OUTLINE

The reclamation of Ancient Hawaiian menstrual practices through a modern menstrual health framework

Menstruation
- Menstrual Health
- Colonialization
- Ancient Hawai'i

Native Hawaiian Women
- Contemporary
- Menstrual Experiences
- Challenges to Menstrual Health

Recommendations
- Integrating Ancient and Modern
MENSTRUATION
ACHIEVING MENSTRUAL HEALTH

Menstruators must be able to:

1. Access educational information pertaining to menstruation over the life course
2. Effectively take care of themselves during menstruation
3. Access timely diagnosis, treatment and care for menstrual discomforts or disorders
4. Experience positive, respectful, and supportive environments
5. Choose whether and how they participate in life throughout their menstrual cycle
COLONIALIZATION

Overwriting of people’s histories, cultures, lives, and futures to express a singular dominant worldview -

False negative interpretations of menstruation
TOXIC
POLLUTING
DIRTY
TABOO
POLITICS OF TABOO

Fun Fact:
The word “taboo” originated from the Polynesian word “tabu” or “tapu” Kānaka Maoli use the word “kapu”

- Originated from Western Scholars
  - Theorized universal menstrual taboo
  - Perpetuation of gender oppression
- Mainstream rhetoric
COLONIALIZATION OF HAWAIʻI

(Historical Resources Hawaiʻi, n.d.)
ANCIENT HAWAI'I
INDIGENOUS FEMINISTS

Kapu and Noa

- States of being
- Integral for balance in society
- Protects individuals and the community

Hale pe'a - Menstrual house

- Place women resided during menses
- Menstruation is sacred -> Menstruating females were kapu
  - Kapu to non-menstruating females and males
- Responsibility to menstruate -> Restorative area

Reconstruction of a hale pe’a

(MUM, 2011)
“one of the basic tenants of the Polynesian religion exalted the male principle and subordinated to it the female principle”  

(Bushnell, 1966, p. 320)

“the precincts of the menstrual house were so charged with the uniquely feminine essence of defilement that men were forbidden to go near it. If a man entered the hale pe’a the price of his intrusion was death”

(Bushnell, 1966, p. 327)

Purposeful misinterpretation, mistranslation, and fabrication of “Ke Ano o Ko Luukia Noho ana ma kela wahi Puukawaiwai” Thrum  

(as cited in Kuahiwinui, 2018)
## RECAP

### INDIGENOUS SCHOLARS

- Reclaim concepts of kapu, noa, and the hale pe’a
- Resituate women’s status in Ancient Hawai’i
- Menstruation is a natural, healthy part of life that should be honored for it is a sacred and divine act

### WESTERN SCHOLARS

- Hale pe’a separated clean from unclean and was restrictive
- Gender hierarchy in Ancient Hawai’i
- Menstruation is dirty and should be taboo

Through an Indigenous Feminist perspective and decolonized approach, individuals can unlearn the flawed and problematic interpretation of Ancient Hawai’i history, women, and menstruation that Western scholars and academia continue to portray.
MENSTRUAL EXPERIENCES

Jabola-Carolus and Yee (2021)

- Financial difficulty and lack of access to period products -> Period Poverty
  - Negative impact on education and workplace
  - Inability to fully participate in society during menstruation
- Prevalence of period shame, embarrassment, and taboo
- Findings associated with continued impact of colonialization in Hawai‘i
Colonialization Period Poverty Perpetuation of Menstrual and Gender Inequities & Taboo Politics Inability to Achieve Five Fundamentals for Menstrual Health Poor Menstrual Health and Wellbeing Outcomes
RECOMMENDATIONS

Community
Discuss menstruation and menstrual health with others

Self-Care
Find ways to honor yourself throughout the menstrual cycle

Sustainability
Build sustainable menstrual habits

Institutional Reform
Get involved!
MAHALO
NUI LOA

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