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【《UH・UR合同シンポジウム》報告】 Reinterpreting Hawaiian Gender through J. H. K. Kānepu ‘u's Work of Legendary Literature, “He Mo ‘olelo o Hamanalau.”

メタデータ	言語: 出版者: 琉球大学国際沖縄研究所 公開日: 2014-12-24 キーワード (Ja): キーワード (En): 作成者: Silva, Noenoe メールアドレス: 所属:
URL	http://hdl.handle.net/20.500.12000/30114

《UH・UR 合同シンポジウム》報告

Reinterpreting Hawaiian Gender through J. H. K. Kānepu‘u’s Work of Legendary Literature, “He Mo‘olelo o Hāmanalau.”

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Abstract

In 1868, the mo‘olelo (tale, story, history) of Hāmanalau, a young woman from Ka‘ala mountain on O‘ahu, written by Joseph H. Kānepu‘u, was published as a serial in the Hawaiian language press. This is the only known written version of this hi/story from the oral tradition. The central relationship in the story is that of Hāwea, the powerful grandmother who can communicate with the spirit world, and Hāmanalau, her seemingly passive and powerless granddaughter. This paper will examine the ways that Kānepu‘u represented gender roles in the main characters of Hāwea, Hāmanalau, the boy Kaukanapōki‘i and lesser male characters. The paper will also examine gender roles as represented in the several marriage ceremonies described in the story. I argue that Hāwea and other characters are closely identified with the land and with other living beings, and that land, place names, and other beings such as birds are thus centrally important to concepts of gender, power, and the very nature of human beings.

1. Introduction

This paper springs from two different projects. The first is a book project documenting and analyzing Kanaka Hawai‘i (Native Hawaiian) intellectual history of the 19th and early 20th century, concentrating on two lesser-known but important writers of Hawaiian language literature. The other is my perceived need for more nuanced interpretations of gender in Hawaiian culture, past and present. I bring these together in this presentation through a reading of the representation of gender in a specific mo‘olelo, or work of legendary literature, by J. H. Kānepu‘u, whose life and works I am studying for the book project. I argue that common binary understandings of gender have tended to fix and flatten understandings of male and female roles in Hawaiian mo‘olelo (stories,

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histories, genealogies) in distinctly heteropatriarchal ways. All interpretations, including translations, serve the needs of the interpreter(s) and the goals of their projects, including my own. Thus, my project here is not to define Hawaiian gender in some “truer” way; nor is it to tease out any imagined “authentic Hawaiian” knowledge of gender roles from those that have been “tainted” by encounters with the “West.” My task of interpretation here is to investigate how Kānepu‘u represented gender roles in 1868, and further, to take into account relationships that the characters have with spirits, the land, and animals, and see how those intersect with gender roles.

I will first give an example of binary, fixed gender roles as found in both older and contemporary Hawaiian studies texts and follow that with a recent critique by (male) Hawaiian scholar of masculinity, Ty Kāwika Tengan.

I then describe this genre of mo‘olelo and give a very brief summary of the plot and characters in the mo‘olelo. I follow by analyzing the gender roles of the characters as well as the language Kānepu‘u uses.

2. Binaries

Two of the major Hawaiian deities are the male Kū and the female Hina.⁽¹⁾ According to folklorist Martha Warren Beckwith, writing in 1940,

Ku and Hina, male or husband (kane) and female or wife (wahine), are invoked as great ancestral gods of heaven and earth who have general control over the fruitfulness of earth and the generations of mankind. Ku means “rising upright,” Hina means “leaning down.” The sun at its rising is referred to Ku, at its setting to Hina. Prayer is addressed to Ku toward the east, to Hina toward the west. Together the two include the whole earth and the heavens from east to west... [Beckwith 1970, p.12].

This idea of Kū as upright, and, by extension, above, and Hina as leaning down, and, by extension, below, at times joins with another general observation about the language and its poetics. Hawaiian makes plentiful use of complementary pairs in general speech and in poetics. Phrases such as ma uka and ma kai (the inland and the shore) appear often together to describe a totality. “He lani ko luna, he honua ko lalo” (Above has heavens, below has earth) is a saying that describes a world in balance and harmony. In addition, the deity Wākea is figured as a Sky Father and his partner, Papahānaumoku (Island-birthing Papa) is Mother Earth. This again tempts interpretations that men are above and more powerful and women are below, beneath them. This unfortunately coincides with Western and colonial ideas of patriarchy.

The image of Kū the war god is ubiquitous in popular culture in Hawai‘i and in the US, where his image has become distorted as the mocked “tiki.” The predominant female

image of Hawai‘i, as everyone knows, is the soft and available hula girl. These are reductions and stereotypes. In Hawaiian religion, literature, and daily life in previous eras, Kū had many, many other forms, including many plants and animals. Anthropologists Handy, Handy, and Pukui describe this phenomenon, called kino lau (many bodies) this way:

According to the theory underlying Hawaiian natural philosophy, all natural phenomena, objects and creatures, were bodily forms assumed by nature gods or nature spirits. Thus rain clouds, hogs, gourds, and sweet potatoes were “bodies” of the god Lono. Taros, sugar cane and bamboo were bodies of the god Kane. Bananas, squid, and some other forms of marine life were bodies of Kanaloa. The coconut, breadfruit, and various forest trees were bodies of Ku [Handy, Handy, and Pukui 1991, p.23].

Kū, then, has many forms, not all of which correspond to the reductionist characteristic of “rising upright.” One of these, for example, is the ‘ie‘ie plant, which spreads out rather than rises up. Ty KāwikaTengan cautions against simplistic masculinist interpretations when he writes:

strength becomes gendered as *masculine* and coupled with authenticity, by men and women alike. ... gendered configurations of nation and culture that operate in colonial projects often reproduce themselves in anticolonial ones: masculinity is identified with the strong and authentic—Māori/Maoli— traditions of precolonial Polynesian society that were able to resist the perceived death, weakening, feminization, and emasculation colonization exacted on Hawaiian culture [Tengan 2008, p.13].

He means that even in contemporary Hawaiian culture and studies, the temptation remains to see gender in these binaries that ascribe strength and power to males and submission to females. As an example, Handy et al. gave only male kino lau in the above explanation, leaving out that the breadfruit tree is also a kino lau of Haumea (herself a manifestation of Papa, Earth Mother). In that form she is called Kāmeha‘ikana and is a deity of war and governance. Further, although Lono is conceived of as one of the primary male deities, one manifestation of the archetypal Hina is named Lonomuku [Dibble 2005, p.41]. Thus, we must not be satisfied with such masculinist interpretations and examples and instead look further into our mo‘olelo in order to more fully understand what and how our kūpuna (ancestors) thought.

Let us look now to our mo‘olelo and see what Kānepu‘u described to his audience, in the Hawaiian language in 1868.

3. “He Mo‘olelo o Hamanalau”

J. H. Kānepu‘u was a school teacher and a writer who contributed often to the Hawaiian language newspapers on many subjects. Previous to this mo‘olelo he wrote two other quite long mo‘olelo based in the oral tradition. All of these mo‘olelo take place in the past, in specific locations, with characters thought to be both historical and somewhat mythical. He wrote this mo‘olelo in 1868, when literacy in Hawaiian was nearly universal and literature was flourishing. It was published as a serial in a Hawaiian language newspaper (*Ka Nupepa Kuokoa*). At the time, our small nation was beset with worries, especially about the dwindling native population and the seeming inability of the ali‘i (genealogical ruling class) to produce new heirs. The ali‘i had changed traditional land tenure to private property and converted to a capitalist economy that compelled moves from farming and fishing for subsistence to working on plantations.

“He Moololo o Hamanalau” is the story of the grandmother Hāwea, who is living on top of Mount Ka‘ala, the tallest point on the island of O‘ahu. Her son Kaiaka and his wahine Pua‘ena live on shore not far away in Waialua.⁽²⁾ Kaiaka and Pua‘ena are the parents of the girl Hāmanalau, whom Hāwea takes up Ka‘ala to raise. As she grows, Hāmanalau has only her grandmother, people in the pō (spirit world), and birds to talk and play with. When Hāmanalau is 12, Hāwea takes another child, her brother Kaukanapōki‘i, to raise. Kaukanapōki‘i likes toy wa‘a (canoes) and admires big wa‘a (open ocean sailing vessels). When Kaukanapōki‘i is about 6 and Hāmanalau about 18, Hāmanalau meets a young man in her dreams and falls in love; in the dreams she tells him where she lives. The young man is Kaihu‘auwa‘alua, an ali‘i who lives on the island of Hawai‘i, and who carves wa‘a, the sailing vessels. He sails over to O‘ahu and conspires with little brother to kidnap Hāmanalau. The brother does so because he sees Kaihu‘auwa‘alua’s big wa‘a and wants to sail on one of them. Hāmanalau does not really resist when she realizes she has been kidnapped; she sleeps with Kaihu‘auwa‘alua and gets pregnant. She also follows Kaihu‘auwa‘alua up into the mountains where he is felling trees and dubbing them out for new wa‘a. When the dubbing is done, he and his companions leave to take the wa‘a down to shore, but Hāmanalau can’t make the trip because she is too far along in the pregnancy. She gives birth up in the mountains and her little brother comes and takes care of her. After giving birth, she dies and her spirit flies to Ka‘ala where she meets with her grandmother Hāwea. Hāwea puts her spirit into a bird and she flies back to her brother, to whom she relates Hāwea’s instructions to care for her or else she will die again. The baby girl is given to Kaihu‘auwa‘alua’s people to care for. When Hāmanalau gets well, she and her brother go to tell the father he must keep the baby because they are returning to O‘ahu. Kaihu‘auwa‘alua now wants Hāmanalau back but she hides and he has to have her caught in a giant bird trap. Eventually, Hāmanalau and Kaukanapōki‘i return to Ka‘ala and reunite with Hāwea. Kaukanapōki‘i becomes a seer like his grandmother and locates an appropriate mate for Hāmanalau.

Hāwea is one of the main characters, a woman and a grandmother. She is also a “kilokilo,” a person who can read signs and omens. She raises her grandchildren and she also makes kapa, which is an expected role for women. She often communicates with her male partner and her brothers who have already passed into the pō. She has the power and the skill to save Hāmanalau’s life: she puts Hāmanalau’s spirit into the ‘i‘iwi bird. Hāwea is also strongly identified with Ka‘ala, the very high mountain: a symbol of strength. From the top of Ka‘ala, she can see the clouds all around the island; Ka‘ala is closer to the sky than lower elevations. It is rich with lehua, maile, and other plants and birds, who are the kino lau of important deities, and all of this is what gives her her mana.

Hāmanalau is the young woman whose story seems to be one of a troubled coming of age. Her parents are the district rulers and her grandmother is the powerful Hāwea, so she is raised under kapu (restrictions) designed to ready her for a life similar to that of her parents. When she is kidnapped, she doesn’t really resist, but allows herself to go along with the desires of the young man and her very young brother. For much of the story, she seems passive, as she gets abandoned and then revived after being put into body of the ‘i‘iwi bird.

For a long time after that she is very closely identified with birds—her behavior even resembles a small, frightened bird. The ‘i‘iwi are tiny birds, only about 5.” tall. This is an image of frailty and vulnerability. This sense is reinforced when she runs away from the baby’s father and is only found when she gets captured in big birdcage built in the forest.

Hāmanalau also seems dependent on males for much of the story. When her partnership with a new, more appropriate mate is arranged, it is her grandfather in the pō who directs the action. He asks Hāwea to test Hāmanalau’s brother’s skill at reading clouds for signs and the brother discerns the location of the new young partner for Hāmanalau.

Kaukanapōki‘i, another major character in the mo‘olelo is an active boy with an interest. His is a kind of hero growing up story. First, he must be responsible to care for Hāmanalau or she will die. He raises the child while Hāmanalau’s body is dead and she travels to O‘ahu.

When they return to O‘ahu, it is Kaukanapōki‘i who is selected and trained in kilokilo after his grandmother. At first, it may seem that he is selected because he is male. Why not the older Hāmanalau? But Kānepu‘u explains that it was because Hāmanalau had been raised under kapu and had broken the kapu, and thus was “haumia” or defiled:

ua hoapono loa ia no nae o Kaukanapokii, a ua haumia ole no oia, a [o ia] ka mea o laua e hiki ke aoia i ka oihana ano kilokilo a kahuna o ka wa kahiko, me ke kuhikuhi ana i ka laina o kela hana kēia hana ... na laina o ka lani, ka honua, na moe uhane o ka po, a oia no paha kekahi mau hana a na Kahuna e hana ai [Jul. 11, 1868].

Kaukanapōki'i was completely accepted [when they returned], and he had not been defiled, so he was the one of the two of them who could be taught the profession of seer and kahuna of the old times, to direct the ways of doing each thing, ... the customs of the heavens, the earth, the dreams of the pō; these are perhaps some of the acts that Kāhuna did.⁽³⁾

It wasn't then because of a gender preference that Kaukanapōki'i inherited this profession.

4. "Weddings" in the Mo'olelo

Unlike most mo'olelo of this type, "Hāmanalau" includes a number of ho'āo ceremonies, similar to weddings. The descriptions are quite fanciful and provide us much material for analysis. I will only talk about one of these ceremonies here, and that is Hāmanalau's with her new kāne, named Hinahelani. Hinahelani had also been raised under kapu in an area nearby called O'ahunui.

The most striking element of the ceremony for Hāmanalau is the ceremonial bath she takes beforehand. Kānepu'u writes:

I ka iho ana aku o ua o Hamanalau a luu iloko o ka wai a e-a mai, ua pau aku la na kino ano inoino a pau o Hamanalau a e like me ka maikai, a me ka pau na o ka lepo i keia mea he wai, pela no ka pau ana 'ku o ko Hamanalau ano kino a kanaka, a haumia hoi o ka hoopu-ku-aka ana hoi o kela keiki o Waipio, a lilo ae la o Hamanalau i mea opio wale, me he mea la aohe i loa kane mua, ua pau loa ae la ia mau opalapala mea koena keiki i ka lu-ia, a kaawale mawaho o ka oihana ku mau o ka nani oikelakela mamua ae o ke keiki o uka [Kanepuu 1868, Aug. 8].

When Hāmanalau went down, dived into the water and came up, her damaged bodies were gone, and like the beauty and the washing away of dirt in water, so was Hāmanalau's human body that had been defiled and crushed by that child of Waipi'o. Hāmanalau became as if very young, as if she had never had a kāne before; all of the refuse left over from that child was scattered and gone, separated away from the [oihana ku mau] superior beauty [she had been] before the child of the upland.

What was washed away was the trauma of having been taken without her consent, having been abandoned, and died. The reference to the refuse left over from "that child" does not refer to her actual child, with whom she develops a good relationship later in the story, but to the young man who caused these things to happen.

After this ceremony, Hāmanalau rides down Ka‘ala to the shore on turtles, accompanied by birds.

The night before the ceremony, her new kāne, Hinahelani, also has a preparation ceremony. In the middle of the night, Hinahelani hears a noise outside and the voices of “ka poe e-epa o ka aina o Apoluona” (supernatural people of the land of Apoluona)⁽⁴⁾ and there follows a whole series of characters sent to groom Hinahelani: they groom his hair, his eyes, shoulders, chest, torso, thighs, and knees so that he is beautiful from head to toe. They perfume his body and his breath and they reshape his poli, the area where one holds a baby, so that it is not too hard or too thin. [Kanepuu 1868, Aug. 1]. We might note that in our contemporary culture, we would expect the woman’s beauty to be paid attention to prior to a wedding ceremony, but that is not the case here.

At the ceremony itself, Kaukanapōki‘i makes a speech that includes an important observation about land and women:

He honu ka aina he mea panee, e panee aku ana no ka hooponopono aina ana malalo o ka lahui kanaka e, a o ka wahine nei no nae ka hapa nui o ka mea nana e hoopanee ka aina ia hai, a mamuli o ka makemake nui a aiwaiwa lua ole o keia mea he wahine, e hiki ke hoopanee i keia mea he aina i lawa ai ka makemake [Kanepuu 1868, Aug. 15].

Land is a turtle, it moves along, it moves along because of land reforms under a different people, and women are the majority of the people who make the land move to other people, because of the great and incomprehensible desires of women, [they] can move land in order to satisfy desires.

This observation is likely interpretable as Kānepu‘u worrying in print about his people losing their land. At that time, many men from different countries came to Hawai‘i for different reasons and decided to stay. They married Hawaiian women, and because the laws were modeled in part on American laws, land that belonged to Hawaiian women sometimes became the property of foreign men. He critiques women here for desiring goods or wealth, or perhaps, incomprehensibly, desiring foreign men.

5. Conclusion

We observe that for the ho‘āo ceremony, Hāmanalau and Hinahelani undergo different rituals to prepare, and that they are not reflections of any stereotypical ideas of femininity or masculinity. They are not paired in a Kū =masculine=above and Hina=feminine=below model. In fact, the man’s name is Hina. This suggests we need a more complex interpretation of the gender archetypes of Kū and Hina.

We further see that Hāmanalau's fearful bird-like behavior was the result of being traumatized by Kaihu'auwa'alua's carelessness toward her. After being cared for by her brother, they journey home, reuniting with Hāwea. Hāmanalau is then back at Ka'ala where her mana must also derive from. She starts over: when she bathes in her usual place, she is restored to strength as well as beauty. This is like a hi'uwai ceremony, at which people used to bathe at the start of the new year [Handy, Handy, and Pukui 1972, p.35].

The image of Hāmanalau as a passive, dependent young woman is not generalizable to all women because of Hāwea, the very strong, mountain-identified older woman.

I have not done justice to this quite long mo'olelo here, because of obvious space and time limitations. But I hope that I have been able to reinforce a few points. One is that the representation of gender is complicated, and as readers everything depends on our interpretation. Further, while mo'olelo should not be thought of as messengers from the past that can tell us what things were really like long ago, we can learn some things about how our kūpuna of the 19th century thought and imagined our relationships to the land and animals, and also how kino lau works. If everything we see is a manifestation of a deity, and all of us— deities, plants, animals, rocks, humans, etc.— are descended from common parents, how then should we relate to them? Plants, fish, and other beings change from one sex to another in a single lifetime. A woman might be closely identified with a high mountain or with a small bird. What can these tell us about gender in Hawaiian thinking? What possibilities might they open up?

Notes

- (1) Contemporary Hawaiian uses two diacriticals, the macron to indicate long vowels and the single open quotation mark to indicate the glottal stop. These were not in use in previous eras, so the spelling of the same word may appear differently, as does Kū (as I spell it) and Ku in quotations from earlier periods.
- (2) For those of you who know the area, they lived at the place also known as Pua'ena, where Hale'iwa Park is today.
- (3) All translations are my own unless specified otherwise.
- (4) Apoluona is the Hawaiianization of Apollyon, mentioned in the Bible, Revelations 9:11.

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