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Seascape Epistemology: An Embodied Knowledge

ABSTRACT This chapter explores how the ocean becomes both a metaphorical and physical body through which we can reimagine conceptions of our selves and our relationships with the surrounding world. The seascape can be expanded into a methodology about the movement of bodies, knowledges, and ways of being-in-the world. This way of knowing and being is termed a seascape epistemology, an approach to knowing presumed on a knowledge of the sea, which tells one how to move through the sea, and how to approach life and knowing through the movements of the world. The Native Hawaiian ocean-based knowledges (or oceanic literacies) of surfing and navigation are used to illustrate how embracing a seascape epistemology creates a counter politics to the dominant thought-worlds that impose rigid systems upon our identities, spaces, and places.

KEYWORDS epistemology, Native Hawaiian, navigation, seascape, surfing

Introduction

When I am fortunate enough to be standing on the warm sand with a surfboard tucked under my arm, I look out at the vast ocean dancing before me and take a deep breath. I like to inhale the seascape: smell its salt, feel the tickle of its spray on my skin, listen to the roar and then purr of its waves, and remember its taste of fish. What I see when I look out are pathways that connect me to my ‘āina, the land and sea. My Native Hawaiian identity emerges as I become a historical being riding waves within a colonial landscape. In the seascape, I am able to autonomously reconnect, recreate, and reimagine through an ocean-based epistemology, a way of knowing and being that allows me to dive into my self. I term this epistemology, a seascape epistemology.

Each time I enter the time and space of the sea, I ponder how the seascape engages an embodied process of place-making, how a seascape epistemology can potentially bring ocean-based knowledges back into an ontological perspective that speaks to an ethical and political experience of movement through the world and life. There has been a predisposition of cultural and Indigenous studies to connect Indigeneity with territory, a “territory” that has been predominantly, although not entirely, land-based. My contribution speaks to the fluvial addition to the territorial through the Hawaiian seascape as a means of obtaining a geopolitical mapping of the political. Seascape epistemology dives into the ocean, splashing alternatives onto the Western-dominant and linear mindset that has led the world toward realities of mass industrialization as well as cultural and individual assimilation. Understanding knowledge as an always moving interaction through theoretical frames challenges colonial narratives that strive to determine absolute and rigid “truths.”

Seascape epistemology is an approach to knowing, presumed on a knowledge of the sea which tells one how to move through it, how to approach life and knowing through the movements of the world based on a visual, spiritual, intellectual, and embodied literacy of the seascape. The seascape includes birds, the colors of the clouds, the flows of the currents, fish, seaweed, the timing of ocean swells, distinct ocean depths, fluctuating tides, and celestial bodies—the stars, moon, planets—all circulating and flowing in rhythms and pulsations. This approach to knowing tells one how to move through the sea, how to approach life and knowing through the movements of the world. It is an approach to knowing through a visual, spiritual, intellectual, and embodied literacy of the land and ocean. It embraces an oceanic literacy which can articulate the potential for travel and discovery.

As a philosophy of knowledge, seascape epistemology is not a knowledge about the ocean or about the wind as things. It is not a knowledge of the sea. Instead, it is a knowledge about the ocean and wind as an interconnected system that allows for successful navigation through them. It is an approach to life and knowing through passageways, organizing events and thoughts according to how they move and interact, all while emphasizing the importance of knowing one’s roots, center, and location inside this constant movement. Like water, which is multi-structural as a formless phenomenon yet never loses its identity, seascape epistemology allows for an Indigenous identity that is linked to place, yet is also multi-sited and mobile.

Seascape epistemology engages a discourse about place that recognizes the ocean’s transient and dynamic nature, and even becomes the

fluctuation of a process that joins the world together. Moving with the fluvial seascape speaks to how we inhabit and shape the earth with our bodies, our emotions, our minds, and spirits. In this way, seascape epistemology can become an ethical way of moving through the world. As Native Hawaiians travel, modernize, and adapt as complex individuals, seascape epistemology also becomes a political epistemology which enables us to observe and interpret diverse knowledges from our own Native perspectives. It enables a disruption of the dominant narratives and systems established across places that place Indigenous knowledges, identities, and memories in the periphery. We know through our oral histories, such as *He Kumulipo*, that we have a genealogical relationship with the sea, and engaging ocean-based knowledges such as surfing and voyaging can help us find connections that offer flexibility and multiplicity in our lives.¹

He'e Nalu: Surfing

I first realized the sea's profound potential when I was hired in 2006 to act as a surf guide for the Australian owned surf camp Sa'Moana on the island of Upolu in Samoa.² The first few days on Upolu fulfilled my every prefabricated fantasy about surfing a South Pacific destination without the crowds that infested my hometown of Honolulu. But the dynamite used to bomb the brilliant green and blue Samoan reefs, reefs which hold great cultural, economic, political, and environmental significance to Samoans, to pave a channel for the camp's surf boats, shook my callow mindset. I began to see underlying political, social, and ethical issues hiding within my fantasy that had been glossed over by surfing films, magazines, advertisements, and the tourism industry.

In Hawai'i, the evolution of surf tourism is directly tied to the larger project of political and economic colonization of the islands by the United States. After annexation in 1898, American businessmen needed to present the island to their fellow citizens as a valuable and desirable place, one of "soft primitivism." The activity of he'e nalu became a new commodity, a romanticized and chic selling point for Hawai'i. Christina Bacchilega,

1 *He Kumulipo* is a predominant genealogy chant composed by a Native Hawaiian priest around the eighteenth century that determines a genealogical connection between Native Hawaiians and the sky, ocean, cosmos, plants, animals, and land.

2 Aspects of this article have been published in my book, *Waves of Knowing: A Seascape Epistemology*, in three different parts.

professor at the University of Hawai'i, argues that photography valorized this image on paper, offering a "visual vocabulary" that endorsed the economic and ideological ambitions of the businessmen in the islands (Bacchilega 2007, 62). In this way, tourism served Western interests at a crucial political juncture in Kanaka history, and surfing played a significant role in this purpose. The image of surfers in Waikiki on postcards that first took effect in 1898, for instance, helped lay the foundation for the creation of a promotional Hawai'i: an idealized, tropical ocean fantasy. The making of Hawai'i into a tourist destination, an open space available for consumption and entertainment, was supported by the appropriation and manipulation of he'e nalu through advertisement.

Today, the surf tourism industry continues to brilliantly tap into people's natural desire for a lost Eden. Many contemporary surfers, like most tourists, have slipped onto the path paved by colonialism which shields them from seeing or concerning themselves with the geopolitics within their surf dream. The ocean is commercialized, coaxing surfers into purchasing the perfect wave, the surf fantasy.

As more and more surfers drop into Hawaiian waves, ke kai (the ocean) becomes prone to this neocolonial fantasy of taking what serves them from the 'āina. Underscored are the colonial lines etched into the Hawaiian islands by the Euro-American ideology and geopolitical structure of sovereignty, prioritizing an organization of place around the strong military and capitalist presence in Hawai'i: airstrips across the reef, warships strategically placed along the coast, paved walkways, mass construction of beach-front hotels and shops, private hotel beach zoning, and surf lessons. Surf tourism promotes a static approach to place that cuts and divides ka 'āina for ease of tourist use. Forgotten in this ideology is the body's relationship to place, human memories stored over centuries in the reef and along the coast. Memories that act as adherent forces, bringing together people and places, arranging these historical memories into contemporary contexts.

The surf tourism industry has attempted to reduce genealogical and cultural space in the Hawaiian sea with an imperial understanding of history. For example, the surf media has created the myth that American surfers helped recover the "lost" sport of surfing in Hawai'i, taming the native waves on the islands. California surfer and filmmaker Bruce Brown asserts in his film, *The Endless Summer*, that 1959 was the "first time" the big waves of Waimea Bay on O'ahu were ridden. Stewart Holmes Coleman continues the imperialistic narrative, writing in his book, *Eddie Would Go*, that in the 1950s, "during those first expeditions to the North Shore, men like John Kelly, George Downing, Greg Noll, Pat Curren, Peter Cole and Fred Van Dyke would drive across the land in their old jalopies, camp on

the North Shore and surf pristine and unriden breaks that had yet to be named. Of course they suspected that the ancient Hawaiians had probably ridden these waves, but it seemed impossible with the long, heavy planks of wood they used to ride” (Coleman 2001, 45).

Native Hawaiians undeniably rode and named the waves at Waimea Bay and elsewhere. A *kau* (sacred chant) of Hi'iaka, goddess of dance and chant, for instance, tells that Pili'a'ama, the konohiki (the headman of a land division under the chief) of Ihukoko, enjoyed surfing both the point and the shore break at Waimea. Not only is Hawaiian history effaced through the surf tourism narrative, but forgotten from this dominant ideology of claiming waves is the body's relationship to place, human memories stored over centuries in the reef at Waimea, memories that act as adherent forces bringing together people and places, arranging historical memories into contemporary contexts.

Yet predominant surf tourism narratives and ethics are not absolute. The experience of surf tourism in Hawai'i cannot be universalized as neo-colonial, constructed as an entirely negative or inescapable system. Colonial power can be exaggerated, and Hawaiian surfers such as the Waikiki Beachboys, most famously Duke Kahanamoku, and contemporary professional surfers, have used the industry as vehicles to experience and (re)affirm an Indigenous identity connected to and emerging through the ocean. They not only move within the industry in beneficial ways, but also help to shape it. Professional Native Hawaiian surfer C. J. Kanuha, for example, made headlines across the world in April 2008, as he was interviewed by ABC's *Good Morning America*, *The Telegraph*, and other international media corporations, for paddling his stand-up surfboard within twenty feet of lava flowing into the ocean from Kilauea's eruption at Waikupanaha in Puna, Hawai'i. What appealed to the media and the surf industry was the danger and novelty of the act. Kanuha, however, underwent respectful training for this event as a way to visit with Pele, the Hawaiian volcano goddess. His movement was primarily cultural. When Kanuha reached an area of the lava that had formed a black sand beach, he went ashore and prayed to his goddess, offering her ho'okupu, a gift of respect. Kanuha was employing his oceanic literacy of he'e nalu to strengthen his Indigenous ontology and epistemology independent of the cultural location of the corporate sponsors supplying his board, paddle, and financial support. What took place was an interplay between the surf industry and the Native Hawaiian space within it.

For contemporary Native Hawaiian surfers, he'e nalu is a process of acculturation. We have adapted to Western ways and materials such as fiberglass boards, plastic leashes, traveling on airplanes to distant waves,

wearing nylon printed suits with corporate brands, and using Internet access to determine wave conditions, while finding autonomous ways of moving through the sea. He'e nalu continues to attune the body to the ocean's liquid pulses, which create fluid earth passages between ideas and perspectives. It is an enactment that engages a profoundly nonlinear conception of the environment and of human relationships to it, privileging embodied connections that help to realize multiple and complex constructions of a multisided identity that resonates with the "language" of he'e nalu.

For instance, Mary Kawena Pukui and Samuel H. Elbert's Hawaiian Dictionary defines "he'e" as

1. n. Octopus (*Polypus* sp.), commonly known as squid [...].
2. vi. To slide, surf, slip, flee [...] to put to flight, [...] flow [...].

"Nalu" is defined as

1. nvi. Wave, surf; full of waves [...] to form waves.
2. vt. To ponder, meditate, reflect, mull over, speculate [...].

He'e nalu is not only sliding across waves, it is also sliding into a ponderous state of thinking and theorizing about the world through a specific context. It is also "putting to flight" the "formation of waves." He'e nalu is an act that helps the seascape to move, putting waves, concepts, and bodies into flight.

In the same way, the oceanic literacy of he'e nalu requires me to "read" a visual text of the seascape with my body. Oceanic literacy of surfing involves a knowledge of the exact location on the outer reef where the surf breaks and where one's footing can still be found. The oceanic literacy of navigation requires the ability to read the cloud colors that indicate a passing squall, the ripples on the water's surface telling of an approaching gust, or a knowledge of where the sea is very shallow and impassable for canoes. There are rhythms involved in an oceanic literacy: the rhythms of the waves, moon, sun, tides, winds, and shifting sand. The rhythms of the clouds and currents communicate information, as living guides gliding along, within, and beyond the laws of the universe, requiring both an intellectual and a spiritual reading.

There is also a biological element involved in oceanic literacy rooted in certain facts that affect our notions of space and place: the body can only lie prone or stand upright and turn left or right. When surfing, however, the body breaks through these limitations. Surfers glide and float on water, sliding on a fluid floor, expanding the realm of gravity by vertically flowing

up and down, sometimes racing through a tunnel of pitching water. A navigator's sight, body, and gravity are also expanded as she floats on a moving mass of liquid, relying on the ever-moving sky, birds, and winds to guide her toward a destination seen only in her mind. Spatial conceptions are altered, as is one's sense of place when engaged in oceanic literacy, because of the ways in which one interacts kinesthetically with the ocean, the ways in which one is physically involved with the sea.

When surfing, my center moves with the sliding sea, tapping into its energy. I relinquish control by immersing myself in the mercurial place of the sea. My center is a pivot point; it finds a rhythmic alignment within the wave. I am, as Paul Carter states, "stitched into the passages of the world" (Carter 2009, 15). My body is the first point of contact with the ocean, and becomes the tool for ensuing investigations. As the rhythms of the seascape assemble with my body, identity becomes an affected process over time and through philosophical, spiritual, and kinesthetic interactions with place. An ocean-body assemblage emerges, a term borrowed from Manuel DeLanda's assemblage theory.

According to DeLanda, of the three forms of matter—solid, liquid, and gas—liquid has the most potential to create because it is always on the edge of chaos. Here lies the Native Hawaiians's potential to self-organize a complex identity: Hawaiian and American, author and oceanographer, logical and emotional, all while moving through a liquid form of cultural genealogy in rooted yet improvised rhythms.

And as the rhythms of the seascape assemble with my surfing body, identity becomes an affected process over time and through philosophical and kinesthetic interactions with place. As my body interacts with the ocean, ways of knowing and being are opened up to innumerable ways of moving, pausing, constructing, and deconstructing my ideas and identity. The sensorimotor pathways that the body creates for itself engage an embodied reading and writing of a specific oceanic space, which can be affective, philosophical, and spiritual movements of recovery. He'e nalu becomes a poesis of nonlinear movement between spaces and times that encourages a specifically Native Hawaiian worldview.

Imagine the Hawaiian sea moss, *limu pālahalaha*, crawling between the cracks of a concrete jetty. The moss is able to maneuver its way between the crevices of the concrete, creating alternative pathways atop and within an imposed structure (colonization). The *limu pālahalaha* exists in "smooth" space, which, defined by Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, is nonmetric and acentral, a directional path that can rise up at any point and move to any other point, like a formless and amorphous space (Deleuze and Guattari 1987). The concrete jetty, however, exists within a "striated"

space that is limited by the order of its own space or by preset paths between fixed and identifiable points. The smooth space of the moss, and of the seascape itself, allows for diversity and for the emergence of marginalized identities simply because it allows for movement between the lines.

A politics of aesthetics emerges as the limu pālahalaha not only creates but also makes visible new spaces within the striated space of the jetty. Time and space configurations are ideological constructions of power within epistemology. They control constructions of identity in the global arena, or state-established and recognized ways of being-in-time and space. The smooth space of the sea offers itself as a means for disrupting power structures. It is not the momentary location in identifiable space but the continuous movement in amorphous space that is critical to understanding the political opportunity of seascape epistemology as well as human existence in time. The space of the ocean is an “occasion,” a moment that comes about through the experience of sensation. The fluid enactments of oceanic literacy are what allow Native Hawaiians to be part of the smooth space, to create an autonomous identity by engaging a discourse on colonization through movement.

Just as the Native Hawaiian professional surfer Kanuha exists both inside and outside the surf tourism industry, striated and smooth spaces cannot exist in isolation. They must always coexist and intermingle. The sea is a smooth space of autonomous creation for Hawaiians, because as a space that holds specific social meaning the ocean is simultaneously also a striated space for Hawaiians. The sea can become striated as it is coded and detailed to those familiar with wave shapes, speeds, and frequencies. The sea can be divided into specific fishing locales that might have seasonal kapu, prohibitions, during spawning times, for instance. Oceanic striations are also created by state-designated boundaries: conservation areas, swim-only zones, permitted surf contest zones. Grids have been formed that identify space within the ocean as being specific to one purpose, as being this and not that, designating belonging and exclusion.

Artificial grids and boundary lines, however, can be “deterritorialized.” Deleuze and Guattari would state that the limu pālahalaha that grows on the concrete jetty, while dictated by the shape of the jetty, “deterritorializes” the concrete (1987). The moss alters the space of the jetty from a geographic zone to a feeding ground for fishes and crabs. The meaning of the space initially created by the concrete jetty is altered by the limu. Striated spaces become smooth, just as smooth become striated. The ocean, inherently from within its own body, enables plurality.

In the same way, he‘e nalu enables plurality for Hawaiian spaces, times, and bodies. Within a Hawaiian context, he‘e nalu becomes an aesthetic

logic that remembers through performance. The movements of the body interact with language, reading, and writing so that the literacy does not merely employ the eyes, brain, and fingers but also a kinesthetic engagement with one's surroundings. It is both reading and writing through empirical observation as well as subjective sensations. Oceanic literacy remembers what was written in the coral and on the fins of turtles through an active interaction. This embodied literacy splashes mobile trails into the sea, inviting a response from the sea itself. The ocean is involved in the writing and reading process, affecting how we create and shape both our selves and our nations.

Ho'okele: Navigation

For Native Hawaiian navigator Bruce Blankenfeld, the oceanic literacy of ho'okele, navigation, is a portal to access his Hawaiian ontology and epistemology through a specific way of reading and interacting with the seascape. Standing on a platform of the wa'a kaulua, voyaging canoe, which sits in the vast ocean, on the planet, which floats in an expansive galaxy suspended in an immense universe composed of tens of thousands of other galaxies, Blankenfeld, engages an ocean-body assemblage by expanding his identity to connect with his surroundings. "Those stars have to be a part of you," he explains (Ingersoll 2008). Being inside the ocean allows Blankenfeld to connect affectively through his spatial imagination by seeing the link between the earthly and heavenly bodies through his own body, a necessary link to read how the skies and universe move, so that he knows how he can and should move through them.

When navigating, Blankenfeld becomes an aesthetic subject whose movement articulates Hawaiian ontology and epistemology through the stimulation of his somatic senses: sight, smell, taste, sound, and touch. His body and the seascape interact in a complex discourse, or way of communicating, in which Blankenfeld is able to "see" his location in the world by reading the yellow stripes painted across the sky, tasting the water's salinity, smelling the cool north winds, and feeling the intensity of the sun's heat on his shoulders. Blankenfeld can "see" the stars on a cloudy night, or when he is closing his eyes in a half-sleep, because his feet and back can feel the direction of the ocean groundswells, and the roll and pitch of the canoe. This enables him to "see" his direction by feeling the direction of the swells. Thus, he knows where the cloud-covered stars are in relation to the direction of his canoe. This is because he knows how the groundswells, stars, and canoe (among hundreds of other factors)

should all be working together. He knows his location inside all of these constantly moving parts.

“Seeing” is a physiological process that involves more than the simple recording of light and images. It is a selective process in which environmental stimuli are organized into flowing structures that provide meaningful signs (Tuan 1977, 10). Blankenfeld explains that when voyaging, “Most of the seeing is inside, so before you even leave on a voyage, you have a very clear vision of what the target is” (Ingersoll 2008). He “sees” his destination as he voyages toward it, even when he’s weeks away from arrival, by responding to sensational messages collected through his feet, in his nose, and his eyes. Sight becomes corporeal: the feet, ears, and eyes all have a specific way of seeing, and this “sight” becomes emotions burned into muscles that are interpreted by the mind. It is this constant interaction between the body and the mind that generate a specific epistemological and ontological context that allows him to expand his world to include an intimate interaction with the white foam of open ocean swells that his canoe surfs.

There is a duality between an analytical awareness and sensational imagination when voyaging. The critical aspect, however, is not that his oceanic literacy allows him to reach his destination island. The significance of his literacy is that the way Blankenfeld physically moves through the ocean affects how he “sees” it. Seeing becomes a political and ethical process; as Blankenfeld’s sight is expanded through his oceanic literacy, so is his ability to think outside of a static mindset, a mindset that tends to enforce one specific way of knowing or seeing, and that relies upon one specific reality. Oceanic literacy engages a subjectivization, a transformation of the aesthetic coordinates, as Jacques Rancière would put it, or the ability to control what is visible (or invisible) in a community by making necessary the assumption that we are all equal (Rancière 2004).

Oceanic literacy becomes a political and ethical act of taking back Hawaiian history and identity through a rhythmic interaction with place: the swing of tides shuffling sand, the sharp tune of swells stacking upon each other at coastal points, the smooth sweep of clouds pulled down by the wind. Rhythms do not just represent the ocean; they constitute it as figurative layers. Merging the body with this rhythmic sea enables a reading of the seascape’s complex habits, as well as all the memories created and knowledges learned within this oceanic time and space that have been effaced by rigid colonial constructions of identity and place.

Affective rhythms of sight are political vision for Blankenfeld because what he sees when voyaging is a structure of his imagination: light hitting the retina of the eye is immediately processed through the subjective

brain. Author Jonah Lehrer notes that without the brain's interpretation of light flashing off the retina's photoreceptors, "our world would be formless" (Lehrer 2007, 105). Lehrer adds, "[B]ut this ambiguity is an essential part of the seeing process, as it leaves space for our subjective interpretations. Our brain is designed so that reality cannot resolve itself," requiring our imaginations to create a context for this "reality" (107). Blankenfeld is harnessing and mobilizing this image-making power inherent in all our brains by reaching beyond light reflection into a realm of seeing through intuition with the aid of the seascape. Blankenfeld dilates his sight by constructing a vivid yet malleable pathway toward a designation through his oceanic literacy: he can find his direction and location by extending his sight into his imagination and into the seascape itself.

Seascape epistemology becomes an embodied voyage for Native Hawaiians, a way of knowing through corporeal interactions. When navigating, Blankenfeld's body is soaked by the seascape. Each puff of wind and slight change in humidity moves through him. His oceanic literacy is accumulated into an experiential reserve so that, over time, he "begin[s] to anticipate the weather. It is like being inside the navigation, participating from the inside" (Low 2008, n.p.). Blankenfeld exists inside movement itself, as movement becomes a mode of experience transferred from place to body. His affective experience in the ocean introduces the power of creativity into the sensorimotor body, enabling an expression of imagination through kinesthetic movements.

In oceanic navigation, everything is connected and moving within the 12,000 miles of Pacific Ocean, creating a guidance system anchored in relationships rather than abstract geographic categories. The fundamental concept of oceanic navigation is that stars mark islands and reefs not in relation to the Western cardinal directions of north, south, east, and west, but in relation to other islands and reefs, all of which move in a synchronized pattern. The stars, for instance, rotate in a star path, above islands and reefs also moving along these same paths. Pacific Islanders understand that the islands and reefs are mobile, constantly expanding and contracting with the movements of their Indigenous inhabitants: the islands expand as fish, birds, and plants travel out, and they contract as their inhabitants journey back home. The "boundaries" of the islands and reefs are perceived as fluid and connected to the life within them; this is a concept that the Carolinian people, from the Caroline Islands, call "pookof."

Through this Indigenous thought-world, everything is pulled together: the seascape, body, and imagination, forging a relationship. Identity is assembled within the movements of the ocean as the body moves through it, meshing the two together. Blankenfeld is engaging an image-making

power through his spatial knowledge of the seascape. If he does not imagine the connection, it will not exist. He must actively “see” the relationships within the seascape with his body, and then sail with the seascape, not on, but as part of it. Movement is privileged within his Oceanic map, a way of constructing the world that allows, and even requires, the islands and stars to participate in the voyage. Blankenfeld is realizing a seascape epistemology by setting into motion an Indigenous way of traveling that orients the body inside the moving seascape as opposed to vectoring oneself off a point that intersects latitude and longitude, which is a way of moving that creates only one specific type of map about social and natural space.

A disembodied movement, on the other hand, fails to capture the collective experience of identity because the body would be left out of an understanding of self. Yet this is precisely how Euro-American reason, and how European theory, functions. It privileges the cognition of the mind over the movement of the body. For instance, in 1768 Captain James Cook was among other European voyagers who began moving away from the coastline and venturing into a realm of longitude. Sailing vessels began to venture “out there” with the goal of “arrival” and “discovery” within what was still perceived as a chaotic and mysterious ocean colored by biblical and mythical images of sea monsters, voracious whales, and catastrophic floods. The ocean was unknowable to Europeans; in fact, “to attempt to fathom the mysteries of the ocean bordered on sacrilege, like an attempt to penetrate the impenetrable nature of God” (Corbin 1994, 2). Native Hawaiians, however, were actively voyaging throughout the Pacific Ocean, which they perceived to be an ancestor, guiding them as they journeyed with it.

Cook’s new ability to jump across the abyss altered Western perceptions of space into organized territories filled with political and economic aspirations. Cook’s traveling instigated European discussions concerning humanity and power that supported various images of political legitimacy, ethics of engagement, and accounts of global justice. Philosopher and political science scholar Brian Richardson writes,

The representations of the world in Cook’s voyages have political implications. In Europe, the representations of the places in the South Pacific were used in debates over the limits and character of human nature, over the relationship between science and politics, and over the legitimate use of power, both at home and throughout the world. [...] What Cook found on the islands of the South Pacific, in other words, was used to idealize the natural political order that nationalists spent the next two centuries trying to create. (Richardson 2005, 7–8)

It should be noted that both Euro-settler and Pacific voyaging took and takes part in the production of specific politico-cultural orders that often articulate narrow horizons of identity, nation, participation, and government. Both Western and Indigenous voyagers establish(ed) the dichotomy between home and away. Every center is someone else's periphery, marginalizing those outside of the dominant theoretical landscape (Clifford 1989). Travel ideologies should not be uniformly demonized or romanticized; both European and Oceanic travelers participated in a quest for new knowledge as well as conquest and oppression. Yet the oceanic maps that guided Pacific Islanders to the islands they settled were inherently mobile. This privileging of movement within an oceanic epistemology resists the reduction of thoughts into an "algebra of points and lines" that divides the world into rigid lines and points because it places the self into the map. Furthermore, the body sits inside the oceanic map. Voyaging becomes an embodied engagement.

Alternatively, a disembodied way of moving and traveling neglects all the memories held within kinesthetic movements, and it erases all the historical journeys that our bodies have taken in the seascape; the knowledges accumulated, stories told, and discoveries made. Paul Carter illustrates this concept beautifully in his book *Dark Writing*: "Like photographers taking care their shadow does not get into the picture, we absent ourselves from the scene of discovery. A description of the world is accounted most authoritative when it contains no trace of the knower" (Carter 2009, 5). Omitting the body creates hierarchies and forces of power that come to constitute realities that, intentionally or unintentionally, marginalize Indigenous relationships to place and impoverish Indigenous identities. In contrast, Native Hawaiians do not try to control the seascape, but instead connect to it by placing their bodies and minds inside it. The knowledge within ho'okele illuminates an epistemology about movement that draws the world together, fostering an ocean-body assemblage that honors our human relationships and responsibilities to each other and to the places we voyage through.

I Imagine

I imagine a school in Hawai'i located along an ever-shifting and interacting coastline of sand, reef, tide pools, and waves. In this school, children will come to spend the day immersed in the seascape, the land and sea, learning by observing and working beside kupuna, elders. This educational center would teach, apply, and support oceanic literacy of he'e nalu,

ho'okele, limu picking, reef and ecological care, as well as knowledge about the marine life and environment within the particular region. The school would be a place where community, culture, knowledge, and identity can be directly addressed and fostered. Bringing together academic strengths and abilities with the Native Hawaiian experiences of oral histories, songs, poems, dance, art, writing, and ceremony creates a power potential for Hawai'i. This educational center could offer us a space in which to engage the imagination for diverse and alternative futures.

Seascape epistemology allows us to see how we are, in fact, part of a whole. Behind the imagination of seascape epistemology is the potential to transform ourselves not only intellectually and culturally, but spiritually and ethically. Seascape epistemology illuminates the fact that we are intertwined with nature, not simply living alongside, but inside it. Seascape epistemology is a call for humanity to open our politics, economies, values, and imaginations so that we can reaffirm and recreate conceptions of knowing and being that are plural and progressive by interacting with a space and place that holds so much significance for so many of us, on so many levels.

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