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Galaxies Like Islands, Islands Like Galaxies:
Envisioning Futurity In Seascape Technologies

A Dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction
of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

in

English

by

Nicole Kuʻuleinapuananioliko‘awapuhimelemeleolani Parubrub Furtado

June 2023

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2023

The Dissertation of Nicole Ku‘uleinapuananioliko‘awapuhimelemeleolani Parubrub Furtado is approved:

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Galaxies Like Islands, Islands Like Galaxies:
Envisioning Futurity In Seascape Technologies

by

Nicole Kuʻuleinapuananiolikoʻawapuhimelemeleolani Parubrub Furtado

Doctor of Philosophy, Graduate Program in English
University of California, Riverside, June 2023
Dr. Michelle Raheja, Co-Chairperson
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Galaxies like Islands, Islands like Galaxies: Envisioning Futurity in Seascape Technologies examines Indigenous Futurisms as a political and aesthetic movement that bridges art-forms (literature, performance, comics, media) to combat "settler futurity." Indigenous conceptions of temporality, contact, alternative worlds, apocalypse, and revolution are all themes/tenets of Indigenous Futurism and can be expressed artistically through multimedia forms. My project's methodology is defined by its engagement with moʻolelo, Kānaka Maoli storytelling. Moʻolelo as methodology envisions alternative futures that are liberated from a colonial matrix and challenge western epistemological conceptions of temporal progress. This dissertation features Native artists creating projects of cultural expression that reimagine uses for technology that are not predicated upon continued modes of capitalism and settler logics. Therefore, I develop a theoretical framework that employs anti-colonial/decolonial

future-making actions and discourses or “futurities,” at the intersections between Indigenous aesthetics and science and technology studies. I engage spatio-temporal Kānaka frameworks by outlining the sections of my dissertation not in chapters—but in wā. The term Wā or Ta-Va (space-time) resonates throughout Oceania and is similar but different between cultures. In the Native Hawaiian context, wā means period of time, epoch, era, time, occasion, season, or age. It can also mean space, interval, or as between objects or time. Material, ephemeral, and affective registers are engaged: it can be thought of as *the space between things* or a rolling interval. Wā speaks to complex temporal overlays between engaging the space of the past, present, and future within this dissertation. As sea-voyaging in Oceanic cultures is central to life, I am outlining my chapters as wā as to signify movement between ideas—like traversing between mini-theoretical islands of thought. Similar to how the ocean is complex with immense depth and secret go-ons beneath the surface, I use the theoretical concept of wā to understand and critically unpack the theories, art, and ideas within this dissertation.

Table of Contents

Wā I | Introduction: Critical Ocean Fabulations..1

Wā II | Survivance through Speculation: Solomon Enos's *Polyfantastica*..................................29

Wā III | I ka wā ma mua, I ka wā ma hope:
An Aesthetic & Praxis of Hawaiian Futurism in Noah Harders's Art.......................................85

Wā IV | (Re)Networked Relations:
Indigenous Virtual Art & Decolonial Geo-Technics..118

Wā IV | Tomorrow on the Horizon: A Manifesto for (Re)Worlding..150

Bibliography..162

List of Figures

Figure 1. “Tumu & Saumana.”*Polyfantastica* (2009)..54

Figure 2. “Hate is Limited, but Love is Infinite.” *Polyfantastica* (2009)......................................57

Figure 3. “More-Than-Human Elements.” *Polyfantastica.* (2009)..60

Figure 4. “The Offer.” *Polyfantastica.* (2009)...65

Figure 5. “Let Us Begin (End) with a Story.” *Polyfantastica.* (2009)...68

Figure 6. “Wa Kuu.” *Polyfantastica Master Timeline.* (2019)...72

Figure 7. “Wa Rono.” *Polyfantastica Master Timeline.* (2019)...75

Figure 8. “Wa Tanaroa.” *Polyfantastica Master Timeline.* (2019)...77

Figure 9. “Wa Tane.” *Polyfantastica Master Timeline.* (2019)...81

Figure 10. Rattlesnake Ginger. Photo Taken by Author on 3/26/22..88

Figure 11. Rattlesnake Ginger. Instagram Post by Noah Harders (@waikapu) on 6/22/23.....93

Figure 12. *Looks Can Be Deceiving*. Photo Taken by Author on 12/30/22...............................105

Figure 13. Promotional Image of *PIKO*...141

Figure 14. Virtual Reality Experience in *PIKO*...142

Figure 15. “Earthness VR Spa” by Tonia B****** and Ana Carolina Estarita Guerrero.............154

Figure 16. “Earthness VR Spa” by Tonia B****** and Ana Carolina Estarita Guerrero.............155

Wā I | Introduction: Critical Ocean Fabulations

The title of this dissertation, *Galaxies like Islands, Islands like Galaxies: Envisioning Futurity in Seascape Technologies*, comes from Kānaka Maoli (Native Hawaiian) artist Solomon Enos and his extensive work in Native Hawaiian speculative art. In 2012, Enos created an exhibition titled "From Stars to Stars: An Indigenous Perspective on Human Evolution" and the phrase "galaxies like islands, islands like galaxies" makes a brief appearance in a description of the project to describe the expansive interconnectedness of island ecosystems through an Oceanic worldview. Enos's line about galaxies and islands struck me as particularly apt to describe how places we consider *small* can house an entire cosmos. To view islands like galaxies and vice versa means reconfiguring the western view of islands as too small, disconnected, and isolated. For me, and for those who come from similar backgrounds, islands are sophisticated, intelligent systems. From the sky to the ground, when it rains, that rain permeates into the soil, the mountains, and runs down back through the trenches toward the ocean. To see galaxies like islands, islands like galaxies means to witness the magnificence of islands as already-always organized states of being capable of teaching us how to remain attentive to the power of shared responsibility and coalition. Thus, this dissertation engages a reorientation of scale to attend to an anti-colonial perspective of what it means to create art that recenters Oceanic epistemologies.

This dissertation examines artistic projects of Indigenous Futurisms and their emphasis on relationality through technological dynamism and Indigenous cultural knowledge

production. Indigenous Futurisms, as an aesthetic movement, bridges art-forms such as literature, performance, comics, Virtual Reality (VR), and Artificial Intelligence to name a few. However, it is not only limited to purely aesthetic expression. The movement of Indigenous Futurisms encapsulates a political act by situating Indigenous cultural knowledge in futuristic settings and asserting that these knowledges will continue to be told to the next generations to come. Western notions of modernity relegate Indigenous peoples and cultures as primitive and out-of-time. This notion calls upon logics of elimination of Indigenous cultures and the disappearance of Native communities to make way for "advanced" civilizations.[1] It is a political act for Native artists to create futuristic projects of cultural expression that reimagines uses for technology that is not predicated upon continued modes of capitalism and settler logics. Projects of Indigenous Futurisms affirm that ancestral technology and knowledges *are* indeed technologies and knowledge. It also affirms that ancestral technologies and knowledges are both vital forms that need to be learned and expanded. Indigenous Futurisms is considered a recent and new field of research in academia. The term "Indigenous Futurisms" comes from the introduction to Grace L. Dillon's edited collection *Walking the Clouds: An Anthology of Indigenous Science Fiction*.[2] Yet, the future-oriented analytics, ancestral knowledges, and cultural values at the heart of these artistic projects—within and outside of the field—are embodied practices of Indigenous peoples that existed long before the term gained traction in

[1] Patrick Wolfe, "Settler Colonialism and the Elimination of the Native," *Journal of Genocide Research* 8, no. 4 (2006): 387.

[2] Grace L. Dillon, introduction to *Walking the Clouds: An Anthology of Indigenous Science Fiction*, ed. Grace L. Dillon (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2012), 1.

2012. The technologies used in these projects of Indigenous Futurisms may be 'new,' but the cultural relationality that Indigenous artists infuse within these artistic expressions come from traditions that honor and cite the practices and worldviews of our ancestors. Indigenous artists working within this burgeoning field center legacies of land literacy and emphasize the need for ethical/responsible networks of relations for advanced social technologies into the future. This dissertation is in conversation with Indigenous digital and artistic medias that comprise radical acts of visual, cultural, and artistic expressions of sovereignty while forefronting concerns about sustainability and the use of technology. While my dissertation focuses primarily on Kānaka Maoli speculative art projects, it is heavily inspired by the global movement of Indigenous Futurisms across geographical contexts to project and imagine the future with Native peoples not only surviving, but thriving.

My own working definition of Indigeneity draws upon the work of Maile Arvin and Aileen Moreton-Robinson. Arvin views a productive definition of Indigeneity as an *analytic*. Viewing Indigeneity as an analytic "enable[s] both a critique of how Indigenous peoples are always seen as vanishing as well as opening up the boundaries of Indigenous identity, culture, politics, and futures to new, productive possibilities... [and] allows us to deeply engage the various power relations that continue to write Indigenous peoples as always vanishing."[3] Being Indigenous calls upon "historical and contemporary effects of colonialism and anticolonial

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[3] Maile Arvin, "Analytics of Indigeneity," in *Native Studies Keywords*, eds. Stephanie Nohelani Teves, Andrea Smith, and Michelle H. Raheja (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2015), 126.

demands and desires related to a certain land or territory and the various displacements of that place's original or longtime inhabitants."[4] As an analytic, Indigeneity is in constant processes of social formation that is separate but interlinked with complex histories involving decolonial, anti-colonial, anti-capitalist, and feminist movements. A working definition of Indigeneity must address shared legacies of colonialism and imperialism and move beyond identity politics. As Aileen Moreton-Robinson notes when referencing the writing of Daniel Heath Justice, "Although the history, contexts, and cultures of Native peoples are all vibrantly unique, Indigenous peoples are united through ethical relations that are enabled by obligations, legacies, loyalties, languages, community, truth, commitment, multiplicity, complexity, and the need to enact honor toward each other and our nonhuman kin."[5] Addressing these complex co-determined processes as an analytic of Indigeneity opens up space for a system of alliances through the global movement of Indigenous Futurisms.

Indigenous knowledges and epistemologies have their own conceptions of futurity that are antithetical to western modes of thinking/philosophies. While the framework of advanced technology being central to contemporary life to navigate the problems we face in the present remains, Indigenous Futurisms emphasizes the dynamism of technology to allow western science to finally catch-up to Indigenous knowledge systems in order to continue sustaining ancestral cultural practices. According to Nicole Naone, advanced western science theories like

[4] Arvin, "Analytics of Indigeneity," 121.

[5] Aileen Moreton-Robinson, introduction to *Critical Indigenous Studies : Engagements in First World Locations*, ed. Aileen Moreton-Robinson (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2016), 10.

"The Hydrologic Cycle, Evolution, and The Big Bang Theory" are all terms used to explain processes that have already been described in intricate detail by Native people for centuries.[6] Indigenous Futurisms is about "Indigenizing" western processes that our ancestors already knew and allowing Native peoples to imagine themselves continuing that knowledge into the future. The future, through a colonial lens, is always relegated to the continuation of settler power structures. Indigenous Futurisms call on us to change this outcome from the knowledge that our kupuna (elders or ancestors) have given us.

The original term "Futurism" emerged at the turn of the 20th century as an Italian neo-impressionist and cubist avant-garde art movement that emphasized dynamism, speed, technology, as well as the energy and movements of modern life. The original Futurism art movement focused on progress and modernity to sweep away tradition and celebrate the technological advancements of the airplane, car, train, and other industrialization methods. Focus was placed on creating a dynamic vision of the future focused on speed, violence, and the working classes as a way to advance social change. Futurism's inception came from the technological innovations starting from the Industrial Revolution throughout the early 1900's. Its founders, such as Filippo Tommaso Marinetti, were advocates for Italian fascist political movements as they thought speed, war, destruction, and violence were necessary for a radical foundation of a new social and aesthetic world order, as previous artforms were considered outdated and obsolete. This original Futurist movement advocated for aggressive expansionism

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[6] Nicole Naone, "Artist Statement," *PIKO*, accessed January 11, 2022, https://pikovirtualreality.com/artists.

by invading other countries to promote a sense of nationalism.[7] An annihilation of the past and complete sublation of art into politics to capture the dynamism of the Machine Age can be seen in Marinetti's famous quote from "The Founding and Manifesto of Futurism" (1909) in which, "A racing motor car…is more beautiful than the *Victory of Samothrace.*"[8] However, after the explosion of new military weaponry in the first World War terrified the world, technology entered into an era of machine angst—people questioned, with the new advancements of technologies, what threatening features are they capable of producing? Contemporary future-oriented movements have moved on from the original Futurism movement, yet these perspectives about modern life, technology, and what "progress" means resounds today with the proliferation of digital technologies and subsequent obsolescence subsuming everyday life. Futurists in our times would like to forget/distance themselves from this original art movement because of its fascist ties. However, western futurist thinking still relies on these paradigms of modernity to inform its trajectories and conceptions for technology. Despite this history, the word "futurism" for marginalized peoples represents a rejection of western conceptions of modernity. Indigenous Futurisms's movement allows the word "futurism" to act as a theoretical placeholder for a *working-through* of what kinds of futures different Native cultures wish to catalyze for themselves.

I include this historical link of Futurism as it is important to note the etymology of the

[7] Anne Bowler, "Politics as Art: Italian Futurism and Fascism," *Theory and Society* 20, no. 6 (1991): 763.
[8] Hilton Kramer, "Italian Futurism, Avant-Garde Spasm, Predicted Fascism," *Observer*, March 22, 2004, https://observer.com/2004/03/italian-futurism-avantgarde-spasm-predicted-fascism/.

word and its link to how Indigenous Futurisms have radically regenerated the term to envision the future from a decolonial and anti-colonial worldview. While the original Futurists were concerned with the spirit of modernity ushering in a new age of political and aesthetic revolution, Indigenous Futurists do not renounce the past. For Indigenous Futurisms, the past is rich with the knowledge of our ancestors. David Lloyd speaks on the capacity of art and aesthetics "to influence and form not only moral and political opinions but also fundamental subjective dispositions that have long been valued and activated."[9] As an aesthetic movement, the original Futurism movement and subsequent contemporary discourse on future-oriented topics (Artificial Intelligence, Virtual Reality, etc.) relies on western science to inform its obsession with notions of 'modernity,' 'advancement,' and 'progress.' Modernity is a realm that structurally dispossesses Indigenous cultures, operating as if Native people have no history to claim, in order to produce capitalist means. Glen Coulthard traces, through Marxist historical thought, how capitalism and by extension *modernity,* relies on alienating relationships to and stealing land through "conquest, enslavement, robbery, [and the] murder [of] noncapitalist producers, communities, and societies from their means of production and subsistence."[10] Therefore, modernity is established upon continued colonial, capitalist modes of production through primitive accumulation as a social relation dependent on the perpetual separation of workers from the means of production. Indigenous cultures must reject

[9] David Lloyd, *Under Representation: The Racial Regime of Aesthetics* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2018), 20.
[10] Glen Sean Coulthard, *Red Skin, White Masks: Rejecting the Colonial Politics of Recognition* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2014), 38.

capitalism's project of reconciliation that would have Native land and subjectivity be subsumed into capitalist circuits. Neo-colonial ideations of the future represent an investment in the teleology of western modernity. However, these views of modernity sprouting from the original Futurism movement are antithetical to the way revolution is conceived in Indigenous Futurisms. Revolution involves acknowledging the harm of past and present colonial ramifications and conceptualizing how to build better futures for ourselves and our communities. Indigenous conceptions of temporality, contact, alternative worlds, sustainability, apocalypse, and revolution are all themes/tenets of Indigenous Futurism and can be expressed artistically through multimedia forms. Therefore, Indigenous Futurism interrupts the colonial present through structural artistic, political, and theoretical frameworks. Indigenous aesthetic practices are a central means of preserving Native epistemologies. The central framework of Indigenous Futurisms's aesthetics is engaging Native ways of being and seeing the world. Indigenous Futurisms interrogates what lies beyond capitalist modes of production, the violences of war, and the category of what gets to be considered 'modern' by western standards. It is a returning to ourselves by activating ancestral knowledges that conjures the past, reckons with the present, and calls on us to enact decolonial and anti-colonial futures for the next generations to come.

Indigenous Futurisms, as an artistic and literary formation, coincides with the genre of Science Fiction or Speculative Fiction (SF). Indigenous Futurisms's connection to the genre embodies an engagement with SF's critical future-oriented analytics as a form of cultural and

social critique. Based heavily in aesthetic and literary practices of Science Fiction, Indigenous Futurisms also flows from the groundwork of Afrofuturism and the movements of Black critical thinkers: Octavia Butler, Samuel R. Delaney, and Nalo Hopkinson to name just a few influential writers and artists. Afrofuturism utilizes the genre of SF to imagine and evaluate the past and future as a way to build a better *tomorrow* in the present. Imagining futures is what SF does through worldbuilding, inventing new realities, and its ability to be a "thought-experiment" on what can/will/could take place. However, just as Indigenous Futurisms it is not only limited to being just an aesthetic or literary form; neither is Afrofuturism. As adrienne maree brown states, "I would call our work to change the world 'science fictional behavior'—being concerned with the way our actions and beliefs now, today, will shape the future, tomorrow, the next generations."[11] Like Afrofuturism, Indigenous Futurisms are about hope: these movements are invested in letting us be in charge of our own narratives to build better futures. As Juleana Enright notes of Afro-Indigenous Futurisms, our conceptions must, "stretch beyond a mere understanding of the history of colonization, but addresses how a system of white supremacy, superiority, and privilege has seeped into our own mindsets—from colorism to white guilt, from privilege to access. It is a process of constant learning and unlearning, and of cultivating pleasure where we can."[12] These movements unravel colonial paradigms and move towards collective healing and catalyzing of decolonial

[11] adrienne maree brown, *Emergent Strategy : Shaping Change, Changing Worlds* (Chico: AK Press, 2017), 16.
[12] Juleana Enright, "Afro-Indigenous Futurisms and Decolonizing Our Minds," *MN Artists*, August 28, 2020, https://mnartists.walkerart.org/afro-indigenous-futurisms-and-decolonizing-our-minds.

and abolitionist futures for ourselves.

As a Kanaka Maoli scholar myself, I recognize that imagining just futures is necessary as a "regenerative refusal" so that we, as Indigenous peoples, can voice dissent from colonial hierarchies of being and relating to the world and enable transformed and liberatory futures.[13] Echoing these sentiments is Leanne Betasamosake Simpson's call for working together in "constellations of coresistance" to form a radical resurgent/alternative present for ourselves. [14] Activations of different futures in these contexts has led to even more critical-future oriented movements being catalyzed in our present moments. Gulf Futurism, coined in 2012 by Sophia Al-Maria, was created in response to the unprecedented technological and urban development of places like Dubai and Doha to critique "conspicuous consumption and the embrace of technology as well as the concomitant issues of inequality, labor, and environmental devastation."[15] Chicana Futurism/Latinx Futurism also emerged from the early 2000's as a movement to interrogate colonial structures and conceptions of borders, dislocation, and identity to advocate for a revitalization of Mesoamerican ancestral worldviews. The imagined space of the future becomes an ideological battleground with consequences for our cultures, the planet, and the next generations to come at stake. Catalyzing abolitionist, decolonial, anti-colonial and anti-capitalist futurities is a battle of the imagination to "ideate—image and

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[13] Maile Arvin, *Possessing Polynesians: the Science of Settler Colonial Whiteness in Hawaiʻi and Oceania* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2019), 23.
[14] Leanne Betasamosake Simpson, *As We Have Always Done: Indigenous Freedom through Radical Resistance* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2017), 10.
[15] Christopher Y. Lew, "Back to the Futurist," *Whitney Museum of American Art*, Accessed February 14, 2022, https://whitney.org/essays/sophia-al-maria.

conceive—together" beyond late-capitalism, settler-colonialism, and the afterlives of chattel slavery.[16] Imagining diverse futures for marginalized peoples offers a way to navigate the problems of the time-period we find ourselves in.

My dissertation attempts to contribute to the growing scholarship of Indigenous Futurism studies by dissecting settler-colonial narratives through a Pacific methodology of moʻolelo. Moʻolelo comes from Kānaka Maoli conceptions of storytelling. Moʻolelo is translated as song, dance, or art and is informed through the rich epistemologies and cosmogonies of our ancestors. This Hawaiian concept derives from the words moʻo and ʻōlelo and is delineated as a succession of speech and stories. Moʻo are important shapeshifting lizard spirits in Hawaiian mythology. ʻŌlelo means the Hawaiian language. Therefore moʻolelo can also mean succession, series, especially a genealogical line, or lineage. It embodies a network of communication that is fostered orally (in line with traditional modes of oral storytelling that is a form of knowledge production in Hawaiian culture). I am informed by moʻolelo as methodology to illustrate how Native digital media projects and other art-forms liberate Indigenous futures from settler-colonial logics of time, hierarchies, and knowledge production. As the sequencing of stories is critical to this methodology, moʻolelo builds on various times, spaces, relationships, and knowledges to create narratives meant to teach, inform, or create multiple perspectives. Aligned with Kānaka Maoli cultural beliefs, moʻolelo is part of an entire ecology of cultural knowledge progression and production. As Indigenous peoples, our storied

[16] brown, *Emergent Strategy*, 18.

relationship to land and each other is central to our worldviews. By centering the social aspects of Kānaka storytelling and its fluidity, moʻolelo disorients colonial notions of time and knowledge production. Moʻolelo is important because the Hawaiian language was banned for almost 100 years, beginning in 1896. While moʻolelo does not have to be in Hawaiian specifically, it is a critical Kānaka framework of thinking and speaking regardless of what language is being used.

Whether it be the universities, museums, government, or the cybernetics industry, western institutions would not consider a moʻolelo my grandmother told me as an accurate or legitimized knowledge. However, moʻolelo as methodology means that stories, letters, songs, or visual art from ancestors or family members are not discounted for not being peer-reviewed, but instead harken to how Indigenous knoweldges had for epochs been oral-tradition cultures. Therefore, that which has been passed down from those who have come before us are full of knowledge, lessons, and critical discourse. These stories may look or sound simply 'casual' to the academic ear and eye. My grandma recently told me a story of how my great-aunt/my grandma's sister used to be an expert lei-maker who worked at the Honolulu Airport's Betsy Lei Stand in the 1960's, long before she passed away in the early 2000's. My Aunty Carmela even got to give leis to Elvis Presley and John Wayne when they visited Hawaiʻi.[17] While this may seem like a casual family story, what this moʻolelo actually teaches me about is the cultural practice of making lei, how it is a practice that has survived from our ancestors, and how it has

[17] Constance Hoʻoipo Furtado, personal communication, May 23, 2023.

changed over time. Her moʻolelo weaves together critical discourse by telling me how my great-aunt had to survive in a capitalistic system and how we as Kānaka can continue to practice our culture in unexpected ways even though tourists consume our products. My grandmother's story also operates as a record from that time. Western institutions establish a canon of what is considered to be empirical and valuable knowledge. As Lee Maracle notes, this canon discredits Indigenous stories and was foisted upon the west's colonies and continues to inform present conceptions of what counts or doesn't count as knowledge.[18] However, acknowledging that this type of oral knowledge, in a variety of forms, has value can radically (re)position how we can use advanced technologies through communication. By utilizing moʻolelo as methodology, I hope to focus on envisioning alternative futures that are liberated from a colonial matrix and that challenge western epistemological conceptions of temporal progress in my dissertation.

Indigenous Futurisms, as a framework, seeks to combat "settler futurity" by intervening in the logics of neocolonialism, the military-industrial complex, neoliberalism, and late-stage capitalism. I elicit the term late-stage capitalism in this mix to signal a post-World War II era of capitalism that is dominated by multinational corporations and global markets of consumption. This specificity is what I aim to critique and connect to systems of militourism that attempt to consume Native land, bodies, and resources in Hawaiʻi and Oceania more broadly. The term militourism comes from Teresia K. Teaiwa to signal how the United States

[18] Lee Maracle, *Memory Serves: Oratories,* ed. Smaro Kamboureli (Edmonton: NeWest Publishers, 2015), 55.

military-industrial complex intimately intersects with the tourism industry to exploit/extract culture, places, and resources throughout Oceania. In the context of Oceania, U.S. imperial forces ensure that touristic ventures exploit Indigenous peoples, lands, and resources, while the tourism industry masks it.[19] Throughout Hawaiʻi, increased U.S. military presence works in tandem with the tourism industry to sever/distort Kānaka relations to land. The type of settler futurity that militourism creates invokes a "whitestream knowledge" that forefronts a culture of white supremacy. Coming from Sandy Grande, whitestream knowledge is forcing white, colonial forms of histories and norms to be the dominant mode of knowledge production.[20] Eve Tuck and Rubén Gaztambide-Fernández call for anti-colonial strategies in education to disrupt "whitestream knowledge" induced by a "settler futurity" that aims to stake claim to Indigenous cultures, lands, and resources. Tuck and Gaztambide-Fernández define settler futurity as such:

> Anything that seeks to recuperate and not interrupt settler colonialism to reform the settlement and incorporate Indigenous peoples into the multicultural settler colonial nation state is fettered to settler futurity. To be clear, our commitments are to what might be called an Indigenous futurity, which does not foreclose the inhabitation of Indigenous land by nonIndigenous peoples, but does foreclose settler colonialism and settler epistemologies.[21]

The term settler futurity illustrates how settler-colonialism forecloses futures for Indigenous

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[19] Teresia K. Teaiwa, "Reading Gauguin's *Noa Noa* with Hau'ofa's *Nederends*: Militourism, Feminism, and the Polynesian Body," in *Inside Out : Literature, Cultural Politics, and Identity in the New Pacific*, eds. Vilsoni Hereniko and Rob Wilson (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 1999), 251-253.
[20] Sandy Grande, *Red Pedagogy : Native American Social and Political Thought*, Tenth Anniversary edition (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2015).
[21] Eve Tuck and Rubén A Gaztambide-Fernández, "Curriculum, Replacement, and Settler Futurity," *Journal of Curriculum Theorizing* 29, no. 1 (2013): 80.

people. Settler futurity cannot be divorced from the western conception of *modernity*. Through colonial lenses of culture and identity, modernity relegates Indigenous people outside of time and perpetuates images of Native cultures as static. This falsehood is perpetuated through settler-colonial forms of erasure that eliminate Indigenous bodies and histories from various digital and cybernetic realms. Critiques of settler futurity are vital to my project in that they gesture towards the totalitizing coloniality of the 'new frontier' of cyberspace and what modernity coming from a western sense means. My dissertation therefore combats settler futurity by focusing on Indigenous speculative art-forms that create possibility in Indigenous futures—both real and imagined—and exist outside of colonial narratives.

In the western imaginary, colonial ideations view the Pacific as "out there" and "back then."[22] The notion of *modern life* and *progress* is predicated upon the harmful histories of inscribing Indigenous peoples as 'backwards' or closer to linear Darwinian theories of evolution, as an earlier version of the category of the human. Notions of progress and improvement have a historical and contemporary function as both operate as systematic causes for structural violence against Indigenous bodies. Colonial coding of Indigenous peoples and worldviews are viewed as objective Truth and have implications for how fields like biochemistry, anthropology, as well as other other STEM fields view what is considered to be fact. These violent 'facts' have justified the structured dispossession of Indigenous lands as a resource and is necessary for the project of modernity. These imperial conceptions of the

[22] James Clifford, "Indigenous Articulations" *Contemporary Pacific* 12, no 2 (2001): 476.

'Future' exist as an epistemological stake up for grabs. As Bryan Kuwada states, "the future is a realm we [as Indigenous peoples] have inhabited for thousands of years."[23] Kuwada continues to say that Native cultures are consistently painted as anti-science and viewed as "speed bumps slowing everyone down on the road to progress... [yet] we operat[e] on geological and genealogical time that spans generations and epochs" to ensure land is abundant [for all] into the future."[24] By encoding/routing Native knowledges within the technological, it 1) creates a space for Indigenous ways of being and relating to the world in scientific discourse and 2) can offer a regenerating take on the ways in which technology can be reconstituted and repurposed to care for life on Earth instead of extractive relationships.

Projects of Indigenous Futurism are rooted in critical practices of care towards cultivating Native cultures. We weave our stories and our knowledges into the *here and now* of the present. Indigenous Futurisms are critical fabulations by engaging the knowledge of our pasts and expanding it into the future. Critical fabulation comes from Saidiya Hartman in "Venus in Two Acts" (2008) and later extended in *Wayward Lives, Beautiful Experiments*: *Intimate Histories of Social Upheaval* (2019). Critical fabulation engages suppressed voices to forefront these perspectives amid the scattered facts of the western historical archive. It allows for a speculative narration to address historical gaps and conjure stories/knowledge that colonial violence has silenced. Drawing from Hartman's work, "Critical

[23] Bryan Kamaoli Kuwada, "We Live in the Future Come Join Us," *Ke Kaupu Hehi Ale,* April 3, 2015, https://hehiale.com/2015/04/03/we-live-in-the-future-come-join-us/.
[24] Kuwada, "We Live in the Future Come Join Us," 2015.

Ocean Fabulations" is rooted in Indigenous Futurisms and engages the groundwork of her theory as a blending of art, literature, and aesthetics to cultivate an embodied archive of experiences. Hartman's theory has greatly influenced my own. This dissertation aims to address the harms of colonialism and how the history of Oceania is typically narrated from colonial common sense views. Specifically in Hawaiʻi's case, western disease causing genocide on the population, the introduction of Christian missionary teachings, and plantation capitalism (among many other factors of settler-colonialism) have worked to significantly erode how we view ourselves and our history. "Fatal impact theory," popularized by Arthur S. Thomson, argued in 1859 that Polynesians were thought to be doomed to extinction.[25] Fatal impact theory, drawing heavily from Social Darwinism, is a colonial worldview that more primitive cultures when compared to European ones would eventually fade and become extinct. Despite this being a colonial falsehood, the threads of fatal impact theory attempts to continue to persist, haunting our cultures, creating doubt about ourselves within Indigenous communities. Our kupuna (ancestors) even internalized these messages and that is partially why a lot of them decided to write our history down in Hawaiian language newspapers, books, and journals.[26] For me, Critical Ocean Fabulations means a way of honoring the past by building on what our kupuna wrote for us to read in the future. It aims to fill in gaps within the colonial archive and dismantle falsehoods like fatal impact theory that my community may internalize. Critical

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[25] Brandy Nālani McDougall, personal communication, May 19, 2023.
[26] Brandy Nālani McDougall, personal communication, May 19, 2023.

Ocean Fabulations is about the possibility of cracking open the colonial archive to reclaim ourselves. While the structures of colonialism have created many questions about our own identities such as how to practice culture in the present and what it means to be Hawaiian, I offer Critical Ocean Fabulations as a space of possibility for our elders, ourselves, and future generations to imagine what is possible to better our communities. To project ourselves forward into the future, we must be grounded within the present while simultaneously engaging the knowledge and uplifting the beliefs of our ancestors.

The western archive cultivates empirical 'truths,' but really they should be considered partial truths. Recorded events in the western archive are filled with biases that only give a limited account of history from a colonial viewpoint. Ethnography, a supposedly impartial view of cultures, assumes a false, constructed authority of cultures. As James Clifford notes, "even the best ethnographic texts—serious, true fictions—are systems, or economies, of truth… Ethnographic truths are thus inherently *partial*—committed and incomplete."[27] Therefore, critical fabulation is in some ways a response to this problem of assumed authority and partial truths written within the colonial archives that informs dominant worldviews. Theories of temporality and critical fabulation come from a variety of influences for me, including José Esteban Muñoz and his work *Cruising Utopia: The Then and There of Queer Futurity* (2009).

[27] James Clifford, introduction to *Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography; a School of American Research Advanced Seminar*, eds. James Clifford and George E. Marcus (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1986), 7.

As Muñoz states, “Queerness is not yet here.”[28] For Muñoz, queerness is an ideality, a potentiality, and a desire of working-though the present to futures of liberation. This phrasing has inspired me to think about how Indigenous Futurisms is not only a working-through to activate the futures we want to see, but also a *working-towards* the futures we desperately need—but is *not yet here*. To think beyond what is “not yet here” is important to my theorizations about Indigenous Futurisms. The work of M. Jacqui Alexander in *Pedagogies of Crossing: Meditations on Feminism, Sexual Politics, Memory, and the Sacred* (2001) is also important to me to critique the colonial archives of the past, the colonial present, and the project of colonizing futures. What Alexander terms “palimpsestic time” is the attempt to work from a temporal and spatial framework that articulates *progress* as nonexistent—she argues that what is “here and now” and “then and there” is actually “here and there” and “now and then.”[29] I use these frameworks to explain that the *here and now* of digital technologies that have since become commonplace are also a disparate space linked to colonial ideations of *progress* and *modernity* and are in need of much critical inquiry.

The Native projects I engage within my dissertation represent a complex macrocosm of the global project of Indigenous Futurisms with localized place-specificity that oppose western technoculture’s empiricism. James Clifford in speaking to the work of Epeli Hauʻofa points out that we must “connect old stories with modern circumstances, recognizing temporal

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[28] José Esteban Muñoz, *Cruising Utopia: the Then and There of Queer Futurity* (New York: New York University Press, 2009), 1.
[29] Jacqui M. Alexander, *Pedagogies of Crossing : Meditations on Feminism, Sexual Politics, Memory, and the Sacred* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2005), 190.

overlays in a complexly contemporary world."[30] Projects of Indigenous Futurisms are on-the-move from the "edge"[31] and in transit into cybernetic, virtual, and/or speculative realms of the future. These works look beyond to the *not yet here* of survivance through speculative forms that envision decolonial futurities. I situate the projects I am writing about in relation to a Hawaiian worldview through what Karin Amimoto Ingersoll terms "Seascape Epistemology." This crucial concept articulates a Kanaka ʻŌiwi way of knowing founded on sensorial, intellectual, and embodied literacies of moana (the ocean). Seascape Epistemology is a current or movement of thought throughout my dissertation to weave different threads of Hawaiian worldviews and cultural knowledge with the projects featured in my dissertation. Rising from the organic dance between surfer and sea, Seascape Epistemology comprises:

> Rhythms of the seascape assemble with the body, identity becomes an affected process over time and through philosophical, spiritual, and kinesthetic interactions with place. An ocean-body assemblage emerges… Seascape Epistemology dives into the ocean, splashing alternatives onto the Western-dominant and linear mind-set that has led the world toward realities of mass industrialization and cultural and individual assimilation. Understanding knowledge as an always moving interaction through theoretical frames challenges dominant theoretical narratives that strive to determine absolute truths.[32]

Seascape Epistemology embodies a dynamic flow of material, bodies, and memories. This Kānaka framework of "being-in-the-sea" echoes Manulani Meyer's theorizations on Holographic Epistemology. Meyer terms "Holographic Epistemology" on how Indigenous

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[30] James Clifford, "Indigenous Articulations," 476.

[31] Being in conversation with Teresia K. Teaiwa's "L(o)sing the Edge" (2001) in how Pacific Studies theories, scholars, and knowledges exist on the edges of certain fields/discourses and how to situate oneself within place and disciplines.

[32] Karin A. Ingersoll, *Waves of Knowing : A Seascape Epistemology* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2016), 15.

people see the world through multiple levels of reality that creates codes of grammar that engages an Indigenous sense of knowing.[33] This dissertation connects holographic thinking to its ability to reflect a seascape of knowledge that comes from a place of "adaptation, representing change, process, the inward and outward flow of ideas, reflections, and events."[34] Thinking of Seascape Epistemology as holographic calls into question the purpose, role, and relevance of western knowledge production and can deconstruct colonial notions of being. Instead of prioritizing knowledge in a top-bottom power system which generates knowledge from archives, books, and related materials, Seascape Epistemology orientates our focus around the ocean—the coral, the sand, the rocks, the tides, the currents, but also the sky and weather.

These more-than-human elements teach us about a different kind of aesthetic, social, and political culture which is embodied first and foremost in our relationality to these things. It is knowing that, in one moment, the sea can be calm, but we know *at any moment* those tides can change, and we expect that change. This shift in perspective refuses to see that change as violent or rough. It simply means that we are called to listen and watch and pivot *with* that change—not against. These terms also relate to the Hawaiian praxis of "Makawalu." Makawalu embodies a form of praxis that is multi-relational, multi-dimensional, and a holographic way of Kānaka Maoli thinking that speaks to the need of looking at things from at least eight different perspectives. According to Nicole Naone, these perspectives aren't limited

[33] Manulani Aluli Meyer, "Holographic Epistemology: Native Common Sense," *China Media Research* 9, no. 2 (2013): 94–96.
[34] Ingersoll, *Waves of Knowing : A Seascape Epistemology*, 23.

to humans, but centers temporality and natural elements of existence. These varied perspectives can include concepts of time, or even the natural elements of the planet. Makawalu considers our thoughts and actions for and through eight seasons, moons, generations: backwards and forwards through time & space.[35] The need to look at things from at least eight different perspectives requires us to pause—to think beyond what is in the here and now and to pay attention to what is to come. Makawalu is about attending to what is occurring in the present while acknowledging interwoven and multiple perspectives that are planetary, as well as celestial. For example, a makawalu perspective on climate change would ask, how do plants, animals, the sea, rocks, or clouds feel about these intense changes? How do these changes relate in time to our galaxy and other planets?

I engage spatio-temporal Kānaka frameworks by outlining the sections of my dissertation not in chapters—but in wā. The term wā or va resonates throughout Oceania. In the Native Hawaiian context, wā means period of time, epoch, era, time, occasion, season, or age. It can also mean space, interval, or as between objects or time. In line with the holographic meanings behind Kānaka theories, wā can also mean to talk much, as of gossip: to talk loudly back and forth—as it is the root word of walaʻau. There is a fluid interchange and abstract nature to the definition of wā. Material, ephemeral, and affective registers are engaged: it can be thought of as *the space between things*. By engaging my sections as mini wā, it gives me theoretical breadth to engage within past, present, and future imaginings and relate these

[35] Nicole Naone, personal communication, October 18, 2022.

divergent objects of study and embodied Indigenous knowledges/practices.

In thinking through the sections of my dissertation as wā, I want to highlight the term *interval*. Indeed, this notion of interval makes its way into the formal definitions of wā. In Hawaiian, it can also mean for musical purposes, the fret of an ukulele, guitar, or similar instrument. Trinh T. Minh-ha notes of the interval that it:

> Allows words to set in motion dormant energies and to offer, with the impasse, a passage from one space (visual, musical, verbal, mental, physical) to another... a direct relation is possible: a relation of infinity assumed in works that accept the risks of spacing and take in the field of free resonances-or, of indefinite substitutions within the closure of a finite work.[36]

Va, as it is called throughout Oceania, relates to temporality and appears in varying Great Ocean contexts. While different yet related to a Kānaka context, the work of Hūfanga ʻŌkusitino Māhina writes of "Ta Va" as a theory of space-time (coming from Tongan) that is critical to Great Ocean epistemology and ontology.[37] Ta Va relates to exchange as a common medium of reality composed of symmetry, rhythm, and harmony which can give rise to either conflict or order. It is a rhythmic interval of relationality. I aim to write through, between, and to the wā. I view the artworks, theories, and writers I am including in my dissertation as constellations or mini-galaxies of knowledge that I do not engage with linearly. I may come across an art project or writing for the first time and not think of it again until it comes back to me. The work done in graphic fiction, Virtual Reality, and theoretical writings I'm engaging

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[36] Trinh T. Minh-Ha, preface to *Cinema Interval,* (New York: Routledge, 1999), xi-xii.

[37] Hūfanga ʻŌkusitino Māhina,"Tā, Vā, and Moana : Temporality, Spatiality, and Indigeneity," *Pacific Studies* 33, no. 2 (2010): 169–171.

with all vary in relation and Ta Va to me. Sometimes these works have been with me for years: others are new. Sometimes I know or am friends with the people who made them: sometimes I don't. My engagement with the materials in this dissertation encompasses different intervals of my life and this extends to the artists and theorists who made them as well. Therefore, the wā is a structure of relationality that encompasses my engagement with these texts that is fluid, like the sea, through variant spaces and times as I keep (re)encountering them.

As noted above, wā in Hawaiian means time, epoch, era, time, occasion, season, or age: it means *the space between things* or a rolling interval. Each wā encompasses a praxis of relationality that allows me to be in conversation with each of the texts and theories I am analyzing. Indigenous Futurisms cultivate critical cultural resurgence for Native communities through art and literature through utilizing technology and speculative aesthetics. To organize my sections in wā speaks to how I engage temporality and how wā is reflective of a refusal of western futurity and counters colonial ideations of the future.

My dissertation is outlined in five wā as a way of connecting between ideas, stories, theories, artworks, artists, and scholars. By thinking through and speaking to the wā, I hope for it to be a portal to my ideas. As sea-voyaging in Oceanic cultures is central to life, I am outlining my chapters as wā as to signify movement between ideas—like traversing between mini-theoretical islands. Wā is expansive, like the Ocean, and it is not empty space. Similar to how the ocean is complex with immense depth and secret going-ons beneath the surface, I hope to use the theoretical concept of wā to understand and critically unpack the theories, art,

and ideas within my dissertation. As the name of my dissertation entails, by viewing galaxies like islands and islands like galaxies, I hope to illuminate the complexities of the artworks I am in conversation with and move between these theoretical islands of thought.

"Wā II | Survivance through Speculation: Solomon Enos's *Polyfantastica"* is an Indigenous science fiction graphic novel that follows different Great Ocean societies living on a planet called Honua (translated as Earth in Hawaiian), as they struggle for power through two different sets of action: peace and war. *Polyfantastica* exists in many forms. The impetus for *Polyfantastica* draws from a thought-experiment the author Solomon Enos proposes. Enos asks, "what would have happened if the Hawaiian Islands were never interrupted?" Thus, Euroamerican colonialism never occurs in this parallel timeline that he creates. *Polyfantastica* follows the journey of the planet Honua over 40,000 years until the planet achieves interstellar travel into the very core of the universe. This wā does a close-reading of the original graphic novel produced in 2009 and accompanying artbooks published in 2019. The term "poly-fantastic" was created by Enos to mean science fiction with a Polynesian twist of fabulation. To me, the term embodies Great Ocean speculative fabulation by engaging the knowledge of our pasts and expanding it into the future through fantastical storylines and themes. The poly-fantastic is taking aspects of Oceanic cultures and fusing it with fantastical and speculative genre elements.

Polyfantastica is a moʻolelo that tells a new story of the future of Hawaiʻi and Oceanic peoples and moves beyond the text of the graphic novel into multiple mixed-media forms that

embody a Kanaka ʻŌiwi worldview of expansion. This wā develops a framework of *survivance through speculation* through art and literature to disrupt the systematic everyday in which Indigenous peoples are defined. I have developed this framework in conversation with Gerald Vizenor's notions of survivance to mean a dynamic presence and present for Indigenous cultures through imagining futures that divest from colonial notions of being. To divest from colonial notions of being centering Indigenous notions of sustainability and relationality for the planet and to each other. While survivance accounts for active resistance in art to colonial paradigms, I also connect it to speculation to imagine and ideate futures for ourselves that can enact change in the present.

What does an aesthetic and political practice of Hawaiian Futurism look like? While Wā II focuses on Solomon Enos's *Polyfantastica*, "Wā III | I ka wā ma mua, I ka wā ma hope: An Aesthetic & Praxis of Hawaiian Futurism in Noah Harders's Art" looks specifically at my community's creation of lei and how it has been expanded in contemporary times. The floral creations of Kanaka artist Noah Harders are discussed in tandem with an aesthetic practice that I tentatively call "Hawaiian Futurism." The ʻōlelo noʻeau[38] "I ka wā ma mua, i ka wā ma hope" or "the future is in the past" is the theoretical grounding I use to trace how Harders's aesthetic and praxis cultural practice embodies Hawaiian Futurism through his creation of floral masks. I ka wā ma mua, i ka wā ma hope is a critical cultural framework is generative to think through a Kānaka Maoli context about Indigenous Futurism and future-making actions. It means that

[38] Hawaiian proverbial saying that relates to cultural and ancestral knowledges.

in order to project oneself into the future, we must look to the past for guidance, protocols, and answers. Harders's art includes the practice of making lei into wondrous Oceanic expression through material masks and visual art on his Instagram page (@waikapu). In this wā, I unpack what the value is of art that is inherently ephemeral. I also connect Hawaiian epistemologies to the art Harders's created to illustrate the layered meaning behind his creations. I was able to meet Harders and attend his first ever museum exhibition in 2022 at the Honolulu Museum of Art. This wā addresses how museums function as a space that acknowledges the limitations of housing Indigenous art exhibitions within western institutions. Through a lens of materiality, Harders's artistic projects uses found organic objects of flowers and creates wearable art based in traditional lei-making. Harders's visual art are storied forms of knowledge that are meant to teach, inform, and have us learn from with the next generations in mind. Through a praxis of Hawaiian Futurism, Harders's work reveals how lei-making can be conceived and expanded in the 21st century. Ultimately, this wā seeks to investigate how Kānaka Maoli contemporary art engages, expands, and honors cultural traditions of our ancestors in the face of continued militourism and desecration of ancestral spaces through creating anti-colonial art.

With the growth of virtual/computer generated technologies, Indigenous artists have begun to harness the platforms' multi-sensory and immersive interactivities to preserve and revitalize cultural practices. "Wā IV | (Re)Networked Relations: Indigenous Virtual Art & Decolonial Geo-Technics" examines the Kānaka Maoli created VR projects *PIKO* and *Kilo*

Hōkū. The artists who created these projects use Virtual Reality as a form of cultural reclamation by recreating and remodeling Hawaiian knowledge systems. In 1996, Loretta Todd crafted a generative and poetic essay titled "Aboriginal Narratives in Cyberspace" outlining the wonders of what could be a place of digital Indigenous expression through technologies like cyberspace and VR. Utilizing Todd's work as the main framework for this wā, I trace a technological trajectory of Virtual Reality (and the ontology of cyberspace) to analyze how VR allows for a decolonial expression of the self under settler-colonialism. This wā on Indigenous VR seeks to understand the benefits and shortcomings of utilizing technology for cultural revitalization and for Indigenous knowledge production/preservation. Through what I term as "geo-technics" I discuss how Kānaka Maoli worldviews and cultural practices are extended through VR to motivate people to understand the importance of Hawaiian knowledge systems and beliefs. In other words, these digital spaces allow a decolonial cultural expression of the self under neo-colonialism.

Wā II | Survivance Through Speculation: Solomon Enos's *Polyfantastica*

"*Polyfantastica*...is a conceptual project. Its broad long-ranging ideas...tap into the meaning of our—or the role of—human beings, within the—within the universe, you know. So it's pretty far out kinda stuff."

— **Solomon Enos,** author of *Polyfantastica*

"But if we look at the myths, legends, and oral traditions, and the cosmologies of the peoples of Oceania, it becomes evident that they did not conceive of their world in such microscopic proportions. Their universe comprised not only land surfaces, but the surrounding ocean as far as they could traverse and exploit it, the underworld with its fire-controlling and earth-shaking denizens, and the heavens above with their hierarchies of powerful gods and named stars and constellations that people could count on to guide their ways across the seas. Their world was anything but tiny. They thought big and recounted their deeds in epic proportions."

— **Epeli Hau'ofa**, author of *Our Sea of Islands*

Introduction

The year is 39,999, and there is no conflict, no warfare, no pestilence, and no starvation. Yet, each adult knows them all—through a drop of water. Through memory. As the opening scene in Solomon Enos's *Polyfantastica* (2009), this prelude asks the reader to consider the question, "What would have happened if the Hawaiian Islands were never interrupted?" Enos himself posed this question more than a decade ago, and his response is a science fiction graphic novel illustrating an ever-expanding 40,000-year alternative universe in which the histories and culture of Native Hawaiians were never interrupted by colonization. Opening with a conversation between teacher and student, readers are immediately drawn to the student's hesitation in *remembering the beginning*—as remembering means spatially and temporally making sense of the 'then' which conflicts with the 'now.' As the graphic novel continues, readers are introduced to multiple political factions in a parallel-Polynesian society, struggling to overcome "death, destruction, and war…connect[ing] all human consciousness while retaining individual identity…and [eventually] exploring[ing] the mysteries of the galaxy."[39] *Polyfantastica* follows various Great Ocean societies living on a planet called Honua (Earth) in an Oceanic continent named Moananui as they struggle for power through two conflicting sets of action: peace and war. *Polyfantastica* is Native Hawaiian Science Fiction and

[39] See Solomon Enos's official's website "Solomon Enos" and the *Polyfantastica* link for this official description http://www.solomonenos.com/polyfantastica.

engages in a praxis of moʻolelo (storytelling) which embodies Kanaka ʻŌiwi worldviews of space, time, and relationality between humans, non-humans, and more-than-human beings.

As moʻolelo, *Polyfantastica* challenges western conceptions of temporality which continue to sever historical and cultural understandings of Hawaiian epistemologies being rooted first and foremost in geological and genealogical relations to the archipelago, the ocean, and more-than-human elements. It is a moʻolelo that tells a new story of the future of Hawaiʻi and Oceanic peoples. *Polyfantastica* moves beyond the text of the graphic novel into multiple mixed-media forms that embody a Kanaka ʻŌiwi worldview of expansion. By engaging with Enos's work, this article aims to dissect narratives that settler-colonialism uses to create futures for Oceania and beyond through *Polyfantastica*. The rich worldbuilding presented in Enos's work emphasizes a process of decolonizing narratives and ideologies by using moʻolelo as methodology and focusing on envisioning alternative futures that are ontologically and epistemologically liberated from colonial worldviews.

I use the term moʻolelo to encompass the vast storylines present in *Polyfantastica*. Moʻolelo is a Kānaka Maoli concept that means story, myth, legend, and history simultaneously. Moʻolelo has the capacity to shape identity and imagine what our place and purpose is in the universal order of life. Brandy Nālani McDougall notes that moʻolelo serves to tell, retell, and even untell the narratives of a people.[40] Settler-colonial ideations of

[40] Brandy Nālani McDougall, "Ola (i) Na Moolelo: Living Moolelo: Brandy McDougall at TEDxManoa," Tedx Talks, October 25, 2012, video, 16:57, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K69_kuqBiX8.

Indigenous peoples perpetuate falsehoods, therefore, continuing to tell our stories can *untell* these notions. With such power of narrativity in mind, McDougall cautions that "colonialism must be a part of our moʻolelo today because it affects nearly every aspect of our lives" and that the "colonial situation has been bolstered by touristic and stereotypical stories and images…these representations end up being taken as truth by those who do not know us."[41] The force of moʻolelo can be incredibly empowering and, in the hands of the wrong narrators, irreconcilably damaging. However, continuing to tell our ancestral stories through an Indigenous Futurisms lens like Enos does can begin to untell colonial representations.

Echoing McDougall, Noelani Goodyear-Kaʻōpua contends that "[w]hen militarization, racism, and colonization are as much about projecting futures as they are about historical processes, transformative Indigenous future-making is necessary for building alternatives and counter-hegemonies."[42] This statement is at once an act of naming the realm of militourism and continued colonization of Oceania through settler futurity and is also a call to imagine counter-hegemonies that constitute transformative Indigenous future-making. Cultural practices are forms of future-making and they give us analytical tools for teaching and theorizing Indigenous futurities and futurisms. Goodyear-Kaʻōpua's call to demilitarize education, in the context of her writing, is key to moving towards expanding moʻolelo through an Indigenous Futurisms lens. Through Indigenous Futurisms, we must call forth narratives to

[41] McDougall, "Ola (i) Na Moolelo: Living Moolelo: Brandy McDougall at TEDxManoa," 2012.
[42] Noelani Goodyear-Kaʻōpua, "Indigenous Oceanic Futures: Challenging Settler Colonialisms and Militarization," in *Indigenous and Decolonizing Studies in Education: Mapping the Long View*, eds. Linda Tuhiwai Smith, Eve Tuck, and K. Wayne Yang (New York: Routledge, 2019), 93.

reimagine the past and future in order to decolonize narratives and ideologies in the present. Enos's work connects to Goodyear-Kaʻōpua's thinking by centering sacred, ancestral connections between land, human beings, and more-than-humans elements (which all make an appearance in the *Polyfantastica* universe). Therefore, Enos's artwork calls to a coalition and continuum of embodied knowledges that can be used to speculate through the artistic praxes of Indigenous Futurisms.

(Re)Defining Expansion

In line with the fluidity of moʻolelo, *Polyfantastica*, in its many manifestations, can be thought of as an expanded text. As an expanded text, *Polyfantastica* is a form of anti-colonial literature, as the story does not end with the graphic novel. It continues to be told in different mixed-media forms and operates as counter-hegemonic in that *Polyfantastica* is not solely about transmission to a reader. It is about encountering a text and recognizing it in its many embodied forms and taking its message with you—much like how a moʻolelo can be told and retold again and again. Enos's artistry illustrates how a story isn't bound to word alone—*Polyfantastica* is reimagined through various different medias that suit the story *in that moment* the writer is attempting to tell. Since the graphic novel's initial release, Enos has created additional materials that expand upon *Polyfantastica's* main storyline through sculptures and digital art e-books. The first iteration of the moʻolelo of *Polyfantastica* was published as a serialized comic in the "Island Life" section of the *Honolulu Advertiser* from 2006 to 2007. The mo'olelo was then published for "The 6th Asia Pacific Triennial of

Contemporary Art" organized by the Queensland Art Gallery and exhibited at the Gallery of Modern Art and the Queensland Art Gallery, Brisbane, Australia from December 2009 until April 2010. Told primarily through images, this main timeline of the moʻolelo continued to be exhibited at the Smithsonian's National Museum for the American Indian and the 2019 Honolulu Biennial.

Polyfantastica's 2009 graphic novel form follows 17 different political factions as they experience a time of great social upheaval and change. All factions want peace, but they are at odds with each other on how to achieve it. This time of great fear and confusion is caused by a pandemic wiping out the population of Europe. Therefore, Enos situates his worldbuilding within a strict anti-colonial orientation: colonization does not happen in this parallel Oceanic world. There is no main protagonist in the graphic novel. Each character is just as relevant as the other. The story and characters move along like an ensemble, as Enos covers a wide time-span of 40,000 years. However, the plot of the graphic novel does closely follow at times the actions of Hulama (a chief's son of the ʻIapo political faction) and his quest to stabilize peace throughout Honua. *Polyfantastica* the graphic novel starts out with Hulama battling a rival group for his father, so that the rest of Honua does not go to war. This duel between the two chiefs' sons is interrupted, however, with an ambush from another political third-party. Hulama escapes with Lomo (who he was fighting in the duel) underwater to unravel the mystery of an ancient, powerful stone called the oroʻino. The graphic novel follows Hulama's transformation from someone who truly believes peace can be achieved to a social pariah after

encountering the ʻoroʻino. The events described all take place in Year 1 out of 40,000. Enos expanded the original graphic novel in 2019 through art books that detail different 10,000 year epochs by creating hundreds of black and white images/drawings. Each image conveys a significant event in that year. Societies rise and fall throughout the 40,000 year time-span outlined in the artbooks, but eventually peace is achieved, which culminates in the people of Honua unlocking the mysteries of the universe.

Polyfantastica continues to exist open-access as a downloadable graphic novel version on Enos's official website. As of 2019, Enos has updated the timeline of *Polyfantastica* and has created four accompanying digital art books that build upon his initial graphic novel. Each titled "Polyfantastica Master Timeline" the story's 40,000 years are divided into "Wa Kuu, Years 1 - 10,000," "Wa Rono, Years 10,001 - 20,000," "Wa Tanaroa, Years 20,001 - 30,000," and "Wa Tane, Years 30,001 - 40,000." There are also two accompanying artbooks that detail certain important archetypes and artifacts in the *Polyfantastica* universe. Enos is expansively detailed in the different facets that comprise the 40,000 year timeline of *Polyfantastica*. He is heavily influenced by genres of science fiction and fantasy: the archetype and artifact artbooks feature individual drawings of 40 millennial figures and 40 millennial items. Each figure and tool is the most important for their age and corresponding epoch. All of the artbooks have a single drawing presented in black and white with a few paragraphs of text accompanying the image. The "Master Timeline" artbooks detail several eras through 10,000 year timeblocks based on four key gods in Hawaiian culture.

Polyfantastica, as an expanded text, embodies many different forms, medias, and ecologies. I use the term ecologies to signal how the graphic novel, sculptures, artbooks, and Instagram posts by Solomon Enos engage in a *media ecology*. All the components that include how media are produced is part of a media ecology. It corresponds to the shifting effects of different audiences and receptions. Therefore, I signal media ecology as part of the expanded nature of *Polyfantastica* to convey how Enos creates, houses, and shares the moʻolelo's different forms. The main way to access the graphic novel and artbooks for *Polyfantastica* is through Enos's official website. On his website, you can find the main stories to be purchased through Apple Books and downloadable PDFs. Enos's other artworks and projects are also present on his website. Thus, his website operates as a professional and deeply personal archive of all of his works. By perusing his website, I was able to piece together the significance of each artwork—while also peering into Enos's overall vision of sustainability and proliferation of Kānaka worldviews. However, his website is only half of the whole picture/story. This blending of a professional and intimate archive is more richly conveyed through Enos's Instagram page.

Enos posts at least one new artwork or project a week to his Instagram (sometimes more, sometimes less). Each post builds upon the other showcasing his expansive ability to create art at breakneck speeds and high turn-arounds. Enos's posts also divert from the usual brief captions that are normalized within Instagram social media culture. Instead of a usual one-liner caption, Enos posts detailed paragraphs of text to explain his artistic vision. Even

though the artworks he shares on Instagram are not related to *Polyfantastica* directly, the running undercurrent of his art oeuvre always centers love of land, Hawaiian worldviews, and sustainability. Enos even extensively interacts with everyone who comments on his posts. All of these different forms of *Polyfantastica* exist within its own galaxy of information to convey Enos's vision to readers/viewers. This galaxy of information and medias that Enos has created corresponds to the vast storylines of *Polyfantastica* forming its own ecology as an expanded text. Despite all these varied expansions, the heart of the story remains the same. Therefore, it is not just one moʻolelo or story being told—but multiple forms coalescing to embody and (re)frame a central current that runs throughout all its manifestations and iterations: expansion. Throughout the expansion of this moʻolelo/text within its many forms, the aesthetic practice of *Polyfantstica* allows for a (re)framing of what a story *is* and what comprises a text. As the story of *Polyfantastica* is told and (re)told through different forms, it has the potential to radically (re)function what we think of as the corporeality of a text, as it encompasses many forms and ways for readers/viewers to encounter it.

The expanded nature of the text for *Polyfantastica* can be embodied even further than its physical or digital printing. Having grown up on the Waiʻanae Coast of Oʻahu in Mākaha, Enos is a self-proclaimed radical optimist or "Possibilist" creating Indigenous aesthetics. As a Kanaka Maoli artist, Enos activates ʻŌiwi epistemology through his art, illustrations, and visions. His artistic expression outside of the *Polyfantastica* storylines engages a wide variety of media including public murals, oil paintings, book illustrations, painted and glass mosaics, and

mixed-media sculptures. Enos's oeuvre touches on themes of collective-consciousness, ancestry and identity, the human relationship with the Earth, and the future of Hawaiʻi, its people, and its resources. Links between two vital concepts: pan-Pacific solidarity and the symbiotic well-being between land, ocean, and people are central to all of his artworks. As a kiaʻi[43] of Kōkua Kalihi Valley Nature Preserve and Kaʻala Farm Learning Center, Solomon Enos evokes Native Hawaiian epistemology in caring for ʻāina or land. Enos is also a community leader at multiple community centers and visits schools across the island of Oʻahu. Kaʻala Farm Learning Center in Waiʻanae was founded by Solomon Enos's father, Eric Enos, who is also an artist. In an interview with PBS Hawaii, Solomon Enos recalls a painting done by his father that shows a person lying down at the bottom of a valley and the body "kind of opening up, and all of his entrails kinda leading out and becoming the landscape."[44] Enos goes on to say that, "it's actually quite beautiful. And that—of and that's the kind of paradox...internal organs and landscape."[45] Enos evokes this idea of a symbiotic and reciprocal relationship between Native Hawaiians and land. ʻĀina represents a storied, sustainable, and genealogical relationship to land that is centered on the premise that if we take care of ʻāina, it will in turn take care of us. For Enos, it is not just about creating art for art's sake. Being in ʻāina means that Enos's artwork is foregrounded and inspired by the work he does on his family's farm and in the Hawaiian community. In the talks I attended where Enos was a guest speaker, he spoke

[43] Protector/Caretaker.
[44] Leslie Wilcox, "Solomon Enos Long Story Short with Leslie Wilcox," PBS Hawaiʻi, July 14, 2009, video, 27:47, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=68aStmSnQWY.
[45] Wilcox, "Solomon Enos Long Story Short with Leslie Wilcox," 2009.

extensively on restoring ancestral lifeways like fishponds and kalo (taro) patches and how it is a necessary part of his artistic praxis. There is a seamlessness in which he blends his artistic practice with Kānaka cultural practices. Therefore, *Polyfantastica* is made possible through Enos's work on his family's farm, the Hawaiian community, and his relationship to ʻāina.

This engagement and centering of Kanaka 'Ōiwi epistemologies signals that the inception of *Polyfantastica* is not limited to just the images printed and created digitally, but is grounded within Enos's being in ʻāina. Enos's biography is a form of moʻolelo that critically informs the framework for which *Polyfantastica* is conceived. Being in ʻāina means that a Hawaiian relationality to land, ocean, and the world is embodied through *Polyfantastica* and cultivates different aspects of ancestral vitality. Enos views *Polyfantastica* as a way "to help to look at what the role of Hawaiian people have been as navigators, as people who—when sitting on their island, looking at the currents, watching the birds, saying, there's *something else beyond where we are right now.*"[46] In thinking through a future that is 'not-yet-here,' Enos is speaking towards an idea of the present-day needs of the Earth while envisioning a future of harmony and interconnectedness between humans and ʻāina. According to his website, Enos's "art expresses his own aspirational vision of the world at its best, which is, at times, deployed through poly-fantastic narratives."[47] The term "poly-fantastic" comes from Enos and means science fiction with a Polynesian twist of fabulation. It is taking aspects of Oceanic cultures and

[46] This quote appeared on an earlier version of *Polyfantastica's* description on Solomon Enos's official website. Enos is constantly updating/changing his website and its descriptions to convey his most current thoughts.
[47] This quote also appeared on an earlier version of *Polyfantastica's* description on Solomon Enos's official website.

fusing it with fantastical and speculative genre elements. *Polyfantastica*, as an expanded text of Indigenous Futurisms, is vital to (re)thinking time and space, as well as the western archive of knowledge by (re)framing the expansion of Oceanic cultures into the future.

Polyfantastica is an example of an anti-colonial science fiction narrative. In the "Wa Kuu" artbook, Enos details how a pandemic wipes out the population of Europe, yet the parallel Polynesian societies of Moananui are spared from the disease. Enos calls his moʻolelo an "ironic twist to history" and states that instead of Europeans bringing change to Oceania, they usher in a time of fear as the reality of the decimation the disease brings is realized across Planet Honua.[48] Moʻolelos have the power to make meaning and this twist to history weaves readers in to showcase Enos's vision of the flourishing of Kānaka culture across vast time and space uninterrupted by the violent impositions of genocide, cultural devastation, and loss of sovereignty. Expansion is a critical key term to *Polyfantastica*. Expansion in *Polyfantastica* has the capacity to make the universe and the world feel so much larger than settler colonial confines of material and psychic enclosures. By the end of the 40,000 year timeline Enos states that "all human consciousness [is connected] while retaining individual identity" throughout the entire universe.[49] This expansion has the ability to expand how we think of time and space, as well as the future and the past to (re)make the colonial present. Expansion, in Enos's work,

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[48] Solomon Enos, "Polyfantastica Master Timeline, Wa Kuu, Years 1 - 10,000," 2019, E-book, Moananui E-Publishing, http://www.solomonenos.com/polyfantastica.
[49] Solomon Enos, "Polyfantastica Master Timeline, Wa Tane, Years 30,001 - 40,000," 2019, E-book, Moananui E-Publishing, http://www.solomonenos.com/polyfantastica.

isn’t about enclosing the world through borders and sequestering land, but opening oneself up.

Storytelling, from a Hawaiian worldview, is critical to meaning–making. Moʻolelos embody the way lessons are taught about life and formulations of reality. Building narratives and telling stories represents a critical transmission of how knowledge is produced within culture. The world-building that happens in *Polyfantastica* occurs from an Oceania that never experienced Euroamerican colonization. This (re)framing indicates that definitions of concepts such as power, expansion, violence, war, and peace must be radically (re)thought, as it does not embody the violent weight and histories that the words mean under colonialism. Definitions of the word expansion are wrapped up in colonial histories and politics. The word in expansion in English means to become more extensive or the broadening/development of something. However, a quick web search through Google’s engine also includes the political aspect of the definition to mean the extension of a state’s territory by encroaching on that of other nations, pursued as a political strategy. Imperial histories are laden within the definition of expansion. Indeed, terms like expansion, discovery, evolution and exploration have all been deployed to reference these histories. How do we conceive of expansion beyond these colonial histories behind these words? There is no exact equivalent for the English version of expansion in Hawaiian. Words that come close are kaiao (to dawn) or māmaka (to put forth buds; to bud; green). Both of these words reference natural occurrences that happen on our planet to talk about expansion. Another word for expansion is mahola (to spread out; to smooth out, as

cloth to dry).[50] This version of the word expansion in Hawaiian has been extended to be used with numbers in mathematics and how a computer file/program awakens/boots up. Enos makes it clear in *Polyfantastica* that colonization never interrupted the Hawaiian Islands. The word expansion does not carry the same colonial weight in this moʻolelo, as this history never took place. Therefore, expansion takes on a new meaning through Enos's story. Expansion encapsulates the way the story of *Polyfantastica* continues to grow in its many mixed-media forms. Expansion, in *Polyfantastica's* storyline, also references the way Kānaka Maoli culture continues to expand into the galaxy not to colonize—but to *continue* to seed, dawn, and reboot uninterrupted.

Survivance through Speculation

Science Fiction is a genre of literature that has at least one element of our reality made different. It is a form of speculative storytelling that envisions (typically future-oriented but not always) scenarios to interrogate ethical matters of advanced technologies. SF can reveal to readers ways to (re)think why society is the way it is. It is a genre of imagination that critically analyzes the consequences of social, scientific, and technological aspects of society and to ideate alternatives to create a better present-time for ourselves and build better futures for those to come. Time travel, space exploration, and parallel universes are some of the staples of the genre, so is a thought-experiment. A thought-experiment is a key aspect of science fiction storytelling that features a *weirding* of our present reality in which something is tweaked (even slightly) to

[50] These definitions come from wehewehe.org, an official Hawaiian language online dictionary.

illuminate aspects of society or unpack ethical matters. SF can operate as a vehicle through which to tell stories, build narratives, and shape the future in the present. Science Fiction, as a genre, is not about asking whether or not an author predicts the future correctly or accurately. What we can gain, as readers of SF, is not about asking if a story set in the future will come or has come true. A generative reading practice of SF means looking at what expression of reality the author has written within their story and what relevance and connections it has to us today.

Critical SF theorist Darko Suvin saw science fiction as a literature of revolt as "a genre showing how things could be different."[51] The (re)framing that Enos cultivates of Oceania offers a critical impact on how knowledge is formed through narrative. Speculative fabulation is a way to help us theorize through science fiction praxes to (re)world our present realities. For Indigenous peoples, speculative fabulation offers a way to engage the knowledge of our ancestors and fill in the gaps and silences of the colonial archive and challenge western knowledge-making. Speculative fabulations are inherent to the genre and aesthetics of SF in order to imagine different pasts, presents, and futures for ourselves. My analysis of Enos's art draws primarily from Saidiya Hartman's use of critical fabulation. Enos's poly-fantastic themes represent a critical fabulation and reimagining of the future from the death sentence of the colonial archive.[52] According to Hartman, the archive cultivates a sharpened hunger for stories about ourselves and our histories.[53] Through Indigenous Futurisms and Native Science

[51] Perry Nodelman, "The Cognitive Estrangement of Darko Suvin," *Children's Literature Association Quarterly* 5, no. 4 (1981): 24.
[52] Saidiya Hartman, "Venus in Two Acts," *Small Axe : A Journal of Criticism* 12, no. 2 (2008): 2.
[53] Hartman, "Venus in Two Acts," 8.

Fictions, let this sharpened hunger be filled by the creative expansion of moʻolelos centered on critical fabulation. Indigenous Futurisms are a literature of revolt that shows us how events could have been different when settler history and the western archive fails to tell our stories and histories accurately. From Enos's embodied cultural practice to extensive visual imaginings, *Polyfantastica* flips the archive on its head in removing western colonial expansion and conquest's thirst for power through violence. Enos critically fabulates the history of Oceania through poly-fantastic themes to challenge settler archival memory and to imagine *what could have been* as a radical act of sovereignty. To read against the colonial archives and the narratives that settler-colonialism tells us is true about ourselves is a speculative, fugitive act. Therefore, the title of this article comes from Gerald Vizenor's notions of Native survivance as "an active sense of presence over absence, deracination, and oblivion; survivance is the continuance of stories, not a mere reaction, however pertinent."[54] Survivance through speculation calls on us to envision a future where Indigenous cultures not only exist and fight for its survival, but thrives and expands beyond imagination. Survivance through speculation through critical fabulation in art and literature disrupts the systematic everyday in which Indigenous peoples are defined.

Utilizing speculative fiction analytics, Enos envisions an Oceania that is not impacted by genocide and the violences of settler-colonialism through his thought-experiment about the

[54] Gerald Vizenor, "Aesthetics of Survivance: Literary Theory and Practice," in *Survivance: Narratives of Native Presence*, ed. Gerald Vizenor (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2015), 2.

Hawaiian Islands never being interrupted by colonialism. In conversation with traditional modes of SF, Solomon Enos is able to fabulate through Kānaka Maoli epistemological beliefs to imagine a Native slipstream type of Indigenous science fiction.[55] Native Slipstream is a speculative fiction format that infuses Indigenous notions of time travel, alternate realities, as well as multiverses and alternative histories. The future is a narrative of potentiality; those in the culture of power reflect and shape these imaginings and projections. As human beings encompass several layers of identity to construct their sense of self, layers of ontological factors are adjusted accordingly to configure an order to a perception of the universe. However, by thinking through the different cultural identities that exist on the planet and neoliberal world orderings, *who* shapes or *what* narrative(s) shapes the future? It is important to consider *how* violent histories are told, as colonial archival falsehoods about Indigenous peoples can be told and (re)told to be taken up as truth. Narratives from a settler-colonial worldview are biased. These colonial worldviews can be damaging to Indigenous peoples. If Enos's moʻolelo features a thought-experiment of an Oceania that is never interrupted, then readers and viewers of his art must imagine a (re)telling of Oceania where the imperial effects of cultural suppression that designate the Pacific as small, savage, and a wasteland of distant islands never happened in this parallel universe. Survivance through speculation in narratives like *Polyfantstica* calls on readers to imagine what other possible futures there are and can be beyond settler-colonialism.

[55] "Native Slipstream" comes from Grace L. Dillon and is interrelated to Richard Dorsett and Bruce Sterling's coining of "Slipstream." Slipstream references a form of genre-bending postmodern literature that is intertextual, meta, or self-reflexive.

Deconstructing Settler Colonial "Truths"

First-contact narratives of the Pacific, as evidenced by the work of Captain Cook and other colonial invaders of the 18th century, were literary accounts of their encounters exploring 'new' worlds and cultivated a particular false image of Indigeneity that was formulated and translated into truth. The terms first-contact, new world, exploration, and discovery are embedded within colonial ideologies and inform our view of social and political history. These colonial imaginaries in the Age of Exploration proliferated "derogatory and belittling views of Indigenous cultures" that are traceable to the early years of interactions with Europeans.[56] Prevailing colonial facts about Oceania as small, isolated, and lacking resources can be traced through interactions from first contact. Epeli Hauʻofa notes of this effect on Oceanic cultures in that:

> The wholesale condemnation by Christian missionaries of Oceanic cultures as savage, lascivious, and barbaric has had a lasting and negative effect on people's views of their histories and traditions... In a number of Pacific societies people still divide their history into two parts: the era of darkness associated with savagery and barbarism; and the era of light and civilization ushered in by Christianity.[57]

The colonial world order enacts a pernicious placement of Indigenous Oceanic peoples at the bottom of a hierarchy that causes a detrimental spiritual, emotional, and physical connection to their sense of self and to the land/ocean. Hauʻofa's theorizations are key to reorganizing these colonial ideologies. Negative colonial notions of Oceania can be deconstructed, as Hauʻofa says, if we activate our ancestral orientations of being from "a sea of islands, not

[56] Epeli Hauʻofa, "Our Sea of Islands," *Contemporary Pacific* 6, no. 1 (1994): 149.
[57] Hauʻofa, "Our Sea of Islands," 149.

islands in a far sea."[58] This sea of islands is embodied within Enos's work as he bases the entirety of *Polyfantastica's* plotline in this ability to traverse/voyage through ocean and land as if they are not separate entities.

From a western standpoint, Euroamerican imperialism, militarization, and capitalism shapes the projection of the future for the Pacific and can foreclose futures for Oceanic peoples who are severed from cultural beliefs and denied their sovereignty. This trajectory of the western, imperialist futures is constituted through and predicated upon continued capitalism, colonization, and racism. This idea of algorithmic projections shaping the future is in direct opposition to the way that Indigenous epistemologies imagine futurity and in the way Enos imagines the future through his art. Capitalism's vision of the future is projected through the makings of the current world order and happen by a "statistical projection [that] transforms the untenable future into a futurescape…that materializes the abstract, rendering it available for possession, even as a sight to behold, or an imaginary to occupy."[59] Thereby, colonial forces can enact boundaries of the mind on oppressed groups of people in Oceania, as well as territorial boundaries through a settler-colonial state project. Finance capitalism and algorithmic speculation colonizes the future through making a narrative that is predicated upon continued capitalist expansion and growth and extraction of land as a resource.

In the colonial imaginary and because of geopolitical consequences, Hawaiʻi in the

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[58] Hauʻofa, "Our Sea of Islands," 152.
[59] Aimee Bahng, *Migrant Futures: Decolonizing Speculation in Financial Times* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2018), 11.

present-time must import almost everything to sustain a capitalistic economy. The islands of Hawaiʻi—as most other places in Oceania—are relegated to a colonial narrow view as being too small, too poor, and too isolated in the colonial world order. Historical violence in Oceania have led to an "eventual consignment of groups of human beings to a perpetual state of wardship wherein they and their surrounding lands and seas would be at the mercy of the manipulators of the global economy and 'world orders' of one kind or another."[60] This leaves Oceania to be prescribed by colonial world orders, in the present-day, as MIRAB[61] societies that are condemned forever to depend on migration, remittances, aid, and bureaucracy without any of their own economic productivity.[62] Hawaiʻi is thought of to be one of the world's most "isolated" chain of islands in its dependency to import 90% of its food at a cost of more than $3 billion a year.[63] This dependence on importing everything can be traced to the implementation of plantation capitalism[64] in Hawaiʻi from the early 19th century. Businessmen from western countries acquired land in Hawaiʻi and began creating lucrative plantations that cultivated monocrops like sugarcane and pineapples through imported immigrant labor, replacing viable farming practices and a wealth of Indigenous foodways. These events changed the landscape of land and labor in Hawaiʻi, as the introduction of foreign

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[60] Hauʻofa, "Our Sea of Islands," 152.

[61] Early 1980s term by Geoff Bertram and Ray Watters meant to describe a model for growth in the Pacific island countries based on (MI)gration, (R)emittances, (A)id and (B)ureaucracy.

[62] Hauʻofa, "Our Sea of Islands," 150.

[63] "Keeping local food local with Ulupono Initiative," *Hawaiʻi Magazine*, April 7, 2018, https://www.hawaiihomemag.com/keeping-local-food-local-how-we-can-all-play-a-role/.

[64] While I have seen this term to describe the history of slavery and colonization in the Caribbean, I want to extend this term to encompass the divergent history of Plantation Capitalism in Hawai'i.

capitalistic systems of privatizing land eroded traditional lifeways of sustainable aquaculture and agriculture.

The work of Epeli Hauʻofa is critical to (re)thinking perceptions of the world and how to (re)map the colonial future. Hauʻofa states, "We are the sea, we are the ocean, we must wake up to this ancient truth and together use it to overturn all hegemonic views that aim ultimately to confine us again, physically and psychologically, in the tiny spaces which we have resisted accepting as our sole appointed place, and from which we have recently liberated ourselves."[65] This ancient truth of the sea, in many senses, is Moananuiākea—a breadth and depth that expresses the deep, genealogical ties islanders have to one another. Moananuiākea is as much a part of our story as our own individual experiences under the settler-colonial present. Specifically, the word "Moananuiākea" translates to the great wide Pacific Ocean. The qualifiers of nui and the descriptor ākea function linguistically to emphasize the breadth and the all-encompassing nature of the ocean. Ākea, meaning *wide* or *expansive*, further emphasized by the qualifier of nui, or *very*, finds resonance with the ideas of Hauʻofa, who creates an opening to think through what it means to embrace this ancient truth of our sea of islands. Moananuiākea, with its expansive kinship networks, stand in stark comparison to the financially predetermined futures of finance capitalism, settler colonialism, and violence. In the Hawaiian language specifically, the word Moananuiākea is used to refer to the connections that Great Ocean peoples have not only to the ocean itself, but to each other. We have a genealogical

[65] Hauʻofa, "Our Sea of Islands," 160.

connection to the ocean, as well as the ways in which our shared experiences of colonialism have been co-constitutively formulated in the Pacific as a project of settler-colonialism. Projects of Indigenous Oceanic futures must consider the work of Hauʻofa to rewrite the colonial ideations of the Pacific Islands as small, desolate islands in a far sea. We must (re)narrativize a future that includes a united Oceania beyond the logics of settler-colonialism and its attendant spatializing geographies of scale. Enos foregrounds this expansion of Moananuiākea in *Polyfantastica*. The entire planet of Honua becomes an Oceanic continent named "Moananui." Thus, a critical fabulation of Moana (ocean) epistemology takes place where an "affective awareness and environmental consciousness of a multifarious existence within a fluid and constantly expanding place" is centered.[66] This fabulation of Moananuiākea into Enos's alternate vision of Moananui is informed through the rich epistemologies and cosmogenesis of our ancestors.

In this (re)thinking and (re)writing of Oceania, Hauʻofa cites a specific and important moment while giving a speech at the University of Hawai'i at Hilo. He states, "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."[67] Smallness is a state of mind and needs to be shifted towards the *ancient truth* that not only land, but the whole ocean is part of the essence of Oceania. The ways in which Indigenous populations talk

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[66] Ingersoll, *Waves of Knowing: A Seascape Epistemology*, 108.
[67] Hauʻofa, "Our Sea of Islands," 151.

about their worlds include the sea, the heavens, and non-human beings that are celestial and oceanic. What is the true meaning of the name of Oceania? The true definition must encompass the complex cultural exchanges and notions of trade happening throughout. The ancient truth of Oceania is that trade existed among Indigenous communities that traversed the ocean/land using forms of navigation in a symbiotic nature that existed in a boundless place. Boundaries were created and Oceania became a different space because of the confines placed upon it due to colonialism. Enos once stated that *Polyfantastica* offers a way to think of "galaxies like islands and islands like galaxies."[68] This framing evokes Hauʻofa's (re)framing of Oceania. To see islands like galaxies and vice versa challenges western conscriptions of islands being small, isolated specks of land on Earth. This (re)phrasing is crucial to understanding the vast ecologies that can occur on islands from the microscopic level of organisms to the vast biodiversity of life that occurs in coral reefs. This statement also calls for us to (re)think scale—as western science's interpretation of galaxies and outer space is that it is out there and isolated far away from us on Earth. Space and galaxies, through a western view, is the new frontier—a space to be conquered. An example of this is the placement of the American flag on the Moon in 1969. However, if we think of galaxies like islands we must recognize the extensive ecologies of relations that comprise the universe.

[68] This phrase also comes from an older version of the description of *Polyfantastica* on Solomon Enos's official website that is no longer uploaded.

As an anticolonial science fiction narrative, Enos's alternate reality in *Polyfantastica* underscores how truth and contested reality becomes irrelevant. In thinking through what expansion means, Enos's science fiction narrative plays with the leaky boundaries on what is *fiction* and *fact*. Therefore, what is considered as empirical 'truth' in colonial narratives is a falsehood to Indigenous peoples' lived realities. Enos's futuristic moʻolelo of Hawaiian culture extending beyond the planet into exploring the galaxy offers a provocative view that challenges western epistemological conscriptions of Indigeneity as *stuck in the past*. Survivance through speculation can uncover this ancient truth of Oceania. Shifts in temporal boundaries are necessary in thinking towards Indigenous futurisms and (re)writing the future of Oceania. Enos's symbiotic worldview and postulations towards an Indigenous Future, through *Polyfantastica*, elucidates the complexities of Moananuiākea and how the expansion and accessing of ancestral knowledge is necessary to (re)write history, re(make) the present, and (re)build the future.

Moʻolelos on the Move

Enos calls this critical fabulation of Oceanic cultures in *Polyfantastica* a "remix."[69] He takes cultural practices and aspects of Oceania (primarily through a Hawaiian worldview) and envisions them expanding and evolving across 40,000 years. Each page of the graphic novel comprises four to five panels and details a section of the story unfolding between characters of different political factions in Moananui. The story flows together yet I believe reading it in

[69] Enos, "Polyfantastica Master Timeline, Wa Kuu, Years 1 - 10,000," 2019.

graphic novel form still feels akin to the original serialized version that was released in the *Honolulu Advertiser*—as each page details a part of the story and then moves quickly to the next plot point. Each page and the corresponding panels embody a color palette or mood. The beginning of the graphic novel follows warm colors of yellow and orange, yet as the characters become more embroiled in battle and war the color palette turns ominous in deep reds and blues by the ending of it. The fashion and technology throughout the graphic novel are speculative fabulations of what already exists in Hawaiian culture. The chiefs and warriors use futuristic versions of koa wood clubs and mahiole.[70] The outfits in *Polyfantastica* are a mix of traditional clothing, but with significant details slightly altered. The waʻa[71] also look like they have been expanded to be able to travel off-planet. These elements of Hawaiian culture look like they have evolved, not through a Darwinian sense, but as if this is the result after millenia of the ocean's waves pounding coral, sand, sea, and rock together in a rhythm of natural tempos. As a Kanaka, these expansions to Hawaiian fashion and technology over 40,000 years look and feel natural to me.

The ending to *Polyfantastica* is also the beginning. The graphic novel begins, at the end, in the year 39,999; the final year in the final epoch of the storyline. From the first page of *Polyfantastica*, we see a moʻolelo on the move—the nature of the expanded text reverberates as a story is told to the student Saumana from the kumu[72] or Tumu. Enos often switches the "k"

[70] Hawaiian feather-work helmets.
[71] Canoes or boats.
[72] Meaning teacher.

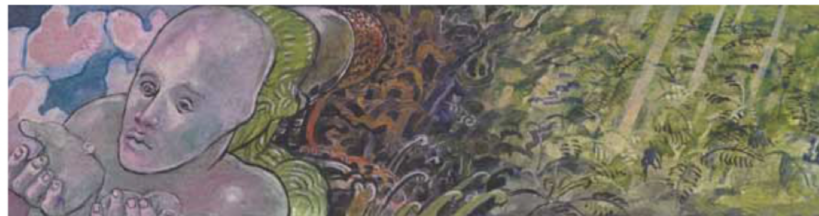

Figure 1. "Tumu & Saumana." *Polyfantastica* (2009).

sound of Hawaiian words for “t” at times. This signals a linguistic genealogy of Oceanic languages containing similar words and sounds and also provides a sense of the parallel timeline/world for Hawaiʻi throughout *Polyfantastica*. Through drinking the wai (water or in this specific case water drop) which holds a continuum of memories of the universe in the year 39,999, the student will learn the beginning of the great eras and the beauty and horror of Moananui. The memory of Year 1 being activated by wai or water calls forth a Kanaka ʻŌiwi epistemology in which ola i ka wai or in water there is life. From this initial page, it can be assumed that utopia is achieved in which there is no conflict, no warfare, or pestilence—yet these stories and memories of it are crucial—as each adult still must remember it all. However, it is not a perfect utopia. Peace has been achieved, but through millennia of war and from trying and failing to attain mutual understanding between all life forms across the galaxy. A moʻolelo being transferred through time begins *Polyfantastica* activating a memory that takes the reader from the vast, distant future to the very beginning of the 40,000 epochs.

The first page of the graphic novel implies that in order for peace and its subsequent expansion into the universe to exist in the future, each adult must intimately know what happened in the Year 1/the Era of Ku—or in the beginning there was war. In Hawaiian cosmology, Ku is the god of war, strength, and healing. Enos states that this first year (and the next 10,000) are embroiled in war because the death-ships from Europe arriving in Moananui usher in a time of great fear. Certain political powers throughout Moananui attempt to capitalize on this fear by waging war on each other to stabilize the region—while other societies

vehemently object and attempt to broker peace. In the world of *Polyfantastica* Year 1, there is conflict between different political factions that comprise Moananui. The storyline of the graphic novel closely follows these different groups and their internal/external struggles and alliances with each other. While the graphic novel follows 17 different political factions in their quest for peace and power, the storyline focuses on the conflict between two parallel-Oceanic societies. The ʻIapo faction seeks peace between all groups while the Kuahu believe war and power is necessary in the region to achieve peace. *Polyfantastica* Year 1 centers around a peace summit that is to take place between all the different political factions. The struggle between the ʻIapo and the Kuahu is manifested in a struggle between the two chief's sons. Hulama (from the peacekeeping ʻIapo) and Lomo (from the power-hungry Kuahu) must duel it out before the peace conference to settle which direction the world of Moananui will enter in.

A significant line from this panel indicates a formative thought from Enos himself, as "hate is limited, but love is infinite."[73] Despite all the political warfare and uprisings against each other, the main takeaway Enos emphasizes is that love and peace are ultimately what is achieved in the year 40,000. However, infinite love is not easily achieved: there are lots of cosmic misunderstandings that occur. Love, or rather empathy for others, is the message that Enos weaves within the story. Its absence is what leads to many epochs of war. This cosmic expansion eventually results in what Enos terms as an event in the year 39,999 titled "The Unlocking of the Multiverse and Death-Life of a Billion Galaxies" in Wa Tane. However,

[73] Enos, "Polyfantastica Master Timeline, Wa Kuu, Years 1 - 10,000," 2019.

Figure 2. "Hate is Limited, but Love is Infinite." *Polyfantastica* (2009).

before that can happen, everything begins with the battle between the ʻIapo and the Kuaha: between Hulama and Lomo.

All of Moananui is drawn into the battle for peace and war throughout the graphic novel including more-than-human entities. In the graphic novel, expansion is constructed within the characters through the blending of forms into forms and bodies into bodies. More-than-human elements blend easily with humanity in *Polyfantastica*: aspects of Hawaiian culture that Kānakas believe and feel are embodied through visual form in the graphic novel. A Kanaka ʻŌiwi relationship with kupua (demigods) shows up in Enos's work. It is just a given that kupua or beings that can possess many forms are part of the world of *Polyfantastica*. The beings in *Polyfantastica* can encounter, interact with, and reciprocate with elements of nature. The rich world-building in *Polyfantastica* speaks to a sociality and relationality which already includes the more-than-human in its understanding of the world and displaces humans comprise the main organizing principle.

Polyfantastica, in the graphic novel and subsequent artbooks, engages in what Karin Amimoto Ingersoll terms in her book *Waves of Knowing: A Seascape Epistemology* as an "ocean-body assemblage" defined through which "an entity is defined by the totality to which it belongs and by its relations to other parts in the whole"[74] An ocean-body assemblage within a seascape epistemology recognizes the relationship that Kānaka have with the ocean, the jellyfish, the sharks, and the birds. While war wreaks chaos, pain, and havoc throughout the

[74] Ingersoll, *Waves of Knowing: A Seascape Epistemology*, 109.

first 10,000 year epoch of *Polyfantastica*, humans are not the only entities that are impacted and must choose their alliances, as more-than-human elements play an integral part in the formation of the world and the direction for Honua.

Polyfantastica represents an engagement from a Hawaiian worldview and this representation of bodies into bodies and forms into forms aligns with Nālani Wilson-Hokowhitu theorizations on moʻokūʻauhau as methodology. Wilson-Hokowhitu references the Hawaiian creation chant called the Kumulipo, which is a genealogical story of how the universe came to be. The Kumulipo is a genealogy that comprises 16 sections or wā that connects Hawaiians to the birth of the universe through detailing the creation of all beings of life that intersects with vast space and time. While western science calls this emergence of the universe the "Big Bang" through physics, the Kumulipo already understands and acknowledges that Kānaka emerged from the stars—from *po* (primordial darkness).

Wilson-Hokuwhitu states that, "we find that we are all a part of the beginnings of existence and that our relations extend far beyond our indigeneity and our human bonds to the Earth, Sky, Stars, Sun, Moon, Wind, Water, Trees, Ocean, Rocks, and into all and everything."[75] Therefore, elemental forms, bodies, and relations suggests that Enos is engaging from a Hawaiian worldview of beliefs and Kānaka Maoli quantum physics that requires a cultural consciousness to (re)think engagements of the past, present, and future of Hawai'i.

[75] Nālani Wilson-Hokowhitu, "Moʻokūʻauhau as Methodology: Sailing into the Future, Guided by the Past" in *The Past Before Us: Moʻokūʻauhau as Methodology*, ed. Nālani Wilson-Hokowhitu (Honolulu: University of Hawaiʻi Press, 2019), 121.

Figure 3. “More-Than-Human Elements.” *Polyfantastica*. (2009).

The Kumulipo is what connects Hawaiians to ʻāina and links the land and the creatures that surround us as our ʻohana (family) that we are genealogically connected and have relation to. By treating limu (different kinds of seaweed in existence), fish, seabirds, plants, planets, etc. as family, creates an awareness of their own agency and role in the universe that is parallel and interrelated to humanity. Enos's engagement of 'beings into beings' represents the interconnection of elements that speaks to a Kānaka framework of a holographic and seascape epistemology. Manulani Meyer terms "holographic epistemology" regarding how Indigenous people see the world through multiple levels of reality. Meyer states that holographic epistemology comprises:

> (1) via the objective, physical, outside world, the world of science and measurement, density and force; (2) via the inside subjective world, the space of thought, mind, idea and interiority that helps us understand meaning and our linkages with phenomenon; and finally (3) via the quantum world shaped by transpatial descriptors and intersections, a spiritual dimension un-linked to religious dogma, described in ethereal, mystic, and yet experiential terms…The challenge is to not see this trilogy as a linear sequence, rather as an event happening simultaneously and holographically.[76]

By weaving the words of Wilson-Hokowhitu, Meyer, and Ingersoll together, I hope to cite their knowledge of the relationships between ʻāina, human beings, and more-than-human elements and connect to how *Polyfantastica* acknowledges these sacred connections. In a holographic seascape of relationality, we must be "balanced upon and within elemental forces, both harnessing and submitting to them."[77] Within a holographic ocean-body assemblage,

[76] Meyer, "Holographic Epistemology: Native Common Sense," 94.
[77] Ingersoll, *Waves of Knowing a Seascape Epistemology*, 108.

attention must be tuned into the universe's tempos of "surging tides, migrating sharks, and circulating billows—all moving in an interconnected rhythm, telling the body how to travel through them."[78] Therefore, ea (life-force)[79] and mana (energy or power)[80] of individual elements must be acknowledged as already part of our world. From a Hawaiian perspective, our bodies—whether we acknowledge this connection or not—are genealogically connected to our more-than-human kin.

Relationality, while integral to *Polyfantastica*, is embodied in complex forms. Perhaps the most complex being the moʻolelo of the ʻoroʻino. This relation of bodies into bodies and forms into forms is seen through the development of Hulama and Lomo's relationship with the ʻoroʻino, as it helps them escape warring factions bent on using them both to gain power throughout Moananui. Echoing the very first page of the graphic novel, a moʻolelo traveling through time begins the segment on the ʻoroʻino. The ʻoroʻino wants to tell its story to Hulama and Lomo who have escaped the duel to the death their fathers imposed upon them and are traveling far away underwater with the help of the ʻoroʻino.

The ʻoroʻino represents an ambivalent force within the *Polyfantastica* universe. The ʻoroʻino is a stone that goes beyond conceptions of what peace/goodness and evil means. As the binary between good and evil, in a western context, ascribes a teleology of biblical origins—the ʻoroʻino operates outside of what constitutes these definitions. Christian missionaries and other

[78] Ingersoll, *Waves of Knowing a Seascape Epistemology*, 108.
[79] Life-force, breath, sovereignty, a network of the past, present, and future.
[80] Mana means divine or miraculous power. People, nonhuman, more-than-human elements, objects and/or events can all have varying amounts of mana.

settler-colonists in Hawai'i at the turn of the early 19th century upended Kānaka cultural beliefs with their arrival bringing disease and devastation upon the population in Hawaiʻi. However, the arrival of settler-colonialism through Christian missionary forces does not happen in Enos's thought-experiment. Therefore, biblical descriptions of what it means to be good and evil do not occur in *Polyfantastica*. Asking whether the ʻoroʻino is good or evil and/or ascribing these characteristics to it fails to grasp its meaning. Enos says that the ʻoroʻino are a "number of spheres which had been created to absorb negative emotional energy from ancient Moananui."[81] It also allows users to edit reality. So what exactly are the ʻoroʻino? The stone is a chance to "do things differently…to upend what has come before… [as it] know[s] love and hate intimately—and how they both fail."[82] What the ʻoroʻino has to offer goes beyond dichotomies of what constitutes good or evil within moral dilemmas. While the ʻoroʻino's motives are ambivalent, its backstory is too. This panel indicates that it was created many wā ago, when ancestors came together as a collective organism that ushered in eras of peace. The ʻoroʻino were dismantled by later generations who had forgotten why they were even constructed in the first place. The ʻoroʻino resurfaces in time over and over again to offer humanity an alternative—a chance to do things differently.

While Enos himself has stated that whoever finds them "gradually turned into pariahs of great and terrible power," my reading of the ʻoroʻino situates itself in the first interaction it

[81] Enos, "Polyfantastica Master Timeline, Wa Kuu, Years 1 - 10,000."
[82] Enos, *Polyfantastica*, 23.

has with Lomo. Referencing Hawaiian worldviews of kinolau, Lomo becomes Lomoʻino after merging with the ʻoroʻino. Kino means "body" and lau means "many." Put together it can translate to "many bodies." Kinolau references the many forms of a god or demigod that can be changed depending on their needs. Therefore, kinolau can mean different forms into forms and bodies into bodies. For example, the god of the ocean in Hawaiian cosmology is Kanaloa. His many different kinolau include the form of an octopus or dolphin or even plants like maiʻa and ʻuhaloa. The stone hurts Lomo at first and Hulama senses this pain during their duel. My analysis of Lomo's interaction with the stone stems from him committing theft and sacrilege against his ancestors. Lomo destroys an ahu[83] to steal the ʻoroʻino (who was resting) and begins the duel against Hulama without ceremony. The relationship is mediated through the first encounter and every encounter after that builds the relation between them.[84] This initial interaction between Lomo and the ʻoroʻino builds a fraught relationship between the two and while dueling Hulama, the stone begins killing him. However, Hulama and Lomoʻino end up escaping together with the ʻoroʻino's help as they are ambushed by a third party. The relationship that Hulama has to the stone differs immensely, as Jackson notes, first encounters build the subsequent relations between the two. The ʻoroʻino explains its origins to Hulama and asks, "We offer, do you accept?" Hulama then enters into a consenting relationship with the stone.

[83] Altar, shrine, mound, mass, collection, heap, or pile.
[84] CJ Jackson, personal communication, April 8, 2022.

Figure 4. "The Offer." *Polyfantastica.* (2009).

By the ʻoroʻino asking Hulama if he accepts, it subverts authoritative power. Ethics of use and power in regards to the stone stem from an ability to say "yes" or "no" and the choices the two parties engage in. The stone offers itself and who it offers itself to must accept. Kānaka conceptions of power stem from mana. The mana of the ʻoroʻino is immense, yet how its immense mana is used falls on the user who enters into the agreement with it. Hulama is not hurt by the stone because of the way this first encounter dictates their relationship. This kind of power subverts colonial notions of power in that a user can accept or decline the ʻoroʻino's offer. It does not deceive or threaten itself onto the user. Those who encounter the stone become pariahs as it is also a dangerous power in its ability to cause tension: this tension stems from an isolation that the mana of the stone brings. The ʻoroʻino represents a provocative power that cannot be shared collectively with others; only the user bears the weight of the ʻoroʻino's kuleana (loosely translated to responsibility). It is a great power bestowed upon the user of the ʻoroʻino with the consequences stemming from how the user brings forth action with it.

The Kuahu wanted to use the ʻoroʻino's powers to conquer all of Moananui to achieve peace by awakening the stones from their ancient slumber. It is unexpected that the ʻoroʻino and Hulama enter into an agreement in the midst of this great conflict. However, Hulama becoming Hulomo—as a reference to shifting kinolau relationality when the stone begins to merge with Hulama—through the partnership with the ʻoroʻino causes great anxiety across Moananui and the different political factions. While the main storyline of the *Polyfantastica*

graphic novel centers on Hulama and Lomo's journey with the ʻoroʻino, the different factions of Moananui are also mobilized to defend their regions and come to a collective solution through meetings and alliances. The Mutu political faction offers to "deliver the stone to Tekihei, where everyone will decide its use" and says that "it is the only pono thing to do."[85] This idea of pono[86] is significant. Pono is relational, as there is no one *right* way to take action and to come to a solution. Understanding pono, means understanding that it is a 'means to an end of a situation' or outcome and whichever action or decision is made must be rooted in righteousness. Pono, however, is relational and depends on the situation. A praxis of pono can be engaged through consultation with elders, mobilizing ancestral knowledge, and/or going with your naʻau[87] on what feels pono. Therefore, each of the characters and political factions across *Polyfantastica* are all motivated by and feel that their actions are pono. However, no one group feels the same way about how to achieve balance and peace across the region.

The ending of *Polyfantastica*, in the graphic novel specifically, remains open. This openness signals moʻolelo as methodology as it does not mean the story is finished being told. Rather, Enos continues to update the story even after the graphic novel concludes. None of the conflicts in the beginning of the graphic novel are resolved by the end. The final battle in *Polyfantastica* culminates in Hulomo facing off against an Osefe Death Master. A Death

[85] Enos, *Polyfantastica*, 30.
[86] Loosely translated as goodness, uprightness, moral qualities, correct or proper procedure, prosperity, equity, benefit, should, successful ought, must, necessary.
[87] Loosely translated as intestines, bowels, guts; mind, heart, affections; of the heart or mind; mood, temper, feelings.

Figure 5. “Let Us Begin (End) with a Story.” *Polyfantastica*. (2009).

Master represents a powerful force within Honua who can easily enter into different kinolau; this foe is Hulama's biggest battle. This battle results in Hulomo's metaphysical journey to enter the Death Master's interior landscape and defeat it. Lomo does not survive the final battle. With the ʻoroʻino's help, the kind-natured Hulama is gone and is replaced with a cunning and powerful warrior at the end of the graphic novel. Hulomo's sister Noi and Kuiomo from the rival Kuahu are worried for him due to these changes. Hulomo becomes a pariah unrecognized by his family due to the power the ʻoroʻino gives him. Kuiomo states that Hulama "may be foreign, even to himself."[88] We, as readers, are left wondering how Hulomo's path will turn out. However, infinite love seems to make its way again as an undercurrent. As Hulama and Lomo's fathers are embroiled with their differences, the younger generation seeks to traverse these differences and align with each other. Hulama and Lomo, sworn enemies in the beginning, had their destinies intertwined intimately. Noi and Kuiomo perhaps represent the most hopeful turn towards change for Moananui. They put their differences aside to pursue what they believe is pono by seeking an answer to conflict with an alliance to find eventual peace for Hulama and Moananui. *Polyfantastica* ends the graphic novel, just as it begins, with a moʻolelo. Three warriors left from the battle stay to listen to Hulomo tell a story out of "fear, curiosity, and ambition."[89]

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[88] Enos, *Polyfantastica*, 51.
[89] Enos, *Polyfantastica*, 49.

Polyfantastica Master Timelines

More than 10 years after the original graphic novel was created, the moʻolelo of *Polyfantastica* was expanded by Enos in 2019 through four artbooks encompassing each 10,000-year wā and two artbooks detailing different archetypes and artifacts. The original graphic novel represents a spotlight vignette on Hulama, his family, and the struggles for peace and power through different factions in Moananui. The storyline of the graphic novel represents a brief moment of humanity in the overall 40,000-year timeline. As part of the expansion of the graphic novel, the moʻolelo of *Polyfantastica* is expanded through a dailies-like format. Other than the few pages of text in the beginning, the four artbooks divided by wā are composed mostly of pictures. They are called "Master Timelines" and correspond to four 10,000-year epochs. Each image/page of the artbooks represents a segmented vignette that highlights significant events such as a particular battle, birth, or a new technology that occurs. However, the flow of images feels like the raw, unedited energy of a dailies. Presented in succession, the images tell us everything and nothing about what occurred in a specific year. The artbooks begin in year one and end in year 40,000. Enos describes the overarching events of each epoch and provides hundreds of pictures detailing these major events throughout each 10,000-year time block. The drawing and corresponding dates embody a form of visual storytelling within them that significantly expands the storyline and timeline of the graphic novel of *Polyfantastica*. Like the fluid definition of moʻolelo entails, each image and year is spotlighted vignette-style and is a moment—each moment is a delineated part to comprise the

whole storyline. Each page/image is a moment within a succession of moments: every event is a parley to the event before and after it. The images within each artbook speak to each other and comprise a movement of various tempos outlining how each individual act/event is dependent upon the one before and after.

Diving into the artbooks, readers are completely immersed in Enos's world(s). They are so excruciatingly detailed that one has to wonder if Enos is actually from this alternate universe/timeline. The black and white sketched images seem like visions from another time—from a future closely related yet distant to ours. The graphic novel follows a clear and comprehensive single storyline about Year 1 in Moananui; each page follows a certain color formation and each panel is a structured image overlaid with text. The artbooks are rooted in a very different artistic approach. The only word I can best think of to describe the artbooks is surreal. Sketched in black and white; each page of the artbook details this surreal timeline and world(s). It is as if Enos saw/experienced these events and hurried to sketch them down: his pen acting as the conduit to visualizing these events. Drawing from a Kānaka worldview, Enos captures raw emotion and the technological sublime in each page. The technological sublime shows up throughout each epoch and reconceptualizes the way we view advanced technology and nature: it undoes and reforms what we can imagine as the functions of technology. We, as readers, are treated to glimpses of the beauty and horrors of Moananui as it continuously tries and fails, then finally succeeds, to achieve peace. Moananui, through cosmic misunderstandings, is constantly seeking out what is the most pono thing to do.

Figure 6. “Wa Kuu.” *Polyfantastica Master Timeline.* (2019).

It seems as if the Maoli continue to ask themselves this question over and over for 40,000 years. In Hawaiian, Maoli word means "human being.: There are names for other Oceanic cultures that are part of Honua, but Enos spotlights the plight, successes, and failures of the Maoli throughout *Polyfantastica*. This question drives the parallel world of *Polyfantastica*. These societies, over generations and lifetimes, are trying to survive and this results in successes and failures in trying to be more pono than what occurred before. I see this question about, "What is the most pono thing to do?" that drives the Maoli to become better and to seek answers beyond pain and warfare. This questioning aligns with Enos's belief that we cannot/must not bring war into outer space. I have attended several talks that Enos gave over the years and he has constantly reiterated that he believes that if humanity were to one-day voyage outside our planet, our legacy must not include war and bringing violence onto others in the cosmos.

The warring that begins in Year 1 in the graphic novel is far from over in the artbook titled "Wa Kuu, Years 1 - 10,000." The portrayal of war in "Wa Kuu" is immense and overwhelming. Ku is the god of war and resistance in Hawaiian cosmogenesis, but there is also a benevolent aspect to Ku. Throughout this artbook, the feelings and events of war for 10,000 years are drawn. I personally felt anxious and on-edge while viewing the hundreds of pictures of Honua constantly on the brink of war and how the societies desperately seek an end to it. This wā details many rises and falls of societies and many tries at redoing what occurred before. There is an earlier 2015 version of this artbook that is no longer featured on Enos's website. The 2015 version feels more like a draft for the 2019 artbooks. This prototype version of "Wa

Kuu" includes text for only years 1-1990 and the sheer level of bloody violence between the factions of Moananui is formidable. The 2019 version contains a similar vibe, but there is none of the earlier text printed with the pictures. It seems as if Enos wants us to do the work as readers/viewers of the artbook to fill in what we think occurred during this tumultuous era. This epoch begins with the arrival of death-ships that carry the sun-dried corpses from the European region of Honua as they are decimated by disease and ends with an all-encompassing empathetic explosion that is a "in a last-ditch effort to save the human species."[90] By the year 10,000, Honua is sick like a giant organism with constant war occurring and this last ditch effort to change course triggers a wave of collective empathy, for a brief time, that reboots the world for the new Maoli in the next epoch.

The second artbook titled "Wa Rono, Years 10,001 - 20,000" is dedicated to the Hawaiian god Lono—the deity of agriculture, peace, and sorrow. The wā in the second artbook is characterized by peace and sorrow as Moananui rebuilds itself after 10,000 years of war. Eventually, the Maoli of this epoch seek to expand collective peace and understanding throughout all of Honua. What is interesting to note between Wā I and Wā II is the occurrence of the technological sublime. While the ʻoroʻino is the main techno-organic material that is featured in the graphic novel—the artbooks detail inventions like "Dreamspace," "Modo," and "World Wombs." These technologies are techno-organic in that they are advanced technologies that come from humans but also are linked/come naturally from Honua.

[90] Enos, "Polyfantastica Master Timeline, Wa Kuu, Years 1 - 10,000."

Figure 7. “Wa Rono.” *Polyfantastica Master Timeline*. (2019).

World Wombs are roads connected by lava tube pathways and are used to build societies on Honua. The 10,000 years of Wā Rono is focused on healing Honua and rebuilding. From this healing came the Modo—eggs of hybrid mutant-lizard bio constructs originally built for war and were found buried across Moananui near ancient World Wombs. The artbooks detail these technologies as large, foreboding masses of organic material resembling coral and mountains. Enos also details Dreamspace in Wā Rono which is the ability to be an individual while awake and become part of a collective organism while asleep. The techno-organic aspect of Dreamspace is that it is transmitted through trees and minerals. The technology created in Wā Rono eventually allows Maoli to travel off-planet into outer space.

The third artbook,"Wa Tanaroa, 20,001 - 30,000," is dedicated to Kanaloa: the Hawaiian god of ocean and travel. In this artbook, Honua finally finds joy. "Every mold, every crab, every plant, every human–all of life had its purpose, woven as harmoniously as possible with all other forms of life... no longer was humanity separate from nature...[the] whole planet became unified... [as did the] whole star system," states Enos about this age. Enos details that this was a slow process of expansion, as the Maoli had to listen, learn, and recognize others before galactic expansion could manifest. The techno-organic is rooted again in this age, as seeds (light seeds, mind seeds, ocean seeds) were condensed forms of technologies used to plant new physical forms of life and extensions of human consciousness which would "bloom when the time was right." Dreamspace is a critical speculative fabulation of Oceanic exploration.

Figure 8. "Wa Tanaroa." *Polyfantastica Master Timeline*. (2019).

As this wā is named after Kanaloa, Enos characterizes this 10,000-year time block through sailing, singing, and dancing throughout the solar system. Oceanic cultures are rooted in exploration between vast expanses of water. Enos takes this culture of voyaging into outer space. The Maoli eventually are able to travel off-planet though Dreamspace. They unlock this ability through having empathy for all forms of life in the universe. The fourth artbook, "Wa Tane, Years 30,001 - 40,000," continues this galactic voyaging of the Maoli outside of their own solar system to expand beyond all the way to the Galactic Core. This wā is dedicated to the god Kane: the deity of light and water. As echoed within the first page of *Polyfantastica* the graphic novel, wai became a dominant form of remembrance and way for life to travel. Eventually, the Maoli evolve to be able to "pass through the heart of a star" through Dreamspace travel and through encountering other forms of life. This voyaging through the universe and encountering other galaxies unlocks *the singularity* or "The Unlocking of the Multiverse and Death-Life of a Billion Galaxies" where all forms of life are connected consciously through empathy.

Western science fiction views the singularity with ambivalence. The singularity, in the western tradition, has a few threads of thought. In science fiction, the singularity has techno-utopian connotations yet ultimately is viewed as dystopian in this tradition. The pivotal moment of the singularity is the merging of all consciousness and is thought to embody the fraught potential of losing all individuality. The loss of individuality through the singularity is a fear of western neoliberalism's desire to be the creator of its own destinies

without any relations/responsibilities to anyone else. SF plotlines involving ancient alien civilizations achieving the singularity are viewed with anxiety/suspicion and function as warnings against a potential future. Western science fiction's portrayal of alien encounters operates as a parallel to the colonization of the New World and historical encounters with Native peoples. These types of plotlines echoes the harmful colonial stereotypes of how Indigenous peoples are viewed as foreign and alien cultures. The second thread of thought is the technological singularity through Artificial Intelligence. In this thread, western thought views a near-future oncoming explosion of machine superintelligence that will supercede humanity. *The Terminator* and other SF stories explore the anxiety of creating something that was supposed to be subservient—that suddenly cannot be controlled and results in oppressing humanity. This fear of AI and technological superintelligence has been echoed by billionaires and leaders of the tech industry such as Elon Musk and Bill Gates. The western tradition is scared of the singularity because of its theorized potential to one day usurp its functions and wreak chaos on our world.

Enos completely upends this trope/tradition of the singularity in *Polyfantastica.* As outlined above, the year 39,999 brings forth "The Unlocking of the Multiverse and Death-Life of a Billion Galaxies." The singularity in *Polyfantastica* culminates in all of humanity achieving a collective consciousness with everything in the universe. After eons of trying over and over and again to survive and continue a movement of infinite love, it is finally achieved:

> Within this age, no life form encountered was considered alien, but were instead future partners in the dance of life to find the most harmonious form of coexistence... In this great galactic dance of mutual benefit, the mystery at galactic core, also known as Pixolani, became the main stage for all of these acts to play out.... The Maoli learned that the process of life expansion was happening across countless galaxies with a greater purpose: to form a pan-universal consciousness, a being made of a single universe. Once formed, this being would connect with an unending family of universes within the multiverse. Many attempts and failures eventually led to success...all planets and other celestial bodies in the galaxy prepared to unify their purpose behind the growing of the galactic consciousness... Pixolani redefined the nature of consciousness itself. And when she was born, at the very end of this age, she sang songs in harmony with all of life in the universal singularity.[91]

My reading of Pixolani comes from the word piko. Piko means navel, umbilical cord; blood relative, genitals; summit or top of a hill or mountain; crest; crown of the head; purity. Therefore, I think Pixolani is a critical Ocean fabulation of the word piko and lani (heavenly/beautiful) meaning Piko-lani which could potentially translate to "beautiful, heavenly center of the universe." The singularity unlocks infinite potential, possibilities, empathy, and care across the universe. It is *the answer* after 40,000 years. All beings in the universe share knowledge and sustain "life and the language that allows different life forms to communicate" through water. Just like the drop of wai that contains all memories in the beginning of the graphic novel, we see how beings relate to each other—from consciousness to consciousness. In the western sense, consciousness is invested in a human-centric and individual experience of the world. Consciousness, in the western view, demarcates between animate and inanimate objects and divides the human and non-human world.

[91] Enos, "Wa Tane, Years 30,001 - 40,000."

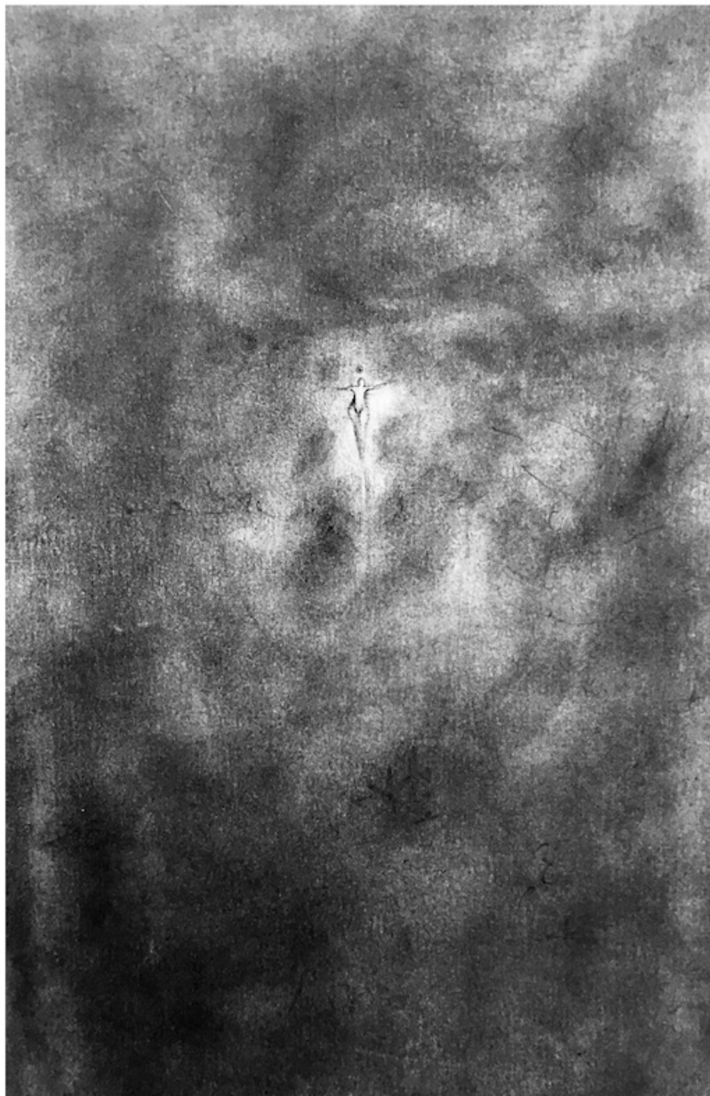

Figure 9. "Wa Tane." *Polyfantastica Master Timeline.* (2019).

This line of thought echoes fears of the singularity representing the loss of individual consciousness. However, for Enos it is the answer for peace across different worlds, times, and spaces.

There is no direct translation as to what consciousness means from a Hawaiian perspective. The words/concepts of ʻike,[92] naʻauao,[93] and most importantly hoʻomaopopo are all important starting points. Hoʻomaopopo means to *recognize* one another. To recognize one another means that in order for there to be a collective consciousness: we must see, feel, and experience one another. Hoʻomaopopo is probably the best means to understand what Enos signals as the singularity. This relation is especially in tune with the way that Enos describes Pixolani as the connection of "unending family of universes within the multiverses." In Wā Tane, we see that all beings become connected: they have responsibility to each other. My reading of this final wā is that expansion, in Enos's world, means we must recognize one another as ohana/family. From a holographic standpoint, to see one another as connected as family does not mean a flattening of difference—but rather as parts to a whole extended universe. The singularity, in physics, also comes from how we understand black holes. In black holes, the singularity represents a point of infinity as the density of finite mass is compressed to a zero volume: gravity is too intense therefore resulting in the collapse of time and space. For Enos, the singularity is not a collapse, but the point of infinite expansion. Through Pixolani, it

[92] To see, know, feel, greet, recognize, perceive, experience, be aware, understand.
[93] Learned, enlightened, intelligent, wise; learning, knowledge, wisdom, science; literally translated to "daylight mind."

unlocks collective consciousness as a "mutual meeting point between various forms of life allowed for the unlocking of transdimensional secrets via black holes and other anomalies, and a black hole at the center of the galactic core was the first to reveal its mysteries to the life forms that met there." Therefore, a converse form of how western physics views gravitational singularity is remade in *Polyfantastica*. Black holes are not unknown portals of compression, they are the meeting place, the center, the piko. The singularity becomes the catalyst for infinite expansion.

Conclusion

In the way that speaking things into existence creates future potentialities of what may come, narratives are crucial for catalyzing what comes *next* for humanity. *Polyfantastica*, a nexus of Indigenous Futurism, comprises speculative acts "[that] model a cultural politics of decolonizing futurity, of occupying the not yet, to hold it open for the yet to come."[94] Throughout the graphic novel and artbooks, expansion takes on a meaning devoid of colonial histories. Enos created an anticolonial visual literature that renders colonial notions of truth, power, good/evil, and expansion irrelevant. By breaking free of this settler-colonial surface tension, *Polyfantastica* teaches us to not shy away from concepts like expansion, utopia, and the singularity. Instead, how can we engage these concepts from our own worldviews? What would these words mean to our ancestors? What do they mean to us?

[94] Bahng, *Migrant Futures,* 23.

The future is a narrative of potentiality: the moʻolelos we tell matter. Although, in *Polyfantastica,* colonization of the Pacific doesn't occur in this alternate timeline that does not mean that the world of Moananui is perfect. Enos showcases how when Indigenous cultures are not interrupted, humanity still struggles. It is not a perfect utopia. Enos's work embodies many different forms to tell a story of a new future for Oceania that spans 40,000 years. This (re)orientation of time showcases how we are but a segment in vast time, yet we must remember that each moment we are here matters. Survivance through speculation means that Indigenous cultures must imagine themselves thriving into the future. Time and moʻolelo are bound to Kānaka identity. Karin Amimoto Ingersoll suggests, "Hawaiian time is Hawaiian genealogy, but time is also a specific relationship to this genealogy of grandparents, gods, and the ʻāina. Kānaka time is the time of stories as both individual and collective narratives in the past, present, and future, and thus a Hawaiian identity is never stagnant but always (re)creating"[95] *Polyfantastica*, with its vast expanses of time, opens up the future to ways of knowing that embody cosmic tempos. Through *Polyfantsatica*, we learn that all beings in the universe, small and large, cosmic and earth-bound are deserving of empathy and understanding. Solomon Enos's work in Native Hawaiian speculative visuals reinscribes our relationships and responsibilities to land by highlighting the genealogical and cosmic connections Kānaka Maoli have to each other, to Moananuiākea, and to a larger place in the universe.

[95] Ingersoll, *Waves of Knowing : A Seascape Epistemology*, 88.

Wā III | I ka wā ma mua, I ka wā ma hope:
An Aesthetic & Praxis of Hawaiian Futurism in Noah Harders's Art

Throughout Oceania, our ancestors created and wore fashion that came from ʻāina. Our history highlights how before, we always would have ʻāina on our bodies in some way.[96] However, due to the events of colonization and a continuing neo-colonialism throughout Oceania, this relationship to ʻāina is not the same as it was before. In the context of Hawaiʻi, there is a disconnect between the fashion/clothes we wear: it is rare that people even know where our clothes have been created or come from. With the proliferation of synthetic materials to create the commercially made clothes we now wear, it is also incredibly rare that we wear clothing items that come from our ʻāina.

Our ancestors wore ʻāina: kept it close to their bodies always. This connection can be seen in kapa. Kapa, or bark cloth, is made from wauke, or the paper mulberry plant. It is a method of making clothes, tapestries, etc. that requires intense intention and care. Kapa was sacred to the person who wore it or "kapa was kapu to the person who owned it."[97] As the process is intensive to make, kapa was specialized for the person who it was for, functioning almost like a second skin for the wearer. Oils from the skin, scent, and movement from the body would eventually blend into the kapa that was worn and make it unique to the individual. Therefore, kapa was infused with the mana (power or energy) of the person who

[96] Brandy Nālani McDougall, personal communication, February 18, 2023.
[97] Brandy Nālani McDougall, personal communication, February 18, 2023.

wore it.[98] This precious relationship to ʻāina and how we wear it on our bodies is not the same in our times; we frequently do not have the same relationship with clothes. What we put and wear on our bodies in our everyday lives is not precious in the same way. However, the Kanaka Maoli artist Noah Harders's work centers this relationship with ʻāina again in his artwork. By creating fashion as art that is thinking through the connection Kānaka have with ʻāina, Harders calls upon this sacred relationship and practice once again and into the future.

I first discovered Harders's art the day I visited Aupuni Space for the closing of the *Ulu Kupu* exhibit in March 2022. Aupuni Space is located in the district of Kakaʻako, which represents a large hub for public art spaces in the middle of the chaos that is the city of Honolulu. This independent exhibition space is on the smaller side, but has been making a powerful impact for Hawaiʻi's art scene outside of mainstream institutions. The experimental works it frequently has on display offer vast storylines that reverberate throughout the space. Its unclear delineation of indoor/outdoor boundaries bleed onto a busy street and it is situated between bustling restaurants, million dollar skyscrapers, and high-end boutiques. On the closing night of the exhibition *Ulu Kupu*, the room was packed, crowded with the waves of laughter and camaraderie echoing throughout the small room like a white chamber. The loud sounds of typical Honolulu traffic around made for a jarring experience, as the exhibition was grounded in the sacredness of wai (water) and a reverence for the elements of water, ʻāina, and that which sustains the Hawaiian archipelago. *Ulu Kupu* featured a multi-site and multi-media

[98] Brandy Nālani McDougall, personal communication, February 18, 2023.

exhibition by a collective of nine Kānaka Maoli and O‘ahu-based artists grounding their art in ancestral place-based connection to the rainforests and watersheds of Hawai‘i, while also offering a potent critique of the U.S. military's poisoning of aquifers.

Yet, that crowd inside and outside Aupuni Space didn't deter me from the magnetic pull I felt towards the work of Noah Harders, an artist who creates a lei—well, kind of. Situated towards the right side of the room was a single mask. Ornate and intricately detailed, Harders's art shocked and called to me with its brown and distinct opulent rivets. There was movement within the mask. From sweeping highs and lows, the viewer is confronted with swirling movements created by flowers that seek to encompass the wearer's entire face. A viewer's eyes can sweep upon the petals from the bottom up or top down. If one's eyes begin their visual journey of the mask from the top, their eyes would feast upon two horns protruding gracefully upon the wearer's head while careful petal placements are composed and folded into each other. The sweeping placements of the flowers jut out from the mouth, circle back into the cheek and eye area, and sweep into the forehead. From there, the eye placements of the flowers on the mask are curved. These curves formulate into circular motions that extend outwards to brush in what appears as an infinite loop of interlocking flower petals. Unattached to the mask itself, but very much attached to the rest of the artistic work were other flowers strung together like lei and adorned at the bottom of the floral sculpture.

Figure 10. Rattlesnake Ginger. Photo Taken by Author on 3/26/22.

Each carefully strung piece of the plant is almost reverent at the base of the mask. As if the mask could have appeared before the viewer naturally, in a rainforest, and not removed from its familiar context.

Lei is a critical aspect of Kānaka Maoli cosmology and embodied practice. Incredibly, lei has endured and continues to thrive into our times. To celebrate a birthday, lei is given. If there's a graduation or invited speaker, lei is given. Lei is everywhere in Hawai'i. From the refrigerators of grocery stores to the garish and tasteless versions sold in the ABC stores of Waikiki, to the flower trees in the backyard of someone who is about to pick pua (flowers)—to the necks or heads of a loved one—lei, like Indigenous culture, takes time and is a flourished practice. The crafting and stringing of it takes careful effort and aloha. The act of the flowers growing, the act of picking and weaving/stringing it together, then finally being received, all speaks of the sum to the whole—the individual relating and reverberating within the collective. Aligned with Kānaka Maoli cultural beliefs, lei is part of an entire ecology. It is a significant act to create, gift, and receive lei.

The weaving of lei comes from the practices of our kupuna that has persisted into our time. After many attempts at cultural control by colonizing forces, lei-making is an important practice that has survived centuries and is integral to Kānaka artistic and cultural expression. As Paul R. Weissich and Marie A. McDonald write in in their 2003 book *Nā lei Makamae: The Treasured Lei* traditionally, "lei might have been fashioned as a direct, specific, and reverent offering to one or more of the numerous gods and goddesses of Hawaiian beliefs… [in] hula it

would be made following strict rules of selection… or it could be given to honor the recipient as a token of love."[99] Therefore, when leis are sold in Waikiki or tourist places removed from their cultural context as a token of touristic consumption of Hawaiʻi, the deep ancestral meaning and connection to ʻāina does not activate the same relationality. Harders's vision to (re)connect with ʻāina through his artwork is both ground-breaking and in line with a long tradition of Kānaka Maoli cultural expression. I wondered about the leis Harders created, and how he must have woven stories within them. What was the moʻolelo and manaʻo behind each?ʻ

There is much to look at with Harders's mask. Each detail of it reveals something more and more, deeper and deeper upon closer inspection. Each petal has its own personality and characteristic. However, each individual petal feels in tune with the rest of the mask. The way each petal is maneuvered gives way to a form of symmetry. Harders has stated that he has a love (perhaps obsession) with symmetry.[100] Flowers already have natural patterns, textures, and templates of symmetry. While Harders seeks to create masks based on symmetry, it is a consensual relationship with the flowers for creation. Harders doesn't seem to impose or force a form of symmetry within the mask, but leans into what naturally exists from the flowers themselves. With each petal in-sync within the mask, it gives the art a speculative aura. Like there is possibility within it, as if donning the mask it would give the wearer the ability to see

[99] Marie A. McDonald and Paul R. Weissich, introduction to *Na Lei Makamae : The Treasured Lei*, (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2003), xiv.
[100] Noah Harders, "Moemoeā: A Conversation with Noah Harders," Honolulu Museum of Art, November 5, 2022, video, 52:35, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Nw1OWKkNIo8.

more. As if the mask could open the wearer's vision to more sight, to interact and see more of the world.

My first encounter with Harders's art at Aupuni Space was once the flowers implemented in the mask had already dried. For a time, I only knew of that version of the mask; knew only how the petals curled slowly inward, and could only imagine how delicate my fingertips would have to be to touch each horn to hear the slight crinkle of dried petals. On Harders's Instagram page, there is a photo from August 4, 2022 that features the same mask I first encountered at Aupuni Space, but I was shocked to realize that the mask I first encountered was a kupuna (elder)—its younger version was born earlier; but when, I'm not sure. I wanted to know the plant Harders crafted, and learned that the mask is made from Rattlesnake Ginger, from the rainforest of Central America. Harders, who wears the mask in the Instagram post, features the Rattlesnake Ginger mask in an opulent yellow state of color.

The vitality of the kupuna mask's younger life was shocking—the brightness, the fullness of the leaves, how its eye and mouth-pieces burst outward from the body. This is not to say that its elder life isn't similarly astonishing, but that the dullness in color and the witheredness invoke an alternate otherworldliness—one more akin to reptiles. Flowers have a life-span similar to humans. Flowers are beautiful and full of life when young and like humans become withered with age. If you don't care for the flowers or handle them correctly, just like if we don't handle our bodies correctly, then the pua will die. Harders art follows the materials he

uses through different lifespans as it moves through different stages, times, and wā. The same rivets, grooves, and movements of the mask I saw at Aupuni Space exist in Harders's Instagram version; however there were now varied shades of tanned brown, smooth as well as wrinkled in certain sections. In talking with a close friend of mine, we noticed that the kupuna mask looks like shedded snake-scales, appropriate given the plant's name. Gone was the symmetry Harders so painstakingly worked into each limb, and left behind was a more delicate, more fragile body. I witnessed the Rattlesnake Ginger mask's death that night of the closing of the *Ulu Kupu* exhibit. It had once lived many different lives in different wā as a seed, budding flower, full flower, and then repurposed into Harders's mask. Finally, the flowers' finale culminated in being returned to ʻāina once again.

In many ways, there is a multiverse of this mask. I am not talking about replication, but instead, I seek to point out that Harders's floral mask has existed and moved through different time periods and forms. These flowers were once a seed that grew into a budding plant and at some point found its way to Harders. The lush flowers were refashioned into an adornment and then shifted—transformed into an older version of itself. There are several temporal and transformational aspects at play in Harders's work. This is in-tune with the petals who are all in-sync with each other to formulate an almost otherworldly being born and made of ʻāina. Harders has stated in interviews that, "In my head, I'm imagining them as otherworldly creatures. I'm asking myself, what would this plumeria look like if it existed on another planet." And that he hopes his art "transports people to another world."

Figure 11. Rattlesnake Ginger. Instagram Post by Noah Harders (@waikapu) on 6/22/23.

In Harders's world, "Hawaiian feather work, helmets, statues and lauhala weaving are all modernized as an homage to the traditional ideas of our ancestors, but reimagined for today."[101] Although it covers the entire face of the wearer, it doesn't feel like it obscures whoever wears it. Instead it makes the viewer feel more pronounced like an assertion of—*I am here*. The mask feels alive.

This particular wā on Harders's work stretches between different times, spaces, and places of encounter. His art pushes the boundaries of how lei-making can be conceived in the wā of the 21st century. In this wā on Harders's art, I want to highlight the immense care that goes into his practice of creating and the ancestral knowledge weaved within his creations. Harders's work, in line with the ideas and art mentioned throughout this dissertation, features an unbridled creativity. Hauʻofa speaks to a boundless or boundary-less Oceania—our islands are not tiny, simple idyllic rocks in the middle of a pond. The current of creativity that swells in Harders's work is expansive, there is a whole world behind these masks and the images he creates to showcase the ephemeral nature of the flowers and other materials of ʻāina that he is working with. Moʻolelo is not just written form, it can also be aural or visual. Harders's images or visual art is an extension of Hawaiian storytelling. He is telling the stories of his ancestors, where he comes from, and his relationship with ʻāina. By extending our cultural practices of lei and storytelling in this way, he is creating a temporal space of futurity. An Indigenous

[101] "Alum Noah Harders' 'Otherworldly' Creations Make It to the Honolulu Museum of Art," Kamehameha Schools, January 25, 2023, https://leiculture.com/making-moody-lei-for-strange-times-with-noah-harders/

Futuristic actualization where he is re-narrating the practices of ancestors, calling upon his own place in time to continue this practice, and activating a new form for these expressions to continue to be taken up by the next generations to come.

Chance Encounters

As the 2022 *Hawaiʻi Triennial* was happening around the same time I saw his work at *Ulu Kupu*, I found Harders at an event at the Honolulu Museum of Art. It was random that we crossed each other's paths, but in line with Kānaka culture—nothing is coincidence. I expressed admiration for his art and Harders told me mahalo (thank you). I heard from him about how he had traveled from his home in Maui to be on Oʻahu. We talked story about his day job in creating floral arrangements for weddings and other events, and that it's through this job that he comes across the lush flowers to repurpose into his pieces. He also told me about his time studying at the Art Institute of Chicago. I asked him if the COVID-19 pandemic was motivating for him, with everyone having to wear face masks. His face lit up, he smiled and said yes.

Harders first worked as a delivery boy for a local florist in 2014. Already knowing how to string lei together, he was asked to make lei and boutonnières. Later, he began working as a wedding florist, eventually running his own company called NkH Design. He is inspired by science fiction, fantasy, high-fashion such as by the designer Alexander Mcqueen, as well as the knowledge of our ancestors. Informed by the traditional practices of lei-making, crafting together these floral arrangements, Harders began "envisioning how to replicate traditional

Hawaiian lei hulu (feather lei) with flowers."[102] Born out of the moment of our time and (re)purposing flowers that were meant to be thrown away, Harders keeps the practice of lei-making vital, and, in an estranging and obscuring moment, returns Hawaiian people to themselves. Adaptation, resilience, and survivance are integral to Indigenous cultures to keep our roots alive. Living in the wā (time period, season, age, epoch) we find ourselves in, Harders is making a critical continuation of Hawaiian cultural practices that are relevant to what we are currently facing. To see practices of lei being cultivated in times of uncertainty calls forth tradition into the future.

Taking into consideration the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, the creation of floral masks covering the nose and mouth by a facemask speaks to how Harders is playing with new identities. During an incredibly isolating time at the beginning of 2020, Harders found a new way to interact with ʻāina with his found material objects. A consequence of the early days of the pandemic to stop the spread of the virus was that everyone needed to stay home and be isolated. In the context of Hawaiʻi, people couldn't go into ʻāina at this time. However, Harders's art speaks to a way for ʻāina to be resilient. By wearing ʻāina for protection as a face-mask, it showcases how, through centering a Hawaiian epistemological view, we can rely on ʻāina to get us through what feels like impossible times. The ʻāina where Harders is from is significant. For more than 100 years, Harders's family has lived in Waikapū. Most of the people

[102] Shannon Wianecki, "Making Moody Lei for Strange Times with Noah Harders," *Lei Culture*, accessed February 23, 2023, https://leiculture.com/making-moody-lei-for-strange-times-with-noah-harders/.

who live in the area are his relatives.[103] Waikapū (which is actually the name of Harders's Instagram profile @waikapu) on the island of Maui translates to "Waters of the Conch." Waikapū refers to the pū or conch shell that creates a calling sound such as a trumpet. Waikapū is located in the ahupuaʻa or land division of Nā Wai ʻEhā meaning "The Four Waters." On the island of Maui, the saying "Kaulana ʻo Nā Wai ʻEhā" or "Famous are the Four Great Waters of Waikapū, Wailuku, Waiehu, and Waiheʻe" references how these four land divisions are culturally and historically significant for their freshwater resources and an abundance of biodiverse life. As part of the moʻolelo of Nā Wai ʻEhā, Waikapū's history is related to how these vast water resources and areas on Maui were once the "the largest continuously cultivated loʻi kalo growing region in all of Hawaiʻi. It also served as the primary ritual, political, and population center of Maui."[104] Nā Wai ʻEhā's extensive freshwater resources lead to the creation of expansive irrigation and agricultural systems unique to Hawaiʻi due to the abundance of wai or water.

In contemporary times, Nā Wai ʻEhā continues to supply over 70% of Maui's water needs. There is a complicated history that continues to cause water-based and land-based struggles when it comes to Nā Wai ʻEhā. Structures of settler-colonialism and plantation capitalism since the 1800's have created a water crisis on Maui by diverting the streams for sugarcane plantation economies owned by foreign settlers. Thereby, disrupting critical Kānaka

[103] Wianecki, "Making Moody Lei for Strange Times with Noah Harders," 2023.
[104] "Historical & Cultural Background," *Hui o Nā Wai ʻEhā*, accessed May 10, 2023, https://www.huionawaieha.org/nawaiehainformation.

cultural practices and livelihoods. Without access to wai, wetland taro cultivation cannot thrive. The ramifications from this history persist even now determining who has access to water and therefore life on Maui. Hōkūao Pellegrino, among other community leaders, continues to fight for access to water resources. These critical cultural practices continue to be contested in court with developments continuing to happen to this day. Harders says he lives and breathes Waikapū. He is able to find the materials he uses to create the masks from the ʻāina around him. There is always an intention or through-process behind his creations where imagines them being part of something else. This resiliency and living history of Waikapū informs Harders's art.

An important process of Harders's artistic practice is the collecting, foraging, and being gifted the materials he creates with. Once an object on the ground or wherever it may be resting is found by Harders, he usually must clean it if it is covered with dirt or sand and this process can take either hours or days.[105] He utilizes the petals, the veins, the gradients of colors to create patterns, shapes, and colorways. Harders stated that because of the time-sensitive and delicate materials he works with, the flowers present a challenge.[106] After foraging pieces of ʻāina around Waikapū or being given the materials by friends, he must work quickly. Each material has its own life-span. He doesn't know if it will wilt quickly or how the material will work with him as he maneuvers it into a creation. There is a challenge working with these types of ephemeral

[105] Viola Gaskell, "The Divergent Lives of Lei," *Maui Times*, accessed May 20, 2023, https://mauitimes.news/lei-of-the-land/.
[106] Noah Harders, "Moemoeā," https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Nw1OWKkNIo8.

materials. “It is a race against the clock,” Harders says with time and the cycle of life and death. He never knows how long the materials are going to last and how much it is actually viable, every artwork feels like an experiment to him. Another critical aspect of Harders’s artistic practice is that once he creates these pieces, “It’s there and gone.”[107] Nature takes it back or he gives it back to ʻāina once its time is done. Harders affirms that once the materials are done, it’s *done* and he allows ʻāina to lead him once again to his next artistic work.

With the weaving of ancestral practices, the connection Harders has to Waikapū, and Hawaiian epistemological beliefs, these images on his Instagram can be read as potentially futuristic and speculative renderings. Harders is sharing with his viewers a moment of time for the flowers he uses in his creations and visually making and expanding the story behind these flowers’ lives. Hence, why the Instagram pictures of his work aim to allow us into Harders’s world and into his relationship with the materials he finds and subsequently fashions into otherworldly images. The images of working with pua or flowers seek to capture the experience, a moment in time, and that is all. There is a memory and connection to ʻāina and we are let into his world within his Instagram page. Through the materials Harders uses, he is transforming them into otherworldly creations. Through the images posted on his Instagram, he is able to speculate and transform himself into the creatures of his imagination.

The flowers, indeed, the very medium in which Harders works is like lei. Lei is not meant to last. It is the feeling of giving it to someone that is the emphasis, it is the feeling of

[107] Noah Harders, “Moemoeā,” https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Nw1OWKkNIo8.

aloha or love behind the act of giving it to someone who you care about, who you have relations with. There is a feeling and connection with ʻāina that is being given to the person who receives a lei. The feeling of a reverberating connection ʻāina is similar to receiving a visual connection to it when we view Harders's art. Harders is taking the highly symbolic and culturally significant Hawaiian lei and extending its meaning and practice into the future. While building on the knowledge of our kūpuna, he is able to honor lei while remixing it into something different that sets in motion different Kānaka epistemological registers. By remixing lei into wearable art, he embodies a future-oriented practice that cites cultural knowledge to continue it into the future.

By invoking Kānaka epistemologies in his work, we can see an extension of storytelling through the visual arts. Moʻolelo also includes our visual arts, as it is intricately connected to our oral storytelling and symbology. The masks and images Harders creates activates different times (ancestral, present, and future) while calling into different notions of lei-making legacies. The function of the mask also offers transformation when worn. What struck me the most about Harders's masks is that his work is a living-embodiment of Solomon Enos's comic *Polyfantasticicia* (which was discussed in Wā II). His masks are literally what I imagined the creations in *Polyfantastica* to be and look like, but alive and occurring in our world. The organic qualities of the mask beckon to the same polyfantastic becoming that Enos creates through his art. The polyfantastic in Harders's work references the body becoming part of ʻāina in a very visceral and literal way. Just as Enos's organic beings are deeply situated in the planet

Honua, Harders's art also draws on this sacred connection. The flowers, fishbones, and plants utilized in Harders's work feel to be part of his body. Similar to this sentiment is Enos's recalling of looking at one of his father's paintings where a body explodes into ʻāina where moments of life and death are mobilized through art. The rupturing of the body simultaneously from and into land recalls the fragility of the flowers and wilting, as well as our own temporal state as human beings. This complexity is embodied in Harders's art as well through his photographs. The flowers are not meant to last and neither are we as humans. There is a rupture of colonial temporality within these artistic expressions where past, present, and future do not occur through a linear separation, but instead are weaved together to recall how we ourselves are connected to ʻāina. As a Kanaka Maoli, Harders is using portraiture as a medium to convey that he is part ʻāina. Harders is transforming himself into something that is not lasting. Through the medium of portraiture, he highlights the fragility, ephemeral, and temporariness of his art through the form of a permanent image. This temporary meaning is significant as well in Enos's work. The beings featured in *Polyfantastica* are always shifting, growing, changing through time into different states of existence. Harders actualizes the sentiments of Enos's work by using items that he finds in Waikapū and that have a limited lifespan. While elements of ʻāina change over time, humans do as well. There is a reflective temporal element in Harders's work that affirms how we, just as the flowers, aren't going to live forever and his photographs are only but a fleeting snapshot to a certain time.

Harders's art is, indeed, an artistic practice, but it is also how he lives his life. He frequents around Waikapū, his ancestral homelands, and cultivates relationships with those around him and ʻāina. This form of Indigenous Futurism is a way of life that actualizes in practice all the tenets that we have come to understand that comprise it. Harders's work affirms that Indigenous cultures are not stuck in the past as colonial common sense would propagate. Harders's artistic practice and livelihood disproves external and internal notions of fatal impact theory where Oceanic cultures are relegated to 'fateful' extinction, as colonial and neo-colonial ideologies promote. Lei, hula, language and other cultural practices continue to grow. Indigenous Futurism, in this sense, does not only mean that we see Native peoples represented in art and literature in outer space or a similar futuristic setting. Or represented as a Future where Natives battle some form of a western apocalypse, as it is often represented within popular discourse.

Imagination at work in Indigenous Futurism calls upon us to ground our futures based on what we experienced in the past. The past informs the present and some of that has to be part of our future as well. The ʻōlelo noʻeau or Hawaiian proverbial saying "I ka wā ma mua, I ka wā ma hope" or "in the future is in the past" (where the title for this wā on Harders's art comes from) is generative to think through in this context. Lilikalā Kameʻeleihiwa notes of this ʻōlelo noʻeau that "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. Such an orientation is to the Hawaiian an eminently practical one, for the future is always

unknown, whereas the past is rich in glory and knowledge."[108] This means that in order to project oneself or speculate of the future, ʻŌiwi epistemology must look to the past for answers and protocols for the wā or time period we are currently in. Through a coalition of new storytellers, art, and writings, we can create the futures we want and need for our communities.

Harders collects parts of ʻāina that were going to be discarded to show their beauty and transform them into something else. By utilizing these parts of ʻāina, he extends their lifespan; however, this practice is not for profit. Once the creation is photographed, the moment is over and he is once again on the journey to let materials come to him to be refashioned into a love letter to ʻāina. By only using materials he finds in ʻāina or is given and fashioning them into new creations, it creates a temporal extension of the life of these items. After he photographs the items, they are returned to the earth again. Therefore, an ancestral sustainability is rooted in his artistic praxis. In this era of intense climate change, sustainability has become a catch-all and buzzword. However, Harders's praxis of sustainability calls upon a Kānaka worldview that we should only take or use what is given to us by ʻāina. Sustainability in this view means not creating harm to ʻāina by having an extractive relationship, but honoring the natural process of ʻāina and how it sustains us. Ancestral practices of sustainability mean recognizing that we must be conscious of what our resources are and not over-consume what ʻāina provides.

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[108] Lilikalā Kameʻeleihiwa. *Native Land and Foreign Desires: Pehea Lā e Pono Ai? How Shall We Live in Harmony?* (Honolulu: Bishop Museum Press, 2012), 22.

Unlike other modes of art, what is the value of art that is ephemeral to its core? The sculptures made of flowers are not meant to be sold. They are valued momentarily. Unlike the majority of the pieces on display in fine-art museums, how do you place a monetary value on something like what Harders creates with flowers? A piece of art that is not meant to last and to force it to last goes against the epistemologies that are weaved into its creation. The value of the piece is not tied to traditional forms of evaluating art. Harders's work with ephemeral materials goes against everything that institutions like museums create and assign as artistic value.

Moemoeā | Dreaming in the Museum

A couple of months after my chance encounter with Harders at the *Hawaiʻi Triennial*, I heard news of his first ever museum exhibition with the Honolulu Museum of Art (HoMA) titled *Moemoeā* meaning to dream or fantasy. I couldn't stop thinking about Harders's art and I was excited to see the pleasant-natured artist's work being recognized and hopefully honored in such a way. Harders again created beautiful artistic masks for HoMA. The piece that really caught my eye in the middle of the gallery was titled *Looks Can Be Deceiving*—an armored outfit made entirely out of lobster bodies. The lobster shells are blue, almost cerulean-like colors mixed with a bit of orange and brown. Similar to Harders's other designs, *Looks Can Be Deceiving* features a mask that almost covers the wearer's entire face. The headpiece flows from the neck up leaving open spaces for the mouth and eyes while culminating in sprouting horns made of one lobster head each at the very top.

Figure 12. *Looks Can Be Deceiving*. Photo Taken by Author on 12/30/22.

The lobsters' antennas and eyes reach high into the sky and mirror each other on each side of the wearer's head. Speckled tiny, rounded spikes from the lobsters' bodies create an imperfect symmetry reflective of the type of variety one would find of these beings out in the ocean. Coupled with semi-identical body structures, the lobsters' separated abdominals offer twin horns, but vary in mixture and orders of blue and brown/orange. Directly below the horns are two split elongated abdomens from lobsters to resemble ears on the headpiece. Melding all these different body parts of varying lobsters forges an armor-like helmet.

Looks Can Be Deceiving is an ensemble piece by Harders. Not only is there a helmet of armor, but there is also a chest piece and malo or loincloth featured. Bodies of lobsters cover the left and right shoulders of the wearers along with the chest. The lobsters' legs, abdomens, and antennas jut out in different directions to cover the wearer and subsequently offer protection of the wearer's body with their own bodies. A malo, which is a form of traditional Hawaiian clothing, is formulated by a large lobster with varied pieces covering the lower half of the wearer. Through the lobster armor, Harders creates a hybrid creature, in which lobsters and humans "created an off-shoot." The inspiration behind *Looks Can Be Deceiving* was a thought-experiment about lobster/human hybrids and wondering, "What would their warriors look like going into battle?"[109] There was an inherent juxtaposition working with the material of the lobster shells. Although the shells were hard, spiny, and thorny, Harders had to actually handle them very gently as they were incredibly fragile, reflecting as well his work with

[109] Noah Harders, "Moemoeā," https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Nw1OWKkNIo8.

flowers. Through the masks, Harders wants to reimagine and re-embody the creatures around us.

Similar to his work with flowers, there are many layers to the different parts of his art that draws the viewers' eyes to the many pieces and innerworkings that goes into Harder's creation. While the work is an ensemble of pieces, as well as of lobster bodies, it is also an ensemble of different transformations. *Looks Can Be Deceiving* is made of Hawaiian Spiny Lobsters or ula in Hawaiian. They are endemic to Hawai'i and can be found living under crevices in coral reefs. While they have an external skeleton that "encases them like armor," they also must shed or molt their exoskeleton to continue growing.[110] The Hawaiian Spiny Lobster is vulnerable at this time of growth and must rely on the crevices of the reef they live within to protect themselves. Harders found the materials to create his armor during the molting season of the Hawaiian Spiny Lobster in Maui. Not bought or taken, but found on the beach, the molting lobster shells implemented in Harders's piece offer us a way to think of ʻāina as co-collaborator to the art. ʻĀina is not just the materials that create the piece, but from a Hawaiian epistemological standpoint, also helps to create the art alongside Harders. Therefore, Harders is working with and alongside ʻāina, not just taking the materials to be used.

According to an Artist Talk titled "Moemoeā: A Conversation with Noah Harders" hosted by the Honolulu Museum of Art posted on November 5, 2022, Harders and Aaron

[110] "Hawaiian Spiny Lobster," *Waikiki Aquarium, University of Hawaii.,* accessed May 21, 2023, https://www.waikikiaquarium.org/experience/animal-guide/invertebrates/crustaceans/hawaiian-spiny-lobster/.

Padilla discuss how he needed to create a piece that would last and be preserved for HoMA. Because of Harders's art embodying a temporary form, there is a tension between what we conceive of art that can 'last' to be viewed in a 'preserved' and continuous state throughout time in a museum. In his artist's talk, Harders conveyed that the museum asked him what he was going to use in his exhibition, as it still "need[ed] to look good for the show... [it had] to be preserved." He states that they told him that "The flowers aren't going to last. We can't have live flowers in the gallery. [Because] what happens when it wilts, shrinks, and dies?"[111] Therefore, Harders had to adapt his artistic practice away from the flowers he frequently uses and adapt other materials such as fishbones, lobster shells, lauhala, and displaying images of flowers that look similar to the ones posted on his Instagram for *Moemoeā*.

The form of the flowers calls into question how we think of art needing to be preserved permanently. However, Harders mediates and navigates these temporalities by taking images of himself wearing the mask, offering us as viewers a chance to see the art in one of its many states before it is returned back to the earth. Museums are centered around the politics of preservation and presentation. There is a signifying process that occurs in museums that functions to assign and create how Indigenous peoples are represented. Pauline Wakeham states that there is a taxidermied relationship to Indigenous cultures when presented in museums.[112] The conundrum of institutionalized museum spaces is that Indigeneity must be

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[111] Noah Harders, "Moemoeā," https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Nw1OWKkNIo8.

[112] Pauline Wakeham, introduction to *Taxidermic Signs: Reconstructing Aboriginality*, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2008), 3-4.

represented solely in the space of the past and in contrast to the progress and modernity of western cultures. Work like Harders' breaks this dichotomy by being able to represent artwork that draws on tradition heavily, but cannot be categorized as primitive or out-moded. Therefore, through the lens of Indigenous Futurism and the engagement of a past, present, and future praxis, Harders's art puts forward an example of what a living culture is.

The problem with HoMA wanting materials that need to be preserved when it comes to the floral aspects of Harders's art, is the paradox of an undying flower. While Harders was able to creatively work-around this issue by utilizing materials (lauhala, fishbones, and lobster shells) that would not change, wither, or transform in the museum space, we see an ontological problem with the institution of fine-art galleries. The very basis of Harders's work with the ephemeral does not neatly fit into what the museum grounds itself to be. If the museum needed an undying flower to be exhibited, then they need only look for the plastic leis that are sold everywhere in Hawaiʻi that tourists frequently don. By restricting the ephemeral aspects of the pua (flower), so central to Harders's art, it elucidates the need for museum spaces to capture art that will be preserved, taxidermied, and stagnant to assign an intrinsic value to art.

From an Indigenous Futurism perspective, the notion of an undying flower and the need for preservation draws from colonial ideations to collect, hoard, and rank knowledge systems and artistic expression. To have something held in museums, whether it be art, history/knowledge, or bodies, affirms a certain western notion of futurity. Western notions of futurity are bound up in a clear linear past that moves into a future of 'progress.' Indigenous

Futurism is not concerned with a linear timeline of progress, but instead calls on us to envision a futurity that is outside the logics of preservation. There is no preservation of the future: the future is not preserved. By wearing the mask and taking photographs of these ephemeral moments with the flowers, he is creating a temporal engagement with the space of the museum. What gets carried across into the temporal future gets bound up in the images Harders creates. The images Harders takes of the masks after he creates them, act as a snapshot or a freeze-frame of the floral masks, as the photos he takes are but a moment in time of something that is going to die. The photographic images capture a moment that will last for posterity. There is something raw and revealing behind the work that accesses registers of the temporary aspect of the lives of the flowers, but also of Harders himself and us as viewers of his art.

Museum institutions preserve Indigenous artifacts under the guise of 'cultural heritage' to create a teleology of what constitutes 'history.' Drawing from the work of Audra Simpson, fields such as ethnography, archeology, and anthropology (among others) create a discourse that links the protection and preservation of cultural heritage to mark the evolution of native or primitive cultures to the progress of civilized nation-states. Simpson states, "To speak of Indigeneity is to speak of colonialism and anthropology, as these are means through which Indigenous people have been known and sometimes are still known."[113] Museums are seen as

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[113] Audra Simpson, "On Ethnographic Refusal : Indigeneity, 'Voice' and Colonial Citizenship," *Junctures : The Journal for Thematic Dialogue*, no. 9 (2007): 67.

houses of knowledge where we come to understand how history, culture, and diversity are created and evolve. These institutions tell a particular story of history that shuffles Indigenous people into the vastness of a static historical past. Jennifer Doyle states that the narration of history should be questioned. In reference to the work of artist James Luna, Doyle raises an important point that Indigenous art questions history and the archive of "how one engages that past, how one narrates it, how one knows it, and how one feels it."[114] Harders's art mobilizes these questions through his creation of artistic pieces that call upon an ancestral connection tied to the practice of making leis and extending this practice to masks where the materials used are all from the people he knows and the place he is from. The museum itself may not be the ideal space for Harders's work to be fully appreciated. Museums err towards a space of surveillance. There are cameras everywhere as well as security guards. Touching any items, unless otherwise specified, is strictly forbidden within a museum. Artifacts are meant to be seen through protective glass, but never interacted with. The items on display are relegated to a stagnant state. This inert state is completely opposite from the praxis Harders invokes by using living items such as flowers which are meant to flourish, change, wither, and decay through a myriad of forms. Only within certain circumstances for specific exhibits is this stigma for preservation within a museum broken when interaction with art is encouraged within set parameters.

[114] Jennifer Doyle, *Hold It Against Me : Difficulty and Emotion in Contemporary Art* (Durham : Duke University Press, 2013), 100.

The live flowers that are staples of his artistic practice based on lei-making did not fit the parameters of the museum. Curious enough, when I viewed Harders's *Moemoeā* exhibit, there *was* a separate exhibition happening at the same time that allowed the hanging of over 20,000 flowers that were in varied states, alive, dried, and dead, in an exhibition hall. Titled *Awakening* by British artist Rebecca Louise Law, flowers were strung in an immersive exhibit where viewers could walk through HoMA's second floor galleries. The flowers utilized were a multicultural mix of endemic and imported flora from beaches, parks, and botanical gardens on Oʻahu. While I am not privy to the information as to why Law was allowed to create an exhibition with live flowers and not Harders at HoMA, this juxtaposition does raise some interesting questions. Why was this exhibit that emphasized a large-scale call to save nature allowed? But Harders's exhibit, which was incredibly place-based and utilizes only a small fragment of live flowers compared to *Awakening*, unable to exist within the museum's space? Law's exhibit took up an entire gallery floor. *Moemoeā* was in a small room at the front of the museum where people could almost miss it entirely if they weren't already aware that the exhibit was occurring.

Law states that through *Awakening* she wanted to "create spaces to reconnect us to the land and also to each other. We are all nature, and everything matters."[115] The reconnection to an unspecified land, perhaps to earth itself, foregrounds discourses on environmental

[115] "Awakening Connects Us to the Natural World," *Hawaii Business Magazine,* September 13, 2022, https://www.hawaiibusiness.com/honolulu-museum-of-art-awakening-exhibition-rebecca-louise-law-2022/.

catastrophe and concerns of damage to land through pollution. Through the hanging/strung up flowers, *Awakening*'s premise is to have museum-goers immerse themselves in nature and create an immersive experience in 'natural' landscapes. This type of environmental idealism often gets touted as a solution to much of the climate and environmental issues that we are currently facing. The goal of *Awakening* is to potentially cause viewers to gain a new appreciation for nature and to take care of the land. While formulating a well-intentioned message or harmonious call to protect nature, the exhibit is tied to neoliberal, multicultural logics. There is a very individualized experience with nature as museum-goers walk through the strings of flowers hanging from the ceiling. *Awakening* centers an experience around having an individual changed by this exhibit. By experiencing the flowers in such a way, social formation in this case is tied to only what the individual can experience. Harders's art differs from this type of experience in that it is inherently tied to a Kānaka system of knowledge and relationality to ʻāina. The making of leis is not just experiential, there is a physical element to creating it and understanding the ontology behind each of Harders's creations. *Awakening* emphasizes an experience where each person encounters the flowers and art in their own subjective ways.

Through creating art firmly grounded in "I ka wa ma mua, I ka wa ma hope," viewers must experience Harders's art by moving outside of yourself and what you know. *Moemoeā* is place-based and causes viewers to think about the art from a Hawaiian perspective. This perspective does not limit how the art can be understood or create an ontological difficulty, but

rather it causes viewers to empathize with these knowledges. It causes viewers to ask themselves how they are understanding the construction behind the pieces and what knowledge is being activated. I am still very curious as to why Harders's live floral art was not allowed, but Law's was. If I were to ask HoMA they would probably give me a very practical and bureaucratic answer. However, sequestering Harders's exhibit to the front corner of the museum (where it was housed at HoMA) emphasizes that the kind of ancestral and ephemeral art he created is allowed in the institution, but only contingently. Only if he can have made a certain type of art and knowledge that is preservable and clearly legible for the museum. Harders states in his HoMA Artist Talk, "I see life in all the materials around me, anything I touch or find." Therefore, only a certain kind of preserved life is allowed within western museum institutions. Indigenous art that blurs these boundaries creates a temporal tension within the museum. The juxtaposition of the co-occurring exhibits, *Moemoeā* and *Awakening* leave questions about the form and function of a museum and what types of knowledge are translatable and legitimized.

Conclusion

Harders has stated that he will continue making pieces, but will most likely expand his practice by aiming to create more full-body outfits rooted in ʻāina. Harders's art is deeply rooted in ʻāina. The masks represent a futuristic return to ʻāina: where our connection to ʻāina is affirmed and we are part of it. It is growing on us and we become ʻāina or are claimed by it in some way. It is a very literal representation of the sacred connection Kānaka have to ʻāina, showcasing how it is really part of our culture, our worldviews, and ourselves. The idea of

transformation with the masks offers a form of protection as well. Harders's artwork with masks transforms and protects. His artistic practice reminds us that we can feel strong with our ancestral connection to ʻāina and that we can feel strong by wearing ʻāina. Harders is calling upon this ancestral relationship to ʻāina and, in turn, making himself into ʻāina ,and into new creatures of ʻāina.

Through an Indigenous Futurism lens, Harders's art can be read as a speculation of what Kānaka can evolve or expand to when merged with ʻāina in this way. The masks are playing with transformation and an evolution rooted in ʻāina. Harders's ʻāina is connected to his evolution as an artist. It is only what ʻāina offers him that he uses. He is treating ʻāina as a collaborating artist, not just materials to be used. Harders states that he is able to reinvent himself through the masks and "release parts of [him] that he would have never shared or showed to the world before." In an emotional part of the interview with HoMA, Harders shares that he avoids posting selfies on social media. However, his artistic practice and the mask allows him to be his most authentic self and share parts of him that he had previously been too scared to share.[116] There is an authenticity to this statement that references the irony of how covering oneself is able to show the world *here I am*.

Indigenous Futurism is open to interpretation: it is about innovating and creating new technologies, but ones that are informed with the old. It is about envisioning a future for ourselves that is informed by the past. While colonial forms of knowledge would emphasize

[116] Noah Harders, "Moemoeā," https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Nw1OWKkNIo8.

that western technology is superior to ancestral technologies, there is value in the knowledge of our ancestors. Indigenous Futurism is about incorporating different kinds of technology and making them our own. Thereby, technologies through a critical decolonial lens can be infused and informed by our cultural designs and values. This type of fusion can be seen with the technology of written language or metal. Indigenous cultures were able to take these introductions and make them our own.[117]

Instead of having a singular definition of what Indigenous Futurism means, I offer that it is about possibility and affirming that Native peoples can mediate our futures on our own terms. Indigenous Futurism does indeed mean that Indigenous people will be in the future. But to extend that thoughtline, I suggest that, through an imaginative power of speculation, we should ask ourselves, what would a decolonial or anti-colonial future look like? It could be our ancestors. There is much speculation involved when thinking about what the future could look like from an Indigenous Futurism lens. However, Enos and Harders's work reflect that maybe the future *does* look like our Indigenous ancestors. Through an Indigenous Futurism perspective, what is viewed as *ancient*—is not exactly ancient. What is ancient is very much a relevant part of our lives now and will continue to be into the future. There is a blurring of the binary that exists between ancient and modern. Western conceptions of progress and modernity where *improvement* is emphasized from a more primitive culture has no place within Indigenous futurity. Indigenous Futurism is an important point against the colonial

[117] Brandy Nālani McDougall, personal communication, May 19, 2023.

view that Indigeneity can only exist in the past or as ancient and therefore stagnant. Projects of Indigenous Futurism affirms that Native peoples have survived, but will continue to endure and thrive into the future. A turn towards decolonial and anti-colonial aesthetics and practices is about implementing ways that we can heal ourselves from the effects of colonization and continue to resist it even in neo-colonial forms. It is also about reconnecting with our ancestors and our culture.

Lei, is reflective of our connection to and aloha for ʻāina. ʻĀina is how we express aloha and know and understand aloha and beauty. Our artistry with lei comes from that.[118]

Indigenous cultures are often relegated to being stuck in the past or accused of upholding traditions that must be rigidly maintained. But Harders doesn't just make lei because it is the practice of our ancestors, he is also responding to what it means to be Kānaka in this time, while honoring and citing all the lei-makers who have come before him; all the extra flowers meant to be discarded are refashioned into wondrous pieces of Oceanic cultural expression. As Kānaka, who are the budding pua of our ancestors and living in the wā of the here-and-now, it is thrilling to see art like Harders literally weaving the past into the future—allowing us to be excited for what is on the horizon.

[118] Brandy Nālani McDougall, personal communication, May 19, 2023.

Wā IV | (Re)Networked Relations: Indigenous Virtual Art & Decolonial Geo-Technics

"Perhaps these patterns in cyberspace will be imagined as liquid light, like a neon sign shining slick and menacing by a wet road at midnight.

Maybe cyberspace cities will be built as if of crystals that shimmer in a sunless sky.

And along the roads and highways of this geography, information will flow like blood, in a space where there will be no flesh and shapes will shift like shadows on the wall."

– **Loretta Todd,** Artist, Director, Producer

Introduction

In her 1996 publication "Aboriginal Narratives in Cyberspace," Loretta Todd asks: "Can our [Indigenous] narratives, histories, languages, and knowledges find meaning in cyberspace?"[119] This question comes at a time when the early versions of cyberspace promised universalisation of knowledge and equal access, but seemingly without critique. Given how western sciences and knowledge systems have stood as beneficiaries of the colonization of Indigenous lands, bodies, and ways of knowing and relating, Todd forefronts concerns about power relations and settler reproduction of digital discourse. "[I]s cyberspace a clever guise for neocolonialism," she asks, "where tyranny will find further domain?"[120] The origins of the Internet itself emerged in response to the military's need for faster communication during the Cold War. Even more, conversations surrounding the development of cyberspace and early Virtual Reality (VR) technologies were and continue to be dismissive of the devastation and abuse of ecological systems. After five hundred years of siege, exploitation, genocide, and assimilation, what responsibilities do we have to ensure that the ideologies which grounded the genesis of cyberspace and VR are disavowed?

In our increasingly techno-mediated world, tech companies would have us consumers believe that we are on the cusp of a *new* horizon. Web 3.0, the third generation of cybernetic technologies designed to provide an open and decentralized web-browsing experience contrasts

[119] Loretta Todd, "Aboriginal Narratives in Cyberspace," in *Immersed in Technology Art and Virtual Environments,* eds. Mary Anne Moser and Douglas MacLeod (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1996), 179.
[120] Todd, "Aboriginal Narratives in Cyberspace," 180.

with the data and content centralized by private companies, also known as "Big Tech." Web3 anticipates better equipped scalability, privacy, and fortified data security from unauthorized users. We are witnessing the growth of these technologies through various Non-Fungible Tokens (NFTs) and cryptocurrencies. Olga Kharif writes that "Web3 is a heady mix of creative new projects, techno-utopianism, and financial engineering" but it is not without concerns.[121] While the techno-utopianism of decentralization seems visionary in enabling cyber-trade and allowing for the globalization of economies, Kharif points out that verifying users' identities or performing anti-money-laundering checks is almost impossible. Developers often deny responsibility, citing that control is passed onto the users.[122] A decentralized Internet remains seductive in its potentiality. However, in line with Native feminist and cyber-feminist critique, I question how do exploitative, capitalist, and neo-colonial forms of knowledge production remain embedded within these "new" technological structures. How do efforts to decentralize and universalize technologies engage in reproductions of western-centric philosophies that have, time and time again, proven destructive to marginalized cultures? The implications of Web3 remain clear. Without direct intervention, where this knowledge is kept, held, and traded will remain centralized to colonial forms of relation where capitalist structures remain in control. These types of movements are frequently portrayed as being about deregulation,

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[121] Olga Kharif, "What You Need to Know About Web3, Crypto's Attempt to Reinvent the Internet," *Bloomberg*, December 10, 2021, https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2021-12-10/web3-is-crypto-s-attempt-to-reinvent-the-internet-here-s-what-you-should-know.

[122] Kharif, "What You Need to Know About Web3, Crypto's Attempt to Reinvent the Internet," 2021.

decentralization, and *democratization*—that promises equal access to this type of knowledge, but this is just a regurgitation of neoliberal idealism. Often, these movements only benefit an affluent few. As the hype about crypto centers discussions of deregulation and thereby decentralization in speculative financial forms, the ultimate goal of this movement aims to centralize a universalizing system for greater accumulation of wealth that only benefits a small group of people or global corporations.

While some argue that cyberspace, augmented reality, artificial intelligence, and VR have become more immersive and accessible to connect a wider range of people than previous generations, this chapter examines and critiques these technologies as potential forms of what Leanne Simpson calls digital dispossession.[123] These technologies are continuously accelerated through cyclical updates that hurl us further into virtual worlds which are meant to mine our personal data for profit. Digital dispossession speaks to colonial extractive relationships to our land and bodies can continue within cyberspace. The complexities of how these technologies continue to interweave with all aspects of our lives requires close attention to the benefits, as well as the downsides, of what cyberspace and VR offer. In this chapter, I argue that Indigenous creators and artists can wield cyberspace and VR technologies in ways that remain rooted in grounded normativity and refute the digital dispossession of ourselves. Undoing the master's house with the master's tools requires centering our approaches to technology in our own respective Indigenous epistemologies as intellectual and cultural sovereignty first and

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[123] Simpson, *As We Have Always Done: Indigenous Freedom through Radical Resistance*, 221.

foremost.[124] This chapter (re)imagines western forms of cyberspace and VR by returning to and expanding on Loretta Todd's 1996 essay to illustrate how Kānaka Maoli VR artists employ what I call *geo-technics* for cultural reclamation in contemporary Virtual Reality projects. Geo-technics is a term meant to convey the affective registers activated when experiencing a particular project of Indigenous Virtual Reality. While mainstream literature on VR frequently cites the transcendental and immersive capabilities of it, I suggest that geo-technics is a phrase that can speak to way Indigenous VR projects frequently imbue a form of cultural relationality (language, histories, songs, genealogy, etc.) while you experience the virtual space.

Towards an Indigenous Praxis of Cyber-Relationality

Technology from a traditional Euromerican standpoint replicates human-centric views and transcendental themes, especially in capital-intensive VR projects. Re-inscriptions of the enterprising individual, who makes their own fate and manifests their own digital destinies, is seen through the potential to create, upload, and *be* whoever you want in cyberspace. As our current historical moment garners much hype about the potentiality of Web3, ideation about a free-access internet revolutionizing communication is not new. The dream of Virtual Reality, in the late 1980's and throughout the 1990's, was the digital embodiment of a radical first-person perspective in which the user is reflected in their virtual avatar. This dream

[124] This particular phrasing comes from lesbian Black feminist poet Audre Lorde in her famous 1979 essay "The Master's Tools Will Never Dismantle the Master's House." Lorde's essay critiques and challenges western feminist structures as the solution for structural and institutional oppression of marginalized communities. She calls for a embracing of difference and I attempt to reference her theorizations to a praxis of Indigenous VR when utilizing western technologies. Audre Lorde. "The Master's Tools Will Never Dismantle the Master's House," in *The Selected Works of Audre Lorde*, ed. Roxane Gay (W.W. Norton & Company, 2020).

consisted of users seamlessly interacting with an avatar or digital mirror of a customized self-image. One of the early key aspects about avatar culture during this era was the notion that we, the consumers/users, will live in a synthetic world through VR in which physical and digital reality mix and are consequential to each other. The equitable/democratic potential that cyberspace promises through VR reflects a neoliberal selfhood: a Cartesian duality in which the mind and body manifest in machine. While this era of early VR critique focused on the potentiality of the "arising shape of a new world, a world that must... begin... as both an extension and a transcription of the world as we know it and have built it thus far,"[125] this period is also marked by early Indigenous Studies critiques of colonial digital selfhood through the work of Loretta Todd. Todd's essay takes up issues of sovereignty, sustainability, and ethics to represent a critical juncture in the inception of cyberspace and its replication of colonial ideologies.

Settler-colonial structures replicate hierarchies of existence within cyberspace that reinforce disembodiment, separation, and alienation of the body. Todd states, "A fear of the body, aversion to nature, a desire for salvation and transcendence of the earthly plane has created a need for cyberspace. The wealth of the land almost plundered, the air dense with waste, the water sick with poisons: there has to be somewhere else to go."[126] From an ecological standpoint, Todd critiques the historical and contemporary aspects of colonization that have

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[125] Michael Benedikt, "Introduction to Cyberspace: First Steps," in *Cybercultures Critical Concepts in Media and Cultural Studies*, ed. David Bell (USA & Canada: Routledge, 2006), 32.
[126] Todd, "Aboriginal Narratives in Cyberspace," 182.

led to our current climate crisis. Settler-colonial structures have created the extractive conditions for which the planet's vitality is quickly eroding: these conditions are dependent on the erasure of Indigenous cultures' ancestral and storied relationships/responsibilities to land and the territories they come from. Virtual Reality projects are meant to transcend the human experience in which our sight, touch, and hearing are immersed in a digitally mediated cyberworld that evades the current and historical colonial consequences to land and social structures. While Todd engages a posthumanist understanding of the human experience simulating into a curated digital world through VR, she provides a staunch anticolonial critique of the ideas of digital selfhood and transcendental escape within cyberspace. As the industry of cybernetics by-and-large does not concern itself with Native peoples' livelihood and culture, Todd's critique is anti-colonial in its nature by centering Indigenous epistemologies and admonishing colonial replications of western ontologies within cyberspace. Cyberspace is grounded in escaping the *drag of the flesh*, while the pollution and wastelanding of our planet continues on multiple fronts. As Todd asks, "there has to be *somewhere else*" for the heart and mind of man to go? An anti-colonial critique of cyberspace means that we must recognize the conditions for which cyberspace was created and how western philosophical notions of selfhood and a desire to escape the colonial consequences of environmental devastation are embedded within.

Todd states that the need to propel "humanity into cyberspace, to the perfect forms, is Eros" and its purpose is to "extend [humanity's] finite being" as Eros "inspires humans to

outrun the drag of the 'meat'—the flesh."[127] To escape the drag of the flesh means to transcend beyond the flesh of the body, referencing Christian Theology. Todd describes this transcendence of cyberspace, through a western philosophical lens, as the body representing earthly fleshy desire, which is inherently sinful by nature. The drag of the flesh in the Bible—drags the individual further away from God and salvation. Much of this interpretation stems from an understanding of *sinful nature* seen through a Christian lens.[128] Todd, in her article, swiftly counters these perspectives by insisting that Indigeneity conceives of being, knowledge, body, and death in ways that refuse aversion to nature. Coming from a Cartesian understanding, western consciousness separates the mind from the body. Therefore, a fear of the body within this framework has created the desire for a cyberspace where humanity can create its own reality in perfect, digitized form. Todd develops this critique linking the ontology of cyberspace to western belief systems and differentiates herself from popular cyberspace literature of the mid-1990's by taking an anticolonial stance. She foregrounds concerns that the replication of capitalist western philosophies will not provide a digital cultural revolution, but instead continue to perpetuate colonial structures that already exist. Trajectories of western consciousness billow into cyberspace to create its epistemological conditions. Todd states:

If you could imagine human consciousness as a fractal geometry, then trajectories of

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[127] Todd, "Aboriginal Narratives in Cyberspace," 181.

[128] In the Bible, the book of Genesis tells the story of Adam and Eve giving into the flesh by choosing to eat the fruit from the tree of good and evil in Genesis 2:17.

western consciousness would spiral and billow. Here, Eden, Plato, calculus, Descartes, technocracies, and cyberspace are very much part of the fragmented fractures, self-similar shapes of fractional dimension' of western consciousness.[129]

Therefore, according to this view, cyberspace is the next evolution for western philosophical thought and consciousness to be mediated. Indigenous Virtual Reality is a divestment from this colonial ontology of cyberspace, which is antithetical to Native beliefs and worldviews. Indigenous VR offers a virtual space of dynamic interaction between self and world that enables old knowledge to be experienced and expanded and is vested in a world of subjects to subjects—what Todd calls "consciousness to consciousness"—that is not anchored to reenactments of western cultural consciousness. An Indigenous praxis of VR, for Todd, encourages balance and harmony amongst "All the Relations" who share the land. She states that this phrase comes from Cree epistemology of keeping Ka-Kanata (Canada) a "clean land" or having all relations such as humans, non-humans, and more-than-humans in balance and harmony. It is important to note that "clean" does not mean pure or innocent in the western Christian sense—but indicates a conception of clean that is outside of Euromerican epistemological thinking.

There are a multiplicity of ways for me to explain what "consciousness to consciousness" means from a critical Indigenous Studies perspective. Relations for Indigenous peoples are central to our worldviews and cultural makeup. Land, animals, humans,

[129] Todd, "Aboriginal Narratives in Cyberspace," 181-182.

non-humans, and more-than-humans are vested in obligations of responsibility and relationality of care that dictate our actions towards one another. These relations take as many forms as there are possible assemblages. While coming from her own tribe's specific context of relationality of consciousness, Todd emphasizes a need for interconnections between humans, non-humans, more-than-human elements, and the universe in cyber narratives. This is in antithesis to storylines in commercial VR that reenact western tropes of a hero asserting his will over others by dominating to achieve his goal. These tropes still exist for the majority of Virtual Reality games available on the market today. Therefore, Todd counters these colonial narratives by emphasizing interconnections of "consciousness to consciousness" that reflect how Native cultures are part of a series of transactions within the universe, a process of communication and exchanges between human, animal, and the universe. One in which a hunter does not get the animal because he is the hungriest or the best at hunting, but because of what Todd calls "an old agreement" that is part of an ethical process of communication and exchange.[130] This type of Indigenous interconnectivity dismantles western hierarchies that emphasize divisions between animate and inanimate objects. As Kim Tallbear notes, "categorical divides between entities—those seen to be alive and those deemed as not living, a divide defined organismically" [state the effect of such divides] which can be extended to "ongoing genocidal and anti-Black violence, as well as violence toward many de-animated bodies."[131] Western knowledge

[130] Todd, "Aboriginal Narratives in Cyberspace," 192.
[131] Kim TallBear, "Caretaking Relations, Not American Dreaming," *Kalfou: A Journal of Comparative and Relational Ethnic Studies* 6, no. 1 (December 12, 2019): 25.

production perverts Indigenous ways of thinking and being by coding landscapes as "resources," epistemologies as "myth," cultures as "tradition," and peoples as "Other."[132] This extractive mindset that treats Indigenous ways of knowing through western power/knowledge structures contributes to much of the exploitation and cruelty against Native and marginalized peoples and severs critical relationality towards land and more-than-human beings.

How can a Native feminist praxis of "consciousness to consciousness" emphasize relationality in cyberspace and change how we interact with each other virtually? Tools such as Virtual Reality would be imbued with a responsibility in our conduct towards each other online and the types of storylines that are perpetuated in cyberspace to cultivate responsible networks of relations. Indigenous thinkers such as Loretta Todd, Jolene Rickard, and Skawennati have been concerned with cyber-relationality since the mid-1990's to the early 2000's. Cyber-relationality, through an Indigenous perspective, allows for the opening up and questioning of what type of mediation technology can bring. This type of thinking was often rooted within a speculative sensibility that asked vital questions of cyberspace while being cognizant of its military and imperial origins. Could cyberspace be a place of nourishment? Or would it just be a replication of capitalist and extractive structures that already exist offline? The creation of Indigenous VR over the last 30 years until now involves complex layers of relationality in which Native artists embody a commitment to uplifting the cultural stories and

[132] Brendan Hokowhitu, "Monster: Post-Indigenous Studies," in *Critical Indigenous Studies: Engagements in First World Locations*, ed. Aileen Moreton-Robinson (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2016), Kindle.

ontologies of the communities they come from and have responsibility towards. Therefore, cyberspace for Indigenous communities becomes a space for our cultural worldviews to be techno-mediated through which we must advocate for ourselves across an ever-increasing digital terrain.

While I am not Cree and cannot speak to their peoples' specific cultural epistemologies, traditions, and beliefs, I utilize a critical Indigenous Studies framework to draw a connection to "communitism" as coined by Jace Weaver.[133] Communitism, in the sense of Indigenous VR projects, means that Native artists are rooted in layers of relationality that include illuminating the stories and knowledges of our ancestors while being responsible for the specific land and territories they come from. This relationality is rooted between Indigenous peoples and the more-than-human elements and life-worlds of plants, waters, animals, etc. that exist for Native cultures in different spiritual, mental, and physical locations. Each VR project created by Indigenous digital artists is unique to the community and Native culture they come from. Therefore, embodiment, immersiveness, and cultural knowledge within the virtual experience will resonate on different affective registers depending on the individual user and their ties to that specific community. By engaging, streaming, and storing cultural knowledges, these projects embody a fluidity and expansiveness of critical Indigenous political/cultural engagement.

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[133] Jace Weaver, "Native American Literatures and Communitism," in *That the People Might Live: Native American Literatures and Native American Community* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 43.

In linking the writings of Loretta Todd to my own Kānaka Maoli community, I utilize a critical trans-Indigenous studies framework to draw a parallel to the notions of commitment to place and cultural resurgence for Indigenous peoples. Chadwick Allen terms trans-Indigenous to "bear the complex, contingent asymmetry and the potential risks of unequal encounters borne by the preposition *across*."[134] By utilizing a trans-Indigenous approach, I hope to provide a multiperspectivism that is attuned to speaking across different Native cultural frameworks by centering localized, place-based knowledge while being generative to a global Indigenous context. Todd's specific cultural relationality between "All the Relations" who share the land comes from Cree epistemology of Ka-Kanata-Aski and is similar but different to the Kānaka Maoli concepts of Kuleana. Kuleana means maintaining responsibility for ethical relations of balance for our communities by centering our ancestral relationships to land and to each other. Kuleana is a cultural practice that determines pono (righteous) webs of relations and obligations connected to ancestors, community, and place. Todd says that "All life is connected throughout the universe… [we] are responsible for our existence in our territories, responsible for caring about the life around us."[135] These different though parallel epistemologies are founded on the need for Indigenous projects to always be accountable to each other in our narratives, as well as the futures of our peoples. Ka-Kanata-Aski and Kuleana, decidedly, are different concepts from the Euromerican

[134] Chadwick Allen, introduction to *Trans-Indigenous Methodologies for Global Native Literary Studies* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2012), xiv-xv.
[135] Todd, "Aboriginal Narratives in Cyberspace," 181.

conceptualization of the idea of harmony. They are rooted in a responsibility to our communities: a responsibility that needs to center our experiences and histories. Cybernetics and Indigenous thought are not conceptualized as being able to blend together, however, a praxis of Indigenous VR demands of cyberspace a relationality to these concepts.

Indigenous Technologies of Knowledge in Loretta Todd's *Coyote Quest*

In conjunction with Métis-Cree writer Kamala Todd and Haida/Kwakiutl director Kristy L. Assu, Todd created a digital game to educate Native youth on Indigenous science. 21 years after publishing "Aboriginal Narratives in Cyberspace," Todd blended her film and media background with her deep love for her Indigenous community to "aspire youth to make a bigger footprint in their own lives" through her website.[136] While the website does not utilize Virtual Reality technology, it does showcase Todd's investment to carve a space within the Internet for Cree epistemological knowledge production and reach a wide audience of people from her community. *Coyote Quest* features an immersive Indigenous science game that takes young students on a culturally rich adventure through animated stories, virtual experiments, and music. Todd found inspiration from theories on the similarities of Quantum Physics and Native American perspectives of space and time. Through talking through discourses of conceptual time and space with Native elders and physicists, *Coyote Quest* was created by the joining of different epistemological understandings. Therefore, the world of "science" can be

[136] Darren Wiesner, "Exclusive – Loretta Todd is an Award Winning Cree Filmmaker and Mentor," *Hollywood North Magazine*, March 26, 2018, https://hnmag.ca/interview/exclusive-loretta-todd-is-an-award-winning-cree-filmmaker-and-mentor/

presented to adolescents through an Indigenous perspective.

Todd created *Coyote Quest* because she felt it was necessary to bridge a gap within the Indigenous community. She states her goals as such:

> I thought it was really important to make sure they were able to see themselves and that the knowledge we have is just as important as Western science. We wouldn't be able to survive as a culture for thousands of years without science. Indigenous people were studying stars, healing themselves with plants, growing vegetables and herbs as they constructed villages and organized them for sustainability."[137]

The game presents itself with a series of challenges that the user must overcome to restore balance to their community. When you first access the game, through the *Coyote Science* web portal, the user is greeted by Coyote, a trickster who has cultural significance to the Indigenous people of North America, and, in this context of the game, the Cree first nations people for whom this game was likely designed. Coyote acts as a guide to the user throughout the game. *Coyote Quest* shows adolescents that they can become Indigenous ethnobotanists, mathematicians, geologists, engineers, or astronauts. Through playing the mini-games, the user can learn scientific theories such as force and velocity, as well as traditional stories. However, the knowledge is only gained from consulting with community members and elders. The game unfolds through first-person interaction on a web-based platform. Sometimes you have to help in the community garden and tend to plants to gain knowledge. Other levels consist of talking to leaders in the community and playing games alongside them that teach a blending of

[137] Wiesner, "Exclusive – Loretta Todd is an Award Winning Cree Filmmaker and Mentor," 2018.

Indigenous and western concepts of science. A project like *Coyote Quest* intellectually liberates Indigenous peoples from ideologies of colonial oppression.

This inclusion of Indigenous praxis within *Coyote Quest* furthers decolonial efforts of cyberspace and in a larger context of deconstructing western forms of knowledge being the only form or the most superior form of philosophies. In my first play-through of the game, I mistakenly played into the western story traditions of a "hero asserting his will over others" that Todd denounces. Before playing the game, I had already failed by not taking into consideration that, in order to succeed, I would need the help and knowledge of others who had come before me. I had to slow down my "playing style" and read through the anecdotes and insightful hints given to me by the support of the other characters in the game, in order to learn more about science and the way the workings of our universe are all interconnected and crafted by physical and spiritual forces.

When I presented my research on Loretta Todd, at the largest Native studies conference in the world with the Native American and Indigenous Studies Association (NAISA) in 2019, few people knew about Todd's theories and critiques of cyberspace. Digital Indiginietes, however, represents a provocative and curious image to the general public. As a Kanaka Maoli scholar myself, I am invested in the ways that Indigenous peoples express themselves in a digital realm. While science and technology from an Indigenous worldview should not be surprising considering Native epistemologies and cosmologies are concerned with these types of concepts regarding space, time, communication, and quantum physics, it

still puzzles people as to how and why Indigenous peoples are creating with digital technologies. Todd's commitment to engaging cyberspace to help keep Ka-Kanata a clean land not only had immense theoretical ramifications for reconceptualizing dominant uses of technologies, but manifested in her own web-based project and her current position as the creative director of the IM4 VR/AR Lab in Canada. For over 30 years, Todd continues to do work for her community that educates and uplifts her culture through technology.

Kānaka Maoli Virtual Reality

Indigenous VR aims to carve a space within the Internet, to overcome stereotypes about Native peoples, and to generate discourse about Indigenous art, technology, and communities. Todd states that cyberspace and Indigenous VR can be "a place where people can find their own dreams, not just fantasies of abandon, but dreams of humanity."[138] I want to draw emphasis to the phrase *dreams of humanity* to link to the dream of cultural and intellectual sovereignty within my own Kānaka community. *PIKO*, created by Nicole Naone, Christopher Kahunahana, and Lanakila Mangauil in 2021, is a VR experience utilizing 360° immersive technology to experience the sacredness of the mountains Maunakea, Maunaloa, and Hualalai on Hawaiʻi Island. *PIKO* was created in response to the on-going land-based struggles to protect Maunakea; most notably, from the development of the Thirty Meter Telescope (TMT). The word piko, in Hawaiian, can translate to navel, umbilical cord; genitals; summit or top of a hill or mountain; or crown of the head. It means the central point of

[138] Todd, "Aboriginal Narratives in Cyberspace," 193.

connection(s) we feel in our body. In *PIKO,* viewers are immersed in visual, affective, and sonic elements of Puʻukohe—the most central point of Hawaiʻi island. In the context of Maunakea, western astronomers have a dream for technology to understand the workings of space and the universe that comes at a great cost for Kānaka Maoli and ʻāina (land).

The desecration of Maunakea by universities and corporations has continued for decades as proponents of the TMT seek to keep building telescopes on the mountain despite ecological concerns and the continued disregard to the calls of the Native Hawaiian community to end these wasteful developments. Maunakea represents a genealogical connection to ʻāina for Hawaiians. Iokepa Casumbal-Salazar notes how Kānaka Maoli protecting Maunakea are described as "turning back to the dark ages" and that "while Western science is conflated with modernity and settler culture is imagined as the measure of humanity, Kānaka ʻŌiwi who oppose the building of the TMT on Maunakea are rendered selfish, regressive, and unreasonable."[139] Casumbal-Salazar's articulation of how Indigenous people are deemed hostile towards the concept of modernity and from the "dark ages" illustrates how dominant ideas about science and technology have functioned to assign Indigenous peoples to a "dark" past–disappearing into the vastness of history. *PIKO* deconstructs these colonial notions by engaging with a different form of ethics regarding consumption, production, labor, and intention to create a subversive ethical relationship with western technology. *PIKO*

[139] Iokepa Casumbal-Salazar, "A Fictive Kinship: Making "Modernity," "Ancient Hawaiians," and the Telescopes on Mauna Kea," *Native American and Indigenous Studies* 4, no. 2 (January 2017): https://www.upress.umn.edu/book-division/images/other-images/a-fictive-kinship-making-modernity-ancient-hawaiians-and-the-telescopes-on-mauna-kea

represents the dreams of the Hawaiian community to end the desecration of Maunakea and centers Hawaiian epistemological relations to combat extractive colonial futures for the mauna (mountain).

I first experienced *PIKO* at the Honolulu Museum during the *Artists of Hawaiʻi* exhibition in December 2021. Since this initial viewing, I have become friends with the creators and have been able to hear their creative process and the meaning of *PIKO* for them. *PIKO* occurs in time-lapse through Virtual Reality with an Oculus Quest 2 headset. To enter the virtual space, you must first walk into a white dome-like structure shaped like a telescope. Nicole Naone has stated that they chose to build the outer-shell of *PIKO* in this form as a critique of all the telescopes that have already been built without the consent of the Hawaiian community on Maunakea. Once inside the dome, users sit on a stool and are immersed in the stars before the VR experience begins.

Through VR's immersive capabilities, *PIKO* features the sounds of winds and rains of Puʻukoli while viewing the mountains Maunakea, Maunaloa, and Hualalai. In *PIKO*, users can experience a full day within a 12 minute VR experience recorded in a 360° camera time lapse of Puʻukoli. Users experience 24 hours of celestial movements on Maunakea starting from sunrise to sunset and moonrise to moonset. The creators of *PIKO* spent a total of two years and over 40 trips to Puʻukoli to capture the time-lapse footage. Users see volcanic dirt, rocks, plants, and

other diversity of life that exists on Puʻukoli through Virtual Reality.[140] Interspersed with these cosmic and ecological elements are the sounds of Lanakila Mangauil chanting sacred oli. Lanakila Mangauil is best known for his activism and successful disruption of the Thirty Meter Telescope groundbreaking ceremony in 2015, which sparked the current protect Maunakea movement of today. These oli laden within *PIKO* engage elements of storied and ancestral sonic registers. *PIKO* begins immersed in the galactic stars of the Milky Way and users will hear the first 16 wā (epochs) of the Kumulipo (Hawaiian creation chant) which begins by centering how Kānaka emerged from the stars and from *po* (primordial darkness). When sunrise occurs behind the mauna (mountain) during *PIKO*, users hear the oli "O Hānau Ka Mauna." When users experience the soft rain clouds passing through and bursting open at Puʻukoli at noon, they hear "He Mele No Kāne." And when the sun sets and the moon rises on the mauna, they hear the oli "Maunakea Kuahiwi." Each chant embodies the sacred connections Hawaiians have to Maunakea. These cosmic and earth-bound occurrences through VR call on users to experience time differently and to note its relativity.

In applying Todd's frameworks to *PIKO*, I suggest that users experience anti-colonial geo-technics. Through their Kānaka Maoli VR experience, the creators of *PIKO* invent a geo-technics that centers users in the cosmos to experience time, story, and history written in the land. Geo-technics in *PIKO* means you don't forget your body—you are grounded in the

[140] Nicole Naone, Apple iMessage and Google Doc to author, April - May 2022.

sacredness of Maunakea. Geotechnics through Indigenous VR allows immersion to be a space of embodiment. Instead of the Cartesian split of the mind/body, the type of geo-technics that the creators of *PIKO* sustain through the virtual environment renders a place-based relationship for users. By centering users in the sacredness of Puʻukoli, it activates users' bodies through an affective, sonic, visual and embodied virtual experience that calls on the site-specific concept of place itself. However, this is not a singular space of access through VR, it engages spatio-temporal frameworks that does not allow for coloniality to be imbued within and charges the virtual experience to be laden with the sound of rain, of winds, and sacred history to fill a user's entire being over the course of 12 minutes.

Geotechnics uses immersion as a process of technological mediation to make users *feel* why Maunakea is important to Hawaiians as opposed to the displacement perpetuated by the telescopic technologies of the TMT. Rey Chow states that the very logic behind western technologies has a "history of military invention that has gone hand in hand with the development of representational technologies, in particular the technologies of seeing."[141] Building on Chow's theory of modern science and technology with the increase of surveillance allows for the "the production of maximal visibility and illumination for the purpose of maximal destruction."[142] The TMT's case for wanting to be built follows western science's hungry desire to conceive of the world as a target to dissect and consume more knowledge to

[141] Rey Chow, *The Age of the World Target: Self-Referentiality in War, Theory, and Comparative Work* (London: Duke University Press, 2006), 29.
[142] Chow, *The Age of the World Target,* 31.

understand its workings and have a more unclouded god's eye view of the universe. Proponents for the building of the telescope on Maunakea argue that it will allow for the clearest vision or sight of the universe to "see deeper into space and observe cosmic objects with unprecedented sensitivity and detail."[143] The TMT's relationship to the stars is mediated through sight to know and understand the universe. However, at what destructive cost to our relationship with ʻāina? Advocates for the TMT continue to ignore that there are already 13 telescopes on Maunakea, each one assuredly considered to be the most "advanced" to see into space at its inception, but as with all western technologies have since fallen into obsolescence. Seeing the universe as a target to consume more knowledge follows "seeing-as-destruction" and ignores the ancestral and technological relationship to the stars that Hawaiians have had since time immemorial.

When put in conversation with Todd's framework on Indigenous VR, *PIKO* calls on users to "define yourself in relationship to the story around you."[144] Thus, VR in *PIKO* becomes a space of nourishment as you bear witness to the land and your relationality to it. There is no avatar or digital self for you to experience Maunakea: you are immersed in time-lapse to see, engage, and contemplate what exists and hear why Maunakea matters through oli. *PIKO* is a kāhea (call) that disorients colonial notions of time and knowledge production. Naone has stated the stakes *PIKO* has for the Hawaiian community:

[143] "What is TMT?" *TMT International Observatory*, accessed March 24, 2023, https://www.tmt.org/page/about#:~:text=What%20is%20TMT%3F,with%20unprecedented20sensitivity%20and%20detail.
[144] Todd, "Aboriginal Narratives in Cyberspace," 192.

> Ancient and future aren't opposites: *PIKO* presents our ancientness and our futurity at the same time. [It] blends a mixed-media experience that engaged the most 'advanced' form of technology (VR), but did not alienate the body and still had sacred connections to land. *PIKO* is a reminder to not simply look 'up' as astronomers who advocate for the TMT justify it as the 'advancement' of western knowledge—but rather look around, below, and within to witness this sacred connection to Maunakea.[145]

The creators of *PIKO* have stated that they wanted to take the technology of Virtual Reality and make it into a makawalu camera. The word makawalu translates to "eight-eyes" and is a Hawaiian epistemology of looking at things from at least eight different perspectives. Makawalu in *PIKO* engages a multiplicity of views that include more-than-human elements such as the cosmos, the ocean, and land in tandem with each other.[146] Thereby, makawalu means engaging a praxis that accounts for the consequences of humanity's actions and the responsibility we have towards our more-than-human kin. This notion calls upon a geo-technics that embodies Hawaiian connections to the cosmos and ancestral relationships to land through Virtual Reality.

The intended audience for *PIKO* were kiaʻi (protectors) who were unable to physically be on Maunakea: whether due to socio-economic issues, age—elderly kupuna (elders) who could not physically make the journey, or health reasons—e.g. anyone whose health did not allow for the mauna's high elevations. The accessibility of *PIKO* even helped my grandmother who is well into her 80's travel to Maunakea, as we viewed the exhibit together.

[145] Nicole Naone, Apple iMessage and Google Doc to author, April - May 2022.
[146] Nicole Naone, Apple iMessage and Google Doc to author, April - May 2022.

Figure 13. Promotional Image of *PIKO*.

Figure 14. Virtual Reality Experience in *PIKO.*

My grandmother had never been to the mauna before and this experience was meaningful for both of us. *PIKO*, through Virtual Reality, allowed Maunakea to be accessed by members of the Hawaiian community that would never get a chance to ever witness being there. The creators of *PIKO* have stated that the goal of their project is to shift away from a colonial mindset that Maunakea is just a mountain to continue to extract western knowledge about the universe from by centering Hawaiian cosmologies.

***Kilo Hōkū* Virtual Reality Project**

Native Hawaiian scholar and coder Kari Noe helped create the program called *Kilo Hōkū*. It is an immersive digital simulation, using an HTC Vive Headset, to aid in the visualization and education of Hawaiian star navigation practices. *Kilo Hōkū i*s a Virtual Reality simulation of sailing on the wa'a or canoe called the Hōkūle'a—which means the Star of Gladness. In the 1970's, the building of the Hōkūle'a was a revival and return to Oceanic wayfinding and star navigation techniques. For some time, the navigational knowledge and wayfinding techniques that are embedded within the legacy of Oceanic exploration was forgotten for Native Hawaiians due to the traumas of settler-colonialism. Wayfinding is the cultural practice of navigating across the open ocean to a destination without the use of maps or modern navigation instruments. Oceanic star navigation needs an intuitive knowledge and visual memory of the stars, ocean currents, swells, winds, clouds, and the habits of birds in order to find land. Nainoa Thompson, among others, sought to revitalize this knowledge since the 1970's. Because only a few people retained this sacred knowledge of Oceanic wayfinding,

Thompson reached across the ocean to ask Mau Piailug, a Master Navigator from Satawal in Micronesia, who was willing to share the knowledge and train Thompson.[147] Piailug reactivated the knowledge of ancestral Oceanic wayfinding in Hawaiʻi and helped guide the original voyage of Hōkūleʻa from Hawaiʻi to Tahiti in 1976. Hōkūleʻa has since completed multiple journeys around the world. In 2023, Thompson and a 400 member crew of the Hōkūleʻa and Hikianalia canoes are embarking on a 4 year journey to traverse an estimated 43,000 nautical miles around the Pacific to visit 36 countries and archipelagoes and nearly 100 indigenous territories.[148] Hōkūleʻa's story repudiates a theory postulated by Thor Heyerdahl that Polynesians drifted from the South American continent on wood, and that our arrival in the islands was accidental. Several years after this study was published, New Zealand historian Andrew Sharp wrote that Polynesian sea vessels were not seaworthy, and that any arrival past 300 miles from another island was a coincidence or an accident.[149] Hōkūleʻa is more than just a voyaging canoe, but represents a revitalization of ancestral practices that disprove western science's theorizations that Oceanic peoples could never have navigated the ocean without instruments.

Through *Kilo Hōkū*, the knowledge Hōkūleʻa strived to revive is embodied in the

[147] Bonnie Kahapeʻa-Tanner, "Fishponds, Food, and the Future in Our Past Sailing the Ancestral Bridges of Oceanic Knowledge," in *The Value of Hawaii 2* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2017), 175.
[148] "PVS to Launch Moananuiākea Voyage," Polynesian Voyaging Society, June 8, 2023, https://hokulea.com/pvs-to-launch-moananuiakea-voyage/.
[149] Patrick Karjala, Dean Lodes, Kari Noe, Anna Sikkink, and Jason Leigh, "Kilo Hōkū—Experiencing Hawaiian, Non-Instrument Open Ocean Navigation through Virtual Reality," *Presence : Teleoperators and Virtual Environment* 26, no. 3 (2017): 265.

digital realm. *Kilo Hōkū* is a technologically-based cyber iteration of the Hōkūleʻa and Hawaiian astronomy. *Kilo Hōkū* in Hawaiian means to observe the stars and is a VR application to help teach users about the importance of stars and constellations through a Native Hawaiian perspective.[150] *Kilo Hōkū* allows users to investigate the night sky while aboard the Hōkūleʻa with the use of a VR headset called the HTC Vive. Kari Noe states that the user can learn to become familiar with the sky in a more natural way as they are immersed in a virtual environment called a "Star Dome." The Star Dome simulates the night sky and has the constellations named according to Hawaiian astronomy. The user can use the headset to interact aboard the Hōkūleʻa. By putting it into cyberspace through Virtual Reality, the goal of *Kilo Hōkū* was to help to educate future generations of non-instrument navigators about Hawaiian wayfinding and to make it accessible to those who are not in Hawaiʻi. Through this unique VR experience users are able to learn and become familiar with location and Hawaiʻi-based navigation.

Kari Noe is the only Native Hawaiian computer-programmer on the team of coders who built the project at the University of Hawaiʻi at Mānoa. By continuing with the legacy of Hōkūleʻa, in cyberspace. Geo-technics in Noe's project allows for users to not just consume knowledge about wayfinding and Hawaiian astronomy, but interact and be immersed with the stars. Users virtually move around the canoe and are able to connect their senses to the sky

[150] Kari Noe. "Virtual Reality and Visualization in Research and Cultural Preservation," *Mānoa Horizon*s: 3, no. 2, 2018: 2.

dome around them and learn about the cosmos through a Hawaiian way of seeing that is in tandem with the elements of the ocean. Similar, to Loretta Todd, Kari has a sense of "communitism" and says that culture and representation in media positivity is important to Indigenous communities. Noe has stated that the stakes for creating the project as such:

> I am still the only Hawaiian on the team. However, my motivation for *Kilo Hōkū* is similar to why I do a lot of my work, and that is that I simply wanted it to exist. I think a big part that you will also see when looking into cultural reclamation is that one of the main points of many projects is to simply have it to exist so that we may occupy some space. I am still trying to find the proper way to credibly explain this myself, but as you may feel as well, to see culture and representation in media positively affects the community the culture is from.[151]

When asked how VR technology can be utilized to further Kānaka Maoli epistemologies, Noe has notions that echo Todd's sentiments in "Aboriginal Narratives in Cyberspace." Noe recognizes the concerns of VR leading humanity towards a "slippery slope into a Matrix-like dystopia where the reliance on something that limits your senses will be the ultimate degradation of our culture."[152] However, she believes that VR can be utilized to support Indigenous understandings of the world and can be a tool to recreate imperfect experiences, so that we can begin to know our own cultural knowledges. She further elaborates that, while all our senses may not be present in a virtual environment when compared to circumnavigating on the open ocean, users can still reflect upon their digital experience to help understand reality. Programs like *Kilo Hōkū* are not meant to replace the actual experience of wayfinding

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[151] Kari Noe, personal communication via email, 2019.
[152] Kari Noe, personal communication via email, 2019.

out on the open ocean and under the actual sky. However, projects like Noe's offer a way for this type of knowledge to be expanded and motivate others to continue to learn about Oceanic wayfinding technologies.

Conclusion

Considering the continued erasure of Indigenous bodies and histories from cybernetics and trajectories of digital media, I question how much has changed from 1996 when Todd published her essay? My answer is two-fold. Number one is that the large majority of dominant views of VR and cyberspace have not changed at all and as the technology gets more advanced, it becomes embedded deeper in capitalistic ideologies of entertainment with also some health use. In the two years preceding the publishing of "Aboriginal Narratives in Cyberspace," technologies that have become commonplace (if not iconic) such as Windows 95, web-browsing, Amazon, and Ebay were in their infancy. Todd's essay represents a critical Indigenous Studies response to growing reflections on the trajectory of the Internet at the time. I find Todd's writing to be poetic and laden with cultural knowledge woven with incisions of insightful critiques of the foundational premises of cyberspace. Todd's anti-colonial stance interrogates and counters optimistic underpinnings written by cyberspace scholars at the time. However, what is important to note from Todd's essay within our own contemporary context is not to question if her predictions/postulations were correct or accurate almost 30 years later. What is critical for us, as users and successors of these technologies, according to Todd's essay, is the development of an ethical framework of interrogating the very principles of cyberspace

and the coloniality embedded within its structures.

Todd's emphasis on the origins of cyberspace and the militarization of these technologies were an important concern as a decolonial project for her art and work. In returning to Todd's essay, I aim to retrospectively call upon us to remember the origins of the Internet as an imperial U.S. Department of Defense project, while emphasizing the work done by Indigenous digital artists who subvert Virtual Reality's intended commercial and militaristic uses. As Leanne Simpson says, "Code and algorithms are controlling our ~~(digital)~~ lives, and capitalism is controlling code."[153] Cyberspace is rooted/routed in capitalist structures and contemporary companies such as Facebook, Google, Apple, etc. are invested in continuing technologies of domination that create further alienation from oneself. Todd's ideas and postulations about VR and cyberspace, as advanced technologies that could influence the world, are a critical *starting point* for thinking about what Indigenous VR does to help Native communities and how uses of technology can be (re)thought and (re)purposed. Indigenous VR represents a critical intervention in decolonizing an ever-expanding digital world. Utilizing Todd's formulations can be an important theoretical and ethical tool to create a disruption from the way in which mainstream VR is employed by corporations invested in technologies of gaming, entertainment, and the military industrial complex. Native digital artists and their projects suggest that we are engaged in a long-term struggle for recognition of intellectual and ethical rights related to cultural sovereignty. Indigenous Virtual Reality can provide an

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[153]Simpson, *As We Have Always Done: Indigenous Freedom through Radical Resistance*, 222.

opportunity to consider how complex understandings of place, history, and culture can be (re)codified through cyberspace.

While Facebook's Metaverse is currently leading the commercial VR industry, we must be cognizant of the ways in which a geo-technic spatiality and temporality in Virtual Reality can be a transformative example that divests from exploitative practices. Indigenous VR projects are underfunded and are primarily independent, artistic endeavors with the occasional exception of being funded by educational institutions. As neglected as these works are by the dominant Virtual Reality industry and Digital Media studies broadly, Indigenous VR can be a transformative reframing of how we create and use technology. Few people knew about Todd's original critiques when her essay was first published and even in our own times; however, her work is an important intervention in thinking how Virtual Reality can have a decolonial role. Indigenous VR artists today benefit from being contextualized in conversation with Todd's frameworks, as these artists' work, like *PIKO,* forces us to rethink Todd's concerns in our own present moment through decolonial/anticolonial praxes that allows our ancestral connections and storied relationships to place be in a constant process of becoming in the present.

Wā V | Tomorrow on the Horizon: A Manifesto for (Re)Worlding

"I want to see into the translucent depths of the universe and come back around the other side to realize that we were enough all along! We will build the futures that we want to see! Why should I have to interpret the past all the time? On this galactic journey, our two truths collide! I am not your tacked on after-thought! I've heard that settler-colonialism has an effect on the mutation in your genes! THAT YOU CAN FEEL WHAT THEY DID TO YOUR ANCESTORS INTO THE PRESENT. It's important, but am I just a simulacrum? A copy, of a copy, of a copy, of the original. But it's okay. I am original. Our ancestors recorded heavy moments. My ancestors think heavy with me. We will take your colonial facts and bend them! Just like you bent my body, my heart, my language, and my mind. We will take a waʻa into the pilina that comprises all matter, and see deep into the pō. Let's burn out these bright lights and wait until the heat death of the universe. Because I'm not going extinct, are you?"

I wrote the above narration in an independent study with Nalo Hopkinson in 2019 during one of her creative writing classes at the University of California, Riverside. She gave instructions to write a manifesto about anything I wanted to, and honestly—that was incredibly hard. When you can write about anything, what *do* you even write about? The activity was to help energize my ideas about speculative fiction and liberate my writing process from the uniformities of academic writing. I distinctly remember her telling me, "Just write anything that comes into your head, don't hold back." A manifesto felt too radical, it felt like too much, like it was too direct. How could I just *say* what I felt and needed to say? However, I

knew that there was a lot of anger and a lot of hope for myself and my community that I felt I needed to get across in my manifesto. When I finally broke through my own barriers barricading my head in isolation, I realized what I wanted to say, and what I wanted others to hear, is how distorted certain western Science Fiction tropes and conceptions of the future are. A very early draft of this manifesto was titled "An Open Letter to All Indigenous Peoples: Raising a Grievance w/ Colonialism and its Knowledge Perpetrators." Eventually, I renamed my manifesto to "A Manifesto for (Re)Worlding." As I followed Nalo's instructions, my manifesto transversed into my thoughts on what speculative fiction could be and could do for Kānaka storytelling and histories. I poured out all my thoughts on what I wanted Indigenous Futurisms to be and wrote raw from my naʻau.

I hope my manifesto, and the larger work of this dissertation, contributes even a small amount to the space of imagining *what could have been* and *what can be* as a radical act of sovereignty. This conclusion "Wā V | Tomorrow on the Horizon: A Manifesto for (Re)Worlding" illuminates how Indigenous Futurisms can take many forms. What drew me to Indigenous Futurisms was the different imaginative threads occurring by weaving together potentialities as I wanted to address disparities within my community. Sometimes living under colonial conditions can make us feel like the future has already been fatally written. Indigenous Futurisms drew me in as a potentiality of hope and an embodied practice that could affirm that our ancestral knowledges and everyday acts in the present can create the futures we want and need. To imagine the end of settler colonialism is a speculative, fugitive act that challenges

western epistemological conscriptions of Indigeneity as 'stuck in the past.' To catalyze Indigenous Futurities, we must utilize all the knowledges and practices of our ancestors to not only imagine futures where Native cultures exist and fight for survival, but thrive and expand beyond imagination.

To continue this thread, I will end this wā with a discussion about the thought-experiment put forth by Filipinx artist Anna Luisa Petrisko in her collective exhibit *Vibration Group* to discuss what an anti-colonial future-oriented praxis of (re)worlding could mean. This space opera from 2019 was created with the premise surrounding "if the Earth was destroyed, how would we ethically settle on a new planet?" *Vibration Group* is not so much concerned with answering the question of Petrisko's thought-experiment, but rather it calls on us as audience members to react to it. The audience members were also part of the space opera's plot. As soon as we entered the performance space, we were also stuck on a spaceship through the universe attempting to answer these questions alongside new technologies, ritual, song, group therapy, and synthpop. All the activities were led by varied members of *Vibration Group* clad in retro-futuristic hand-made outfits designed by Petrisko that "riff[ed] on the indigenous tattoos of the Philippines, a nod to her own Filipino heritage."[154] As audience members trickled in around 8:00 PM on November 23, 2019 at Los Angeles Contemporary

[154] Liz Ohanesian, "This Subversive Sci-Fi Opera Explores the Idea of Being Displaced from Planet Earth," *Los Angeles Magazine*, July 10, 2020, https://www.lamag.com/culturefiles/vibration-group/.

Exhibitions, we were suddenly thrown into the far reaches of the galaxy—full-throttle into the cognitive estrangement of Petrisiko's worldbuilding.

The performance space featured different parts for us as audience members to interact with. Plants and technology that Petrisko developed alongside Tonia B****** and Ana Carolina Estarita Guerrero abounded. With different research portals that were inspired by public library kiosks, I could peruse an intergalactic library catalog, member resources, calendar events, as well as know what the ship's status was. Petrisko wanted to convey that "… in the narrative, that we're not settlers. We've been displaced. We don't want to displace others. The opera takes place in this suspended space where we had to leave our homes, we don't know where we're going to go and we're stuck."[155] While the space opera's songs and choreography were captivating, it was the "Earthness VR Spa" that stuck with me ever since I experienced it. Audience members were encouraged during the performance to engage in "guided earthing meditation experience for home-sick members of their spaceship to ground themselves… [a] winding plush crystal controller engages atmospheric elements in each surrounding…the crystal also mines memories of those who use it, to supply the machine learning behind Earthness' simulations."[156] Because we were stuck in the spaceship and far away from Earth for so long, we could not forget the memories we had of our displaced home. It was important to ground yourself on the spaceship through VR using a controller that was disguised as a crystal.

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[155]Ohanesian, "This Subversive Sci-Fi Opera Explores the Idea of Being Displaced from Planet Earth," 2020.
[156] "Earthness VR Spa," *Vibration Group*, accessed June 3, 2023, https://vibration.group.

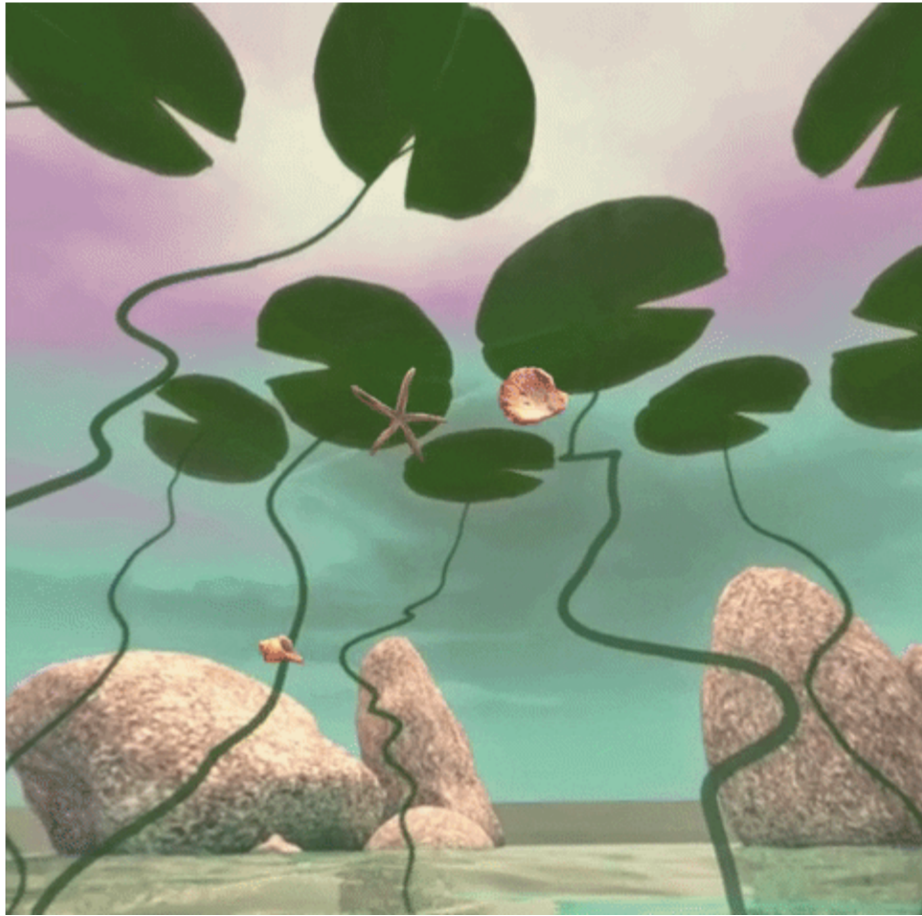

Figure 15. “Earthness VR Spa” by Tonia B****** and Ana Carolina Estarita Guerrero.

Figure 16. "Earthness VR Spa" by Tonia B****** and Ana Carolina Estarita Guerrero.

Through the crystal, we could interact with a VR experience that was 'virtually' like Earth. To this day, I remember the moment I was plugged into the Virtual Reality Spa as the moment when the thought-experiment became incredibly visceral for me. I felt totally immersed in Petrisko's world. Like I was actually on a spaceship and I had been too far away from Earth, as if I had been far from ʻāina for too long. The earthing meditation experience did help to ground me. While the overall VR experience featured art that was created in a vaporwave stylistic utilizing a Windows 95 aesthetic, the experience *did* feel like what Earth was like if I had to explain it to someone who was not from or had never been to the planet. As explained in Wā IV on Indigenous Virtual Reality, there was a kind of geo-technic memory that occurred in Earthness VR Spa that caused me to sit with the implications of Petrisko's thought-experiment deeply.

As elucidated in the different wā of my dissertation, Kānaka conceptions of futurity are tied to our ʻāina. While ʻāina can mean a multidimensional relationship to land, this also extends to our planet. We all have special connections to the land we come from, but ʻāina is *everywhere*. ʻĀina means that we honor and respect different lands and beings everywhere on Earth. Therefore, Petrisko's thought-experiment creates different and complicated paradigms. Being connected to ʻāina, in its multitude of forms, doesn't mean we cease to be Indigenous to Earth if we must go into space, if the Earth were one day to die. Petrisko's thought-experiment provoked me to think through what it means for Indigenous relationality when we no longer have ancestral ties to our planet. What would it mean to be Indigenous, in which our cultures

have place-based knowledges at its core, when our planet no longer exists? This wā works through these entanglements to engage what it means to be committed to a relationality that recognizes the responsibilities to ʻāina and each other. *Vibration Group* provided a provocative premise—what do we do when faced with a displacement of planetary proportion?

A western perspective of Science Fiction relies on tropes that are manifestations of the future that are linear. Indigenous Futurism troubles this relationship of a western past, present, and future. Certain tropes of western Speculative Fiction revolve around dystopian storylines where the Earth dies and technology becomes a means to extend human life. Indigenous Futurisms changes the type of linearity of western futurism where at some point there was destruction and we are progressing or moving forward using technology. Drawing from the original Futurist Manifesto, there is a techno-fetishism that is all about a movement that is always unidirectional. 'Progress' means moving away from a primitive-ness and into a linear conception of the future. Through art and literature, Indigenous Futurism disorients these notations. Much of western Science Fiction's plots revolve around apocalyptic scenarios where the planet becomes no longer habitable. Sometimes it's about alien invasion. Sometimes it's about class relations. More recently, it has become centered around climate catastrophe: the Earth fights back against humanity for its ecological crimes.

However, these scenarios do pose questions on how western conceptions and ideations of the future conceives of itself. I want to note an interesting but not immediately relevant point about biblical notions of future, futurist, and futurism. In my research about the 1900's

Italian Futurism movement and the work of Filippo Tommaso Marinetti, I learned that the word "futurist" has an obsolete definition in the Oxford English Dictionary that is linked to Christian theology and the belief that biblical prophecies, especially those in the Book of Revelation, remain "still to be fulfilled" in the future.[157] I was curious about whether Marinetti and his contemporaries were influenced by Protestant thought, and if so, how that alters western speculative fiction, western futurism, and certain western Science Fiction apocalypse stories as a more or less "fanfiction" of Revelations. And, how this potentially solidifies the way in which western SF cannot escape itself—it is always-already anticipating and anxious about a future that endangers their own livelihood, and ensures the literal and metaphorical death of their subjectivity.

I sought to delve deeper into the implications of the word Futurist from a western perspective. Some Protestant theologians place John the Baptist as standing in the tradition of Old Testament prophets, "foretelling as well as forthtelling" the events of Revelations, and emphasizing how the events of Revelations have already-happened and have not-yet-happened. This perspective comes from a combination of two of four interpretations of the time-orientation of Revelations: *preterist* and *futurist*. The preterist approach sees "all the events through chap. 10 [of Revelations] as past, and the futurist sees all chapters past chap. 6 as "still future" or "yet future."[158] In other words, although the future has not happened,

[157] "futurist n. 1." Oxford English Dictionary Online, Oxford University Press, March 2023, https://www.oed.com/view/Entry/75859#eid3351669/

[158]Klein, William K., et al. Introduction to Biblical Interpretation. Thomas Nelson, 1993, pp. 442-443.

prophetic foretelling/forthtelling always-already predicts what the end of time will look like—famine, war, death, pestilence, and divine judgment. It is this future that western Futurism attempts to escape—yet, cannot.

Through Indigenous Futurism, we see a storied epistemological approach in artists Solomon Enos and Noah Harders's embodied/ancestral art and the different Kanaka Virtual Reality projects outlined in previous wā. Instead of focusing on western technology's ability to conjure a militarized epistemological approach, what does it mean to center technologies in ʻāina, in our communities, and in critical consciousness raising? While broad, but also quite specific in the tenets that guide it, Indigenous Futurisms is a term that is not meant to be a catch-all for all Native cultures. Each community has specific needs and wants that they must work through to catalyze abundant and generative futures. Specific Native communities may not even agree within their own community about how to work towards the future(s) they want to see, be part of, and create for next generations. We can imagine the futures we want through an Indigenous Futurism framework, but it must be based on what we experienced in the past. That is where our imagined futures must come from. Indigenous Futurisms allows us to call upon our ancestral knowledges and what was part of our people in the past into the present, and some of what was in the past has to become part of our future as well. Indigenous sociality and relationality represents an epistemic tradition that involves complex relationality to our territories, but also the planet.

Petrisko's thought-experiment is provoking especially in conversation with the work of

Solomon Enos. *Polyfantastica* is moʻolelo and an epistemic approach that also functions as an ever-expanding work of Speculative Fiction. *Polyfantastica* opens up time frames of how we encounter space and movement whether that be planetary, galactical, or cosmological. Enos's art showcases how moʻolelo reflects a capaciousness and expands how Oceanic storytelling is heard and seen. The boundaryless elements of *Polyfantastica* through its art, storytelling, and Enos's embodied practice stretches what it means to encounter our cosmologies in artistic form. Just as Petrisko's thought-experiment questions and calls on us to confront how not to enact colonial violence on other planets, the beings in Eno's space opera actually *do* leave Earth to share aloha throughout the galaxy and even further out into the cosmos.

I propose that to try to answer Petrisko's question, what if we return to Epeli Hauʻofa's theorizations and remind ourselves of the boundarylessness of Oceania—how can we conceive of space and time and our relationship to the cosmos as something different? Through an Indigenous Futurism lens, an Oceanic perspective on expansion means that ʻāina is not just limited to our planet, but could also mean our whole galaxy or beyond. Then we could come to understand Petrisko's thought-experiment beyond creating the same violence and problematics of settler-colonialism where displacement is at the forefront. Instead, through Oceanic conceptions, we can begin to understand movement. The galaxy itself is an archipelago. We can think of the vastness of space to the similar vastness of our oceans on an infinite scale. Each planet, star system, and asteroid is part of an interconnected complex system of relations to traverse between like islands in a galaxy. The exploration of space, from a Kānaka

worldview, is not daunting and is not colonial, because we understand that our relations to land, water, and other more-than-human entities include and exceed those on Earth. For Kānaka, stars are important to us for navigation. As Brandy Nālani McDougall notes, "The Kumulipo essentially connects us genealogically to the stars too, as there is wā that names all the stars. As a genealogy of the creation of the universe, it can be concluded that all life is made of the same energy/matter, that all life is interconnected in that way."[159] Our responsibility and requirements for reciprocity does not end when we leave the ʻāina of Earth, because ʻāina is the whole galaxy, it is the whole cosmos. This view of galaxies like islands, islands like galaxies means that we must continue to treat each other and other beings with the complex love that aloha entails. It also means that we understand and adapt to the situations at hand, relying on the knowledge of our ancestors, and remixing it into the future especially if we ever were to find ourselves deep within the cosmos *again* one day.

[159] Brandy Nālani McDougall, personal communication, May 19, 2023.

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