

CONTEMPORARY MEANING IN ANCIENT ART: A CASE FOR HAWAIIAN *KAPA*

By

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A CAPSTONE PROJECT PRESENTED TO THE COLLEGE OF FINE ARTS OF THE
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For my daughter Emmalia and for her children's children.

E ola mau ke kapa o na kupuna! E ola mau nā kanaka maoli!

Long live the kapa of our ancestors!

Long live the Hawaiian people!

Mahalo ke Akua, a nā aumakua, a nā kupuna.

This is the story of an art form and also of the Hawaiian people. There are many who helped this project come to fruition and I am so grateful because without them I would not have made the progress I did. They listened, coached, advised, and participated. To these family, friends, and teachers, I say *Mahalo nui loa*...a heartfelt thank you! Your aloha during this project helped me to embrace my Hawaiian heritage and perpetuate it.

Very special thanks to my University of Florida professors, especially Dr. Craig Roland and Dr. Elizabeth Delacruz, who graciously gave of their time and expertise to serve on my Capstone Committee. Their sound advice and critical feedback challenged me and helped me grow as a researcher and as an educator.

THE ART OF KAPA IN THE 21ST CENTURY

ABSTRACT OF CAPSTONE PROJECT PRESENTED TO THE COLLEGE OF FINE ARTS
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Major: Art Education

Abstract

This capstone project describes my experience working in the Hawaiian cultural art of *kapa*, and my examination of it as an avenue for cultural preservation and revitalization of Hawaiian identity. The study describes the re-articulation of this art that was considered extinct for over a century. I used autoethnographic methodology to conduct the study, which allowed me to be an integral part of investigating the historical and contemporary representations of this art form.

My data collection included interviews, surveys, documentation of ancient *kapa* procedures, examination of ancient tools using historical literature and artifacts in museum

collections, and participant/nonparticipant observation of activities related to current *kapa* practices. I interviewed Hawaiian culture practitioners to define their knowledge and practice, and to consider how their practice compared with historical documents. I observed and surveyed student *kapa* makers while they worked in the learning context.

My observation and practice in the Hawaiian cultural milieu and my work replicating artifacts for *kapa*-making were substantiated by the constant re-examination of historical texts and conversations with Hawaiian cultural practitioners. Analysis of pedagogy that is culturally-based to perpetuate the Hawaiian cultural world view was explored through these research avenues. This was done under the auspices of art education and cultural learning in the tradition of passing down knowledge in a continuum for future generations. I used self-reflection, narrative, and comparison to explain my conclusions. In my final recommendations I suggest the viability of an educational model that uses the ancient practice of *kapa* as a foundation for teaching in our present day.

I created an online blog as a repository for information and a forum for dialogue on *kapa* making and other topics related to preserving and perpetuating the Hawaiian culture and Hawaiian sovereignty. The blog can be found at <http://kapakulture.wordpress.com/>

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Overview

At the beginning of my journey, I joined a small group of *kapa* makers. *Kapa* is a type of cloth that is made from the fibrous bark of certain trees. We were gathered to collaborate on two pieces of *kapa* cloth designated to wrap ancestor's bones for re-burial. The bones were uncovered at a construction site. Our *Kumu*, the head teacher, told us that this was just the beginning because "there have been many disturbances of *kupuna iwi* (ancestor's bones)." I felt honored to bring dignity to our ancestors. We started with *pule* (prayer) and then we each took a roll of wet fibers, and began to pound. Tok, tok, tok, tok, tok, tok, tok. Tok, tok, tok, tok, tok, tok, tok....The sound of our *nā hohoa i na kua* (wooden mallets on wooden anvils) filled the air. We casually chatted together and intermittently raised our voices together to chant:

Kuku kapa e! I ke kua, nā kē-kē-kē kapa e!

Hohoa ho'i e! Ho'o pulu wai e!

Ku'i ku'i 'alā e! Huli huli i ke alo!

La'i la'i mo'omo'o, a ke kua!

Strike the *kapa*! On the anvil, clang, clang, clang, the *kapa*!

The *hohoa* beater, too! Make it wet with water!

Pound on the stone! Turn it to the other side!

Smoothly join pieces of *kapa*, on the anvil!

Kapa was a part of my childhood; however, back in my youth I never thought about actually making it. I thought of it as a symbolic, ancient thing, an old relic, and a treasure from the past. My interest to further explore the art of *kapa* began when I was an adult. I

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came to find out about all the varieties of *kapa* designs and connections to Polynesian migrations and history. In Hawai'i, there was no one making it for a long time and for the most part, it could only be seen at museums. It was nearly forgotten because the practice of *kapa* making was extinct.

Fast forwarding to the present, *kapa* is still a symbolic artifact, but tangible evidence of my heritage. It connects me with my Hawaiian lineage and to my *kua* (backbone), represents *na kupuna* (my ancestors), and gives me strength in the world.

This research project was originally conceived to understand how cultural loss affects personal and collective identity. It grew into a personal discovery of cultural restoration and revival. Like data embedded in memory on a computer hard drive, I retrieved facts from people, documents, and evidence from experience and artifacts. Then I displayed this to inform that which was once hidden. I found that communities could come together, gather their memories, and reconstruct a culture plagued with losses. Browsing archives and artifacts I was able to piece together a collective past to reconstruct the cultural art of *kapa*.

Statement of the Problem

Art educators are in a position to realize the social opportunities for art making and the educational benefits that the arts offer to the individual and the community at large. This could not be more true when considering traditional arts that have unique cultural value and provide a social context for which revival can not only ensure survival of ancient art but also the revival of cultural identity. The social context and worldview that is rooted in indigenous cosmology and social order have historically been upset by globalization, colonization, and

ethnocentric dominant cultures that overshadow local culture sometimes to the point of extinction (Finney, 1995; Helu-Thaman, 1997; Flores, 2002; Freeman, 2012).

In the Hawaiian Islands, this has been the case and has caused a great deal of cultural knowledge to be lost over the past two centuries. A particular instance of this happening is with the traditional art of *kapa*. *Kapa* is made through a process of pounding tree bark into sheets, which could then be used for multiple purposes. This was a standard practice of women, back in the days before Western contact and the introduction and proliferation of modern textiles.

In the past, the labor-intensive production of *kapa* was integrated into the social order and daily Hawaiian life, as each woman was responsible for producing *kapa* cloth for her own family's bedding and clothing, as well as large amounts for contributions at social events such as in annual tribute, commemorations, investitures, funerals, weddings, and births. The loss of traditional *kapa* practice as an integral part of the social fabric of Hawaiian culture has impacted relationships and cultural values to the present day. The implication of this loss has a role in the disintegration of family, culture, and traditional social norms and values.

Researchers working in fields associated with sociology, education, anthropology, and the arts may find relevance in this study. In particular, education reformers may be interested in the connections between academic learning, socialization, and the integration of cultural arts. Indeed, educators may extrapolate ways that process-oriented pedagogy addresses how to teach in and through the arts.

Purpose of the Study

In response to the cultural losses throughout Hawaiian history there has been an ongoing desire for reclamation of heritage through a process of reconstructing traditional arts and knowledge (Finney, 1995; Flores, 2002; Freeman, 2012). The reconstruction has been an articulation of culture that essentially hopes to promote ethnic identity, reclaim cultural heritage, and restore dignity to the people. Articulating cultural heritage relies on memories of practices and knowledge that has been preserved in a continuum of learning through social contexts. In the past, such learning had been transmitted orally from one generation to the next. In the instance of reconstructing practice of *kapa*, we derived knowledge from other Polynesian nations that have similar culture and practice of traditional *kapa* making such as Tonga, Samoa, and Fiji (Neich & Pendergrast, 1997).

As a contemporary artist and educator of Hawaiian ancestry, I have discovered how making *kapa* contributes to viability of Hawaiian values and culture, while providing learning components that are applicable in multiple learning environments. It is worthwhile to understand the importance of how children are affirmed in their identity while working alongside adults in an inter-generational context of learning, as is ideal in the processes and practice of *kapa*. In this context it becomes evident that the importance of community, cultural intelligence, and experiential learning is how *kapa* making can be preserved and perpetuated for future generations.

This project was an initial step toward synthesizing old ideas with new perceptions in community art involving *kapa* production and design. One of my primary goals was to

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become more involved with young people in my local community. In this way, passing on cultural heritage and knowledge of Hawaiian *kapa* is insured.

During the course of this research project, first and foremost I was able to serve the Hawaiian community to advance the cultural practice of *kapa*-making. All facets of *kapa*-making were part of my experience including learning specific vocabulary in ‘*ōlelo Hawai‘i* (Hawaiian language), planting and caring for the *wauke* trees used for Hawaiian *kapa*, making special tools, working with others to produce *kapa* for burial of *iwi kūpuna* (ancestor’s bones), working with students of all ages at various venues to practice and demonstrate *kapa* processes, including the National Tropical Botanical Garden, Chiefess Kamakahahei Middle School, and at the Kaua‘i Museum.

As part of this project, I created a body of *kapa* work and documented all aspects of this work. The activities and events transformed me as an artist and as a person, because of the Hawaiian aesthetic, relationships I developed with others, and elements of the natural world and culture that influenced my creativity and ingenuity. I interacted as a learner and as a teacher and in doing so I was strengthened in my Hawaiian identity and cultural practice (See Figure 1).



Figure 1. Photo of me working on my *kapa* cloth.

Research Questions

There were two important questions that guided my research. Each inquiry addressed contemporary issues rooted in historical events and change. They both related to cultural revitalization, cultural identity, and education, with *kapa* as the source for discovery.

1. What does the ancient art form of *kapa* offer contemporary Hawaiian identity and society at large?
2. How does *kapa* factor into [art] education insofar as it can be used for teaching in and through the arts?

Documenting the re-articulation of *kapa* and the effect on practitioners was key to my investigation. I predominantly used auto-ethnographic methodology with myself as the subject under study. Additionally, case study and creative methods based in practice were used to glean answers to my queries.

My primary objective was to collect and document evidence of *kapa* practice and procedure, derive understandings about the social interaction and contextual learning environments associated with culturally-based arts activities, and explore how investing in cultural capital¹ inherent in Native Hawaiian heritage could restore health and well-being to the individual, the Native Hawaiian community, and the community at large.

Rationale

Kapa is an iconic marker of Hawaiian identity and its practice is symbolic. The significance of reviving *kapa* in the Hawaiian Islands is a powerful statement of cultural

¹ Cultural traits associated as assets. Cultural habits, disposition, and skills as resources that empower the owner.

reclamation to the Hawaiian people, as well as others on the world stage concerned with social justice and equity. In the reconstruction of traditional heritage through arts, culture, and language in the post-colonial climate, there lies a model for other nations seeking to reclaim their unique cultural identity. My project adds to the ongoing conversation of these important topics of Indigenous sovereignty and cultural survival (Helu-Thaman, 1994; Finney, 1995; Ross, 2004; Jiesamfoek, 2009; Freehawaii, 2012).

Definition of Terms

Traditional Art Forms. Traditional art forms are defined by the National Endowment for the Arts as “those practices that have been passed from one generation to the next with the culture” (Flores, 2002, p. 106). *Kapa* is a traditional art form that was considered one of the premier traditions of Native Hawaiians until contact with Westerners saw its decline (Kaepler, 2008).

Cultural Resistance. The term cultural resistance as used in this paper refers to the means of emancipating oneself from politically dominant popular culture, such as that established by colonialism. Cultural resistance brings about empowerment to subjugated people. It is “manifested through unabashed defiance to power structures” (Agbemabiese, 2012, p. 3). Cultural resistance is a strategy used to transcend the dominant reference group by relocating [Indigenous] frames of reference to empower [Indigenous people] who have been subjugated (Flores, 2002, p. 107).

Social Activist Art. Social activist art “is created with an express intention to challenge and change conditions of inequality or injustice” (Dewhurst, 2010, p. 12).

Cultural Capital. Cultural Capital is a community's cultural resources. These are cultural traits associated as assets (Campana, 2011) such as cultural habits, dispositions, and skills. They comprise a resource capable of generating "profits" and can be passed down generationally (Weininger & Lareau, 2007) in a social context where cultural characteristics are valued and empower the owner.

Limitations of the Study

The primary objectives of this research were to collect and document evidence of *kapa* practice and Hawaiian-style procedures and to analyze the potential applications in our contemporary world. This was accomplished by building an initial understanding and appreciation for the industry and artistry of the art form. The immense amount of information and knowledge that I discovered during my research is more extensive than what I present in this paper. For one thing, my explanation of *kapa*-processes and design aesthetic is truncated. The full extent of *kapa* production, decoration and design on finished *kapa* cloth involving natural dyes, various printing methods, and the Hawaiian artistic aesthetic is covered in a brief descriptive manner. This area has a lot to offer the creative sensibilities, and deserves more than the token study presented here.

Secondly, it is important for the reader to understand the multiple forces that led up to the unraveling of Hawaiian traditional society. However, the historical complexity in its entirety is beyond the scope of this paper. Historical implications are concisely illustrated enough for a working background about the circumstances surrounding the losses to Hawaiian culture.

Lastly, there are four learning components suggested that could be used to structure curriculum involving kapa. For the sake of brevity, these serve as recommendations to teach in and through the [cultural] arts rather than as a finished plan.

Literature Review

Cultural revival in Hawai'i arose out of a barren landscape of dormant cultural traditions and losses stemmed from a colonial history of political and social inequality. I focused my review of the literature on a bevy of authoritative voices to form a basis for further discussion of the historical and educational connections that are vital to this study. Discourse is organized to feature the chronological stages important to the context of ancient *kapa* practice and transitions into the present. I begin with what is commonly termed the *Pre-contact Period* when Hawai'i was in relative isolation from Westerners. This is followed by the *Contact Period* where I describe the effects that Western contact had on Hawaiian life, including *kapa* practice. In the *Post-contact Period* of colonization and up to the present day is a time of many changes. The implications of these are brought forth in my research and are used to justify kapa making as a socially relevant educational practice in our present day.

A Brief History of *Kapa*

A brief history of *kapa* making and the associated practice and procedures during the *Pre-contact Period* is mainly informed by two Native Hawaiian historians who lived during the time of King Kamehameha III. They are Samuel Kamakau (1964) and David Malo (1951). Two other sources wrote based on their extensive observations of *kapa*. Dr. Peter S. Buck (1959) was a renowned historian, author, and former director at the Bishop Museum. William T. Brigham (1911) authored a treatise on “the work of kapa” in Hawaiian life at the

turn of the 20th century. Brigham's book is based on *kapa* in collections around the world and at the Bishop Museum, first-hand accounts by early Europeans who recorded their contemporaneous impressions of Hawaiian life; and Brigham's own observations of *kapa* tools he actually saw in use. Examples of *kapa* and its social significance are well documented through the perspectives of Pacific culture ethnologists Nicholas Thomas (1995) and Adrienne Kaeppler (2008). These two researchers give their insights on socio-political history through their extensive study of artifacts in museum collections and comparative field research in the region.

The *Post-contact Period* runs simultaneously with events of the Unification and Monarchy Period, when our chiefs and islands were unified under the kingship of King Kamehameha I in 1810. This section has a plethora of voices concerned with the "outsider" influences of imperialism and witnesses to change in everyday Hawaiian culture. These are educated scholars, historians, and cultural advocates who informed my study by illuminating the connections related to differences between Western and Polynesian thinking. Mary Kawena Pukui (1998), Karen Stevenson (2008), Herman Jiesamfoek (2009), Mariana Ross (2004), Konai Helu-Thaman (1994, 1997), and others inform this section. Common problems related to colonialism faced by other Indigenous people are cited for their circumstantial similarities and the demise of *kapa* making.

Finally, *kapa* as it relates to cultural revival, the Hawaiian Cultural Renaissance of the 1970's, current trends in social justice, education, and revival of cultural arts as cultural resistance, are issues addressed by anthropologist, Ben Finney (1995); bi-cultural educator Jill Smith (2007); authors for the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural

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Organization (UNESCO), the Pacific American Foundation, and others. I examined pedagogy, hybridized art, and contemporary art practices through Karen Stevenson (2008), Eliza Pitri (2006), Erica Hansen (2009), Marit Dewhurst (2010), and Alina Campana (2011). These are some of the art educators who share their perspectives about social activist art, ecology, and contemporary themes that jive with indigenous philosophies. In this section, *kapa* making is reflected as an appropriate tool for social activism through the realms of art, education, and community revitalization. It considers how traditional and contemporary practices can work together.

The Pre-Contact Period. The Pre-Contact Period is the era before Hawai'i had contact with foreigners of European descent. Historical literature helps us understand how Hawaiian *kapa* was an integral and functional practice in the social and creative life of ancient Hawaiians. Realizing the purposes of the art form and the contexts of traditional production is a basis for reconstructing it today in its authenticity as a traditional practice. David Malo (1951) originally wrote his observations of *kapa* practice and function in the Hawaiian language in 1898. His remarks give a first-hand account of the types of plants used to make the bark cloth fabrics that were *kapa*. For example, bark from breadfruit (*Artocarpus altilis*) and Mamaki (*Pipturis albius*) were known to be used. The bark from the Paper Mulberry (*Broussonetia papyrifera*), called *wauke* in Hawaiian, was preferred for its soft and strong *kapa*. Malo and others corroborate about pounding methods for making *kapa*, as well as the dye plants grown and used for natural dyes (Malo, 1951; Kamakau, 1964; Brigham, 1911; Buck, 1959).

According to Adrienne Kaepler (2008), the introduction of metal tools in the 1700's, and modern textiles in the 1800's were two of the most prominent influences on *kapa*. Metal tools were instrumental in refining intricately carved designs on traditional wooden implements. Textiles woven on looms led to the final demise of labor intensive *kapa* practice. With the introduction of woven cloth, Hawaiian women learned to sew from the Missionaries. Traditional garments and community items made of *kapa* cloth eventually ceased (Brigham 1911; Kaepler, 2008).

Contact Period. The Contact Period begins in 1778 and refers to the era when the Hawaiian Islands were exposed to European influences. Artifacts of *kapa* and other salient cultural objects were collected on the voyages of Captain James Cook and other sea captains in the 1700's (Thomas, 1995; Kaepler, 2008). These artifacts and writings in ship logs stand as proof that *kapa* had significance in ancient days and was an article of material culture associated with status, wealth, and power. It was used as bedding and clothing, but also as a form of exchange during social occasions and religious ceremonies.

Social relationships were essential to defining contexts of the arts such as *kapa* in ancient Hawai'i. This is discussed by author Samuel Kamakau (1964) and is elaborated on at length by researchers Nicholas Thomas (1995) and Adrienne Kaepler (2008). According to Thomas and Kaepler, daily living and art making were entwined and art was not in a separate category. There was not even a word to express the English word "art" in Hawaiian, but instead artistic aesthetics were related to "skills that resulted from creative processes" (Kaepler, 2008, p 7). In defining the word "art" Ellen Dissanayake, a leading art educator and researcher, explains how different cultural views of art can be. In her eloquent article,

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“The Core of Art: making special” (2000) she argues that Western notions of art are surprisingly different from most societies. Dissanayake drives the point that Westerners view art as “dependent on and intertwined with ideas of commerce, commodity, ownership, history, progress, specialization, and individuality” (Dissanayake, 2000, p 14). Whereas non-Westerners do not view art as a commodity but as an essential community endeavor.

Herle, Stanley, Stevenson, and Welsch (2002) admit that controversy surrounds cultural artifacts from the past because museum curators had typically relegated Hawaiian arts to a one-dimensional definition such as “primitive art” culture. Today these Pacific art specialists and cultural researchers favor objects found “in situ” as shown in Figure 2, where purpose and context add meaning and understanding to artifacts. Progressive stances regarding post-contact history align with this thinking and are vehemently opposed to artifacts from the past representing living culture through glass cases in museums (Herle, et al, 2002; Stevenson, 2008).



Figure 2. Hawaiian Kapa Makers.

Photo credit, R.J. Baker, 1912

Post-Contact Period and Colonization. The Post-Contact Period encompasses the history of colonialism in the Hawaiian Islands and the circumstances that brought Hawaiian sovereignty to an end. This period overlaps the voyages of Captain James Cook with the arrival of Protestant Missionaries in 1821, after which a series of precursory events led to the establishment of sugar plantations and the overthrow of the Hawaiian Monarchy by the United States Government in 1893 (Kaepler, 2008). Thomas (1995) suggests that rate of cultural losses to Native Hawaiians in the midst of these changes was exponential. This was due in large part to massive decline in the Native Hawaiian population from fatal sicknesses, loss of lands and traditional way of life, and intermarriage with foreigners. The graph in Figure 3 depicts the rapid rate of this population decline. Foreign concepts of civilization led to prohibitions forbidding the use of Hawaiian language, traditional practices, arts, religion, and medicinal knowledge (Helu-Thaman, 1994; Ross, 2004; Kaepler, 2008; Jiesamfoek, 2009). This set the stage for the assimilation of Western lifestyles and cultural ruin.

The circumstances of colonialism and post-colonialism continue to challenge Native peoples around the world. This is reflected in sovereignty movements, cultural resistance efforts, and revitalization of cultural practices that seek to uphold traditional perspectives in the midst of Western domination (Ross, 2004; Stevenson, 2008; Jiesamfoek, 2009). Mariana Ross (2004) describes Native communities of Ghana in similar situations that were weakened through institutionalized education by colonizing governments. Likewise, in Hawai'i during the Sugar Plantation Era when institutionalized assimilative public school education led to Americanized cultural trends. This becomes more complex when considering the changing

demographics at the time. A rising tide of sugar plantation laborers emigrated to Hawai‘i from Asian and European countries for a hundred years beginning in 1835.

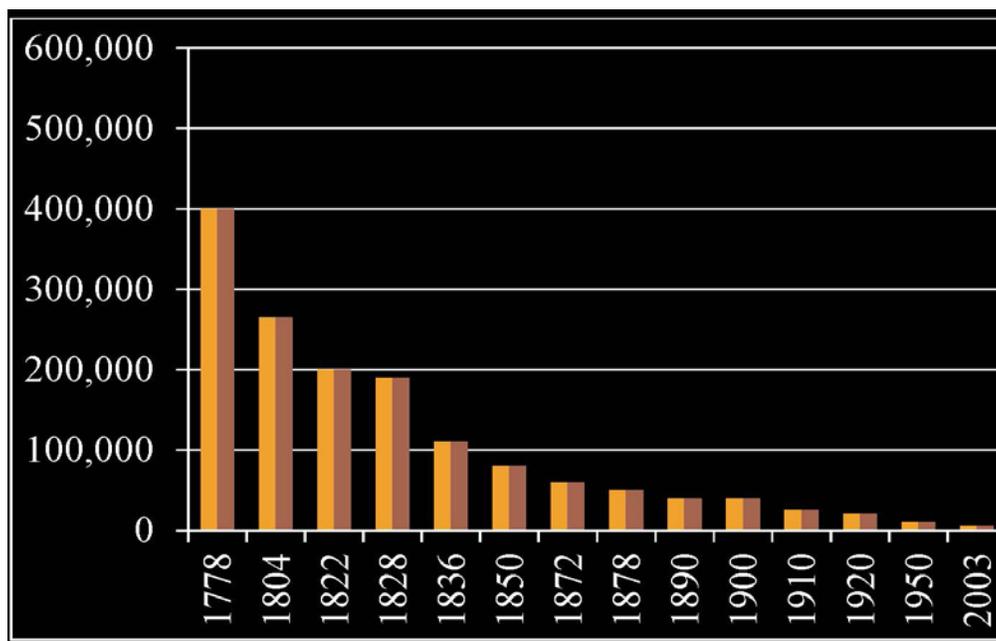


Figure 3. Bar graph shows the rapid rate of Native Hawaiian population decline.

Neo-Traditional Period and Cultural Revitalization. The Neo-Traditional Period is our current era. This period began in the 1970’s and was manifest throughout Oceania (Teaero, 2002). It was driven by a vivid sense of cultural losses during the years of colonialism and assimilation. The period was characterized by the use of traditional objects, which represented symbols of Indigenous community identity and acted as blueprints for cultural revitalization (Herle, et al. 2002).

The “Hawaiian Cultural Renaissance” of the 1970’s and revitalization efforts that swept through the Hawaiian Islands addressed long-standing political and social iniquities. As the

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neo-traditional period took hold in Hawai'i there was a resurgent interest in Hawaiian culture, language, and traditions (Finney, 1995). Among the list of revived cultural practices was celestial navigation and the wayfaring arts, long-distance ocean voyages in double-hulled canoes such as the *Hōkūle'a*, Hawaiian language immersion schools, Hawaiian fishpond restoration, the warfare art of *lua*, and canoe club racing (Finney, 1995). *Kapa* was not mentioned in the literature as one of the cultural arts revived at that time by practitioners. To the contrary, *kapa* was noted for its century-long absence and period of extinction, until more recent efforts of its revival came in the 1990's (Neich and Pendergrast, 1997).

Anthropologist, Ben Finney wrote for the Polynesian Voyaging Society in 1995, as a witness to the Hawaiian Cultural Renaissance. Finney remarked on how activists at that time addressed Native Hawaiian issues of cultural, political, and social injustice. According to Finney, inequality and sovereignty were departure points for Native Hawaiian activism in the 1970's. "Using the past to confront the future" (Finney, 1995, p. 4), Native Hawaiians effectively ushered in dreams of cultural vibrancy, revitalization efforts, and reconstruction of cultural arts and practices. According to Finney (1995), "Reviving declining languages and other cultural elements has become a way to demonstrate cultural identity and worth in relation to both the old colonial structure and increasingly impinging globalizing pressures" wrote Finney (p.4).

Government Mandates for Cultural Arts in Education

Teweariki Teairo (2002) is an artist-educator from the Kiribati Islands. He lectured in support of cultural arts education for primary school curriculum at the UNESCO 2002 World Conference in Fiji. His paper specified how traditional arts are intrinsically linked to

the revitalization of community identity and empowerment of Pacific Island people.

Following the 1970's Cultural Renaissance, pro-active, culture-oriented curricula was developed for public schools in the Continental United States, in Aotearoa, New Zealand, and in Hawai'i (Bequette, 2007; Smith, 2007; Hawai'i State Department of Education, [HIDOE], 2010). These initiatives for culture-based public school education were largely political responses that heeded popular arguments in favor of cultural revitalization and political redress. In Hawai'i, government mandates sought to appease Indigenous Hawaiian activists who vehemently voiced concerns over social and economic impediments and political inequalities (Finney, 1995) such as homelessness, financial poverty, and militarism.

A recent fiscal report published by the Hawai'i State Department of Education (2010), indicated that a statewide policy change was mandated in 1981. The mandate followed on the heels of the Constitutional Convention held in 1979 and called for a culturally relevant curriculum able to empower Native Hawaiian morale and improve community welfare. The curriculum program survives until today and features studies of Hawaiian culture and arts throughout the elementary public schools in Hawai'i (Hawai'i State Department of Education, [HIDOE], 2010).

Educator Jill Smith (2007) observed implementation of bi-cultural art education programs in Aotearoa, New Zealand which were systematically deployed as mandatory educational policy and curriculum directives to restore Indigenous Maori cultural practices. According to Smith, these were born out of decisions to redress the broken treaty of Waitangi, which was made between the British Crown and the Maori in 1840 (Smith, 2007). Likewise, programs such as the Native Arts Program in Northern California (Bequette, 2007) were

initiated in the Continental United States to preserve and perpetuate Native American cultural arts in concerted efforts to pass on traditional knowledge through formal education in public schools (Bequette, 2007, p. 360).

In Hawai‘i, developing culturally-laden educational programming currently thrives via Native Hawaiian organizations such as the Pacific American Foundation (Martin, et al. 2009) who work to create authentic, cultural, place-based education programs with interdisciplinary curriculum. Such curriculum is designed to foster a Hawaiian cultural worldview in young people. For example, understanding “the sacred nature of the land” (Martin, et al. 2009) is a key piece in the practical framework and theory behind the cultural curricula. According to Weininger and Lareau (2007) such culturally-laden philosophies are forms of cultural capital that are reiterated throughout Indigenous cultures in Polynesia and elsewhere to underscore a social construct that is characterized by spirituality, intergenerational relationships, respect for elders, the land, and traditional knowledge that is passed down orally as valuable heritage (Chalmers 2006).

Unquestionably, the basic philosophies of indigenous people are intrinsically tied to values about homelands and responsible stewardship (Helu-Thaman, 1994; Kaeppler, 2008; Jiesamfoek, 2009; Martin, et al. 2009). The Hawaiian concept of *pono* relates to proper action and order that is the fundamental principle of kinship, social conduct, and land stewardship (Pukui, 1998) that predates Western influence. Similarly, the values about sustainability in Hawaiian cultural practices, such as *mālama i ka ‘āina* (care for the land), acknowledge a spiritual responsibility associated with ecological knowledge of biodiversity and kinship with the land (Pukui, 1998). There is an order and a *pono* way for humans in nature. These

principles are what generate the aesthetic values, human interaction, and conduct in work, such as in the work of *kapa* as art.

Traditional Hawaiian cosmology has a continuum of belief systems (Malo, 1951; Kamakau, 1964; Thomas, 1995; Kaeppler, 2008) based on interdependent kinship between the land and family genealogy. According to Kaeppler, evidence of this link to genealogy is thematically reflected in all manner of traditional visual and performance art including narrative stories and oratory, legends and chants about places, songs, and dances (Kamakau, 1964; Thomas, 1995; Herle, et al. 2002; Kaeppler, 2008). Furthermore, social constructs in Hawaiian cultural practices are aligned with other indigenous cultures where cosmology of the environment are so important as to order activities and events and dictate the action of the day (Ross, 2004; Chalmers, 2006; Martin, et al. 2009).

The Native Arts Program in California confirms that art making associated with the land and sharing cultural wisdom perpetuates important markers of indigenous identity (Bequette, 2007). Bequette writes about the art of basketry where elders led students in gathering the raw materials needed. He describes this method of sharing as an important marker toward developing artistic and aesthetic values that are used in creating artifacts or skilled works.

Culture-based curriculum that centers on symbiotic relationships involving cultural arts, stewardship, and social responsibility substantiates that students do make cognitive connections between collecting raw materials and the environments where these natural products are found (Bequette, 2007; Martin, et al. 2009). The ideas of Bequette and others are

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in step with paradigms that incorporate the natural world with traditional values. Students are shown harvesting raw materials for their *kapa* projects in Figure 4.



Figure 4. Photo shows high school students collecting *wauke*, the raw material they will use to make *kapa* cloth.

From Cultural Resurgence to Activist Art

UNESCO author, Teweiariki Teairo (2002) and art education researcher, Ellen Dissanayake (2000) argue persuasively that renewing cultural arts for community building

creates a sense of belonging and meaning, cultural identity and empowerment. Judy Flores (2002) asserts that a primary reason that native people are drawn to create indigenous art is to acknowledge and encourage ethnic identity. Fundamentally, the production of culturally-based artistic works can serve as a strategy to reaffirm and empower artists as they recognize themselves “as different from their colonizer” (Flores, 2002, p. 107). Flores (2002) discusses the term ‘cultural resistance’ at length and observes that reclaiming cultural identity is one of the strongest reasons for cultural resistance against socio-political domination of “others.” Perspectives from culture advocates and artists of Pacific Island Nations concur with this and their artworks, architecture, and metaphoric symbolism are often made as a form of resistance (Flores, 2002; Herle, et al. 2002; Stevenson, 2008). Flores insists that cultural re-articulation is a process that establishes evidence of connections to the past, whereby discovering the roots of lost knowledge resurfaces (Flores, 2002). Furthermore, combining the traditional arts with social science topics creates relevant and forthright opportunities to promote awareness and transformation that can lead to civic engagement, the development of empathy, and social cohesion (Bequette 2007; Hansen, 2009).

Creating Change through Art

“*Pacifika Art*” originated in a politically motivated social context to engage social reform of Aotearoa, New Zealand (Stevenson, 2008). Created in response to Euro-centric inequalities and the hegemony of British dominance, these artistic statements are strong and compelling. The disabused voices represent complex socio-political relationships and perspectives of Indigenous ethnic identity. From stereotypical images to ambiguous metaphor, composites of fused realities, or hybridization, are features of Pasifika social activist

art. *Pasifika Art* provides a new context for traditional imagery and opens doors for personal expressions on collective Maori experience (Stevenson, 2008).

The *Pasifika Art* of Aotearoa, New Zealand is a clear example. Stevenson (2008) asserts that cultural icons stand as cultural markers or stereotypical images that are purposefully allowed to dominate an artwork in order to communicate essential themes of social injustice. According to Stevenson, what makes up contemporary representations and interpretations is a combination of the “stereotypes and myths, authentic and traditional, the eclectic and the eccentric, the island and the urban” (Stevenson, 2008, p. 36). Art educator, Donalyn Heise (2010) asserts that symbolic and cultural icons can be used as declarative statements where powerful meanings of experience are conveyed. Stevenson (2007) esteems that art related to the traditional meanings of objects can be reinterpreted through contemporary displays. For example, using a contemporary motif of bark cloth (*kapa*) to reinforce traditional notions of social obligation, authority, and power that was essential to the culturally authentic production and customary exchange of bark cloth (Stevenson, 2008).

Connections between colonial ethnocentric hegemony and subsequent loss of traditional ways of living are not avoided. On the contrary, they are faced head-on and used to forge new perspectives, making strides to create socially relevant activist art and highlight markers of our identity. This kind of contemporary vision engages with history and cultural knowledge to form hybridized interpretations that resonate with new meaning. The perspective is not an apathetic assimilation supporting the status quo, which could lead toward cultural extinction. On the other hand it is social activist art, layered with complexity, and imagery that provokes the audience and artist to think more deeply.

Conclusion: Possibilities for Fostering Cultural Vitality through the Ancient Art of *Kapa*

According to the literature, traditional cultural arts are worthy endeavors and should be preserved to benefit the individual and the whole of humanity. *Kapa's* not too distant status as an extinct art and its present vulnerability suggests the need for support and regenerative action. Given the fact that the Polynesian cultures in general and Hawaiian culture in particular are yet living cultures, the opportunity for inquiry and documentation through living subjects is still possible. Investigating intergenerational relationships established within our Hawaiian cultural milieu has the effect of galvanizing *kapa* practitioners of all ages. Furthermore, *kapa* practice using traditional methods sets a foundation to strengthen the Hawaiian community in its development of future contemporary arts practice. There is untapped potential for *kapa* to be used as a cornerstone to develop a comprehensive cultural knowledge base and a source of cultural regeneration. This sets the stage for a worthy investigation into this ancient art practice.

Research Methodology

My investigation into the subject of *kapa* uses a mixed-method research strategy. I employed auto-ethnography and grounded analyses to collect, analyze, and interpret data. Auto-ethnography allowed me to use narrative to discuss my research and the constant comparative method of grounded analysis enabled me to compare and interpret data.

Subjects of Study

Adult Cultural Practitioners Interviewed as Subjects. Interviews were conducted with three cultural practitioners. All three have Polynesian ancestry. Two were female *kapa* makers over 50 years of age. The third is a male also over age 50 who works as a teacher in the

arts of carving and playing drums and flutes. Their names have been changed for this discussion to protect their privacy.

The first female, Kumu Kaliko, is a teacher who works at the Hawai‘i State Department of Education as the Hawaiian Culture Resource Coordinator, a temporary-part-time position she has held for 23 years. We spoke at length about *kapa*, education, and cultural connections in DOE programs. The second female interviewed, Kumu Malia, does private classes, has made *kapa* for international dignitaries and makes her living as a *kapa* maker and teacher in a commercial educational context. The male practitioner, Kumu Kimo, is the director of a non-profit community cultural center. At the center, cultural arts classes are offered to students of all ages, and space is rented for events. Kumu Kimo has a very specific set of cultural values that are implemented at the center and cultural activities are open to the whole community, all ages and ethnicities.

Each of these *kupuna kumu* elders actively work in the community teaching cultural arts. The interviews provided three different points of view on traditional practices, the re-invention of traditions in contemporary times, and implications of cultural, social, and political history on educational settings. I used a set of questions (See Appendix A) in a semi-structured format to guide each interview. They lasted about an hour, and were recorded using note-taking.

Student Kapa Practitioners as Subjects. I involved two classes of student *kapa* makers in my study. The first group was composed of four high school seniors (3 girls, 1 boy). All have Hawaiian ancestry and attended the Hawaiian Language-Immersion Charter School. They made *kapa* as part of their senior graduation requirement. Each completed a garment in

the style of a cape (*kihei*). These students worked over the course of several months. I worked with them on the first day of their project, to harvest *wauke*, the paper mulberry trees, as shown in Figure 5. We harvested and prepared the trees for their *kapa* project. When their project was done, each student completed a survey (See Appendix B) to share their experience.

The second group of students was a botany class with twenty-two 7th graders. Students were of mixed ancestry. Ten girls and twelve boys participated in stripping and pounding 7-inch segments of *wauke*. I had come to demonstrate *kapa* and teach about the *wauke* trees. These students were not surveyed or filmed. I observed the students during our class time and took notes to record my observations of students at work.

Adult Audiences at Museum Demonstrations. Sixteen adults attended *kapa* demonstrations I performed at a local history museum. I did three two-hour demonstrations. The cultural venue provided opportunity to survey a mixed local/mainland group of adults with interest in Hawaiian history. I invited the audience to try some *kapa*-making processes themselves during hands-on demonstrations. Afterwards, I asked them to share their impressions through a short survey (See Appendix C).

Personal Cultural Revival and Study of Kapa. My study of *kapa* revival came through work projects and included all facets of *kapa* production: tool making, *kapa* fabrication, cultivating *kapa* plants, gathering raw materials then producing dye, and printing designs on finished *kapa* cloth. In addition to learning about *kapa* processes, I also examined cultural contexts, relationships, and personal reflections of my experiences in the cultural milieu.

Historical literature added to my knowledge about the *kapa* process and tools used in ancient times. I carefully studied, measured, and cross checked the dimensions of tools with

original artifacts. I created a series of tools carving by hand, or making them with a combination of power tools and hand tools. I made 14 sheets of *kapa* cloth of various size and quality with my tools.

Research Sites

I worked with students and others in several classroom settings, preparing and pounding *kapa*. At the museum, I did demonstrations of *kapa* making and studied ancient artifacts. With students or by myself, I collected raw materials in diverse areas, such as the cultivated garden, forest, and beach. At times I gathered raw materials from the woodworker's pile for my *kapa* implements. Dye preparation happened using a fire pit at the beach or at my home studio. My home studio was the site where I performed all phases of *kapa* making, dye preparation, and printing.

Data Collection, Procedures and Instrumentation

Over the course of three months I actively collected, stored, and reviewed data. I used auto-ethnographic self-reflection and grounded analysis methods. My research study fit well into the paradigm of auto-ethnography as it was predominantly conducted in cultural settings using a social and political history to frame the analysis. Caroline Ellis and her colleagues described the auto-ethnographic research method as “both process and product” (Ellis, et al. 2011). This two-pronged instrument allowed me to explore and examine the processes of self-actualization and self-study in my own production of *kapa* from a Hawaiian practitioner's point of view. I was a self-reflexive participant whose role was simultaneously researcher-subject, and learner-teacher. My personal reflections were counted as primary data and

evaluated in comparison with data collected through surveys, interviews, and observations of students.

Grounded analysis using the constant comparative method allowed me as the researcher to generate qualitative understandings from evidence I perceived. The constant comparative method as determined by Barney G. Glaser (2008) gave me freedom as the analyst to establish definitions of cultural and social gains or losses as they emerged through my data analysis. I used note-taking, video, and photo documentation to document my *kapa* making processes. I collected surveys and conducted interviews during specific events. I posted to a project blog periodically to reflect current information and progress (<http://kapakulture.wordpress.com/>).

Data Analysis Procedures

I used qualitative methods of analysis to summarize data around emergent themes in a narrative, auto-ethnographic form. I analyzed and interpreted the data I collected by the auto-ethnographic method through recurring patterns observed, theoretical frameworks, and compare/contrast schemes (Anderson, 2006; Glaser, 2008). With these strategies in place, I verified data through “triangulating sources and contents; to decipher the cultural meanings of events, behaviors, and thoughts” (Chang, 2007). I used conceptual and theoretical analysis to make generalizations through data mapping and triangulation that synthesized converging lines of inquiry and patterns (Soy, 2006). Analysis was ongoing and reflexive.

The data that I collected in semi-structured interviews (Craig, 2002) was analyzed through comparison of emergent themes. In addition to analyzing this data for the status of *kapa* revival, I gleaned pedagogical perspectives from these aspects of the study for new

insights about teaching and learning in and through the arts. I used participant/non-participant observation combined with self-reflection and comparison constantly as instruments for my grounded analysis.

I created tools to replicate ancient artifacts. These original specimens were carefully sketched and/or photographed for study and reproduction. For implements and tools to be as close as possible to the authentic Hawaiian tools of the past, I consulted historical documents and living informants. These provided essential accounts of ancient *kapa* making, including detailed information on size and shape of tools, natural dye products, methods of practice, vocabulary, and even traditional ways to tend the gardens.

Data Interpretation

I used participant feedback, self-reflexivity, pattern matching, and comparison as triangulation strategies to analyze and interpret data collected in fieldwork and literature. I continuously examined the relationships between data samples for emergent themes using the three strategies for analysis identified by Maxwell (1996). These include the following. I used organizational analysis to aid in reconstructing knowledge about *kapa*; organizing data from the start by two known categories: ancient practice and contemporary practice. I used theoretical analysis to look at data and discover how and why patterns occurred as they did. And I used substantive analysis to look at descriptions of what happened with events, places, participants (Maxwell, 1996). Using insights gained through organizational, thematic, and substantive analysis allowed me to form generalizations in answer to my research questions.

Limitations

The reasons *kapa*-making declined and became extinct are complex and are linked to overall cultural dissolution and political changes. The process-oriented nature of *kapa*-making along with all the many aspects for study and production makes it too lengthy to discuss in great detail in this paper. The process and the Hawaiian artistic aesthetic are important. It is in the sum of the many parts that adds to the value of this art form. However, only a brief description will be discussed here to form a general understanding for the reader.

Findings

I extrapolated three major findings from my study. These are discussed after I briefly explain the labor-intensive process of *kapa*-making, including the tools and fabrication of *kapa* cloth. This explanation is followed by my findings that address questions that guided my research. My guiding questions were to understand how the cultural arts such as *kapa* affect contemporary Hawaiian identity and society at large; and how educators might use *kapa* making to teach in and through the [cultural] arts.

The next section on my findings begins with how seeking knowledge and practice of *kapa* impacted my own identity as a descendent of Hawaiian ancestry. I then share my discoveries about perpetuating traditional heritage through teachers as vessels of knowledge, and student learning related to the learning context. These findings coincide with keen underpinnings of Hawaiian cultural history, intrinsic values of Hawaiian culture such as respect for elders and stewardship of the land, and the oral transmission of knowledge and skills using legends, stories, and cultural values to illustrate concepts.

The Craft and Process of *Kapa*

There are several legends about the origin of *kapa*. These remain with us as treasured gifts. The first is remembered as a secret that was once given from a beloved father to his daughters. He leaves us a legacy through his burial in the earth: which become the first *wauke* tree. *Kapa* begins with the cultivated *wauke* or paper mulberry tree. The tree is carefully tended while it grows. The side branches are removed and a smooth even trunk results. When it reaches about 1-2” in diameter, it can be harvested. It takes about two years for the tree to reach this point. Then it is cut down, scrapped of outer bark, and stripped from its core to remove the white, and somewhat pithy, inner bast. The bast is rolled and soaked for a week or more until soft and fermented.

After soaking, the bast is ready for a first pounding which is done on a stone anvil with a roundly-shaped wooden beater. This beater (*hohoa*) is about 12-14” long and about 3-4” in diameter. The second pounding is done with a four-sided rectangular beater (*i’e kuku*) which is grooved on each side. These grooves are an important technical feature and are used to separate and felt the fibers, and join loose pieces into one, resulting in a flattened, smooth textured cloth that is achieved by repetitious beating.

The final beating of the *kapa* is done with another squared beater (*i’e kuku ho’oki*) which is used in the finishing step of the *kapa* that imprints a watermark design into the wet surface of the cloth. When the *kapa* dries, dyes are applied with carved bamboo stamps (*’ohe kāpala*). Traditional stamp designs have meaning related to natural phenomena and are applied with an aesthetic usually consisting of asymmetrical compositions with attention paid to negative space as a primary component in the design.

Becoming a Vessel of Knowledge

When I started my research I felt distant from my Hawaiian nationality, culture, language, and community. One reason for this was because I am *hapa*, or part-Hawaiian, a source of my struggle to fit in with my mixed ancestry seemed to follow me where ever I went. However, through my research, I discovered that my family has a long history in Hawai‘i that stretches back to the Tahitian migration voyages. I discovered that *kapa*-making was a part of that history, which makes it especially meaningful for me to enter into *kapa* practice. My cousin brought me a *kapa* beater that his mother, my aunt, gave to him. I examined this family heirloom with great love as I counted each groove of its smoothly worn sides. We spoke of the fine *kapa* it would have made...we surmised it must have been fit for chiefs judging by its size and weight. The many closely carved grooves bespoke of a finely beaten *kapa* product of the highest quality softness and texture (See Figure 5 and 6).

I found that reviving *kapa* is something welcomed by the Hawaiian community to learn, study, and share. In my quest to learn more about *kapa*, I have entered into the generation of practitioners who now remembers, who now knows, and who now shares. I found that my desire to learn about *kapa* as a cultural practice opened up doors for me to be a vessel of cultural knowledge with potential to enrich my relationships and revitalize my community.

Perpetuating Traditional Knowledge

I organized my data into the known categories of Elder Practitioners on one hand and Youth Practitioners on the other to examine the learning context and the notion of perpetuating cultural traditions through passing down knowledge to the next generation.

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This does not necessarily reflect the age of the practitioners, but rather the first generation of learners in relation to the second or subsequent generation of learners. I based this analysis on student surveys, adult surveys, my observations, and informant interviews. What emerged from the data was that there is not a static, but rather a dynamic and fluid relationship at work in the cultural domain. I found that when cultural priorities shifted, so did the knowledge base and cultural dynamics of passing on knowledge.

As an example, the two *kapa* makers I interviewed shared a similar background of becoming involved with cultural art practice later in life. Ironically, both of these women were influenced by one and the same *kapa* practitioner in the 1990s. Their initial experiences in *kapa* workshops included guided work making *kapa* tools and making *kapa*. It ended with each participant receiving a *wauke* sapling as a gift to plant. The message was to go forth and continue the cycle of perpetuation by growing the raw materials needed for making *kapa*. It reiterates important methods of traditional teaching, too, where practicing traditional art is followed by teaching and sharing as the next inevitable step. Taking this step to work with students signified a change for these *kumu* from being in the role of student to being in the role of teacher. Henceforth, living as *vessels of knowledge*, poised to transmit the traditions to others in a regenerative cycle of learning and teaching that effectively perpetuated the culture and arts legacies. Although the teaching is not through our grandmothers and mothers as in the past, this new generations of cultural practitioners are raised up in our contemporary times. Wherefore, it is through the practical use and enactment of cultural values in a consistent manner, as in the practice of a cultural art, where the transmission of traditional knowledge appears to be successfully perpetuated.



Figure 5. This *i'e kuku* has 47 grooves carved into one side. It is a family heirloom that is more than a hundred years old.

***Kapa* in the Curriculum**

I examined how Hawaiian cultural experiences were transmitted in public school education through a 12th grade class at the Hawaiian language-immersion chartered public school, and a 7th grade botany class in a regular public middle school. The school learning context was essential to understanding how cultural arts could be used to teach in and through. I found that the purpose of the class projects should be meaningful with consistent, methodical involvement by students over periods of time in order that traditional knowledge and cultural values can impact students more cohesively.

All students had access to tools, materials, and a knowledgeable teacher at their disposal. But a difference was noted in the time allotted for study and student growth, in

particular, the understanding of the cultural capital in the given context. Students at the Hawaiian Immersion Charter School were given a full year in a project-based situation to create their graduation *kihei* (capets). Whereas the students at the middle school only had 45 minutes to learn the process and complete small *kapa* pieces.

Summary Across all Findings

It appears through my analysis of available data that 100% of survey respondents, including youths and adults of all ages and ethnicity, agreed that preserving traditional cultural heritage is important for the present and future of humanity as a whole, as well as for the specific Indigenous culture where the art and traditional knowledge originated. Some of the comments made in the surveys reflect these views such as: "...The past shouldn't become a mystery...because we learn from what went before ...History is important for people to understand what led to and resulted in survival of the people...if there is no evolution [we] won't live, but we should keep [our] roots...continuing what our ancestors did teaches patience and shows how hard one has worked... I carry on traditions because if I don't, then my family history won't continue on... It is important because it is part of our culture... [to keep] culture strong, living, and thriving..." These comments illustrate the impact that cultural arts have on contemporary Hawaiian identity and others in our society who are not of Hawaiian ancestry. This gives insight to my research query and understanding how cultural arts such as *kapa* affect contemporary Hawaiian identity and society at large.

The varied components of *kapa* making offered students and teachers diverse opportunities for learning that interested all participant and non-participant subjects in my study. Students and adults of all ages enthusiastically approached learning about *kapa* and

made association to broader topics when cultural art of *kapa* was the focal point for learning. My findings substantiated that making *kapa* may be used by [art] educators to teach in and through.

Discussion and Conclusion

Native Hawaiian traditions based in culture and arts have important assets to offer contemporary society (Teaero, 2002; Bequette, 2007; Martin, et al. 2009). The ancient art of *kapa* making has a history that relates across political borders to other nations with similar colonial experiences (Helu-Thaman, 1997; Ross, 2004; Jiesamfoek, 2009) and cultural losses. There is a need for preservation and re-articulation of cultural identity through cultural arts. The cultural losses sustained in previous years and threats of ethnic extinction are compelling reasons for reconstruction and continued cultural practice (Finney, 1995; Flores, 2002; Herle, et al. 2002). Although years of lost knowledge are irreplaceable, reconstructing cultural knowledge is a valid instrument for the future survival of Indigenous populations and ways of knowing (Wintu Elder, 2012).

My research was based in auto-ethnographic and grounded research methodologies. These were used to discover what the ancient art form of *kapa* can offer contemporary Hawaiian identity and society at large; and how the art of *kapa* can fit into [art] education insofar as it can be used for teaching in and through the [cultural] arts. My findings indicate that the art form of *kapa* has many components useful for teaching and learning. These components have artistic merit as well as value for an overall paradigm that recognizes the implications of cultural revitalization for the world at large. The following discussion iterates

my recommendations and possible schemes involving educators, students, and cultural practitioners in the educational contexts where we work and live.

Discussion and Interpretation of Findings

Recognizing the status of *kapa* as an endangered and vulnerable cultural art form was a first step in reclaiming its intrinsic value and restoration. The historical importance, the significant learning contexts, and the political implications of regenerating a diminishing culture add richness in a discussion about the continuing legacy of Hawaiians through *kapa*.

The research I did shows that curriculum in the regular public school setting does not address the relationships between learners and teachers in a way that promotes true and lasting cultural survival or revitalization. Since the days of Western contact and Western cultural domination, public schools in Hawai‘i lack the priorities needed to guarantee Hawaiian cultural survival. In the preservation and perpetuation of traditional cultural arts, the environment or social context is a primary element. Environmental conditions that promote higher levels of cultural awareness, affiliation, and consistent cultural affirmation reflect priorities for revitalization.

Learning potential through the cultural arts and through the oral transmission of knowledge uses stories, cultural values, Hawaiian language, and the various craft processes. The transmission of traditional knowledge starts with observation and leads to practice. This method of teaching, based on cultural values is inclusive, disciplined, and authoritative.

Significance, Implications, and Recommendations

In the final analysis, I recommend that a pedagogical model be researched and developed as a continued study into the potential for learning through cultural arts using the

traditional methods of knowledge transmission mentioned herein. *Kapa* making practice developed into an integrated curriculum offers the diversity required for such a model. For instance, the tool-making, gardening, fabrication, and dye and print components of the *kapa* making process could be developed and structured with learning outcomes in mind. The learning outcomes could address standardized objectives currently important to educational pundits, but with priority and critical care taken to ensure that cultural integrity is maintained.

Presently, the Hawai‘i State Department of Education offers cultural programs that are implemented in the elementary grades. Projects involve short crafty activities, songs, or games. They do not address the needs of cultural revitalization as a relationship of cultural transmission to the survival of the culture. The context is not well suited for sustained and consistent transmission of culture or arts and the supporting values. Furthermore, the DOE Hawaiian Studies Resource program falls short in funding, staffing, and overall vision for how Hawaiian cultural programs should be integrated into the curriculum for lasting impact and efficacy.

The benefits of implementing a pedagogical model using *kapa* have already been tested in a limited way. Students from the Hawaiian immersion charter school worked on *kapa* projects over the course of the school year. They yielded a product that matched their abilities, had authentic purpose, and had additional byproducts of academic and artistic skills, Hawaiian language vocabulary, socialization, and leadership.

Students at the Hawaiian Immersion Charter School reportedly were able to observe more fully and participate with full commitment in their experience. They developed strong

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fidelity to traditional methods of *kapa* practice and made room for change and evolution in design and method after adhering to the basic traditional ways of their ancestors. Cultural understanding was obvious in these students' responses to traditional practice of *kapa*. These students have a sense of responsibility to their community and family in the present and future, and think about the past as a way to strengthen themselves. There are three Hawaiian proverbs that stand as exemplars of education based on a cultural arts model:

“‘A ‘*ohe pau ka ‘ike i ka hālau ho ‘okāhi*. Not all knowledge is taught in the same school.”

“*Ma ka hana ka ‘ike*. In working, one learns”

“*I ka nana no a ‘ike*. By observing, one learns.”

While some knowledge may be learned seated at a desk in a classroom, other knowledge is passed down through transmission from person to person in a social interaction.

Conclusion

Kapa is an art form that was once considered a premier traditional practice of Native Hawaiians until modernization. Contact with Europeans and Americans, and shifting priorities led to its decline and extinction. The reasons *kapa*-making declined and became extinct are complex and stem from overall cultural dissolution and political changes. The fragility and erasure continually facing Native Hawaiians and many other Indigenous communities throughout the world is convincing. The fact is that many Native cultures, which were at one time vibrant, are endangered of becoming dead cultures. This urges me onward in my commitment to revitalize traditional knowledge about *kapa* as a living cultural practice and as a basis for contemporary art practice. Because practicing *kapa* requires use of Hawaiian language, a cultural worldview, and Hawaiian aesthetic values it offers an ideal

opportunity for a rich cultural learning experience. Developing a variety of cultural assets is available to the *kapa* artist, educator, and students of all ages. This must be done resolutely to ensure that preservation and cultural legacy continues for future generations.

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Appendix A - Interview Questions for Adult Cultural Arts Practitioners

1. Would you mind telling me what year you were you born? Where were you born?
2. Would you mind talking a little bit about where you grew up?
3. How did your 'ōhana, makua or kūpuna (family, parents, elders) influence your present work as a cultural practitioner and educator? Do any specific traditions from your 'ōhana (family) guide you in your work?
4. In what ways has working with kapa as an art form established your identity as a woman? As a Hawaiian?
5. Given that kapa-making was virtually extinct in Hawai'i for more than a century until fairly recently, Can you explain what led you to begin making kapa in the first place?
6. Who or what inspired you to learn about the art of kapa? Who inspired you, mentored you?
7. Can you explain some of the contemporary settings you work in to practice this ancient art?
8. Are there any hindrances to you working in the old traditions of this art form?
9. What approaches to design in Hawaiian art do you feel is most important? Are Hawaiian cultural values important in your designs?
10. Is it important to stick to traditional designs and methods? How do you feel about fusing together traditional art methods with contemporary ones? Can you give any examples of this?
11. Do you see interdependence between different cultural art forms in modern life? How do you find ancient cultural practices relating together in modern times?
12. What changes do you see on the horizon for Hawaiian culture and traditions? More fusion? More traditionalism? Hawaiians have always been highly adaptive: ideas,

tools, processes, etc...In your opinion, what is currently influencing the traditional arts?... especially kapa?

13. What are some avenues you see for perpetuating Hawaiian culture and cultural arts?
14. Does past history affect your work? In what ways? For example, the Missionaries, the “Great Mahele”, Annexation, and Statehood are major political shifts that affected Hawaiian sovereignty and way of life in the past. Presently there are issues of land and water rights, immigration, and sustainability. Do these issues affect you as an artist, and as a cultural practitioner?

Questions about technique:

How you resolve making larger pieces for kihei or kapa moe? Do you accept the mottled colors together and resolve it later with dye? Or just look for similar color, weight, and texture in pieces to join...?

How do you join your strips together? For example how would you extend the pounded strips that are of various lengths and colors? Do you keep the fibers going in one direction or mix horizontal and vertical in the felting process?

Appendix B - Survey Questions for Student Practitioners of Kapa

1. Where are you from? Which *ahupua'a* / *moku* of Kaua'i? _____
2. Do you have Native Hawaiian ancestry? Y ____ N ____ . How old are you? ____
What grade are you in? ____
3. Why did you start making *kapa*? Why is it important to you?

4. Did you carry on specific traditions, values, or designs from your *'ōhana* (family) in your work? Why or why not? Please explain:

5. How important is it to stick to traditional designs and methods? Is it okay to make new designs and create with new methods when making your *kapa*?

6. In the process of making *kapa* how do you rate the following steps between 1-5?

	1 I did not do this step	2 I do not want to do this again	3 I did not like this part	4 I liked this part	5 I want to do more of this	Comment
Mālama i ka māla wauke (taking care of the garden)						
Kālai na mea hana (making tools)						
'U'u wauke (stripping the wauke bark)						
Kuku kapa, ku'i 'alā (Pounding on the stone anvil)						
Kuku kapa, me ke kua lā'au (Pounding on the wood anvil)						
Ho'omo'omo'o (beating strips of wauke, making sheets)						

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Waiho'olu'u (dyes)						
Ho'owehi (decoration)						

Mahalo ā nui for sharing about your experience making *kapa* !

Appendix C - Public Survey Questions

1. Are you a resident of Hawai'i? Y___ N ___. If so, which island? _____
If not, where are you from? _____

1. Are you of Native Hawaiian ancestry? Y ___ N ___

2. What is your impression of this public performance of kapa making?

3. Were you familiar with the art of kapa before viewing this demonstration?
Y___N ___ if yes, please explain your prior experiences:

4. Do you think it is important to perpetuate and preserve cultural arts?
Why or why not?

5. You may know that Hawai'i was named the 50th State in United States of America. Did you know that the Hawaiian Kingdom was illegally deposed by a U.S. military coup d'etat in 1893? Y ___ N ___

6. Did you learn something new from experiencing this presentation? If so, please explain:

7. Would you like to learn more about kapa Y ___ N ___

8. Would you like to make your own kapa? Y ___ N ___

Author Biography

Sheri Majewski is an artist, educator, and arts advocate. She has worked with students in both visual and performing arts, and directed middle school students for the Kaua'i Performing Arts Center, an afterschool facility open to middle and secondary public school students.

Her background in the arts as a director of educational and arts programming for youth spans 13 years on Kaua'i Island in Hawai'i. Four years of these were spent as the Program Director for the Kaua'i Academy of Creative Arts. Other key appointments have been with the Hawai'i Children's Theatre as a drama coach, theater director, and program administrator; at the Kaua'i Museum, as the Education Coordinator and Contemporary Art Gallery Curator; and at the Hawai'i State Department of Education, as a certified elementary/middle school teacher and special resource teacher of math and drama.

In serving the Hawaiian Community, Sheri helped facilitate the Kukulu Kumuhana O Anahola Mural, a collaborative public art project for the Anahola Neighborhood Center, and was a keynote speaker addressing youth at the Founder's Day Event for Kamehameha Schools.

She was a member of the San Francisco Dancer's Forum; studied theatre arts, dance, and graphic design at San Francisco State University, and fashion design at the Fashion Institute of Design and Merchandising. Later, she earned her BA in Education from the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa and her Master's degree in Art Education from the University of Florida. She is a recipient of numerous academic scholarships including the 'Imi Na'auao scholarship of merit from Princess Bernice Pauahi Bishop and Kamehameha Schools.



Figure 6. This i'e kuku has been in my family for generations.