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Aloha Media: Negotiating Kānaka Maoli Representation And Identity In Television, Film, And Music

Colby Y. Miyose
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ALOHA MEDIA: NEGOTIATING KĀNAKA MAOLI REPRESENTATION AND
IDENTITY IN TELEVISION, FILM, AND MUSIC

A Dissertation Presented

by

COLBY Y. MIYOSE

Submitted to the Graduate School of the University of Massachusetts Amherst in partial
fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

May 2021

Department of Communication

Aloha Media:

Negotiating Kānaka Maoli Representation and Identity in Television, Film, and Music

A Dissertation Presented

By

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DEDICATION

To Kānaka Maoli, past, present, and future. May one day each and every one of us be able to stake claim to our own identity and be represented in the ways we want. We are stronger together. Imua! Let's move forward, let's move ahead!

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Graduate school is a journey, and like any other journey it is best experienced with others. The Doctoral degree program in the Department of Communication has taught me treasured research and writing skills, but more importantly it has taught me to stand firm to my convictions, my gender identity, and racial and ethnic diversity. These things create my positionality in academia, pedagogy, and life. In addition to these, one invaluable skill that the program has also given me is how to be myself, how to be simply human. In a realm that demands constant reading and writing, where your life is lived from one deadline to the next, it is easy to lose yourself in the busyness of life. My shortcomings were definitely shown, but I have also learned how to live with my shortcomings. I hold this dissertation near and dear to me, not just because of the time it took to write this but more importantly because of how closely this work connects to my Hawaiiana, (Hawaiian culture), and to the Kānaka Maoli (Native Hawaiians). Although trekking through a PhD is a rather self-driven experience, for me personally, it would be unimaginable to think about doing this alone, and so I would like to acknowledge those who have guided me on this journey.

First and foremost, I would like to thank Dr. Anne Ciecko, my advisor. Your encouragement given to me, from the very first day that I started as a PhD student, has done immeasurably more for my self-confidence as a scholar. At every step of this process, you have always provided invaluable feedback. I am truly thankful for having you as my advisor. To Dr. Leda Cooks, one of the most empathetic and compassionate people I know. The time and care you take in all of your help shows how seriously you take your role as a professor, but you don't do it because of your title, you do it because

you wish for others' success. To Dr. Henry Geddes. Your up-beat personality and enthusiasm, along with your brilliance in postcolonial theory has provided me with strong theoretical groundings for my scholarship. To Dr. Sonya Atalay. I am continually inspired by you because of your character as a scholar and a person. Before entering graduate school, I personally knew very few Indigenous scholars, so having met you, and now knowing you, gives me hope that Indigenous people can make it in academia.

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ABSTRACT

ALOHA MEDIA: NEGOTIATING KĀNAKA MAOLI REPRESENTATION AND IDENTITY IN TELEVISION, FILM, AND MUSIC

MAY 2021

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In her work on research and Indigenous communities, Māori scholar Linda Tuhiwai Smith (1999) points out that academic research is a site of contestation, struggle, and negotiation between the West and Indigenous people, and lays the groundwork for Indigenous researchers to write from a cultural perspective that serves their home community. Hawaiian cultural protocols serve as guidelines for my research. This dissertation, then, is simultaneously a critique of settler colonialism in Hawai‘i and on screen, and as Foucault (1980) puts it, “an insurrection of subjugated knowledges.” (p.81)—an act of decolonial, Indigenous, and anticolonial thought.

In this dissertation I argue that Kānaka Maoli speak in a variety of ways, using a variety of mediums, while still living in a colonized world. In Chapter 1, I provide a literature review of the continual oppression and colonization of Native Hawaiians, as well as past research of stereotypes about Hawaiians in media. In Chapter 2, I discuss my positionality as a Kānaka scholar, summarizing my theoretical and methodological approach to this project. After laying the framework for this dissertation, Chapters 3, 4,

and 5 are case studies of corporate produced and Indigenous produced mediated texts in television, film, and music.

Chapter 3 reviews how Hawaiians are portrayed in television by evaluating the renewed *Hawaii Five-0* series and Native owned ‘Ōiwi TV network. Film contexts are observed in Chapter 4, analyzing the Disney film *Moana* and the recently debuted film by Native Hawaiian filmmaker Chris Kahunahana, *Waikiki*. In Chapter 5, I analyze two songs written by Native Hawaiian artists, *Rise Up* by Ryan Hiraoka featuring Keala Kawaauhau and *#WeAreMaunaKea* by Sons of Yeshua. These songs were written in protest of building a telescope on the sacred mountain Mauna Kea. Finally, Chapter 6, summarizes and connects all case studies to the overarching idea of aloha, while also envisioning what works like this can do in transforming the academy and pedagogy.

Keywords: Kānaka Maoli representation, braided knowledges, textual analysis, Indigenous studies, postcolonial theory

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION AND LITERATURE REVIEW:

HAWAI‘I, HAWAIIANS, AND REPRESENTATION

Take a moment to ponder what you know about Hawai‘i,¹ maybe you’ve been there for vacation, or even watched a film where the setting took place in Hawai‘i. Think about what kinds of things come to mind when thinking about Hawai‘i. Does a paradise escape with girls in hula skirts, people surfing, people wearing Aloha shirts, and untouched lands come to mind? If you have only watched a movie about Hawai‘i, or visited for a short time, these kinds of things may be the first things to come to mind because of the way popular culture projects life in Hawai‘i. As someone who was born and raised in Hawai‘i, these depictions are humorous and flattering at times, but far from the way many Hawaiians² view or represent themselves.

For many years, Hawai‘i has been a favored destination of vacationers and adventurers, colonizers and usurpers, who venture there because of its beautiful landscape and strategic placement. However, there is another side of Hawai‘i that many do not see, and even fewer understand. When the sunscreen, ABC Stores, island tours, and lū‘aus³ are left behind, when the tides recede, one might find that there is a part of

¹ Although it is considered to be grammatically correct to spell it either Hawaii or Hawai‘i, in its Native language the okina, or glottal stop, between the two i’s changes the pronunciation of the word. Recent efforts are being made to legally change the spelling to Hawai‘i, so I will use this spelling to honor the traditional way it is spelled.

² The concept of Hawaiian race defined by blood quantum is in large measure a product of a Western practice that has adversely impacted Native Hawaiians. When I speak in this dissertation about Native Hawaiians, I attempt to avoid constructing them as a race to be identified by notions of biology. Thus, terms like Native Hawaiian, Hawaiian, and Kānaka Maoli are identifiers that I will use synonymously.

³ Keeping with the recent movement to resist making the Native tongue appear foreign in writing produced in and about a Native land and people, I have decided not to italicize Hawaiian words in the text.

Hawai‘i that longs for the return of its independence, its identity, and its culture. This Hawai‘i no longer wishes to see its people impoverished. It no longer wishes to be forgotten in history books and remembered only when it is time to plan a family trip over the summer. Though sparse in mainstream popular culture, depictions of Hawai‘i and Hawaiians pale in comparison to how Hawaiians themselves identify as by providing skewed portrayals of wealth, lifestyle, physical characteristics, intelligence, and exaggerates Hawaiian culture as a commodity. As a Native⁴ Hawaiian, I believe that it is time to shed light on the stereotypical ways that we are represented and inform others about initiatives that Hawaiians are currently undergoing to counter these damaging portrayals. The goal of this dissertation is to overlay and challenge the conception of being "Hawaiian" as told from a Eurocentric lens. This first chapter serves as a literature review, and aims at articulating two ideas: 1) the history of Hawai‘i and Native Hawaiians from first contact with the West till statehood; and 2) an overview of historical and contemporary stereotypes and countertypes of Kānaka Maoli (Native Hawaiians) within literature, film and other forms.

History of Hawai‘i: A Nation Within a Nation

Since first contact with Western societies, foreigners have constantly attempted to control who Hawaiian are, and what they should believe in. The maka‘ainana (people of the land), “believed that all living things had spirit and consciousness. The land was an ancestor; therefore, no living thing could be foreign. There is an extraordinary respect for

⁴ Following the practice initiated by Trask (1999), I will capitalize Native when referring to the people who are Indigenous to Hawai‘i. Trask recalls, “my usage is political on a geographic level we are Native to Hawai‘i; on an ideological level we are neither Western nor Eastern but Native Pacific Islanders; and on a cultural level we are not transplants who are “new” to Hawai‘i but an ancient people who have learned to live in and without place and whose culture is the least destructive and the most beneficial to the land (p. 7)

life of the seas, the heavens and the earth” (Trask, 1999, p. 6). Because of this belief, all things of life, land, and sea lived in a balance of peace and harmony. When James Cook, Captain of the British Navy ships Resolution and Discovery, arrived in Hawai‘i in 1778, he brought not only the ways of the Western world, including politics and Christianity, but also diseases that would eventually cause the “collapse of the population” (Puhipau, 1993, p. 6). Cook initiated contact between the Western world and the Hawaiian Islands. By 1887, Hawai‘i had treaties with various countries, including Russia, Italy, England, and the United States. “Hawai‘i was recognized in the international community as a sovereign nation” (Laenui, 1993, p. 80). The influx of many different cultures brought people with skills of great diversity to Hawai‘i to the point where “Hawai‘i had a literacy rate that was among the highest in the world. It had telephones and electricity built into its governing palace Iolani, before the White House had such technology” (Laenui, 1993, p. 83).

In 1820 the first missionaries appeared in Hawai‘i. The Hawaiians accepted them and embraced their new ideas. As a result of this situation, the missionaries had a tremendous influence over the Hawaiians (Lili‘uokalani, 1964). The missionaries did not believe in dancing or celebrating life as the Hawaiians did. Their goal was to civilize those “naked savages,” as they would scourge, “you must forget your dances and traditions. The reason you are dying is because you do not believe in Jehovah” (Puhipau, 1993, p. 6). The Hawaiians believed in what they were saying because their people were dying of mysterious causes unknown to them but were really caused by diseases brought by foreigners. Those deaths led them to believe what the Calvinists were preaching. In an attempt to save their rapidly declining population, many Hawaiians began to convert

(Puhipau, 1993).

As time went by, the missionaries moved from religion to control over politics by forming a Missionary Party. Its members consisted of the children of missionaries who had left their positions in the church and became growers and sellers of sugar. The Missionary Party altered land relationships, as they were known for controlling the land they used for sugar (Laenui, 1993). Traditionally, land was ruled by the Ali'i (chief) of that particular island. The chief allotted the use of the land to their sub-chiefs. In turn, the sub-chiefs allocated the use of the land to those who supported them (Laenui, 1993). In 1845, the Board of Land Commissions was created. Under constant pressure from the missionaries, in 1848, the chiefs reluctantly agreed to sell the land, bringing the inception of what is historically called the Māhele (land division) (Puhipau, 1993). This action was against Hawaiian tradition because land, air, and water were to be used by all and not owned by a few. The missionaries threatened that, if the Hawaiians did not own the land, they would forfeit it according to Western land tenure (Puhipau, 1993). The missionaries and foreigners alike purchased vast tracts of land on which they prospered exponentially from sugar plantations. Only ten percent of the Indigenous⁵ people were allocated land awards averaging about three acres per person (Puhipau, 1993). By staking claim to land this action stripped away one of the Natives most precious beliefs of being in connection to, and in relationship with, the 'āina (land).

The missionary plantation owners paid wages that were unacceptable to Hawaiians, so they had to import laborers from other countries. These laborers performed

⁵ As a sign of respect and solidarity, I capitalize the word Indigenous to acknowledge this community's legitimacy and to identify with the community.

the grueling tasks required to maintain a sugar plantation for meager plantation wages (Laenui, 1993). The Missionary Party had successfully gained control of both the land and affordable labor, all that was left was a tariff free market to export their sugar, and the United States was geographically closer to Hawai‘i than any other market (Laenui, 1993). The United States military yearned for naval presence in Pacific waters, and in order to achieve this goal offered the Missionary Party two options: reciprocity or annexation. With a reciprocity agreement, sugar would be imported duty free and exports from the United States into Hawai‘i would also be duty free. Annexation by the United States had the optimum advantage because Hawaiian sugar would be considered a domestic product (Laenui, 1993). In 1869, the new United States Minister to Hawai‘i, Henry Pierce, with pressure from White sugar planters, pushed for the cession of Pu‘uloa (Pearl River Lagoon to foreigners), now known as Pearl Harbor, for a naval station in exchange for reciprocity.⁶ “The United States wanted more than just an exchange of trade rights. It wanted sovereignty over Pearl Harbor in order to extend its commercial and military arm into the Pacific” (Laenui, 1993, p. 84). Under the reign of King Kalakaua, in 1875, a Reciprocity Treaty finally became reality in order to assist the sugar industry. Sugar exports to the U.S. soared, and of 32 plantations 25 were owned by Americans (Trask, 1999).

As American presence grew and became more powerful, a league consisting of

⁶ After the Hawaiian Kingdom was overthrown in 1893, the U.S. Navy took control of Pu‘uloa in 1899, turning it into Pearl Harbor. Pearl Harbor was bombed by the Japanese in 1941 which initiated martial law in the islands. For Kanaka Maoli, Pearl Harbor serves as an enduring reminder of the multiple layers of loss—loss of kingdom, of sovereignty, of land and ocean, of status as a people.

400 powerful haole⁷ businessmen and politicians was formed. They referred to themselves as the “Hawaiian League” (Puhipau, 1993). Within the “Hawaiian League” was a subgroup, the Honolulu Rifles, an all haole annexation club who formulated and declared a new constitution that was acceptable to their terms (Puhipau, 1993; Trask, 1999). The members of the League forced King Kalakaua, at gunpoint, to sign their new constitution. With one signature, King Kalakaua essentially abdicated his power to rule. This document came to be known as the “Bayonet Constitution” because of the fashion in which it was executed (Puhipau, 1993). This constitution allowed all foreigners the right to vote if they had money. And because of the property qualification for voting, it took power away from the common Hawaiian, who was generally landless, who was generally without money, and who could not meet the property qualifications (Puhipau, 1993). Having lost everything that he tried to advocate for the Hawaiian people, Kalakaua died unfulfilled, in San Francisco in 1891. His sister, Lili’uokalani, became Queen and the last ruling ali’i (chief).

The Hawaiian people wanted back the control of their government and Lili’uokalani wanted to give to her people a new constitution. But it was her actions that actually triggered the overthrow, because of the threat that she posed to the relationship between Hawai’i landowners and the United States. Her own ministry betrayed her when she requested a vote for the new constitution. Lili’uokalani’s cabinet, aware of the fact that the foreigners possessed an abundant amount of power, denied her request for the vote. Their fear of an uprising stopped her cabinet from signing the new constitution

⁷ The term haole originally translated as being a foreigner, but since the late 1880s became to be loosely used to describe White Americans.

(Puhipau, 1993). In 1889, John L. Stevens became the United States Minister to Hawai‘i (Laenui, 1993). To the public, Stevens’ duty was to ensure that agreements were being honored between the Kingdom of Hawai‘i and the American government. Privately, Stevens was tasked with another operative in being a spy whose mission was to provoke the annexation of Hawai‘i to the United States (Laenui, 1993; Puhipau, 1993). “Basically, Stevens saw it almost as a holy mission to see Hawai‘i safely encircled by American arms” (Puhipau, 1993, p. 15).

In January of 1893, with the aid of Minister John Stevens, the haole businessmen formed the “Committee of Safety.” The committee formed immediately following the Queen’s request for the new constitution. The purpose of this committee was military in nature. Plans for the overthrow were complete with Sanford B. Dole accepting the position of President of the Provisional Government (Puhipau, 1993). With much intimidation by an occupying U.S. military, both on land and at sea, and to put a stop to any bloodshed, “Lili‘uokalani ceded her authority, not to the provisional government, but to the United States on January 17, 1893” (Trask, 1999, pp. 14).

On February 1, 1893, Stevens raised the American flag. On March 4, 1893, newly inaugurated President Grover Cleveland withdrew the annexation treaty from Congress. Cleveland sent commissioner James Blount to Hawai‘i to investigate the situation. Blount lowered the American flag, which flew over Hawai‘i’s government building. When he returned to Washington in August, Blount’s report made clear to the President that the events had amounted to an overt overthrow of the Hawaiian government, an overthrow complete with conspiracy between the missionaries and Minister Stevens. Cleveland vowed he would never go through with the annexation process during his term in office.

“Blount's report justly became known among Hawaiians as the single most damaging document against the United States, the missionary descendants, and the arrogant Mr. Stevens” (Trask, 1999, pp. 18). However, this optimism for sovereignty became short lived as Cleveland only served four years as President. William McKinley was elected to be the succeeding President and the annexation Hawai‘i became official in 1898 (Laenui, 1993).

Laenui (1993) explains the strategic degradation of the Hawaiian culture between annexation and statehood. Congress, through an act known as the Hawaiian Homes Commission Act, declared that Native Hawaiians with at least 50 percent aboriginal blood were entitled to special land privileges. Laenui (1993) went on to say that “Hawaiians were no longer Hawaiians, but Americans. The term Hawaiian was redefined as a racial rather than a national term” (p. 90). Their language, spiritual laws, cultural customs, and religious beliefs were all exchanged for the American way. “Hawai‘i, that melting pot of cultures, races, languages and lore, changed from a reality to an advertising slogan for politicians and merchants” (Laenui, 1993, p. 92). During this time the military staked its Pacific claims. The Navy transformed Pearl Harbor into a port and the island of Kaho‘olawe as a target range (Laenui, 1993). In 1959, the question to determine Hawai‘i’s statehood was posed to the people of the territory and the issue went to a vote. Any American who resided in Hawai‘i for one year was eligible to vote. On August 21, 1959, Hawai‘i became the United States’ 50th state with an overwhelming “yes” response (Trask, 1999).

The aftereffects of annexation and colonization have had depressing consequences for my people. Before contact with the West in 1778, an estimated one

million Native Hawaiians lived in the Hawaiian archipelago. By 1892 this number had diminished to 40,000 (Dudley & Agard, 1993). In 1990 there were a mere 8,244 full-blooded Native Hawaiians left, 992,000 less people than before Western contact, a decrease of more than 99 percent (Dudley & Agard, 1993). Declining numbers of the Native Hawaiian population threatens the legacy of Hawaiian identity, culture, and livelihood. This dismal history, coupled with the persistence of Western settler colonization in the State of Hawai‘i today, has led to the creation of the Hawaiian Sovereignty Movement, a collection of land struggles, peoples’ initiatives, and grassroots organizations in the mid-1970s that still remains true to its cause present-day. Hawaiian social movements have been, at their core, about protecting and energizing ‘Ōiwi (Hawaiian tradition) ways of life: growing and eating traditional foods, speaking the Native language, renewing relationships through ceremonies and chanting, making collective decisions, and simply remaining on the land that their ancestors tended (Goodyear-Ka’opua, 2014).

Since that day in January 1893 when the Queen ceded her authority, Hawaiians have initiated in numerous social movements to protect their land rights and cultural heritage, but initiatives really began to strengthen and pick up in the 1970s, during what is considered the Hawaiian renaissance. An eviction struggle sparked the Hawaiian sovereignty movement in 1970. The event occurred in the Kalama Valley, on the Island of Oahu, on the land of the largest private landowner in the state, Bishop Estate. The estate owners evicted Native farmers from the land so that Kaiser-Aetna Corporation could build an upper income residential development. Even though Kokua Hawai‘i, the organization leading the fight against the use of Native land for commercial gain, lost this

battle, the support for this resistance was phenomenal (Trask, 1999). This event inspired others in the fight for sovereignty. By the late 1970s and early 1980s many Hawaiian movement leaders that emerged from earlier land struggles and cultural revitalization initiatives positioned themselves between two ideas of what sovereignty would look like. One notion sought some measure of justice within existing structures of the United States government, this is known as the nation-within-a-nation approach (Goodyear-Ka'opua, 2014). This view seeks federal recognition from the U.S. as a domestic-dependent and ethnically defined people. It encompasses ideas of ethnogenesis, sociogenesis, and hybridity, in which this project hopes to further explore in terms of cultural representation. The other notion of sovereignty fundamentally questions U.S. authority, and emphasizes the independence of Hawai'i as its own country but is the least popular of the two ideas (Goodyear-Ka'opua, 2014).

As Goodyear-Ka'opua (2014), Associate Professor of Political Science at the University of Hawai'i at Manoa asserts:

These Hawaiian movements for life, land, and sovereignty changed the face of contemporary Hawai'i. Through battles waged in courtrooms, on the street, at the capitol building, in front of landowners' and developers' homes and offices, on bombed-out sacred lands, in classrooms and from tents on the beaches, Kānaka Maoli (Native people) pushed (and continue to push) against the ongoing forces of U.S. occupation and settler colonialism that still work to eliminate or assimilate us. (p. 1).

The commercialization and orientalization of Hawai'i has drastically increased the cost of living for all Hawai'i residents, but most pointedly for Hawaiians. According to the 2011 census, Hawai'i was home to the highest percentage of millionaires in the nation, and currently stands as one of the top three most expensive states in the country (Goodyear-Ka'opua, 2014). Native Hawaiian families in Hawai'i have both the lowest

mean family income and per capita income of all major ethnic groups. Over 15 percent of Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders live in poverty when compared to the national average of 9.8 percent (Kana'iaupuni, Malone & Ishibashi, 2005). Because of their low wages and the high cost of living, many Kānaka Maoli cannot afford to live in the islands, and are forced to move to more affordable areas, creating a Hawaiian diaspora. Hawaiians comprise about 23% of the population in Hawai'i, while about 45% of Native Hawaiians reside in the continental U.S. or Alaska. (Braun & LaCounte, 2015).

In terms of education, Native Hawaiians are much less likely to receive a four-year college education compared to the national average (9 percent versus 28 percent) (Kana'iaupuni, Malone & Ishibashi, 2005). This statistic is comparable with looking at only Hawai'i residents. Nearly 30% of the total population in Hawai'i over the age of twenty-five hold a bachelor's degree or higher, while only 15% of Native Hawaiians in the same age group hold a bachelor's degree or higher. Healthwise, Kānaka Maoli life expectancy is significantly shorter, and their prevalence of several chronic diseases significantly higher than White, and Asian populations living in Hawai'i (Wu et al., 2017). The result of long-term historical discrimination and oppression can be a leading factor in the staunch underrepresentation and inequitable treatment of Kānaka Maoli. This toxic relationship by Hawaiians with Westerners is what fuels Natives to resist and protest.

Because of various Hawaiian protest movements from the 1970s till today, water in Hawai'i is protected as a public trust. Also, cultural practitioners can continue to access natural resources and sacred sites (Goodyear-Ka'opua, 2014). Native Hawaiians have also faced tremendous loss and challenges: highways have been built over burials

and religious temples; families have been evicted from their ancestral homeland; Hawaiians are continually struggling to preserve their language and culture in the public school system; and most importantly, we have not yet been recognized as an independent people that provides us similar rights to Native Americans by the federal government (Goodyear-Ka'opua, 2014). These reasons alone inspire Hawaiians to continue to fight, not just for their own self-identity, but also for the future of the next generation of young Hawaiians who will have to face their own share of persecution and prejudice. One aspect of grave importance to Native Hawaiians is who has the privilege and the right to disseminate what a "Hawaiian" looks like. Thus, the struggle for proper representation is, in its own regard, also a part of the sovereignty movement.

Historical and Contemporary Representations of Hawai'i and Hawaiians

As a term, representation has typically been defined as referring to signs, symbols, images, portrayals, depictions, likenesses, and substitutions (D'Acci, 2004). Scholars tend to think of representation as a primary function that cultural artifacts perform. I would like to think of representations as human constructs and as social representations. Speaking of them as human constructs emphasizes that representations are produced by human imagination—that representations are mediations that are human interpretations. This way of thinking of representation emphasizes that they are distinct from reality. Representations in this regard, "are spoken of as social representations to underscore the fact that they don't spring up in isolated humans minds, but rather they come into being, exist, and do their work in the social realm, in the realm of particular, empirical, human societies" (D'Acci, 2004, p. 375). When representations are seen in cultural artifacts, involving spheres such as television, film, literature, art, and so forth,

these are often referred to as cultural representations. These representations exist and do their work in the cultural realm. Though both social and cultural representations rely on each other, the differentiation between the two is that cultural representations usually serve to reinforce the more primary social representations (D'Acci, 2004). Though, certainly, one could challenge the other, or they could potentially challenge each other.

We might ponder over the idea that cultural artifacts “reflect” society, or hold a mirror up to reality, but I would argue that this statement is false. First, texts cannot hold a mirror up to reality or nature because nature is not simply waiting out there to be reflected, it is not simply knowable, it is already humanly and socially constructed. Second, cultural artifacts cannot reflect society because texts themselves (or those creating the text) are utterly selective about what it chooses to represent and how (D'Acci, 2004). With this train of thought, context, like where the representation is produced, who produces it, and so forth, is of utter importance. Thus, reality/society is not reflected *per se*, but can be refracted.

Past literature has shown that media continue to underrepresent, misrepresent, and skew representation of particular minorities, such as Asian Americans, Blacks, Hispanics, Native Americans, and Native Hawaiians (Kopacz & Lawton, 2011; Larson, 2002; Merskin, 1998; Tan, Fujioka, & Lucht, 1997). When depictions are present, they often show native peoples through a narrow range of stereotypes that are considered to be subaltern (Poindexter et al., 2003). Negative depictions can be harmful to minorities, as Enteman (2011) contends, “stereotypes impose a rigid mold on the subject and encourage repeat use without revision...Stereotypes are ultimately used to stigmatize” (p. 20). Stereotyping converts real persons into artificial persons. Such stereotypes in media may

contribute to discrimination of Native Hawaiians and other minorities (Gilliam, 1999; Kopacz & Lawton, 2011; Parker, 2016; Tan, Fujioka, & Lucht, 1997). In typecasting groups, people treat others that are different from themselves with fixed proxies. In short, we deny them their humanity. Sniderman and Hagendoorn (2007) argue:

Prejudice's power partly comes from its ability to propel people to action; partly from its capacity to coordinate an image of the "other." Individuals who make up the "other" recede as individuals; what remains is an image of a group... Seeing another as the "other" minimizes awareness of difference among them and maximizes perceptions of difference between "them" and "us." (p. 44)

Prejudice and discrimination magnify the dangers of stereotyping, in that audiences tend to use these slanted generalizations of a group to form their knowledge of race.

Another consequence of negative portrayals of race in media is that people learn social, gender, race, and class roles from mass media portrayals that aid them in defining their own personal identity (Riffe, 2009). By comparing themselves with characters in media content, and modeling mediated behaviors and attitudes, individuals learn to become who they want to be, as well as what is deemed acceptable by society. The media culture has emerged to assist people in producing what constitutes their everyday lives. This shapes their political views and social behavior and provides them with the materials to forge their own identity (Strelitz, 2008). Hence, a majority of media creates a dialectical relationship between culture as a lived experience and culture as a representation (Strelitz, 2008). What I would like to propose is a more dialogical approach, where both media and culture have the possibility of having both negative and positive depictions, in which a negotiation between the two occurs to create some sort of representation.

Since contact with the first explorers to Hawai'i, Western accounts of Hawaiians

have written that Hawaiians are soft and inviting—as having a condition of benevolence. Earliest ship log accounts by Captain Cook and Captain James King (1785) described the implicit connection of benevolent “Hawaiianess” to its natural surroundings:

The civilities of this society were not, however confined to mere ceremony and parade. Our party on shore received from them, every day, a constant supply of hogs and vegetables, and several canoes loaded with provisions were sent to the ships with the same punctuality. No return was ever demanded...Three things made them our fast friends. Their own good-natured benevolence disposition, gentle treatment on our part, and the dread of our firearms. (Cook & King, 1785, p. 57)

This sense of “Hawaiianess at heart” is what Halualani (2002) calls “normative benevolence,” a cultural value that is inherent in the Hawaiian tradition. The notion that Hawaiians are generous has been influenced by the philosophical concepts of aloha (sharing, exchange in reciprocity) and ohana (family, kinship, and interdependence). Though normative benevolence portrays Hawai‘i and its Natives as utopic, it undermines the real definition of aloha. Yes, aloha is reciprocity and generosity amongst people, but it also has many other meanings. Aloha represented a different social relation between Hawaiians of different status and positions. Between ali‘i (chiefs) and commoners, aloha captured the nature of this difference in positions. The maka‘āinana (common people of Hawai‘i) would gaze upon and adore their chief, and herein aloha symbolized the social obligation to those who were in higher status (Halualani, 2002; Trask, 1999). Benevolence can be seen in this interaction, but so can social responsibility, respect, and loyalty to leaders, ideas that are severed by historical Western depictions of Hawaiians. Thus, the ideas of aloha, Hawaiianess at heart, and normative benevolence from historical accounts are distorted, and stem from hegemonic political relationships of power rather than a cultural essence of Hawaiianess. As Halualani (2002) contends,

historically representing Hawaiians as naturally benevolent and willing to share everything, such as their land and culture, extends this notion that non-Hawaiians can have a share of Hawai'i.

In spite of the Hawaiian as benevolent, Hawaiians were also historically depicted as savage. The Kanaka Maoli (Hawaiian people) were imagined as ready to strike and pounce in a frenzy (Kuykendall, 1938). Upon the arrival of Western ships, besides being generous, Hawaiians are constructed within archives as having a dangerous and violent propensity for Western economic goods. They were depicted as Natives that “would kill just to have the new, shiny trinkets” (Halualani, 2002, p. 27). As Trask (1999) puts it, Eurocentric writings on Hawaiians displayed them as thieves and savages who regularly practiced infanticide and who, in contrast to the civilized Whites, preferred lewd dancing to doing work. This can be observed in the struggle that killed Captain Cook, as historian Gavan Daws (1968) recounts of Cook's encounters:

One thing more than most gave Cook trouble with Polynesians—they were thieves, and in this then Hawaiians of Kauai were like the rest. As soon as they came aboard the Resolution (Cook's ship), even before the strangeness of the encounter died away, they began to pick things up with the idea of keeping them. (Daws, p. 3)

Accounts construct Hawaiians as not only murderers but doing so for the express purposes of gaining Western materials. As McClintock (2015) asserts, representing Native's fetish for all things Western also shows the power dynamics between the two groups, displaying the idea that Western ideas and goods were superior to the Indigenous world. “To want and lust for Western items was to want to be like them; to illustrate human tendency for Western rationality and commodification” (McClintock, 2015, p. 62).

Thus, Hawaiians were historically depicted as benevolent and savage at the same time, having two polar opposite representations, yet not being portrayed as human. Often, groups are dehumanized in order to be considered as the “other.” They are seen as being opposite or inferior (Steuter & Wills, 2011). “Dehumanizing metaphors tell us persistent stories about the animal, diseased, or indistinguishably and threateningly conglomerate nature of our enemies to ensure that we don’t see them as fully human” (Steuter & Wills, 2011, p. 44). Representing the other as subhuman offers people a way of dealing with the other group. If they are portrayed as being savages, people then have greater justification to control them, or “fix them.” As Steuter and Wills (2011) argue, dehumanization “goes beyond simple stereotype and stigma... it strips away humanity through the consistency of its metaphoric links with the bestial, the verminous and the microscopic” (p. 44). They are in fact viewed as the gazed upon other—an “object” of affection. It is when Hawaiians have the means and control over how they are represented that they can own their own identity, instead of being branded one. This project aims at observing how Hawaiians do so with media artifacts, utilizing the postcolonial ideas of hybridity and strategic essentialism.

As a term, hybridity describes how one identifies themselves through the negotiation of embracing otherness and coloniality. Bhabha (2012) contends that all forms of culture are continually in a process of hybridity. Through this idea comes the key concept of mimicry as a way of resistance against the colonizer’s forced identity, which is illustrated in two ways: First, the colonized subject is empowered to return the colonizer’s gaze by using narratives created from Western culture and interpreting them in ways other than were originally intended by the colonizer; second, the subject who

mimics representations can also refuse to return the colonizer's gaze, which Bhabha suggests, destabilizes colonial authority just as effectively in a different way (Bhabha, 1994). Oftentimes hybridity emerges out of the attempt to reconvert a dominating legacy in order to reinsert it into new conditions. Hybridizing the hegemonic and the popular, the local, the national, and the transnational "challenges binary divisions between private and public, past and present, psychological and social, and recognizes the complex intertwining that take place 'in between'" (Canclini, 1995, p. 5). Indigenous movements, or even just individuals, that are able to reshape their identity and goals within various forms of media, utilizing what has been enforced on them, then go through a process of hybridization. This project aims then, not to study hybridity, but Native Hawaiians' process of hybridization. One tactic utilized in hybridization is strategic essentialism. Termed by Spivak, strategic essentialism is the act of divided groups mobilizing on the basis of sharing a common goal (Moore-Gilbert, 1997). It becomes sometimes advantageous for groups to essentialize and bring to the forefront their collective group identity in order to gain entrance and legitimacy into the public sphere.

With the advent of television and other media forms, an extension of the two historical depictions can be viewed in contemporary manifestations. Corporations utilize aloha as a guise for selling "authentic" Hawaiiana (Hawaiian culture). Today, like its historical account, aloha is far removed from the Hawaiian cultural context. As Wood (1999) contends, "the Hawaiian values of generosity and love such as aloha were misappropriated to make it seem as if they are particularly suited to the visitor industry" (p. 49). Most people who have never been to Hawai'i learn about it from movies and television constituting what Laura Mulvey (1975) calls "an advanced representational

system” (p. 7). Films produce multilayered representations that seem to most to mirror reality. Contemporary Native Hawaiian depictions can be assembled into four categories: (a) the primitive other; (b) the sexualized other; (c) the benevolent other; and (d) the buffoonish other.

Most Indigenous people face hardship in deconstructing the narratives being told about them, sold about them, or representing them in media. Portraying Native Hawaiians as idealized primitives suggests that Hawaiians are on the margins of history, not belonging to the modern world. Wood’s (1999) analysis of films set in Hawai‘i between 1900-1940, contends that in every film evaluated, Hawaiians were seen as people of the past and Westerners were people of the present and the future. “Hawaiians in films, like those early modern women and children, are constructed as people who lack access to the language which defines, delimits and locates power” (Wood, 1999, p. 106). In over fifty movies filmed in Hawai‘i or pertaining to Hawai‘i between 1920 and 1939, all showcased the idea that Native Hawaiians were primitive people (Desmond, 1999). Okihiro (2008) notes, “the primal, fertile earth frees White men from the confines of modernity and allows them to shed social inhibitions such as nudity and interracial sex” (p. 45-46). Filmmakers produced materials that disguise the islands and embellish residents as primordial, fertile, and sexual.

Not only are Hawaiians viewed as stuck in the past, but they are also displayed in media as savages. They are repeatedly idealized in American films as a threat to Euroamericans (Wood, 1999). In these films, a dichotomy between nature loving savages and Western city-mindedness is portrayed. In some situations, the Mainland (continental 48 states) visitor is at odds with their own identity and being lost in new exotic lands they

diverge to “savage” behavior, or “go Native.” Take Chadwick, played by Elvis Presley, in *Blue Hawai‘i* (Norman Taurog, 1961). In *Blue Hawai‘i*, Chadwick flirts with the danger of going Native and gratifying his various “savage” lusts. He refuses to embrace the conventional life of his Euroamerican parents. Chadwick is tempted by the “dangerous” Native Hawaiian culture to abandon working at his father’s company to dawdle with surfing, singing, dancing, feasting, and having multiple sexual encounters with Hawaiian women. The primitive savage is not only posed as a direct threat to Westerners but can be a threat to Western identity by having a persuasive demeanor. Because colonizing outsiders, like Chadwick, feel a desire to “go native” and become like those they are colonizing, their films help justify policies that encourage the domestication of the Hawaiian culture (Wood, 1999). As Spurr (1993) asserts, “the supposed danger of the European’s degeneration in the presence of the primitive becomes both the source and the pretext for an obsessive reprehension of the ‘other’” (p. 81-82). Though Chadwick toyed with the idea of going Native, he resolves this conflict in the conclusion of the film by reaffirming the superiority of the dominant Western culture within which he was born.

Hawai‘i has been labeled as a White man’s paradise in which “dark women await the embrace of heterosexual men, especially White men from the continental United States” (Okihiro, 2008, p. 60). Native Hawaiian women are presented as objects that are eager to bestow their favors in a narrative that showcases these ideas as being commonplace. Further, no matter what gender they identify as, Hawaiians are showcased in a sexualized manner, forcing them to be looked upon from a heterosexual male perspective (Wood, 1999). A prime example of the sexualized representation of

Hawaiians, especially Native Hawaiian women, is the hula girl. Desmond (1999)

explores the hula girl image explaining:

Hula girl images on postcards and in photographs in this period thus ran the gamut from beautiful to alluring, to sexual, to pornographic. But they all presented a gendered and sexualized image of the Native. The Polynesian looking “hula girl” during this period is the dominant signifier of Hawai‘i – a feminized site of nature and romance. (p. 48)

The sexualized hula girl has become a dominant figure of Hawai‘i. Mulvey (1975)

provides three descriptor gazes or views:

There are three different looks associated with cinema (and other artifacts): that of the camera as it records the profilmic event, that of the audience as it watches the final product, and that of the characters as they look at each other within the film illusion. The conventions of the narrative film deny the first two and subordinate them to the third, the conscious aim being always to eliminate intrusive camera presence and prevent a distancing awareness in the audience. (p. 2)

Based on this idea, the image of the hula girl as a dominant figure means that the camera watches Native Hawaiian women, men in the films watch Native Hawaiian women, and men in theaters are expected to be watching Native Hawaiian women as well. The spectacle of the hula girl can be thought of, then, as operating like a strip tease of sorts. Inviting predominately male audiences to identify with the male protagonist in looking at and desiring women who will be expected to disrobe.

The sexualization of Hawaiian women is not limited to postcards and images. A content analysis of sixty-six movies made in Hawai‘i or about Hawai‘i between 1898 and 1939 found that all films either displayed sexualized women, exotic landscapes, or both (Okihiro, 2008). The Islands as a whole tend to have an implication of being exotic, mysterious, and mystical, descriptors that could be assumed as being feminine.

Williamson (1986) contends, “one of the most important aspects of femininity in mass culture is not what they reveal, but what they conceal. If ‘woman’ means home, love, and

sex, what ‘woman’ does not mean, in general currency, is work, class, and politics” (p. 99). The Islands as a place are presented in film and media as soft, feminine, a welcoming place that is waiting and receptive (Wood, 1999). Places that are depicted as being feminine also tend to be portrayed as weak and in need of aid by a larger, more advanced, and more powerful entity.

Tourism in Hawai‘i is driven by the market philosophy of aloha, the seemingly cultural value that Hawaiians are naturally benevolent, inclusive, and generous. Reproduced in popular culture discourse and tourism promotions, the aloha of Hawai‘i is staged as both a consumer guarantee and a vacation norm (Halualani, 2002). “The term aloha and its kindred aloha spirit were fundamental marketing ploys in tourist advertisements of Hawai‘i in the islands and abroad in the 1930s” (Trask, 1999, p. 162). These marketing schemes led to Hawaiians being depicted as loving and warm individuals that wear aloha attire. Hughes (2017) contends, “the ‘aloha spirit’ sold by the tourist industry since the 1930s has camouflaged the colonial sale of Native Hawaiian culture, land and language under the rhetoric of multicultural harmony” (p. 286).

Halualani (2002) argues, that the construction of “normative benevolence” has become popularized in modern Hawai‘i as a reconfigured articulation of “Hawaiianess at heart” known today as the aloha spirit. “Travel discourses and popular discourses (commercials, televisual and filmic texts, T-shirts, and souvenir items) feature the unconditional love and naturalized benevolence of Hawaiians, while excising out any reference of symbols to the earlier Hawaiian identity aspects based on war and political confrontation” (Halualani, 2002, p. 193). Focusing on the aloha spirit deepens the liberalization of being Native and reifies the representations of Hawaiians as generous

and warm. This in turn, silences or strongly refutes Native Hawaiian's demands of sovereignty and land preservation.

Recent television and film depict Native Hawaiians as ignorant or unintelligent—as buffoonish. The romantic comedy *50 First Dates* (Peter Segal, 2004) is an excellent example. Set in Oahu, Lucy Whitmore (Drew Barrymore), who suffers from severe short-term memory loss and amnesia, is wooed anew daily by a persistent stud and marine biologist Henry Roth (Adam Sandler). It's questioned why Hawai'i was even chosen as an environment for this plot, where it could have been set anywhere (Konzett, 2017). The reality of people's lives on Oahu is not shown on screen, and Hawaiian culture is ridiculed by the minstrel performance of Rob Schneider as Ula, a marijuana smoking, uneducated, pidgin⁸ talking, lazy Hawaiian. He is shown as having a protruding belly, shark scar, and glass eye, and is married to an “unattractive” Native woman to whom he has five children with. Konzett (2017) argues, “in the tradition of the plantation genre, playful and beloved Native children and adults' humor and serve the White cast” (p. 195). Along with Ula, the staff of the restaurant, which Lucy spends her mornings, are also seen as servants to White customers, while only having humorous lines that portray them as ignorant, unintelligent, and buffoonish.

Television also represents Hawaiians as being violent and immoral. Take *Dog the Bounty Hunter* (2004-2012) for example. Shot and set in Hawai'i, locals are turned in to bounty money, or seen as mere commodities. They are portrayed as being violent and dangerous people, that make wrong decisions, showcasing that the only things that the

⁸ Pidgin is a creole language based in part on English, spoken by many residents of Hawai'i. Although English and Hawaiian are the co-official languages of the state, Hawaiian Pidgin is used by many Hawai'i residents in everyday casual conversations.

Native Hawaiian knows how to do is be violent and consume drugs (Konzett, 2017). In the end of each episode, the criminal has a “coming to God” conversation with Dog, insinuating that they need the help of White people in order to change their lives, because they alone don't know how (Konzett, 2017). It is also ironic that “Dog” can be seen as an anagram of “God”—for he is seen as the “savior” at the conclusion of each episode.

Both *50 First Dates* and *Dog the Bounty Hunter*, as well as other movies and shows provide insight into the poorer sections of the population. A 2010 study of the Justice Policy Institute from the University of Hawai‘i shows that Native Hawaiians tend to be disproportionately represented, having higher number of arrests, prison sentences, and prison and probation terms (Office of Hawaiian Affairs, 2010). The report further argues that, “Native Hawaiians do not use drugs at drastically different rates than other races or ethnicities but go to prison for drug offenses more often than other races and ethnicities” (p. 12). With media profiling Natives as violent and unintelligent, they cover up the socioeconomic fallout of Hawai‘i’s colonization and romanticize Whites as Hawaiians’ saviors.

The cultural dimension of a state economy that is dominated by tourism and the U.S. military is reflected in the aforementioned mass of literature, television programming, films, etc. that project the image of Hawai‘i as the very ideal of a welcoming tropical paradise. The popular representation of Hawai‘i as home to tourism and the U.S. military naturalizes the presence of these industries in the islands and reflects a reductive cycle of cultural politics (Ng, 2009). The economic health of tourism and the military relies on the continued representation of Hawai‘i as a tourist destination and strategic and historic site. Because these institutions drive the state economy, they are

able to represent life in Hawai‘i in a way that pushes out alternative representations, especially local perspectives that run counter to their narratives.

Though a copious number of representations throughout popular culture concerning the Hawaiian represents them from a Eurocentric and stereotypical manner, some research has also noted about how Native Hawaiians use popular cultural artifacts to subvert negative stereotypes. For example, scholars Lewis (1987), Stillman (1998), Weintraub (1998), Akindes (2001), Osumare (2001), and Imada (2006) have extensively examined how music within the islands have helped Hawaiians in forming their own identity, how music is used in refuting Eurocentric representations, and how music is used in protest and sovereignty movements.

Other cultural artifacts have been analyzed as well. For example, Tamaira (2017) examined two Honolulu-based murals, *Ola Ka Wai, Ola Ka Honua* (As the Water Lives, the Earth Thrives) and the community-created *Aloha ‘Aina* mural, to illustrate how Kanaka Maoli use the surface of urban and temporary walls as semiotic slates to both affirm Hawaiian sovereignty and contest U.S. colonialism. In this work, Tamaira (2017) argues that Indigenous scholars should encompass a more comprehensive reading of Indigenous sovereignty that expands beyond the political and includes aesthetic articulations, in this particular case murals and graffiti. As she states, “In the specific case of Kanaka Maoli art production in Hawai‘i, I read visual sovereignty as an aesthetic strategy through which Kanaka Maoli artists articulate an Indigenous-centered perspective that conveys Native epistemologies, ongoing political struggles, and ancestral connection to place” (Tamaira, 2017, p. 4). An examination of contemporary Hawaiian art using visual sovereignty has not yet been advanced but has started with this piece.

Ng (2009) has recently overviewed local, Native identified, filmmakers as they premiere their films at the Hawai‘i International Film Festival, and globally. He cites Kaliko Palmiera’s (2004) documentary about his father, musician Steve Ma‘i‘i, titled in his father’s name, as a film that presents in an original way the rise of Hawaiian music entertainment as a movement for Native Hawaiian identity. In another example, *Plastic Leis* (2005), a film by Tyrone Sanga, depicts the removal of an elderly lei seller from Waikiki. Drawing on the plight of this woman, the film offers a view on Hawaiian culture and its collision with tourist commercialism. Her expulsion from Waikiki represents the symbolic displacement of Native Hawaiians in Hawai‘i (Ng, 2009). *Follow the Leader* (2006), another short film by Sanga, reveals the racial and ethnic tensions in Hawai‘i through the narrative of children collecting baseball cards. A child of Asian descent feels intimidated by an older and larger boy of Hawaiian descent when he is asked by the older boy to purchase a baseball card from an Asian storeowner who is suspicious of the older boy. The film reveals the kind of divisions that linger from the Hawai‘i plantation era when racial and ethnic tensions were used to help manage plantation workers (Ng, 2009). These films, made by local filmmakers, illustrate how films can re-deploy Indigenous tropes and circulate “alter-Native”⁹ representations of island lifestyle.

Scholars Magnat (2012) and Teves (2018) have examined the complexities of the performative aspect of Hawaiian indigeneity and resistance. Magnat (2012) notes, “cultural continuity thus vitally depends on the embodied transmission of traditional performance-based practices such as ritual and dancing” (p. 34). The Kumulipo, for

⁹ Though I could not track who originally coined this term, AlterNative is a subverting of “alternative” that promotes Indigenous worldviews and experiences. There is also a journal called *AlterNative: An International Journal of Indigenous Peoples*, that promotes decolonization and Indigenous perspectives.

example, is a Hawaiian genealogical prayer chant where the reciting of it requires memory of Hawaiians historical past, since this chant predates written language. “The oral transmission of this sacred chant entailed that acquisition of specific vocal techniques combining kuolo (vibration), kaohi (guttural sound), and a form of alala (gurgling) produced by different parts of the vocal apparatus” (p.34). The combination of memory and technique is inspired by nature and displays the visceral connection everything within nature (living or otherwise) have with each other. This concept of relationality implies that Indigenous research must be inclusive of multiplicity of perspectives, thus performance helps to position the practitioner/artist’s identity. Magnat (2012) argues that performance informed by Hawaiian perspectives can teach us how research may become ceremony, since the work then becomes about strengthening relationships that are based on values such as respect and reciprocity. This approach suggests that the way in which research is conducted affects the quality of knowledge and knowing. Performance as a perspective, then should attempt “to make people feel better, live longer, and happier,” purposes that ceremonies in Hawai‘i serve (Magnat, 2012, p. 33).

Teves’ (2018) work aligns with Magnat and examines how Indigenous performances on stage and in everyday life do not merely attempt to rewrite inaccurate depictions and replace them with “authentic” Hawaiians, but to evaluate the multiple ways in which people cultivate indigeneity and defy the expectations of colonialism. As she notes, she specifically analyzes the “double-binding pressures of the performance in indigeneity and how these performances are contested in the political and cultural context of Hawaiian indigeneity... Defiant indigeneity is an amorphous performance that

challenges settler colonialism” (Teves, 2018, p. 11). Hawaiian identity and authenticity in the form of Indigenous performativity is complicated and messy but is a response to representations that posit Natives as somehow less Native when they perform in ways that defy dominant representations of themselves. “This desire for recognition and respect speaks to a need among Kanaka Maoli, one that seeks to move beyond stereotypes and one that acknowledges our varied articulations... by disrupting indigeneity through performance, artists allow spaces to emerge that challenge how the state manages us, how the media and popular culture stereotype us, and how we even divide ourselves” (Teves, 2018, p. 21). Teves’ scholarship encourages us to look to how we create spaces in which we see one another, honoring the ways that we communicate and maintain who we are through the performance on stage and the performance of our everyday lives.

In response, some scholars argue for a more ethical representation of Hawai‘i. Trask (1999) makes a forceful argument to show that the tourism industry has dispossessed Kanaka Maoli identity, culture, and land. In another work, Desmond (1999) traces the exploitative dynamics of tourism’s representation of Native bodies in Hawai‘i. Ferguson and Turnbull (1999) have studied the signs and symbols of the U.S. Military in the islands and show how these images dominate the historical meaning and everyday use of the archipelago’s landscape. Wood (1999) and Koznett (2017) explore how journalism, novels, diaries, advertisements, visual arts, museums, films, television shows, and various other types of cultural productions assist the more naked coercion associated with the military and the criminal justice system in the usurpation of the Hawaiian lands and the displacement of Hawaiian culture. These studies suggest the importance of adopting a critical perspective on the cultural economy of Hawai‘i. I also see their

perspectives as a testament to the value of teaching students to embrace the ethics of representation that encourages more fully developed depictions of Hawai‘i that may challenge the cultural status quo. In other words, an argument can be made for the inclusion of critical/cultural studies in creative media education, via multimodalities, and the significance of diversifying Hawai‘i’s cultural economy.

Broadly, the critical study of cultural texts specifically pertaining to Hawaiian cultural artifacts refers to the historical, aesthetic, and theoretical examination of text production and the power of its representation and dissemination. Adding a critical, multimodal, lens to the field (especially at an institute in Hawai‘i) would add what Jenkins (2006) comments as a focus on technical instruction—pedagogy. Many universities include critical/cultural studies to their curriculum, however teaching these ideals in conjuncture with arts-based research/multimodality in Hawai‘i, a place where it is lacking, would be shaped by cultural specificity. Given the predominance of tourism and the military, my educational imperative would be to respond to the existing representations of Hawai‘i and try to help students create different narratives and imagery, and disseminate such values using multiple mediums. An Indigenous perspective reflects stories and storytellers rooted in the Islands’ everyday dynamics and complicated history. It would involve Native and non-Native experiences as well as tensions that may exist between them. Such textured narratives include stories of divisions that linger from Hawai‘i’s plantation era or the displacement of Native Hawaiians and their search for empowerment. In effect, my goal in filling the gap in research regarding Hawai‘i and Hawaiian representations hope to teach students and audiences to recognize the broad range of experiences that are available and specific to

Hawai‘i but have been excluded from dominant representations of Hawai‘i.

Few, but some scholars have already initiated this process. For example, Wilson (2000) highlights a similar imperative when speaking about the Hawai‘i based journal, *Bamboo Ridge: Journal of Hawai‘i Literature and Art*. Wilson (2000) contends that the journal’s selection of literature reflects an island sensibility, as opposed to works that portray Hawai‘i from a tourism and military spin. These subversive texts present a “cultural politics of place-bound identity expressing... symbols/acts/tactics of local resistance to metropolitan centers of culture” (Wilson, 2000, p. 134). As Shapiro (2006) notes, art forms such as film, music, and literature can express identities that are excluded or marginalized by the dominant culture. For Shapiro (2006) the resulting expressions are ways that people resist and redefine representations not of their own making.

[Aesthetic expressions can be] modes of self-fashioning by those who flee imposed identities in order to achieve a state of non-closural becoming... [and a way for] those who tend to be excluded, given the way that recognizable “politics” is policed, assembled to contest imposed identities, deform conventional modes of intelligibility, struggle to survive economically, socially, and politically, or articulate, through writing, sounds, built structures, or images, aspects of a life and thought-world that are officially unheeded (Shapiro, 2006, p. xv)

Wilson and Shapiro offer useful outlooks that describe the role of critical/cultural studies in Hawai‘i institutions that encourages cultural production in and of Hawai‘i to be a part of a larger commitment to an ethics of indigeneity.

The underlying idea is to assist in the diversification of Hawai‘i’s cultural economy by addressing its distortions and recognizing that a broader range of expressions is both possible and necessary. Arts-based approaches represent one way to assist with decolonizing the research process, subverting the ways we think about ownership, control, access, and possession (OCAP). My desire is to bridge the academy and the

community. Cultural artifacts such as hip hop, drama, graffiti, and photography have the ability to reach across what Anzaldua (1987) terms the borderlands between academic research and artistic and local communities. I think that the very strength of using multimodal/arts-based works is what Flicker and colleagues (2014) assert that it:

Reveals multiplicities, strengthens intersectional identities, creates accessibility, and tells stories of those who have often been unheard or whose stories have been erased. The power of art is in its evocation of meaning, and in its ability to heal, to provoke, and to stimulate change... Decolonizing the research process means creating spaces that are open to diversity and to history. Rather than passively engaging with text, art requires the audience to become actively involved with the artist and her [sic] creation. In this way, [people] are able to self-represent, eschewing stereotypes or marginalizing discourse that attempt to oppress them, and replacing those representations with ones of strength, empowerment and cultural pride. (p. 29)

We should not overlook the importance of challenging the existing forces of cultural power in Hawai'i. We need to develop scholarship and curriculum that promotes Indigenous storytelling and its ethical commitments so that cultural artifacts contribute to Hawai'i's cultural imaginary in new empowering ways. This dissertation aims to do so by: 1) providing a historical review of Hawaiian history and culture, as well as a critical overview of historical depictions of Native Hawaiians within literature; 2) examining contemporary representations of the Islands and its people within cultural artifacts from Western and Kānaka Maoli producers; and 3) providing future insights and pedagogical suggestions with the hope of teaching students to be critical of works, and challenge the conception of being Hawaiian as either/or Western or Indigenous, but instead adopting a hybridized and braided position of both/and.

This dissertation comprises of six chapters. This first chapter, Chapter 1, provided a literature review of Hawaiian history and previous research pertaining to historical and contemporary Hawaiian representations within film, television, and music. Chapter 2 will

be an overview of the theoretical and methodological framework that I will positioning my work from, mainly summarizing major theories in critical theory and cultural studies, with notions of coloniality of power, settler colonialism, postcolonial studies, and decolonization being the major focus. As a methodology I will be describing a “braided knowledge” approach, attempting to utilize the best from Western textual/rhetorical analysis and complementing them with Indigenous, mainly Native Hawaiian, epistemologies. Chapters 3, 4, and 5 are case studies of particular mediums. Chapter 3 overviews representations of Native Hawaiians and the Islands in television using *Hawaii Five-0* as an exemplar of Western produced portrayals and extend knowledge about Hawaiian representations by offering portrayals provided by a network with Kānaka leadership known as ‘Ōiwi TV. Chapter 4 concerns representation within film overviewing what postcolonial film approaches can offer in terms of hybrid Hawaiian identity. *Moana* was used as a Hollywood example and the film *Waikiki*, an independent film directed by Chris Kahunahana, was used an Indigenous exemplar. Chapter 5 focuses on the hybridization of genre and cultures in Native Hawaiian music, using the songs *#WeAreMaunaKea* by Sons of Yeshusa and *Rise Up* by Ryan Hiraoka as the main texts being analyzed. Lastly, Chapter 6 provides a discussion and conclusion of the previous chapters, honing in on an “aloha approach” to media production, Kānaka Maoli representation, and pedagogy.

Though the Native Hawaiian population has seen a sharp decline since Western contact, the 2000 Census provides some optimism for the future of Hawaiians. Since allowing participants to identify as more than one race, numbers of identified Hawaiians have increased. According to 2013 census estimates, the Native Hawaiian population in

Hawai‘i stands at 298,000. Also, there are more than 560,000 Americans, nationwide, who identify as being at least part Hawaiian (Goo, 2015). Research by Kamehameha Schools’ Native Hawaiian Educational Assessment suggests that the total Native Hawaiian population in Hawai‘i is projected to be about 500,000 by 2045, and 675,000 by 2060 (Kahakalau, 2012). This increase in numbers heightens the urgency of preserving Hawaiian culture and land in order for this next generation of Hawaiians to have a tradition in which a part of their identity relies on. It is with research like this project that will help to disseminate the values of my people, from their own perspectives. I hope that this project not only helps readers gain a deeper understanding of issues concerning Hawaiian representation and its influences on Hawaiians’ identity and culture, but is also a part of the Hawaiian sovereignty movement itself—reinvigorating the community to continue to peacefully fight for sake of the next generation. The next chapter, Chapter 2, will provides an overview of the theoretical and methodologic perspectives from which this dissertation adopts.

CHAPTER 2

THEORETICAL AND METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH:

POSTCOLONIALITY, IDENTITY FORMATION, AND BRAIDED KNOWLEDGES

In popular culture, the depiction Hawai‘i contributes to the projection of the U.S. imperial status and the global expansion of its geopolitical boundaries. One-sided representations within popular culture, then, has the possibility of affecting the way others view Hawaiians, and also the way that Hawaiian view themselves. For this reason, I examine cultural representation of Hawai‘i and Hawaiians from a textual/rhetorical analysis perspective. Identity is a complex, multi-layered, and dynamic phenomenon that is both fluid and situational, yet retaining core characteristics. Each of us have multiple identities, influenced by our ascribed characteristics (e.g., our race/ethnicity, cultural background, skin color, sexual orientation, ability, gender); our achieved characteristics (e.g., our education, job, social position); how we view our identities; and how others see us (Oetzel, 2009). It is shaped through our social location within society, and reinforced through interactions with others relative to that position (Yep, 1998); and its shaping differs based on whether one is from the dominant or a subordinate group (Oetzel, 2009).

As a consequence of the mythologizing of Hawai‘i, it is both the best and least known of the U.S. imperial holdings. Popular culture locates Hawai‘i as the origin of tiki culture, volcano sacrifices, happy and friendly Natives, grass skirts, hula girls, and surfer boys, helping to install and reinforce the symbolic coordinates of one of the largest U.S. tourist industries. These ideas and icons are supported by the mainland interpretation of aloha culture, embodied by the welcoming Native offering up Hawai‘i to the weary traveler (Fojas, 2014; Halualani, 2002). The idea of the Hawaiian Islands and their golden

bounty as fruit just ripe for the picking for mainlanders dates back to the imperial ventures of the annexationists. For example, as mentioned in Chapter 1, John Stevens, U.S. Minister to Hawai‘i and architect of the illegal overthrow of Queen Lili‘uokalani actually stated, “The Hawaiian pear is now fully ripe and this is the golden hour for the United States to pluck it” (Coffman, 2016, p. 127). This language is key to the place of Hawai‘i in the U.S. imaginary—A subject waiting passively to be subsumed into the imperial whole. In popular culture, Hawai‘i was not just a safe and stable destination, but it is presented as a new U.S. frontier that would bring expansive economic opportunities and an exotic escape from the workday life of the mainland. It was also the only set of islands in the U.S. empire to achieve statehood. Following statehood, Hollywood described Hawai‘i with a discourse aligned with the U.S. hegemony. Hawai‘i was made into a visible site of the United States brand of U.S. superiority and the gold standard of colonial development (Fojas, 2014). Thus, Hawai‘i was made into a model colony. With the notion of Hawai‘i as a colony, and Hawaiians as colonized within past texts, it is reasonable to approach examining contemporary representations from the theoretical perspective of critical/cultural studies, mainly postcolonial theories, while using textual/rhetorical analysis as the tool for excavating the multiple meanings of such portrayals. Since media representation and identity formation are related to each other, theories regarding identity in general and Hawaiian identity in particular will also be discussed. This chapter will: (1) provide a breakdown of postcoloniality, the theoretical approach that each case study in the succeeding chapters adopt; (2) discuss ideas of identity and society, and identity formation specific to Hawai‘i and Hawaiians; and (3) provide an expansive rendering of textual and rhetorical analyses, braided with

Indigenous/Hawaiian values, as the methodological approach in examining each cultural artifact in this project.

Theoretical Approach

Before the late 1970s, there was no academic specialization that went by the name of “postcolonial studies.” Today, by contrast, postcolonial studies occupy a position of legitimacy and even relative prestige in the academy. To build such legitimacy, works from prolific scholars accumulated to create postcolonial theory. The works of Edward Said, Homi Bhabha, Benedict Anderson, V. Y. Mudimbe, Peter Hulme, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, and Frantz Fanon, to name a few, have been noted as influential cornerstones of the postcolonial paradigm. It is only fitting that a conversation of postcoloniality be provided, as these ideals are what heavily guide my epistemology.

To begin to appreciate how much postcolonial theory informs my theoretical outlook, consider the following passage from Bhabha’s, “The Postcolonial and the Postmodern: The Question of Agency,” in *The Location of Culture*. I quote from Bhabha’s essay at length, both because of its relevance to my commentary on postcolonial theory, and because Bhabha’s work has been so influential in framing the parameter of postcolonial studies:

Postcolonial criticism bears witness to the unequal and uneven forces of cultural representation involved in the contest for political and social authority within the modern world order. Postcolonial perspectives emerge from the colonial testimony of the Third World countries and the discourses of minorities within geopolitical divisions of East and West, North and South. They intervene in those ideological discourses of modernity that attempt to give a hegemonic normality to the uneven development and the differential, often disadvantaged, histories or nations, races, communities, peoples. They formulate their critical revisions around issues of cultural difference, social authority, and political discrimination in order to reveal the antagonistic and ambivalent moments within the rationalizations of modernity.... As a mode of analysis, it attempts to revise those nationalist or nativist pedagogies that set up the relation of the Third World and

First World in a binary structure of opposition. The postcolonial perspective resists the attempt at holistic forms of social explanations. It forces a recognition of the more complex cultural and political boundaries that exist on the cusp of these often opposed political spheres. (1994, pp. 171-173)

As Shohat (1992) contends, the very idea of what is postcolonial is ambivalent because it often times blurs the distinction between colonizers and colonized. It likes to create a dichotomy between the two, but it is not as clear-cut as some would like it to be. I think it should not necessarily be thought of in a dialectical manner, but more on a matrix or in a dialogical perspective. As Hulme (1995) asserts, the word postcolonial is useful as a generalization to the extent that it refers to a process of disengagement from the whole colonial syndrome which can take many forms and is probably inescapable. As he further contends, to be a postcolonial scholar, or ascribing to the term itself, should be descriptive and not evaluative. Citing Hall, he argues that to be postcolonial is a general process of decolonization (Hulme, 1995). But, the process of decolonizing lifestyles has to be articulated alongside specific contextual, economic, social, cultural, and historical factors. Thus, postcoloniality and the process of decolonization works quite differently in various parts of the world. To impose a single understanding of decolonization would erase differences within the term (Hall, 1996). Although the term postcolonial is useful in indicating a general process that may be shared across the globe, if specific contexts are not accounted for, the term then ironically becomes hegemonic and colonized. Philosophies surrounding postcoloniality, coloniality of power, and decoloniality take the form of multiplicity.

Many would credit Said as being one of the forebearers of postcolonial theory. Said sees practices as deeply implicated in the operations and technologies of power, by virtue of the fact that all scholars (and artists) are subject to particular historical, cultural,

and institutional affiliations which are governed in the last instance by the dominant ideology and political imperatives of the society in question (Moore-Gilbert, 1997). With his conceptualization of Orientalism, Said focused on literature and how the East (particularly Arabic and Islamic culture) was represented in these literary texts. His main argument in *Orientalism* was that Western systems of knowledge and representation have been involved in the long history of the West's control over other nations, and that the non-Western world was subordinate to the West's political and material culture (Said, 1978). Described by Foucault as the "repressive hypothesis", power is an impersonal force operating through a multiplicity of sites and channels, constructing what he calls a "pastoral regime" through which it seeks to control its subjects by re-forming them, and in so doing, making them conform to their place in the social system as objects. Said adapts from Foucault the argument that discourse, the medium which constitutes power and through which it is exercised, constructs the objects of its knowledge. The regime of disciplinary power inscribed in Orientalism transforms "real" East into a discursive "Orient" (Said, 1978).

Said's work demonstrates the relationship between Western texts of cultural representation and scholarship on one hand, and specific institutions' techniques of colonization and surveillance on the other. Orientalism operates in the service of the West's hegemony over the East primarily by producing the East discursively as the West's inferior "other," a maneuver which strengthens, even partially constructs, the West's self-image as a superior civilization. It does this principally by distinguishing and then essentializing the identities of East and West through a dichotomizing system of representation. These stereotypes aim at making rigid the sense of difference between the

European and Asiatic parts of the world (Said, 1978). As a consequence, “the East is characteristically produced in Orientalist discourse as voiceless, sensual, female, despotic, irrational, and backward. By contrast, the West is represented as masculine, democratic, rational, moral, dynamic, and progressive” (Moore-Gilbert, 1997, p. 39).

Some, like Aijaz Ahmad (1994), have criticized Said’s work for being too simplistic. Representation in Orientalism simply dichotomizes the West from the non-West, preferencing the West. But to be clear, Said only examines a specific area of the non-West through one specific medium. Said is justifiably accused of homogenizing the sites of enunciation of Orientalist discourse, and in the process of suppressing important cultural and geographical, as well as historical, differences in the varied cultures of Western imperialism. Indeed, in this respect it can certainly be argued that Said repeats in reverse the alleged tendency of colonial discourse to homogenize its subject peoples, by implying that colonizing cultures are all the same (Ahmad, 1994). Though problematic, Said’s work is a steppingstone to further postcolonial thought. It is clear to Said that the best way forward is a mode of cultural criticism which reflects the hybridity engendered by the ever more intertwined histories of the modern world, and which eschews conceptions of identity which are based in fixed ontological categories, whether in race, ethnicity, or national identity.

Spivak, instead, more characteristically focuses on various counter-discourses against the Eurocentric. Her methods are consistent with her view that postcolonial analysis should keep heterogeneity in terms of cultures of postcolonialism in mind. Thus, variations in the historical experience of oppression should be acknowledged. Whereas Orientalism sees colonial history as a simplistic and uninterrupted narrative of

oppression, Spivak tends to offer a more complex vision of the effects of Western domination. Yes, there is an abundant amount of negatives associated with imperialism and colonization, but Spivak also recognizes the potential positive effects such as the social capital that the subaltern can attain in the contemporary era, as she uses herself as an example, being a marginalized minority that has the opportunity to work in a privileged academy (Spivak, 1993).

In particular, Spivak's work attempts to admit non-Western cultural production into the Western academy without evading how they challenge Western canon. She rejects the idea that there is an uncontained space outside the hegemonic where postcolonial scholars can access, but instead she negotiates within Western institutions while still being critical of them. Though a major criticism of her work critiques her positionality of doing postcolonial work within the Western academy, Spivak strongly defends the use of elite Western critical theory to analyze postcolonial and subaltern texts, and resists the argument that only local theories are valid. More recent perspectives adopted by Spivak suggests that she has begun to explore a number of alternatives to the dominant critical/cultural narratives in the Western academy, again with some degree of negotiation. Though in her seminal work, "Can the Subaltern Speak," she adamantly asserts that the subaltern can never speak unless they are made to be "othered" in which someone else will speak for them, she does emphasize the importance of trying to recognize and hear the other on their terms and not simply assimilating them to Western values (Spivak, 1994).

Spivak is adamant that scholars should ask themselves: "there has to be another focus-not merely who am I? But who is the other woman? How am I naming her? How

does she name me? Is this part of the problematic I discuss?" (Spivak, 1994, p. 73) Out of the prominent three figures, Said, Spivak and Bhabha, all also coming from the South Asian postcolonial tradition, Spivak is the only one to explicitly enter gender into the conversation. I appreciate her attempts at expanding pass race in terms of understanding identity. Using the term colonial benevolence, Spivak suggests ways in which the researchers should look past their privilege, stating: "The academic Western feminist must learn to learn from them, to speak to them, to suspect that their access to the political and sexual scene is not merely to be corrected by our superior theory and enlightened compassion" (Spivak, 1994, p. 93). In short, the Western feminist must learn to understand their privilege and how these things come into play with the oppressed that they interact with.

Homi Bhabha also diverges from Said, in that he argues that colonial discourse is never quite as authoritative and unified as it claims to be because the way in which we take in texts and ideas is also a translation of the original, thus we are always at least a little off of the original. In his conception of the term mimicry, Bhabha asserts that a compromise occurs in this process for the colonized. They are encouraged to adopt and repeat the colonizer's culture, but in so doing, they create a rearticulated identity, of both the colonizer's culture and the colonized culture (Bhabha, 1994, p. 34). "The consequence of this, however, is quite contrary to the intention of the colonizer, in that mimicry produces subjects whose not-quite sameness acts like a distorting mirror which fractures the identity of the colonizing subject and rearticulates its presence in terms of its otherness, that which it disavows" (Moore-Gilbert, 1997, pp. 120-121). Through mimicry, the oppressed others produce resistance, as mimicry can be seen as a sort of

defense or camouflage—a sort of blending-in yet being oneself. This is illustrated in two ways. First the colonized subject is empowered to return the colonizer's gaze, and in doing so the Native subject questions the foundational narratives and texts of Western culture and interprets them in ways other than were originally intended of use by the colonizer. Secondly, the subject who mimics can also refuse to return the colonizer's gaze, which, Bhabha suggests, destabilizes colonial authority just as effectively in a different way (Bhabha, 1994). This is the beginning the postcolonial concept of hybridity.

Hybridity, perhaps his most key concept, assumes again that a dichotomy exists of colonizer and colonized, and hybridity is the identity in negotiating the betweenness. As Bhabha's conception of the third-space puts it, "all forms of culture are continually in a process of hybridity" (Bhabha, 1994, p. 51). While the colonized mimics Western society, they can also repurpose those narratives and interpret them in ways other than were originally intended. One major critique of concepts like the third-space, hybridity, and the in-between is the question of how can they be conceived of as specifically postcolonial modes of cultural intervention if everyone is seen to be "in-between" (Ahmad, 1994)? Ahmad's (1994) criticism of Bhabha also stresses the textualist and idealist basis of hybridity, while it neglects specific local differences of textual interpretation. Also, I would argue that the terms hybridity and in-between does not really push political or postcolonial thought as far as it could, being that it mainly focuses on the idea that we pick and choose who we want to be but goes no further to decolonize the process. Perhaps this is where more contemporary perspectives of postcolonial theory and hybridity come to bear.

Canclini (1995) contends that the idea of hybridization is an intermixing of the traditional and contemporary; of Western thought and non-Western values. But often, hybridity emerges from the attempt to reconvert a legacy that was set into motion for years in order to reinsert it into new conditions of the market. So, hybridity can be viewed as selecting one's identity, but it can also be used to keep status quo for the elite. Hence, coloniality, also referred to as neo-colonialism, is still the most general form of domination in the world today, succeeding colonialism. Stemming from Latin American subaltern scholars, such as Mignolo (2013) and Grosfoguel (2007), the idea of coloniality is honed-in more tightly in terming it the "coloniality of power." From this perspective the intersectionality of multiple heterogeneous global hierarchies/institutions (economic, political, linguistic, racial, etc.) of domination and exploitation where there is a staunch divide between Western and non-Western is focused on. Whereas older philosophies of postcolonial thought showed a division between studying culture or political economy as sources of oppression, the coloniality of power focuses on both as well as the interrelation between the two in a globalized capitalist world system. Of major concern in this approach is the idea of race and racism as the organizing principle that structures all of the multiple hierarchies of the global system. Again, the coloniality of power alludes to critiquing the very idea of hybridity, in that in the modern world system national independence and sovereignty from Eurocentric systems is an illusion (Mignolo, 2013).

In response to the idea of the coloniality of power, decolonization or decoloniality is suggested. Termed "border thinking" by Mignolo (2013), this idea asserts that identity should be localized to a specific region, or border. Politics and knowledge should be

ingrained in specific local context. Aligning with the idea of border thinking is “delinking”. Delinking suggests that we are chained to the idea or illusion that there is no other way of thinking or living outside of the Eurocentric/Western, but in order to hone-in to locally specific border thinking one has to delink themselves from the Western chain (Mignolo, 2013). Connected to advocates of dependency theory, the idea that peripheral/Third World nations cannot develop and modernize under colonial conditions, delinking suggest that we should remove ourselves from the idea of modernity. Though this approach argues for total separation from modernity and Western structures, I think this perspective is somewhat unrealistic and radical. Hall (1995) argues that like a relationship one has with their mother, it is always already there, and cannot be broken. He continues by saying that we should not forget about traditional pasts of cultures, but we also should not be stuck in a thought process of romantic nativism.

Again, thinking about terms like hybridity and neo-colonialism, we must take into consideration that cultures and societies are intricately connected in some fashion. So how can you delink if you are heavily welded to the Western chain of modernity? Mignolo (2013) asserts that delinking and border thinking can occur whenever the conditions are appropriate, as long as you are aware of the coloniality of power, or the contemporary remnants and aftermath of colonialism. Delinking to me suggests total removal from something. This contrasts from strategic essentialism in that delinking is an effort to be completely separate from the coloniality of power, whereas strategic essentialism is when one decides when and where to converge on or diverge from coloniality. The term Sociogenesis, introduced by Fanon, is a concept that is more fitting, as it embodies border thinking and delinking. As Mignolo (2011) states, sociogenesis

occurs at a moment of awareness that you are othered not because of the color of your skin, but because of the modern racial imaginary of the modern colonial world. People are made to be subaltern “by a discourse, whose rules you cannot control, and there is no room for complaint” (p. 7). As Mignolo (2011) further contends, “sociogenesis came out of thinking and dwelling in the borders and thinking decolonially, for it came out of *existencia Africana* as Lewis Gordon would have it, but it could have come out of any other similar experiences of racialized individuals” (p. 7). Sociogenesis is similar to the idea of hybridity, but as its name suggests it acts politically in understanding your identity as something that has been influenced by modernity, while at the same time you are consciously deciding on adopting locally specific ontologies.

There is room to extend what has already been achieved in terms of the analysis of the role of Western culture, and metropolitan canons more specifically, in the histories of neo-colonialism. Colonial textual analysis in respect to popular culture is an avenue that may prove to be fruitful in expanding our use of postcolonial theory, as this dissertation partially sets out to do. Much more work could also be undertaken in terms of comparisons between the Anglophone and non-Anglophone worlds. As Stuart Hall (1995) has suggested, there is scope for more interdisciplinary work. For these reasons, it seems to me that the most pressing problems which face postcolonial studies are not so much a loss of their initial impetus, or the emergence of a more critical audience, but issues which arise from the multiplicity of historical and social contexts out of which the postcolonial has emerged, and the diverse cultural forms and modes of critical engagement which it now inhabits. The model which has been the most influential since the 1990s has been the polarity of identity and various versions of the concept hybridity.

It has emphasized the complementariness which exist between the different aspects of the postcolonial formation and tries to build upon them. Not only is this a favored approach in a wide variety of other postcolonial criticisms, but it is also the vision which predominates in postcolonial theory. Because postcolonial histories, and their presents, are so varied, no one definition of the postcolonial can claim to be correct at the expense of all others, and consequently a variety of interrelated models of identity, positionality and critical/cultural practice are both possible and necessary.

Shome (2009) contends that although many scholars have taken a “postcolonial” or counter-Eurocentric turn in their research ontology and epistemology, it poses the idea that Western knowledge is its focal point:

The issue, however, is that when they (postcolonial scholars) refer to cultural studies, the assumed positions of cultural studies in relations to which their international move is being advanced and advocated is the Anglo/Euro axis and imaginary of cultural studies. In other words, the action of “internationalizing” cultural studies occurs in relation to, and springboards from, the moment of North Atlantic centered cultural studies. (p. 696).

In response to this, Shome (2009) argues that what is needed is the recognition of the diverse modalities and temporalities of the “international,” and this is agreeable, to some extent as I would argue that it is quite impossible to fully escape the influence of a dominate structure, especially in an ever more networked and globalized world.

As Miike (2002) contends, communication theorizing in the local community and the global society ought to move beyond the dualistic thinking of provincial specificity versus universal applicability. Any theory has local resonance and may have global significance. More and more scholarly endeavors must be made to generate theories that can resonate fully with the local context and, at the same time, suggest their possible global implications. This is not to say that the researcher should fully adopt a context

specific lens, being that globalization and transnationalism do have some influence on the local. But instead of thinking about research as dialectic between the global and the local, one might consider this relationship as dialogical—as a negotiation between the two.

Canclini (1997) might argue that this dialogical negotiation between the global and the local would align with the idea of hybridity. With the expansion of neoliberalism and Westernized industry, it is difficult to pinpoint phenomena as being influenced fully by the Indigenous, unless that culture is secluded from the Western world, but most would find it difficult to accomplish such a thing. Instead, a blending of traditional and modern is taking place. As Canclini (1997) further contends:

Social and cultural expansion, as well as renovation have been manifested in the rapid industrializing development and in the growth of secondary and higher education, in artistic and literary dynamism and experimentation throughout the twentieth century, and in the fluid adaptation of certain sectors to technological and social innovation. However, these renovating impulses do not replace local traditions; at times they accompany them and at other times they conflict with them, yet without destroying them. In addition, multicultural mixtures can be observed in the metropolises, but one characteristic that demands attention in Latin America [and I would argue in other locations that are postcolonial, such as Hawai‘i] is that heterogeneity is multi-temporal. (p. 2)

Canclini (1997) asserts that cultures that are in postcolonial phases, do not fully lose their traditions to Eurocentric ideas and advances, but are in a state of negotiating between the two. They attempt to preserve traditional customs and beliefs by merging and adapting them to the contemporary.

Loomba (2007) argues that questions of indigeneity and the environment are two interconnected issues that are highly neglected within postcolonial studies, and I would agree with her. These two issues alert us of the overlap between colonialism and neo-colonialism of the global system. For capitalism to survive, it constantly needs to encroach on cultures, untouched spaces, workers, and materials outside of its current

domain, and it needs new markets for its goods. With this in mind, postcolonial theories should not be solely focused on either cultural representation or political economy, but the overlap between them. Also, the deep historical connections between trade and colonialism should not be overlooked, as this is what connects old forms of colonialism to the newer form of colonality of power in a globalized society. Conceived together with America and Western Europe, colonality of power describes the segregation of social classification of the colonized and the colonizers by race (Quijano, 2007).

Expanding this idea, we can further think of colonality of power as spectrum between the privileged and the oppressed, based on intersectional identities. Colonality as a newer form of colonialism, then, is the most general form of domination in the world today.

What is imperative in the colonality of power is the staunch authority that these divisions create as the organizing principle that structures all of the world systems.

Of great concern to me, is how the environment then becomes new battlegrounds, as described by Leiss (1994) as capitalism's/humans' "domination of nature." This idea is in direct contradiction to Indigenous values, in which there is no hierarchy but all things breathing and inanimate are connected on the same plain. The continual dispossession from land, loss of rights over nature, loss of livelihood practices and related knowledges, even culture of Indigenous peoples, to modernity and capitalism, has encouraged me to focus on the colonial-like relations to globalization and its exclusionary process for Indigenous folks.

With postcolonial concepts such as colonality of power, hybridity, and sociogenesis as influential theories, this dissertation aimed at decolonizing hegemonic forms of representations, by exploring how Native Hawaiians subvert media

representations and use them to achieve their own goals. As Quijano (2007) states, the alternative to abiding to a single form of knowledge production is through a change in ontology and epistemology:

Epistemological decolonization, as decoloniality, is needed to clear the way for new intercultural communication, for an interchange of experiences and meanings, as the basis of another rationality which may legitimately pretend to some universality... The liberation of intercultural relations from the prison of coloniality also implies the freedom of all peoples to choose, individually or collectively, such relations: a freedom to choose between various cultural orientations, and above all, the freedom to produce, criticize, change, and exchange culture and society (Quijano, 2007, pp. 177-178).

Through a different perspective of knowledge-seeking, a means of liberation for those who have been oppressed under a singular, Western, way of knowing could be provided. This could potentially expand the ways in which we see and approach the world.

To accomplish a decolonized method that subaltern groups could adopt to provide them voice in which they otherwise may not have had previously, Grosfoguel (2007) suggests three main points. First, that a decolonial epistemic perspective requires that a broader paradigm beyond Western canon is required. Second, that a decolonial perspective should not be based on an abstract universal ontology but would have to stem from the dialogue between diverse critical, political, and social epistemologies that favors a pluriversal approach. Lastly, decolonization of knowledge would require people to take seriously the insights from individuals from the Third World, Global South, or other subalternized communities. For this project, values from Hawaiians were taken seriously to provide a platform for them to speak, in which one major focus is the connection between cultural representation and identity. Thus, understanding identity, Hawaiian identity specifically, will be addressed next.

Identity: What does it mean to be Hawaiian?

Identity formation and reflection has been an area of study that has stretched across multiple disciplines throughout the natural sciences, social sciences, and humanities. Culture's influence on self-identity has been widely studied as an aspect of identity scholarship. For many years, identity has been central in behavioral sciences and can be traced as interdisciplinary conceptualizations of human thought and action (Jung & Hecht, 2004). Earlier, identity has been studied within preceding departments such as psychology and sociology. Within psychology, identity has been understood as the aspect of the self that gives meaning to others (Jung & Hecht, 2004; Tajfel & Turner, 1979). Through sociology, identity has been theorized as social roles that aid in explaining one's self image and position within society (Jung & Hecht, 2004; Mead, 1934; Stryker, 2008).

Scholars in Communication Studies have asserted that identity obtains communicative aspects and have thought identity to be co-created within relationships and emerging out of relationships (Shin & Hecht, 2017; Jung, 2011). As early as Goffman, identity has been viewed through a communicative lens as being a presentation of the self that is performed for others to view in the front stage. The idea of one's true self though, is hidden from all within the dwellings of the backstage (Metts & Cupach, 2008). Although this idea shows effort in interpreting identity from a communication point of view, it does little work at assisting to understand how others might influence how a person conceives themselves. This led scholars such as Jung and Hecht (2004) within the field to address the emerging questions about the relationship between communication and identity formation. Still, various conceptions of communication's role within identity development occurred. Some, like Morkros (2003) have asserted that the self is constructed out of a reflection of interaction, while others like Ting-Toomey

(1999) attest that identity is constituted as a negotiation from discourse with others.

Cultural Identity Theory (CIT) provides a framework examining how cultural identity is established and preserved. An underlying communicative assumption of CIT asserts that part of the construction of cultural identity is through the co-creation and re-creation of social interaction between the individual and the various communities a person belongs to (Orbe & Harris 2013; Yep 1998). Thus, to construct cultural identity is to negotiate, renegotiate, maintain, and modify through dialogue with and among community members. CIT proposes that interaction between participants either reifies or modifies cultural identity, as the interactants choose to maintain existing identity, modify, or adopt new cultural identities. Therefore, developing a Hawaiian identity relies heavily between the negotiation of the self, the Hawaiian community, and how structures of power represent Hawaiians.

Hawaiian Identity as Told by Western Perspective

In his article entitled, “On being Hawaiian enough: Contesting American Racialization with Native Hybridity,” Ledward (2007) invites the audience to question their own socially constructed ideas of: What does a Hawaiian look like? What characteristics contribute to a “Hawaiian-looking” person? Who decided these characteristics? What is the relationship between looking Hawaiian and being Kānaka Maoli (Hawaiian)? What does it mean to be a Hawaiian when one is not “Hawaiian looking?” He examines the feelings of Hapa Hawaiians (Hawaiians of multi-identity/mixed-heritage) in Hawai‘i and “off-island.” “Hawaiians are imagined to be a homogeneous group, yet there is much diversity within the Hawaiian community” (p.107). Ledward’s (2007) research offers insight into his own personal experience and

family histories of contemporary Hawaiians whose lives “reflect hybridity and multiplicity”:

The creation of a monolithic Hawaiian culture is rooted in the convergence of scientific and touristic depictions, which privilege phenotype over other components of identity. The stories of research participants reveal how color consciousness, racialization, and not feeling “Hawaiian enough” complicate matters for the *lahui Hawai‘i* (Hawaiian community). (p.107)

Generations of Western depictions have and continue to influence the way Hawaiians are seen and the way they see themselves. Scientific, historical, and anthropological representations of *Kānaka Maoli* in the early 20th century, as well as representations from the tourist industry, combine to form stereotypes that presume an overlap between “race” and “culture.” While “looking Hawaiian” cannot possibly be a reliable indicator of Hawaiian-ness, Ledward (2007) asserts that:

People, both non-Hawaiians and Hawaiians alike, tend to assess cultural and ethnic identity based on phenotypic qualities. Dark complexion, dark hair, brown eyes, a wide nose, and fuller lips are common markers . . . often lead to assumptions of one’s Hawaiian-ness. These markers are initial signifiers that are tested against other attributes, such as names, behavior, cultural knowledge, and location of residence. (p. 111)

Kauanui (2008) points to a historical moment when the United States government imposed a policy on the Indigenous people of Hawai‘i, and Hawaiian identity became a race issue, measurable by blood quantum. Referring to mixed ancestry among Hawaiians, she reports, “The mixed-race status of Hawaiians is both a desired outcome of assimilation, and also a condition that disqualifies them from land rights and other benefits” (Kauanui, 2008, p. 119).

The Hawaiian Homes Commission Act (HHCA), for example, established a “spectrum” or “continuum of Hawaiian-ness,” thereby allowing Hawaiians with 50% blood quantum or more to claim benefits such as homestead land and housing.

Individuals entitled are often waitlisted for decades; spouses and children with less than 50% Hawaiian blood are ineligible to inherit those benefits and must move from the property once the beneficiary passes away (Buyers, 2006). Perhaps this is one reason that Hawaiians leave Hawai‘i for the mainland—because they can no longer afford to live in the islands. Kānaka Maoli are forced out of their own heritage and connection to the land. Hence, an American notion of identity emerges, as being partly related to the percentage of “Hawaiian” blood one inherits. This in turn, identity is not merely seen as cultural, racial, or ethnic, but is seen as inherently political.

Indigenous/Native Identity

Kenny and Fraser (2012) identify four embodied concepts core for Native leadership: land, ancestors, elders, and story/oral history. From the beginning of time, tribal peoples all over the world have lived by a shared code of ethics that embraces these values as sacred. We know this to be true by our creation stories and oral histories that have been told and retold for generations, well before our languages were scribed. Additionally, Kanaka Maoli believed that health, wellness, and prosperity depended upon *lokahi* (unity/harmony) between self and others, *‘āina* (land), and *ke akua* (higher spirits/deities) (Meyer, 1998; Noyes, 2003; Rezentes, 1996). Identity problems arise after colonization and integration, when Western and Indigenous values clashed, and Western laws were imposed upon Indigenous people (Smith, 2013).

The World Council of Indigenous Peoples (WCIP) passed a resolution in 1977 declaring that only Indigenous peoples should have the right to define who is, and who is not, Indigenous. The official definition states that:

Indigenous people shall be people living in countries which have populations composed of different ethnic or racial groups who are descendants of the earliest

population which survive in the area, and who do not, as a group, control the national government of the countries within which they live. (Razak, 2003, p. 153)

Kānaka Maoli therefore, are identified as Native, Indigenous peoples. Indigenous peoples are also referred to as “First Peoples,” “Native Peoples,” “First Nations,” or “Aboriginals,” because their ancestors were the original inhabitants of their lands (Razak, 2003; Smith, 2013).

Dissertation Methodology

Engaging in academic research and writing can mean spending a lot of time alone in archives, in labs, in libraries, in “the field,” and often in front of computers. But, referred to as braided knowledges by Indigenous studies scholar Atalay (2012), everything has a connection, thus our scholarly methods should intertwine the best of all perspectives, to create a synergetic approach. This attitude towards scholarship is also seen in Hawaiian studies, as Trask (1999) poetically reassures us that, before we were born, those “Kānaka who came before us have been twinning stores of intellectual ropes for us to use...thus, we who consider ourselves to be Hawaiian studies practitioners are never really alone. Our kūpuna (elders/mentors) join us in our work, whether we recognize them or not” (p. 23). When I use the phrase Hawaiian studies here, I mean it in a broad sense. I am not simply referring to scholarship produced by those who are directly connected to Hawaiian studies departments as students or faculty, rather I am motioning toward a dynamic, interdisciplinary field that is constituted by practitioners in a range of diverse locations but who maintain some shared commitments and driving questions. Yet, what makes this field cohere? This project was but a subtle attempt to talk about some possibilities of Hawaiian studies in relation to textual/rhetorical analysis.

What I attempt here is to intertwine the roles of researcher and practitioner, of scholar and protester, of Eurocentric tendencies of approaching a text and Indigenous perspectives, specifically the Hawaiian values of *lāhui*, *ea*, *kuleana*, and *pono*.

We can think about *lāhui*, *ea*, *kuleana*, and *pono* as central commitments and lines of inquiry that are hallmarks of Hawaiian studies research. Each of these four principles could also be seen as ‘*aho*, single cords, that when braided together form what Trask (1999) describes as a “rope of resistance” (p. 55). It is a rope that holds the field of Hawaiian studies together. It provides a means of connection for our people. My goal here, is to draw out these particular ‘*aho* of Hawaiian studies intellectual production and use them in conjuncture with predominately Western ideas of textual/rhetorical analysis and cultural practices.

One of the hallmarks of Indigenous Hawaiian studies research is a commitment to ensuring the survivance of Kanaka Maoli as a *lāhui*, a people (Oliveira & Wright, 2016). Tired of others trying to define Hawaiians and of being pummeled into accepting the “othered” view of ourselves, Holt describes Hawaiians instead as “a people with a history... the Native connective tissue to forebearers who used these islands superbly for the production of goods and the enjoyment of life” (Holt, 1964, pp. 9-10). In the context of the ongoing U.S. occupation of Hawai‘i, one of the central challenges for Hawaiian studies practitioners is the need to strategically assert and nurture our collective identity in the face of American discourses of assimilation (Oliveira & Wright, 2016). Scholars employing critical approaches to Hawaiian studies, such as Haunani Trask, Rona Halualani, Noelani Goodyear-Ka‘ōpua, Jamaica Heolimeleikalani Osorio, and Noenoe Silva, have interrogated the ways that Hawaiian subjectivities are affected and inhabited

through notions of race, class, and gender. They point toward the importance of Hawaiian studies methodologies that give us the ability to negotiate discrepant relations of power and authority. They also suggest a more complex picture than seeing Hawaiians as victims or agents, either authentic or assimilated. They call us instead to consider the political stakes such as the material effects on Hawaiian lands and bodies, and of different ways of understanding and living our “Hawaiianess.” To that end, Hawaiian studies helps us in thinking about Kanaka Maoli collective political status and claims (Oliveria & Wright, 2016).

Indigenous methodologies require that research practitioners be conscious of the political stakes of our research. We incorporate the lived experiences of our people into the way we frame, conduct, and present our research. The word *ea* has several meanings. It refers to political independence and is often translated as “sovereignty.” It also carries the meanings “life” and “breath,” among numerous others. Thus, *ea* means independence as well as life, and connects the two together. *Ea* refers to the environment that sustains life for all creatures; it is the water and air that sustains life; it is the optimal environment for people to thrive, in thinking of both nature and politics (Goodyear-Ka’opua, 2014). To live, to breathe, is to be free; to be free is to live and to breathe. “Like breathing *ea* cannot be achieved or possessed; it requires constant action day after day, generation after generation” (Goodyear-Ka’opua, 2014, p. 4). *Ea* is essential for survival. It is the environment in which we thrive. Research can give us collective voice, it is not the only source of voice, but with *ea* in mind, meaningful Hawaiian studies research can act as a conduit of our breath, life, sovereignty.

Another factor inherent in Indigenous/Hawaiian methodologies is *kuleana*, or

responsibility. For Hawaiians, kuleana is extremely important (Wright & Balutski, 2013). According to Pukui and Elbert (1986), kuleana means “right, privilege, concern, responsibility” (p. 179). In traditional society, kuleana referred to a plot of land an individual person or family was charged with maintaining and caring for (Kame’eleihiwa, 1992). In a way, my work is the plot to which I am responsible to tend with care. As a researcher, finding my personal/professional voice is an important part of methodology. I often ask myself, what is at stake in my methods of research and writing? To whom am I accountable? Who is at risk and how? Who might benefit and how? What obligations to specific communities, families, individuals, stories, and places do I have? These are all ethical questions that Indigenous researchers struggle with. To be an academic is to occupy a position of privilege. With more knowledge comes more kuleana. I carry the burden of representing my community in the work that I produce, and it is because of this that I position myself predominantly in the texts that I analyze. Smith argues that sharing knowledge should be reciprocal and that research scholarship should enrich the participating community (Smith, 2013).

Thus far I have suggested lāhui, ea, and kuleana as central commitments and questions that are hallmarks of Hawaiian studies research. I now offer one final ‘aho (braided rope), pono. The word pono is usually translated in English as “righteous” or “proper,” but is, in reality, much deeper, broader, and more complex, as evidenced by its definition in one of the most complete Hawaiian language dictionaries. In Pukui and Elbert’s 1986 dictionary, pono occupies nearly three-quarters of a column:

Goodness, uprightness, morality, moral qualities, correct or proper procedure, excellence, well-being, prosperity, welfare, benefit, behalf, equity, sake, true condition or nature, duty; moral, fitting, proper, righteous, right, upright, just,

virtuous, fair, beneficial, successful, in perfect order, accurate, correct, eased, relieved; should, ought, must. (p. 421).

Perhaps Kame‘eleihiwa’s (1992) question is as applicable for Hawaiian studies scholars today as when she posed it more than twenty years ago in her book, *Native Land and Foreign Desires: Pehea lā e pono ai*: “How do we restore balance, bring about healing, and assure that justice is realized?” Indeed, Pehea lā e pono ai? As a people who study Hawaiian culture, we should consciously think about how our work contribute to collective discussion and action around pono. At a micro level, we might consider questions such as: How are the benefits of this research accruing? To whom? To what end? How are benefits or predominant lines of Hawaiian studies growing differently across different groups in the community? How can we support emergent lines of research that may more effectively challenge the structural relations of power and wealth that hinder Hawaiian survivance (Goodyear-Ka’opua, 2014)?

With more Indigenous people conducting research in their Native communities, many have taken a more conscious effort to consider our values and beliefs as relevant forms of ontology and epistemology (Lopes Jr., 2016). Methods that are employed should be a process that is “respectful, to enable people to heal and to educate” (Smith, 2013, p. 128). Researchers should make a more mindful effort to develop the tools that are needed to conduct their own research. Indigenous scholars have the opportunity to present “our position in history...tell our stories, write our own versions, in our own ways, for our own purposes” (Smith, 2013, p. 28).

Extending on Critical Race theory, TribalCrit adopts nine tenets, five of which are important to the study of Native Hawaiian identity and culture:

1. Colonization is endemic to society.

2. U.S. policies toward Indigenous peoples are rooted in colonialism, White supremacy, and a desire for material gain.
3. Indigenous peoples occupy a liminal space that accounts for both the political and racialized natures of their identities.
4. Indigenous peoples constantly seek ways of expressing self-determination, sovereignty, and autonomy.
5. Reframing culture, knowledge, research, and power through an Indigenous perspective is imperative. (Brayboy, 2005, p. 429)

The consequences of colonialism and occupation are impacting factors in viewing the exploitation of Natives' conception of 'āina (land) and identity by Eurocentric powers.

Articulating Hawai'i specific colonialism and imperialism is vital because of its intergenerational impact on the current socioeconomic and political conditions that effect the Hawaiian people.

“The main aim of Indigenous methodologies is to ensure that research on Indigenous issues can be carried out in a more respectful, ethical, sympathetic, useful and beneficial fashion, seen from the point of view of Indigenous peoples” (Porsanger, 2004, p. 108). In reflecting on my personal journey with research inquiry, I am aware that my beliefs as a Japanese, Korean, Hawaiian, pansexual, scholar, educator, Hawaiian and Japanese cultural practitioner, have influenced me in what I research, and the perspective that I take on research. Native Hawaiian scholar Maaka (2003) offers advice for Indigenous researchers: “Given the multitude of questions to which Indigenous peoples are seeking answers, it is very clear that one single approach will not suffice. We need multiple methodologies that are grounded in our Indigenous traditions” (p. 6). Considering Maaka's (2003) words, I always attempt to be conscious of Native Hawaiian culture and values, and self-reflexive of my own morals while at the same time proving the rigor of my work in the academy. With these Indigenous/Hawaiian values in mind, I will now describe textual/rhetorical analysis as a potential method for Indigenous

scholars.

Bryman (2004) states that textual analysis is probably the most prevalent approach to the qualitative research of texts. Textual analysis is a way for researchers to gather information about how people make sense of the world. It is a methodology for those who want to understand the ways in which members of various cultures and subcultures make sense of who they are, and of how they fit into the world in which they live (Selzer, 2003). We interpret texts in order to try and obtain a sense of the ways in which, in particular cultures at particular times, people make sense of the world around them. Texts are the material traces that are left of the practice of sensemaking. Hartley (2002) uses the metaphor of forensic science to describe this process.

Forensic scientists never actually see a crime committed—by the time they arrive on the scene, it has gone forever. They can never wind back time and witness it themselves; and they can never be entirely certain about what happened. But what they can do is sift through the evidence that it left—the forensic evidence—and make an educated and trained guess about what happened, based on that evidence (Hartley, 2002, p. 13).

Importantly, by examining the various ways in which it is possible to interpret reality, we also understand our own cultures better because we can start to see the limitations and advantages of our own sense-making practices. Thus, I argue the emphasis on merging the best of Western and Indigenous perspectives and methods. Western culture is only one possible approach to sensemaking. Rather than seeing rational descriptions of the world as simply describing the “truth” of the world, I approach textual analysis and sensemaking attempts to view texts from multiple perspectives—from different forms of language.

From this approach, we don’t make claims about whether texts are “accurate,” or “truthful” or “show reality.” We don’t simply dismiss them as inaccurate or biased. These

claims are moral ones more than anything, attempting to close down other forms of representation without engaging with them. Instead, the methodology that I am describing seeks to understand the ways in which these forms of representation take place, the assumptions behind them, and the kinds of sensemaking about the world that they reveal (Stam, 1991). Different texts can present the same event in different ways, and all of them can be as truthful and accurate as each other, hence Stam's (1991) argument of polyphony and others argument of polysemy. If all we say of them is that they are "accurate" or "inaccurate," then we never get to the interesting part of the analysis—how these texts tell their stories, how they represent the world, and how they make sense of it.

Some might ask, "If there is no single correct way of making sense of any part of reality, does that mean that anything goes?" or, "Can anybody make any claim and they would all be acceptable?" These are valid criticisms, and I would like to respond to these questions. Yes, some may have radical readings of texts that would be largely different from those of the culture around them, but textual analysis does not insist that anything goes, that any representation is as acceptable as any other, or that any interpretation makes as much sense as any other. In fact, I think the opposite seems to be the case. The reason we analyze texts are to find out what were and what are the reasonable sensemaking practices of cultures, rather than just repeating our own interpretation and calling it reality (Stam, 1991). A variety of perspectives exist, but there is a finite number of sensemaking positions available within a given culture at a given time—keys being intrinsic and extrinsic contexts, intertextuality or the text's connection to other texts, and paratextuality or outside knowledge that would affect the reading of the text. In short,

context matters. Of course, even my own thoughts are debatable. There is a history to this kind of textual analysis. It comes from certain traditions and can only answer certain questions. It can never produce something of absolute certainty, nor can it always produce statistics to back its claims. There are certainly other ways to deal with texts, but textual analysis as a method is, I think, one useful way to answer questions about meaning-making within specific contexts and from particular informed perspectives. Though popular culture forms popularity based on redundancy of messages, and the power of the political economy, the texts selected in this project aims at analyzing a wide array of cultural products that range from different genres and mediums to help gain a fuller picture of the varying depictions of Hawaiians.

Postcolonial textual criticism focuses on the forces at work that shape ideas and values in a particular culture. That kind of culture that has been colonized or subjected to the rule of another, or an “other.” Cultural objects are often an important part of the way a ruling power thinks about and influences its subjects, and also an important feature of the way Native people both absorb and resist the colonizing power (Cook-Lynn, 1996). Postcolonial criticism is not restricted to the analysis of literary texts, but rather seeks to connect any grouping or products that may help us understand the complex relationships of a colonial to a colonized culture. The goal here is to intervene and expose the way that one culture represents and therefore controls another—my goal is to undermine that power. Thus, the excluded, repressed, “savage”, and “primitive” can be rewritten in other terms.

The value in writing about culture as a way of intervening in culture is at the heart of critical/cultural studies. Cultural studies is concerned with the ways cultural practices

are produced, inserted in, reinforced, and operated in everyday life. It examines how people are empowered and disempowered by particular structures, with the idea of “power” being centered (Grossberg, 2010). Cultural studies assumes that meaning is constructed, and that we cannot assume that Western culture is superior to some other culture. The usefulness and popularity of critical/cultural studies derives in part from the liberating erasure of our assumptions and prejudices (Cook-Lynn, 1996). Cultural values are invented, and cultural studies seeks to expose the systems of meaning-making that create the worlds that people inhabit. Critical/cultural studies can be thought of more as guidelines, than a set of theories, as it encompasses a plethora of different theories from varying theoretical perspectives. The fundamental idea of cultural studies, one could argue, is that the products of a culture are shaped by underlying assumptions and values and various methods from psychoanalysis to textual analysis can be used to explain the objects and activities of a culture (Grossberg, 2010; Cook-Lynn, 1996). This field attempts to use the best intellectual resources available to gain a better understanding of the state of play of power within particular contexts, one of those intellectual resources being postcolonial theory. As Hall (1996) contends in “When was the POST-colonial,” postcoloniality is a response to a genuine need to overcome a crisis of understanding and knowing the world outside of old canons. This dissertation is an attempt to do so by adopting a braided knowledge approach, utilizing textual/rhetorical analysis from a Hawaiian point-of-view.

Textual analysis is a flexible method that is used to analyze text data (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). What is considered text data can range from verbal messages, written manuscripts, or media and electronic sources. The text data that a scholar decides to

analyze is dependent on what is the best means for examining a particular phenomenon (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). The aim of a textual analysis is to acquire a condensed, broad description of a phenomenon; the outcome of an analysis should be a set of concepts to describe the phenomenon (Elo & Kyngas, 2008). As Bryman (2004) contends, a textual analysis is “an approach to documents that emphasizes the role of the investigator in the construction of the meaning of and in texts...there is an emphasis on allowing categories to emerge out of data and on recognizing the significance for understanding the meaning of the context in which the item being analyzed appeared” (p. 41). In short, a textual analysis is concerned with meanings, consequences, and context (Downe-Wamboldt, 1992).

The process of carrying out a textual analysis follows a sequential model and puts forward three distinct analytical procedures, which may be carried out either independently or in combination, depending on the research questions (Mayring, 2002). These three elements are: summary, explication, and structuring. Using summary as an analytical approach attempts to reduce the material in such a way that preserves the essential content through abstraction, while also succinctly describing the example without overexpansion (Mayring, 2002). To accomplish this, the text is paraphrased, generalized or abstracted, and reduced. Explication involves explaining, clarifying, and annotating the specific material that represent common themes throughout that text (Mayring, 2002). From a deductive approach, the researcher examines particular events that connect to each other. Then, they explicate or make sense of their findings. Structuring corresponds to the procedures used in the analysis and is viewed as the most crucial technique of a textual analysis. The goal of this approach is to filter out a

particular structure from the material being examined. If a particular word or phrase about a Native Hawaiian is used frequently throughout the film, this method would propose that the phrase would have some sort of rhetorical power. The power that it represents would then hold weight to how audiences might interpret the meaning of such word connected to Hawaiians. For example, if a person is constantly being described as benevolent, or having the “aloha spirit”, this representation of that character then gains traction and defines who they are, insinuating a preferred portrayal. In this project, I am interested in how different mediums or cultural artifacts represent Hawai‘i and its people.

Related to textual analysis is rhetorical analysis or rhetorical criticism. Kennedy (1991) argued, at its broadest level, rhetoric is “the energy inherent in emotion and thought, transmitted through a system of signs, including language, to others to influence their decisions or actions” (p. 7). As suggested by him, rhetoric develops in the realm of symbols. Language is a familiar system using written and spoken words to communicate meaning. People’s social lives depend on using symbols for achieving their sense of “self.” Symbols are used to bring about cooperation, compromise, and coordination of effort inherent to forming and maintaining society (Herrick, 2009). In rhetoric, people act symbolically in response to their motives, taking in commitments, desires, and goals that lead to action. Simply put, texts rhetorically convey a portrayal of those who wrote the text, their goals, motives, and persona.

If rhetoric is the projection of meaning through symbols, rhetorical criticism, then, is the searching out of meaning within texts. As Black (1978) articulates the lines between positivist and interpretive methods:

The scientist is one who is associated with the scientific method...He [sic] is, in sum, committed to adhere to certain strict procedures of logic, and to certain well-

defined intellectual values...Criticism is a discipline that, through the investigation and appraisal of the activities and products of men [sic], seeks as its end the understanding of man [sic] himself. (pp. 7-9)

Where the scientist, or positivist, typically studies natural phenomena, the rhetorician studies the products of people in order to gain a better understanding of that community.

Haunani Kay Trask (1999) begins her book, *From a Native Daughter*, by stating, “When I was young the story of my people was told twice: once by my parents, then again by my schoolteachers” (p. 1). What Trask succinctly describes is how Kanaka Maoli exist negotiating between two distinct stories. It reminds me of Fish’s (1980) idea of the interpretive community, where language is always perceived from a given social structure or point-of-view. As Fish (1980) notes, “all objects are made and not found, and that they are made by interpretive strategies we set in motion...to the list of made or construed objects we must add ourselves, for we are no less than the poems and assignments we see are the products of social and cultural thought” (pp. 331-332). People interpret a text within a given context, and with set preconceived notions based on experience and shared group-knowledge. “It is impossible even to think of a sentence independently of a context, and when we are asked to consider a sentence for which no context has been specified, we will automatically hear it in the context in which it has been most often encountered” (Fish, 1980, p. 310). Texts and textuality emerge out of context, and the interpretive communities (cultures) that a person affiliates with effects the ways in which texts are produced and read.

Using Fish’s ideas, Fleski (2015) continues by stating that:

We cannot access all the conditions that make our speech possible; we cannot turn all of our background into foreground; we cannot turn all that is unthought into thought. To believe that we can denaturalize the assumptions that make our thinking possible, that we can distance ourselves from the very patterns of belief

that make us who we are, is to chase the old dream of philosophical transcendence, of the view of nowhere. (p. 81)

I agree with this statement, and suggest that, try as we might, to completely “distance” oneself from the text, though also a form of relationality and positionality, is quite unrealistic from my ontological and epistemological approach. I am concerned with the well-being of present-day Hawaiians, and the role scholarship can play in strengthening my people and culture. This concern translates into an academic interest in Indigenous research, and from an effort to balance Kanaka Maoli and Western knowledge systems. I envision Indigenous scholarship to the same regard that Kawelu (2015) does:

Embracing more of a Kanaka Maoli system of knowing, allowing for change and a multiplicity of approaches... engaging issues surrounding the practice of research, addressing research topics of interest to Kanaka Maoli, incorporating Kanaka Maoli voices into the discipline, and taking this one step further by encouraging Kanaka Maoli to enter the field. (p. 17)

Perhaps some fundamental questions for academics who conduct textual analysis and Hawaiian methodologies are: How do I live my life with integrity to my craft, to my kupuna (elders), to my family, to my community? How do I live pono? In that regard, Kanaka‘ole offers a beautiful interpretation of research and pono: “The greatest definition of pono, to me, is not being righteous, but being the most authentic...neither right nor wrong, both are acknowledged, and both are valuable” (Snow, 2014, p. 29).

Understanding media and its influences on multiple facets of humanity (identity, ideology, economics, etc.) is complex, but media is almost inherently inescapable—it is always-already meshed into our lives. In fact, Slack (2012) argues that technology is a part of us: “We have never been fully independent, isolated beings, separate from our technologies. Technologies do not exist as tools wholly outside and independent of our bodies, even when they appear to exist outside the molarities we think of as our

bodies...We have always, in that sense been cyborg” (Slack, 2012, p. 150). With reliance of technologies in aiding even the tiniest of daily tasks, media studies is ever more relevant. But in order to keep up with the rapid advancements of media, methods will need to be adapted. Some scholars, such as Grossberg, have suggested a multi-methodological or multimodal approach as a means towards observing people’s use of and interaction with media.

For example, taking a cultural studies lens, Grossberg (2010) argues for the need to expand beyond a single paradigm: “Culture studies refuses to go along with the increasingly common effort to reduce all intellectual work to a single logic or productivity and efficiency, as if all scholarship operated within the same temporality” (p. 55). Couldry (2006) lends us some idea of what the future of media studies, should, and might look like:

We need to know much more about the relative importance in people’s lives of 1) mainstream media institutions, 2) other media productions, and 3) non-media influences, and to understand better the range of variation here among individuals and sociological types. Second, as the range of media themselves increases, and the complexity of their potential interactions increases exponentially, our research can take for granted a mediated environment that is super-saturated. (p. 187)

Curran (2006) urges researchers to go beyond conforming to what has been done, in search of new ways of exploring media and expanding theories: “If anything, this tendency to hunt as a pack is becoming even more entrenched. Perhaps the next time a collective ‘turn’ is proclaimed, fewer people should rush to join the caravanseraï travelling to the new approved destination. It might be better if some people decided to journey in the opposite direction,” (p. 145) or in the case of this project, a slight detour from traditional methods.

Research Questions

Given the significant political, cultural, and intellectual influences that the Hawaiian sovereignty movement has had on the lives of Hawai‘i’s inhabitants, both Hawaiian and non-Hawaiian, it is surprising that more books or journal publications have not been written about Hawaiian representation and Hawaiian identity. Trask’s (1999), *From a Native Daughter*, is one of the most widely known books on contemporary Hawaiian political movements, even though a majority of it was written about twenty-five years ago. Recent books such as Halualani’s (2002), *In the Name of Hawaiians*, and Kaunani’s (2008), *Hawaiian Blood*, provide important, rich studies on particular aspects of Hawaiian culture and Hawaiian identity. However, there remains a dire need for Kanaka scholars to offer up-to-date information about historical and contemporary trends in the Hawaiian sovereignty movement, from the point of view of Natives. This project aims to add to these prolific works.

Based on theories pertaining to critical theory and cultural studies (critical/cultural studies), predominately theories of postcolonialism, colonality of power, and decolonization, this project aims to examine the multiple forms of representation of Hawai‘i and Hawaiians in three mediums: television, film, and music. Specific case studies will be used as exemplars of Western portrayals of Hawaiians, as well as of cultural texts that are produced by Hawaiians. Research questions that I explore in this project are:

RQ1: What are the Orientalizing, Westernized, hegemonic tropes and representations of Hawai‘i and Hawaiians as presented by mainstream/Hollywood cultural artifacts via the characters, scenes, background imagery, diegetic and non-diegetic sound/music and texts?

RQ2: How is Hawai‘i and its people represented in cultural artifacts that are produced by identified Hawaiians, via the characters, scenes, background imagery, diegetic and non-diegetic sound/music and texts?

RQ3: In what ways can we blend Western and Indigenous/Other ontologies and epistemologies, as well as other forms of knowledge seeking and learning, in approaching research and pedagogy of representation and identity?

The following three chapters will be specific case studies of Hawaiian representations within three different mediums: television, film, and music. The next chapter, Chapter 3, will examine the “Hawaiian” in popular television texts, as well as Hawaiian owned networks.

CHAPTER 3

REPRESENTATIONS OF HAWAIIANS IN TELEVISION:

NEGOTIATING BETWEEN MILITOURISM AND CULTURAL REVITALIZATION

“You know what’s funny? You don’t look Hawaiian... But you were born there, weren’t you? (S1E1). These are the first words spoken in the 2010 re-launch of the widely popular primetime television series *Hawaii Five-0*¹⁰. This is an interesting question to pose and is answered through the narratives of the main and recurring characters. *Hawaii Five-0*, currently in its 12th season, follows Navy Lieutenant Commander Steve McGarrett (Alex O’Loughlin) as he leads his team of Sergeant Danny “Danno” Williams (Scott Caan), former Hawai‘i Police Department detective Chin Ho Kelly (Daniel Dae Kim), and newly graduated police cadet Kono Kalakaua (Grace Park) in a “no rules applies” approach to hunting down the state’s worst fugitives. *Hawaii Five-0*’s producers have hired Hawaiian language and culture experts to help ensure that terms are pronounced appropriately, and that traditional Hawaiian practices, as well as “local” culture, are displayed as accurately as possible (Kia, 2010). Though this is a step in the right direction, the show itself has major issues in terms of the representation of Hawaiians and Hawaiian culture, as these portrayals tend to be one-sided.

Hollywood depictions of Hawai‘i and Native Hawaiians provides depictions of wealth, lifestyle, physical characteristics, and intelligence, and exaggerates Hawaiian culture as a commodity that could skew the negotiation of identity for Hawaiians. This chapter is a critical overview of the contemporary representations of the islands and its

¹⁰ *Hawaii Five-0* was the most popular new series of the 2010-2011 season, and averages between 10-12 million viewers each episode in all ten seasons, making it the most popular, and most wide-reaching, of any television show or film that depicts Hawaiians.

people within popular television, using *Hawaii Five-0* as a case study. The goal here is to overlay and challenge the conception of being “Hawaiian” as told from a Eurocentric lens, and also provide an alternative televisual, in ‘Ōiwi TV, that could help inform audiences more about other representations of Native Hawaiians, beyond mainstream television.

Analyzing Television

Media institutions are powerful. Children between the ages of two and seventeen watch an average of 22 hours of television each week; adults spend one-third of their time awake each day connected to media (more than 11 hours a day); 88 percent of homes in the United States subscribe to a cable TV company; and 79 percent of Americans have computers (Common Sense Media, 2017; Nielsen Company, 2018). The U.S. has the highest Internet penetration rate in the world, with an estimated more than 89 percent of the population being users (Pew Research Center, 2018). Gerbner and colleagues (2002) suggest that the level of media consumption is related to how people perceive their world. Seeing oneself in media can aid in constructing a view of the self and of the world around the self (Merskin, 1998). At the same time, not seeing oneself, or viewing a skewed portrayal of the self, could also impact one’s identity. Such stereotypes can be used to legitimize hegemonic ideals of race and ethnicity.

UCLA’s 2019 Hollywood Diversity Report asserts that American film and television is the most diverse in terms of gender and racial representation than ever before (Hunt, Ramón, Tran, Sargent & Roychoudhury, 2019). A means to understanding and testing this latest trend in culture, race, ethnicity, and language representation in media is by evaluating television texts. As D’acci (2004) argues:

Television representation, therefore, conjures up notions of one thing standing in for something else; and we typically contrast this representation to reality, believing, for example, that the electronic image of a man [sic] on the TV screen is a portrayal, a substitute, or a reproduction of flesh and blood man out there in the world of empirical reality. (p. 374)

Audiences, therefore, have the tendency to believe that what is on the screen is the only truth available. Television as a medium, communicates the “everydayness” of reality (Gray & Lotz, 2012). Kellner (1982) sharply contends that television provides, “stories which dramatize society’s values, ideals and ways of life; they are enacted in story-telling media...TV is the electronic ideology machine who offers hegemonic ideology for advanced capitalism” (p. 134). Television narratives signal to the audience reality, representation, and ideology. As a large Western industry, Hollywood has the resources to create a skewed view of reality, representation, and ideology that would support their bottom line (Christian, 2018). Thus, when using culturally specific language and practices, shows like *Hawaii Five-0* attract large audiences that are potentially receptive to adopting Hollywood’s own rendering of Hawaiian language and culture. An Indigenous approach toward textual analysis may prove to be useful when analyzing such polarized depictions.

As a popular network, and syndicated, television show, expanding over 200 episodes and reaching over ten million viewers worldwide, this is the first project known to analyze a contemporary television show that contains a plethora of representations of what it means to be “Hawaiian” (IMDbPro, 2019). Being that this series encompasses over 200 episodes, I conducted a preliminary soak of the series up until Season 7, viewing every episode and noting potential episodes to focus on using the four tropes of Hawaiian representation that was created based on historical and contemporary

depictions.¹¹ When deciding on episode selection, I chose at least one episode from each season for consistency of tropes throughout the series. Each episode designated were viewed two or more times for quotes and examples. Based on these methods, I was interested in investigating ways *Hawaii Five-0* maintains, evolves, negotiates, or subverts hegemonic stereotypes of the Hawaiian via the characters, scenes, background imagery, diegetic and non-diegetic sound/music, and texts.

Hawaii Five-0's "Hawaiian"

Throughout the multiple explications of the episodes of *Hawaii Five-0*, numerous iterations of the hegemonic historical and contemporary depictions, as mentioned in Chapter 1, of Hawaiians can be observed, especially in all main and recurring characters that are "Hawaiian"¹² in the show. Through the characters of Chin Ho Kelly, Kono Kalakaua, and Kamekona Tupuola (Taylor Wily) three of the four tropes were found, and a composite of the "Hawaiian" is seen as being: immoral, sexualized, and unintelligent.

Native Hawaiians as Immoral: Chin Ho Kelly

Hawaii Five-0 reinforces the narrative of the "immoral" Native Hawaiian juxtaposed to the policing from a White "moral" authority figure. Violence being the focal point here, while race being the division. The logic here is that a White "savior" uses their privileged violence to correct corrupted and violent radicals. This justified

¹¹ Though Season 12 is currently airing on CBS, at the time of analysis only seasons 1-7 were analyzed since they featured the original cast members and it was available to view multiple times via Netflix.

¹² Though all characters are shown to be Hawaiian in the series, the actors/actresses playing these characters do not identify as Hawaiian. Thus, they are considered as "passing," or not being Hawaiian but being able carry the role of being Hawaiian based and phenotypical characteristics that are stereotypically "Hawaiian" looking. This is also known as brown-face and is another aspect of representation that I intend on analyzing but merits its own project.

violence by one race over others is rooted in Hawaiian history. The Massie-Kahahawai case (or more commonly known as the Massie case) in the early 1930s is an example of brutality that was used against Native Hawaiians and locals. A wife of a Navy officer, Thalia Massie, accused “some Hawaiian boys” of kidnapping and raping her in Waikiki, a popular tourist location in O‘ahu, Hawai‘i (Rosa, 2014). Although she could not remember the exact descriptions of the men who assaulted her, nor provide consistent statements, five young local men, two of which were Native Hawaiian, were accused of the alleged crime (Rosa, 2014). Following a mistrial, Horace Ida, one of the accused men, was kidnapped and beaten by Navy men before escaping. Worse yet, Thomas Massie (husband of Thalia), Grace Fortescue (mother of Thalia) and two fellow Navy personnel officers killed Joseph Kahahawai, one of the Native Hawaiian men accused. For the latter incident, All four were later convicted of manslaughter and sentenced to ten years of prison. However, the Governor reduced their sentence to one hour in his office (Rosa, 2014). This historical incident indicates that violence against “aggressive” locals is warranted, and when violence has to be used the perpetrators are the victims. This event parallels with Chin Ho’s storyline within the fictional *Hawaii Five-0*. Thus, reality is then mirrored from historical to the fictional, blurring the lines between the two.

We first meet Chin Ho Kelly (Daniel Dae Kim) in the pilot episode (S1E1). Chin is a local boy from Hawai‘i, thus figuratively representing Native Hawaiians in the series. Chin was at one point a police officer with the Honolulu Police Department (HPD), but was released from the department when he was accused of being a dirty cop. Now working a civilian job, Chin caught up with Steve McGarrett (Alex O’Loughlin) by a chance encounter at the Pearl Harbor Hickam Pier when Steve, a Lieutenant Commander

in the Navy, returns to Hawai‘i following his father’s death, John McGarrett (William Sadler). Chin was previously acquainted with Steve’s dad because they were both police officers (and partners) with the HPD years earlier. During their brief chat, Chin expresses to Steve that John was a good friend both during his time on the force and after he was released. As a result, Chin repays the kindness that John showed him by joining a special taskforce based in Hawai‘i that McGarrett is leading. The Governor of Hawai‘i gave Steve this leadership position so that he could clean the streets of O‘ahu. Right off the bat, Chin is posed as being corrupt, and is considered to be an outcast of the police department and of the community, while Steve is shown to be the moral compass and saving grace for Chin specifically, but for Hawai‘i and its people as a whole. Thus, *Haole Pono*¹³, or showcasing the mantra of divine leadership of the superior White man, is clearly evident here.

We are reminded of Chin’s “wrongdoing” in future episodes. For example, Chin is blackmailed from a fellow dirty cop, Frank Delano (William Baldwin). After agreeing to sign Frank out of Halawa Correctional Facility in exchange for his cousin’s release from kidnappers, Chin learns that Frank’s team of men has also kidnapped his wife, Kelly (Reiko Aylesworth). In shock, Chin asks Frank why he is being targeted. Frank replies “Everybody knows you are a dirty cop... but instead of having your life ruined like the rest of us, ...you get your badge back” (S2E23). Although he tries to be the “good guy” in an effort to save his cousin, this exchange implies that Chin is still a dirty cop. Further demonstrating this is when Chin is being questioned by Internal Affairs (IA) about the

¹³ The term *Haole Pono* does not exist in the literature on Hawai‘i and is coined by myself.

murder of his father in season four. IA points out that Chin has a “history of covering for family members who break the law” and references Chin’s uncle who stole drug money from a police evidence locker. IA also questions Chin’s involvement in squashing a car thief case years ago for Gabriel Waincroft, the brother of his girlfriend, now wife (S4E13). Here again we see that Chin is perceived to be the dirty cop.

Chin is continuously portrayed as having devious actions. Over the course of several episodes, Sara, daughter of Gabriel, is relocated to live with (and adopted by) other relatives in Mexico. Chin takes it upon himself to investigate the family to see if they are a good fit for Sara by conducting background checks and having a judge delay the adoption, which Kono, his cousin, warns him against (S7E10). For Chin, ‘ohana (family) is his motivation for just about everything he does. Even though the value for ‘ohana is a positive cultural value for Native Hawaiians, the portrayal of Chin suggests his actions are deceitful which plays into the stereotype of an immoral Hawaiian culture.

Native Hawaiians/Pacific Islanders are repeatedly portrayed as criminals, such as drug users, gang members, and/or part of an organized crime ring. Interestingly, Kaleo (Jason Scott Lee), a HPD detective, has a similar narrative to Chin’s, in that both were “crooked cops” (S1E8). This creates the impression that locals are not to be trusted, even ones that are police officers. These examples, reflected over the series, produce an image of a broken system rooted in an immoral local culture. The premise here is to fix this erratic behavior through morally correct, militarized White violence, or Haole Pono. No one exudes this characteristic more, than the main character of the series, Lieutenant Navy Commander Steve McGarrett.

We are introduced to McGarrett in the Pilot Episode while he conducts a prison transport in South Korea (S1E1). As the opening scene progresses, Steve's father is killed in his home in Hawai'i. Though Steve grew up in Hawai'i, he is not a Native Hawaiian by blood. Throughout the series, it becomes clear that Steve's leadership style is not "by the book." He uses force and violent behavior to get what he wants. In addition, no one tells him what to do, not even the Governor, but he has the authority to tell others what to do. He does whatever he thinks is right and uses any means necessary to do so. Essentially, he is everyone else's moral compass, as he literally and figuratively leads the team. For example, in the beginning of the series, Steve throws an uncooperative suspect off the roof of a tall building and holds him by his feet (S1E2). Fellow task member Danny (Scott Cann) reacts negatively to Steve's forceful and illegal behavior:

Danny: ... You cannot hang a guy off a roof!

Steve: (talking to the suspect) All I have to say is that you came at me with a gun. We struggled. You fell.

The example suggests that the law does not apply to Steve. His Haole Pono thinking overrides any consideration for humane treatment of locals, even if his actions may cause harm.

It is not surprising that Steve has used explosives in a public area. Steve and Danny decide to investigate and question "Big Lono" who owns Lono's Pawn Shop in Kalihi. "Big Lono" was not cooperative in opening the security door, stating that there needs to be a warrant. Consequently, Steve took matters into his own hands. He walks outside, grabs a grenade from the car, pulls the pin and places it on the locked security door, resulting in blowing up the store thereby "unlocking" the door. Even though the local merchant knew his rights, Steve disregards it (S1E17). This establishes a disparity

in power and protection under the law, suggesting that it is acceptable to violate the rights of local community members. This is a sharp contrast to Chin, who represents Native Hawaiians, as his circumvention of the law is characterized as rule breaking (even years later), while Steve is glorified for his law-breaking behavior with no consequences.

Steve's Haole Pono behavior continues over the course of the series. For example, while driving a jet ski, Steve drags a local male suspect in the ocean with hands tied to it (S6E10). In another incident, surrounded by HPD in a secured and restricted area of King's Medical Center, Steve enters the room of Oleg Larionov, a Russian spy, and shoots him. Steve casually emerges from the room and informs HPD, "Hey, he needs a doctor" (S6E17). Haole Pono is not limited to Steve's violent tendencies, but it also includes his rule-breaking behavior. For example, in season seven, we learn that Steve's driver's license has been expired for seven years. Therefore, he has been driving illegally since his return to the islands (S7E15).

Despite his penchant for violence and law-breaking, Steve is portrayed as a savior to his team. Without him, the Five-0 team would not be rescued from dangerous situations. A striking example of this occurs when Steve saves Chin and Kono from being killed. Feeling defensive, Steve makes a bet with Chin (and Kono) that he (and Danny) could get back to work faster by using an alternative highway he recommends despite its long route. Chin disagrees and states that he could get to work quicker with the roads he suggests and emphasizes that he is familiar with these roads because "I used to ride those trails on my dirt bike, when I was a kid". Steve wins the car race but is concerned when Chin and Kono fail to show up at work. We learn that Chin and Kono get lost, stop, and ask for help after spotting a vehicle on the side of the dirt road. It turns out the vehicle

belongs to two brothers who killed a police officer who are in the middle of digging a hole to bury the body. Chin and Kono are told to lineup with their backs turned. Pointing their guns, the brothers take their aim. Just in time, Steve and Danny arrive and instantly kill the brothers by shooting them in the back, saving the two Five-0 team members (S6E13). Without his instincts, Chin and Kono would not have survived the ordeal. Thus, it is clear that the White man saves the Hawaiians. In addition, Chin and Kono's "familiarity" with the land is transformed to ignorance, resulting in their need to be saved.

Steve's regard for not following the rules could be interpreted as comical. For example, when Danny did not want to purchase an expensive Christmas tree, Steve drives up to Kuliuou Forest Reserve and cuts down a tree with a chainsaw. Danny explains to Steve that it is unlawful to cut a tree down in a protected area. This does not matter to Steve, as we see the tree strapped to the roof of the car as they drive away. While conducting his own detective work, fellow HPD officer Pua Kai (Shawn Anthony Tomsen), determines that Danny has the tree in his possession, and notifies Danny that he will be fined for cutting the tree (S5E9). This scene normalizes Steve's irrational behavior, suggesting that it is acceptable for him to do whatever he wants, without being held responsible or accountable for his actions—he is untouchable. This example also shows that Steve's rule-breaking behavior should not be taken seriously, especially since he is not reprimanded. His controlling dominance coated in comical relief prioritizes him as central, and Hawaiians on the outskirts as the other.

Steve's "no holds bar" acts of violence, aggression, intimidation, and force is always justified and warranted. He is portrayed as a courageous cop who is doing

whatever necessary to bring the immoral to justice. In contrast to Hawaiian characters, whose law-breaking behavior is criminalized, his “maverick” decisions are glorified as heroic traits that is rooted in justice and virtue. Steve represents White militarized justice who is never in the wrong. In contrast, Chin, representing Native Hawaiians, is considered immoral and a “dirty cop” who is never in the right. Further, Steve’s behavior is accepted through the use of comedy.

Native Hawaiians as Sexualized: Kono Kalakaua

Kono Kalakaua¹⁴ (Grace Park) is the most consistent female character in the series. She is portrayed as a *local girl* from Hawai‘i and is the primary representation of female Native Hawaiians. Kono is featured as the exotic other in the series. As Chin’s cousin, she is characterized as an attractive surfer girl that can hold her own. A soon to be graduate of the HPD academy, Chin brings Steve and Danny to meet her at a beach. While watching her surf, Kono and a male tourist collide while surfing the same wave. Feeling disrespected, Kono gets out of the water, shoves her surfboard in the sand, walks up to the tourist and says, “ho, bra” then punches him. This first impression of Kono reinforces the tourist gaze of what others think of Hawaiians, implying that Hawaiians—including women—solve their problems through aggression, even when it comes to trivial matters. It also upholds her tough-girl image, but we are quickly introduced to her femininity and sexuality following this exchange. As Kono greets Steve and Danny with a handshake, Danny prolongs his handshake with Kono. Noticing this, Chin tells Danny,

¹⁴ Interestingly, the character of Kono Kalakaua was a male character in the original run of Hawaii Five-0. Deciding to portray Kono as a female in this reboot may warrant future discussion, especially since Kono can be translated as “inviting or enticing”, and Kalakaua translates as “the day of battle.” Kono could possibly be the full stereotypical “Hawaiian”—Benevolent, sexualized, and violent.

“That’s good, brah.” Right away, Kono is sexually objectified as the first thing Danny notices about her is her physical attraction. She is dichotomized between being a brute and a sexual object. Interestingly, this conversation takes place while the male characters are fully clothed and Kono is dressed in her bikini, which also speaks to the tourist gaze conceptualization of her character. However, this is not the only instance Kono is seen “displaying” her body in front of others.

Later in the pilot episode, Steve asks Kono to go undercover thereby officially joining the task force (S1E1). While undercover, Kono meets Sang Min (Will Yun Lee) who is part of a local Chinese gang that runs a human smuggling ring. Posing as a Chinese immigrant, Kono asks Sang Min for help in bringing in her relatives who would like to live in Hawai‘i. Suspecting that Kono may be an undercover cop wearing a wire, Sang Min demands Kono to take off her clothes. This undressing takes place in front of everyone, including the rest of the Five-0 team, who are watching the events unfold via video surveillance. Kono follows through with his demand and strips down to her underwear. Sang Min circles around her, inspects her body, and even asks her to turn around to see her backside. Once he realizes that Kono does not have a wire on her, he takes a picture of her anyway and sends it to a friend of his for identity verification. A text comes back stating, “She’s a cop.” Steve and the rest of the Five-0 storms in and saves Kono while capturing Sang Min. This scene clearly depicts Kono as a less powerful and vulnerable individual who is sexually objectified, and then rescued by the majority male task force.¹⁵ She is forced to put on a show as she strips, becoming an exoticized

¹⁵ Though an equally important issue, gender representation is not the purpose of this textual analysis and would not be justly covered if added in this dissertation. This topic merits its own paper, in which I intend on pursuing in the future.

object of not just the male gaze, but also the foreigners' gaze as this television show broadcasts worldwide.

It is not unusual for Kono to go undercover and “undress”, especially as a means of either creating a distraction or obtaining information for a case. For example, in another episode Kono disguises as a sexy waitress (S1E3). Dressed in a short, silky red robe, she serves drinks to invited guests at a private party. Later in the episode, Kono and Danny are kissing as this provides a distraction so that the Five-0 team could get closer to the suspect. This distraction works, and the Five-0 team is able to kill the suspect.

Chin also contributes to this “distraction as physical attraction” concept. As the Five-0 team share their “Valentine’s Day gone wrong” stories with each other, Chin shares his. Chin explains that after having dinner, he and girlfriend Inspector Abby Dunn (Julie Benz) were to spend a romantic evening at the Kohala hotel. However, she abruptly leaves their hotel room, leaving Chin confused. He runs after her with nothing but a towel wrapped around his waist. Once learning that he is locked out of his room, Chin walks into a busy hotel lobby, heading to the front desk, still holding on to the towel. Just then, he encounters HPD sergeant, Duke Lukela (Dennis Chun) who introduces his wife to Chin. During this scene, the camera shot focuses on Chin’s towel and pans up to show his muscular body (S6E14).

By focusing on Chin’s body throughout the scene, in public view of the tourists in the hotel lobby, he ironically and literally becomes an object for the “tourist gaze.” Kono and Chin are made into exotic commodities to gaze at and are used as distractions from the real world. Tourists come to Hawai‘i for vacation; thus, the Hawaiian people, environment, and culture serve as diversions and an escape from their everyday life.

This theme is constant throughout the series. Going undercover once again, Kono is seen dressed in a form fitting floor length red dress. Danny tells Kono (S7E2):

Danny: You're up.

Kono: Wish me luck.

Danny: You don't need luck, not looking like that.

This exchange implies that not only is Kono sexually attractive, but that her *only* contribution and usefulness to the Five-0 team is her physical beauty as the exotic other. The scene continues as Kono grabs two glasses of champagne and walks over to the suspect in question who happens to be surrounded by several women. The suspect notices Kono and asks her to dance. They playfully interact on the dance floor, promoting the perceived sexual chemistry between the two. Kono gets down to business and tells him to meet her on the patio. He agrees and walks outside but is met with the rest of the Five-0 team for questioning. (Interestingly enough, Steve hangs this suspect off the side of the tall building, just like in the pilot episode.) Kono's sexuality serves as a means to retrieve information.

The series also shows how Kono is the object of affection for recurring characters, with emphasis on the word "object." Gerad Hirsch (Willie Garson) is the owner of a crime scene cleaning business and is infatuated with Kono. In one episode, Steve instructs Kono to provide protective custody for Hirsch (S6E23). While at Hirsch's apartment, Kono finds a painting of herself hanging above Hirsch's bed, making her feel uncomfortable. Hirsch also cooks her a fancy meal, plays a "Kono mix" of music, and calls her honey, all emphasizing his fetish for the exotic and erotic. This storyline shows the extent to which Kono continues to be sexually and culturally objectified and that these interactions are acceptable and funny. Again, we see comedy used here to

normalize and downplay the seriousness of these issues. It becomes the accepted status quo to an audience watching this. Specifically, the painting is similar to a locker style pin up or even a brochure of what Hawai'i has to offer in terms of exoticness and Native Hawaiians. To satisfy the tourists who come looking for their authentic "Hawaiian" experience, Kono, as well as Chin, represent a fetishized prey for the Western tourists' gaze.

Native Hawaiians as Benevolent and Buffoonish: Kamekona Tupuola

Kamekona Tupuola (Taylor Wily) is introduced to the *Hawai'i Five-0* series in the pilot episode (S1E1). Kamekona is obese, dark skinned, and speaks a recognized language of Hawai'i—Pidgin—a "foreign language" to those unfamiliar with Hawai'i and local culture. Thus, he could be interpreted as the most literal representation of Native Hawaiians in the series. As the primary recurring character from the beginning of the show, Kamekona is regularly seen in short snippets in almost every episode. A reformed drug dealer, now informant to the Five-0 team, Kamekona balances his businesses and entrepreneurial exploits, while also providing assistance to the Five-0 team whenever needed. Kamekona is primarily depicted as the benevolent and ignorant Hawaiian who embraces the aloha spirit of love, compassion, and generosity. As such, Kamekona represents an idealized and "authentic" Native Hawaiian—one who is helpful and hospitable to the White race, without challenging their ideals. While this is another dimension of the tourist gaze, he is there to serve tourists who are looking for a "Hawaiian experience."

In search of information pertaining to the murder of Steve's father, Chin brings Steve and Danny to meet Kamekona at his business, Wailoa Shave Ice. After exchanging

greetings, Chin asks Kamekona for a name. However, Kamekona, an entrepreneur of sorts, wants to not only get paid for that information but also use Steve and Danny to promote his business (S1E1):

Steve: How much kala, bulleh? (Holding money in his hands)

Kamekona: You speak bird, huh? (Referring to the Pidgin language)

Steve: Yeah, I grew up here.

Kamekona: It don't matter, you still look haole to me.

(Looking at the money Steve gave to him)

This one feels a little bit lonely, bro.

(Steve gives him more money after Chin gives a nod of approval)

Cool. One more thing I need you two fine White gentlemen to do.

(Steve and Danny are next seen wearing Wailoa Shave Ice shirts and holding shave ice in their hands while standing in the parking lot.)

This first impression of Kamekona speaks to how he regards race, pointedly, his distrust of Steve and Danny because they are White. In fact, it does not matter that Steve grew up in Hawai'i, Kamekona still considers Steve an outsider. This promotes the idea that Hawaiians hold negative views of others, especially those who are not Native Hawaiian. This distrust for those who look foreign may stem from settler colonization of Hawai'i. Due to the numerous wrongs done to the Hawaiian people from mainly White foreigners, Hawaiians may try to distance themselves from outsiders. Still, Kamekona is willing to use them to promote his business, showcasing the idea that he is manipulative and a strategist for self-preservation.

Given his hospitality and aloha spirit, it is not surprising that Kamekona helps the team with whatever they need. As a benevolent and ignorant individual, he makes sacrifices for them. For example, when Steve is in a sudden need of a gun, he knows exactly where to get it—Kamekona—and proceeds to race to his house. Kamekona gives in and takes Steve into his backyard to an abandoned ice cream truck, where an array of guns and ammo are stored. Steve helps himself to an abundance of weapons (S1E24).

The sacrifice that he makes for the team speaks to how Westerners may interpret Native Hawaiian behavior as a willingness to serve White people.

Following this initial assistance to the team, we continue to see Kamekona in future episodes thinking of ways to expand his business, but his efforts are not taken seriously and is often used for comic relief. One such case occurs when he decides to provide helicopter tours, despite not having a helicopter in his possession nor a pilot license. Although he needs to purchase it, he does not feel confident in his racial identity and Native language to secure a deal with the salesperson. Kamekona asks Danny to talk to the salesperson, Freddy Schumaker (David Rees Snell), and negotiate a price point of \$170,000. Kamekona feels that Danny could get that price because “haoles speak the same language.” As he sets up the earpiece for Danny, Danny reluctantly agrees to participate (S3S11):

Kamekona: ...the seller's a White guy and you haoles speak all the same language.

Danny: You mean English?

Kamekona: Yeah.

(Danny walks into the sales lot.)

Kamekona: (speaking into the microphone connected to Danny's earpiece)

Salesman at six o'clock.

Freddy: Aloha! Name's Freddy Schumaker. My friends call me "Fast Freddy," 'cause I got a need for speed, if you know what I mean.

(Danny and Freddy continue to talk)

Kamekona: Ask him about the rodah.

Danny: What about the "rodah?"

Freddy: Rodah, oh, the rotor!

Danny: Yeah.

Freddy: The rotor. This here is your standard semi-rigid main rotor with, uh, three blades, Danny. What else can I tell you 'bout?

Kamekona: Ask him if there's any transmitting problems with the cyclic pitch input.

Danny: Any, uh how's it turn? Does it turn good?

Kamekona: No, don't ask him that, brah!

(Freddy continues to talk to Danny; Kamekona talks to Danny via earpiece)

Danny: All right, look, I'm gonna level with you. My friend sent me in here because he wanted to make a deal. He was afraid you were gonna rip him off.

(Danny and Freddie continues to talk)

Freddy: Well, that's too bad. You'll have to tell your friend tough luck. And that's a shame, too, Oh, man, because he must be pretty desperate to send a guy in who doesn't know a damn thing about helicopters.

Danny: Yeah, yeah, it's true. I don't know anything about helicopters. But being a law enforcement officer, see, I do know a thing or two about tax evasion. So what do you say, uh, make it an even 170 and I will forget that the whole "dropping the price for cash" conversation ever happened. What do you think?

Freddy: Deal.

Danny: Deal.

This exchange reinforces the stereotype that Hawaiians are not intelligent (nor confident) and are in need of help from a White man to engage in a dialogue with another White man. Without the help from Danny, Kamekona is not able to get the discount that is needed to purchase the helicopter, echoing the Haole Pono philosophy. Thus, he is not “good enough” to be engaged in important conversations. Kamekona is seen as powerless in his ability to effectively communicate with a White salesperson—a man that could ultimately decide the fate of his business expansion idea. Specifically, Kamekona is corrected from “rodah” to “rotor” which suggests that there is a “correct” way to say things—and it is not Pidgin, although it is an accepted language in Hawai‘i. Further, Danny knows nothing about helicopters. Yet, he uses his police authority and law knowledge to secure the deal, implying that despite Kamekona’s expertise in helicopters, he does not have that kind of leverage himself and that the only way he can succeed is to ask for favors and guidance from high powered White persons. This example is an extension to Steve’s narrative in the series, in that the White man saves the Native Hawaiians—repeatedly.

Kamekona is portrayed as compassionate, but his generosity and thoughtfulness are used with humor that emphasizes his ignorance. Much of the focus within these scenes are placed on how ridiculous and impractical Kamekona's behavior and actions are. For example, now that he purchased a helicopter, Kamekona wants the Five-0 team to be his first customers and offers them gift certificates for free helicopter rides as Christmas presents. When questioned by the team, Kamekona calls having a lack of a pilot's license a "technicality" (S3E11).

This scene suggests that Kamekona's actions are not to be taken seriously, which supports the benevolence yet ignorant narrative. Interestingly, Kamekona does not seem to mind being the object of the tourist gaze or used as a commodity. His smiling face is the logo of his business ventures, and is featured on the side of his shrimp food truck and on merchandise such as T-shirts. Kamekona wants his logo (i.e. face) on everything. For example, when his cousin, Flippa (Shawn Mokuahi Garnett), reveals his own food truck to a crowd of supporters, Kamekona becomes upset that it is not his face that is featured on the truck. To Kamekona, his face is the reason why people buy the food (S7E17).

The series reinforces the tourist gaze of a benevolent yet ignorant Hawaiian. Kamekona is displayed as being caring and generous, yet ignorant, forcing him in a double-bind. Foreigners would want the generosity of their hosts, but by pointing out Hawaiians' "stupidity", oppression is reinforced, teaching them that they cannot achieve anything without the saving grace of the White person. Kamekona is stuck. He is to be benevolent, yet know his place through ignorance. He is to serve, but not be served. In particular, Kamekona reflects the hospitality culture of tourism, as Native Hawaiians are

expected to be hospitable to visitors. Sustaining that they are ignorant, the Hawaiian is to be seen through the tourist gaze, but not heard as they are not “qualified” to have a voice.

Discussion

By way of main characters Chin Ho Kelly, Kono Kalakaua, and Kamekona Tupuola, a composite of the “Hawaiian” is represented as being immoral, sexualized, benevolent, and ignorant. This depiction of the Hawaiian follows the trajectory of historical and contemporary portrayals of Hawaiians in the literature. This highlights the consequences that hegemonic stereotypes have within popular media, and difficulties that accompany challenging the status quo.

Of significance in the case of *Hawaii Five-0*, is the prevalent use of comedy, especially in an action-oriented police series. Humor is a powerful rhetorical device and can be used to clarify social norms and enforce dominant cultural views (Ladenburg, 2015). It can work towards preserving the status quo or towards challenging it (Sharpe & Hynes, 2016). In the case of *Hawaii Five-0*, the former is used. The use of comedy can have a normative impact on issues that have been questioned before. It has the ability to turn the serious to the nonchalant. As we have seen, Steve’s actions, which would normally be seen as unethical and lawbreaking, becomes accepted as normal and unquestioned through the use of comedy. What is also notable is how comedy is used to downplay racism and sexism, in turn normalizing them. “What makes humor especially interesting is that it tends to operate at this less than conscious level...humor can act as a form of everyday racism precisely because it involved an act of de-commitment” (Sharpe & Hynes, 2016, p. 89). Kamekona is seen to be benevolent, yet comedy is used to uphold the idea that he is also ignorant. Kono’s contribution to the Five-0 team seems to be only

for sexual “eye candy” for suspects and her teammates alike, and comedy is used frequently to soften the seriousness to which the audience should take these offenses.

These episodes exude the idea of American “justice, or Hoale Pono, via militarization, militourism, environmental tourism, and ecotourism. As Biesen (2001) states of the original *Hawaii Five-0*, and could arguably be mirrored in the re-launched version because of the intertextuality between the two texts in having the same concept, similar narratives, and the same characters:

Hawaii Five-0’s production and representation signifies a dichotomy between the effort to engage in issues of local culture/regional industry, and the effort to construct, commodify and consume Hawai‘i as a feminized and fetishized Western ideal of ‘Oriental’ island exile and regional ethnicity as ‘other’ is to perpetuate the exotic myth of travelogue, of a remote tropical Pacific paradise promoting tourism via global Hollywood television narrative. (p. 89)

Audiences of the series then see a dichotomy of those who are “just” and those who are not, McGarrett, though violent and ethically questionable, is the face of justice. On the other hand, characters like the criminals, most often seen as Hawaiians or locals, are then depicted as in need of correcting, and other Hawaiians like Kono and Chin Ho are best viewed as suitable sidekicks to the main hero. As aforementioned, the “othering” of some communities then creates an “us versus them” mentality, declaring that of the two only one perspective is valid, in this case, McGarrett’s.

Shows like *Hawaii Five-0* embrace ideals of the military-industrial complex. The idea of the military-industrial complex can be expanded to the entertainment business in what Konzett (2017) terms the military-entertainment complex. Here, the police activity appears to be exciting, fair, and overall just. The Hawai‘i military-entertainment complex, or paramilitary context, serves to further historicize and mythologize Hawai‘i (Britos, 2002). This adds a level of verisimilitude to the messages

produced about Hawai‘i by Hollywood, which is typical in the police action genre.

Verisimilitude is the likelihood or probability of an idea to be true or reflected as reality

(Neale, 2000). Neale (2000) contends:

Cultural verisimilitude is characteristic of Hollywood genre. This has implications for conventional notions of realism...Certain genres appeal more directly and consistently to cultural verisimilitude. Gangster films, war films, and police procedural thrillers, certainly, often mark that appeal by drawing on and quoting “authentic” and (authenticating) discourse, artifacts, and texts: maps, newspaper headlines, memoirs, archival documents, and so on. (p. 159).

In the case of *Hawai‘i Five-O*, the use of Hawaiian for episode titles, and of Hawaiians within the shows themselves are used to add a level of verisimilitude to the series, but also affords producers of the show to use discourse to fit their own means and implications. The episodic drama of *Hawaii Five-0* lends viewers a pedagogic and idealized status quo.

Paramilitary TV allows for an exploration of law and order issues in a controlled environment, with a predictable level of resolution. Like the proto-hero McGarrett and Dano all carry pistols into battle, extend and consolidate the frontiers of far-flung empires, are the agents of secret missions and elite societies, represent and wield cutting-edge technology as Euro “gods” in Hawai‘i space, and inevitably resolve crises in a timely manner. (Britos, 2002, p. 104)

Additionally, police action dramas based in Hawai‘i have three additional functions: 1) they showcase the Hawai‘i television hero on a mission to prevent foreign infiltration; 2) they portray the protection of American lives in Hawai‘i and their property from threats, and 3) they promote Hawai‘i as a safe place for tourism, adventure, and romance (Britos, 2002). As Halualani (2002) contends, historically representing Hawaiians as naturally benevolent and willing to share everything, such as their land and culture, extends this notion that non-Hawaiians can have a share of Hawai‘i, reifying Western dominance over Kanaka Maoli.

Trask (1999) contends that, because of its geography, ever since Western infiltration, Hawai‘i has been used as a militarized outpost of empire. As a result of the aftermath of World War II, militarism and mass tourism became the leading political economies in Hawai‘i. With the use of television, as aforementioned by Britos (2002), Sasaki (2016) asserts, “Hawai‘i’s present state as a tourist’s paradise, a land seen as attractive, welcoming, and safe, is partly a result of the confluence between the tourism and military industries” (p. 643). Coined militourism by Teaiwa (2016), militarization and tourism work in complex and interlocking ways to ensure a hegemonic, White, standard. Although Hawai‘i is considered to be the most militarized state in the nation, the violent histories of colonialism against Hawaiians is rendered invisible through the everyday narrative of the “aloha spirit” and touristic hospitality (Sasaki, 2016). On the capital of Hawai‘i, Oahu, the military controls 25 percent of the land area; statewide, they have 21 installations, 26 housing complexes, eight training areas (including the whole island of Kaho‘olawe), and 19 miscellaneous bases and operating sites (Goodyear-Ka‘opua, 2016). Hawai‘i is home to the largest port of nuclear-fueled ships and submarines in the world. The United States Navy’s Seventh Fleet, which patrols the Pacific, is stationed at Pearl Harbor (Konzett, 2017). Today, the United States Pacific Command (USPACOM) stationed in Hawai‘i, comprises of nearly 700,000 contractors and soldiers, representing one-fifth of the total U.S. military strength (Wright & Balutski, 2013). Militarization is inextricably tied to colonization of the Pacific, especially Hawai‘i. Since becoming a territory of the United States in 1898, the United States has treated Hawai‘i as its personal base and weapons testing laboratory (Wright & Balutski, 2013). Struggles and protests such as that over Kaho‘olawe, as well as other

demilitarization efforts, such as those in the Mākua Valley, are a testament to the ongoing battle that Kanaka Maoli face over ancestral lands.

This disregard for the environment in the series can translate to the militarization of Hawai‘i in reality, as the U.S. military is arguably the largest industrial polluter in Hawai‘i (Kajihiro, 2009). The 2004 Defense Environmental Restoration Program report to Congress cited 798 military contamination sites in Hawai‘i (Kajihiro, 2009). Military training exercises prove to be extremely destructive to the Hawaiian ecosystem, in which 82 percent of Native species are found nowhere else on the planet (Kajihiro, 2009). Lastly, military pollution poses the greatest threat to Kanaka Maoli, as most live in low-income areas that tend to be near the contaminated sites (Kajihiro, 2008; Kajihiro, 2009).

An integral means of reifying and reinforcing this idea of Hawai‘i being a “paradise” is mass-based corporate tourism, the largest industry in Hawai‘i (State of Hawai‘i Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism, 2017). Hawai‘i has been marketed as a beautiful and exotic location that serves tourists’ every whim. Thus, landscape shots of Hawai‘i within *Hawaii Five-0* aligns with the cultural appropriation of Hawaiian culture and language. As Trask (1999) contends, “to most Americans, then, Hawai‘i is theirs: to use, to take, and above all, to fantasize about long after the experience” (p. 136). On average since 2000, Hawai‘i has been visited yearly by eight million tourists (six times as many Hawai‘i residents), resulting in more than \$14.4 billion in revenue each year (Hawai‘i Tourism Authority, 2016).

Trask (1999) would further equate the colonialism and corporate tourism of Hawai‘i to prostitution as she argues for calling it cultural prostitution:

Prostitution in this context refers to the entire institution that defines a woman as an object of degraded and victimized sexual value for use and exchange through

the medium of money... The pimp is the conduit of exchange, managing the commodity that is the prostitute while acting as the guard at the entry and exit gates, making sure the prostitute behaves as a prostitute... My purpose is not to exact detail or fashion a model but to convey the utter degradation of our culture and our people under corporate tourism. (p. 140)

Shows like *Hawaii Five-0* add to this victimization and exoticization of the culture by making it their own. In addition to seizing the Hawaiian culture and draining resources, tourism also reproduces a service-based economy for Hawai'i in which residents are economically bound to the instability of a tourist economy (Wright & Balutski, 2013). Thus, tourism is a part of the larger context of living in Hawai'i that may have direct or indirect impacts on influencing Hawaiian identity.

As mentioned in Chapter 1, since Westerners first encounter with Hawaiians, they have consistently depicted Hawaiians historically and contemporarily as benevolent, primitive, sexualized, unintelligent, savages—the quintessential “other”. As Said (1978) notes, through the notion of orientalism a dichotomy is formed between the West and the rest of the world. Orientalism operates in the service of the West's hegemony over everyone else primarily by producing their counterparts discursively as the West's inferior “other”, a maneuver which strengthens and constructs the West's self-image as superior. It does this principally by distinguishing the identities of the West and the “other” through a dichotomizing system of representation via stereotyping (Said, 1978). Stereotypes aim at making rigid the sense of difference between the European and Indigenous parts of the world. As a consequence, Hawai'i is characteristically produced in Orientalist discourse as voiceless, exotic, despotic, irrational, and backward.

The portrayal of Native Hawaiians as a multicultural community from a Western mindset redefines what it means to be Hawaiian. This leaves the Native Hawaiian identity

somewhat disoriented. Western constructed narratives, which continue to be told about Hawai‘i is prevalent in the eyes of mainland U.S. citizens, as well as for global audiences. Representations of exotic Indigenous cultures in media are usually used to promote tourism. These depictions have advanced from colonial times when ethnic images often reflected a submissive or deferential “other” (Parker, 2016). Hall (1997a) explains that the representation of an “other” is established by a process in which the context of meaning is found not only in one image but also in how one image is read against or in connection with other images. The repetition of images gains textuality, accumulating meaning by playing off each other (Hall, 1997b). Stereotyping is often fixed by those in a position of power as a way to differentiate between what the dominant group regards as normal according to their own views and what might be excluded as the other (Hall, 1997b). Stereotypes may also be developed by what is ignored, trivialized, or left out of the mass media, a theoretical approach labeled symbolic annihilation (Tuchman, 1978).

As a refraction of society, texts help to maintain the status quo. Loomba (2015) argues:

Imperial relations may have been established initially by guns, guile and disease, but they were maintained in their interpolative phase largely by textuality, both institutionally... and informally. Colonialism, then, is a formation of discourse, and as an operation of discourse it interpolates colonial subjects by incorporating them in a system of representation. (p. 103)

If the text is then a venue of representation, as a means of decolonization, reclaiming control of Hawaiian identity and subverting stereotypes by identified Hawaiians is a means of embracing non-Eurocentric perspectives. Perhaps to answer this need,

scholarship pertaining to textual analysis of Hawaiians should follow what I mentioned in Chapter 2 of what Kawelu (2015) suggests:

Embracing more of a Kanaka Maoli system of knowing, allowing for change and a multiplicity of approaches... engaging issues surrounding the practice of research, addressing research topics of interest to Kanaka Maoli, incorporating Kanaka Maoli voices into the discipline, and taking this one step further by encouraging Kanaka Maoli to enter the field. (p. 17)

Though the UCLA's 2019 Hollywood Diversity Reports states that television and films are more diverse than ever, "diverse groups are still woefully underrepresented among directors, writers, and lead actors that breathe life into Hollywood" (Hunt et al., 2019, p. 63). In heeding Kawelu's suggestion, the need for television that centers Native Hawaiian voices both onscreen and in the director's chair is paramount. Few scholars, such as Fishman (2001), are skeptical of media's role in language and culture revitalization, referring to the media as a social domain that tends to be dominated by majority cultures that can prevent older generations from passing down other languages. Others, such as Cormack (2007) and Pietikainen (2008), have also displayed optimism about the potential of the media to assist in language and culture revitalization, suggesting that Indigenous media can:

1) Increase the domains in society in which the language is used; 2) heighten awareness of the language and enhance prestige and positive attitudes; and 3) become a tool for empowering the Native community to define for themselves the way that images of the language and culture are disseminated into society (Saft, 2017, p. 57).

A terrific example of such would be the Native owned and produced television network 'Ōiwi Television Network ('Ōiwi TV). With the mission to "leverage the power of media to create meaningful impact and experiences for Hawaiians, Hawai'i and the rest of the world" ('Ōiwi, 2020), and a vision to "reestablish the Native Hawaiian worldview to a

place of authority in Hawaiians, Hawai‘i and the rest of the world” (‘Ōiwi, 2020), ‘Ōiwi TV went on air in 2009 (‘Ōiwi, 2020). They broadcast on television in Hawai‘i and offer over 1000 videos on YouTube.

‘Ōiwi TV is an initiative that makes use of both older (television) and newer forms (internet, social media) of televisual technologies. ‘Ōiwi TV’s productions are shown locally on television in Hawai‘i on Spectrum (formerly Oceanic Time-Warner) channel 326 and are also housed on their website ‘Ōiwi TV. Not all of the videos feature speakers talking in olelo (Hawaiian language), but the website states that, as of March 10, 2020, 1,250 videos have been produced, with 925 of them in olelo. Some of the videos are of considerable length, varying between one hour to three minutes. It should be made clear that of the Hawaiian videos that ‘Ōiwi TV produce, many consist of a mixture of English and Hawaiian, a result of the fact that many of the people interviewed in the videos are not fluent speakers of Hawaiian. Often, a video will begin with a narrator speaking in Hawaiian to introduce the videos topic, followed by the main content (varying from interviews, lectures, animations, etc.). Frequently, the videos also provide English subtitles for those learning olelo, or who do not know the language. Likewise, some of the English parts of a video show Hawaiian subtitles.

As videos usually feature both visual images and spoken language, there are numerous resources employed toward achieving ‘Ōiwi TV’s mission and vision statements of promoting a Hawaiian worldview. The choice of the topic, for instance, is one way a video can do this. Many of the videos focus on the relationship between people and the ‘aina (land) and also between people and the moana (ocean, also referred to as kai), emphasizing the Hawaiian worldviews of lokahi (harmony/connection) and aloha

‘aina (protection of nature). ‘Ōiwi TV also heavily concentrates on language and the arts, including music and dance. Within the Hawaiian language as well, there are numerous resources for promoting a Hawaiian ontology, including vocabulary, proverbs, and grammatical patterns used to construct actions such as chants and songs that also appear in the videos.

An exemplar of teaching Hawaiian language and culture on ‘Ōiwi TV is the three-episode series called *E Ho‘omau* (to preserve), a curriculum development project funded under the Native Hawaiian Education Program. These three episodes are animated versions of traditional Hawaiian legends, that are designed to engage keiki (children) in learning Hawaiian culture through each episode’s narratives, as well as learning oleo (Hawaiian language) by watching the video in Hawaiian with English subtitles. One of the episodes is titled “Why Maui Snared the Sun,” and talks about how the demigod Maui wrestled and reigned in Kalā (the sun) so that the days would be longer. The episode’s description lays out the basic premise of the myth:

Long ago, Kalā (the sun) raced across the sky as he pleased, leaving the land and its people with short days and long, dark nights. Among those suffering from the lack of daylight was the goddess Hina, mother of the demigod Maui. In order to make things pono (right), Maui summons all his courage and travels to the highest summit of Haleakalā, where he confronts the mighty Kalā. (‘Ōiwi TV, 2020)

The episode begins when a boy named Ikaika visits a kupuna (mentor/elder) he calls Auntie, who is sitting under a tree speaking to a group of keiki. Ikaika tells Auntie about how his mother made him hang the laundry on the clothesline, and begins to grumble about having to do chores stating, “why don’t we just get a dryer.” In response Auntie states: “Well, it just so happens that the story I was about to share is about a boy helping his mother with her chores... this young man accomplished a marvelous thing to help his

mother and his whole community. It was a daring feat of strength, more amazing than any of your comic book superheroes.” After this, the animation moves to the legend of how Maui fought and persuaded Kalā to stay in the sky longer so that the Hawaiians could have longer days to accomplish their daily tasks. After the story, we come back to Auntie and the keiki, and Auntie parallels the myth she just told to Ikaika’s current situation. She says: “But you see everyone has responsibilities, Kalā’s kuleana (responsibility) was to bring light and warmth to all living things so the world can grow and thrive. He quickly learned to care about every plant, person, and animal in the world, because of this he became quite proud of his work and did it the best he could. He did it with honor and aloha.” Thus, this episode teaches kids life lessons, as well as also Hawaiian culture and Hawaiian language, in an engaging manner.

Using technology and Western techniques in animation proved to be beneficial in terms of disseminating Hawaiiana (Hawaiian culture) to the next generation of Kānaka Maoli. Animation is an extremely malleable medium which heavily borrows from other visual communication forms. As Farinella (2018) contends about comics, but can also be valid for cartoons:

The multimodal nature of comics [and cartoons] have the potential to increase [audience] engagement and facilitate learning... [They] often rely on the use of characters and situation models, which provide the basis for emotional attachment and self-reference, which can also facilitate the formation of new memories...The effects of [animation] and text are equivalent in terms of knowledge acquisition, but comics and [cartoons] are consistently more effective at improving students engagement and motivation. (pp. 2-3)

Animation being a multimodal and technological medium, presents Maui’s legend to a generation of kids who find it easier to learn from this mode. Thus, learning Hawaiian and Hawaiian culture is also made simpler.

Saft (2017) suggests how media initiatives like ‘Ōiwi TV can contribute to the Hawaiian revitalization movement in two possible ways. First, since most Hawaiian language revitalization have focused on print material, the use of media technology is a new medium to disseminate and educate. ‘Ōiwi TV represents additional domain of usage of Hawaiian and is hopefully a precursor to other mediated formats (Saft, 2017). Second, ‘Ōiwi TV empowers Native Hawaiians to control how they are portrayed in the media (Saft, 2017). These two possibilities can already be observed from educators who adopt a Native Hawaiian perspective on technology, media, and pedagogy, as one teacher in a study on Hawaiian education stated: “I am thankful to ‘Ōiwi TV... [it] was the first television program that I could use in the classroom with Hawaiian speaking kids. Therefore, I think we’ve come a long way” (Yong & Hoffman, 2014, p. 18). As one of the rare media initiatives that currently employs Hawaiian, it will be important to continue to examine how the use of *olelo* and *Hawaiiana* (Hawaiian culture) on ‘Ōiwi TV contributes to the revitalization of Hawaiian identity.

Conclusion

Understanding media and its influences on multiple facets of humanity (identity, ideology, economics, etc.) is complex, but media is almost inherently inescapable—it is always-already meshed into our lives. Though this chapter is a step in the right direction, multiple other steps need to be taken. Analyzing texts is but one form of examining representations, identity, and identity formation. Other facets such as the political economy of Hawai‘i that supports such representations via tourism should be considered, as well as Hollywood industries that produce these artifacts. Although these are great initiatives for further investigation, they expand beyond the reach of this dissertation.

This chapter analyzes television portrayals of Hawaiians via the case study of *Hawaii Five-0* episodes until season 7. I decided to view only up to this season, even though the series is currently in its twelfth season because the audience sees the departure of Kono and Chin Ho, two major characters who identify as Hawaiian in the show. Expanding to the most recent season would prove to be beneficial, but not realistic for this project, especially since new characters that also identify as Hawaiian, such as Tani Rey (Meaghan Rath), are introduced.

Geddes Gonzales (2008) asks excellent questions about Western portrayals of Indigenous cultures.

Could it be that representations of the non-Western other, coded as difference, continue to facilitate the reaffirmation of the modern constitution? Is this a form of “imperialist nostalgia” that mourns the subjugation of the other, yet simultaneously perpetuates the “primitive,” at times actually identifying with it? If so, what does this say about the influence of the margins in defining Western subjectivity and visual culture? What has been the Mayan (or Hawaiian) response? (p. 8)

This chapter is a step in the right direction in critically analyzing the very one-side portrayal of Kānaka Maoli in Western produced television, while also expanding the possibilities and complexities of Hawaiian representations within other contexts such as ‘Ōiwi TV. Indeed, one might say that given the extant asymmetrical social and symbolic television representations, Native Hawaiians are subject to an ongoing process of dispossession of their material and cultural resources, a process promoted by corporate and local elites. The resulting toll on the environment, society, and culture is the subject of much debate within state organizations, local media, and civic groups. However, much of this escapes the attention of the major national industries, which continue the long tradition of making local concerns invisible, thereby foreclosing global awareness and

policy initiatives around these issues, in order to continue to profit from subjugating subaltern groups.

This chapter examined a staunch dichotomy between Western representation as being Eurocentric, and Indigenous/Hawaiian representation being more complex. The next chapter, Chapter 4, will take a look at negotiating film representations of Hawaiians and their connection to the 'aina and culture through a culture-nature dualism via Disney's *Moana* (2016) and Native Hawaiian Filmmaker, Chris Kahunahana's, *Waikiki* (2020).

CHAPTER 4

REPRESENTATIONS OF HAWAIIANS IN FILM:

POSTCOLONIAL FILMMAKING, CULTURE-NATURE DUALISM, AND

KULEANA IN *MOANA* AND *WAIKIKI*

Hawai‘i’s statehood, granted in 1959, is often construed as a major turning point in its history, but it does little to change the conditions of ownership on the islands (one-fourth of Oahu’s land is in military possession) and its dominant military culture (one-fifth of the population serves in the military) (Teaiwa, 2016). It also does not change Hawai‘i’s ideological representation in cinema. Although a powerful voice, Hawaiian sovereignty movements, likewise could not reverse Hawai‘i’s forceful incorporation into the United States military and the tourism industry. President Clinton’s apology for the United States takeover of Hawai‘i, ratified by Congress as a joint resolution in 1993, appears as a first step in the right direction with its frank admission of the violation of Hawai‘i’s sovereignty: “To acknowledge the 100th anniversary of the January 17, 1893 overthrow of the Kingdom of Hawai‘i, and to offer an apology to Native Hawaiians on behalf of the United States for the overthrow of the Kingdom of Hawai‘i” (*The Apology Resolution*, 1993). However, this apology remains purely formal in nature and comes with no responsibility on the part of the U.S. government—they are merely words. The more recent Akaka Bill (Native Hawaiian Government Reorganization Act) demands federal recognition of Native Hawaiians as Indigenous people in the manner of Native Americans. This bill was originally introduced in 2000 and frequently amended but failed to achieve legislation in 2011. In the meantime, the state of Hawai‘i signed the Native Hawaiian Recognition Bill into law in 2011, granting Indigenous rights to Native

Hawaiians and their descendants (Native Hawaiian Recognition, 2011). With these steps in motion, there is still a widely concerning issue of who creates the film representation of Hawaiians, and to what extent are Hawaiians involved in the process. The most important discourse that helps to accomplish this representational makeover of Hawai'i against Hollywood's fantasy of an idealized Whiteness subsuming, non-White, Native Hawaiian culture, are decolonial and anticolonial voices from Native Hawaiians in the film industry.

As stated in Chapter 1, films have always shown Hawaiians to be stuck in the past, savage-like, or even non-existent, and this trend can be followed even with movies that premiered in the early 2000s till the present. *Forgetting Sarah Marshall* (Nicholas Stoller, 2008) features a post-breakup melodrama with its White characters vacationing in Hawai'i and sorting out their messy romantic lives. British comedian Russell Brand, playing as rock icon Aldous Snow, corners the attention during musical cameos on the lū'au stage, traditionally reserved for Hawaiian performers. *Just Go With It* (Dennis Dugan, 2011) involves another Hawaiian vacation in which a plastic surgeon Daniel Maccabee (Adam Sandler) asks his assistant to pose as his estranged wife, Katherine Murphy (Jennifer Anniston), in his effort to win back his girlfriend. *Soul Surfer* (Sean McNamara, 2011) offers a melodramatic comeback story of a young girl, Bethany Hamilton (AnnaSophia Robb), seriously injured in a shark attack with a predominant focus on her White family. The film, *Blue Crush* (John Stockwell, 2002), recalls the comeback story of surfer Anne Marie Chadwick (Kate Bosworth) with encouragement from real life White Hawaiian surfer Keala Kennelly. Also in line with these White-normative scenarios, *50 First Dates* (Peter Segal, 2004) produces two White couples at

the film's end, namely Lucy Whitmore (Drew Barrymore) and Henry Roth (Adam Sandler), as well as her brother Doug Whitmore (Sean Astin) and European immigrant Alexa (Lusia Strus). In this new functionalization of Hawai'i in all these films, the islands are thoroughly American and has become the home turf for mainland drama. Recalling perhaps globalization and its accompanying woes, Hawai'i's diverse multicultural life, especially Hawaiian life, is deliberately omitted in these films.

In a more critical engagement with Hawai'i's annexation and occupation, contemporary films such as *Princess Kaiulani* (Marc Forby, 2009) and *The Descendants* (Alexander Payne, 2011) conversely address the overlooked or repressed question of land rights. *Princess Kaiulani* revisits the struggle of asserting independence and avoiding annexation in the final days of the Hawaiian Kingdom. The film follows her journey as a Polynesian woman living in Europe to gain an education, while also acting as a liaison for the Hawaiian Kingdom. *The Descendants* looks toward the future of a Hawai'i trying to curb the ever-growing expansion of the tourist and construction industries and return the islands to an ecological balance. Attorney Matthew King (George Clooney) is dealing with life challenges on all fronts. As a descendent of both Hawaiian royalty and White sugar plantation owners, he is the sole trustee of a family trust of 25,000 acres and faces pressure to sell the land to corporations that want to build hotels on it. In personal life, after being in a boating accident, Matthew's wife, Elizabeth (Patricia Hastie) is in a coma with the likelihood that her condition will worsen quickly.

As melodramas with a more specific focus on Hawai'i's history, they show more genuine involvement with this history opposite to what was initially discussed with contemporary romantic comedies. *Princess Kaiulani* focuses on the forgotten historical

heiress to the throne of the Hawaiian Kingdom during the tumultuous events of the Kingdom's overthrow. Modernization is indicated not necessarily as a hostile element, since the Hawaiian royals are shown in contemporary Victorian fashion, hula dances are performed in long gowns and evoke a spiritual rather than a sexual element, and finally Iolani Palace is lit by the young princess in 1886 as the first palace in the world operating on electricity. These films also portray the complexity of Kānaka Maoli identity. Both Princess Kaiulani and Matthew King are in constant struggle with negotiating who they are. Princess Kaiulani has a formal Western education, yet, attempts to use this to bridge Hawai'i and the West. Matthew's lineage is of both Indigenous and colonizer, and is facing a pinnacle moment as he is pressured to sell the land to corporations what will degrade his Hawaiian legacy.

Though the storylines portray a more empathetic demeanor to the Hawaiian experience, what is upsetting are the cast members who represent these "Hawaiians". It is not surprising that in present films set in Hawai'i, White actors such as George Clooney (*The Descendants*) and Emma Stone (*Aloha*, Cameron Crowe, 2015) can be effortlessly cast as Hawaiian or part Hawaiian, allowing them to "go native," since no Hawaiian identifiers are necessary in a seemingly White-dominated onscreen Hawai'i. As aforementioned, George Clooney's character portrays a half-Hawaiian and half-White person, and this identity is constantly being challenged. Although not germane to the overall narrative of the film, Emma Stones character in *Aloha*, Air Force Capitan Allison Ng, is reported to be half-White, a quarter-Chinese, and a quarter-Hawaiian. In reality Whites remain a minority in Hawai'i, making up only 24 percent of the overall population (Sasaki, 2016). In addition, although Q'orinanka Waira Qiana Kilcher, the

actress portraying Princess Kaiulani, is of Indigenous descent, all Indigenous cultures are not a monolith, where one Indigenous person represents us all. The same query can be asked of Dwayne “The Rock” Johnson or Jason Momoa. Though they are in multiple films depicting Pacific Islanders they are not necessarily the “token Pacific Islander.” Therefore, who is in position to create representations of Native Hawaiians and who represents Native Hawaiians matter. This chapter will look at two films to see how Pacific Islanders, especially Hawaiians, are represented: *Moana* (Ron Clements & John Musker, 2016), who hired a diversity council to inform the filmmakers about Pacific culture; and *Waikiki* (Chris Kahunahana, 2020) a film directed by a Native Hawaiian speaks about the continued oppression of the Native people in contemporary Hawai‘i by the tourist industry.

Though past literature pertaining to Pacific Islander media representations have honed in on the many negative stereotypes perpetuated in mainstream media, such as the idea that Oceanic people are lazy and apathetic, few have commented on the positive messages that can be garnered from these films and television shows (Konzett, 2017). Also, although an abundance of research has looked into the over sexualization and hyper-gendered portrayals of Disney princes and princesses, fewer have looked at portrayals of race and ethnicity, with exception to *Pocahontas* (1995), *Mulan* (1998), the *Princess and the Frog* (2009), and a few others (Cheu, 2015). But again, nonetheless, when race and ethnicity is focused on, mostly negative portrayals and stereotypes are highlighted, with disregard for the potential to have positive depictions. Furthermore, though a sparse amount of recent literature has evaluated the portrayal of Moana’s tough-girl femininity, few have analyzed representations of Pacific culture (Cheu, 2015). Those

that have focused on how Pacific Islander culture have honed-in on the specific intricacies of how Pacific Islander culture is misrepresented, such as nitpicking the use of particular language in song lyrics, or pointing out the minute inaccuracies in the depiction of Maui the demigod (Leslie, 2017). However, when evaluating cultural values that are interconnected between Oceanic cultures on a “big picture” level within the movies, *Moana* and *Waikiki* encapsulates a culture-nature dualism that many Pacific Islanders (i.e. Hawaiian, Samoan, Tahitian) have adopted as their way of life. Using Hawaiian culture as an example, the following chapter analyzes *Moana*’s and *Waikiki*’s portrayal of the connection between nature and culture, and the possible consequences of severing this relationship. These films also showcase the importance of including Indigenous voices in not only what is represented on screen, but in the filmmaking process.

Misrepresentation of Hawaiians in Film and Television

In a BBC article titled, “Aloha to the US: Is Hawai‘i an Occupied Nation?,” Peter Apo, a Native Hawaiian, said “the only thing I knew about Hawaiians was what I saw in television and the tourism ads” and he also reflected on how he spent almost half of his seventy-five years not knowing who he was (Steriff & Dundes, 2017). This article brings up one major problem in Hawai‘i—Native Hawaiians’ identity crisis as a product of the media illustrating an oriental narrative of Native Hawaiians. As Said (1978) wrote in the opening of *Orientalism*, “the Orient was almost a European invention, and had been since antiquity a place of romance, exotic beings, haunting memories and landscapes, remarkable experiences” (p. 1). Taking this idea one step further, these Western constructed narratives of Hawai‘i were without a doubt a Western invention.

In an orientalized version of Hawai‘i, an extension of the benevolent Hawaiian is

seen, as the spirit of aloha is about tourism rather than a spiritual belief grounded in centuries of theology (Antinora, 2017). Here, predominantly White American tourists are targeted as consumers while Native Hawaiians are largely consumed. Further, Native Hawaiians, while not entirely removed from some aspects of the tourism industry, are largely absent from any positions of power in the production of “Hawaiian” culture. Instead, “the orientalization of Hawaiiana (Hawaiian culture) silences or marginalizes contemporary Native Hawaiians, while simultaneously freezing them in a romanticized past” (Antinora, 2017, p. 19). Trask (1999) equates the orientalization of Hawai‘i in media and advertising to prostitution, as she asserts that media and tourism have represented Hawaiian culture as a prostitute. She contends that, “the prostitute is a woman who sells her sexual capacities...the pimp is the conduit of exchange, managing the commodity that is the prostitute while acting as the guard at the entry and exit gates, making sure that the prostitutes behave” (Trask, 1999, p. 140). Corporations utilize aloha as a guise for selling “authentic” Hawaiiana. Today, like its historical account, aloha is so far removed from the Hawaiian cultural context. As Wood (1999) contends, “the Hawaiian values of generosity and love such as aloha were misappropriated to make it seem as if they are particularly suited to the visitor industry” (p. 49).

Moana also has quite a few skewed portrayals. For example, Guam scholar Vicente Diaz (2016), contends that, “the romanticization of the primitive that characterizes Disney movies like *Moana*, whitewashes how those same people were colonized and their cultures dismembered by the West” (p. 32). *Moana*’s story, which draws heavily on Polynesian culture, is being told through the prism of “a Disney animated film.” In an attempt to be culturally sensitive and respectful directors Clements

and Musker put together the Oceanic Story Trust, a group of Pacific Island experts that guided this project. This group consisted of people from many walks of life: academics, archeologists, anthropologists, linguists, historians, cultural practitioners, tattoo artists, master navigators, elders, and artists (Sciretta, 2016). It was named the Oceanic Story Trust because they shared knowledge and stories with production and their stories were incorporated in the film. The Oceanic Story Trust were involved in “guiding the film’s narrative beyond a fixation on paradise and toward a perspective that is infused in meaningful ways with Pacific histories and epistemologies” (Tamaira, 2018, p. 298). “Every name in the movie either comes from or was approved by the Oceanic Story Trust... Every draft of the script, every little change, was sent to the Oceanic Story Trust to vet” (Sciretta, 2016). Although this group was made, *Moana* is still an animated fantasy version of Polynesian life and customs steered by two non-Polynesian men. Furthermore, Taika Waititi, a screenwriter, director, and actor of Māori descent, offered Disney the first write up *Moana*, but was ultimately rejected for unknown reasons.¹⁶

Their depiction of Maui, a demigod, depicts him as overweight and immature—as a person who does things for his pride, and to gain legitimacy from the Oceanic people (Diaz, 2016). Instead, Pacific Islanders see Maui as a legendary hero, who had help to bring sustenance to all of Polynesia. World renowned Native Hawaiian singer Israel Kamakawiwo’ole, nicknamed Braddah Iz, whose passing at a young age has left many Pacific Islanders to mourn this cultural advocate, has equated Maui to preceding the legendary fame and supernatural might of Clark Kent, also known as Superman. Braddah

¹⁶ Though Disney passed over Waititi’s script for *Moana*, they did acquire his help to produce a Māori translated version of *Moana*. *Moana Reo Māori* premiered in 2017 airing on 30 screens across New Zealand.

Iz writes of the many deeds that Maui has done for the people of the islands in his song, “Maui (Hawaiian Supa Man)” (2003):

He fished out the islands with his magic hook...
In blue morning sky, the sun he entwined
To slow down his flight, so kapa (cloth) could dry

He found out the ‘Alae held the fire connection
But his plan of deception fell short of perfection
With no other choice he had to get mean
So he squeezed ‘Alae's throat until she screamed the secret

Maui, the legend, pulled out the Pacific Islands so that we may live on it; captured the sun so that we may have longer days, essentially creating the concept of time; brought us the tool of fire in which is used for cooking and other daily tasks for our sustenance. As Braddah Iz illustrates in his chorus, “Mischievous, marvelous, magical Maui, hero of this land. The one, the only, the ultimate Hawaiian Suppa Man.” Maui is indeed a hero to the Oceanic people. Thus, a need for Native Hawaiians to be involved in the filmmaking process and being represented in the cast of films are of utmost importance. A way to steer this frame of thought in the right direction is by adopting the lens of postcolonial film theory.

Postcolonial Film Theory

Shohat and Stam (1994) summarize one important aspect of the global process of decolonization, which is the creation of anticolonialist media. In the face of Eurocentric historicizing, Third World and minority filmmakers have rewritten their own histories, taken control over their own images, and spoken in their own voices. It is not that their films substitute a for Eurocentric “lies,” but that they propose counter-narratives, reclaimed-narratives, alternative-narratives informed by an anticolonialist, decolonial, perspective. The decolonization of the media mainly involves raising Indigenous voices

and creating self-controlled media in the process of asserting Indigenous identity, cultural values, and historical and contemporary experiences (Shohat & Stam, 1994). In addition, it involves contesting the grand Western narratives of Indigenous history, ethnography, and sociology. In this way, Indigenous filmmakers strive to work against assimilation through Western media discourse and against the appropriation of Indigenous discourse. Within these works of anticolonialist media, filmmakers attempt to break down stereotypes and preconceived notions of Indigenous cultures established by Western media discourse (Knopf, 2008). Needless to say, the creation of anticolonialist media requires Indigenous filmmakers to be involved or to have control over film production, and, if possible, over distribution and broadcast as well.

Cultural and mental colonization operates preeminently through the oral, written, and visual texts that make up colonial discourse. Colonial discourse, in Bhabha's (1994) words is:

an apparatus that turns on the recognition and disavowal of racial/cultural/historical differences. Its predominant strategic function is the creation of a space for a "subject peoples" through the production of knowledges in terms of which surveillance is exercised... It seeks authorization for its strategies by the production of knowledges of colonizer and colonized which are stereotypical but antithetically evaluated. The objective of colonial discourse is to construe the colonized as a population of degenerate types on the basis of racial origin, in order to justify conquest and to establish systems of administration and instruction (p. 70).

Postcolonial theory addresses textual works that create counter-discourses that respond to colonial discourses, which have produced, and continue to produce, collective identities alienated from Indigenous roots and turned into colonized mentalities. Said (1986) terms this creating "discourse of liberation." By contrast, Spivak (1993) has suggested employing a strategic essentialism in order to combat cultural hegemonies and oppressive

systems: “You pick up the universal that will give you the power to fight against the other side and what you are throwing away by doing that is your theoretical purity” (p. 29). For postcolonial film analysis it is necessary to combine a critical application of “classical” tools for film analysis with postcolonial theory. Classical film analysis here serves to study technical (camera work, salient methods, lighting), structural (narrative features, motifs, form), and stylistic features. Postcolonial theory needs to be employed for the assessment of these features and, of course, for the analysis of content (Knopf, 2008).

A focal point of this combined approach must, however, be the classical Hollywood cinema, since Western fictional cinema has been dominated historically by this film practice (Shohat & Stam, 1994). It has been the shaping norm for many national cinemas and still influences filmic production and reception on a global scale. Since Hollywood cinema clearly upholds Western supremacy, the export of Hollywood films throughout the world ensures the dissemination of Eurocentric ideologies and the cultural export of U.S. imperialism. Shohat and Stam (1994) employ the phrases “Hollywoodcentrism” and “imperializing film culture of the US” to denote North American colonialist film practices, which need to be undermined by oppositional practices in the creation of postcolonial films. Judith Mayne (1989) argues:

The classical Hollywood cinema has become the norm against which all other alternative practices are measured. Films which do not engage the classical Hollywood cinema are by and large relegated to irrelevance. Frequently, the very notion of “alternative” is posed in the narrow terms of an either–or: either one is within classical discourse and therefore complicit, or one is critical of and/or resistant to it and therefore outside of it (p. 254).

On the one hand, postcolonial filmmaking is driven by the need to deviate and differentiate itself from mainstream filmmaking, but on the other hand, the binary reception of filmic practice needs to be dissolved and the concept of hybrid filmic

practice introduced. Hybrid film practice in regard to Indigenous filmmaking needs to be understood in the Bhabhian sense of creating a third space, what others pose as a braided approach. Here, Western film technology, conventions, and genres mingle with Indigenous usage and negotiation of these, infused with content that derives from various Indigenous constructions of cultural meaning as well as structures, styles, and techniques that are informed by traditional and modern Indigenous cultural practice and expression.

Postcolonial filmmakers for the most part face four major dilemmas. First, in order to raise their voices and explore decolonizing strategies, Indigenous writers and filmmakers must, to a certain degree, assimilate to colonialist modes of literary and filmic practice (Knopf, 2008). They have to make use of colonialist means of production such as film technology, as well as colonialist marketing systems. Thus, they remain entangled in a state of dependency and negotiation within hegemonic colonialist institutions and in a capitalist mode of production. Second, Indigenous writers and filmmakers enjoy a certain freedom concerning Indigenous settings and stories. However, this freedom is misleading because Indigenous content makes these works different and other and contributes to a new cultural diversity appropriated into mainstream film discourse further nurturing hegemonic structures (Knopf, 2008). Third, there is what Faye Ginsberg (1991) calls the Faustian dilemma regarding cultural groups which have been largely unexposed to Western influences. Here, people from secluded communities avail themselves of Western film technologies for self-assertion and self-expression; at the same time, they are introducing into their communities technologies which might promote disintegrative alienation from traditional knowledge and values (Ginsberg, 1991; Knopf, 2008). The use of Western technologies, however, does not necessarily mean assimilation to Western

conventions and philosophies, but that video is a tool for cultural preservation and communication as well as for the rejuvenation of deracinated cultural traditions (Ginsberg, 1991). Finally, there is the issue of which language is to be employed. According to Fanon (1967), colonialism restricts Indigenous languages, thus destroying cultures and creating cultural alienation. He says that speaking the colonial language implies an acceptance of colonialist consciousness and colonialist values, which creates a gap between the colonized body and mind, and the colonized subject becomes assimilated to the colonizers' culture and alienated from their own culture. Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o (1986) also insists that language is a carrier of culture. He defines the colonial language as a tool for mental subjugation and alienation:

[using the colonizer's language] is like separating the mind from the body so that they are occupying two unrelated linguistic spheres in the same person. On a larger social scale it is like producing a society of bodiless heads and headless bodies (p. 451).

Indigenous filmmakers have the choice of either employing their traditional language or the language of the colonizers. Each choice has its advantages and drawbacks. On the one hand, films made in English can reach a far larger audience than films made in the respective Indigenous language. On the other hand, using an Indigenous language means a higher degree of self-determination and decolonization in the process of filming and the end product. Still, if a film is made in an Indigenous language, a large part of the prospective audience may not be able to access the content (Knopf, 2008).

I would disagree with this argument about an either/or use of language, as to truly adopt a braided approach to film would mean to use both Western language and Indigenous language. Case and point, the use of Pidgin Hawaiian in Hawai'i is neither fully English or Hawaiian. As immigrants from European countries like Portugal and

Great Britain, as well as immigrants from Asian countries like Japan, China, and the Philippines started populating in Hawai‘i, the need for a common language was dire. “With so many nationalities, a common language was needed...[Pidgin] has a rich linguistical history based on the need for a common language among a diverse group of people who spoke different languages. It also has a dark side based on plantation domination and American English Hegemony” (Hargrove, Sakoda, & Siegel, 2014). Pidgin is the hybrid language born out of the combination of different languages, although predominately English, but showcases a “and/all” mentality instead of an either/or perspective.

The films *Moana* and *Waikiki* adopt a hybridized approach to film production adopting Western film technique with Pacific Islander, specifically Native Hawaiian culture, within their storylines to address issues that Indigenous folks struggle with. As an animated studio product, *Moana* also has to fit into the larger Disney business model, which demands profits be made from the film, from the soundtrack, and from the merchandising. What I do propose, however, is though distinct representations of culture are skewed, the Disney movie *Moana* as well as the film *Waikiki*, portray significance in the relationship between nature and culture, and the consequences when either one of these two things are neglected.

Culture-Nature Relationship in the Pacific Islands

Due to colonial neglect and historical isolation, the Pacific Islands, home to the world’s most diverse range of Indigenous cultures, continue to but also struggle to sustain many ancestral life-ways. Fewer than 6.5 million in all, the people of the Pacific Islands possess a vast ocean of cultural traditions (Lindstrom, 1993). Papua New Guinea, for

example, alone is home to one-third of the world's languages—about over 800 distinct vernaculars (Lindstrom, 1993). Oceania thus has the most to lose, culturally speaking, from the pressures of global political and economic change, and environmental erosion (Lindstrom, 1993). Spread across a vast expanse of the Pacific, these people occupy an array of environments, from Papua New Guinea's massive mountains to Auckland New Zealand's urban jungles. About 85 percent of the population is rural and often nearly self-sufficient. Still, over one-fourth of the more than 2 million Micronesians, Melanesians, and Polynesians live in cities or move to metropolitan centers in Australia, New Zealand, and the United States (Lindstrom, 1993).

Despite diversity, all Pacific societies are small and vulnerable. A typical Native group consists of only a few thousand people, and this has drastic consequences for cultural survival (Lindstrom, 1993). As stated in Chapter 1, before contact with the West in 1778, an estimated one million Native Hawaiians lived in the Hawaiian archipelago. By 1892 this number had diminished to 40,000 (Dudley & Agard, 1993). In 1990 there were a mere 8,244 full-blooded Native Hawaiians left (Dudley & Agard, 1993). Declining numbers of the Native Hawaiian population threatens the legacy of Hawaiian identity, culture, and livelihood. Environmental forces also pose a major threat to island communities. In Fiji and Samoa, the damage from recent major storms to villages and national infrastructure will take years to rebuild (Lindstrom, 1993).

As observed, to Oceanic people, culture and nature play hand-in-hand with each other. It is a distinct relationship where if one suffers so does the other. And this idea of the culture-nature relationship has been embedded at the inception of Pacific culture. For example, Hawaiians cherish a value called aloha 'aina (caring for the land). Aloha 'aina

is spiritually recognized during the course of life and death. Hawaiian cultural historian and practitioner, Rita Knipe (1989) states that, “the land is religion. It is alive, respected, treasured, praised, and even worshipped. The land is one Hawaiian, sands of our birth, and resting place for our bones. The land lives as do the spirits of our ancestors who nurtured both physical and spiritual relationships with the land” (p. 33).

Haunani Trask (1999), professor of Hawaiian Studies stated, “we are children of Papa (earth mother), and Wakea (sky father) who created the sacred lands of Hawai‘i Nei. From these lands come the taro, and from the taro came the Hawaiian people” (p. 112). Trask educates and reminds the Indigenous people of the commitment their ancestors made to the land, and that the land made to its ohana (family). Hawaiians consider the land to be an entity that works in harmony with life. Kanahale (1992) notes that, when reviewing the relationship of Mother Earth and ‘aina (land), if the earth is considered to be a living entity, so must be ‘aina. He also states, “Hawaiians, therefore, did not regard land as a lifeless object to be used or discarded as one would treat any ordinary material thing. As part of the great earth, land is alive—it breathes, moves, reacts, behaves, adjusts, grows, sickens, dies” (Kanahale, 1992, p. 187). Aloha ‘aina is the spirit that connects the land to Native Hawaiians. The land is a part of the Hawaiian—a part of Hawaiian identity. As nature dissipates so does Oceanic culture, but also as Oceanic culture dissolves, the land is then neglected. This relationship is displayed in *Moana* and *Waikiki*.

Culture-Nature in *Moana* and *Waikiki*

On the Thanksgiving weekend of November 23, 2016, *Moana* (meaning wide expanse of water in Hawaiian) splashed into the hearts of young children, as Disney’s

latest princess adaptation, grossing \$642 million to date (IMDB, 2020). Set about 2000 years ago, after the goddess of nature, Te Fiti's, heart is stolen, blight has overcome the islands, devastating the vegetation and fish supply, and endangering the livelihood of the people. Moana is called by the ocean to return Te Fiti's heart and restore balance to the islands. As her journey proceeds, she encounters many who want Te Fiti's heart for their own personal gain.

The people of Motunui, the place where Moana resides, live in harmony with their natural surroundings. "Consider the coconut," they sing, celebrating the fruit that supplies food and liquid for their nutritional needs. It also provides the islanders with fiber from the shell, which can be used to make netting and other useful tools. The coconut tree supplies shelter from the weather, and its palms can be used as a building material. Chief Tui strongly believes that the island supplies them with all they need to live a rich and fulfilling lifestyle. But there are signs that this form of living on the land might be in trouble. The villagers are catching fewer fish than they used to. And the coconuts on the island are starting to decay. Later in the film, Moana has visions of her island becoming rotten and black, with her people hungry and struggling. Even though Moana is drawn to the ocean, and longs to find out about the world beyond the reef, her father is firm. The island is their home, and the reef is their safety barrier—no one goes sailing beyond it.

Later in a cave, a hidden secret is unveiled, we see depictions of islanders sailing very large boats, much larger than the small fishing boats that the people of Motunui use inside the reef. Moana then has a vision of people who look like those who live on Motunui, but who are roaming the ocean, using stars as a navigational tool. She hears

them sing: “We are explorers... We tell the stories of our elders in a never-ending chain.” Moana learns that people stopped exploring the seas at the same time that Te Fiti’s heart went missing. They found a safe island and decided to stay there. Moana is to be the one who restores Te Fiti’s heart, and when she does the goddess then starts to rejuvenate the destruction throughout the lands around her, green leaves start to emerge, and they quickly start to reinvigorate the blackened, dying islands. Where darkness was once spreading across the Pacific, now there are tropical plants and flowers.

As Motunui rediscovers a luscious version of itself, its inhabitants also rediscover something from their past: the desire to explore what lies beyond the ocean reef is reignited in them. As the islanders celebrate Moana’s return, and the re-greening of their island, they drag the large boats out of the secret cave. Finally, we see the islanders sailing the large boats out beyond the reef. Te Fiti’s heart has been restored. The oceans are safe again and the islands are healing. The people of Motunui have now embraced their ancestors’ natural penchant for exploration.

Moana justly represents the culture-nature relationship. As we see the people of Motunui once were voyagers who used the stars to navigate and explore from one island to another, tending to these new lands, yet when they stop this practice their environment slowly dissipates; the land no longer provides for them because they no longer tend to the land. Thus, it was Moana’s calling to rebuild this severed relationship by returning the heart of Te Fiti. A similar but more visceral narrative can be seen in the film *Waikiki*.

Written and directed by Native Hawaiian and Sundance Institute Native Lab fellow, Christopher Kahunahana, *Waikiki* is his first feature-length film, and premiered on October 29, 2020 at the Los Angeles Asian Pacific Film Festival (LAAPFF) then later

on November 25, 2020 at the Hawai‘i International Film Festival (HIFF). Both festivals awarded the film with top awards—the Grand Jury Award for Best North American Narrative Feature at the LAAPFF, and the Made in Hawai‘i Best Feature Award at HIFF. Audiences and film critics alike lauded the films cinematography and overall narrative, naming it “arguably the most important film ever by a Native Hawaiian.” Gallichio (2020) asserts that *Waikiki* is “offering a literal behind-the-scenes glimpse of the iconic tourist spot... *Waikiki* is a succinct emotional dive into the complex intergenerational trauma that plagues many Native Hawaiians.” The film has been noted by many as the first narrative feature film by a Native Hawaiian filmmaker, which in of itself justifies why this film should be analyzed.

I was made aware of this film’s production in 2018 while participating in an open discussion about Native Hawaiian media initiatives at the University of Hawai‘i, Hilo. Since that day, I anticipated its debut, originally set for Fall 2019, but due to filming complications and the Coronavirus, it finally made its premiere in Hawai‘i at the HIFF in November 2020. I was fortunate to be able to attend the Hawai‘i International Film Festival virtually, where I was able to view approximately 15 films produced by Asian Pacific filmmakers, all telling their narratives of Asia Pan-Pacific. I was also thrilled to be able to participate in virtual Q&A sessions with the filmmakers and cast members. One session that was invaluable for this chapter was the *Waikiki* Q&A session. Speaking with director Kahunahana and the cast encouraged me tremendously in writing this chapter. To be able to envision the possibilities of the future of Native Hawaiian media production is exciting. Another advantage of attending this one-of-a-kind virtual experience at HIFF, is the fact that I was able to watch films multiple times, as well as

pause, fast-forward, and rewind films while taking notes. I viewed *Waikiki* a total of four times.

The film follows the events in a week of Kea (Danielle Zalopany), a hard working Native Hawaiian who works three jobs (as a hula dancer at a Waikiki restaurant, a nightclub hostess, and a teacher at a Hawaiian immersion school), while living out of her van and saving up to rent an apartment for low income residents. Her current living situation is due to the fact that she moved out of an apartment that she was living in with her abusive boyfriend (Jason Quinn). One night, she flees an altercation that she was having with her ex-boyfriend in the parking lot of the nightclub that she works at. While driving vigorously, she hits a homeless man, Wo (Peter Shinkoda). Distraught, Kea puts Wo in her Van, eventually shuttling him around as she attempts to maintain her life and her jobs. Their developing friendship is soon shattered when her van is towed away, leaving her and Wo completely without shelter. Here desperation triggers past trauma, driving her towards insanity. All the while people who view her judge her for being dirty, poor, and mentally incapable. The only redeeming quality, as one passerby says about her, is that “she looks pretty.” Throughout the span of these few days Kea learns how the tourism industry has truly misrepresented Natives Hawaiians like herself, all the while staking ownership to everything that was once under Hawaiians’ tending. This film serves as an allegory for the contemporary issues Native Hawaiians face, from mental illness, physical abuse, homelessness, and most importantly the loss of their land and Hawaiian identity. In all of this chaos, Kea learns to find peace by turning back to what she learned from her ancestors, returning back to the land—back to a culture-nature relationship.

In the opening scene of the film, Kea is performing with a troupe of hula dancers at a restaurant for tourists with a backdrop of world-famous Diamond Head behind them. She is adorned with the stereotypical “hula girl” attire—coconut bra, sarong (linen cloth skirt), a lei around her neck, and a flower haku lei (head piece). They dance to the melodic “Hawaiian” song, “Waikiki,” by Andy Cummings (2007) that extolls the idyllic vision of a bygone era in Hawai‘i’s golden age in the 1950s, showcasing Waikiki as a heavenly escape from the routine life of the mainland United States. As they dance the lyrics state:

Waikiki, my whole life is empty without you
I miss that magic about you
Magic beside the sea
Magic of Waikiki

This first scene immediately portrays the vision that many think of when they imagine Hawai‘i, an orientalized oasis from reality stuck in a pristine and peaceful past.

This imagery is immediately strengthened by the following scene in the film. While tourist sit and enjoy gazing at the dancers and eating the food, immediately after they dance Kea hustles to get to her next job being a hostess at a night club. One group has the privilege to gaze, while the other is objectified as the gazed upon to make ends-meet. While at the night club we see Kea sitting closely next to an older White gentleman as she sings the exact “Waikiki” song that she previously was dancing to at her first job. As she is singing, the man slowly brushes his hand against Kea’s leg and in the other hand offers her a large monetary tip. In this process, Kea looking uncomfortable, goes along with it because she really needs the money. From merely being an object of the tourist gaze, she quickly becomes an object for their handlings. As aforementioned by Trask (1999), in the colonial tourist industry, Hawaiians become cultural prostitutes for

tourists. “The prostitute is a woman who sells her sexual capacities...the pimp is the conduit of exchange, managing the commodity that is the prostitute while acting as the guard at the entry and exit gates, making sure that the prostitutes behave.” In this particular scene, Kea is no longer figuratively made to be a prostitute, by is literally sexually harassed by a White tourist. She has no choice but to comply, or risk losing her job that she desperately needs to survive.

As the film progresses, while at work at the night club, Kea’s van is towed for being parked in a private parking lot. It is in this instance that she now becomes fully homeless. In the following days and nights looking for her van, she sleeps on the sidewalks of Waikiki while tourists pass by her with glaring eyes. Once being gazed upon for her exotic beauty by tourists, she is now being gazed upon as being dirty, in some sense primitive like. There is an actual incidence where police escort her away from a largely popular and populated tourist site in Waikiki. This is an inherent symbol of the continued aftermath of historical colonialism within Hawai‘i—Hawaiians being pushed out of their living spaces. It also portrays the immense institutional power that the tourist industry has. If a Native Hawaiian does not behave in the orientalizing picture created by tourism they are symbolically annihilated and silenced.

While living on the sidewalks, and searching for her van, Kea continues to have flashbacks to better and more peaceful times, when she was a young kid. She remembers being in nature with her grandma, whether it be the forest or in the ocean. She remembers learning to chant mele (songs) in olelo (Hawaiian language), and dancing hula to those songs. She remembers her grandmother leading by example, teaching her Hawaiian culture and tending of the land. All of these memories are what help Kea to cope with her

current struggles. Though the film does not provide a resolution to Kea's homelessness and objectification, the last scene displays her on the shores of a beach at Waikiki, kneeling and grabbing the sand and tossing it around while dancing hula and chanting in olelo. This is in stark opposition to the first two scenes of the film, where she is dancing and singing to a White "Hawaiian" song in English, to perform for the pleasure of tourists. In this last scene, she is not performing for a person, but is chanting and dancing hula in front of the ocean—she is performing for the ocean or 'aina. Though her situation and challenges persist, she finds solitude in the brief moment of returning back to the culture and 'aina.

Waikiki's conclusion is drastically different from *Moana*'s. Disney films are notorious for providing full and encouraging endings, as they should, being that their audiences are for children and families. *Moana* offers viewers a cheerful optimism in thinking about culture-nature relationships in Pacific Islander cultures, and the need for going back to such connection. *Waikiki*'s ending, on other hand, does not resolve any of Kea's struggles, and in a sense presents the viewer with a more realistic view of the fate of Native Hawaiians in a largely White, colonized, militarized, and tourist-driven institution. Instead of optimism, it provides a dystopic outlook for Native Hawaiians should we continue to live in such conditions. We see this struggle of sustaining culture and environments across the Pacific Islands. For example, in Hawai'i recent attempts to build a telescope on top of the mountain Mauna Kea or Mauna O'Wakea have sparked Native Hawaiians to protest against construction on that sacred ground (Brown, 2016). This will be explicated more in the next chapter, but in order to maintain culture and reestablish Native Hawaiians connection to 'aina, it is our kuleana (responsibility) to

make sure the next generation of Hawaiians learn this. This can also be viewed in both *Moana* and *Waikiki*.

Kuleana

Moana and *Waikiki* showcase the inherent role of kuleana, or responsibility, to continuing the beliefs, traditions, and legacy of Pacific Island culture. For Hawaiians, kuleana is extremely important (Wright, 2003). According to Pukui and Elbert (1986), kuleana means “right, privilege, concern, responsibility” (p. 179). In traditional society, kuleana referred to a plot of land an individual person or family was charged with maintaining and caring for (Kame’eleihiwa, 1992). So, this idea of responsibility is culturally grounded within Oceanic tradition. *Moana* and *Waikiki* display different levels in which kuleana is classified: to the self, to family, and to community.

Understanding, one’s own purpose helps to illuminate their personal responsibilities toward the Polynesian culture. Understanding one’s own role, not just physically, but also spiritually is kuleana to the self. In finding one’s self, they then understand their connection to the land and the people, and their responsibility to them. It is the individual’s responsibility to learn and understand their Pacific Islander identity, and the importance of preserving the culture and ‘aina. At the outset, Moana questioned her own identity, and her purpose within her tribe. Her father keeps telling her that no one travels beyond the reef—that the island would provide all that is needed for her and her people. Her calling, according to Chief Tui, was to follow his footsteps and lead the people of Motuni. Instead, an inner inkling tells Moana that she was meant to do more. That she was to go beyond the reef to find her identity and her true calling. This tension between being the person her father wants her to be, and trying to find out who she is

meant to be is displayed in the song that she sings, “How Far I’ll Go:”

I've been staring at the edge of the water
Long as I can remember, never really knowing why
I wish I could be the perfect daughter
But I come back to the water, no matter how hard I try...

I know everybody on this island seems so happy, on this island
Everything is by design
I know everybody on this island has a role, on this island
So maybe I can roll with mine
I can lead with pride, I can make us strong
I'll be satisfied if I play along
But the voice inside sings a different song
What is wrong with me?
See the light as it shines on the sea?
It's blinding
But no one knows
How deep it goes
And it seems like it's calling out to me

It is when Moana discovers that her ancestors were explorers that she finds her own purpose and responsibility to the people of Motuni and to the land. Through finding herself she was able to pass on her legacy to her family and community.

Similarly, in *Waikiki*, Kea struggles with her identity. She is well learned in Hawaiiana (Hawaiian culture), yet she is lost in how she should use her knowledge. In the beginning of the film we see her use her hula skills to be adorned as an exotic other for the tourist gaze. Though she finds displeasure in her performance, her culture and her body are being appropriated and objectified, for colonizers pleasure. As the film progresses, and nostalgic memories fill her head of better days spending time in nature, caring for the ‘aina, and learning Hawaiiana from her grandmother, she is filled with moments of relief from her current struggles. This reaches its pinnacle in the ending scene of the film, where Kea dances hula and chants in Hawaiian on the beach shore in nature. It is when she grounds herself in connection with the ‘aina that her Hawaiian

identity is reclaimed and restored.

Not only is kuleana a value for the self, but it expands to the community. Once Native Hawaiians understand their own role within their culture, they have a responsibility to pass on that knowledge to the next generation in order to preserve their identity, culture, and land. This is apparent in *Moana*. After sailing past the reef, finding Maui, and returning Te Fiti's heart, not only does Moana literally rescue her people and the land, but she also saves them in terms of their lost identity. Not only is the heart of Te Fiti restored, but also the heart of the people of Motuni. Voyaging is restored and passed along to the next generation.

Likewise, in *Waikiki*, responsibility to one's community and Native Hawaiian youths is of utmost importance. In a powerful scene in the film, Kea is at her third job as a teacher at a Hawaiian immersion school where she teaches the students the term, "he ali'i ka 'āina, he kauwā ke kanka" (The land is the chief and the people are its servants). In this scene, she writes this phrase on the white board and has the following discussion with her students:

Kea: Alright somebody remind me what does this mean?

Student 1: It means that the land is the chief and the people are its servants

Kea: Yes, but that is a literal translation, what does this mean to you guys [sic] specifically?

Student 2: We must care for the land because if there is no land there are no people

Kea: Maikai (good), that was so good! We all must take care of the 'āina because it will in turn take care of us

This scene displays the strong connection that Hawaiians have to the land, that of a culture-nature relationship, where if one falters so will the other. In teaching her students this lesson about our connection to 'āina Kea is carrying out her kuleana to the community and to the next generation of Kānaka Maoli. She is also doing what her

grandmother did, leading by example in teaching the students about Hawaiiana, ‘aina, and olelo.

Discussion and Conclusion

In examining contemporary films about Hawai‘i, it has become apparent that two diametrically opposed themes dominate in the onscreen representation of the Pacific and Native Hawaiians: amnesia and militarization. The former is rooted in escapist fantasy and White melodrama, negating any historical accountability of the United States toward its colonization of Hawai‘i. Instead, Hawai‘i figures as a wholesome ecosystem that restores broken relationships or induces new romances. Its natural and oceanic habitats remind viewers that a belief in ecological balance and sustainability will correct all problems, even those that the films steadfastly refuse to address such as race, property, and political representation (Konzett, 2017). The White reinforced universe that sees Hawai‘i as a home away from home appears benevolent but gives little voice to those living in Hawai‘i who have been socioeconomically displaced by settler colonialism, tourism, real estate prices, and an extremely high cost of living. In contrast to these fantasy escape scenarios, films with a dose of realism view Hawai‘i as a battleground for global conflicts and the maintenance of geopolitical dominance through the use of military power. The necessary (re)militarization of Pacific culture is made acceptable to audiences via thriller and action plots (Kajihiro, 2009). Once again, the reality of contemporary Hawai‘i and the Pacific falls through the cracks in such scenarios that indulge in the ever-growing enlargement of the military-industrial-entertainment-complex, or as I termed in the previous chapter, Haole Pono.

Since U.S. annexation of Hawai‘i in 1898, the former Kingdom has changed from being a primarily plantation-based economy to one that is being driven by tourism and the U.S. military. However, over the past decade, several legislative and educational events in Hawai‘i have signaled the state’s expectation that there will be an increasing role for cinema and digital media in the development and diversification of its economy. In 2000, the Hawai‘i State Legislature established the Hawai‘i Television & Film Development Board to help grow the film and television industry by providing support to Hawai‘i’s local filmmakers (Hawaii Television and Film Development Board, 2000). From 2001 to 2006, the legislature passed Acts 221, 215 and 88, a series of government incentives and tax credits designed to encourage investment and entrepreneurialism in Hawai‘i’s film, television, video, and digital media industries (Relating to Film and Digital Media Industry, 2007). In 2006, the state of Hawai‘i completed multimillion-dollar renovations to the Hawai‘i Film Studio so that the state now has a modern film and television production facility that is comparable to studio spaces in Hollywood (Relating to Film and Digital Media Industry, 2007).

In conjunction with government plans to use creative media as a way to diversify the state economy, the University of Hawai‘i’s Board of Regents approved the Academy for Creative Media (ACM) in January 2004 (Ng, 2009). The ACM became the university’s primary academic program for the production and study of film, animation, and computer game design from technical, indigenous, and critical perspectives. In the program’s founding documents, then-ACM chairperson and Hollywood film producer, Chris Lee, stated that the ACM would not follow a traditional Hollywood-centric model of film school that relied on expensive film equipment and focused on preparing students

to work in the Hollywood studio system. Rather, Lee believed the curriculum of the ACM should promote Indigenous stories and storytelling (Ng, 2009). All of these initiatives allow for Native Hawaiians to have access to film production, and a path towards reclaiming representations about themselves.

In having an advisory board of Pacific Islander elders and cultural specialist in the Oceanic Story Trust, as well as having a cast of Pacific Islander identified voice actors and actresses, Disney's *Moana* attempts to provide a more accurate portrayal of the Pacific Islander, and specifically the Native Hawaiian experience. Also, as a sign of good faith to the people of the Pacific, Disney has translated *Moana* into Hawaiian, making it the first Disney movie to be translated into olelo. This version of *Moana* is being used in Hawaiian immersion schools to help students learn olelo. Even more optimism can be seen in the production of *Waikiki* as the first narrative feature film to be written and directed by a Native Hawaiian, truly encapsulating the goals of postcolonial filmmaking. In an interview with director Christopher Kahunahana conducted by CBC radio, Christopher was asked why he wanted to produce the film, in which he responded:

Waikiki has always been the crown jewel of the tourist industry, and they spent billions of dollars marketing Hawai'i as paradise. But it's not actually that for everyone who lives here. We see Waikiki as the driving force behind the exploitation of Hawaiian culture. So they package our culture and resell it. And it's inaccurate. It's not a correct representation of who we are as people... So as Kānaka Maoli [Native Hawaiian] filmmaker, I felt it was my kuleana, my duty, to actually show a fuller picture, you know, not just the one that we see every day in the tourist ads... It's the image of what happens when she stops dancing and stops being performative and she has to go back to normal life. That smile soon fades. And Kea, our protagonist, has to navigate a world where intergenerational violence, abuse and poverty and mental illness are daily battles. So she has to deal with this diametrically opposed need to survive in modern society, and at the same time, the calling of our ancestors and their culture. These things tear at her. And she hopes eventually to reconnect to her culture, which is the true beauty of Hawai'i and Waikiki (Shantz-Hilkes & Goodyear, 2020).

Stating that he felt like it was his kuleana to provide a more accurate depiction of the Native Hawaiian experience in a colonized and tourist driven land is the very definition of a postcolonial filmmaker, in creating counter-discourses that responds to colonial-discourses—providing a fuller picture than a skewed one.

Organizations that focus on conservation and sustainability can learn from traditional practices of Pacific Islanders. One applicable lesson that can be gained from an examination of *Moana* and *Waikiki* is the importance of the finely tuned relationship between natural resources and culture. Examining the loss of those connections in a rapidly changing world that followed Western contact and global warming can also display the importance of a tightly integrated relationship between resources and culture. The actions and forces that resulted in a breaking of that interrelationship contributed to our current conservation crises.

Consequently, the reestablishment of those relationships represents a reconnection for building a sustainable society that once again values and maintains its unique island legacy. To many Oceanic people, the natural world is in an ongoing reciprocal relationship with people that requires dedication and effort to maintain. Cultural identity, knowledge, and practice are rooted in this reciprocal relationship with the land— the health of one depends upon the health of the other. As the *Moana* song, “Where You Are” states:

This tradition is our mission
And Moana, there's so much to do (make way!)

Consider the coconut (the what?)
Consider its tree
We use each part of the coconut
That's all we need

We make our nets from the fibers (we make our nets from the fibers)
The water is sweet inside (the water is sweet inside)
We use the leaves to build fires (we use the leaves to build fires)
We cook up the meat inside (we cook up the meat inside)
Consider the coconuts
The trunks and the leaves
The island gives us what we need

But this only happens when we take care of the land as well. One's life is connected to the land. Both life and land should be taken care of through kuleana. In considering the kuleana of Native Hawaiian filmmakers, Christopher Kahunahana was asked about how he felt about being the first Kānaka Maoli filmmaker to produce a feature film, in which he responded:

This is my debut feature... and we didn't know that was the situation until we had entered post-production. And it was shocking. It was upsetting. Honestly, I just could not believe it to be true. But I am hopeful because I know there's so many great Hawaiian filmmakers who are working on launching feature projects. And I know we can look forward to at least two or three within the next year or so. So hopefully it's a short-lived period of time (Shantz-Hilkes & Goodyear, 2020).

His words provide encouragement and optimism about the future of Native Hawaiians in both the filmmaking process and their representation on screen. The next chapter, Chapter 5, will again use a postcolonial approach in analyzing two songs written by Native Hawaiians in protest against the building of a telescope on Mauna Kea. The focus of Chapter 5 being the use of hybridized sound as indigenous protest.

CHAPTER 5

REPRESENTATIONS OF HAWAIIANS IN MUSIC:

HYBRIDIZED SOUND IN CONTEMPORARY HAWAIIAN PROTEST MUSIC

While spending my winter break in the trenches of research, on a whim of nostalgia, I turned my Pandora to the “Classic Christmas” station and low-and-behold, *Mele Kalikimaka (Hawaiian Christmas Song)*¹⁷ was the first song played. I felt a sense of irony listening to a song that claims to be Hawaiian, all-the-while being sung by Bing Crosby—smiling, thinking that before Western contact, Christmas was not in the Hawaiian vocabulary or a part of Hawaiian culture. This song is “hawaiian” rather than Hawaiian. It is viewed as a romanticized version of the Hawaiian islands as opposed to a voicing of Native Hawaiian culture. As Jonathan Schroeder and Janet Borgerson argue, marketing and tourism constantly creates and recreates what is considered to be “Hawaii” discourse by selling the concept of aloha (Schroeder & Borgerson, 2012). As aforementioned in previous chapters, Indigenous studies scholar Sarah Antinora (2017) asserts, when this type of marketing is utilized, “predominantly White American tourists are targeted as consumers while Native Hawaiians are largely consumed” (p. 34). Further, Native Hawaiians are fundamentally absent from any positions of power in the production of Hawaiian culture. Instead, “the orientalization of Hawaiiana (Hawaiian culture) silences or marginalizes contemporary Native Hawaiians, and the Hawaiian

¹⁷ Although, it is technically a Hawaiian derived word, it was inspired and borrowed by the English “Merry Christmas.” The Hawaiian translation of the word attempts to pronounce it as close as possible to the English pronunciation, but since the Hawaiian language does not have the letters “r” or “s” the closest pronunciation is *Mele Kalikimaka*.

sovereignty movement in particular, while simultaneously freezing them in a romanticized past” (Antinora, 2017, p. 35).

Hawaiian music has a long history of being a part of the political ferment in the islands. Much more than the soft, inviting sounds, soothing tourists, Hawaiian songs, despite their easy melody, gentle rhythms, and major tonalities, have been signal elements in the struggles of Hawaiians to maintain their culture and presence in Hawai‘i. As Judith Butler (2015) states, referencing Foucault, critique should expose the illegitimacy of hegemonic fundamental political moral order. To expand beyond just the Eurocentric marketing of Hawai‘i, the goal of this chapter is to provide a textual analysis of two songs pertaining to the We Are Mauna Kea movement, a social movement that protests against building a telescope on top of Mauna O‘Wakea (Mauna Kea), a mountain on the Big Island of Hawai‘i.

Lindsay Prior (1997) contends that texts and communication can be used as a source of empowerment: “Discourse empowers certain agents to create representations, and thereby to authoritatively pronounce on the shape and form of the world” (p. 66). *Rise Up*, by Ryan Hiraoka, featuring Keala Kawaauhau¹⁸ (2015), and *#WeAreMaunaKea*, by Sons of Yeshua (2015), are written by Hawaiians, and speak against building on the sacred grounds of the mountain. Though multiple songs have been written surrounding this social issue, these two songs have been the most frequently played on local radio stations in Hawai‘i, often times reaching the daily top ten lists on radios stations. They were also the most accessible in terms of attaining lyrics and copies of the songs

¹⁸ On August 27, 2018, Donald Keala Kawaauhau Jr., member of the active and popular Hawaiian activist musical band Sudden Rush, passed away peacefully in his sleep. His legacy for Native Hawaiian rights and cultural revitalization will be remembered. This chapter is dedicated to his memory.

themselves. Given that there are two texts a thematic approach will be utilized for this analysis. Here, the content of the text is the focus.

The study of Indigenous music and song-making has long been constrained to the realm of ethnomusicology, and has often focused on the old songs, “traditional songs,” or chants—for Hawaiian music *olīs* and *meles*. It has been studied for its rhythmic patterns, timbre, tonality, and symbolic meaning (Berglund, Johnson, & Lee, 2016). However, it is rarely discussed in the broad continuum of expressive artistic responses that lends itself to literary and rhetorical analyses. While there is clear value in the linguistic and ethnomusicological approaches, it is important to recognize that music commands attention within other fields, as well as note that the artificial divisions between song, music, and literature are constructs of Western academia (Berglund, Johnson, & Lee, 2016). By translocating our discussion of contemporary Hawaiian popular music, I am claiming new and multiple spaces for the analysis of musical traditions; traditions that are responsive, evolving, and in dialogue with shifting sociopolitical contexts.

In Indigenous studies and studies of Indigenous music in ethnomusicology, there has been ongoing work that focuses on “modern” Indigeneity. Modern is often a gloss for “popular” music or culture, and the scholars associated with this thread point out the problems that occur when people insist that Indigenous people must remain traditional. This argument assumes that tradition itself is static and past, which perpetuates colonial discourses that relegate Indigenous people to the past (Berglund, Johnson, & Lee, 2016). Such studies typically explore the ways in which Indigenous people have always been a part of popular music history, in the mainland U.S. and Canada in particular, and continue to utilize popular music in resistant ways. Related to this is a recent turn from

culture as circumscribed and localized processes, to culture as transformative circulation (Berglund, Johnson, & Lee, 2016). In this framework, culture is still a process and constantly changes, but is always moving geographically and transforms as it moves. Likewise, discussions of globalization in ethnomusicology focus strongly on the dichotomy of local and global; this turn to circulation totally blurs the boundaries of this binary as each comes to constitute the other. This line of thought complements discussions in studies of the Pacific, sometimes called Native Pacific Cultural Studies, which have advocated a centering of circulation for over twenty years. Native Pacific Cultural Studies has posited that Pacific peoples traditionally understand themselves and their culture to be multiple and perpetually in motion, yet always grounded in a particular ‘aina-like (land) entity (Imada, 2006).

Why an exploration or textual analysis prioritizing lyrical content? Song lyrics are carefully chosen words that, standing alone, can instill the attitudes, beliefs, and values of the author, but when put to music can serve as a medium of connection between people (Berglund, Johnson, & Lee, 2016). Lyrical textual analysis can serve as a solid basis for discussion. People can easily remember song lyrics if they become familiar with the song. In his essay, “Musical News: Popular Music in Political Movements,” Mark Pedelty (2010) draws from labor organizer and musician Joe Hill, who says, “a pamphlet, no matter how good, is never read more than once, but a song is learned by heart and repeated over and over” (pp. 3-4). Pedelty’s essay explores the relationship between music and political movements in the United States on a broad scale, but the same can be said for lyrical analysis of Indigenous songwriters with a specific message. He also says that, “many young activists first hear about important issues, events, and people through

listening to popular music” (Pedelty, 2010, p. 1). As Jeff Berglund, Jan Johnson, and Kimberli Lee (2016) note, “Lyrics can educate, inform, and engage in thought-provoking ways. Lyrics can unify relationships. Lyrics can plant political ideas” (p. 4). These talented Native artists serve as modern-day orators, purposefully using earth-centered and people-centered rhetoric to address human impacts on the environment and to other people. Blended with a dynamic musical score, the lyrics they craft act as an aesthetic catalyst for the willing activists-to-be. Before diving into evaluating the two texts, *Rise Up* and *#WeAreMaunaKea*, an overview of popular Hawaiian music and its influencers will be provided, along with a brief summary of the We Are Mauna Kea movement.¹⁹

Hawaiian Music in Hawai‘i

For all Indigenous tribal societies, music and songs played, and continue to play, an integral role in peoples’ everyday lives. In fact, it was a fundamental part of the cultures themselves. In the “old days,” there were songs for all types of situations, and many were composed and sung by individuals for many reasons. Perhaps a personal song of lament or joy, or a song to help with work, or a song to express one’s romantic feelings for another but sung to no-one in particular. Sacred ceremonial songs were also essential to Native societies, some of which were only known to holy people or elders, others the whole community would know and be able to sing (Berglund, Johnson, & Lee, 2016). In some Native communities, songs were given to individuals by guardian spirits in a vision, and then sung in times of need throughout one’s lifetime. Other songs were sung in celebration of victories against enemies, still others sung for those who had fallen to the

¹⁹ The We Are Mauna Kea movement is also known as the Protect Mauna Kea movement and the Aloha Mauna Kea movement. These titles will be used synonymously throughout.

enemy—but in all of this, the songs and music were composed to function in the society—they were there to do something for the people (Berglund, Johnson, & Lee, 2016).

Outside of the Islands, the idea of “Hawaiian music” is stereotyped as images of lei²⁰ wearing musicians, sporting colorful floral print attire, serenading visitors to the soothing tropical vibes by the poolside. Exotic women adorned in grass skirts, as means of visual aesthetics to match the hypnotizing sounds, accompany them. Elizabeth Buck (1993), a scholar in the cultural production of Hawaiian products, contends that the first mass production of “Hawaiian” music recognized these stereotypes as an attractive lure for the visitor industry, all the while exoticizing Hawaiian artists as the object of the visitor’s gaze and amusement: “Tourism had constructed enduring images of Hawaiians as happy-go-lucky beach boys, friendly bus drivers, smiling lei sellers, funny entertainers, or beautiful women performing an exotic and somewhat erotic form of dance—all were part of the heavily marketed image of Hawai‘i” (Buck, 1993, p. 174). This version of Hawaiian culture defined Hawaiians’ roles in Hawai‘i and strongly excluded them from attaining any other role. A cultural product that has been exported since the 1920s, these images are still a predominate depiction of what tourists expect when they arrive to Hawai‘i (Stillman, 1998). Though still prevalent today, this is just one type of Hawaiian music that is locally produced and consumed, and amongst local residents this category of music is the least popular.

²⁰ A lei is a garland or wreath that is typically worn around the neck. Most leis are made from leaves or flowers but can also be made out of numerous other materials such as fabric.

Before Western contact, music in Hawai‘i consisted of mele oli (chanting) and mele hula (chanting with traditional dancing) (Akindes, 2001). Since the arrival of the first travelers to the islands, Hawaiian music has been a hybridized sound. This mixed music sees influences from a diverse range of genres such as folk, country, jazz, blues, and pop. Many of the instruments used in creating Hawaiian music have been introduced by travelers and immigrants. For example, the ukulele was developed from the Portuguese four-stringed braguinha. Mexican cowboys introduced the guitar, and motivated the creation of the slack-key style of guitar playing that is well connected to Hawaiian music (Akindes, 2001). There are three main genres of modern Hawaiian songs. Hula ku‘i only consists of Hawaiian language lyrics and are intended to be performed in conjuncture with hula (Stillman, 1998). Mele Hawai‘i utilizes Hawaiian language that follows an alternating verse-chorus format and is inspired by the styling of Christian hymns. Lastly, hapa-haole songs are English language songs that have lyrics about Hawai‘i or some aspect of Hawaiian culture (Stillman, 1998). Usually utilizing a mixture of English, Hawaiian, and Pidgin, this type follows the 32-bar song format that most American popular music employs. Most contemporary forms of Hawaiian music, though Hawaiian in its own sense, are influenced by other forms of popular music, most predominately reggae and hip hop. Both, *Rise Up* and *#WeAreMaunaKea* are hapa-haole variations that are influenced by, and employ, reggae and hip hop.

Reggae has been a part of the popular music scene in Hawai‘i since the 1970s. Andrew Weintraub (1998) contends that most who listened to reggae in the 1970s and 1980s derived from three groups: Jamaicans who were temporarily stationed in Hawai‘i for military service, local Hawaiian youths, and university students (Weintraub, 1998). It

wasn't until Bob Marley's live performance in 1980 at the Waikiki Shell that reggae's popularity expanded to a wider audience. In the early 1990s, the inception of Jawaian²¹ music, a synthesis of Jamaican reggae and Hawaiian music, became a staple on local radio stations. Coined by local artist Bruddah Walter, on the cassette jacket of his 1990 release, *Hawaiian Reggae*, he defines Jawaian as follows:

- Jawaiian (je wi' en', -way'yan), adj,
1: of pertaining to Jamaican-Hawaiian music indigenous to the Hawaiian youth of today
2: music that makes you feel good (Waltah, 1990)

Bruddah Waltah uses the term "indigenous" to promote the idea that Jawaian music has roots in Hawaiian culture. It has been so successful that it is currently the most popular musical style in contemporary Hawai'i (Weintraub, 1998).

Weintraub (1998) offers three reasons why Hawaiian Reggae is seen to be so widespread, especially amongst Hawaiian youths:

1. The popularity of reggae throughout the world, as an international style.
2. A desire for local Hawaiian musicians to share a musical style with Jamaicans because of the perceived similarities between the Hawaiian and the Jamaican people as historically oppressed populations.
3. The perceived similarities between contemporary Hawaiian and Jamaican "island" lifestyles, attitudes, and climate. (p. 79)

Jawaiian music has roots in Hawaiian culture, and is a means in creating community amongst Hawaiians and locals alike. It advocates for a local group identity as a way of asserting an insider-outsider dichotomy, outsider pertaining to the Mainland tourist or haole. Artists like Ho'aikane and Butch Helemanoh call themselves Jawaian musicians, and explicitly identify with the struggles of colonized Blacks in the Caribbean (Imada,

²¹ Jawaian music can also be referred to as Hawaiian Reggae or Island Hawaiian music. These terms will be used interchangeably throughout, but will denote Jamaican Hawaiian music.

2006). Jawaiian music constructs a larger collective political identity. It borrows features of Rastafarian ideals, but asserts the importance of Hawaiian land and Hawaiian culture. Political messages are explicitly and widely inserted into Jawaiian song lyrics. For example, the song “Hawaiian Lands,” by Bruddah Waltah, concerns the politically critical issues of land ownership, sovereignty, and sustaining Hawaiian culture, as some of the lyrics contend their suggested solution to these social issues:

Talk to me my brother
Love one another
It’s plain to see
This land is here for you and me

Keep Hawaiian lands in Hawaiian hands (yeah) (x4)

On the road we go
Far from life we stroll
It’s an uphill climb (yeah)
Stays with you all the time

Keep Hawaiian lands in Hawaiian hands (yeah) (x4)

Hawaiians say: Ua mau ke ea o ka ‘aina i ka pono [The life of the land is perpetuated in righteousness]

This is our plea, our destiny flight
We got to be free to claim our rights
Stand-up be heard and declare our creed
We got to preserve our dying breed (Waltah, 1990)

In the mid-1990s Jawaiian music started to incorporate rap, adding another layer of complex hybridity to contemporary Hawaiian music.

Hip hop’s inception as a Black expressive culture within an oppressive political history resonates globally with other cultures and peoples. Links between the displacement of Hawaiians and African Americans showcase a general bond between the two groups, as historically oppressed peoples (Osumare, 2001). Native Hawaiians, like

other marginalized groups in the United States, “experience the brunt of economic tyranny, with median incomes far below state and national averages, high unemployment, a lack of educational attainment, drug abuse, and an increasing risk of homelessness. All of these compromise a general quality of life. Hawaiian hip hop provides a forum in which to talk about these realities” (Teves, 2011, p. 80). Hawaiian musicians, particularly with their use of Black style accompanied with Hawaiian language, represent the best of the Hawaiian experience. Their raps signify a connective marginality of historical oppression (Osumare, 2001). Hip hop and culture expert Halifu Osumare (2001) asserts: “Situating their artistic approach within a Hawaiian context, rather than an appropriated imitation of mainland style, the compilation of strongly political jams is an important step, content-wise, in the hip hop movement in the Hawaiian Islands” (p. 178) Hawaiian contemporary music’s African American hip hop and Jamaican reggae influences, mixed with Hawaiian chanting and subversive rapping in English and Hawaiian languages, produces a complex multi-layering of sounds that represents the equally complex multi-layering of cultural identities of Hawaiian artists.

Hawaiian social movements have been, at their core, about protecting and energizing ‘Ōiwi (Hawaiian tradition) ways of life: growing and eating traditional foods, speaking the native language, renewing relationships through ceremonies and chanting, making collective decisions, and simply remaining on the land that their ancestors tended (Goodyear-Ka’opua, 2014). The resurgence of an authentic local Hawaiian music scene that is currently flourishing in the community is connected to the resurgence of Hawaiian cultural practices in the Hawaiian renaissance, which began in the early 1970s. Kānaka Maoli were not alone. Inspired by groups such as the Black Panthers and the American

Indian Movement, young Hawaiians were organizing to demand land, reparations, and independence in organizations such as Kōkua Hawai‘i (1971), the Aboriginal Lands of Hawaiian Ancestry (1972), and Protect Kaho‘olawe ‘Ohana (1976). Relatedly, the University of Hawai‘i began its Hawaiian Studies program in 1970, the culmination of attempts for a number of years to establish the study of Hawaiian culture in Hawai‘i’s leading research university or, in fact, anywhere in the island archipelago (Fellezs, 2019). This program was born out of the Hawaiian renaissance, as activists reciprocated their eagerness to learn Hawaiiana and olelo since it had been forbidden to be taught since the Hawaiian Kingdom’s annexation.

On March 22, 1977, Hawaiian activist and founder of the Hawaiian Music Foundation, George Kanahale, presented an exhilarating speech about the importance of the Hawaiian renaissance in front of a packed Rotary Club of Honolulu (Lewis, 1987). He exclaimed:

Some have called it a psychological renewal, a purging of feelings of alienation and inferiority. For others it is a reassertion of self-dignity and self-importance... What is happening among Hawaiians today is probably the most significant chapter in their modern history since the overthrow of the monarchy and loss of nationhood in 1893. For, concomitant with this cultural rebirth, is a new political awareness which is gradually being transformed into an articulate, organized but unmonolithic, movement. (Lewis, 1987, pp. 168-169)

This cultural blossoming is strongly tied to the new developments in Hawaiian music, and continues to influence Hawaiian social movements, a prime example being the We Are Mauna Kea movement, initiated in 2015.

We Are Mauna Kea

Kānaka Maoli have always been astronomers and life-long learners. The stars are seen as a form of navigation by Native Hawaiians, and most progressive Hawaiians²² agree that education to further expand Hawaiian culture and practices is needed to peacefully adapt culture into a rapidly increasing technological society. Aside from loving science, we are passionate about our history, culture, and connection to the ‘aina. The dormant volcano/mountain Mauna Kea is a sacred land. It is known to be the belly button of the Sky Father Wākea, one of the parents of the Hawaiian islands. To Hawaiians, everything is related and interconnected. They believe that the environment is animate and is a part of an interconnected web of related elements (gods, land, ocean, humans, sky, animals) (Brown, 2016).

Hawaiians consider the ‘aina to be an entity, which works in harmony with life. Thus, ‘aina does not strictly translate to just “land” but can also be conceptualized as “sustenance” or “that which feeds” (Beamer, 2014). This concept or belief is recognized as aloha ‘aina (love of the land) or malama ‘aina (caring for the land). Rita Knipe (1989), a Hawaiian cultural historian, expresses that Hawaiians respect the tradition of nature’s deities and inherit this mana (spirit). Hawaiians are the human form or representatives of these deities which include: “Wakea, Papa, Ho’ohu Kulani, Hina, Kane, Kanaloa, Lono, and Pele. The sky, the earth, the stars, the moon, water, the sea, natural phenomenon as rain and steam and native plants and animals” (Knipe, 1989, p. 31). Aloha ‘aina comes to be spiritually recognized during the course of life and death. Knipe (1989) states that, “The land is religion. It is alive, respected, treasured, praised, and even worshipped. The

²² Progressive Hawaiians are those who welcome the idea of Braiding Knowledge, taking the best from Western and Indigenous epistemology, understanding that advanced technology can help to further preserve ancient Hawaiian customs.

land is one Hawaiian, sands of our birth, and resting place for our bones. The land lives as do the spirits of our ancestors who nurtured both physical and spiritual relationships with the land” (p. 33). Kanahele (1992) notes that, when reviewing the relationship of Mother Earth and ‘aina, if the earth is considered to be a living entity, so must be ‘aina. He also states, “Hawaiians, therefore, did not regard land as a lifeless object to be used or discarded as one would treat any ordinary material thing. As part of the great earth, land is alive—it breathes, moves, reacts, behaves, adjusts, grows, sickens, dies” (Kanahele, 1992, p. 187).

According to Hawaiian scholar Marie Brown (2016), in 1968, the University of Hawai‘i System had promised to act as a steward for the sacred mountain, the highest point in the state standing at 4,205 meters (13,796 ft.) above sea level, and gained the approval to build an observatory there. Throughout the 70s and 80s, six telescopes were built, causing a swell of opposition and resistance from Native Hawaiians, sympathetic Americans, and environmentalists alike. By 2014, there were thirteen telescopes on Mauna Kea, and as each were being built, concerns increased by the Hawaiian people. The peak of this frustration came to fruition with the building of the fourteenth telescope in 2015 (Brown, 2016). This telescope, known as the Thirty Meter Telescope (TMT), would be the largest built yet, stretching about one and a half acres wide, and standing at eighteen stories tall (Quirk, 2017). The \$1.4 billion project has received funding from numerous private and public organizations, including the University of California System, the California Institute of Technology, the University of Hawai‘i System, and the Association of Canadian Universities for Research in Astronomy. The United States,

Japan, India, Canada, and China have all contributed government finances as well (Quirk, 2017).

At its inception, on the day of its groundbreaking on October 7, 2014, protests by Hawaiians as well as environmental activists began, giving birth to the “We Are Mauna Kea” movement. On April 2, 2015, the struggle came to a head when hundreds of protestors, keeping to the tenet of the movement to act peacefully, blocked the road to prevent the TMT contractors from preparing the TMT site. More than 30 protestors were arrested that day (Brown, 2016). At the peak of this conflict in 2015, Google searches for “Mauna Kea protest” and “We Are Mauna Kea” had 146,000 and 1,610,000 results respectively (Brown, 2016). Inspired by these events, and the movement itself, *Rise Up* and *#WeAreMaunaKea* were frequently aired on Hawai‘i Reggae/Island music stations such as KWXX on the Big Island, and Island 98.5 on Oahu.

Music as Protest

Social movements are created not only as a response to conditions of oppression, injustice, and inequality, but also because of changing definitions of such conditions. Music can play a major role in (re)defining such circumstances. As Barbara Finlay notes, “If one examines just the lyrics of protest songs associated with social movements, one can find many examples of diagnoses of what is wrong with the present order of things, proposed solutions to these wrongs, and rationales for participation in the movement” (Finlay, 1980, p. 3). Thus, ideology can easily be formed in songs. Another advantage of music in social movements is its ability to build group cohesion (Lewis, 1987).

In order to achieve their goals, protest groups need to be well aware of the environment outside of their group, and be adaptable should the situation change. To

convey messages to the institutions and audiences that are not within their collectivity, specific strategies need to be adopted. These strategies are known as external tactics. As social movement rhetoricians Charles Morris and Stephen Browne (2013) contend, one way to evaluate movement rhetoric is to examine how groups develop messages to an exterior audience, or an audience that are not members of the protest movement. Specifically, the process through which protestors negotiate their relationship with exterior audiences and opponents should be highlighted. The group's conveyance of messages is altered in particular ways to adapt to spectators, the context, and the rhetorical situation. Morris and Browne (2013) further argue that, in order for a group to be successful they "must be closely attuned to the shifting demands of the situations they confront. They must also strategically address both those they wish to persuade and those most likely to resist their efforts" (p. 163). Social movement groups need to be able to attempt to gain supporters, as well as counter the notions that their antagonists pose.

The success of a protest does not solely depend on the discourse used for out-groups, but also on the allegiance of their members (Morris & Browne, 2013). Sustaining and strengthening commitment to the movement may prove to be more challenging than communicating with external audiences. As Morris and Browne (2013) contend, "members sometimes tire under the strain of opposition, commitments waver, other pressures intervene, conflicts arise, or apathy sets in" (p. 287). The pressure to form a cohesive identity may be what determines the group's success. As Morris and Browne (2013) further assert, "the very possibility of joining a movement presupposes a sense of identity that may not initially exist" (p. 287). The central focus on internal and external rhetoric for a critic is to evaluate how identification, or a group identity, is formed and

sustained in order to keep commitment to the movement, while at the same time displaying their disapproval and opposition to their opponents.

Identification Through Moral Values and Culture

Both *Rise Up* and *#WeAreMaunaKea* attempt to create the Burkean idea of consubstantiality, or identification, with an internal community of Hawaiians.

Discourse—in this particular case, music—may be a solution to this urgency. Among the most famous lines of Kenneth Burke's (1969) work is the statement: "You persuade a man [*sic*] only insofar as you can talk his [*sic*] language by speech, gesture, tonality, order, image, attitude, idea, identifying your ways with his [*sic*]" (p. 55). If people were not alienated from one another, there would be no need for the researcher to examine the often times limited lines of unity that each party shares. Rhetorician James Herrick (2017), writing on Burke, asserts that, "identification is the antidote or necessary remedy for our separation from one another" (pp. 225-226). Communication is needed to find common meaning and ways of acting as a cohesive group, thus, promoting cooperation with one another. Common core values and beliefs can overcome multiple divisions to create a sense of unity, and both songs under consideration attempt to create identification with a Hawaiian community by using a shared history and common heritage.

Esteemed poet Simon Ortiz (Acoma) (2003) reflected on the particular role of song in his family and culture and its resonance in the work he does as a poet:

The song is basic to all vocal expression. The song as expression is an opening from inside of yourself to outside and from outside of yourself to inside, but not in the sense that there are separate states of yourself. Instead, it is a joining and an opening together. Song is the experience of that opening, or road if you prefer, and there is no separation of parts, no division between that within you and that without you, as there is no division between expression and perception. (p. 242)

Ortiz (2003) suggests that song is the most integrated and potentially powerful form of human expression, and thus of continuing significance to Native peoples. Through the concept of identification, songs make connections between one person to another, eventually forming a braided coalition or community.

Native Hawaiian cultural values and language are used throughout both songs to help create a community. In order for supporters to converge on a common ground with each other, they reject the philosophy of a solely “White society,” while identifying with Native Hawaiian culture. John Hammerback and Richard Jensen’s (1994) “Ethnic Heritage as Rhetorical Legacy: The Plan of Delano,” asserts that ethnic groups often speak, write, listen, read, and see in a tradition unique to their experience and culture. Both Hammerback and Jensen’s (1994) essay, and Randall Lake’s (1983), “Enacting Red Power: The Consummatory function in Native American Protest Rhetoric,” suggest that when critics impose the majority’s culture on a minority’s discourse, misleading results could occur. Instead, the scholar should evaluate the text by the standards of that particular group’s standpoint. As Hammerback and Jensen (1994) also note, “some rhetorical qualities appropriate for a genre may be in opposition to qualities called for by the broader orientation” (p. 54). Thus, a rhetor’s style of discourse should be viewed broadly to include the various structures, content, and strategies, instead of viewing the object from a singular, popular, perspective. This approach is taken up here when evaluating *Rise Up* and *#WeAreMaunaKea*.

Hawaiian protest music is an ideal vessel to create identification for the Native community by portraying Hawaiians shared history and common moral/cultural values. As performance studies researcher, Chris McRae (2015), states, “music marks and is

marked by identities, cultures, and bodies. Music is deployed culturally in the service of meanings and understanding, emotions and feelings” (p. 1). Both songs resonate with Native Hawaiian culture by conveying that there is a sacred connection between Hawaiians and the land. As *Rise Up* states:

The mountain is our lifeblood, so we fight it with our lives
We’re tired of the lies
We cry out for this land we call Hawai‘i...

Mauna Kea is our mother
Mauna Kea is our brother
Mauna Kea is our sister
Ke akua is our father...

and *#WeAreMaunaKea* stating:

Taking up our land for technology
They’re pulling up our roots of ancestry
Standing in the midst of an out breaking
Hawai‘i people stand united
The love for our ‘aina is what we found
Please don’t tear up our sacred ground,
This is our home, and we are here to stay

There is an inherent physical and metaphorical connection to the environment portrayed here, as the artists state that the land is their lifeblood, their relative, and that they are rooted in it. Similar to how one might honor their parents or elders, the ‘aina is sacred and must be cherished. Identification is created between Native Hawaiians, but also between them and all things akua (deities) and amakua (ancestral spirits), relaying that everything is related and connected. This point of view may be lost if the songs were evaluated from a solely Eurocentric perspective. Reminiscent of what social movement scholars Johanna Siméant and Christophe Traïni (2016) term the process of moralization, both songs promote the moral values and culture of the Hawaiian people, and their desire to keep the relationship that they have with the land intact.

Not only do both songs attempt to create a sense of Hawaiian collective identity, but they also point out that this identity is related to the land. Hence, what happens to the environment and its identity is a reflection of what happens to Hawaiians. In a sense it is a metaphor for the “Hawaiian way of life,” though in a more literal sense than what most would think in the loose relationship of metaphors. As Imani Perry (2004) suggests, “metaphor and simile engage the imagination and expand or transform the universe... with them, the author creates a space of possibility” (p. 65). There is a metaphoric parallel being displayed in these lyrics. As more things Western are built and introduced, fewer things Hawaiian survive. This can be connected to early colonialism/settler colonialism and Hawaiians’ first contact with Europe and America, as the essence of what it means to be Hawaiian slowly diminishes, as do all physical things.

Being hapa-haole Hawaiian songs, some Hawaiian is used interspersed throughout. As quoted earlier, Burke (1969) states, “You persuade a man [*sic*] only insofar as you can talk his [*sic*] *language* by speech, gesture, tonality, order, image, attitude, idea, identifying your ways with his [*sic*]” (p. 55). In the beginning of *Rise Up*, rapper Keala presents a prelude: “E nā Hawai‘i mai a Ni‘ihau a hiki i ka moku o Keawe, ‘o kēia ka manawa a kākou e kū ha‘aheo, e kū no ka Mauna a Wākea.” This message is meant for those who speak the language. Using some olelo (Hawaiian language) builds a sense of identification and possibilities with each other, in that the language is connected to the culture, and those who know the language are invested in preserving the customs and the land for future generations.

Identification Through Opposition

Not only does acceptance of ideas, values, or culture create unity, but the common rejection of other's ideas can also create identification (Brock, 1998). "Hip hop music (and protest music) celebrates Me and We, as opposed to You ... the other is the competing MC or DJ, the challenger in a fight, or white people" (Perry, 2004, p. 89). Termed conflictualization, the creation of division between two opposing forces is established through sharing an unjust historical legacy bestowed by opponents (Siméant & Traïni, 2016). The idea of who is "the other" is flipped in this situation. Instead of being the exoticized other, these songs are used to depict their antagonists as the "morally wrong other." As can be seen throughout parts of each song, a division between Hawaiian beliefs and Western beliefs is depicted, with Hawaiian values being morally superior to the oppressive Eurocentric notions. This is presented in the following verses from each respective song:

They want to look for life on Mars,
So they look up at the stars while they desecrate the land of our ancestors
I don't understand the plan
Politicians them are wicked never listen to opposition of the Hawaiians
Say they got the legal right but the people will unite when they believe that it's
not righteous
and we will fight until our last breath
Protecting Mauna Kea because we know what's next...

We don't care what's way out there
Floatin a million miles in space
Our kuleana (responsibility) is right here
Our people, our 'aina, our race, and our place
So far we kept it peaceful
In the ways of the righteous people
But don't mistake our aloha for weakness when it comes to fighting evil (*Rise Up*)

We come in peace, cease and desist
I love the pressure and all the local things
We understand you want to see past the stars but this land is our home, the key to
our hearts
Why don't you take a look around now

See all the damage you have caused yea
We need protection for our keiki (kids)
Before we build another billion-dollar facility (*#WeAreMaunaKea*)

Both melodies display that, though they understand that non-indigenous people want to further science, these views do not take into account Hawaiians' perspective. As the song *#WeAreMaunaKea* cheekily states "we come in peace," it voices the opinion that the Hawaiian is viewed as "the other"—as "aliens" whose perspectives are not being seen, but instead being perceived as savage-like, foreign, and strange. The songs frequently present the conflict between "us" versus "them" as historical and cultural differences.

Also, by using strong language such as "wicked" and "evil" to label the opposition, and by blaming their choice to spend finances on other things instead of spending it on local social issues, these texts create an "us against them" mindset. It presents the idea that non-indigenous people do not understand or care for Hawaiians, so Indigenous people must protest against them in order to get their point across: "The exaltation of the inclusive 'we' in song often appears to be inseparable from the denunciation of a 'they' referring to those profiting from injustice (oppressors, tyrants, etc.)" (Siméant & Traïni, 2016, p. 117).

One might make the argument that "evil" and "wicked" may pertain to science versus Hawaiian culture, but that would be false, a point writer and artist Ryan Hiraoka spoke to in an interview that was conducted for a local Hawai'i news station. Hiraoka states: "Astronomy is not evil. Nor is science for that matter ... What I'm referring to as 'evil' in the song is the mind set [*sic*] of people who put money and politics before what is right. This has happened throughout history and is what I'm calling Hawaiian people to rise up against" (Morishita, 2015). Echoing this sentiment, Kealoha Pisciotto, President

of Mauna Kea Anaina Hou, a Native Hawaiian environmental activist group, and founder of Kai Palaoa, an ocean conservation non-profit organization, states that the opposing side of the TMT project is not about the Hawaiian people versus science: “This issue has never been about astronomy. It’s always been about Muana Kea. It’s sacred. It’s our water source that contains very important biodiversity on the planet that is rare, threatened and endangered, cultural practices and rituals will be affected as well” (Kauwale, 2020, p. 11). Such rituals are the solstice and equinox ceremonies that are specifically dependent upon our ability to observe and track the motion of the sun and other celestial bodies in order to find our way in space and time, and to determine when and how to perform certain activities for the care of the land and sea (Kauwale, 2020). Our traditional resource management models are dependent on these ceremonies. Ancient knowledge relating to our relationship with other Pacific people is also a part of these traditions. Thirty years of astronomy development has resulted in adverse significant and substantial impact to the natural and cultural resources of Mauna Kea. With these points in mind, those who are not conscious of Native Hawaiian culture and their connection to the land are seen as the opposition. As Pisciotta explains, “The TMT project and science needs to evolve from their privileged perspective... If science loses its humanity, the there’s no purpose for doing it” (Kauwale, 2020, p. 12).

Labeling Hawaiians’ beliefs and tactics as being “peaceful” and “responsible” displays a moral imposition on their opponents, as they are made to look as the opposition to peace and responsibility. All the while, stating that Hawaiians are defenseless while they are being confronted, showcases a rhetoric of oppression. As Sarah Daynes (2010) argues, a rhetoric of oppression “defines the terms which govern a worldview and is

rooted in the daily reality of the lives of poor people ... It also structures the social critique made by music” (p.192). This type of music describes the complete control of the privileged over the political, social, and economic structures. The rhetoric of oppression in music argues that “poverty is a consequence of the corruption of an elite that maintains a society based on exploitation, which therefore could be changed” (Daynes, 2010, p. 192). This is observed in the lyrical choices of both songs.

Because “Hawaiian” is an Indigenous category, it exists in relation with settler colonialism. According to Patrick Wolfe (1999), settler colonialism is different from other forms of colonialism because it is fundamentally about the acquisition of land through the “elimination” of the peoples already on the desired land. Other scholars such as Maile Arvin (2015) have noted that elimination may not always be the goal of settler colonialism. Nonetheless, settler colonialism is marked by the oppression of a group for the acquisition of their land. Hawai‘i has been illegally occupied by the U.S. since 1893, making it, and Hawaiian people, colonized subjects. This trend of settler colonialism is continued in projects like TMT, where things that were considered Hawaiian and sacred are now being taken away. The difference this time is that Mauna Kea is not being taken in the name of “God”, or the “American Dream”, but in the name of “science” controlled by the state government. Through this polarization of who “deserves” and are entitled to the ownership of the land, opposition is formed.

Identification Through Consciousness Raising

Identification can be garnered through conveying similar values and opposition to said values. It can also be accomplished through consciousness raising, which both songs convey in supporting the We Are Mauna Kea movement’s values. According to George

H. Lewis (1987), there can be distinguished four stages of consciousness raising in protest movements. First, a level of social discontent is associated with the social conditions that the marginalized groups are facing (Lewis, 1987). Next, these social conditions are put into place by policies enacted by a group in power, and thus can be changed when social discontent moves to social unrest—a willingness to challenge the current political and social constructions (Lewis, 1987). Third, social unrest brings about proposed solutions to the injustice, and new ideology is created. Lastly, this new ideology must be legitimized by group cohesion and a call to action (Lewis, 1987).

Both *Rise Up* and *#WeAreMaunaKea* display all four steps. They both address the significant oppression that Hawaiians have faced historically, which has accumulated and led to present injustices. Aforementioned lyrics have demonstrated that the Hawaiian way of life has been silenced for years, and the Hawaiian people have been displaced from their own homes, language, heritage, and land. The songs also condemn the choices of a morally corrupt power elite, describing their actions as “evil” and “wicked.” These melodies do not just stop at creating consubstantiality, but go beyond by calling Hawaiians to action, as can be seen in their choruses:

Rise up, rise up, rise up Hawaiian people, we must unite and fight against evil,
The wicked them will try to buy up your freedom, cause they fear us if we stand
as one
Rise up (*Rise Up*)

Aloha Mauna Kea we stand for you, Aloha Mauna Kea we fight for you
We are Mauna Kea, so we are fighting for the land
People rise up
Take a stand
Yea Mauna Kea, so we're taking back our land
Soldiers rise up
Take a stand
Yea Mauna Kea, Yea Mauna Kea (*#WeAreMaunaKea*)

The emphasis on a call for Hawaiians to “rise up” in both songs suggest that inaction is also action, in that doing nothing supports building the telescope. Thus, the only action possible, as presented in these songs, is to protest against what is being done.

Using music is a more effective medium to disperse political claims because it can be more engaging than other discursive formulations (Siméant & Traïni, 2016).

Listeners are able to understand their relation to the struggle by realizing that they are either a part of the movement or not. Those that decide to be neutral are also a part of the struggle in that they decide to be mute. These songs create a sense of consciousness raising, encouraging Hawaiians and Hawaiians-at-heart to a call to action through petitioning and peaceful protesting. The overview of historical transgressions leading up to this current struggle provokes a feeling that is harrowing and enraging, one that urgently calls for immediate action and commitment to the movement. These texts are used to spark an awakening in those who are ignorant about the wrongs that the Hawaiian people have faced. For those who already know about these woes, the songs are used as a constant reminder to keep the morale of supporters invigorated. As Siméant and Traïni (2016) contend:

To the extent that they require the synchronization of gestures and voices, as well as shared aesthetic and repertoire, musical and choral practices form a kind of collective action . . . the act of singing together is a clear materialization of the determination of group members to act together in a coordinated fashion. Mobilizations for protest thus appear to be often closely linked to a tradition of ritualized performance, which use songs that symbolize a group in movement to assert the existence of a group of individuals with characteristics, desires and destiny that are all shared. (p.114)

Music as a social movement rhetorical device has the unique ability to extend an invitation to listeners to join in the “singing” of these songs, thus encouraging them to join the movement (Siméant & Traïni, 2016).

John Street (2013) argues that within music there is a political calling for togetherness, “[music’s] politics lie as much in its collective character as in its radical lyrics and apocalyptic visions. Even without the words, the sounds are those of a collective resistance, of people making—albeit briefly—a world of their own” (p. 220). *Rise Up* is an exemplar of this. The title in itself is an invitation to audiences from the very beginning, to not only listen, but to act. As a prelude to the song, a plea for action is issued by Keala: “E nā Hawai‘i mai a Ni‘ihau a hiki i ka moku o Keawe, ‘o kēia ka manawa a kākou e kū ha‘aheo, e kū no ka Mauna a Wākea [Hawaii from Ni‘ihau to the district of Kiawe, this is the time we all must stand proud, stand for Mauna Kea]” This is a bold statement, declaring that success is only possible through collective action. In listening and singing together, individuals are participating in creating a shared unity and solidarity.

Discussion and Conclusion: We Are Mauna Kea Forever

In evaluating the hapa-hoale songs *Rise Up* and *#WeAreMaunaKea*, witnessing the “bridge” between the more traditional songs and the contemporary songs isn’t a huge stretch. Native people have adapted and adopted Western languages and instrumentation into their cultures, and now put them to use to further fight for Indigenous issues. Native folks have, in effect, “indigenized” these entities, inventing new ways—Native ways—to employ music and songs in many popular genres, to convey Native thought and concerns in song (Berglund, Johnson, & Lee, 2014). My concentrated focus on contemporary and popular music purposefully revises stereotypical understandings about the “pastness” of Native peoples and cultures, and attempts to recalibrate expectations that Indigenous peoples are in all places, and inextricably linked to contemporary trends and interests.

Conducting this brief analysis was captivating and fun, but also challenging. The fact that I had to listen to each song and transcribe the lyrics took some time, but also speaks to the availability of these texts. Is it by choice that these songs are not easily accessible? Should they be, if they want to reach a wider audience? Because the access to these songs is limited, how many people outside of Hawai‘i are even aware of this social issue? Questions on ontology also come to mind. Perry (2004) states:

One thing that hip hop (and other music genres) criticism should do in addition to providing interesting and informative analyses of the art form, is to use the creativity and ideology contained within the music to enrich the ways we think about society and the ways we create contemporary theory...realism encourages a critique of the media and reflects the significant realities of social inequality. (p. 101)

How can these songs counter hegemonic, orientalizing songs such as *Mele Kalikimaka* or *Hawaiian Wedding Song*? How do Native Hawaiians use songs to convey their ways of understanding the world? How can particular texts be used within sovereignty movements to express identity? I think this evaluation was a pivotal launching point in understanding these questions.

Due to initial protests, the TMT project was temporarily halted by Governor David Ige on April 7, 2015. Construction was set to begin again on June 24, 2015 but was again delayed and halted by protests, resulting in eleven arrests (Associated Press, 2017). On December 2, 2015, the Supreme Court of Hawai‘i invalidated TMT’s building permits, ruling that the process that they went through in attaining their permit did not follow proper protocol. A revised permit was approved on September 28, 2017 by the Hawai‘i Board of Land and Natural Resources, and on October 30, 2018 the Supreme Court of Hawai‘i ruled 4-1 that the revised permit was acceptable and that construction on the project may proceed (Mosbergen, 2018).

Throughout the course of this debacle, protesting persists on the Mauna, and across the islands. One of the largest protests was held on December 5, 2018, when more than two hundred students, faculty, and staff from various campuses of the University of Hawai‘i System (UH) met at the flagship campus, the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa. Their goal was to peacefully urge University of Hawai‘i President David Lassner to terminate all agreements for the construction of TMT (HNN, 2018). Chairpersons of numerous university departments were present that day to voice their concerns. Prolific Indigenous studies scholar and Chair of the Political Science Department, Noelani Goodyear-Ka’ōpua, stated: “As the university community, we should oppose research that severely compromises the work already done to build an ethical relationship between the academy and our community in Hawai‘i, and that undermines the UH goal to become a model Indigenous-serving institution” (UH News, 2018). Hawaiian Studies Chair, Konia Freitas, exclaimed: “The policy and practice of UH must begin to prioritize the protection of the Mauna’s natural and cultural resources, respect the protectors and Native Hawaiian cultural practitioners, and begin to heal the degradation that has already occurred” (UH News, 2018). As a Native Hawaiian scholar, who has recently been hired in Fall 2019, as a faculty member in the Department of Communication at the University of Hawai‘i, Hilo, my sentiments align with both Goodyear-Ka’ōpua and Freitas. Reflexively and ethically, my research is not my own, but acts as another voice that advocates for the preservation and revitalization of the Hawaiian culture.

Construction was set to begin again on July 15, 2019, and again the resurgence of a core of Hawaiian activists gathered at the access road to Mauna Kea. Over 400 protestors peacefully engaged in chanting, and blocking of the access road, but due to the

sheer number of participants, police officers arrested 38 kupuna (mentors) and elders. Protestors camped out on the mountain and continued to block access to the summit of the mountain, until December 2019, when Big Island mayor, Harry Kim, offered a truce for both sides, stating that construction would not commence until after February 2020. In an article written by Chelsea Jensen (2020), published in the Hawai‘i Tribune Herald on August 3, 2020, Big Island of Hawaii community leaders Pualanit Kanakaole Kanahele, Edward Halealoha Ayau, and Kelii W. Iaone Jr. filed a lawsuit against the State of Hawai‘i explaining that the state failed to obtain authorization from the Department of Hawaiian Home Lands (DHHL) or the Hawaiian Homes Commission to build the Mauna Kea Access Road (the road used to tow building equipment for the TMT project) on DHHL land in 1964. Therefore, subsequent use of the land has been unlawful, and the DHHL has failed in its duties to act exclusively in the interests of its beneficiaries, the Native Hawaiian people. As of this writing, this case is pending but has currently halted the beginning of construction for TMT.

In the process of writing this chapter in October 2020, construction has not yet restarted. Activists and scholars alike, urge the University of Hawai‘i Board of Regents to uphold the state motto, *Ua mau ke ea o ka ‘aina i ka pono*, translated as, “The life of the land is perpetuated in righteousness.” Indeed, this cause, and others connected to the Hawaiian sovereignty movement, constantly fight for the struggle over their ancestry, culture, and land, all of which are related—they are one and the same. Although the U.S. government continues to occupy Hawai‘i, it is no longer able to contain the dissenting and opposing voices raised from the islands in the soothing discourse of the tourism industry, or the official language of a happy multiculturalist state. In an empathetic effort

to show compassion, in 1893 a non-Hawaiian missionary wrote: “It is to be hoped that the time will soon come when Hawaiians shall be permitted to speak of themselves in their own way” (Malo, 1839, p. 121). Nearly a hundred and eighty years later, Hawaiians are still hoping that this time will arrive. In the next, and concluding chapter, discussion and implications of conducting various textual analyses of differing mediated formats will be provided, as well as a proposed pedagogical perspective in teaching about media and representation.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION:

THE STATE OF ALOHA IN THE “ALOHA STATE”

I was born into a Hawai‘i colonized and occupied by the United States. Stories of American imperialism, conquest, and settler colonialism from George Washington to Pearl Harbor, from American Calvinist missionary letters and journals to the storylines of the revised television series *Hawaii Five-O*, and even to recent films like *Aloha* and *The Descendants*, are inescapable. Yet, born into a Hawai‘i-based Maoli (Native) family, the stories of our akua (deities), kupuna (elders), and our ‘aina (land) have been woven through my life in deep and profound ways. I think the key term here being, *woven*—or braided, weaved, and corded. These mo‘olelo (stories) are more than something spoken to the next generation, they connect the next generation to preceding generations (lāhui). They also connect the individual to ‘aina. In all of this, genealogy matters, it emphasizes the connection that Kānaka Maoli have to all things.

My lineage connects me to not just people, but to the ‘aumakua (spiritual ties). Let me take this moment to introduce my genealogy. I am descendent of the Pi‘ilani line of Maui. I was raised on the Hilo side of the island of Hawai‘i, in the Hawaiian archipelago. I am a scholar, a writer, an educator, and practitioner who negotiates between two traditions, one colonial, the other resistance. I was born into captivity, a Native person in a non-native world, a Kānaka in an American colony. Because of the long dominance of American imperialism in our Native homeland, including the military overthrow of our Native government in 1893, the banning of our language in 1896, a forced change in citizenship from Hawaiian to American with U.S. annexation in 1898,

and a near total imposition of foreign ways and thoughts, our traditions, our Native voices, literatures, and oratures, have been silenced, though not completely gone. Alongside this historical rotting of na mea Hawai'i (things Hawaiian) has come a redefinition of our national culture from Hawaiian to American, albeit with an island, multiethnic flavor. When the Hawaiian language was banned at the turn of the century, the clear American intent was to prohibit our speech, including resistance speech. They wanted to diminish our literary voice, especially any critical voice. The objective was to obliterate from our minds a unique Native understanding of who and where and how we are. Given this bitter history, my writing, as that of other Hawaiians, whether we write mele (songs), or oli (chants), essays or speeches or poetry or scholarship, is a continuing refusal to be silent.

In her work on research and Indigenous communities, Māori scholar Linda Tuhiwai Smith points out that academic research is a site of contestation, struggle, and negotiation between the West and Indigenous people, and lays the groundwork for Indigenous researchers to write from a cultural perspective that serves their home community. Hawaiian cultural protocols serve as guidelines for my research, particularly the value of kuleana (right, responsibility). In academic inquiry, kuleana is applicable to the concept of one's right to information or to share information, as well as one's responsibilities in this knowledge and sharing. Indigenous scholars must be cognizant of what and how we have a right to know and share. As kahu (caretakers) of knowledge, we are responsible in differing degrees to our disciplines, colleagues, and the institutions we work in, but we have equal responsibility to our kupuna (elders), 'aina, and lāhui (Hawaiian community). When I am asked how I came to choose to research and write

about Hawaiian culture and media representations, my answer is always the same: I did not choose it, it chose me. There are many coincidental events that have occurred far too often throughout my life, and especially in the years I have spent in my undergraduate and graduate tenure of studying these texts to be considered mere accidents. Rather, I strongly believe I am guided by my kupuna on this path of discovery and scholarship. What this kuleana means to me, my ‘ohana (family), and the greater lāhui is deeply imbedded within me, and guides not just my scholarship, but who I am. Thus, who I am is weaved into my scholarship.

This dissertation, then, is simultaneously a critique of settler colonialism in Hawai‘i and on screen, and as Foucault (1980) puts it, “an insurrection of subjugated knowledges.” (p.81)—an act of decolonial, Indigenous, and anticolonial thought. Michel de Certeau and Lawrence Levine point to the ways that subjugated peoples, while appearing to become assimilated into the dominant culture, simultaneously resist domination and retain and reproduce their traditions. Certeau (1984) notes how “the [Indigenous] Indians... often made of the rituals, representations, and laws imposed on them something quite different from what their conquerors (the Spanish) had in mind... They were other within the very colonization that outwardly assimilated them; their use of the dominant social order deflected its power” (p. xiii). Levine (1977) “found that, every time [he] focused on a new form of cultural expression that seemed to function as a mechanism for deep acculturation to the larger society, [he] discovered important degrees of cultural revitalization as well” (p. 11). Is even such an outcome possible? Spivak (1994) asked: “Can the subaltern speak?,” and I have had to grapple with what she meant

by that question, as well as by her conclusion that they cannot, as I have attempted to represent what the Kānaka Maoli were saying at various times.

In this dissertation I argue that Kānaka Maoli speak in a variety of ways, using a variety of mediums, while still living in a colonized world. In Chapter 1, I provided a literature review of the continual oppression and colonization of Native Hawaiians since their first encounters with Westerners, up until present day. I also overviewed past research of stereotypical tropes about Hawaiians in media such as the Buffoonish Other, the Benevolent Other, and the Sexualized Other. Chapter 2 discussed my positionality as a Kānaka scholar, summarizing my theoretical and methodological approach to this project. My theoretical perspective stems from critical/cultural studies, with a focus on postcolonial theory, and my methodological approach attempts to braid Western textual and rhetorical analysis with Indigenous ontology. After laying the framework for this dissertation, Chapters 3, 4, and 5 were case studies of corporate produced and Indigenous produced mediated texts in television, film, and music.

Chapter 3 reviewed how Hawaiians are portrayed in television by evaluating the renewed *Hawaii Five-0* series and Native owned ‘Ōiwi TV network. Here, a staunch difference can be observed in how Kānaka are displayed. While *Hawaii Five-0* continues and modifies stereotypical tropes of Hawaiians via what I coined Haole Pono, we see the purpose of ‘Ōiwi TV mainly as a medium to preserve and teach Hawaiian culture and language. Film contexts were observed in Chapter 4, analyzing the Disney film *Moana* and the recently debuted film by Native Hawaiian filmmaker Chris Kahunahana, *Waikiki*. Through the aid of a Pacific Island advisory board, the Oceanic Story Trust, *Moana* makes an attempt at using Pacific Island cultures in its storyline. All the while, *Waikiki*,

labelled as the first full-length feature film directed by a Native Hawaiian, provides a more visceral portrayal of Kānaka Maoli experiences living in tourist driven Waikiki. In both films a culture-nature relationship is emphasized as imperative to Pacific Island lifestyle. Chapter 5 analyzed two songs written by Native Hawaiian artists, *Rise Up* by Ryan Hiraoka featuring Keala Kawaauhau and *#WeAreMaunaKea* by Sons of Yeshua. These songs were written in protest of building a telescope on the sacred mountain Mauna Kea, and showcases the use of hybridity, by mixing musical genres, and by using both English and Hawaiian languages. Finally, this chapter, Chapter 6, summarizes and connects all case studies to the overarching idea of aloha, while also envisioning what works like this can do in transforming the academy and pedagogy.

Some of the messages and representations to which are portrayed in Indigenous television, film, and music are not even understood and not meant to be understood by the colonizers, this is known as “kaona.” The word kaona means “hidden meaning,” and in Hawaiian oli, mele, and mo‘olelo concealing reference to a person, thing, or place, or even words with double meanings is a common characteristic of the Hawaiian language. An awareness of the political functions of kaona, especially the possibilities for veiled communication, helps in analyzing the words and actions of the Kānaka Maoli. Hawaiian language is used in texts like ‘Ōiwi TV, *Waikiki*, *Rise Up*, and *#WeAreMaunaKea* as a means to perform kaona, where if you do not understand olelo (Hawaiian) you would not understand the message. When thinking about this overall project now, in evaluating all of these texts, what strikes me in carrying out these textual analyses in Chapters 3, 4, and 5 on television, film, and music whether Western produced, Western produced with Hawaiian input, or Hawaiian produced, is the perspective that creators and directors take

on one word—Aloha. The way in which each producer positions themselves in terms of aloha influences the purpose and structure of each text.

Aloha Appropriated, Aloha Reclaimed

For many, aloha signifies a deep, abiding kinship within Hawaiian culture based on practices of reciprocal care and the work it takes to be in community, but we also know that aloha has been turned into a concept for tourism, emptied of its cultural context when displayed in advertisements or postcards. One thing is clear: aloha is a performance, negotiated at the intersection of ancestral knowledge and outsider expectations, manifest in the daily contradictions and complexities of Kānaka Maoli indigeneity (Teves, 2018). Usually conferred through the sharing of a lei, a kiss on the cheek, or perhaps a shaka,²³ aloha is supposed to communicate an overall feeling of welcome and warmth. This imagined performance affirms in the global imagination the existence of something that is real, that represents Hawai‘i, that comes from Hawaiians, but that is now a gift given to the world by Hawaiians. Living with Indigenous values and culture like aloha is a contradiction that many Indigenous people are challenged with. Culture is what makes Indigenous people special, so it should be a source of pride and shared, however, it is cultural difference that made Indigenous peoples subject to colonization and continues to keep Natives locked in Western discourse.

The Hawaiian dictionary defines “aloha” as love, affection, compassion, mercy; to love, to venerate, to show kindness; and as a salutation, to greet, and to hail (Ulukau,

²³ The shaka is a gesture in Hawai‘i tracing back to the early 1900s. To make a shaka you curl your three middle fingers while extending your thumb and pinky finger. This gesture can mean, “hang loose,” “right on,” “thank you,” “take it easy,” “things are great,” among other things. The term “shaka” is not a Hawaiian word. It is attributed to David Espinda, a car salesperson who would end his commercials in the 1960s with the gesture and called it a “shaka.”

2019). *No Nā Mamo*, by Malcolm Nāea Chun (2011) documents that the meaning of aloha as a Hawaiian word transformed over time. Calvinist missionaries, first arriving in Hawai‘i in 1820, were directly involved in the translation of the Hawaiian language into English. One of their primary goals was to translate the Bible into the Hawaiian language. As George Kanahele (1992) discussed, missionary translation turned aloha into a word that focused on agape love, in other words, love of God and unconditional love. This Western translation of aloha for religious purposes paved the way for other Western driven translations of the term, thus respectively appropriating aloha.

As Hawai‘i became more influenced by Western ideology and economics, the use of Hawaiian language and the teaching of Hawaiian culture was banned. By the early twentieth century, aloha became one of the few cultural practices that Kānaka Maoli had left, and they were encouraged to perform it for money (by dancing hula and expressing aloha) (Kanahele, 1992). This is precisely how aloha got attached to the definition of Hawaiianess and Hawaiian culture, because under capitalism Kānaka Maoli are required to perform it as their worth (Teves, 2018). Giving aloha came to be a skill that Kānaka Maoli were perceived to be good at (and they were). It also provided one of the few available sources of financial benefits for them, as they were not deemed qualified for other forms of employment. As Adria Imada (2012; 2008) has discussed, many Kānaka Maoli secured a measure of agency through the hula tours in the 1930s and 1940s, but giving and performing “aloha” on these tours also solidified the relationship between Hawai‘i and the United States, one being superior while the other being in continued servitude.

On March 13, 1959, Reverend Abraham Akaka delivered a sermon that motivated the naming of Hawai‘i as “the Aloha State.” The governor, members of the territorial senate, Hawaiian civic clubs, and the Royal Hawaiian Band all convened for an interdenominational sermon at Kawaiahao Church during which Akaka addressed fears about what the future would hold for Hawai‘i as a U.S. State (Joesting, 1979). Akaka also named what has now come to personify Hawai‘i’s commodification, “the spirit of aloha.” He said:

We need to see that Hawaii has potential moral and spiritual contributions to make [to] our nation and to our world. The fears Hawaii may have are to be met by men and women who are living witnesses of what we really are in Hawaii, of the spirit of aloha, men and women who can help unlock the doors to the future by the guidance and grace of God. This kind of self-affirmation is the need of the hour. And we can affirm our being, as the Aloha State, by full participation in our nation and in our world. For any collective anxiety, the answer is collective courage. And the ground of that courage is God. (Akaka, n.d.)

The territory of Hawai‘i soon became the State of Hawai‘i on August 21, 1959. Inspired by the sermon, a law was soon passed that designated Hawai‘i the Aloha State (Joesting, 1979). By this time, aloha had already been solidified as Hawai‘i’s cultural essence via tourism. The Reverend Akaka further elaborated the concept of the “aloha spirit” in 1966 that reflected common usage of the term in the post-statehood era. In speaking about the tolerance for tourists and foreigners to the islands he explained:

This we call the “Aloha Spirit”— the heritage each man finds if he adopts these Islands as his own [sic]. Those of us who hold this theory believe God designed these Islands for immigrants. Everyone here, from the members of the oldest Hawaiian families to the visitors disembarking from planes today, are immigrants... Despite the great numbers of immigrants, the Hawaiians— the first settlers of the Islands— have survived the influence of the newcomer. While each immigrant group brought something of its native culture to Hawaii, it also adopted a way of life from the Hawaiians. It absorbed what we call the “Aloha Spirit”— the friendliness, humbleness of the Hawaiians. To the malihini— the newcomer— the word “aloha” at first means simply “hello” or “goodbye.” But it does not take the newcomer long to learn that there is a deeper meaning to

“aloha”— kindness and graciousness, love and understanding... Yet the “Aloha Spirit” is not something we of the Islands wish to retain only for ourselves. We offer it to the world. (Akaka, n.d.)

By perpetuating the myth of the Aloha State, the local government prioritizes a false sense of belonging among Hawai‘i’s multicultural population and tourists, while actively ignoring and erasing Kānaka Maoli sovereignty struggles. The tourism industry works to ensure that American tourists to Hawai‘i would feel at ease in their choice of vacation destination, without any exposure to Hawai‘i’s troubled racial history or American conquest over Native Hawaiians (Joesting, 1979). Touristic references to the aloha spirit helped to normalize Hawai‘i’s relationship to the United States by reviving colonialist tropes, in which Native Hawaiians welcomed White American settlers.

In 1986, Hawai‘i passed the Aloha Spirit Law, which encourages people to emote good feelings to each other, especially in government dealings (Reyes, 1986). The passing of the Aloha Spirit Law occurred in the wake of the Hawaiian Renaissance and several years of unrest within the local government. In the late 1970s, Hawaiian groups agitated for an acknowledgment of the injustices done to Kānaka Maoli, precipitating the creation of the Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA), an end to the U.S. military target practice bombing on Kaho‘olawe, and the emergence of a Hawaiian sovereignty movement. Such tensions influenced the need to codify Hawai‘i’s most prized essence in law (Reyes, 1986). The Aloha Spirit Law states:

These are traits of character that express the charm, warmth and sincerity of Hawai‘i’s people. It (Aloha) was the working philosophy of native Hawaiians and was presented as a gift to the people of Hawai‘i. “Aloha” is more than a word of greeting or farewell or a salutation. “Aloha” means mutual regard and affection and extends warmth in caring with no obligation in return. “Aloha” is the essence of relationships in which each person is important to every other person for collective existence. “Aloha” means to hear what is not said, to see what cannot be seen and to know the unknowable. (Hawai‘i Revised Statutes, 1986)

Richard Pomaikaio Kalani Kinney of the Hawaiian Political Action Council testified against the bill, saying that the measure “interferes with religious freedom” of Native Hawaiians and would “become the one and only legal interpretation of Aloha Spirit” (Miller-Davenport, 2019, p. 121).

Such non-Hawaiian local and Western claims to aloha clearly pose problems for the Hawaiian sovereignty movement that took shape in the 1970s during the Hawaiian renaissance. As a Hawaiian word rooted in Polynesian ways of life, aloha belongs first and foremost to Hawaiians, who are uniquely situated to determine its applications. Yet, the “aloha state” and the “aloha spirit” were constructed works against Hawaiian interests in multiple ways, as Keiko Ohnuma (2008) states that it does so:

1. by subsuming the asymmetrical political claims of immigrant-settlers and indigenous people under the umbrella of Christian equality;
2. by containing any political resistance that would foreground such claims;
3. by continuing to invite the exploitation of land and other resources
4. by the tourism industry; and
5. by substituting feel-good intentions for any material remediation of colonial exploitation. (p. 378)

By appropriating and defining aloha using Western standards, the idea of aloha became a barometer of Hawaiianness that was used to quiet dissent and encourage the maintenance of the settler-colonial state. Our performances of culture can thus function as a tool or weapon of the dominant culture, which forces Indigenous people to perform within the limited and often negating frames it sets in order to be seen or recognized as subjects at all (Teves, 2018). These are the catch-22s of indigeneity. Settlers employ definitions of Indigenous cultures that limit Indigenous claims to our resources, lands, and sovereignty. Indigenous people must prove themselves as “real” or “authentic” to secure political recognition and, unfortunately, cultural belonging. Hawaiians have in turn utilized these

definitions of Western aloha to access the social, economic, and political resources that are necessary for their survival—an act of strategic essentialism (Raibmon, 2005).

While the historical appropriation and commodification of aloha have been justifiably criticized, this dissertation looks instead at the conditions that require Kānaka Maoli to perform aloha and how aloha can be reclaimed as a practice of their own world-making that exceeds the limits set by the colonality of power. This practice is what Stephanie Nohelani Teves (2018) terms “defiant indigeneity,” and it is the focus of this dissertation. The uncritical celebration of aloha impacts Kānaka Maoli, for aloha’s deployment in a number of discourses undergirds the ongoing military occupation of the Pacific, the cultural exploitation of our Hawaiian culture, and the attendant environmental degradation across our islands from the ocean, to the shores, and to the mountains/volcanos. Still, I am compelled to defend aloha in spite of its internal conflicts and the contradictions that reform and reproduce its power—I would be lying if I said I didn’t believe in aloha too. Aloha is promoted as what is “Hawaiian” and the thing that binds us, and it does. It is imperative, then, to mark how Kānaka Maoli articulate and perform aloha with other Hawaiian philosophies as a strategy to disarticulate aloha from its most commodified forms, and I believe this dissertation showcases this.

Going beyond a superficial and commodified warmth and benevolence, when aloha is connected to our genealogy, land, and culture a more nuanced aloha is observed. For instance, ‘Ōiwi TV, *Waikiki, Rise Up*, and *#WeAreMaunaKea* go beyond “hello” and “welcome” aloha and displays aloha aina, a deep love and connection to the land in portraying how the land takes care of Native Hawaiians, and in return we should tend to the land. These texts also portray an aloha for ohana (family) and lāhui (community)

when they showcase our kuleana (responsibility) to each other. And lastly, by the using olelo, these texts encourage an aloha for Hawaiiana (Hawaiian culture) and our role in revitalizing, preserving, and transferring this knowledge to future generations. Kānaka produced media is much more than the “aloha spirit,” they in many cases refute it and reclaim their own sense of aloha grounded in Native Hawaiian ontology and epistemology.

The naming of the Aloha State and the creation of the Aloha Spirit Law are two examples of aloha that require disarticulation. We must recall the definition of aloha put forth by Puku‘i (1983), that aloha is embodied in spaces where people gather to provide mutual helpfulness for collective benefit. Further, aloha functions alongside other Hawaiian values, such as ohana (family) and kōkua (help), which challenge articulations of aloha purely in the name of capitalism. In our commitment to perform our indigeneity for each other, we recenter aloha among ourselves, which in turn allows us to make decolonial claims to life, love, and living as Kānaka Maoli. When we recognize the aloha in one another, we refuse state-based or tourist-infused fantasies of aloha, and we reaffirm aloha as a social relationship between Kānaka Maoli and our land, and non-Natives whom we welcome because they are also committed to this relation. As Trask (1991) describes:

Social connections between our people are through aloha, simply translated as “love” but carrying with it a profoundly Hawaiian sense that is, again, familial and genealogical. Hawaiians feel aloha for Hawai‘i from whence they come and for their Hawaiian kin upon whom they depend. It is nearly impossible to feel or practice aloha for something that is not familial. This is why we extend familial relations to those few non-Natives whom we feel understand and can reciprocate our aloha. But aloha is freely given and freely returned; it is not and cannot be demanded or commanded. Above all, aloha is a cultural feeling and practice that works among the people and between the people and their land. (p. 141)

Trask's words remind us all that we need aloha and we need each other. We must remember this social relation and cultivate it because the yardsticks of indigeneity and aloha apply to all of us, such as when we are performing in a musical genre that appears antithetical to aloha; or when we are protecting a sacred mountain as in the case of *Rise Up* and *#WeAreMaunaKea*; or when we are filmmaking abstractions of the Hawaiian experience as we have seen in *Waikiki*; or when we are audiences of such film experiences.

Revilla and Osorio (2019) provide a succinct wrap up of what was aforementioned in the appropriation of aloha, and where authentic aloha comes from.

Since the arrival of foreigners to Hawai'i in 1778, aloha has been seriously fucked with. The sexing and selling of Native bodies, continues to define Hawai'i to the outside world, and the expectation of "getting lei'd" upon arrival persists. [Aloha] is gratuitously sold as exotic Native love. In the shared labs of colonialism, global corporate tourism, militarization, and heteropatriarchy, aloha has been genetically modified into a diseased host. American colonialism uses aloha as an alibi; tourism uses aloha as a commodity; New Age peddlers of Polynesian sorcery use aloha to gloss over settler identity; and politicians use aloha to define our people as "happy hosts," punishing us when we go off script. Even so-called Christians use aloha to outlaw love even though aloha did not begin in a church and is bound to neither Christianity nor heterosexuality. Aloha is much more than this. Our aloha is born from the power of creation, as established in our mo'olelo. Let us be clear: aloha does not carry the limitations of tolerance or economy-driven ploys to attract more visitors; it is not just "hello" and "goodbye." Aloha is a complex set of practices and relationships that keep the integrity of our aina, 'ohana, and lāhui at the center. (p.126)

Aloha cannot be demanded or forced, such as in the example of the aloha state apparatus, where aloha is connected to a practice and a cultural feeling. I have hoped to show the way that these different performance spaces/mediums construct and build upon aloha, bringing together different Hawaiian and non-Hawaiian audiences and communities that are predicated on questioning the status quo in Hawai'i—a status quo that continues to be

invested in constraining and regulating aloha in the service of a tourism industry that confines and codifies the Hawaiian people and our culture.

At the heart of these mediated representations of who and how we are is aloha, but what now? I surely hope people will read this dissertation and discover a deeper definition and connection to aloha, but how can I move forward from this as a Kānaka scholar? How can I perform aloha in the classroom? I teach and research at a university that serves a majority of Hawai‘i locals and Hawaiians, and that prides themselves in being one of the most ethnically diverse universities in the nation. It is also designated as an Indigenous serving institution. So how can an Indigenous scholar, born and raised in a colonized land, taught to embrace both Western and Indigenous perspectives, use aloha in teaching? Well, just like the approach taken in this dissertation, I would like to propose weaving and connecting these perspectives together to form my pedagogical point of view.

Indigenous (Aloha) Pedagogy

Research in the academy often represents a continued form of oppression and colonization for Indigenous scholars, whose voices are marginalized and perspectives as Indigenous people are challenged. Gatekeepers within the academy maintain rules and methods that continue to colonize and oppress Indigenous scholars and populations (Miheuah & Wilson, 2004). Scholars have long criticized the privileging of non-Indigenous scholars as “experts” on Native education. Swisher (1998) pointedly argued, “their authority is cited more often than the experts from whom their experience and information was gathered, and they have become the experts in [Indigenous] education recognized by their mainstream peers” (p. 193). A mere 1.3% representation in 20 years

of scholarship is testament to the sheer invisibility of Indigenous voices in higher education (Willmott et al., 2015). There continues to be a call for scholarship that includes not only our voices, but research methodologies that more appropriately address our unique positions and responsibilities as Indigenous people and scholars (Kovach, 2009).

In order to help steer our universities in a new direction away from such erasure and exclusion, I argue that a transformation of institutions into Indigenous places of learning is necessary, not just in name, but in action as well. These universities would be a place where Indigenous peoples of the area are recruited as students, staff, faculty, and administrators and where they are invited and made to feel safe to bring their Indigenous histories, knowledge systems, languages, worldviews, and practices as part of the foundation for curriculum. A fostering of a genuine inclusivity can build a campus culture in which the experiences, realities, and worldviews of many will be uplifted, affirmed, and validated (Jayakumar & Museus, 2012). To me, that is real aloha, an aloha pedagogy in action.

Perhaps one way in which we can attempt to involve more Indigenous, and specifically in my case Kānaka Maoli, voices in higher education is through Lipe's (2014) Hō'ālanī Framework. This model is used as a means to transforming underlying assumptions of individuals to engage in more inclusive and Hawaiian worldviews. This is particularly important as I consider pathways toward equity and equality at my own institution. The Hō'ālanī Framework consists of four principles that help people recognize the importance of including and valuing Hawaiian land, people, and ontologies. The first principle to note is the importance of mo'okū'auhau or genealogical

successions, connections, and stories. It is an understanding that we are connected to all parts of our world through space and time (Lipe, 2014). In understanding mo‘okū‘auhau we must also acknowledge the second principle of kaikua‘ana (older sibling)/kaikaina (younger sibling) or relationship within one’s genealogy (Lipe, 2014). These terms refer to the senior and junior genealogical lines within mo‘okū‘auhau, inferring that there is always a person or element that is interdependent on the previous person or element and their successor. Nothing is alone or without connection to the next—everything is intergenerational. In understanding our lineage, connection, and interdependence on one another, the next step is Kuleana. This term has been defined and stated many times throughout this dissertation as a mean of responsibility. In the case of the Hō‘ālanī Framework, kuleana is about nurturing and sustaining the life of each of the entities within mo‘okū‘auhau, depending on your kaikua‘ana/kaikaina role (Lipe, 2014). Lastly, all is brought to fruition with the fourth principle, ho‘okōkuleana, or fulfillment of the kuleana. Without action kuleana is not fulfilled. Just as the kaikua‘ana raises, feeds, clothes, and protects the kaikaina, the kaikaina in turn is responsible to take care of the kaikua‘ana as they age. When kaikua‘ana and kaikaina recognize and fulfill their kuleana in mo‘okū‘auhau, there is pono or balance and order (Kame‘elelehiwa, 1992).

One of the fundamental aspects of reclaiming Indigenous spaces in higher education research is to continually reflect on how we move this work forward. What are the next steps? How do we ensure a continued reclamation of space and voice in higher education? One of the goals of this dissertation was to push back against the systems that have excluded Indigenous research, and to create an academic space for myself as an Indigenous scholar in higher education. We must continue to push for systemic changes

that honor and respect Indigenous knowledge and Indigenous methodologies. Therefore, I see it as an important step to institutionalize Indigenous, cultural, and community protocols. I am thrilled to be a part of a university that is designated as Indigenous serving. I am also encouraged by the recent creation of an Indigenous Caucus in 2020, and soon to be Division, in my discipline's national association, the National Communication Association. Granted that we have progressed quite a bit in the past decades, there is still a lot of room for more inclusion. This also means pushing our non-Indigenous colleagues to be more inclusive of Indigenous methodologies in scholarly spaces such as journals and academic conferences.

Another step involves making room for emerging Indigenous scholars. We must constantly work to create a community of scholars that fosters support and encouragement. It is important that as Indigenous scholars, and non-Indigenous scholars as well, we acknowledge our kuleana to future scholars and are creating spaces of inclusion, support, and encouragement. This requires faculty to be more receptive and encouraging of Indigenous methodologies and to respect the different types of work emerging from our future Indigenous scholars. I for one must say that I am thankful for an encouraging doctoral committee to have accepted this braided approach towards critical/cultural textual analysis. Finally, I think it imperative that we continue to honor our kuleana to our communities by ensuring that our scholarship is accessible, worthy, respectful, and reciprocal. I hope this dissertation is pono to the lāhui Hawai'i, as it is my act of ho'okōkuleana and protest against settler colonialism.

In a way, respective Kānaka media creators of the texts analyzed in this dissertation do what they do because of the realization of the Hō'ālanī Framework. They

understand their connection and role they play in preserving and relaying the ‘aina, culture, and language to the next generation of Hawaiians. Their production of such texts is their ho‘okōkuleana, and in a way, the production of this text, this dissertation, is my ho‘okōkuleana. However, I wish to go beyond this text and take what has been learned from this voyage and make it a part of my lifestyle and my pedagogy as I hope to help to create a more inclusive academy that allows more Indigenous voices to speak.

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