvita Ka’iili, Rochelle Fonoti, and I made
in our introduction to the special issue of *Pacific Studies* we co-edited in 2010 on ‘Genealogies: Articulating Indigenous Anthropology in/of Oceania’. Incidentally, I would like to thank the board for designating it an ASAO special publication last year and for including it on the book display this year – better late than never! (I will say more about this later.) In our introductory essay, we suggested that ‘articulating visions of anthropology’s future, at least from an Indigenous Oceanic perspective, can be done only through genealogical work – the search for, production, and transformation of connections across time and space’ (Tengan, Ka’ili, and Fonoti 2010:140). As someone who does not have close family or community ties to Kona, I had my work cut out for me.

Thus I set about doing some genealogical work on the site (http://www.konabeachhotel.com) of the King Kamehameha Kona Beach Hotel. The first of those sites was the hotel’s own website, which predictably featured pretty much just the three S’s with Hawaiian structures providing a picturesque backdrop for those wishing to ‘dine with a view’, ‘enjoy a [poolside] tropical drink’, have a ‘Hawaiian wedding on any budget’, or ‘capture the Hawaiian spirit’. Of course, like me, I am sure that most of you were dedicated to being good anthropologists and so made that ethnographic commitment to scroll down the page and click on ‘culture and history’. There we read: ‘King Kamehameha the Great established his royal residence’ at this site, and rededicated ‘Ahu’ena Heiau, a temple . . . to Lono who was the Hawaiian God of peace, agriculture and prosperity. Here, on The Big Island, Kamehameha the Great lived and conducted matters of government, until his passing on 8 May 1819. Indeed, our Big Island hotel owes quite a debt to our island’s rich history and culture’. Quite a debt indeed, which, as I will point out soon, is repaid in only a way that a settler colonial institution could. (Which is: not.) But onwards first with our ethnog-clicking!

When one clicks on the first occurrence of *Ahu’ena Heiau*, nothing happens, though the URL changes to add on ‘#Heiau’ after ‘historical.htm’. Was there a separate webpage that used to tell another story, or were these two always one and the same? In any case, if you are an ethnographer, as I am, you will persevere in the search for deeper understanding and click on the next Ahu’ena Heiau hypertext, which takes us to ahuena.net, replete with the translated writings of 19th century Hawaiian authors such as John Papa ‘Ī‘i, accounts and sketches of

Figure 3: Kahu Mikahala Roy, wearing a maile lei, Ty Kāwika Tengan, and Tēvita Ka‘ili at the ASAO meeting, Kamakahonu, Hawai‘i, 7 February 2014. Photo by authors.
European and American explorers and missionaries, photographs from the 1950s to 2011, and a relatively empty ‘Outreach’ page that says only ‘Coming soon . . .’. But it features images of nā koa, Hawaiian men who have taken up warrior traditions as a part of the broader Hawaiian men’s movement and Hawaiian cultural nationalist movement I have written on (Tengan 2008). Back to the home page, which starts off with the following message:

The Ahu’ena Heiau rock platform base, perimeter wooden fencing, Anu’u Tower and an uprooted ki’i were all damaged from the recent tsunami. Ahu’ena Heiau, Inc. has surveyed the damage, consulted the State Historic Preservation Division and is working closely with a qualified historical site restorations coordinator. We are currently seeking grants to repair and restore the tsunami damage.

The statement seems to have been written in order to prepare the reader (or potential visitor, or visiting anthropologist) for a site of disrepair, but that somebody – Ahu’ena Heiau, Inc. – is doing something about it.

The text of the home page goes on to note that Ahu’ena was both a religious temple and meeting house for Kamehameha’s inner circle of advisors and that three major events occurred there, including his death in 1819, the subsequent ending of the ‘aikapu traditional religio-political system, and the landing of the first missionaries in 1820. (This perhaps is not the main point that others would try to convey about Ahu’ena Heiau; rather, we must recognize that it is a site steeped in mana and meaning for the people who visit.) It goes on to note that ‘an accurate restoration project [was] undertaken in the mid-1970s’, and ‘[a] community based committee Ahu’ena Heiau Inc., formed in 1993 to permanently guide the restoration and maintenance of this national treasure’.

When I went to the Historical Photos page, I came across an image taken by Theodore Kelsey in 1950 of a Mr. Henry E. P. Kekahuna standing on a ‘large stone in the middle of the house of Hale Pua Ilima, in which King Kamehameha breathed his last’. That is all the information we are given about Mr. Kekahuna, but many of us in the field of anthropology and archaeology recognize him as an important archivist, scholar, historian, and community archaeologist, ethnologist, and ethnographer from Maui who had one leg, yet travelled across the islands with the assistance of his friend and colleague Theodore Kelsey, a non-Hawaiian who was nevertheless fluent in the Hawaiian language and committed to matters of cultural and historic preservation. Together they mapped heiau and other cultural sites and interviewed elders about histories of the land, and in Kona they were guided by Nāluahine Ka‘ōpua the revered kupuna and konohiki (land overseer) of the Lanihau ahupua’a (district) that we are in. Contemporary ‘Ōiwi archaeologists and anthropologists see Kekahuna as an important ancestor in our genealogy (Kawelu 2013). His appearance during my search of this website suggested that I was being guided on the right path.

KEKAHUNA’S MAPS

I pursued this path by doing a Google search on Kekahuna’s maps, which I know have been used by a number of different ‘Ōiwi groups and organizations in their efforts to protect and restore sacred sites. To my surprise, I found that the Bishop Museum had recently digitized and posted a number of Kekahuna’s maps, prominent among them those that he drew of Ahu’ena, Kamakahonu, and Kaiakeakua (Sea of the God), today referred to as Kailua Bay. The detail in these maps and the amount of descriptive text are astounding, evidence of the care and purpose with which they were produced – to keep the histories of these places alive in the memories and hearts of all of Hawai’i’s people, and particularly its ʻŌiwi (Fig. 4).
Figure 4: 1953 map of Kaiakea, now known as Kailua Bay. Henry E. P. Kekahuna, Bishop Museum.
Though historical, Kekahuna’s documentation was not of what *used* to be there, but rather what is *still* there, even if no longer visible to the eye. Take, for example, the map he did of Kaiakeakua in 1953. In his Brief Descriptive Notes, he writes:

In order to present a clear picture of the archeological, legendary, and historical treasures, together with the place-names, in the area shown, I have endeavored to combine two pictures. One picture represents as nearly as possible the land of Ka-maka-honu and its environs during the lifetime of Kamehameha I, according to sketches and descriptions from early explorers. The second picture, in order to facilitate orientation, includes some of the most prominent business houses, private properties, and other features of Kai-lua at the present day . . . Fortunately I have been able to obtain many of the old place-names and locate numerous points of ancient interest through the kind assistance of my aged uncle Mr. Na-luahine Ka’opua, of Kahalu’u, N. Kona. (Kekahuna 1953)

Yet, even to acknowledge ‘two pictures’ is to underplay the multiple dimensions of time and space he reveals as he points out sites associated with the 15th century chief ‘Umialiloa, an ancestor of Kamehameha, as well as the grass hut where Kamehameha’s great-granddaughter Princess Ruth Ke’elikolani died in 1883. An ‘ancient foot-trail’ intersects – intersects – with the ‘present government road’ that passes a ‘schooner under construction’ for Kamehameha. Continue west on the Government Beach Road to Kona Inn and you pass the Seaview Inn of Mrs. Rose Yuen Lee and Kim Chong Foo’s Stores. I could go on, but you get my point – multiple histories, geographies, and genealogies of people and place where the Indigenous is co-present, or ever-present.

Kekahuna and Kelsey also penned a serial on ‘Kamehameha in Kailua’ that ran in *The Hilo Tribune Herald* from 28 February through 5 April 1954. In it, Kekahuna reproduced a few of his maps to go along with the stories he and Kelsey told. Opening the series with an ode to the land, they wrote:

Basking in the sun of the somewhat arid coastal region of the district of Kona, beloved by Hawaiians for its calm, variegated ‘opua or horizon-clouded sea, teeming with fish, in the tranquility of prehistoric King ‘Ehu . . . lies the prominent historic village of Kailua Kona. By day it is fanned by Kona’s cooling sea-breeze, the ‘Eka. . . . By night the sweet scented land-breeze the Kehau, suffuses Kona with its cool breath from the mountain of Hualalai. (Kekahuna and Kelsey 1954:8)

On 5 March, after describing the various structures and formations at Kamakahonu, they describe the persistence of mana in the land:

When at last it became necessary to demolish Ka Hale ‘Ili-Mai’a [Kamehameha’s Western-style storage house], foreigners and natives alike were afraid to do so, lest its mana, or spiritual power, should bring calamity upon them. The work was finally undertaken after a suitable ceremony was performed by old Mr. Na-lua-hine Ka-‘opua . . . whose great grandfather, La-na’i, last high-priest of the heiau of Ka-pua-noni, in Kaha-lu’u, is of the blood of Hawaii’s ancient high-priesthood. Na-luahine also held a ceremony before the blasting of a nearby rock in Ka-makahonu Cove. Thus were reconciled the powers of the unseen realm of spirit. (Kekahuna and Kelsey 1954:8)

The ‘old Nāluahine Ka‘ōpua’ – the kupuna (elder) and kahuna (ritual specialist) – was the source of ‘ike (knowledge) and mo‘olelo (histories, stories, legends) that informed
Kekahuna’s maps and narratives. More needs to be said and understood about the position that cultural workers such as Kekahuna and Kelsey and elders such as Kaʻōpua found themselves in as mediators and mitigators of the forces of change and transformation. But the scent of the Kēhau breeze (or is it the ‘awa?) tells me that I must move on in this journey and return to the trail that brought me to tonight.

AHU’ENA ARRIVAL

Knowing that I needed to connect with people who were actually caring for Ahu‘ena Heiau, yet not knowing who they were, I consulted my ethnic studies colleague Davianna McGregor, an ‘Ōiwi historian, activist, and mentor to me. She suggested I contact Mikahala Roy who was Kahu of the heiau but had recently gone through a major dispute with the hotel. I thus emailed Kahu Mikahala introducing myself and my project and asked if we could talk about Kamakahonu. She immediately responded by acknowledging our connection through another ‘Ōiwi woman professor who has guided me, Noenoe Silva. I explained that one purpose of this talk was to underline the need for all anthropologists and scholars, Native or non-Native, to both account for and be accountable to the deep cultural and political histories of place wherever they go, be it for research or for a conference. She then forwarded me a compilation of emails, testimonies, and songs she had composed in response to events that took place since 2007, both at the hotel and throughout the islands more generally. When we finally spoke on the phone, it was as if we had known each other for a very long time, connected by those genealogies of descent as well as dissent. I asked her if she would be free to meet me when I arrived in order to properly carry out the protocols of introduction and homage to the heiau, and also if a small group of Pacific scholars could join. She gladly agreed, and I set about making plans and preparations for the ho‘okupu (offering) that I would give on behalf of the ASAO.

At noon on 6 February, Lisa Uperesa, Tēvita Ka‘ili, Kalaniopua Young, Sa‘ibliemanu Lilomaiva-Doktor, Jacob Fitisemanu, Adrian Bell, and I watched dolphins spinning in the air as we awaited the arrival of Mikahala at the entrance of Ahu‘ena Heiau. I remembered that she had mentioned Na‘Pōhaku Kālai a ‘Umi by the banyan tree as our meeting location, which someone eventually pointed out on the other side of the hotel. I went to find her and passed a Hawaiian male employee of the hotel who gave me a fairly unfriendly look as I walked by. (I later found out from the others I left that he was questioning their presence there – though I highly doubt he was asking the same of the other tourists that were visiting). As I approached the banyan tree, Kahu Mikahala came out with a huge smile, wearing her ceremonial white kihei. We embraced with the honi, the pressing of noses and exchanging of hā (breath) that connected us as ‘Ōiwi. It was a true joy.

Together we walked to the heiau, passing the employee who maintained an emotionless face and said Mikahala’s name curtly, to which she replied with a true greeting of aloha. I could feel the tension there, and I knew a story would come later. When we arrived at Ahu‘ena, everyone introduced themselves while I put on my own white kihei. Mikahala had told me before I arrived that the best offering would be a chant, but I had also brought some physical offerings in the forms of ‘inamona, a kukui (candle nut) relish made with salt, a small ipu (gourd) container bound with cordage, and mashed ‘awa root in a gourd cup with holder. Kalaniopua had poi, a banana, water, and corned beef, and Tēvita had a lei.

Mikahala directed us down to the sand and rocky area just below the heiau where we stood as she first gave a chant and then allowed us to offer ours. Mine was a prayer that called out to the different forms of Lono for blessings, knowledge, strength, righteousness, patience, courage, protection, guidance, and mana, and that introduced us and the ASAO as a group that...
has come in respect, honor, and aloha for this ‘āina. Tēvita and Kalaniopua also offered up chants, and we stood in silence acknowledging the sacredness there.

After a time, Kahu Mikahala took us down closer to the water’s edge and told us a story of three turtles that had come ashore some time ago. The first, a large and aged turtle, came up out of the water with a long crack in its shell. It receded back into the sea. Soon, a second, smaller and younger turtle came upon the shore; its shell was whole. A third honu appeared that was a baby, young and vigorous. With tears in her eyes, Kahu Mikahala explained that this story was a ho‘āilona (sign) that to her represented hope for our people. A Pacific nation is presently divided. It will be unified for a future of health for the young. The smell of the ocean, salt air mixed with fish, mingled with the aroma of the roasted kukui nuts I was still holding.

Kahu Mikahala explained that by Spiritual Guidance, no physical ho‘okupu are to be made at this time. Instead, ho‘okupu of Oli (Chants) are welcomed. She explained that she would take the physical ho‘okupu that we brought, for at this point in time when Ahu‘ena Heiau and Kamakahonu are under foreign occupation, leaving a physical offering would make the wrong kinds of things grow. Thus, the clear communication of our chants to the Kūpuna would be the most appropriate offering. I thus offered another prayer to Lono asking for growth and nourishment. At the end of our time there, Jake, Sa‘ili and Lisa led the group in the offering of the Sāmoan song of gratitude ‘Fa‘afetai’:

>  Ua fa‘afetai, ua fa‘afetai
>  Ua malie mata i va‘ai
>  Ua tasi lava ‘oe, ua tasi lava ‘oe
>  I lo‘u nei fa‘amoemoe³

After leaving Ahu‘ena Heiau, Mikahala took us to the rock wall boundary between the hotel and the neighbouring property, which was formerly held by the missionary-come-business family of the Thurstons whose scion led the illegal overthrow of the Kingdom of Hawai‘i. There she produced a large printout of a Kekahuna map of Ahu‘ena and proceeded to tell us the stories of the ‘āina and the efforts to educate the new land owner, Microsoft billionaire and Seattle Seahawks owner Paul Allen (Fig. 5).

Eventually we sat on the grassy area just outside Ahu‘ena Heiau and had a wonderful talk story. Mikahala showed us a picture of her father Kahu David Kahelemauna Roy, Jr., who worked in strong and highly visible ways to save and restore sites (see Roy 2014b). She told of how Amfac, one of the ‘Big 5’ sugar companies that dominated the Territory of Hawai‘i (Kent 1993), agreed to restore the heiau in exchange for community support for the renovation of the King Kamehameha Hotel in 1975. Kahu David worked with Bishop Museum as the superintendent of the project, selecting the men who were all of heritage and bloodline of ‘Ōiwi. Roy served as overseer for the restoration of Ahu‘ena Heiau by the guidance of Akua (God) – the element neither the museum nor their staff could provide. Life in the title of Kahu is the significant outcome for the people as the restoration of Ahu‘ena Heiau is the significant outcome for Hawai‘i (Fig. 6).

Mikahala is the second of four daughters who took keen interest in her father’s work; she even sat on Nāluahine Ka‘ōpua’s lap when she was only one at her ‘aha ‘aina piha makahiki (first birthday celebration). These men inspired her to keep the sacred sacred. Over the years she has joined other community members in fighting off multimillion dollar developments that would threaten such sites all along the Kona coast. She also protests the illegal occupation of our Hawaiian Kingdom and any efforts such as the Akaka Bill or Kana‘iolowalu that would have us forget the first true capital of Hawai‘i at Kamakahonu.

While Mikahala’s father was alive, his priority was the life and care of Ahu‘ena Heiau. With colonization and the colonized behaviour of ‘Ōiwi, the road has not ever been smooth.
Ahu’ena Heiau Inc. (AHI) formed in 1993 but was inactive, so the community formed Kūlana Huli Honua (KHH) in 1999. For over a decade, the hotel offered KHH a small office to develop cultural services to benefit Ahu’ena Heiau and the people. Mikahala and the organization members (including teachers and historians) led property tours that benefited local and visitor alike.

However, in 2007, a major disagreement arose between KHH and the Hotel (Pacifica News Service n.d). After that point men from AHI breached their support of the spiritual tradition of ‘Ōiwi. The non-profit organization positioned itself to guide the discourse on how

Figure 5: Kahu Mikahala uses a Kekahuna map to retell the history of the lands that, for her, remains the priority over all changes brought in time by present-day landholders. Kamakahonu, Hawai‘i, 6 February 2014. Photo by authors.

Figure 6: Kahu David Kahelemauna Roy, Jr. Kamakahonu, Hawai‘i, early 2000s. Photo courtesy of Kahu Mikahala Roy.

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culture and history should be represented here when a new hotel operator purported to ‘own Ahu'ena Heiau’. Kahu Mikahala and Kulana Huli Honua led a resistance in 2008 contesting the environmental impact study done for proposed renovations, which they knew would disturb iwi kuʻpuna (ancestral remains). From 2007 to 2009, although these efforts failed by American legal standards, they were highly successful in building unprecedented networks for the people. The hotel proceeded with their plans. Shortly after the newly renovated King Kamehameha Kona Beach Hotel reopened, the 2011 tsunami caused massive water damage to the hotel (Rechtman and Poepeoe 2008).

Mikahala persists, upholding her kuleana as Kahu to bring people to connect to the Kapitala Mua o Hawai‘i and to honor Ahu'ena Heiau. Important matters have progressed loudly and quietly here, she told us as we walked to visit the vault where iwi kupuna unearthed in recent years had been re-interred. When Mikahala stood on the pier on 17 January to pray for transformation and unity on the day of the illegal overthrow of the Kingdom, a Micronesian man joined her. Few words were exchanged; they communicated in silence with gestures and nods, feeling and sensing the purpose of each other’s co-presence there. When her vigil was finished, they had a brief conversation. She asked him if wisdom keepers still maintained sacred sites where he was from, and he said yes. She thanked him for Mau Piailug and the gift of voyaging, which had, returning us back to Hau‘ofa, reminded us of the ‘Ocean in Us’ and ‘Our Place Within’.4

CONCLUSION

The ‘inamona, which I can smell from here, reminds me that I still need to explain its significance. On the heiau, as a hoʻokupu (gift), it was meant to represent enlightenment and knowledge that comes in Lono’s form of the kukui, or candlenut, which traditionally would have been lit as the torch held at a vigil such as the one Kahu Mikahala carried out. I also came across another meaning for ‘inamona when going through Henry Kekahuna’s unpublished papers at the State Archives. In a furiously written and rigorously researched rebuttal to a group of non-Hawaiian historians who questioned the veracity of the birth date of Kamehameha as reported by 19th century ʻOiwi scholar Samuel Kamakau, Kekahuna wrote:

the writer [referring to himself in the third person] is prompted to bring to your attention these bits of pungent kukui-nut condiment (ina-mona) with little pinches of salt added that will cause the lips of the reader to smack with each mouthful. (The roasted kernel of the kukui, or candlenut, called ina-mona, is a delicacy that only a Hawaiian can appreciate. It represents the actual truth). (n.d.:1)

I would amend his comment by noting that some Hawaiians in fact will not appreciate it and that there are non-Hawaiians who might. It all depends on how far you are willing to stick your nose in it. But do not get too fond of it – ‘inamona in excess is also known to be a powerful laxative. Then again, perhaps that is what we all need – a good enema!

Let me offer one example of a blockage that could use some clearing.5 On 14 January 2011, Tevita Ka‘ili (on behalf of himself, Rochelle Fonoti, and me) sent an email to the ASAO leadership to request use of one of the conference rooms at the upcoming February meetings in Honolulu for the launching of our special journal issue on genealogies of Indigenous anthropology that I referenced above. While we knew it was a last minute request, we had only just found out from the editor of Pacific Studies that the issue was going to be ready, and we were hopeful that the association would want to celebrate the publication of this first collection of writings edited and authored by Indigenous anthropologists, with contributions from
non-Indigenous allies. Unfortunately, the very quick response we received was that ‘there is no spare room or break in the program’. This, for me, was the last straw in a long line of ASAO insults that I and other Pacific Islanders had suffered over the years, experiences that might lead us to recall some of the earliest writings of Hau’ofa, in particular his essay ‘Anthropology and Pacific Islanders’ and poem ‘Blood in the Kava Bowl’ (both written in 1975 and reprinted as the first and last chapters in his 2008 book).

At first, Tēvita, Rochelle, and I were not going to make a big deal about it – we and the communities we came from were used to that kind of treatment. But the more we thought about it, the angrier we got. We had originally approached the board with the hope that the vision of anthropology (from below/behind/in back) that we were promoting was one that could branch out and expand in truly Hau’ofan ways (above/forward/in front, and back again). Instead, we confronted the most banal of colonial blockages: deadlines, schedules, and costs that defined who belonged and who did not in space and time. For Indigenous anthropologists, the very first thing you do anywhere is to recognize and acknowledge the sovereignty and mana of whose space you are in at all times. The affront was not so much to us as individuals but more importantly to all those people and places who precede and will succeed us, those who hold us accountable to carry on the unfinished business of resisting occupation, surviving settlement, persisting as Islanders, and striving for pono (justice, righteousness, balance) in Oceania. We did not discuss all of that explicitly, but it is the truth we embody, and it is what leads to the visceral reactions in our guts when we sense that bad history is happening all over again. And it does . . . So, I decided to take my leave of ASAO, with one parting email gift: ‘Thanks for the effort you have made to accommodate our request. Though it is unsurprising, it is nevertheless disappointing that there is no room for Indigenous anthropology at ASAO. Enjoy your time in Waikìki’.6

With much ambivalence, I accepted the invitation to give the Distinguished Lecture after a considerable amount of discussion with Lisa Uperesa, Paige West, and Lamont Lindstrom, who all assured me that it would be okay (even welcomed) if I shared my thoughts on what I saw were major issues in ASAO that needed to be addressed. I had originally planned to focus on the failure to book launch (at the conference site), but to be honest I was not finding much that was hopeful coming out of that story. Saying this, I acknowledge that Edvard Hviding and Paige West had been very proactive in their capacities as past Chairs in trying to steer the organizational canoe in the right direction, most explicitly seen in West’s ‘From the Chair’ message in the April 2013 ASAO newsletter. But I was away from the association, and I was still unconvinced that there was enough commitment to ‘mak[ing] sure that ASAO is a welcoming and productive place for our Pacific Islander colleagues’ (West 2013:5), even if our special issue was voted in as one of four new ASAO publications that year.

Facing something of a writer’s block, I eventually tried to put into practice the approach to Indigenous anthropology that our collection was arguing for all along. And it was there in Kamakahonu’s ‘tangle of historicities’ of land, sea, family, and nation that I found ea – the Hawaiian word for sovereignty that also translates to life, breath, and ‘to smell’; coincidentally, or not, ‘ea (with the glottal stop) is the term for the Hawaiian Hawksbill turtle, and it also means to smell (Pukui and Elbert 1986:36). I thank Kahu Mikahala for allowing me to see and smell that moani ke ea o Kamakahonu i puı¯a me ka maile/wind-blown is the maile-scented breath of Kamakahonu.

Finally, I want to sincerely thank the ASAO for bringing us here in this space of entangled and ambivalent histories. I have a new thought on Hau’ofa’s revelations in 1993 – perhaps it was not only the road he was driving on and not only the aegis of Pele, but also the time he spent here with the kūpuna (ancestors) and akua (gods) from Kamakahonu that gifted him with his vision. Three turtles, smelling their way to the shore, two genealogies of discontent that might be transformed in the lands and seas of hope.7

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COMMENTARY FROM KAHU MIKAHALA ROY

The restoration of Ahu‘ena Heiau provides a strong reminder to future generations that such work is important. It is for this reason that business leaders associated with American Factors created lawful land covenants with the state of Hawai‘i to abide ‘with these lands’ throughout changes in time. The Spirit of the memorandum of agreement requires all land tenants to promise to uphold respectfully and with honor the dignity of the lands of ke Kapitala Mua o Hawai‘i (First Capital of Hawai‘i).

All ensuing landholders here since Amfac have honored these land covenants. All until the current landholder, Pacifica Hotels now managed by the Marriott Courtyard took up tenure in 2007. This landholder disrespects the sacredness and sanctity of Kamakahonu.

The Kingdom of Hawai‘i abides at Kamakahonu. Here, over the years, by our actions and by our words, we have told of the generational love given by ‘Ōiwi for Akua, for their ancestors, for their rulers, for the love for their beginnings in heritage and hope for their country. We have shared the stories of inspirational acts in history and the customs of ‘Ōiwi to inspire future leaders among ‘Ōiwi. Kamakahonu’s light is the beacon for the world that it has always been. We move into times of great hope for the planet and all life upon the planet. Symposium attendees are all seated in the cradle of transformation: A fireplace in the Home of Ka ‘I-lälä-‘ole (Supreme-One-Without-Branches or Divine Creator).

Ancestors of ‘Ōiwi (first people of the Pacific) paved the way for those of us who follow, to help and heal all life on the planet by fostering aloha kekahi i kekahi (love one for another). So let us pay attention here at Kamakahonu. Ancestral wisdom shares that giving your essence here, where you feel you can, aids the abiding cumulative light of healing for the world (Fig 7).

E ‘oni wale nō ‘oukou i ku‘u pono, ‘a‘ole e pau
Go on in the righteousness I have followed; it is not finished.
–Kamehameha-the-Great.

Figure 7: Kahu Mikahala Roy dances a hula at the reception following the distinguished lecture at the ASAO meeting, Kamakahonu, Hawai‘i, 7 February 2014. Photo by authors.
Tengan would like to thank Paige West and the ASAO Board for the invitation to speak, Davianna McGregor for suggesting that he contact Kahu Mikahala, Puakea Nogelmeier for his insights into the relationships between Henry Kekahuna, Theodore Kelsey, Nāluahine Kaʻōpua, Kathy Kawelu for her observations of the unique qualities of Kekahuna’s maps, and Geoff White for providing a recording of the talk and for his years of mentorship and friendship. We would both like to thank an ASAO reviewer for productive comments, and Lamont Lindstrom for his work on shepherding this article through the publication process. Finally, we acknowledge the ‘āina of Kamakahonu, and the kūpuna, ‘aumākua, and akua whose ‘ike and mana inspired this essay.

NOTES

1. Tengan opened the Distinguished Lecture with the chant ‘E Hō Mai’, which was composed by Edith Kanakaʻole and translates as ‘Grant the knowledge from above/The hidden wisdom of the songs/Grant it, grant it’ (Tengan translation).

2. Roy observes: the shapes of turtles found in the lava of the pāhoehoe islets of Kamakahonu, later referred to by missionaries as ‘The Plymouth Rock’ of Hawai‘i, are significant to history. Mrs. Chee, a respected teacher of Kailua Elementary School as a part of her instruction, would walk her students down to the pier, which was then upheld by wooden pilings, to acknowledge the significance of this place.

3. Sa’iliemanu Lilomaia-Doctor provides the following translation: ‘We appreciate thank you, we appreciate thank you/Our eyes have seen and are satiated/You are our one and only, one and only/In our hearts and souls’. She also notes that ‘The song is sung always at any gathering of Samoans between the host and visitors where a reciprocal exchange of greetings, dances, gifts, and good wishes are usually done. At the end of any excursion and visitation, to show the guests’ appreciation of the wonderful time, beauty, and hospitality exhibited by their hosts they sing this song to show their appreciation, love and gratitude for the people and place they have just been guests of. The song also speaks of hope and continuity although it is not explicitly stated’ (email to author, 20 February 2014).

4. Particularly over the last decade, the growing numbers of migrants from the Freely Associated States in Micronesia have become the target of racist discrimination. Intra-Oceanian conflict has been a big part of this story as Native Hawaiians have tended to see them not as family but rather as yet another wave of settlers, and in their case carrying all of the worst belittling stereotypes that Hau‘ofa rejected. Indeed, Joseph Genz and Julianne Walsh organized a special session at the Kona meetings on ‘Ethnic Tensions in Hawai‘i’ that was prompted by ‘a recent high school fight that erupted between Hawaiians and Micronesians, located within walking distance from this year’s ASAO meeting in Kailua’ (Genz and Walsh 2014). Thus, the story of connection and recognition between Kahu Mikahala and the man who came up to her is particularly poignant and meaningful.

5. Tengan: I did not include this in my delivered speech, though it was originally going to be the central focus. However, comments from an anonymous reviewer and encouragement from Kahu Mikahala convinced me to augment this section.

6. Doing what any good Moana anthropologists would do, we sought to reweave the connections of ta‘ui (time) and vā (space) (Māhina 2010) so relocated our party to the land of Hong Kong-style cuisine smells at Happy Days Chinese Seafood Restaurant at the intersection of Wai’alae and 11th Ave. The food was excellent, but I probably ate too much. We made room for folks who we did not know were coming.

7. Another cause for hope: following the 2014 meetings, Sa’ili Lilomaia-Doktor (Samoan) and Marama Muru-Lanning (Māori) were elected as new incoming board members, one of whom will serve as ASAO Chair in two years.

REFERENCES


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