

HE PUKOA KANI 'ĀINA

Kanaka Maoli approaches to mo'okū'auhau as methodology

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Abstract

This article briefly defines mo'okū'auhau (genealogy) and acknowledges other Kanaka Maoli (native Hawaiian) academics that have prioritized the Hawaiian value and importance of genealogy, both traditionally and contemporarily. It engages with diverse Kanaka Maoli approaches to mo'okū'auhau as methodology and concludes with my own interpretation and empirical examples from my doctoral thesis, *Nā Mo'okū'auhau Holowa'a: Native Hawaiian Women's Stories of the Voyaging Canoe Hōkūle'a* (Wilson, 2010).

Keywords

Hawaiian, women, Kanaka Maoli, voyaging, canoes, methodology

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Introduction

He pukoa kani 'āina.

A coral reef strengthens into land. (Pūkui, 1983, p. 100)

Like the coral reef to the ocean, methodology serves as a foundation that grounds and nourishes research. In this way, it is metaphorically comparable to a coral head that has the potential to grow into land. The 'ōlelo no'ēau (Hawaiian proverb) above refers to the coral heads that Hawaiian navigators used as marking points in their memories to pass on to their apprentices. During their voyages they observed that the small coral heads eventually formed into islands.

There are several metaphorical “coral heads” utilized to navigate the reader through this paper. I begin by briefly defining mo'okū'auhau (genealogy) and acknowledging other Kanaka Maoli (Native Hawaiian) academics that have prioritized the Hawaiian value and importance of genealogy both traditionally and contemporarily. The section moves on to engage with diverse Kanaka Maoli approaches to mo'okū'auhau as methodology. In the last section I incorporate my own interpretation and use of mo'okū'auhau as methodology and conclude with empirical examples from my doctoral thesis, *Nā Mo'okū'auhau Holowa'a: Native Hawaiian Women's Stories of the Voyaging Canoe Hōkūle'a* (Wilson, 2010).

Mo'okū'auhau as methodology

Genealogies are perceived by Hawaiians as an unbroken chain that links those alive today to the [cosmological] life forces—to the mana [spiritual power] that first emerged with the beginning of the world. Genealogies anchor Hawaiians to our place in the universe. (Kame'eleihiwa, 1992, pp. 19–20)

Articulating the full complexity and fluidity of mo'okū'auhau and Kanaka Maoli use of genealogical information, whether traditionally or contemporarily, is beyond the scope of this paper, but a brief introduction to its definition and expressions is nonetheless essential. Mo'okū'auhau is fundamental to Hawaiian epistemology, to our Kanaka Maoli sense of knowing and being in the universe. Although translating and defining the intricacies of mo'okū'auhau is extensive, it is nonetheless vital to briefly do so before proceeding to articulate mo'okū'auhau as methodology. Like most words in ka 'ōlelo Hawai'i (the Hawaiian language), mo'okū'auhau has multiple meanings and kaona, (hidden meanings). In simplest terms “genealogy” is the English translation for mo'okū'auhau; yet, in Hawaiian it is far more complex. Mo'o in this context can be defined as a succession, series, story, tradition or lineage. Kū means to stand, stop, halt, anchor or moor, as well as signifying the God of War. 'Auhau refers to the femur and humerus bones of the human skeleton. When strung together the words refer to “genealogy”, but the kaona and deep significance in 'ōlelo Hawai'i refers to the bones of our ancestors that connect us, as Kanaka Maoli, to our islands. The succession of our ancestors, and mana within their bones buried in the 'āina (land), establish our place to stand tall, our place to protect and defend. From this context, I believe that our spiritual selves are informed and inspired by nā ākua (gods), nā kūpuna (ancestors), and nā 'aumākua (ancestral guardians within the natural world) who are all a part of an extended Kanaka Maoli mo'okū'auhau. This relationship is recited in our cosmological creation chant, the Kumulipo, which directly connects humans to nā akua, nā 'aumākua, and nā kupuna who dwell within the natural and spirit world. Spirit and the natural world are ubiquitous. They are one and the same.

Retaining genealogical lineage has been particularly important to Hawaiian ali'i (chiefs) who recited their mo'okū'auhau to assert their

political power (Kame'eiehiwa, 1992; Osorio, 2002; Silva, 2004; Young, 1998). Since Western contact and, later, annexation of the Hawaiian Nation by the United States at the turn of the 20th century, political use of mo'okū'auhau has also been vital to subversive, anti-colonial movements. For example, King Kalākaua's celebration of the art of hula (native Hawaiian dance form) and the sport of surfing, which had been banned by missionaries and his predecessors, served to validate Hawaiian cultural practices and genealogical knowledge (Silva, 2004). Noelani Goodyear-Ka'ōpua (2005) discusses mo'okū'auhau as a social and political tool utilized across the centuries, which will be explored later in the section.

In my own work, part of the research process involves honouring and valuing mo'okū'auhau, including acknowledging Kanaka Maoli academics that have come before, who have inspired or shifted my thinking and knowing. I find that I am an extension of a long line of Kanaka Maoli seeking to protect, defend, and respect our ancestors and the 'āina in which they reside. For example, following the Hawaiian renaissance of the 1970s and 80s, academics such as Haunani Kay Trask and Lilikalā Kame'eiehiwa began integrating an acknowledgement of their mo'okū'auhau within their academic and political writing and presentations. Their inclusion of mo'okū'auhau was a sovereign statement and assertion of their knowledge as indigenous to the Hawaiian Islands, as Kanaka Maoli, which served as an example for other Kanaka Maoli academics that have followed. Since the millennium a new wave of Kanaka Maoli voices have been exploring their own diverse interpretations of mo'okū'auhau as methodology (Goodyear-Ka'ōpua, 2005; Kaomea, 2006; Meyer, 2008; Silva, 2004).

Kame'eiehiwa (1999) states that, "as Hawaiian women, we are the intellectual as well as the physical descendants of our female ancestors, and in turn we will be ancestral inspiration for the generations to come" (p. 1). Alongside Kame'eiehiwa, the scholarship of

Jon Osorio (2002); Kanalu Young (1998), Trask (2002), Noenoe Silva (2004), Julie Kaomea (2006), Noelani Goodyear-Ka'ōpua (2005) and Manulani Meyer (1998, 2003, 2008) prioritize Hawaiian genealogies and have made significant and ongoing contributions to understanding Native Hawaiian perspectives in academia and education. Returning to the metaphor of pukoa kani 'āina, just as it was vital for navigators to remember significant coral heads as navigational points, so too is it necessary for academics to recall the predecessors who have helped guide their own academic journey.

Mo'okū'auhau grounds the knowledge and understanding of several of the aforementioned leading Kanaka Maoli academics (Goodyear-Ka'ōpua, 2005; Kame'eiehiwa, 1999; Kaomea, 2006; Meyer, 1998, 2003; Silva, 2004). These scholars have each worked within their various areas of expertise to add to the body of knowledge that redefines Kanaka Maoli in our own terms. For example, Lilikalā Kame'eiehiwa (1992, 1999) specializes in land tenure and mo'okū'auhau. Haunani Kay Trask (1994, 1999) is known for her political efforts toward Hawaiian sovereignty and for her expressive poetry. Noenoe Silva uncovered anti-annexation petitions from Hawaiians which she documents in her book *Aloha Betrayed* (2004). Julie Kaomea (2006) uses mo'okū'auhau to deconstruct the current Hawaiian curricula within the United States Department of Education. Lastly, Manulani Meyer (1998) conducted her doctoral research exploring the stories of Kanaka Maoli kūpuna (elders) leaders to create an academic text that would better inform the concept of Native Hawaiian epistemology. Their contributions are vital to informing diverse Kanaka Maoli methodological approaches.

Meyer (1998), Kame'eiehiwa (1999), Kaomea (2006), and Goodyear-Ka'ōpua (2005), in particular, help ground mo'okū'auhau as methodology. For example, Meyer's dissertation found that the majority of kūpuna that she interviewed described the significance of place and identity in relation to mo'okū'auhau,

connectedness with the ancestors, land and the surrounding environment. Cultural terms such as “continuity”, “spiritual purpose”, “responsibility” and “genealogy” came forth and shaped the need for further clarification as to how the participants drew inspiration from genealogy to develop their sense of ongoing purpose (Meyer, 1998). In this instance, through Meyer’s attentiveness and respect for the Hawaiian leaders that she interviewed, her methodology simultaneously grounded and informed her method, which will be discussed again in the last section.

Attempting to articulate and utilize mo‘okū‘auhau as methodology extends from a long lineage, traditional and contemporary, personal and academic. If we were to imagine the convergence of these worldviews to be like the meeting of ocean waters at the furthest tip of the North Island of New Zealand or South Point on Hawai‘i Island, what we find is abundance, rich abundance where life flourishes. Valuing mo‘okū‘auhau as methodology is a part of a larger ongoing process of decolonization within, and extending beyond, academia.

Of particular interest to the paper are the diverse ways in which Kanaka utilize mo‘okū‘auhau as methodology. As Maenette K. P. Benham (2007) explains:

The methodology (logic behind research/inquiry approach) should not be seen as an end in itself (this often leads to artificiality) but must engage scholars in an ongoing discussion to ensure that there is no one-size-fits-all solution but a broader, more dynamic position of possibilities that encourages diverse representation and voice. (p. 519)

Drawing upon Julie Kaomea and Noelani Goodyear-Ka‘ōpua as examples of academics who have sought to reinterpret mo‘okū‘auhau for methodological purposes points to the possible diversity within the one concept and engages an ongoing discussion of methodology for Kanaka Maoli.

Kaomea (2006) incorporates mo‘okū‘auhau in the essay “Nā wāhine mana: A postcolonial reading of classroom discourse on the imperial rescue of oppressed Hawaiian women”. In this work, Kaomea’s methodology merges mo‘okū‘auhau and French social theorist Michel Foucault’s genealogical method. She explains that the hybrid method is a counter-genealogy, inspired by the commoner use of genealogy, in which the po‘e ku‘auhau (genealogist) investigates local or lesser-known stories to suggest an alternative reading of a widely accepted genealogy to, in some cases, usurp power from a dominant ruler. Kaomea asserts that her commoner use of genealogy is in many ways consistent with Foucault’s (1977) genealogical method, which was not only directed against great truths and grand theories or narratives (p. 334), it was also focused on the subjugation of what he referred to as “local knowledges”.

While there are clearly distinct differences between how Foucault thinks about genealogy and how Kanaka Maoli women utilize mo‘okū‘auhau within contemporary academic texts, the insights afforded by Foucault have nevertheless been informative to indigenous academics. For example, Kaomea (2006) and Smith (1999) insightfully demonstrate that Foucauldian concepts have analytic utility for indigenous scholarship. In particular, his understandings related to what “history” comprises together with his notions of “discourse”, power-knowledge and subjectivity are useful in indigenous work. Thus, for the purposes of Kaomea’s article (2006), by seeking out the voices of less-cited, fragmented and subjugated knowledge, Kaomea acts as the commoner Hawaiian genealogist constructing a counter-genealogy of nā wahine mana (powerful Hawaiian women), descended from 20,000 divine female goddesses, prominent female ali‘i and resilient commoner women.

Although distinct from the work of Kaomea, Noelani Goodyear-Ka‘ōpua’s (2005) dissertation serves as another direct example of

mo'okū'auhau as methodology. Like Kaomea, Goodyear-Ka'ōpua uses critical methods to navigate currents of power and knowledge, but she does so in her own distinctive way. She says, "We need a notion of mo'okū'auhau that does more than assert our ancestry and our rights and responsibilities in this place. We need tools to understand the systems of power" (p. 316). She goes on to discuss mo'okū'auhau as socio-political and analytical tools for critiquing relations of power that move beyond legitimizing Kanaka Maoli existence and mana. She poignantly asks the question, "As Kanaka Maoli scholars and activists assert our genealogies in tactical ways, how can we mobilize a genealogical method in understanding the very contexts and situations in which we enunciate those mo'okū'auhau?" (p. 316). Her methodological reflections seek to answer this question by referencing political examples from colonization to present. Specifically, Goodyear-Ka'ōpua considers how Hawaiian Studies practitioners might use mo'okū'auhau as a research method for gathering, understanding, and using information.

In summary, the previous section highlights Kanaka Maoli examples of decolonizing methodologies. For Kanaka Maoli the inclusion of mo'okū'auhau was and continues to be a sovereign statement and assertion of our indigenous connection to the Hawaiian Islands; yet, a new wave of Kanaka Maoli voices have been exploring their own diverse interpretations of mo'okū'auhau which has included its methodological utility (Goodyear-Ka'ōpua, 2005; Kaomea, 2006; Meyer, 2008; Silva, 2004). As a diasporic Kanaka Maoli woman, I honour these influential academics and express my gratitude for their work, which has greatly inspired my own research journey. Although my work also focuses on Kanaka Maoli, it grew into fruition in the southern Pacific Ocean far from my islands of indigenous origin. It is for this reason that my use of mo'okū'auhau transcends a geographical location; rather, it represents a diasporic indigenous approach to finding methodological

place and purpose. Therefore, the last section incorporates my own interpretation and use of mo'okū'auhau as methodology and concludes with empirical examples from my doctoral thesis, *Nā Mo'okū'auhau Holowa'a: Native Hawaiian Women's Stories of the Voyaging Canoe Hōkūle'a* (Wilson, 2010).

Nā mo'okū'auhau holowa'a: A re-search journey

As a Kanaka Maoli woman living in Aotearoa New Zealand, I consider myself to be a contemporary Pacific voyager. As an indigenous scholar, I acknowledge that my research journey has been deeply influenced by the elements and people of Te Waipounamu (the South Island of Aotearoa New Zealand, literally "the place of greenstone"), the space and place where most of my researching, writing and creating has transpired. My relationship with the sub-Antarctic ocean, for example, or friendships and aloha (love in the broadest sense) shared with Kai Tahu (one of the indigenous peoples of Te Waipounamu) inform the research. Although this reciprocal exchange has been expansive and life changing, I continue to maintain a deep connection to my ancestors, family and islands of indigenous origin. My mo'okū'auhau has sustained me while living away from my island homeland.

During the early stages of the thesis I found that mo'okū'auhau repeated in my mind, heart and spirit like a mantra. I saw genealogy in everything, especially the academic texts that I read. There seemed to be an interconnection and layering of voices and perspectives that came in succession. In particular the academic writing of Kanaka Maoli women seemed to follow a "genealogy" of thought. Interestingly, these women also interweaved the value of mo'okū'auhau throughout their texts, which led me to understand the reciting of genealogies was occurring on multiple levels. For example, there was a spiritual element with the acknowledgement of the presence of our ancestors upon

conducting research, or “coming up with”¹ an idea. Whilst the intellectual element acknowledges the academic lineage that has come before, exemplified by leading Kanaka Maoli women academics. Mo‘okū‘auhau is, therefore, both deeply embedded in our epistemologies and contemporarily utilized as methodology.

As has been articulated in the previous section, conceptualizing mo‘okū‘auhau as methodology stems from a long lineage of Kanaka Maoli tradition, epistemology, ontology, and contemporary indigenous scholarship. As a scholar following in this lineage, I have learned that our indigenous “homelands” are capable of transcending physical geographies and for some diasporic peoples our connections often thrive within the heart, mind and spirit. Within these diverse spaces and perspectives, I have found that there is power in unity, power in a common cause, where each unique indigenous person has the capacity to contribute to broader communities in our fight for the return of our autonomy, sovereignty, land, languages, integrity and dignity since the onset of colonization. These are struggles that continue to exist today as we attempt to locate our own voices, stories and perspectives in educational and political spheres that have, for the purposes of Western assimilation, long deemed our epistemologies as inferior and irrelevant. It is for this reason that indigenous Pacific methodologies, specifically the Kanaka Maoli concept of mo‘okū‘auhau as methodology grounded my doctoral research project.

Before describing the specificity of methodology and methods to the thesis, I will briefly summarize the work. *Nā Mo‘okū‘auhau*

Holowa‘a: Native Hawaiian Women’s Stories of the Voyaging Canoe Hōkūle‘a (Wilson, 2010) sought to highlight the contemporary life stories and experiences of Kanaka Maoli women from the voyaging canoe Hōkūle‘a. Like the scholarship of Kaomea (2006), the stories of nā mana wāhine interviewed served as counter narratives to texts that have not included women’s perspectives as voyagers and navigators. The thesis centred on the women’s stories, affording them place and space to describe and define their own experiences and understandings of the canoe Hōkūle‘a. It also yielded opportunities for the women to reflect upon ways that working with the canoe may have contoured other aspects of their lives; in particular, allowing them to forge paths of self-determination as Hawaiian women.

Mo‘okū‘auhau was the primary theoretical thread that bound the research in its entirety. The thesis explored how legendary Pacific and Kanaka Maoli female voyagers link ancestral women, through an extended mo‘okū‘auhau, to contemporary women from Hōkūle‘a. A deconstruction of Western anthropological and explorer documents sought to inform readers, specifically other Kanaka Maoli, of the way in which our ancestors’ knowledge was recorded and represented to offer a dissected, incomplete version of our people. The intention was that the work would serve as an example to question the historical texts as potentially limited, especially when written by foreigners to the Pacific who came with their own personal agendas and worldviews.

Throughout the research process, I tried to remain cognisant of my own subjectivities because inevitably the stories of the women were filtered through “my” lenses. Therefore it was important to emphasize that the participants’ voices *guided* the work, indeed it is imperative that they did. Simultaneously, I acknowledged my awareness of how my concerns, experiences, and subjectivities influenced the way in which I discussed and interpreted the women’s stories. Reflexivity was, therefore, a constant and vital

1 I use quotes here to emphasize my personal belief that our ancestors call us as Kanaka to do particular work or research. In this respect I do not take credit for “my” ideas. Instead, I acknowledge the presence of my ancestors in everything that I do or pursue. In regards to this research, I strongly believe that the research came to me when I was initially asked to contribute an article to the *International Journal of Maritime History* and grew from there.

part of the methodological process.

The methods for this project involved in-depth, semi-structured interviews with Kanaka Maoli women who voyaged on long open-ocean sails with Hōkūle'a. The women were encouraged to share about who they are, beginning with their mo'okū'auhau, extended family, where they are from, what spaces and places have been significant to shaping their worldview and "sense of place"; thus, laying a foundation of understanding before leading into their experiences working with the canoe. Beginning with the participants' background in this way enabled incorporation and prioritization of Hawaiian epistemology and value for mo'okū'auhau as a Kanaka Maoli method of inquiry. However, it is important to note that not all of the women voyagers interviewed knew about or chose to share their personal mo'okū'auhau. They did all share feelings about the presence of an at times unidentifiable spiritual presence, which some of the women attributed to the canoe and their ancestors.

I envisioned the method of incorporating time and space to explore mo'okū'auhau and spiritual understandings to be similar to what Māori academic Russell Bishop (2008) has termed one of the most fundamental concepts in Māori culture, whanaungatanga, which acknowledges connectedness and kinship. This term in the Hawaiian language would be best associated with mo'okū'auhau or 'ohana, a familial relationship. Connectedness is established through traditional and contemporary genealogies and experiences. For example, in this project I shared the same traditional Kanaka Maoli mo'okū'auhau as some of the participants as well as the contemporary experience of having also voyaged on Hōkūle'a.

Kaupapa Māori serves as a beautiful example of an indigenous, Pacific approach to researching, yet it is important not to essentialize across the Pacific. Māori and Kanaka Maoli *do* share deep genealogical, linguistic and cultural similarities but are also distinct. In this respect, our Māori cousins inspire the

potential for establishing research methods appropriate for Kanaka Maoli, but we need to articulate our own methodology. As previously outlined, Manulani Meyer's work on Hawaiian epistemology is pivotal as a starting point for paralleling Kanaka Maoli perspectives and values in relation to indigenous research methods articulated by Māori academics. Her work greatly informed my desire to explore mo'okū'auhau as methodology.

In self-reflection, I realize that as a Kanaka Maoli living in Aotearoa my work has been inevitably influenced by the people of this land. Furthermore, I am married to a Māori man, my children are Māori and I help facilitate a te reo Māori (Māori language) play group for my daughter that adheres to kaupapa Māori (Māori methodologies), so again, I am deeply committed and connected to these islands through my family. Perhaps it is partly for this reason that I found the Kaupapa Māori approach resonated in my research because it involves the development of a relationship defined by whānau/'ohana (extended family). This relationship sets forth a series of rights and responsibilities, commitments and obligations, and supports a collective purpose (Bishop & Glynn, 2003). The interactions are warm and interpersonal, emanating attributes of "aroha [aloha] (love in the broadest sense), awhi [kōkua] (helpfulness), manaaki (hospitality) and tiaki (guidance)" (Bishop & Glynn, 2003, p. 158). Regarding the doctoral research, my relationship with the women interviewed was nurtured by having voyaged with and worked alongside the women on the canoe. Together we are all a part of the canoe community and Hōkūle'a 'ohana.

As a voyager, it was while sailing on the open ocean under a sky layered with stars, following the pathway of our ancestors that I felt the presence of my kūpuna more than ever before in my life. My hope was that the research would evoke conversations about the power and presence of our ancestors while at sea and on land. The integration of mo'okū'auhau into

the interviews was a way to begin this dialogue and to investigate the extent to which the women's connections to place and their ancestors inspired their life experiences as voyagers. Given the contemporary academic context, my extending mo'okū'auhau from epistemology into methodology could be compared to shifting from understanding into utility. This is a complex process in which epistemological worlds merge. I will attempt to explain. From the bones of our ancestors, and the mana that is passed on in succession, our traditional link to the land, place and our islands is clearly established. Beyond the physical existence of our ancestors at their place of rest, many Kanaka believe that our ancestors are present in spirit form. As 'aumākua in animal form or in the elements of the natural world, such as the moon, wind, rain, a rainbow, the ocean and so forth, our ancestors communicate and make themselves known.

I extend this epistemological knowing and understanding into methodology in two ways. Firstly, the starting point is to be open and to trust the process, acknowledging that my ancestors are present and here to mālama (take care); thus, I take time to listen to the signs and messages through the research journey. Secondly, mo'okū'auhau as methodology is about allowing the research participants involved the same time and space to articulate connections of spirit. It is about offering an opportunity for Kanaka Maoli to introduce their mo'okū'auhau before themselves if they choose and to prioritize questions that honour this deeply rooted aspect of Kanaka epistemology.

As Kanaka Maoli women voyagers, we honour our ancient connection to legendary women voyagers, our ancestors and the spirit of Hōkūle'a while we tread the challenging terrain of modernity, all of which are an integral part of our contemporary realities. Living in a modern context and trying to adhere to the life of a voyager is highly complex. Sacrifices have to be made to make time to volunteer with the hope to sail someday. Other challenges are present

as well, especially for women. For example, when interviewed, Shantell Ching described aspects of her journey relating to her genealogy and contemporary challenges. Shantell began dreaming about being a navigator when she was 10 years old. She wondered how our ancestors navigated using natural clues. It was not until the last decade that she began to look to her genealogy for answers as to why she had that interest at such a young age.

Shantell found names in her father's side of the family, like Kahoewa'a, which means paddling the canoe. Her father is from Hanapepe, Kaua'i, and traces his genealogy to Ni'ihau. Upon recently finding Ni'ihau records that show that two of her ancestors, Wa'awa'a and Paikuli, actually "makemake moana" (died at sea), she said that "I'm still in the process of understanding why I have this very strong interest in learning about the ancient ways of navigation and my recent research is leading me to [feeling as though], 'Wow, it's in my genealogy, it's where I come from, it's in my blood'" (S. Ching, personal communication, 10 August, 2007).

Shantell and I agreed that sharing knowledge and experiences of a spiritual nature is difficult, especially in a public and academic context. We both question whether some stories should be written down, yet perpetuating the knowledge is part of the process. Shantell outlines, "I like to use the metaphor in navigation that you only know where you are by knowing where you come from". She found that in researching her genealogy she discovered her kuleana (responsibility and privilege), which has guided her life. With the gift of knowledge there is also the responsibility to share and perpetuate what you have learned.

Shantell does not doubt her life's purpose to be a navigator. While sailing she remembered:

There was that force outside of me that was guiding me and giving me the 'ike, the knowledge, to make decisions on the canoe. There were times where I felt things that I couldn't explain in English, that I couldn't explain in

modern terms with scientific evidence. I was questioned on the trip and there was that conflict of facts and evidence but I guess I finally had to stay clear in mind and soul and say, “I cannot explain to you this right now but this is what it is, this is how it is,” because it came from a feeling. (personal communication, 10 August, 2007)

She recalled that each day on the canoe she was able to pick up clues and interpret more, but she attributed her knowing to an outside force. Shantell shared that while travelling across 2,500 miles of open-ocean, at no time on the trip home was she scared: “I can honestly say something was guiding us home. Whether it was Hōkūle‘a’s mana, my ‘ohana’s mana, whatever it was, I was very comfortable out at sea and, of course, we made it home safely with that guidance”.

I share Shantell’s feelings on this subject and believe the force she felt also came from within, that it courses through her veins as the genetic memory of her ancestors. It is also the ever-present spiritual guidance from our kūpuna. This is an epistemology with which many of our people are quite comfortable. We honour this relationship by acknowledging our connection to the past, grounding us in the present and guiding our future. This is our legacy as Kanaka Maoli women voyagers.

Engaging mo‘okū‘auhau as methodology and method led to beautiful and rich exchanges between nā wāhine holowa‘a (the women voyagers). For example, like Shantell, all of the women talked about powerful experiences that they witnessed within the natural world while sailing on the canoe, at times attributing the mana of Hōkūle‘a and/or their ancestors as having influenced natural phenomena as exemplified in these quotes:

I turned around to see what was going on in back of us and the squall was coming back together again. That was just one of those chicken skin moments and I thought, “oh my

god, we just...” I don’t know what it was but it was like the squall just parted for us. Then it came back together again after we passed through. (Pi‘ikea)

I mean it can’t just be coincidental. I mean maybe it is but how amazing is that? So whether it is ancestors guiding or some kind of spiritual...one can only wonder, but it’s pretty amazing when you think about it. (Moana)

I believe that there is guidance and sometimes it’s more subtle than other times. I think maybe another thing that I learned on the canoe is that just being quiet enough sometimes to listen for it and to hear it, and not to just go blindly on your way. (Catherine)

Whether on the ocean or on land, and in reference to her life as a voyager, perhaps this quote best encompasses the essence of our many journeys as Kanaka Maoli: “It’s because of my genealogy or ancestors that I’m doing what I’m doing, because this is what I ought to be doing” (Shantell). Like Shantell, I too believe that we are guided by our ancestors, our mo‘okū‘auhau.

In conclusion, like the opening ‘ōlelo no‘eau that refers to the coral heads that Hawaiian navigators used as marking points, which continued to grow and flourish, so too will these thoughts morph and evolve. The intention of synthesizing other Kanaka Maoli academics use of mo‘okū‘auhau in framing and guiding my own research journey is to stimulate dialogue and further articulations of Kanaka Maoli approaches to methodology, for my perspective is only one, and as Kanaka Maoli we are a diverse people with multi-ethnic and multi-geographic influences. Mahalo nui loa, I am abundantly grateful and honour all who have come before while I await the mana‘o (wisdom) from those not yet heard and the next generation.

Glossary

Hawaiian	English
‘āina	land
ākua	gods
ali‘i	chief
aloha	love in the broadest sense
‘aumākua	ancestral guardians within the natural world
hula	native Hawaiian dance form
‘ike	knowledge
ka ‘ōlelo Hawai‘i	the Hawaiian language
Kanaka Maoli	native Hawaiians
kaona	hidden meanings
kōkua	helpfulness
kuleana	responsibility and privilege
kūpuna	elders
kūpuna	ancestors, elders
makemake moana	died at sea
mālama	take care
mana	spiritual power
mana‘o	wisdom
mo‘okū‘auhau	genealogy
‘ohana	familial relationship; extended family
‘ōlelo no‘eau	Hawaiian proverb
po‘e ku‘auhau	genealogist
wāhine holowa‘a	the women voyagers
wahine mana	powerful Hawaiian women
Te reo Māori	English
aroha	love in the broadest sense
awhi	helpfulness
kaupapa Māori	Māori methodology
manaaki	hospitality
te reo Māori	Māori language
Te Waipounamu	the South Island of Aotearoa New Zealand
tiaki	guidance
whānau	extended family
whanaungatanga	connectedness and kinship

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