

The Ability to Imagine a Future: On the work of Ahilapalapa Rands

Lana Lopesi

"I ka wa mamua, ka wa mahope"

This Hawaiian proverb "I ka wa mamua, ka wa mahope" has been translated into English as "the future that lies in the past", "the time in front" or "through the past is the future". As Kanaka Maoli historian Lilikāia Kame'elehewa noted in her book *Native Land and Foreign Desires* (2013), "Ka wa mamua" or "the time in front or before" denotes the past with "ka wa mahope", or "the time which comes after or behind" denoting the future. A similar proverb in te reo Māori reads "ka mua ka muri" which is most commonly translated to "walking backward into the future".

future.

The ability to imagine a future.

Time in this instance is not the linear time we have become so familiar with, which posits the past on one end with the future on the other. Instead here relates to Hawaiian and Māori conception of the pasts and futures being interconnected. These definitions highlight the importance of the present moment for Kanaka Maoli with one's back moving toward the future while embracing the richness and wisdom of the past, with the ultimate sentiment that we should look into the past to help us inform the actions of the present and the future.

With notions of the future so readily woven into Hawaiian concepts of time—and other Indigenous Moana concepts of time for that matter—it is no wonder that there have been many generations of futurists in the Hawaiian Islands long before Captain James Cook first sighted the archipelago. It would be easy then to assume that this innate ability for radical imagination has remained unbroken across the islands, and yet to assume that would also involve undermining the seemingly irreversible and pervasive colonisation of that archipelago. The Hawaiian Kingdom was invaded by United States military forces in 1893, when they overthrew the Hawaiian rule under Queen Lili'uokalani, outlawed 'olelo Hawai'i

A collection of notes in the months I have spent living in the UK

25 June, 2017, 2.27pm
Mauna Kea
I love you
We will stand strong

4th October, 2017 3.10pm
#HawaiiansInHull only Hawaiian in Hull
sitting on the bus in Kingston upon Hull
scrolling to find out from Andre that the TMT permit has been approved

2nd November, 2017, 8.45am
Honolulu Civil Beat Podcast: OFFSHORE
Episode three, Season two: *The Sacred Mountain*

"What will be lost if TMT isn't built on Mauna Kea?"

"It will really be a loss to American leadership, because even if we build it, it will not be built in the US, it will be somewhere else. I think we all like to feel that we're associated with something that's sort of 'breaking new ground', 'The frontier spirit', and I think America really has this attitude of doing things that no one else does or can do and I think that's a very important part of our culture and a very important part of our place in the world."

—Ed Stone, Director TMT Governing Board.

The national language in 1896, and in 1900 became a territory of the United States. Since then Kanaka Maoli have suffered "massive depopulation, landlessness, christianization, economic and political marginalization, institutionalization in the military and the prisons, poor health and educational profiles." Most recently corporate tourism has further commodified Kanaka Maoli culture and land. As Hauanani-Kay Trask has written, "Burdened with commodification of our culture and exploitation of our people, Hawaiians now exist in an occupied country whose hostage people are forced to witness, and for many of us to participate in, our collective humiliation as tourist artifacts for the world's rich."²

Within an environment that is so violently oppressive, the ability to imagine a future becomes an incredibly radical act because it involves seeing possibilities beyond the imperialism forced upon Indigenous peoples. In literature, film, anthropology, and in legislation the Indigenous person is relegated to the past, antiquated and expected to self-eradicate. We see this in the current-day fascination in the last "full-blooded" person, or the way in which blood quantum determines a whole nation's survival in the eye of colonial law. A similar obsession with blood was apparent in Nazi Germany through their Mischling test to racially classify Jewish people.

The ability to imagine a future.

For artist Ahilapalapa Rands (Kanaka Maoli, Taukei Viti, Pakehā) the last year has been spent in London. Currently in England, and all over the Commonwealth, we are amidst the first of a three-year commemoration of the 250-year anniversary of Captain Cook's Pacific voyages. However, for those of us in settler nations—who are still confronted with the ongoing effects of colonisation—our desire to see these voyages commemorated with such grandeur is very different to those in England where the literal riches of the

Upcoming Events

29 September Queer Pride: Closing Symposium & Celebration

4 October First Thursdays, Carol McGregor

6 October Book Launch, Ryan Presley: *Prosperity*

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Opening Hours
Tuesday–Saturday 11am–6pm | First Thursday of the month 11am–9pm

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On the work of Ahilapalapa Rands

In order to love you the way I want I close my eyes waiting for the 381 Travelling over the North Sea, continents stretching until our Moana Nui a kiwa. Upon arrival I realise My human form is insufficient, laughable, childlike and inappropriate. I am the mist. I encircle and caress. Hanging suspended, gathering and dissipating along your valleys and cliffs. This may take all nights and into the mornings

20th November, 2017, 12.20pm
Ko'olau, Ko'olau, Ko'olaaau

14th February, 2018, 2.20pm
On this day, February 14th, 1779
Tawhirimātea was blowing hard all day. This August marks the 250th anniversary of Captain Cook's first departure from the UK to Moana nui a kiwa. This was the first of three voyages, the last ending in Kealakekua Bay where we killed him. Not sure what I thought I was going to find here in Whitiy, the small sea town where he lived and did his apprenticeship. I carry Kupuna who lost their lives on the beach that day in my stomach, my Yorkshire blood sits still and heavy in my calves.

3rd March 2018 3.45pm
Beginning online course for learning Hawaiian - Niulalahiki is named after a

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