Preface

The events that inspired portions of this book, and that will appear in the chapters ahead, took place in the latter half of 2019. From July to November of that year, I moved to and from different movements both to protect place—as in the movement to protect Mauna Kea in Hawai‘i and to protect Ihumātao in Aotearoa—and to stand for Indigenous persistence. This book was therefore written to highlight these few months and to capture how engagement in these various events and movements transformed the way I thought about—and continue to think about—the central concept of this work: Kahiki. I wanted to bring this concept, whose life often seems to speak more to the past than it does to the present, to the now so that I could argue for its continued relevance in Hawaiian lives today. It is not only a term that speaks to our origins or to our awareness of the outside world but also a concept that can carry new functions as we continue to persist as Indigenous peoples.

Producing this book in this way gave me the opportunity to put into action what I was writing about, or to think about the role, function, and importance of a concept such as Kahiki in contemporary times, spaces, and actions. It allowed me to actually use Kahiki in the ways I was proposing it be used: to understand and articulate what I was experiencing, to unpack what was unfolding around me, and to create and maintain spaces for continuing...
to do the hard work of addressing the present so that we can adjust our lives and realities to match the futures we dream of. While for me the events that allowed this learning occurred in the span of a few months, their significance will have life far beyond this time as they show us how we might use ancient concepts and continually make them new for changing times. My hope, therefore, is that anyone who engages with this work be able to pick it up, consider the ideas presented, and add to them, challenge them, change them, and give them new functions. This is how our concepts will survive, and this is how we, as Indigenous peoples, will persist.