

DISSERTATION DEFENSE

Ho‘oulu ‘Āina: Embodied Aloha ‘Āina Enacting ‘Ōiwi Futurities

By

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This dissertation examines the relationship between Kanaka ‘Ōiwi (Native Hawaiian) values and practice and the politics of decolonization. The question that drives this work is: How do Kanaka ‘Ōiwi step away from the toxic culture of neoliberal capitalism and the trauma of colonialism, structures that work to eliminate the kinship relationships between Kanaka ‘Ōiwi and the ‘āina (that which feeds us) that have developed over millennia?

This work is situated within a broader body of scholarship on resurgent practices of Indigenous peoples. This dissertation argues that through resurgent practices Indigenous ideologies develop and become the springboard for enacting Indigenous futurities. Indigenous ideologies emerge out of practice that is anchored in place and a worldview that acknowledges our kinship relationship with ‘āina. These relationships have developed across generations of being of and on the land and are shaped and constrained by ancestral flows of knowledge that are anchored to specific places. Indigenous ideologies cannot be distilled into an abstract set of theoretical principles designed to contain all situations in all places but are instead expressions of specific values and relationships based in specific material environments.

Through participant observation, semi-structured interviews and discourse analysis I present a portrait of Ho‘oulu ‘Āina, an ‘Ōiwi community that is mapping ancestral knowledge and values onto future generations through rigorous attention to and re-thinking of structures of education and health within an urban community in Honolulu, Hawai‘i. This community is a living example of the way practice steeped in ‘Ōiwi ideology enacts radical Indigenous futurities.

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Saunders 624**

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