Awa Drinking as Identity Marker and Cultural Practice

Christine Nahua Patrinos and Kekailoa Perry

Abstract. The focus of this paper is the reemergence of socialized drinking of ʻawa and the role it plays in Hawaiian national identity. The authors explore the social cohesion and integration of the libation, ʻawa (*piper methysticum*), within the Kanaka Maoli society through the ancient traditions, chants, narratives and preparation. We examine the cultural interaction and identity signifiers that take place through the drinking of ʻawa today in various ritual and recreational settings – and specifically, the Hale Noa (a Honolulu ʻawa bar).

How and what, with whom and where we drink informs cultural and/or national identity. Drinking rituals are among the elements that mark a people as unique and it has been argued that specific drinks come to function as markers of ethnic identity: "Guinness for the Irish, tequila for Mexicans, whisky for Scots, ouzo for Greeks… one's national beverage can become a powerful expression of one's loyalties and cultural identity."[1] In Hawai'i, ʻawa, functions today as a marker of identity and belonging. The importance of ʻawa as a cultural sign has been recorded among the earliest Hawaiian writings and traditions[2] and the role of ʻawa drinking reveals central features of Kanaka Maoli social and cultural traditions.[3]

In Hawai'i we call it ʻawa; in the rest of the South Pacific (and much of the world) it is commonly called kava. ʻAwa has many names; *yaqona* in Fiji, *sakau* in Pohnpei, *seka* in Kosrae, *kavainu* in Niue, etc.[4] Though the Maori of Aotearoa have no tradition of ʻawa drinking, the word kava is said to come from Maori and means "bitter."[5] And, indeed, this plant whose root will yield an intoxicating beverage is bitter and will numb one's tongue and mouth. Despite its acrid taste, ʻawa with its relaxing and calming attributes, has been a favorite drink among native people in the Pacific.[6]

ʻAwa is an analgesic whose main effect is that of muscle relaxation.[7] The

Christine Nahua Patrinos is Associate Professor in the Political Science Department at Holy Names University, Oakland, California.

Kekailoa Perry is Assistant Professor in the Kamakakuokalani Center for Hawaiian Studies, Hawaiinuiakea School of Hawaiian Knowledge at the University of Hawaii at Manoa, O'ahu, Hawai'i.

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Latin name is *piper methysticum* which means "intoxicating pepper." As a member of the black pepper family, ʻawa owes its relaxing effects to lactones rather than to alkaloids. Thus ʻawa is an analgesic and its effect is different than those with a narcotic, opiate or alcohol base.[8]

In the past several decades ʻawa drinking has increased in the Hawaiian islands,[9] paralleling and contributing to a revitalization of Kanaka Maoli culture. As the traditional beverage, it carries with it historical associations of drinking as a way of expressing or promoting peaceful relationships and connections among people in casual or ritual settings.

The renewal of the ancient practice of imbibing bitter juices of the ʻawa root indicates the revitalization of a cultural pattern for communication and connection. Although this is not an anthropological study or a sociological paper, the drinking of ʻawa does play an important role in social cohesion and cultural integration. Jocelyn Linnekin writes "[t]radition is fluid; its content is redefined by each generation and its timelessness may be situationally constructed."[10] And, the tradition of drinking ʻawa has again become an important activity that gathers people to share and laugh and "talk story."

What is most evident in the gatherings and places where people drink ʻawa around the Hawaiian Islands is the social bonding and relaxation that is inherent in the drinking process. Nina Etkin writes that throughout the Pacific "kava drinking was integral to the social, political and religious lives…[marking] important social events."[11] Although, there has been a small consistent contingent of Kanaka Maoli ʻawa drinkers in Hawai'i, the practice is becoming more popular among the general population. For the past forty years, the Tongan and Samoan communities have kept the use of ʻawa active in Hawai'i.[12] It is still a familiar sight to see a group (usually men) gather in parks or on the beaches and form a circle with the ʻawa in a large bowl in the middle constructing a space for sharing. Sometimes a Polynesian ʻawa party is organized to raise money. For instance, a Tongan chief living in Hawai'i needed to return home because his father had died so the Tongan community had an ʻawa gathering where each participant made a donation and sat in the circle and drank ʻawa until sunrise.[13]

Drinking and practicing the traditional activities related to ʻawa create an arena within which Kanaka Maoli culture may be shared and developed. From a cultural standpoint there is more to the consumption of ʻawa than a simple imbibing of this traditional beverage. Dwight Heath defines drinking as "normally a social act, and the quality of social relations tend often to be significantly enhanced by the act of drinking."[14] While this reference is to alcohol beverages there are parallels with regard to ʻawa. The use of ʻawa in Hawai'i takes on added significance because of the many important traditional roles that this plant embodies.[15] ʻAwa is used for physical healing and cleansing, medicinal purposes, and ritual offerings to the gods and ancestral spirits. It is an embedded cultural symbol that helps us to remember and practice one element of our Hawaiian identity. As such, the revitalization of ʻawa drinking

has a layered significance and informs a broader cultural renewal.

Properties of ʻAwa

The preparation of ʻawa, its practical and ritual uses and its beneficial and detrimental effects have been described through chants, genealogical histories and in oral and written legends. ʻAwa's potency and different varieties have been documented by ethnobotanists since the late 1700s.[16] Today the properties of ʻawa continue to be studied by such recently established groups as the ʻAwa Development Council and the Association for Hawaiian ʻAwa.[17]

The effects of ʻawa differ considerably from those of drinking alcohol, although in each case moderation is important. As Magaret Titcomb describes it,

> The effect of ʻawa varies according to the amount taken. In moderation, it relaxes the nerves and induces refreshing rest; taken often in large quantities it makes the skin scaly (*mahuna*), ulcerous, the eyes blood-shot and suppurated, and reduces the control of the nerves of the arms and legs. Walking is difficult or impossible. In striking contrast to the effect of alcohol, the mind remains clear until sleep comes and the emotions are unaffected.[18]

Drinking three or four bowls a night for the average person would simply relax the individual, while drinking ʻawa all day and night would weaken the body. But taken in moderation the effects of ʻawa are mild: there is a pleasant relaxation, a numbing of the mouth and tongue and, in the morning, no hangover.[19]

The ʻawa drink is made from the woody, slightly spongy root of the ʻawa plant. The root was scraped and washed, then reduced to small pieces. This was done by breaking with a sharp-edged stone if the root was large, by cutting into small pieces with a bamboo knife if small, young and fresh. It was then ready to chew and mix with water to make a cold infusion.

Usually the chewing of the ʻawa root was performed by servants or children. Isabella Abbot writes, "children with strong teeth chewed the root to crush and soften it, depositing the results in a special calabash called a kanoa. In later days, chewing was replaced by grinding or pounding."[20] When the desired quantity was accumulated, water was added, and this was sometimes allowed to sit for a while. Next the contents of the kanoa were strained into another bowl through a bundle of ʻahuʻawa fibers laid in either a perforated gourd or a niu shell.[21] For a group of forty people about six chewers would be needed.[22] To prepare ʻawa in this manner would allow better conversion of the starch into a fermentable substance but it was also a way to set boundaries around who could use ʻawa and how much.

A farmer or fisherman could chew and prepare ʻawa for his own muscle soreness and relaxation, whereas only a person of some means would be able to use ʻawa for inebriation. Also, to provide enough ʻawa for a feast or ritual would require chewers, who would have to be compensated. Eighteenth Century Kanaka Maoli Historian Samuel Kamakau writes, referring to Umi-o-

Kalani, "His old men drank ʻawa constantly. It was understood that theirs was a wealthy lord."[23] To be able to provide ʻawa to the old men meant that the chief had enough servants to harvest, chew and prepare the ʻawa for them.

An abundance of ʻawa signified wealth and the skillful preparation of ʻawa translated into power. For instance, the story of Puapuakea tells of his ability to prepare and present ʻawa so quickly and efficiently that his actions gave the political advantage to his chief. In this manner he was able to prevent the chief of Maui from humiliating the chief of Hawai'i.[24] This concept that political influence may be created by the skill of ʻawa preparation is also exemplified in the story of ʻUmi-a-Liloa. Traditionally, only the chiefs would have enough "wealth" to overindulge with ʻawa to the point that their skin would become scaly and the rim of their eyes red.[25]

ʻAwa in Traditional Kanaka Maoli Culture

The drinking of ʻawa was a vital part of the Hawaiian society and its ritual was included in most of the important ceremonies on the islands.

> *Ala mai, e Lono, i kou haina awa,*
> *Haina awa nui nou e Lono*[26]
>
> [Arise, O Lono, eat of the sacrificial offering of ʻawa set for you
> An abundant feast for you, O Lono!]

Researchers believe that ʻawa was brought to Hawai'i by Polynesians of the Central Pacific, who received it from Vanuatu, a Melanesian island group.[27] Tradition holds that the ʻawa plant was a gift from the gods and was present at the beginning of the world sharing space and time with the ocean [*kai*], the kalo [*taro*] and the coconut [*niu*]. That ʻawa held an important place in Hawaiian society is evidenced by its primacy within the listing of created things in the Hawaiian creation narrative, the Kumulipo, the title of which means "beginning in deep darkness." The Hawaiian genealogical chant of origin consists of 2,102 lines and begins:

> *O ke au i kahuli wela ka honua*
> *O ke au i kahuli lole ka lani*[28]
>
> [At the time that turned the heat of the earth
> At the time when the heavens turned and changed]

One of the first plants listed in the Kumulipo is the ʻawa plant. It is already a part of creation and thriving when the world is in its infancy:

> *Hanau ka ʻa'awa noho i kai*
> *Kia'i ia e ka ʻAwa noho i uka*[29]
>
> [Born is the "Aawa fish living in the sea
> Guarded by the ʻAwa plant living on the land.]

According to our narratives, not only was ʻawa present at the beginning of creation but many traditional chants, which are a form of Hawaiian historical records, claim that it was the gods Kane and Kanaloa who brought ʻawa to Hawai'i.[30] ʻAwa was considered the primary offering to the *akua* [gods]. There are prayers and rituals that use ʻawa for ceremonies in honor of the gods.[31]

Na Kane me Kanaloa i kanu,
No'u akua o ka lewa lani, ka lewa nu'u
O ka ʻawa popolo a Kane i kau iluna
I ulu iluna, i lau iluna, i o'o iluna[32]

[A plant set out by Kane and Kanaloa,
For you gods of the heavens, and the mountains
The ʻawa popolo of Kane, that existed above,
Grew above, leafed above, ripened above.]

The drinking of ʻawa was included in every important ceremony – from the birth of a royal child to the political transfer of power among the chiefs. Prayers and rituals accompanied the use of ʻawa and prayers of thanksgiving were said with petitions of supplication, inspiration and guidance. There were many occasions to drink ʻawa and ask for blessings and help from the gods – for skill in hula, for health, for a successful battle, for a safe voyage, etc. June Gutmanis writes, "Of all the offerings man has to give the gods, that of ʻawa is the most pleasing."[33]

One story that exemplifies the importance of ʻawa to Hawaiian guardian spirits is told by Kamakau, who wrote about a shark guardian named Kalahiki. ʻAwa was used as a connector between the shark guardian and his descendents. Kalahiki's "human family" did not worry about being lost at sea because he would always lead them to land.

> When it was stormy and the ocean was rough… a fire would be lighted on the canoe and ʻawa and aumiki, the after-drink, would be prepared. The shark that was guiding the canoes would come up close and open its mouth and the ʻawa would be poured into it. After it had partaken of the drink-offerings it had been fed, it would turn its head and in whatever direction the head turned, the canoe fleet would go… until they sighted land.[34]

There are many such stories that reveal ʻawa as a favorite drink of the guardian spirits and the gods.[35]

From traditional times to the present, the use of ʻawa is linked to the cultural mannerisms, behavior and social structure of Hawaii and the Pacific. The present use of ʻawa, therefore, must be considered in context with the "life attitudes" that are engrained in its production and the enhanced social setting that ʻawa provides for Kanaka Maoli.

The poem below is one of many chants describing the significant role that ʻawa plays in the Kanaka Maoli life. It speaks of a daily gathering of ʻawa that encourages the sacredness of life and the gods.

I pono ke oma ia Hilo
Na ʻawa hiwa i ho'olewa
Me na ʻawa kakahiaka
E kaumaha i pono ka ʻai
I nui ka mana o ke Akua[36]

[That the sacrifice for Hilo might be acceptable.
The sacred ʻawa borne in procession,
With morning (gathered) ʻawa
As (an) offering for sanctification

To enlarge the power of the god]

The Introduction of Alcohol and the Decline of ʻAwa Drinking

He kanaka ka mea inu ʻawa;
he pua'a laho ka mea inu kuaipa[37]

[The man who drinks ʻawa is still a man
but the man who drinks liquors becomes a beast.]

On January 20, 1778, the British Captain James Cook sailed into Waimea Bay, Kaua'i bringing iron, goats, melons, pumpkins, firearms, disease and alcohol.[38] But Kamakau writes in the Hawaiian newspaper, *Ka Nupepa Ku'oko'a*, (1867) that it wasn't until the early 1790's that King Kamehameha and his people tasted rum. It was brought by Captain Maxwell, and King Kamehameha and his entourage went to the foreign ship to drink. On the King's return he was acting strangely and the people said, "Alas, what terrible thing has happened! You have lost your reason! What is the matter with you?" Those who came back from the ship said, "it is the exhilarating water of the foreigners, the sparkling water, the dancing water!"[39]

Alcohol soon displaced the native drink of ʻawa as a means of relaxation and camaraderie. In 1773 on Captain Cook's second voyage to the South Pacific, Georg Forster makes this observation, "The pepper-plant [ʻawa] is in high esteem with all the natives of these islands as a sign of peace; perhaps, because getting drunk together, naturally implies good fellowship."[40] The ritual significance of ʻawa dissipated as foreign habits and religious traditions enveloped the islands.[41] With the arrival of newcomers to the islands, many traditional practices fell into neglect, and since the preparation of ʻawa is time-consuming and alcohol is more potent, it is understandable that most Kanaka Maoli began to choose alcohol over ʻawa as a means of inebriation especially in town settings. By 1809 rum was being distilled on the islands by an entrepreneur named Oliver Holmes. Not to be bested, Kamehameha had his own still at Kahapa'akai in Nuʻuanu, Oʻahu.

With alcohol available to chiefs and commoners, men and women, its popularity grew and the use of ʻawa waned and drunkenness became a societal problem. Laws were passed to try and control drinking. By 1829 a new law was proclaimed by the chiefs against "retailing ardent spirits at houses for selling spirits."[42]

The use of alcohol had become an economic issue as well as a matter of morality. Not all the chiefs agreed that drinking was immoral and that the sale of liquor should be controlled.[43] But the missionaries and the King kept trying to dampen the effect of drunkenness (and the debauchery that seemed to follow). So in 1835 alcohol was again regulated by legislation proclaimed by King Kamehameha III. This penal code dealt with only five laws, prohibiting murder, stealing, unlawful sexual intercourse, fraud or false witness, and drinking ("drunkenness and offenses committed while in a state in intoxica-

tion, with graduated penalties.”)[44] Under the missionary influence, alcohol was regarded as a threat to the stability of the Hawaiian Kingdom. Drunkenness was considered a major offense and the King and his ministers were concerned with the lawlessness produced by the consumption of alcohol.

The divine power or *mana*[45] of ‘awa came from the society in which it existed and as that community was being restructured, the traditional ways and gods were being ignored. Alcohol became a new signifier of cultural change.

The missionaries – who arrived in 1820, one year after the death of Kamehameha and forty-two years after Captain Cook landed – disparaged strong drink of any kind. They had a well-organized campaign against alcohol in all its forms, including ‘awa. They mistakenly equated the two, though ‘awa is an analgesic and does not produce the same effects as alcohol. The imbiber of ‘awa usually relaxes and speaks quietly and Pukui notes that ‘awa seems to drain off aggressive energy so that while under the influence of ‘awa one does not fight, talk loud or make trouble.[46]

But the missionaries’ temperance league did not understand ‘awa drinking nor condone it and, as with many things “native,” they dismissed it as a heathen practice. Hiram Bingham, an influential and prominent Calvinist missionary of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions exemplifies the blinded, zealous approach missionaries took toward “bettering” Kanaka Maoli society when he wrote, that prior to missionary arrival, “darkness covered the earth and gross darkness the people. This, for ages was emphatically applicable to the isles of the great Pacific Ocean. But the voice divine said, ‘Let there be light.’”[47] The missionaries were oblivious to the benefits of ‘awa and, perhaps because ‘awa is a source of the Kanaka Maoli cultural foundation, believed that the practice of ‘awa drinking threatened the progress of a Christianized, Western society.

Missionary influence led to laws restricting both the consumption of alcohol and ‘awa which were generally joined as a single vice. Johnston and Rogers quote one astute Hawaiian who cautioned the people to treat the native and Western drinks distinctly. In his comment, the anonymous Hawaiian noted,

> It is not right to arrest those under the influence of ‘awa; for when one looks at a person who is intoxicated with rum one can plainly see that he is drunk, but with ‘awa it is not possible to tell whether one is drunk or not. And too, one who is drunk with ‘awa does not make trouble like the one who is drunk with rum, who talks out loud. He may have received his glassful from another person but it is he who fights and shouts aloud before others… when a man is drunk with ‘awa, his body relaxes, his mind also relaxes, and he does nothing to interfere with the peace of others so that it becomes necessary to forbid and blame him.[48]

Still, Western misconceptions of ‘awa and the drive to acculturate the native continued to influence Kanaka Maoli socio-political structure.

In 1887 a book for children was translated from English into Hawaiian. *He Buke Ola Kino No Na Kamali’i* [A Health Book for Children] had the approval and endorsement of the Woman’s Christian Temperance Union. The chapter on ‘awa begins by comparing ‘awa with opium. The section on ‘awa

is only two pages and was probably added to admonish Hawaiian elders, more than to warn children. The last line reads:

> *He mo'onihoawa keia;*
> *a'ole no paha like kona ikaika me ko ka opiuma,*
> *aka he mo'o make no,*
> *a e nahu ana no i ka po'e e hi'ipoi ana iaia.*[49]
>
> [This is a poisonous snake: although it is not as strong as opium
> it is just as deadly
> and it will bite whoever cherishes it.]

The missionaries and those who embraced the new mores did their part in the battle of the eradication of ʻawa.

ʻAwa's Revitalization

> *O Ku, O Kane, O Kanaloa, na 'li'i*
> *Na 'aumakua i ka po*
> *Na 'aumakua i ke ao*
> *Eia ka 'awa*[50]
>
> [Ku, Kane, Kanaloa, the chiefs
> To the guardians of the night
> To the guardians of the day
> Here is your ʻawa]

The decline of ʻawa and the rise of alcohol consumption and prohibitions marked a turning point in the history of the Kingdom. In 1948 Titcomb wrote that

> on the other islands there are more numerous wild patches, but outside of botanists, only the older Hawaiians know or care what it is, and only a few still have a taste for the old Polynesian drink once so important and so popular. When these pass away there will be no more of their kind to take their place and probably all use of ʻawa in Hawaii will end.[51]

But ʻawa did not completely disappear. Today, because of careful cultivation, there are many varieties or hybrids of the plant available and each offers a different effect.[52] Some ʻawa is mild and is a simple muscle relaxant such as the "Nene" variety of Hawai'i and others have a powerful effect like the "Tudei" from Vanuatu which gives to its imbiber a moderate high that will last a couple of days.[53]

There were only three beverages known to ancient Hawaiians, water, coconut liquid and ʻawa. Tea brewed from ʻawa has long been used in the Pacific to soothe tired bodies and minds. In ancient Hawai'i farmers and fishermen would drink ʻawa at the end of a day for a peaceful night's sleep and to relieve sore muscles. Titcomb records that ʻawa may also alleviate or cure the following: chills and hard cold, difficulty in passing urine, sharp blinding headache, disorderly stomach, lung and kindred troubles, weaknesses arising from certain conditions during virginity and as a poultice for boils.[54]

In the 1930s Handy was able to identify about fourteen Hawaiian varieties of ʻawa.[5] Abbott writes, "evidently choice varieties were reserved for the

highest-ranking classes, with the most fragrant varieties, for example, being set aside for the pleasure of the *ali'i* [chiefs]. Other varieties such as hiwa were kept for ritual use by *kahuna* [priests]."[56]

There are many medicinal varieties of ʻawa which were originally gathered in 1838-9 by Kaho'ohano and Kalama, assistants for Gerit P. Judd, a missionary turned government official for the Hawaiian Kingdom during the reign of Kamehameha III. The information was not catalogued in a Western style until 1924. An abbreviated list for ʻawa may be found in the table below.

Name of ʻAwa Variety	**Description of Plant and Uses**
ʻAwa hiwa	very black, with long joints. This is the ʻawa used for important medicinal treatments
ʻAwa mo'i	dark stalk, and its joints are fair or light colored
ʻAwa papa ʻele'ele	stalk is very black, and its nodes are short
ʻAwa papa ke'oke'o	greenish white and its joints are short
ʻAwa makea	stalk and nodes are a pale green, and its joints are very long
ʻAwa nene	similar to the makea's nodes, however spotted, and its clump of young – the shoots [*pu'upu'u*] is like nene feathers and it leaf is wrinkled [*pukupuku*]
ʻAwa mokihana	green white color is like the makea, its nodes are however small, and it looks very much like ʻohe li'ili'i
ʻAwa lau a Kane	kupaoa is one name for this type of ʻawa. It grows in the forest. It grows in cliffs near the banks [*kaha*] and the upper plains. It is called also Kupuali'i.

Today Western research focuses on the healing properties of ʻawa. It may be an alternative treatment for insomnia, depression, chronic pain and anxiety. "The United States Department of Defense has funded research to determine if powdered kava root might work as part of C-rations, to ease anxiety in troops going off to war."[58] The healing properties of ʻawa may include a cure for cancer. Rajesh Agarwal and Gagan Deep assert that there is strong epidemiologic evidence to "suggest that kava-drinking populations have an unusually low cancer incidence despite high rates of smoking."[59]

Economically, ʻawa has had its ups and downs. Before World War II there existed a European market for the ʻawa root. German pharmaceuticals were the main producers of anti-anxiety medicines that used ʻawa.[60] However, once the war began the international ʻawa market declined. In the past decade there has been a resurgence of interest in ʻawa as an herbal remedy for insomnia and anxiety.[61] In 2001 according to Hawai'i Agricultural Statistics Service over 450,000 pounds of ʻawa was sold internationally-primarily to European countries. But in 2002 reports were released that linked ʻawa to liver damage. Other scientists insisted that kava, in its pure form, was not harmful,[62]

but international sales dropped dramatically as some European countries put restrictions on the sale of herbal medicines that contained ‘awa. Britain was worried that it was not possible to know the full effects of kava on individual persons and joined other European nations such as France, Switzerland and Germany by banning kava products in 2003. In 2002, only 60,000 pounds of ‘awa was sold worldwide-and the sale of ‘awa dropped by 88 percent. In 2003 the Hawai’i Agricultural Statistics estimates that ‘awa production was down 58 percent from 2002 at 25,000 pounds sold. However, recent negotiations in 2008 with the Fijian International Kava Executive Council, the European Union’s Executive Commission, German government authorities and Pacific Island representatives lifted the EU kava ban established in 2002. As a result, the *Fiji Daily Post* reported that legal pressures for World Trade Organization intervention on the ban brought by Pacific Island countries who produce ‘awa as an export to the EU has made considerable inroads to creating the potential for the Pacific Island ‘awa producers to increase ‘awa’s cash crop potential in the European markets.[63]

The Hawai’i Agriculture Statistics Service is no longer taking statistics relating to the commercial use of ‘awa since its agribusiness production has fallen below the necessary levels to justify following its economic growth. There is a growing demand by native Hawaiians to imbibe more frequently at various cultural gatherings and reconnect spiritually with the practices associated with the plant and ‘awa production at the local levels (non-agribusiness producers) continues. Makahiapo Cashman, Director of the Center at Ka Papa Lo‘i o Kanewai at the University of Hawai’i’s Hawai‘inuiakea School of Hawaiian Knowledge, notes that the Kanewai garden has consistently planted various varieties of ‘awa since its reopening in 1980.[64] He also states that within the past four years Kanewai gardens has increased their ‘awa plantings from one variety to four or more. Interestingly, Kanewai’s biggest problem is not the cultivation but the protection of the ‘awa since many of their older, mature plants have been known to “walk away” (and never return) over the years.[65]

Hale Noa as a Pu’uhonua

> The house in which the ‘awa drinking took place was like a chief’s house – there was no gaiety, no talking, no jollity, for these would bring on vomiting.[66]

Hale Noa (meaning “House Without Kapu”)[67] was established in 1999 by Lolana Fenstemacher[68] and Keoni Verity. The opening of Hale Noa marked the first commercial attempt to make a public space for cultural Hawaiian ‘awa drinking. This “bar” was envisioned as a gathering space for ‘awa drinking enthusiasts which included Hawaiians, local people, students and the occasional tourist. As such Hale Noa functioned as a *puuhonua* – a Hawaiian place of refuge, sanctuary, asylum, place of peace and safety.[69] Thus, it empowered the Hawaiian community, through ‘awa sharing, to reassert cultural identity in

traditional and modern forms.

During its six year existence this ʻawa bar on Kapahulu Avenue was regularly filled to capacity on the weekends. Consistent with the storied practices of old, the room was softly lit and the fifty or so men and women, many of whom would speak Hawaiian, drank ʻawa from coconut bowls. The bartender and proprietor, Keoni Verity asked each new customer the perfunctory questions: "Have you had ʻawa before?"; "Have you been drinking alcohol?"; "Are you taking any medication?" He then explained that ʻawa does not mix well with alcohol or drugs. Keoni did not serve anyone under the age of twenty although there is no legal drinking age for ʻawa in Hawaiʻi.[70] After being assured that the person was aware of the effects of this Polynesian elixir he would carefully hand over a bowl of ʻawa for five dollars and fifty cents.[71]

While there is a marked increase (about five percent) in businesses like Hale Noa, as ʻawa becomes a more familiar drink of choice among island people, the overhead cost for running these establishments has also risen considerably. Eventually, there was not enough ʻawa being grown in Hawai'i and Keoni had to import ʻawa from Vanuatu, adding a $2,000 expense every month. In 2006 Hale Noa became a nonprofit affiliate. "'We were already profitless, so we figured we might as well be a nonprofit,' one employee quipped."[72] In a last attempt to save Hale Noa there was a fundraiser at the Bishop Museum, but this effort was not enough; the financial burden was too heavy. And in March 2006, Hale Noa officially closed its doors, leaving a void in the local ʻawa industry and removing the cultural sanctuary space for the native practitioners of ʻawa who had frequented Hale Noa. Its vibrant clientele and cultural atmosphere was not enough to survive the standard small business economic model that fueled its entrepreneurial engine.[73]

While Hale Noa stayed in business for only six years,[74] it was successful in drawing people together and continues to have an influence as a cultural model for future ʻawa bars. Hale Noa operated on two significant levels. On one level was their entrepreneurial and business model. At another level was their cultural model founded upon Hawaiian tradition and custom. Clifford Geertz describes culture as "an historically transmitted pattern of meanings embodied in symbols, a system of inherited conceptions expressed in symbolic forms by means of which men communicate, perpetuate, and develop their knowledge about and attitudes toward life."[75] The cultural model of Hale Noa is significant in understanding the value and differences associated with the Kanaka Maoli desire to create a space for a lived cultural practice in the contemporary context that reaches beyond the social camaraderie typically associated with the imbibing of alcohol.[76] Therefore, Hale Noa's business life and death did not destroy the imbibing of ʻawa. Nor did it halt the practice of language and culture or the development of other modern *pu'uhonua*.

New "alternative" health bars were born out of the Hale Noa conceptual ideology and continue to encourage the practice of drinking ʻawa. While these newer establishments are more "business like" they recognize, to a limited

degree, the importance and significant level of cultural practice that ‘awa and its clientele brings to their establishments. In 2006, barely a year after Hale Noa closed its doors local ‘awa businessmen Jonathan Yee and Daren Kimura purchased the lease and took over Hale Noa’s venue intending to rejuvenate the ‘awa bar by adding food and soft drinks to the menu. They named the new ‘awa bar “Kapahulu Kafe.”[77] Central to the new bar’s success was capitalizing on a space that would bring back Hale Noa’s faithful customers. As Kimura and Yee pointed out, “it would have been dumb to jump in and not look at the existing clientele… nobody wanted Hale Noa to close.”[78] Yee had worked with former owner Keoni Verity as founder of the Hawaiian Kava Center and organizer of the Hawaii Pacific Islands Kava Festival. However, due to financial constraints, the bar closed within a year. Local businessman Marcus Marcos, a regular visitor of Hale Noa, opened his own salad and health food bar, Diamond Head Cove, several blocks from the ‘awa bar. Marcos owns a café that serves ‘awa and he has actively advertised to promote his business. But in the beginning, even though his establishment served ‘awa, he had difficulty establishing a haven similar to that of Hale Noa. As one customer put it, “This one [Hale Noa] is a Hawaiian ‘awa bar – that’s what makes this place different, the other place [Diamond Head Cove] is a salad bar that serves ‘awa.”[79] But over time Diamond Head Cove has become popular as an ‘awa bar.

Many island people are not aware of the ‘awa bars, though they are unique facilitators of social bonding. One reason could be that the space for drinking ‘awa in the twenty-first century is different from the traditional setting. Try as Keoni Verity, Jonathan Yee and Marcus Marcos might, there was something divergent with the modern conceptualization of “bars” and the cultural gathering and obligations associated with the drinking of ‘awa.[80]

And yet the ‘awa bar served a dual purpose – it was a space both physical and relational. In the Western world, the drinking-place is a “separate sphere, a self-contained world set apart from everyday existence.”[81] Hale Noa filled that role as a *pu’uhonua* – a place of peace and safety. But the “drinking place” for traditional ‘awa was not often a physical place but a contextual one.

A space was created so that the ‘awa ritual could be performed whether it was for the blessing of the birth of a royal child, or to petition the gods, or as a sign of gratitude. When the canoes returned from their voyage the crew would drink ‘awa – sometimes while still on the canoe and sometimes ashore – as a way to thank the gods and to celebrate their safe return. (The ‘awa ritual was celebrated at the launching of the Polynesian voyaging canoe Hokule’a in 1976.)[82] The drinking of ‘awa created the space that signified the relationships between the humans and the gods.

In our research we found only one account of a separate house used solely for the purpose of ‘awa drinking in the story of Hi’iakaikapoliopele as told by Ho’oulumahiehie in the Hawaiian language newspaper *Ka Na’i Aupuni* in 1906. The story reads, in relevant part,

> But the house we shall visit is that of Kahuli, Kahela, of the woman who lies

> face up. It is an ʻawa-drinking house" Wahine'oma'o agreed. "Yes, it is still an ʻawa-drinking place."
>
> When the people saw Wahine'oma'o, who was familiar to them, entering along with the other travelers, women they didn't know, their inviting calls rang out, as is customary among us Hawaiians, to welcome and to host. As they came in, it was something quite new for these folks to see such beautiful strangers there. The house buzzed with the murmured questions of people asking about Hiiaka and her group.
>
> The people offered them cups of ʻawa, but Wahine'oma'o said that she would drink the cup for the others in the traveling party. And when the local people drank down their cups of ʻawa, Wahine'oma'o quaffed hers, took a second, and then the third, finishing off the cups of ʻawa intended for all three of them.[83]

The story reveals two things that are not necessarily common knowledge with regard to the ʻawa ritual: that there was a designated house for ʻawa drinking and that women could partake of ʻawa.

ʻAwa Drinking and Culture

ʻAwa is still present and its traditions are kept alive through various ʻawa bars, Hawaiian halau[84] and cultural groups[85] and festivals.[86] ʻAwa bars, in particular, can be found on four of the major islands in Hawai'i. The most prominent bar on O'ahu was Hale Noa and now, the Diamond Head Cove.[87] On the island of Hawai'i is the popular Kanaka Kava ʻAwa Bar in Kona[88] and the more subdued setting of the Hilo Farmer's Market ʻawa bar.[89] Maui island has also joined in the commodification spectrum of ʻawa by developing a more tourist oriented experience at Wow-Wee Maui's Kava Bar and Grill.[90] And, on Kaua'i entrepreneur Oshi Grady offers a traveling ʻawa bar to partygoers and concert enthusiasts.[91] Jonathan Baker also notes that "there are four mainland kava bars – three in Florida and one in Oregon – and at least one place in California sells kava, though not calling itself a kava bar."[92]

More than a dying fad, the imbibing of ʻawa is making its mark in a more public and often times cultural forum. Kawika Winters argues that although ʻawa bars bring together "diverse groups of people… tourist, college students, Hawaiians, South Pacific Islanders and others to drink ʻawa… the Hawaiian kupuna – the keepers of cultural traditions – are not a demographic of the ʻawa bars' clientele." And yet, the "keepers of cultural traditions" would most likely be present at ritual ʻawa ceremonies.[93] There are several organizations that continue to uphold the tradition and practice of ʻawa. For instance, the ʻAwa Development Council (ADC), among other activities, supports the

> practice of Hawaiian religious protocols… conducted by kahuna (specialist practitioners) traditionally trained to preside over ceremonies involving the use of ʻawa… encourages Native Hawaiian expression of religion, and shares this expression with a variety of people of different faith, nationality and ethnic backgrounds.[94]

Today there are classes and seminars offered on ʻawa. The catalog listing for the University of Hawai'i's Honolulu Community College seminars (below) offers an introduction to ʻawa, an intermediate class that teaches

propagation, economics and future uses and an experience of different types of ‘awa. There is an interest in knowing about “things Hawaiian” among the general public on the island.

> **Intro to ‘Awa: The Sacred Pacific Beverage**. Are you curious about this ancient and mystical plant? During this lecture you will hear about the Hawaiian, Pacific Islander, and Western perspectives on the historic, contemporary cultural, therapeutic values and other uses of ‘awa. At the end of the class, the instructors will give a demonstration on how to prepare the ‘awa and provide a sampling of the ‘awa beverage as well as receive a sample packet of ‘awa to take home.
>
> **Growing, Economics, and Future of ‘Awa.** You’ve gotten used to the ‘awa beverage and now you’d like to try and grow some for yourself? You will learn about the propogation, planting, and care of the ‘awa as well as the farming analysis and retailing aspects. Also, you will hear about the experiences of Hale Noa (Hawai’i’s first ‘awa bar). Lastly, find out about current, potential and future issues of ‘awa in Hawai’i and world market.
>
> **The ‘Awa Beverages: Taste Comparisons** Hawaiian varieties, Vanuatu varieties, Samoan varieties, what is the difference? Is there a difference? If there is a difference, does it really matter? Descriptions of various ‘awa cultivars will be given as well as what the varieties have to offer. The instructors will prepare various varieties of ‘awa from the Pacific including varieties from Hawai’i, Vanuatu, Samoa, Tonga, etc. all for students to taste. (Varieties to be prepared will depend on availability.)

On yet another venue, ‘awa took its place as a cultural signifier when it was portrayed on film at the Twenty-third Hawai’i International Film Festival. Cinema No Ka Oi presented a fourteen minute independent film by director Leah Kihara entitled Kava Kultcha. The synopsis provided for the film, read:

> Set in 2012, Kava Kultcha portrays a world where one culture dominates. The Global Enforcement Agency’s (GEA) sole task is to abolish all countries, religions, languages and cultures. Facing tyranny, an underground group of Polynesians continue their traditions in secret – their Kava drinking group perpetuates their culture – until one night, the GEA aggressively seeks to eradicate them.

The film was a bit disappointing because of the time limitations; it was difficult to explore the complexities of a culture under attack by the ultimate hegemony in fourteen minutes. But the premise – that what one consumes can perpetuate a culture – was clearly evident in each frame.

On October 9, 2003, the first Hawai’i Pacific Kava Festival was held at Lyon Arboretum in Manoa Valley on O’ahu.[95] The interesting and informative day began with an opening chant praising ‘awa and included an ‘awa ceremony and ‘awa tasting with different varieties of ‘awa available. Hawaiian arts and crafts exhibitions, hula performances and island music were included in the general festivities. The guest speakers were Gary Henderson and Martha Harkey, Professors of Pharmacology at University of California, Davis. They extolled the virtues of ‘awa as being a natural herbal relaxant but also warned of the dangers of drinking ‘awa in excess. The Arboretum grounds were filled with people who wished to partake and learn more about ‘awa and the promot-

ers considered this first ʻawa festival a huge success.

October 9, 2010 will mark the Seventh Annual celebration of the Pacific Kava Festival at the University of Hawai'i at Manoa Campus. The location of the festival on the University campus is due in part to the large following and popularity that the event and subject matter is gaining in the islands. Organizers of the festival note that, "the Kava Festival, also known in Hawai'i as the ʻAwa Festival, features many aspects of ʻawa as central to culture for Hawai'i and the Pacific Islands. The festival celebrates ʻawa as an important and fundamental aspect of Hawaiian culture and a treasure for Hawai'i's people and the world."[96] As the celebration grows so will the exposure and relevance and the reviving of the cultural identity of the people.

Since the beginning of the Hawaiian Sovereignty Movement in the 1970s, national identity has been closely related to cultural action. Besides the drinking of ʻawa, Kanaka Maoli continued cultural revitalization is also evident in the hula, education, language and politics. In 1978 the Office of Hawaiian Affairs was founded to "better the conditions of native Hawaiians and Hawaiians." And in 1987 the nation of Ka Lahui Hawai'i developed a constitution for self-determination that was ratified by a citizen base of 20,000 Kanaka Maoli and non-Hawaiians.

In the academic year 2008-9, the UH Hawaiinuiakea School of Hawaiian Knowledge matriculated 55 Hawaiian Studies and Hawaiian Language undergraduate students.[97] This growing number of Hawaiian language scholars will have a significant impact on the present discussion and improve the analysis as they uncover valuable knowledge held in our Hawaiian language primary resources. Nogelemeir notes that "In just over a century, from 1834 to 1948 Hawaiian writers filled 125,000 pages in nearly 100 different newspapers with their writings."[98] Less than one per cent of the whole has been translated and published leaving more than a million letter-sized pages of text untranslated and thus difficult to access. These Hawaiian language scholars have the advantage and resources to translate the over a million pages of newspaper accounts which continues to inform our understanding and the *mana'o* [beliefs] of our elders including the use and practice of ʻawa before Cook.

How and what, with whom and where we drink shapes our identity as a people. While there is no empirical data to demonstrate the increase in ʻawa drinking in Hawai'i, the social and political awareness is evident in the continued use in the community.[99] There are signs that ʻawa continues to be a part of the Hawaiian resurgence and a part of our cultural identity. The 25th annual Hawaiian Independence Day celebration, La Ho'iho'i Ea that was held on July 31, 2010 at Thomas Square, opened with its traditional ʻawa ceremony. Included in the event every year is a social drinking booth as part of the poi tent.[100] And though no one artifact wholly encapsulates a people, with the resurgence of ʻawa as a beverage of choice, there is also the return of the stories and the chants and the traditions. As we drink, we remember and create and solidify our identity as a people. As Kamehameha I said in the midst of battle

and braving the future:

> *I mua e na pokii,*
> *a inu i ka wai 'awa'awa*
> *'A'ohe hope e ho'i aku ai.*[101]
>
> [Go forward young warriors
> and drink the bitter waters of battle (a play on 'awa)
> There is no turning back
> be courageous and live for the moment
> through the wisdom of your ancestors].

Holy Names University, Oakland.
patrinos@hnu.edu

University of Hawaii at Manoa.
wperry@hawaii.edu

Endnotes

1. "Social and Cultural Aspects of Drinking" *Social Issues Research Centre*, [electronic journal], (March 2, 2005), 12. [http://www.sirc.org/publik/drinking6.html].

2. See e.g., Martha Warren Beckwith, trans and ed., *The Kumulipo: A Hawaiian Creation Chant* (Honolulu: University Press of Hawai'i 1972); Stephen L. Desha, *Kamehameha and His Warrior Kekuhaupio,* trans. and ed. Frances N. Frazier, (Honolulu: Kamehameha Schools Press 2000), 33, 85, 106-09; S.N. Hale'ole, *La'iekawai,* trans. Martha W. Beckwith, (Honolulu: Noio Press, 2006), 11-14; Hooulumahiehie, *The Story of Hiiakaikapoliopele*, trans. M. Puakea Nogelmeier (Honolulu: Awaiaulu, 2006); Pualani Kanahele and Duke Kalani Wise, *Ka Honua Ola (The Living Earth): An Introduction to Pele and Hiiaka with Annotated Bibliography* (Honolulu: No Publisher, 1989); Samuel Manaiakalani Kamakakau, *Ruling Chiefs of Hawai'i* (Honolulu: Kamehameha Schools Press, 1961); David Malo, *Hawaiian Antiquities* (Honolulu: B.P. Bishop Museum Press, 1951).

3. Kanaka Maoli is a term that has evolved politically over the past century and is used here to describe the ethnic and political identity of the aboriginal people of Hawaii. See*,* Kekailoa Perry and Jonathan K. Osorio, "Honoring the Law and Restoring a Nation," *University of Hawaii Law Review* 31 (2008), 331, 332, citing Mary Kawena Pukui and Samuel H. Elbert, *Hawaiian Dictionary, revised ed.* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1986), 127.

4. Vincent Lebot, Mark Merlin, and Lamont Lindstrom, *Kava: The Pacific Elixir, The Definitive Guide to its Ethnobotany, History and Chemistry* (Vermont: Healing Arts Press, 1992), 27-38.

5. For a more detailed analysis of the word Kava see: Lebot et al *Kava,* 131.

6. Ibid.

7. Ibid., 58-60, 152.

8. Klaus Dragull, G. David Lin, and Chung-Shih Tang, "Chemistry, Pharmacology, and Safety Aspects of Kava," in *Hawaiian 'Awa: Views of an Ethnobotanical Treasure*, ed., Ed Johnston and Helen Rogers, (Honolulu: Association for Hawaiian 'Awa, 2006), 24-29.

9. See Tracy Chan, "Where to Find Kava in Honolulu," *Honolulu Metromix*, October 9, 2008, http://honolulu.metromix.com/events/roundup/where-to-find-kava/668403/content.; Katie Young, "Ahhh Awa," *Mid Week Magazine*, October 7, 2005.; Dan Nakasao, "Hawaii Kava Study Finds Liver Anamoly," *The Honolulu Advertiser*, December 27, 2008.; Sterling Kini Wong, "Does Commercial Use of 'Awa Dilute its Cultural Value?" *Ka Wai Ola o OHA*, Pepeluali 2006, 13.

10. Jocelyn S. Linnekin, "Defining Tradition: Variations on the Hawaiian Identity," *American Ethnologist,* 10 (1983), 241.

11. See, Nina T. Etkin, *Edible Medicines: An Ethnopharmacology of Food* (Arizona: University of Arizona Press, 2006), 143.

12. For a more detailed description of the Kava ceremony in Tonga, see, Elizabeth Bott, “The Kava ceremonial as a dream structure,” in *Constructive Drinking: Perspectives on Drink from Anthropology* ed. Mary Douglas, (Melbourne, AU: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 183-84.

13. Personal participation: Nahua.

14. Dwight B. Heath, *Drinking Occasions: Comparative Perspectives on Alcohol and Culture*, (Philadelphia: International Center for Alcohol Policies Series on Alcohol in Society, 2000), 196.

15. While not in the scope of this paper, the authors pause here to recognize the significant spiritual embodiments that the ‘awa and other native plants in Hawai’i are endowed. The ‘awa is known to be the kinolau or physical manifestation of the god Kane who, among other things, restores life and brings forth fresh water for nourishment and good health. Regarding kinolau, see e.g., Isabella Aiona Abbot, *La’au Hawai’i: Traditional Hawaiian Uses of Plants*, (Honolulu: Bishop Museum Press, 1992),15, 23; Rubellite Kawena Johnson, *Kumulipo: Hawaiian Hymn of Creation* (Honolulu: Topgallant, 1981), I: 50-1.; E.S. Craighill Handy and Mary Kawena Pukui, *The Polynesian Family System in Ka’u Hawai’i* (Honolulu: Mutual Publishing, 1998), 252.; Samuel M. Kamakakau, *Ka Po’e Kahiko, The People of Old* (Honolulu: Bishop Museum Press, 1991), 63-4; Lilikala Kame’eleihiwa, *Native Land and Foreign Desires: Pehea La E Pono Ai?* (Honolulu: Bishop Museum Press, 1992), 29-30.; Mary Kawena Puku’i, E.W. Haertig M.D., and Catherine A. Lee, *Nana I Ke Kumu* (Honolulu: Hui Hanai, 1972), I: 23-4.; June Gutmanis, *Na Pule Kahiko, Ancient Hawaiian Prayers* (Honolulu: Editions Limited, 1983), 20-23.

16. See generally, E.S. Craighill Handy and Elizabeth Green Handy, with Mary Kawena Pukui, *Native Planters in Old Hawai’i, Their Life, Lore, and Environment* (Honolulu: Bishop Museum Press, 1991 revised ed.).; Lebot et al *Kava*; Ed Johnson, and Helen Rogers, eds., *Hawaiian ‘Awa: Views of an Ethonobotanical Treasure* (Honolulu: Association of Hawaiian ‘Awa, 2006); Abbott, *La’au Hawai’i*.

17. The ‘Awa Development Council (ADC) is a nonprofit 501 public charitable organization. The ADC is devoted exclusively to educational, science, and religious activities. Their motto is *I Maluhia ka Honua* [So that the world may be at peace].

18. Titcomb, Margaret, “Kava in Hawaii,” *Journal of the Polynesian Society* 57 (June 1948), 108.

19. Lebot et al, *Kava*, 57-8.

20. Abbott, *La’au Hawai’i*, 43; see also,Titcomb, “Kava in Hawaii,” 112.

21. Titcomb, “Kava in Hawai’i,” 112. ‘Ahu’awa is a sedge (Cyperus javanicus) that is stripped, dried and used as a strainer for the ‘awa drink. ‘Ahu means to gather. The ‘ahu’awa therefore gathers the dregs or fibers of the ‘awa plant and helps to strain out its active kava lactones without the gritty pulp that would make the drink difficult to swallow. Puku’i and Elbert, *Hawaiian Dictionary*, 8.

22. Ibid., 113

23. Kamakau, *Ka Po’e Kahiko*, 46.

24. Ibid., 53.

25. Regarding the physical effects of ‘awa consumption, see, Abbott, *La’au Hawai’i,* 43.; Titcomb, “Kava in Hawaii,” 108. Also, in the epic story of La’iekawai, a rapacious chief named Aiwohikupua was cautioned that the excessive drinking of ‘awa would make his skin “scaly and wrinkled.” This effect is noted often in traditional stories and confirms the observations of the ethnobotanists cited herein. S.N. Hale’ole, *La’iekawai,* trans. Martha Warren Beckwith (Honolulu: Noio Press, 2006), 13.

26. Malo, *Hawaiian Antiquities*, 88.

27. Abbott, *La’au Hawai’i,* 42.

28. Martha Warren Beckwith, *The Kumulipo: A Hawaiian Creation Chant* (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 1972), 67.

29. Ibid.

30. Handy, *Native Planters,* 189. Handy also notes historian Abraham Fornander’s conjecture that ‘awa may have been “brought from Kahiki [a foreign land] by O-ili-ku-ka-heana and first planted on Kaua’i to be used by priests in making offerings to sharks,”(189) thus demonstrating ‘awa’s spiritual origins and historical importance in Hawaiian society.

31. For an extended listing of ‘awa prayers see, June Gutmanis, *Na Pule Kahiko, Ancient Ha-*

waiian Prayers (Honolulu: Editions Limited, 1983).

32. Titcomb, "Kava in Hawaii," 107-8.

33. Gutmanis, *Na Pule Kahiko*, 20. The 'awa popolo is a specific variety of 'awa. In Hawai'i there are an estimated 14 native varieties. Handy argues that there are 14 known varieties during his study conducted in 1930s. Handy & Handy, *Native Planters,* 192-8. Kawika Winters believes that there are a greater number of varieties in Hawai'i. Winters, "Hawaiian 'Awa: A Study in Ethnobotany" (MSc. thesis., University of Hawai'i, 2004), 18.

34. Kamakau, *Ka Po'e Kahiko*, 74

35. See for example., Hooulumahiehie, *The Story of Hiiakaikapoliopele*, trans. M. Puakea Nogelmeier (Honolulu: Awaiaulu, 2006), 13, 19, 46.

36. Abraham Fornander, *Hawaiian Antiquities and Folklore* (Honolulu: Bishop Museum Press, 1919), IV: 405.

37. Mary Kawena Pukui, *'Olelo No'eau: Hawaiian Proverbs and Poetical Sayings* (Honolulu: Bishop Museum Press, 1997).

38. Ralph Kuykendall, *The Hawaiian Kingdom: 1778-1854* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press,1957), 14.

39. Samuel Kamakau, *Ruling Chiefs of Hawai'i* (Honolulu: Kamehameha Schools Press, 1992), 193.

40. J.G.A. Forster, *A Voyage Around the World in His Brittanic Majesty's Sloop Resolution* (London: Hakluyt Society, 1777).

41. Kame'eleihiwa, *Native Land and Foreign Desires*.

42. Kuykendall, *The Hawaiian Kingdom*, 126.

43. Ibid., 130. The governors of Oahu from 1829-31, Boki and Liliha, "sanctioned the traffic in rum selling and gambling in direct opposition to the existing law."

44. Ibid., 137.

45. Mana is described as "a supernatural or divine power." Puku'i, *Hawaiian Dictionary*, 235.

46. Mary Kawena Pukui, *Nana I Ke Kumu* [Look to the Source] (Honolulu: Queen Lili'uokalani Children's Center Publication, 1972), 220.

47. Hiram Bingham, *A Residence of Twenty-One Years in the Sandwich Islands* (Tokyo: Chas. Tuttle, 1981), 2.

48. Johnston, *Hawaiian 'Awa,* 4-5.

49. *He Buke Ola Kino No Na Kamali'i* [A Health Book for Children] (Honolulu: Woman's Christian Temperance Union, 1887). From the private collection of Dr. Puakea Nogelmeier with his translation.

50. Gutmanis, *Ka Pule Kahiko,* 20-21.

51. Titcomb, "Kava in Hawai'i," 167.

52. Johnston, *Hawaiian 'Awa,* 4-5.

53. Dale MacDiarmid, "The Pacific Drug," *Honolulu Weekly,* May 24, 1995, 6.

54. Titcomb, "Kava in Hawai'i," 126.

55. E.S. Craighill Handy, "The Hawaiian Planter, Volume 1," *Bernice Pauahi Bishop Museum Bulletin* 161 (1940).

56. Abbott, *La'au Hawai'i,* 43.

57. Malcolm Naea Chun, ed. and trans., *Native Hawaiian Medicine* (Honolulu: First Peoples Production,1998), II: 10.

58. Beverly Cramer, "The Roots of Kava," *Honolulu Advertiser Island Life*, July 30, 2000.

59. Rajesh Agarwal and Gagan Deep, "Kava, a Tonic for Relieving the Irrational Development of Natural Preventive Agents," *The American Association for Cancer Research Journal*, 59 (November 2008): 410.

60. Ibid.

61. Christopher S. Kilham, *Kava: Medicine Hunting in Paradise* (Vermont: Inner Traditions International, 1996); Dragull, "Chemistry, Pharmacology, and Safety," 24-29. See also J. Anke, and I. Ramazan, "Kava Hepatotoxicity: are we any closer to truth?" *Plant Medica* 70 (2004): 193-96.

62. Hawai'i Agricultural Statistics Service reports that, "Recently, a team of University of Hawaii scientists traced the kava-liver problem to extracts made from the peelings of the kava plant's

stem bark which contain an alkaloid called pepermethystine… in the 1990s European extractors began purchasing the stem bark peelings and using the extract in kava products. Traditional kava drinkers only use the root of the plant which does not contain the alkaloid." *The Hawai'i Agricultural Statistics Service Report*, 2002.

63. "Kava ban to be lifted," *Fiji Daily Post*, November 19, 2008.

64. Many of Kanewai's ʻawa was collected from the wild and under the supervision of ethnobotonaists such as Jon Obata and Lolana Festamacher. One of the authors, Kekai Perry, was party to several expeditions with Obata and Fenstamacher during the 1980s.

65. Edward Makahiapo Cashman, personal communication, July 13, 2009.

66. Samuel Kamakau, *Na Hana a ka Po'e Kahiko* [The Works of the People of Old] (Honolulu: Bishop Museum Press, 1972), 42.

67. Keoni Verity, interview by Dr. Nahua Patrinos, July 18, 2004. Verity says that he named the bar "Hale Noa" for two reasons. The underlying *kaona* [understanding] was to stress that women were welcome. A house without restrictions meant that often ʻawa houses in the past were primarily for men this one had been established for both women and men to drink ʻawa together. The second reason is to make a political statement with regard to the drinking of ʻawa. It is a place where people can come to speak freely and exchange ideas without censure.

68. Although Lolana was not partner for long, his expertise in ethnobotony and brewing the ʻawa served Hale Noa well.

69. Pukui and Ebert, *Hawaiian Dictionary*, 358.

70. Today the use of ʻawa is being subject to law with regards to drinking and driving. Officials are worried that the drinking of ʻawa may impair a person's ability to drive. In 1996 a man in Utah was convicted of driving under the influence of ʻawa. That was the first such conviction in the nation but in 2000 a California judge dismissed a case against a Tongan man stating that there was not enough evidence to indicate that the state laws against DUI included kava tea. *West County Times, California Editorial*, December 29, 2000; L. Khan, "Utah Tongans wrestle a culture gap," *Salt Lake Tribune*, October 10, 1999.

71. Even today Keoni Verity is acknowledged as a "brewmeister" of ʻawa. The mixing of ʻawa requires fresh ʻawa, care and time. Keoni brought in the best available ʻawa, massaged it in water and served it strong with aloha. Vern Niaupuhipau interview by Dr. Nahua Patrinos, July 8, 2010.

72. Sterline Wong, "Hale Noa No More?" *Ka Wai Ola O OHA* 28 (February 2006), 1.

73. Was the ʻawa too expensive a product to viably sell in a bar setting? Was the clientele too small? Can a small business advocating cultural behavior manage in a West facing system? Unfortunately, these questions and many others relating to the ʻawa bar's business functions are not the subject of this essay. However, the authors acknowledge the critical importance of such an analysis that would significantly show the benefits or shortfalls of economic development as a tool for actively supporting and perpetuating culture where culture is the tool for generating a healthy, non-exploitative revenue.

74. See, Gordon Pang, "Cultural Gathering Place to Close," *The Honolulu Advertiser*, March 23, 2006.

75. Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures* (New York: Basic Books, 1973), 89.

76. See Jonathan D. Baker, "Kava Tradition and Toxicity: Local and Global Discourses About the Use and Safety of *Piper Methysticum* G.Forst. (Piperaceae), An Indigenous Botanical Undergoing Pharmaceuticalization" (PhD diss., University of Hawai'i, 2008), 83-85.

77. Jason Genegabus, "The Awa Returns to Kapahulu" *The Honolulu Advertiser,* September 17, 2006.

78. Ibid.

79. Parentheses added. Pang, "Cultural Gathering Place to Close."

80. In *Edible Medicine* Nina Etkin writes, "increasingly, partaking at the "kava bar" has emerged in urban areas throughout the Pacific as a largely deracinated practice that is neither gendered or celebratory and has few or no ritual components. Informal, ceremonially attenuated kava consumption also is commonly found in the diaspora, among Pacific Islanders who have migrated to the United States, Canada, Australia and New Zealand," 144.

81. Peter Marsh and Kate Fox, Eds., "Social and Cultural Aspects of Drinking" in *Social Issues Research Centre* [electronic journal] (March 2, 2005): 8, http://www.sirc.org/publik/drinking6.

html (last accessed August 9, 2010).

82. Ben R. Finney, *Hokule'a: The Way to Tahiti, 31*. Hokule'a is the Polynesian voyaging canoe that was built to demonstrate native Hawaiian ability to navigate the Pacific through traditional methods and means. The Hokule'a today is the mother of the modern Polynesian voyaging family of canoes and crews. Hokule'a is celebrated as an active and real symbol of the bridge between the modern and the traditional. 'Awa ceremonies are part of the voyages and dedications for that canoe and the Polynesian voyaging families.

83. Hooulumahiehie, *The Story of Hiiakaikapoliopele,* 98.

84. Halau is used to describe a long house, as for canoes and hula instruction or a meeting house. It is also used as a noun to describe a particular school such as a halau hula or hula school. Pukui and Ebert, *Hawaiian Dictionary*, 52.

85. See Ty P. Kawika Tengan, *Native Men Remade: Gender and Nation in Contemporary Hawai'i* (North Carolina: Duke University Press, 2008).

86. The importance of 'awa continues to this day with the annual Annual Hawai'i Pacific Islands Kava Festival sponsored by the 'Awa Development Council, a non-profit corporation devoted exclusively to the educational, scientific and religious activities related to 'awa. See Vanessa Sim, "Awa: The Comeback Kid of Beverages," *Ka Leo O Hawai'i*, A1, (October 9, 2008).

87. Julia Steele, "Awa Makes a Comeback in Honolulu," *The Los Angeles Times*, (March 16, 2007).

88. "Kailua-Kona Restaurants: Kanaka Kava: The Awa Bar," http://www.bigisland-bigisland.com/kailuakona-restaurants-kanaka-kava-the-awa-bar.html (last accessed July 6, 2009).

89. Sean Pager, *Hawai'i Off the Beaten Path, 8th Edition*, (Connecticut: Globe Pequot Press: Connecticut, 2006), 240.

90. "Wow-Wee Maui Kava Bar," http://mauibusinesses.com/maui-kava-franchise.html. (last accessed July 6, 2009).

91. Joan Conrow, "Root 66," *Hana Hou! Hawaiian Airlines In-Flight Magazine* 11 (December 2008-January 2009), 15.

92. Baker, "Kava Tradition and Toxicity," 85.

93. Kawika Winters, "Hawaiian 'Awa", 23.

94. For more information on the 'Awa Development Council, see, http://awadevelopment.org/kavafestival/

95. Ibid.

96. "Hawai'i Pacific Islands Kava Festival," http://awadevelopment.org/kavafestival/. (July 2, 2009) (last accessed August 9, 2010).

97. The Hawaiinuiakea School of Hawaiian Knowledge Kokua A Puni Hawaiian Student Services office compiled the data presented herein for the authors. The data originates from the University of Hawaii Operational Data Store database and was extracted using PL/SQL Developer and STAR. Spring 2010 grades (and graduation information) were not available before the publication deadline of this paper. General information on the data discussed here is found at http://manoa.hawaii.edu/about/facts/ (last accessed August 9, 2010).

98. M. Puakea Nogelemeier, *Mai Pa'a I Ka Leo: Historical Voice in Hawaiian Primary Materials, Looking Forward and Listening Back* (Hawai'i: Bishop Museum Press & Awaiaulu, 2010), ii

99. For more information see: http://awadevelopment.org/about.htm

100. La Ho'iho'i Ea is a celebration of Hawaiian independence and sovereignty. It remembers the end of a short British occupation in Hawaiin in 1843. Once the Crown acknowledged its violation of international law the Hawaiian Kingdom was restored.

101. Puku'i, *Olelo Noeau*, 134