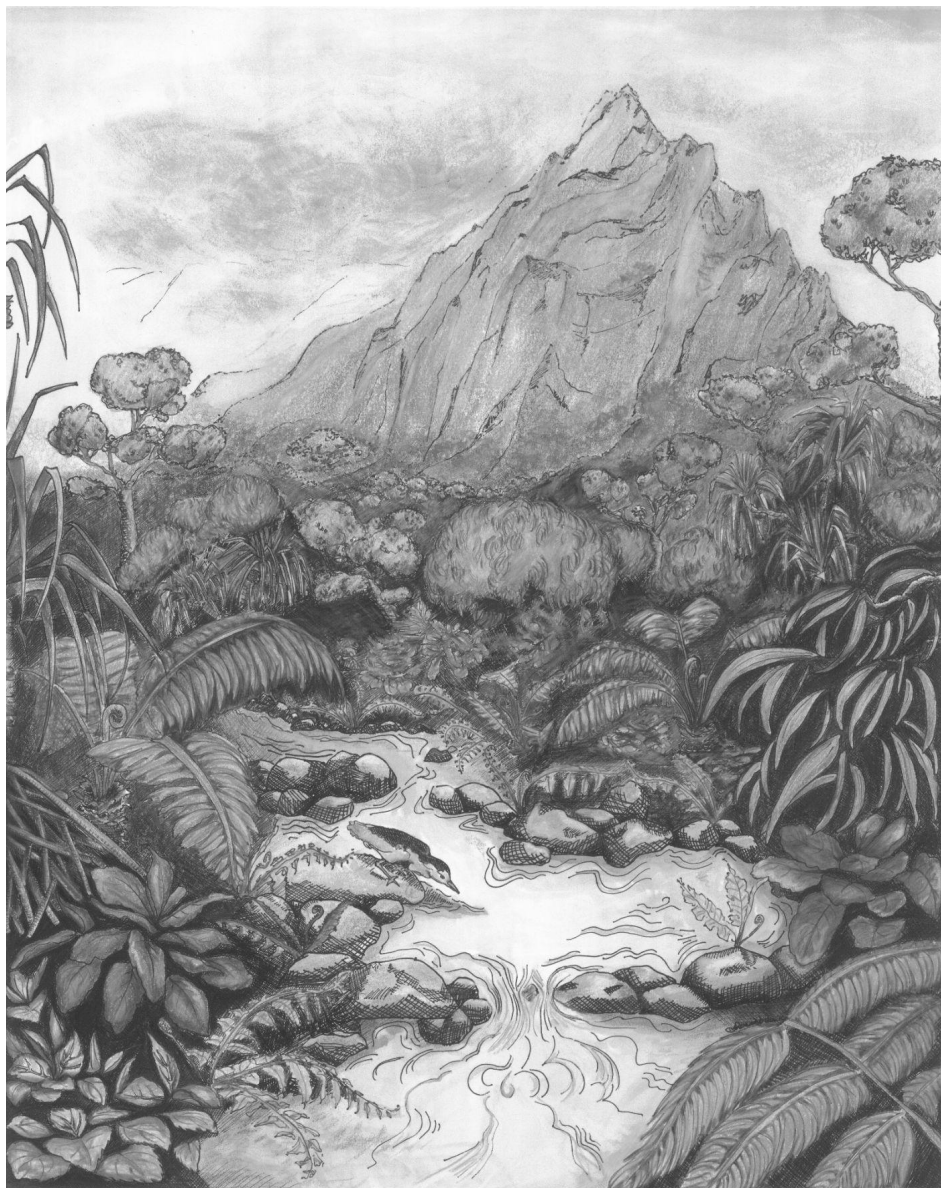


Understanding Mo'olelo



The Hawaiian language became a written language less than 200 years ago. That is not a long time. Prior to Western contact, the Hawaiian language was communicated only by word of mouth.

Cultures throughout the world use myths and legends to share values, preserve history, and explain the unknown. These Hawaiian stories (mo'o/e/oJ, information, and practices were retold and passed down from one generation to the next.

Between 1834 and the late 1940s, over 100 newspapers written in Hawaiian were published.

They provided traditional, cultural, historical, and political discussions. Today we rely on chant and hula, books, other print media, and the Internet for this information. This requires good literacy skills.

We learn from mo 'olelo how Hawaiians of old thought, lived, and expressed themselves. Mo'olelo provide us insight into their deepest beliefs, and in doing so, the Hawaiian culture lives on. As you read mo'olelo, think about your own cultures. What stories will you leave behind?