

## **Presentation Proposal: Humanities of the Lesser Known Conference, Lund University, Sweden 2010**

### **PRESENTER:**

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**TITLE:** *He Ahupua'a Ke Mele*: Land Division and The Hydrologic Cycle As A Conceptual Metaphor For Hawaiian Language Composition

**SUMMARY:** The ancient Hawaiian composition "Ka Wai A Kāne" suggests a pre-western contact understanding of the hydrologic cycle as it relates to the *ahupua'a* – a traditional, self-sustaining land division running from the uplands and into the sea. I will present AHUPUA'A IS MELE as a conceptual metaphor by which Hawaiian language compositions may be analyzed.

**ABSTRACT:** Hawaiian *mele* 'Hawaiian poetry' are noted for their extensive use of metaphor. Human beings, their characteristics and activities are often portrayed as elements of nature, their characteristics and movements. The shifting or mixing of metaphoric representations is also common, and a single individual may be portrayed as a bird in one line, a plant in the next, and the fish in the next verse. While this juxtaposition of mixed metaphors may be disconcerting on the surface, the flow of thought in the underlying meaning remains consistent, and apparent only to those who understand the complexity of these Hawaiian poetic and stylistic devices.

The flow of thought found in *mele* can be expressed metaphorically as the waters that run from *uka* 'upland' to *kai* 'sea'. The *mele* "Ka Wai A Kāne" ('The Waters of Kāne' – a Hawaiian deity) identifies the location of these waters, and describes their travel through the *ahupua'a* – a traditional land division that runs from the uplands to the sea. The waters are depicted as moving skyward through evaporation, and falling again as rain on the uplands. This *mele* suggests a pre-western contact understanding of the hydrologic cycle as it relates to the *ahupua'a*.

The depiction of the hydrologic cycle and *ahupua'a* as found in "Ka Wai A Kāne" provide a rich conceptual metaphor by which Hawaiian language compositions may be analyzed: AHUPUA'A IS MELE. I will discuss how elements of the hydrologic cycle and *ahupua'a* - water, land, sea, the atmosphere and other elements – may also be used as metaphoric expressions for elements found in Hawaiian composition.

**BIOGRAPHY:** Keola Donaghy is an Assistant Professor of Hawaiian Studies at Ka Haka 'Ula O Ke'elikōlani College of Hawaiian Language, University of Hawai'i at Hilo. He is a Ph.d. candidate in Ethnomusicology at the University of Otago in New Zealand, holds a M.A. in Hawaiian Language and Literature and B.A. in Hawaiian Studies, both from the University of Hawai'i at Hilo. His primary research interests are in Hawaiian language composition and vocal performance and the use of music in language acquisition. He is a member of the Board of Governors of the Hawai'i Academy of Recording Arts and a voting member of The Recording Academy ("The Grammy Awards"). A prolific *haku mele* 'Hawaiian language composer', his compositions have been recorded by prominent Hawaiian artists including Keali'i Reichel, Obrien Eselu, Kenneth Makuakāne, and Kainani Kahaunaele.