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Abstract

Fighting the Battle of Double Colonization:

The View of a Hawaiian Feminist

This article is both a description and an exploration of the place of activist women in the indigenous, nationalist political movement of Native Hawaiians. The analysis is rooted in the author's own experiences but significant larger connections are made with the development and power of political women in general. Insights from contemporary feminist theory are applied toward an understanding of the many conflicting conditions under which activist women participate in indigenous struggles. Questions are raised about the relationship between feminist and nationalist struggles in the day-to-day living through of those struggles. The author argues that how we feel about our political commitments is as crucial as how we enact them, and in turn, how they merge with other commitments to redirect us. She concludes with the judgment that indigenous women must fight for their own liberation as women even as they fight for the liberation of their people. But she has attempted to show, through a single example, just how difficult that imperative can be.

Fighting the Battle of Double Colonization:

The View of a Hawaiian Feminist

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I.

Introduction

Some 1400 years ago, several small groups of South Pacific Islanders (at first, from the Marquesas; later, around 1200 A.D. from Tahiti) migrated north. They found a bountiful paradise gracing a vast area of the northern Pacific Ocean. Among the 132 islands and atolls, eight were large enough to settle, encompassing 4 million acres of land. These lands came to be known as Hawai'i; the indigenous people were called Hawaiians.

I am a descendent of these people, a Native Hawaiian woman. And what you are about to read is the story of my people and my place among them.

Before the arrival of Europeans in 1778, my people enjoyed a stable, environmentally harmonious culture. The indigenous value of Aloha 'Āina ("love of the land", an indigenous ethic of caring and respect for the land) was grounded in a subsistence economic system in which everyone had rights of use and access to the resources of the land and sea. Private ownership of the land was unknown. The chiefs were trustees of the lands, the people the beneficiaries. Land was divided into large parcels from the mountains to the sea. People within these parcels shared their produce with each other: fish from the sea, taro (the Hawaiian staple from which poi is pounded) and other products from the valleys. Strange as it seemed to Europeans, Hawaiian society thrived on sharing and common use.¹

With the coming of British explorer James Cook, however, a Westernization process began which eventually led to the demise of my people. In a brief hundred years, Native Hawaiians suffered the loss of their lands, the destruction of their social and religious system, and a savage decline which

can only be termed genocide. Ravaged by introduced diseases (syphilis, measles, influenza, whooping cough, cholera), the indigenous population fell from an estimated half million in 1778 to less than 48,000 in 1878--- a decline by a ratio of more than 10 to one. Christianity, with its repressive sexual morality and its emphasis on individualism and wealth, quickly replaced the native religion which had regulated Hawaiian society. As a result, traditional authority was undermined, Hawaiian values were superseded by materialistic Western values. Finally, encroaching haole (white) business interests advanced the concept of "private property", replacing the value of "collective use" with that of "individual ownership."²

By the 1850's, American business forces---mainly sugar interests--- had pressured the Hawaiian monarchy for a major land redistribution called the Great Mahele (great land division). Hailed as bringing fee simple ownership to indigenous Hawaiians, the division actually alienated the land from them. The end result left the maka'ainana (the people of the land, i.e. 99% of the population), with less than one percent of the total land area, about 28,000 acres. Hawaiians lost their use and access rights to the land while haoles gained vast acreages.³

Later, in 1893, the same interests (American businessmen and missionaries) that had forced the Great Mahele managed to overthrow the Hawaiian monarchy with the aid of U.S. Marines. A provisional government was formed; our Queen, Lili'uokalani was jailed; and urgent requests for annexation to the United States were made. By 1898, the world's most isolated island chain was a territorial possession of the American government.

For the Hawaiian people, alienation of the land was the decisive factor in their cultural disintegration. Without a land base, the Hawaiians lost their identity, their sense of pride and place. They could no longer be self-sufficient. Taro and sweet potato fields were transformed into

sugar cane and pineapple plantations. Fishing areas became military ports and bases; mountain forests appeared as tracts of virgin timber for aspiring American entrepreneurs; and places once sacred to my ancestors became luxury resort areas and military training grounds.

As the haole (white) minority came into power, English began to replace Hawaiian language in the schools, and more significantly, in the commerce and leisure of everyday life. With the introduction of Western dress by the missionaries, the transformation was obvious. The appearance of a whole people, once clad only by the sun and the stars now suddenly confined by Victorian fashion, gave silent witness to the transfiguring effects of colonization. Behind their enforced modesty, Hawaiians grieved for their land, their children. A beautiful, strong and creative people had become weak and imitative in the wake of American colonialism.

Far from "civilizing" us, the West brought us savagery and degradation. In the first stages of Western contact, traders and whalers put high monetary value on our unique resources: sandalwood from the mountains, whales from the sea. Later, missionary-descended businessmen took large areas of land, destroying the Hawaiian subsistence economy with cash-cropping of sugar and pineapple. Land and people were devalued by a "new" system: no longer spiritual and cultural in nature, they became capitalist commodities, valued only for the money they could generate.

In the meantime, the American military steadily increased its land-holdings until the second World War when over 600,000 acres was confiscated during Hawaii's period of martial law. Less than half of this acreage has been returned.⁵ Since Statehood in 1959, tourism has become the basis of Hawaii's economy, causing increasing commodification of our culture. For example, the "Aloha Spirit", a euphemism for distinctive Hawaiian generosity and love, has become the current justification for subjugating local people

and their needs to the unrestrained demands of a tourist industry controlled by American and Japanese and Canadian multinational corporations. For indigenous Hawaiians, the "Aloha Spirit" has meant nothing less than the shameless prostitution of our culture in the interests of tourism.

But a recent response to American imperialism has been a rising activism among my people for self-determination and cultural integrity. Such activism has taken both political and cultural forms, and has come to be known as the Hawaiian Movement.

This is the story of my personal commitment to the struggles of my people and how I came to know a kind of double colonization as a woman, and as an indigenous nationalist.

II.

My involvement in the Native Hawaiian Movement began in January of 1978 when I returned home to Hawaii after eleven years of study on the American mainland and in Eastern Europe. I had served a political apprenticeship of sorts during my stay at the University of Wisconsin-Madison in the late sixties and early seventies. Participation in the student, anti-war and civil rights movements had broadened my understanding of social and political forces in America, and on the international scene. After coming to understand a Marxist analysis (although not a Marxist resolution) of capitalism, I deepened my political education with insights from Marcuse, Sartre, Fanon, and later, most of the major feminist thinkers: De Beauvoir, Millett, Rich, Daly, Firestone, and others. Finally, involvement in the Women's Movement illuminated the many contradictions, both personal and professional, I had experienced as an activist intellectual. By the time I returned home, feminism was integral to my self-definition and my vision of a better, more just world. While in graduate school, I had committed myself to a doctoral dissertation on feminist theory, but it was more meaningful to me that I had begun to practice feminist politics in my everyday life. Given my philosophical training and my activist commitments, I sensed that participation in the Native Hawaiian Movement would be a serious test of my political theories. I wondered whether, as a practicing feminist, I could survive in a grassroots movement, a movement of my own people but nevertheless dominated by men. In very personal terms, I asked myself if I would be able to manage, even grow with the continuous tensions between my developing identity as a Hawaiian activist, and my identity as a political woman for whom feminism was a way of life, not merely a brilliant innovation on the history of ideas.

Despite my previous experience, nothing in my past had ever posed these dilemmas. Other Third World Movements within America, particularly

those of Indians and Blacks, had won my support, but they never raised doubts about my ability to interact within my own culture among my own people. And while the Women's Movement made me aware of the patriarchal nature of culture and politics, I still remained terribly ignorant of women's lives in traditional and contemporary Hawaiian culture. Worse, perhaps, was my general ignorance of my people's continuing oppression as a result of American colonization. Common sociological indices---income, housing, employment, education---show Hawaiians to be at the very bottom of island society.⁶ But more painful to me was the discovery that the health conditions of my people are appalling. In comparison to the other major ethnic groups in Hawaii (the Haoles, Japanese, Chinese, and Filipinos) Hawaiians have an infant mortality rate more than double that of the other groups; they have the highest rate of congenital malformations; the highest rate of deaths below the age of one; the greatest number of admissions to drug treatment facilities in the State. In 1979, for example, a greater percentage of Hawaiian deaths occurred to infants under the age of one than was the case with the rest of the State's population under the age of 34; and about the same percentage of Hawaiian deaths occurred to children under the age of four as was the case with the rest of the State's population under the age of 55.⁷

For those Hawaiians who manage to survive, even with a life expectancy nearly ten years less than that of the rest of the State, there is a special kind of "living death." I am referring to an internal, psychological colonization, like that described in the works of Frantz Fanon, which goes beyond an identity of inferiority to encompass a fatalistic acceptance of cultural, economic, political, and social oppression. Part of this oppression results in the internalization of white standards regarding acceptable, even preferable kinds of work, education, life-style, diet, and of course, skin

color and beauty. I was a good example of such internalization. Because I had grown up under haole (white) domination, I accepted haole standards for judging myself and the world around me. In order to survive, I learned haole ways, was anxious to achieve in haole terms. My colonized identity prevented me from studying Hawaiian culture, language, dance, philosophy (which were, in any case, not taught in the elementary or secondary schools when I was a child, and until recently, were not taught at the University of Hawaii). What I did learn from my mother about being Hawaiian was valued less, by myself as well as the larger society, than my fluency with Western ways.

It was not until I left America for home that I started on the long path back to my culture. The aura of Hawaii, her spirit of beauty and plenty reminded me of my true heritage as a "keiki hanau o ka 'āina"--- child born of the land. With my return home came a total commitment to the struggles of my people. It was to be a commitment burdened with pain.

In a brief decade, the Hawaii I knew had become a flashy example of American values: predatory individualism, commodification of my people's best attributes into saleable items such as "native" sexuality (especially that of "Polynesian" women) and the artificial "Aloha Spirit"; rampant development (condominiums, hotels, freeways, fast-food chains, gas stations) in response to the rapacious appetites of increasing numbers of tourists, many of whom are nothing more than common racists. As with other examples of American imperialism, I saw the indigenous people---my own Hawaiian sisters and brothers---oppressed and exploited in their own land.

By 1978---the time of my return---the Movement was in its eighth year of activism, having grown from a series of eviction and anti-development struggles in the early seventies into a full-scale social and political Movement with a developing Native Hawaiian nationalist ideology in the

later seventies. Historically, the Movement grew out of a basic transformation in Hawaii's economy from dependence on cash crops of sugar and pineapple and military expenditures in the first half of the 20th century to an increasing dependence on tourism and land speculation with rising investment by multinational corporations in the second half of the century. After statehood, burgeoning tourism led to an overnight boom in hotels and luxury resort areas which resulted in ever-enlarging demands for land.⁸ These demands brought heavy tax burdens on Hawaii residents as the local political elite moved quickly to support tourism while reaping enormous private financial benefits.⁹ The effect on residents was predictable economic strain as food, housing, land and other necessities soared in price. Additionally, a ten-fold increase in tourists since Statehood created intolerable population pressures on O'ahu, site of the major tourist destination of Waikiki, and home for 75% of Hawaii's population.

These strains bore down on local people just as America began to suffer the effects of involvement in Viet Nam: inflation, and mass social and political upheaval. By 1970, Hawaii was experiencing its own response: rising activism in certain segments of the population---youth and Native Hawaiians---regarding increasing dependence on tourism and the resulting whole-scale sellout of the land to commercial development; a disillusionment with the promises of the local Democratic Party for land redistribution; and a smoldering anger in local people, particularly Hawaiians and other ethnic poor (for example, Samoans and Filipinos), because they were going to pay for tourist developments while a growing upper-income resident population recently arrived from the American mainland would swallow up the best jobs and housing.

In short, a major shift in the basis of Hawaii's economy created a continual source of strain which, when coupled with increasing political

consciousness about the exploitive effects of American colonization, resulted in radical activism in the seventies. Throughout the decade, specific struggles highlighted the crushing demands of commercial and military development for land; the resultant increase in evictions of local residents; the lack of community control over the type and pace of development; and State disregard for the needs of local people, particularly indigenous Hawaiians. The combination of strain and rebellion gave birth to the Hawaiian Movement, a series of political struggles between 1970 and 1980 characterized by demands for community self-determination and Native Hawaiian cultural assertion and independence.

While community struggles sprang up throughout the State in response to development, leadership was provided by a growing group of educated youth, some of whom had been sent off to the American mainland in the sixties to become professionals but had returned in the seventies as activists and cultural nationalists. I was but one among many in this group.

I chose to join the Protect Kaho'olawe 'Ohana (the word, 'ohana, means the extended family in Hawaiian). As a loosely-organized association with membership drawn from predominantly poor Hawaiian communities around the State, the Kaho'olawe 'Ohana was the focus for a strong cultural revival among Hawaiians. Born in 1976 after a series of "illegal occupations" of Kaho'olawe Island by Native Hawaiian activists protesting Navy control and bombing of the Island since 1941, the Protect Kaho'olawe 'Ohana was at the center of the Native Hawaiian Movement. By questioning the military, the 'Ohana exposed the heart of American imperialism in the Pacific. Through continual assertion of Hawaiian cultural values of Aloha 'Āina---love, care and nurturance of the land---and Aloha Ka Po'e---love and care for the people

of the land---the 'Ohana presented a clear alternative to Western capitalism and its ceaseless destruction of the human and physical environment. And the strength of our spiritual relationship to the land pointed up the shallow, callous reality of Western materialistic culture, especially in its American variant where land---our beloved 'āina---is nothing more than a commodity called real estate.

Since 1976, the 'Ohana had carried their struggle into the hearts and minds of Hawaii's people, raising questions about military need for bombing, State land use policy, and the preservation of Hawaiian culture and its base, the land. (This included a controversy surrounding protection of hundreds of historic sites on Kaho'olawe. Now, in 1982, the preservation issue has been partly resolved in favor of the 'Ohana: Kaho'olawe Island has been declared a National Historic landmark. Unbelievably, however, the bombing continues.) The seriousness and depth of commitment to the struggle against the bombing had been demonstrated by the willingness of many 'Ohana members to suffer imprisonment for "illegal" landings. And two of our brothers, George Helm and Kimo Mitchell, lost their lives in 1977 trying to warn other 'Ohana members on the island. By 1978, the 'Ohana had already managed some redress in Federal Court through a suit against the Navy. Meanwhile, the State legislature had voiced concern with six resolutions against the bombing, and Hawaii's congressional delegation as well as Presidents Ford and Carter had been drawn into the issue. In a very short time, the 'Ohana had made the bombing of Kaho'olawe a controversial issue and had brought critical attention to bear on realities long accepted by the local public: for example, the link between Hawaii's status as an American colony, and military control of large tracts of land, including 30% of the most populated island of O'ahu.

During my time in the 'Ohana (1978-1980), I had several responsibilities: Chair of the O'ahu 'Ohana (organization was divided by islands); spokesperson for the Statewide 'Ohana; civil suit liaison with Honolulu law firms; grantwriter for our non-profit arm of the 'Ohana; and community organizer. Most of these tasks were carried on simultaneously, and I saw all of them as attempts to translate into practice the unique 'Ohana assertion of Hawaiian cultural values---Aloha 'Āina and Aloha Ka Po'e---as an alternative, in material as well as spiritual terms, to Western values of capitalism and Christianity.

However, the translation of these values through daily organizing was traumatic. In the first place, I hadn't been home for more than a decade and was out of touch with current events, styles, and networks. Because the 'Ohana was a Statewide association, I needed to work effectively on all the major islands and particularly in rural areas with large Hawaiian populations. At the start, my mainland, urban experience created difficulties. And, of course, there was the entire problem of crossing back into Hawaiian culture (and local style which is very slow and easy compared to the loud, aggressive style of mainland haoles) without losing my ability to deal with the dominant white culture.

Despite these real hardships, I experienced my first year with the 'Ohana as a wave of excitement, fervor, life-centering commitment. Learning a new style of politics in my own land for my own people was not simply a novel variation on old themes. It was, truly, a change to new and better values which had immediate expression in political activity. It seemed that I had finally solved the dilemma of theory and practice.

But dilemmas are never solved, they merely evolve, reappearing in changed form before disbelieving eyes. While involvement in the Movement narrowed the tension between thinking and doing, it brought new tensions between my feminist politics and 'Ohana style, between my arguments and visions (always perceived as those of a woman), and the arguments of men, whether leaders or not. Slowly but resolutely, patterns of male domination and conscious exclusion of women from policy-making emerged out of the 'Ohana.

Unlike most Western organizations, leadership in the 'Ohana derived not only from skill but also from style (Hawaiian/local style), island of residence, genealogy, and the possession of spiritual faculties, what Hawaiians call mana. Apart from the presence of spiritual people in the 'Ohana, the organization itself was a practicing spiritual community. For example, Hawaiian religious ritual was an integral part of 'Ohana activity. Every gathering, no matter how small or large, began and ended with prayer. Various gods were often invoked during periods of strain. And there was a clear understanding that the meaning of 'Ohana as family entailed belief in some higher, more inclusive state of community to which all of us should bend our efforts and raise our aspirations. Beyond procedure, 'Ohana values were deeply spiritual in nature. Aloha 'Aina and Aloha Ka Po'e flowed from a cultural belief in the inherent value of all earthly inhabitants---stone, person, tree, ocean, bird. Therefore, everything was treated with respect and care. Above all, 'Ohana leaders were expected to personify spiritual values.

Genealogy and island of residence also figured in status. Although the 'Ohana as a whole did not defer to those who claimed ali'i (chiefly) descent, there was a certain status attached to Hawaiian over other, non-

Hawaiian families. While the 'Ohana welcomed all ethnic groups, it was clear that Hawaiian culture and values were of paramount concern. The 'Ohana was primarily a Hawaiian organization, and thus only Hawaiians represented the 'Ohana in public. Regarding islands, Moloka'i, as in times of old, was believed by many 'Ohana members to possess spiritual powers superior to those of other islands. Thus Moloka'i people were given a special hearing in political decisions. Similar advantages accrued to those from rural areas. Indeed, the very facts of grassroots background---rural, poor, uneducated---carried a certain positive aura. To me, and other Hawaiians as well, this characteristic of the 'Ohana made it uniquely appealing to the excluded and oppressed, particularly Native Hawaiians.

As a political expression of the Hawaiian family, the Protect Kaho'olawe 'Ohana gave to its members a kind of warmth, nurturance, and solidarity only experienced in extended families. But like these families, the 'Ohana was also a patriarchal institution pervaded by assumptions (and practices) of male domination and female subordination. Indeed, the positions of women in our political family mirrored the roles of women in the larger society: the supportive, ever-present wife or lover; and the unattached, often invisible "workhorse." These women occupied a separate "women" sphere with tasks of childcare, support of men, and often important organizing jobs (arranging meetings, collecting monies, finding accommodations, etc.) which kept the 'Ohana afloat but which carried no policy-making power. None of these tasks was given serious recognition. As "women's work" such jobs were devalued and taken for granted by nearly everyone, including the women themselves. Full-time, rather than occasional child care was never done by men, and although

many men contributed to various activities in a quiet, unassuming fashion they enjoyed tacit authority over women in the same position.

If the workhorse and supportive lover were clearly separated from the policy-making arena, there were two avenues to political influence open for women. One, an older woman/kupuna (elder with specific cultural wisdom) role, was only possible for a woman beyond her child-bearing years. As a political version of the traditional mother figure, a woman in this position (and there were at least four or five during my active involvement in the 'Ohana) wielded considerable influence over policy. Because of her life-experience and age, she posed no sexual threat to the men in leadership. Often, she treated them as sons, and they in turn acknowledged her as a wise, sometimes motherly adviser. If she possessed revered spiritual knowledge and personal power (what Hawaiians call mana), she occupied both kupuna and kahuna (priestly) roles, increasing her potential authority. Women in this category tended to radiate confidence and conviction, perhaps because their capacity to survive gave them a sense of their incredible tenacity which was readily communicated to the 'Ohana. Having lived through 20-30 more years of struggle than other, much younger 'Ohana members, these women had some basis from which to command respect and power. Many times during crucial periods of political wrangling they played pivotal roles, arguing forcefully for one or another position, often carrying the day. Given that the 'Ohana, as other families, included children (keiki), young people ('opio), middle-age people (makua), and elders (kupuna), no one thought it unusual for these women to exert some influence, as parents or grandparents often do in extended families. Interestingly, I can remember only one man in this same age group who was an active 'Ohana member.

Finally, there were a very small number of women, among whom I include myself, who were young (20-35), single, often without children, and assertive. They did not occupy traditional mothering roles; they were generally college-educated, and articulate, unafraid contributors to political discussions. All of them were conscious of their independent, up-front roles as well as their capacities to think and argue with some sense of political insight. Because they negated the prevalent characterization of women as merely erotic-reproductive objects (lover/mother roles), they did not speak from protected positions. In many ways, these women had to carve out their own creative space in opposition to the men, especially the male leadership. And when these women were successful, recognition by men was only grudgingly given. Still, this recognition never translated into authority, meaning acknowledged, legitimate power. Whatever power was granted, particularly the power to argue and be listened to by everyone, was fleeting, entirely dependent on the moment. This lack of recognition which afflicted the activist women was not unusual, it was characteristic of the general role of women in the 'Ohana.

But there were mitigating factors. If a woman could show over time that she had a skill or talent which the 'Ohana needed---organizational, accounting, press relations---she was given general recognition. But skills of this kind could not compare with the spiritual, charismatic qualities of male leaders. If her accomplishments attained public stature, she became a serious threat to the male leadership, and sooner or later, she was looked upon as strangely suspect. If this warning went unheeded and the woman persisted in her challenge, she ran the risk of being ousted from the family altogether, not by official order, but by the traditional means of humiliating women---avoidance, mockery, disappro-

bation. For most of the activist women this message was received early on. Some women left, others remained but steered clear of leadership positions and confrontations. The system worked remarkably well to keep women from rising to leadership.

The one or two women who continued to achieve and struggle met another barrier which seemed more intractable and elusive: their lack of spiritual power, and deep confusion about why they were excluded from its realm. I myself could not find an explanation for this until I saw that it is part of our culture. Only a kupuna/kahuna---that is, an older woman beyond childbearing age---could possess spiritual power in contemporary Hawaiian society. Since spiritual mana is one of the qualities of leadership, especially charismatic leadership, the exclusion of young women from its possession ensured their exclusion from the highest circles of leadership.

These baffling conditions meant that our activist women struggled within contradictory, politically ambivalent positions. They would always be limited in the development of their talents and the power to use them. And the 'Ohana would never benefit from their kind of leadership.

The young women who went beyond traditional roles did so, in large part, because they had been exposed to formal education, urban environments, and previous political struggles, both theoretical and practical. These enabling qualities, however, often became avenues for scapegoating during heated political infighting. In this fashion, talents which may have been essential to the 'Ohana became focal points of derision. In my case, my urban residence, that is, residence in Honolulu, was attacked as being "too citified"; my education and articulation were often put-down as "too haole." But Honolulu, for all its drawbacks, was, and remains, the center of Hawaii's business, judiciary, press, education, etc. Anyone who could

deal effectively in this environment was an asset to the 'Ohana. But the bickering was never an honest debate about talent or background; rather, it was a clear displacement of aggression provoked by challenging, critical arguments. Again, women more than men were vulnerable to this kind of attack since the very fact of their assertion is a contradiction, and since it is always easier to deal with women's style rather than their arguments. Indeed, although all the male leaders in the 'Ohana had some level of higher Western education, I never heard a single remark, disparaging or otherwise about this fact.

Finally, the young, activist women, like all women, suffered from a kind of sexual vulnerability. I mean by this that a woman's sexual life, her marital status, and her maternal capacities were all fair game for attack when internal struggles became fierce. Given women's social definition as erotic/reproductive objects, failure to live up to this characterization or worse, actual rejection of it, meant a constant undercurrent of sexual innuendo which the activist women had to address.

For example, single women without children already question prevailing female roles. But in Hawaiian culture, a woman approaching thirty who has no children and no husband, such as myself, is not considered modern. Far from it, she is thought to be quite strange, meaning physically strange---sterile or in some other way biologically abnormal. Possibly, she may be lesbian, which is also considered abnormal; or, as one woman with three children told me, just "not a real woman."

There is also a double standard regarding sexual relationships. Many married 'Ohana men were haphazard about caring for their children and their wives, preferring instead to "hangout" with their lovers, "cruising" the neighbor islands. While having children is considered essential to most Hawaiian men, caring for them is less essential since it is primarily seen

as women's responsibility. Most 'Ohana members accepted this careless behavior on the part of Hawaiian men as the norm of everyday life. But the few women--married, single, with or without children--who had lovers in succession were considered promiscuous, in the sense of immoral, while the men were considered virile and masculine.

It was during political debates that upfront women were vulnerable to sexual baiting. Of course, such attacks were never made openly because they would not have been condoned by most 'Ohana members. But they were made privately, they were intended to hurt, and in extreme cases, to drive the women from the 'Ohana.

In my own experience, my lack of children and single marital status were constantly mentioned, sometimes in the cruelest of ways, during tense, challenging debates. More than once, I was characterized as promiscuous. Other activist women had similar experiences. Some were accused of undermining their men; others of not inspiring and supporting their men with sufficient (meaning 'self-sacrificing') love and attention. These accusations always seemed to arise when activist women began to argue in opposition to their men.

It was clear to me that this kind of harassment served a political function. Like all character assassination, sexual innuendo undermines political credibility. Apart from the hurt and isolation which such innuendo creates, these attacks cast the entire person into doubt. When coupled with other "negative" characterizations---in my case, urban origin, mainland education---sexual innuendo could, if believed by enough people, effectively neutralize a woman's arguments. For me, the only response was to ignore the baiting and proceed with the politics at hand. But under-

neath my resolve, the attacks took their toll. I always felt like leaving the 'Ohana, giving up my determination to organize, accepting class distance as insurmountable, laying down the burden I felt to be mine by virtue of my education and skills. While I never gave in to these moments of exhausting despair, I also never adjusted to the fact that an organization which espoused a loving, nurturant ethos for the land and its people, could tolerate such crude, appalling behavior. In retrospect, I cannot recall any of the men, including the leadership, voicing their opinion about this problem, or attempting to alleviate it. It might have been that many of the men, uneasy about activist women to begin with, felt they deserved the heat. And of course, there were women as well as men who participated in this kind of sexual baiting. But no matter the numbers, it was a bitter game, often played and sanctioned by the leadership as well as the rank and file membership.

Activist women suffered two other disadvantages which, in many aspects, I would judge more serious than the ones already discussed. One was the absence of any established, collective support network outside the mothering sphere. This absence was painfully felt because of the presence of a strong support group for the men. In the 'Ohana, this boy's club is called the "bruddahs", local pidgin for "brothers."

Apart from enjoying fishing, hunting, and other "male" activities together, the "bruddahs" share an undisguised, occasionally brutal macho ethic which includes violence toward women and children. As in the case of sexual innuendo, I was shocked by this, and very disturbed by its matter-of-fact acceptance by 'Ohana leadership. Indeed, it was not uncommon for men in the 'Ohana to defend violence against women as a man's prerogative or none of anyone's business. I was continually amazed to

find some of the most ardent advocates of Aloha 'Āina to be perpetrators of violence against women and their children, and if not violence, then forms of neglect, especially regarding child support, which I would call abusive. Other men who did not themselves act violently toward women, refused to confront their "bruddahs" on this point. Indeed, I heard more than once the incredible defense of child and spouse abuse as the "Hawaiian" form of discipline. And of course, there were always those men who defended their friends as basically "good bruddahs" who had but a few faults, by which was meant their beating of women and children. In the simplest terms, most of the men in the 'Ohana (and some of the women) accepted violence against women and children as part of the hard blows of life, or they deplored it privately but would do nothing publicly.

It soon became clear that at least part of the "bruddah" culture is grounded in conscious dislike, abuse, even hatred of women. In such a hostile environment, most women responded by supporting each other. But the basis of this support was women's functional roles as wives and mothers. Activist women who didn't fall into either category were essentially without support. Of course, the activist women supported each other, but their number was so small and their positions so besieged, it was easier for them to make alliances with men for political if not emotional support. Not only were activist women isolated, then, by lack of support networks, they were operating in very unsympathetic surroundings. Moreover, alliances with individual men, even when genuinely supportive, never broached the specific problems of women on the front lines. This failure is typical of the kind of alienation political women have always suffered, and continue to suffer, mostly in steamy, sullen silence or uncontrollable rage. Problems which are unique to women, especially those dealing with sexual harrasment and emotional nurturance, are never considered significant enough to warrant

recognition, serious discussion, and efforts at solutions. The Women's Movement is, in many ways, a response to this failure. In the Hawaiian Movement, and particularly in the 'Ohana, women's concerns, problems, and perspectives are treated as secondary when they are discussed at all. But the major reality is that they are rarely discussed.

The other disadvantage which I saw as specific to women in the 'Ohana was a spinoff from the first. Unlike activist men, all of whom enjoyed some kind of emotional sustenance from their women (wives/lovers), activist women, in general, did not enjoy comparable nurturance. The reasons for this are many. Men don't generally supply nurturance; it is not part of their gender role in either haole or Hawaiian society. And strong women, much more than the mythic "feminine" women, are not perceived as needing such support. Finally, 'Ohana men did not believe in expressions of public affection or private support to a woman regarding her work. All public and private support was supposed to flow to men, not the reverse.

Of course, in terms of political perseverance, such nurturance is essential. After harrowing political struggle when personal and collective energies are exhausted, the comfort and replenishment of an intimate relationship are inestimable. Most of the men in the 'Ohana had access to this kind of nurturance, but none of the women did, at least not the activist women. Although most of them were involved in relationships with men, I would not characterize any of them as mutually-nurturant. Nearly all activist women confirmed this observation in private conversations with me. To be sure, the women were supportive of their men, whether in or out of the 'Ohana, but the reverse was rarely true, at least not on the same level and with the same intensity. Sadly, emotional support never seemed to approach reciprocity.

Given the many hardships which women faced if they rejected traditional female roles, it is not surprising that 'Ohana leadership was, and remains, predominantly male. Apart from the rigors of leadership itself (the burden of responsibility, the task of constant mobilization, the necessity to manage conflict and direct policy, and the sacrifice of self that can easily tend to martyrdom), women experienced all the oppressions typical of patriarchy: structural barriers to achievement; lack of accepted leadership roles, particularly spiritual roles; consciously-directed harassment from men, especially sexual baiting; and the constant refusal by men to convey recognition and authority.

To compound matters, activist women experienced these realities, in their day-to-day lives, as intermeshed with other intangibles: the feel and expression of Hawaiian identity; the practice of communal values; a serious radical commitment to political struggle. The doubts and confusions, pressures and misunderstandings which generally surround these experiences gave daily life a stormy, chaotic quality. Meanwhile, battles of some kind were always being waged on one or another front: against the Navy who controlled and bombed the island; against the State who supported the Navy; against local agencies caught in bureaucratic procedures and unconcerned about the island, the 'Ohana, or the Movement; and finally, against both sexual and class politics inside and outside the 'Ohana.

With this constant multi-levelled strain, it was always easier to let pass the smaller examples of sexism, although for me, never the larger ones. Of course, I felt badly letting anything by, but it took enormous energy to fight on so many fronts. What is worse, perhaps, is my belief that no one's consciousness, particularly in the men, was raised by my efforts. Of all the men I came to know in the 'Ohana, I am hard-pressed to recall one who seems to have learned anything about the oppression of women, or who has

made any attempts to help change their conditions. To me, this only proves the age-old adage that the powerful (whether they are brothers or not) never give up their power; or share it, I might add, without a struggle.

Of course, it is also true that the domination of women by men in the 'Ohana reflects, in part, the dominant position of men in society, a society which has been shaped by colonization. Like our cousins, the American Indians, Hawaiians have suffered particularly from colonization. Not only have our people been pushed to the very edge of society, but our culture continues to be prostituted in the service of tourism. Under these conditions, it is easy to understand why the people are afflicted by alcoholism, suicide, family disintegration, and violence.

But while this oppressed condition can be linked to colonization, it cannot justify the oppression of Hawaiian women by Hawaiian men. And yet, several of my Hawaiian brothers have argued this very position with me, excusing the abuse of Hawaiian women as part of "blowing off steam" against the system. They argue that Hawaiian men carry a special burden of oppression ---emasculated by haole society and haole men---which Hawaiian women have escaped. This burden is often expressed in violent terms against wives, lovers, children and other brothers. Thus, they conclude, the role of Hawaiian women is to "understand" Hawaiian men, to love them despite their abusive behavior.

I have always responded by pointing out to these brothers that the same system which exploits them also exploits Hawaiian women. In fact, our exploitation is worse, given work discrimination, bad social services, and general social violence against women. But my basic argument is that as Hawaiians we cannot convince others of the superiority of our values, of

our traditional cultural ways of caring for the land and the people of the land unless we practice these values amongst ourselves. But I have never managed to convince even my closest brothers that what a few of them do in the name of "fighting the system" is wrong, morally and culturally.

This kind of attitude on the part of our brothers is not a rare feeling. For our sisters, this means struggle---against the larger system which would destroy us, and against our own brothers who would keep us beneath them. For feminist Hawaiian women like myself, the seas will be even rougher, the harbors few and far between. Contemporary Hawaiian culture, for all its warmth and beauty, is still dominated by men. The equality of women, respect for their ideas and contributions, is not a reality. Traditional divisions of labor mark off women's and men's spheres of work. Women who confound this division cannot expect nurturance or support, indeed, they can expect hostility and derision. As far as indigenous politics is concerned, the trauma of struggle itself is enough to exhaust the most devoted of activists. But when complicated by sexual politics, Movement struggles can be particularly wounding.

Nevertheless, despite the overwhelming obstacles in the fight against American imperialism, my time in the 'Ohana was a tremendous experience, one which transformed my understanding and definition of both my people and myself. Because of my involvement, I came to appreciate the deep-rooted difficulties of social change, in both feminist and nationalist terms, in our culture.

Despite my sobering experience, however, I would not repudiate my actions or regret my commitment. Nor would I disavow political struggle. Now that I have a better sense of the Hawaiian Movement, and a sharper view of its internal politics, I am more fully prepared to deal with its problems, indeed, to organize my Hawaiian sisters to counteract the "bruddahs."

For a woman like myself, educated but indigenous, there is really no question of choosing to fight. In the language of Third World analysis, I am a colonized woman of color. If I wish to survive while preserving something of my integrity and that of my people, I have no choice but to fight, and I have no other vehicle than the cultural solidarity of my people.

But liberation does not come all at once. To be doubly colonized-- as a woman and as an indigenous nationalist--means to struggle twice as hard, twice as long. As I fight American imperialism and its agonizing effects on my people, I must work and live with my Hawaiian brothers who would add to the burden of colonialism another burden of sexual oppression and domination. Yet, I will not leave my people---women and men---in the face of their oppression. But neither will I cede to my Hawaiian brothers the sovereignty of my Hawaiian sisters.

Notes

1. See E.S. Craighill Handy, Elizabeth Green Handy, and Mary Kawena Puku'i, Native Planters in Old Hawai'i: Their Life, Lore, and Environment (Honolulu: Bishop Museum Press, 1972).

Also, Samuel Kamaku, The Ruling Chiefs of Hawai'i (Honolulu: Kamehameha Schools Press, 1961).

Also, David Malo, Hawaiian Antiquities (Honolulu: Bishop Museum Press, 1951).

Also, Marshall D. Sahlins, Social Stratification in Polynesia (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1958).

2. For demographic information, see Robert C. Schmitt, Demographic Statistics of Hawai'im 1778-1965 (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1968).

For an analysis of the transformation of Hawaiian land tenure see, Marion A. Kelly, Changes in Land Tenure in Hawai'i, 1778-1850 Unpublished Masters Dissertation in Anthropology at the University of Hawai'i Library, Honolulu, Hawai'i. Also see Neil Levy, "Native Hawaiians Land Right", in California Law Review 63, (July, 1975); and Karen Blondin, "A Case for Reparations for Native Hawaiians" in Hawai'i Bar Journal, Vol. XVI, No. 1.

3. For an analysis of the Mahele, see Kelly and Levy above.
4. See the Native Hawaiians Study Commission Final Report, June 1983, from The Department of the Interior, on file at the University of Hawai'i, Hamilton Library for a description of the effects of Western contact on Hawaiian health, language, religion, and general welfare. For primary sources in English, see Malo and Kamakau above.
5. See the military's report on their own landholdings in Hawai'i entitled, Military Property Requirements in Hawai'i (MILPRO-HI) published by the United States Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Pacific Division, Pearl Harbor, Hawai'i, 1979.
6. See statistical reports by the State of Hawai'i, Native Hawaiian Profile, published by Alu Like, Inc., 1975. Also, Analysis of Needs Assessment Survey and Related Data, Native Hawaiian Project (Title VIII Native American Programs Act, P.L. 93-644; REGION IX Project), Alu Like, Honolulu, Hawai'i, 1979. Also see the Native Hawaiians Study Commission Final Report, cited above.
7. Compared health statistics on Native Hawaiians with those of the four other major ethnic groups in Hawai'i in Department of Health Statistical Report, State of Hawai'i, 1979.
8. See Noel Kent, Hawai'i: Islands Under the Influence (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1983).
9. Ibid., Also, John Kelly, Hawai'i---Showcase of Tourism, Land Alienation, and Foreign Control, paper presented at the 9th Waigani Seminar, University

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9. of Papua New Guinea, May 2-9, 1975 on file in the Hawai'i-Pacific Collection of Hamilton Library, University of Hawai'i, Honolulu-Hawai'i.