LAND, LEADERSHIP, AND NATION: HAUNANI-KAY TRASK ON THE TESTIMONIAL USES OF LIFE WRITING IN HAWAIʻI

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Haunani-Kay Trask is descended from the Piʻilani line of Maui and the Kahakumakaliua line of Kauaʻi. A professor of Hawaiian Studies at the University of Hawaiʻi at Mānoa, Trask served as director of the Center for Hawaiian Studies for nearly ten years. During her tenure as director, she played a primary role in the building of the Gladys Brandt Kamakakūokalani Center for Hawaiian Studies. Trask is the author of *Eros and Power: The Promise of Feminist Theory* (1984). Widely read and taught in Hawaiʻi, the continental US, and throughout the world, her collection of essays, *From a Native Daughter: Colonialism and Sovereignty in Hawaiʻi* (1993; reissued in 1999) is a foundational text for those interested in indigenous rights. Equally important is the award-winning documentary film *Act of War: The Overthrow of the Hawaiian Kingdom* (1993), which Trask co-wrote and co-produced. A poet whose work explodes with anger, profound beauty, and eroticism, Trask has published *Light in the Crevice Never Seen* (1994) and *Night Is a Sharkskin Drum* (2002). Her work as a scholar and activist is featured in the CD *Haunani-Kay Trask: We Are Not Happy Natives* (2002).

Trask's activism on behalf of Native Hawaiians and other indigenous groups extends beyond her writing. A founding member of Ka Lāhui Hawaiʻi, the largest sovereignty organization in Hawaiʻi, Trask is a foremost leader in the Hawaiian sovereignty movement. Since 1986, she has anchored and produced *First Friday,* a monthly public access television show spotlighting cultural and political issues important to Hawaiians. She has represented Native Hawaiians at the United Nations Working Group on Indigenous Peoples in Geneva, and at numerous Indigenous gatherings in Samiland (Norway), Aotearoa (New Zealand), Basque Country (Spain), and Indian nations throughout the United States and Canada. In 2001, she went to Durban, South Africa to participate in the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance.

As Trask reflects on the Hawaiian struggle for sovereignty, she also provides insights into popular forms of testimony that often go unrecognized as such, and she does so in a way that brings together theory and practice.

Biography 27.1 (Winter 2004) © Biographical Research Center

Display by Leandra Wai at ʻIolani Palace during the 100th Anniversary Commemoration of the 1898 Annexation of Hawaiʻi. Photograph © and reproduced by courtesy of Ed Greevy.

Cynthia Franklin and Laura E. Lyons (CF & LEL): *Could you talk about the role that testimony and/or forms of life writing have played in the struggle for sovereignty at various moments? We have particular events that we would be interested in having you respond to. First, can you describe the petitions that Hawaiians signed in 1897 opposing annexation, and discuss how important the recovery of them has been for Native Hawaiians? In other words, can you discuss the importance of these documents as a form of testimony, both at the time they were signed and presented to the US government and their significance now?*

Haunani-Kay Trask (HKT): Several years ago, I realized how Noenoe Silva's work in recovering the anti-annexation petitions would change the way Hawaiians looked at contemporary sovereignty.[1] At the time, many Hawaiians were undecided about sovereignty: should they support the sovereignty movement which, for most of them, meant a move away from supporting the Democratic Party—i.e., the dominant political force—or should they wait and see? The petitions moved a lot of unaware or indecisive people toward supporting the sovereignty struggle. The growth of the sovereignty movement, its acceptance by many Hawaiians beyond the activists, was given added strength by the petitions. Of course, my parents' generation already

knew about our people's resistance, like my grandfather on my father's side and my grandmother on my mother's side, whose names are on the petitions.

Then statehood changed everything. The political focus was on the Democratic Party gaining ascendancy over the Republicans. The past—the overthrow, the petitions, the political resistance to American annexation—was eclipsed. Although I grew up in a very political family—my grandfather, David Trask, was a Territorial Senator for two decades—I learned nothing about our Native past—including the petitions—when I attended St. Ann's in Kāneʻohe and Kamehameha in my high school years. The movement against the Americans, and specifically against annexation, was never, ever mentioned, let alone studied, in school.

This historical amnesia was intentional, of course. Education is one way for governments to indoctrinate their citizenry. For our colonized, miseducated generation, the petitions revealed how unified—in truth, unanimous—was our nation's opposition to the United States and to annexation—from the royal family on down to the rural *makaʻāinana.* Today, our quest for self-determination is rooted in that time, takes its sustenance from that national resistance.

But first came the process of historical retrieval.

When a group of us began research for the film *Act of War,* we had to unearth the primary sources, like the magnificent Blount Report, written by President Cleveland's emissary sent to investigate the overthrow and the complicity of American Minister Stevens, and the American troops, in the taking of our sovereignty.[2]

My Uncle Arthur knew the Queen. He was the oldest of the Trasks. He just recently died at the age of 96. Fortunately, he gave me an original copy of the Blount Report with this magnificent old-fashioned handwriting, saying, "And here you are, the next generation." He stepped right out of the pages of history, literally. I was stunned to learn that he had known our Queen, indeed, had done some work for her as a young man.

The petitions not only gave legitimacy, an anchor, to the sovereignty movement. They gave an excitement to what we were doing and the path we were on. It was thrilling to search for the names of our *ʻohana* (relatives) and find them, indeed to find that all of our *kūpuna* (elders) were opposed to annexation. The physical process of retrieval meant searching for family names. If some of us couldn't find our genealogical names, we were likely to wonder "What happened?" My students would ask parents or grandparents, who didn't previously want to say anything. All of a sudden, my students are talking to *Tūtū,* who becomes very animated and wants to talk with the *ʻohana* about the pride of having officially resisted through signing petitions.

I remember when I found my grandmother's name from Hāna. I was shocked. She had a fourth grade education. She raised eleven children. She was alone, because her husband had been murdered when she was carrying my mother, the last of their children. She had a little taro patch—in those days, everybody did. My mother said the people had to sign petitions in one place. So the officials went by boat from Wailuku to Hāna to collect signatures from the people.

I hadn't heard any of this before. Not when I was growing up, nor when I came back from college. In thinking about your question, I recalled the many significant political events I had never known about as I was growing up. Then, by asking people about such things, and hearing them say, "Oh, yeah, we were involved in that," or, "yes, your grandparents were involved," another world, a world of Native resistance, is revealed.

My parents' generation rarely talked about the overthrow, and forced annexation. I think they probably decided that our future, that is, their children's future, depended on looking ahead, not recalling the past. They had worked hard for Statehood, particularly my grandfather, David Trask, Sr., who had been a Territorial Senator and the Sheriff for two decades. He was a stalwart Democratic Party member. In fact, he helped to found the party. He was also a long-time proponent of statehood. He knew, as did the rest, that statehood meant the ascendancy of the Democratic Party, and therefore, of Hawaiians and the non-*haole* population in general.

Nearly forty years after statehood, when the centennial of the overthrow is both commemorated and deplored, the petitions once again surface in 1997, and Hawaiians reconnect with an era of resistance against the United States. They search for family names to establish their linkages to Hawaiian patriots, and thereby their family's opposition to becoming Americans.

Among other things, this kind of historical retrieval demonstrates the power of testimony: the linking of generations, the mapping of resistance, the evidence of our own past through our own recording of it.

The storytelling that came out of people recognizing that Hawaiians had signed petitions started a whole new *moʻolelo* ("story" in Hawaiian). A retelling began. For example, I'd see somebody who'd say, "Hey, I saw your *tūtū's* name on the petition. I know your family from Hāna." Then we'd start to talk about where we came from and how we were related, even if not by blood, then by *ahupuaʻa,* the indigenous land tenure system. That generated more stories, say, when their family met the "pigs," which is the PGs [Provisional Government]. They might say, my *tūtū* did this, or got up and walked away from them, or something that suggested a kind of resistance to the *haole* who stole our government.

For us, resistance at the overthrow was part of the *mo'olelo,* the long story of resistance from contact, including the ongoing resistance today. We join each other in resistance through speaking about it, even though we're not talking about ourselves but about our parents and our grandparents. For Hawaiians, that's important, because the behavior of the older generations confirms and supports our resistance today.

When we started the sovereignty movement, lots of Hawaiians were very afraid of it, especially the *kūpuna.* They thought our behavior would bring down the wrath of the ruling political parties. That would mean more suffering as a result, more evil. Because we were young, and the young think of what to do, rather than what it will cost to do it, we didn't really care about the wrath or anger of non-Hawaiians. We were the injured, the ones who had a claim to anger and to the justice that would heal it. Today, our students, who could be our children, actually a bit younger, are also looking for our Native history that has been suppressed because of the overthrow. And so, each generation adds to the historical recovery.

CF & LEL: *We also are interested in how you think sovereignty has been forwarded by accounts of activists such as George Helm and Kimo Mitchell who were lost at sea in March 1977 during an attempt to occupy the island of Kaho'olawe. These activists were part of the Protect Kaho'olawe 'Ohana (PKO), which in 1976 carried out a series of occupations of this island which had been taken over by the US military at the start of World War II and then placed under the authority of the Secretary of the Navy by Executive Order in 1953.*

HKT: I was very active in the PKO, but I didn't come home from college in time to have met George Helm and Kimo Mitchell. They had just recently gone missing—at the time I returned home. It's a curious story because Emmett Aluli, founding member of PKO, was my mother's doctor when I was planning to return home. She had had breast cancer surgery and Emmett Aluli had been her doctor. She would write to me in Wisconsin, enclosing packets of clippings on the Kaho'olawe landings. She kept asking: "Are you coming home? When are you coming home?"

Dissertations are not something easily explained to people who think you've been away too long. They think, correctly, that school goes on and on. They want to know if you are ever going to get a job and grow up!

So I finally replied that, "yeah, I'm coming home." I returned in 1977. Of course, one reason for that date was my desire to get involved in PKO. I had been in Madison for ten years; had been part of the anti-Vietnam war student movement, of the Women's Studies struggle on campus, of the

Black Studies struggle. But it was time to come home and re-join my family and write my dissertation.

My father had died while I was away at school. Something I regret to this day. These life changes put you in a different mind. So I had a talk with my adviser, Booth Fowler, and asked him what he thought about my going home. I was very fond of him, still am. I trusted his judgment, so I said "Do you think I could write this dissertation at home?" And he answered, "Dissertations are written all over the world. If you don't go home, your heart will be there and your mind will be here—just go home and write it." With his blessing, I was on the plane instantly.

I came home in 1977—the first landing on Kahoʻolawe had been in '76. And Walter Ritte and Richard Sawyer were in prison, and I thought: I'm here, now what? You know, feet first, let's go.

I became a grant writer for the Protect Kahoʻolawe ʻOhana, which I hadn't planned to do since I was interested in contributing to the legal team. But as Emmett Aluli and I were strategizing, we realized that getting arrested was no longer helpful. Leaders like George Helm and Kimo Mitchell were missing, presumed dead. Others, like Walter Ritte and Richard Sawyer, were in prison. Neither Emmett nor I thought more arrests and imprisonments would help. In truth, I thought they would only hurt us, taking away more leaders, or disappearing them altogether. Of course, I was criticized. Some ʻOhana members said, "Oh, you see what happens when you spend ten years getting your Ph.D.? Now, you're not going to be arrested. Why do you think you can prevent us from landing and being arrested?"

I answered that we were addressing a strategy question, not a personal commitment issue. It was simply the wrong path. To me, getting arrested depleted our ranks. It didn't stop the bombing and we lost valuable, young leaders.

I decided to concentrate on moving our Federal lawsuit against the military. I went to see our pro bono lawyer, Boyce Brown. He told me he didn't have enough time, with all the rest of his paid work, to give the lawsuit his full attention. He knew the lawsuit could be a path-breaking avenue if we had a full-time attorney taking it on.

Boyce suggested I call Cynthia Thielen. She was an older woman who went to law school after she had her family. She wasn't only mature, she was incredibly sharp, enormously energetic. At the time, she was studying for the bar, and told me: "I'll call you back if I pass." And so she did. Meanwhile, I raised money through a grant to pay her salary. And the rest is history. She went into the 9th Circuit Federal Court and got us access. Ironically, it was her first appearance in court. Legal access changed the whole nature of the

struggle. The cost of occupying the island meant civil disobedience, prison, or death. So, I kept saying to Emmett Aluli, the leader of the ʻOhana, that legal access was imperative. He replied, thoughtfully: You get us legal access.

Because the ʻOhana had been trying for months—after Walter and Richard were in prison—to get legal access, Emmett wanted me to pursue whether, and if, I could get it, in my own way. In the past, the courts had said no. But once we got the lawsuit off the ground, the judge awarded us access.

Legal access was the beginning of the end for the military. The media came over. The military couldn't deny them access, since we were allowed, and because the press argued it was a matter of their freedom to cover the news! Once on the island, we all saw how the military had been lying about what actually went on over there. You know, the usual lying military, the same as with the Stryker Brigade now. They said, for example: "We are taking great pains to protect the historic sites." But they weren't doing a thing to stop erosion of the sites, or direct bomb hits, or anything! In truth, they were destroying the land, the sites, the water table, the surrounding seas, the endangered species, everything. The press accompanied us, covered the entire access in living color on the evening news. And for once, the media was on our side! They couldn't help but be on our side, all they had to do was film the island for all to see.

The end to the bombing was such a public issue that it even became pertinent to the presidential race with the first Bush. There was a narrow contest for a Congressional seat from Hawaiʻi. The Japanese American woman who was running for Congress, a Republican, Pat Saiki, didn't get elected. But she gave the Democrats a real scare. So Bush, the other Bush—there are so many Bushes—called a halt to the bombing in the hopes of swinging the Hawaiian vote to Saiki. She lost, by a slim margin. But we had won because the bombing was stopped.

Now regarding George Helm. In my analysis, he and the others who were arrested—Walter Ritte, Richard Sawyer, Emmett Aluli, and the rest—changed the possibilities of acceptable political praxis. Hawaiians, at that time in our history, did not support breaking the law. Like many subjugated people, Hawaiians were fearful of the consequences of breaking the law. So, it was generally considered bad behavior, something likely to get all of us in worse trouble than we were in. But not only did George and the others break the law, they inspired more Hawaiians to do the same, or to feel badly if they didn't. That reversed the idea that all arrests are bad, either in terms of strategy or of public disapproval. To be arrested in the name of protecting the *ʻāina* became an acceptable risk. If you loved the land, if you were Hawaiian, you had no excuse to merely sit and watch the military bomb the

island. You could see the bombing from Molokaʻi, you could even hear it! That's what George made them think about. The young wanted to occupy Kahoʻolawe. The older generation, our *kūpuna,* supported them. Eventually, after five landings, jail time for many, and a precedent-setting lawsuit, the bombing was halted.

I'm proud to say I was the one who suggested we bring the *kūpuna* and parents on the first legal landing. We brought Mrs. Helm, Mrs. Ritte, and Mrs. Aluli. That was my exhilarating moment, because nobody had considered inviting the mothers.

Of course, it was the mothers who stayed with the struggle, the mothers who came to meetings. Always, the mothers. And nobody thought of inviting them. But I did. We flew them over to Kahoʻolawe. The rest of the team came on boats. We have pictures of them sitting together and talking; they were so excited. We also did memorials and offerings to George Helm and to Kimo Mitchell. The mothers were critical: they served as guides because they were elders. Not guides in the sense of guiding us around the island, but spiritual guides, those who give strength and deep love to all of us in struggle.

Resistance entails suffering. The sacrifice required to engage in resistance —whether by organizing, or by demonstrating, or by breaking the law—is enormous. Usually it's the family who worries, because they care about you and want you to be safe. Then, it's friends of the family. Then, classmates, or community supporters. Everybody supports sacrifice in theory, in talk, but they hesitate when it's people they know, or they care for, and are afraid for. It's a basic human reaction, to fear for our loved ones. Sacrifice makes you both sad and buoyed in the struggle. The recognition by our communities of our sacrifice enables individual Hawaiians to experience a collective connection that is the basis for our existence as a nation, a people, no matter the level of diaspora, of media assault, of colonial oppression.

This brings me to obligation. Once you see somebody else engage in political work for the nation, you realize your own obligation to contribute. George and Kimo's sacrifice generated a larger sense of obligation to carry on what they began. That feeling of obligation to the *lāhui,* the people, is part of our Hawaiian cultural heritage. We are the only people in Hawaiʻi who have that ancestral obligation to the land and the people.

Through Kahoʻolawe, our generation began to speak to the previous generations, and to our own generation. Just recently, Emmett Aluli was honored by all these Hawaiian dignitaries and institutions, including reactionary entities like the Kamehameha Schools and OHA [Office of Hawaiian Affairs]. It made me smile to see Emmett honored. I was thinking way

back when I joined the PKO of how people would say, he's a doctor, why does he do this? But now he's one of the establishment's heroes. He's passed into history. In the end, obligation must override opposition to resistance.

CF & LEL: *Another context that you might address is the International Tribunal held in Hawai'i in 1993 in an attempt to hold the US accountable for crimes against Native Hawaiians and the occupation of these islands.*

HKT: The International Tribunal was a kind of miracle. I show the film of it to my students, because time passes so quickly, they know nothing about it. The Tribunal left a record, always important to our history. Because of the Tribunal, we had international jurists lending the proceedings an official status. These were people expert in their own fields. They passed judgment on the United States, finding it guilty on all counts of invading and annexing our independent nation. That aided our struggle, which resulted in the Apology Bill.[3]

It's important that we have a written and filmed record of the Tribunal. Historical memory and retrieval depend on it. I think of my nephew, who is seven. As he grows up, he will see that tape on public access TV, and hear about it from me. And he will know, almost without thinking, that we are a nation occupied by the United States. Unlike my generation, he will not have to rediscover we were once an internationally recognized nation. He is learning that right now!

Public access TV is fabulous. We have stored every *First Friday* tape in the UH library. Actually, some of the tapes were filmed before the program was called *First Friday*, when it was *Honolulu Peace Talks* and Majid Tehranian was moderator. We were in our 20s and our 30s. Among other interesting realities, it's a record of our aging, not just of the movement! Everything is in there. It's astounding. My sister's and brother's kids are learning about our family, not just our struggle, through watching *First Friday.* Just as I grew up knowing about my grandfather, and the opposition to annexation, they're growing up with my speeches, and my television show. Now, in a matter-of-fact way, they say to me, "Oh, Auntie, I am not an American."

LEL: *Is the Tribunal's judgment against the United States invoked at the UN or other international forums?*

HKT: Yes. It's cited, but I'm not sure it has any real force. Of course, it does have legal status but, as we all know, there's only one world power. In the sense that very serious people take notice of the Tribunal's findings against the United States, the effort was worth the struggle. Like other struggles, ours needs to move from one stage where a few people know, to another stage

where more people know, to a much larger, international stage. But informing audiences is not the same as changing the political power imbalance.

CF & LEL: *Can you also discuss the current work that Native Hawaiians, most noteworthy that of your sister Mililani Trask, are doing at the United Nations through mechanisms that include the presentation of testimony?*

HKT: When I first went to Strasbourg and the European Parliament, the Working Group on Indigenous Populations was the only entity for us. As nations, we didn't have an indigenous seat, as we do now with the Permanent Forum. The Working Group was under the Economic and Social Council (Ecosoc). The UN is vast—like a honeycomb—so the establishment of the Working Group was critical; it was a foothold. It took so long to move into the stage where we had a Permanent Forum, almost twenty years. Now, we have a kind of indigenous embassy where indigenous representatives can stay.

Mine is a curious story. In 1984, I received an invitation to attend the Working Group on Indigenous Populations, which was only in its second session. I attended as a member of the International Indian Treaty Council. They were the first group to call for the establishment of an indigenous entity to interface with the United Nations.

Absolutely critical to the founding of the movement, they had done all manner of American conferences and meetings inviting other indigenous peoples, such as Hawaiians. Then they had gone to the United Nations, demanding entry. It was impressive with tribal leaders from different geographical areas, wearing official tribal clothing and identifying headdresses. And they succeeded in conveying that, "we're here and we belong here." Now, after some two decades, the Working Group has become the Permanent Forum and our own Hawaiians, including some of my students, go there regularly to testify.

At the second meeting, nine of us testified, including Rigoberta Menchú, and the head of the Cree nation, and other distinguished indigenous leaders. Today, there are hundreds and hundreds of Native representatives who attend. I am astounded at how fast the growth has been in the global consciousness of indigenous people. They know they should send representatives to the Forum. They know of the Draft Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples—part of which I include in *From a Native Daughter.*

And participating not only reinforces indigenous consciousness, it affords everyone a transformative experience. For example, my students met people who changed their entire sense of the larger issues for indigenous nations. They came to understand other situations, which are often worse

than our own Hawaiian condition. Much worse. For example, the conditions of genocide, removal, tremendous underdevelopment, and industrial/political invasions.

Then the *mo'olelo*—stories—begin to be repeated about other peoples, their suffering, their struggles. This is why it's important, especially for first-timers, to attend. I haven't been back since my initial visit, which is the strangest thing. I went in the other direction, not to Europe but down under. I went to Australia and New Zealand, and of course, to South Africa. I would very much like to return to South Africa, and to teach perhaps, at a South African University.

Meanwhile, Mililani, who was doing all the work here, founding *Ka Lāhui,* and heading up the Gibson Foundation, is now a member of the Permanent Forum. It's wonderful. Both for our family and for our people.

Many of those people at the Forum know each other from decades of working together. You can see the effects—like ripples from a stone in the ocean—of all the work these individuals contributed, one by one. For example, when Mililani and I were in South Africa, four of the people we met went on to become members with Mililani of the Permanent Forum. One was a Saami man, Heinrich. One was a tribal leader from the Torres Strait Islands. It was amazing how much spade work we had done which was reflected in the people who actually took the first seats at the Forum. They had been doing this kind of work for years, for decades. It was sweet justice to see them take their places.

Ironically, I saw their first gathering on CNN as they entered the UN I was on my way to Europe, in a hotel in New York, exhausted from traveling. I turned on CNN, and that was the first news story, one of those human interest stories about something other than the President. And there they were, entering! Mililani and the other delegates. It was news because they were entering the United Nations in New York to take their seats as indigenous representatives. There was Heinrich, dressed in his traditional Saami dress from which Santa Claus's uniform was stolen. And there was Mililani, my sister. And all the others.

That reminds me of something else I want to say about Mililani's work for the United Nations in regard to testimony: it's all preserved in official UN documents. Like the petitions, the arguments in the testimonies have entered into general everyday discussion regarding the human rights of indigenous peoples, including Hawaiians. Four of my students attended the UN for that opening. They were only twenty-two years old!

CF & LEL: *Perhaps the most influential and widely read autobiography by a Native Hawaiian is Hawaii's Story by Hawaii's Queen, written by Lili'uokalani in 1898. It is read by diverse audiences that range from Native Hawaiian scholars and activists to tourists. It is widely taught at the University of Hawai'i across a number of departments. Could you discuss the work that you see this text having done and continuing to do?*

HKT: The autobiography of the Queen is probably, both for the people who are teaching but also for Hawaiians, the first time that we know from Lili'u's own hand what actually happened at the overthrow, as opposed to growing up with the idea that the United States brought us democracy and all the rest of the lies. The kind of lies I was taught at St. Ann's school in Kāne'ohe. The kind of lies I was taught at Kamehameha where, by the way, I never read the Queen's story. In fact, I didn't read it until I was back from college, jumping into the movement. That, too, was my Uncle Arthur's copy, just sitting around the house. He knew her. He used to do errands for her, and he used to rail against the *haole,* just rail against them for their mistreatment and rudeness to her.

A wonderful book, it explains our Native history. It is more intimate than anything else that we read because even though Blount is meticulous in his interviews, he's speaking to her as the sovereign. He's not concerned with what she felt, but with what happened. The real Lili'u wrote the Queen's story. Not the missionaries, or the emissaries sent by the President. But our *ali'i,* herself. We Hawaiians need to know what our *ali'i,* our Queen, really thought.

Personally, I wish I had known her. When, as a child, I listened to my uncle, he would emphasize her tremendous *mana.* Even in very old age, she was beloved and respected by our people. Some would leave presents for her at her house. My mother used to tell me how, in the olden days, Hawaiians would bow before her, as they did for higher personages, especially the *ali'i.*

The Queen was the last of our *ali'i.* Not a pretender to the throne, but the sovereign herself. I have never witnessed a sovereign of my own people. All we have seen and heard are little politicians anxious to get ahead, without any sense of how to govern, to protect and represent the people. It's simply disgusting, what Americans have done to us. My mother grew up with a sense of the *mana,* the royalty of our Queen. What a contrast to the disgusting, rude *haole* like John Stevens, totally without any sense of honor, of his obligation to the sovereign of another country. Even Sanford Dole, her alleged friend the sugar planter who helped to overthrow her, even he treated her with great respect. But Stevens was so rude, like stupid American tourists today, or stupid Americans, period. Lili'u wrote to the President,

Grover Cleveland, who was a friend, and asked him for help. She wrote something similar to the question, "Can't you do something about this man? He doesn't have any manners." When we were researching the background of the overthrow for the production of *Act of War,* we found out that Stevens had been expelled from two previous posts in Latin America because of complaints by government officials saying, "This is the rudest, most disgusting man. We refuse to accept him as your emissary. What is the matter with you people? Do not send us this kind of person." That's the way we see him too, because that's exactly who and what he was.

Not only is it very emotionally liberating to read what our own people say in *Hawaii's Story by Hawaii's Queen,* but there's also a rootedness about how the Queen talks. Even though it's in English, and she's very reserved, if you're a Hawaiian, you have a feeling, a sense of what she means: the idea that she's taking care of all these orphaned children, for example. That's very Hawaiian. It's not at all unusual to say that this is your blood family, but you were brought up by so-and-so, and that's the way her Lili'uokalani Trust Children's Fund worked for children. That Trust is the one the lawsuits brought by anti-Hawaiian *haole* are now attacking. Just think: these bastards are suing to break the Kamehameha Schools that Bernice Pauahi Bishop created through a trust dedicated to the education of Hawaiian children. Those behind the lawsuits look at these trusts as discriminatory because they serve only Hawaiians, but these trusts are in fact a cultural patrimony to the next generation, whom we are obligated to support.

And thank you for the question because I never teach Lili'u's book. I do teach the Blount Report, but long ago when I first started teaching my course on Modern Hawai'i, almost everybody had read *The Queen's Story,* having been through the public school system. I thought, well okay, have any of you read the Blount Report? Of course, none had.

Her's is a sad, actually, a tragic, story. The Blount Report, by contrast, is a condemnation of the United States. Blount makes very clear that Stevens, the American Minister to Hawai'i who lands American troops to overthrow the Queen, is a liar, that the PGs are liars. But the most astounding statement is that of Cleveland when he withdraws the Treaty of Annexation from the Congress. He carefully reveals the criminal intent behind the landing of the troops, and acknowledges that Hawai'i was not tendered to the United States by the government of Hawai'i, but by thirteen *haole* men who called themselves the "Provisional Government." Here's the president of the United States saying his own representative is committing treason against the Hawaiian Kingdom! You can't find a better witness than the President of the United States.

To drive home the point about American hegemony, I always end this section of my class by asking, "Where is McKinley High School?" My students invariably reply, "Oh, we know where McKinley High School is." Then I ask, "And who was McKinley?" They answer, "We don't know." I say, "I just told you. He's the President that annexed Hawai'i." So then I say, "Where is Cleveland High School?" "There is no Cleveland High School." "Mm-hmm. And why is that? Is there a Cleveland Drive? Cleveland Street?" They say, "That's right, Haunani!" And I say, "Yeah, because he was the good guy and McKinley was the bad guy. So there's McKinley School, and McKinley Street in Mānoa, nearby the University." And of course, the reality is beginning to dawn on these kids why all this is so, why we are surrounded by pro-annexationist street signs. Usually, I then suggest that one project they might consider is changing the signs in Mānoa. Maybe putting up a Cleveland sign in place of a McKinley sign! Strange as it sounds, this kind of suggestion makes students' ears perk up. It's the small examples that open the door to larger issues and analysis!

Another thing regarding Lili'u's autobiography: it restores our memory, which has been skewed by this current *haole* propaganda that there was a "willing annexation."

At its best, that's what testimony does. Renders a different level of memory that, two or three generations hence, can be retrieved. A kind of memory restoration.

CF & LEL: *Would you see contemporary music and also traditional cultural practices (chant, hula,* oli*) as forms of testimony or life writing? Are there any that you find particularly powerful? In asking, we are thinking about Gramsci's insight that those engaged in on-the-ground struggle often don't have the luxury to document their histories and so it becomes all the more necessary to look for that documentation in other forms.*

HKT: Contemporary music and traditional cultural practices are forms of testimony. Absolutely! I'm writing an article called "Resistance Metaphors in Hawaiian Chant, Rap Music, and Poetry." These resistance metaphors are everywhere. Sudden Rush, Israel Kamakawiwo'ole (Bruddah Iz), Makaha Sons, and other composers all use resistance metaphors in their work. In Iz's "Hawai'i '78," the line "Cry for the people, cry for the land," is part of this modern *kanikau,* or grief chant. So too, "Mele o Kaho'olawe," by Uncle Harry Mitchell for his son and George Helm, who disappeared when they tried to land on Kaho'olawe. The genres may change, but the grieving is everywhere. For people whose language was banned, these compositions serve as a powerful form of testimony. The testimony of the Queen's story,

of the petitions, and the rap music of Sudden Rush, are all similar. Even though people may not think of them as testimony, say in the sense of a tribunal, they all testify to our conditions, our national life as a people.

Another form of testimony would be *Holo Mai Pele,* which was performed in 1996.[4] This hula was a creative departure from the regular *hālau hula,* which itself was a departure from the era when everybody did sitting hulas because standing hulas were banned. *Holo Mai Pele* is an epic, and although once we chanted and performed great epics, they were stilled by repression and Americanization. With the banning of the language, hula became a form of entertainment for tourists. So the people who chanted for the Queen in their old age were dancing for tourists, like Auntie Jennie Wilson, who was a tremendous traditional dancer who wound up in her elderly years dancing for "distinguished visitors," like presidents, and Clark Gable.

But today, *Holo Mai Pele* is a form of resistance, and hula, especially traditional hula, has evolved into something completely opposite from the tourist/Hollywood fluff. Hula is now very athletic, forceful. The bodies aren't covered in Western clothes. Men now wear *malo.* The emotional level is one of strength, what Hawaiians call *mana*—power. The particular stories being told through the dance are no longer just tourist pieces. Now, epics are presented: heartbreaking dramatic narratives; at other times, humorous, playful episodes. The stage is now filled with hundreds of dancers, often enacting very athletic movements. All this is, of course, completely different from the hula in hotels. When I saw *Holo Mai Pele,* many of us in the audience had tears in our eyes. The epic of Pele was presented on a grand scale. We had forgotten, or never knew, that our ancient form of hula, called *kahiko,* was forceful, tremendously athletic. The performance includes scenes with huge outpourings of grief. We once performed epics regularly, not just little moments of one or two dances. Of course, missionaries called it a form of *kahuna,* suggesting it was pagan. Well, "*kahuna*" means "priest." The comeback of hula, especially *kahiko,* is tremendous. *Holo Mai Pele* is the first thing that came to mind when I thought about life writing and testimony. This epic is testimony to our own history, a living performance of our past.

I agree with Gramsci that for those engaged in struggle to record their own history is very difficult. Unless, of course, the history is a form of testimony, like a tribunal or the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. Gramsci's idea opposes the notion that serious creative work is that which is written, is somehow academic, and is published. I remember people saying to me, "You can't be a poet until you publish a book," yet I had grown up in a house where I wrote poetry when I was very little, because Hawaiians just engage in whatever creativity suits them, by which I mean dance, or song, or

writing. We don't repress ourselves by defining what we ought to do. If we like to write, we do, or to fish, or to dance, etc.

My dad used to tell me great things about writing, and my mom was a creative writer. She won a writing contest at the University of Hawai'i. I can't remember the details, but it winds up being a very sad story. The professor accused her of plagiarizing—and you know, there were only two percent Hawaiians at UH—and then someone else said to him, no, she writes well, she didn't plagiarize. She gave it to me. It's about Alexander the Great's lover, Campaspe. You can see how my themes are different. But I do love Alexander the Great, and the ancient Greek civilization.

CF & LEL: *You have been asked to write your autobiography on any number of occasions. Why does this not appeal to you? What do you see as the possibilities and limits of using autobiography for forwarding human rights and decolonization?*

HKT: Many people whom I respect, like Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o, have encouraged me to write my autobiography, so I'm trying to get interested in it. I also think, as I get older, I begin to look forward to the next generation and I realize I haven't left a record of my own life and struggles. The record that's left for me, besides *From a Native Daughter,* is the *Advertiser* and the *Star-Bulletin.* I don't want the *haole* newspapers to determine the record of my contributions as perceived by the next generation. Although they were sympathetic at some early point, after the hundredth anniversary of the Overthrow of the Hawaiian Kingdom in '93, the press coverage became very negative. Anyway, I'm thinking about an autobiography. David and I have talked about it at great length, and I've talked to other people, especially Eleanor Wilner, who's a good friend of mine. She thinks I should do something. And then David and I started talking about memoir versus autobiography, and I've been reading *A Mountainous Journey,* an autobiography of a Palestinian woman poet, Fadwa Tuqan, which I am thrilled about, especially because she was persecuted by the patriarchal culture of Palestinians. In the end, she triumphs, and is now considered one of Palestine's greatest poets.

It seems I'm slowly moving down the path of writing something autobiographical. I'm glad I didn't do it earlier because I wasn't ready, although people have said that *From a Native Daughter* is a kind of autobiography.

CF & LEL: *Although that book is not an autobiography, in it you do use stories from your life as both an academic and an activist to testify to the problems that Native Hawaiians face. We're especially struck by your stories about UH. How do you see this as different from autobiography?*

HKT: In those parts of *From a Native Daughter,* I wanted to tell people, this is what it's like to be at a white university in a colony. All you Hawaiians who buy this book, get over to the University and start carrying on the struggle. I didn't think of it personally. I thought of it politically. I didn't think of it as autobiography until I read your question.

CF & LEL: *One of the problems that leaders within oppositional movements face is the way in which the individual can become conflated with the entirety of the movement. In your case, you have been regularly attacked by the media in a way that is both personal and clearly calculated to delegitimate the sovereignty movement. What are ways that you have both utilized your position as a representative of the Native Hawaiians and worked against it?*

HKT: Oh, yeah. You can really see these attacks in my case. It's all over the papers. Trask, comma, who hates *haoles,* comma, lives with her long time live-in *haole,* David Stannard. So I write back and I say, "Well, that just proves my point that I'm not a racist." But beyond these little tiffs, I have had to think carefully about how to deal with the press because I don't have the luxury of being an individual. I speak for and represent Hawaiians, for good or ill. In dealing with a negative, *haole* press over the years, I've had to get tough. My approach is, fine, you want to attack me, then I'm going to fight you. I hate doing this because it detracts from the argument we Hawaiians are trying to make. In the early days, the press was more sympathetic because I was trying to stop the bombing of Kaho'olawe. But later, when sovereignty became an issue, when we were making arguments for land and water and reparations, then things got nasty. This speaks to the level of the press, to their pro-American, anti-Hawaiian positions. Of course, it also speaks to the institutional reality in Hawai'i. The press represents the United States, the domination of American capitalism, of the American military.

For example, my relationship with David was fair game for the press, especially the editors. Better to attack a woman about her personal life, than deal with the oppression and the racism suffered by her people. Hawai'i has a very high interracial marriage rate. In fact, press people, including editors, are themselves linked up with people of color. But they aren't nationalists, they could care less about Natives.

But the press has also targeted my sister and I because we are defiant, independent, and politically astute. Many people in Hawai'i are linked with partners of a different race, but only nationalists like myself are targeted.

CF: *It's also used in such a contradictory way, because on the one hand it's used to discredit you as a Hawaiian—*

LEL: *—and it's accompanied by "you hate haoles" and you've made one exception. I think this is a particularly American, or western problem, the way in which one individual becomes conflated with a movement. There's a couple of problems with that. Not only can you discredit the movement by discrediting the person, but also the entirety of the movement isn't represented, which can be bad for the people within it who are also subject to those media representations.*

HKT: It's unfair on lots of levels because we're specifically targeted. When the legislators disagree, nobody says well, "this dumb legislator" or "this racist legislator." I had a huge fight with the *Advertiser* three or four years ago and I took all my students to their offices for a large confrontation. We had about fifteen people, and it was wonderful because the *Advertiser* editors and writers literally never had to face anything like that before. Shane Pale started. He said, "This is why I hate the media. I'm a big Hawaiian man, and I'm really tired of the way you represent us. We're either prisoners, that's when we get big pictures. Or when we're demonstrating, you always pick on people that look like me. Men who are large and therefore, threatening. Do you have any idea what it feels like?" Speaking of testimony, once Shane started, everybody just opened up, and the *Advertiser* editor was shocked. There were three *haoles,* and I don't think they had ever imagined how offended and angry Hawaiians were. I thought, we should have done this ten years ago. We should have demanded a meeting ten years ago!

Everybody knows the media is *haole.* And not only *haole,* but racist to the core when it comes to Hawaiians. But during the Kingdom, there were over twenty newspapers for Hawaiian audiences, written by Hawaiians. In the case of newspapers, you can really see how hegemony is not a word—it's a political force, it's a practical reality.

Hawaiians would love to have our own newspapers again, then we could go back and forth with each other instead of having to fight to get something printed in response to Kenneth Conklin or Freddie Rice or Thurston Twigg-Smith. Thurston's family founded the *Advertiser.* They still own it! So much for independent, fair-minded coverage of Native issues and people!

CF: *What are ways that you've managed to use the focus on you as an individual to advance your politics?*

HKT: That's an interesting question. I'm going to teach a course on media, and I want to teach the strategy that you have to adopt to defeat them. One of the strategies is the one that I just talked about. Nobody does that. You always feel badly when the press attacks you, but it doesn't dawn on you to attack them. No, you go down there in person, and you attack them. You can't do this anymore, because they have a gate and a guard, at the back

entrance and the front entrance. But sometimes I used to take the back stairs and just show right up in their room and say, "Hi, you guys," and they'd go, "AAAAHHHH!"

LEL: *Freedom of the press. You can't get to them, but they're free to get to you.*

HKT: Yeah. As I got older, I came to embody the movement and the most left positions regarding Hawaiians, and for good or for ill, even the Hawaiian people say that. So it came organically, through the movement itself. At one point you seem radical and out of touch and the press is quoting everybody in the Civic Clubs. The Civic Clubs passed six resolutions against the Protect Kahoʻolawe Ohana, repeatedly saying, "They are not Hawaiian. They are not Hawaiian." To give you a comparison of what I mean, when David is criticized, the press doesn't disparage him by saying, "Oh, he's not a real *haole,* or a good *haole.* We refuse to acknowledge him as a white person." That sounds ridiculous! When I came home from college, and read about how the Civic Clubs responded to the PKO, I thought these ratbags! But in fact, this backfired, because other Hawaiians began to ask, "If we're Hawaiian, why are we criticizing the younger generation?" Eventually, the Civic Clubs passed a resolution supporting the ending of the bombing of Kahoʻolawe. And eventually, the press began to cover us, if not in a fair manner, at least with a larger, more in-depth analysis that included our political positions.

CF: *To go in a slightly different direction, I've heard you speak on another occasion about the way you and your sister have utilized different but complementary strategies for the media. Can you talk about that?*

HKT: Lots of it is just the way we are as individuals. Mililani is, and always has been, more willing to reason in a kind of back and forth, incremental way. She can be very charming. But she can also be tough as nails. Still, for a while, it seemed she was the good cop, and I was the bad cop, as the movement rolled along. The press was so ridiculous, trying to pit us against each other, when it's just the opposite. When they would do this, Mililani would say something such as, "Yes, well, I am the more beautiful younger sister," and that of course diffuses everybody's anxiety. But then she'd say, "And, of course Haunani-Kay says this, and in the international context, this is what it means," and all of a sudden people, against their will, are smiling and what they were ready to pounce on didn't happen. There was nothing to pounce on. To me, that's her great skill. That's why she's a diplomat. You see, being at the UN requires being diplomatic. That stuff is slow. It's boring. You listen to people attack you all day long from the United States. She can put up with that. Anybody who can write the constitution of *Ka Lāhui* and become its governor, or *Kiaʻāina,* has got to be a diplomat.

People have told us I'm like Malcolm and she's like Martin. I never liked this comparison because the struggles and the issues are different, but they are referring to personality, and also function. Malcolm was much more likely to say exactly what people were thinking, whereas Martin used a religious framework—the beloved community, justice as a higher form of being a good person, etc. Malcolm was much more likely to attack, and in that respect I'm very like him.

People used to tell me, "Your greatest speech was in 1993," at 'Iolani Palace, commemorating the 100th anniversary of the Overthrow. I told Mili, "Oh, that's Malcolm," and my sister said, "why do you say that?" And I said, "I was listening to him on the way to the speech." I don't mean it metaphorically. I meant I was relying on him, his energy. He gets me up, and if I'm going to give a great speech, I have to be up. In fact, when David and I drove to the march, we didn't say anything, because it would distract me from my Malcolm X position. I was listening to him, so I was high, I was ready. I always feel, in my best moments, that Malcolm's spirit is with me, he lives through and within me.

CF & LEL: *What if any problems do you see with using life stories in ways that invite readers to uncritically identify with writers from oppressed or marginalized groups? On the one hand, empathy can be an important part of solidarity, but on the other hand, a rush to identify can lead non-Hawaiians to adopt positions such as "Hawaiian at heart."*

HKT: People's eagerness to "identify with your pain" is something I know all too well. For example, when I went to UC Irvine to give a talk last year, a *haole* woman who had married a Hawaiian and has three *hapa* kids got up and cried and went on and on: "I don't know what you expect me to do—why don't you want me in your country?" I was very puzzled. I said, "I don't understand what you're saying. I didn't say anything about you. I don't even know you." Whereupon she started to cry, and it's always the tug-at-your-heart thing, which never works. It always makes me angry instead.

And I said, "Well, I don't understand how talking about the overthrow, the loss of land, the 6.5 million tourists a year, makes you feel bad. It makes us feel bad. It's our land." She just kept crying about her children, and the conversation continued like this. In fact, we didn't have a conversation. Then started a whole series of attacks—"You're a Marxist and you used to be a nationalist!" "How could you do this?"—the whole thing turned into a massive audience attack. I thought, maybe this is group hysteria. People could not address what I had just said about American colonialism. All they could think about was their own lives, petty and small as they must be!

CF: *It's a diversion away from the issues to how you make people feel.*

HKT: Apparently! I don't think about empathy myself, because I don't want people to identify with me. I want them to *listen* to what we're saying. I don't want their empathy. If I say, "don't come to Hawai'i," which is how I end almost all my talks on the continent, I mean don't come, don't physically come to my country. Then, this woman got up and said, "well, my children are part Hawaiian so what am I supposed to do, put them on the plane and just stay here?" I said, "Lady, I'm not talking about you. I'm talking about 6.5 million tourists who come each year." Empathy to me is irrelevant; it's Clinton: "I feel your pain." This issue is so far beyond the *manini* idea of empathy. People are suffering and they're dying. They don't have land, they suffer ill health. When somebody once said to me, "Well, what can I do? I can't give you anything," I said, "You don't know that. Let me ask you. Do you own a house? Give it to me. Sign it over to me. Do you have a car? I got all these Hawaiians that are taking the bus from Waimānalo. Give it to me, and I'll give it to them. There's lots you could do, but you just want to cry and tell me that you feel badly for me. I don't need that. I don't need your feelings. I need two million acres of land that were stolen at the overthrow. Are you a lawyer? We need lawyers to defend Hawaiian prisoners who can't mount a defense."

In 1993, I talked with the Truth and Reconciliation group from the United Church of Christ. They made an apology, and had given money to the churches in Hawai'i. They brought me back after ten years, to celebrate. I thought, these guys, they love suffering! They bring me along with some other Hawaiian leaders to Kawaiaha'o Church. So they start with me, and I spoke about "cheap grace." I learned this phrase from the President of the United Church of Christ, when the apology was first made. He told the Hawaiian leaders, "I'd like to hear what you have to say." I was the first to speak, and I said, "I don't need your apology. It's not going to help us. It just makes you feel good, and it doesn't take care of the problems that we have." Many Hawaiian leaders were kicking me under the table, saying, "You've ruined it again!" And then, after everybody said, "Haunani doesn't represent us, we represent us," and when we were all done, the President turned to me and said, "We have a name for that in Christian theology." And everybody sat there and thought, "Oh no, they're not going to make the apology, because of Haunani." He said, "Our term is cheap grace." I said, "Cheap grace?" And he explained, "Cheap grace is when we try to trick God by saying, 'I'm really sorry,' so you can have some grace to get into heaven. But in fact it's on the cheap, because it's not real." And I thought, these Christians know all about it. They know when they apologize, they're after

cheap grace. Of course, other Hawaiian leaders were taken up short by this serious discussion, and the President said, "And that's why we need to know, besides the apology, what else should we do?" I asked, "What else are you planning to do?" And he said, "We're going to sit down with the congregations and do just what you're suggesting. We're going to talk about the money that we have; we're going to talk about programs that we have; we're going to talk about where our lands are." I thought, this is a serious man who came here, directly from Chicago, to do the apology. Eventually they gave several hundred thousand dollars to the church. My complaint is that it went to their own church, but apparently it went with some qualifications. They had to use the money for the poor, and so on.

When I returned to the discussion at Kawaiaha'o Church ten years later, I said, "Since your President said this, I herewith give you ten things to do. Pay for prisoners' phone calls." I didn't know until I did prison work that Hawaiian prisoners in Lompoc have to pay for their calls home to Hawai'i. I said, "You pay for it." I also told them, "Christ says feed the hungry and clothe the homeless. Okay. Here is where all the homeless are. They're in Kapi'olani Park. They're being harassed in Makapu'u. They're being kicked out of Wai'anae. You go down there and you feed them." The last thing I told them was, "Central Union Church sits on one square city block, which is worth millions of dollars. I want you to set up tents to feed the homeless." I got this idea from Martin Luther King, who did this march and had this tent city, when he was fighting for the civil rights bill.

I put Kaleo Patterson, a Hawaiian Reverend-Doctor of the United Church of Christ here in Hawai'i and a strong proponent of sovereignty, on *First Friday* several months later, and I asked, "By the way, whatever happened to my suggestions?" He said, "We're doing them. I don't know if they're going to do all ten, but they've started with the prisoners." I felt pretty good about that.

CF & LEL: *We know that you went to South Africa in 2001 for the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance, and you have written about the issues of truth and reconciliation and also reparations in the US context. What connections do you see among different decolonization movements?*

HKT: Reparations are something that interest me. I keep getting invitations from people to attend conferences on the whole bundle of issues on reparations around the world, not only in South Africa. I wind up now on panels with the Basques, the Catalans, of course American Black people, Canadian First Nations. And it's good because not only do we support each other, but

we learn from each other. In fact, I'll give two speeches at UC San Diego in March, one on settler colonialism and one on reparations. That a Hawaiian goes to South Africa with the Fisk University Race Relations Institute, is a good example of people's movements linking up. Who would have thought I'd be in South Africa as part of the Race Relations Institute's representative group. Incredible!

LEL: *How did you get connected to the Institute?*

HKT: This is a circuitous and strange story. Public Enemy was here—Chuck D, the so cool rapper. I was doing a forum on campus and there were the usual twenty-five people attending, and he came to the forum. He was wonderful. He listened to what I had to say and then he jumped right up and said, "You all need to listen to this sister. This is the way things really are, and this sister needs to be supported." I could hardly believe it. I'm probably old enough to be his grandmother! So then we hung out together for awhile, and I listened to his music, which is both radical and beautiful. So we became friends and comrades. He's a good man fighting for justice. Later, I went to the Fisk Race Relations Board meeting in Nashville, and he was there, as a speaker. This was a public conference after we met as a board. He kept saying to me, "This is really boring—why don't we go take a ride around Nashville?" He gave me a guided tour of Black Nashville, a whole other Nashville, not the Grand Ole Opry but the ghetto, the poverty-stricken Black communities. By the time we returned to the conference, some awful person was talking who didn't support reparations, and Chuck D started yelling at the guy from the back of the room, asking "What are you doing up there? Shame on all of you for inviting this man, he's against reparations. Get off that stage!"

I thought, oh, yes, I'm in good company. Speaking of connections across decolonization movements!

CF & LEL: *You've mentioned reparations, but not all tribunals or forums give people the possibility of reparations. Can you discuss the political limitations and problems with things like the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in South Africa or other similar state-sponsored human rights forums?*

HKT: I address these limitations in my article on reparations ("Restitution"). Too often, I think, truth becomes more central than reparations. There's no mention of reparations in "truth and reconciliation." There seems to be a national interest in reconciliation. Here, I'm thinking of stability, both economic and political, of the state. Then there's the taking of human life, which is the family's interest, the peoples' interest. In the interest of the

nation, the family's interest is glossed over. And at the international level, often people are too poor to appear and to raise issues against the state or individuals who committed crimes. There's a large difference between what can happen at the international and at the national levels.

There's no doubt that South Africa took the lead in raising the issues of truth and reconciliation. The irresolvable part, to me, is that issues of genocide cannot be resolved by truth and reconciliation commissions. In the film, *Long Night's Journey into Day,* a South African woman whose son is killed by a fellow African man, confronts him, and at first she is very angry, and demands, "Why did you kill my son? Don't tell me you killed him because you were paid by the apartheid guys to do it. Everybody knows that. But why did *you* do it? You look at me and you tell me why you killed my son," and of course they both started crying, and he can't tell her. He can't. He just sits there, mute. Then, in a long and painful sequence, she goes to him, and says, "I forgive you." Obviously, she did it to further the healing of the nation. That's when my students, and oftentimes I myself, start to cry. No one says a word. We take a break, then resume.

I start off by telling my students, there's a contradiction here. Who sacrifices? The people. What for? The future stability of the state. What do you think, class? Is the stability of the state worth it, worth giving up the search for justice? Most students say no, but they realize in a painful, deep way, that South African stability depends on the victims giving up the quest for justice for the injured and punishment for the guilty.

CF & LEL: *Often, solidarity is aided by the dissemination of memoirs and autobiographies of leaders of movements. We think here of Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o, Malcolm X, Angela Davis, Rigoberta Menchú Tum, etc. We also know that you are very interested in the prison writing of Antonio Gramsci. These are figures that have been important allies and/or sources of inspiration to you. Can you discuss ways that any of these people or others have used their life stories in ways that you find politically powerful?*

HKT: Actually, in terms of Gramsci, I know nothing about his personal life, but his writing includes the personal in the sense that he is struggling against his enemies. We learn about these individuals and the roles they play in the politics of his times. But we know little else about him. Whereas in my case, and in Rigoberta's and Angela's and Ngũgĩ's writing, there's a lot of heartrending personal stuff. This is different from Gramsci.

One of the things I haven't wanted to do in my writing is talk about anything personal, but David has convinced me after ten years of arguing, that I should write a memoir. He said, "Stop thinking Hollywood and tell-all and

who slept with whom." In Angela's book, for example, she never talks about the fact that the man she loved was murdered during the Marin County courthouse shootout. Bettina Aptheker, her long-time political and personal friend describes that; reprints the love letters between them, in fact. So maybe it's for somebody else to do my personal life, although as I say, I feel no one should talk about my personal life. If I don't give my approval, it's because I don't believe my personal life belongs to the public realm.

In a larger sense, I think the political becomes personal, more than that the personal becomes political. In other words, these people are thrown up into the public sphere by virtue of the oppression of their people. Their lives come to represent that oppression and struggle. The Hawaiian leaders of our generation became symbols of our people, even if we didn't think we were symbols when we became politically engaged on behalf of our *lāhui.* Historically, that's what it means to be a public figure; that is, our individual lives come to represent our people. This probably explains why the newspapers conduct leadership polls every five or six years regarding whom the Hawaiian public identifies as their leaders. I've never seen polls of *haole* leaders, Japanese leaders, etc. Of course, a *haole* sovereignty movement or a Japanese sovereignty movement has been absent. The ruling classes don't need movements since they already run the state.

Regarding our *lāhui,* we've all looked at the Queen as a symbol of our sovereignty. I think those of us who began the movement have become part of the life of the nation. In a strange way, all our leaders represent the people. We embody the *lāhui,* are symbols of it, both as leaders and as individuals. And we are the only people in Hawaiʻi who are identified in this way. Others are identified as leaders of businesses or of political or legal entities, but we are the only ones identified by a people. That's as it should be, since we are, literally, the only leaders who can be said to have a people, a *lāhui,* a nation.

As I get older, I have more acceptance of my representation of the nation, meaning that I am speaking for the nation, for our political needs, for self-determination. Part of the reason I can speak for our people is simply that I am very articulate, have a first-rate education, and descend from a long line of political leaders who were also identified by our people as leaders of the *lāhui.* In Hawaiian thinking, therefore, my genealogy predicts or makes my leadership possible. And my people confirm it.

Of course, the educational class I occupy—a Ph.D., and a professor—is at the top of the occupational pyramid for Hawaiians. My people, on the other hand, are at the bottom of the economic and educational ladder. And this says nothing about the large, indeed disproportionate status that accrues

to professors. Both in terms of respect and in terms of obligation, I am expected to contribute to our people's welfare. In Hawaiian culture, much more than in *haole* or Japanese cultures, my educational and political position carries a large obligation to the *lāhui,* the nation. This is partly because we are a nation, a people, and because we are poor, oppressed, and in need, dire need. After twenty-five years of struggle, I see how leaders do come to represent the people, both symbolically and practically. We are the personal and the collective, the personal and the political.

So many of us are now recognized by our own people as leaders. We all were there in '77, when we landed on Kahoʻolawe, and we're all here now. The continuity, the longevity of our contributions, make me understand how we are all in it, both personally and politically, which is why people want us to write our autobiographies.

LEL: *I've been thinking about what you said about the petitions and how your generation has had to pass on what your grandparents said about them. However, as time passes, people can't go back to the generation who signed the petitions and ask, "What did you think?" because those people are gone now. Instead you have to rely on anecdotes and family stories, and so a lot of history can get lost. So there is a need to have some self-representations from within the movement itself about itself.*

HKT: And actually from people like me. I agree now with the people who say I should write my memoirs, because the historical record which enriched us so much can enrich the next generation. The other nice thing, too, is because of television, my nephews and nieces see us on TV all the time. I never had the luxury to see my grandfather on TV. We didn't have TV when I was a kid. But my nephews and nieces grew up with TV. They grew up watching us, and now, of course, ʻŌlelo. Thank god for public access TV. I think in many ways more people in Hawaiʻi know me because of *First Friday* than from the newspapers or even because they read *From a Native Daughter.*

LEL: *I want to raise one last question. I have been looking at these archival boxes on your coffee table, that contain Ed Greevy's photos that you wrote captions for, for the Kūʻe exhibit this past summer. Testimony is regularly associated with voice and words. Can you address these photographs—which cover over thirty years of protest in Hawaiʻi—as a form of testifying to both the years of struggle, and to building the contemporary sovereignty movement?*

HKT: Perfect. Me and Greevy. The expression that one picture is a thousand words captures why photographs are so effective, especially if the people in the photograph are no longer alive. Or, when a moment is so shocking, if

somebody hadn't photographed it, we would have lost the meaning, the testimony. And I think here, for example, of a photograph by Wayne Levin that accompanied a 2002 article I wrote for the *Honolulu Weekly* called "Stealing Hawai'i: The War Machine at Work." The tanks in the photograph look like a behemoth wending its way through Saddle Road on the Big Island. The American military has occupied Hawai'i since prior to the 1893 military invasion and overthrow of our islands, and this stark photograph brings home the violence of this occupation.

When people are in struggle, they're not really thinking about testimony. But photos, like Levin's, or like the *Kū'ē* exhibit of Greevy's photographs—soon to be a book—become an archive of a historical movement. There might be some pictures from newspapers, but in Hawai'i they represent the ruling classes. Because we are a colonized people, photographs like Greevy's or Levin's offer a completely different historical view, one born from resistance. Photographs can be much, much better than just verbal testimony. And photos last. They last in a way that memory doesn't. They almost bring you there.

US tanks in Pōkahuloa Training Area (PTA) along the Saddle Road of the Big Island, 2002. PTA, most of which is on ceded land, is the largest live-fire training facility in the Pacific. Photograph © and reproduced by courtesy of Wayne Levin.

NOTES

AUTHORS' NOTE: This interview was conducted 16 January 2004, in Kāne'ohe, Hawai'i.

1. Noenoe Silva is an Assistant Professor of Political Science and Hawaiian Language at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa. While conducting research at the Smithsonian Institute for her dissertation on Hawaiian resistance, she uncovered lost petitions against the annexation of Hawai'i signed by over 21,000 Hawaiians, over half the indigenous population at the time. For a full account of these petitions, see her *Aloha Betrayed* and "Kanaka Maoli Resistance to Annexation."
2. Blount's evaluation, a part of the House Foreign Relations Committee Report, was published in 1894. Documents related to the annexation, including both the Blount Report and the names of those signing the anti-annexation petitions can be viewed at <http://libweb.hawaii.edu/libdept/hawaiian/annexation/annexation.html>.
3. In 1993, President Clinton signed Public Law 103-150, a joint resolution of the Congress that officially apologized for the wrongful overthrow of the Hawaiian Kingdom one hundred years before. Although the law includes language pointing to the necessity for the US to reconcile with the Native Hawaiians, it significantly made no moves to offer the Hawaiians any form of material reparation, or recognition of their right to political sovereignty.
4. For a text of the *oli,* or songs and chants performed in this hula, see Kanahele.

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