Home-Free and Nothing (...)-Less: A Queer Cosmology of Aloha ʻĀina

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> Violence is what we're used to. . . .
> We are no longer shocked
> by raids on what is left
> in the pitched tents and tarps,
> our evictions from beach to beach
> and park to park, the poverty
> of unfurling fists open only
> to the smallest of handouts.
>
> (Brandy Nālani McDougall, "The Second Gift")

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As a (qu)id,[1] I learned that Kānaka Maoli were not homeless, because Hawai'i *is* our home. I learned this from my mom's sister, Aunty Nalu,[2] who told me that I had kuleana for the land and people of Hawai'i and that such a responsibility was to be taken seriously.

It was 1993, around the time of the centennial that marked one hundred years of the illegal US invasion of our islands. Aunty Nalu had left the service industry as a cook to support land-based reclamations in Wai'anae, a ten-mile leeward coastal region on O'ahu known for Hawaiian sovereignty, indigenous resistance, and environmental justice activism. These social movements had a profound impact on the people of Wai'anae, especially Aunty Nalu, who lived by the motto, "If I don't grow it, I don't know it." Aunty Nalu is not well known in the mainstream Hawaiian movement. She is that kolohe aunty from Nānākuli Hawaiian Homestead who rarely traveled outside her comfort zone of Wai'anae, turning to hotwiring and stealing cars to make money and, on occasion, enjoying a good police chase up Wai'anae Valley for fun. I remember how some of us kids would be screaming "cheeeehooo!" all the way up the mountain road, police sirens blaring behind us, pakalolo in the air, with Aunty Nalu cackling at the helm of yet another stolen land yacht. Somehow, Aunty Nalu always managed to escape capture—even in those huge Cadillac Eldorados from the 1970s.

A mother of three, Aunty Nalu defiantly rejected the state's treatment of Hawaiians. She often tore down NO TRESPASSING signs in the mountains and near the ocean if they were posted by the state, and she refused to register her car to an illegally occupying government entity. Moreover, she did not fit the gendered proscriptions emboldened by the state. She dressed in men's jeans, T-shirts, and tank tops and gave motherhood a masculine swagger by challenging the colonizing gendered expectations placed on her body. Except for a high-pitched cackle inherited from the Aken and Carlisle bloodlines, she was pretty "butch." She drank Budweiser, occasionally strummed the ukulele and, at family gatherings, argued with my cousin Kaipo about going rogue and taking back the 'āina (land, all that feeds). "I may be living on da beach but brah, I not homeless, I '*home-free*.' I take care of dis 'āina and dis 'āina takes care of me." She would then add, "Nobody going give us our land. We gotta give it our all and grab what we can before we lose everything that belongs to us."

At some point in my adolescence, Aunty Nalu began teaching away the problematic image of homeless Hawaiians from my mind, replacing it with an intimate, empathic solidarity for Hawaiians living out of a tent on the beach. When my mom was in prison, I'd go and stay with Aunty Nalu at Nānākuli Beach Park. It was there that I began to challenge the assumptions about Hawaiian bums mooching for money—stereotypes I had heard about from middle-class relatives living in single-family houses in the mountain valleys. Aunty Nalu refused being boxed in by the category of "homeless loser" that people like my cousins and other family members complained about. Instead, she was aware that the problem of displacing Hawaiians was the result of systemic and intergenerational trauma—the overthrow of our nation and the resultant state of Hawai'i being only the tip of the iceberg. She was concerned about the laziness of complacent Hawaiians and embodied an 'Ōiwi (Hawaiian in the bones) poetics—taking the runoff water from public beach showers to grow kalo or taro at a time when the US occupation became increasingly militarized and hostile to Hawaiian tent cities, particularly tent village residents at Mākua, who were evicted in 1996.

In 2014, after almost twenty years of beach bum living, Aunty Nalu moved to Alaska to care for a daughter with special needs. Nonetheless, it is through Aunty Nalu's teachings that I come to approach a "home-free" rather than an "anything less" kind of perspective. Framed within a distinctly queer theorization and a broader houseless or homeless discourse—a home-free perspective repositions, and indeed transforms, libelous poison into medicine and enables us to regard all people as whole and complete unto themselves. Processes of coloniality, active resistances to it, and simultaneous reclamations of the self in defiance of it—distinguish a "home-free" subjectivity from that of being merely houseless or homeless. I cherish the relatives who, like Aunty Nalu, remind me that they may be without a house but are, in fact, home-free. These relatives see land and family as a site of direct action to reclaim ʻāina—including one's own body, mind, and soul—and the broad sense of inclusive nourishment that results from this reclamation.

Layla

In 2011, Layla, a tall and thin sixty-two-year-old Kanaka Maoli māhūwahine (transgender woman), walked out of her Chevrolet van for the last time and headed for what she then referred to as "the bush"—a tent village wedged between a high school and a boat harbor on the leeward coast of Oʻahu, now referred to as Puʻuhonua o Waiʻanae. After being fired from a nine-year janitorial job, she lost her apartment and, eventually, her van. Though at first Layla despised Puʻuhonua o Waiʻanae, she came to acknowledge and accept that life there was better than having to serve the interests of a workplace built on the systematic discrimination of māhū people. At Puʻuhonua o Waiʻanae, she lived free of such violence and survived on less than thirty dollars a week—a manageable rate subsidized by dumpster diving, bartering, and reciprocal gift giving.

Moreover, the indifference Layla once enjoyed while living in her apartment, free from the raids and evictions taking place in public parks, was no longer an option. She was booted from parking lots, kicked off beaches, and disrespected in shelters by police officers and security guards. Puʻuhonua o Waiʻanae saved her life and shielded her from this harsh reality. At Puʻuhonua o Waiʻanae, the community polices itself and provides for its residents without the economic and political support of the cistem, a systemic privileging of cisgender and heteronormative nuclear family structures. Layla and other Puʻuhonua o Waiʻanae residents work tirelessly to keep the place clean. Many of them know the intimate tortures of having one's belongings thrown into dumpsters. They hope that by organizing themselves and taking initiative they might stave off such violence.

At first, Layla was nervous to enter the village. She didn't know when a raid would happen, or how she would defend her meager belongings from thieves. The blue and black tarps, the tents—the perceived harshness of the people—weren't exactly welcoming. Nonetheless, Layla persevered and was pleasantly surprised to find a well-organized village setting protected by a group of queer Hawaiian women. One of the residents even hosted her for a few days until Layla was able to get on her own two feet.

In this essay, I focus on gender nonconformity and home-free Kanaka resilience. Such stories situate a queer cosmology of aloha ʻāina; that is, a theory of gender-nonconforming origination, persistence, and evolution within a broader social movement to "soften"

the hardness of violence. I am particularly interested in unsettling and transforming "cissettler" family formations that shun rather than embrace their queer and transgender kin.

Puʻuhonua is a Hawaiian concept of place. On one hand, it literally translates to "earth barrier," and on the other, it means "city of refuge." In this essay, I observe the queerness of puʻuhonua—the inclusive atmosphere it provides and the free-flowing social nature of its culture within and against the state. This piece focuses on anarcha-indigeneity to demonstrate how respect for one's self and others builds upon a social network that diverges, however unequally, from its original intended purpose: to serve as a temporary holding zone for the state.

As an indigenous and autonomous space for gender-nonconforming Kānaka, displaced Pacific families, and abandoned settlers from the continental United States, the village is rebranding itself not simply as a tent city but as a model refuge for the ʻohana, a fully functional and inclusive chosen family system. This essay stems from the trust established with people in this ʻohana and the emo-spiritual labor of organizing political dissent toward addressing the urgent, everyday needs of Puʻuhonua o Waiʻanae residents. The stories shared here are generally overlooked in mainstream news reports. However, these narratives are profoundly influential in weaving together the broader experiences and critiques of colonial land displacement, homophobia, and transphobia experienced by and among Kānaka in contemporary Hawaiʻi. More importantly, the village allows us to plant the seeds of an increasingly important project to address the issue of land displacement through the active repossession of lands, waters, and tools to empower our own liberation from the bottom up.

For Layla, Puʻuhonua o Waiʻanae offered not only the promise of escapement and safety, but also a queer sense of belonging and healing without the added pressures of paying for costly rent and bills. In particular, it enabled a re(knewed) sense of freedom within herself to reject the gendered social expectations placed on her body resulting from the cistem in which she had lived and worked throughout her life. Despite ongoing challenges such as access to public sanitation, Layla expresses that her well-being has improved since moving to the village. As she lovingly points out, "Everybody here is ugly, just like me" (meant as a term of endearment). For some people, Puʻuhonua o Waiʻanae represents economic and political abandonment, a place where people are sent to die. And for others still, it is a last resort. For Layla, however, Puʻuhonua o Waiʻanae has become a reliable home where a queer love ethic activates the transformation of violence.

In her poem "The Second Gift," Brandy Nālani McDougall describes the everyday violence of houseless raids and evictions in contemporary Hawaiʻi as something that no longer shocks us. In this essay, I want to push McDougall's depiction to the horizon by showing how the *people* of Puʻuhonua o Waiʻanae, including the aforementioned māhūwahine, transform themselves and their larger social support networks for the better. I argue that in the queer-managed space of Puʻuhonua o Waiʻanae, there is a queer soul that challenges and indeed transforms the "gift" of US settler occupation and the economic and political landscape under which it stands. Such a soul supports the bare necessities: autonomy, land, privacy, sleep, and water. It disarms and indeed tenderizes the people to care again, to wake up and act upon that intuition. Today, the people of Puʻuhonua o Waiʻanae are unfurling their "fists . . . to the smallest of handouts," and they are also advocating

for new directions in the larger Hawaiian movement. Perhaps this is the seedling of possibility—the promise of contrasted visions for how we might better work together to resolve the gendered conundrums of our time and make us "green and tender once again" (McDougall, 2014, p. 253). In this restorative condition, might we overcome the numbing, everyday violence of eviction, scarcity, and indifference?

Today, it is nearly impossible to talk about Hawaiʻi without first confronting the crises of drugs, housing, and land. Scholars, doctors, community leaders, and activists all acknowledge the overwhelming increase of these scourges in contemporary Hawaiʻi. And yet, rather than generating on-the-ground, low-cost, indigenous, localized, and organic alternatives, colonial frameworks continue to dominate the perceptions of healing as a biomedical and statistical game without pleasure and fun. Entering the village in 2014, however, I was struck by the bold leadership against the cistem as a matter of fun and of pleasure. Thus, it became clear that a crucial part of both my internal and external spiritual journey back to this city of refuge, this ancestral place of indigenous well-being, was its capacity to promote aloha with dignity and calm in the face of overwhelming systemic chaos and failure, including the neocolonial regulation of Hawaiian subjectivity.

In line with Mark Rifkin's work, villagers are redefining the terms of indigenous autonomy within the social context of colonial land displacement and cultural repossession by defending their autonomy and freedom as Hawaiians (Rifkin, 2009, p. 102). Such villagers are simultaneously mobilizing collective self-sufficiency and political transformation of the "bare life" of tents on the beach by bringing people to consciousness about Hawaiian land struggles and by activating creative solidarities. It is presumed, according to Agamben (1998), that the bare life is incapable of making autonomous decisions. However, the people of puʻuhonua challenge this characterization and do so with increasing regularity as the village itself continues to grow its political power, digital presence, and cultural importance for all people of Hawaiʻi who can relate to being priced out of paradise. The village embraces the bare life and demands a second look at the analytical capacity it offers for transforming oppressive settler relations. Within this transformation the future is optimistic, however cruel or bleak it may at first appear.

Puʻuhonua o Waiʻanae challenges the discursive limits of homelessness as a category for purposes of policy and protocol. Unlike state-based programs that focus on providing shelter to transition out of homelessness as a matter of discipline, the village reaffirms the cultural restoration of ʻāina-based relationship building through direct action as a matter of mending relations of harmony. The distinction between those who are home-free, homeless, and/or houseless is mostly absent in contemporary debates about what to do about the "homeless problem." In this article, I reposition the conversation to explore how Kānaka Maoli, in particular, understand "re-placing" themselves temporally and spatially back on the land (Fermantez, 2012) rather than opting for other available housing "solutions" that are often taken as a stand-in for universalized care in larger legislative contexts.

Oh Back! To Paragraph 175

By the summer of 2015, Layla was doing odd jobs, recycling cans, and trading goods and services with fellow villagers at Puʻuhonua o Waiʻanae to meet daily needs.

She refused an offer for a room in a nearby shelter facility to maintain these relationships. Moreover, past experiences with transphobia by staff and residents at the shelter facility prompted her to turn down the offer. "They forced me to use the men's bathroom against my will," she told me (field notes, March 2017).

The effects of transphobia in her life have left Layla reluctant to accept offers for work and shelter from unknown sources. This is intergenerational trauma. In 2015, she declined a job offer at a nearby resort, afraid that she'd be fired for being māhū. "I'm too old to deal with that shit," she told me on a hot Sunday. "I just want to work in my yard and take these recyclables in to buy food for my cats and dogs" (field notes, November 2016). The shit Layla is referring to is racism, cisheteropatriarchy, and capitalism—institutionalized technologies of governmental control that moved from making her life hard to unbearable. These institutions have undergirded the various settler logics and assimilation technologies aimed at erasing Layla's Hawaiian ways of knowing and being. For Hawaiian transgender women, or māhū, the risk of state violence has compounded encounters with these technologies. Many transgender and queer people of color have a healthy distrust for law enforcement officers due to past experiences.

In 1963, the state of Hawai'i passed a public ordinance dubiously termed by the courts as "deception under the law," or paragraph 175, which forced māhū to wear a button that read, "I am a boy." The buttons were distributed at local nightclubs such as the Glades, a hotspot in Honolulu for māhū and drag performers. Layla recalls having to wear these buttons every night in town, especially in the 1960s and '70s when Vietnam soldiers were making their way to Honolulu for redeployment and recreation. She recalls police beating up "the queens" (māhū) who refused to wear the buttons and the sheer brutality forced upon the girls who did. The ordinance was borrowed from the Nazi military code, also known as paragraph 175, which sent thousands to death camps during the Holocaust for trivial things like cross-dressing and homosexuality (Mancini, 2010). Penalties for not wearing the button carried a minimum sentence of a year in jail and a one thousand dollar fine.

Sheila, another village māhū in her sixties, a friend of Layla, recalls having to run from law enforcement with or without the button on. She explains, "They didn't care about us girls. All they wanted was to beat us up, rape us, and dispose of our bodies" (field notes, April 2017). Both Sheila and Layla lost a number of māhū friends during the 1970s and '80s. One girl, according to Layla, disappeared under mysterious circumstances, her body found mutilated and disposed of in the Ala Wai canal. Sheila, a friend of the murdered queen, recalls how lax law enforcement was with the handling of the investigation. She believes the officers were responsible for her friend's disappearance. "It was premeditated murder, those assholes took my friend's life" (field notes, April 2017).

A Refuge Fit for Queens

At the village, Layla expresses feeling like the days of people "clocking her t," or giving her weird double takes because of her transgender positionality, are behind her. She feels safe in the village. Adding to her level of comfort is the fact that the village is run almost entirely by gender-nonconforming Hawaiian women, including gay and transgender women, as well as those who position themselves as politically queer and/or accepting of LGBTQ people. Pu'uhonua o Wai'anae is a Hawaiian

cultural sanctuary that naturally includes protections for transgender and queer individuals from the dehumanization of capitalism and cisheteronormativity, two systems upheld by a belief that only two genders (male and female) and heterosexuality serve as the only productive norms for market economics. The village offers a queer alternative to such a belief. Hawaiian and other Pacific families, for example, have long carved out a place for māhū (trans) and aikāne (gay) individuals in society. Aunty Laka, the village's second-in-command, was raised by "da kine" (queer and transgender) relatives and pledges to maintain the village's queerness in this way.

However, it isn't all sunshine and roses. "Living in the village is a full-time job," Layla reminds me. "You have to haul your own water, build your own hale (house), and carry out at least ten hours of community service once a month to remove rubbish from the village." Such cleanups are made possible with the help of Hawaiians from the nearby community. One person, a hefty Hawaiian man from the nearby Hawaiian homestead, donates his semitruck to haul the trash once a month. On these days, volunteers from local church, school, and governmental organizations lend a hand. Still, despite all the help and support, the village has unmet needs.

The nearest bathrooms and water spigots are located hundreds of yards from the village, making it especially difficult for disabled and elderly villagers to access. Cruel optimism, as defined by Lauren Berlant (2011), is a relational double bind where one's attachment to an object sustains life, but the object itself is actually a threat to flourishing. The village represents this cruel optimism. As Layla points out, "It's better to be in a jungle that loves you than in a house that doesn't. If we had bathrooms and showers, things would be a lot better for us." By stapling flower-print sarongs to wooden pallet walls, Layla has enough privacy to bathe fully naked. She uses water jugs to complete the task, an important ritual for her. "I don't want boils," she tells me one day, alluding to the prevalence of skin infections among villagers who bathe near the garbage-filled dumpsters and water spigots in the boat harbor parking lot. She continues, "I don't understand why the government doesn't provide us with basic stuff like toilets and showers. They know we're here" (field notes, September 2017).

The simple answer to Layla's question is that the state sees the village as an obstacle to long-term, stable, permanent housing. To build accessible sanitation facilities for the village would make it appear as though the state supports an obstacle rather than a solution. Meanwhile, public health concerns of the villagers remain an ongoing problem that has less to do with those who are without resources and more to do with those who have resources but choose not to help. An ongoing component of my research involves actively organizing partnerships, collaborating with political and community stakeholders, and working with village leaders to challenge this reductive depiction of the village.

The Fluidity of Home

Anela is a twenty-one-year-old Hawaiian-Samoan transgender resident at Puʻuhonua o Waiʻanae. She is a defiant, philosophical "spartan" with curly brown locks, ʻehu blonde streaks, and muscly calves. Her no-nonsense attitude meets with a tenacity of will that is humble, honest, and genuine. Working hard to keep the village organized and clean, Anela believes that "home" is what you make it. She spends much time caring for this idea in a multiroom tent house shared with several other young Hawaiian adults and children.

Residing with Aunty Tina, the village's "commander in chief," Anela and the crew of young folks live and conduct daily chores under sage tutelage and guidance. The campsite reminds me of my own childhood in the house on Puhano Street, where my grandma ruled. Aunty Tina is the matriarch, the glue of the ʻohana, who keeps everyone working together to make sure there is food on the table and that there is a strong sense of belonging for everyone. Anela is known as Aunty Tina's "son," an endearing term since being informally adopted by the stern leader a few years back. This informal adoption practice, or hānai kinship, is a key strength of ʻohana relationships mediated through more-than-bloodline relations rooted in intimate care and reciprocity.

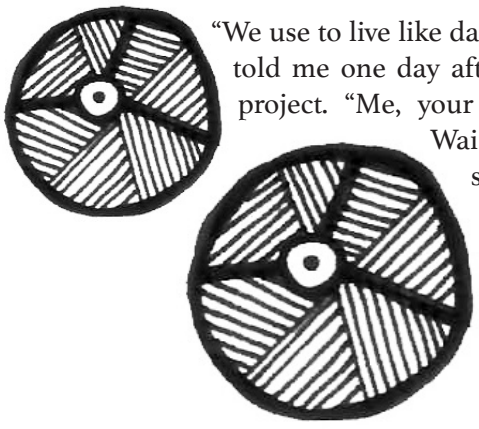
Understanding the ʻohana relationship within a queer cosmology of aloha ʻāina disrupts and expands ideas about Hawaiian belonging in contemporary life and the important embrace of our queer and Pacific kin. Aside from creating solidarity across racial, gender, ʻāina, and housing divides, being home-free enriches the ʻohana relationship and animates the undertheorized political terrain for an expansive queer indigeneity that refuses to settle and disappear. Hawaiian epistemologist Manulani Aluli-Meyer asserts that basing a movement on money is a mistake. In this vein, I argue that a queer cosmology of aloha ʻāina expresses a refusal of capitalist exploitation through chosen family arrangements of mutual reliance and collective autonomy, which are generative and effectively mobile in subverting social alienation in everyday life.

"I'm not fish like you yet," Anela tells me one day as we hike up pillbox, a mountain trail in Maile. "I don't have a preferred gender pronoun or whatever you call it. I'm okay with either 'he' or 'she,' but who knows what the future holds?" Like the tent she now lives in, home for Anela's gender identity and expression is liminal, constructed, and flexible. It transcends the hegemonic sphere of biologically determined dichotomies that fail to capture her wholeness as "male" or "female," just as owning a rambler fails to define what it means to be "home-free." Instead, home appears to evolve, move, and adapt to the social and physical environments and orientations in which she finds herself. "Tida," she explains, as we sit on a bomb shelter to enjoy panoramic views of rolling mountains and pristine beaches, "one day I will be on hormones, go to college, and buy a house." I reply with an encouraging smile and a chuckle. This isn't a topic of discussion we'd normally have back at the village, around people who are not trans-identified. Anela is a healer, and her optimism about the future, a rare phenomenon in our village, is palpable. I am afraid that offering critical concerns might dissolve this hopeful disposition. I don't push sensitive questions and tensions. She and I are both well aware that things can, and indeed do change, with the high probability that they won't be in our favor. "I'm here to support you, Anela," I tell her while hopelessly struggling to descend down the mountainside. "Take my hand, Tida," she responds, preventing me from falling off a steep embankment. I gather my composure as we sit for a few minutes on a large gray rock surrounded by tall yellow grass near a tree with exposed roots. "We help each other," she reminds me. "Home is a journey, not a destination."

Home is a journey. For Hawaiians, working-class immigrants, and trans folk alike, this journey often involves structural violence defined and redefined by an Empire that moves from making life difficult to intolerable. In this work, we examine alterNative economies of solidarity between Hawaiians, settlers, and arrivants at Puʻuhonua o Waiʻanae through the ʻohana principle, an inclusive Hawaiian concept of family that emphasizes

mutual respect for all individuals making up the extended family and kinship network. We pay particular attention to its anarcha-indigenous home-making capacity within a third space of counter-Empire resistance to settle claims to land, language, and water in contemporary Hawaiʻi. Taking environmental justice, class struggle, and indigenous economies seriously, I situate the village at Puʻuhonua o Waiʻanae within a milieu of Hawaiian resistance and resurgence outside the dominant housing social structure of contemporary Hawaiʻi. In this article, I look at how villagers of Puʻuhonua o Waiʻanae perform and/or enact an anti-oppressive and non-statist form of self-determination in the largest outdoor "homeless" encampment in the United States.

According to post-Marxist philosophers Negri and Hardt, "The creative forces of the multitude that sustain Empire are also capable of autonomously constructing a counter-Empire, an alternative political organization of global flows and exchanges" (2000, p. xv). At Puʻuhonua o Waiʻanae, that counter-Empire is sustained by the ʻohana, that dwelling place of social interconnection and responsibility. Borrowing from Tongan anthropologist Epeli Hauʻofa (1993), the ʻohana serves as "our sea of islands" in the village. That is, ʻohana is a s/Pacific third space of relational belonging shared between people, place, and the more-than-human, beyond-colonial mappings of our island homes, bodies, and ideas as small, isolate, and violable.



"We use to live like dat, you know," my Aunty Mandy told me one day after hearing about my research project. "Me, your dad, everybody up-house in Waiʻanae Valley. Before the construction money, we slept outside. Those were the days. Grandma played music and we all sang, talked stories, and laughed ourselves to sleep." Aunty Mandy is my dad's sister. She is a small-framed, warm-spirited Hawaiian mahjong player from Waiʻanae who smokes American Spirit menthol lights. She lives in a four-bedroom, three-bathroom rambler in the Hawaiian Homestead of Kapolei along with her son, his wife, and their three kids. Her role in my upbringing at the house on Puhano Street cannot be overstated. She is the aunty who took me out for ice cream the year everyone forgot about my ninth birthday, the one who always said "I love you" when it counted, and the one who cried for me when I returned to Washington state for high school. "The aloha of our ʻohana is more powerful than money," she reminds me one night in Kapolei, as she lights up a cigarette. "It is aloha and ʻohana that keep us safe when we need to be cared for and loved." Interestingly, this notion of aloha, staying connected, and re-membering ʻohana, moves from up-house in Waiʻanae Valley, the new tract housing development in Kapolei, to the tent structures of Puʻuhonua o Waiʻanae, where the ʻohana continues to grow in large numbers. The ʻohana is a safety net for individuals and families facing displacement and dispossession. The strength of ʻohana lies in its ability to resist structural violence at the individual, community, and transnational level. The decentralized but closely knit organization of the ʻohana comforts the individual. It manifests itself by linking local officials and community organizations to individuals and families needing support to stop an eviction from their home. It finds expression in "talk story" among politically situated relatives to make land, water, and food resources accessible to people who need it most and can instill in the hearts and minds of the larger community that protecting people and places serves as a benefit to everyone caught in the inevitable fall of Empire.

Mapping the Counter-Empire

Some tents are canoes. Some are ramblers. Some are canoe ramblers. A few of them have multiple bedrooms. Living rooms. Kitchens. Dining areas. Upstairs, downstairs, houses made of pallets. Front yards. Backyards. Communal meeting spaces.

Beyond the design of architectural bricolage that uses available materials to make shelter, Pu'uhonua o Wai'anae has its own map drawn and routinely updated by Aunty Laka, a middle-aged Hawaiian mother of three. Tediously documenting the 130+ campsites is no simple task, requiring periodic updates as people come and go. The map challenges the colonial techniques used to displace Native peoples from their territories through the cadastral survey, which mapped subdivisions for sale and profit.

Though not formally recognized by the state, the camp's map, the village, and what they stand for, are a radical departure from the state's portrayal of tent cities as dangerous and disorganized sites of disposability for Hawaiians who have failed to assimilate. Here, at Pu'uhonua o Wai'anae, Hawaiians have not failed to assimilate. Rather, they have refused to accept the economic and state violence that makes life unbearable under capitalism. Here, I borrow from Mohawk anthropologist Audra Simpson the concept of refusal to better understand how the assemblage at Pu'uhonua o Wai'anae is really about housing aloha (deep love and care) in a time of crisis beyond and within the call for economic and policy reform (Simpson, 2007).

The village is a well-known home to a restoration project for a distinctly Hawaiian place of refuge. This kind of home, however precarious, is proving surprisingly effective despite the imperfect balance of power in contemporary Hawai'i, which disproportionately alienates Hawaiians from the land. Hawaiian women lead the project's everyday affairs in Wai'anae and are known for being the camp's most devoted residents.

Aunty Pearl, a Hawaiian woman in her sixties, for example, has lived here for more than twenty years; Aunty Tina, ten; and Aunty Laka, seven. On nineteen acres of undeveloped land, these Hawaiian women are leading the charge to reclaim the now radical idea that people can and indeed do create "free" and "safe" places to affirm life outside of capitalism and do so with little to no help from the state government. Taken in this vein, the village can be read as housing aloha 'aina within a "Hawaiian Dream" that protects those suffering under the destructive spell of the American one.

Admittedly, the village is an unusual scene of chaos and confusion for the newbie and is not completely removed from the state apparatus and its policies to evict tent cities. However, there is something about tent village life here in Wai'anae that transcends the politics of visibility and liberal recognition. Picture Gilligan's Island meets Mad Max. Mopeds, dune buggies, wooden pallets, roaming dogs, rugged men with tattoos, and tin roofs meet with well-manicured dirt pathways, home gardens, and neatly divided campsites headed by sixteen strong female defenders. At first, the village appears as a kind of postapocalyptic scenario that should be avoided at all costs. However, after taking time to become a part of it, building friendships with the people residing in it, and feeling the sunrise change the morning temperature on the skin as roosters crow to greet the day, the village becomes less scary and more like a place worth returning to.

Homeless Discourse as Settler Colonial Violence

Kānaka, or Hawaiians, are reported to make up the majority of the homeless population in Hawaiʻi. As alarming as this statistic appears to be, without a nuanced historical and contemporary context of land struggles, it can be misleading. In particular, statistics have the effect of entrapping Hawaiians within a settler colonial occupation that frames failure by quantifying what Hawaiians are said to be lacking. The lack of rambler housing, for example, almost always entails some kind of political intervention to justify the use of force to discipline precariously housed Hawaiian bodies. This is an old biopolitical technique with contemporary vestiges, requiring critical assessment by scholars on the consequences of Empire and how home is defined and redefined by affective relationships in the twenty-first century. Through the effect of Empire, or the ways in which imperialism shapes and structures the way people feel about homelessness, we can better understand affordable housing policies from a different perspective. Affordable housing sounds like a well-intended political intervention for homeless individuals. However, as Aunty Laka points out, "Such policies will not help the people living at Puʻuhonua o Waiʻanae, because affordable housing is still out of reach for most of us and doesn't resolve our land crisis."

Along the Waiʻanae coast, where the largest Hawaiian population anywhere in the world is said to reside, anarchical and indigenous forms of autonomy at Puʻuhonua o Waiʻanae disrupt the naturalization of homelessness as a particularly Hawaiian social problem caused by a failure to assimilate. This autonomy challenges political interventions by delineating a critique of the current state's ongoing failure to respect Hawaiian sovereignty, our people, and our place-based values over time. It juxtaposes the limits of the state's bureaucracy with the collaborative and queer cosmology offered by an alterNative land system that prioritizes indigenous well-being, non-statist freedom, and more-than-human relations above profit and social control. This is a critical departure from state-based systems ruled by capitalist values, institutions, and settler state ideologies of indigenous elimination.

The people of Puʻuhonua o Waiʻanae who are reclaiming their displaced, sometimes broken, and socially abandoned bodies as sites of spiritual import, cultural resilience, and autonomous refuge articulate an alterNative economy of solidarity and epistemic disobedience that refuses to settle for a land management system that is devoid of aloha. The aloha I seek to index here is not the "aloha" bought and sold in market economy fantasies for touristic consumption. Rather, it is aloha ʻāina beyond monetary and political gain and the elite social structure of liberal recognition. It rests, instead, within the building up of intimate relationships between variously positioned people banding together to make places like Puʻuhonua o Waiʻanae feel possible, like this a good place for all of us to stand as one.

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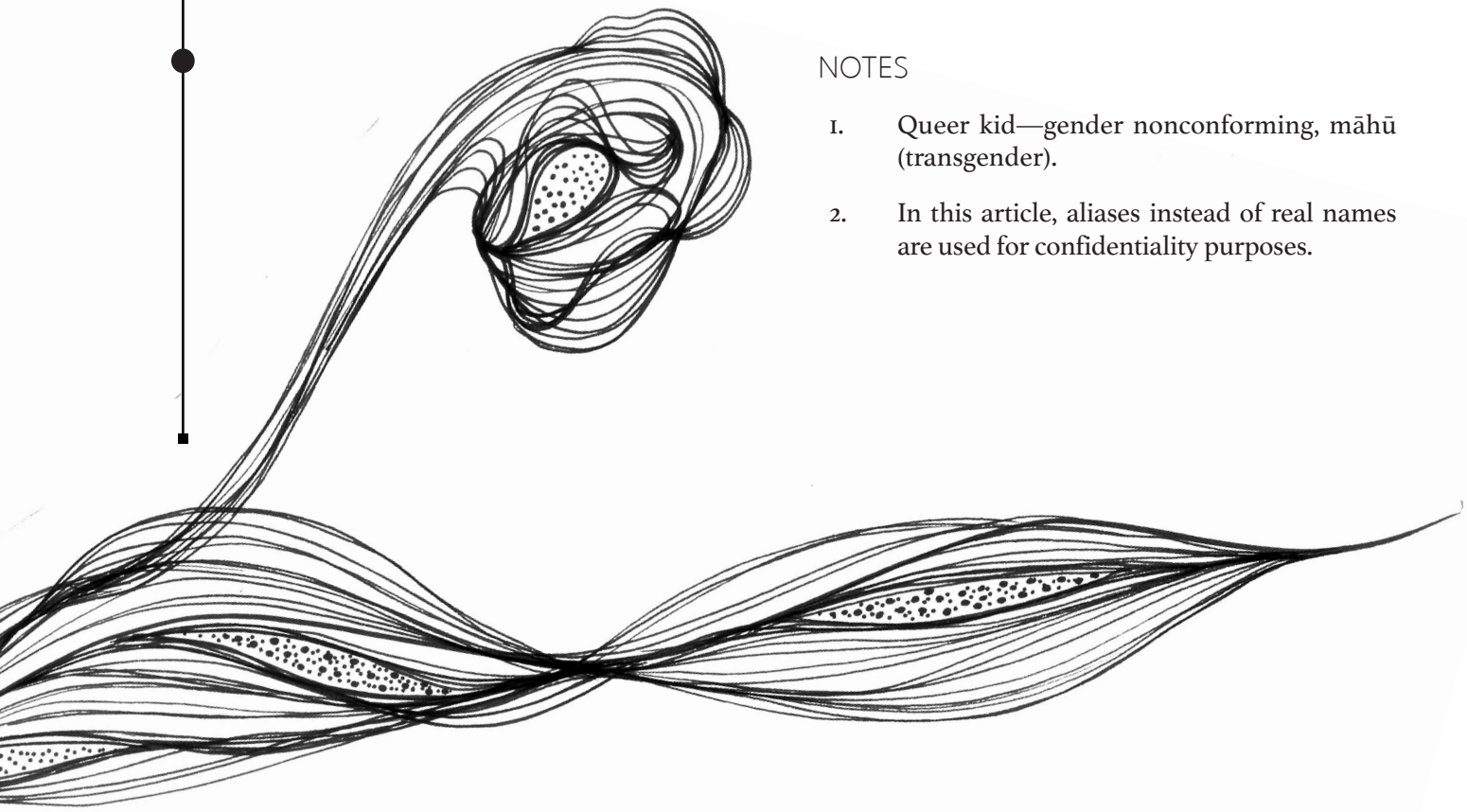

NOTES

1. Queer kid—gender nonconforming, māhū (transgender).
2. In this article, aliases instead of real names are used for confidentiality purposes.