

A Review of *Waves of Knowing: A Seascape Epistemology*

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“...as my body enters the sea, I enter an indigenous thought-world stimulated by cultural memory, imagination, perception, and understanding. Time becomes a condition of action in the ocean” (115).

Natural systems have always been models for our thinking. Their marginalization is a symptom of the dumbing-down of our society, which is expressed in standardization of schools, government and social systems modeled without respect for our natural world. In *Waves of Knowing: A Seascape Epistemology*, Karin Amimoto Ingersoll’s passion for surfing comes to life and helps detail an emerging Oceanic literacy (knowledge shaped by Island life-styles) discovered in her own embodied knowing. *Interconnection*, *flexibility*, and *movement* (10) act as descriptors of what could be referred to as a surf session: Karin Ingersoll’s writing splashes from context into text, and from essence into form.

Waves of Knowing is an intimate discussion of both external and internal realities found both in the politics of Hawai‘i and within the author’s perception. Ingersoll eschews a colonial-variety, empirical world (knowledge without the nuance of dreams or intuition) and instead explores a dynamic, place-based, historic memory empowerment which becomes its own *living archive* (34) and instructs Ingersoll’s own self-determination. The author uses her *na‘au mind*, her authentic voice, to honor Hawaiian names and *mo‘olelo* (stories) for all things *moana* (ocean). Ingersoll works to re-code this fluid sensibility back into our thinking so feeling and emotion can respectfully re-enter our cognitive reality, and *Kanaka time* (115) can once more be a privileged space.

Filled with self-noted false dualities in both her person and her writing, Ingersoll ultimately commits to wholeness. Knowing then becomes embodied sensations within cognition (113). For Ingersoll, the sea was not something to be “studied,” but to be engaged through her own metaphysical ontology, which she discovered in her own sensuality (86, 122). She introduces *he‘e nalu* (surfing), *ho‘okele* (way-finding), and *lawai‘a* (fishing) as tools to understand a seascape epistemology more interested in life, purpose, and joy than in commodification, extraction, and power.

Oceanic literature becomes a phenomenological tool for Kanaka, a political literacy that can reimagine possibilities through sensations felt not merely by the surfer as an isolated figure, but [by] all of the possibilities included in her image; the waves, the sand, the reef, the fish, ancestors and future generations. These sensations radiate out, reaching those watching on the shore, affecting and pulling them (even tourists)

into the experience. He'e nalu is an enactment by which energy is released, digested, and then rereleased in an incessant cycle of rejuvenation and (re)connection (77).

What I find interesting in this seascape epistemology is that it can indeed be a space for a (k)new (already known) model to enhance our thinking. Natural systems have always instructed us through their patterns, purpose, and inspiration. Perhaps, even surfing tourists will one day play a role in keeping pristine those very places they commodified. Here is my own understanding of Ingersoll's writings, along with the liquid source we know as *moana nui ākea*: ultimately, we are not racially defined, we are *culturally engaged*. Way-finding, fishing, and surfing remain disciplines of a consciousness that by its very nature transforms society because of its potential for personal awareness and collective devotion to our *beloved* natural world. Karin Amimoto Ingersoll details the occupied machination of Hawai'i (the American political and social climate dominating our Island society) and our minds in *Waves of Knowing: A Seascape Epistemology*, but I know she wants to be in the ocean. Maybe that is what she wants us all to do, and that—just that—will change *everything*.