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How the 2019 Mauna Kea Protest Movement Sparked a Hawaiian Cultural Renaissance: A Mini Ethnography.

Wailana Medeiros
Seattle University

How the 2019 Mauna Kea Protest Movement Sparked a Hawaiian Cultural Renaissance: A Mini Ethnography

Wailana Medeiros, Political Science

Faculty Mentor: Harriet Phinney, PhD, Anthropology

Faculty Content Editor: Rob Efird, PhD, Anthropology and Sociology

Student Editor: Anna Petgrave, English

Abstract

The construction of the controversial Thirty Meter Telescope (TMT) on the summit of the sacred mountain Mauna Kea has been debated for several years. It has recently sparked a cultural awakening of native Hawaiians in Hawai'i through protests against the telescope. These protests took place throughout the summer of 2019, starting in July, and were attended by native Hawaiians and others standing in solidarity. What came to be known as the Mauna Kea Protest Movement took place primarily on the slopes of Mauna Kea, but in various location across the state and on social media as well. inspired a Hawaiian cultural renaissance. The author witnessed this movement as it gained traction through social media, her presence on the mauna, and on the Big Island of Hawai'i where she resides. This ethnography explores how the movement has gained traction, and investigates the cultural renaissance it sparked. It considers themes such as the role of the media, the importance of Hawaiian history, and how the effects of settler colonialism stirred both the recent protest and those of the past. It concludes by discussing the effect the movement itself had on the identity of *Kanaka Maoli*, or native Hawaiian people.

Introduction

July 17, 2019 was the day of the Mauna Kea protest in which Native Hawaiians gathered together to defend their culture and sacred lands against the installation of the Thirty Meter Telescope (TMT). I was there that day, as a Native Hawaiian woman. I knew of the movement, and as it gained traction, I wanted to understand how it had gotten as big as it did, and how it prompted a renaissance of Hawaiian culture. This paper analyzes this cultural renaissance using personal experience, interviews, and research to explore the role of the media, of parallel moments in modern Hawaiian history, and of the effects of settler colonialism in prompting the need for protest, both then and now. I will also discuss some culturally significant phrases that popped up in my research pertaining to the movement, such as *aloha ʻāina,* or love of the land, and *kapu aloha,* a philosophical code of conduct created by Native Hawaiians. I conclude by discussing the effect of the movement on the identity of *Kanaka Maoli*, or Native Hawaiian people. But let's begin at the top of Mauna Kea.

The conditions at 9,000 ft. elevation on the peak of one of the tallest mountains on Earth are not easy on the human body. The blistering cold and whipping rain at night and the sun and wind burn of the day are difficult to endure. The night of July 16, my friends and I camped in my car, but I was restless: I knew what was to come in the morning. I got little sleep that night, and instead conversed with myself and my ancestors while admiring the glorious moon-lit outline of Mauna Kea from its base. The next morning, my alarm went off at 5:00; I had managed to get about two hours of shut-eye. I woke my friends, and we prepared for the short trek to the Mauna Kea access road—where it all began.

July 17, 2019, changed what it means to be a Native Hawaiian in Hawai'i. My friends and I sat on the tough lava rocks after chanting in the rising sun "*E ala e ka lā i kahikina* […]" as we waited for the police officers to come to take away our *kupuna*, our elders. At around 7:15 in the morning, they came. We stood, hundreds of us, in *kapu aloha* as one by one our *kupuna* were arrested and shoved into unmarked white vans that served as police cars.

"Stand for the Mauna now!" Aunty Maxine, an elder protestor, exclaimed with her hands zip-tied, the closing car door drowning out her voice. I clutched my friend's hand, trying to hold back the tears in my eyes. I thought, "Why is this happening? Why is it so hard to be a Hawaiian in Hawai'i? Why are we being arrested for trying to protect something that is important to our identities as *Kanaka Maoli*?" I looked around. I saw the hundreds of other Native Hawaiian faces with the same look of confusion and *ʻeha*, or hurt, and hot tears falling from their eyes.

Each subsequent day of protest on Mauna Kea gathered more people, despite the harsh weather conditions; sunburn seemed like a small sacrifice when it came to trying to preserve what aspects of our culture we had left. With the increase of support through social media,

more and more people arrived in hopes of educating those who came to stand in solidarity. Mauna Kea is considered to be the *piko*, or center, of the Hawaiian Islands, and the physical embodiment of *Wākea*, or Sky Father, in the Hawaiian pantheon of gods. Mauna Kea is the most sacred mountain—arguably the most sacred land in the Hawaiian Islands to Native Hawaiian people. Hundreds, and later thousands, of people across the state came together to protest the construction of the TMT. The telescope was approved by the state of Hawai'i to be built on the mountaintop alongside 13 other controversial and contested telescopes situated on the mountain. Through social media, my residency on the Big Island, and my experience as a Native Hawaiian woman, I was able to witness the growth and traction of this incredible movement.

The movement against the proposed construction garnered support over social media and across the Big Island of Hawai'i, which I witnessed through my time on the *mauna*, or Mauna Kea, and through Instagram.

Subjectivity

It may be obvious by now that I was and am directly affected by this movement. Although I now confidently identify myself as a Native Hawaiian woman, my people's claims to a Native Hawaiian identity have historically been fraught. One impact of colonization was a reduction in pure Native Hawaiian heritage; consequently, current generations of Hawaiians are often mistaken for being of a different ethnicity, or of a mixed ethnicity—rarely ever as Native Hawaiian. While I have been a Native Hawaiian cultural practitioner of hula and certain aspects of ceremony and spirituality for approximately 17 years, it was only after the events on July 17 and the Mauna Kea movement in general that I was able to feel empowered as a Hawaiian, regardless of blood quantum (a settler-colonial form of oppression which discriminates based on the amount of one's Hawaiian "blood").

Through the research process, I have come to recognize that my identity is an important aspect of my research. As such, I sought to interview people whose perspectives and identities reflected the Hawaiian context in which the protest occurred (and is occurring). This ethnography can also be looked at as an autoethnography because of how integrated I am in this process; I used my own personal experience as a Native Hawaiian woman and a protester together with my research to formulate and inform my arguments. I strive to provide a "thick description" (Geertz 6) of the movement from the perspective of the younger generation by examining the symbolic relevance of Native Hawaiian identity and the renaissance prompted by the TMT protest. The process of thick description validates feeling, voices, actions, and meaning to help the reader fully understand the context the writer is trying to portray. This

follows Lila Abu-Lughod's call to "write against culture" (138), countering the ethnographic accounts of the past, which present culture as something that is static, discrete, homogeneous, and coherent. This new perspective engages crossover and intersectionality between different societies, social and cultural changes, subjectivity, and everyday contradictions. I focus my research on complexity and contradiction, intersubjectivity and history, and aim to situate the knowledge I have gained in the context of the current moment.

This research does not encompass every attitude or all experiences of the movement. My goal is to explore the importance of the movement as it pertains to identity and the renaissance of particular cultural values.

Field Site and Methods

The geographic point of my research is the Big Island of Hawai'i. This ethnography is based on my observations during my time protesting on the *mauna* and conversations and interviews I conducted over the internet. I considered ethnography and subject interviews to be important methods, as they contribute to and recognize sovereignty for Hawaiian people. After July 17, I spent the whole summer on the slopes of Mauna Kea with various practitioners, *kupuna*, and young people my age, solely to protest the construction of the TMT. This experience and my consequent research constitute this mini ethnography.

Virtual Participant Observations

Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, I was not allowed to conduct research outside of my home. Therefore, I conducted a virtual ethnography that enabled me to observe and understand how people interact with others through online spaces (Caliandro 552). I also utilized my personal accounts to access different social media platforms, including Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, YouTube, and Zoom, in order to conduct my research. Social media platforms are a useful way to conduct remote research, but I would also like to recognize that they are vital tools in organizing grassroots protests. Therefore, social media played an important role in influencing my interview subjects, the leaders and participants in the movement, and me. Texting, calling, FaceTime, and email were other valuable digital platforms in conducting my research and gathering data. Despite conducting research virtually, the physical presence of my site is important: my informants and I are from and currently reside on the Big Island of Hawai'i. Three of my subjects were able to converse with me in their respective homes over the phone, and the other was able to engage in an email interview.

Interviews

First, I interviewed 19-year-old Kealoha Cariaga, of Napo'opo'o, South Kona, Hawai'i. Kealoha granted permission for her name to be used in this mini ethnography. I've known Kealoha for quite some time now, as we both dance hula. Kealoha was an avid protestor this summer and is active in multiple Hawaiian cultural practices. We agreed on a phone interview, which was formally written and conducted.

I then interviewed Kapulei Flores, also 19 years old, of Waimea, Hawai'i. I selected Kapulei because her mother, Aunty Pua Case, is an active leader of cultural ceremonies and a well-known water protector. Kapulei explained to me that she and her mother have "been standing for the *mauna*" for over 10 years; therefore, her opinion is valuable for my research. Kapulei opted to craft a written response, so I shared with her a GoogleDoc containing various questions pertaining to my research. Kapulei also granted permission to use her real name.

Next, I interviewed 20-year-old Makenzie Kalawaia, who lives in Hilo, Hawai'i. Mackenzie and I are friends, close from our time on the *mauna*. She gave permission to use her real name in this ethnography as well. Makenzie graduated from Kamehameha Schools Hawai'i campus, a school founded by the last princess of Hawai'i, Bernice Pauahi Bishop, with the intent of educating Native Hawaiian youth; Makenzie described the school as a "stepping stone" on her journey to become more culturally informed. Her father is a member of the Royal Order of Kamehameha, a Hawaiian sovereignty organization. I utilize Mackenzie's perspective because she attended Kamehameha Schools and, because of her father's involvement, has been well versed in Hawaiian culture and the sovereignty movement. I conducted an informal interview over the phone from our homes.

Lastly, I interviewed Lanihuli Kanahele, also located in Hilo, Hawai'i. Lanihuli has been a long-time cultural practitioner and an avid *kia'i* (protector), in the *mauna* movement. Her maternal grandmother, Puanani Kanaka'ole Kanahele, is a *kumu hula,* or hula master, and holds an important place in the world of hula. She has done much for *ka lāhui Hawai'i*, or the Hawaiian nation, when it comes to cultural revitalization, including being one of the *kupuna* who was arrested on the *mauna*. I wanted to get Lanihuli's perspective, since she walked with her grandmother to the police vans on July 17. Lanihuli agreed to a FaceTime interview, which was also informal, from her home, and she consented to having her name used.

I decided to interview young people around the same age because in many indigenous cultures, especially cultures with oral traditions such as Hawai'i's, people often look to the perspectives of the elders. I wanted to focus on the perspectives of the younger generation because the *kupuna* have repeatedly stated the importance of the youth standing their ground because the elder's time is almost *pau*, or done. Anthropological indigenous research that focuses on the younger generation can be just as valuable as the perspectives of indigenous elders.

Social Media

This research is shaped not only by these interviews but by other methods as well. The study of scholarly research on ethnography, as well as online activity observation, document analysis, and media and social media analysis, is crucial in my findings. I searched Instagram, Twitter, and Facebook to gather information pertaining to my research questions. I also investigated relevant public profiles, hashtags (#kukiaimauna, #protectmaunakea, #aoletmt, #puuhuluhulu, and more), fora, and articles recommended by related profiles. This led me to a cultural learning Zoom seminar from a profile on Instagram that pertained to the Mauna Kea movement (Perriera). I used the seminar to observe the way it advertised education to Hawaiians and appreciators of the culture, as well as some of the outcomes of the movement itself.

I first searched different Instagram handles, for example, @protectmaunakea, using my personal Instagram account, then Facebook, and then Twitter. I searched using key words such as "*mauna kea*" and "*aloha aina*" to find accounts and hashtags that I deemed most beneficial for my research. I wanted to see how the use of social media and hashtags connected people and strengthened the movement; assessing social media is relevant in that it directly relates to the norms of the younger generation and how they connect, communicate, and mobilize. Each of the Instagram handles provided updates on the Mauna Kea movement, and one provided day-to-day updates from *kia'i* who occupied the mountain during the movement. An account for Pu'uhuluhulu University, a makeshift Hawaiian culture school on the mountain, also provided updates on the movement and gave university schedules pertaining to the Hawaiian classes that would be taught at the *mauna* during the days of active protest to get the *kia'i* community involved.

Importance of History and the Effects of Settler Colonialism

It is not a trivial question to ask if history is important to native research. As Linda Tuhiwai Smith has argued, "[t]he negation of indigenous views of history was a critical part of asserting colonial ideology, partly because such views were regarded as clearly 'primitive' and 'incorrect' and mostly because they challenged and resisted the mission of colonization" (31). I aim to reclaim history by drawing upon and utilizing the native perspective of history, told through a native lens. For indigenous peoples, "history is important for understanding the present and that reclaiming history is a critical and essential act of decolonization" (Smith 31). Therefore, when it comes to the protest of land disputes by Native Hawaiians in Hawai'i, understanding certain historical concepts is crucial to understanding the way in which they affect the present.

We start in the nineteenth century with the Great Māhele, a land division method set up in early colonial Hawai'i by King Kauikeaouli, better known as Kamehameha III. Hawaiians, unlike white settlers, did not view land as property, so the notion of a land division was a foreign concept. The Great Māhele was outwardly presented as progress for the Hawaiian Kingdom, yet in reality, Hawaiian lands were unwillingly taken in an unfortunate attempt to turn both lands and people from "barbarism to civilization" (Banner 275). This benefited the rich white settler populations at the expense of Hawaiian peoples. Lilikalā Kame'eleihiwa explains that in the aftermath of the land division,

> [a] quiet revolution had been accomplished whereby foreigners now controlled all the *'āina* [land], even that of the *mō'ī* [royalty], because the *ali'i* [district chiefs] had submitted themselves to the foreign rules of the Land Commission. Hawaiian sovereignty, manifest in the control of the *'āina*, had been usurped by foreigners behind a facade of American legal jargon. (225)

Although these resolutions seemed innocent enough and claimed to benefit the native people of Hawai'i in the beginning, they paved the way for foreigners to gain *'āina* in Hawaiian towns.

We then see the effects of the Great Māhele along with the overthrow of the Hawaiian Kingdom and annexation. Queen Lili'uokalani was forcefully overthrown in 1898 by white businessmen looking to annex Hawai'i to the United States; they were successful in their endeavors, but at the expense of the wellbeing and sovereignty of many Hawaiian people who had to abide by the new constitution set up by these white men. Among other things, Hawaiians were shamed for speaking in their native tongue, an attempt by white settlers to decentralize Hawaiian culture. The suppression of the *Kanaka Maoli* continues over one hundred years after annexation. There have been many waves of protest for sovereignty since annexation. In the twentieth century, protests of the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s prompted their own versions of Hawaiian Renaissance. Hawaiians did not have control over their land and waters, and with the incursion of United States law, western values, and practices, native peoples were dispossessed of their lands and natural resources, resulting in the inability to sustain themselves and their native cultural practices. Hawaiians, angered by the continued mismanagement of their land, channeled their anger into their protests. Mililani Trask, an interviewee for "The Autobiography of Protest in Hawai'i" and a Native Hawaiian attorney and founder of the Indigenous Women's Network, says "[w]hat do we have to do in order to survive in this day and age? The answer to that is self-determination and sovereignty" (Mast 393).

Settler colonialism resulted in systemic oppression, fueling land protests and shedding light upon other Native Hawaiian issues and land disputes. The whole movement tapped into an ancient Native Hawaiian appreciation of the land. As a result of the late-twentieth-century sovereignty movement, Hawaiians questioned not only the Great Māhele, but the way that Hawaiian lands were historically distributed in general. These concerns include the Mauna Kea TMT telescope dispute, the result of yet another forceful claim to Hawaiian lands. The State of Hawai'i's Board of Land and Natural Resources (BLNR) issued a general lease in 1968 to the University of Hawai'i for the purpose of building a single telescope complex at Mauna a Wākea. Upon doing so, multiple telescope complexes were developed, prompting public protests that claimed that the new development violated the state's initial general lease; these protests have lasted for decades since 1968, most recently emerging in the 2019 Mauna Kea TMT protest, the largest in modern Hawaiian history (Maile 332).

In 2011, after the University of Hawai'i applied for a Conservation District use permit for permission to build the TMT, a petition was filed with the BLNR for a contested case hearing. However, the BLNR ended up steamrolling the process and approved the use permit before holding the hearing. This occurred even as the university's application explicitly declared, "[t]he impact on cultural resources has been, and would continue to be, substantial, adverse, and significant" (Maile 60). The dispute arose again in the summer of 2019, when a *kāhea,* or call, was issued to the people of Hawai'i to gather at the base of the mountain to physically stop construction trucks from proceeding. This resulted in large-scale protests, an uprising of the Hawaiian people, and a cultural renaissance.

The Effects of *Aloha 'Āina* and *Kapu Aloha* on the Movement

Aloha 'āina, which literally translates from Hawaiian language to "love of the land," is a particularly important cultural value. Trask describes the teachings of *aloha 'āina* as "living in balance with yourself, God, and the earth" (Mast 394). She believes that it is the job of the *Kanaka Maoli* to

> maintain the balance of the earth and the heavens, to keep the connection with the land and with God. If we pass away, it's not just losing a traditional culture, which is priceless, but it is also losing the *'āina*, the whole archipelago. Which is why we move for sovereignty and self-determination. (Mast 394)

From my time atop Mauna Kea, I can recall the countless *aloha 'āina*s! chanted in unison. In my interview with Lanihuli, I asked her what her definition of *aloha 'āina* was. After thinking

for a while, she said, "[w]ell we have to look at the word aloha first, which has been misused so many times throughout history. *Alo*, meaning face. And *hā*, meaning breath" (Kanahele). She explained that Native Hawaiians (like many other Pacific Islanders) show affection by pressing their foreheads to each other and breathing in each other's *hā*. Lanihuli further explained that this was the act of establishing a relationship, and therefore *aloha 'āina* was the same act in the sense that one is establishing a relationship with the land—caring for the land, because we are not able to live without it.

'Āina itself translates to "land," but if the word is taken apart by the method that Lanihuli used, it translates to "that which feeds." *Aloha 'āina* describes not only the unconditional love that one has for the land that feeds them, but the connection and relationship that one has to it. There is a proverb in Hawaiian teachings: "*He ali'i ka 'āina, he kauwā ke kanaka*," or, "the land is chief and humankind is its servant." The *Kanaka Maoli* perspective of *aloha 'āina* is integral in the movement, for Hawaiians are defending their most sacred land. I asked Kapulei how important she thought that *aloha 'āina* was to the movement, and she responded, "*[a]loha 'āina* shows the lengths we will go to for the places that we love and need to protect. I feel like it is a way to ground back into the true reason you support the movement, which is because of the *mauna*." With the widespread use of *aloha 'āina* throughout the movement, it is not hard to see why Hawaiians want to incorporate this important Hawaiian value into their everyday lives, as their ancestors have done. Kealoha, Makenzie, and Kapulei all had similar answers when describing to me how they incorporate *aloha 'āina* into their everyday life: "[i]t can be from the simplest thing like picking up rubbish when I go to the beach, to planting native plants, to being in a frontline to protect your sacred *mauna*" (Kalawaia).

Usually following the chants of *aloha 'āina*! you could hear *kapu aloha*! One might define *kapu aloha* as a form of civil disobedience similar to that of Martin Luther King, Jr. Kapulei explained to me:

> *Kapu aloha* isn't just a saying[;] it represents and stands for the way you conduct yourselves in intense situations as well as on a daily basis. On the Mauna during the frontline stance, *kapu aloha* was a way to remind people to remain in their highest conduct; the conduct you would have at a temple or church, because that is how sacred the *mauna* is. This conduct wasn't just for frontline actions with the police, but anytime you were on the *mauna* or off the *mauna* representing the *mauna*. It reminded you to be *pono*, be your best self, and react to situations in the best way you possibly could. (Flores)

Kapulei's comment reminded me of a story that Lanihuli told me pertaining to *kapu aloha*. She had just gotten down from the *mauna* and was complaining to her cousin about various problems. He then reminded her, "Eh! *Kapu aloha*!" She responded, "We aren't on the Mauna anymore!" to which he responded, "We are always on the *mauna*." Despite the peaceful form of protest, Hawaiians seeking to protect their land were labeled as violent: "*kia'i* protecting Mauna a Wākea [a more formal term for Mauna Kea] have halted TMT from being built but, in doing so, been labeled violent. On July 14, 2015, Hawai'i governor David Ige signed an emergency rule passed by the BLNR to criminalize and remove *kia'i*" (Maile 333). The protests in 2019 are a reflection of those in 2015: peaceful Hawaiians gathering to protest, but labeled as violent by the media. In response, Hawaiians urged people to go to Mauna Kea to witness the way they held themselves there. One could look at social media or go to the protest itself and see that there was clearly no threat of violence from any protestor. Threats and claims of violence were attempts from the settler state to continue construction and silence native pleas (Maile 329). *Kapu aloha* has helped the movement itself gain traction. People have watched in awe as hundreds of Hawaiians stood face to face with police officers peacefully, in *kapu aloha*, and won.

The Role of the Media

Social media has impacted the publicization of the Mauna Kea movement. Each Instagram page used in my research is operated by *kia'i* who call themselves protectors of the mountain. As such, users are able to get a secondhand experience by looking at *kia'i* Instagram and Facebook stories and posts, which pertain to the movement. The purpose of these accounts is to create community and awareness for the movement, a seemingly successful endeavor given the large number of followers for each account; the largest account had around 135,000 followers. All are relatively new social media accounts, so it was impressive that they were able to accumulate so many followers in a short period of time. Each hashtag I used has a minimum of 4,000 posts, which demonstrates the multitude of people with whom the protest resonates (@protectmaunakea). I found that the availability and sheer quantity of hashtags allowed Hawaiians to show how they perpetuate their culture not only through standing up for Mauna Kea, but in how they use *aloha 'āina, kapu aloha*, and other Hawaiian values in their daily lives.

I asked Makenzie how she understood the role of social media in the movement, and she replied,

> In the media, before they posted only a little bit about Mauna Kea after 2015 and people kind of neglected it a little bit, but then after and during this whole movement, and how much people actually showed up […] It spread like wildfire. It was amazing to see, all these people from all over the world were coming. Celebrities were coming, everybody. It was just really getting out there. It was good to know that other people knew that we needed help as Hawaiian people. (Kalawaia)

These platforms not only allow the public to connect with Hawaiians perpetuating their culture but also give them a view of what's happening on Mauna Kea, letting them determine for themselves their stance on the matter. Social media provides the public another source of knowledge and information regarding Hawaiian culture and provides the choice to participate by giving updates about where *kia'i* will visit around the islands and what workshops are available. Due to COVID-19 restrictions, advertisements for Zoom workshops have risen in popularity. New protests have sprouted around the islands, as well as around the world, because of the success on Mauna Kea. These protests are also using social media to spread awareness about the desecration of sacred lands.

Kanaka Maoli Identity and Mauna Kea

The film *Like a Mighty Wave* synopsizes the purpose of the movement. In this film, the statements of Kaho'okahi Kanuha, another avid leader of the Mauna Kea movement, struck me: "[w]e aren't trying to do anything we haven't before. We are trying to do it again" (Inouye 12:50). Many Hawaiians have struggled with the question of how to maintain their cultural identity in a modern world; nevertheless, Hawaiians continue to stand for their land and to learn what it means to be Hawaiian in Hawai'i. Each of the factors that I have discussed throughout this mini ethnography shows that the whole movement has done a great deal to remind and teach *Kanaka Maoli* who they are, what they come from, and why that is important for *ka lāhui Hawai'i*. In Victoria Keith's film *Hawaiian Soul*, Tamara Morrison, a Hawaiian woman, explains that before the 1970s, "growing up Hawaiian then, it wasn't cool. I grew up being ashamed I was Hawaiian" (Keith 2:35). But she said that after "all of the Hawaiian activism in the 70s, the cultural renaissance that went on, the anger that was held all those generations just burst. The Hawaiian voice started emerging" (Keith 3:55).

These attitudes are reflected in today's Hawaiian world. Anger was shared throughout an entire Hawaiian nation, resulting in this explosion and renaissance of Hawaiian culture in 2019. I asked Kealoha Cariaga how she has seen the movement affect fellow *Kanaka Maoli*, and she replied,

> You know some Hawaiians were asleep. They were not aware of who they are, they were not connected to that *piko*, to that sacredness. So, when this all happened, you know, it awakened our community and our *lāhui* and you know, just shot at them with a big reminder that they are *kanakas*, and that they do have *kuleana* [responsibility] in Hawai'i. (Cariaga)

I asked her if this was something that she thought makes them proud, to which she replied, "[o]f course! Of course it makes them proud. Being a Hawaiian should make you proud. Because you know, that's what makes us who we are, that is our identity. Nobody else can have that except for us Hawaiians" (Cariaga).

Each of my informants used a variation of the word awakening, or waking up, implying that now Hawaiians are more aware of their cultural identity and are using that awareness as a vehicle to benefit the future for the next generation. Makenzie Kalawaia expressed her feelings as a Native Hawaiian after the movement: "I feel a lot more empowered. Just because, I used to be like 'oh I just went to Kamehameha' and that was enough. But Kamehameha School[s] was just a steppingstone […] I realized that it was like 'okay this is your pathway, you have to keep up your culture,' I realized that I need to do it on my own and take the initiative." Makenzie described her process of "awakening" and how she will use her knowledge to "wake up" the upcoming generation.

Part of cultural identity is fully knowing one's culture, Lanihuli Kanahele expressed. Her family performed ceremonies on the Mauna Kea access road three times a day, and also taught classes for Pu'uhuluhulu University—a makeshift school founded in 2019 as a result of the protest, located right on the lava rocks, which aims to pass on knowledge to the Hawaiian nation. Pu'uhuluhulu University consists of *kumu,* or teachers, mostly Native Hawaiian, who share their *mana'o,* or thoughts, about different aspects of Hawaiian education. Many who spoke while I was there came from the University of Hawai'i and lectured about their own specific fields free of charge. Some of the classes taught at Pu'uhuluhulu University include hula, chanting, Hawaiian history, '*ohe kāpala,* or Hawaiian stamp printing, and more. Lanihuli Kanahele spoke of cultural education:

> The ceremonies and *aha* contributed to the rise of the people, it made people curious. Hawai'i is reborn. Chants are a huge part of communicating with and changing our environment, especially hula. We wanted to communicate all the "good jujus" to the environment, and above. (Kanahele)

Kanahele further explained that she recognized her privilege in having access to these chants and hula, while some people did not. As a result of her education in Native Hawaiian chants

and hula and knowing the disparity in cultural access, Kanahele taught hula and chants at Pu'uhuluhulu University. She shared that, looking at the faces of people eagerly learning chants and hula, she saw the desire to be more active and involved in culture. She saw a Hawaiian nation, reborn.

Conclusion

As I have exhibited, the Mauna Kea protest movement was more than just a protest; it started a revolution in Hawaiian thinking, a renaissance of Hawaiian culture, and a rebirth of a nation that better knows what it means to be Hawaiian in a modern world. I asked each of my informants what this could possibly mean for the future, and each replied with an extremely optimistic answer. Although I have worked with one specific group of informants, I believe that this ethnography, which has been made complete with other sources of literature and media, has addressed vital points dealing with decolonization of the mind and the place of modern media in native affairs. This research, although restricted due to the COVID-19 pandemic, may prove beneficial in educating others and doing its part in amplifying historically silenced Hawaiian voices. This research touches on not only a few elements of the colorful Hawaiian culture, but also the day-to-day impacts of cultural identity and generational trauma. While I have broached this subject, more research is needed to understand the complexities of Native Hawaiian culture and history to then better bring forth native voices and perspectives, and begin to heal from its subjection to white settler colonialism.

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