

Perspectives of Kanaka Well-Being:
The Stories of Native Hawaiian Doctoral Students

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Dedication

*He mai,
E ku 'u pua lehua o ka wao
I pōhai 'ia e nā manu o uka
Ku 'u lehua i mohala i ka ua o Ha 'ao
Ua ao hale nei, ua hiki mai lā 'oe,
Mai. E komo mai, eia nō mākou nei*

From the collection from Mary Kawena Pūku'i

For my 'ohana:

We did it gang!

With the help of many hearts and many hands, this work has been possible. With high highs and low lows, I have been carried, held, heard, seen, and brought along on this incredible journey. This experience has taught me to 'auwana once again as I have moved through joy, grief, love, pain, happiness, sorrow, laughter, and frustration. If you have known these experiences too, this is dedicated to you. May you be blessed by the rain, may you taste the sunshine, and may you feel at peace. I am honored to have met you here on these pages. May this also serve as a reminder for you to honor the well-being within you, beside you, and around you as we continue to learn how to love and be loved in return.

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Abstract

This study examined Kanaka (Native Hawaiian) well-being and focused on two questions: (a) How do Kanaka doctoral students describe their well-being? and (b) What lived experiences contribute to the development of their well-being? Rooted in a multiple case study design, this exploratory qualitative inquiry tells the story of 11 Kanaka doctoral students at the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa and their genealogy of well-being. Well-being is explored through hula as a research approach. This approach is informed by a combination of Kanaka ‘Ōiwi Critical Race Theory with aspects of embodied cognition theories. It also draws upon hula as an art form in the research design. The author’s hula genealogy framed what she heard, smelled, tasted, touched, and felt and informed how she heard, understood, and re-told the stories of the Kānaka who participated. She developed a (k) new understanding of well-being as pono (balance within the mind, body, and spirit) and mālama (care for the relationships with others and ‘āina, as land and ancestor), to make sense of how contemporary Kanaka well-being was rooted in a practice of care. Kanaka doctoral students experienced and embodied imbalance, and through the process, I discovered pono and mālama routines and activities that maintained their well-being practice. While challenging, the COVID-19 pandemic provided the opportunity for these Kānaka to honor and nurture themselves and their needs in ways that may have had other benefits. Results highlight the potential for prejudice to influence self-stigma and negative attitudes about self-care. Results also suggest the privilege of having a relationship with ‘āina, and the need for cultivating a culture of care through healing Hawaiian communities.

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Chapter 1.

Introduction

Hālau hula is a school of knowledge, where generations of Hawaiian movement exist inscribing within its songs and chants lessons of the present. This cultural memory transforms through the movement process of hula (Hawaiian dance) into the genealogy of the school to serve as a reminder of the challenges Kānaka Maoli, Native Hawaiians, face as a lāhui, a people. Through several hula mele (as songs or chants used in Hawaiian dance) that I will share forthcoming, we can reflect on the contemporary conditions of Kanaka to make sense of how the trauma process is being reclaimed and restoried in real-time (Wilson-Hokowhitu, 2019). Through this reflection, a revitalization of histories is possible through the rediscovery of genealogies. While imperfect, I attempt to bring this process into an embodied form in this narrative by stating three hula as a context for understanding my introduction to this research topic. As a starting point, these hula reflect on contemporary problems for Kānaka. In this research, I attempt to explore such problems through a counternarrative exploration of well-being. This understanding is important for reconciling the trauma that inhabits Kanaka bodies. This understanding also pertains to haumāna or students today, as Kānaka inhabit academic space. As I reflect on the meaningful experiences within my genealogy and the obstacles I have faced, I am inspired to cultivate (k)new¹ ways of knowing that support the development of my own well-being beyond the scope of this paper, as well as how this scholarship contributes to the survivance of Kānaka as people. I hope this work inspires how you may understand well-being for yourself, as illuminated by the well-being development of the Kānaka I interviewed, and how this understanding could support healthy and thriving educational communities.

¹ A (k)new ideology is applied in this research as described in detail in chapter two.

From the mo‘olelo (story) of Pele and Hi‘iaka we learn about such challenges. Over time, new mo‘olelo arise to inscribe this same memory and lesson again, as hula practitioners learn and re-learn to tell these stories as well as their own. From this journey, the practitioner faces obstacles first in the form of metaphor as learned through the hula and its movements. Then, as obstacles manifest in their lived experience. These hula are then returned to over and over again as a (k)new means for learning. As hula practitioners come to embody and practice these lessons in their present and lived experience, they inscribe this meaning and knowledge as well as its challenges and tensions into their bodies. I trace this genealogy of obstacles through several hula, which helped me to reflect upon the problem statement for this qualitative inquiry. For me, this genealogy of obstacles re-presents my past, present, and future in hula beginning with “No Luna I Ka Hale Kai,” transformed through “A Ko‘olau Au,” and illuminated further in “‘Ino Ko‘olau.” I provide this mo‘okū‘auhau of hula as I see them as tools that inform contemporary Kanaka problems. I considered if one hula would suffice to demonstrate this understanding, and I reflected on the potential challenges that arose from tracing and re-tracing obstacles. However, I found that this re-telling across these three hula represents my mo‘okū‘auhau and through its repetitive qualities evokes different and important ideas potentially lost when not considered together. I will first mention these hula, presenting some ideas along the way. These ideas work in genealogical succession to inform my problem statement for this research. Together, this set of hula and its movements recognize my genealogical past and inform how I understood the contemporary context of problems for Kānaka which have persisted (as informed by No Luna I Ka Hale Kai), which are (k)new and embedded in the cultural memory of Kānaka (as informed by A Ko‘olau Au), and which are a culmination of a complex history (particularly in ‘Ino Ko‘olau). Utilizing these hula, I then provide a statement of the problem as situated in the

Hawai‘i context, through hula and its movements in particular. In doing so, I draw attention to aspects of ‘Ino Ko‘olau that are intertwined with the problems Kānaka face in the present to demonstrate the persistence of these problems in the re-membling found in the hula.

I trace these three hula as a foundational genealogy for my problem statement. As Tengan (2008b) suggests ancestral knowledge is a tool for addressing contemporary problems. By extension, ho‘omanawanui (2014b) offers that the mo‘olelo for Pele and Hi‘iaka is one such tool. While I do not utilize these hula as a tool to address problems here, I acknowledge these hula, which are embedded in the Pele and Hi‘iaka mo‘olelo, as a means for understanding the contemporary condition and problems of Kānaka as people. While a full analysis of these hula are beyond the scope of this introduction I offer a few key ideas, specifically from the final hula ‘Ino Ko‘olau. These ideas are inspiration, providing a glimpse into my wonderings and wanderings as inspired by my interactions with other practitioners, Kanaka scholarship, and Kanaka histories.

No Luna i ka Hale Kai no ka Ma‘alewa

No luna i ka hale kai no ka ma‘alewa
Nānā ka maka iā Moananuikalehua² lae
Noho i ke kai o Maliu ē
I kū a‘ela ka lehua i laila la
‘Eā lā, ‘eā lā, ‘eā,
I laila ho‘i,
I laila ho‘i

Hōpoe ka lehua ki‘eki‘e i luna lā
Maka‘u ka lehua a i ke kanaka la
Lilo a i lalo e hele ai
‘Eā lā, ‘eā lā, ‘eā,
I lalo ho‘i,
I lalo ho‘i

² In the Hawaiian language newspapers, Ho‘oulumāhie (2008) notes Moananuikalehua as a variation of Moananui‘aikalehua (p. 240).

Kea‘au ‘ili‘ili nehe i ke kai lā
Ho‘olono i ke kai a‘o Puna lā ‘eā
A‘o Puna i ka ulu hala lā
‘Eā lā, ‘eā lā, ‘eā,
Kaiko‘o Puna,
Kaiko‘o Puna

In some traditions, this hula is taught and learned as a lesson of Hi‘iakaikapoliopole and the obstacles she faced on her journey to fetch Lohi‘au for her sister Pele. As complementary and oppositional forces, Pele and Hi‘iaka represent a counterbalanced relationship emblematic of a Hawaiian worldview (ho‘omanawanui, 2014b). I have learned from this mele the principle of hō‘ailona, the idea that hō‘ailona foreshadows in Kanaka consciousness³ obstacles to come as a call to action for lāhui. The premonition in this hula is described through Hi‘iaka’s tall standing lehua trees, i kū a‘ela ka lehua i laila la, which are destroyed in this re-telling but to which she returns to despite the rough seas as she fulfills her promise to her sister. While I have learned and re-learned this hula several times it took many years to come to a place of embodied understanding of this hula. Each experience created a new meaning for me as I reflected on the journey of Hi‘iaka to better understand the obstacles along her journey and her relationships with others and with ‘āina. In the movements of this hula, I reflect on the i laila, i lalo, and kaiko‘o of her journey, and the ma‘alewa that happens in this process. What is important to understand here, is that these teachings became a genealogical model or mo‘okū‘auhau from the beginning of time to now and from ancestors to us as Kānaka (ho‘omanawanui, 2014b). The obstacles Hi‘iaka faced, as touched upon in this hula, reflect a Kanaka consciousness toward contemporary challenges.

³ Invoked in this Kanaka consciousness is a “kuleana consciousness” as described by ho‘omanawanui (2014b), which is a recognition of responsibility. This consciousness demonstrates empowerment and agency through mo‘olelo such as Pele and Hi‘iaka and for Kanaka ‘Ōiwi is a consciousness of the revitalization efforts of lāhui.

A Ko‘olau Au

A Ko‘olau wau ‘ike i ka ua
E kokolo a lepo mai ana e ka ua

E ka‘i kū ana e ka ua
E nū mai ana ka ua i ke kuahiwi

E po‘i ana e ka ua me he nalu a la
E puka, e puka mai ana ka ua

In succession and over time, I learned “A Ko‘olau Au” as part of a trilogy⁴ of hula. This hula, also from the Pele and Hi‘iakaikapoliopole legends, “refers to the windward, or *ko‘olau*, side of O‘ahu.” (Tatar, 1993, p. 220). Drawing closer to home, I came to contextualize the metaphors embedded in this hula in my daily life, and through movements that became reminiscent of the types of rain, as challenges, embodied in this hula. Such metaphors⁵ are illuminated through the body, where the circular and dynamic diagonal movements reflect a deep and embodied religiosity. While an imperfect metaphor, such movements could be reflected in their spiritual similarities with Sufi whirling (see Harel et al., 2021). For example, the foot movements used in the hula, “A Ko‘olau Au,” are similar in practice to Sufi whirling as the ritual movements are meditative and allow for spiritual connection to higher beings although there are differences. From this space, puka or passing through and emergence happens akin to how the sun rises to break through the night sky. In response to the preceding hula which demonstrates a foreshadowing of obstacles, this hula reflects on the rain connecting Kanaka sense abilities (see

⁴ In the hula lineage I am a part of this trilogy consists of Kaulilua, A Ko‘olau Au, and ‘Au‘a ‘ia. These hula when taken together represent all life. I draw attention to A Ko‘olau Au here because of its application as a metaphor for the obstacles of the recent past, to the obstacles perhaps faced by my Kumu’s Kumu, Maiki Aiu Lake during the Hawaiian renaissance and in respect of the political, social, and cultural conditions of that time.

⁵ These metaphors are embedded words found in this hula namely, kokolo, ka‘i kū, nū, and po‘i. These metaphors help to contextualize the movements as well as sounds in a way that is indicative of what ho‘omanawanui (2014b) describes as “the kinesthetic and auditory imagery of the oli” (p. xlv) that not only personify the rain as described in this hula but are functional in the way they represent natural processes.

Oliveira, 2016) to inform the process of puka or emergence. The reduplication of the term puka in this hula both reflects a sense ability and is a poetic device. This term is also often associated with graduation, as the process of puka is a similar passing from one phase of life to the next.

‘Ino Ko‘olau

‘Ino Ko‘olau, e ‘Ino Ko‘olau
Aia kena i ka ua Ko‘olau
Ke ua maila i Maelieli
Ke ho‘owa‘awa‘a maila i He‘eia
He kupa la i ka ua i ke kai
Ha‘a hula le‘a ka ua la

I ‘Ahuimani, ka ua hō‘oni,
Ho‘onaue i ka pu‘u koa
Ka ua pō‘ai hale o Kahalu‘u
Lu‘ulu‘u lu‘ulu‘u iho nei au
I ka pū‘olo waimaka o ka ‘ōnohi
Ke kulu iho nei e

In the survivance of my hula lineage, my Kumu Hula created a (k)new trilogy of materials to be learned or re-learned by haumāna or students going through the ‘ūniki in 2021. In addition to the trilogy set forth by our Kumu’s Kumu Hula, Maiki Aiu Lake, we would learn ‘Ino Ko‘olau as part of this (k)new trilogy⁶. In a similar fashion, ‘Ino Ko‘olau was integrated into the training process. While my kumu taught this hula before, it came to be parallel with A Ko‘olau Au for me in this new context. As Tatar (1993) described A Ko‘olau Au is, “similar in content and purpose to “‘Ino Ko‘olau e, ‘ino Ko‘olau,” a *mele kau*, prayer of supplication, chanted by Hi‘iaka on O‘ahu on her way to Kaua‘i to see Lohi‘au” (p. 220). The movement genealogy of

⁶ The hula in this trilogy as gifted to me and my hula brothers and sisters by our Kumu Hula, Michael Pili Pang, included “‘Ino Ko‘olau,” “Hālau Hanalei,” and “‘Ūlei Pahu.” While the genealogical trilogy of our lineage from Kumu Hula Maiki Aiu Lake represents the perpetuation, presentation, destination, and portal of puka through which our hula genealogy has survived, this (k)new trilogy represents the tradition, adaptation, and innovation of hula pahu as a means for knowing and understanding the living and breathing knowledge system of a hula practitioner.

this hula is multidimensional as the diagonal movements from A Ko‘olau Au were perhaps transformed. This hula embodies a transitional and ceremonial space as the body moves on one plane while maintaining its seamless circular motion. As I reflected on these subtleties, I believe this shift in movement is reminiscent of the complementary forces of Pele and Hi‘iaka and the counterbalance involved in their relationship (ho‘ omanawanui, 2014b). This genealogy also traces a performative quality that may have evolved in response to occupation and colonization. In other words, perhaps some of the changes in movement can be traced genealogically, and in part, in response to the colonial gaze. For example, the ritual movement sequences used in hula on the heiau, outdoor temples, transformed in the 19th and 20th centuries as the meaning of movement in hula evolved in new contexts as can be seen in still and moving picture film (Kaepler, 2010) and proscenium stage performance. As such the metaphors embedded within these hula react with one another, holding their essences in a relationship, and embodying shifting cultural meaning while maintaining and perpetuating core values. I will now use lines from this third mele as a guide for how I explored the contemporary condition of Kānaka. This approach is informed by my ‘auwana⁷ process and is unique to my practitionership in hula.

‘Ino Ko‘olau, E ‘Ino Ko‘olau

In this hula, I draw attention to the initial reduplication of ‘ino Ko‘olau, and the stormy weather that Hi‘iaka faces. These storms, while reflective of the nature of the Ko‘olau mountain range as a physical place, also allude to the internal storms Hi‘iaka is facing throughout her journey. These obstacles create the ‘ino or storm present in the hula. Contemporary manifestations of these storms can be traced to colonization and occupation (Wright & Balutski,

⁷ I must include a note here to thank my academic sister, Makanalani Gomes. She formally modeled inviting and embodying this ‘auwana practice into the collective academic and professional spaces we inhabited together throughout my doctoral journey. Experiencing her in this way allowed me to dream and invite my own ‘auwana practice into my writing. Mahalo ā nui, Makanalani.

2016), racism (Kaholokula et al., 2012), intergenerational trauma (Bissen, 2020), and lateral violence (Nguyen-Truong et al., 2023). When trauma affects a group of people because of colonization and occupation, research suggests that well-being also suffers (Dela Cruz et al., 2006).

Ke Ua Maila

Woven throughout this hula are several poetic references to express rain. Rain characteristics throughout Pele and Hi‘iaka, as seen in this hula, provide not only an understanding of the physical ‘āina that are referenced (in this case Ko‘olau, Mā‘eli‘eli, He‘eia, ‘Āhuimanu, and Kahalu‘u) but also describe the quality and strength of the rain through their meaning (ho‘omanawanui, 2014b). Such rain qualities referenced in this hula represent the downpour of rain that create gullies, lashing against the sea, moving, and shaking until Hi‘iaka is surrounded by this downpour. Situated contemporarily, this understanding reflects how external forces, as mentioned previously through the “storms” that are referenced, could inhabit the physical bodies of Kānaka. Such forces are seen through the manifestation of disproportionate outcomes for Native Hawaiians (Kana‘iaupuni & Ishibashi, 2003; Liu & Alameda, 2011). And research calls attention to these “qualities of rain” for Kānaka as higher rates of suicide, obesity, risky behavior, and physical, mental, and emotional abuse. As I theoretically ‘auwana through this process, I recognize the tensions this exploration may cause for other practitioners and Kanaka scholars. I honor that tension in you and invite you to hold it lovingly as I will continue to explore some ideas about rain in the upcoming paragraph. In this flow, I see these ideas working in concert much like musical instruments to create crescendos⁸ and forte, descrescendos and piano, creating dissonance and consonance, and at times being stacatto while at others

⁸ These musical terms refer to some elements of music such as volume, tone, harmony, rhythm, and texture.

legato. I allow these ideas to expand and contract just as the movements of this hula mele have for me throughout my years of practitionership.

Lu‘ulu‘u, Lu‘ulu‘u Iho Nei Au

In the reduplication of lu‘ulu‘u, following the many references to rain, this hula draws attention to the sadness and burden that fills Hi‘iaka. Such a reference is used in Hawaiian poetry to describe the physical weight of grief (Pūku‘i & Elbert, 1986). As such, Hi‘iaka’s eyes fill with a swelling pū‘olo of tears. In relationship, the storms that are faced and the qualities of rain that become embodied in swelling tears reflect how Kānaka, like Hi‘iaka, embody the characteristics of ‘āina. Lu‘ulu‘u is also a reduplication of the term lu‘u, meaning to dive or immerse oneself into the water following the reference to the pō‘ai hale o Kahalu‘u. Perhaps such a reference also described the nature of this immersive rain. The Kahalu‘u rain cycle is said to circle around Kahalu‘u and does not go beyond its hills (Ko‘olaupoko Hawaiian Civic Club, 2013). In this way, the embodiment of problems for Kānaka can be traced through deficit-based perspectives, which Kānaka have historically pushed against through counternarratives (Lee, 2017) such as through the counternarrative (i.e., mo‘olelo or story) in which this hula is situated (Archibald, 2008). This reality as informed by the lu‘ulu‘u raises important questions for the future. For example, how do we face the traumas (‘ino) embedded in our histories? How do we learn from the qualities of rain within us? How do we counternarrative the sadness and weight of grief (lu‘ulu‘u) through stories in which we ascend (pi‘i)? And how do these stories cultivate (k)new ways of knowing?

Ha‘a Hula Le‘a Ka Ua La,

Ke Kulu Iho Nei E

In the closing lines for each of these verses, as I was taught them, Hi‘iaka’s tears overflow, and we are reminded that this rain dances with joy. We first return to the ha‘a, which is an older name for hula (ho‘ omanawanui, 2014b), and the emphasis on hula as the dance and its movements. Reminiscent of hula le‘a wale as used in what is said to be the first hula “Ke Ha‘a La Puna,” this reference to hula is a reminder of such joy (le‘a) and the abundance or waiwai particular to this hula as multitudes of rain provide sustenance for the earth or ‘āina. This reference to ha‘a also reflects a sense of humility as embodied in Hawaiian pedagogy (Kahakalau, 2020). In other words, embodying a Hawaiian pedagogy for teaching and learning involves ha‘a, coming from a place of humility in the interdependent process of teaching and learning. In the closing line of the second verse, we return to kulu iho nei, the overflowing of tears. In a counterrepresentation to the preceding lines that describe the swelling as pū‘olo, and the heavy burden of grief, kulu may be understood as a puka of sorts, a sense of relief and a release. Both closing lines counterbalance the lines that precede them to reflect a Kanaka sensibility (or sense ability).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this research is to understand the well-being of Kanaka doctoral students to identify elements of well-being that are consistent with a contemporary Hawaiian worldview. Historically, researchers reported little about the experiences of diverse doctoral students as well as the diverse experiences of doctoral degree recipients. In part, this was due to the historical underrepresentation of diverse groups of students in higher education (Nettles, 1990). As the number of minority students in higher education has increased, questions about their graduate experiences naturally followed (Yuan, 2017), as more diverse students entered higher education pathways. In the next chapter, I map the landscape of literature on doctoral student experiences,

including research on the COVID-19 pandemic, and a bit about the Hawai‘i context to situate this inquiry. I will then describe the topic of well-being and its history, how it developed for me as informed by Indigenous and Kanaka scholars, and the working definition I used for this research project. Lastly, I discuss my research paradigm and my research questions.

Chapter 2.

Literature Review

In this chapter, I map the landscape of literature on doctoral student experiences as a context for understanding the development of well-being in this study. I further situate this understanding through a description of the COVID-19 pandemic as a historically relevant context and include a brief description of the University to further situate this inquiry. I then discuss the history of well-being as the central focus of this research and discuss the constructs which unfolded from this review process. Born out of this work, a definition for well-being is provided and then I present my hula approach to this research, which is followed by a description of my ideology and informs how I present my Indigenous research paradigm. This paradigm is shaped by hula is integrates Kanaka ‘Ōiwi Critical Race Theory as well as aspects of embodied cognition theories. I conclude this chapter with the research questions for this dissertation.

Doctoral Student Experiences

In general, research indicates that the doctoral process for marginalized groups is complex and challenging from entry to degree completion (Tinto, 2004). Researchers have focused on areas of underrepresentation in doctoral education and how larger goals of persistence and degree completion shape challenges and successes. For example, researchers explored the ethnic and racial group differences of minority doctoral students (Clewell, 1987; Morgan & Alcocer, 2017; Platt & Hilton, 2017; Ramirez, 2017; Roksa et al., 2018; Taylor & Antony, 2000), and the experiences of women in higher education (Hoskins, 2015; Moyer et al., 1999; Shotton, 2018). Researchers have also focused on challenges that underrepresented minority students face in particular academic disciplines. For example, they have studied minority doctoral student experiences in biology (Roksa et al., 2018), kinesiology (J. A. Russell,

2015), science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) (Graham, 2013; Jaeger et al., 2013), special education (Wasburn-Moses, 2007), and nursing (Harrigan et al., 2003). Insights from these degree program analyses provide potential solutions for the recruitment and retention of underrepresented students in particular fields.

Doctoral Experiences of Minority Students

The research on minority doctoral students has often focused on underrepresented racial, ethnic, and cultural populations, particularly Black and Hispanic students. Across departments and institutions, there have been efforts to increase minority representation and visibility throughout higher education (Taylor & Antony, 2000). Despite these positive efforts, research on minority doctoral students suggests that many minority students continue to experience racial and cultural discrimination (Nettles, 1990; Yuan, 2017). And yet, minority students often display an intrinsic desire to learn and persist despite adversity (Clewell, 1987). Research on minority students is valuable for defining challenges to persistence. However, considering challenges to persistence in relationship to broader outcomes beyond higher education, such as well-being, and using those outcomes to inform higher education reform is somewhat absent from the literature. Thus, I propose that understanding the embodiment of well-being could illuminate the challenges that Kanaka doctoral students experience in similar ways to other students who have been minoritized and marginalized. By embodied well-being I mean the capacity of the physical body to understand and create meaning through its living and being in the world (Shonstrom, 2020). From the literature, I recognize the power of higher education as a social context to sustain and challenge students intellectually and wonder if and how academia enhances Kanaka students' embodiment of well-being, as students navigate well-being within and beyond their education.

Doctoral Experiences of Women. The experiences of women in doctoral pathways are comparable to the experiences of racial and ethnic minority students (Moyer et al., 1999). While women face similar challenges to racial and ethnic minority students, they differ in the apparent themes that support their higher education success. For Native women the research reveals that both reciprocity and family are integral to their doctoral degree achievement (Shotton, 2018). Reciprocity, in this case, is specifically tied to place, such that women feel a value in their degree achievement because of its power to transform their community or tribe. In contrast to individual achievement, reciprocity with the community was central to their persistence. Family, on the other hand, is a pillar on which Native doctoral women stand. Women in doctoral programs utilize their family support as a resource to their persistence and degree achievement.

However, across career sectors, several nuances arise. Women continue to be underrepresented in the professoriate, despite the growing number of degree recipients (Hoskins, 2015). This evidence calls attention to gender imbalances in the academy. The perpetuation of social inequality has sometimes been compared to a leaky vessel (Carr, 2012), and educational and professional culture can sometimes create a funneling effect (Binder et al., 2016) for women in particular career pathways. Women, compared to men, experience less career mobility and achievement despite similar academic merit (Moyer et al., 1999). According to researchers, these professional challenges are problematic because they represent a lack of opportunity for certain groups within and beyond higher education (Etzkowitz et al., 1994). This implies that encouraging women and minorities to enter doctoral pathways is not enough to transform inequity problems into career success across groups. In a critical dialogue of Kanaka ‘Ōiwi women scholars (Reyes et al., 2020), congruent expressions of their lived experiences as Kanaka women in the academy, as well as their experiences mentoring Kanaka students echo the same

frustrations, pillars of success, and hopes for the future. Through their dialogue, these Kanaka scholars describe the continued challenges that come with U.S. occupation while simultaneously invoking and embodying Haumea⁹, our mother deity, as a call to action for future scholars to do the same. In other words, these scholars utilize the story of Haumea as a guide for how they approach their practices in higher education. By recognizing Haumea's story as a context for their practices, they invoke her spirit and call upon her literally and metaphorically. In doing so, they invite others "to protect the potential of our lāhui ... [and] "rise up" and embody Haumea" (p. 247) too as a means for hope for future generations to thrive and know they are not alone in the fight for social justice.

I humbly offer my research as one pathway to understanding the richness, limits, and various perspectives of doctoral students in the academy to add to the understanding of how Haumea is embodied by Kanaka women in doctoral pathways. Previous research on Haumea embodiment supports the transformation of a unidimensional perspective of health to a holistic model through the examination of social determinants of well-being (Office of Hawaiian Affairs, 2018). Building on this literature, understanding well-being holistically is a complementary approach to creating a more complete vision of Native Hawaiian women's experiences. Doctoral experiences in the context of Haumea embodiment, in particular, offers a critical perspective to women's narratives of well-being.

Doctoral Experiences of Men. In comparison, the focus on women in higher education demonstrates a gap in the literature. Not much is known about Hawaiian men in higher education. Scholarship on Hawaiian masculinity reveals the hegemonic structures that continue

⁹ As a haumana of hula, I am less knowledgeable about Haumea in comparison to other feminine deities. Since I have only learned bits and pieces of her mo'olelo, I invite you to take a deeper dive into her story through the summary provided by Silva (2007).

to challenge Native Hawaiian men (Akiona, 2018). This historical trauma, which succeeded occupation and the feminization of Hawai‘i by the tourist industry, resulted in challenges for Hawaiian males who have multiple disadvantaged identities (Akiona, 2019). As Native Hawaiian men reconnect to traditional practices, research suggests that through cultural practices, Hawaiian men are reconnecting to Native masculinity in the modern world, while simultaneously challenging gender hegemony (Goodyear-Ka‘ōpua, 2013; Tengan, 2008b). Importantly, the scholarship on Native masculinity reveals the continued limitations of hegemonic educational structures to provide access to higher education for Native Hawaiian men (Akiona, 2019).

Although the lack of research on Native Hawaiian men does not diminish the lived experiences of women, the reality that Hawaiian men continue to be underrepresented in higher education is apparent. So, the absence of Hawaiian men warrants particular attention in this research inquiry to unpack the critical spaces they do hold and perhaps provide insights to their absence across higher education pathways. Previous research on Native Hawaiian men and the embodiment of Kānehō‘ālanī¹⁰ has, similar to Haumea embodiment, supported the transformation of health to holistic through social indicators (Office of Hawaiian Affairs, 2017). Adding to this scholarship, understanding well-being holistically is a complementary approach that enacts the ‘ōlelo no‘eau, ‘ike aku, ‘ike mai, kōkua aku, kōkua mai; pela iho la ka nohona ‘ohana¹¹. By working towards a similar vision of wholeness across disciplines our scientific

¹⁰ In some versions of the epic of Pele and Hi‘iaka, Kanēhō‘ālanī is the father of Pele alongside Haumea (Osorio, 2013). I presume the use of Kānehō‘ālanī and Haumea together as referenced in the Office of Hawaiian Affairs reports (2017) may be rooted in this genealogy.

¹¹ Pūku‘i (1983) provides the following translation for this ‘ōlelo no‘eau: “recognize and be recognized, help and be helped; such is family life.” Included with each translation Pūku‘i provides an explanation. For this particular ‘ōlelo no‘eau she writes, “family life requires an exchange of mutual help and recognition.” In the context of the scientific community where I provide this quote, I refer to the health and educational psychology fields as part of the same scientific family. Like brothers and sisters, these communities through the exchange of ideas help and recognize one another, building clarity through mutual reciprocity. Such is the way of the Hawaiian family, where we a‘o aku, a‘o mai, teach and learn together for the betterment of our collective community, humankind.

communities come together and, in the process, create greater clarity on topics such as well-being.

Doctoral Experiences Across Disciplines

Underrepresentation should not be misperceived as a lack of interest in doctoral disciplinary areas by the peoples who are underrepresented (Jaeger et al., 2013).

Underrepresented and minority doctoral student populations can be attracted to particular disciplines for a variety of reasons. For example, minority doctoral students in science and engineering selected doctoral programs for their intellectual rigor, perceived freedom, career growth, and career opportunities. Research on doctoral students in special education programs across the United States (Wasburn-Moses, 2007) further suggest that underrepresented student populations selected programs for reasons that were different from their Caucasian majority peers. For underrepresented student populations, these factors, which made degree discipline choices attractive, did not translate to program satisfaction. So while high enrollment by underrepresented populations in degree programs was a positive outcome, it may have been a result of program attractiveness and caution should be used when considering correlations between high enrollment and degree completion with positive outcomes and experiences in school (Roksa et al., 2018). In brief, even if students complete their degree programs, they may not necessarily be satisfied. In addition, overall satisfaction ratings suggest that there is no difference in satisfaction by race between majority and minority student populations (Wasburn-Moses, 2007). However, differences in satisfaction exist with specific satisfaction ratings of financial support and research experiences. In addition, preparedness by race showed statistically significant differences such that Latinx minority and Caucasian majority student populations felt best prepared in comparison to their African American and Asian minority peers. While there is

the possibility of cultural response bias (Bernardi, 2006; P. B. Smith, 2004), these results suggest a more nuanced picture of students' experiences across underrepresented groups.

Graduate school, as a space where doctoral students develop professional or academic identities, confronts issues related to identity development (Jaeger et al., 2013), as these spaces potentially create dissonance with a student's racial, cultural, and social identity. For underrepresented student populations, this dissonance is often coupled with gendered and racialized beliefs and these beliefs add to the identity dissonance they experience in graduate school. For example, Asian Americans in science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) pathways are often confronted by the model minority myth in graduate school creating challenges as they simultaneously navigate developing their professional identities while confronting issues related to their personal identity as a result of these gendered and racialized experiences (Roksa et al., 2018). Research suggests that these challenges persist across Asian American and Pacific Islander groups creating inequitable differences in their doctoral experiences and perpetuation of the systems of oppression that they are subjected to in higher education. In other words, when students enroll in a discipline and come from an underrepresented population, they could face challenges related to gender, race, or systematic oppression. These challenges can perpetuate continued inequality and systems of oppression within an academic discipline.

Research on the challenges students face in higher education highlights that across disciplines there are similarities among students' experiences, drawing attention to potential system-level issues, such as with policies and practices, that influence underrepresented students regardless of the underrepresented population they come from (J. A. Russell, 2015). While policies and practices are important, student learning and development at the level of the

academic unit cannot be ignored. Doctoral student development is facilitated by the faculty, mentors, and advisors who support their thinking and learning (Gardner, 2009; J. A. Russell, 2015). So, while similarities between students' experiences across various disciplines could be evidence for larger systemic problems, considerations of discipline-specific development in relation to student's academic units are important for understanding how doctoral education affects well-being and the life of doctoral students beyond their higher education training. In my exploration of research on doctoral students across diverse disciplines, I find that there seems to be a lack of investigation into long-term outcomes for doctoral students, such as life fulfillment, and by comparison, a larger focus on more direct educational outcomes and interest in students' lives while they are still in school. Therefore, while I will be interviewing doctoral students during their academic studies, I am interested in how they perceive their doctoral experiences will impact their later life development.

Socialization. A consistent challenge across disciplines is the manifestations of struggle through challenges with socialization (Ramirez, 2017; J. A. Russell, 2015; Taylor & Antony, 2000; Turner & Thompson, 1993; Wasburn-Moses, 2007). Thus, a variety of scholarship on doctoral students across disciplines and underrepresented groups has focused on socialization. In graduate school, socialization is a process for gaining advanced knowledge, skills, and values that provide entrance into a professional career (Weidman et al., 2001). For example, socialization includes aspects of doctoral studies such as faculty mentorship opportunities (Ramirez, 2017). These processes also vary by discipline. In the science fields, for example, socialization emphasizes particular knowledge, protocol, and academic language for working in a laboratory. These processes become necessary for professional success. Even with a recognition of these challenges, unequal access to career preparation and professional

development opportunities persist. Furthermore, an understanding of how these learning experiences are embodied holistically and translate into well-being beyond academia requires further investigation. What the research does suggest, is that challenges manifest in issues related to socialization within school and the challenges and supports available to students. Challenges also manifest as expressions and experiences of students through feelings such as isolation (Lovitts & Nelson, 2000; Nettles, 1990), and onlyness (S. R. Harper & Palmer, 2015; Yuan, 2017). Shaun Harper and Palmer (2015) define onlyness as, “the psychoemotional burden of having to strategically navigate a racially politicized space occupied by few peers, role models, and guardians from one’s same racial or ethnic group” (p. 190).

Research on socialization in higher education provides several implications for understanding well-being and the embodiment of psychological, social, and emotional experiences. Presumably, these experiences have the potential to influence students’ lives and subsequent self-actualization after graduate school. When referring to self-actualization beyond higher education, I refer similarly to the “intrinsic growth of what is already in the organism, or more accurately of what *is* the organism. Just as our tree needs food, sun, water from the environment, so does the person need safety, love, and respect” (p. 134) as Maslow (1954) describes. In this respect, self-actualizing people “are people who have developed or are developing to the full stature of which they are capable. These potentialities are idiosyncratic or species-wide” (p. 150). In the context of doctoral education, Soffer (2001) defines self-actualization as the embeddedness of doctoral experiences in the living and being of the person as an individual professional, and as part of communities to which they identify. Thus, self-actualization is a byproduct of the search for meaning in life (Ebersole & DeVore, 1995), and

becomes an underlying process to a state of mental health and well-being when engaged in meaningful activities (Weed, 2011).

Although self-actualization has been contested and some researchers have criticized the use of the term (Ebersole & DeVore, 1995) self-actualization has been redefined by scholars in connection to physical spaces, the politics of land territories (Morgenstern & Weber, 2011; Sahabuddin & Zubaidi, 2018), and to the physical act of writing (Hembrough, 2016; Sawwa & Neimneh, 2017). Self-actualization has also been explored alongside identity development for immigrants and where self-actualization has the potential to negate exile and dislocation as a positive counter narrative (Sawwa & Neimneh, 2017). Self-actualization within doctoral student narratives could serve as a guidepost to understanding the underlying processes of their experience that could later manifest in plausible conceptualizations of well-being after graduate school. But I have not found any study that explores the connection between doctoral experiences, and conceptualizations of living and being in the world through students lived and embodied experiences.

The COVID-19 Pandemic

In the midst of this project, I had the unique opportunity to explore how Kanaka doctoral students confronted their well-being and adapted related routines and activities in response to the global COVID-19 pandemic, furthermore, referred to as the pandemic in this section. Research suggests that the impacts of the pandemic have resulted in economic (Bond-Smith & Fuleky, 2022; The Center for Economic Policy Research, 2020), social (Bhanot et al., 2021), and health issues (Quint et al., 2021) that have raised fear and anxiety in people (Mohammadpour et al., 2020). However, less fear was also related to less engagement in self-care routines and activities

during the pandemic. While fear and distress are normal reactions in a time of extreme crisis, the pandemic raised awareness on the well-being needs of individuals, families, and communities.

Overall, the pandemic affected the well-being of all people, and research began to suggest how the pandemic was felt across diverse domains. In addition to the disproportionate health effects Native Hawaiians live and experience (Liu & Alameda, 2011), researchers expressed concerns over the disproportionate health effects of the coronavirus on Native Hawaiians and other Pacific Islanders (Juarez et al., 2022; Quint et al., 2021). Simultaneously, researchers called attention to the mental health effects of the pandemic and the need for effective coping and stress management routines (Deguma et al., 2022) as a buffer for unprecedented consequences. One such buffer highlighted in the research is spiritual practice (Chirico et al., 2020; Ribeiro et al., 2020; Roman et al., 2020; Thompkins et al., 2020) as spirituality can be an effective coping and stress management tool that also provides comfort and support. Interestingly, one study also suggested that congregants relied more upon their family and church for guidance over medical experts during times of crisis (Thompkins et al., 2020). And so, relationships, particularly during the pandemic, may have determined what was socially and culturally desirable amongst some communities. Consumption of official and unofficial sources of coronavirus information alongside education level also influenced the degree to which people trusted such sources (Juarez et al., 2022). While education level did not affect the degree of trust in such sources of information, education was a modifier for vaccine hesitancy. This data is relevant to Kanaka doctoral students, as Native Hawaiians have historical and present-day lack of trust in governance due to political, social, and structural discrimination.

Educational institutions also implemented various policies and practices that influenced the lives of students, faculty, and staff. In March 2020, a statewide shutdown implementing stay-

at-home orders (Lund, 2021) altered learning environments for Hawai‘i students. While doctoral students today are accustomed to engaging and working online to some degree, being at home full-time and for an extended period of time created new challenges (Wang et al., 2021). For the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa, these conditions shifted as statewide policies were implemented and updated. Guidelines for telework, social distancing, and masking generally remained in effect from 2020-2022. In March 2022, the University suspended formal COVID-19 vaccination and testing requirements (UH News, 2022a) and in September 2022, the remaining mask requirements were lifted (UH News, 2022b). From these policies, researchers also highlighted several environmental benefits (Loh et al., 2022; Morimoto, 2020). Such policies and practices may have aligned with traditional Hawaiian beliefs (Boggs, 1977) and historical practices with ‘āina (Graham-Tutt & Broderick, 2020; Porter & Cristobal, 2018) leading to unintended benefits on the well-being of Kānaka. Regardless, the pandemic required Kanaka doctoral students to face additional disproportionate adversities and continue to be resilient (Sood & Sharma, 2020). Such adversities affected their daily lives and their lived experiences as doctoral students.

Questions of persistence, academic success, and learning outcomes have guided research on students in higher education (Tinto, 2004), but, how students’ lived experiences are embodied, practiced, validated, and challenged in education, and how their well-being develops through educational learning experiences are current gaps in the literature. The body of knowledge on doctoral student experiences suggests that faculty members need to be knowledgeable of racial and cultural diversity (Yuan, 2017) to eliminate racial discrimination (Nettles, 1990) and to challenge systemic oppression (Freire et al., 2014). Aside from faculty members being conscious of their praxis, there is also a need for them to come from culturally and racially diverse backgrounds (Clewell, 1987). Understanding the doctoral experience for

culturally and racially diverse students is important because doctoral studies are the pathway to the professoriate and into the academy (Turner & Thompson, 1993). Furthermore, as doctoral programs prepare students to become leaders in and across the academic community, valuing their experiences becomes central to understanding and increasing their presence in higher education. From a lāhui¹² perspective, the larger practical application and goal are to encourage entrance and retention of Indigenous students through the higher education pipeline so that they may serve as educational leaders in the future (Thomas et al., 2012).

The Hawai‘i Context

A strategic goal of the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa was to become a Hawaiian place of learning (Lipe, 2016). Failure to center Kanaka doctoral student experiences within this goal perpetuates the systematic challenges of Kanaka faculty and staff (Gomes, 2016; Reyes et al., 2020). Therefore, understanding their doctoral student experiences, particular to their well-being, is important and has the potential to serve as a model for other Indigenous-serving institutions that are finding systematic ways to integrate more thoroughly the values and principles of their surrounding Indigenous communities (McCarthy-Brown, 2014).

The University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa is a public university on the island of O‘ahu in the moku¹³ of Kona, in the ahupua‘a¹⁴ of Waikīkī. When I recruited students in the fall of 2019, the University served 709 Kanaka graduate students. Of these students, 373 were pursuing master’s

¹² McGregor and colleagues (2003) define lāhui as, “a historically constituted stable community with a shared unique language, culture including spirituality, ancestral national lands, economic life and governance structure” (p. 109).

¹³ Moku refers to the district or section of an island (Pūku‘i & Elbert, 1986). The island of O‘ahu has six moku (Ko‘olaupoko, Ko‘olaupoko, Waialua, Wai‘anae, ‘Ewa, and Kona. The moku of Kona, which the University of Hawai‘i is apart of, is the leeward side of the island and the term Kona may be used to described the leeward side of all of the islands in the archipelago of Hawai‘i.

¹⁴ Ahupua‘a refers to land divisions within a moku that extend from the uplands (e.g., ma uka) to the sea (e.g., ma kai) (Pūku‘i & Elbert, 1986). These divisions are traditional land classifications that were used to effectively manage the natural resources of an area.

degrees, 157 were pursuing research doctoral degrees, and 123 were pursuing a professional practice degree. In fall 2022, the University served 754 graduate students. Of these students, 395 were pursuing master's degrees, 186 were pursuing research doctoral degrees, and 111 were pursuing a professional practice degree.

Generally speaking, Native Hawaiians currently represent roughly 15% of college-goers in the University of Hawai'i system compared to roughly 24% of Hawai'i public school students (Hawai'i Department of Education, 2022) reflecting low college matriculation and retention. Despite the general increase in college attendance and advanced degree seekers for Kānaka in recent years, which is a marked improvement considering the other major ethnic groups in Hawai'i that have not seen such increases (Kana'iaupuni et al., 2021), accessibility to higher education and socioeconomic resources and the financial feasibility of degree attainment are persistent barriers. Now that I have described the context of doctoral education influences, I will discuss my research topic by tracing the social, historical, and genealogical contexts of well-being development.

Well-Being

Across the pae 'āina (archipelago) of Hawai'i, well-being continues to be investigated and interest in well-being is prevalent for organizations that serve Native Hawaiian communities. These efforts highlight the needs of practitioners that work with Hawaiian communities and provide evidence for continued exploration into the topic of well-being. Over the last two decades, the *Hūlili: Multidisciplinary Research on Hawaiian Well-Being* serves as one physical record of the development towards understanding and evolution of well-being in the Hawai'i context. Hūlili is, "a multidisciplinary forum for current research that examines the nature, needs and strengths of Hawaiians, their families, and their communities" (Kamehameha Publishing,

2007). Other efforts through various collaborations (Kūkulu Kumuhana Planning Committee, 2017; Native Hawaiian Education Council, 2018; Office of Hawaiian Affairs, 2017, 2018) demonstrate the continued efforts by Hawaiian-serving organizations to advance well-being development and understanding. These efforts suggest that well-being continues to be a growing need of Hawaiian communities.

This concern over well-being development and continued growth alongside my personal well-being experiences has inspired my research direction. In the coming sections, I will describe my journey into the construct of well-being, discuss the history of well-being, and common threads that guided my well-being conceptualization. In response to this collective review of literature, I end this section with a definition for well-being. To allow for flexibility in the research process, I integrated the experiences of my participants into how well-being was ultimately conceptualized in this research. The socio-historical context, along with the literary and social context of doctoral education described in this section work together and speak to how I frame my research. After I describe and define well-being, I then discuss my research approach that is grounded in hula.

A Journey into Well-Being

When I first began my exploratory journey into the construct of well-being I was drawn to national and international research that divided well-being into two large domains: objective and subjective well-being (Alatartseva & Barysheva, 2015; Muhajarine et al., 2012; OECD, 2013; Rath & Harter, 2010; Self et al., 2012; Smale & Hilbrecht, 2014). As I navigated the body of literature, I came to understand well-being constructs, such as mental well-being, as either objective or subjective in nature and how these constructs manifested in the research landscape. However, this segregation of concepts as objective or subjective became problematic for me over

time. As I reflected on Indigenous ways of knowing (O'Donnell & Talbot-Jones, 2018; Saffrey, 2015; Vaughan, 2019) I found it difficult to utilize this conceptualization in context. So, I returned to the literature to make sense of the genealogy of well-being to understand this genealogy further and to imagine well-being in Indigenous contexts recognizing the potential settler colonial constraints that existing models may impose on Indigenous peoples.

The History of Well-Being. In the Preamble of the Constitution of the World Health Organization (International Health Conference, 2002), “Health is a state of complete *physical, mental, and social well-being* [emphasis added] and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity” (p. 984). Thereafter, in the *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* adopted by the United Nations in 2015, well-being was part of an international vision,

We envisage a world free of poverty, hunger, disease and want, where all can thrive. We envisage a world free of fear and violence. A world with universal literacy. A world with equitable and universal access to quality education at all levels, to health care and social protection, where *physical, mental and social well-being* [emphasis added] are assured. (United Nations, 2017)

While these examples reflect positive global transformation because of the integration of well-being on the international agenda (Tsutsumi et al., 2015), this definition of health and well-being is problematic in practice, specifically for Indigenous communities. In the aftermath of World War II, the creation of the World Health Organization provided international cooperation for the health and peace of nations (Saracci, 1997). In response, research on well-being uses this definition of health to make sense of well-being through physical, mental, and social domains (Riediker & Koren, 2004; Supranowicz & Paz, 2014). Over time, the research community improved this definition by adding psychological domains (Saracci, 1997), and again by

broadening it further to include spiritual and political ones (Follér, 1995; Larson, 1996). However, several challenges are evident. While these domains are a logical starting point to investigate well-being there is an underlying assumption that well-being is within the context of physical health. And while these domains provide several entry points for exploring well-being, one domain as equivalent to well-being as a whole became a common problem. Such philosophical challenges contribute to confusion and misinterpretation across the research community of well-being. So, while research into domains (i.e., vocational, educational, physical, mental, emotional, social, political, and spiritual well-being) add to the body of knowledge, they may not remedy the philosophical challenges that undergird a well-being definition for Indigenous peoples.

After much time and consideration, I found this underlying philosophy personally inescapable in how well-being is understood. Although I frame this history with challenges, I recognize ‘a‘ohe pau ka ‘ike i ka hālau ho‘okahi¹⁵. I also believe that knowledge can be viewed from different perspectives and hold the same truth (Meyer, 2003; Paglinawan et al., 2020). So, in my embodied experience with the literature, I responded to this tension in my spirit by reflecting on the question: *What philosophy guides a Hawaiian conceptualization of well-being?* I began to answer this question by looking inward and found myself returning to hula as a pathway to my well-being. This pathway as a source of knowledge will be revisited in my research approach. As I searched the literature, I made sense of well-being through various cultural contexts. Then I came to several ideas about a Kanaka philosophy for well-being through what I called Indigenous threads which could also be understood as constructs of well-

¹⁵ This ‘ōlelo no‘eau (proverb) is translated in English as: All knowledge is not taught in the same school (Pūku‘i, 1983, no. 203). In this context it includes an understanding that you can learn truth from many sources.

being. These common threads will now be introduced before a definition of well-being is provided to situate my research topic and the working definition provided.

Indigenous Threads of Well-Being

While there is no universal Indigenous well-being model, a Kanaka philosophy for well-being development is possible by looking to Indigenous research on well-being and Kanaka development literature. These Indigenous threads of well-being are balance, relationality, and reciprocity. Although these threads are not definitive, they provide a basic structure for Indigenous well-being. So, while these threads are central across Indigenous well-being models, their application in diverse communities could be different. Overall, I saw these threads as flexible, having the ability to evolve and shift over time.

As I began to articulate Indigenous threads for well-being, I was inspired by Hawaiian scholars in the health field who were expanding the idea of Native Hawaiian health as holistic (Antonio et al., 2020). These scholars began to integrate well-being into the conception of health for Native Hawaiians. I also looked at scholarship on hula (Kaholokula et al., 2018). In this research, hula was identified as an avenue for this expanded view of health and well-being that was optimized through embodiment, specifically through hula, language, culture, and connections between people and ‘āina (physical places). This expansion of the health domain to include well-being added to these threads. On the one hand, this research led me to believe that well-being as holistic was a need for the Kanaka community. On the other hand, it added the possibility that cultural models, such as hula, could optimize how I understood the well-being of Kānaka. Thus, models were chosen to fulfill these needs (a) to understand well-being in ways that cross the Western plane and define well-being in cultures and contexts, (b) for wholeness or utilizing a holistic approach, and (c) to connect to embodied experiences of well-being, achieved

through either the use of a physical model or through metaphor. While these threads are consistent with a broad range of literature from Indigenous peoples, the models I reference do not represent an exhaustive list. These models reflect a culmination of my lived experience with well-being thus far.

Particular focus was also taken to include models from other Indigenous peoples due to the similarities between other Indigenous and Hawaiian communities (Bird, 2002; Ring, 2003). The models that have helped me to develop common threads are the Vanuatu house model (Department of Strategic Policy, Planning and Aid Coordination, 2016; Dick, 2015), the Indigenous Australian well-being model (Kingsley et al., 2009, 2013), the Yupiaq worldview model (Kawagley et al., 1998; Voinot-Baron, 2020), Māori models of well-being through Te Whare Tapa Whā (Rochford, 2004; Thorp, 2011), Te Wheke (Love, 2004), Te Pau Mahutonga (Durie, 1999), Whānau-based principles (Hopkirk & Wilson, 2014; Huriwai et al., 2001), and oranga essence statements (Ahuriri-Driscoll et al., 2012), and the medicine wheel model across First Nations Peoples (Duran & Duran, 1995; Gone, 2011; Kavasch, 2002; Loiselle & McKenzie, 2006; Verniest, 2006; Wenger-Nabigon, 2010).

I highlight various Indigenous models to provide context for a Kanaka philosophy of well-being by weaving these models throughout the common threads. But their mentions are brief in order to articulate well-being in terms of a Kanaka philosophy for well-being, which is the focus of my research. I list these references to provide clarity on the Indigenous models that were explored in the research process, and to honor their contributions to this work. In the description of each thread, I also drew heavily on Hawaiian well-being and identity development literature to reimagine well-being and illustrate practical influences to consider in the context of my research with Kanaka doctoral students. In the following sections I discuss each thread: (a)

balance, (b) relationality, and (c) reciprocity to provide a perspective on Kanaka well-being development that guided my inquiry.

Balance. A common thread of balance is embedded across Indigenous well-being models. For example, physical models of well-being, such as the pillars (Department of Strategic Policy, Planning and Aid Coordination, 2016) or cornerstones (Thorp, 2011) of a house provide a metaphor for balance. Without one of the walls or one of the pillars, the house that is well-being would fall. So, balance in a model of well-being is important. Extending this thread, balance exists beyond the physical world and in relation to it (Kawagley et al., 1998). As a Yupiaq worldview articulates, the physical or human realm is situated in relationship to the realms of the spiritual and natural world (Kawagley, 2006). This view creates a tetrahedral model, essentially triangulating humanity with the environment and the spiritual plane. Similar to a Yupiaq worldview, Kānaka situate themselves in a larger cosmology (Kame‘eleihiwa, 1992). From this philosophy, balance is defined as pono (Lyons, 2010). Kame‘eleihiwa (1992) suggests that pono is bound to land and sovereignty. Thus, loss of land and sovereignty have historically been followed by the depletion of pono. But pathways building pono across Hawai‘i continue to evolve in response to U.S. occupation. For example, *ea*¹⁶ is one pathway to restoring pono that is historically documented in *mo‘olelo* (stories), *mele* (music, chants, and poetry), and *hula* (as Hawaiian dance, described in more detail in a coming section) (Lyons, 2010). One such example is seen in the *mele* and *hula*, “Kaulana Nā Pua”¹⁷ (see Appendix A).

¹⁶ *Ea* is a concept that is translated in English as sovereignty and independence. As Kanaka scholar Goodyear-Ka‘ōpua (2014) describes, *ea* is also a pathway towards restoring pono, which centers ‘āina over government, and acknowledges the complex structures and necessary autonomy of governance required for the health and well-being of the nation. She states, “Here *ea*, both breath and sovereignty, reflects not a supreme authority over territory but a sacred connection to the land requiring dutiful, nurturing care” (p. 7). So, *ea* as a pathway towards pono invokes this definition and understanding. In this context, *ea* is defined simultaneously as sovereignty, breath, dutiful and nurturing care. Furthermore, these meanings of *ea* define an *ea pathway* towards the restoration of pono.

¹⁷ I listened to this song a lot growing up, because my dad is a musician and he recorded this *mele* with his long-time friends and band, incorporating the song with the chant “I Kū Mau Mau.” Kaulana Nā Pua is a patriotic song

When I reflected on how this chant and song came together, I was reminded of our sea of islands (University of the South Pacific, 1993). Just as Hau‘ofa describes the Pacific is a vast space that facilitates travel, connection, and wholeness across Oceania for island peoples bringing them together as opposed to being a barrier that separates them. This perspective emphasizes holistic relationships that connect island peoples in the expanse of the ocean. By contrast, islands confine peoples of Oceania within the boundaries of land masses where the political power of space made island peoples feel small, insignificant, powerless, remote, and dry. As I see it, Hau‘ofa (1994) embodies the spirit of Kaulana Nā Pua when writing,

Oceania is humanity rising from the depths of brine and regions of fire deeper still,
Oceania is us. We are the sea, we are the ocean, we must wake up to this ancient truth
and together use it to overturn all hegemonic views that aim ultimately to confine us
again, physically and psychologically, in the tiny spaces that we have resisted accepting
as our sole appointed places, and from which we have recently liberated ourselves. We
must not allow anyone to belittle us again, and take away our freedom (p. 161).¹⁸

In parallel, ho‘oponopono, literally meaning to correct, is understood in English as conflict resolution practices. These practices are looked to as a way to achieve mutual restitution, repentance, or forgiveness through prayer, discussion, or confession (Pūku‘i & Elbert, 1986). As a contemporary strategy, ho‘oponopono is a healing process (McGregor et al., 2003) that is used in therapies and medical treatments (Look et al., 2014). In consideration of conflict resolution

that was written in opposition to the overthrow of the Hawaiian kingdom. Through its opposition this mele is an ea pathway because it is asking for the restoration of balance for the Hawaiian Islands. In conjunction, i kū mau mau means to stand together and the chant portion of this mele was traditionally used as a call for hauling logs onto shore when building canoes or heiau idols. This chant was significant for wa‘a practitioners, and I was introduced to it through the context of water.

¹⁸ Through these words, I am reminded that each time I dance this mele I am moving towards balance by understanding the history of this chant and mele, connecting it with my own history, and embodying its meaning through movement.

practices, experiences tied to race could influence student well-being (Allen et al., 2017) resulting in imbalance. Similar to other Indigenous models (Kingsley et al., 2013; Voinot-Baron, 2020) these experiences could result in counterstories of well-being for Kanaka university students. Applications of ho‘oponopono could provide evidence of a healthy or pono life (McMullin, 2005). In addition, research suggests that self-esteem, Indigenous identity, and ‘ohana or extended family could buffer racial discrimination experiences to restore balance (Allen et al., 2017; Kaholokula et al., 2017).

Kanaka perspectives of balance are also described through lōkahi¹⁹ (unity, harmony) (McGregor et al., 2003). Research on Kanaka Maoli health suggests that physical illness could be a sign of disharmony in the environment (Blaisdell et al., 2017). Disharmony weakens mana²⁰ creating an imbalance inside a person, which then manifests as illness. From this perspective, looking at disruptions in one of the three piko²¹ could bring to light the balance or imbalance in students’ lives (Ko‘omoa & Maunakea, 2017). In complement, lā‘au lapa‘au (Hawaiian medicine utilizing Hawaiian plants) and mālama ‘āina (taking care of the land) practices are evidence of lōkahi and thus a pono lifestyle. Looking for other similar practices that support living in

¹⁹ As a hula practitioner, lōkahi for me is embedded within aloha, “Akahai e nā Hawai‘i, lōkahi a kūlike, ‘olu‘olu ka mana‘o, ha‘aha‘a kou kūlana, ahonui a lanakila.” This aloha chant, as I originally learned it is an adaptation of a longer oli. This chant teaches hula students a pedagogy of aloha. Through aloha as an instructional tool, Hawaiian well-being is achieved (Kahakalau, 2020) by embodying the values of akahai, lōkahi, ‘olu‘olu, ha‘aha‘a and ahonui.

²⁰ In this context, I very loosely translate mana as a supernatural power and state; you are mana, places are mana, things are mana. Mana as a metaphoric substance has spiritual and sacred energy. For a more thorough understanding of mana see Crabbe and colleagues (2017), and Tomlinson and Tengan (2016).

²¹ Piko as defined by Pūku‘i and colleagues (1972) is the, “umbilical cord or umbilicus; genital organs; posterior fontanel or crown of the head; summit or peak.” As the authors describe, piko denotes relationships with one’s ancestors and descendants while at the same time giving another layer of meaning through the “triple *piko*” where the body is a physical site of three different piko: the crown of the head (piko po‘o or piko manawa), umbilicus (piko waena), and genitals (piko ma‘i). These piko bind the body to ancestors, descendants, the spirit, and emotion. Hawaiian scholar, Blaisdell (1996) furthers this understanding of piko by mirroring human anatomy and the physical being with spiritual relationships. Through his Kanaka Maoli philosophy he describes the spiritual relationships as part of the natural world, where the piko enact forces of kanaka thought and attitude that are evident in their actions. In my personal hula praxis, I have engaged these piko in several ways, just as Pūku‘i and colleagues (1972) suggest. So, I invoke these many meanings when I use piko in this particular reference and context of my body narrative.

harmony could provide evidence of balance in the lives of my participants. And so, I was open to this possibility after exploring this literature. As ho‘omanawanui (2010) describes, for Kānaka, examples of lōkahi are found in our mo‘olelo. Ho‘omanawanui suggests unity in mo‘olelo is achieved through diversity. In this research context, students could express how family, school, and community when kept in harmony helps them to maintain their well-being (McMullin, 2005). By finding unity across diverse areas of life, students may embody lōkahi and therefore express feeling more balanced in their daily lives. While I presumed that these areas of balance, such as family, school, and community could be different for each student, I considered how the overarching goal across these areas could be embodied through what balance meant to each Kanaka, and how restoring balance in their daily life could maintain their well-being overall.

Relationality. Another thread across Indigenous cultural models of well-being is relationality. Indigenous scholars define relationality in several ways, through people (Hopkirk & Wilson, 2014), place (Kingsley et al., 2013), and spirituality (Kawagley, 2006). This thread helps to make sense of what balance looks like in dynamic living interconnected systems. Because the nature of these aspects within the system is reciprocal, a discussion of people, place, and spiritual relationships was difficult as the boundaries were blurred through the interconnected system of these relationships. Broadly speaking, as Maunakea (2016) summarizes, “the answers to our questions about research, education, sovereignty, health, economics, and well-being can be found in an interdependent relationship with community, ‘āina, and ‘ike kupuna” (p. 157). Drawing from her words, the overarching goal of relationality in the context of well-being is then to understand the people that provide community, the places that define ‘āina, and the spirituality, that is guided by our ‘ike kupuna²² or ancestral knowledge.

²² I am fondly reminded here of, “He Momi Waiwai Ko Kākou Mau Kūpuna” (Wong, 2014). Kumu Ku‘uipolani Wong is a respected kumu and ‘ōlelo Hawai‘i speaker who perpetuates a distinct dialect of Hawaiian language

People Relationships. Relationality with people through these various models re-defines the meaning of kinship to include extended family (Love, 2004). This definition of relationships is consistent with a Hawaiian philosophy of ‘ohana where kinship reflects a larger system and pattern of living (McGregor et al., 2003). Mainly relationships with people are defined through the community that makes up ‘ohana, such as through kūpuna, respected elders (Browne et al., 2014), or kaikua‘ana and kaikaina relationships, as older sibling or cousin of the same sex, and younger sibling or cousin of the same sex, respectively (Lipe, 2018). Through ‘ohana, students learn about kuleana, respect, resilience, emotional support, multigenerational living, and child-rearing (Kaholokula, 2017). Research suggests that stories of ‘ohana, and in particular kuleana and caregiving, describe relationality with people (Blaisdell et al., 2017; Browne et al., 2014). Relational imbalance could lead to ‘ohana instability (McGregor et al., 2003) so being mindful of ‘ohana as a reflection of balance in the lives of Kānaka was important to this research. In a similar respect, stigma, prejudice, and discrimination could lead to dissonance with people (Browne et al., 2014). These experiences could provide a counterstory to well-being by influencing a student’s relationality with others. The ‘ohana community²³ that surrounds students, could also mediate such effects to create harmony.

‘Āina Relationships. Relationality is also defined through connections to the environment (Dick, 2015; Durie, 1999; Kawagley et al., 1998; Voinot-Baron, 2020). As an

known to the Ni‘ihau people. In this particular mo‘olelo, or story, she describes ‘ike kupuna through her experiences in relationship to lau hala weaving. In her mo‘olelo she draws on several ‘ōlelo no‘eau (proverbs) as ‘ike kupuna to demonstrate this type of knowledge in practice through her lived experiences. While I will not attempt to translate this work here now, I see it as a story that effectively embodies the meaning of ‘ike kupuna as she has woven it throughout her mo‘olelo as a whole.

²³ One example of familial relationships in practice was found in sharing food (McMullin, 2005). McMullin indicates that sharing food is an embodied practice of the ‘ohana community. At the onset of this project, I was open to such embodied ‘ohana relationship to exist, but further exploration into food sharing was not organically explored in these interviews. In future research, sharing food could be explicitly explored in the context of well-being to further understanding this embodied practice in detail.

Indigenous Australian well-being model highlights, this connection to place affects human-to-nature relationships, extending kinship even further to include other non-human entities. As evidenced by the 1993 Apology Resolution, from the United States Government, which formally acknowledged the illegal overthrow of the Hawaiian Kingdom (Akaka, 1993), ‘āina was described in relation to Hawaiian people because of its importance to a Hawaiian way of life. The document states, “the health and well-being of the Native Hawaiian is intrinsically tied to their deep feelings and attachment to the land (Joint Resolution US Public Law 203-150)” (Fujikane, 2019). This document recognizes the role of ‘āina in shaping well-being collectively and individually for Kānaka ‘Ōiwi. Drawing from an understanding of Papahānaumoku and Wākea, earth mother and sky father (Blaisdell et al., 2017), relationality with ‘āina is living, conscious, and communicating. Drawing from Hāloanakalaukapalili²⁴ the first kalo, relationships to ‘āina through kalo are also deeply rooted. As the mo‘olelo of Papahānaumoku, Wākea, and Hāloanakalaukapalili describes, such relationships are genealogical (Kame‘eleihiwa, 1992). Thus, ‘āina is ‘ohana (ho‘omanawanui, 2012) and these relationships shape well-being (Browne et al., 2014) as evidenced by food practices (McMullin, 2005) and nutritional habits (Lassetter, 2011). In addition, the literature suggests human relationships to ‘āina are captured through mālama ‘āina and aloha ‘āina practices, caring and love for the land as a physical ancestor (Clark & Pahinui, 2014; Pascua et al., 2017). Furthermore, land relationships define ways of doing things for Kānaka, through various praxes, that have the power to influence well-being development, even in urban areas (Schachter, 2016).

Spiritual Relationships. Relationality is also spiritual. Spirituality accounts for the wholeness of lived experience as seen in the Medicine Wheel model (Loiselle & McKenzie,

²⁴ Born to Wākea and Ho‘ohōkūkalani, Hāloanakalaukapalili who was stillborn, was then planted and grew to be the older brother of Hāloa the second born and ancestor of Kānaka people (Kaholokula, 2017; Wong-Wilson, 2007).

2006). While domains of well-being place spirituality within the individual, creating distance between objective and subjective perspectives of lived experience, Indigenous models situate well-being as a whole within a larger cosmology. This alternative, from a Kanaka perspective, creates order by maintaining reciprocal relationships between the objective and subjective experience in a way that is spiritual (Kame‘eleihiwa, 1992, p. 26). Namely, drawing away from the component parts of domains for well-being, spiritual relationality recognizes the essences of well-being (McGregor et al., 2003) and implicitly recognizes its multidimensionality. This idea builds an ecological system where inter- and intradependence become important, as will be discussed in the coming thread. Mandelman (2014) further suggested that spiritual relationships can be recognized through mālama ‘āina because these routines and activities historicize Hawaiian relationships with place in ways that carry moral and political weight for Native Hawaiian people. For students, one way this relationality is learned is through ‘ike kupuna (Duponte et al., 2010; Iokepa-Guerrero et al., 2011). Thus, engagement in spiritual routines and activities²⁵, sets the foundation for Kanaka spiritual relationships.

Reciprocity. The last Indigenous thread of well-being I explored was reciprocity. When peoples relate beyond themselves, beyond society, to include higher beings, the ecological system where inter- and intradependence occurs (Kingsley et al., 2013) becomes more important in relation to any segregation of parts. Situating well-being within an entire ecology nourishes a wholeness of experience consistent with the diverse models for well-being that I explored. Hawaiian philosophy is consistent in this way with other Indigenous scholarship because

²⁵ Specifically, in the stories of Pele and Hi‘iaka an oli kāhea (call) is used to ask for entry to a place and is an example of a spiritual routine and activity. This practice (e.g. oli kāhea) demonstrates non-homogenous culture even within Hawai‘i (ho‘ omanawanui, 2012). Through this oli (see Appendix B for oli kāhea), Hi‘iaka as a visitor respects the relationality of people, place, and spirituality. So, while this oli kāhea is used in hula praxis as a foundation for understanding protocol, it importantly teaches relationality. Other expressions of spirituality (Clark & Pahinui, 2014) could represent similar praxes as oli in hula to influence student well-being in the current study.

reciprocity explains how Kānaka understand the world and their actions (ho‘omanawanui, 2010). Upon reflection, reciprocity teaches a relational worldview that could influence the reality of Kanaka students as they develop and come to understand and make meaning from their lived experiences. So, routines and activities that provide reciprocity could influence well-being. In perpetuity, I understood these Indigenous threads as circular informing my perspective on Kanaka well-being and how Kānaka learned to live in their environment. Together these threads, as informed by the literature, provided practical implications and opportunities for my inquiry.

A Well-Being Definition

While the body of well-being literature is vast, a universal definition has yet to be agreed upon by scholars and practitioners. In part, this stems from its historical genealogy. This discord is also reflective of the need for well-being models to be sensitive to culture and context (Panelli & Tipa, 2007). And while there has been progress across diverse communities towards a universal definition, in many instances, well-being is used interchangeably with wellness, health, mental health, happiness, life satisfaction, and quality of life (Eger & Maridal, 2015). These inconsistencies affect a clear understanding of well-being and its development. To articulate this challenge, I provide the following questions for reflection: *If you achieve well-being, in whatever way that makes sense to you, are you healthy? If you are happy or satisfied with your life, does that mean that you are holistically well in your living and being in the world?* I believe these questions make the central challenge apparent. Terminological exchanges are not reciprocal (Saracci, 1997) creating a challenge for well-being inquiries such as this one.

For the purposes of my research, I begin by defining well-being as an individual's participation in everyday routines and activities, that are meaningful, desirable, and culturally grounded (Weisner, 2010). This definition of well-being incorporates the idea that well-being is

an overall quality of life (Frisch, 2013) and includes specific contextual factors. In the beginning, I utilized balance, relationality, and reciprocity as the context-specific constructs for well-being but was open and flexible to other possibilities. Building upon the ‘ohana ‘ōlelo no‘eau mentioned previously²⁶, ‘ohana is the ecological system that creates and sustains cultural learning environments. Well-being develops through this system of everyday activities and routines. And these activities and routines inform practices for everyday life. Throughout this chapter so far, I have begun to introduce hula concepts by weaving them throughout the narrative. I argue throughout this work that hula is one way to understand the development of well-being for Kānaka. So, hula, through this assumption will be used as an approach for this inquiry. This approach is provided in more detail in the coming section. Of note, hula is one of many Kanaka lenses that articulate a Hawaiian worldview and that can be used to understand phenomena. By using hula to investigate well-being, I will be looking for the threads (or constructs) as outcomes of holistic well-being and as informed by well-being development through their lived experiences. Drawing from these threads as well-being outcomes, I turn to hula as a framework for understanding well-being development. In doing so, I describe well-being through hula to articulate how it will be used as a research approach.

Hula as a Research Approach

Now that I have laid a foundation for what I mean by well-being, I discuss hula as a research approach. This approach is used to demonstrate a knowledge system that comes from Hawaiian culture and the Hawai‘i context. Through a description of these concepts, I created a model, and I include the theories from which these concepts were derived. Theoretically, a hula approach offers an unexplored link between lived experience and the outcome of well-being

²⁶ ‘ōlelo no‘eau, ‘ike aku, ‘ike mai, kōkua aku, kōkua mai; pela iho la ka nohona ‘ohana

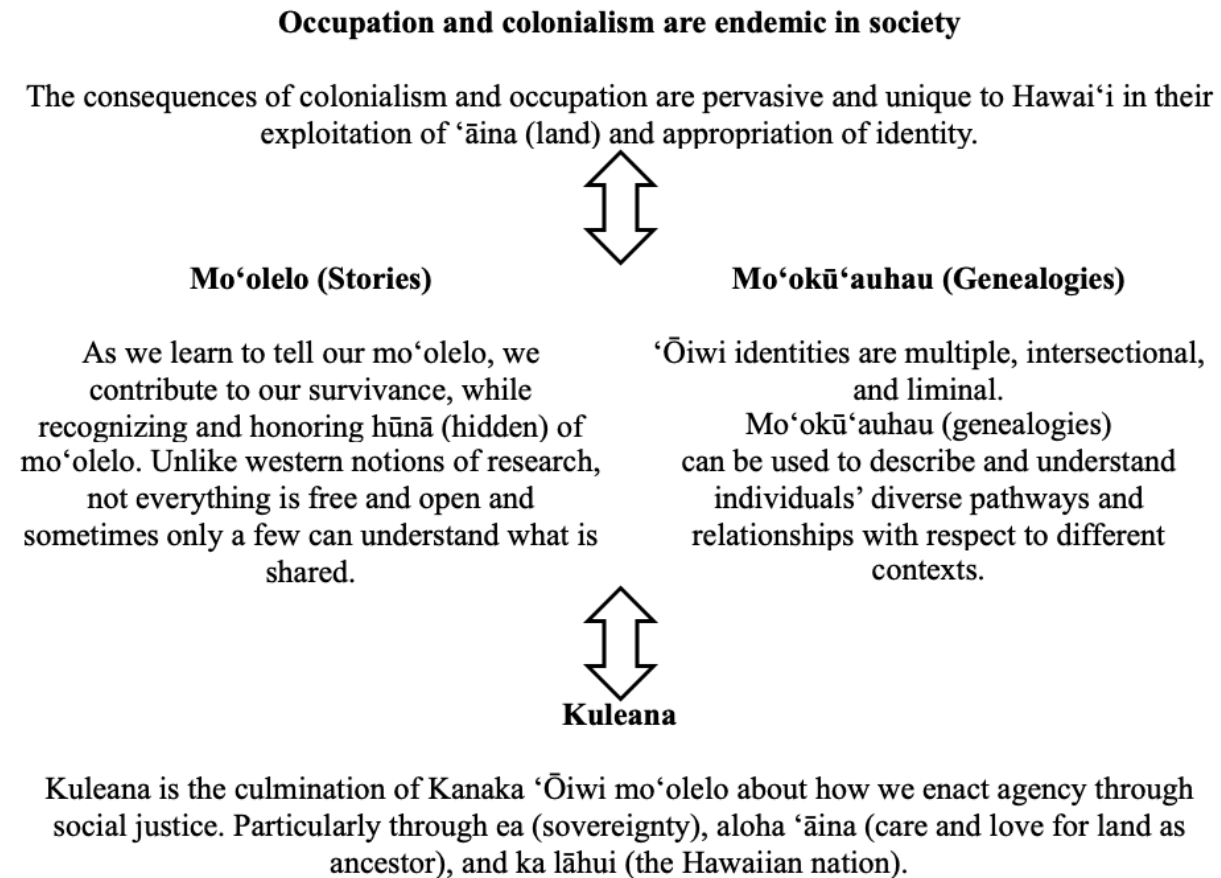
development through the embodiment of everyday practices. Thus, hula as an embodied knowledge system provides a context for understanding the embodiment of lived experience. I propose that this model, applying Kanaka ‘Ōiwi Critical Race Theory (KanakaCrit) and informed by some aspects of embodied cognition theories is novel through its application of hula as a methodological approach. This model facilitated a meaningful understanding of Kanaka well-being development in graduate school, beyond the boundaries of graduate education, and considering the future of the Kānaka I interviewed. I will now describe KanakaCrit and their principles of: (a) occupation and colonialism, (b) mo‘olelo, (c) mo‘okū‘auhau, and (d) kuleana. Then, I highlight two concepts from theories of embodied cognition, (e) embodiment, and (f) reflexivity, that were applied to this research. Throughout the descriptions of these concepts I utilize hula to explain how I applied hula as a methodological approach to this ideology. While I intended to further ground this research in theories of embodied cognition, I recognized how aspects of the theory were beyond the scope of this project, and while I was inspired by this work, I re-conceptualized how these theories came together to inform my research approach in this study.

Kanaka ‘Ōiwi Critical Race Theory

Researchers offer a number of theories to understand well-being development. To consider how well-being develops to and through higher education for Kanaka doctoral students I considered Kanaka ‘Ōiwi Critical Race Theory, referred to from here forward as KanakaCrit (see Figure 1) (Cristobal, 2018; Reyes, 2016; Wright & Balutski, 2016), as it has been applied to an ecological Native Hawaiian well-being model (McGregor et al., 2003). Critical theories are an interpretive community where social life is explored through the critical interpretation of meaning in relation to the historical struggles, and social structures and institutions of

Figure 1.

Tenets and Principles of Kanaka ‘Ōiwi Critical Race Theory



Note: Adapted from “Kanaka ‘Ōiwi critical race theory: Historical and cultural ecological understanding of Kanaka ‘Ōiwi education.” By N. Cristobal, 2018, *Contemporaneity: Historical Presence in Visual Culture*, 7, 27–44 (<https://doi.org/j6kr>).

underrepresented or marginalized groups (Creswell, 2007). With the intention of presenting the mo‘olelo (stories) and mo‘okū‘auhau (genealogies of lived experience) of my participants in a way that recognizes the counterstories that may be present, and by addressing these areas of difference as consistent with critical race theories, I will strive to situate students’ narratives in the larger social context of higher education. I recognize how this research focus may not fully achieve a critical theoretical framework application and with this limitation in mind offer stories

of lived experiences as a means to understand the belief systems that undergird contemporary Kanaka worldviews. While incomplete, these stories provide a foundational lens that is important for beginning a conversation of critical lensing. I see these stories as an offering to depart from when we rethink what effective transformation could look like for systems of oppression, occupation, and settler colonialism in Hawai‘i.

Occupation and Colonialism. KanakaCrit research suggests that Kānaka create narratives of their lived experience through mo‘olelo and mo‘okū‘auhau, and these stories and genealogies respectively interact with kuleana (responsibilities and rights) (Cristobal, 2018). In higher education, these student narratives inform and interact with the consequences of occupation and colonialism, which are unique to Hawai‘i and can become a burden (Wright & Balutski, 2016). As Wright and Balutski explored, these consequences were felt in particular ways by the students they interviewed. In this research, I argue that occupation and colonialism have become embodied in Kanaka consciousness to explore their diverse manifestations through (k)new consequences as articulated by the Kānaka I interviewed. Such consequences have the potential to shape the contemporary conditions of Kānaka.

Mo‘olelo. This research lens also involves mo‘olelo to consider how the stories Kānaka tell contribute to survivance²⁷. Informed by hula as an approach for this research, I contribute to this survivance and acknowledge the mo‘olelo as the stories of Kānaka that contribute to the perpetuation of lāhui (nation). As I have learned, perpetuation from a hula approach is a means for embodying mo‘olelo. In contrast to preservation, which repeats mo‘olelo and has the

²⁷ I was first introduced to the term survivance through the work of Goodyear-Ka‘ōpua (2016), which notes that survivance is not just survival but a dynamic presence, as rooted in the work of Annishanabe scholar, Gerald Vizenor. I was further inspired by the work of Lipe (2014), which moved beyond survivance through the application of the ‘a‘ali‘i kū makani a chant used to describe the mo‘olelo of Kanaka women in leadership as models of survivance through the strength, resilience and flexibility of the ‘a‘ali‘i. And so, survivance here means that through re-telling their story, Kānaka perpetuate and live into their strength, resilience and flexibility.

potential to perpetuate harm, perpetuation is a means of learning our mo‘olelo through re-membering and re-storying (to be described in a coming section). This re-membering has the potential and power to break cycles of harm and is further informed by Kānaka agency over the mo‘olelo as they share, re-tell, embody, and re-experience the experiences as resilient and resistant narratives (Lawrence III, 2015). These mo‘olelo can be hūnā, hidden or confidential (Cristobal, 2018), as Kānaka grapple with how they consciously and unconsciously pass and trespass in spaces, like the academy, as a means of survival (Lawrence III, 2015).

Mo‘okū‘auhau. KanakaCrit suggests that the genealogies of Kānaka are intersectional and liminal (Cristobal, 2018). From Critical Race Theories, intersectionality refers to the interrelated and complex nature of race, power, gender, sexuality, and class as an analytic framework (Davis, 2008). In application, critical race theories guide researchers to reflect on aspects of identities and social structures together (Kolivoski, 2020), and these intersections reveal a more complete understanding of interlocking systems of oppression (Annamma et al., 2018). Such insights have the power to more fully and authentically express the lived experiences of people who have historically been oppressed and could provide promising avenues for dismantling such systems (Crenshaw, 1989). Liminality refers to the spaces which Kānaka occupy that exist at the boundaries of their lived experiences. Reyes (2018) expounds on this idea through her lived experience:

As an ‘Ōiwi woman, I have felt deeply the results of the occupation and colonization in my homeland. I live a liminal existence, at once knowing the injustice that has been done to our lāhui through overthrow and occupation and realizing that, in some ways, I have benefitted from the U.S. government as the daughter of a retired U.S. Air Force enlisted man and the recipient of federal financial aid. I am proud to be Hawaiian. Yet, though I

have tried, I still have so much to learn regarding nā mea Hawai‘i (things Hawaiian), our ‘ōlelo makuahine (mother language), our cultural practices, our histories, and even our possibilities for the future.

As Reyes describes, such literal and figurative positions result in an inbetweenness where Indigenous peoples, such as Kānaka, are framed by members of society as a racialized group regardless of the multiple and intersectional statuses they embody (Brayboy, 2005). While challenging, recognizing this liminality in practice provides opportunities for alternative ways of knowing (Andrews et al., 2019) and in this inquiry allows an exploration into how Kānaka negotiate their well-being realities. So while liminality adds complexity to understanding mo‘okū‘auhau it provides access to alternatives that create and affirm the identities of these Kānaka, and metaphorical space for counterstories of race, power, gender, sexuality, and class.

Recognizing this intersectionality and liminality suggests that multiple identities coexist, and each identity has a unique and separate genealogy. These genealogies run along one another like a stream, at times they overlap and mix together like the muliwai (estuary where fresh and saltwater meet creating a fertile habitat of abundance and biodiversity), and at others, they crash into one another to create a space of tension as Kānaka create (k)new genealogies. From these waters, we can learn more about genealogies, pertinent to this research, a genealogy of well-being. By exploring the many mo‘okū‘auhau of Kānaka it is, therefore, possible to understand the diverse pathways, relationships, and contexts that intersect with their well-being development. As I have come to suggest through this research, these pathways inform their mo‘okū‘auhau (genealogy) of well-being.

Kuleana. KanakaCrit also offers that kuleana is expressed and realized through the mo‘olelo and mo‘okū‘auhau of Kānaka (Cristobal, 2018). As the theory highlights, the agency of

Kānaka as they navigate spaces, articulate their identities, and challenge the appropriation of their role as Kānaka in the academy is embodied in their articulations of kuleana. In response to their developing academic identities, students develop kuleana, as a right, responsibility, privilege, concern, and authority (Wright & Balutski, 2016). Kuleana reflects identity consciousness and is a culmination of their mo‘olelo within the ecological system they inhabit (Cristobal, 2018). Therefore, kuleana is a source of identity development as students come to embody higher education identities (Wright & Balutski, 2016) and this developmental process informs their well-being genealogy. These identities subsequently shape well-being development as students grow into their various kuleana.

Aspects of Embodied Cognition Theories

Additively, I used embodiment and reflexivity to apply my hula approach to the components of KanakaCrit. Embodied cognition generally presents lived experiences as cycles of perception and action (Hinton, 2014), which result in embodiment or embodied knowledge. Embodied cognitivists consider the physical body as central and significant to cognitive processes (Wilson & Foglia, 2017) when perceiving the external world. By looking at the body as central to cognition, researchers explore new ways of thinking and learning. Rather than leaving the body as peripheral to understanding and creating meaning, the physical body is now being recognized as critical to how people understand their lived experiences (Merleau-Ponty, 2005) rather than taking for granted assumptions of unconscious experience (Kelly et al., 2017). Considering embodiment in this approach, I recognize how the physical bodies of the Kānaka I interviewed were engaged in, attuned to, and acting upon their external world (Gallagher, 2005). As some research suggests the physical body and well-being act in concert because the physical body has the capacity to alter well-being through its physiology and because well-being also has

a salutary effect on the body (Howell et al., 2007). Drawing on Gibson's (1978) work, the central nervous system is a continuous loop where the body is active in cognitive processes in a "whole bodily context" (Hinton, 2014). As Malinin (2016) articulates, this process is intuitive, and people have autonomy and agency through embodiment.

Embodiment. In reflecting on how embodiment informs this approach, it can be understood that occupation and colonialism as consequences in the environment have the potential to become embodied²⁸. If embodied, as KanakaCrit suggests, these effects are pervasive (Wright & Balutski, 2016) activating the nervous system. There is some research to explicate this idea, particularly in the Hawai'i context (see Kaholokula et al., 2020). From mo'okū'auhau, Kānaka also come to embody a particular genealogy for well-being, as informed by the relationships and contexts in which they are situated. Such contexts inform how their well-being develops. In response, this embodied genealogy influences, which stories are told, which are repeated, and which stories become important to them. These mo'olelo interact with their genealogy for well-being as they come to recognize and honor their stories through how they re-tell their mo'olelo. As such, Kānaka enact agency, as consistent with KanakaCrit (Wright & Balutski, 2016) and I explicate that this agency is a means for perpetuating their mo'olelo. I now turn to reflexivity to examine its role in understanding the lived experiences of Kānaka.

Reflexivity. Reflexivity as embodied cognition theories suggest, involves confronting lived experiences (Kelly et al., 2017) and engaging reflexively in the process (Denzin, 2001; Finlay, 2006). Research suggests that reflexive thinking can enrich research findings (Kelly et al., 2017) by creating a co-constructed space between the researcher and participants (Soja, 1996), by deepening the connections between the data and its social and cultural context (Sharma

²⁸ To develop additional understanding on the type of embodiment I am referring to here I invite you to explore the transgenerational effects of environmental exposure as seen in epigenetic research (Manikkam et al., 2012).

et al., 2009), and by recognizing new possibilities (Edvardsson & Street, 2007; Seymour, 2007). For example, in a study of healthcare environments, the embodied reflexive experience of nurses, raised subtle differences in the foreground of effective environments of care (Edvardsson & Street, 2007). In other words, the nurses explored movement through embodied reflections and became attuned to the dissonance between the active body of the nurse and the passive body of the patient. This reflexivity revealed how staff movement, through walking briskly, communicated a sense of unavailability to patients making them hesitant to ask for help.²⁹

In my research approach, reflexivity was used to continuously and consciously self-reflect and question inherent values and assumptions. Reflexivity helped me to reflect on the hūnā of particular mo‘olelo (or what could be considered confidential from a Kanaka lens) and be sensitive to what was shared in the interviews. This process also allowed me to reflect on my assumptions about well-being to better understand the well-being of the Kānaka I interviewed. Lastly reflexivity, helped me to explore the different genealogies of these Kānaka, and how they embodied mo‘okū‘auhau through their consistent activities and routines. Such insights allowed me to be flexible in re-defining well-being from their cases in a way that I may not have considered otherwise. When taken together these concepts as informed by a hula approach articulates well-being as the outcome and goal of lived experiences. And it is through contemporary consequences, their mo‘olelo and mo‘okū‘auhau, and kuleana that students embody their world.

Indigenous Research Paradigm: A (K)new Ideology

²⁹ Critiques of reflexivity in research express discontent with the role of body in memory (see Goldinger et al., 2016). More specifically, while the body is involved in potential actions and remembering, the claim that memory is influenced by the body is criticized as vague. Such critiques question the degree to which sensorimotor involvement determines memory processes. While the details of how, and how much the body affects cognition is beyond the scope of this paper, I suggest that the role of the body in re-membling and recognizing this claim is critical to investigating the intersectional and liminality of lived experience (e.g., mo‘okū‘auhau) and honoring the mo‘olelo of the Kānaka I interviewed.

I introduce this next section by describing its ideology. A (k)new ideology sets a foundation for hula in research as it aligns with an Indigenous research paradigm. The concept of “(k)new” (Freitas, 2015) acknowledges the settler colonial influence on academic scholarship while considering the construction of knowledge systems as deeply rooted and ancestral. Drawing on Māori scholarship (Edwards, 2009; L. T. Smith, 1999) and the mātauranga Māori (Rangiwai, 2018), (k)new knowledge is part of a decolonial process of re-membering the past. Re-membering (or (re)membering) the past is distinct from remembering as recall because it draws attention to the idea of membership (S. Russell & Carey, 2002), and subsequently the knowledge system that is perpetuated by members of a particular cultural group. While the knowledge itself is not “new” it has been consciously and unconsciously forgotten through the settler colonial process (L. T. Smith, 1999). So, for many peoples, this re-membering of the past is new, is sometimes interpreted or perceived as new, or may seem new although it is deeply rooted in the knowledge that has been passed down from generation to generation. Scholars have engaged with (k)new knowledge, particularly in academia, by describing how knowledge in such systems has been structured, known, and passed down both consciously and unconsciously by ancestors, through Indigenous ways of knowing (Edwards, 2009). (K)new knowledge is, therefore, one strategy to transform hegemonic approaches to research using pre-existing knowledge systems, standards, and governance to verify, critique, and legitimize Indigenous praxis (Rangiwai, 2018).

Kanaka researchers have added to the growing body of scholarship around (k)new knowledge as an ideology within Kanaka ‘Ōiwi lensing³⁰ (Freitas, 2015; Meyer, 2014; Saffrey,

³⁰ Ancestor lensing is a data analysis strategy that explores the connection and practical application of Māori legends (Royal, 2008). Such applications, through Māori language, art, and music hold epistemological truth (Edwards, 2012). Born out of this work, Kanaka ‘Ōiwi lensing is applied as a data analysis strategy for adapting and exploring the language, art, and music of Hawaiian legends (Freitas, 2015).

2019; Tengan, 2008a), utilizing the concept of (k)new to make sense of Hawaiian epistemology and ‘ike kupuna (ancestral knowledge) in contexts and spaces that bring to life the endurance of these knowledge systems and the complex layers of meaning that are tied to their lived genealogies. As Tengan (2008a) expressed, “Thus re-membling is both a type of memory work and an embodied practice that aggregates historically constituted collectives by coordinating personal memories, historical narratives and bodily experiences and representations” (p.29). Stillman (2001) further adds that re-membling in hula is expressed in the poetic repertoire, first as a historical progression of cultural memory, and second as a recovery of the embodiments encoded in the dance and movements. In this way, Kanaka scholars have contextualized the notion of inter-sensory perception as a foundation for understanding and creating meaning (L. T. Smith et al., 2019). By re-membling these knowledge systems, scholars embody space and place, access ‘ike kupuna (ancestral knowledge), and learn these historical narratives through their lived experiences. This ideology is embodied in the ‘ōlelo no‘eau, i ka wā ma mua, ka wā ma hope. Wilson-Hokowhitu and Meyer (2019) translate this as the past before us and use this definition to contextualize a Kanaka ‘Ōiwi worldview. As Kame‘eleihiwa (1992) describes,

It is interesting to note that in Hawaiian, the past is referred to as *Ka wā mamua*, or “the time in front or before.” Whereas the future, when thought of at all, is *Ka wā mahope*, or “the time which comes after or behind.” It is as if the Hawaiian stands firmly in the present, with his back to the future, and his eyes fixed upon the past, seeking historical answers for present-day dilemmas. Such an orientation is to the Hawaiian an eminently practical one, for the future is always unknown, whereas the past is rich in glory and knowledge. (p. 22)

Informed by these understandings, hula itself is a space for recovering embodied knowing and a poetic, historical, and cultural way to access Kanaka memory (Stillman, 2001). In this inquiry, I argue that hula is also a way of living into the recovery process and that through participant's re-membering I am able to access the poetic, historical, and cultural memory of Kānaka in (k)new ways. Furthermore, I see hula knowledge through this (k)new genealogy such that I reference knowledge and ideas that have been passed down for generations. This 'ike (knowledge, perception, awareness, recognition) was given to me by many teachers and Kumu Hula, and I am one of many vessels in this expansive genealogy. As Dudoit (1998) articulated,

Contemporary Hawaiian art also reaches towards the past, but in order to translate our traditions into the language of today. ... That transformation is an expression of my condition as a Hawaiian in contemporary times and, by extension, an expression of the contemporary condition of the Hawaiian people in general (p. 22).

Thus, hula is a (k)new ideology, a new way to frame the research process grounded in the genealogical past of a resilient hula lineage. Extending Dudoit's explanation to hula adds that the contemporary power of hula lives in its ability to perpetuate hula traditions of the past by translating them into expressions of the contemporary conditions of Kānaka. In effect, this research is an attempt to express one condition that is well-being.

From decolonizing research to the strengthening of Indigenous approaches, Indigenous scholars have progressed towards re-claiming³¹ Indigenous practice in academic spaces (L. T. Smith et al., 2019). Historically, as Linda Tuhiwai Smith articulates (1999), "Indigenous peoples have been, in many ways, oppressed by theory" (p. 38). This narrative shares a similar thread

³¹ Akin to the application of re-membering utilized in this inquiry, this reference of re-claiming embodies the idea that Indigenous scholars (through cycles of reclamation) may re-member their Indigenous practices in academic spaces. Such re-membering is an attempt to occupy academic space through intellectual agency.

across Native communities, such that academic ideologies and merit are held in conflict with the health and well-being of communities (Kana'iaupuni, 2004; Shotton et al., 2013). And so, I use hula as my research paradigm to challenge how Indigenous peoples have historically been oppressed by research processes.

Hula: A (K)new Description

I provide a brief (k)new description of hula to provide context for how it is applied as a paradigm. I describe some basic knowledge of hula, as a dance form, how the art form extends beyond the physical body, how it is tied to cultural memory, and how the practice itself is decolonial in nature. I then discuss a specific hula context (i.e., 'ūniki), which is pertinent to how this praxis was applied.

Hula is an art form that is known as Hawaiian dance. Included in this understanding is hula as an exercise. An exercise is a kind of transformative practice undertaken to inspire change, and through training, people become accustomed to behavior that they will eventually manifest (Foucault, 1988). In education for example, we may engage in physical exercise to gain strength, in intellectual exercise to train ourselves in grammatical structure, in emotional exercise to learn coping strategies, or in social exercise to develop relationships with others (McWhorter, 1992). These exercises transform behavior into routines and activities that contribute to our development. In hula, these exercises transform the practitioners undergoing the experience and they are embodied through a culmination of the consistent engagement in activities and routines (i.e., a praxis) that develops.

Foucault (1988) describes exercise as twofold, involving both the training of the body and the training of the soul. Perspectives of health by hula educators and experts similarly speak to hula as a training of the body and soul (Look et al., 2014), such that hula is not only a physical

exercise, but an intellectual, socioemotional, and spiritual one. Exercises such as gymnastics, for example, provide harmony in the mind and soul in response to the regimen of care given to the body (Foucault, 1988). The body also has the capacity to remember and embody memories. These memories live in our musculature or neurology, but both are framed in the body and within its movements (L. D. Russell, 2017). So, while our actions and behaviors reflect our perceived world, our bodies could know and understand our experiences in ways that we may otherwise be unaware of during memory recall. Dancers, for example, have opportunities to fine-tune their felt knowledge by tapping into an embodied knowledge system that can then be used to understand their world.

Hula is also a site of access to cultural memory and a social practice central to the development of identity (Stillman, 2001). In effect, hula has the power to illuminate lived experiences through an understanding of sensational awareness (Block & Kissell, 2001) via cultural memory. But, just as research has privileged Eurocentric verbal and written knowledge systems, dance has privileged visual aesthetics (Bull, 1997). This intersection is where hula adds to the academic community, as a bridge between understanding verbal and written meaning through an understanding of meaning through multiple senses. As my Kumu Hula often recites³², hula is everything we see, hear, smell, taste, touch, and feel. Through these hula senses, I define meaning and these senses guide the life and breadth that are in my academic practice of research.

By drawing on hula as an embodied knowledge system and practice, I aim to decenter privileged knowledge systems and senses, to transform the space where dance and research praxes meet. The research shift towards embodiment also, “represents a more authentically

³² Again, this reference embodies re-membling, as my Kumu Hula “recites,” as oral traditions explicate, while also “cites,” as academic references explicate the valued intellectual system that is hula.

phenomenological sensibility that overcomes the divide between the objective and subjective dimensions of our existence ... and more important, the concept of flesh connotes receptivity or intertwining with the external world” (Becker et al., 2015, p. 123). This decolonial approach attempts to expand perceptions of well-being, by questioning how we understand the phenomenon. This lens also challenges the divide between objective and subjective measures to look beyond dualistic discourse (Martínková, 2017; Ng et al., 2005), and the Cartesian mind-body split (Brown et al., 2011; Mond-Kozłowska, 2017; Moreton-Robinson, 2013), to bring the body and mind into an inseparable existence with one another (Shonstrom, 2020). This process is aligned with hula as an embodied knowledge system and includes utilizing feeling and emotion as interconnected with rational thought, as opposed to obstacles to rational thinking and objectivity. The body and lived reality from this perceptive position becomes interwoven with the mind and lived experience. As a research paradigm, hula complements other Indigenous research approaches by integrating the body of the researcher in the research process. From this understanding, where the body and soul are integral to Hawaiian knowing, and through hula movement and extensive training it is possible to embody a Hawaiian worldview, I began to develop my Indigenous research lens. I suggest from this embodied knowing that hula, and in particular hula ‘ūniki³³ training—preparation for graduation exercises, as for hula, lua fighting, and other ancient arts that involve protocol and ceremony—upholds my Indigenous research paradigm.

To provide context, I am a hula dancer and practitioner of Hālau Hula Ka No‘eau under the direction of Kumu Hula Michael Pili Pang. I have been dancing with him for over 14 years. I completed my first ‘ūniki in 2009 as an ‘ōlapa, and I completed my second ‘ūniki concurrent

³³ Not all hālau practice ‘ūniki ceremonies and go through this type of training. From my understanding, this depends on the mo‘okū‘auhau of the hālau and the Kumu Hula’s genealogy.

with my doctoral studies graduating as a ho‘opa‘a and Kumu Hula in 2021. Although it is possible to engage in dance in ways that are not embodied, I am specifically referring to hula in an embodied context (i.e., ‘ūniki) because the ceremonial and ritual practices involved require years of training and expertise. Such expertise informed the protocols I leaned upon when making research decisions and through which I studied and explored the well-being of Kānaka in this study. As I engaged in hula through ‘ūniki I was able to embody hula in particular ways that guided my research through metacognitive practices. In other words, I was able to utilize Indigenous knowledge that I have gained in hula as a way to approach this dissertation research as a learning process. For example, utilizing oli as prayer to inform how I engaged with and analyzed the data. Generated by my hula experiences, my approach to research is a culmination of a Hawaiian knowledge system within the praxis of hula. Specifically, I reference various mo‘olelo, mele, hula, oli, and ‘ōlelo no‘eau as sources of a Hawaiian epistemology, which provide living narratives that practitioners use to embody Hawaiian ways of knowing (Saffrey, 2019). This system framed how I articulated an Indigenous research paradigm and is influenced by hula as a structure for understanding my lived experiences with the data, as I embody the research process. By connecting hula to my research paradigm, I recognize the value of hula as an Indigenous knowledge system to honor my genealogy as a hula practitioner and within a particular lineage. Appendix C was gifted to me by my Kumu Hula, Michael Pili Pang and appeared in the program of our hu‘elepo ‘ūniki ceremony, Saturday, July 24, 2021 (see Appendix C for this hula genealogical chart). In the next section, I will define what I mean by an Indigenous research paradigm through hula as I have applied it in my research.

A Hula Research Paradigm

Hula falls within an Indigenous research paradigm. According to Wilson (2008), an Indigenous research paradigm is a ceremony that is made up of ontology, epistemology, methodology, and axiology. Together, this philosophy undergirds the research process and are assumptions or a set of broad principles that guide the research design (Creswell, 2007). With hula as my guiding praxis and ‘ūniki as my ceremony, I, therefore, describe my Indigenous research paradigm through hula as a means to define the research paradigm in context-specific terms. In short, hula as an approach is one way to conduct research with Kānaka or with Kanaka communities. I now discuss the research pā‘ū or my ontology and epistemology, along with the research kūpe‘e and lei, or my methodology and axiology, in the coming sections to articulate the assumptions and principles of hula that are applied to this research.

Oli Pā‘ū. Kākua pā‘ū ‘ahu nā kīkepa,
i ka pā‘ū no‘eno‘e i ho‘olu‘ua,
i ho‘okākua ‘ia a pa‘a i luna o ka imu.
Kū ka hu‘a o ka pali o ka wai kapu.
He kuina pā‘ū pali no Kupehau,
i holo a pa‘a ‘ia a pa‘a e Honokāne.

The Research Pā‘ū. Wilson (2008) describes ontology as the nature of reality, which asks, *what is real?* Following an embodied constructivist approach, in hula what is real and true is learned through the physical body. As a Kanaka worldview suggests, there is a natural order in the world and this order is understood by hula practitioners, and Kānaka alike, through our na‘au, translated in English as intestines, bowels, guts, mind, and heart all as one (Meyer, 2001). The na‘au as a physical center is the seat of ways of being for Kānaka, clarifying how the mind and body are centered spiritually. In practice, this comes from deep internalization, thorough observation, active listening, and awareness –being attentive to the na‘au –because feeling *is* knowing what is real. As Louis (2017) explains, a Kanaka ontology centers on space, place, and nature as opposed to time, events, and history (p. 21). This ontology recognizes the mana,

defined by Louis as the life force, within all beings that shapes reality. As such, the ontological perspective of this research is focused on the processes through which well-being developed and how well-being as a phenomenon varied across situations and contexts (Power et al., 2023).

These processes as informed by Kanaka scholarship are understood as rooted in the na‘au and instincts as a means for understanding what reality is, as the na‘au reflects the natural order in the environment. This ontology also suggests that changes could be understood through the spaces, places, and nature surrounding Kānaka, such as the ones I interviewed.

Epistemology is the system of knowledge and its relationships in context (Wilson, 2008). This aspect asks, *how do I know what's real?* A hula approach suggests that what is real and how I know are learned through the body in motion. Through hula, the body perceives what is real, and knowing and understanding the world comes from what is embodied. So, the physical body and its sensations, such as the na‘au, define reality (Meyer, 2001, p. 141). Meyer suggests that in research this epistemology is embodied when feeling comfortable in the na‘au is understood as knowing and feeling uncomfortable is a signal to change the course of protocol or that some knowledge gained should be cast aside. As such, a hula epistemology could be seen as beginning with intuitive knowledge (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017). In the process of reclamation, this epistemology is also informed by ‘ike kūpuna (i.e., ancestral³⁴ knowledge) as well as sense abilities (i.e., empirical knowledge). As mentioned earlier, hula is everything we see, hear, smell, taste, touch, and feel. These hula senses define the sense abilities (Oliveira, 2016) that are the life and breadth of my Kanaka epistemology. As Oliveira described, these abilities can provide visual cues, conversational discourse, cultural memories, palatable impressions, tangible

³⁴ I redefine this terminology as ancestral. Other traditions may utilize the term authoritative knowledge here (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017).

inspiration, and na‘au instincts, respectively³⁵. I leaned into these sense abilities in diverse ways throughout this process as part of my epistemology creating (k)new connections with people, places, and resources. These experiences allowed me to perceive, react, and empathize in ways that felt authentic. Furthermore, hula as a research epistemology is informed by naturally occurring phenomena and is understood through how people impose meaning on the world and interpret it in a way that makes sense to them.

As I have described, together ontology and epistemology are informed by the na‘au. Pūku‘i and colleagues (1972) describe the genealogy of na‘au as beginning with the abstract qualities of intelligence and character, which combine to express our human capabilities. While these are often expressed through emotional states, such as love and courage, they are combined with the viscera or our sense abilities (Oliveira, 2016). In this combination is where the intuition lies. Without an English equivalent this understanding has been historically transformed and translated as the heart of our lived experiences or the gut feelings that are considered a collective consciousness (Guajardo & Guajardo, 2017).

While this evolution of understanding has been helpful to more fully and authentically express the na‘au, in practice it also has the potential to create challenges when expressed in research praxis. Kanaka scholars have described the na‘au to consider how Kanaka consciousness of ancestral knowledge represents a Kanaka worldview (see Wilson-Hokowhitu, 2019). From exploring these perspectives of na‘au, I have become inspired to describe the research application of the na‘au as a receptiveness to Kanaka consciousness, as a meeting place for where quiet periods of self-searching converge with opportunity to birth enlightenment (Kahakalau, 2019). In other words, a belief in the na‘au can be understood as enlightenment that

³⁵ Oliveira (2016) discusses additional sense abilities but because of the boundaries of this research I highlight a few as pertinent to hula as my research paradigm.

becomes possible when the flow of deliberate, intense, and extensive contemplation converges with the opportunity to find meaning, inspiration, and inner awareness. While this abstract description may seem lofty it more accurately allows kuleana to take alternate forms (Aikau, 2019) and creates balance (Wilson-Hokowhitu, 2019) between what is considered in English as the mind work and the heart work of research. As Vaughn (2019) touches upon, na‘au is preceded by “trusting in the people who know a place ... more than any pattern or plan” (p. 34). Given that the topic of this research is a metaphoric space of well-being development for each Kānaka, I have trusted in them as the knowledge holders of their physical bodies. These physical places are trusted sources to express the phenomena of well-being. As Louis (2017) extends, classification through recognizing the characteristics, roles, and responsibilities of both human and more-than-human entities is one way for Kānaka to (re)learn this consciousness.

Through my research ceremony, the ontology and epistemology form the research pā‘ū or skirt, that covers and guards the imu (the oven of the body, i.e., na‘au) of knowledge, which is a source of the physical, experienced, and perceived world. To articulate further, this work is inspired by Wilson-Hokowhitu (2021) who described the micro and macro cycles of Hawaiian ontology and epistemology by reclaiming the body and exploring how it informs research. As Wilson-Hokowhitu stated,

The intergenerational interactions between the moon, volcano, land, ocean, rivers, mist, and rain, guide the micro and macro cycles that inform identity, gender, and wellbeing. Here, I refer to the micro cycles as the subtle changes within our own bodies, most notably the process of birthing (in all forms), menstruation, and the macro cycles as the phases of the moon that determine the ocean tides, animal behaviour, such as the presence or lack of fish, and the growth of plants. ... in the traditional Hawaiian

worldview, atmospheric elements embody nā kino ākua Hawai‘i, providing a fundamental function in our ancestral memory, essential in the modern Hawaiian consciousness. (p. 115-116)

From this consciousness, from pō or darkness all macro and micro cycles of knowledge are born. As Wilson-Hokowhitu argues, a reclamation of darkness is necessary to embody a Kanaka and hula ontological and epistemological position. Similar to what Wilson-Hokowhitu described, I saw parallels in my ability to write this dissertation and pō. While Wilson-Hokowhitu traced the Hawaiian lunar phases through kilo I recalled my process more generally associated with pō perhaps as someone with a name that was gifted to my mother by a priest in a dream³⁶. I surmise that it is possible that ancestral knowledge gifted me this guidance as I was in the womb or perhaps even earlier as my ancestors conspired to give me an inoa pō. In the years of my doctoral research, I used pō, and found my most productive and efficient writing and analysis periods to come during late evenings as opposed to early mornings. Mornings often left me feeling drained and unproductive. Some may call me a “night owl” because of this, and there is research to suggest that our sleep chronotype has a biological rhythm (Ding et al., 2023) and influences our social perceptions and group stereotypes (Stolarski & Gorgol, 2022).

In one tangible example, I often received advice throughout this journey to wake up early and write first thing in the morning. While these thoughtful recommendations seemed practical and are effective for some, I tried and failed to utilize this advice in practice. It was frustrating and I reflected on how I just could not find clarity in this way. I tried again and again and failed to embody this way of knowing and thus writing. As I returned to my physical body and the

³⁶ This is referred to as “inoa pō.” As a Kanaka with an inoa pō (see Pūku‘i & Elbert, 1986 for a direct translation), I recognize and honor the genealogy of pō that predetermined my own birth. Other scholars such as ho‘omanawanui (2014b) also discuss pō and their work informs this epistemology.

micro and macro structures of my being, I noticed that it was in times of pō when things became clearer for me. I learned that to write and make sense of the research, I needed to write when the rest of the world around me was quiet. At times, this happened late at night driving home from hula. At others, when I laid awake at night in bed, restless and unable to sleep. These opportunities in pō cleared my mental field allowing knowledge, reality, and truth to arise from the dream-state space we inhabit with pō (Wilson-Hokowhitu, 2021).

From the Oli Pā‘ū, presented to introduce this section, an ontology and epistemology are illuminated by the pā‘ū or skirt that ‘ahu nā kīkepa (see Appendix D for people wearing kīkepa). While kīkepa are used in other contexts, a kīkepa in my hula genealogy is a garment given to someone upon successful completion and when the Kumu Hula rank is received. This kīkepa is printed in a particular way (i.e., pā‘ū no‘eno‘e i ho‘olu‘ua) and with particular markings that represent the genealogy of the hālau hula and is done by the Kumu Hula and tied onto the haumāna during their ‘ūniki as a Kumu Hula. There is no physical paper degree, as with academic completion, and so these garments are the physical representation that qualifies a level of knowledge much like a diploma that qualifies an epistemology and ontology have been passed down to you.

Oli Kūpe‘e.

‘A‘ala kupukupu a ka uka o Kanehoa
E hoa e

Hoa nā lima o ka makani, he Waikalua
He Waikalua ka makani anu Lihue

Alina e lehua i kau ka ‘ōpua
Ku‘u pua e,

Ku‘u pua i‘ini e kui a lei
Inā iā ‘oe ke lei ‘ia maila

The Research Kūpe‘e. Methodology asks, *how do I find out more* (Wilson, 2008)? It outlines the methods employed in empirical research to reach the destination. In talking with McGregor and Osorio, Maunakea (2016) articulated the methodological process. First, there is documentation, understanding all that there is to know in preparation for research. Documenting means understanding ‘āina (land) and how Kanaka ancestors connected to ‘āina through inoa (names), oli (chants), mele (songs), and ‘ōlelo no‘eau (proverbs). This step is followed by seeking out kūpuna (elders) and asking questions, being prepared to figure out the story of the people. In learning, however, keeping focused is important. McGregor pointed out how this asking process is focused, speaking about maha‘oi (immodest, impertinent in asking questions) as a challenge of methodology. As they explained, coming with intention, and only taking what you need is imperative. Lastly, this process ends with giving back, protecting the people and their knowledge, and respecting their choices. As Osorio upheld, not everything is given freely, and that is okay. The community of participants has the right to change their minds and to be perceived in a way that makes sense to them. So, being accountable is important in the relational knowing of this methodology (Wilson, 2008). Inspired by her Tūtū, or grandmother, Vaughan (2016) similarly uses lei-making as a metaphor for methodology. She explains,

Oli First: Ask and explain the purpose for your gathering. Look. Listen. Take only what you need. Clean your materials before you depart, leaving as much as you can with the plants to rejuvenate and replenish. When the process is complete, and the lei dries, bring it back to this spot or return it to some other ‘āina [land] to bring growth. (p. 50)

I see parallels throughout Kanaka methodologies of this metaphor. Kanaka researchers draw on various methods to make sense of where this process begins, how and what information they gather, and how it is honored and returned to the community. In effect, each step that is part

of the method is a kūpe‘e, bracelet, or anklet, in the methodology. These kūpe‘e are *hoa*³⁷, tied, bound, and secured to the wrists and ankles, and as the *oli* suggests, *ku‘u pua ‘i‘ini e kui a lei*. These endeared blossoms inspire an ‘i‘ini (desire) that are kui (strung together) to create a kūpe‘e, which in this context are the methods of the methodology.

From my experience, this process of making kūpe‘e begins with *mai‘a* or a banana stump³⁸ (see Appendix E1). The stump is opened and dried, and then the strands are braided to create *kaula* or cordage (see Appendix E2). This cordage is the backing of a kūpe‘e and is the piece of a kūpe‘e that is *hoa*, tied or bound, when the practitioners chant *oli kūpe‘e*. While there are many adornments that can sit atop the *kaula*, and be woven into a kūpe‘e, such as *palapalai*, *kukui*, and ‘*a‘ali‘i* to name a few, the *kaula* is the foundation for the kūpe‘e³⁹. After creating the *kaula*, there are several protocols for gathering materials for the kūpe‘e, aligned with the methods I ultimately used in this research process and writing. And once completed the kūpe‘e is used in ceremony and returned to ‘*āina*. In a similar respect, I wrote the cases and returned them back to the Kānaka I interviewed. However, this ceremony continues, as I prepared for the defense and a

³⁷ I utilize the term *hoa* later in this chapter, this is different than the *hoa* as expressed here and reflects the layers of meaning or *kaona* of *hoa* as they manifested in my dissertation.

³⁸ *Kaula* or cordage used in kūpe‘e can be made using various materials. In the hula lineage to which I am a part of I have been taught to use *mai‘a*. This genealogy represents one school of knowledge, while many other traditions and genealogies exist.

³⁹ I would like to make note here of something that I have learned regarding *kāhili* primarily from docents at ‘Iolani Palace as I see similarities between the *kāhili* and the kūpe‘e as mentioned briefly here. *Kāhili* (more specifically *kāhili kū*) or feather standards have historically become equated with a Coat of Arms for *ali‘i* or Hawaiian royalty (Rose, 2015). What I learned from docents of the palace and to which I found one written record, “Traditionally, the most important element in a *kāhili* was said to be the pole or *kumu* from which the *kāhili* derived its personal name” (Rose et al., 1993). Traditionally, this *kumu* was often made of the bones of a slain enemy and inlaid with turtle-shell. Analysis of *kāhili* mentions that in the years that follow *kāhili* were often made of *koa* and *kauila* and were polished or painted to look like traditional poles made of bone and turtle-shell. Through the docents of ‘Iolani Palace, I learned that while the hula or feathers have a long and important history less is written about the *kumu*. As such, the *kumu* of the *kāhili* is just as important as the hula although at times forgotten or perhaps since some of this history has been lost. I invite other Kānaka here to reflect on the importance of *iwi*, the development of *kumu* for *kāhili*, and the representation of *kāhili* contemporarily. I see reflections of kūpe‘e in this understanding recognizing how the *kaula* is the foundation for the kūpe‘e, how *mai‘a* is a *kinolau* of *Kanaloa*, how the braided nature of the cordage represents how hula practitioners are bound and interwoven into a particular genealogy, and how the *kaula* can be a representation of the methodology we come to embody as hula practitioners.

similar return to ‘āina will happen when I conclude this dissertation work through makana. I will be gifting the Kānaka I interviewed as well as our continued relationships as a community of scholars.

Oli Lei. Ke lei mai la o Kaula i ke kai, e
Ke malamalama o Niihau, ua malie.
A maile, pa ka Inu-wai, la
Ke inu mai la
na hala o Naue i ke kai.
No Naue, ka hala,
no Puna ka wahine.
No ka lua no i Kilauea

The Research Lei. Axiology is the ethics and morals that guide the search for knowledge and meaning (Wilson, 2008). In other words, the role of values in the research process is important for defining what is meaningful. Generally, as Louis (2017) articulates, ‘ohana or the extended family is a framework for how Kānaka conduct research with respect and reciprocity. Through my ‘ohana⁴⁰, I understand my kuleana (responsibilities) and it guides my respectful interactions with the world. This ethics was informed by academia, as I deepened my understanding of kuleana through my academic work to critically consider my privileges as a means for the interviews I conducted. From this understanding of kuleana and respect, reciprocity was rediscovered in my hula praxis as I re-membered these ethics for engagement. Similarly, in the methodological process reciprocity is a response to respect and kuleana as I learned to provide for my research ‘ohana, including the participants, the community, and others. For me, axiology is the research lei⁴¹. The research lei is tended to, carefully cleaned, and woven

⁴⁰ The ‘ohana that I refer to here, begins with my ‘ohana in hula. As indicative of the term, this includes and recognizes the intersectionality of my ‘ohana in hula with my familial and extended ‘ohana.

⁴¹ Given my hula genealogy, I am referring here to a lei ‘āī and made of maile. This type of lei is carefully crafted, as the stems of the maile plant are pounded and then stripped. If done incorrectly, the maile leaves come apart. After it is stripped, a hili or twisting technique is used. As I have been taught this technique is typically done with two strands and they are twisted together clockwise.

together. And when the lei dries it should be returned to the ‘āina or people to provide growth for the future.

In the presentation of oli lei in an ‘ūniki ceremony, the hula dancer, sitting, unwinds the lei, often made of maile, in a clockwise motion. Then the chanter asks for mālamalama (clarity and enlightenment) as they offer this lei to the gods before placing it around their neck. As they chant the closing portion of the oli they then place a lei po‘o around the crown of their head and come to a standing position. As such, in addition to the lei that serves as a metaphor for the axiology, this understanding of process and protocol were integral to my axiology. Kanaka scholars (Lipe, 2016; Lopes, 2010; Saffrey, 2015) and non-Kanaka scholars (Blair-Stahn, 2014; Rowe, 2013) alike have wondered and wandered through the values and assumptions that are found in hālau hula. I am always learning and re-learning in this praxis how to embody these assumptions in everyday life. In this search for meaning, I look to two concepts found in this oli as hallmarks for this axiology. These concepts are mālie and mālamalama. In embodying these values, I have come to a place of ethical relationality (Todd, 2016) where I understand differences in this research as an ethical means to understand each Kanaka more deeply in relation to the next, and in relation to my own well-being. From mālie, the calm, quiet, serene places I have meditated on these stories. I have approached these interviews with respect through an ethics of gentleness. I have found mālamalama, clarity, and enlightenment, by visiting the oceans, wandering in the pō, and by allowing ideas to birth from the experience. By utilizing mālie and mālamalama as guiding values in this process I have re-centered an ethics of care in my research looking to mālie as a means for mālamalama. Perhaps there are other ways to understand Kanaka axiology, and I invite commentary and critique of this challenging process as I attempt to bridge hula protocol with research processes.

Through reflection, I came to understand how this praxis for hula in my research was rooted in motion. As Akkerman and colleagues (2021) proposed, research in motion adheres to two principles, actuality, and generativity. These principles provide what they called ontological synchronization between the ontology, epistemology, and axiology of the research to inform the methodology of its practice. As the authors argue,

Actuality ... is not primarily about identifying topical themes but about subordinating and opening up one's epistemological and axiological perspective to the ontology of people's wider lives as they are and are always becoming anew. Such a principle allows more valid interpretations of findings about people, but it also brings necessary caution in making suggestions for people based on findings. (p. 422)

As they put forth, this means attending to the present and presence of people and settings studied. This principle in action meant considering what genealogies existed beyond the genealogy of well-being that was the focus of this inquiry, as well as the expectations of well-being embodied or not through the activities and routines Kānaka engaged in. Looking across multiple genealogies and the many mo'olelo Kānaka shared, I continued to build my attunement and reflexively think through what mattered the most for these Kānaka and how well-being fit into that narrative. I argue that this process of generativity can be seen as a way to embody mālie. Akkerman and colleagues added that the principle of generativity meant being responsible for the future. In essence, this principle is caring for the future and being sensitive to potential and unpredictability that the future holds. In alignment with ka wā ma hope as mentioned previously (Kame'eleihiwa, 1992; Wilson-Hokowhitu, 2019), generativity is an awareness of what future is being suggested (Akkerman et al., 2021) through an understanding of the past (ma mua), and in this case what well-being future possibilities are possible or impossible for the Kānaka I

interviewed. Reflexively recognizing the past while reaching into the future (McDermott & Pea, 2020) these principles lead to new possibilities that emerge in, between, and around people. Such is the embodiment of mālamalama to illuminate a pathway, ka wā ma hope, into the future.

These concepts and principles when taken together highlight circularity and reflexivity in my research process, and how research in motion (Akkerman et al., 2021) helps to define hula as an Indigenous research paradigm. Together they dress the research in the necessary pā‘ū, kūpe‘e, and lei, providing a hula approach as the foundational knowledge necessary to conduct research in my community.

Conclusion

The existing literature on doctoral students suggests the power of higher education as a social context for development. This context is not without challenges as students encounter diverse cultures, races, ethnicities, and genders in academic spaces. As students develop professional identities and embody higher education identities, they challenge hegemonic structures and inequitable access through their presence in these spaces. The literature on how students are socialized into academia uses educational outcomes as measures of success without exploring long-term development outcomes, such as well-being. Using this broader lens to understand degree pathways supports diversity, access, and equity in higher education in ways that may better explain Indigenous ways of thinking and learning. By utilizing hula as an approach for this explanation of well-being development in graduate school, I examined well-being through the following research questions: (a) How do Kanaka doctoral students describe their well-being? And (b) What lived experiences contribute to the development of their well-being?

Chapter 3.

Method

Ke welina mai nei ke kini ō lalo⁴² is a chant and hula that was taught to me as a greeting. This hula tells a story of Kāne. As I reflected on my research design, I continued to return to this hula mele (the words of this dance) and use it as a framework for organizing my procedures. Other scholars have used hula chants in their research in diverse ways (see Lopes, 2010; Saffrey, 2019). While I am inspired by such applications, I utilize this mele as a means for structuring the design of this research and keep it within the boundaries of the procedure. The depth of some metaphors referred to here may not make sense to all people, but the descriptions I provide offer, allude to, and provide an essence of their application. In other words, I will not provide direct translations for the metaphors of hula I include in this chapter, since I am not a Hawaiian language expert or fluent speaker, but rather will explicate upon ideas applicable to this research as I have learned and begun to explore them as part of my training as an ‘ūniki graduate and hula practitioner. These metaphors and ideas may be incomplete and require further development. But for me utilizing the wisdom of hula as a Kanaka praxis in (k)new ways is how I have chosen to trespass⁴³ the boundaries of rigorous scholarship in the academy today. I also acknowledge that this application is imperfect and set forth this structure for my chapter as a starting point and place of departure for myself and others. Above all, I hope this expression serves as an inspiration for other hula practitioners navigating academic spaces.

Ke Welina Mai Nei

⁴² In this chapter, the direct references to “Ke Welina Mai Nei” that open and close these paragraphs are diacritically notated just as they were given to me. While I am not a Hawaiian language expert or fluent speaker, there are times when the translations and diacritical markings may be incorrect and fixing them because of their poetic nature are beyond my knowledge and experience. To preserve the genealogy in which this hula has been passed down to me, I honor the diacritical decisions that were taught to me regardless of the potential for such errors.

⁴³ This reference is drawn from Critical Race Theory (See Lawrence III, 2015).

Ke welina mai nei ke kini o lalo
Na hoa i ka uka nahele o Puna
Akahi ko noho a ka ua i Kaukahi
Noho o Kane i ka papa i lohia
A lau o Kalohelani o Pi'ilani la
Ea la, ea la, ea

Alo neia poe i ka maanu lai
Na ka manu i kai o Halulu
Hano o ka lani i ka papa ni'oni 'o
Ni'oni 'o aia la e mimiki ke kai
Eia a ahuwale e ka papa la e
Ea la, ea la, ea

Ua maona o Kane i ka awa
Ua kau ke keha i ka uluna
Ke hiolani la i ka moena
Kipi'i ke kapa a ka noe
O ka hoopaa kai a Kinilau la
Ea la, ea la, ea

Ke Welina Mai Nei: Research Design and Procedure

Welina mai, greetings to you and the design of this research.

Within an Indigenous research paradigm, I designed this qualitative study to be descriptive and exploratory, as it describes the way Kanaka doctoral students conceptualized well-being and analyzed the nature through which their well-being developed based on their lived experiences and genealogies. I used qualitative inquiry to uncover layers of meaning in well-being for these Kānaka, in essence providing specificity and nuance to this research in terms of how their well-being developed over time (Wright, 2003). As Wright (2003) argues, specificity and nuance through qualitative inquiry expands identity formation from an individual internal process to a collective one. Exploring well-being development using this understanding expands how these well-being stories are understood as a reflection of collective well-being development. Looking across the lived experiences of these Kānaka, I attempt to move towards

understanding the specificity and nuance of their stories through the cross-case. This research utilized a multi-case study approach to provide an in-depth understanding of well-being for each case and the ways in which well-being developed through the lives of the Kānaka I interviewed (Creswell, 2007). Approaching the data using this design calls attention to the details of each student's case and their setting as aligned with the approach. More importantly, approaching the data in this way is informed by Kanaka scholarship which details the need for research to be designed through mo'olelo or the stories of participants and mo'okū'auhau or the genealogies through which Kānaka understand their world (Lipe, 2014; Oliveira & Wright, 2016; Saffrey, 2019; Wilson-Hokowhitu, 2019; Yazzie, 2018). Such design was enacted using the following protocol: (a) a pilot study, (b) expert review, (c) individual interviews, and (d) collecting individual artifacts.

Nā Hoa⁴⁴: Pilot Study

Nā hoa, to the companions in this work.

When learning a new skill or mele in hula, my Kumu Hula taught me to first rely on and turn to my hoa. In this context, hoa could be translated as friend, companion, and colleague, referring to the peers in the learning process. Through this process, we discuss and confer as hula brothers and sisters before reaching out to our kumu. This protocol is helpful when learning something new because it strengthens our relationships as we come together to solve problems. It also encourages me to not be maha'oi (Maunakea, 2016) and to only ask kumu deeper questions when I am ready to do so and have risen to a level of preparation that requires their tutelage. As I

⁴⁴ Another way to describe hoa in the research context is through the terms kaikua'ana and kaikaina (for a fuller description and understanding of these constructs see Lipe, 2014b). I use hoa instead of the terms kaikua'ana and kaikaina to make a direct reference to the hula "Ke Welina Mai Nei", which is a foundation for this chapter. While I use the term hoa here, I recognize the potential limitations of its translation that could more overtly be described through utilizing the terms kaikua'ana and kaikaina. But to streamline this chapter I have decided to align this section with the hula and therefore use hoa in its place to refer to the pilot participants of this research.

reflected on this process, I found myself searching for *hoa* in the academic space to confer with. To enact the hula research paradigm, I reflected on this process of learning in hula, and formally engaged with *hoa* through the pilot study for this research. This pilot helped me develop my process and ensured that I was ready to seek out experts for their insights thereafter.

I conducted a pilot with four Kanaka master's students, who were not participants in the current study. I used these opportunities to modify the interview questions, make changes to the interview protocol, and utilize the feedback of these *hoa* to bring clarity and consistency to the protocol. I was open to modifying the procedure to include additional Kānaka in the pilot study if there was a need for additional feedback to reach saturation. While I anticipated interviewing three Kanaka students for the pilot study at the onset of this project, my pilot included four Kanaka students for saturation purposes. These interviews ranged from 1-4.5 hours. The original intent of this data collection method was to mirror the 'ōlelo no'ēau, ma ka hana ka 'ike. Only in doing the work could I learn how to do it; by piloting the procedures, I better understood the interview process and protocols. And through turning to the wisdom of these four *hoa*, I was able to prepare myself for the expert review process.

Ke welina mai nei ke kini ō lalo nā hoa ō ka uka nahele ō Puna. Such is my greeting to the multitudes below, and the companions of the uplands in the forest of Puna. I am welcomed into the research space, have become a better hoa, and am prepared for the journey forward. I extend this invitation of welcome to you as you journey through this inquiry.

'Akahi ka Noho: Expert Review

Gathering like the rain at Kaukahi these research pieces begin to come together,

I invite Kāne⁴⁵ to dwell with us here.

⁴⁵ Kāne is a god or akua whose genealogical story may be traced to Kānaka (Barrère, 1961). While several genealogical stories exist, in hula such as Ke Welina Mai Nei we honor the Akua, Kāne for his role in Hawaiian

I also sought guidance from experts for my interview protocol and talked with three Kanaka faculty members about my interview questions. For this review, I looked for faculty who self-identified as Kanaka, had experience working with doctoral students (at least three years of experience advising or mentoring doctoral students), and were practitioners with experience in Hawaiian cultural practices⁴⁶. After sharing my research background with faculty, they explained to me how they fit my expert qualifications and provided feedback on my interview questions. Feedback included recommendations for existing interview questions, general thoughts and reactions, and aspects they felt were missing from the protocol given my research questions and cultural foundations for this work. I planned to meet with at least three Kanaka faculty members and was able to find similarities across their feedback, such that I did not need to ask additional Kanaka faculty members to reach saturation. This process prepared me for the individual interviews, and the final protocol and interview design incorporated feedback from experts (see Appendix F for expert review notes and modifications).

This data collection method is rooted in the ‘ōlelo no‘eau, i ulu no ka lālā i ke kumu (Pūku‘i, 1983) and reflects a Hawaiian protocol that is mindful of respect for kumu who, like kūpuna, are keepers of knowledge (Iokepa-Guerrero et al., 2011; Maunakea, 2016). While respect for kumu is a common Indigenous practice, it is particularly important because of how I applied hula as a research paradigm. Seeking expert counsel is part of honoring their ‘ike as kumu and embodying the ‘ōlelo no‘eau, i ulu no ka lālā i ke kumu.

histories. A (k)new chant, He Mele No Kāne (Elbert, 1962; Emerson, 1909) has also become prominent and more accessible throughout Hawai‘i. While I have not been formally taught this chant, I recognize its contemporary role by drawing attention to Kāne here to situate this research further. In particular, He Mele No Kāne has gained attention in wai or freshwater rights and the contaminated drinking water well at Red Hill by military fuel storage facilities. By inviting Kāne into this research, I ask Kāne to join us from below, in the rising waters, and to spring forth to give this work strength and life.

⁴⁶ All three faculty experts self-identified as Kānaka, had 4, 14, and 18 years of experience working with doctoral students, and were Hawaiian cultural practitioners including but not limited to: hula, Halemua practices, hoe wa‘a, lei, mālama ‘āina, lifecycle practices, makahiki, and daily ceremonies.

My sister first taught me this ‘ōlelo no‘eau when I was in high school, and it became the motto for my school’s May Day and Holokū pageants. She reminded me and my fellow hula instructors that without the trunk there are no lālā. As I applied this ‘ōlelo no‘eau in hula, I learned and re-learned its meaning through another ‘ōlelo no‘eau, i le‘a ka hula i ka ho‘opa‘a. The lesser details that we may not pay attention to in hula, such as the ho‘opa‘a, or drummer and chanter, play an important role in the hula (Pūku‘i, 1983). The ho‘opa‘a in the hula context sets the stage for a hula performance and guides the dancers often with their voice and accompaniment.

Embodying these two ‘ōlelo no‘eau in this research, I turned to several experts to check my understanding, ask questions, seek approval, and request guidance. As this research continued to grow, I was reminded of the gift of my experts who provided sound advice and modifications to consider for my interview protocol. Importantly, these experts also provided access to participants. After my expert review, I asked each expert if they knew Kanaka doctoral students who might be a good fit for my research. Of the 11 Kānaka in this study, seven were referred from these three faculty experts.

A lau ‘o Kalohelani a Pi‘ilani la, such are the multitudes of Kalohelani and the offspring of Pi‘ilani. The knowledge grew and the protocol strengthened.

Participants

I interviewed 11 Native Hawaiian doctoral students from the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa. I sent potential participants an email to explain the study and invite them to participate. I worked with a University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa representative, and faculty experts (defined in more detail in a coming section), to identify these Kānaka.

At the start of data collection, I contacted the University's Graduate Division staff for assistance recruiting participants, and they provided a list of deans (83 total) across campus. They instructed me to reach out to the deans directly in hopes that they could provide access to Kanaka students in their departments or connect me with faculty and staff members who could provide access. After completing my pilot study, I concurrently reflected on the data collection plan while preparing for my expert review. As I re-turned to Kanaka 'Ōiwi methodologies for collecting data, I was reminded that it is a practice of laulima or cooperation (Maunakea, 2016). And so, I came to recognize how the University representative and faculty experts who already had kuleana with Kanaka students could serve as mākuā, or relatives of a parent generation, in this work by providing entry, permission, and access to participants (Billups, 2021). Importantly, this entry begins with pilina, or building meaningful connections with participants (Van Manen, 2016). Additively, I made a university-wide callout to students.

As Wilson (2008) described, data collection is a ceremony involving respect, reciprocity, and relationality. As I spoke with these mākuā (Billups, 2021), they developed an understanding of my research and topic and guided me in a more purposeful sampling through their relationships with potential participants. Utilizing this small network of people, I was able to share my research purpose with the intention of coming from a place of respect, as Wilson described, or which could be described as coming from a place of kaho'ohela⁴⁷ in hula. In

⁴⁷ Kaho'ohela is a hula step utilized in my hālau particularly in the hula "Ke Welina Mai Nei." At first, I considered the term 'aiha'a (or ha'a) here, which might be palpable for other hula practitioners to think about in conjunction. I utilized the term kaho'ohela here to foreshadow the hula "Ke Welina Mai Nei" as it will be applied later in this chapter. I could not find a description of this step in the 'ōlelo Hawai'i dictionary and so I provide my understanding of this step recognizing any fault in this description as my own. I believe that the kaho'ohela is rooted in two terms and perhaps is a modified contraction of the terms kāholo and hela. Kāholo is a hula step, "consisting of four counts: (1) one foot is extended to the side, (2) the other is brought alongside, (3, 4) this is repeated on the same side; then the four steps are repeated on the opposite side; to execute this step" (Pūku'i & Elbert, 1986). Whereas hela, is a hula step in which "one foot is placed at about a 45-degree angle to the front and side, with the weight on the opposite hip and with that knee bent; the foot is then returned to the original position and the step is repeated with the other foot." In combination, I have learned that the kaho'ohela is executed like a kāholo with the final and fourth

essence, kaho‘ohela represents coming from a place of respect, reciprocity, and relationality, recognizing which relationships are important and pivoting the research process as necessary given what I was able to learn in my relationships with people at the University. I respected the university and reached out to the Graduate Division. I also made a university-wide callout to students to welcome all Kānaka into my research. In essence, I strived to embody kaho‘ohela by pivoting my process, recognizing how the university representative and faculty experts were an effective and respectful way to contact Kānaka at the university in comparison to reaching out through their deans, which could potentially cause harm by reinforcing hierarchy and power dynamics inconsistent with Indigenous engagement. These conversations and experiences helped to prepare me to be in conversation with Kānaka at the university, some of whom would become my participants. I hope that I was able to live into this ceremony⁴⁸ of data collection with respect and reciprocity by honoring the integrity of these relationships (Maunakea, 2016; Youngbull, 2017) as a foundation for meaningful connection. As Vaughn (2016) describes, such data collection efforts are participatory in nature, with collaboration as a means for in-depth understanding.

count executed as a hela rather than ending alongside the other foot as described in step (2). The contraction perhaps also indicates how the body moves from an i lalo (down) to an i luna (up) position with each four counts. This movement as a research process is one way to describe how I as a hula practitioner engaged in the relationships with my participants, beginning with a kāholo and moving along one path. Then pausing with a hela to reflect and reconsider, before engaging in a kāholo along an alternate path and headed in the opposite direction. Throughout the process and with each (k)new kāholo starts i lalo (below) akin to an ‘aiha‘a and respectful position, and moving i luna in the process, as I was able to react, respond, and reflect on this process.

⁴⁸ Drawing from the work of Wilson (2008), living into this research as ceremony for me meant leaning into the hula practices I have learned and reflexively exploring how these practices were working or not working in the data collection process. At first I leaned into the hierarchy of the academy to reach out to Kānaka (as I have learned to do as a student of the university), and recognized that this strategy was not effective for living into this research as ceremony. Returning to hula praxis, I realized how faculty experts who served as Kumu (teachers and mentors) were like Kumu Hula. When called upon by or through the Kumu, students answer because they serve as a trustworthy source. This pilina (connection) was important when it came to the initial kāhea, call out, to students. While I provide one example here, this research as ceremony was woven throughout this inquiry, as I continued to learn how to approach research using hula.

Potential participants included doctoral students who identified as Native Hawaiian and were, therefore, classified as Kanaka in the current study. From the University representative, I contacted six Kānaka, two of whom agreed to participate, and one who agreed but whose email I had mistakenly missed. Through the faculty experts, I contacted 11 Kānaka, seven agreed to participate, and one Kanaka did not meet all my participant criteria. I also sent out a university-wide email of my invitation to all students. From this outreach, one Kanaka agreed to participate. One of the Kānaka also recommended two other participants at their first interview with me. I reached out to these Kānaka and sent them my invitation and one of them agreed to participate.

In my consent form, I asked participants if they identified as Native Hawaiian, by asking the Hawaiian ancestry question, “Were any of your ancestors Hawaiian?” and having participants respond with “yes” or “no” in the consent form. This methodology is consistent with the preferred “Legacy” methodology used by the University of Hawai‘i System Institutional research office to determine Hawaiian ancestry across the system. Participation was voluntary (see Appendix G for the consent form), and participants could withdraw at any time. One Kanaka chose to withdraw from the study for a variety of reasons after I conducted two interviews, and they reviewed a draft of their case. I also provided the opportunity for Kānaka I interviewed to remain anonymous. This anonymity was exercised in some cases, and I used pseudonyms.

‘Alo Nēia Po‘e: Individual Interviews

‘Alo nēia po‘e i ka mā‘anu lai, na ka manu i kai o Halulu. Now let us wander in the calm, as the birds of Halulu at the shore observe and respond.

I conducted two individual interviews with each Kanaka doctoral student roughly six months apart. In total I interviewed 11 Kānaka, but two of them did not attend a second

interview. Interviews were 1-4 hours in length. Interview questions were semi-structured and were designed in alignment with my research approach and constructs for Native Hawaiian well-being as described in the literature review. Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, all interviews were conducted online through Zoom.

Demographics. At the start of the first interviews, I asked Kānaka to tell me a little bit about themselves. Given my research approach, it was important for me to live into and embody the framework by allowing participants to self-determine what demographic information was shared and how these data were disclosed. While participants revealed other demographic details throughout the interviews and particular stories, I did not structure the interview questions to specifically gather demographic data on attributes such as age, sex, and place of residence or ask about socioeconomic factors such as occupation, family status, and income. Therefore, I present some demographic details of the participants to represent the breadth and depth of their lived experiences.

The Kānaka I interviewed were at diverse points in their doctoral degree programs ranging from 1 to 8 years. Several Kānaka finished their degrees between the first interview and the completion of this dissertation. Notably, several Kānaka were in political science and public health programs, while other diverse academic programs were also represented. The majority had graduate assistantships at the university, and several had full-time positions, as well as a breadth of volunteer and community work. The majority of the Kānaka I interviewed were born and raised on a neighboring island to the island of O‘ahu, some were born and raised on O‘ahu, and two were born and raised in the diaspora on the continental United States. All of the Kānaka I interviewed had siblings, ranging from 1 to 5. The majority grew up in a two-parent heterosexual married couple home, and others had diverse upbringings, including foster care, houselessness,

and blended stepfamilies. In their stories, I also recognized that some of the Kānaka I interviewed were children of divorce, and several had fathers who had passed during their childhood. Almost half of the Kānaka I interviewed were raised in a Christian-based faith. And the majority identified as female or wahine. Two of the Kānaka I interviewed were also married with children, and the majority had partners. Above all, I saw these Kānaka as movers and shakers, as practitioners and stewards, as people with a deep love for Hawai‘i and what it means to be Hawaiian. As their words weighed heavily on their minds and hearts, I reflected on their steadfast nature and silent persistence that moved between us like water filling the space between the words and unconsciously occupying the emotional and spiritual spaces within the interviews. As they would pause, take deep breaths, and ponder I could see them wading in this water as they struggled to find the words for the ideas we felt and (k)new together.

Both interviews focused on exploring how participants defined well-being, through questions like, “What does well-being mean to you?” The interview included questions to probe how well-being was embodied, experienced, and practiced, for example through questions like, “Talk to me about a person you think has well-being,” and “What would you need right now to improve your well-being?” Between the first and second interviews, I returned transcripts to participants for their review. The transcripts were sent electronically which allowed participants to review them for accuracy and at their leisure. At the start of the second interview, I asked each participant about any changes to the first transcripts to ensure participants had time to reflect, clarify, elaborate, and respond to their first interviews as well as make any changes (see Appendix H for interview protocols). This member-checking method supported authenticity and accuracy in the cases (Creswell & Miller, 2000; M. Harper & Cole, 2012), relational accountability, and respect for their stories (Wilson, 2008). With the permission of the

participants, the interviews were video recorded. Audio recordings were uploaded to Otter.ai to generate transcripts, which were then revised. I then sent the transcripts to the Kānaka I interviewed. This transcription software aided in embodied reviews of the transcripts as it aligns the written transcripts with the audio recording to allow for multimodal (i.e., visual and auditory) processing of the data. I intended to utilize the video recordings to capture nonverbal communications and re-member embodied insights from the interviews, which I had planned to return to in hopes that I would trigger my visceral and emotional experiences with participants (Thanem & Knights, 2019). However, it was more effective to record visceral and emotional responses in real-time during the interviews through memos taken during and immediately after individual interviews. After the interviews, I coded the data using the qualitative data analysis software, MAXQDA.

Ni 'oni 'o aia e mimiki ke kai, eia a ahuwale e ka papa. Just as the birds reflect in the receding sea till the floor is bare, I took must sit and reflect till all that is left is clear.

Kau ke Keha: Artifacts

Ua kau ke keha i ka uluna. Kāne has placed his head on the pillow, and he is satisfied. The artifacts, like the pillow, have been selected and the participants must be satisfied for their contributions to this project are now finished.

To supplement the interview data, I asked participants for artifacts (see Table 1 for a list of artifacts and their descriptions). Artifacts are the hula implements (e.g., ipu heke, pahu, 'ulī'ulī, etc.) of the research. While I anticipated collecting written artifacts, I modified how I asked participants for artifacts in my protocol as informed by the pilot study feedback and expert review processes. Often, pilot participants' artifacts were not written artifacts showing me how my artifact description focusing on written artifacts was not consistent with my purpose

statement. Experts also asked about artifacts and prompted me to explain the purpose of this method. Their curiosity helped me to further reflect on the purpose of the artifacts. From these reflections, I expanded my artifact description and rather than focusing on written artifacts

Table 1.

List of Artifacts

| Name | Artifact and Artifact Purpose |
|--------|--|
| Pua | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Pua's grandparents at their family home in Kohala Foundational relationship for her well-being that has shaped her and informed her values 2. Reading a kindle with a hand-sewn quilt Representation of Pua's relationship with herself providing comfort and joy 3. Pua holding hands with her kāne walking through the forest Representation of the importance of maintaining connections to people in places that uplift her |
| Māhea | <p>Not applicable</p> <p>I was not able to interview Māhea a second time and therefore did not collect their artifacts.</p> |
| Kahala | <p>Not applicable</p> <p>I was not able to interview Kahala a second time and therefore did not collect their artifacts.</p> |
| Kawika | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Kawika's son in kindergarten Kawika began his comprehensive exams on the first day of his son's kindergarten. As a rising fifth grader, Kawika reflected on how the writing phase of his dissertation lasted throughout his son's elementary school years. And so, his son served as a reminder of the balance between dissertation perfection and the other important aspects of his life. |
| Puna | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Box of letters and trinkets for kūpuna (her ancestors) A box Puna made after her first grandmother had passed away, which she used to store letters she had written to her grandmother and other kūpuna that joined her. Included in this box were trinkets for her kūpuna that served as a reminder of her pilina (relationship) with them. 2. Puna's cellphone A place for Puna to distract herself from this realm while simultaneously being connected to things outside of herself. Puna's phone serves as an escape from this realm where she writes letters to her late father and other kūpuna through the notes app, and where she can revisit them through photo albums. |

| Name | Artifact and Artifact Purpose |
|----------|--|
| Kainoa | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A photograph of 5-year-old Kainoa with her tūtū (grandmother) in a peacock frame A reminder for Kainoa of the initial opportunities and experiences she had in ‘āina (nature) with her Tūtū as they went on huaka‘i (adventure) walks up into Mākaha valley behind their family home. These memories fostered her curiosity to be in nature, ask questions, and develop love for plants and animals that informed her development into an ‘āina educator. Today, this photograph and peacock frame remind her of these memories as they often found peacock feathers along these huaka‘i, which they would bring home to her Tūtū’s house in Nānāiku‘ulei (also known as Nānākuli). |
| Anuheia | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Pāhonu (turtle pond) in Waimānalo A place where Anuheia finds wellness through healing by restoring Pāhonu 2. Pu‘u o Kaimukī (hill of Kaimukī) A place where Anuheia finds wellness through learning by restoring a safe space for community 3. Native out-plants in Pia Valley Plants that are ready to move from pots into the ground give Anuheia hope, and that hope contributes to her wellness |
| Chevelle | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Tea and biscuit in the morning An example of how Chevelle spends her morning, sitting in silence and looking out her window at Mount Ka‘ala 2. Chevelle and her dog, Sierra A loving relationship Chevelle has with her doberman and a reminder of the pono (duty/rights/equity) of reproductive health and social justice |
| Emily | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Emily running A consistent activity that came out of the COVID-19 pandemic for her mental health 2. Kawika Au, Emily’s uhi (Hawaiian tattoo) practitioner and Emily dancing hula Spaces where Emily is surrounded by likeminded people who share her values. These people serve as inspiration for Emily, and that fellowship is something tangible to her of well-being. 3. Ie kūkū (kapa beater) Like crochet and knitting for Emily, the ie kūkū represents the creative space that exists outside of Emily’s doctoral student journey. 4. ‘Ohana (family) services: Emily sitting outside on a mat with a family that has two parents and two young children. The family is holding a tī lei in their hands as if in ceremony together Emily’s professional practice is ‘ohana service. And so, this photo is a cultural artifact or archetype of what service looks like to her. Rooted in her belief that wellness is dependent on community, she reflects on her practice as a way to love, serve, and give to others without needing anything in return. |

| Name | Artifact and Artifact Purpose |
|--------|---|
| Jessie | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Jessie's grandmother A representation of the complete circle of Jessie's life as seen through her grandmother, reminding Jessie of the generational farming of her family that she can trace back to the San Joaquin valley. 2. Praying hands A spiritual story Jessie's grandmother would tell about sacrifice, and which reminded Jessie of the sacrifices her family made and the support system that fostered their resiliency. |
| Kat | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A cross and pendant necklace inscribed with the words of Ave Marie (Hail Mary prayer in Latin) and with a picture of the archangel Michael A symbol of solace, protection, and grounding for Kat to know that God is always with her wherever she goes. Kat wears this necklace daily and it reminds her to be mindful of her morals and values despite the negative feelings, hardships, and challenges she may be facing. |

applied several examples as guided by the artifacts I was gifted in the pilot study process. I explained to participants in the interview protocol that,

The purpose of the artifacts is for me to view examples of the way your well-being is displayed through products or items or are products or items you turn to when seeking well-being. For example, an artifact could be a photograph of someone or something significant such as you engaging in a particular activity that represents your way of life, a written work you have created that you are proud of such as a master's thesis or conference presentation, or a significant object that you have created or have received that you return to that reflects who you are or helps you to continue to live and be in the world.

Questions that arose about participants' artifacts were addressed as part of their second interviews since I introduced the purpose of the artifacts at the close of the first interview, and emailed participants the purpose along with the examples, as quoted above, shortly after the

first interview. These artifacts, as objects represented, accentuated, and highlighted the patterns in the data just as hula implements do in a performance.

Mā'ona: Data Analysis

Ua mā'ona o Kāne i ka 'awa ... Kipa 'ia ke kapa a ka noe, ka ho'opa'a kai a Kinilau la. Covered by a blanket of mist, hiding from view, the sea of Kinilau. I combed through the data to uncover and reveal the mo'olelo or stories of these Kānaka. Through the data analysis, I interacted with the data, spreading, reflecting, growing, and transforming in the process. I hope you and I become mā'ona (satisfied as with thirst or hunger) by the end of this journey.

In thinking about the stories, I had gathered, I revised my data analysis process. I re-defined hula as a process for research by reflecting on hula as a process for learning because I wanted to learn from the stories of my participants. In my lived experiences, the process of learning in hula could be articulated as follows:

1. Learn a hula mele. At first, you might learn a new hula mele in the classroom. You hear the music and learn the steps, both the footwork and hand movements, as you familiarize yourself with the hula mele. If you first engage with hula in this way, the process begins with the body.
2. The hula sheet. After which you may be given or may write a hula sheet. This hula sheet would include the lyrics of the hula, along with a translation, and dictation of the footwork and hand movements. Through studying or writing a hula sheet you could familiarize yourself with the words and their translation further, building a connection between the mind and the body. This mind-body connection could start when you learn a hula mele, as articulated in step one. But to provide some clarity and given the context through which I learn hula as a non-fluent 'ōlelo Hawai'i student, I build upon learning a

hula through the hula sheet. Since I am not a native speaker this mind-body connection is not always immediate to me and is something that I tend to develop through more Western ways of knowing. This hula sheet also provides an opportunity to more fully grasp a mele (the lyrics and its translation) and its embeddedness in a particular mo‘olelo or story to situate how the mele and mo‘olelo work together in a hula.

3. Practice. You continue to practice a hula, learn the movements, and go over the hula sheet again and again, perhaps bringing what you have learned from the hula sheet into active learning in the body. In developing your understanding of a hula mele through repetitive practice, deeper layers of meaning are revealed. You learn more deeply about the mo‘olelo and the lessons embedded in the hula that are situated within a larger genealogy, in turn learning more about the context the hula is referring to. For example, you learn more about the haku mele or composer through this process, and the people the hula is referring to, as well as the time period in which the hula is written. Through this practice, you are then able to make sense of the mele and mo‘olelo by applying it in (k)new ways to your own life and lived experiences. As you practice a hula and revisit it, you may learn and find (k)new lessons along the way.
4. Performance. When you are finished learning a hula, you may perform or present it in some way for an “audience.”

This process was personal to my hula learning and ingrained in my lived experiences. It is possible that not all parts of this process are reflected in the lived experiences of other hula practitioners or that it is unique to my hālau hula and so I may not include steps that other practitioners consider essential in their praxis. Similar to how no two teachers are completely identical in their pedagogy, no two hula practitioners are completely alike. Thinking about this

hula process in relation to data analysis, several questions and answers arose for me and helped me to articulate the hula data analysis process I utilized in this research.

At first, I needed to understand what the hula mele were within these interviews. I thought about how hula mele are often drawn out from larger mo‘olelo or stories. In essence, hula mele are composed from lived experiences. The interview itself is a mo‘olelo or story of the participant, that holds many mele within it. In thinking about the individual interviews, people rarely talk in direct mele form. In other words, they do not simply synthesize their experiences into succinct stanzas ready to be interpreted and in a way that the lessons they have learned from their lived experiences are directly stated. So, I would not be able to start with step (1) in the hula data analysis process but would need to come back to this step in the data analysis. However, I could begin at step (2) and become familiar with the interviews to make sense of the hula mele within them. This step in the hula process is where I began the data analysis.

So, I began with the question, how can I familiarize myself with the interviews and understand the mo‘olelo or story of each participant and the hula mele embedded within them? I familiarized myself with each mo‘olelo through the transcription process and prepared the data for coding in Otter.ai. This transcription software was helpful for developing a multilayered connection with the data because I was able to revise the transcripts and return to the transcript and audio in tandem. In revisiting the written text of the interviews, I was also returning to the audio in real-time, seeing and hearing the words again and again as I wrote, revised, and re-wrote them and as they were spoken. I used holistic codes (Saldaña, 2013) to think about the mo‘olelo of each participant, exploring the data holistically, and getting a broad sense of each participant’s mo‘olelo in context. This exploratory method aligned with how I originally planned to investigate the data and the case study strategy of direct interpretation to inform how I made

sense of participants' stories and the constructs (i.e., categories) of well-being that would develop later in the cross-case analysis (Stake, 1995).

I then reflected on the question, what methods would further reveal layers of meaning embedded in these interviews? I explored and tested various coding methods, such as values and emotions coding, as I thought that these strategies would help divulge the lessons from these mo'olelo and the embodied meaning within their stories. Through this "practice" step (3) in the hula research process, I tried strategies, and truthfully, I stumbled. At times, I also felt like I had failed, but I continued to revisit the stories, taking analytic memos, and deepening my understanding of each participant and the lived experiences that informed how they defined well-being. In this reflexive process, I noted questions and impressions to further develop my thinking. While the process was inductive until this point, I returned to the theoretical perspectives I drew upon for this research in a deductive manner to code the interviews. As such, I used eclectic and simultaneous coding strategies (Saldaña, 2013) to code each interview. These strategies included what I call: (a) mo'olelo coding, and (b) mo'okū'auhau coding.

These coding strategies were informed by the following questions that are rooted in my hula approach for this research. In their mo'olelo of well-being, what beliefs did they have about well-being? How were their beliefs similar or different from their definition of well-being? And what did they perceive about their well-being needs? In their mo'okū'auhau for well-being, what did their lived experiences tell me about their well-being? What activities and routines did they engage in for their well-being? In thinking about how occupation and colonialism are endemic in

society (Cristobal, 2018), what consequences were endemic in their environment? And what consequences influenced their well-being? ⁴⁹

Mo‘olelo coding was first informed by KanakCrit (Cristobal, 2018). Mo‘olelo are the stories and narratives the participants told about themselves, and given the topic of this inquiry the stories they tell about their well-being. Some stories, as consistent with KanakaCrit, are only understood by a few, and some stories are sacred and therefore not to be shared with others. All stories contribute to the survivance of Kānaka regardless of if they are written because if they are only spoken, this process is considered just as valuable, if not more so, in a Kanaka paradigm. This coding strategy was also informed by narrative coding (Saldaña, 2013). As such, this strategy was used to embody the exploratory nature of this inquiry. As I coded the stories within each interview, I was able to reflect on how well-being developed for each participant and think about how particular stories became important for them in the context of their lived genealogies.

Looking to research on Kanaka literature and the processes embedded in storytelling, scholars have identified many literary and rhetorical devices that make up a Kanaka aesthetic for mo‘olelo. Some have listed 10 (Elbert, 1962) to as many as 24 devices (Perreira, 2011) that are part of telling a mo‘olelo. Additionally, ho‘omanawanui (2014a) focused on one poetic device, mo‘okū‘auhau, as a key device under which all others are subsumed. Ho‘omanawanui explored mo‘okū‘auhau in various nonfiction narratives of prominent Kanaka Maoli writers to demonstrate how mo‘okū‘auhau is a key ‘Ōiwi aesthetic marker. Informed by this research, I utilized mo‘okū‘auhau coding to look at the genealogies of each participant, such as their genealogy as a student or the genealogy of their family. Through this coding process, I utilized in

⁴⁹ In this coding process, I also included the following questions but did not utilize these codes during the writing stages of this research. Questions included kuleana: What was their kuleana? What were their responsibilities? And embodiment: what things do they embody now and how is it expressed across their lived experiences?

vivo codes (Saldaña, 2013) and thought about participant's multiple identities, the contexts through which these identities developed, and the diverse pathways and relationships that informed the development of their identities (Cristobal, 2018). In other words, looking at the mo'okū'auhau of each identity. Using this coding strategy, I also coded their activities and routines and took written memos to situate their activities and routines within particular genealogies. I also coded the lived experiences of each participant or the individual instances they discussed as part of their well-being that were embedded in their genealogies.

These coding processes were conducted simultaneously for each interview and began to reveal multiple layers of meaning within each transcript as tied to their stories. This process was also eclectic because it purposefully drew together coding mo'olelo or the stories and mo'okū'auhau or the genealogies through which participant's came to understand themselves and their worlds. When taken together, these processes informed how I was able to understand their individual definition of well-being, how it developed and through which experiences, and how it informed the activities and routines they engaged in as they journeyed towards their definition of well-being.

After coding all the stories and genealogies within each interview, I reflected on each participant's definition of well-being and thought about how each story was connected to their definition. This process helped me to refine which stories were important for their well-being and development overall. I then utilized this understanding to develop a genealogy of focus for each participant to create a boundary for this research inquiry within their case. Without this boundary, all stories felt important to me, such that the interconnections and nuances made it difficult for me to find meaning. And so, these boundaries were necessary for me as an embodied researcher to hold my research questions while also honoring their stories. Across their

genealogies, I centered on a mo‘okū‘auhau for well-being for each participant and used this as a guide in the development of their case.

I explored if this mo‘okū‘auhau was evident in both the first and second interview, and then triangulated this mo‘okū‘auhau within their artifacts (as I was able to) to ensure the mo‘okū‘auhau that I heard through their stories was evident in the artifacts that they gave me. In other words, the artifacts were used and returned to repeatedly in the analysis process as a means for validating patterns embedded in their stories, corroborating evidence from the individual interviews, and exploring how patterns in the data were represented by their artifacts (Hatch, 2002). Triangulation was a validity procedure I used to move towards an intersection of the themes, across data sources, and methods (Creswell & Miller, 2000). Artifacts served as the third point of the triangulation method, with the first and second interviews serving as the first two points. Overall, the goal of the artifact analysis was guided by content, context, and relationality (i.e., my Indigenous research paradigm) to understand how participants situated their well-being in their lived experiences through these physical models (i.e., artifacts) as metaphors for their well-being and well-being development. After considering the artifacts along with these genealogies, I included in each case particular stories that shaped how I understood their genealogy for well-being. These stories represented the diverse pathways in which each participant’s interviews came together for me.

I then asked myself, how do I “perform” these cases as in step (4)? In other words, what is an appropriate presentation for these interviews? I wanted to re-tell their case in a way that was reflective of our interviews to honor their unique voices. This meant writing each case and sending case drafts back to the participants for their feedback. I wanted them to see how I constructed the case from our interviews and allowed them to react and respond. This process

served as an important member-checking method (Creswell & Miller, 2000) that was arguably more effective than member-checking through their transcripts, as transcripts are often lengthy and time-consuming for participants to go through. Hula ku‘i helped me in this performance process, as I constructed each case for my participants.

Hula ku‘i, also known as mele ku‘i and more commonly known in hula competitions as hula ‘auana (or ‘auwana) is a type of hula that is created through poetry, music, and movement (Stillman, 1982). Hula ku‘i refers to “any interpretive hula, so called since the days of Kalākaua; *literally*, joined hula, i.e., old and new steps were joined together.” (Pūku‘i & Elbert, 1986). In academic scholarship, hula ku‘i is differentiated from mele hula ku‘i, which are chants, as the “twentieth-century westernized descendants” of mele hula ku‘i (Stillman, 1982). DeSilva (2018) notes that during the Kalākaua period, the revival of Hawaiian customs through hula ku‘i generated pride for Kānaka even though hula ku‘i embodied social, cultural, and political polarization in the Hawaiian community. The nūpepa also helped to popularize hula ku‘i as they were printed in the Hawaiian newspapers and became accessible to Hawai‘i communities (Lum, 2017). Thus, hula ku‘i transcended social boundaries and demonstrated the vast landscape of music of the time period as Kānaka perpetuated hula through new mediums while maintaining their traditions. While not a direct reflection, I utilized aspects of hula ku‘i as the bones for the “performance” or presentation of each case. I also hoped to invoke the power of hula ku‘i through the cases, as they similarly represent a vast landscape of the condition of Kānaka of this time period. Hula ku‘i draws together Western tonality with Hawaiian stylistic features (Stillman, 1982). While this dissertation is written in English, I strived to stylistically represent each case in a way that was reflective of the Kanaka I interviewed as they are living models of Hawaiian contemporary styling. I now describe the aspects of hula ku‘i that were applied to my

process for writing each case. I admit this process is not perfect. But I hope that this inspires future hula practitioners to apply and refine hula ku‘i as a process for writing qualitative research.

First, hula ku‘i typically includes an introductory verse, which provides general information about the who, what, and where of the hula ku‘i (Salā, 2021). At the start of each case, I included an introductory “verse” or opening vignette for each participant. These introductions varied in length and provided a general sense of each participant, as they re-presented themselves to me throughout our first interview. The introduction is followed by their personal definition of well-being to situate the story that followed.

Each case included a well-being mo‘okū‘auhau to articulate the genealogy through which I felt their well-being developed. Just as hula ku‘i is used to remember particular moments and honor individual members in an ‘ohana (Salā, 2021), the hula ku‘i, which developed into each participant’s case drew attention to specific lived experiences and relationships that were important to their well-being mo‘okū‘auhau. In reflecting on the mo‘olelo and mo‘okū‘auhau coding strategies I utilized, I thought about which mo‘olelo were repeated and could be joined together to inform their definition of well-being. I also reflected on which routines and activities illuminated their mo‘okū‘auhau for well-being. This process led to removing some stories and genealogies as they were beyond the boundaries of their mo‘okū‘auhau for well-being.

As informed by KanakaCrit, consequences were also interwoven throughout each case to articulate how the endemic factors of colonization and occupation manifested in their stories (Cristobal, 2018). Participants discussed consequences that they felt influenced their well-being development overall. I thought about how colonization and occupation have become embodied through these contemporary consequences as articulated by my participants. I invite you to

wonder and wander (i.e., ‘auwana) about how the consequences manifested in their story to inform how participants defined well-being and how the consequences they discussed influenced their personal genealogy of well-being.

Finally, the end of each case includes a closing formulaic *kāhea* also known as a *ha‘ina* (ho‘omanawanui, 2005). In the second interview with each participant, I revisited their definition of well-being. After doing so, I asked the participants, “what are your goals for living and being in the world?” I sent the first draft of each case to participants to review as mentioned previously. I then wrote the cross-case analysis, thinking that it would serve as the *ha‘ina* for all the cases. I reflected on *hula ku‘i* as a means for my writing process to consider the need for a *ha‘ina* in each case. At first, I struggled to create a *ha‘ina* feeling like closing each case did not always seem appropriate for each participant. For example, I felt that in some cases to craft a *ha‘ina* would require interviewing the participant again as their story did not seem to close in the times we spent together. At the same time, I returned to my definition of well-being to reflect on how well-being informed the sustainability of routines and activities for participants (Weisner, 2010). In other words, I reflected on how the management of well-being in participants’ daily lives hinged upon the life goals they identified. Their responses to “what are your goals for living and being in the world” helped me to close their stories, and therefore, serves as the last verse or *ha‘ina* across these cases.

As I wrote each case, I allowed embodied aspects to arise naturally in the form of “found poems” (for more information and examples see Prendergast et al., 2009). Found poems like *hula mele* can be written in verses, which are further divided into stanzas⁵⁰. Found poems and *hula mele* typically have a message or central theme and incorporate similar literary elements to

⁵⁰ Not all *hula mele* are divided into stanzas or verses as some are through composed. This contemporary evolution of music and style are reflected *hula ku‘i* although not all are reflective of this form.

convey meaning and evoke emotion. I attempted to integrate a hula mele method as an interpretation strategy in my analysis of the data and this was inspired by the found poetry method. When engaging with in vivo codes through mo‘okū‘auhau coding as mentioned previously, a poeticizing strategy was possible (Saldaña, 2014). “Like coding, poetic constructions capture the essence and essentials of data in a creative and evocative way” (p. 602). To implement this strategy, hula mele (called mele (poems) in this study) were created from participants’ transcripts using fragments of their words to create a found poem. Similar to in vivo coding, these mele utilized, to the greatest extent possible, the actual language of participants (Reilly, 2013). Some language was modified to provide consistency and clarity to the overall theme of the mele, and in one case was changed at the request of the participant after they reviewed their case. This change is marked with a footnote.

Research that has utilized found poetry suggests that poetic reconstruction of a transcript has the potential to evoke bodily qualities of storytelling that represent the data in a way that is not captured through transcript coding and that stays true to the essence of an experience (Chadwick, 2017; Reilly, 2013). This mele reconstruction, therefore, served to illuminate the embodied lived experiences of my participants (Holyoak, 2019) and was used to represent and further examine and re-examine the data using an arts-based lens. In effect, I attempted to create a hula mele method as informed by the found poetry method in this research. Importantly, this method allowed me to explore alternate ways of seeing, knowing, and understanding the data contributing to the multilayered approach⁵¹ through which I applied hula as my research paradigm.

⁵¹ This multilayered approach recognizes ‘ike pāpālua (Paglinawan et al., 2020), makawalu (Oliveira, 2016), and kaona (as understood through hula praxis).

At the start of this project, I planned to have at least one mele within each case. As I wrote each case, these mele naturally emerged as a means to capture the essence of something, whether it was a particular mo‘olelo or an aspect of their mo‘okū‘auhau. Admittedly, this process for integrating embodiment into the writing of each case was challenging as it was not possible for me to have a mele within each case by the end of this journey. At times, I crafted some mele, but after reflecting on the essence of the mele, I transformed them back into a written narrative. In other words, the mele method was an analysis tool used to explore the data. But after reflecting on the narrative and mele, more context was necessary for the reader to make sense of the meaning of some stories. While this is a potential limitation, I recognize and honor how my relationships with participants and their mo‘olelo were diverse. If embodiment was not possible for me, a mele was not included for fear of re-presenting the participant in a way that was not authentic to the interview experiences we shared. In some cases, it was also possible to write several mele, and more than one is included in their case. This diversity represents the varied relationships I developed with participants and recognizes my role as researcher in the collaborative process of qualitative interviewing. Participants may divulge more or less depending on the interviewer, the level of skill of the interviewer, and their pilina or connections as participant and interviewer as influenced by the multiple spaces and places that they inhabit as people beyond the interview space. This relationality affects the way we interact in an interview as well as the depth we can achieve in its boundaries. This reflection is not to say that embodiment is equivalent to the depth of an interview, but rather that there were many factors that affected my ability to craft a mele for each participant’s story. Using mele was just one way for me to reach an embodied place in writing these case narratives and allowed me to re-present parts of the data in ways that made sense to me to illuminate aspects that I felt were important to

participants' well-being overall. I also recognize that some aspects of mele were not possible in this process, as some structural elements are rooted in the Hawaiian language (ho' omanawanui, 2014b). For example, the use of pīna'i (repetition) as a device in mele is embedded in the structure of the language. Despite this limitation, I allowed the poetic devices of mele to inspire this process and utilized my mo'okū'auhau with mele⁵² to inform how and when this method was implemented.

After constructing each case narrative, I looked across the cases to consider the cross-case mo'olelo of well-being that was created. This mo'olelo serves as the learning or rather re-learning of the hula research process, as seen in step (1). Through this process, I ended up with two constructs for well-being as informed by the mo'okū'auhau and mo'olelo of each participant. I discussed similarities and differences across these mo'olelo to explore the layers of well-being that I discovered or perhaps re-discovered through this inquiry.

⁵² My mo'okū'auhau with mele is informed by several genealogies. These genealogies include: the Hawai'i Youth Opera Chorus (HYOC), various choral ensembles within and beyond Hawai'i, Hawaiian music and the music of "I Kū Mau Mau," hula through the May Day and Holokū pageants at Punahou School, hula through Hālau Hula Ka No'eau, musical theatre, as well as acapella music. These diverse genealogies create a lens through which I understand mele and influence how I crafted each mele across these cases.

Chapter 4.

Results

In this chapter, I present mo‘olelo from 11 Kanaka doctoral students to explore genealogies of well-being as seen through their lived experiences. These narratives represent an abundant future, of what I believe Goodyear-Ka‘ōpua (2016) described as “ke ea i ke ana,” the sovereignty and life breath that comes from the collective voices of Kānaka in research. Moreover, these stories represent survivance as Kānaka traced the diverse consequences they lived and experienced (Lipe, 2018). In learning to re-tell their stories and honoring this diversity, I leaned into the idea of mo‘okū‘auhau as central and significant for understanding a Kanaka reality (Wilson-Hokowhitu, 2019). In particular, returning to my research questions: (a) How do Kanaka doctoral students describe their well-being? and (b) What lived experiences contribute to the development of their well-being?

While I present these mo‘olelo in diverse ways, I include within its structure aspects of hula ku‘i with an opening verse (Salā, 2021) that tells you about each Kanaka followed by their well-being definition to situate their mo‘olelo or life story. This structure includes centering on a genealogy (i.e., mo‘okū‘auhau) for their well-being as discovered through the analysis and writing process, and closing each mo‘olelo is a ha‘ina looking to their future goals. Upon reflection, I’ve titled this ha‘ina using the words “Puana Kaulana, Ka Inoa o (Name of Participant)” to honor the hula ku‘i genealogy that has been passed down to me. In the lineage I am a part of, this refers to the hula “Aloha Kaua‘i” whose structure like the ha‘ina ‘ia mai ana ka puana, states “puana kaulana ka inoa o Kaua‘i, ha‘aheo he nani hiwahiwa.” This closing refers back to Kaua‘i and the mo‘okū‘auhau of aloha that this hula lineage shares with that ‘āina. As a hula that is deeply embedded in the mo‘okū‘auhau and legacy of Maiki Aiu Lake, it reflects the

revitalization of hula that has played a part in the reclamation of hula praxis throughout Hawai‘i and beyond. In many performances, I have danced this hula. In these moments, we often invite other hālau hula (hula schools of knowledge) and haumāna (students) of hula to stand and join us. While some movements have evolved altogether the hula largely remains the same in this genealogy reflecting the nature of perpetuation over preservation that is the life and breadth of hula. I recall these moments fondly, as generations of hula practitioners would slowly stand or sit and begin to move in unison. While I cannot fully express this experience here on the page, I hope one day you will get to see it and witness it with your own eyes, many hālau coming together and sharing from one genealogy. I hope you are in awe and become inspired just as I have. I hope you are reminded of how hula is life, expressing everything we see, hear, smell, taste, touch, and feel. The meaning of this puana across these Kānaka stories represents this same idea, that in their stories we see a legacy, lineage, and mo‘okū‘auhau. Through their re-telling, they represent the revitalization and reclamation of a Kanaka praxis. These stories evolve over time but when they come together demonstrate a perpetuation of Kanaka bodies to represent life, as well as spaces, places, and nature in (k)new ways (Louis, 2017).

While I close each mo‘olelo of the Kanaka I interviewed with the puana, I invite you to visit the puana first before reading through their stories (refer to the table of contents for case details). I make this suggestion as a way for you to come to an understanding starting i ka wā ma hope (with their future goals in mind) to make sense of i ka wā ma mua (their past). While this is not a traditional way to read through a case narrative, I believe this will further aid in an embodied understanding of each Kanaka mo‘olelo as rooted in the Indigenous paradigm this work is intended. With this invitation, I hope you are able to see these mo‘olelo in (k)new ways if you choose to read them as I have proposed here.

Pua

Pua is a student, a Hawaiian scholar, a sister, and a girlfriend. Pua grew up in Kohala on Hawai‘i island with her four siblings and was raised by her mom, dad, and grandparents. During her first year of high school, her father passed away. After finishing high school, Pua applied to a college admissions program, where she successfully completed courses that prepared her academically and she was admitted to UH Mānoa. At the time of our interviews, she was in her third year of her doctoral program, preparing to teach a 300-level college course, and was working with a team to write a book chapter. She had built a relationship with several ‘āina, including Kohala where she was raised; Mānoa, O‘ahu, where she received her higher education degrees; Kaimukī, O‘ahu where she lived for some of her graduate education; and Hilo, Hawai‘i where she currently resides.

Well-Being Definition

Pua first defined well-being as “peace and contentment.” For Pua, that meant being in “a pretty constant state of just feeling content and at peace with things that you can’t control. Even when things get hard, you do what you do and then you just kind of let that rest.” She was aware of her need to, “not to put pressure on myself ... telling myself it’s okay to be stressed out or anxious but always coming back to that place of contentment and letting things roll out the way that they’re supposed to be.” Feeling content and at peace gave Pua a sense of grounding and centering, and was achieved, as Pua said “when you get to check back in with yourself.” This awareness was an active praxis she did to maintain her sense of well-being. Pua also shared that through her relationships she could create a sense of well-being in spaces that were new or unfamiliar. In new spaces, she trusted her relationships and connections with others, which allowed her to feel safe. The activities that sustained her well-being on a day-to-day basis were

rest, exercise, going for a walk or being in ‘āina, utilizing a planner, reading for fun, pule, driving, eating consistent meals throughout the day, and engaging in meaningful work with her community. At the end of the second interview, Pua said, well-being was “‘āina” and “people.”

A Mo‘okū‘auhau of Care

Pua’s mo‘okū‘auhau of well-being is one of care that she learned from her grandparents. She said, “my grandparents raised us to think the most important thing that you could do is take care of your family and take care of your house.” Pua observed some unhealthy behaviors on the part of her parents and recognized that it was not what she wanted to do. She also recognized that putting those thoughts into action could be challenging. However, principles of care were a constant in her life specifically through her grandmother.

My grandma is super funny ... when we graduated with our bachelor’s and master’s, all these big things, she’s kind of like, “Well, good job. Can you cook dinner for yourself? Is your house taken care of?” those kinds of things. And it really puts in perspective, like okay, what really matters is, are you taking care of you, are you taking care of the people in your home, eating well, and all of these different things.

This perspective promoted self-reflection as Pua assessed whether or not she was taking care of herself and those around her. And so, her home became a metaphor for how well she was doing, and she explained that it made her feel safe. This sense of safety supported her relationships.

To me, your home is the most important place to you. It is in ways a representation of yourself. It is where you can invite the people you love to come and feel safe as well. And so, that was one of the big things that she taught me that I definitely know that I actively think about now.

Pua added that her inclination for care was grounded in her “simple country roots” and she considered it to be “super old school” because her grandparents were “raised on plantation and didn’t grow up with a lot of money in Kohala.” And so, Pua and her siblings were raised with that same humble upbringing. As Pua recognized “when everything’s crazy, I’m kind of like as long as my home is good and the people, I’m with are taken care of, then it’s all good.” It became clear that care was formative to her understanding of well-being and her beliefs about care were woven throughout her mo‘olelo. In addition, Pua observed care through the domestic activities her grandparents were responsible for. She said,

My grandpa was very much a believer like the man takes care of the work and the yard work, whereas my grandma was very much like I will cook all the meals and I will clean the house. And that’s just the dynamic that worked for them. And it wasn’t until we got a little bit older that my grandpa kind of started leaning more towards, okay, I’m gonna have my granddaughters doing the yard work and that’s an okay thing.

This lived experience provides a glimpse into Pua’s family dynamic. By observing her parents, Pua recognized the unhealthy ways that they modeled a family dynamic as they were unable to deal with life’s challenges together. She sensed that in their upbringings they did not learn a healthier relationship dynamic, and therefore could not achieve one together. And so, Pua learned from these different family dynamics, as well as her own trial and error, the genealogies she wanted to emulate. Being raised by her maternal grandparents from the time she was 10 years old impressed upon her a genealogy she came to embody care, which unfolded during our interviews as we explored her well-being.

Pua also reflected on feeling unequipped for self-care in graduate school. While she felt like her undergraduate program at the university prepared her for the tough conversations and

experiences that would come, she was unsure about the extent of those challenges. As Pua explained, she was prepared to be tokenized, to have to stand up against the romanticization of Hawai‘i, and to have to defend her Kanaka worldview and core truths. However, she was unprepared for the constant battle of these experiences and conversations, and “how to mālama yourself” in that process because as she said, “it happened so often.” She explained,

I knew that it was going to happen and that I would have to address it in some way, I didn’t know how to still take care of myself in that process and not feel like you’re constantly having to fight to be heard.

She believed that,

Well-being and thinking about taking care of ourselves is not something that we’re taught as kids, as even teenagers. And in my experience, it’s been something that I’ve had to stumble upon out of necessity because I wasn’t taking care of myself.

Without the tools to mālama herself, Pua was learning the practices that worked for her. As a result, self-care developed into a marker of success. She shared,

I’ve been thinking about ... like with my [younger] sister, in what ways can I instill taking care of yourself is priority over trying to do those 10 things that you want on your list. And so if we can get to that point that to me is ultimate success.

And as Pua concluded, “If I’m not taking care of myself there’s no way that I can take care of anything else.”

Although brief, Pua shared a story about healthy eating that was important in relation to her self-care mo‘okū‘auhau. She said, “as I got older something happened, my body switched.” From this experience and reflection, she recognized that ‘ai pono or eating healthier had an effect

on her physical body. And so, self-care through eating consistently became an important practice in Pua's day-to-day life for her well-being.

Mo'olelo: Re-Learning Care Through Relationships

Mele: Finding Care at Kānewai

“We always make a joke that said,
Kānewai brings you the right people
because it brought us all together
and it was such an important experience for me
to learn the power of 'āina
and working and connecting with people.”

As demonstrated through the above hula mele (i.e., found poem), Pua felt that Kānewai⁵³ was an important 'āina where she found caring relationships. She reflected on these relationships to say, “certain people feel more like home to me ... as much as the places.” She re-cited the 'āina of her genealogies, “Mānoa, Kaimukī, Kohala, [and] Hilo,” and described how the people she met at Kānewai as well as the 'āina of her genealogy both felt like home, which helped her “feel good and safe.” This reflection promoted her to explain how “people as embodiments of their 'āina” are a source of care through their ability to make others feel a sense of safety in their lives. Pua shared that her partner Malu and her best friend Kawai exemplified this embodiment as they both felt like home.

Mo'olelo: Care Through 'Āina

Pua further described her relationship to 'āina as one that provided her needs for grounding and recentering. She said that these well-being needs could be achieved with others, as she had done with her partner Malu.

⁵³ Ka Papa Lo'i O Kānewai, also commonly referred to as Kānewai, is a taro patch at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa campus located at the Kamakakūokalani Center for Hawaiian Studies. Pua work at Kānewai while she was an undergraduate student.

A couple of months ago there was even a day where I was just having a junk day ... and something told me to not take saddle road, go straight over the mountain to take the long way through Kohala side. And I did and it was so grounding and recentering just to be in that space, just because I'm familiar with it. I feel like it knows me. And I'm just like ahhh. So 'āina to me is a place to re-center, to ground, also to feel safe in your space and excited. Malu and I have also made it a habit to walk in the forest just randomly because we did it when we first started dating and now it's a thing we do. ... it's always a really good time for us up there. So 'āina even in my relationships, especially with him, has been a thing that we can come back to, and help re-ground us.

So, building caring relationships with 'āina, people, and with people in 'āina were all ways for Pua to cultivate her well-being.

Mo'olelo: Re-Learning Productivity

This genealogy of care informed Pua's beliefs about productivity. She said, "to maintain my own well-being it's just making sure I'm eating consistent meals, and again feeling some sense of productivity during the day, even if it is restful productivity." Pua defined productivity in the following way, "being productive, in the sense of, I get what I need to get done for work, say half the day and then the other half of the day I'm productive with rest or exercising." This practice of productivity and re-framing productivity to include not just her to-do list but also walking, exercise, reading, and rest was important for Pua. Pua's planner provided her with a way to let go of the tasks she had to do and allowed her time for self-care through rest. She added that "I don't want to equate feeling good with productivity. So that's been my challenge is, you don't have to check things off a list to have a good day." Thus, Pua was learning to redefine

productivity for herself, perhaps through integrating her genealogy of care into her beliefs about productivity.

Consequences

Financial security was a topic that was woven throughout Pua's stories of well-being. For Pua, being financial aware began from a young age. Through her lived experiences and the family dynamics she witnessed, she and her siblings learned to rely on one another. At the time, she believed that "scholarships" and for "everybody to stop spreading COVID" could improve her well-being and added that, "the jobs that we get as students are not necessarily the biggest support financially." She was fiscally responsible, maintaining a budget by considering her rent needs and planning for meals. She explained that presently,

An ideal state of well-being would be to get to a place where I have a good job that can support me financially and that I can kind of be at peace with that and pour my energy into other places.

As she shared, with the privilege of financial freedom, she would have energy for elsewhere. Simultaneously, she felt that her concerns over financial stability were "a little bit shallow." But without them she specified how she would,

Schedule more time doing things that inspire me. And that's, talking to my kumu, being in classes, being outside at these events. Those are the things that really sustain me and kept me inspired and thinking. And I always kind of forget that they do.

Pua also felt that well-being was inaccessible to Kānaka reflecting on the potential stereotypes of well-being in her community.

Well-being is not talked about enough within the Hawaiian community. I would say that there's really solid pockets of it like if you want to be in that conversation with people,

you know what pockets essentially to go and seek out those. But in a general sense, if I go home to Kohala there's no way that I can be like, let's talk about Kanaka well-being and everybody kind of be on board with engaging it.

As Pua reflected on this consequence as a barrier to well-being in Kanaka communities, she wondered out-loud about how to change these stereotypes to normalize conversations about well-being. As a reiteration of her mo'olelo, she wondered, "how we can focus more almost on mālama-ing this part of our communities" perhaps to prepare Kānaka to change these stereotypes. In some ways, she felt the pandemic was a blessing in this respect because,

It was at a place where everyone was really understanding of other people's mental health and just the stresses of being at home and because of that it gave you, gave all of us the okay to focus on ourselves.

By contrast, Pua felt that "it's kind of a Hawaiian thing to do that, to feel like we have so much kuleana and that we have to overexert ourselves." Pua observed burn out in her Hawaiian community and was actively counterbalancing this collective trauma with intentional care.

It's something that is so strong in our community that yeah, I just am actively trying not to repeat that even though it's so hard because we're getting pulled and all of these different things. And that's part of why I tell myself like, don't put the pressure so much on because you don't want to get to that point. So, yeah, I think that is a naturally Hawaiian thing that we're doing, especially in the university.

Despite the inaccessibility of well-being in the Hawaiian community and collective trauma of burn out, Pua felt that, "taking care of people or places ... [was] a natural part of who we are." And so, giving care was a part of her Kanaka identity. She said,

I think that I would say it's not only Kānaka but I think it's a very Kanaka thing for us to recognize care, and recognize that we have a responsibility to care, recognize when that relationship is reciprocal of care. We really feel it, feel that. And I recognize that when I talk to Kānaka, when I talk to people in our communities that it's almost second nature, you don't have to explain that this is something that we need to do. It's just something that we know. Whether you know the person or not, if you see that that person needs care, you always see somebody reaching out and offering it.

For Pua, while the kuleana to care for her community can sometimes feel overwhelming, she is actively striving to not overexert herself through self-care and is learning how to give care to people, 'āina, and community without burnout.

Puana Kaulana Ka Inoa o Pua

Pua described her short- and long-term goals for living and being in the world. At the time of her second interview, her short-term goal was to enjoy summer by being present, exercising, being in 'āina, spending time with 'ohana, and jumping in the ocean. She also shared her long-term goals were self-care and peace. Pua prioritized self-care because she felt that taking care of yourself was an indicator of a successful life. Pua also prioritized peace as a goal because she felt that peace was rooted in being happy with the contributions she was making to the community.

Pua's mo'okū'auhau of care is rooted in the genealogy of her maternal grandparents. This genealogy has informed her mo'olelo as a student, a girlfriend, and as a Kanaka. This genealogy is represented through the metaphor of Pua's planner, as she balanced her financial, professional, and academic responsibilities with all other aspects of her life. This genealogy is informed by productivity and Pua (k)nows this includes rest.

While Pua strived to find peace by feeling more settled, she acknowledged that this period of her life was a “constant figuring it out stage.” Pua reflected on her sense of peace within her academic journey, and described feeling unsatisfied after finishing her master’s degree and how the PhD was a natural next step although not part of her initial plan. She expressed that finishing her PhD was an academic goal and recognized how she had become at peace with the fact that her journey thus far, as a third year PhD student, was productive and so the remainder of her journey could be more intentional and meaningful regardless of the pressures she felt to finish quickly. And so, Pua said that she wanted to finish her degree in seven years, to take her time and not complete the degree just “for the sake of finishing it.” Pua was at peace with her decision to take her time with the rest of her doctoral journey. From her story, I learned the value of restful productivity and felt that she came to embody this attribute as a means for living into her goals for well-being.

Māhea

Māhea is “a song catcher and storyteller,” “a poet activist,” and a feminist. As a creative spirit, she became “a filmmaker, a playwright, an actor, a singer, a dancer, a chanter, an educator, [and] a lifelong learner.” She identifies as a daughter, a mother, a sister, and an aunt, and she is also a cat lover. As Māhea described her journey she shared how,

Even though I don’t like the term, I’m super resilient. I’m always really enthusiastic about learning and life. So, I’m always really curious about other people’s stories and how they got to be who they are. ... I think because my own life has changed so many different times. It throws me curveballs that I learned to live, like well, whatever you’ve got right now really make the most of it because you don’t know what’s coming tomorrow. So, be joyful, radically joyful for whatever you can be because you don’t know what’s coming. I always try to make the most of every moment, and try and live authentically, and live my truth, and speak my truth.

Māhea’s father is “Hawaiian and Portuguese and English,” while her mother is “Haole. She’s English, Irish, French, and Scottish.” Her father went from Hawai‘i to California as a musician and as Māhea shared, “we like to say the rest of the band went home but he met my mom and stayed.” Her mother was an actor and her mother’s ‘ohana lived in California “for a couple generations. And kind of moved across the United States as all settlers do.” And so, Māhea is “a diasporic Kanaka. I was born in Los Angeles and raised mostly in Dana Point, which is halfway between LA and San Diego.”

Māhea has an older brother, from her father’s first marriage, as well as a younger sister. Her younger sister, Noelani, is an activist, and as Māhea described they were “twinsies because she also grew up in the theater.” Māhea attended the University of California (UC), Berkeley,

while her sister went to New York for dance. While in New York, her sister was “hānai-ed by a Native American woman.” From her hānai mother, Noelani learned sweat lodge practices, came into contact with their kūpuna, and was called home. Māhea finished a theater and English bachelor’s degree at UC, Berkeley, a master’s in mythology at the Pacifica Graduate Institute in Santa Barbara and was working on a doctorate at Pacifica. Around the time her sister encountered their kūpuna, Māhea had a series of dreams where she could oli and ‘ōlelo, which ultimately called her home to Hawai‘i. And so, Māhea went to UH Maui to “find her roots and learn” more about her Hawaiian culture while reconnecting with her extended family. As she shared, “my dad’s brother and all his family are on Maui.” Māhea and Noelani both moved to Maui in the same year although they were called home for different reasons. Through the courses Māhea took at UH Maui, with Kaleikoa Ka‘eo and Kahele Dukelow, and through the knowledge holders she sought out, namely her Kumu Hula Keali‘i Reichel and her oli teacher Kumu Hula Kapono‘ai Molitau, Māhea created a foundation for political science analysis while continuing to learn about Hawaiian cultural practices. Through ‘ōlelo at the university, Māhea met her partner, who was an ‘ōlelo tutor. After which, Māhea and her kāne decided to go to UH Mānoa to pursue doctoral degrees. At the time of our interview, Māhea was working on her doctorate in English along with a Women’s Studies Certificate, and teaching at the university.

Māhea’s own ‘ohana included her kāne, Kahala, and her daughter who is now in the ancestral realm⁵⁴. Māhea was working on a dissertation at Pacifica when her daughter was born, but she put her education on hold to care full-time for her daughter who had Berdon syndrome, a

⁵⁴ An endearing way to refer to a child who has passed. In hula mele, there is a cultural belief that death is not typically referred to directly and there are many poetic expressions to figuratively refer to death. In Hawai‘i, these beliefs may have been influenced by other cultures and traditions (Braun & Nichols, 1996). For Kānaka, storytelling is a way to maintain the memory of the deceased and keeping the spirit alive is part of the process of bereavement (Green & Beckwith, 1926). For more information see Lili‘uokalani Trust (2008).

rare gastrointestinal and urinary tract condition that affects the intestinal nervous system. After her daughter passed and Māhea took time to grieve, she recognized “my clock had run out from that school, and it was a private school so I couldn’t afford to stay.” And so, Māhea was not able to complete her first doctoral degree and started over when her journey brought her to UH Mānoa. While completing her degree at Mānoa was important because of this genealogy, Māhea also explained that,

Finishing my PhD is really important [because] I’ll also be the first one in either sides of the family to do that. I was already one of the first to go to college, and one of the first to graduate with a master’s and now I’ll be the only one who graduated with a PhD.

Mo‘olelo: Healing

Māhea’s well-being mo‘okū‘auhau is informed by her mo‘olelo of healing. This story is shaped by particular practices she engaged in for her well-being. These daily practices were meditation, oli, ‘ōlelo Hawai‘i, and movement.

Healing through Meditation

Māhea went to Catholic school for most of her life. There, she was introduced to meditation practices by nuns, and as a college student, she continued this practice and learned from many mentors. Māhea also learned from many master chanters “from Sufi chanting to Dhrupad, which is an ancient Indian Sanskrit form that’s used for healing in South India.” She studied “Buddhist chanting ... and just different traditions around the world.” But as she said,

I was always so shame because they would ask me to do stuff in Hawaiian, and I don’t know. And so, I felt really guilty ... I’m like, you don’t even know your own. I knew a few things that you learn in hula, but I was never able to haku anything. I didn’t really understand what it meant. I was doing everything just by devotion and rote.

While Māhea was working on her first dissertation, her advisor pushed her to go beyond the power of sound (i.e., Joseph Campbell) and select a topic that was meaningful to her. After she had a series of dreams in ‘ōlelo Hawai‘i, she explained that those dreams ultimately called her home, “because I had that sense of loss ... that’s what really called me, I just felt like I had missed out on so much.”

Healing through Oli

Māhea learned some hula while in California through family members and in a hālau hula in Los Angeles. But she did not dive into the practice to learn “skills and collectivity and mutual kuleana to each other” until she had joined Kumu Hula Keali‘i Reichel’s hālau, which had just opened when she moved to Maui. Together, Māhea and her sister learned oli and hula in hālau, and she continued to connect and engage in these practices with other master practitioners. Māhea fondly recalled chanting oli to her daughter, who would mimic her. Māhea continued these practices (i.e., meditation and oli) for her physical, mental, and spiritual health. These practices and the principles within them manifested in her praxis of teaching. As an educator, Māhea taught mindfulness to her students as a means to teach them healing aligned with her practices for meditation and oli.

Healing through ‘Ōlelo Hawai‘i

Māhea continued to learn ‘ōlelo Hawai‘i throughout this time too. While not a daily practice, Māhea discussed ‘ōlelo Hawai‘i as part of her well-being mo‘okū‘auhau. She recalled preparing her daughter for multilingual education in Hawai‘i. She added, “if we have any more kids ... that’s the first thing on the list is ‘ōlelo in the home. So, I’m still learning, I’m in my fourth year so I still have a long way to go.” Māhea continued to practice ‘ōlelo with her partner,

Kahala, who is a speaker. As she reiterated, “‘ōlelo in the home is definitely high on the priority” leading me to believe ‘ōlelo was a practice, albeit not daily, integral to her well-being overall.

Healing through Movement

At the time of our interview, Māhea was in California. She shared how “randomly they discovered a tumor in my eye that’s cancerous, so I’ve been going through radiation.” Māhea had two rounds of brain surgery prior to getting cancer. As she recognized,

I've had to rethink what it means to live in a body that's not so healthy. And I was thinking about it and I'm like, oh my gosh, I have become one of those horrible statistics. You know how you read the statistics on, the Hawaiians are like, they're diabetic, they have anxiety ... like I'm on blood pressure medication now and how did that happen? I'm hitting all these things and I've lost a child. Like I've hit all of the boxes of what you might consider the worst things of Kānaka, and then at the same time, I've had my own business, I'm gonna finish my PhD, I'm teaching at the university. So, there's all these other things that balance it out that if you only look at part of the picture can really skew the statistics of it.

Māhea explained how her health challenges affected her physically but honored the ways in which she was healing through her daily activities and routines. These activities and routines aided in her resiliency and success. She recognized how “normally I would walk through the neighborhood or the sunshine ... but it’s a little scary with compromised health in a pandemic.” And so, she purchased an elliptical machine and mentioned taking online or YouTube dance classes to introduce movement into her everyday routine.

Well-Being Definition

Māhea acknowledged that as a dancer, throughout childhood “having the perfect healthy body was always everything.” After getting sick and having brain surgeries, Māhea shared how the presence of her “strong spirit ... regardless of what my body is going through” helped her to reframe well-being. And so, she reconceptualized her beliefs to define well-being as “feeling balanced and feeling in my divine creative flow.”

For Māhea, feeling balanced meant “making sure I cover all the different aspects of life that I need to pay attention to.” She described how she could “hyper-focus on things,” which also meant throwing herself into an activity until she was completely exhausted. As Māhea concluded, “balance would be making sure I keep my physical health and I’m always trying to learn something new that’s not required of me to bring me joy.” Seeking radical joy, seemed to align with Māhea’s need for divine creative flow and her passions as a creative, musical being, and Indigenous feminist. Radical joy will be described in more detail in a subsequent section.

Māhea shared several challenges to feeling balanced. In her academic and professional career, she explained how balancing “demands of being a student and being a teacher at the same time” was difficult. She expressed how balance was also difficult given her kuleana.

I do feel guilty sometimes just shutting out the world. But I’ve also been learning that if I don’t do that, then I can’t meet my kuleana, which means I have nothing left to give anybody else. So, I guess that’s the balance, is knowing how much for me and how much for them.

Addedly, Māhea shared how her anxiety exacerbated her ability to feel balanced, such that feeling unbalanced meant,

An increase in anxiety. And I tend to keep a full plate in general, that’s my personality.

But since my health isn’t great ... I forget that I don’t have as much capacity as I used to.

And so, I end up getting stretched thin ... and then I feel guilty about being behind on everything. ... that's my bad cycle.

So, in addition to being attentive to her physical needs and divine creative flow, balance for Māhea meant being realistic about her capacity by not taking on too much responsibility. As Māhea said, “Even though I want to do it, I’m learning to say no.”

Māhea described what she meant by feeling in divine creative flow. She believed, “I’m happy and healthy when music just spontaneously comes to me.” For Māhea, spontaneous music did not mean songwriting, but rather song-catching and having scores of music play as she went about her daily life. These scores reflected her peace of mind and were a happiness meter that informed her well-being.

Consequences

Māhea highlighted that “financial resources so that I didn’t have to stress out about whether I’m going to be able to afford tuition and housing and food” would improve her well-being. Disheartened she said, “sometimes I don’t have money to help [my family] when they need things, I don’t have time. I know my sister gets way overburdened with the iwi [bones] stuff⁵⁵ and I feel really bad when I just can’t do it.” The constraint of financial resources and limited time made Māhea feel “guilty” and she recognized how,

It’s a luxury to be a student to be able to just say, “Sorry world, I can’t help you, I have to study for my exams.” And it’s really hard for other people too because unless you’ve been through it you don’t really understand.

⁵⁵ Māhea refers to iwi here as related to iwi kūpuna (ancestral bones) issues. These issues include but are limited to the historical abuses of Native burial sites, the desecration of ancestral bones, and the major Hawai’i and Federal laws related to such disturbances and abuses (for more information see Baldauf & Akutagawa, 2013). Māhea was part of the Maui burial council, and continuously gave testimony when iwi issues arose on Maui, she also was learning kapa practices from Auntie ‘Ai’ai Bello for iwi and helped lead others in learning such practices and protocols.

Māhea felt that with “more free time” she would “be able to go connect with nature” and participate in “women’s retreats,” amongst other things. She felt that the pandemic impeded her ability to do so, with the added stress of her compromised health. She shared how with her health issues, “healthy food[s] ... are expensive,” which was also an added stressor. Māhea believed,

If I had time and the State would stop messing everything up and I didn’t have to fight them then I would be writing more stories, and making more films, and more plays, and more songs.

These activities, as Māhea listed, were important to her well-being although she was not engaged in them as often as she would like, presently. These opportunities were constrained by challenges with the State, as demonstrated in the previous quote. I assumed these challenges included but were not limited to iwi kūpuna issues (see Baldauf & Akutagawa, 2013 for more information), and “land back” issues⁵⁶, which Māhea and her ‘ohana were consistently engaged in as activists in their Maui community.

Resiliency. Māhea believed that throughout her lived experiences she had been resilient. But she pushed back against this terminology. To elaborate she detailed,

I think I’m struggling with the weaponization of it. So, it’s become such a catch-all term like, “Oh, you’re resilient, build your resilience,” which is good. We all definitely need to do that. But I think then it also erases, if we’re always focusing on our individual portion, then it misses the systemics. And so, we end up not focusing on the larger picture of how to make real change at the systemic level, so that we don’t have to be resilient.

⁵⁶ “Land back is the demand to rightfully return colonized land - like that in so-called Canada - to Indigenous Peoples. But when we say “Land Back” we aren’t asking for just the ground, or for a piece of paper that allows us to tear up and pollute the earth. We want the system that is land to be alive so that it can perpetuate itself and perpetuate us as an extension of itself. That’s what we want back: our place in keeping land alive and spiritually connected” (Longman et al., 2020 as cited in Scobie et al., 2021).

She reflected on the amount of time she had spent over the recent years and imagined how else she could have utilized that time and energy. As she explained,

I don't want to have to be resilient. I don't want to have to always be fighting. I want to build stuff. I want to create things. I want to build a new future, not always tear down what somebody else built for us.

Despite her frustration, Māhea recognized her resiliency throughout her lived experiences. Simultaneously, she called attention to the potential erasure that comes from ignoring the conditions that require individuals to develop resiliency.

The COVID-19 Pandemic

The COVID-19 pandemic prompted Māhea to reflect on well-being. As Māhea said, “I’ve been thinking a lot about well-being in general, like the high-level issues and how they come to the forefront because of the pandemic.” Māhea noticed, “how mental health and well-being have been so stigmatized in general that we don’t have enough conversations about them.” As a teacher, she witnessed how this stigmatization may have affected her students.

This semester alone, I had four students drop out of my class, drop out of school entirely because of mental health reasons. They were having so much anxiety, they were too far away from home, everyone around them was getting sick, they were constantly afraid, and those are terrible odds of how many, I’ve never had that. I’ve been teaching for five years now, and this is really the first time [where] just so many [students left].

While dropping out of school could be perceived as an academic failure, Māhea admired their bravery, and she took the time to reach out to her students to commend them for taking care of themselves. Māhea explained to her students that, “school will always be here, you can always

come back. But it's more important for you to figure out what you need right now than what the university says you need."

The Intelligentsia

Māhea recognized her "academic privilege" and felt responsible for "open[ing] those doors wider" by cultivating a more supportive university environment. As she said, "even if we're out there on the front lines and (sic) you're still part of the intelligentsia and we have a responsibility to not only reform the system we're in but to try and make more access." At the same time, Māhea felt that it was ridiculous that what her grandparents and great-grandparents took for granted now required a college degree. Despite this tension, Māhea said that while higher education was not the only place to learn, "it is definitely a place" and so she strived to make it a more welcoming space for other wahine. Reflexively, she asked herself, "am I reaching my hand out to the next wahine who wants to come in and making space for her?"

Māhea simultaneously gave voice to challenges, "I definitely think as Kānaka in the university it's particularly difficult for us to navigate all the kuleana we have." She believed that "we [Hawaiians] carry so much extra that navigating the university can be really tough and then those of us who already have things stacked against them." Māhea used her own health as an example, to describe what she meant by having things stacked against her through her anxiety and health issues. While she felt these challenges didn't prevent Kānaka from finding joy in the academic process she felt it "dampers or dims the amount of joy ... because I'm just freaking tired all the time." She recalled being scolded by a professor for being late on an assignment once, "[the professor's] like, "they would have never tolerated this ... at Chicago" because that's where she was from." This experience led Māhea to share the sentiment that the teacher probably

“had full funding, and ... in your day when you were a graduate student, that’s all you did.” As a student, Māhea recognized,

We don’t just go to school. We also have massive community responsibilities. We don’t have the luxury ... I think that all of the rest of the things come to weigh on us that we carry a lot more through our journey. And I sometimes wonder, do we get to enjoy it as much as other folks do?

This reflection helped me to see why Māhea was steadfast in her beliefs about radical joy.

Radical Joy. Māhea was active in her pursuit of “radical joy” which she defined as, “finding even if it’s just a sliver of happiness with all the rest of the crap that’s happening all around us, being able to focus on that, and illuminate or elevate that.” Māhea confessed that she “stole” this term from Black feminists. Affectionately, she described,

I love how despite the systemic oppression that Black women go through ... they still are able to find beauty in the flower, find beauty in the relationship, find beauty in their family and constantly make space to hold that for other women.

From this admiration, Māhea strived to “pay it forward” in her practice. And so, in teaching and life she perpetuated radical joy. She continued, “I love teaching our Kanaka and other Pacific Island students because I feel like finally, I try and be the teacher that I would have wanted someone to be for me that I didn’t have.” She honored the genealogy of knowledge holders she learned from who were not Kanaka, but questioned “why am I learning my history from a White anthropologist?” As an undergraduate in the diaspora, Māhea found comfort in Black and Asian American literature as they aligned with her history as a Kanaka. Addedly, she believed,

If relationality really is the foundation of our culture, it’s hard to relate to people if you don’t know yourself well, if you don’t know where all the ideas that you take for granted

came from. And I think all of that critical thinking and analysis ... it's not necessarily that you have to go to school to learn them, but that is, right now, one of the places where we can learn it.

So, Māhea dreamed of “more mass public education” and recognized how “the best thing about the pandemic has been all these free webinars and content lessons. I’ve learned so many things.” She reflected on how,

We [as Kānaka] have this whole long genealogy of really strong women and until colonization came and really messed things up, we have patriarchy also our own form of it, but we handled things differently. And if we could take some of those lessons and pass them on, I think everybody would be in a much better state, not just wahine, but the whole ‘ohana community would be better.

And so, Māhea believed in the power of speaking truth to change systems, empower community, and cultivate “body autonomy and both personal and collective sovereignty.”

Māhea witnessed how to be a good ally from others in Hawai‘i, such as Candace Fujikane⁵⁷ among others. She said, “I see really how much effort they do put in and how it makes a difference to the colonizer when their own are speaking on behalf of the natives.” So, while in California, Māhea was modeling how to behave differently in the diaspora, recognizing “I don’t belong here,” and she felt grateful to support other Indigenous communities in the diaspora as she had seen others who advocate for Hawaiians in Hawai‘i.

A Mo‘okū‘auahu of Radical Joy

⁵⁷ Candace Fujikane is an English professor at the University of Hawai‘i. “She is a Japanese settler aloha ‘āina, standing for lands and waters in Hawai‘i by mapping the mo‘olelo of places and mobilizing the ancestral knowledges encoded in the mo‘olelo to protect those places” (Chayne, 2021).

As I experienced Māhea's journey through her re-telling, I made sense of it in the following way. Through Māhea's musical upbringing, she was raised as a creative and spiritual being. While she grew up in the theater, she recognized the challenges that had developed related to her physical health. Parallel with her compromised health, she developed into a chanting practitioner, which was informed by the musical practices she engaged with in theater and dance. These lived experiences led her to develop into a cultural practitioner of oli and hula. Although she learned some of these Hawaiian practices in California, she moved to Hawai'i to grow beyond rote memorization. After moving to Hawai'i to reconnect to her culture and family, she gained a political science perspective through relationships that informed her development as an activist. She continued to engage in activism and iwi issues. And her oli and hula practitionership continued to flourish and be informed by her creative spirit.

Māhea used her other chanting learnings and activist lens to inform her spiritual meditation practice, as she learned to haku, story-tell, and song catch in (k)new ways. Throughout Māhea's life, she had many maternal guides. She felt as though older women were drawn to her and that these women took her under their wings. Over time, Māhea was able to merge her passion for oli and (k)new ways of storying and singing into her activist lens, and she became a feminist. She turned away from feminism for a brief time because of what she had learned from Haunani Kay-Trask about White stream feminism but was introduced to the ways Black and Asian American feminist scholars used feminism and adopted Indigenous feminism into her worldview. Māhea recognized the toll of activism work and as someone with compromised health, she came to reconceptualize her well-being. Thus, her journey led her to radical joy. Through her creative spirit, Māhea was striving to cultivate radical joy in her life as a staunch act of resistance to the consequences she lived and experienced.

Puana Kaulana Ka Inoa o Māhea

Māhea and I did not have the chance to meet for a second interview, so I did not get to ask her about her goals for living and being in the world. However, Māhea did share her professional goal of becoming a tenure-track faculty member. If that was not possible, Māhea would continue freelancing as a writer because as she shared, “it took me my entire adult life to get to Hawai‘i, that I’m not willing to just take a job anywhere else. ... I would rather take a job doing something else than having to move somewhere else.” Māhea shared that she had no regrets and added jokingly that her one regret would be the “legacy” that is her student loans debt. She felt lucky to have spent her doctoral journey studying things she was passionate about, namely Hawaiian and Pacific literature and Indigenous feminism. These passions gifted Māhea radical joy and that joy is her well-being guide.

Kahala

Mele: Unknown Identity

Identity is kind of the moku that we live on,
You launch out off the moku,
And you might follow the stars,
And you might not follow the stars.
I am okay with not knowing.

Identity for me is like,
The thing that becomes a fossil,
The fossil is great to hold,
It provides some stability,
It provides a grounding place
But it's produced in the process.
I prefer that unknown.

So, my identity is less important to me,
Then the relationships that produce
the identities that I claim
At any given moment.
I go down a route,
with excitement,
And I leave some identities behind,
And continue to explore,
Because you're not just going to go back,
You're taking your ancestors with you,
When you're pursuing that unknown.

I am Kanaka Maoli,
I'm mixed with Filipino,
I have Indigenous roots to the diaspora.
But my idea
of being Kanaka Maoli
or Visayan,
or queer,
Might fall apart,
And I might have to pick it up again.
I don't know if my identities
are going to be stable
At the end of this all.
But that's exciting!
I still identify with all those things
I mentioned now.
But what I identify most with is the process.
I love that not knowing.

Kahala is from Nā Wai 'Ehā or the island of Maui. They⁵⁸ moved to O'ahu to go to UH Mānoa and is a graduate student in Political Science and Women, Gender and Sexuality Studies. At the time of our interview, they were visiting California with his partner and was “just trying to get through the pandemic.” Kahala grew up in a two-parent home and was raised as a Christian. Their parents are still members of the Church of Jesus Christ Latter-Day Saints, “otherwise

⁵⁸ I asked all participants for their pronouns. Kahala shared that the pronouns they would like to use throughout this case were “(They/He).” And so, they/he will be used across this case.

known as Mormons.” But Kahala left that environment because “it wasn’t healthy at [one] time” in life. Kahala grew up in an eight-person household, which included extended family members, and they have five siblings. Many of their siblings are queer or māhū. His ‘ohana and kinship played a role in his well-being, particularly as the hiapo, the first-born child of the family. Their family still resides on their traditional homelands in Maui.

Kahala described themselves as “very introverted” so their kuleana as a hiapo was difficult. Over time, Kahala learned how to be a hiapo through the relationships with his siblings. As Kahala explained to me it meant,

Working with each of my siblings as they also were challenged by their raising in the church under those values. And so, I became a pu‘uhonua⁵⁹ basically to all my siblings as they began to come out, and as some of them start to transition.

This learning process, as Kahala shared, was not just about making decisions as a senior member of the family but also about protecting and supporting one another on his siblings’ journeys of self-discovery. Kahala described that perhaps this process was one way they were striving to “decolonize” their family. When Kahala was a sophomore in college, they explored gender and sexuality, and was thrown out of the house for being queer. But as Kahala shared,

Thankfully, I have a lot of support from people who are at the university, as well as my partner, who I’m still with, and had a part in that lifesaving, caring culture that helped me to get through a very difficult time.

Kahala described their central ‘ohana as their partner, partner’s sister, and college roommate.

Kahala added that his college roommate and partner’s sister were also partners. In this “very tight-knit miniature ‘ohana” Kahala found support, community, and shared values. This support

⁵⁹ By definition a pu‘uhonua is a “place of refuge, sanctuary, asylum, place of peace and safety” (Pūku‘i & Elbert, 1986).

network helped Kahala work through their “strict kind of conservative Christian values.” Their college roommate helped them to explore ‘ike Hawai‘i, shared with them ways of healing through trauma, and exposed them to ritual experiences learned through pālūa.

As an ‘ohana, they strengthened their relationships to one another during the 2019 Maunakea standoff. Kahala explained how they lived together on Hawai‘i island for about a year. As Kahala shared, “all four of us were instrumental in building the Pu‘uhonua o Pu‘uhuluhulu⁶⁰ up there.” And so, Kahala and his ‘ohana were part of the community to protect Maunakea while learning various ‘ike Hawai‘i practices and protocols and becoming “ride-or-dies”⁶¹ because of these experiences together.

In reflecting on life and familial relationships, Kahala added, “to be fair, my parents have actually done leaps and bounds. ... because they know they love their children.” Acknowledging how they too had become social justice advocates largely because of their children. As Kahala concluded his parent conservative beliefs had shifted because, “they’ve actually come to understand for themselves what it means to be māhū and LGBTQ and Hawaiian and having these worlds outside of the church.” And so, Kahala felt supported by their parents although he had moved away from the church teachings he was raised with to explore queerness.

Consequence: Colonial Society and ‘Ohana

Kahala and I explored together how his family was able to make such “leaps and bounds.” They believed and attributed their conflict resolution to four things: “aloha, trust, and communication, in addition to an acknowledgment of conflict as not a bad thing.” At first, Kahala reflected on the anger and blame he harbored toward his parents and questioned them,

⁶⁰ For more information on Pu‘uhonua o Pu‘uhuluhulu visit: <https://puuhuluhulu.com/>

⁶¹ “Ride or die” is a colloquial expression that began in the 90s through hip hop culture. This expression refers to a relationship to someone or something that is rooted in extreme loyalty. In this case, Kahala is referring to his central ‘ohana as people who he shares extreme loyalty with because of their shared experience on Mauna Kea.

Talking to them, asking them very, very angrily like, “Why didn’t you tell me?” “Why didn’t you tell me these things?” “Why did you do this?” I think it stirred up in them the same questions I was asking them, like “why weren’t we taught these things?”

Questioning why their parents did not teach them about their Hawaiian, Tahitian, and Filipino ancestries helped Kahala’s parents to reflect on their upbringings. As Kahala explained, “over time I had to come to realize in my conflict with them they’re in the same place or similar place I’m at.” Kahala came to understand how “they never had the privilege to learn themselves and go to college to find out these things about ‘ike Hawai‘i.” And so, Kahala felt, “I can trust that what they were trying to do was probably in their mind for my benefit.” Kahala explained how this trust, allowed them to grow together.

A lot [of] times, Hawaiian families have or value only one, aloha, right, maybe trust as well. Some develop communication, but a lot of Hawaiian families never get to the point of engaging in huhū [anger] and the productive, not just productive, the human necessity of huhū. And I think the reason why is because colonial society values aloha, and the joy, and that kind of romanticized idea over the also valuable anger, which we need, we need to be able to engage as hoapaio [antagonists] even in our families.

Kahala also marked the privilege of having a two-parent home. As Kahala shared, “I also have in the queer community, a lot more flexible relationships than a lot of my other friends and ‘ohana have.” By marking this privilege, Kahala explicitly was recognizing the role of the church and Mormon environment, which allowed their parents to “maintain the kind of financial and also relational stability through their marriage because they were supported by the church and by the state and receive a lot of benefits.” Despite being working class, Kahala felt that they were given more access to resources in comparison to other families in their communities. Kahala did

not realize this privilege until they left their parents and observed these differences firsthand. And so, they recognized how this privilege allowed his parents to support the “majority of their kids to go to college” and how the capital “to be able to even consider going to the university” was something they had access to. This privilege motivated Kahala, and as a second-generation university student, they valued how their parents provided opportunity and access “to get an education or to pursue an occupation that we [them and their siblings] could live with, that we could gain a living from.”

Well-Being Definition

Kahala experienced well-being at the Pu‘uhonua⁶² on Maunakea. During his time on the mauna, Kahala found a community that could hold his issues with the educational institution in ways that felt pono. For Kahala, well-being meant carrying and maintaining pono relationships, such that there were clear boundaries or palena, respect, aloha, and self-determination for one another without harm. They described this as “a really delicate balance” because finding people who belonged to his intellectual class and who could maintain such relationships was a rarity. Kahala recognized that having pono relationships was a rarity because they felt isolated. But as Kahala discussed the rarity of such relationships, they reflected in real-time and recognized the people in his communities whom he had such relationships with and acknowledged the ways those people helped him cultivate well-being. Kahala experienced trauma in the academy and discussed the gaps between his and his partner’s struggles, as academics, with those of his miniature ‘ohana, who were activists and from the working class. As Kahala shared, “right now our problems don’t really translate exactly.” And so, “normally where we would kind of back

⁶² Pu‘uhonua refers to a sanctuary as mentioned earlier (Pūku‘i & Elbert, 1986). For Maunakea the Pu‘uhonua o Pu‘uhuluhulu was established by kia‘i (caretakers) to protect Maunakea, as it is a sacred pu‘uhonua for Hawai‘i island people. This sanctuary was established by the kia‘i during the 2019 Maunakea standoff and was supported by the royal order of Kamehameha ‘Ekahi.

each other up ... We're all carrying our own significant toils and they're different," perhaps contributing to a sense of isolation and disconnect with their chosen 'ohana. Despite these challenges, Kahala was striving to "incorporate what I learned at Pu'u honua in my daily life" and to create boundaries that could protect, maintain, and cultivate pono relationships with people in their communities.

Kahala also expressed the duality of working out for their well-being, recognizing that working out was an important activity for physical health but "because it moves me towards masculinity and away from femininity" it could be problematic. As Kahala said, "it spikes testosterone and I have a very hard relationship with that." And so, he recognized the benefits of working out but valued other types of well-being such as emotional health. As Kahala said,

I don't want to become a statistic. ... I want to fight that part of colonization, but at the same time if I couldn't do it, I mean I'd miss out, but I would still probably be okay with other type[s] of well-being ... [such as the] emotional muscle, vulnerability.

As Kahala concluded, "I probably would be really, really good with what time it opens up to develop the emotional side of me."

Mo'olelo: Spirituality

Ritual, journaling, radical rest, and being open to wonder were guiding daily practices for Kahala's well-being. They cultivated well-being through ritual and had many teachers that helped them to explore gender expression. Through ritual, he "experienced the phenomenon of 'āina." And so, Kahala engaged in ritual, through chant, dance, and Visayan practices, to cultivate well-being. Kahala also utilized journaling to explore their gender and sexuality and reflect on his relationships. As Kahala said,

Journaling is like I used to laugh at it, it was toxic of me in the past. But journaling and reflecting on, especially my gender expression, sexuality, my relationships in the past and currently journaling about that ... and I was asking these questions about, what you see now? What you want later? ... What do you admire in other folks? What can you take from that? Doing that has, every morning, has really helped me to get that radical rest and give me time to breathe and grow.

Like radical rest, being open to wonder was another practice important for Kahala's healing. As Kahala explained,

Being open to wonder. ... triggers in my well-being, my health, this sense of pono. Like this is my element, thinking through, creating, imagining, doing art, doing, I write sci-fi fantasy. I'm a total dork with that.

And so, Kahala utilized being open to wonder as a "creative dimension ... in order to stay pono" and valued spirituality and gender exploration as three practices that they engaged in daily to maintain their well-being.

Consequences

Kahala described the need for class consciousness and that, "we don't talk enough about how we're the intelligentsia, and what privileges and disadvantages come from that." As Kahala shared,

In addition to the financially crippling debt ... the activist, political, like critical consciousness side, the liberation side, know what class you come from, develop class consciousness, develop what it means to be part of the Hawaiian or BIPOC intelligentsia because I'm really, really disappointed a lot of times with my fellow scholars, when we don't challenge the institution enough or we even facilitated the continued oppression of

the institution against us, or I'm just going to say it, like this aloha 'āina thing ... It's hurtful to me being on the Mauna and doing the aloha 'āina actually ... We don't understand that we have a pattern of being academics. And I hate to say it but collaborating with the institution rather than fighting it or more importantly being a part of the communities that are outside.

And so, Kahala expressed the need for a collective class consciousness to “decolonize not just indigenize.” As Kahala explained, “you can't indigenize unless you decolonize institution. Otherwise, we're just kind of indigen-washing,” which perpetuates oppression and reinforces imperial structure.

The Intelligentsia

Kahala discussed the challenges and privileges of higher education. Kahala highlighted the exclusionary nature of higher education because of its high cost, less than a living wage, lack of collective bargaining rights, and exploitation of labor. They also recognized the privilege of being associated with the university, and explained that when testifying,

I don't even have a PhD yet, but just being associated with that ... it really shifts ... the kind of White privilege, settler privilege that we have to deal with on the opposition. But when we do that, and it over clouds [overshadows] non-academics, we're not doing our job. We actually should hāmau [be silent] and boost the voice of the working class or non-academic folks because it's learning how to leverage that so that we're not exclusive.

Yeah, we don't exclude, we don't silence other voices.

Another privilege of the university for Kahala was the ability to study queerness and feminism in ways that allowed Kahala to contribute to 'ohana, particularly as the hiapo of the family, which supported their development of deeper relationships with his parents and siblings. Kahala added

that teaching at the university provided opportunities to interact with Gen Z students in ways that were personally healing. Kahala said, “engaging with them has been really healing. I don’t know if that’s as true for them and me. ... But I do enjoy the interactions with students. ... I love watching the growth that happens.” Kahala was aware of the privilege of intellectual intimacy in academia and described how it was exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic.

A Mo‘okū‘auhau of Crossing Boundaries

Kahala further developed his beliefs about the boundaries of community through his punalua side or through non-monogamous multiple consenting partners. As Kahala explained, our relationship to culture and community is like a marriage, “we think that we have to find a partner that, that is Hawaiian culture.” And so, we may not recognize flaws and anticipate a partner, a culture, or a community to “be everything for us, and in sickness and in health, et cetera.” But, as Kahala explained,

That’s never the reality ... you look at the divorce rates and whatever marriage promotes, and nothing against people who are married of course, but with the promotion of those ideas, I see that in a similar, we’ve kind of internalize[d] that with how we’re rediscovering our Hawaiian culture.

As Kahala continued to reflect, he added,

Sometimes we expect too much, we expect a lot from, and it’s understandable. But “I think that just like with a partner, and for me having multiple partners, means that it’s okay if I’m flawed.” It’s okay if my other partner doesn’t see me as being everything to them, and it’s okay if the other partner that I’m with or the other partner that they’re with isn’t everything to them either, and I think that’s where the kūpuna, that’s kind of what we had. “We had something like that, that’s why punalua’s a thing.”

And so, Kahala believed that through punalua there was less anxiety to be everything for his partner, and gleaned how we can utilize such learning to think about how we are members within a community.

Consequence: Community

Kahala recognized the boundaries of their communities. He believed that in any community, even those seemingly homogenous there are multitudes of differences, between individuals and within each individual. Kahala critiqued how “sometimes with nationalism and “lāhui-ness” it kind of flattens that difference” and that when we seek homogeneity, we miss the power of difference. As Kahala explained,

There’s always going to be that queer person who pops up in this quote, unquote, “straight community,” there’s always going to be that atheist that pops us in a heavy conservative Christian community. ... And that difference is actually very, very valuable. It’s a very important part of how we create pilina.

And so, Kahala valued having multiple belongings and the multitudes of our differences, which they believed were important for building pilina.

Kahala recognized the issues within the communities he was a part of and discussed moving between communities “when one is super colonial and doesn’t critique its colonial roots.” Kahala believed that,

Membership in those multiple communities, complicated, problematic as it is ... I think it’s necessary ... I don’t think being Hawaiian is the only, I don’t think it’s comprehensive. I don’t think it can hold all of us right now, currently. I don’t think it should.

He mentioned the expectations we hold for community and that creating new communities or moving between communities was beneficial when cultivating pono relationships. As Kahala said, “back to the community and being pono, that’s how we make it pono. It’s like realizing the boundaries of community, crossing it to go find others and creating pono in that.” They experienced how in their Hawaiian community, these expectations were a result of “internalized colonization,” which resulted in “heteronormativity against queer folks, against mähū folks ... [and] patriarchy.” He included in this discussion mention of the Isabella Kalua case, a child who was horrifically murdered, and how such issues resulted in shame. As Kahala shared,

Hawaiians have a hard time, I think, touching that because I think it’s one of those things where we haven’t learned how to realize that it’s not just the colonizer and the colonized. It’s not just the oppressor and the oppressed. It’s also us and how we engage in oppression, how we internalize that oppression, and sometimes we do it to our own people.

Kahala believed that “coming to grips” with the ways “our current society is hyperviolent because of patriarchy from the colonizer” was a challenge, and how we may not recognize “our own versions of gendered violence from the past without the colonizer.” As Kahala reflected on internalized colonization they said,

I think for me that’s been a limit, that I constantly have to put a boundary on because people like to gaslight, like a lot of my Kanaka community like to gaslight, that they like to make it silent. They don’t want to talk about it, shame, guilt, trauma, all of that and understand where that comes from. But oftentimes when I bring it up, I kind of feel put down, quieted, silenced. And for myself, I also have a history of gender and sexual abuse when I was a kid, so it’s not, it [gets] re-triggered.

And so, Kahala effectively moved between communities and recognized the need to see the boundaries and limitations of community. Reflecting again on the boundaries of the Hawaiian community, they said,

That's okay because ... it's allowed me to go and find my queer community, my māhū community, my LGBTQ community and they got their own problems, they have their own issues, whiteness, coloniality, anti-blackness, all of that. But what really helped me out is addressing some of the issues that Hawaiians still have not because of this shame, the guilt, the trauma, and internalization of colonial patriarchy. We still have some work to do.

So, going back and forth between communities helped Kahala to find new communities and reconcile issues they noticed in one community to heal when in another. As Kahala concluded,

We also have to pop the bubble that there's this romantic idea of if we just recover all our traditions and become whole again then everything will be fine. I don't believe that. I think that that's not optimistic, I think it's misleading. I think it makes us think that we have to be sufficient and total and whole rather than real Kānaka, flawed, but able to use those problems and challenges as a way to form different communities.

Kahala discussed labor expectations and exploitation in academia but recognized the same challenges in the community. "Unfortunately, I have to say it's not just by the institution. It's also sometimes by our lāhui with ourselves." As Kahala believed,

"No ka lāhui," which originally was used in a sense of nationalism and doing your kuleana and whatnot. But it's also taking on a darker tone because we've become more attuned to labor issues and work and where our energy goes to and how we are not supported at times, even though that's demanded of us. So, "no ka lāhui" is also being

used in a kind of semi-ironic and sarcastic way to refer to the ways that our labor is expected by the lāhui in a very toxic, patriarchal way. You need to sacrifice yourselves in order to find liberation.

They added that with such labor exploitation there is the expectation for “no period to heal from burnout” and they challenged this expectation through “radical rest.” As Kahala explained, “radical rest is a way to just say, cut that off. No, I do not consent. And I’m going to take the time to go and heal and rest with my community and grow.” He described this period of rest as “not always just kū‘ē but kūkulu” and recognized burnout as the “haole version of what we experience, which is hulihia.” Kahala eloquently concluded this explanation using a cultural metaphor, which I include here as a hula mele or found poem titled “radical rest.”

Mele: Radical Rest

A new island is created in all that violence,
All that fire,
All that burning.

There’s no Hi‘iaka coming in,
To swiftly restore
All that is livable.

In order for restoration,
Pele has to rest.
We need all Akua, Pele, Hi‘iaka, Laka ...

Pele must take a step back to let that happen,
For hulihia,
To restore all life.

At the time of our interview, Kahala was in California with their partner. While in California, he was able to connect and explore his Filipino heritage by learning Visayan rituals

and practices. Kahala shared how his upbringing cut them off from the Filipino genealogy of their family.

I have the privilege of living in my ancestral lands on the Hawaiian side. But it has been for my Filipino side, quite an experience to look at the diaspora. ... I've had to go through another language loss issue. ... learning Cebuano and Tagalog, it's not as traumatic but it is a reminder that I'm separated from my Filipino ancestors' lands.

They commented on the romanticization of returning to the homelands of his Filipino grandfather because whether they would get to return in the future, the experience and area where their family had lived would inevitably be different. This process led Kahala to reflect on reconnection in the following way:

The most important thing is feeling that connection in your iwi because you always carry them and gaining the respect for the privilege I do have, being Hawaiian on my ancestral lands still. And that has also open[ed] me to be much more empathetic to the diasporic Hawaiians who are off island on the continent or elsewhere, to respect and understand that, and hopefully create space back home on our ancestral lands so that when they return, they can have a positive experience too.

Puana Kaulana Ka Inoa o Kahala

Kahala and I did not have the opportunity to meet for a second interview, and so I did not get to ask Kahala his goals for living and being in the world.

Kawika

Kawika is “a busy Native Hawaiian parent of young children.” Kawika currently resides on the island of O‘ahu but was raised on Hawai‘i island. He was carried to term in North Kōhala in Kapa‘au, and was born at Kona Community Hospital in Kealahou. He explained, “I lived my childhood between the distance of where I was carried and brought to term and where I was born.” His mother is Hawaiian along with other ancestries, and his father is a disabled American combat veteran from the Vietnam War. Although his parents divorced when he was young, he grew up in a loving home. He described his parents as “both very loving parents, also both very free-spirited people,” which led to a nontraditional and less structured upbringing. And so, he moved around a lot throughout his childhood. At times, this included being raised by extended family members and living in foster homes. Growing up, his grandfather was a “stabilizing force” and a “great role model.” By the time Kawika was in high school, he had a clear idea about what he wanted to achieve academically. Although he mentioned having siblings and being the first person in his immediate family to graduate high school, he was primarily focused on taking care of his family, which included his wife, and their two young children.

Well-Being Definition

Kawika described well-being as “not just the absence of problems or the opposite of not doing well.” He felt that well-being was a state of living, “where you are thriving yourself and you’re doing it in a way that gives more than it takes from the world and the people around you.” For Kawika, this included having purpose, feeling balanced, and as his father’s friend used to say, “all things in moderation, including moderation.”

As Kawika shared being, “a part of things ... more important than myself” was a priority. Kawika felt that this attribute contributed to his well-being through “a sense of purpose” beyond

“having a good time or getting by from day to day.” As Kawika explained, “I think that has to be balanced with not giving too much so for it to not be sustainable.” And so, he felt that balance was important and that “little bits of balance ... little pono moments, here and there” happened regularly. Kawika described balance through the metaphor of swinging back and forth. He said,

I think ... it's good and fine, if not important to sort of swing back and forth between a life that's focused on others and higher purpose. But then also a life that finds small pleasure and enjoy small pleasure and doesn't feel guilty about doing the thing that's fun even if it's not always purposeful fun.

He also described balance through the kuleana of his research.

I think my research is very important. And I want to do it well. And I think that my integrity is on the line in every page I write because ... when we're researching our people, there's an added layer ... a really important kuleana and there's a balancing to it because if I over emphasize my writing and my research, I will find that I'm not caring for my family, I will find that I'm not caring for my reputation, I will find that I'm not caring for my health. But if I give too much in any of those areas, then my dissertation starts to kind of dry up. And so, it's that like, the movement between all the things.

Kawika connected this sense of balance and responsibility to his self-worth, “I feel my worth, my sense of worth is connected to my achievements in relation to my responsibilities.”

Additionally, he noticed the effects of stress, anxiety, and negative self-talk on his well-being and felt that “it's about capacity. I don't feel like I necessarily need less work or less kuleana, I need greater capacity to respond to it in a way that is not hurtful to myself.” He thought about the influence this would have on his children, and said,

I hope I'm modeling enough self-care and good behavior to where they soak some of that in. I hope they take more of that than they take my anxiety or the stress that they see when they see me working at home.

At the end of the second interview, he believed, “well-being is not just the absence of bad things but it's the presence of something, I guess a type of mana.” He felt that mana like power, was an unseen force but recognizable and present because of its effects. He perceived that mana was present in his everyday life through his family.

Like my daughter is when she's trying to make a point and full-throated arguments for something, whether it's that we have to come to her Taylor Swift party that she organized in her bedroom in 15 minutes. ... And my son is playing soccer and his completely applied version of himself. And he's getting through the other kids and scoring, I see that mana there. When my wife wakes up ... but then in 20 minutes, she drinks her coffee, she's wearing workout clothes, and she's doing this [online fitness class].

And so, he witnessed small everyday acts of mana, and felt, “a type of mana can be that positive thing that indicates well-being. I think it's hard to picture wellness without mana.” Moreover, he explained how he observed mana throughout his entire family as he watched them apply themselves, perhaps similar to how he experienced well-being as a sense of purpose.

Mele: A Desire for Perfection

Seek balance over perfection
The kids are a really important reminder of that,
The desire for perfection
Against the importance of all other things in this universe.

At a certain point,
You've just got to let go
Because there's so many things in this world
And some of them are passing me by.

And while I may weigh more, I am lighter now.

A Mo‘okū‘auhau of Luck

Kawika’s well-being was shaped by a genealogy of luck. Generally, Kawika felt lucky and this perspective allowed him to cultivate his gifts to serve his community and ‘āina. As Kawika described, “I’m lucky that my life is very full. And my burden is that my life is very full.” He characterized luck in “a straightforward way” because he felt like a “pretty lucky person.” He added,

I’m healthy. I have so many of my material wants taken care of in addition to needs. I’ve got purpose, these are fantastic things ... I think I have a ton of things that I haven’t earned, and I think you can call that a lot of different things, I think it’s privilege, I think it’s luck.

Childhood Gifts

While Kawika was independent from a young age, he felt that his parents’ love and support, as well as their honesty, fostered a sense of responsibility in him. As he said, they were “honest people who would talk about their shortcomings,” which he felt was brave. In part, these shortcomings were tied to academic achievement. Although his father did not graduate high school and his mother dropped out of college after one semester, he felt that they intentionally ceded the importance of education. He said, “I had parents who valued education and talked about the value of education, even though they weren’t formally educated themselves. ... It just didn’t click for me until I was 14, and on my own-ish.” As Kawika reflected on his parents’ honesty he said,

I think that helped me because ... I didn't have to make all of my own mistakes. So, it's a blessing that they were willing to give me that gift when a lot of parents don't want to do that, they want to seem perfect to their children.

And so he learned from others, in the schools he went to and at the places he worked, the behaviors he wanted to emulate. This upbringing led him to get involved in things that were important to him, such as student government and clubs, particularly “doing mālama ‘āina work as a young person.” In reflecting on his childhood, he shared one memory that solidified his goals. He said,

My dad was gone on a trip, and I was staying with a friend of the family. And that had happened a couple of times. And I was budgeting, and I had all of our stuff. And I just had a lot of time to myself and was processing all of that, and realized I needed a path for myself or I was going to end up in the same neighborhood that I was staying at. And I didn't want that life. And so, I thought a lot about what I wanted to do, and I just landed on political science. I didn't know what the career was, but I kind of found my career within that year also. And I think I was just lucky in that sense.

So, by the time Kawika was 14, he had clear sense that he wanted to help others through the complicated systems of governance. Kawika described feeling lucky because, “a lot of it there was an “aha” moment.” Perhaps this memory Kawika shared was an “aha” moment that made him feel lucky, and perhaps allowed him to reflect on the gift of honesty and the gift of valuing education given to him by his parents. Kawika also observed two friends who were part of the Mayor’s Youth Council work with local government to take action and build a skatepark. And so, he was exposed to working with local government and wanted to learn about political processes as a way to help people. After his friends matriculated, he joined the Mayor’s Youth

Council. Alongside his work in student government, Kawika was also the editor of his school's paper, and had the opportunity to intern for his county's councilman. Through these experiences, Kawika learned about government and politics and by the time he applied for college he felt called to political science as a viable academic pathway to achieve his purpose. Ultimately, he felt lucky that things worked out the way that they had, and for the opportunities and experiences he was fortunate to have throughout his childhood.

College Gifts

It was helpful that Kawika recognized the relationship between education and his future goals early on, and this connection motivated him to achieve academically.

I think what was good about my journey is just from a younger age, I had this sense of the connection between what I wanted to do professionally, these challenges or needs or opportunities, and then this need for some types of academic work to be produced, to help those communities or advance those causes. And so, I've been lucky to see a nexus between scholarship and those things that I recognize is important. And that's been the motivator for me.

Kawika had friends who were in college, and talked with them about going while he was still in high school. He also took the initiative to change his life. As he said, "I realized college was necessary for me to get out of the lifestyle that I was living in, like the demographic that I was in." And so, he began reading "how to" books at Borders Books & Music, and found being a good reader as one of his many gifts. Upon applying to college, Kawika recognized some challenges, such as the FAFSA, but continued to take initiative. He said,

I kind of stumbled for a bunch of it, I didn't do the FAFSA until I got to, well, I did it because a friend showed me how. I did it wrong. And then I didn't do the FAFSA

correctly until I had been admitted to college. I redid it there on campus because somebody else helped me. So, I guess I've had a lot of people kind of helping me out, but I took initiative too.

And so, Kawika went to college in the U.S. mainland, started his professional career, met his wife, and then started a family.

Adulthood Gifts

Kawika shared what it was like as someone who started his family away from Hawai'i. He recognized as a Hawaiian, and with a partner who is also Hawaiian, that they were just grateful to raise their children in Hawai'i.

We can remember the opposite of that, the absence of being here and what that felt like for us. Not to mean that's everybody's truth, but for us. And so, ... I talked about luck. I think a really nice thing that I am lucky for, is I'm lucky that we were able to figure out how to come home and to make this work. And it is a choice to come home but also it is very complicated. ... So, I think just being here and staying here is part of my wellness and my family's wellness that can be overlooked, nearly taken for granted.

Kawika mentioned lāhui Kanaka, or other Hawaiians who may wish to come return to Hawai'i but for whom it is not financially feasible, and felt fortunate to be able to do so with his family.

Kawika shared a story about using the StrengthsFinder⁶³ book in the Omidyar Fellows⁶⁴ program. He said,

⁶³ StrengthsFinder is a psychometric instrument invented by Don Clifton and developed by the Gallup Institute. It is a personality-assessment tool that focuses on 34 themes that make up an individual's personality.

⁶⁴ The Omidyar Fellows program is a 15-month Hawai'i-based leadership program designed to develop leaders in Hawai'i through global best practices. This program strives to equip fellows with the necessary leadership skills while cultivating cross-sectional relationships to affect societal change.

Achiever was my number one. And ironically, I also scored really low for competitions.

... And what is interesting about me, though not unique, is I like to win, and I don't like other people to lose, so I compete with myself. And I compete in the sense of trying to achieve things that aren't about beating other people or walking around with a medal. But nonetheless, it's this really, it's this thing that I feel is almost wired into how I go through the day, and I have to stop and think slowly, in order to think differently than that.

He recognized that this quality allowed him to thrive in his professional career and considered seeking harmony as one of his leadership qualities and strengths. As Kawika explained, "I have the gift of caring about other people, individually and collectively. And it provides a sensitivity that is an asset in organizations and in group settings." And so, he felt that this quality was why he was often chosen for leadership and management positions. Overall, Kawika said, "I feel really good about using my particular skills to care for 'āina." He added,

I engage and care for 'āina in a very indirect fashion. ... And I think I'm good with, I'm at peace with the fact that I'm caring for those things that matter to me, but in a super indirect fashion. I would like to spend my time playing in those spaces and getting to enjoy those things. But I also feel like if I had to choose ... I'd rather do the purposeful thing. Hopefully, fate will give me time to play at some point.

He reflected on his day-to-day well-being in comparison to his overall sense of well-being by saying,

There are those surveys done where people are checked in with at various times of the day and asked, "How stressed out are you?" "What's your well-being?" And ... if somebody did that with me, they would probably find on a day-to-day basis I'm pretty stressed out. I'm cranky about something, I'm feeling out of balance in at least one thing

and I'm complaining about it. So, I might actually not seem like I'm having a good time, but generally, I'm living the life that I want to.

Kawika included this sense of balance into beliefs about his well-being, and ultimately felt lucky to be cultivating the life he wanted. Presently, he hoped that “This guy, I think I just want to do better at everything and feel like I'm contributing more in a way that is sustainable and doesn't burn me out and hurt me. That's all I really want.” And he recognized that in his daily life, he thrived with structure and maintaining “a fairly consistent rhythm,” which gave him a sense of accomplishment incrementally. These “pono moments” as Kawika called them, were transient, and he was still learning how to manage his stress and self-doubt, live more sustainably, and perhaps become more balanced within himself as ways to build his capacity moving forward. As Kawika said, “I’ve never had trouble putting in the work. But feeling like it was good enough is something that I have struggled with.”

Mo‘olelo: Observing Curiosity in Late Adulthood

Perhaps because of their shortcomings, Kawika’s parents pointed to his grandfather as a role model. As Kawika shared, “he is an important part of whatever sort of gifts I have too.” Kawika felt his grandfather was someone who had well-being in his later years. He said,

I don't know if it's really fair for me to say that I felt like his well-being was one way or another when he was younger, but we were close. We got to be close when I became an adult.

And while he observed that his grandfather did not have “a life of luxury” he felt that he lived a good life and achieved a good state of well-being because he had a sense of purpose, he was “not super stressed out,” and had “a peace about him.” He spoke about how his grandfather,

He finally got to travel when he was older after my grandmother passed away, which was a hard time, very hard time for him. But when he did bounce back and make use of the time he had left he traveled and did things that he always wanted to do.

This ability allowed Kawika's grandfather to cultivate curiosity which was something he was also striving for. Kawika elaborated,

I think curiosity is natural and I think you have a different kind of natural curiosity depending on who you are. I think it's not all choice, but I think you can choose to cultivate it or you can not choose to cultivate it, and I loved that this person who was so much smarter than me and so much more experienced than me and had been on the earth for a super long time, he was still genuinely curious about all kinds of things.

He observed that this brought his grandfather joy and as a result gave joy to those around him.

Addedly Kawika believed,

People like to be interesting, and some people can go through long periods of time without being given the gift of somebody showing them that they're really neat. And so, I loved and noticed that about him and I think that was a part of his well-being.

Kawika felt that being interesting was a gift you could impart to others, particularly in education.

A professor has an obligation to be interesting. And I think that that's true because that's how you bring your students into this wonderful universe and help them see interest through your interest, and to show them the shiny parts because otherwise, they might not see it...I think part of our kuleana, if we get to, when we get to teach or when we get to write, outside of the tiny jargon world, part of our kuleana is to at least try to be interesting to bring that kind of light and life to the academic space.

And so, bringing this sense of interest, and genuine curiosity was something he was cultivating in his praxis personally, academically, and professionally.

Consequences

Food and Body Politics

Kawika discussed his changing relationship with food, and through various points across the interviews provided an example of the legacy and process of food colonization in Hawai‘i.

Peering towards 40, one of the things I think about more is favorite foods are not just what tastes good as you're putting it into your body, but it's like what is the experience of that food? And I'm coming to rethink about what my favorite foods are based on understanding what the experience of that food is.

He felt that choosing foods that were better for your body, could be challenging because of time, expense, and having reliable food sources. As he explained,

So, I think that's an important thing and being willing to make choices that maybe, to choose to source your food in a way that you define as better or to choose foods that are better for your body, even if they're more expensive, even if they're harder to get to, even if they're unreliable, right? Especially with everything happening in the world, I think is also a really important well-being thing that I have varying capacity to do because I can afford it. But time is scarce.

His relationship with food was also tied to his physical body, as he emphasized physical health as an important activity in his routine. As Kawika shared, “I try to exercise because I think our bodies are so important to all the other stuff, and nobody can take care of your body for you.” He shared that physical health was something his father valued.

My dad was always, he was into it. He was a baseball coach. He was my baseball coach. When I played, he was a mentally strong, assertive kind of alpha kind of guy with a soft spot for a small group of people, including me and, he was always about, take care of your body, be strong, hard, and tough, it's a necessity for protecting yourself. And one day you'll have a family, and you'll want to protect them too. But it also is one of the spaces where I saw my dad have fun, and he enjoyed. He learned to box at a young age, he fought in the Marine Corps, and he learned martial arts when he was younger, and it gave him peace. And the older I get, the more important I realize that is.

In the time that had passed between our two interviews, Kawika recognized that his physical activity was lacking because of the precedence of “dissertating” as Kawika and his family called it. At the time of the second interview, he had just defended his dissertation and was making adjustments in his life so that his physical health could once again become a more prominent priority. As Kawika reflected on his “dissertating” he said,

I didn't realize it, but I put on in this last year where I've really been doubling down on the dissertation, I put on 20 pounds, and I'm still in a relatively healthy weight. But I am at the heaviest I've ever been. I've been at this weight before, but I always scale it back at a certain point. So, I think I also realized the amount of mental and finger workload that I put on myself in order to jam out this dissertation, part of that showed up with a bigger belly, 20 pounds of extra meat. So now I need to work on scaling that back and getting to a healthier weight.

And so, as Kawika concluded after the dissertation, “I think you probably see a peppier me. I may weigh more, but I am lighter.” Kawika described this shift in habits as a coping mechanism.

I think just a lot of people cope too, like what's the thing that's going to, when you're trying to achieve something big or you're trying to make it big, something's got to give. And so, people make different choices about what's going to give, and I think it's not an unusual thing to choose to not sleep enough and not eat right and not exercise enough. So, I bet it's common. And I know that it's not just PhD students, it's all people in all walks of life. It's the single parent who's trying to raise their kids with two minimum-wage jobs. She's making the same sleep, eat, exercise choices that I was making. It's just for different reasons.

Doctoral Socialization

Kawika discussed his desire for perfection in conjunction with the timeline of the doctoral process by saying,

I would feel equally junk about finishing and then feeling like my dissertation wasn't good enough. Doesn't have to be perfect, that's a trap, that's a death spiral. But it has to be good. I have to feel good about what I'm putting out into the world. And I think more about what would it be like if my work wasn't good, and that bothers me because I feel like, I mean, I'm not quite done with my 6th year so I'm not in the danger zone, I got time, but I do worry about finishing in a way that I don't feel good about. You can't take that back.

This reflection, although brief, highlights to some degree the socialization expectations of the doctoral process as Kawika believed the 6th year to be a “danger zone” in terms of time for completing a doctoral program.

Puana Kaulana Ka Inoa o Kawika

Kawika described this season of his life as a positive plateau, as he had just finished his dissertation, had risen to that achievement, and now had a life that was flat, metaphorically speaking. He did not have a holistic goal for living and being in the world but was living in a temporary period where he was figuring out what the best version of himself would look like. He discussed practical activities he was doing to work towards the best version of himself, which meant attending to the areas in life that were on the back burner while he was completing his dissertation. For example, cleaning the house, attending his children's soccer games, writing academic papers with his wife, eating healthier, exercising more, and checking in on friends whom he had been a mediocre friend to temporarily were renewed priorities. As Kawika explained, these re-integrated activities in his routine were not the horizon or goals for living and being in the world but were strategies that would help him clear mental space as he figured out what his goals for living and being in the world could be.

Puna

Puna is “an aspiring hunter, gatherer, fisher,” an “organizer,” and a “scholar.” She is from Ho‘olehua, Moloka‘i, and currently resides in Pālolo on O‘ahu. Puna grew up in Hawaiian immersion, attended Kamehameha Schools during adolescence, and went on to receive her higher education degrees from the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa. During her undergraduate education, Puna studied abroad in England and worked on an olive farm. At the time of our interviews, Puna was working full-time as a “program analyst and developer of student programming” for the university, while working on her doctoral degree.

Puna described herself as “aspiring” because she felt as though “we’re all becoming.” So, she identified herself as someone who was still “getting there ... figuring it out” and “in the process of learning.” She added that this meant she was not a *loea* (i.e., expert). However, as an organizer, Puna described herself as active as opposed to aspiring. For Puna, this meant being active by “constantly doing the work of organizing people,” which included “showing up when ... someone’s *iwi kupuna* are being dugged up and you can organize that ‘ohana because not everybody knows the same resources as you do, and they don’t have the same access” to “breaking down institutional barriers,” as well as being “the one that follows up with policy.” Throughout our interviews, Puna also described herself as an “instant processor,” which she had learned from a *16 Personalities*⁶⁵ test.

Puna’s family is from Moloka‘i and her mother and brother currently reside there. Her brother “now runs the family farm on the homestead on Moloka‘i.” Puna shared that her mother is a retired social worker, and her father was “a jack of all trades.” She added that her father

⁶⁵ This self-report personality test refers to the Sixteen Personality Questionnaire (16PF), which provides a measure of personality trait constructs based on empirical research. The most recent edition of this test was released in 1993 and is a fifth edition of the original instrument. (For more information see Cattell, et al., 1993; Cattell & Mead, 2008).

passed two years prior and described the jobs he had, including farmer and fisherman, and working as a youth correctional counselor.

Well-Being Definition

Puna defined well-being as pono and believed that well-being is a practice. She explained further that, “I don’t think it’s something that you have. ... It’s like ka‘u or ko‘u, like you cannot” possess well-being. She shared that pono “is always shifting” and how being on a particular path towards pono shifted based on “what my lāhui needs or what my ‘ohana needs or what I need.” She also described that for her well-being, “I usually force myself to at least make it to Moloka‘i before I crash” when life felt unbalanced. And so, home was like her “favorite pair of jeans,” providing comfort during bouts of depression. As Puna described, “even just the wheels touching the ground, I feel like I can breathe a bigger breath.” Thus, Moloka‘i was a place she could return to, to find “peace” in times of stress or when she was feeling less grounded, and to “slow down because the world is a little bit more calm.”

Puna also believed her kumu, Keoki Baclayan, was someone who practiced well-being through lā‘au lapa‘au and described her kumu as someone who was spiritually grounded. Consequently, Puna reflected on spiritual groundedness and added it to her conceptualization of well-being. Additionally, Puna explained,

If we understand the goal of well-being is for you to be pono with yourself ... pono as Lilikalā described it in *Pehea Lā E Pono Ai?*⁶⁶ as living in perfect harmony, I think that’s a better way of understanding how we can help ourselves and help others in their quest

⁶⁶ Puna is referring to a book, to describe her definition of pono. (For more information see Kame‘eleihiwa, 1992).

for well-being. So, instead of self-care, throw on a face mask⁶⁷. It's what do we actually need?

At the time of our first interview, Puna reflected on well-being as being able to “just relax ... find more fulfillments in the calm ... [and] allowing yourself that time to settle in and enjoy life a little bit.” As a psychology bachelor's holder, Puna reflected on how her relationships, drinking enough water and getting enough sleep were also important for her well-being practice. This belief shifted, and at our second interview, Puna described how well-being at that moment meant nurturing her relationships and having time to rest. Although similar, these slight differences reflect the ways in which Puna lived and experienced pono as a guide for her well-being, “because pono isn't necessarily one thing and sometimes for your well-being,” you need to shift your practices to recenter yourself so that you can continue on a pono path to achieve peace. Puna perceived that if we did another interview, her answer for what well-being would be at that moment would inevitably be different because of the shifts she would have to make to feel pono.

Well-Being Artifacts

Puna said, “all my kūpuna are in pō” and mentioned how she had collected letters, trinkets, and small gifts from her kūpuna in a box which was something she often returned to when seeking well-being. Contemporarily, she added that her phone, although distracting, was like an ahu where she could write letters and notes to her late father. And she discussed how her phone's photo albums were a place of refuge when she missed her kūpuna and needed to “escape this reality.” As Puna explained,

⁶⁷ Puna is referring to a face mask or facial mask that is used for cosmetic skin treatment (e.g., clay or sheet mask) as opposed to a protective face mask (e.g., N95 or cloth mask) that guards the airway.

I'm kind of lua about it [my phone] ... it is what it is because it's accessible. And I can retrieve those photos and retrieve those letters or ... write down letters wherever I am.

But it's also the constant distraction of being connected to things outside of myself.

And so, the box she shared with me, and her phone were artifacts for her well-being.

A Mo'okū'auhau with 'Āina

Puna shared how Moloka'i was important to her well-being. She explained how "just being home shifts the energy so much." By contrast, she said, "on O'ahu it's like you're constantly stimulated by everything." She continued to explain to me,

Going home is so important because it's not just ... I mean sometimes it's not even seeing friends and family. Sometimes it's just landing on Moloka'i that's just like a huge weight. Like a few times if I hadn't been home for almost six months, as soon as the plane lands, I'll just cry. You know, and, but like relief, oh my god, I'm okay.

By the second interview, Puna described the same feelings for Pālolo valley, where she was living. She said,

So, the other week, as I was driving into Pālolo valley, from the McDonalds side, and the valley kind of opens up to you. So, I was coming in, and then as soon as I passed that Pālolo valley sign by McDonald's, I was just like, okay, I'm safe. I'm home. And I was just like, whoa, that was the first time that I felt like that before on O'ahu.

And so, Puna felt similarly about Pālolo as she did with Moloka'i.

During our second interview, Puna described the many places that shaped her. She began with Moloka'i as the foundation because of her 'ohana and relationships. She also talked about Kapālama, and her time boarding at Kamehameha Schools as a student. Puna described how "you don't have your parents with you at all times. And this was before phones." So, as she said,

“my friends were really important in high school” because she did not have access to her parents. She added that Kapālama shaped her because “it changes how you see the world because my worldview would have been a lot different had I not gone.” Similarly, Puna talked about her study abroad in Norwich which opened her eyes to “other ways of living.” By building a connection to the ‘āina in England while working on an olive farm, she also came to appreciate Hawai‘i more “for its beauty, and it’s hulahula.”

Addedly, Puna described several places in Mānoa that have shaped her. Mānoa valley, she shared, was important “because the campus can be just so life-draining or school can be so life-draining and then you walk outside and then you remind yourself that you’re in Mānoa ... it’s just so beautiful. ... the place matters.” She described how Kānewai, the campus lo‘i, was “a healing place,” and talked about Ba-Le, a Vietnamese restaurant on campus, as a place, “where I’ve seen the most happy Hawaiians.” She reflected on how Ba-Le “is more than the place itself, but ... it’s a gathering space for everyone and Hawaiians just happen to gather there.” Puna also mentioned the Maunakea ahu⁶⁸ on campus and said, “at a certain point in my life the Maunakea ahu was significant when I lived in Mānoa, and I walked to school. I would stop there every morning and do a few oli.” And so, as Puna concluded “the people that I’ve met at the university have definitely shaped the direction of my life” and she believed she would have been naive otherwise. The aspects of physical places she valued were also reflected in the ways she opened her home to others. As Puna explained to me about her home in Pālolo,

⁶⁸ An ahu is a Hawaiian altar typically constructed of stone that is used for ceremonial and spiritual purposes. For more information on the Maunakea ahu on the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa campus, visit: <https://manoa.hawaii.edu/hshk/hawaiinuiakea/about-us/about-uh-manoa-campus-ahu/>

We host a lot of people here now; we have friends over so it's kind of become a gathering place for us to organize. But it also has become a place for us to rest. So, it's just been a dynamic place for our friends and family to come and it's "Hotel Moloka'i."

And so, "Muliwai" as her house was named, was a place that provided rest, but also provided a space for people to gather, which was important for her healing, peace, and relationships.

Mo'olelo: Support System

Puna learned to accept help and recognized how the people around her who provided support shaped her well-being. As she explained,

Anytime I was overwhelmed or stressed at school or if I was upset at myself for ... mistakes and shortcomings, they [Puna's parents and grandparents] were never mad. It was always supportive. And it was always, "Okay, how can I help you? You don't have to worry about this." ... before I thought that's just how you do things, you just help everybody, and when you're in trouble you ask for help, and such is life, and then reality came, and everybody didn't have the same experiences with support.

As Puna continued to describe, the "kid pressures" were "not significant in the grand scheme of things" and their gift of reassurance provided "the tools to recognize when I'm stressed and the acceptance of if things are out of my control," and "the tools to ask for help when I need it, which I didn't realize was a very valuable tool that not many people are equipped with." So, while Puna was candid about her struggles with mental health, she recognized how the support she had was a gift for her well-being. And so, Puna credited her family as "the reason why I guess I can do school in a way that doesn't feel like I'm going to hate school by the end of it."

Puna recalled her religious upbringing but described how part of her higher education journey was mixing "mea Hawai'i with mea Haole." Through higher education, she was able to

be “intentional about bringing mea Hawai‘i into Haole spaces.”⁶⁹ Through her ‘ohana, she also maintained her connections to Moloka‘i through her friendships. Her family felt these connections were important, so she continued to foster them.

Puna described her partner and the relationship they had developed across the two interviews. From the honeymoon phase to “digging through the weeds” they were both navigating the academic process as higher education students, and roommates. She shared how “we’re both struggling through mental health issues” and was honest about how that could be both “helpful and stressful” at times. As Puna explained, we’re “finding support in each other while trying to also not overwhelm the other.” And so, she was learning how to “nalu with it” and make decisions for herself in the context of her world.

Mo‘olelo: Routine

Although Puna felt she lacked a routine, she recognized by our second interview the ways that she intentionally cultivated a routine for her mental health. To be clear, during our first interview Puna’s friends were at her house and heard what we talked about. After the interview, they reminded her of the ways she intentionally created a routine for her mental health, and she carried this reflection with her to the second interview. She also recognized that since it was the end of an academic year at the time of our second interview, much of her routine had “fallen off” and although she was frustrated, she found small ways to cultivate well-being, such as going on the lānai or watching an episode of a television show.

Consequences

Puna discussed how society, education, work, and lāhui constrained her well-being, identifying several endemic consequences of “occupation, capitalism, imperialism, [and]

⁶⁹ In this discussion about mixing both of her worlds, Puna mentioned a specific article for reference (see Lawrence III, 2015).

heteronormativity and gender [norms].” She explained how “imbalances of power” affect pono in the ecological system using the historical example of ‘Umialīloa and Hākau. As Puna retold,

Hākau was the Ali‘inui (high chief) ... But he wasn’t pono. He had all this mana ... And then comes in ‘Umi ... Hākau was pono ‘ole ... ‘Umi wanted to make it pono. ... So then he overthrew Hākau and then made it pono and ‘Umi had the mana. Two generations later, his grandkids [mess] it up, and then they were pono ‘ole. ... So, I think you can have mana without pono. But I think that’s what leads you to an unjust society.⁷⁰

In the contemporary context, Puna said,

Pono [is not] possible, as long as imperialism exists, as long as capitalism exists, as long as we’re building more houses instead of finding real solutions for Hawai‘i’s housing crisis that has over 50% unoccupied homes because they’re all rentals.

She added the belief that, “I don’t think it’s possible for anyone to live in pono because the conditions that we live under don’t make it possible. So, we can strive for pono, but we’ll never ... achieve pono.” Puna felt that achieving pono hinged upon changing society and in particular systems, such as capitalism.

For Puna, this included reflections on products and services throughout Hawai‘i, such that there is no ethical consumption under capitalism. She reflected on a saying from her friend about how people should not “buy anything from Amazon” and explained, “the point of that isn’t that by us not buying anything from Jeff Bezos, he’ll stop making his bajillions, it’s just sometimes we just have to do whatever we can to achieve pono.” Upon further reflection, Puna stressed how “we [as Kānaka] care” and how our governance system “was once pono and that it

⁷⁰ For a more detailed account of the history of ‘Umialīloa and Hākau see Kalākaua and Daggett (1999) and consult with No‘eau Peralto to learn more about this history.

can be pono again. And that throughout history pono ‘ole, hewa has been overthrown, and it can be overthrown again.”

Education

Puna said, “the academy is a volatile place for Kānaka most times ... the standards, Western standards are volatile.” Puna held this belief in part because of the racism she experienced as an undergraduate. She provided an example where she stood up to another student’s derogatory remark about “Hawaiian time.” In this large lecture class Puna explained, “Not only did ... I have to put myself in an uncomfortable position by calling out the student’s racism. But then [the professor] singled me out by basically nuku-ing me for calling out the student’s racism.” Puna explained how the professor justified the remark as a difference of opinion.

As a student, Puna also shared how “definitely TMT [the Thirty Meter Telescope]⁷¹ was a rough year.” And so, she felt that the educational system was not pono. She said,

It sits on, on stolen land. It takes contracts from the military. It developed Agent Orange, and it’s one of the lead contract universities for drones that lead to drone strikes and all these huge implications of mass murder, and ‘āina degradation.

She explained that as a Kanaka student, “that sucks” because she did not want to be associated with such harm. She added that the university,

Advertises to out-of-state students more than it does to in-state students. It reserves housing for out-of-state students more than it does for neighbor island students. It just prioritizes profit over the welfare of Hawai‘i and Hawai‘i’s people when it’s literally the University of Hawai‘i on stolen Hawaiian lands, on unseeded lands. So, there’s just no

⁷¹ For more information see Witze (2020).

way for it to be pono unless it were to reject all of these things, and if the university is not pono and I'm a part of the university, then that adds into the dilemma of "pehea lā e pono ai?" We cannot, because the systems we are a part of, or whatever la aren't pono.

And so, Puna experienced and witnessed the potential for educational systems to be a volatile space that caused harm.

As a student, Puna also felt "imposter syndrome" and desired for "more confidence in [her] ability to perform academically," which included "how to manage [her] time" better. Addedly, she explained how in "the society we live in today. I don't think I am able to just pick one" career pathway. Puna described how contemporarily, having multiple jobs was imperative for her modern conception of "balance." As Puna said,

If I wanted to be a loea [expert] of one of them, I would have to give more of my time.

But the scholar in me wants to learn, the activist in me want to organize, the ... Kanaka in me wants to be in 'āina. ... So, if I could whatever, I would just, I don't know what I would do. I love learning, so I think I would just be in the academy but that's also life draining too.

And so, Puna felt the ways the education system did not cultivate learning for Kānaka, "not just because of our well-being, you have the state, the curriculum, it's just all a mess." She recognized how the size of the university also affected its ability to cultivate connectedness as the culture of the university felt impersonal and distant. However, Puna felt fortunate to be in the Indigenous Politics program where she felt supported and how the connections, she made with people helped to ho'omana her. So, although she felt the volatility of the educational system, saw the degree itself as "a palapala and a PhD at the end of my name," and viewed the degree through the economic mobility it could provide, she recognized the value of the relationships she

had made through the university that helped her to cultivate, learn, and grow despite a general lack of well-being in the campus culture overall.

Pae i ka Moku

Puna felt the demands of working full-time at the university and shared how “boundaries are hard,” particularly as an instant processor. Simultaneously she felt, “it’s really exciting work, and it’s work that I’m happy to do.” As Puna explained, “no ka lāhui⁷², is the work that I do.” And so, she felt the expectations of labor and productivity stifled her ability to feel balanced, with the added demands and expectations for lāhui. She believed that in her role as a student and with her work responsibilities, “they’re really just surrounded by lāhui work.” As Puna explained she reflected upon lāhui work, such that “when you’re always having to give more and more of yourself ... you fall deep into the traps of that mentality and don’t really balance it out with your own well-being.” Puna also shared how being Kanaka, meant “surviving” and that she felt as though “we’re all on different pae.” So, she hoped for “lāhui to move forward. But in order to do that,” she explained, “we got to get on the same pae.” Puna added, “lāhui’s disagree. We can disagree the heck out of each other, but they got to disagree forward.”

Puana Kaulana Ka Inoa o Puna

Puna described her goals for living and being in the world as survival, pono, and peace. Puna described how survival meant helping to move the lāhui forward to “get on the same pae” or same landing place, metaphorically as a lāhui even when we disagree with one another. She felt that if the goal of well-being is a journey of finding pono within yourself, then embodying pono meant helping others on their journey of well-being too. She recognized pono as balancing

⁷² Puna defined lāhui as “a group of people that come together for a movement ... with a common purpose. ... The lāhui that wants Hawai‘i to do well.” She added that this definition came from Kahikina DeSilva and confidently believed that lāhui Hawai‘i supports Mauna Kea based on her lived experiences.

her needs with the needs of her ‘ohana (family and friends), and the needs of the lāhui. She ultimately strived to find peace with the decisions and actions she chose as a way to move towards being pono in her life.

Kainoa

Kainoa is a 35-year-old doctoral candidate, a mother, and a teacher. While pursuing a doctoral degree, she was working full-time, as well as working as a graduate research assistant (GRA), and volunteering on various boards. Kainoa is married and she and her husband have a 5-year-old daughter. Kainoa was a math and science teacher, and her husband was an English and social studies teacher. Together, they were living with their daughter and a dog in a one-bedroom apartment in Puowaina.

Kainoa identified as Kanaka; although, she recognized, “that’s taken me probably this entire educational journey to be confident in saying that.” Along with being Kanaka, Kainoa was confident in her identities as a mother and a teacher and added,

There are things that I do, and I try ... I don't feel like I have earned the mantle of academic, or a researcher, or of scholar, or activists, or any of those other labels that come with lots of work and time and energy, and like you can't just name yourself other people have to tell you what you are. And you can't just, like kuleana right, you just can't say things are yours or other people have to recognize it before it is real. Like it has to be apparent to a community.

Kainoa described herself as task- and achievement-oriented. As Kainoa expressed, “since I graduated from college, it's just been what's the next thing I could work toward?” And so, shortly after becoming a teacher, Kainoa started a master’s program. Once she finished that degree, she got married and had a baby. And once her daughter was born, she used the extra time she had to take professional development courses, which ultimately led to her entering a PhD program. Kainoa had support from her in-laws who resided in Nu‘uanu and could help with her daughter after school and in the evenings when she and her husband worked on their degrees. Kainoa

continued to add things to her plate when she felt like she had some free time and appreciated having some stress to keep her motivated.

Well-Being Definition

Kainoa felt that well-being was defined by “the concept of balance and fulfillments and health.” She felt that she was not an expert in well-being because as she said, “I often put too much on my plate.” And so, Kainoa felt that “the concept of balance is elusive and weird. I don’t really understand it.” She added,

I think I like having just a little baseline stress in my life that helps me feel motivated and then I think as long as I see a plan to accomplish things, and I feel like there’s not significant barriers, even if it’s hard or even if it takes a long time, as long as I feel like there’s a pathway forward and I can do it, I think I feel okay. And that is probably as balanced as I get.

And so, Kainoa felt that “I think it would be accomplishing all the things and not being sick would be well-being.” Kainoa highlighted that when she felt imbalanced it was often reflected in her physical body, primarily through migraines and gastritis. As Kainoa noted “I hold stress in my body. And then I also don’t listen to my body,” recognizing that balance was something she struggled with.

Kainoa identified herself as “achievement-oriented” meaning that “it’s relaxing to check things off my list, which is not really a relaxing thing.” She felt a “mental brokenness” around relaxing and felt she was unable to achieve “what people consider being relaxed” because she strived for fulfillment, namely to her family and community. Upon reflection, she added,

I don’t know anybody, who I can identify as, oh, that person is doing stuff for the community, is accomplished, has a balanced life, and feels like they’re not burning it at

both ends. I think most of the people I interact with are scholar-activists. And I don't think activism leaves a lot of room for well-being.

At the time of our first interview, Kainoa recognized her inability to manage her well-being because she was dealing with some health issues. She shared that she had several diagnostic procedures and an MRI and needed to get her gallbladder removed. But because of the COVID-19 pandemic and Omicron variant surge, her surgery was canceled and rescheduled several times. By the time of our second interview, she was healing from her surgery, though the procedure had been delayed by six months. At our second interview, Kainoa reflected on how she was in a lot of pain and overwhelmed at our first interview although it was not apparent to me when we met. She described that because of her health issues, "I didn't realize how much I was disengaging ... And just how much it was affecting my productivity and ability to multitask." And so, between the first and second interviews Kainoa mentioned putting her PhD on the back burner to focus on her family, work, and "survival" until she was able to have the surgery. As Kainoa described,

Being achievement oriented, I can get really focused on things and then just not listen to my actual body, about what it needs, or I don't relax usually until something is done. So, I think that's what allows me to have so much on my plate, but it's also my downfall.

Kainoa reflected on her body and age by saying "getting older is a little bit crappy because I feel like my body is the thing that breaks down and then is the thing that reminds me, you're doing too much, chill out a little bit." These changes were stressful and affected her well-being overall.

At the second interview, Kainoa added to her definition for well-being by saying,

I think we have our individual health and mental well-being, but I think it's very important to be able to understand our relationships to one another and integrate that into

our sense of self and well-being. And more than that, our greater sense of purpose and community and lāhui.

Kainoa said, “In my overthinking brain and body I’m not afraid of work. And work doesn’t scare me or doesn’t necessarily affect my sense of well-being positive[ly] or negatively.” She concluded that for her, well-being meant:

I feel most content when I have been able to visualize or think through an entire process to completion. ... once I’ve been able to think through the whole thing, and all of the different steps and issues, and been able to problem solve at least at a high level, my entire pathway forward, I feel good. So, I mean there’s me stressing out about the things that will happen in 10 years but at least if I have a clear pathway and no stuck points forward, I feel good.

For Kainoa, being able to visualize the “forward and backward” of her pathway allowed her to be more present in her life. While an absence of being able to visualize this pathway meant feeling stuck, being stressed out, and in response not being present in her life. As she concluded, “I have to be able to feel unstuck in all directions to be present as of now.” For Kainoa, well-being meant engaging in activities daily where she could have “a nice balance between a meaningful, productive work environment and be[ing] able to be present for my daughter, and exercise regularly, eat regularly” and that with such balance she could enjoy life. Given more time, she believed she should engage in more fun activities, particularly “unstructured, outside, grounding myself in environment” types of activities. Although Kainoa struggled to relax and unstructured time was rare, she found grounding by engaging with her daughter in ‘āina through ‘āina-based workdays and activities.

Mo‘olelo: Well-Being Models

Kainoa shared how she witnessed unhealthy examples of well-being. She said, I have a lot of people in my life that are counterexamples for health and well-being. So, it's part of it, it's an important part of it. But they are more examples of what your life could be if you don't pursue wellness whether it be physical ailments or addiction and mental health stuff.

So, Kainoa learned with and from her husband and daughter as they were “positive influences” on her well-being. She reflected on the support she had from her husband “to build connection with culture and with ‘ohana, positive connections that weren’t there for a while.” And Kainoa felt that her daughter supported her well-being by prompting her “to be in the moment and to spend time with her doing things that are fun, and educational and foundational for her growth.”

A Mo‘okū‘auhau of Tough Love

Around the time Kainoa was in the first grade, her family was homeless on Hawai‘i island. She mentioned being with her mother and younger brother in homeless and women’s shelters before moving back to O‘ahu, and temporarily moving in with her Tūtū wahine in Nānāiku‘ulei, also known as Nānākuli, before her mother qualified for low-income housing in Mā‘ili. She had developed allergies at that time because of the nearby pig and chicken farms in Mā‘ili and moved back in with her Tūtū “to kind of escape the allergy issues. ... [and] to help her out.” And so, Kainoa lived with her grandmother from Grades 2-10. Then, as Kainoa retold, “when I was in 10th grade, we moved to Kāne‘ohe, to a house out there. And so, I lived with my mom and my brother, and then my mom got remarried when I was in 11th grade.”

Kainoa reflected on the memories she shared with her Tūtū and believed she “had a very tough love approach,” which shaped her upbringing. She remembered her Tūtū’s expectations, which she perceived were stricter for the girls in her family in comparison to the boys. Kainoa

fondly recalled the times she spent with her Tūtū learning about plants, lei, and lauhala, going to Homestead association meetings, and taking “huaka‘i walks up in Mākaha valley.” As Kainoa explained, “My Tūtū’s family were lauhala weavers and lei makers.” And so, these lived experiences in elementary school shaped her love for ‘āina. As Kainoa reflected on these memories, they reminded her of a time when she was “less jaded.” In adulthood, she strove to reconnect to the practices she had engaged in with her Tūtū. Kainoa also felt that she was task-oriented, which she attributed to her Tūtū. She said,

[Tūtū] had very rigid ideas of how things should be done and when it should be done, and she was very clear about that. And so, she kind of direct taught me how you should plan your day, and how you have to finish things to a certain degree of, I don’t know, her own idea of what made it good.

Kainoa also said that “failure is kind of an unacceptable place or idea for me.” And so, Kainoa learned from her grandmother’s tough love approach and carried these beliefs about achievement and failure with her into adulthood.

Kainoa also had a “really Mormon Christian upbringing.” In particular, she believed that “the church is somewhat good in her [mother’s] life.” While much of her extended family was still part of the church, Kainoa and her brother had since left, although for different reasons. Through the Teach for America cohort, Kainoa engaged in conversations that allowed her “to think about systems in a different way.” As she recognized “systemic inequality” she said, “I went from being really conservative to incredibly liberal, as liberal as you can get.” And so, Kainoa described, “I kind of shed my attachment to religion.” As her interests in culture and community grew, she described how “in the span of probably six months, I did a complete 180”

away from her religious upbringing to explore other ways of knowing. As a math and science teacher, Kainoa described her teaching pathway as follows:

[I] started out being a math and science teacher and teaching a pretty generic first-year curriculum and then wanting to connect my students to ‘āina and wanting to reconnect to ‘āina myself. And so, started going deeper into service learning, and then discovered place-based science, and that was kind of my gateway into ... culture-based education. And then now I feel like I’m just beyond that into resurgence, and radical resurgence, and creating alternative[s].

During this time period, she recalled the many long conversations she had with her husband and reflected on how “maybe he was just taught to recognize in ways that I wasn’t with my conservative upbringing and education.” And so, together they talked about the values, beliefs, and behaviors that they wanted to cultivate as educators, and then as partners and parents.

Mo‘olelo: Reconnecting with ‘Āina

As Kainoa believed,

‘Āina is, ancestor. ‘Āina is everything. And so, I think in our modern world, for me, I think that’s why I feel like I need to be outside ... because ‘āina is not supposed to be metaphorical all the time. I think we do need to remember that it is actual life and form.

She believed that “‘āina is the place that I have to go and remember to ground myself and try to ground myself and I don’t do that enough.” So, Kainoa was working on reconnecting to the many ‘āina of her ancestors.

Kainoa discussed the places she felt connected to as she learned about her genealogies and planned to teach them to her daughter. Kainoa felt that Nānākuli was her home, but also mentioned, Papakōlea, O‘ahu where her Tūtū and great grandparents lived and many people in

her ‘ohana currently reside; Ka‘ū, Hilo and Kohala, Hawai‘i where other kūpuna resided; and Kaua‘i where half of her mother’s siblings currently reside. She mentioned living in Waialua and Kāne‘ohe and felt connected to those ‘āina on O‘ahu as well. At the time of our second interview, her ‘ohana had acquired a parcel of land in Anahola, Kaua‘i, and Kainoa, being “hyper task-oriented,” was helping to manage the loan approval process.

As a mother, Kainoa talked about “nature shopping” or “finding things that are edible and then getting them.” This was a practice she did with her daughter and was one way they engaged with ‘āina. She attributed this practice in part to her science teacher background and described that it was a term created by her mother. This activity potentially aligned with her reconnection to culture and the practice kilo. As Kainoa described,

As a science teacher, 10 years ago at this point when I was building connection to culture or noticing the things that were missing from the DOE set of standards in a classroom that’s when I started learning about kilo and trying to reach out to people who could teach me more about it and attended quite a few Papakū Makawalu trainings.

So, as part of her reconnection to culture and after becoming a teacher, Kainoa was finding ways to integrate the memories she had with her grandmother in Nānākuli and Mākaha valley, the practice of “nature shopping” she learned from her mother, and the reconnection to culture she was intentionally making, as influential standards for engaging with her daughter and ‘āina.

Consequences

Kainoa shared sentiments about the COVID-19 pandemic that were similar to other participants. As Kainoa said, “I wish the pandemic was over that would be super cool,” because “I think the pandemic was part of the equation of making it a little bit worse. ... I think just the overall stress of working in education and not wanting to get sick and then worrying about my

own child” affected her well-being. She added that the pandemic also “[took] a toll on other friendships and other types of relationships.” She recognized that once her daughter was fully vaccinated, she could feel safer and more comfortable spending time with others.

Kainoa acknowledged the pandemic’s effect on housing in Hawai‘i. As she described, “the whole pandemic increase in house values 25% in the last year has been a real kick in the face.” And so, while her home ownership goals were an added stressor, she felt some of her stress was alleviated by her GRA. As Kainoa concluded,

I think I stressed about money a lot. And as I’ve had more financial security, I think it’s also made work less stressful because having the freedom to be like if this [full-time job] really is an unhealthy place to be, I could peace out and not die ... even though it’s functionally the same, I behave the same, it feeling like a choice or something that I have to do, or I’m being forced to do has been helpful.

So, through her GRA Kainoa had more financial security which helped alleviate stress and allowed her to view her full-time job from a different and perhaps healthier perspective.

Kainoa also reflected on her identities and the negative stereotypes she faced. She said, As Hawaiian, as a woman ... when I wanted to escape Nānākuli I also was looking to escape the negative connotations of being Hawaiian and being poor and poverty and all those things and how they kind of get conflated into one, and ... maybe it’s just me. Like when I was young, how I kind of saw it as all fully a tangled ball of sameness.

Although she tried to escape those stereotypes, she found herself learning more about Nānākuli in adulthood. As Kainoa concluded, “I’ve definitely felt closer to Nānākuli and have learned a lot more about that place, as I’ve learned more about myself and tried to build stronger connections to my family history and to culture.”

Kainoa touched on the challenges she faced in academia, particularly with “class offerings.” As Kainoa explained, “I’ve tried to have conversations with professors about when they’re doing it, and how they could cater to a broader working student population.” She recognized that often, “the solution doesn’t match the scope or size of the problem” when it came to academic challenges such as course offerings. But she persisted and continued to have such conversations with professors throughout her academic journey. She also commented on the disengagement she felt after the comprehensive examination process. “I think no one ever made that clear. Like, okay, you do your comps, they pass you, and then you never have to talk to anybody again” until the defense, which she felt was strange. Simultaneously, Kainoa felt that through the doctoral process, “I’ve done a lot of self-improvement.” She recognized that up until the proposal defense, “It’s the personal journey, the reading, and the work, and ... the fully just internal mental exercise of figuring out what is important to me. ... my education thus far has pretty much just been for me.” She added that the rest of her journey, doing research and writing a dissertation was the “fun” part. As Kainoa explained, the research “is not for me, that’s for community, that’s for lāhui, that’s for furthering where we are in terms of our idea of production and cultural production.” And so, she felt the rest of her journey was able “getting to know people and building connections” and that,

Ideally, it’s something that would be useful to other people besides me ... I don’t know that also feels really high makamaka, like my work is going to be so important to so many people. I hope it’s important to somebody or I hope at least I build stronger community connections from it, or I hope somebody benefits from it beyond me.

Overall, Kainoa recognized the organizing structures that influenced her living and being in the world. As Kainoa said, “I get to teach and be outside, and then teach about things that I

think are important. That whole capitalism thing is kind of putting a damper on that stuff.” So, she said that in addition to the pandemic being over, “I also wish that we had something besides capitalism as the organizing structure in our life.”

Puana Kaulana Ka Inoa o Kainoa

Kainoa’s goals for living and being in the world included a weekly sense of achievement, long-term goals of engaging in research and homeownership, and holistic goals of health, balance, re-connection, and spiritual attunement.

Kainoa strived to cultivate a sense of achievement by being productive daily and multitasking, this sense of achievement on a weekly basis gave her a sense of fulfillment overall. She was still learning to listen to her body and be conscious of the ways stress impacted her physically, and so not making herself sick was a goal for her overall health. She felt that life was constantly changing and so balance was something she had not figured out yet but was something she was working towards. She attributed a lack of balance to the dynamic period of life she was in but she was still working towards creating a more balanced life. In particular, Kainoa wanted to re-connect to cultural practices she had learned from her Tūtū, and strengthen her connections to her family and community by making time to have important conversations and being in ‘āina. Kainoa also shared how she wanted to cultivate intentional spiritual energy attunement. She recognized the spiritual energy embedded within her mo‘okū‘auhau in the family members around her and wanted to be able to channel her energy in a positive way such that it could support her in cultivating a more balanced life.

Anuheia

Anuheia is a Native Hawaiian female, who identifies with other various settler ethnicities. She is an ‘āina steward and is becoming a cultural practitioner through mālama ‘āina. Her ‘ohana is from Kohala, although they currently reside in Hilo on Hawai‘i island. Anuheia currently resides in Pālolo on the island of O‘ahu. Anuheia grew up in the diaspora, namely in Oregon, and was raised by her parents there along with her younger sister. Although she struggled to find community in the diaspora, she was working through those lived experiences in adulthood. At the time of our interviews, Anuheia shared that it was her first year living in Hawai‘i. Anuheia is a scientist and is striving to become the type of scientist “who does ethical science ... the science that’s relevant and helps ‘āina.” So, although it was her first time living in Hawai‘i, she was intentional about building her connections to ‘āina, specifically through mālama ‘āina in Pia valley, Kaumukī, and Waimānalo.

Well-Being Definition

For Anuheia, well-being is:

Holistic and it encapsulates, includes, kind of the wellness of the body, like physical functioning and the wellness of the mind. So, your own thoughts and stuff. And then also, your na‘au ... like your instincts about how you feel, like what you're doing in the world is right or wrong, or what's happening around you is right or wrong. I feel like it also has to do with ‘āina. Like when I think about my own self-care, I think about how mālama ‘āina feels like self-care. And how I know that I am part of ‘āina, and the ‘āina it's part of me, so if I'm taking care of ‘āina then I'm also taking care of myself and seeing that positive impact is meaningful.

Anuheia identified the wellness of her physical body, mind, and na‘au as holistic indicators of her well-being. She included in her definition, ‘āina and the reciprocal action of mālama ‘āina as self-care. She is still figuring out how to find balance in her life to feel holistically well, particularly as a graduate student because of how much time she feels she spends on the computer. But she knows that, for her, ‘āina is central and significant to the well-being process.

Mo‘olelo: “Mō Ka Piko” - Feeling Isolated and Disconnected from ‘Āina

“In Hawaii’s past, *mō ka piko* [emphasis in original], conveyed a tragic disruption of loving relationship.” (Pūku‘i et al., 1972, p. 185). For Anuheia, *mō ka piko* could be a cultural tool used to explore the severed relationships she experienced, which resulted from her disconnect with Hawai‘i. The *mō*, broken and cut connections, Anuheia lived and experienced led her to feel isolated and alone. This understanding simultaneously recognizes the *piko*, and the cultural ability to retie severed relationships through love.

Anuheia shared the various places she grew up as a way for me to get to know her, yet in spending time together it became evident that Anuheia was still making sense of her *pilina* (connections) to those places because of the negative interactions that she experienced there. She began with the following genealogy,

I was born in Nevada. I lived in Virginia a little bit and lived in Oregon for majority of my life. So, I grew up as a Hawaiian person in the diaspora, and both my parents are originally from Hawai‘i. So that's kind of informed my experience.

She later articulated her family’s implicit return to Hawai‘i by saying, “there was always kind of the sense that we would always, that it was inevitable that we would move to Hawai‘i at some point if that makes sense. Even though they didn’t say that.”

Anuheā was honest about the trauma she endured, as “there was unpleasant things that happened,” while she lived in Oregon. Through her own self-reflection she was trying to make sense of her experiences and came to realize the microaggressions that led to her feeling disconnected, and provided the following example, “people would ask me where I was from a lot. I think that kind of, in some ways, made it harder for me to feel like I was from Oregon.” We continued to talk and as we were about to finish our time together, I asked her if there was anything else she wanted to share. She returned to “living in the diaspora” and wanted to talk more about her experiences there. She referenced a report she had read and shared, “there’s more Hawaiian people living outside Hawai‘i than in Hawai‘i and knowing that everybody’s experience is different and diverse, I think I just wish I’d known more people in the diaspora.” Anuheā expressed feeling isolated and that the reason she responded to my research invitation was because “I just want other people to not feel alone.” She continued on to share an intimate story. This story comes from her first year in college and is included here as a found poem:

Mele: “Hawai‘i Club”

My first year of college, I decided to check out:
“Hawai‘i Club”
It was the opening meeting,
And we were all doing introductions, roundtable.

I guess I didn’t know what the club was about,
And when I went there
People were basically like,
“Why are you here?” because I didn’t grow up in Hawai‘i.

It was probably just a question, and I was like, AHHH!,
I guess I’ll leave now.
I guess I’m just too sensitive.
Probably there are Hawaiian communities, I just wasn’t part of them.

Now, I think the purpose of the club was to be a social place,

which is fine too.

And I think it was just one person.

It's not like it was everybody, they were probably a great group of people.

And even though I haven't had an interaction like that in a long time,

I'm still guarded

Against all those kinds of interactions,

It still influences my navigating and I'm still trying to understand my own experience.

Anuheā chose to focus on, and desired to understand and make sense of her experiences in the diaspora. She said, "I guess I'm still personally working through what the significance of living in Oregon first of all was," and after sharing her Hawai'i Club experience, she reflected the same sentiment, as in the last line of the found poem. As Anuheā reflected on her lived experiences it was clearly difficult at times, but she was actively and consciously working through her experiences in adulthood to honor her connections to place, however challenging.

A Mo'okū'auhau of Restoration

Anuheā shared that her parents divorced when she was 13, after which her father moved back to his home, Hawai'i island. In the years that followed, she lived with her mom and sister in Oregon, she finished high school and started college, her sister got accepted to Kamehameha Schools Kea'au, and her mom and sister moved to Hawai'i so that her sister could attend high school. Since Anuheā was already in college, she decided to stay in Oregon to finish her bachelor's degree, and then she pursued her goal of moving to Hawai'i, as the rest of her family had already done. She got an internship in Hawai'i, and shared that opportunity, "when I moved to Hawai'i, it was kind of a volunteer position. But we were working full-time, just for very little pay." I got the sense that this did not bother her because although she had never lived in Hawai'i before, it was the place she considered her home. This sense was evident when she shared, "I'm

really glad I got to move back and, or not back but, you know, felt like a return even though I never lived here before. But this is where my family lives.”

This sense was reinforced, as Anuhea said, by pride, “my sister and I were lucky enough to be told that you can be proud of being Hawaiian.” As I learned more about Anuhea, I began to feel the deep love she had for Hawai‘i although this was her first time living here. She voiced a similar sentiment of gratitude for the places in Hawai‘i that she visited growing up,

I was pretty lucky in that my family made sure that we visited family here. We tried to come once a year. It got more complicated as my sister and I had more commitments ... in Oregon, but I do have a lot of childhood memories of coming to Hawai‘i.

So, although they did not discuss moving back to Hawai‘i as a family it felt inevitable because her family was proud to be Hawaiian and made it a priority to return frequently.

While in the diaspora, Anuhea learned mālama ‘āina skills that she carried with her back to Hawai‘i. Over time, her appreciation for ‘āina continued to grow as she volunteered to mālama ‘āina throughout O‘ahu. As Anuhea believed, “mālama ‘āina can foster community.” While she did not claim the places she volunteered as home, she felt as if the places she chose to mālama were like home in a sense because, as she said,

I want to take care of it, and I want it to exist forever and for other people to be able to enjoy it. I want it to be protected and I want it to be a place that I can bring my family and my friends. I want it to be healthy.

In her definition of well-being, Anuhea felt a lack of balance because of graduate school and attributed that to spending too much time on the computer. So, for Anuhea re-connecting with ‘āina and strengthening relationships with ‘āina were restorative. Additionally, she described the environmental loss as a cultural loss, “The native species and Hawaiian culture are

really important. So, when we lose a native plant or native animal, we lose part of our culture. So, trying to prevent that.” Anuheā believed that preventing ‘āina loss and doing ‘āina restoration would create balance for the environment.

It wasn’t until we were talking about ‘āina, that Anuheā connected balance for the environment to what she believed was balance for herself and people. She said,

If we manage to take care of ‘āina we’ll be taking care of ourselves too. And our human health and environmental health, I guess human health is tied to the health of our environment ... it seems natural, but if you do things that help restore ‘āina you’re going to do things that help restore people too.

This idea, that ‘āina restoration restores people too, is something that she heard from others. But it is also something she adopted and integrated into her belief system as part of balance and her well-being. And so, she made the connection that mālama ‘āina helped restore the environment, and in turn, could do the same for her, and perhaps other people.

Anuheā included oli and piko, which she learned from volunteering, as part of this praxis of restorative reconnection and felt that these activities provided a “unification of purpose and focus. And communicating our intentions,” which she felt was powerful. Anuheā also felt “a greater connection with the people around” her when engaging in these activities together. She commented that the practice of mālama ‘āina and these activities made her feel safe and shared, “I think my interactions with people are just generally better anyway when there’s a task to do. Makes you feel a little bit more confident.” Addedly, she said, “When I’m outside and I’m around people, and we’re working together to accomplish something or plant things or restore things and give back to community and ‘āina that’s when I feel most hopeful” and that “having that social interaction is supportive to my schoolwork and my wellness and mental health.”

Mo‘olelo: Retying the Piko - Mālama ‘Āina as Self-Care

As Pūku‘i and others (1972) explain with piko, “there was a physical and mystic linking of the body with forebearers of old and descendants to come ... the bonds between the living individual and his [or her] never known and long departed ancestors.” (p. 294) And so, it is possible to retie the piko when connections and relationships have been severed and cut. As I came to make sense of Anuheā’s story, I recognized the ways that pule and other cultural practices helped her to retie her piko to Hawai‘i. For Anuheā mālama ‘āina facilitated cultivating deep and meaningful relationships with herself and others. As Paglinawan and others (2020) affirm, “your pule connects you to your piko, your center as a Hawaiian” (p. 55). And so, through pule and other cultural practices Anuheā was, somewhat unconsciously, trying to retie her piko, mend her severed connections, and heal. These practices informed how well she was doing and contributed to her overall sense of well-being.

Through mālama ‘āina Anuheā was “learning a practice.” Although she said that work was, “where a lot of my struggles of not being balanced comes from,” and that “it manifests in anxiety, worrying, mostly worrying if what I’m doing is important, and it’s going to benefit people and ‘āina,” she was learning from others how to be confident, “not to overanalyze things” or “logic everything,” and “following my na‘au ... to channel it better.” Being physically present in ‘āina allowed Anuheā to observe reciprocity in action. She reflected on her new teachings and teachers and saw how they were “very grounded and sure of their practice and their role.” And so, as Anuheā built connections with people and ‘āina she came to understand that “hope is a verb or there has to be an action to it.” She said, “I see other people doing things that are trying to move towards that future that is livable.” Although she felt “really stuck in the academia kind of learning. And facing those roadblocks and feeling some of them were insurmountable” and

“belonging and being Hawaiian enough...[was] something that I struggle with,” she felt that mālama ‘āina was an “accepting space” where she could contribute to the betterment and restoration of the places she volunteered. She concluded, “I think that has helped me feel better about that situation.”

Addedly, Anuhea reflected on the hui (group) of people she built relationships with through uhau humu pōhaku⁷³, and how these relationships allowed her to work through her shame as a Kanaka and recognize the roots of her shame as generational trauma. Through this hui of people, Anuhea was able to connect with people, both Hawaiian and non-Hawaiian, to talk about shared thoughts and feelings, and reflect on their similar lived experiences. She reflected on how shame “is such an isolating, lonely feeling” and how talking about shame with others made working through it easier. After reviewing the second interview transcript, Anuhea added that mālama ‘āina was powerful, restorative, and hopeful because she was able to revive her ancestral connections within herself, and with the greater Hawai‘i community.

Consequences

Anuhea described external consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic, environmental degradation, specifically water contamination at Red Hill, and opportunities in the diaspora, perhaps highlighting the inaccessibility of such opportunities in Hawai‘i. She recognized the privileged knowledge systems of academia as she repeated the mo‘olelo of imposter syndrome while recognizing the failures of Western science. These consequences affected her perceptions about herself, her health and well-being, and the institutions around her, which reinforced her feelings of stress and anxiety. Anuhea pushed against these external consequences and the feelings of not being Hawaiian enough by engaging in mālama ‘āina and privileging ‘āina and

⁷³ Uhau humu pōhaku or Hawaiian dry-set masonry is a traditional building technique used to build rock walls. Such structures use gravity, rock shape and size, to hold the wall together, without the use of concrete.

people. Thus, mālama ‘āina was a kuleana for Anuhea and that influenced how she felt about herself as she worked towards contributing to her Hawai‘i community.

The COVID-19 Pandemic

Anuhea shared how she wished the COVID-19 pandemic was over. She recognized its effects on her ability to make connections at the University and to her community. Although she moved to Hawai‘i three years prior, she had moved to O‘ahu in July 2021 while telework policies were still in effect at the University and there was limited face-to-face interaction on campus. She also wanted to remain limited in her social interactions because, as she said, “I have a tutu that’s 91 years old.” And so, she was still uncomfortable and careful about the spread of COVID-19.

Water Contamination at Red Hill

Anuhea believed that “human health is so tied to the health of our environment.” And added that “in the case of Hawai‘i, there’s so many environmental problems that we have here like endangered species and pollution ... and also a lot of social justice issues.” She recognized that “to restore the productivity of our food systems, like the oceans, and also restoring our forests” were intimately connected to the health of people.

When reflecting on “the nature of conservation in Hawai‘i” Anuhea shared how “sometimes I feel kind of hopeless.” In particular, she discussed the Red Hill lawsuit in our second interview. She said, “It’s stressful because it’s still going on.” She added,

I guess the whole situation has affected my mental health a lot and when [the fuel spill] first happened I went through a period of really high stress because, I mean, we still don’t really understand what’s happening, which is the scary part. I think I’ve just gotten used to the stress. At the beginning, ... I was having a hard time eating and taking care of

myself. And I was just really, really stressed out ... when I found out about the Red Hill stuff, there's all kinds of things that went through my mind, like am I even gonna be able to live on O'ahu anymore? Am I gonna be able to complete my degree? And to be honest, I'm still not sure if in five years we're still gonna have clean water, which is really scary. This trauma affected Anuheā and through mālama 'āina she was able to build relationships with others and talk through these issues with people who understood its gravity. She said,

Seeing people that I know step up in a time of crisis, and really take on so much kuleana in addition to all the other kuleana that they have, that was really influential or really stuck out to me. And hopefully, that's a learning moment. It's like, I hope that someday I'm somebody that can do that too.

These relationships gave her hope, as she continued to work through her anxiety and stress with others. Anuheā also recognized that many of the relationships were with people who were older and who were not Kanaka. But as she said, "they're doing Kanaka stuff, like they're learning oli, they're mālama 'āina ... mālama 'āina is not just a Kanaka thing." Anuheā wished that more people would get involved, whether they were Hawaiian or not. And as she concluded, "We're all just working together. But I think specifically being somebody who is Kanaka and trying to be involved in these things, I think I do have kuleana to be involved."

Anuheā also believed, "something that a lot of Kānaka seem to do is, they're just really happy when they're working. ... maybe not always, but in general really happy when they're interacting with 'āina." And so, she felt that,

Feeling like you're a part of a cycle or a part of something that's bigger than yourself and contributing to the perpetuation of those things and knowing that you are both giving and receiving that, I think there's joy in that.

For Anuhea, being in ‘āina was a privilege she felt was inaccessible in the diaspora, and through kilo she was observing and noticing the impact she was making as a volunteer. The people she volunteered with became like family. Perhaps Anuhea’s mālama ‘āina engagement is a counterstory to the negative emotions she was feeling around ‘āina degradation and water contamination and was a way for Anuhea to cultivate joy despite the external consequences she was living and experiencing.

Training in the Diaspora

Anuhea shared her experiences working in Oregon working with birds saying,

A lot of the other people with experience with birds are also not originally from Hawai‘i or they got their experience elsewhere. And so, that’s why they got hired. I think there are some opportunities but in general, it’s just harder.

She pointed to the training opportunities she had while living in the diaspora and how the jobs in this area in Hawai‘i required trainings that were not available in the islands.

Privileged Knowledge Systems

Anuhea believed that “a lot of the failures of Western science” stem from “when you try to take people out of the equation.” She also believed that “everybody in academia, to just be swallowed by their work” was a harmful norm. And so, she was striving to find “balance by finding things that kind of restore me so that I can go back the next day and do work” at the university. She shared, “I still feel imposter syndrome pretty often.” So, while engaging in mālama ‘āina felt “selfish” at times because it was in some ways self-serving and healing, Anuhea said, “I feel like if I don’t go, I’m not gonna be able to finish school.” These feelings informed her beliefs about learning and research. Anuhea said, “Research is a learning through-doing process, it’s just different.” And so, she came to experience the shortcomings of the

educational institution. As Anuheia believed, the university sometimes “doesn’t act in the best interests of everybody or against the interests of Native Hawaiian specifically. It’s really frustrating. And honestly, it does make school harder.”

Puana Kaulana Ka Inoa o Anuheia

Anuheia reflected on the goal her family had to return to Hawai‘i, which they had achieved. Looking forward, Anuheia believed that her goals for living and being in the world were to be a good steward, find her life purpose, and cultivate pono.

Anuheia was building deeper connections to ‘āina, and through these restorative actions, she felt like she was contributing to the restoration of balance between people and ‘āina to create healthier communities. This stewardship included becoming culturally grounded herself, while also cultivating environments for native plants and animals to thrive.

While Anuheia was still figuring out her life’s purpose, she described a desire to have clearer goals. She felt that clarity would come from continuing to be in community and in ‘āina and through supporting others to achieve their greatest potential. Personally, Anuheia was working towards her potential by learning how to work through her doubt, fear, frustration, and anxiety by engaging in culturally grounded activities, such as oli and mālama ‘āina.

Anuheia was also striving to cultivate pono in her life by taking care of the people and places around her. She felt that by taking care of others, it would help her “be more well too.” She described how reciprocal relationships were necessary for survival. And so, “making sure that nobody gets left behind” was something that Anuheia consciously thought about as a way to cultivate pono in her life more holistically.

Chevelle

Chevelle is “a human being who’s super passionate about humanity.” She was born and raised in the ‘Ewa Beach and Kapolei area on the west side of O‘ahu. Her parents are divorced, and she is the eldest of six, and so she comes from a blended family. As the first-born child, Chevelle helped her mother raise some of her younger siblings. Her mother also had sole custody of her until she was 16 years old.

Chevelle began by describing herself through academia. She said, “my academic journey has been a very long and interesting one. It took me nine years to get an associate’s degree and then [I] transferred to UH Mānoa into a bachelor’s program.” Reflectively she added,

I’m just realizing you asked me to tell you about myself and I tell you about my academic self and that’s not really who I am. But it’s like we’re so conditioned to speak about ourselves in that way so I’m kind of annoyed with myself.

She continued to describe herself more fully as a daughter, an older sister, and a friend.

Throughout our interviews, she talked about her passion for equity, social justice, and reproductive health and rights, and I came to recognize how she viewed the world through a justice lens. Chevelle characterized herself as “the type of person that really tries to show up for people,” and as someone who likes “to cause disruption.” So, she referred to herself as a “good troublemaker,” and said that her friends described her as a “real one, or the “ride or die” type,” while her family would probably describe her as, “an odd one.”

Well-Being Definition

Chevelle described well-being as “all-encompassing,” and “transient.” She defined it as “just feeling whole,” and mentioned that “I think it’s unrealistic for everything to feel balanced or in harmony.” She believed that well-being,

Is feeling as though you have what you need to face the challenging things that will come in life, regardless ... but also having the structures and the environment that allow you to achieve what that means to you in the way that you feel that you need to achieve it. And so, self-determination and access were integral to Chevelle's perception of well-being.

Chevelle felt and acknowledged that well-being included, "physical, mental, and emotional health" and added that "there are layers to that ... And those layers are different for every person." For Chevelle, one layer of well-being perhaps was having the capacity for self-reflection. Chevelle prescribed,

You have to be able to, one, know yourself, which I think is a difficult thing for a lot of people to do because that requires self-reflection, which sometimes we don't want to see the things that we actually are, much less do the work to address the things we don't like. And so, Chevelle felt she had developed and worked on, "that capacity to recognize" what she needed to cultivate her well-being. By the end of our second interview, she reiterated that "well-being is honestly however an individual defines it for them" reflecting the consistency of her belief about well-being as self-determined.

I asked Chevelle, as an individual, what well-being would be for her, and she stressed the complexity and difficulty to define it. She provided many definitions, which I have transformed into a found poem to express the core values that arose across our interviews.

Mele: Well-Being is ...

Well-being is a space grounded in values
Values of truth and love.

Well-being is access,
Access to health care.

Well-being is feeling at peace.

Well-being is not a space guided by fear or stress.
Fear from two mass shootings over the weekend,

Stress from money to provide for basic needs.

Well-being is people
People who are self-reflective
People who take responsibility.

Well-being is feeling safe.

Well-being is validation.

Validating thoughts, feelings, and opinions over the status quo.

Well-being is control,
Control of my time and energy.

Well-being is feeling seen and heard.

These are all well-being.

Well-being is grounded in truth and love.

And that makes me feel well.

Well-being is feeling at peace.
Well-being is feeling safe.
Well-being is feeling seen and heard.

Well-being is equity,
Well-being is relationships,
Well-being is justice.

As reflected in the poem, Chevelle provided breadth and depth to her personal definition for well-being. She emphasized the need for self-determination and held closely to her core values of truth, justice, and love. And while she struggled to create a single definition, she problematized and complicated well-being in ways that illuminated the external consequences that affected her ability to feel whole.

Consequences

Chevelle was deeply aware of the effects of external consequences on her living and being in the world. She felt it was paramount to “abolish capitalism” and desired an “anti-capitalistic world,” which could “solve a lot of problems.” She recognized that the imposed economic system influenced all facets of her life and wished others were aware of the intrinsic connection between structures and well-being. She reflected on well-being beliefs and said,

I feel like I hear a lot of rhetoric around, “you’re responsible for your happiness, and well-being, and managing stress, and blah, blah, blah.” And it’s true, to an extent ... And I think those kinds of statements are very, sort of gaslighting people into thinking that they have created the lives that they live for themselves. To an extent, that’s true because we all make choices. But our choices ... are set up by the structures that create the environments in which we live.

As she elaborated, “[People] don’t understand the ways in which it [structures and policies] shapes their lives, what they have access to and what they don’t.” And so, Chevelle also wished that with such awareness, of the connections between structure and policies, and well-being, people would care about policy work and get involved.

Capitalism and Education

Chevelle highlighted issues with education in Hawai‘i under capitalism. She described “just realizing how racist the structure is,” and “how it only provides one pathway to which we can achieve” doctoral degrees. Chevelle described how education does not “reflect on the ways that it perpetuates violence and enacts violence on its students, and its faculty and staff.” And she critiqued that, “everything is locked in the ivory tower” because “our research is not accessible to the general public.” And so, Chevelle felt that “we as Hawaiians or Indigenous people across the world really have to operate within a Western system that dictates what knowledge is” such that “it only provides knowledge that is marketable and useful for capitalism.” In alignment, Chevelle rhetorically asked, “Who has the power to create knowledge? ... And who assigns value to knowledge? And how much are we missing out on because we don’t include different perspectives?” She concluded that valuing particular knowledge systems results in erasure in ways that “are not actually conducive to people’s health and well-being.”

In addition to knowledge systems, Chevelle felt that in education, “the systems and the processes we have in place, and how productivity is measured, is not really conducive to [the] health and well-being of people.” She felt that responsiveness was part of this learned productivity and said, “granted that those are my feelings like I need to respond to these emails right now because again people need things from you. And then we’re socially trained to just be responsive, and we have to.” Chevelle pushed back against this norm during the pandemic because as she said, “productivity is going to be what I define it. I’m trying to survive a pandemic right now, and the adjustments that come with that, so no, I’m not on your timeline anymore, I’m on mine.” Although this led to her “fall from grace” with her graduate assistant (GA) supervisor, she reflected on “the power dynamics that exist between the institution and its actors, and us as students” and was working on separating herself from her “quote, unquote productivity.” Addedly, she said, “as grad students, we’re so conditioned I think, you need to be perfect. You need to turn things in on time. ... You’re always producing.”

Chevelle said that a month prior to our second interview she was seriously considering dropping out, but made a commitment to her program knowing that,

In order to affect the kind of change that I want to affect, also being a woman of color, having a PhD after my name gives me just a little bit of clout, not as much if I was a white man, but I got the letters.

And she commented on how academia was “radical” and “exclusionary.” Despite feeling in “limbo” when she contemplated dropping out, Chevelle came to say, “I just view my PhD as currency” because “what the bottom line is, is [the] budget.” She mentioned “bright spots in the university” as professors who understood the issues with the academic system. And so, she found some consolation within her academic community through her relationships with people who

recognized systemic oppression. She concluded, “I think that a lot of the reason why a lot of us can still stay in Hawai‘i with this ridiculous cost is because of our ways of community.”

Mo‘olelo: Counterstory to Productivity. Chevelle’s understanding of capitalism and education was informed by her lived experience. She talked about getting fired from her GA position over Zoom while she was with her mother who was being hospitalized. The process by which she was fired left her feeling “blindsided” and as Chevelle articulated “prior to termination there are steps that [are supposed to] happen.” As a 35-year-old woman who had 20 years of work experience, she felt her termination was unjust and lacked the appropriate ethical protocols. As Chevelle reflected on this experience, she acknowledged the pressure for productivity. She noted that “Universities do not provide management training to their faculty,” and attributed this to her supervisor’s lack of communication. She also realized how she reacted from a place of imbalance in ways that left her feeling ungrounded. This experience added stress because as Chevelle explained, “I don’t want to be in a pandemic without health insurance.” She got fired in May, and between February and May, five people she knew passed away. She was open about her struggles with her supervisor and as she said, “all these things do disrupt people’s executive functioning. So, I am not operating in my most optimal right now. But somehow, we [the department] thought that just firing you was like the best way to go.”

Chevelle found support through the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) program⁷⁴. After explaining her situation to the RWJF she was told by the program director,

⁷⁴ The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) Health Policy Fellows program is a national program for mid-career health professionals. The program includes an intensive three-and-a-half-month orientation period, and a hands-on placement where Fellows use their leadership experiences to improve health equity, health care, and healthy policy at the federal level.

If you need us to pay your tuition, just let us know and we can make the direct payment. ... this happens a lot to graduate students ... So, we budget extra funds for you folks to have access to if you need to move ... if you need financial resources.

This response surprised Chevelle, and as Chevelle explained to me,

It's so sad that a program anticipates violence from the institution, therefore they budget for it. ... And that's what gives me hope, I think, is that there are people that are already recognizing this ... and doing things about it in their small little corners of the world.

The COVID-19 Pandemic

Chevelle was honest about the struggles she endured because of the pandemic. First, because of the people she had lost, and then because of the lasting symptoms she had after having the COVID-19 virus. She said, "I'm worried now ... so much is still unknown about COVID. So, it's like, what are potential long-term impacts that I don't know or notice now that could impact me later?" Chevelle was sick for about a month from the virus and was worried because "the biggest thing I really struggled with was the brain fog." She added,

To make a living as a PhD, you need to have your brain and be able to communicate ... that is what you are hired for is your ability to critically think about things or help to resolve complex problems.

And so, she described "freaking out about that a little bit" because of how her symptoms continued to affect her everyday life. She also described how at the time, "there were very few people that I could call when I had COVID, and I was losing my fucking mind because I had to isolate." She acknowledged her need for more deep and meaningful relationships, which is something she did have with her mother.

Mo'olelo: Chevelle's Relationship with her Mom

Chevelle talked about the close relationship she had with her mother. She said, “my mom is such an important person in my life” and described her as her “best friend.” She included talking to her mother twice a week as important for her self-care routine. Chevelle believed that it was what her mother did not do that influenced her the most. She shared, “When I think about my mom and growing up, I would say that my mom gave me to myself at a very young age” because “I could make my own decisions” and “she never stood in my way.” Chevelle provided several examples.

There were limits. No, you’re not going to a hotel party at 15-year-old, young lady. But I want to get a job. Okay. I want to pierce my nose. Okay. I’m having issues. This is how I think I want to resolve it. My mom’s like, “Okay, this is what I think. But it’s up to you how you proceed,” and it was like that from a very young age.

Chevelle defined her upbringing with her mother as her own “journey of self-discovery” and that because of her mother’s overall support she felt as if her lived experiences were validated.

Chevelle recalled a conversation she had with her mother about being the oldest of her siblings.

I remember just complaining to my mom, “it’s just such bullshit being the oldest, the most is expected out of you. ... And my mom’s the oldest, too, so maybe that’s helpful in us relating. But I just remember her being like, “Yeah, you know Chevelle, it sucks. ... I rely on you because you’re the one that I know will get it done. ... and it’s not fair.”

This example provides a glimpse into the ways her mother validated her experiences, held space for her, and allowed her to feel and express her emotions without trying to change them or becoming defensive. Chevelle similarly recalled being able to have uncomfortable conversations with her mother and shared how,

She never made me feel bad for feeling the way that I felt or thinking the things that I do.

Whereas my mom's here for it, she's listening to me, and my dad just tells me, "You think too much."

And so, Chevelle appreciated how her mother was "a sounding board" and provided her with space to learn and grow independently.

Mo'olelo: Family

Chevelle described challenges with some of her family members because "my dad's side of the family ... is very steeped in this authoritarian style of parenting." She added, "We always have family drama" and recognized the ways in which her family felt controlling. She frequently confronted her family members and said, "I'm like, one of the few that will speak out to ... injustice, even within my own family," and she described feeling stigmatized as an academic,

Especially being a first gen college student, especially being the most educated person in your family, formally educated ... I noticed especially with the men in my family this very sort of inferiority complex that they have around me now. I can't tell you how many times the phrases get tossed at me, "Oh, you just think you're so smart," or "You're just too smart for your own good." ... And then that dynamic of also being female.

Chevelle concluded that setting boundaries to limit these types of interactions with her family was helpful and simultaneously how they continued to feel "hurtful and unsupportive."

Consequences

Trauma and Respect

As Chevelle described, "a lot of elders in my family, any sort of disagreement in their opinion is considered disrespect. And I'm like, no, it's just a difference in opinion. It doesn't mean that I love you any less or don't respect you." These experiences led Chevelle to reflect

upon the prevalence of unilateral respect in Hawai‘i communities, and the potential for unilateral respect in other communities. “I think that respect for our elders has always been a thing, historically. ... But I think it has evolved to this in response to the conditions that our people have been subjected to.” She surmised that perhaps,

You’re trying to control the behavior of your child because you’re afraid of what is going to happen if they are out of your control, or they don’t listen to you because you are trying to protect them. And so, it’s like ... “Do as I say, not as I do” or “you do what you’re told” mindset.

And so, Chevelle wondered, “How much of that is a response to the trauma that has been inflicted upon people of color across the world?” She concluded, “the authoritarian way of parenting or exerting control ... how much of that is a fear response maybe?” She added that perhaps this fear response became an ego-based reaction to these conditions, and over time developed into a misconstrued version of respect. As Chevelle continued to reflect upon these ideas, she questioned, “how much of it started as a trauma response, and then has morphed into this thing that has been correlated with respect that only is unidirectional?”

Mo‘olelo: Chevelle’s Relationship with her Dad and Stepmother

Chevelle described her father as someone who compared his relationship with her to her relationship with her mother. As she explained,

He’ll often say things like, “Oh, I want you to feel like you could tell me anything,” because he knows I tell my mom everything. But I’m like, “Dad, you have not created the conditions for me to feel like I can tell you everything.”

She also felt that her father questioned her close relationships with some of her siblings, particularly the ones she helped raise with her mother, in comparison to his children, her half-siblings. Chevelle explained, “Proximity is the thing.”

Addedly, Chevelle described the tumultuous relationship she had with her stepmother. Namely, between the first and second interview, Chevelle explained how her father and stepmother had decided to breed their Doberman. As “a reproductive health and social justice ... advocate,” Chevelle disagreed with forced birth. She explained,

My dog was slated to give birth. And ... I realized that they fully expected me to be the one to do it because I worked from home ... I told them ... Well, I have to be in town by five tomorrow. ... And so, my stepmom was like, oh no, it’s fine. I’m gonna be home before that anyway. ... So, I leave the house around four o’clock. And about 4:45 I’m sitting in the parking lot in front of my, where I’m doing my training ... my stepmother texts me, “are you home?” Text her back, “No.” Still no response. So, I get home, my dad’s sitting in the garage, and he’s like, “We need to talk.”

This situation led to an argument, and as Chevelle explained to me, “[arguments like] this happened every couple of months.” And so, she recognized that “there was no conflict resolution” and she struggled because of the ways that her stepmother was “not self-reflective ... [or] accountable to the ways in which she contributes to certain things.” Ultimately, Chevelle decided after this incident to move out of their house. As Chevelle reflected,

Living with them. ... I didn’t actually realize how much stress I was under, just simple things about how I lived my everyday life. ... I think my dad really had to adjust too because now that I have moved out, I have done a massive amount of boundary-setting.

And living with them, they just held it over my head I felt, not in a conscious way. But it's like ... because they let me live there for free, I should be doing all these things. At first, Chevelle was resistant to moving out because as she said, "I need to save money." But was reminded by her therapist that, "your mental health is something that you need to prioritize ... The expense is worth it," and she reflected on how "even though I'm paying 60% of my income ... for my half of the rent. My therapist was like, "it's worth it if it gives you the freedom.""

Mo'olelo: Family Revisited

She gained further insights about her familial relationships through therapy and shared, My therapist said ... "Your relationship with your family might never be what you want it to be. You can make it so that it's everything they wanted but it won't be everything you want because ... you're gonna have to put a lot of time and energy into those relationships because you have to work towards them. They cannot, and will not, and don't even know how to, don't even know that they have to work towards you. But you can choose differently for the relationships that you choose."

This feedback made sense to Chevelle and stuck with her. She recognized the familial challenges she would continue to face but shared with me at our second interview, "I think me, and my family are in a better place now. But that whole time period was just really exhausting." In response to these lived experiences, Chevelle believed in having deep and meaningful relationships. She explained that such relationships mean,

I want to be seen for who I am, all of who I am. And for people to feel comfortable with me seeing them for all of who they are and being able to hold space for each other and honor each other in the struggle of what it is to be humans in this world.

As Chevelle explained this meant, “people that ... bear witness to your struggle. You can just see me and all my ugliness and still not pass judgment.” So she believed that, “connectedness is a super important thing for me, even though I am kind of hermit” and added that in her relationships, “I tend to become a hermit when I am not taking care of myself because I don’t feel like I have the capacity to show up for people in the way that they might need me to.”

Mo‘olelo: Counterstory of Native Hawaiian Identity

Chevelle described her identity as a Native Hawaiian as an “insider-outsider.” She believed, “I’m Native Hawaiian by blood, but I’m not Hawaiian enough because I don’t speak the language, or I don’t have cultural practices.” Because of the absence of cultural connection, Chevelle said, “I always felt excluded from the Native Hawaiian community, as if I wasn’t Hawaiian enough. ... So, it’s like when I was in Native Hawaiian space, I always kind of felt like I couldn’t understand.” She mentioned having aunties who were entertainers that played in the Royal Hawaiian Band but ultimately struggled to connect to her Hawaiian identity. Chevelle added that through academia she learned both the utility and issues with identity, such that it could provide community but that it could also be used to categorize and separate people.

Perhaps because of my hula praxis and introduction to this research project, Chevelle commented on a hula experience she had. She shared,

My first and only hula experience was so traumatizing in the hālau that I was in ... even at a young age. I was like, no, I do not want to be in this type of environment. And it’s not to say that that would be my experience now, but I think just even as a child and being, having a kumu hula that to me was very abusive, verbally. I was just like, no. And so, while Chevelle believed a hālau hula could provide a beautiful community and as she said, “that’s a part I think I missed out on,” she did not continue after that experience.

Over time she recognized, “as I think [I] gained a better relationship with myself and got a clearer picture of the life that I wanted to live and who I want to be, that I have learned that there are different ways that I can connect to culture.” And although the pandemic had disrupted the ‘āina-based activities she was involved in, she said,

I just kind of want to connect in that way. ... because whenever I feel very chaotic on the inside, I’m always like I gotta go on a hike or ... just look at the ocean or be in nature in some way. ... I think I’ve never really noticed how connected I actually am to land.

This exploration was important for Chevelle and was something she was trying to reawaken in herself, and she felt “it’s a shame that more people are not aware of how connected we are to it [land and ‘āina].”

A Mo‘okū‘auhau of Self-Care

Chevelle’s well-being mo‘okū‘auhau is a journey of self-care. She emphasized well-being as honoring and recognizing our common humanity. She was adamant about the need for well-being to be self-determined and that its transient nature required consistent self-reflection. Through self-reflection, Chevelle was learning to create healthy boundaries for herself and to say “no” as a complete sentence. She believed that she did not have to explain herself unless she wanted to. Chevelle shared, “as women, we feel conditioned ... to explain ourselves.” So, Chevelle was actively learning to protect her peace while simultaneously protecting others when she felt like she did not have the capacity to show up for them. Through self-care, Chevelle was maintaining a healthy relationship with herself and was therefore working towards cultivating deep and meaningful relationships with others. Chevelle embodies justice and equity through her self-reflection practice, and we learn from her story about the embedded ways external consequences affect well-being.

Puana Kaulana Ka Inoa o Chevelle

Chevelle described that her goals for living and being in the world were to “advance humanity closer to justice and equity,” “live comfortably and ... be able to afford [her] basic needs,” “have deep, meaningful relationships,” “and find joy as much as [she could] because life is really short.” To elaborate on finding joy, Chevelle described how the work of advancing humanity closer to justice and equity was painful and exhausting, both mentally and physically. So, finding joy was important for cultivating a sense of balance, peace, and accomplishment.

Emily

Emily is a social worker, a healer, and a practitioner of many things. As she said, “I am someone who wants to be absolutely everything” and, “I am literally everything that I want to be.” She believed, “I am Kanaka Maoli, and I am wahine. Everything I want to be is impacted by those two things, and how I was gifted, and what inherently comes from being a Kanaka and what inherently comes from being wahine.” In other words, she said, “because I am a Hawaiian woman, I was gifted these opportunities to then become a social worker, and a haku ho‘oponopono and a pono practitioner, if you could call it that.”

Emily equally expressed that she is an aunty, a daughter, and a sister. She is the youngest of four girls and was raised in the Honouliuli – Kapapahu area, which is in ‘Ewa on the island of O‘ahu. She felt she had a “normal upbringing” because as she described her childhood was,

Typical, I guess in the sense that I’m still the baby of the family. I know everyone still somewhat worries about me and my choices in life more or less because I’m the youngest...[and] fairly normal in the sense that we all still see each other, we all still are involved in each other’s lives.

Although she felt her life was normal, she recognized that it was also atypical because her dad passed away when she was 16 years old. As she shared, “it’s been about 20 years now. And so, our family has somewhat been missing that father/grandfather role for a really long time. But I have a lot of brother-in-laws that kind of have stepped into the role.” At the time of our interviews, she was all but dissertation (ABD), and as a nontraditional student she was working on her doctoral degree to get herself “to that next level.”

Well-Being Definition

Emily began to define well-being through two Native Hawaiian constructs, “pono and mana.” She defined pono as “individual health in the sense of how I can balance my body, mind...[and] spirit.” She described that balancing these three things to achieve pono led to “Native Hawaiian health.” She defined mana as, “rooted in that pilina or connection” such that, “it’s not just by your own individual health, but it’s also how you reciprocate that, and how you can bring help to others and others can kind of add to your pono.” As someone who is “goal- and task-oriented,” Emily was aware of the “pono practice” she cultivated to give her a sense of well-being. In particular, she felt this included, waking up at the first alarm, exercising and running, eating healthy, being spiritually and mentally engaged, staying organized and working, and having time to rest and self-reflect. Addedly, she summarized,

My health and wellness and well-being was also to help inspire or empower others to figure out what their wellness was. And I think whether that's through modeling of, hey, this is how I do it or again, being that link for them to accessing what they need for their wellness.

And so, she felt that part of her well-being was defined by how she was able to support and empower others to access a pono practice. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, Emily said, “I’d say yeah, I’m pretty healthy, my well-being is intact” but that the pandemic “oki’ed or cut a lot of those connections” regarding her hula practice. As Emily reflected she said, “Now after the pandemic, I realized it’s so reciprocal, I need other people in my life to help create that space for me...And so, a couple hula sister and I we got really creative” as they began to do research and engage in activities together to (re)connect as a community of practice and (re)cultivate their pilina to one another to achieve well-being, which was previously done through their hula practice. At the time of the first interview, Emily and her hula sisters were doing a “deep dive

into one of our oli or a dance” and by the second interview Emily discussed a kapa class that they began in 2021, which “spans over the lifecycle of how to grow wauke. And then how to kind of complete a [kapa] piece.” Through these activities, it seemed that Emily was finding new spaces to (re)build pilina and cultivate mana with her hula siblings which contributed to her sense of well-being.

In addition to engaging in pono practices and cultivating mana with her hula siblings, Emily defined well-being further by saying, “I know what I can do to kind of stay healthy and stay on that well-being track. It’s do I have the discipline to do that in times of chaos or times of stress?” She shared a story with Auntie Lynette, who is one of her ho‘oponopono practitioners. Emily was driving Auntie to a doctor’s appointment and Auntie said to her, “Do you see that group of birds? . . . you ever see single birds flying by themselves?” to which Emily responded, “Yeah, I do.” Auntie explained to her, “that means you’re not in alignment. You’re seeing things that choose to be by themselves...birds are in nature, they want to be with other birds, they want to be with their flock.” Then Auntie Lynette asked Emily, “Are you choosing to be by yourself and not trust people?” As Emily reflected on that experience, she realized the misalignment she felt, and how it could potentially be affecting her well-being. As Emily explained, “it was me not being aligned and I knew it. And I just knew, and then you start going back and reflecting and like, you know what I did see those fricken birds by themselves.” By the end of the second interview, Emily defined well-being as “alignment” and had integrated that lived experience with Auntie Lynette into her adapted definition of well-being.

A Mo‘okū‘auhau of Alignment

Through “trial and error,” Emily was learning how to live in alignment. She said,

When I feel good, when I have mana, I feel confident in what I can do, and I feel confident that then I can ... serve my community, I can serve my family, that I can be what maybe they don't feel if they're depleted of mana or if they don't feel strong and powerful or spiritually aligned. ... But to me mana is really this idea of alignment, that what I'm choosing to do feels good whether the outcome is what you want it [to be] or not, it just still feels good to do this.

As Emily defined, well-being is living in alignment. And as reflected in the previous quote, when she lived in alignment, she had mana. In perpetuity, this alignment allowed Emily to be confident in her abilities so she could serve her community, which continued to “feed” how she lived in alignment with herself and the people around her.

Physical and Emotional Misalignment

Emily learned from her familial mo‘okū‘auhau and her dad’s passing how to live in alignment by focusing on her physical health. She reflected on her father and shared that,

Just being healthy, I think was also something I learned growing up. My dad passed away when I was really young. And he was a typical, and I hate to say it, but this is why I became a health social worker, but he had diabetes, high blood pressure, high cholesterol. ... And he eventually passed away from a heart attack. And so, for me, this idea of being healthy was something that unfortunately, we realized how important it was because of how sick my dad always was.

And so, as Emily felt, “we're definitely in a place of we not only live the unfortunate gaps in research, but we live the solutions.” In part, her research was important because of this reality as she was striving to heal the unfortunate disparities that the Native Hawaiian families she worked with experienced every day.

Part of this familial mo‘okū‘auhau included repressing emotions. As Emily shared about her family, “we couldn't feel it, like sadness...Or you can't be angry because then you get in trouble. So, I think just by proxy, even be super excited, we were almost scared to be those things.” And so, she felt that as an adult, she would downplay things, like her PhD, although she was excited about the milestones she was accomplishing throughout her journey. She recognized the misalignment she felt emotionally because of this lived experience. With her sisters, she was actively trying to change that practice in her family by teaching her nieces, nephews, and grandbabies that it was okay to feel and express your emotions.

Alignment through Pono Practices

Part of Emily’s alignment was being able to “pivot my pono” as she described. This meant “being able to assess, hey, what am I feeling today? And regulate that. I think just checking in on myself.” She believed this ability meant, “I will live in alignment, I will live in confidence, I will live in peace of every kind of decision I make.” And she perceived that,

It's not making right decisions; it's not making or having the best outcome possible. It's just, I feel good with the decisions that I am making, and that those small daily decisions, whether it's the small thing of, I'm going to eat breakfast today, or I'm going to eat healthier breakfast today, or ... I'm going to go for a run in the morning ... after making every decision, I'm still regulating and assessing, am I pono? Is this something that's making me feel pono today? And then you just kind of keep doing it.

Reflecting on the pono of her decisions allowed Emily to adapt her daily practices and routines to align herself with her well-being. And regardless of the decisions she made or outcomes she experienced, she felt that being “always constantly aware” of pono in her life helped her to cultivate alignment as an individual.

Rest as a Pono Practice. Rest was something that Emily avoided because, as she concluded, “I could be doing something.” She said, “I’m super hyperavoidant of patience for myself, for the rest period.” Ideally, she mentioned, “to have those moments of rest, to have those moments of self-reflection more consistent versus, okay, oh I need to take a break because I’ve hit a wall. ... or I’m just so exhausted that I just accidentally like sleep in” would contribute to her well-being. Although she recognized rest was a necessity and important for her well-being overall, she self-identified as being task-oriented, so it may not have aligned with her beliefs about herself, and therefore, was not a priority for her to intentionally integrate into her pono practice.

Running as a Pono Practice. Emily found solace in running. She described how running provided a dedicated time to herself, which on the one hand she could use to listen to an audiobook, for example, while on the other hand, could be relaxing after a stressful day. She added that running in a half-marathon provided an “outcome” such as a medal or t-shirt which aligned with her need to be task-driven.

As a Kamehameha Schools alumna, Emily reflected on the rigorous physical education program she experienced growing up and somewhat jokingly said that she was, “scarred for life. I hated running because you had to run so much in high school.” During the COVID-19 pandemic and through “trial and error” she began to run again, and felt it aligned with her healthy pono practice. And so, it was an activity that she wanted to continue. She said,

I got really into physical parts of me, so exercising and running. I hate running to be quite honest with you. But I was like, let me try it. And I think for me ... I was experiencing a lot of anxiety during the past year ... being stuck in a house, in an office or just in spaces.

So, for me, the easiest thing to do is to go running and help track my breathing, help with my thoughts.

She concluded, “I think what I'm working on with my well-being is increasing activities that I know work. And so, what that means is trying it out.” So although Emily tried many activities during the pandemic, she found running to be a practice that worked for her. Between our first and second interview she had completed a half-marathon, and by the time we had our second interview she was preparing for a full marathon.

Alignment through Mana Cultivation

Emily recounted the genealogy of her knowledge around mana as adopted from Kamana‘opono Crabbe and the Office of Hawaiian Affairs. She said, “there are two aspects to it,” and defined that there was,

This inherited piece of power and spirituality, based on the skills that we acquire from just being born, from our family, our ‘aumakua, our akua. We all have that. And then there is this acquired mana in the sense of, what do I gain by interacting with these forces in nature?

And so, she expressed, “for me, mana is tangible” and she clarified using an example related to her professional practice.

For the woman who is trying to get out of a domestic violent relationship, who is addicted to drugs and alcohol, who is now living in transitional housing. For her mana is, wow, I got my ID back and I can now maybe get a job or I can maybe buy a car and I can start driving myself around, that’s mana. And so, for me, it’s not about quality of mana. I never want to impose that yours is better than mine, or theirs is better than ours. But it’s

whatever you are doing, how does that impact your health and wellness, and how often do you need to do it?

Emily additionally shared, how mana as alignment meant “being able to know where to achieve it, and how to get it for myself.” And so, achieving mana in her daily life was a practice that helped her to live in alignment and be confident in her practice, which gave her peace in the decisions she made towards cultivating mana in her relationships with herself and with others.

Service as a Mana Cultivator. Personally, Emily felt that her alignment was tied to service. She said,

My wellness is also dependent on how I can be, how I can serve my community. And they say that a lot too, you know when you have enough love, and love for yourself, when you can openly love and serve your community without needing things in return. She acknowledged that service was a gift that she was given that perhaps was unique to her in comparison to her siblings. She explained,

I was gifted these skills to work within my community as a healer ... there's a part of me that I think was tasked that even before I was here that was maybe my family kuleana responsibility, or my ‘aumakua, kūpuna, like our ancestors in a sense, saying like, okay she is going to have this gift, and hopefully she increases her ability to do it.

While service was something she enjoyed and that brought her alignment, she recognized the pressure it put on her professionally as she would often “take a phone call,” for example, outside of work hours. And so, Emily felt that creating healthier boundaries would benefit her well-being overall. She added that the practice of creating healthier boundaries included “helping others to set boundaries, and then also accepting other people’s boundaries” which she was working on with her family. She recognized that, “to some fault of that idea of service, being something that

really means a lot for my well-being, I then say yes to everything that then is a service.” And she acknowledged that with service,

I also blame myself in that sense of I want to do everything, so I'm going to make the time for it. So, what did I have to sacrifice for that was a lot of that social pilina that we have. That also means a lot of that pilina that I talk about that is so important for well-being, I have to get rid of it.

So, although Emily believed that people are programmed for connection, her social pilina was often the first thing sacrificed when there were competing priorities, particularly ones where she felt that she was being of service to others. Emily recognized that at times, although service felt good, it could be exhausting. And by consequence, this exhaustion forced her to rest.

Mo‘olelo: Accountability

Emily found community through her practitionership and reflected on her need for relationships that were reciprocal, and therefore, accountable. She recognized that these relationships were present in her life with people who shared her cultural values. She mentioned many communities where she had such relationships, namely, in her hālau, Hālau Hula Ka Lehua Tuahine with Kumu Hula Ka‘ilihiwa Vaughan-Darval, in ho‘oponopono, with practitioners Aunty Lynette Paglinawan and the late Uncle Likeke Paglinawan, and in uhi, with practitioner Kawika Au, among others.

She also found some healing through getting rid of unhealthy relationships that were not serving her well-being. She mentioned being in a “toxic relationship” at the start of her doctoral journey, which led her to reflect on her relationship priorities. She said,

At some point, you realize that your kuleana outside of a PhD still needs to be fed. ... I was like, hey, I'm still a sister. So, what does the kuleana mean? ... How am I being a

good daughter? How am I being a good aunty? How am I being, well a good partner, right? How do I be a good, and at that time, I had stepchildren, like, how am I being all of these things? And then you have to realize, where's the PhD student fall into that list? And I'll be honest, it was always the last thing for me, even though it's probably one of the most important things I was doing. ... [and] I wanted to make it a priority. So, it's higher up there because I could take away other things.

As Emily concluded, "I could take away other kuleana roles that weren't feeding my wellness." She shared a contextual example that came from rewatching *Tinder Swindler* on Netflix and how it provided insight into her relationship needs.

One thing that I got out of it was, my need for people to feel ... I was so unsatisfied with that ending. I don't know how you felt, I was just like, he's making more money now? How was this possible? I was so upset. And so, yes, I had a wasted evening where I should have been working or could have been doing something else. But this acknowledgment of, wow, I really need people to be accountable for their actions that makes me feel safe ... something came out of it, which is this, boom, I know I need that for myself. ... I need to pick people who are comfortable with being accountable. Like, hey, I know I made you feel sad or I did something to upset you. I need that.

And so, she reflected on relationships and recognized her need to find people who could be accountable, which communicated to me that accountability was significant to how she defined a reciprocal relationship. In her doctoral program, Emily found such a community that kept her accountable to her research.

I have this group of PhD, Native Hawaiian, Kānaka PhD people who are pushing me to do this, so that it impacts my private practice or it actually has value back to the

community that I serve. And so, you love them, and you hate them at the same time. But again, they'll also be the ones that are going to celebrate with you.

Mele: 'Ike from Emily's Toolbox

I am truly in search of this idea of mana,
To know who I am spiritually,
So much so that I can promote spirituality
By sharing it with others.
To be at a place
Where my life being pono is so intact,
That I can now create other practitioners
Who are healthy individuals.

I'm hyperavoidant
Of patience for myself,
We're so gentle with others,
But what do we sacrifice?
We overextend,
We struggle to find grace.
Whether its a consequence of
Capacity, time or motivation.

While we can't plan the outcome,
We can be flexible, curious, and joyful.
We can learn to be gentle with ourselves
And cheer people on, unequivocally.

Be flexible with your plan
And this is coming from a planner.
Be confident in your practice,
Even when you feel imbalance and chaos.

Adapt and adopt your practice,
By honoring your genealogies,
In hopes they will be proud
Of how you've pivoted your pono.
And when others are depleted of mana
Or don't feel strong,
Serve them, and gift them what you know,
So they too can live in alignment and find peace.

Consequences

Emily described the start of her doctoral journey with the following anecdote:

When I first got into the PhD program, there was four of us that got in, or no, there was five of us. And they were like, “Wow, guys, we got 25% Native Hawaiian acceptance rates in our program.” And I looked, and I was just like, “It's me, hello, here I am.”

And as Emily reflected on this part of her story she added,

You have to question did I get in on merit or did I get in because I served a purpose of being a Hawaiian serving institution? And I'll be honest, to this day, I don't know. I really don't. I'd like to think I got in on merit and just so happens, I'm Hawaiian.

She recognized that in Western academia, “no one celebrates you.” And we discussed how the doctoral process had been mutually uncelebratory for the both of us based on our lived experiences in our respective programs. She described her process as self-guided and acknowledged the grit it took to get herself to ABD. Even from the “qualifying paper,” Emily shared that,

The two professors that it first went to, and I love them. ... But they had no clue about Native Hawaiian spirituality, and they wouldn't touch my systematic review with a 10-foot pole because they were so worried for themselves that they would say something, and it'd be like, great, now the whole Hawaiian community is out to get me.

And while she didn't blame them, she was ushered to choose a different topic or explore it from another angle, which she adamantly resisted. On the one hand, Emily reacted to this situation and said, “you guys need to find people who can and are qualified to then read my paper. I was like, that is not on me to do” perhaps as a way to keep them accountable. While on the other hand, she reflected an attitude she had heard and experienced which was, “The first thing they'll say is

your dissertation, your PhD is not your life work. So, pick a topic, get it done.” And while she understood where this sentiment came from, although it was not something we explicitly discussed, she felt aligned with other Kānaka in her program because, “This is our life work, because not only are we living in the situation, we’re also living the problems that we’ve identified.” And so, she described sitting on her qualifying paper until appropriate people were found and selected to give her feedback.

Emily also reflected on the financial aspect of being a doctoral student,

If I could just enjoy a PhD program, without the stress of financially having to support myself and maybe some of my family, then absolutely, I would. I would do it. So, time, you know, other things, time, money, I think definitely add to wellness.

This aspect of her educational journey contributed to her sense of well-being. And while she recognized that we all compare ourselves to others, she said, “you kind of weight the benefits and the cost. And then what that means for you.” So however stressful, she decided to work full-time and be in her doctoral program full-time, along with building her private practice which was outside of her full-time job, as well as teaching at the university because as she said, “I always wanted to get into academia” too. This educational and professional engagement aligned with her wants and needs to be and do everything, and she combated potential feelings of inadequacy by being in service to other students at the university on top of the other kuleana she was fulfilling.

Puana Kaulana Ka Inoa o Emily

Emily shared that her goals for living and being in the world were balance, care, alignment, and vulnerability.

Personally, she found balance through cultivating a pono practice (consisting of routines and activities that served the wellness of her mind, body, and spirit), which she could then use in

times of chaos and stress, alongside cultivating mana, by strengthening the relationships she had with her family as well as with the people she worked with as a social worker, hula practitioner, and healer. Importantly, setting daily and long-term goals helped Emily to cultivate a sense of achievement, which fed her pono practice and allowed her to feel confident in her abilities.

Emily described care for students, people in her community, and family as an important goal for her life. She also assessed on a daily basis if her actions and behavior were pono, and found alignment when she was able to pivot her pono while also be confident and at peace with the decisions she made with regard to her actions and behavior. This daily assessment allowed Emily to live in alignment such that she could feel good about her actions and behavior mentally, physically, and spiritually. Emily included vulnerability with herself as a life goal. She described having both physical and mental self-reflections and strived to routinely assess where she was and where she wanted to be in the future.

Jessie

Jessie is a Native Hawaiian Christian woman. At her core, she said, “my number one adjective would be Hilo girl.” Jessie described herself as a minority because of her Native Hawaiian, Japanese, and Chinese ethnic and cultural backgrounds. She grew up Christian and is a Christ follower. Jessie was born and raised in Hilo, Hawai‘i, and went to Kamehameha Schools Hawai‘i campus. At Kamehameha, she was part of the first graduating class of the Hawai‘i campus. Jessie then attended Wheaton College in Massachusetts where she finished her bachelor’s degree, and she returned to Hawai‘i to pursue further education at the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa. Jessie has completed her master’s and a doctorate in nutrition. As she explained to me,

High school, college, even to some degree a master’s was never a question of not getting it. ... I’m not the first one to have an advanced degree in my Japanese side, which is very typical Japanese. ... So definitely, my family is, I think, the only reason why I’ve gotten so far without criticism.

Jessie developed a particular worldview because of her roots as a “Hilo girl.” As she explained, in Hilo “things are less sophisticated but somehow satisfying.” Additionally, she said that “you don’t need much to be in Hilo ... you don’t need a lot of money and you can kind of survive on limited funds.” She explained how this worldview was also shaped by her family’s genealogy as large-scale farmers in California because “growing up we were sent to California every summer.” As Jessie said, “her [grandmother’s] older brother who took the family farm after my great grandfather passed away ... he didn’t want to see any other generation farm. So, it kind of stopped with him” because as she included, “the farming life. It’s glamorized in country songs, but it’s a hard life.” And so, “my great uncle didn’t want any of us kids to do that, he

wanted a more educated background.” As an individual, this upbringing allowed Jessie to “weather through conflict” because she was someone who did not need control. But at times, Jessie commented, this led to other people feeling that she was “so flippant.” As she explained, “I’ve been called flippant in the past, like you’re so flippant about things. ... I don’t know if that’s self-defense, it’s just [that I do] not get so worked up about certain things.” As a result, she reflected inward to conclude, “I’m 100% not alpha, and I’m not assertive. I know what I am. I know what I’m not. And I know definitely, I am not someone to just grab the bull by the horn.” She commented on how “we’re surrounded by people who are controlling” in academia but explained how this trait, “I don’t know if it will serve me well [or] it served me well. ... It’s who I am and at this point, I’m not about ready to change.” So, Jessie ultimately wanted to return to Hilo in the future although she was not in a rush to do so.

A Mo‘okū‘auhau of Faith

Jessie comes from a religious family. Her mother is full Japanese and was raised as a Presbyterian. Jessie traced their genealogy of faith to explain how her mother’s family were missionaries in India before settling in California. Jessie’s late father was Hawaiian-Chinese and a Southern Baptist minister. Jessie shared how he passed a month before she was born from an asthmatic attack because of the vog in Hilo. So, she described being raised by a single mother, along with her older brother and sister. However, they maintained relationships with her father’s family through a family-owned store in Hilo. Although her mother’s family is from California she explained, “they all moved to the Big Island.” So, both sides of Jessie’s family currently reside in Hilo. Jessie also believed that although her childhood was atypical because she did not have a father, it was also typical because as she said,

We had four uncles that practically raised us, my grandfather was really close to us. We lived with them, with my [maternal] grandparents ... until I think in the second or third grade. And that's when they moved and gave my mom their house.

As Jessie explained, although it was a tragic experience, this genealogy allowed her family to form a resilient community around her mother. She elaborated by saying,

If my dad was alive, I'm not sure if we would have had these close friendships or relationships with my uncle and aunties, and my grandparents, they probably would have, that my mom and dad been their own unit. And because of that tragedy, they really embraced us and took care of us and continue to take care of us to this day.

And so, Jessie returned to her faith to explain the tragedy, "the Lord really made something so tragic into something that was a testament to him, providing for our needs, but just that he will make a way when it just seems like there's despair." At the time of the interviews, Jessie's family included a stepfather, who is a Southern Baptist minister, a half-brother, and a boyfriend in addition to her extended family community.

From this genealogy, Jessie had a strong faith, and she dedicated intentional time on a daily basis to be with God whether through attending church or her own independent spiritual practice. As she defined it, "spirituality to me is living and believing in something bigger than you ... just being respectful of what has been given to you ... and honoring [that] is my idea of spirituality." And so, she believed, "all things come from the Lord" and by "recognizing how much he has blessed me with, I honor him, and I recognize my need for him ... and just my inability ... to just not exist without him, I guess. I humbly recognize that." She acknowledged the possibility of other truths, where people "might not call it God" but that "it's universal or it can be universal" to believe in a higher power. Jessie also felt that from church, she learned her

need for others and cultivating her relationships, and the necessity of being in communion with people guided her perceptions of well-being overall.

Well-Being Definition

For Jessie, well-being is collective resiliency, living spiritually, and having the self-determination to define well-being as an individual. As Jessie said, “my well-being is centered on my spiritual well-being” and she believed “my picture of well-being is resiliency.” She explained how “no one is an island,” and how this belief was shaped by her mother and family. As Jessie articulated, “in my sense of well-being I’m not an isolated entity, I’m something that is involved and leaning, and having other people lean on me kind of being.” And so, Jessie felt that her family was resilient, which shaped her perspective of well-being.

Raised as a Southern Baptist, Jessie felt that spirituality was also central to her well-being. She shared the following quote by Oscar Issac during our interview to elaborate.

“Do you ever try turning it back on again?” ... It being his spirituality or just religion, being religious, “Or are you still in the off mode?” ...the journalist said. And he says, “I’m trying to get back on, I’m grasping in the dark for the light switch because I have found that living in just a kind of materialistic sense of things, you know, just the material world and all that’s real to me, that feels like a dead end. And it’s quite an egotistical thing to be like everything I see that’s all that’s real and I know exactly what or how everything works. ... And I wouldn’t presume to do that. So, I think I’m in a bit of a search, a hopeful search to cultivate a bit more of a spiritual life.”

After sharing this quote with me, Jessie said that his words resonated with her and explained,

If I lived in such a way that all there is, is what is in front of me I’d be depressed. ... I’d be so saddened by what’s happening in Afghanistan, what’s happening in our political

system, you know what I mean? I feel like my well-being comes from the fact that I feel so much comfort in knowing this isn't it, like this world isn't it. There's something better and more justified, and I keep thinking about that Isabella Kalua⁷⁵ ... and I think I would not have good well-being if I knew, if I perseverated on that, which I know many people do. They do persevere on the evils of this world. And I just feel like knowing that there's justice in the universe is real comforting to my well-being. ... knowing that wrong will be wrong and right will be honored because of Ke Akua and whether that be in heaven or we die ... but maybe justice will be prevailed in the prison system when they go to prison for the Kalua family. I don't know.

This sense of divine justice gave Jessie reassurance in this world and at the time of our first interview, Jessie felt that nirvana is "a lifelong journey for your well-being." Upon reflecting on the well-being, she wanted in the future, Jessie said she wanted to "age with integrity." This ideology included "being more secure in who I am, and more others oriented and more nurturing." So, she strived to do so but also struggled with feeling "short-changed or compromised." Ultimately, Jessie felt that her goals would look like, "being able to sleep at night, not having to think I have, for me, disappointed Ke Akua, that I've honored him, I've shown other people His love and His acceptance and providence."

By the end of our second interview, Jessie highlighted the importance of well-being to be self-determined. As she said, "everyone's well-being is their own. ... Your well-being is your own, I mean you just gotta find out what it is that will make you be a better person and maybe it's always evolving." For Jessie, this meant "surrounding myself with people that are good for

⁷⁵ Jessie mentioned the case of Isabella Kalua, a 6-year-old child who was brutally murdered. She was reported missing on September 13, 2021, and her adoptive parents, Lehua and Isaac, were arrested for her murder on November 10, 2021.

me” and she observed in her life how the pandemic “forced friendships to be bared down,” such that “only the real relationships” survived while toxic relationships were severed. So, she found good relationships that lasted through the pandemic of “people who support me, makes me resilient and also have this sense of like, I’m okay, things are good.”

Summatively, Jessie defined well-being as “happiness,” “being okay with who you are,” “self-contentment,” and “calm.” She added that for her, “not being in control” was part of her well-being but that for others it could be control, “resetting by going home,” or “setting a time in your day for self-care” in ways that were not selfish but involved helping others.

Mo‘olelo: Her Grandmother’s Resilient Journey

Jessie felt that her maternal grandmother was someone who had a good well-being practice because of her strong faith. She acknowledged the limitations her grandmother faced as someone with dementia but explained how, “going back to spirituality being a focal point in my idea of well-being, because of her faith I feel like she does have a good sense of this, this sense of well-being in her life.” Although Jessie was hesitant and recognized “we’re all human” she believed that her grandmother’s security in who she was, and her faith in God allowed her to actively cultivate well-being. And as Jessie concluded, “maybe this journey to being a well individual is a journey. You are always actively or you're always trying to work toward it. You never arrive.”

Mele: My grandmother.

Planting on her raised bed,
Hands weathered and worn
From tomatoes, lettuce, and mizuna.

From a Japanese immigrant family,
Farming in Hanford,
And sent to an internment camp in Arkansas.

Their neighbor, a Portuguese man, said,
“Give me your land, and when this war ends, I’ll give it back to you.”
And that’s what they did, returning to Hanford after the war.

So, my grandmother looks at this photograph ⁷⁶
of praying hands,
And tells me this story:



There once was two artistic brothers. One brother worked to put the other through school, and he became a renowned artist. And then he said, “Okay brother, now it’s your time. I’ll work and you go to art school.” And his brother said, “I can’t look at my hands.” The years had passed, and his hands had become weathered and worn from working. And so, the brother who had become a renowned artist, saw his brother praying with his weathered hands and decided to draw them. ...

My grandmother told that story of this photo hanging on the wall, as a reminder of sacrifice.
How we overcome discouragement and are resilient
Because of our support system.

And while my grandmother’s hands are weathered and worn
She is still in the garden,
Planting mizuna, lettuce, and tomatoes.

I watch her and am reminded of that hard life of farming,
That became our family’s history,
And the support system that came from God’s providence.

Jessie also explored how food practices in her childhood home shaped her perception of whiteness. As she explained, “My grandma didn’t move to Hawai‘i till she was in her 40s. My mom was born and raised in the mainland as well. She didn’t move here till she was in her late teens.” And so, Jessie recalled, “I remember my grandma cooking the best, was non-Japanese,

⁷⁶ This photograph was one of Jessie’s artifacts that she gave to me when she shared this story.

non-local, non-Hawaiian food. It was pot roast, chicken pot pie, prime rib, lamb.” And so, she felt, “there’s just things that make Haole people less foreign to me” such that she did not have the same hostility towards White people that she witnessed in others around her because she did not have bad experiences with them. Jessie noted,

I think it’s because we’re a little bit Haole in our ways. ... my grandma’s kind of White, I mean she’s more mainland than what we give credit to, and even her mannerisms like how formal eating is. ... it was just things that we had to have that I don’t see in other people’s homes, but I do see in mainland homes.

And so, Jessie felt that through her grandmother and the genealogy of her family life, she was tied to their roots in Hanford, California. However small, Jessie also reflected on lessening her uses of things like water and electricity and consciously strived to reduce her emissions. As an example, and part of this practice was her re-use of Tupperware, which she attributed to her grandmother and Hanford. She described this practice as “antimaterialism” and a “love for not pretty things” in a way that was different from others in Hilo because as Jessie concluded,

Maybe it’s frugality ... but it’s less of a habit and more I guess just our mentality. ... and I say it’s different from Hilo because in Hilo I think people do things out of necessity. ... But we just do it because that’s just how.

She reflected on how she was also taking care of ‘āina through this practice and believed,

If everyone makes little changes ‘āina can breathe again. Like we could restore ‘āina. ... And it will give us a sense of pride ... It can only change our outlook; I mean improve our outlook on life and how we view the world and view ourselves.

Mo‘olelo: Jessie’s Partner

Jessie's partner, Keith, was a prominent influence on her well-being. She described her relationship as supportive and believed, "he's 100% one reason why I think I've held it together and haven't gone home with my tail between my legs in defeat." She also felt it was important to engage in activities together for her well-being overall. For example, Jessie shared "we try and go swimming in Kailua during the summer months. So we actually started during the pandemic but we try and do it every night throughout the summer." Through Keith, Jessie felt a "displaced pilina" with O'ahu. She described not having the same place-based connections as Keith through their diverse stories and lived experiences. As Jessie explained, this reality made her feel as if,

I just can't settle down in Honolulu even though everything in my life says you should ...

It's like no, I can't because it's not home. So, definitely, Hilo will be my home. I don't know if it's a healthy attachment but it's an attachment, nonetheless.

So, while Jessie physically dwelled in Mānoa, and she felt pilina to Kailua and Waimānalo through Keith, she ultimately experienced these 'āina relationships as displaced and vicarious as opposed to direct and personal to her.

Consequences

Mele: Education

I have prioritized my education. And so,
I'm very sensitive and vulnerable to the treatments that I endure
Because the University is at the top of my list.
So, what they do hurts me,
And sets me back even more,
Because of where I've placed the University in my life.
I put it so high on my list that
What should be a ripple is a tidal wave.

Jessie called out the duality between being trained as a Western academic with her cultural ways of knowing and doing as a Kanaka. As demonstrated in the found poem above,

Jessie highlighted how the traumas she has endured by the hands of the university were shaped by the priority she placed on her education. As she said, through such treatments “I feel like my rose-colored glasses are shattering.” She explained how she filed two grievances because of the behavior of two professors and felt as though no actions were taken to support her. In one case, she shared that the professor retired and in the other the professor received a promotion. And so, as Jessie articulated, “I felt most vulnerable to them and then get easily hurt. And then it tests, it questions my faith,” and remarked how these experiences had affected her quality of sleep. As Jessie pointed out, being a female in a male-dominated field, and being a Kanaka at a Western institution, made the lack of action to her allegations “very, very hurtful.” Jessie added to this discussion an idea she was introduced to at the university and came to “firmly believe that the university is the last plantation” because of the hierarchy and treatment she received. As Jessie said, “I’m forever grateful that [the professor] named it, she called it ... I didn’t know how to put [it] into words but she did and I really clung to that because that is truly how I feel.” In alignment to the importance she placed on education, Jessie said “another thing that my girlfriend Kat and I talk about all the time is the sacrifices we’re making for this path we’ve chosen.” She understood the tradeoffs between education, and her career and family goals and felt either pathway could be equally fulfilling. As Jessie also indicated, “UH has provided in ways that I don’t give it enough credit,” using the example of the tuition waiver. She concluded, “if you graduate with a degree with very little loans, think of it as, not penance, but compensation for the abuse.” Although she ultimately felt the degree was small in comparison to the potential for trauma, she understood how a graduate degree could “get you in the door.”

Because of her college experiences, Jessie believed “that’s why I was able to, when I came to Hawai‘i for grad school, I just accepted the treatment I was getting because, not that I

felt prejudices in Massachusetts, but it was different.” She attributed her inability to speak up and her willingness to endure to “complete naiveness.” And as she believed,

I think if I had gone [to Massachusetts] with the exposure and awareness I have now it would have been different ... So in a way, it was kind of nice to be a little bit naive or not jaded. I guess not jaded or not corrupt or whatever you want to call it.

At the time of our interviews, she shared how she did not think she could speak up but came to feel that she should have because as concluded, “I have people that will support me.” In retrospection, Jessie shared the following advice,

I guess what I would tell myself back in 2014, “Don’t be intimidated. If you don’t feel like this is good treatment, say something. This is your home, UH, Hawai‘i is your home. You have nowhere else to go, Jessie. ... You have to feel comfortable in your own home and UH should support you and make you feel comfortable, not making you feel like you don’t belong, like this place isn’t for you.”

Jessie called out the capitalist norms of aggression and competition in the Western institution, and revisited the duality she experienced by saying, “it really is this duality that we have to, you and I, and all Kānaka, Indigenous people have to face, is how do we not become like our environments and hold true and be pono to our culture?”

So, while she felt supported by the people around her at the institution, she struggled to feel supported by the university as an entity because systemically “it’s still a place that needs a lot of improving.” She acknowledged “we’ve come a long way” but believed others should feel encouraged to speak up because there were people that could and did provide support despite the colonial hierarchy.

Ultimately, throughout her academic journey in Hawai‘i, Jessie felt immense pressure that she described as “a sense of urgency” to finish. Upon reflection, she realized this pressure was not something she enjoyed. And so, while she could see herself working at a university, she would rather teach at a community college because “there’s not so much pressure.” Jessie came to this conclusion after working with Po‘i Nā Nalu, the Native Hawaiian Career and Technical Education Program at Honolulu Community College. And her experience with the program seemed more enjoyable for the future if she were to pursue a career in academia. However, she planned to continue on the several grants she was already a part of at the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa after completing her doctorate.

Nutrition

Jessie reflected on her privilege in terms of access to nutritious and good-quality food. Through her academic journey, she shared the following example, “I’ve never thought that a mother would give their child Cheetos, hot, spicy Cheetos and Crush for breakfast. I never in my wildest dreams thought that that was possible. But I’ve seen it.” And so, she recognized how the effects of poverty influenced people’s ability to access nutritious food; and therefore, reframed her perspective of health as “eat[ing] healthy” to consider and prioritize the benefits of physical activity. She concluded, “I think we can incorporate physical activity in our life in lieu of [nutrition] ... if it’s safe and feasible.” As a profession, she also called attention to the lack of minority dietitians. As she experienced, “[a] lot of Hawaiian have diabetes and unfortunately high blood pressure. But most importantly, they’re on dialysis.” And so, she discussed the need for dietitians who reflected “their patient population that they serve” to also recognize the importance of her place as a dietitian for her community.

Physical Activity. This belief was also shaped by her academic genealogy as a Kamehameha Schools graduate. She noted the school's rigorous physical education program as a commonality across Kamehameha's three campuses and reflected on the distinction between exercise at school (i.e., biathlon, triathlon) to what she experienced with her family (i.e., haul away rocks, machete down a tree). And so, Jessie became a big proponent of physical activity and believed, "just a 30-minute walk will do wonders for your outlook on life." Addedly, Jessie commented on "getting a good night's rest" as a meaningful routine she engaged in particularly because she "got diagnosed with adult ADHD." And so, as she learned about ADHD symptoms in adulthood, she came to conceptualize a "healthy and appropriate sleep cycle" alongside "physical activity" as something that lessened her symptoms and could, as Jessie said, "have a profound impact on your mental health and physical health."

Puana Kaulana Ka Inoa o Jessie

Jessie described having a well-being goal through the simple illustration of "being able to sleep at night, not having to think that I have, for me disappointed Ke Akua, that I've honored, I've shown other people his love and his Providence."

Jessie also discussed that her goal for living and being in this world was to be described as a helpful person as she intended to use her time on earth to be available to people and hoped that she could make a difference by being in their life. Jessie believed this meant supporting others by being a source of strength and encouragement, lending a helping hand, and uplifting them in times of need.

Kat

Kat is a “Native Hawaiian, from the Big Island, who wants to work in the health field.” She was “born and raised in Hilo” which is “on the east side of the Big Island” and she has an older sister. Her father is from the Big Island and is Hawaiian, Korean, and Chinese while her mom is from California and is “pure Mexican.” Both Kat and her sister currently reside on O‘ahu and they live a few buildings apart. Over the last three years, Kat’s life “turned around in a complete 180.” Although she had distanced herself from her family, and had not talked to them for three years, she had since reconnected with them. Simultaneously, Kat returned to her Catholic upbringing as a means to heal, reflect, and find peace and contentment in her daily life.

Well-Being Definition

Kat defined well-being as “balance,” and she said, “if anything’s kind of out of whack whether it be your mental health or your physical health, it does cause your life to be more difficult to operate in.” She reflected on the transience of life and shared how getting older made her realize that she can’t spread herself too thin or live in a way where she is going to extremes. Kat explained,

When I was younger I would just be like, oh, I’ll just stay up all night, do this, crank it out, and I’ll sleep later or you do these very extreme things to kind of accomplish certain tasks, and maybe you should have thought about your plan of action a little bit better like you could have worked on this a little bit over time instead of one long night.

So, Kat felt that being more efficient would improve her well-being and she preferred to keep life small as a way to maintain balance in her life. However, she acknowledged that for others,

Keeping life small is a little misleading. But I mean, I think that's right for me. But I think what I'm trying to say is, keep life manageable, don't overextend yourself all the time, know your limits, and be honest with yourself.

As she reflected on her stories, she believed that everyone needs to find their limits and live life in a way that works best for them. She said that "spending time with yourself" was a general theme to well-being. She also reflected on having a "finite time" and was realizing "I can't put this off, you know, I need to do it now, I won't have time later. I think when you're younger, you don't have a concept of how much time you really have." In compliment, she shared a conversation she had with a 40-year-old doctoral student. Kat shared her ideas for her post-doctoral plans and the other student said because he was older, he was not able to do the things she wanted to do. And that her post-doctoral plans were things that he could not do because of his age. For Kat, this conversation "put things in perspective" because "you can't wait to be the person you want to be. You have to try to be that person actively." She concluded that "balance but also at a higher level," involved moving "towards a healthy place" by raising the level she was operating at now, by being more productive, knowledgeable, and healthier, and having more meaningful interactions. Through her lived experiences, Kat learned that "committing myself, I think to living for the future" was something she was doing because as she said "life's a gift. So I don't want to squander it." She reflected on her bad habits and made significant lifestyle changes, "because when you're younger you don't want to miss out. I know this is kind of an old phrase but the whole FOMO [Fear of Missing Out] was very real for me." Overall, she found peace in returning to her Catholic upbringing, and prayer was something she utilized in her daily life. The activities that sustain her well-being daily are self-reflection, prayer, reading, sleep, consistent meals and not overeating, hygiene, and reaching out to others when she needs help. At

the time of our second interview, she shared that there was some uncertainty with her graduate assistantship and remarked, “as grad students you want some form of stability with your job.” And so, for Kat, well-being as balance became and was defined as “stability” based on that lived experience that shifted her well-being needs.

Mo‘olelo: Observation - Observing Balance in Couples

When I asked Kat if there was someone in her life that had well-being she was hesitant because she felt that well-being as balance was something she witnessed in the couples around her. She said,

It’s hard for me because I think I’m surrounded by couples. So, when I think of a person, I think of them in association with another person, and when I think of them as an individual, you can see where their strengths are, and where their weaknesses are.

And so, she noticed how the significant others of people she was close to helped to “balance them out and compensate for what they’re lacking in.” She added that “being in a partnership, where you constantly have to reflect [on] what you are doing, wherever you are” was a type of introspection that she witnessed in the couples around her but was also something you could readily achieve as an individual. This led me to believe that Kat felt self-reflection was an important practice of well-being and that this practice was done in a relationship.

Simultaneously, she continued to reflect on her age, and said, “because I’m older I think there’s kind of more of a pressure to reflect about [sic] what you’re doing because you can’t be 60 and your shit is still not together.” Addedly, she said,

The older you get the more you realize if you want certain things, you have to do certain things. So, it would help to have a partner. But I still think you can achieve an awesome life as an individual.

So, although she felt that life could be great without a partner and that it wouldn't necessarily be better with one, she said that having a partner would be like, "the cherry on top."

A Mo'okū'auhau Shaped by Women

Kat's Mother

Kat reflected on how her mother was 23 years old when she gave birth to her sister, and consequently felt that at 23-years-old she was a "complete mess" in comparison. She described her mother as someone who had mana because she was "capable" and exuded an "energy you want to be around." Kat felt that this allowed her mother to be a "healer or caretaker" and was reflected in the fact that "people seek her out when they need help." Her mother also had the ability to voice her needs, when she was "feeling tapped out" and needed time alone, which was perhaps another reflection of her mother's capabilities. Although she felt that her mother was capable, she also felt that it was "scary" because "she never really half asses anything." And so, Kat worried about her mom because she "doesn't forgive herself easily" and "struggles with not feeling good enough" at times. Kat felt that this resulted in overcompensating, although she also believed that her mother "thrives when she does a lot." She reflected on another insecurity of her mother's because "she never spoke Spanish" like her siblings. And so, she felt that her mother assimilated to "Western standards" and worked against the negative stereotype that "Mexicans are dirty" by overcompensating and being "really clean." Across the interviews, she described the relationship they had developed, as they talked on the phone on a weekly basis and grew their relationship through their shared religious beliefs.

Kat also shared a story about her aunt, her mother's sister in California who had passed, which at the time created a "cascade effect" in her family. As Kat came to recognize, her aunt was "the glue in the family," "kept the family strong," and was "the main connection [for her

mother] to her other sisters.” She said, “it felt like things became a little darker and people weren’t as connected to each other anymore.” And so, Kat noticed how her aunt and mother’s relationship connected them to her family in California. As Kat reflected on their disconnect, she came to reevaluate her relationship with her mother. She remembered “all the stupid things” she did and apologized to her mother because of her bad habits and behaviors. Although her mother said, “It’s fine. Doesn’t matter,” it led Kat to reflect on her family relationships and become “more grateful for people” in her life.

Mele: Growing Up in Hilo

I hope to go back to Hilo, grow there.
But, when you kind of grow up with the same people,
You kind of feel a little constricted by everyone's perceptions of you
And everybody knows your family, too.

So, I guess I just wanted to see...
Who I was more as a person
And not through the lens of who my dad was,
Who my siblings [sic] were...
I guess I wanted to start anew
Just to see what would happen.

Although Kat was grateful for her family, she still felt confined by her lived experiences and decided to leave Hawai‘i to go to California for college, but came back to Hawai‘i for graduate school. But during graduate school she disconnected from her family. She shared,

I didn't really have a relationship with my family like we didn't talk for years. ... like something kind of intense happened. I kind of went off on my own to prove that I could make it by myself and that was really hard because I was still a student and broke. I lived with people I didn't know. You're just trying to hustle. ... I think it was good for me to kind of realize that it's life. But when you feel like you don't have anyone who has your back you do get a little jaded.

Kat struggled on her own, and after the intense experience she mentioned, which she wanted to keep confidential, she was able to “reunite” with her family and “grow past that” experience with them. In doing so, she took a semester off, “was able to go home, and take a break, and kind of rebuild” herself because this happened around the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. At the time of our interviews, she said “I can’t really imagine needing anything more than I have.” And so, the disconnection and reconnection to her family allowed her to reflect with a renewed gratitude.

Kat’s Sister

Kat’s relationships with her family members were multidimensional. She reflected on becoming “introverted” because her family “didn’t like it if you complained.” While her sister became a “high achiever,” she became “silly,” and “maybe up to some shenanigans” like “the class clown,” which she felt was “typical” for younger siblings such as herself. Although she didn’t seem particularly close to her sister, Kat felt that they had a good reciprocal relationship. She shared a story about a time where her sister asked her to join a Zoom meeting and she went, because “it’s kind of rare that we ask each other things like that. So, I like to think that when we do though, it’s like, okay, this is real. She wouldn’t ask me otherwise. It’s important.”

Throughout the interviews, Kat reflected on her relationship with her sister and felt that as the older sibling her sister, “gets a lot of that responsibility of being more of the representation of the family.” Because of her role she also provided a preview for Kat for what was next. “My sister, she’s [a] lawyer, she’s further down the road. She just bought an apartment. So, she’s doing all these really big girl moves; She’s getting married. And we’re only three years apart.” So, Kat would look at the milestones her sister was accomplishing and used them as a preview to prepare herself. Witnessing these milestones, as Kat said, “makes me want to be in a good, a better place.” Similar to how she felt about her mother, Kat was worried about her sister too and

thought it helped that her sister's fiancé provided balance to their relationship. Specifically, Kat felt that her sister "motivated him to improve his life and make goals," while he "softens her edges a little bit." In continuing to reflect on her sister's relationship Kat felt that, "I think sometimes it's okay, everyone has different perspectives. But I think when you want to build your life with someone, you have to kind of change that so you can grow together. And I can see that with my parents as well." And so, Kat observed these partnerships and came to define well-being through the balanced relationships that she had witnessed.

Kat's Best Friend

Kat also "reconnected by chance" with a friend, Jessie, during the beginning of her graduate journey. She felt that their "trajectories have been pretty parallel" and that Jessie was someone she could talk to because they understood each other. Both women grew up together in Hilo and were Native Hawaiian doctoral students who had similar religious beliefs; And they both felt that these beliefs were important to their well-being. This relationship developed through academia when both women were master's students in their respective programs. Altogether, Kat felt that her relationships were supportive and she summarized them as follows:

I guess having him [(i.e., her father)] help me with that [incident]. And my mom, she's also religious too, so we can talk about that together. I know my sister's here for me if I need it, so that's a comfort. And then my friend Jessie [last name], I love her. I feel like I could say anything to her.

Kat's Grandmother

Kat shared a story about her grandmother and aunt and their family properties in Hilo. This story connects land ownership with belonging and was something she believed and learned through observation.

Mele: Inherited Land

My grandma on my dad's side,
had four lots of property in Hilo.
She gave it to her first three children.
My dad was the fourth, he was a surprise.

My aunty ended up selling her lot,
I remember it was very shameful
And I guess in that moment it was fine
But what she did was very bad.

Especially for my grandma who was very adamant,
Don't give away something that's been in your family.
Whatever your family has worked hard to get, try to take care of it.
If we don't own land, then where do we belong?

It happened a long time ago,
My aunt⁷⁷ was still young.
And I think when you're young
You're prone to make bad decisions.

My grandma planned for that land to be in our family,
A safe place for anybody that comes through.
My grandma was just a papaya packer,
The land she had was inherited from other generations.

If we don't own land, then where do we belong?

This story reflects Kat's beliefs about age, particularly youth, and its connection to bad decision making. Kat also believed that 'āina, and land ownership provided a safe place, and she learned that from her grandmother. In reflecting on this mo'olelo, 'āina as a safe place potentially parallels with prayer as a safe practice for Kat. Altogether, she learned through observing her

⁷⁷ In the original interview, Kat said "my dad was still young" when her aunt was selling the property, and so that was included in the first draft of this case. Upon Kat's review, this line was changed from "my dad was still young" to "my aunt was still young" to more accurately reflect that her aunt was the one who sold the lot, while her dad did not receive any land.

family members a need for safety, and the potential for home ownership to support a sense of belonging in her community.

Mo'olelo: Safe and Soured Relationships

"I guess sometimes in my life, I felt like being adaptable has been very necessary."

The idea of 'āina as a safe place potentially carried over to relationships, as Kat sought safe connections with others. But Kat struggled to build such relationships because in her lived experiences many of them had soured. She said, "In the past, I've just had a lot of interactions that kind of changed the relationship." And so, these bad interactions weighed heavily on her as she thought about them "a lot afterwards. Probably a lot more than is a healthy amount." She tried to navigate conversations with others by "somehow changing the subject" and read things like *"Psychology Today*, how to deal with difficult people, how to have difficult conversations" so that she could "interact with people in a healthy way." But she realized that these "good tips and tricks," were not practical because "real life is a lot more complicated." She derived that, "it's already hard enough to focus on what you got to do. And I already stress myself enough, so I just want to have a clear mental space." And so, she strived to avoid conflict and talked about topics that were "safe" like "talking about the weather." Kat further recognized that,

I think everybody's lives are hard. So, we're not always available to people. And if you try to reach out to someone, they could be kind of short with you or they're annoyed, it just kind of feels like a safer option to pray about it in a way.

So, while Kat found relationships were challenging, and perhaps unsafe spaces, she found safety in her prayer practice. She also said, "I really like learning and it's a safe place." These practices, prayer and learning, kept her life manageable and contributed to her sense of well-being.

Consequences

“Do I get caught up in this moment or do I just keep pushing?”

Despite feeling that learning was a safe place, Kat had interactions with people in educational environments that impressed negative stereotypes upon her as a Native Hawaiian and as someone from Hilo. While in California, she shared that other college students who were from Hawai‘i stereotyped her.

I think it would have helped if a lot of the ‘Iolani and Punahou kids weren’t there. Not like I didn’t like all of them, but they just kind of kept calling me like, “You’re so country, you’re from the Big Island.” And I was like, “What do you expect me to do, husk a coconut with my teeth? Like, no.” I was also a science major, and ... I just felt people kept trying to bring me down, intellectually ... I don’t know if you felt this but it’s just when you’re outside of Hawaiian Studies, people kind of question your legitimacy.

These stereotypes continued when she returned to Hawai‘i for graduate school and was something she experienced with professors. She shared one story about a professor who she developed a good relationship with but the relationship soured after he said something like, “You’re just a local girl from the Big Island.” This left her feeling unseen, stereotyped as a Native Hawaiian, and as if she was a joke. She later took a class with this professor who asked, “Who wouldn’t mind having diabetes in this class?” This class only had four students and after the teacher looked at her, she remarked, “I don’t want diabetes,” to which he replied, “most Native Hawaiians have diabetes.” This encounter made Kat uncomfortable and while she laughed at the time, she had to endure interactions of being stereotyped. From these types of interactions Kat inferred, “I know that I’m not just representing myself, I’m representing a group of people...and if I do well then that means they’ll be more likely to give a chance to another Native Hawaiian student. And they won’t question she’s from a rural place...she’s this, she’s

that.” And so, for Kat it was a responsibility to “help break down those barriers” so that there are opportunities for “someone else with the same background as me to make it higher.”

Although Kat felt “reduced” and “labeled” with these stereotypes in educational settings, she felt that there were people who vouched for her and she wanted to be a good investment. She also felt that education would benefit her because as she said, “You’re making yourself better in a way... You are testing yourself and seeing what your limits are and trying to improve your skills.” She added the sentiment that through her educational experiences she was “just trying to get the skills to pay the bills,” and that doing Native Hawaiian research in particular “helps with promoting understanding.” Equally, she felt that by understanding more “dominating thoughts,” you could potentially “cure yourself as best as you can” as a minority student. Ultimately, Kat valued the network she had gained from academia and the peer relationships she had developed that would support her in the future, and she was actively encouraging others so that they would not feel looked down on, dumb, or otherwise stereotyped as she had experienced.

Kat looked to her future by reminiscing on her home in Hilo. She reflected on Hilo as a place that was, “safe,” “easier in a way,” “comfortable,” not “competitive,” and where the “people are just a lot nicer.” Although she recognized the people in Hilo were “changing because there’s more people from the mainland coming in” she still believed that “if somebody saw you on the side of the road people will stop” and see if you need help.

Puana Kaulana Ka Inoa o Kat

For Kat, well-being is finding balance through managing safe relationships with those around her while “also not depleting your reserves.” Kat maintains balance in her life by taking time to “recharge” as an introvert, although she felt people perceived her as an extrovert based on her behavior. While she has developed an understanding of well-being by observing people in

relationship, such as her mom, dad or her sister and her sister's fiancé, she personally finds contentment through prayer. For Kat, returning to her Catholic faith brought her peace although she felt that others did not need to believe in a specific religion. She said, "I think whatever speaks to you, you should follow your intuition. Whatever motivates you to try to be better for those around you, and hopefully the world." And so, for Kat her intuition motivated her to turn to prayer and learning as a way to seek well-being and it provided safe spaces for her to recharge and self-reflect. Kat embodies self-presence by reflecting on her temporality and actively working towards her goals for the future, which included writing a book. We learn from her story the power of women in her life and the multidimensionality of maintaining safe relationships.

Kat's goals for living and being in the world included continuing to work towards her goal of a PhD, figuring out how to provide for herself in the future, enjoying life, and encouraging others to strive for their highest potential.

Kat recognized how having a routine supported her success holistically. She was also mindful of what she needed to do to maintain financial stability but also wanted to enjoy life by caring for herself and others. She enjoyed reading and hoped to write a book one day, and so reading was a part of her self-care routine. She described how she cared for her family and friends, by being available to them and this contribute to her long-term goal for enjoying life. Additionally, Kat described short-term goals that aligned with her long-term goals of financial stability and enjoyment. These short-term goals were: buying a house, not having debt, trying new restaurants, and going skydiving.

Cross-Case Analysis

Well-Being: A Transitory Journey

While all participants provided a definition for well-being, many felt that it was difficult to define. For four Kānaka, it was hard to describe because it was a way of living and being in the world that could evolve and adapt over time. As these participants explained it's "transient" (Chevelle), it's "always shifting ... [and] its changing" (Puna), and "maybe this journey to being a well individual is a journey you are always actively or always trying to work toward ... you never arrive" (Jessie).

For two Kānaka, the concept was elusive. Kainoa felt a "mental brokenness" around well-being because she did not understand "what you're supposed to do to relax," which was incongruous with her desire for achievement. She attributed this brokenness to burn out and connected it to her relationships by saying, "most of the people I interact with are scholar activists and I don't think activism leaves a lot of room for well-being." Chevelle believed that the concept was elusive for another reason. She said,

You have to be able to know yourself, which I think is a difficult thing for a lot of people to do because that requires self-reflection which sometimes, we don't want to see the things that we actually are, much less do the work to address the things we don't like.

While Chevelle and Kainoa grappled with defining well-being, other Kānaka struggled to talk about it in relation to themselves and others in their life. This challenge manifested in diverse ways, and we explored these challenges together in response to particular questions, namely: "What would you need right now to improve your well-being?" and "Talk to me about a person who you think has well-being." How these Kānaka responded to these questions reflect the

multidimensionality of crafting a well-being definition and provided insight to the consequences they lived and experienced.

Well-Being Needs

Two Kānaka did not know what they would need to improve their well-being because they were content with their life (Kainoa, Kat). Two Kānaka highlighted the pandemic as a well-being constraint (Kainoa, Anuheia), while five Kānaka talked about systemic constraints that would improve their well-being. These systemic influences included capitalism (Kainoa) affordable housing and livable wages (Chevelle), financial resources (Pua and Māhea), and kaiāulu or community (Kahala). Five Kānaka talked about needing more time (Pua, Māhea, Puna, Emily, Jessie), such as time to take care of themselves and their relationships with others, manage their priorities, be inspired, and rest. These diverse needs help to describe the complexity of well-being, while recognizing the contextual and systemic consequences that these Kanaka doctoral students lived and experienced.

Well-Being Models

In talking about someone who has well-being, the Kānaka I interviewed provided a variety of complex responses. Eight Kānaka identified someone who has well-being, while three could not identify someone who did (Anuheia, Kainoa, Kat). For the eight Kānaka who named someone with well-being, three did so easily (Chevelle, Māhea, Kahala), and another three identified someone, but acknowledged limitations based on their definition of well-being (Kawika, Jessie, Pua). For example, Jessie said her grandmother was someone who had well-being because of her strong faith. However, Jessie's personal definition for well-being also included being confident and secure. And so, she explained,

I want to be in a state of well-being where I can be okay with who I am. And that's not so much my grandma. ... I have to cut that lady some slack but she does have some insecurities.

Of the eight Kānaka, two also identified someone but acknowledged that well-being was not necessarily something that you have (Puna, Emily). As Puna said, "I think well-being is something that you practice." Emily offered similar sentiments, describing how while achievable well-being was not necessarily something you work to achieve but something that you were constantly working on. These collective reflections complicated defining well-being and prompted me to re-reflect on the interview protocol.

Personal Reflection: A Well-Being Assumption. Guided by the participants' stories, I reflected on my interview protocol and the assumption embedded in the question "Talk to me about a person who you think has well-being," such that an individual could have well-being or could look to other people in their life as models for their well-being development. The Kānaka I interviewed reminded me of the process and journey that is well-being, which created tension, pause and deep reflection when answering this question. These Kānaka also reminded me that the goal of living a "good" life is a moving target and that people adjust what well-being means for them based on their lived experiences and circumstances. These reflections allowed me to re-think how I would consider this question if I conducted these interviews again, and perhaps could instead ask, "Talk to me about a person who you think has a healthy well-being practice. What is a part of their practice that you believe maintains their well-being day-to-day and can you tell me about it?"

I then reflected back on a question that was posed during my comprehensive exam, when Dr. Ratliffe asked me whether I was looking at well-being or well-being development. (Mahalo,

Dr. Ratliffe). Looking back, I wanted to explore both how Hawaiians defined well-being via constructs (i.e., well-being), and the lived experiences through which they came to define well-being for themselves (i.e., well-being development). In hopes of honoring a Hawaiian process, I tried to let their stories be my guide, and aimed to describe well-being development throughout their individual cases. As my Kumu Hula says, “The F-Word. Flexible!” So, I strived to be malleable and let the constructs for well-being emerge piece-by-piece as I read and re-read their stories. I have attempted to honor their unique voices, which I may or may not have achieved, but recognize and honor my role as researcher, as a mirror, to look at the reflection of the picture we created together. And so, in this cross-case analysis and with these introductory reflections in mind, I now turn to well-being to articulate the constructs of well-being that emerged from looking across their stories. In this definition, I also strived to look at how this definition was embodied through the everyday routines and activities these Kānaka engaged in. Here are their stories.

Well-Being Constructs

The constructs that came to define well-being as articulated by the Kānaka I interviewed, were balance and relationality. Based on the conversations I had with them, balance was articulated as inner peace and was achieved through the maintenance of mind, body, and spirit equilibrium. This sense of balance can be described through the cultivation of a pono practice, meaning that these Kānaka developed and engaged in routines and activities, which they felt were beneficial to the wellness of their mind, body or spirit. More specifically, cultivating pono of the mind meant engaging in routines and activities that helped to ground them, allowed them to self-reflect, cultivated joy, or made them feel productive in their day-to-day life. To cultivate pono of the body, the Kānaka I spoke with discussed engaging in routines and activities for their

physical health, and in particular, to rest. Lastly, the Kānaka I interviewed described how they cultivated pono of their spirit through spiritual routines and activities. The specific routines and activities varied for these Kānaka and the ones that were most important for cultivating a sense of balance related to their perceived needs.

These Kānaka were also conscious of the ways imbalance manifested in pono 'ole of their mind, body or spirit. In the event of imbalance, these Kānaka either engaged in routines and activities to re-balance themselves internally or lived with the imbalance because other routines and activities were perceived as more important for their overall sense of well-being. Counterintuitively, the pandemic provided the affordance to engage in self-care without guilt because self-care served Hawai'i communities and was perhaps less stigmatized.

Over time, it became apparent that relationality was also central to how these Kānaka defined their well-being. This relationality can be described as a cultivation of a pilina practice, meaning that these Kānaka developed and engaged in relationship-building routines and activities that contributed to their overall sense of well-being. Because of kuleana, the Kānaka I spoke with strived to mālama their relationships and were intentional about the people and spaces they gave their time and energy to, while recognizing the constraints these relationships could have on their sense of balance.

At times, family relationships constrained a sense of balance as the Kānaka I spoke with recognized the intergenerational trauma that persisted in their families. At times, their roles as parents, caretakers or siblings also allowed them to reflect on their pono practice such that they were able to adjust their routines and activities to mālama their families or as they were living into pono relationships with them. In general, community relationships provided support for the Kānaka I spoke with. Community relationships were also tied to the way these Kānaka defined

their kuleana and supported their ability to find fulfillment in service to their communities through their work and research. Perhaps because we are human and thus social beings, these Kānaka recognized their need to be in and belong to a community and valued having deep and meaningful relationships with others. I propose that they valued and sought out relationships within their communities when such relationships were not readily available in their families. The pandemic may have provided space for these Kānaka to reflect on the deep and meaningful relationships they needed, remove relationships that did not serve their wellness, and find new ways to cultivate pono with the people in their lives. Lastly, ‘āina relationships were described as important for well-being. The Kānaka I spoke with valued time in and with ‘āina but did not always have the privilege to be with ‘āina because of competing economic demands. These relationships constructed social contexts for these Kānaka, informing their liminality. For example, between their identity as students and as part of the lāhui. In the next sections, I will describe the constructs, balance and relationality, in more detail looking across the cases, the routines and activities these Kānaka described within each construct, and then I will revisit the construct once more to summarize.

Construct One: Balance

To further describe balance, I turn to the definitions provided by the Kānaka I spoke with. Anuheā defined well-being as,

holistic and it encapsulates, includes, the wellness of the body, like physical functioning and the wellness of the mind, so your own thoughts. And then also, your na‘au, your instincts about how you feel, like what you’re doing in the world is right or wrong, or what’s happening around you is right or wrong.

Anuheā described a fullness of well-being, a feeling that a life well lived is somehow complete and enough despite the fact that well-being was transient. As articulated by another Kānaka, Chevelle, “well-being is just feeling whole.” Anuheā’s definition also infers that perhaps Kānaka make sense of their well-being through Hawaiian ways of knowing by referring to feelings in the na‘au. Similarly, Emily described the balance of mind, body, and spirit through the concept of pono. She shared, the following definition:

Pono being that individual health in the sense of how I can balance my body, mind, or kino, our mana‘o, as well as our ‘uhane, our spirit. How we can balance those three things to achieve pono, our optimal Native Hawaiian health.

Thus, well-being for Emily meant living in a way that is balanced, which successively resulted in individual health. Healthy, as Emily described, in a way that was Hawaiian. On the one hand, Kawika suggested that living this way means,

Well-being is not just the absence of problems or the opposite of not doing well, but I think it’s an actual, it’s *something [emphasis added]* and I believe that everybody has tremendous potential to thrive and to give life to the world around them.

For Pua, well-being at the time of our interviews was defined as financial stability. Perhaps Kānaka define well-being based on their current needs and once these needs, such as financial stability are met, their conceptualization of well-being evolves, such as a need to thrive as described by Kawika.

Mele: Imbalance. I created this found poem using the responses from the Kānaka I interviewed to the question, “So if life becomes unbalanced, what does that typically look like?”

My physical body tells me first,
Something is off.
I feel guilty,
I get really anxious.

I give myself excuses,
to be by myself.
[It's] a feeling of sinking.

It means an increase in anxiety.
A lot of anxiety,
A lot of worrying.
Anxiety, worrying, mostly.
Oh, depression, for sure.

I hold stress in my body.
I end up getting stretched thin.
I'm extremely tired,
I'm breaking down,
I crash.

My body is convinced that I'm at peace
[with] addictions.

I haven't discovered
a [version of myself] that has found balance.
I wish I could find something
that could take my attention in a healthy way.
I'm learning to say no.

I have to start doing the things that help me,
ground and recenter back into myself.

Recognize me as a full human being.

But what happened when these Kānaka experienced imbalance of mind, body, and spirit, an imbalance to well-being? As Kat said, “if anything’s kind of out of whack whether it be your mental health or your physical health, it does cause your life to be more difficult to operate in.” Feeling unbalanced triggered an emotional response from the Kānaka I spoke with and provided some evidence that feeling unbalanced is an embodied phenomenon. So, while six of the eleven participants (Anuheā, Kainoa, Chevelle, Kat, Emily, Māhea) acknowledged balance of mind,

body, and spirit, as central to well-being, ten described embodied experiences of imbalance in their lives. Four participants (Kat, Māhea, Anuhea, Pua) explicitly identified anxiety or feeling anxious, which was coupled with other feelings: of worry, fear, guilt, frustration, and uncertainty. Two participants (Emily, Kainoa) described ailment of the physical body, or ill-being, as an indicator of feeling unbalanced. And three participants (Jessie, Pua, Kawika) provided other diverse visceral experiences, specifically, confusion, depression, and the feeling of sinking. Kahala also shared that feeling unbalanced, “means not being able to envision” the future. He said,

I like to think of what can be and what we can do to change the world. When I can no longer imagine those things, when I can no longer be creative about what I desire, what I see for myself, and for others- my relations that’s when it goes into that very, very worried troublesome space.

Furthermore, some of these Kānaka felt that it not only influenced what they believed about others, but also the way they interacted with others. This embodiment of imbalance, such that it affects relationships and interactions will be discussed in a coming section.

Case Examples

Mo‘olelo: Balance through Spirit. Jessie said, “my well-being is centered on spiritual well-being.” She quoted actor Oscar Issac and took the time to pull up the interview quote because she felt it was a reflection of her well-being. She shared the interview question about his spirituality, where the journalist asked Issac if he tried turning his spirituality back on again or if he was still in the “off mode” to which he described spirituality through the metaphor of searching for a light switch in the dark, and how materialism was a “dead end” constraining his ability to cultivate a spiritual life. For Jessie, centering her connection to her spiritual self, meant

“that there’s justice in the universe” that allowed her to not, “perseverate on the evils of this world.” This belief in a higher power provided her with a sense of reassurance to counter the potential despair and depression that came from the lived physical world. She mentioned Isabella Kalua, a little girl who was reported missing, and whose story flooded Hawai‘i media at the time of our first interview, as an example of how the physical world could bring despair and to highlight her need for spirituality to foster balance and give her peace of mind.

Mo‘olelo: Re-Balance through Mental Rest. Well-being was defined, for Puna, through relaxation, calm, and inferentially a need for peace. She shared,

And now it’s kind of changing into, if I can just relax. It doesn’t have to be at the beach nowadays, it can just be at home or at a park. I guess I find more fulfillments in the calm.

So, not so much the beach anymore, but just the still.

She further added that well-being is, “allowing yourself that time to settle in and enjoy life a little bit.” The need for rest, whether it be intentional, unintentional, or radical, was a concept that Kānaka came to wonder about and wrestled with throughout our interviews.

Together, these participant definitions put forth the belief that when we have balance of mind, body, and spirit, we can live in a state of wellness. This state of being is an active process of reconnection and healing, that is experienced as well-being. For some Kānaka, this may be an active process of connection to one aspect of balance, such as to the spirit, depending on its perceived importance in their life. When embodied, this state of balance is evidenced by how healthy we are and how we give life to the world around us.

Mo‘olelo: A Counterstory of Balance through the Body. While these Kānaka described physical health as an indicator of well-being, Māhea shared how she re-framed her

well-being beliefs given the state of her physical body. Because of physical illness she needed to find balance through new forms of well-being and described this lived experience as follows:

It's funny because when I was young, and I was a dancer, having the perfect healthy body was always everything. And then once I got sick, and I literally couldn't get off the couch for a month and a half after my surgeries, I came to realize that there's a really strong spirit part inside of me that is crystal clear, regardless of what my body is doing through. And so, that was kind of a huge shift for me that I came up with, this idea that the closer I got to dying, actually, the closer I got to really living because I discovered a part inside of myself that's really strong. And I'm not sure I really like the term resilience, but I mean that's really what it is. I'm resilient as shit, if I'm anything and so well-being to me means feeling balanced and feeling in my divine creative flow. I know that I'm happy and healthy when music just spontaneously comes to be. So I call myself a songcatcher, not really a songwriter because I've never been able to just sit down and think out a song. But if I'm in a good state of mind, I hear scores of music happening. And so that's my gauge as to how healthy I'm feeling. That's definitely my happiness meter.

Despite the challenges she was facing with her physical body, Māhea was finding within herself new ways to be healthy and cultivate well-being. She became balanced through divine creative flow, and that flow provided a “happiness meter” that reflected her state of well-being. As learned from Māhea's story, when one aspect of our mind, body, and spirit changes, we may find contentment through adaptation and based on what is accessible given our means. In-turn, it is possible to learn to re-appreciate our life by creating a new definition of well-being for ourselves.

Balance: A holistic pathway for life contentment. As Pua highlighted, contentment and peace are aspects of her well-being. She shared,

Above all, to me well-being is like being in a constant state, well in a pretty constant state of just feeling content and at peace with things that you can't control. Even when things get hard, you do what you do, and then you just kind of let that rest.

She conceptualized well-being as a product of balance, and finding peace such that she is able to, “not put too much pressure on [herself]” and that, “it’s okay to be stressed out or anxious, but always coming back to that place of contentment and letting things roll out the way that they’re supposed to be.” Pua added that this practice of coming back to contentment was a helpful tool to, “maintain [her] sanity.” For Kainoa, well-being was born out of the interaction and overlap between, “balance and fulfillments and health.” While balance was an elusive concept for her, she later came to define well-being as, “feeling happy and contented.” This belief meant, “being content in the present moment but also content when looking back at previous moments, and then looking forward.” Although Kainoa felt, “like there’s no time for self-care when our waters poisoned and we’re in the pandemic,” she expressed, “things like community care and community building” were more attractive to her experience of well-being. She grappled with the compromises that come with being in various communities and shared,

While they are meaningful and fulfilling, they’re also stressful and a lot of work. So, I think there’s those moments that you can put in your gas tank, but I think we’re often collectively as a community, like Hawaiian community, education community, activist community, we’re just kind of on fumes all the time.

Despite feeling unbalanced and on fumes, Kainoa found well-being in the possibility of contentment despite an “overthinking brain and body” such that there is “a clear pathway” in all directions.

Balance: Routines and Activities

Mental Grounding, Self-Reflection, Joy, and Productivity. The Kānaka I spoke with described routines and activities that were grounding. For example, being in ‘āina or physically returning home in times of stress as well as prayer and oli were grounding activities. Such activities allowed these Kānaka to live in alignment with their values (pono, care, peace, joy, or faith) and were necessary given the stress they lived and experienced in their daily life. Several Kānaka described the burnout they had witnessed in others or experienced themselves and felt that grounding activities were necessary in response to their environment. Overall, grounding activities and routines helped these Kānaka find peace and counter the experience of imbalance. Such activities and routines also supported these Kānaka to find peace with the decisions they made and with the things that were outside of their control. In essence, grounding helped these Kānaka feel confident in their ability to live into their various kuleana.

The Kānaka I spoke with described several activities and routines around self-reflection, such as learning in school, journaling, prayer, as well as therapy. I got the sense that graduate school also provided these Kānaka doctoral students with the opportunity and affordance for critical self-reflection. For example, Kainoa shared how her graduate school experience so far was “a lot of self-improvement,” and described that while her research and dissertation would be for the community and lāhui, her coursework was “the personal journey ... the fully just internal mental exercise of figuring out what is important to me.” Perhaps as a privilege of graduate school, these Kānaka were able to critically reflect on and recognize the need to check in with

their physical body or were forced to confront the trauma that lived in their bodies through their education. Importantly, it seemed that these higher levels of education gave them the tools to recognize and name the roots of their trauma stemming from colonization, which they could then push against, as well as identify the effects of colonization embedded in their families and communities, which they could then try to heal from but also create boundaries for in an effort to protect their pono. In several interviews, we also discussed the effects of therapy. While some of these Kānaka used therapy as a self-reflective routine and activity, one Kanaka was critical of its praxis. As Kahala described, while therapy was helpful it did not fulfill their needs,

A lot of [therapists] really helped out in me trying to figure out how to deal with the problems of the University. However, there was always a limit, and I think that limit was, I don't think therapists understood you're doing therapy in an institution on our land. Particularly for the non-Kanaka folks, they didn't understand that ... I've never had an experience where someone was like, "So, here I am again, a non-Kanaka practicing this on your land. ... What can I do to decolonize that?" ... It's always been the you, like it's a you thing.

Altogether, these Kānaka described how changes in their physical bodies helped them to self-reflect and become more attuned to their needs. Additionally, self-reflection was a mental activity that helped them to think about and assess their goals while reassuring them that they were on the right path (i.e., using their na'au as a guide) and create healthy boundaries for their success in life. Some of these Kānaka utilized spiritual routines and activities to self-reflect. The Kānaka I interviewed also described self-reflection as social, such that their relationships with others and at times conflict with others, supported their ability to reflect on their lived experiences.

The Kānaka I spoke with also cultivated joy through their everyday routines and activities at work, in school, with community, and with ‘āina. They strived to cultivate joy for themselves to live a happy life, which ultimately aided in their sense of balance. At times, cultivating joy was radical, such that these Kānaka refused to be discouraged by the systems and structures that could easily stifle their happiness. Giving and receiving joy looked like caring for themselves and others, and receiving care from others, although the latter was less explicitly described in our interviews.

The everyday routines and activities these Kānaka described as productive included work and school, creating and checking off lists, keeping a calendar, as well as restful productivity⁷⁸ activities such as doing the laundry and having a morning routine, which often involved coffee or tea. These productivity routines and activities were described by the Kānaka I spoke to as a way they cultivated balance and a meaningful life. They critically explored how productivity is defined in the capitalist system by calling attention to the external pressure of labor expectations. From their stories, I learned how these Kānaka re-defined productivity not as economic performance but rather as cultivating a balanced life of giving and receiving care, taking time to rest, being knowledgeable experts and practitioners, sharing that knowledge with others, and being able to engage in hūhū in our relationships in ways that were culturally grounded.

Physical Health and Rest. The need to engage in healthy routines and activities for the physical body was evident across cases. The specific activities and routines described were physical activities of exercise, daily movement, and running, ‘ai pono activities of healthy eating, grocery shopping and cooking, as well as sleep, hygiene, and mālama ‘āina. Several Kānaka described the social determinants of health for Native Hawaiians to illuminate the inequities in

⁷⁸ See Pua’s story and the section “Mo‘olelo: Re-Learning Productivity” for a description of restful productivity.

health they lived and experienced within their physical bodies and their mo‘okū‘auhau. These Kānaka described physical ailments that were tied to their genealogies, and recognized the stress they held in their bodies that manifested in adverse consequences to their physical health. They also recognized contextual consequences to describe physical ailments. The sentiment of not becoming a part of negative Hawaiian health statistics was palpable. Importantly, the health of the physical body was often sacrificed for other priorities in their life. For example, being in service to community or as several Kānaka described “no ka lāhui,” felt more important regardless of the health of their physical body.

Perhaps it is unsurprising that I heard stories of lack of sleep or change in eating habits because of the nature and rigor of completing a doctoral degree. But I also heard stories of lack of physical health, which landed several Kānaka in the hospital. Quite literally, the physical body was not a priority, it was sacrificed until the needs of the physical Kanaka body were required for survival. Addedly, the Kānaka I spoke with discussed the interplay of physical health with mental health to recognize the ways the physical body, and in particular, a lack of physical health, resulted in changes to their mental capability. Some Kānaka I interviewed attended Kamehameha Schools and highlighted Kamehameha’s rigorous physical education program as a source of knowledge that promoted their physical health in later years. Overall, physical health was described in relationship to mental health and the COVID-19 pandemic centered physical health within Kanaka reality by destigmatizing a prioritization of physical and mental health for Kānaka today.

Aligned with physical health, rest was also an important routine and activity. At times, the nature of rest was described in a way that was radical. These activities and routines included sleep, reading, journaling, and having a morning routine that involved oli or pule. Rest was also

described as an act of resistance to counter burnout and Western norms of productivity. Rest was also a means for recognizing the boundaries of their capacity and was an important practice for cultivating self-reflection. For many of the Kānaka I spoke with, rest was absent from their routine. And so, allowing themselves to rest was really challenging because these Kānaka felt immense pressure to mālama their communities and be productive. So, working to the point of exhaustion was often a theme that forced them to rest. As stated previously, the pandemic was a gift in that it allowed for intentional rest in ways that also supported community needs. This reality alleviated some of the community pressures these Kānaka experienced and gave them the opportunity to heal, self-reflect, and re-ground.

Spiritual Prayer and Meditation. The spiritual landscape of Hawai‘i and across Kanaka families is diverse, and so the spiritual routines and activities of the Kānaka I spoke with reflected such diversity. It seemed to me that many of these Kānaka engaged in some form of spirituality and several discussed specific activities such as prayer, meditation, or oli. These practices were rooted in Christian-based faiths, ‘ike kūpuna, or other ethnic or cultural practices they had learned. Some of these Kānaka engaged in spiritual practices they inherited or described spiritual activities embedded in their lived genealogy. And there were cases where the spiritual practices of their ‘ohana created conflict because of the history of colonization in Hawai‘i. Similar to grounding activities, spiritual activities and routines, provided a sense of peace and contentment, which shaped how balanced these Kānaka felt in their daily life. Many engaged in a spiritual practice as part of their internal sense of balance, and it was not typically for a sense of connection to a higher power, or sense of belonging and community. So, spiritual engagement supported a sense of inner balance by providing peace and pono for the Kānaka I interviewed. While all Kānaka did not describe a spiritual practice per se, it was hard for me to make a

judgment about what these Kānaka felt was spiritual unless they were explicit about making such connections. For example, Anuhea described the relationship between caring for ‘āina as well-being. But in the context of our interviews, she did not call attention to the spiritual aspect of that practice. However, Anuhea did describe pule (prayer), oli (chant), and piko (opening and sometimes closing a space through collective self-reflection in a circle) as important activities for how she engaged in mālama ‘āina, which are Hawaiian cultural practices that could be considered spiritual. This potential is a limitation of my interview process, and a future study could explore such spiritual engagements as well-being more intentionally.

Balance Revisited: A Pono Practice. Informed by these stories, I suggest that one goal of well-being is balance. Balance as a construct within the boundaries of well-being is enacted and lived through the development of a pono practice. This pono practice can be categorized by several routines and within these routines are specific activities. Although activities could vary across people, such as the Kānaka I interviewed, I included a few examples that were effective strategies they described in our interviews together. Namely strategies for grounding, self-reflection, and rest.

Construct Two: Relationality

These Kanaka doctoral students also considered the quality of their relationships with others as central to their well-being. As Jessie defined, “my view of well-being is, in a sense, that no one is an island,” she continued, “I guess in my sense of well-being, I’m not an isolated entity, I’m something that is involved and leaning, and having other people lean on me, kind of a being.” Jessie attributed this belief to her lived experiences, having a father who passed away when she was young, such that her family created a community around her, coupled with the genealogy of spirituality in her life. Likewise, Kahala expressed, well-being is, “where I can just

feel that all of my relationships are pono, where I don't feel isolated. ... Well-being is, if I could find folks who belong to my class, as an intellectual, who are able to carry and maintain relations that are pono." Prior to providing this definition for well-being Kahala considered it, "a very rare occurrence," but in a brief self-reflection came to say, "I do have that. Kahala, you do have that," to recognize the community around him. Kahala added that these relationships may have been stifled because of the pandemic, which was a shared sentiment among the Kānaka I interviewed. Emily offered that one way we carry and maintain relationships that are pono is through mana. She defined mana as,

Rooted in that pilina or that connection. So [wellness] is not just by your own individual health, but it's also how you reciprocate that, and how you can bring help to others and others can add to your pono.

So, while well-being was described by these Kānaka as balance, which we experience emotionally and individually, one way we can recognize it in our relationships, as Emily described, is by asking ourselves, "How do you then in turn balance [mind, body, and spirit] for your family and your community, so that we can all achieve pono or wellness?"

With this ideology of balance in mind, if Kānaka act in a way that is balanced for themselves, they can then learn how to support others to do the same. Said another way, Kawika offered that well-being is a state of living into your "potential to thrive", such that, "you're doing it in a way that gives more than it takes." Anuheā shared that her relationship with 'āina was a way that she was living into her potential to thrive. As she said,

When I think about my own self-care, I think about how mālama 'āina feels like self-care. And how I know that I am part of 'āina and the 'āina, it's part of me. So, if I'm

taking care of ‘āina then I’m also taking care of myself and seeing that positive impact is meaningful.

Thus, relationships influenced how these Kānaka perceived their well-being, and that sense of well-being could be reciprocated with others, which contributed to how balanced they felt.

In articulating what an unbalanced life looked like for them, some of these Kānaka described how it changed their relationships. Five participants described acting differently towards others or changing their behavior when they felt unbalanced. Specifically, Kahala said, “It means cutting myself off from folks more than I usually do, even as an introvert,” while Kat explained it as, “I have less time for people.” For Māhea it meant, “not taking on more than I can handle realistically. Even though I want to do it, I’m learning to say no,” while for Emily, it was recognizing that in times of unbalance she was more irritable with others, and less patient. Interestingly, Chevelle, explained “I become a hermit because it’s my effort to protect everyone from my grouchiness. ... because I don’t feel like I have the capacity to show up for people in the way that they might need me to.” Connected to her relationships and lived experiences, feeling unbalanced for Chevelle meant not feeling seen and, or heard by others.

People Relationships. At the onset of this project, I articulated relationality as a construct for well-being, and delineated it into three parts: people relationships, place relationships, and spiritual relationships. Many of these Kānaka recognized their relationships as important to their well-being. Unfortunately, many of these Kānaka were reflective about the struggles in their immediate families and the resulting sentiment of learning what not to do when it came to their well-being. For a few, caregiving was prominent in their lives as parents or family caretakers, and many felt responsible for other family members in some form. So, these

Kānaka recognized their need to give care to their families and community, at times at the expense of their well-being.

Space Relationships. The Kānaka I spoke with reminded me of the people that create spaces of community, such as in academia or in their careers. These ordinary spaces were important because this was where the majority of these Kānaka spent their time every day. It was clear that for the Kānaka I interviewed, their research was a rejuvenating space, which they viewed as part of their kuleana to community. The academic space was also one that was critically analyzed, as many academic spaces caused tension and conflict. To escape such conflict, the Kānaka I spoke to found a community of people who could support them, namely friends and colleagues in the academy, as well as their professors. They valued these relationships and effectively built a community around themselves. For participants who were teachers, students were also a source of hope and inspiration that supported their overall sense of well-being. The majority found purpose through their careers, they felt that their contributions to these communities were valued, but also recognized the constraints of capitalist culture on their ability to feel supported by the career space. Ten out of eleven of these Kānaka held graduate assistantships at the University. Although this provided financial support for their education, many of them had other jobs in addition to their assistantships for financial stability. And while they described spaces on campus that provided community, they were critical of the ways the institution perpetuated harm because of their lived experiences as graduate assistants and students. This landscape highlights a need to restructure academic spaces, such that communities of practice rooted in healing are formed, and so that students feel valued and are equitably compensated with a livable wage. It was clear that there were people that cared within the University that supported their success, however, systemic challenges persisted and presented

problems in the daily life of these Kānaka that affected their ability to not only fulfill their responsibilities at the University but to cultivate a sense of well-being overall.

‘Āina Relationships. I asked these Kānaka to define ‘āina and explore the ways they engaged with ‘āina. Within the boundaries of this project, it was clear that these Kānaka generally understood and could articulate a relationship to ‘āina. Several connected to ‘āina intentionally as part of their well-being practice, while some were engaged with ‘āina indirectly through their work. But what I learned from their stories was the general absence or lack of access to ‘āina because of consequences and the competing demands of daily life. It was also clear that the degree of knowledge about ‘āina was as diverse as the Kānaka I spoke with. How these Kānaka defined ‘āina and thus explained their relationship to ‘āina was not as homogenous as I anticipated.

The Kānaka I spoke with felt attached to ‘āina but getting to intentionally connect with ‘āina was sometimes perceived as work, perhaps because of the commodification of ‘āina through things like ‘āina workdays, while at others it was perceived as fun, which they could not afford because of socioeconomic needs and demands. I also endeavored to explore mālama ‘āina and aloha ‘āina. While these practices reflect ‘āina relationships there were nuances in the understanding of mālama ‘āina and aloha ‘āina across their interviews, which warrant additional exploration beyond the scope of this project. These Kānaka stories reflect the fractured connections Kānaka have with ‘ōlelo Hawai‘i, as the historical trauma and loss of language influence their ability to make sense of Hawaiian ways of living. Aptly, as Puna explained,

We lost the words, but we didn’t lose the instincts for certain things. ... before you’re learning mea Hawai‘i you just have family practices. And then, you learn a little bit more about how come you do those practices. ... it’s actually mea that matter. ... because it’s

just tradition we lose the meaning of it sometimes because it's just, its repetition, it's just a habit at that point. So, we lose that, how come we're doing stuff, but we never lose the practice. ... we're still doing it.

Relationality: Routines and Activities

People Relationship Routines and Activities. These Kānaka described routines and activities that cultivated their relationships with people. They described cultivating their relationships by being present, modeling behavior, practicing patience, being kind, and supporting and helping others. Importantly, the Kānaka I interviewed explored the caring relationships they had with 'ohana. These relationships were something they could care for but did not always receive care from. It is just as important to acknowledge the growth within families of the Kānaka I interviewed, perhaps because of this critical time in Hawaiian history when the Kānaka I interviewed were doing the personal work of healing from intergenerational trauma. I do not want to make it seem as though families did not care or were not flexible in recognizing their shortcomings and perpetuation of historical harm, but rather to highlight the continuum of healing that these Kānaka have taken on as a kuleana within their families, perhaps as a privilege of being educated individuals in their family's ecosystem. I recognize that healing for these Kānaka is multidimensional, and they may have been learning to heal in other spaces. Additionally, I recognize that higher education is one space, and that these Kānaka may have had family members who were learning to heal in other spaces that positively contributed to the healing happening within their families. In other words, I do not suggest that higher education is the only place this can be learned, but do offer that it is a space that these Kānaka may have been given particular skills and tools that they then used on their healing journeys.

Specific relational routines and activities varied. For some, it was engaging through a particular activity, such as mālama ‘āina workdays, while for others it was simply checking in with people who were important to them. The Kānaka I spoke with described how the pandemic allowed for other forms of relationship building, whether it was sending a text, making a phone call, or dropping off food. Overall, these relationships allowed Kānaka to co-create safe spaces and build trusting relationships that they could then rely on. This support and meaningful engagement with others fostered their resilience in times of stress.

‘Āina Relationship Routines and Activities. These Kānaka described ‘āina as ancestor and ‘ohana. They reflected upon ‘āina as embodiments of people and people as embodiments of ‘āina. The routines and activities they engaged in to foster relationships with ‘āina were primarily through being in ‘āina and mālama or care. ‘Āina engagement was often described as a re-connection necessary for survival and was something that provided these Kānaka with a sense of grounding and belonging. The Kānaka I spoke with recognized their kuleana to ‘āina and were reawakening the ways they believed they should serve and care for ‘āina in their daily lives. With respect and appreciation, they shared about ‘āina degradation, romanticization, and ownership of ‘āina that were sources of tension in their spirits. The Kānaka I interviewed who were also parents described a desire to help their children build a relationship with ‘āina because it was important for them that their children build a familial connection to place. Oftentimes, these Kānaka discussed how ‘āina was restorative because it brought contentment and helped them to feel calm. They also acknowledged a desire to engage and play in ‘āina more often, but they were not always able to. While it was clear that building a relationship with ‘āina was important, culturally valued, and desired, it was also a privilege that they were not always afforded.

Relationality Revisited: A Pilina Practice

From these stories, I suggest that another goal of well-being is relationality. Honoring relationships to people, spaces, and places within the boundaries of well-being is enacted and lived through the development of a pilina practice. This pilina practice can be categorized by several routines and within these routines are specific activities that varied across these as detailed previously.

Well-Being Redefined

From these stories and lived experiences, I propose well-being from a Hawaiian perspective as described by two constructs: balance of mind, body, and spirit and relationality with people (and spaces), as well as with place or ‘āina. Receiving is an important and often overlooked part of the process of relationality because of the way Kānaka give and are expected to give to others, their communities and ‘āina because of economic demand and at the expense of themselves.

From these stories, a Kānaka definition for well-being could be found in the Hawaiian construct of pono. Pono is lived and experienced through the praxis of well-being as care, specifically self-care and relationship care. A practice of self-care includes a cultivation of wellness of the mind, body or spirit and the needs of these three things shift and change over time such that Kānaka adjust their well-being focus of self-care based on their perceived needs and as mediated by the consequences of their environment. Importantly, a lack of care across mind, body, and spirit manifested in consequences for the physical body that were often intentionally ignored. Activities and routines of self-care were diverse, but some strategies that worked for these Kānaka were: (a) various forms of prayer, (b) being physically active, (c) getting enough sleep, (d) learning, and (e) having a morning routine. These Kānaka purposefully

engaged in self-care routines when they needed grounding. They also engaged in self-care as a means of cultivating joy and for intentional self-reflection. At times, these routines felt productive, at other times they supported their physical health or allowed them to rest. Such forms of care were intimately interconnected with relationship care, as these Kānaka described building deep and meaningful relationships with others and ‘āina was significant to the assessment of their well-being overall. These practices of relationship care were also influenced by how these Kānaka perceived the needs of their communities and were mediated by sociopolitical changes to their environment. A poignant example as some of these Kānaka discussed being the Mauna Kea standoff. A lack of relationship care could be perceived as a cultural stigma and was perhaps perceived as more important than self-care for the Kānaka I interviewed. In other words, this cultural stigma around self-care as selfish, coupled with the belief that Kānaka should be resilient but not angry while they continue to experience oppression and marginalization in their homeland, is a reflection of the lived intersectionality embedded across their mo‘okū‘auhau as higher education students.

Activities and routines of relationship care were also diverse. But some strategies that worked for these Kānaka in their relationships with people were: (a) supporting others in their cultivation of a pono practice, (b) caring and being kind, (c) engaging in work and research that they felt was meaningful to the lāhui, and (d) being present and available to people while also creating boundaries to protect themselves and others. Such relationships were important for these Kānaka to build deep, meaningful, and trusting relationships, and thus a community around them who could support them as a means for receiving care.

Some strategies that worked for these Kānaka in their relationships with ‘āina were: (a) being physically in ‘āina, (b) supporting ‘āina cultivation and restoration both directly and

indirectly, as well as (c) supporting others in their ‘ohana and community to build a relationship with ‘āina. A relationship with ‘āina often supported a sense of balance for the Kānaka I spoke with, thus feeding their pono and serving their overall sense of well-being. However, building and continuing to build such relationships were often constrained by consequences, such as economic demand, and was not something they were afforded consistently. Accordingly, the privilege to work in, on, and with ‘āina is a reality of contemporary life for Kānaka.

Similar to self-care, opportunities in ‘āina also provided a sense of grounding when these Kānaka needed it, while also providing a sense of belonging and peace. At times, ‘āina activities felt like work, but as one Kanaka aptly summarized,

You’re so burnt out that you just don’t have time or you think you don’t have time for ‘āina. But then, when you do do the ‘āina work, then you’re just like that’s what I needed. But you’re like, woah, I’ve been go, go, going for the past two, three months, there’s no way I can make it out the door another day. And then, when you finally do, and then at the end of the workday, then you feel better. But the idea of going, just moving another day is exhausting. So, I guess just pushing beyond the idea of viewing that as work and viewing it more as wellness. But that’s even hard because ... it’s called a workday. You know, when we go to an ‘āina workday? But I don’t think that’s what a lot of us use it for ... I don’t think of it as work when I’m there. Or when I do think of it as work then I’m like, “Oh, I don’t know if I can do this.” But if I think, “Okay, I’m gonna go to the lo‘i ... then it’s not work, it’s wellness. (Puna)

In summary, while integrating self-care activities and routines to increase a sense of well-being may not be a particularly novel or surprising finding, what was valuable from these interviews was the complexity embedded in their narratives about the constraints that existed for

these Kānaka to honor themselves, and value and prioritize the care of their physical bodies as it affects their ability to mālama pono their relationships (i.e., give and receive care in a way that is pono in their relationships). The absence of self-care interwoven throughout these interviews highlights the potential for self-stigma such that these Kānaka may have internalized public attitudes of prejudice towards self-care that need to be addressed to cultivate a culture of Hawaiian healing. This internalized prejudice of self-care could also potentially birth internalized shame, guilt, or fear. And this internalization informs how these Kānaka felt about their Hawaiian identity and consequently represent their stories in (k)new ways by pushing the boundaries of the spaces they occupy.

In conclusion, while relationships with family presented diverse challenges, these Kānaka chose to mālama those relationships because of their sense of kuleana. These Kānaka also created their own families as a means of support and to foster resiliency. While they desired to be in ‘āina more often, they did not always have access to ‘āina in their daily lives. But they recognized their familial connection to ‘āina as ancestor, regardless, and their relationship with ‘āina was a means of self-care because of its restorative and healing power.

Chapter 5.

Discussion

From this research inquiry, I conclude that Native Hawaiian well-being is a practice of care. This practice is rooted in two Native Hawaiian constructs, pono and mālama. Pono as defined in the interviews is having a sense of balance, which is rooted in how an individual takes care of their mental, physical, and spiritual health. Mālama was defined through pilina (e.g., relationships) or taking care of relationships with others and ‘āina. While mālama is often translated as care, I apply it here as a means for defining the relationships Kānaka engaged in with others and ‘āina, which, akin to the term, are attended to, preserved, protected, maintained, and honored. Together pono and mālama provide an overarching structure for the consistent routines and activities Kānaka engaged in daily. Self-care through pono, and care for others and ‘āina through mālama is one way to understand how these Kānaka described well-being. In their development, Kānaka embody their versions of pono and mālama. This embodiment influences how well they feel in their daily life and informs their self-assessments of how well they are doing at any point in time. This embodiment also informs how they feel about their journey of well-being and supports or creates tension in their mind, body, and spirit. When routines and activities support their embodiment of pono and mālama, Kānaka are inspired to perpetuate those routines and activities. When activities and routines create tension, Kānaka feel misaligned and from the fissures of hulihia⁷⁹ become courageous in their ability to change, adapt, and transform their routines and activities. It is also possible that such tensions cultivate disembodiment challenging the Hawaiian identity Kānaka create for themselves. Regardless, these routines and

⁷⁹ Read Howes (2020) for a description of hulihia.

activities when taken together form a practice of care, which is how Kānaka come to conceptualize well-being in their day-to-day life.

I will first re-visit this well-being definition in more detail below. Then I will re-share pono as a construct for Native Hawaiian well-being, discuss how the construct was defined in the interviews, and explore how the construct aligns with Kānaka literature. From this discussion of pono, I highlight the embodiment of imbalance, the privilege of higher education, and the influence of the COVID-19 pandemic on Kānaka conceptualizations of pono. I will then re-share mālama as a construct for Native Hawaiian well-being. While Kānaka defined relationships through the connections themselves (i.e., pilina), I explicate from these interviews the nature of their relationships as ones rooted in mālama or reciprocal care. In this discussion, I highlight the multidimensionality of family relationships, the protective nature of community relationships, and the severance of ‘āina relationships that affect Kānaka. Embedded in this discussion of mālama I include some suggestions for practitioners and problematize the term resiliency as informed by the interviews. To further interpret the results, I provide a brief re-introduction to my research approach and provide contributions from this research to the hula model. These implications are followed by some limitations and a discussion of future research directions.

Well-Being

Well-being, as defined through these interviews, is a journey of both pono and mālama in daily life. As the Kānaka in this study articulated, well-being can be understood through a practice of care, as embodied through routines and activities that cultivate pono and mālama. More specifically, pono was defined as balance for the mind, body, and spirit. And mālama helped to define the types of relationships Kānaka sought to actualize with others and ‘āina.

Altogether, these two constructs create a framework for Native Hawaiian well-being and inform a practice of care, self-care as pono and care in all other relationships as mālama.

Through maintaining mental and physical health, and cultivating a spiritual life, Kānaka developed a pono life for themselves. To do so, Kānaka utilized self-reflection. Oftentimes, reflecting daily on routines and activities was a starting point for adaptation as the Kānaka I interviewed moved towards fulfilling their life goals. Some theorists have described this personal growth as adaptive potential (Colby, 2003) such that development begins with the physiological needs of the body, and cultural conditions promote the development of adaptive potential through security and freedom. Intersectionality adds to the understanding of adaptive potential to recognize both the advantages and disadvantages of people's privileged and oppressed identities that become mutually constructed through their lived experiences (McConnell et al., 2016). In particular, through the well-being stories constructed, self-reflection activities and routines became a counterspace in higher education where Kānaka could explore the alternative identities they possessed, alternative identities which challenged the dominant culture of the higher education institution. This intersectionality and diversity of experiences shaped Kānaka perceptions of well-being and informed how they showed up in higher education spaces, such as through how they created and found community as a means for affirming their Hawaiianess.

While some Kānaka used pilina to define their relationships with people and 'āina, I found that mālama better illustrated how they engaged in their relationships. Through their relationships Kānaka learned their kuleana and developed community. These communities defined their sociocultural contexts. Within such spaces, Kānaka faced social, historical, and political consequences that broadly included capitalism, burnout, the COVID-19 pandemic, and lack of resources and time for themselves and others. While capitalism cultivated unhealthy

economic conditions and norms of productivity, Kānaka were similarly constrained by the needs of the Hawaiian community and the kuleana therein. In a study of Kānaka in higher education, Wright and Balutski (2016) described that, “clarity on the depth of the meaning of kuleana (i.e., the dual nature of kuleana as privilege and burden)” (p. 102) are embedded in the stories of the Kānaka I interviewed. Such conditions have cultivated Kanaka resiliency as a means for survival and as they seek financial stability. As some research highlights, the COVID-19 pandemic had varying effects on students; but compounding consequences will likely increase stress and exacerbate inequalities (Hoyt et al., 2021). These consequences provide an intersection for Kānaka where they seek affirmation, purpose, and well-being, as they strive to fulfill their kuleana and survive. In this process, activities and routines occupy space and time, perhaps constraining opportunities for pilina or at least decreasing its potential. As KanakaCrit explains, consequences that sustain inequality are embedded in our systems and structures and become intertwined with our ways of being and belonging (Cristobal, 2018).

In the current study, Kānaka critically confronted the harmful realities of historical trauma and had the privilege to recognize how systems have perpetuated harm while simultaneously bearing the weight of it as a kuleana in academic and professional spaces. With such recognition came the kuleana to heal trauma and violence in these spaces, in community, in their families, and perhaps most importantly for themselves as Kānaka. For some Kānaka, this kuleana was expressed through activism activities and routines, for others it was expressed through ‘ōlelo Hawai‘i activities and routines. As Conner and colleagues (2023) found, youth activists report that activism benefits outweighed costs. However, costs were related to worse physical and mental health, as well as decreased flourishing⁸⁰, whereas benefits were only

⁸⁰ Flourishing in Conner and colleagues (2023) utilized an eight-item Flourishing Scale to assess positive relationships to feelings of competence, meaning, and purpose in life.

positively associated with flourishing and did not affect physical and mental health. It is possible that such participation, while adaptive, has been met with further marginalization (McConnell et al., 2016) as evidenced by the potential cost to physical and mental health. And so, the challenge with such activities and routines is the replication of oppressive structures as a social response to activities and routines that could be perceived as acts of resistance. The Hawaiian proverb “i ka ‘ōlelo no ke ola, i ka ‘ōlelo no ka make,” (Pūku‘i, 1983, p. 271) similarly reflects how kuleana through learning Hawaiian language can support healing from historical trauma in alignment with activism activities and routines. As MacKinnon and Brennan (2012) advocate, Indigenous language, and Indigenous islands and their surrounding waters provide “the emotional energy of belonging and responsibility” (p. 9) that are important for Indigenous resistance. As Conner and colleagues (2023) research points out, while activities and routines can foster healing from historical trauma, the challenge with healing such trauma exists in the physical and mental health of Indigenous peoples. And so, while routines and activities, such as activism, learning Indigenous language, and cultivating relationships with Indigenous islands and their surrounding waters are important for Indigenous people to heal historical trauma, the challenge of this healing exists in the minds and bodies of Kānaka as people. Perhaps continued change is needed to reflect on kuleana and advocate for structural change (Pentecost & Ross, 2019) so that some kuleana shifts away from Kānaka as individuals and is carried by institutions of power that should be accountable to such rights and responsibilities (Müller & Kenney, 2021). Implications from this research in particular contribute to the collective narrative for advocacy of food and housing security, safe neighborhoods, and racial justice. In the context of universities, Daigle (2019) suggests that this means adopting Indigenous ontologies for place, legal practices of place, and relationships with place by being responsible and accountable to Indigenous peoples

for continued occupation. Furthermore, embodying and activating such kuleana means adopting, “Indigenous conceptualizations of responsibility, relational accountability, relationship-building, and diplomacy-making” (Daigle, 2019, p. 174) based on the Indigenous laws of Indigenous peoples. Another avenue to cultivate a practice of care when considering the counterstories of these Kānaka in particular can be found in the political organizing embedded in their genealogies, such that the alternative communities they find and create around their multiple identities supports their explorations of difference in safe spaces and enables them to create collective narratives for well-being that could serve the lāhui.

The Kānaka I spoke with were also careful about making judgments of other people’s well-being. Perhaps because it could threaten the cultural safety and security of others (Colby, 2003) and perhaps because of historical exploitation, which placed judgments on Hawaiian ways of living (Harfst, 1972). These Kānaka were acutely aware of their judgments and were cautious when responding to interview questions that required subjective opinions, perhaps as an outcome of being highly educated. Research suggests this type of non-judgmental awareness may reduce stress and enhance well-being (Kang et al., 2013). However, these case narratives suggest awareness alone may not be enough to reduce stress for Kānaka. As such, other strategies, which complement non-judgmental awareness may align with contemporary Kanaka proclivities to reduce stress in their lives. As Kānaka described, caring for themselves and others might include strategies for managing their priorities, rest, and finding inspiration more consistently. Perhaps these strategies could effectively complement their development and support stress management. As Menakem (2017) offered,

Learning to settle your body and practicing wise and compassionate self-care are not about reducing stress; they’re about increasing your body’s ability to manage stress, as

well as about creating more room for your nervous system to find coherence and flow. ...

Settling is not the same thing as healing; it is an all-important foundation for healing. A settled body invites and accepts efforts to mend it; an unsettled one tends to resist those efforts. (p. 153)

Informed by these interviews, I propose that living life with care at the center of routines and activities could be interpreted as one way to embody a Hawaiian worldview for well-being.

Pono

Pono as a construct of Native Hawaiian well-being was defined as balance for the mind, body, and spirit by Kānaka. Balance was described through routines and activities of daily self-reflection, joy, productivity, physical health, rest, and spirituality. While each journey differed, engaging in routines and activities that cultivated one of the above led to a more balanced and thus pono life. These results align with Kanaka philosophy (Kame‘eleihiwa, 1992; Lyons, 2010) but differed slightly from Indigenous worldviews which explicate balance as a cosmic ideology between the physical, spiritual, and natural worlds (Kame‘eleihiwa, 1992; Kawagley, 2006; Thorp, 2011) because a sense of balance was contextualized by living in a world that was physically, spiritually and mentally aligned for the Kānaka I interviewed. These results provide new insight into liminality through providing an alternative to how the relationship between the everyday life of Kānaka and the evolving worldviews they embody that inform how they live and experience pono are understood. In other words, these stories suggest that in the day-to-day life of Kānaka, pono was experienced across the mind, body, and spirit. However, while pono was embodied through their relationship to their physical and spiritual worlds, their relationship to the natural world did not fit within the boundaries of how Kānaka defined pono for themselves. So while ‘āina was described as a source of physical, mental, and spiritual healing

the definitions of pono that Kānaka shared with me did not specifically mention ‘āina although it was included in their discussion of well-being overall. This concept, a relationship with the natural world, fit within the boundaries of mālama as will be discussed in a coming section.

From this inquiry, I also learned from these interviews that the more grounded Kānaka felt, the more confident they were of their well-being practice. In a study of Indigenous Māori women’s perspectives of safety, Wilson and colleagues (2016) described how groundedness in physical and ancestral places that people refer to as home, provided comfort, continuity, and strength for Māori women. The current study may add to such research by demonstrating how groundedness inspired confidence for the Kānaka I interviewed.

But as I learned from this inquiry, striving for a sense of balance in life is complicated for Kānaka. As some research suggests, striving can both produce happiness and life satisfaction as well as stress and frustration (Fong, 2004). And while individual striving is different from striving for a sense of balance, such striving informs cognitive dissonance (Brown, 2021). This dissonance creates discomfort and managing to reduce such dissonance increases continuity. So, reducing the dissonance produced from individual striving, in the case of Kānaka, may inform striving for a sense of balance as it creates more or less tension in their minds, bodies, and spirits. On the one hand, striving may produce feeling balanced or pono for Kānaka, to produce happiness and life satisfaction (Fong, 2004). But on the other hand, striving may produce a sense of stress, frustration, and guilt because of increased cognitive dissonance. With the added pressures of kuleana, it is probable to consider how Kānaka today live in a difficult space where they confront this dissonance, and experience imbalance in their lives as informed by feeling ungrounded in their physical and ancestral homes. This reality is negotiated to inform and affirm their Hawaiian identity and perception about well-being. Such identity and beliefs may be

challenged by the socioeconomic spaces they are forced to inhabit, and this evidence draws attention to the need to heal ‘āina displacement. Experiences of dissonance through the stories of feeling unbalanced may alternatively express their liminality, as liminal lived experiences can generate mixed feelings of anticipation, confusion, and fear (Brown, 2020). But what becomes possible from these boundaries and ungroundedness is the possibility of what Ibarra and Petriglieri (2010) call identity play such that people grant themselves permission to explore future selves rather than strive for authenticity and integrity in their existing identities and adapt to create new roles.

At the systems level, ungroundedness could be utilized as a cultural resource to transform learning environments through what researchers have called bracketing (see Howard-Grenville et al., 2011) or the process of reflecting on everyday activities and routines at the organizational level as a way to invite people to explore different ways of interacting. In this process, imagination inspires the transformation of such lived experience, which “opens up the possibility for cultural change as new cultural resources become valid ongoing strategies of action” (p. 534). From this research, some (k)new cultural resources could be Hawaiian cultural activities and routines, such as oli. A fuller exploration of the liminal experiences within universities could advance new and different cultural resources more effectively.

Imbalance manifested in the physical bodies of the Kānaka I spoke with. As these results indicate, imbalance is an embodied phenomena and was expressed as sickness, stress, worry, anxiety, depression, anger, and addiction. Kaholokula and researchers (2020) aligned scholarship on the development of depression in Native Hawaiians (e.g., Rezentes III, 1996) with research on learned helplessness (e.g., Seligman, 1974) to explain how behavioral health problems, such as anxiety and depression, are rooted in the continued stress of oppression. Additionally,

Keli‘iholokai and colleagues (2020) explained that imbalance stems from colonization and that disconnection from ‘āina has worsened Kanaka health and increased disparities. Scholars also note how the physical body of Kānaka and political unrest compounds struggle, and bodies have become sites of cultural and political resistance (Harcourt, 2019). Simultaneously, colonial culture has at times romanticized the Kanaka body (Imada, 2011). When taken together, such research reflects how colonization exists in the Hawai‘i context, specifically in how ‘āina disconnect has manifested in the embodiment of imbalance in contemporary Kanaka bodies. The current study contributes to this landscape by recognizing the growing health disparities of Kānaka and the contemporary living and breathing conditions of colonization that create problems for Kanaka doctoral students. As scholars suggest, addressing such imbalance requires healing from displacement (Keli‘iholokai et al., 2020). So while healing can take many forms, healing people’s relationships with place may be advantageous for Hawai‘i communities based on these research results and existing literature.

As Carlton and colleagues (2006) suggest, resilience factors for anxiety and depression in adolescents come in the form of family emotional support and physical fitness. While the authors found benefits of academic achievement on measured anxiety and depression for non-Hawaiians, no such effects were found for their Native Hawaiian peers. Such evidence suggests that for Native Hawaiian adolescents, academic achievement may not produce as many internal emotional benefits when compared to their non-Hawaiian counterparts. Given the stories of anxiety and depression as expressed throughout the cases in the current study, this finding could also be true for Kānaka in graduate degree pathways. Additionally, academic achievement may also compound health problems (Kaholokula et al., 2020). Together these findings draw attention to the needs of Kānaka across the academic pipeline. Enhancing protective factors of family

emotional support and physical fitness are opportunities that support well-being as noted by Carlton and others (2006). And so, while academic achievement may not be the most fruitful avenue for Kanaka healing, the stories of the Kānaka I interviewed offer two alternatives, which are (a) developing the emotional intelligence of Kanaka families, and (b) instituting physical fitness practices in early stages of development. Other stress management strategies as informed by this study may also be necessary to reduce the prevalence of depression and anxiety for Native Hawaiians pursuing graduate degrees. Together these strategies could have long-term benefits as Kānaka age.

From these interviews, I conclude that in response to imbalance more consistent and reliable support structures are needed for Kānaka on doctoral degree pathways. These support structures could importantly provide healing and opportunities for reconnection to Kanaka ways of being in the world. For the Kānaka I interviewed, cultivating well-being as pono in response to compounding problems and at times from a gap in support, meant finding contentment in and through daily routines and activities. Such contentment could improve further by healing displacement (Keli'iholokai et al., 2020; Wilson et al., 2016). In Hawai'i and as these stories suggest, healing displacement could look like healing people's relationships with 'āina. Research also suggests that healing displacement could come from healing people's relationships with others by fostering support through social and emotional learning (Global Education Monitoring Report, 2019). Revitalization of a Hawaiian process for healing people's relationships through forgiveness or ho'oponopono (Christianto & Smarandache, 2022; James, 2008), could also be promising if and when it is implemented correctly. As such, education and Hawaiian cultural revitalization may be important vehicles of support for healing the imbalance people feel, live,

and experience because of its potential to heal people's relationships with one another and with 'āina.

Other researchers suggest that Hawaiian cultural identity may increase acculturative stress and risk of suicide due to cultural conflict (Kaholokula et al., 2012; Yuen et al., 2000). Kaholokula and colleagues (2012) found that different types of oppression were related to a stronger Hawaiian cultural identity. Such effects manifested in psychological stress via cortisol levels and blood pressure, and contributed to the understanding that oppression is a chronic stressor. As Hermosura and colleagues (2018) suggested, self-awareness of physiological reactions to stress may be an effective strategy for coping as such awareness may reduce the risk of cardiovascular disease. Menakem (2017) similarly advocated for self-awareness through the body to heal trauma and make room for a self-care routine reminding practitioners that, "these practices are nourishment as well as medicine" (p. 154).

Perhaps as a privilege of graduate school, the Kānaka in the current study had opportunities to self-reflect upon and become attuned to recognize imbalance in their physical bodies. In response, these Kānaka were also learning or cultivating (k)new routines and activities to heal and reconnect to their minds, bodies, and spirits. In discussing the behavioral health of Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders in the United States, Kaholokula and colleagues (2020) stated:

Another subset of Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders represent an emerging type of client seeking services, especially among Native Hawaiians. Having benefited from higher levels of education and advancing into good paying jobs or professions, their sources of stress are typically the result of a more internal conflict. ... Having more affluence, such clients often feel they need to "fight" to create more opportunities for

others from their ethnic group, educate non-Pacific Islanders, or counsel other non-Pacific Islanders of their offensive behaviors toward Pacific Islanders. This strong sense of responsibility often causes overwhelming stress that affects their mood and sense of self-efficacy.

Such discussions align with the results of the current study, such that Kānaka embodied imbalance and become attuned to the internal conflicts they endured as a result of their higher educational levels.

The COVID-19 pandemic seemed to provide opportunities for increases in self-care routines and activities, informing well-being overall and perhaps strengthening pono practice. Physical health challenges for the Kānaka I interviewed aligns with research on the inequality of health outcomes for Native Hawaiians (Taparra & Deville, 2021; Townsend et al., 2015) calling attention to social determinants of health (Liu & Alameda, 2011), and economic and environmental disparities that may have adverse health consequences for Kānaka today (National Academies of Sciences et al., 2017). Additionally, the COVID-19 pandemic may have exacerbated these health disparities. As research suggests, health disparities disproportionately affected Indigenous people in comparison to their non-Indigenous counterparts during the pandemic (Mallard et al., 2021). More research is needed to understand these conditions more fully for Native Hawaiians and the long-term effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on Kanaka health.

In response to these interviews, I theorize that in addition to identifying the routines and activities of a pono practice, it is also important to gauge whether such strategies were used effectively in times of chaos or stress. In the current study, this ability allowed Kānaka to cultivate a sense of fulfillment, be at peace with their decisions, and seek inspiration and

creativity. Measuring how and to what degree such strategies are used in times of chaos or stress could be an important step forward in research for and about Kānaka. For Native Hawaiian youth, for example, familial networks provide a stress-buffering effect that could intensify behavior (Okamoto et al., 2009). Such evidence considers the social influences, particularly in ‘ohana or Native Hawaiian familial systems that have the potential to support or inhibit the use of effective strategies during times of stress. Additionally, a deeper understanding of inspiration and creativity for Kānaka could support contemporary strategies for transcendent and transformative Kanaka ways of being.

Mālama

Relationships with others and ‘āina were also important for Native Hawaiian well-being. These relationships could be described as rooted in mālama or reciprocal care. While mālama can include different routines and activities for Kānaka, it was interpreted through kuleana as these Kānaka fulfilled their relationship responsibilities, rights, and privileges. Such relationships were described as kinship in nature as aligned with a Hawaiian worldview (McGregor et al., 2003) because Kānaka felt responsible for the well-being of others in their life, as well as the ‘āina around them. Such kuleana, as manifestations of Hawaiian relationships with people and place, were described. And kuleana influenced Kānaka perceptions of mana (Crabbe et al., 2017). While I collected some data on mana, an exploration of the influence of mana conceptualizations on well-being development is beyond the scope of this dissertation. Instead, I explored the diverse and multidimensional relationships Kānaka described as part of their well-being, which inherently have mana. In the coming paragraphs, I explore relationships and discuss suggestions and contributions to the research landscape.

The Kanaka families my participants described were diverse and the relationships within them were multidimensional. While dissonant at times (Browne et al., 2014), Kanaka families were important for continued self-reflection as Kānaka strived to embody mālama as well-being in their familial relationships. These relationships supported Kānaka, but also challenged their sense of pono. As family structures changed and shifted over time, the Kānaka I spoke with continued to adapt in search of cultivating mālama in their relationships with family members and pono for themselves.

Community relationships were similarly multidimensional as sources of support and spaces where Kānaka found fulfillment. Aligned with previous research (Blaisdell et al., 2017; Kaholokula, 2017; McGregor et al., 2003), relational harmony through community and the extended 'ohana systems surrounding Kānaka supported their sense of well-being overall. These community relationships also created pressure because of kuleana, as stated previously. Kānaka being in service to community was a theme that may have had unintended consequences leading to a lack of self-care. The COVID-19 pandemic affected Kanaka relationships in diverse ways that may have served their well-being, as Kānaka further recognized the importance of their relationships, severed relationships that were not caring or did not add to their sense of pono, and continued to cultivate relationships that added to their well-being. While some research suggests relatedness is a psychological need that contributes to well-being (Riggenbach et al., 2019), Holzer and colleagues (2021) found that relatedness had a minor effect on positive emotion for university students during the COVID-19 pandemic. This finding, as the authors mentioned, was surprising, and the low association between relatedness and positive emotion warrants further attention and investigation. The stories in this dissertation suggest that relationality did have an effect on well-being, which aligns with Riggenbach and colleagues (2019). Such potential

warrants further investigation and may lead to insights for the health and well-being of Hawai‘i communities.

In particular, relationships Kānaka had with therapists and mental health professionals was an important exploration during our interviews. I first offer the strategy that Kānaka offered as a means for improvement and then explore additional strategies and avenues of research stemming from how this suggestion blossomed for me during this research inquiry. Interestingly, traditional models for mental health (or self-care of the mind) through therapy were not as successful for Kānaka students because, as they described, the models they encountered did not explicitly address the societal, social, and cultural needs of Kānaka today. As suggested in my interviews with Kānaka, collaborative critical dialogue could have supported them. They desired to have open discussions with their therapists about the systemic consequences that affected how they engaged collaboratively with their therapist. For example, having discussions as an Indigenous client facing displacement by settlers such as the therapist. This suggestion aligns with the work of Duran and Duran (1995), who proposed contextualizing historical issues and its effect on families during family therapy and regarding how these issues should be validated in the context of therapy. As stated previously, Native Hawaiians in graduate school may face internal conflict as a result of their higher levels of education that could intensify stress and their sense of responsibility (Kaholokula et al., 2020). These factors perceivably accompany Kānaka, such as those interviewed in this research, in mental health spaces and affect how these issues appear in therapy. For example, decolonizing the therapy space (see Linklater, 2014) and trauma-informed care (see Bendall et al., 2021) are contemporary avenues that are gaining traction in counseling and education that could improve therapy, particularly for Indigenous and minority students. As another example, according to Bendall and colleagues (2021), trauma screenings

could improve practices of care. While trauma screenings may be avoided for fear of retraumatizing (Berliner & Kolko, 2016), such efforts are essential and learning how to reduce re-traumatization can improve practices of care. As Bendall and colleagues advocate such screenings should assess trauma using brief and closed-ended questions to avoid re-traumatization while addressing trauma-related needs of those in mental health settings.

After speaking with Kānaka and learning from their stories, I was inspired to think about culturally informed care activities and routines as a strategy that could help build pilina, reflecting the care that trained professionals strive for and the care Indigenous students such as Kānaka need. Importantly, as practitioners move from a deficit to strength perspective (Wilson et al., 2016), mental health practitioners could similarly consider the continuum of relieving emotional distress and mental health problems to emotional empowerment and the transformation of healing. For example, Yan and colleagues (2020) suggest that positive traits (e.g., “character strengths”) as a focus of intervention could improve well-being, particularly for those with chronic medical conditions. A character strengths-based intervention, as the authors prescribe, could look like describing personal strengths, and discussing new ways to utilize those strengths to achieve personal and meaningful goals. Another example could be keeping a gratitude journal (Seligman et al., 2005) where people reflect daily on three good things, they are grateful for. Such opportunities have the potential to empower people and honor the wisdom they inherently hold in their bodies and may contribute to a strengths-perspective in various settings. As Linklater (2014) suggests, while enhancing protective factors, such as family networks, are important for decolonizing spaces, survival strategies such as humor also serve an important role in fostering belonging and community strength.

A trusted mentor also suggested I use voice memos while walking or driving as a strategy that worked for them during their PhD journey. This advice was gifted as a potential opportunity and alternative for digesting my research. During my interviews, a participant also offered a similar strategy discussing how they did a walking meeting at least once a day as part of their routine, which they felt was generally good for their health and improved their mental clarity. While these strategies are anecdotal, I wondered if this advice could similarly be implemented into walking therapy sessions to help people process their lived experiences. Some research suggests that while walking may not be a replacement for therapy, walking could have related physical and psychological benefits (see Merom et al., 2008). So, while these benefits may not relieve mental health disorders, they could facilitate creating healthy routines. In their research on talk therapy in outdoor spaces, Cooley and colleagues (2020) noted that therapy outdoors created a more balanced power dynamic. The scholars found that for clients, encountering the practitioner or therapist in a natural space, as opposed to a professional one, provided a greater sense of mutuality, flattening the power hierarchy and providing the opportunity for clients to see their therapist as a person in the natural world rather than as a professional with power and control over the experience. These findings are innovative and provide support for viable strategies practitioners could use when working with Kānaka. Because such strategies could shift power dynamics, I suggest them here as important opportunities worthy of exploration. Equally important, and as the authors suggest, practitioners should first begin with the following questions.

‘Does the client want to work outdoors and why?’, ‘is it physically and psychologically safe for this work to be taken outdoors?’, ‘what additional benefits would the outdoors

provide?’, ‘how does the outdoors fit with the client’s recovery goals?’, ‘is the outdoors appropriate for what we have planned for today?’ (Cooley et al., 2020, p. 11)

Such reflexivity would support determining if walking or talk therapy in outdoor spaces were appropriate, safe, and intentional for both the client and practitioner based on the client’s needs and goals.

As a Kumu Hula, I have also learned ceremonial strategies for opening and closing a space, which involve pule (Hawaiian prayer) and oli (Hawaiian chant). Such strategies provide grounding for students in hālau hula or Hawaiian dance spaces, schools, and classrooms. For other Hawaiian cultural practitioners, similar strategies may exist but differ depending on the school of knowledge. This practice is evident in other Indigenous communities, for example in the pōwhiri of the marae for Māori people. The pōwhiri process is a welcoming ceremony that involves particular protocols and values for engagement. Aligned with Kanaka ceremonial engagement this process is rooted in well-being, care, and safety of visitors and locals in relationship (Blätter & Schubert-McArthur, 2016; Reilly et al., 2018). The marae and pōwhiri process has also been applied in other contexts. For example, as a judicial setting (Dickson, 2011) or to support people who are houseless (P. King et al., 2015). Such opportunities provide hope for similar applications of Hawaiian culture and ceremony to contemporary issues.

Other strategies that are beyond the boundaries of mainstream therapy are prayer, spiritual connection, and love (Linklater, 2011). From this exploratory discussion I propose that ceremonial processes and protocols could potentially improve therapy effectiveness for Kānaka and other Indigenous peoples. Integrating such strategies, as mentioned above, into the classroom could also support students from diverse backgrounds and be preventative and protective activities and routines that they could then utilize in their daily lives. This research and

cultural knowledge provide a starting point for continued innovation in healing as these examples provide space for other strategies of care, trauma-informed activities, and culturally-grounded routines. Such advancement could transform perceptions of mental health in the diverse settings of Indigenous communities, and improve how we care for ourselves, one another, and ‘āina.

The Hawaiian theory of evolution (i.e., Kumulipo) explains how Kānaka evolved from ‘āina and are direct descendants of Hāloa (Beckwith, 1992). Informed by this perspective, research suggests that Kanaka well-being is defined by relationships with ‘āina (Fujikane, 2019). The results of this inquiry suggest this is still true. Kānaka were consistent in their belief that their well-being was informed by their relationship with ‘āina. Through the lived experiences of the Kānaka I interviewed, I learned how despite this belief there was a general absence of such ‘āina-based routines and activities or lack of fostering such relationships on a daily, weekly, or monthly basis. Thus, their lived experiences did not match with their expressions of connection and attachments to ‘āina as ancestor. As the Kānaka I spoke with explained to me, cultivating a relationship with ‘āina was a privilege that they were not always afforded as consequences of colonialism and occupation competed or constrained their ability to take care of ‘āina. Looking to previous research (Meyer, 2018), aloha ‘āina is a form of mālama where Kānaka build stronger relationship with ‘āina. As a practice, aloha ‘āina could support the well-being development of Kānaka. Perhaps as a consequence of historical ‘āina exploitation coupled with food commodification, Kānaka today have continued to become disconnected from ‘āina in ways that have adversely influenced their well-being. Distance between Kānaka and ‘āina may be found in land and water rights, which have the power to strain the relationship Kānaka have with ‘āina and food practices (Correa, 2021). While physical cues persist as evidenced by the

embodiment of imbalance, they are often too easily ignored and this may continue to distance Kānaka from ‘āina, food resources, and related cultural practices. If continued, adverse effects may continue to manifest in the physical health of Kānaka and the dietary patterns they develop. As Antonio and others (2021) concluded, “connecting with ‘āina, while incorporating traditional knowledge in this contemporary world demonstrates reclaiming of Indigenous knowledge and a movement toward food sovereignty.” The results of this study suggest that opportunities to give and receive care (i.e., mālama) from and with ‘āina could improve the well-being of Kānaka. As research suggests, such relationships could shift power dynamics (Cooley et al., 2020) and are a form of reclamation (Antonio et al., 2021). And while these experiences to mālama ‘āina are a rarity and privilege, integrating such practices into mainstream professional and academic cultures could benefit the well-being of all people.

Historical cultural loss has manifested in diverse adverse problems for these Kānaka, and if the communities and families in which they reside continue to feel unsafe and unstable, ill-being will likely increase. But important strides are being made in the micro moments of Kānaka daily life as they continue to confront the pain they have inherited, as well as the pain they have lived and experienced. Such experiences have cultivated resiliency. As a result, a critique of resiliency is necessary, to reflect on potential problems of resilience and the macrostructures that maintain barriers to flourishing and thriving. Several of the Kānaka I interviewed said directly that the idea of resiliency was potentially problematic. This critique was new to me and warranted continued exploration in this discussion. As one participant explained, while building resiliency is important, focusing on the individual is potentially problematic because it erases the systemic challenges that drive the development of resiliency in people. Furthermore, to “always

be fighting” as they said, limited other opportunities for thriving and flourishing if resiliency was a daily practice needed for survival. As Stillman (2021) discussed,

Resilience isn’t just another gear you shift up to when things get tough. Instead, the need for resilience is a blaring alarm that something is fundamentally wrong that needs fixing. ... Resilience, in other words, shouldn’t be the responsibility of the individual but of the community.

Hannah King and colleagues (2021) similarly advocate for an understanding of responsibility with resiliency to suggest that resilience approaches in institutions be critically interrogated (Welsh, 2014). Such structures perpetuate systemic inequality and create the need for resiliency, as the Kānaka I interviewed described. If well-being is a priority, it is important for those within knowledge systems and governing structures to consistently reflect on the ways they perpetuate harm. While research suggests adverse effects from the COVID-19 pandemic (Xiao et al., 2021), these Kānaka stories highlight a more complicated reality where practices of self-care were an adaptive benefit for well-being (Disabato et al., 2022), and these practices were perhaps situated as collective and relational (Lewis et al., 2022). Across their stories, these Kānaka learned to find radical joy and be resilient, and the COVID-19 pandemic has promoted Kānaka celebrating care in new and meaningful ways. Altogether, I hope these stories inspire change and transformation, as well-being is a worthy priority for all, and as systems and structures strive for healthy, healed, just, and equitable communities.

A (K)new Interpretation of Well-Being: A Practice-Based Framework for Kanaka Thriving

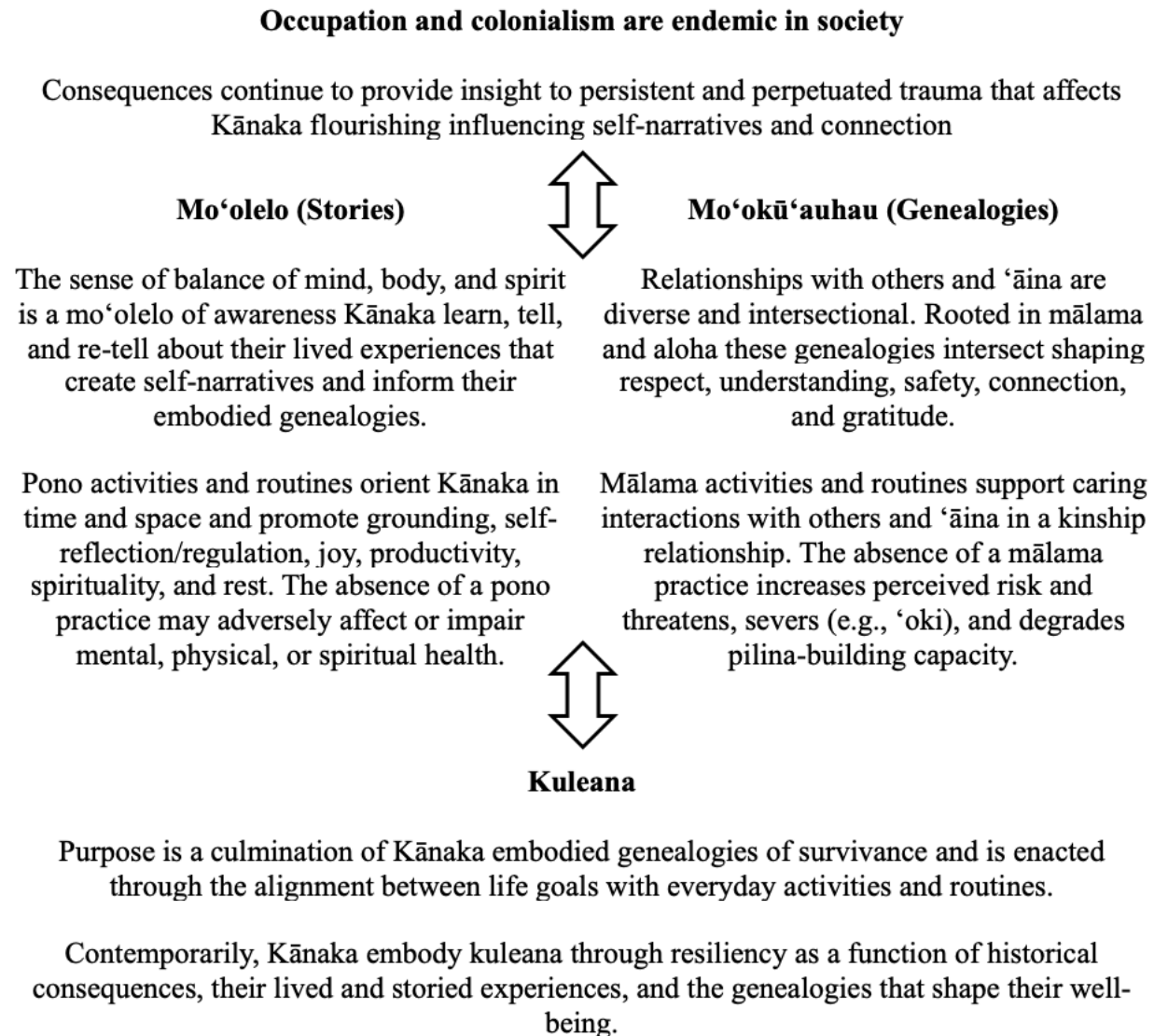
Informed by KanakaCrit and embodiment theories, I created a routines and activities framework (see Figure 2) to reflect upon how Kanaka practices for well-being could be re-

conceptualized to cultivate thriving (Feeney & Collins, 2015) and flourishing (Dahl et al., 2020).

The tenets of Critical Race Theories center racism and redefine its influence not as routines and

Figure 2.

A (K)new Interpretation of Well-Being: A Practice-Based Framework for Kanaka Thriving



Note: Thematic relationships using KanakaCrit framework (Cristobal, 2018; Wright & Balutski, 2016) as a foundation for Kanaka-rooted “flourishing” (see Dahl et al., 2020).

activities by people but as embedded in institutions that uphold oppression in relationships (Reyes, 2018). This lens provides a critical perspective for analyzing the lived experiences of Kanaka doctoral students by situating the conflicts they experience within a larger structure, such as embedded in the education system, to interrogate the conditions of power that marginalize them (Taylor et al., 2023). These structures, as the paradigm explains, influence the daily life of Kānaka in education and as they move through other structures and institutions. Cristobal's (2018) research offers the following themes for KanakaCrit, to which I apply cross-case learnings as drawn from these interviews with Kānaka and a hula approach: (a) consequences of occupation and colonialism in Hawai'i are contextual factors that influence identity development, (b) mo'olelo, Kanaka's stories contribute to survivance, recognizing stories as precious gifts that are sacred, at times hidden, and at other times only understood by a few, (c) mo'okū'auhau, genealogies or the relationships Kānaka have with people, place, and space, can be used to describe the diverse relationships and contexts Kānaka inhabit, which inform Kānaka conceptualizations of well-being, and (d) kuleana, the rights and responsibilities of Kānaka culminate from their stories and how they enact agency influences the routines and activities they engage in to embody their kuleana. In the following sections, I provide a routines and activities framework of well-being by discussing this study through a hula approach by using KanakaCrit interwoven with an embodied perspective. I suggest that this (k)new interpretation provides a practice-based framework informed by 'ike kūpuna from hula for Kanaka thriving that adds to the landscape of literature on well-being and well-being development. Using this approach offered one transformative lens for analyzing these Kanaka stories. As informed by KanakaCrit this framework recognized the diversity of trauma they held in their bodies. And as informed by embodied theories this approach explained how their experiences manifested in an embodied

practice of care. As articulated through hula, I suggest that this framework, which draws KanakaCrit and embodiment together, illuminated how their lived experiences influenced their well-being daily through their activities and routines.

Occupation and Colonialism

Informed by KanakaCrit, consequences of colonization and occupation continue to be pervasive in the Hawai‘i context in their exploitation of ‘āina and appropriation of identity (Wright & Balutski, 2016). These consequences are also experienced through the liminality Kānaka experienced throughout their lives to affect their multiple identities not just their identities as Kānaka. In the lives of Kanaka doctoral students, colonization perpetuated violence through labor exploitation, environmental degradation, food colonization, and the weaponization of resilience, which have sustained systemic forms of oppression. As was seen in the COVID-19 pandemic, the weaponization of resilience highlights how social harms can be exacerbated by political activity or inactivity (see H. King et al., 2021). These consequences provide insight into the chronic nature of oppression (Kaholokula et al., 2012) that affects Kanaka flourishing, influencing self-narratives and connection. These self-narratives are important because they shape how Kānaka understand themselves and their worlds (Jensen, 2020; Reyes, 2018). As their stories suggest, consequences manifest in Kanaka bodies through imbalance and have the power to impair executive functioning (McVay & Kane, 2012), adversely affect psychological health and wealth (Engert et al., 2014; Hoffman et al., 2016; Seli et al., 2019), and create distractions (Killingsworth & Gilbert, 2010) that affect the well-being of their mind, body, and spirit. While context-specific (Wright & Balutski, 2016), the hula approach importantly offers reading Kanaka bodies and imbalance of mind, body, and spirit through the consequences of colonialism and occupation. For example, there were times when the Kānaka I spoke with grappled with

historical context perpetuating the paradise ideals of the past ambiguously void of contemporary problems. Others were cognizant of such romanticization and pushed against this paradigm. Across many stories such consequences were further embodied in persistent and perpetuated trauma. As these stories demonstrate, such consequences are a contemporary issue that affects Kanaka flourishing and will continue to influence the self-narratives Kānaka tell as their mo‘olelo and the connections or relationships they foster or are distanced from.

Mo‘olelo

The interview process I used was in and of itself one way that the Kānaka learned to tell their story. Aligned with KanakaCrit, this means that through telling their story, and through allowing me to re-tell their stories in my research, they have contributed to the survivance of Kanaka ‘Ōiwi (Cristobal, 2018). This mo‘olelo is one of awareness as learned through this research inquiry. As research suggests, such awareness supports the balance of the mind, body, and spirit (Dahl et al., 2020). As these Kānaka told mo‘olelo about their lived experiences, the self-narratives they created reflect continuity and renewal of Kānaka (Goodyear-Ka‘ōpua, 2016). And so, these mo‘olelo can represent how Kānaka celebrate the power (e.g., mana) of their stories, while wrestling with how colonization and occupation have become embodied in their mind, body, and spirit. Such expressions become important for the collective journey of Kānaka as a lāhui, as a people, towards pono as embodied in systems and structures.

As KanakaCrit prescribes (Cristobal, 2018), these mo‘olelo recognize and honor hūnā, what is sacred, hidden, and at times only understood by a few. Much of this sacredness, or mana, of the Hawaiian process for engaging with storytelling are beyond the pages of this text as they are not reflected in these stories directly. To explain, some stories Kānaka shared with me in confidence and are not in their cases intentionally. Some participants did not attend a second

interview, perhaps keeping hidden parts of their story that I was not ready to hold and understand. One Kanaka reached out to me at the start of this project, but I missed their message due to a fault of my own and their story remains hūnā. Another Kanaka went through the interview process, reviewed their written case with me and ultimately needed to step away from this research project. These stories are part of the process described by the term hūnā and are valid and important for Kanaka survivance, although they are not directly written in these pages.

Additionally, some of the stories in these pages may not be fully understood by the general audience (Cristobal, 2018). Some cultural practitioners (whether Kanaka or not) may have a deeper understanding of the lived experiences of some of these Kānaka based on their expertise in particular cultural arenas. At this stage, I encourage you to wonder and wander out loud with others by connecting with such practitioners to discuss these stories and embedded meaning (e.g., kaona), and honoring your knowledge and experience in these areas as a means for discussion. Through oral traditions in preparation for becoming a Kumu Hula, I heard stories of Mary Kawena Pūku‘i, and her interviewing with elders. It was shared with me that through such discussions, kūpuna would ask Pūku‘i about something to see if she had some understanding and readiness about the topic. If she did not, they would simply move on. Such a process reflects hūnā, demonstrating how Kānaka embody Hawaiian ways of living and being in the world and how wisdom, readiness, and sacredness are honored and recognized through how knowledge is shared between people. I recognize that this too happened throughout my interviews with people. At times I may not have noticed as the Kānaka I spoke with gauged my readiness and may have chosen to move on as topics arose during our sessions together. At other times when I noticed it, I hope I was able to embody my hula approach and an Indigenous research methodology to respect the Hawaiian inquiry process to not be maha‘oi or rude

(Maunakea, 2016). Sometimes this awareness was accompanied with fear as I strived to humble myself to the process of hūnā. I learned that it is a complicated process, and I am grateful for the opportunity to engage in living and breathing aspects of this process by striving to embody this understanding in practice with the Kānaka I interviewed. In re-telling these stories, I expanded my understanding of mana, or the power, of stories. In recognizing that mana by re-telling stories and by honoring hūnā by keeping hidden the sacredness and meaning of some stories, I attempted to embody a hula approach in this research.

These mo‘olelo informed embodied genealogies through the daily routines and activities Kānaka chose to engage in. On the one hand, pono activities and routines can promote any of the following individually or in any combination: grounding, self-reflection, joy, productivity, spirituality, and rest. While on the other hand, absence of a pono practice adversely affected or impaired mental, physical, or spiritual health. Pono activities and routines situated Kānaka in time and space as a culture- and context-specific practice for well-being. From such activities and routines (k)new mo‘olelo for lāhui were born as Kānaka journeyed towards sovereignty, justice, equity, and independence. Tracing these embodied genealogies through these mo‘olelo, I have learned how critical and embodied theoretical approaches are deeply personal, as it was means to bring myself into an awareness of my own story. This approach is living and breathing (Cristobal, 2018), and has affected how I engage with myself, others in my family, and the lāhui. As Goodyear-Ka‘ōpua (2016) explained, such research “allows us to pull toward one another against powerful forces that attempt to fragment and obliterate us as a Lāhui Kanaka ‘Ōiwi.” And so, my hope for these mo‘olelo are that they pull towards you, drawing you and I, as well as you and the Kānaka that shared their stories closer together.

Mo‘okū‘auhau

Relationships with people, ‘āina, and spaces are diverse and intersectional (Wright & Balutski, 2016). Rooted in mālama these genealogies intersect to shape kuleana. Other researchers have found that empathy (Dahl et al., 2020), safety (Hollan, 2009), connection (Adelson, 2000), and gratitude (Wood et al., 2008) shape these genealogies of relationship. From this inquiry, I offer to this discussion how genealogies of care in Kanaka relationships with people, ‘āina, and spaces, shape kuleana in particular as informed by KanakaCrit (Cristobal, 2018). Mālama routines and activities supported caring interactions with others and ‘āina in a kinship relationship (Heil, 2009) while an absence of a mālama practice increased emotional distress (Cacioppo et al., 2015); and therefore, was an adverse consequence to well-being overall. While KanakaCrit offers, ea, aloha ‘āina, and ka lāhui as some means for learning mo‘okū‘auhau and enacting kuleana (Cristobal, 2018), I propose that for some Kānaka the first step towards ea, aloha ‘āina, and ka lāhui is learning to nurture and embody a practice of care. While the Kānaka I interviewed described stories of ea, aloha ‘āina, and ka lāhui, the absences in these areas were more telling. Such gaps revealed some mana‘o, or ideas, for how to nurture pono and mālama and embody care, in efforts to enact kuleana in (k)new and different ways given the reality of diversity amongst Kānaka and to Hawaiian identities.

Kuleana

Kuleana is a culmination of Kanaka embodied genealogies of survivance (Cristobal, 2018) and is enacted through the alignment between life goals and everyday routines and activities (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Contemporarily, Kānaka embody kuleana through resiliency as a response to historical consequences, lived and storied experiences, and the genealogies of their relationships. While I asked the Kānaka I interviewed about their kuleana, a detailed account was not included as I recognized the boundaries of this inquiry through the analysis process. As I

returned to my research questions and explored the diverse pathways of well-being through their stories, I focused on how they conceptualized well-being for themselves. In this exploration, I moved away from exploring kuleana in detail because of the richness of their stories. As pono and mālama came to the forefront of this exploration, kuleana faded into the background for me. Said another way, in exploring well-being and understanding the activities and routines of pono and mālama that guide well-being development for Kānaka, I realized that the culmination of routines and activities were rooted in a practice of care. Such practice of care informed how kuleana was described by these Kānaka because kuleana is the culmination of each Kanaka journey toward well-being (Cristobal, 2018). While important as a culmination of their lived experiences, I felt that kuleana was challenging to articulate when trying to identify the specific routines, activities, and practices in Kānaka daily life that supported their well-being development. I also reflected on the level of detail and diversity of kuleana articulations for the Kānaka I interviewed. To appropriately describe and tease out these intricacies I felt warranted further exploration and it became something that was beyond the scope of this project because of the equally descriptive intricacies in how Kānaka described pono and mālama in their daily life. It is plausible that this research could have been reframed and centered on kuleana, and perhaps my integration of kuleana into the interview protocol was rooted in this belief. I hope to detail the stories of kuleana I heard in a future research project in ways that give those stories justice for their diversity, intricacy, and inspiration.

Limitations

While these results were not designed to be representative, I would like to remind readers of this caution when interpreting how I presented this discussion. In honoring a Hawaiian process, I wandered and wondered throughout this research, allowing myself to ‘auwana through

the stories as aligned with an exploratory inquiry and the circularity of a Hawaiian worldview rooted in hula movement. This process may have caused tension in your body, and that tension is valid, may you wonder too, and self-reflect on questions that arise as it may advance the seeds of ideas I have presented here for future scholarship. I also reflect on the limitations of my population, as Kanaka doctoral students, and although a fuller range of experiences was not possible here, I hope we can continue to explore Kanaka experiences beyond higher education throughout the lifespan to better understand well-being more broadly.

The call-out I made to students and the types of students I was referred to for this study based on my research topic is a limitation (see Appendix I for my invitation). For example, in my invitation to participate, I stated, the intent of my research was “to better understand Hawaiian conceptualizations of well-being development” and how their participation would help with understanding “how to support Native Hawaiian doctoral students and nurture their well-being development.” Inevitably, such an invitation opens a doorway to sensitive topics because understanding what is well-being may involve exploring what is ill-being. As such, well-being may have been an aversive topic for some people, and I recognize that those who did not answer the invitation may have done so intentionally, perhaps reflecting a cultural stigma related to the topic itself. And the folks who did answer the call or who were referred to me may represent a particular subpopulation of an already small pool of Kanaka PhDs. This selection bias may have attracted Kānaka who were more self-reflective for example, were actively thinking about their well-being because of some other unexplored factor or were at least at a place where they were open and willing to self-reflect on their well-being. Such selection bias was a limitation in this research because these stories may not depict Kānaka outside of higher education, and roughly half of Native Hawaiians throughout Hawai‘i do not enroll in any postsecondary education

(Teranishi et al., 2020). Future research could extend this inquiry by exploring the stories of Native Hawaiians in adulthood and in other communities outside of higher education. To prevent any misleading conclusions, and because of the collection strategies used, I add that these data are context-specific and are not intended for cross-cultural examination.

As mentioned previously, another limitation of this research involved kuleana. While I asked Kānaka about their kuleana, this exploration was not in the final dissertation. I intend to analyze these stories of kuleana in a future work but other opportunities exist, as the research protocol could be re-framed utilizing kuleana as a means for investigating Kānaka well-being.

Future Research

In terms of research procedure, while the general invitation of this inquiry could potentially be viewed as least effective, it highlights the importance of relationality in the Hawaiian community while also bringing attention to the trauma of disruption and disconnection. As such, while a university-wide callout may not seem worthwhile from an academic and economic standpoint because of the trauma of disconnections, such callouts are a necessary space for Indigenous academics to occupy, as these stories, while scarce, can be fruitful and may help others to heal this type of trauma.

Future research could explore the degree to which diverse settings privilege human and ‘āina relationships. Generally speaking, having relationships with other people and with ‘āina are beneficial to well-being (Galvin, 2018). And so, I argue that future research would not need to justify its benefits but rather determine the degree with which such relationships exist and how differing degrees influence well-being. Potentially, this research could determine a threshold of subjective experience to improve the conditions of existing systems and structures. Such privilege of intentionally cultivated social and environmental relationships should exist in

institutions and therefore exist on a continuum of experience. In the Hawai‘i context, researchers could also explore (k)new and adaptive ways to engage with ‘āina utilizing technological advancements. For example, geographic information systems and the Dear Data project, could provide opportunities to strive towards these relationship goals as they foster important connections with ‘āina and between people.

Survey research with Native Hawaiians could also explore well-being as a profile (see Bewick et al., 2010) such that main components of well-being are given a score providing a visual summary of well-being, which can then be compared. While Bewick and colleagues explore national well-being and compare them across countries, perhaps such survey data could be collected across communities or counties to explore well-being another way. Additionally, national measures could be compared with measures of pono and mālama to explore the validity of national measures for Hawai‘i communities and the reliability of Native Hawaiian constructs for well-being measurement.

Research with Native Hawaiians could also explore the relationships between stress, chaos, inspiration, and creativity to further understand protective measures and management as informed by behavioral health research (Kaholokula et al., 2020). A deeper understanding of peace, contentment, and fulfillment for Kānaka in particular or for Indigenous peoples could also inform policies and practice. As Dallas (2020) points out, “If happiness is the metric we track, we will fail. Being happy is a temporary gift and not sustainable. Life is full of unavoidable tragedy and devastation. Hardships will come. The goal of a healthy mindset should be peace” (p. 113). And with 36% of doctoral students saying that their PhD studies caused them to seek help for anxiety or depression (Woolston, 2019), it appears important for colleges and

universities to become more adept and versed in such strategies and measures that support students having healthy mindsets and management capabilities.

In curriculum and instruction design, activities and routines that are grounding, self-reflective, joyful, productive, restful, and spiritual could also inspire cultivating a pono practice for students. Such strategies, as informed by this research, could be useful across the academic and professional pipeline. Measurement across these areas could also inform understanding of the degree to which particular activities and routines inform a pono practice. More specifically, conducting a regression analysis on pono and these activities and routines could determine which are the most effective and which covariates could increase pono in the day-to-day life of students.

Closing

Returning to hula as wisdom, I am inspired to think about hula in (k)new ways, particularly as a guide for research in the academy. I hope to have advanced this type of scholarship, for which other Kanaka scholars laid the foundation. If you too are inspired by hula, I invite you to wander (i.e., ‘auwana) out loud so that the practice of hula can be found anew in the pages of our contributions to the lāhui. In the three hula I presented in this paper’s introduction, I dreamed about the genealogies of obstacles that re-present my past, present, and future in hula to demonstrate how hula as a research tool can reflect ideas about contemporary Kanaka life. In bringing this dissertation to a close, I struggle to find the words to aptly describe where we go from here, from the ideas that have been birthed in these pages. In hula, there are many stories of joy, of love, and of empowerment, which I believe could provide the appropriate reverence I would like to end this dissertation with. But these stories seemed to lack the concreteness I also wanted to leave readers with. Perhaps that is how I am meant to close this

work, dreaming out loud about the lasting ideas that have stuck with me. So, I reflect on my introduction and include some floating ideas like clouds passing in the sky.

Hula over time and through its oral tradition has naturally evolved to perpetuate cultural knowledge, and hula practitioners have adapted the movements to contemporary contexts. Although in one hula today, there are many versions and the intricate changes have affected the language embedded within them, their meaning is worthy of exploration, discussion, and debate, lest we lose its wisdom. Without an openness to wonder out loud we may continue to lose the understanding of its richness. And so, I have been lucky to be at a nexus of preparation and opportunity; the preparation to ‘auwana and the opportunity to have the freedom to think out loud about hula’s research possibilities (Mahalo ā nui to my committee who gifted me this freedom). While I have wrestled with my own ineptitude, I hope to have inspired others to lean into their cultural practice, however difficult it can be or how scary it can feel to write down on paper. I was surprised by the reaction from my committee, who fell in love with my process. And so, I let this lesson in confidence be my guide in these closing paragraphs, which were not present in my dissertation defense, but which I was invited to include so that this ‘auwana through the data did not end so abruptly.

In the version of “No Luna i Ka Halekai” I learned, I could surmise about the kaiko‘o, rough seas, that nehe, rustle against the ‘ili‘ili or stones. While there are other versions of this hula and each hālau hula has its own traditions, I am inspired by this mele to reflect on the Kānaka stories I shared in this research by returning to this hula. Like the flowing and rough seas, these Kānaka stories move against rocks that are seemingly immovable. Like these rocks, our systems and structures seem immovable sometimes, too. But as this hula could teach us, these Kānaka stories, as the sea, have the power when moving together as one to shift and glide

the ‘ili‘ili into a (k)new place. And perhaps if we ho‘olono, listen keenly to these rocks moving and remember that these rocks can fit together differently, we will have the courage to move them, one ‘ili‘ili at a time. And their reverberating sounds will be the evidence of our transformation. I envision this process much like elders in the local park doing Tai Chi. Their flowing movements are mesmerizing and intentional, and together their collective energy, although soft and subtle, are powerful. Powerful enough, some might say, to move the seemingly immovable.

In succession, I look back to “A Ko‘olau Au” and reflect on the po‘i or crest of the breaking surf and the rains of the Ko‘olau. In some translations the puka is described as a smiting. However, in my lived experience, while I have been drenched by the torrential and abundant Ko‘olau rains before, I have never felt this downpour to be of that nature. Looking to the contemporary use of puka as a graduation, as a passing through, as an ability to come out of, like the puka of the sun breaking through the night to create dawn, I find myself wondering about the puka of this rain through a cloudless blue sky, as I imagine this hula could come to embody today. Perhaps this revisioning can be a modern perpetuation of this hula in practice.

This mele is often followed by “‘Au‘a ‘ia,” which is a hula that I believe has taken on a new life particularly on our Mānoa campus in 2019 through both the hana keaka (Hawaiian-medium theatre), *‘Au‘a ‘ia: Holding On*, and as part of the protocol for Maunakea. This hula has sacred and ritual significance beyond these pages, but looking at the new life this hula has cultivated in community and at our higher education institution, I think we can be inspired by the power of the ‘au‘a ‘ia and its movements. I have come to believe the ‘au‘a movement in this hula is a physical representation of being kūpa‘a (steadfast), and can be thought of as a gathering or cupping of water on the surface of the ocean to create dune-like waves. In our modern history, I

believe we have seen these waves in action, from Standing Rock to Maunakea, and through the environmental personhood, which has now been given to many rivers around the world. As these ideas converge, they ebb and flow to inspire (k)new ways for me to think about ‘au‘a ‘ia. In this dissertation, I have seen this hula embodied in these Kānaka stories as a collective awareness to awaken the past and live into resilience, recognizing how being in a constant state of vigilance has presented systemic challenges. In these Kānaka stories, this essence of ‘au‘a ‘ia in a contemporary form is surely not the only or the last of such mo‘olelo.

Similar to the succession of “A Ko‘olau Au” and “‘Au‘a ‘ia,” the last hula I presented in the introduction “‘Ino Ko‘olau” was followed by “‘Ūlei Pahu” in my most recent ‘ūniki. Said to be a prophecy of Cook’s arrival, ‘ūlei pahu is a reminder to e kū i ka hoe uli a‘e kōhi i ka pale kai, take up the hoe uli to steer the course, and pull the hoe uli to the railing to do so. I add that while I first learned this hula some years ago I am not an expert yet when it comes to this hula. So, I will intentionally leave this mention floating here unfinished, as I continue to imagine the contemporary applications of this prophecy and the prophecies that will be birthed in my lifetime for our lāhui. For more skilled practitioners of this hula in particular, I invite you to reflect and comment on its application so we too can learn together.

Now what does all of this mean? Although imperfect, I attempted to utilize these Kānaka stories and their lived experiences to dive into their mo‘olelo and allow you, dear reader, to dream about them and reflect on what we could learn and institutionalize in (k)new systems and structures. I think in exploring the various questions I posed throughout this dissertation I learned that a Hawaiian philosophy for well-being should be rooted in the concept of care. And while there are various Kanaka ways of doing so, as detailed in their stories, there could also be a universal application to this idea that can be carried across cultural boundaries. *For those outside*

of Hawai‘i, what does care mean for you and your community? What activities and routines help you to embody this version of care in your daily life? And how do you strive to cultivate that in the world around you? In Hawai‘i, developing deeper understandings of pono and mālama is one way to continue to apply the lessons of these stories in the everyday practices Kānaka engage in to cultivate well-being. *For people across our pae ‘āina, what does pono and mālama mean for you? What activities and routines help you to thrive? And how do you strive to cultivate that in the world around you?* From this research, I believe these are some guiding questions we can continuously come back to as a means to reflect on our well-being day-to-day and this continued investigation could help to cultivate well-being in our communities.

There are also diverse lived experiences that contribute to the development of well-being. And through our lived experiences we learn to embody particular practices for survival, to find peace, and to thrive as expressed in these stories. And perhaps, higher education is one space where Kānaka can continue to learn and grow in one professional capacity to deal with the lack of care they may experience in their environments, recognizing that higher education spaces are also spaces that often and unfortunately lack such care. Looking at these stories, I would also like to leave a note of recognition that we, as Kānaka, have come so far, that flow in academic writing is a valuable research process, and that the purpose of graduate education for me has been to continue to learn and grow as a cultural practitioner, lifelong learner, and Hawaiian. I have often struggled to hold tensions around practitionership and Hawaiianess in my spirit, but am reminded by these Kānaka stories to find ways to settle my body, mind, and spirit that feel pono to me. In truth, I am not at a place (at least in this stage in my life) where I feel totally settled yet. But I hope that this dissertation as one form of practice has prepared me to do so.

Perhaps that is what this dissertation was, another lesson in preparation to integrate the lessons from these Kānaka more fully into my living and being in the world.

At last, I hope people find within these pages moments of resonance, solace, and comfort. As I have learned from these Kānaka across their activities and routines, we can engage in self-awareness in a variety of ways and this practice takes time and intentionality. An awareness practice is also a lifelong journey and we should continue to strive to be more aware daily, and work on articulating that awareness with clarity and gentleness. The collective awareness of these Kānaka inspires new ways of living and being in the world to use such awareness as an opportunity to cultivate strength within the lāhui. This collective awareness also has the potential to cultivate courageous communities of practice that are rooted in care. Perhaps if we learn to prioritize care for ourselves, each other, and the world around us, we can come to a place of finding our common humanity. And yet, I still struggle to find the words to leave you with. I feel that there is still so much to be said; and yet, it seems that the dust has settled, the sun is setting, and I am being called to move on. I reflected on a few things here as a means to string together the lasting ideas that have left an imprint on my heart, however loosely. And so I ask you, in the words of Lilikalā Kame‘eleihiwa, *pehea lā e pono ai? What will you do now that you have heard these stories and how will you intentionally choose to live in harmony with yourself and the world?* And right now, I respond and react to this simply by saying, it can be truly difficult to be human, so be kind to one another and to yourself. And whenever possible, take small moments to settle your body and be inspired to wonder out loud because you may be surprised how much you learn about yourself and the world around you when you do. As I have continued to learn through this dissertation, it is also important to be fearless and unafraid, and be at peace because your story is not yet finished...

...kō mākou maluhia, a mau loa aku nō.

- *Queen Lili‘uokalani*

‘A‘ole i pau ...

Appendix A

Kaulana Nā Pua: Song Lyrics and Translation

Kaulana Nā Pua was written by Ellen Wright Prendergast in 1893 under the title “Mele Ai Pohaku.” Although the tune is upbeat, the words oppose the annexation of the Kingdom of Hawai‘i by the United States of America. This song is now classified as a mele aloha ‘āina, a song of patriotism and loyalty to the Hawaiian kingdom, and is referred to, among others, as a mele lāhui, nationalist song of the Hawaiian Nation (Stillman, 1999).

Kaulana nā pua a o Hawai‘i
Kūpa‘a mahope o ka ‘āina
Hiki mai ka ‘elele o ka loko ‘ino
Palapala ‘ānunu me ka pākaha

Famous are the children of Hawai‘i
Ever loyal to the land
When the evil-hearted messenger comes
With his greedy document of extortion

Pane mai Hawai‘i moku o Keawe
Kōkua nā Hono a‘o Pi‘ilani
Kāko‘o mai Kaua‘i o Mano
Pa‘apū me ke one o Kakuhihewa

Hawai‘i, land of Keawe answers
Pi‘ilani’s bays help
Mano’s Kauai lends support
And so do the sands of Kakuhihewa

‘A‘ole a‘e kau i ka pūlima
Maluna ‘o ka pepa ‘o ka ‘enemi
Ho‘ohui ‘āina kū‘ai hewa
I ka pono sivila a‘o ke kanaka

No one will fix a signature
To the paper of the enemy
With its sin of annexation
And sale of native civil rights

‘A‘ole mākou a‘e minamina
I ka pu‘ukālā o ke ‘aupuni
Ua lawa mākou i ka pohaku
I ka ‘ai kamaha‘o o ka ‘āina

We do not value
The government’s sums of money
We are not satisfied with the stones
Astonishing food of the land

Mahope mākou o Lili‘ulani
A loa‘a e ka pono o ka ‘āina
Ha‘ina ia mai ana ka puana
Ka po‘e i aloha o ka ‘āina

We back Lili‘ulani
Who has won the rights of the land
Tell the story
Of the people who love their land

These lyrics and translation are from:

I Kū Mau Mau. (2004) [Liner Notes]. In *I Kū Mau Mau* [CD]. Honolulu, HI: Audy Kimura.

To listen to a rendition of this mele see:

Nāleimaile, S., Nāhale-a, K., & Lindsey-Asing, K. [ProjectKULEANA]. (2013, June). *Kaulana Na Pua* [Video]. YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bhibLQFebpQ>

Appendix B

Oli Kāhea from the stories of Pele and Hi‘iaka

The following oli [highlighted in lines numbered 1-10 below] is a kāhea (call), which Hi‘iaka must use to ask permission to enter the islands on her journey to fetch Lohi‘au for her sister Pele.



This version comes from Ka Na‘i Aupuni an ‘ōlelo Hawai‘i, Hawaiian language newspaper digitally archived on the Ulukau: Hawaiian Electronic Library. This portion of the mo‘olelo comes from Ka Na‘i Aupuni: Buke I, Helu 64, 9 Pepeluali 1906.

Oli translation (Ho‘oulumāhiehie, 2006, p. 167) provided by Puakea Nogelmeier:

Steep is the mountain in the calm
Wai‘ale‘ale rises there, at Wailua
Pulled up heavenward is the bridge of Anokawailani
Blocked from view by Nounou Hill
Kaipuha‘a disappears completely
Low-lying in its expanse
Shallow is the gourd, low-lying at the shore of Kapa‘a
Shallow is the gourd, low-lying in the uplands of Kapa‘a
Do not restrain the voice
Leaving no beckoning call of welcome.

Appendix C

My Hula Genealogical Chart

| | |
|--|--|
| <p>Unknown Teacher Ho'okano (and others) Keahi Luahine (1877 - 1937) Mary Kawena Pukui (1895 - 1986) Lokalia Montgomery (♦) (1903 - 1978) Maiki Aiu Lake* (♦) (1925-1984) Lani Correa Kalama (♦) (1928-1999) Sally Woods Nalua (1909-2000)</p> | |
| <p>Maiki Aiu Lake Hālau Hula O Maiki (1954-1984)</p> <p>Papa 'Ūniki Lehua 1972 & 1973 <i>nā Kumuhula</i> - Robert Uluwehi Cazimero (♦) Milton I (♦), George Maile (d), Kalena Silva, Keli'i Taua (♦) Kaha'i Topolinski (♦), Mapuana Aarona, Coline Aiu (♦) Karen Aiu, Mililani Allen (♦)(d), Ulalia Berman (♦) Ho'oulu Cambra (d), Lani Downey (d) Nalani Kahoano Lahela Ka'ahue, Sarah Keahi, Leina'ala Kekahuna Momi Aarona Kepilino (d), Loke Kerfoot, Wendy Nakanishi Tessie Pedro, Kini Sullivan (d), Kealoha Wong, Maile Yamanaka (ma Puna) - Leina'ala Kalama Heine (♦) (d) Mae Kamāmalu Klein (♦) <i>nā 'Ōlapa</i> - Cathy Arnold, April Chock (♦), Carol Kapu (d) Dutchie Kapu Saffery</p> <p>Papa 'Ūniki 'Ilima a me ke Kukui 1975 <i>nā Kumuhula</i> - Keahi Chang (d), Bill Correa (♦)(d), Kepa Malay Keola Alpelina, Kawai Aona-Ueoka, Ku'ulei Bernardino(d) Napua Brown, Mapuana de Silva (♦), Elena Marquez Rowena Nakamitsu, Pamaieulu Sham, Snooks Silva (d) Victoria Holt Takamine (♦), Charlene Williams (d) <i>nā 'Ōlapa</i> - Marlene Aiu(♦), Willa Donnelly Deanna Kaluhiokalani (d), Billie Klein (♦), Racine Klein (♦) Jeanne Miyamoto, Leilani Miyamoto(♦), Debbie Nakanelua Leialoha Pedro, Heather Wilhelm, Ramona Wong</p> <p>Papa 'Ūniki Kukui a me ka Hau 1979 <i>Kumuhula</i> - Ed Kalahiki (♦)(d) <i>nā 'Ōlapa</i> - Kula Abiva (♦)(♦), Orson Kaho'opi'i, Michael Lau Michael Pili Pang (♦)(♦), Charles Panui, Roth Puahala Jeff Tario Kahiwa Aki, Napua Flood (♦), Carla Holmes Debbie Barrett (♦), Debbie Kaiwi, Margaret Kekauoha, Libby Lee Linda Marquez (♦), Mercky Chun, Sandy Kuroiwa (♦) Sally Miyashita, Angie Neil, Sharon Shinsato (♦), Angie Taylor</p> <p>Papa 'Ūniki Hala 1981 <i>'Ōlapa</i> - Debbie Ogata</p> <p>Papa 'Ūniki Laua'e 1983 <i>Kumuhula</i> - John Keola Lake (♦)(d) <i>nā 'Ōlapa</i> - Marguerite Ashford, Carol Ayakawa, Gordean Bailey (♦) Nalani Chang, Debbie Guernsey, Sachiko Iwashita (♦) Rhoda Komuro (d), Lee Mann (♦), Diana Schuman, Donna Young</p> | <p>Robert Uluwehi Cazimero Hālau Nā Kamalei o Lili'ehua (1975 - Present)</p> <p>Papa 'Ūniki 'A'ali'i 1995 <i>nā Kumuhula</i> - Karl Veto Baker(♦), Charles Manu Boyd(♦) Michael Casupang(♦), Moses Crabbe</p> <p>Papa 'Ūniki Maile 2007 <i>nā 'Ōlapa</i> - Kyle Kia'i Atabay, Brad Cooper, Patrick Ganhinhin Edward Babooze Hanohano, Alvin Gunnie Hanzawa, Bryon Keola Bully Makaiau</p> <p>Papa 'Ūniki Maile 2010 <i>nā Kumuhula</i> - Kyle Kia'i Atabay, Brad Cooper</p> <p>Papa 'Ūniki A'ali'i 2017 <i>nā Kumuhula</i> - Keala Chock, Keo Woolford (d) (Papa Maile) Patrick Ganhinhin <i>nā Ho'opa'a</i> - Kaipi Dudoit, Nicholas Lum, Daniel Naho'opi'i <i>nā 'Ōlapa</i> - Kaliko Chang, Dean Kida, Alaka'i Lastimado Cris-p Pasquil, Barry Ki Quillooy, Kaulana Vares</p> |
| | <p>Victoria Holt Takamine Pua Ali'i 'Ilima (1977 - Present)</p> <p>Papa 'Ūniki Maile 2007 <i>nā Kumuhula</i> - Jeff Kānekaiwilani Takamine, Momiala Kamahale <i>nā 'Ōlapa-Ho'opa'a</i> - Dukie Akioka, Mokihana Dods Benavente Maui Ola Cook, Alison Ka'imipono Hartle Charlene Ku'uleihikiahahi Hazlewood, Kawika McKeague R. Kaha'i'i'ōlelo Sueoka, Nolan Okalani Tallett Ka'ula Williams, Kamaka'eu Williams 'Ōlapa - Kalae Akioka, Lori Concepcion, Kim Kauahipoluauapele Crozier Evans Sabra Kauka, Verna Kuroiwa, 'Āina Lau, Malia Locey Mokihana Martin, Ke'alahilani Perry, Alana Tyau-LaChance</p> <p>Papa 'Ūniki 'Ilima 2017 <i>nā Ho'opa'a</i> - (Papa Maile) Kim Kauahipoluauapele Crozier Evans <i>nā 'Ōlapa-Ho'opa'a</i> - Aggy Elizabeth Stevens-Gleason Kusunoki Kawika Lum-Nemida, Marvin Kaleookalani Manuel Elizabeth Ka'iulani In Takamori, Reid Ka'imina'auao Yokote 'Ōlapa - Ka'ahu'ō'ū Espania Sampson</p> |

* Kumu Hula Maiki Aiu Lake is the root of this chart as she formalized the 'ūniki ceremony as it has become known today.
The chart is used here to show only the direct branches of graduates maintaining the style, mannerisms, traditions and protocol of Maiki Aiu Lake.
(◊) Graduate 'Ōlapa/Ho'opa'a continued hula training within this genealogy. (♦) Kumu Hula exercised the rites of 'ūniki ceremony. (d) Deceased

Mae Kamāmalu Klein

Hālau Hula Kōkalehuaika'ohu (1984 -2010)

Papa 'Ūniki Maile Lau'i 1985

nā Kumu Hula - April Pualani Chock (◊)

Michael Pili Pang (◊) (♦)

Papa 'Ūniki Kukui 1991

Kumu Hula - Racine Klein (◊)

Papa 'Ūniki Maile Kaluhea 1991 & 1992

nā Kumu Hula - Patrick Choy, Pohai Souza (♦), Lehua Galuteria
Ardis Gomes, Ab Valencia (♦)(d)

nā Ho'opa'a - Mariko Honda (◊), Kumiko Honda (◊)

nā 'Ōlapa - Amber Gomes, Sommer Galuteria, Mahealani Kobashigawa

Papa 'Ūniki Liko Lehua 1994

nā Kumu Hula - Moddett Ka'apana (♦) (d), Billie Klein-Oda (◊)
nā 'Ōlapa - Alena Heim, Beverly Miller, Pua O'Mally, Laiku Stutzman
Ola Souza, Kawahine Tokunaga, Carol Young

Papa 'Ūniki 'Ōlena 1999 & 2000

nā Kumu Hula - Kalei Aaron-Lorenzo, Kawahine Tokunaga
nā 'Ōlapa - Ho'opa'a - Pohai Aaron, Ua Aaron, Kau Akiona
Dana Bringman, Alena Heim, Ka'ala Higa, Mapuana Kobashigawa
Kamaka Kukona, Beverly Miller, Shelly Ng
Jessica Warmouth, Carol Young

Papa 'Ūniki Laua'e 2004

nā Kumu Hula - Kamaka Kukona, Patrick Makuakane (♦)
Shawna Alapai (♦), Rolanda Reese (♦), Alena Heim, Mikiala Kanekoa
Mapuana Kobashigawa, Sandy Kuroiwa Masumoto (◊)(♦), Shelly Ng
Aohoku Susan-Allensonorin, Kauano Taliaferro, Jessica Warmouth
nā 'Ōlapa - Ho'opa'a - Kanani Kelekolio, Janeen Tirrell

Papa 'Ūniki 'Ie'ie 2007

nā Kumu Hula - Analu Akao, Nalei Akina, Mi'ilani Cooper
Laiku Stutzman, Hiwa Vaughn, Ipo Vaughn, Carol Young
Ho'opa'a - Kala'i Hanohano
'Ōlapa - Ka'ohu Harada

Papa 'Ūniki Kupukupu 2010

nā Kumu Hula - Nani Aiu-Quezada (♦), Hau'oli Akaka
Gwen Lazear, Monika Hawkins, Sarah Oda, Tiffani Saunders
Ho'opa'a - Fenton Kekoakalani Yap

Michael Pili Pang

Hālau Hula Ka Nō'au (1986 - Present)

Papa 'Ūniki Liko Lehua 1994

nā 'Ōlapa - Kehau Baker, Keikilani Cuman, Alva Kamalani, Ipolani Moss
Cherise Mundon, Pa'ahana Roehrig, Kalaniami Roxburgh, June Tanoue

Papa 'Ūniki Liko Lehua 1996

Kumu Hula - Kalaniami Roxburgh (d)
nā 'Ōlapa - Ho'opa'a - Kehau Baker, Keikilani Cuman, Sharon Goodman
Helen Honda, Alva Kamalani, Patricia Luzon, Ipolani Moss
Cherise Mundon, Pa'ahana Roehrig, Mary Sakamoto
June Tanoue, Iris Thompson

Papa 'Ūniki Liko Lehua 2000

nā Kumu Hula - Keikilani Cuman, Sharon Goodman, Alva Kamalani (♦)
Patricia Luzon, Ipolani Moss, Pa'ahana Roehrig
June Tanoue, Iris Thompson
nā 'Ōlapa - Ho'opa'a - Liana Aveiro, Lelehua Bray, Keli'i Cromwell
Monica Lindsey, Bernadine Ohia, Mary Sakamoto
nā 'Ōlapa - Anela Brighter, Lisa Tagawa

Papa 'Ūniki Lehua 2001

nā Kumu Hula - Lelehua Bray, Monica Lindsey, Cherise Mundon

Papa 'Ūniki Lehua a me ke Kukui 2005

nā Kumu Hula - Liana Aveiro, Bernadine Ohia, Lisa Tagawa-Jones
nā 'Ōlapa - Terra Acquaro, Moani Akana(d), Tysha Caitano, Nicole Collins
Lois Gregg, Kathleen Kawakami, Po'ai Lincoln, Rene Nahulu
Charles Charles Jr., Emiko Etherton, Holly Honbo, Renee Kaneshiro
Kanani Okuda, Davin Pascua, Budi Staven, Noelani Vitarelli

Papa 'Ūniki Kukui 2009

nā Kumu Hula - Marlene Aiu-Parpal(◊), Leilani Miyamoto Kaeo(◊)
nā 'Ōlapa-Ho'opa'a - Honey Aiu (◊), Emiko Etherton, Holly Honbo
Helene Honda, Esther Izuo, Renee Kaneshiro, Jodi Nagata
Davin Pascual, Budi Staven, Noelani Vitarelli
nā 'Ōlapa - Daisy Canite-Miyashiro, Ann Doike, Jane Fyrberg
Kawehi Goto, Sherry Kekahuna, Sharon Shinsato Wong (◊)

Papa 'Ūniki Pala'a a me ka Maile 2015

nā Kumu Hula - Honey Aiu, Emiko Etherton, Holly Honbo
Helene Honda, Davin Pascual
nā 'Ōlapa-Ho'opa'a - Daisy Canite-Miyashiro, Alrando Fortuna
Chiaki Hasegawa, Maka'ala Jordan, Tamie Onchi
Tammi Silva, Sherry Tamayose-Kekahuna
nā 'Ōlapa - Tyler Dahlin, Honey Honey Dahlin, Chelsea Galdones-Morales
Austin Ramiscal-Souza, Shazareen Ramiscal-Souza, Makena Tong

Papa 'Ūniki Hulu 2021

nā Kumu Hula - Terra Acquaro, Daisy Canite-Miyashiro, Alrando Fortuna
Lois Gregg, Kawehi Goto, Keli'i Cromwell Kalkbrenner
Tamie Onchi, Tammi Silva
Ho'opa'a - Rene Nahulu
nā 'Ōlapa - Dezaree Akina, Renee Espiau, Deborah Ing, Kaleo Kamealoha
Christine Koroki, Kelson Paiva, Lakeasha Ruffin

Note: My genealogical chart was gifted to me by my Kumu Hula, Michael Pili Pang and this version is reprinted from our July 24, 2021 ‘ūniki ceremonial program. Our hula genealogy is traced to Maiki Aiu Lake, and includes fellow Kumu Hula who are practitioners of the same hula stylings that we perpetuate, namely, Kumu Hula Robert Cazimero and Kumu Hula Vicky Holt Takamine. On the first page and in the left column, are a list of Maiki Aiu Lake graduates, the name given to their class, the years in which they graduated, and the level in which they graduated (i.e., ‘ōlapa or Kumu Hula). From Aunty Maiki, Aunty Mae Kamāmalu Klein graduated as a Kumu Hula in the Papa ‘Ūniki Lehua 1972 & 1973 class. Also from Aunty Maiki, my Kumu Hula, Michael Pili Pang was an ‘ōlapa graduate in the Papa ‘Ūniki Kukui a me ka Hau class of 1979. You will see included on this first page in the right-hand column, the students who graduated in both Uncle Robert and Aunty Vicky’s hālau hula and the years in which those students graduated along with their conferred titles. As siblings to my Kumu Hula, Uncle Robert and Aunty Vicky are included in this genealogical chart because of their relationship with my Kumu Hula, because of their collective commitment to perpetuate the same hula styling and practice, and as a way to honor and recognize the haumāna who have graduated from them. On the second page, you will see a continuation of this genealogy as it relates to my hula lineage. On the left side and from Aunty Mae Kamāmalu Klein, my Kumu Hula, Michael Pili Pang graduated as a Kumu Hula as part of the Papa ‘Ūniki Maile LauLi‘i class in 1985. And on the right-hand side, you will see that I was an ‘ōlapa graduate in the 2009 Papa ‘Ūniki Kukui class, and then was a Kumu Hula graduate in the 2021 Papa ‘Ūniki Hulu class.

Appendix D

Kīkepa

(photo credit: Kori-Ann Kamealoha)



Note. The 2021 Kumu Hula graduates of Hālau Hula Ka No‘eau, wearing dark blue kīkepa. Also pictured, two of the 2015 Kumu Hula graduates of the Hālau in light blue kīkepa, and a 2021 ‘ōlapa graduate wearing a dark green pā‘ū set.

Pictured from left to right: Emiko Etherton, Tamie Onchi, Alrando Fortuna, Tammi Silva, Kawehi Goto, Kaleo Kamealoha, Daisy Canite-Miyashiro, and Davin Pascual.

Appendix E

Mai'a (banana stump) and kaula (cordage) varieties

Figure E1.

Mai'a or a banana stump (From Creative Commons)



Figure E2.

Braided kaula or cordage (From Creative Commons)



Appendix F

Expert Review Modifications

| Expert Review Notes | Modifications and Comments |
|---|--|
| Interview Protocol 1 | |
| The idea of management arose from the expert review and was integrated using the following probe | Optional Probe: How do you manage your well-being? |
| Experts provided feedback on inviting embodied memories and so the following probe was added to invite stories of feeling balanced | Optional Probe: Can you tell me a story about a time when you felt balanced? |
| Probe: How do you care for and love ‘āina today? Similarly, experts provided feedback on inviting embodied memories of ‘āina and so the original probe was modified | Probe: Can you share a story about a time you cared for ‘āina? How do you care for and love ‘āina today? |
| Experts provided feedback on ‘āina displacement and so this probe was added | Probe: And so when you are removed from ‘āina what do you do? |
| Probe: Tell me about practices that you learned from your kūpuna. Experts provided feedback on kūpuna recognizing that not all Kānaka have kūpuna or kūpuna figures and so the probe was modified following the question “What practices, in other words everyday meaningful routines and activities, do you engage in?” | Probe: And where did you learn these practices? Who taught them to you? |
| Experts provided feedback on access and lack thereof so a probe was added to address access concerns | Probe: Are there other practices you would like to engage in but may not have access to? |
| Is there anything else you would like to talk about today that I have not asked about? | Is there anything else you would like me to know? |
| The above question was modified to be more concise based on expert feedback | |
| Expert feedback highlighted confidentiality with story-sharing and so this question was added to specifically reflect on the interview process and potential stories that participants may not want shared with others | Is there anything that you’ve shared with me today that you don’t want shared with others? |

| Expert Review Notes | Modifications and Comments |
|--|--|
| Interview Protocol 2 | |
| Several questions were structured to ask participant's what things meant to them, and so questions about mana were preceded by this additional question so that there was consistency with other questions asked throughout the interviews | What does mana mean to you? |
| Added after upon reflecting on expert review feedback, and the need to close the second interview protocol | In a word or short phrase complete the sentence: Well-being is_____. |
| Added to second interview as well, after expert feedback to add to first interview protocol | Is there anything that you've shared with me today that you don't want shared with others? |
| Added after reflecting on expert review feedback and pilot study to allow for participant's to further define how they are re-presented in this research inquiry | Throughout my dissertation, what pronouns would you like me to use for you? |

Note: Through the expert review process, experts provided additional questions for consideration for the interview protocol. For example, experts provided feedback on the questions “Tell me about conflicts you have overcome, how do you resolve conflicts in your life?” and “Probe: What specifically about Manoa has caused conflict or created challenges for you?” Their considerations included, asking about which conflicts were uniquely tied to being Native Hawaiian, if participants felt that sources of conflict arose from being Native Hawaiian, as well as probing for challenges that conflicted with their core values of being Native Hawaiian. While interesting discussions arose from the expert review such as this, they were not added to the interview protocol after considering which additions and modifications would best serve the research questions of this inquiry and considering time constraints as the pilot interviews ranged from 1- to 4.5 hours.

Appendix G

Consent Form

University of Hawai'i Consent to Participate in a Research Project

Lois Yamauchi, Principal Investigator

Kawehionālani Goto, Graduate Student Investigator

Project title: Perspectives of Kānaka Well-Being: The Stories of Hawaiian Doctoral Students

Aloha! My name is Kawehi Goto and you are invited to take part in a research study. I am a graduate student at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa in the Department of Educational Psychology. As part of the requirements for earning my graduate degree, I am doing a research project.

What am I being asked to do?

If you participate in this project, I will meet with you for two interviews both conducted over Zoom. If at a later date it is safe to meet in person and you prefer to do so, this may be a possibility. You will also be asked to provide personal artifacts to be used in this research study.

Taking part in this study is your choice.

Your participation in this project is completely voluntary. You may stop participating at any time. If you stop being in the study, there will be no penalty or loss to you. Your choice to participate or not participate will not affect your rights to services at the University of Hawai'i.

Why is this study being done?

The purpose of my project is to examine the meaning of well-being as conceptualized by Hawaiian doctoral students. I am asking you to participate because you identify as a Native Hawaiian and are a doctoral student at UH Mānoa.

What will happen if I decide to take part in this study?

The interviews will consist of a total of 22 questions spread across two interview times and will focus on your (a) lived experiences, (b) well-being and (c) how you have come to make sense of living and being in the world through your experiences. The two interviews will be one-to two-hours in length. The interview questions will include questions like, "What does well-being mean to you?" "What people in your life have shaped your well-being?"

Only you and I will be present during the interview. With your permission, I will audio-record the interview so that I can later transcribe the interview and analyze the responses. You will be one of about 10 people I will interview for this study. With your permission, I will also video-record the interview so that I may analyze your body language and movements during the interview.

What are the risks and benefits of taking part in this study?

I believe there is little risk to you for participating in this research project. You may become stressed or uncomfortable answering any of the interview questions or discussing topics with me during the interview. If you do become stressed or uncomfortable, you can skip the

question or take a break. You can also stop the interview or you can withdraw from the project altogether.

There will be no direct benefit to you for participating in this interview. The results of this project may help improve the professional practices of educators, mental health professionals, and social service workers who work with other Kānaka and Indigenous graduate students.

Privacy and Confidentiality:

I will keep all study data secure and encrypted on a password protected computer. Only my University of Hawai'i advisor and I will have access to the information. Other agencies that have legal permission have the right to review research records. The University of Hawai'i Human Studies Program has the right to review research records for this study.

After the completion of this research project, I will erase or destroy the audio- and video-recordings. When I report the results of my research project, you can choose whether you would like to be identified as a participant or whether you would like to use a pseudonym (fake name). If you choose to use a pseudonym no other personal identifying information will be used that could identify you. Whether or not you choose to be identified as a participant I will report my findings in a way that protects your privacy and confidentiality to the extent allowed by law.

Future Research Studies:

Identifiers will be removed from your identifiable private information and after removal of identifiers, the data may be used for future research studies or distributed to another investigator for future research studies and we will not seek further approval from you for these future studies.

Questions:

If you have any questions about this study, please call or email me at 808.956.7775 or gotok@hawaii.edu. You may also contact my advisor, Dr. Lois Yamauchi, at 808.956.4385 or yamauchi@hawaii.edu. You may contact the UH Human Studies Program at 808.956.5007 or uhirb@hawaii.edu. to discuss problems, concerns and questions; obtain information; or offer input with an informed individual who is unaffiliated with the specific research protocol. Please visit <http://go.hawaii.edu/jRd> for more information on your rights as a research participant.

If you agree to participate in this project, please sign and date this signature page and return it to: gotok@hawaii.edu

Keep a copy of the informed consent for your records and reference.

Signature(s) for Consent:

I give permission to join the research project entitled, "*Perspectives of Kānaka Well-Being: The Stories of Hawaiian Doctoral Students.*"

Please initial next to either "Yes" or "No" to the following:

| | | |
|------------------------------|-----------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No | Were any of your ancestors Hawaiian? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No | Are you enrolled in a doctoral program at UH Mānoa? |

☐ Yes ☐ No I consent to be video-recorded for the interview portion of
this research.
☐ Yes ☐ No I consent to be audio-recorded for the interview portion of
this research.
☐ Yes ☐ No I consent to the use of my personal artifacts in this research.

I give permission for the use of my data for future research:

The following statements regard the use of your data (audio-recording, video-recording, and transcripts) collected from you during the research project and their storage and use to support future research. Please initial next to either "Yes" or "No" to the following:

☐ Yes ☐ No My data may be stored and used to support any future research.
☐ Yes ☐ No I will consider providing consent to the use of my data to support
future research. But prior to future use, please provide me with a
consent form that describes the protocol.

Name of Participant (Print): _____

Participant's Signature: _____

Signature of the Person Obtaining Consent: _____

Date: _____

cc: Participant Contact information

Email address: _____

Phone number: _____

Mahalo!

Appendix H

Interview Protocol and Questions I

Introduction & Mahalo

Mahalo for agreeing to meet with me today. This research is part of my doctoral studies and through this interview, we will talk-story about your well-being. Using my hula experiences as a lens, I am trying to make sense of how Kānaka live and be in the world. I am grateful for the opportunity that we have to share this time and space to talk about your experiences with living and being in the world in a way that makes sense to you. But before we get into the interview, I would like to share a brief explanation of my doctoral research and how your participation will be part of my academic journey.

Brief Description

My research is focused on well-being and I am interested in how well-being develops, how different aspects of well-being are defined, and how they are made sense of, embodied, and practiced through lived experiences. This research includes a recognition of trauma and pain, as well as to happiness and life transcendence.

My dissertation is an exploratory study. I will collect and analyze data from two interviews with each participant, in the first interview we will talk about well-being. In the second interview we will clarify our first talk-story session and address any questions or additional comments we both have, including any changes and updates to the transcript. We will conclude this session with additional questions as we continue to explore together how you make sense of, embody, and practice well-being in your life.

Do you have any questions?

COLLECT CONSENT FORM

Now, before we begin recording I would like to ask you to change your name in the Zoom video settings to either only include your first name, or include a pseudonym of your choosing. While the video recording will be used for the data analysis process and will not be shared this step in the interview process is to protect your privacy and confidentiality throughout this interview.

Begin Video Recording

Interview Questions I

Interview Questions

1. Tell me a little bit about yourself.
Probe: Tell me more about your 'ohana? What does your family look like?
Probe: What other relationships do you have with people? Tell me about them?
2. Walk me through a typical week- what do you do?
Probe: If you couldn't do _____ what would that be like for you?
3. What does well-being mean to you?
Optional Probe: How do you manage your well-being?

- Probe: Say, if you didn't have the well-being that you have now, what would it look like for you to have the well-being that you want?
- Probe: What would you need right now to improve your well-being?
4. Talk to me about a person you think has well-being.
Optional probe: You mentioned _____, what ways do you _____?
 5. What does balance look like for you?
Optional Probe: Can you tell me a story about a time when you felt balanced?
Probe: So if life becomes unbalanced, what does that typically look like?
 6. What does 'āina mean to you?
Probe: Can you share a story about a time you cared for 'āina? How do you care for and love 'āina today?
Probe: And so, when you are removed from 'āina what do you do?
 7. Tell me about your kuleana?
Probe: If you couldn't fulfill your kuleana to _____ what would that be like for you?
 8. What practices (i.e., everyday meaningful routines and activities) guide you in your day-to-day life?
Probe: And where did you learn these practices? Who taught them to you?
Probe: What practices do you hope to continue with your 'ohana in the future?
Probe: Are there other practices you would like to engage in but may not have access to?
 9. What do you hope to gain from graduate school and what will you carry with you after you complete your degree?
 10. How do you identify yourself?
 11. What advice would you give to someone in your shoes?
 12. Is there anything else you would like me to know?
 13. Is there anything that you've shared with me today that you don't want shared with others?

Mahalo for taking the time to talk with me today. For my study I will also be reviewing and analyzing artifacts from each participant. The purpose of the artifacts is for me to view examples of the way your well-being is displayed through products or items, or are products or items you turn to when seeking well-being. For example, an artifact could be a photograph of someone or something significant such as you engaging in a particular activity that represents your way of life, a written work you have created that you are proud of such as a master's thesis or conference presentation, or a significant object that you have created or have received that you return to that reflects who you are or helps you to continue to live and be in the world. I will be sending you an email to ask for artifacts with all of that information, and you can send me any additional works that were not one of these examples but that you have created and are comfortable sharing with me for this project. In my analysis I will be using a poetic strategy by creating poems from your interview transcript. This is similar to in vivo codes and is meant to be a co-constructive process. After this interview, I will send you this interview transcript for your review and you can decide if there is anything you would like to add or amend from our conversation. Then after our second interviews you will similarly receive the interview transcript along with the poems derived from your interview transcript using this poem strategy. You may respond to these poems in whatever way you see fit and we can work together at a level you are comfortable to construct them. Do you have any additional questions based on what I have now shared? *Respond to any questions* Thank you!

Schedule second interview

I also drew on embodiment as a strategy for interviewing to help participants draw on somatic memories. As mentioned above, these sensation styled interview questions support conscious embodiment exploration. These questions will be used as optional probes throughout the interviews, when appropriate. Examples probes of these types of questions include:

- Tell me more about _____
 - What did that feel like?
 - What were you thinking?
 - What were you feeling?
- Earlier you mentioned _____ ...
 - What did that feel like?
 - What were you thinking?
 - What were you feeling?

Interview Protocol and Questions II

Introduction & Mahalo

Mahalo for agreeing to meet with me again. As a review, this research is part of my doctoral studies and through this interview, we will talk-story about your well-being. Using my hula experiences as a lens, I am trying to make sense of how Kānaka live and be in the world. I am grateful for the opportunity that we have to share this time and space to talk about your experiences with living and being in the world in a way that makes sense to you. But before we get into the interview, I want to revisit a brief explanation of my doctoral research and how your participation will be part of my academic journey.

Brief Description

My research is focused on well-being and I am interested in how well-being develops, how different aspects of well-being are defined, and how they are made sense of, embodied, and practiced through lived experiences. This research includes a recognition of trauma and pain, as well as to happiness and life transcendence.

My dissertation is an exploratory study, I will collect and analyze data from two interviews with each participant, in the first interview we talked about well-being. In this interview we will clarify our first talk-story session and address any questions or additional comments we both have, including any changes and updates to the transcript, and given your life experiences to-date. We will conclude this session with additional questions as we continue to explore together how you make sense of, embody, and practice well-being in your life.

Do you have any questions?

Again, before we begin recording I would like to ask you to change your name in the Zoom video settings so that we may protect your privacy and confidentiality throughout this interview.

Begin Video Recording

Interview #2 Questions

Artifacts: Collect and Discuss

1. In the time that has passed what has changed in your life?
Probe: Is there anything new you would like to share?
2. Looking back at our first interview session, are there any changes you would like to make or comments you would like to add?
3. What everyday meaningful routines and activities do you engage in? And can you tell me about them?

In our last interview, you shared with me that well-being is _____ with that in mind...

4. What are your goals for living and being in the world?
5. What guides and inspires you?
6. What people in your life have shaped your well-being?
Probe: Who and/or what do you take care of?
Probe: Who and/or what are you responsible for?
7. You shared with me in our first interview that you are from _____. What physical places do you call home?
8. What physical places describe who you are and how you have come to be?
9. What does mana mean to you?
10. Talk to me about a person you think has mana? What are they like?
11. Tell me about conflicts you have overcome, how do you resolve conflicts in your life?
Probe: What specifically about Mānoa has caused conflict or created obstacles for you?
12. What supports your educational journey?
Probe: What specifically about Mānoa has facilitated your progress or created opportunities for you?
13. In a word or short phrase complete the sentence: Well-being is _____.
14. Is there anything else you would like to talk about today that I have not asked about?
15. Is there anything you shared with me today that you would like to be kept confidential?
OR Is there anything that you've shared with me today that you don't want shared with others?
16. Throughout my dissertation, what pronouns would you like me to use for you?

Mahalo for taking the time to talk with me today. I will be sending the transcript from our session today along with the poetic strategy pieces I have worked on as we discussed in our last interview. Do you have any more questions for me? *Address any questions* Mahalo & aloha!

Appendix I

Research Invitation



Invitation to Participate Seeking Participants for a UH Mānoa Research Study on Well-Being

Aloha mai,

My name is Kawehi and I am an Educational Psychology PhD candidate at the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa. I am emailing to ask for your participation in my dissertation project to better understand Hawaiian conceptualizations of well-being development. Your participation may help us understand more about how to support Native Hawaiian doctoral students and nurture their well-being development.

Your participation would involve being interviewed twice over Zoom and would take approximately 2 hours each time. Interviews will be scheduled roughly 6 months apart.

Eligibility criteria:

- Enrolled in a doctoral degree program at UH Mānoa
- Students who identify as Native Hawaiian

If you are open to participating in my dissertation research project please fill out the following google form: <https://forms.gle/kD9iJMTtNTLdXqbA>

If you have any questions, please email me. Thank you for your time and consideration.

E mālama pono,
Kawehi Goto

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