

## **Renee Louis**

Renee is a Hawaiian woman and PhD student dedicated to both preserving Hawaiian performance cartography and advancing indigenous cartographic concepts in academia. As the closing speaker at the International Forum on Indigenous Mapping in March 2004 in Vancouver, Canada, she cautioned the use of Western mapping technologies such as Geographic Information Systems (GIS) due to its inconsistencies with Indigenous knowledge transmission protocols. Although she remains a staunch critic of these technologies for Indigenous applications she both acknowledges the legitimate successes Indigenous people have experienced working with GIS and she encourages an Indigenous cartographic literacy that recognizes competence of Indigenous cartographic knowledge systems.

Her research interests include cartographic map accuracy and place naming orthography \* working with the Hawaii Board of Geographic Names to include diacritical markings on all known Hawaiian place names currently in the U.S. Geologic Survey Geographic Names Information System database and used in their topographic maps; Geographies of Indigeniety \* striving to understand the way indigenous people related to the world they live in (both physically and metaphysically) and to recognize how these ways of life influence their relationship with others and shape their daily rapport with the world; Hawaiian Performance Cartographies \* immersed in appreciating, integrating, and replacing Hawaiian oral/performance cartographies in the form of place name narratives in our chants, songs, dances, storytelling, and proverbs.

*A sense of place must include, at the very least, knowledge of what is inviolate about the relationship between a people and the place they occupy, and certainly, too, how the destruction of this relationship, or the failure to attend to it, wounds the people...*

*- Barry Lopez*

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## **Hawaiian place names: mnemonic symbols in a Hawaiian performance cartography**

Hawaiians used place names as mnemonic symbols to encode their knowledge of the environment. Place names performed in daily rituals (i.e., stories, chant, song, and dance) were a conscious act of re-implacing genealogical connections, re-creating cultural landscapes, and re-generating cultural mores. Those performing these traditional practices deliberately incorporated familiarity, awareness, expertise, and fluency of the spatial relationships of their environments thereby communicating cartographically.

This presentation proposes to investigate Hawaiian 'performance cartography', a cartographic tradition cultivated in oral traditions still being practiced today despite the eroding presence of Hawaiian names and cartographic traditions on Western map products (i.e., U.S.G.S. topographic maps). In addition, it will also seek to understand the nature of Hawaiian cartography, its parallelism with Western cartography, its depiction, communication, display techniques.

The main goal of this research is to attain a better understanding of the development of Hawaiian cartography, its cognitive relationships with Hawaiian culture, livelihood, and the landscape, and offer a comparison of its scientific paradigms with those of Western cartography. The broader impacts of the results of this research is a cooperative effort with the U.S.G.S. to revive and preserve this important Hawaiian tradition by suggesting and replacing place names back to the Hawaiian tradition and adopt them into the GNIS, to educate mapping agencies as well as future Hawaiian generations the cognitive, cultural, spatial, cartographical implications of Hawaiian place names. Furthermore, it will raise awareness of indigenous cartography among practitioners of Western cartography.