

Colonial Apprehension: Hawaiian Indigeneity in U.S. American Popular Culture,
1945-1980

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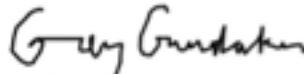
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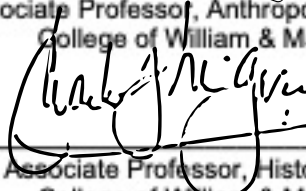
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ABSTRACT

Colonial Apprehension: Hawaiian Indigeneity in U.S. American Popular Culture, 1945-1980 is an interdisciplinary historical study of American settler-colonial state formation that focuses on the contentious political relationship between the U.S. and Kanaka Maoli (Native Hawaiians) after World War II. The central objects of study are three Hawai'i-inspired American popular-cultural formations — surfing, tiki culture, and police procedural television — that have very rarely been examined through the analytic lens of indigeneity. In three case studies, I demonstrate how popular-cultural production and consumption has mediated historically specific modes of colonial apprehension. This dissertation develops a methodological approach that merges archival research of undigitized source material with textual and cultural analysis. This dissertation's central claim is that U.S.-Hawaiian relations, since the end of World War II, have been shaped by a form of knowledge production that I call *colonial apprehension*: practices for generating and enforcing understandings about Indigenous peoples, places, and epistemologies that ultimately aim (and consistently fail) to neutralize the threat to settler-colonial authority posed by Indigenous sovereignty and knowledge. I draw on the multiple meanings of the word apprehension — comprehension, containment, anxiety — in order to show how settler-colonial knowledge and violence is (re)produced in Americans' everyday lives and, importantly, how it is made vulnerable by an Indigenous politics of decolonization.

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倉賀野 利子, 安正, 朋子, 昌子 へ
(For Toshiko, Yasumasa, Tomoko, and Masako Kuragano)

INTRODUCTION

COLONIAL APPREHENSION

For many U.S. Americans who had long dreamed of visiting Hawai‘i, a sudden drop in air travel prices in the early months of 2020 seemed to be a moment worth seizing, and the fact that these low fares were the result of a global pandemic was far from a deterrent. Across social media networks, users expressed a desire to flee from a world wracked by the COVID-19 pandemic to a place long figured as an island paradise. There emerged a persistent attitude that if Americans were required to practice social distancing it would be far preferable to do so in a tropical locale.¹

The “corona vacation” phenomenon posed a serious problem for Hawai‘i’s state government. Hospitals had already been near capacity before the pandemic began, and after the islands’ first positive coronavirus case on March 6th, the number of infections had steadily grown.² Yet, in spite of the risk, Governor David Ige was reluctant to regulate the tourism industry, which has long been Hawai‘i’s largest employer. When it became clear that the state was dragging its feet to impose travel restrictions and stay-at-home orders, residents began organizing protests. On a road leading into ‘Iao Valley State Park on Maui, visitors were met by groups of locals blocking vehicles and holding signs reading “No Tourists” and “Park Closed.”³ In Honolulu, a convoy moved from the airport through Waikīkī, shouting at tourists to return home.⁴ This widespread dissent

¹ Frances Nguyen, “Please Don’t Go to Hawaii on a ‘Corona Vacation’ Right Now,” *Vox*, March 20, 2020, <https://www.vox.com/2020/3/30/21198011/hawaii-coronavirus-vacation-crisis-tourism>.

² Eleni Avendaño, “Are Hawaii Hospitals Prepared For A Pandemic?,” *Honolulu Civil Beat*, March 19, 2020, <https://www.civilbeat.org/2020/03/are-hawaii-hospitals-prepared-for-a-pandemic/>.

³ “Residents of Moloka‘i and Maui Protest to Keep Visitors out amid COVID-19 Fears,” *KITV 4*, March 18, 2020, <https://www.kitv.com/story/41912481/residents-of-molokai-and-maui-protest-to-keep-visitors-out-amid-covid19-fears>.

⁴ Nguyen, “Please Don’t Go to Hawaii on a ‘Corona Vacation’ Right Now.”

forced Governor David Ige to swiftly concede on March 26, as the total number of cases climbed steadily toward one hundred, the state of Hawai‘i implemented a mandatory fourteen-day quarantine for all new arrivals, including both tourists and returning residents.⁵

The mandatory quarantine had a significant impact on the tourism industry. Compared to the previous year, the number of visitors in April had dropped by 99.5%, even though 4,564 non-residents still chose to travel to Hawai‘i over the course of the month. Data from the Hawaii Tourism Authority shows that the vast majority of these visitors were residents of the continental United States.⁶ Unsurprisingly, it seemed that there were plenty of tourists who were willing to defy the law. By July 2020, almost two-hundred visitors had been arrested for violating the quarantine order, some arrested more than once.⁷ The violations were so common that the state was unable to keep up with enforcement, even with the assistance of a citizen Facebook group called “Hawaii Quarantine Kapu Breakers” which had been crowd-sourcing reports of visitors who were ignoring the mandate.⁸

⁵ The mandatory quarantine period officially ended on October 15, 2020. On that day, over 8,000 visitors arrived in Hawai‘i. See Stewart Yerton, “Opening Day For Hawaii Tourism: It’s Just The Beginning,” *Honolulu Civil Beat*, October 15, 2020, <https://www.civilbeat.org/2020/10/opening-day-for-hawaii-tourism-its-just-the-beginning/>.

⁶ “Hawai‘i Visitor Statistics Released for April 2020” (Hawai‘i Tourism Authority, May 28, 2020), <https://www.hawaiitourismauthority.org/media/4832/april-2020-visitor-statistics-press-release-final.pdf>.

⁷ “Nearly 200 People Arrested in Hawaii for Violating Travel Quarantine,” *KITV 4*, July 17, 2020, 200, <https://www.kitv.com/story/42382980/nearly-200-people-arrested-in-hawaii-for-violating-travel-quarantine>; Manolo Morales, “2 Visitors Wanted for Violating Quarantine Order More than Once Found by Police,” *KHON 2*, April 22, 2020, <https://www.khon2.com/coronavirus/two-visitors-wanted-for-violating-quarantine-order-again/>.

⁸ Ryan Kalei Tsuji and Yunji de Nies, “VIDEO: Hawaii Quarantine Kapu Breakers Group Continues to Assist Local Authorities,” *Honolulu Star-Advertiser*, November 9, 2020, <https://www.staradvertiser.com/2020/11/09/breaking-news/watch-live-hawaii-quarantine-kapu-breakers-angela-keen-joins-the-honolulu-star-advertisers-spotlight-hawaii/>.

Some even went so far as to take legal action against the state to assert what they saw as their right to visit Hawai‘i without participating in quarantine. On July 15th the Center for American Liberty, a right-wing legal organization, filed a lawsuit against Governor Ige on behalf of several clients who claimed that the quarantine mandate discriminated against out-of-state visitors and violated their constitutional right to travel freely to Hawai‘i.⁹ Several days later, the Department of Justice filed a Statement of Interest in support of the lawsuit as part of Attorney General William P. Barr’s initiative to ensure the protection of civil liberties during the coronavirus pandemic.¹⁰ Governor Ige’s legal team stated that the quarantine remained constitutional, because it applied equally to both residents and non-residents arriving in Hawai‘i.¹¹

By actively defying and challenging certain restrictions on free movement, both “corona vacation” tourists and the U.S. federal government have made clear that they understand Hawai‘i to be a place that Americans have a right to enter at will. For the crisis vacationers this understanding is entangled with notions that Hawai‘i is a place wherein one always has the right, as an American, to escape the cruel realities of the modern world. Far from decrying this position, the Ige administration and many of Hawai‘i’s residents insisted that these measures were a temporary and necessary response

⁹ Jennifer Sinco Kelleher, “Judge: Hawaii’s Quarantine Is Reasonable during Pandemic,” *Hawaii Tribune Herald*, July 4, 2020, <https://www.hawaiitribune-herald.com/2020/07/04/hawaii-news/judge-hawaii-quarantine-is-reasonable-during-pandemic/>.

¹⁰ “Department of Justice Files Statement of Interest Challenging the Constitutionality of Hawaii Governor’s COVID-19 Order That Effectively Discriminates against out-of-State Residents in a Manner That Harms Hawaii’s Economy” (Honolulu, Hawai‘i: U.S Attorney’s Office, District of Hawaii, June 23, 2020), <https://www.justice.gov/usao-hi/pr/departement-justice-files-statement-interest-challenging-constitutionality-hawaii-governor>.

¹¹ Josh Gerstein, “Court Rebukes Justice Department Move in Hawaii Quarantine Case,” *Politico*, June 25, 2020, <https://www.politico.com/news/2020/06/25/hawaii-quarantine-case-justice-department-339964>.

to an exceptional situation after which the tourists' supposedly fundamental right to unimpeded access to Hawai'i would be restored.

These public debates over the coronavirus pandemic are emblematic of the production and formation of settler colonial knowledge to which this dissertation attends: an assemblage of acts, practices, and strategies of rule that I theorize as *colonial apprehension*, and which iteratively (re)produce seemingly commonsense ways of understanding and containing Indigenous peoples, places, and knowledges. Apprehension, a word with multiple meanings, is particularly useful for understanding the production of this colonial knowledge formation. When one apprehends something, it is made graspable in both the literal and the figurative sense. To apprehend is to seize, contain, and possess (as in the apprehension of a criminal or property), but also to comprehend or understand. Relatedly, as a noun, apprehension describes a notion or opinion. These multiple meanings allow for conceptual flexibility. I use apprehension as a noun to describe the *process* of epistemological production or a particular colonial knowledge formation (*an* apprehension) that might be historically specific. In the form of a verb (to apprehend) the term facilitates my discussion of the active (re)production of colonial knowledge formations. Moreover, to feel apprehensive is to be doubtful, ambivalent, and can even describe the affective experience of fear or dread. This final meaning reflects what I see as the fundamentally uneasy and unsettled nature of settler colonial knowledge and logics.

Foundational to the dominant representation of the debate over pandemic-era tourism was an underlying assumption — one that seems so common sense that it goes almost completely unquestioned — that Hawai'i is unequivocally part of the United

States and, consequently, that its residents should be afforded the same rights guaranteed to all American citizens. Taking Hawai‘i’s statehood as a given is immediately troubled, however, when one considers the public political presence of Kanaka Maoli, the Indigenous people of Hawai‘i, many of whom continue to claim their exclusive right to sovereignty and denounce American governance in Hawai‘i as settler colonialism and illegal occupation.¹²

The mainstream press did little to define the protests against “corona vacation” tourism as anything other than an effort to pressure the Ige administration to close state borders in response to the pandemic. Upon closer inspection, however, it becomes clear that these pandemic-related demonstrations are part of a history of Indigenous political action against U.S. settler colonial rule that has been sustained for well over a century. The convoy in protest of tourism that took place in Honolulu was organized by Kanaka Maoli activists who are also leaders in the ongoing movement to end the construction of the Thirty Meter Telescope (TMT) on the sacred mountain Maunakea. Many of these same activists later participated in a gathering on July 4, 2020, to protest a display of American flags in Kailua, which were replaced by protestors with flags of the Hawaiian Kingdom, the independent nation that had been illegally overthrown by an unsanctioned armed militia of U.S. Americans in 1893. Kanaka Maoli scholar and activist Jamaica Heolimeleikalani Osorio stated in a local news report that the flags symbolized the

¹² Throughout this dissertation, I follow J. Kēhaulani Kauanui’s guidance on the use of diacritical marks for “Kanaka Maoli”: “*Kanaka* (without a macron) indicates the singular or the categorical plural, while *Kānaka* denotes a countable plural.” J. Kēhaulani Kauanui, *Hawaiian Blood: Colonialism and the Politics of Sovereignty and Indigeneity* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2008), xii. Additionally, all English translations of Hawaiian language words are from Mary Kawena Pukui and Samuel H. Elbert, *Hawaiian Dictionary: Hawaiian-English, English-Hawaiian*, Revised and enlarged edition (Honolulu, Hawai‘i: University of Hawaii Press, 1986).

continued occupation of Indigenous land and settler colonial violence against Kanaka Maoli, and therefore, had no place in Hawai‘i.¹³

This particular set of recent events, however, must be understood as part of a long and recursive history. Apprehension takes shape through contentious (re)negotiations over time, across space, and at every level of social life. The colonial regime is forced to contend with ever-shifting historical conditions and ever-present political dissent that threaten to expose what is always a vulnerable logical basis for continued rule. Gone unexamined, apprehension continues to justify colonial violences perpetrated in defense of what appears to be common sense, and colonial regimes will go to great lengths to suppress those who violate or evade epistemological containment. Even the notion that Americans’ right to enter and move about Hawai‘i at will might be temporarily limited spurred lawsuits and wide-spread unrest from many of the state’s conservative residents.¹⁴ Vacationers were willing to risk arrest and thousands of dollars in fines in order to evade a fourteen-day quarantine, and the risk they posed to the health of Hawai‘i’s residents hardly appeared to register as a consideration. It is evident from this and countless other historical instances (some of which are discussed in this dissertation) that evading apprehension is punishable in a number of violent ways. The set of inquiries addressed by this dissertation can, perhaps, best be summarized by a provocative question

¹³ Jenn Boneza, “1,000 American Flags in Kailua Back up after It Was Removed, Vandalized,” *KHON 2*, July 3, 2020, <https://www.khon2.com/local-news/1000-american-flags-in-kailua-back-up-after-it-was-removed-vandalized/>.

¹⁴ “As State Begins to Ease Restrictions, Scores Gather to Protest Stay-at-Home Order,” *Hawaii News Now*, May 1, 2020, <https://www.hawaiinewsnow.com/2020/05/01/more-than-protesters-turn-out-state-capitol-protest-stay-at-home-order/>.

posed by a protester in Maui whose sign read: “Why is your vacation more important than my health?”¹⁵

This dissertation argues that the U.S. settler colonial state and its agents have apprehended Hawai‘i, Kanaka Maoli, and Hawaiian cultural knowledge in order to mitigate historically specific threats posed by enduring Indigenous sovereignty and perceived by the settler colonial state. I engage a genealogy of colonial apprehension across three ubiquitous Hawai‘i-inspired American popular cultural formations that emerged around Hawai‘i’s statehood in 1959: American surfing, tiki culture, and police procedural television. Each of these formations has facilitated and mediated certain visions for Hawai‘i, its residents, and its culture in different yet overlapping ways. Despite differences in modality, I argue that cultural production and consumption served to buttress an ever-vulnerable settler colonial common sense and justify the continued occupation of Indigenous land.

Throughout this dissertation, I use colonial apprehension as a way of gesturing toward a certain “way of knowing,” a form of knowledge production, and an assemblage of sentiments and strategies of settler colonial rule. Apprehension offers a point of convergence at which critiques and analyses of settler colonial (dis)possession, land theft, and genocide are put into a shared conceptual space with modes of governance that are often registered at different frequencies — rhetoric, signification, representation, affect — but that nonetheless shape the very fabric of life in settler colonial society. I argue that settler colonial governance always requires that the Native population be apprehended in

¹⁵ Doug Herman, “Shutting Down Hawai‘i: A Historical Perspective on Epidemics in the Islands,” *Smithsonian Magazine*, March 25, 2020, <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/history/shutting-down-hawaii-historical-perspective-epidemics-islands-180974506/>.

order to justify continued occupation of Indigenous land and violence against Indigenous people.

This project presents colonial apprehension as a conceptual framework that understands Indigenous ways of knowing and being otherwise as fundamentally disruptive to the historical and ongoing (re)production and (re)iteration of settler colonial logics in everyday life. It recognizes that simply identifying coloniality in any given context without considering Native and Indigenous histories, politics, and epistemologies ultimately reinscribes an “unknowing” through which decolonialization is rendered unimaginable.¹⁶ Based on this understanding, I give special attention to those sites of colonial apprehension that are made to seem apolitical or well-intentioned. Said another way, the popular cultural texts and formations under examination gain political purchase not despite but *precisely because* they appear to be banal. Moreover, this project focuses on texts and formations that erase Hawai‘i’s Indigenous people and appropriate Kanaka Maoli knowledge. Rather than point out cultural inauthenticity or diagnose producers and consumers as passively ignorant, I critically interrogate the ways in which erasure or appropriation, as strategies of apprehension, actively produce colonial ways of knowing that seek to desperately contain, counter, and neutralize the constant threat of Indigenous political presence.¹⁷ Kanaka Maoli have always evaded apprehension, and as such, this project maintains that the processes and practices through which the settler colonial

¹⁶ Manu Vimalassery, Juliana Hu Pegues, and Alyosha Goldstein, “Introduction: On Colonial Unknowing,” *Theory & Event* 19, no. 4 (2016), <https://www.muse.jhu.edu/article/633283>.

¹⁷ For a rich theoretical and historical account of Indigenous erasure under U.S. settler colonialism see Jean M. O’Brien, *Firsting and Lasting: Writing Indians out of Existence in New England* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2010).

regime attempts to categorize and contain Indigenous peoples, places, and knowledges will always produce its own undoing.

This introductory chapter provides the necessary groundwork for this dissertation. In the first section, I provide an overview of U.S.-Hawai‘i history until statehood in 1959. The second section explains the ways in which I use certain key terms, including “imperial,” “colonial,” and “settler colonial” to describe the United States as a state formation and its political relationship to Hawai‘i. Although a theorization and critique of settler colonial logics and practices of apprehension are central to this project, my attention to settler colonialism as an analytic is necessary insofar as it furthers a politics of decolonization that is predicated on the resurgence of Indigenous ways of knowing and being. The third section attends to the political and methodological ground upon which this project stands. I discuss my methodological approach to historical analysis as a project of genealogy that foregrounds indigeneity as well as my attention to relationality. The introduction concludes with a summary of each of the chapters that follow.

Colonial Apprehension Before Statehood

In each of the dissertation’s chapters, I examine a specific popular cultural formation —U.S. American surfing, tiki culture, and police procedural television — that emerged during the historical moment surrounding Hawai‘i’s admission to the United States in 1959: a period roughly spanning 1945 and 1980. These three formations emerged and rose to ubiquity during a period that saw a transformation in the dominant settler colonial apprehension of Hawai‘i and Hawaiians.¹⁸ It is for this reason that I

¹⁸ Throughout this dissertation, I use the term “Hawaiian(s)” interchangeably with “Kanaka Maoli” or, rarely, “Native Hawaiian(s)” to refer to the Indigenous people of Hawai‘i. I do not use “Hawaiians” to

understand the time period to be worthy of intentional analysis. However, and very importantly, this is not to say that apprehension only played a significant role in U.S. settler colonial governance during the moment of Hawai‘i statehood, nor is it to claim that apprehending Hawai‘i as a potential U.S. state did not occur prior to World War II.

Recent studies in the history of the U.S. and Hawai‘i argue that statehood began long before the Congressional debates of the 1940s and 1950s that culminated in the 1959 Hawaii Admission Act. Dean Saranillio has argued that statehood functioned as a “future wish” for white elites in Hawai‘i as early as the nineteenth century.¹⁹ The idea that Hawai‘i and Hawaiians could be potentially or even ideally American was open to negotiation over several decades before it was affirmed through official U.S. policy. I argue that our present-day “common sense” apprehension of Hawai‘i and Hawaiians rose to dominance during the years before and decades following statehood.

Anthropologist Clifford Geertz described common sense as a “cultural system,” a form of knowledge that is socially determined in similar ways to a religious or gender system. Among the differences between common sense and other systems, Geertz proposed, is that “common sense rests its [case] on the assertion that it is not a case at all, just life in a nutshell. The world is its authority.”²⁰ The power of a commonsense assertion is that it appears to be the de facto and universal truth. Geertz concluded that an analysis of common sense must begin by questioning the ways in which “down-to-earth, colloquial wisdom, judgments or assessments of it” are made to seem as true as any other

generally refer to Hawai‘i’s residents in the same way that one might refer to the residents of the state of Virginia as “Virginians.”

¹⁹ Dean Itsuji Saranillio, *Unsustainable Empire: Alternative Histories of Hawai‘i Statehood* (Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 2018).

²⁰ Clifford Geertz, “Common Sense as a Cultural System,” *The Antioch Review* 67, no. 4 (2009): 772.

observation of an objective reality, such as “rain wets” or “fire burns.”²¹ I understand colonial apprehension to be common sense-making: a historically contingent and socially determined form of knowledge production that also denies its function as such.²² The idea that Hawai‘i and Hawaiians are unequivocally American has become common sense in our present, but this was far from the case for much of the early history of U.S.-Hawai‘i relations.

The dominant apprehension of Hawai‘i and Hawaiians until the historical moment of statehood had been that Kanaka Maoli were inherently incapable of achieving the level of civilization required to be American citizens. The logical basis for these ideas emerged even before the first encounter between Captain James Cook and Kanaka Maoli in 1778. In his journals, Cook described the people of the Hawaiian Islands as primitive and wholly ignorant about the rest of the world, but generally hospitable to him. He assumed that this warm welcome was proof that the natives believed him to be a god. Cook’s apprehension of Kanaka Maoli was built with the commonsense language of the Enlightenment: the modern liberal humanism that Lisa Lowe has argued was intimately and inextricably entangled with “colonial divisions of humanity” that attributed racial difference to certain groups to mark them as “unfit for liberty.”²³ Cook’s Anglo-European supremacy enabled his categorization of Hawaiians as non-threatening, and therefore, available for Western domination. These accounts soon inspired traders and whalers from

²¹ Geertz, 772.

²² For further exploration of settler colonialism’s reliance on “common sense” see Mark Rifkin, *Settler Common Sense: Queerness and Everyday Colonialism in the American Renaissance* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2014).

²³ Lisa Lowe, *The Intimacies of Four Continents* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2015), 6, 7.

Europe and the United States to begin using Hawai‘i as their Pacific waypoint, and later, as a natural source of sandalwood and other valuable commodities.²⁴

Drawing upon both Hawaiian language sources and archaeological evidence, scholars have disproven many of Cook’s initial assumptions about Kanaka Maoli. The idea that Kanaka Maoli were entirely ignorant to the existence of other societies, for example, was categorically untrue. The Hawaiian Islands’ first human inhabitants arrived between 300 and 1000 C.E.²⁵ The first voyagers to the Hawai‘i navigated thousands of miles by wa‘a (canoe) from other islands in Oceania — more specifically within a geographic sub-region that Westerners later named “Polynesia.”²⁶ They arrived in Hawai‘i within the period between 300 and 1000 C.E., and over time, established permanent settlements across the archipelago. Kanaka Maoli society prior to Western encounter is sometimes divided into two larger historical periods: the first (c. 1000 - c. 1300) that saw consistent migration and contact between Kanaka Maoli and other Pacific Island societies, and the second (c. 1300 - 1778) during which Kanaka Maoli ceased consistent exploration and direct contact with outsiders.²⁷ It is clear based on early nineteenth-century Hawaiian texts, including the earliest written transcriptions of the Kumulipo (Kanaka Maoli creation mele [chant]) and the Kumuuli (genealogy mele), that Kanaka Maoli retained and preserved historical, genealogical, and geographical

²⁴ David A. Chang, *The World and All the Things upon It: Native Hawaiian Geographies of Exploration* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2016), 5–6; Gary Y. Okihiro, *Island World: A History of Hawai‘i and the United States*, The California World History Library 8 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008), 135–36.

²⁵ Chang, *The World and All the Things upon It*, 4; Patrick Vinton Kirch and Clive Ruggles, *Heiau, ‘aina, Lani: The Hawaiian Temple System in Ancient Kahikinui and Kaupō, Maui* (Honolulu: University of Hawai‘i Press, 2019), 3.

²⁶ For more on the Western construction of “Polynesia” as a racialized geography see Maile Arvin, *Possessing Polynesians: The Science of Settler Colonial Whiteness in Hawaii and Oceania* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2019).

²⁷ Chang, *The World and All the Things upon It*, 5.

knowledge throughout this period of isolation. In these historical accounts, time is measured in generations: one-hundred generations after the first kānaka arrived in Hawai‘i and eight-hundred generations prior. The events following arrival in Hawai‘i span roughly 2,000 years and are referred to as the time of Papa-Wākea, named after the earth mother Papahānaumoku and sky father Wākea, the akua (deities) from whom all Kanaka Maoli are descended. The time period prior to Papa-Wākea is Ta‘aroa, named after Wākea’s father, and spans another 20,000 years.²⁸ From this genealogical and historical knowledge, it is clear that Hawaiians were aware of the existence of humans and societies beyond their islands and were fully capable of recognizing Cook and his crew as outsiders rather than deities.

Cook’s Enlightenment-era apprehension of Kanaka Maoli led him to overestimate his power. When Cook arrived, Kanaka Maoli society was organized into several chiefdoms within which there was a hierarchy of social classes that included the mō‘ī and ali‘i (leading chief and chiefly class), the maka‘āinana (commoner class), and several other categories within and in between these groups. Social rank was determined based on genealogical descent as well as on one’s mana (sacred power) which could be gained or lost based on one’s relationships, actions, and the breaking or upholding of kapu (sacred taboo) and pono (norms, conduct, procedure, morality).²⁹ These chiefdoms regularly exchanged commodities and participated in diplomacy, and the arrival of Westerners only added new parties to this existing political and economic structure. Historian David A. Chang has concluded that Kanaka Maoli quickly became proficient

²⁸ Lilikalā Kame‘eleihiwa, “Hawai‘i-Nui-Akea Cousins: Ancestral Gods and Bodies of Knowledge Are Treasures for the Descendants,” *Te Kaharoa* 2 (2009): 45.

²⁹ Kauanui, *Hawaiian Blood*, 44.

actors in the emerging system of Western mercantile capitalism and used encounters with haole (foreigners)³⁰ to establish intentional diplomatic relationships with Western nations.³¹ Noenoe K. Silva has further argued that failures on the part of haole to be pono and uphold agreements were met with retaliatory action, an especially notable instance being the death of Cook at the hands of Kanaka Maoli warriors in response to the captain's attempt to abduct the mō'ī Kalani'ōpu'u.³²

Importantly, Kanaka Maoli were fully aware of the dangers of what I theorize as colonial apprehension. Chang's extensive study on late-eighteenth and early nineteenth century Hawaiian global knowledge describes the intentional ways that Hawaiian representatives placed themselves in Western spaces — aboard ships, especially — where they could observe Europeans and evaluate their ideologies and treatment of others. Within a few decades of Cook's arrival, Kanaka Maoli had purposefully encountered Asian traders, ship workers of multiple cultural backgrounds, Indigenous peoples in the Pacific Northwest, and New England Protestants, often returning to Hawai'i to share their knowledge with other Hawaiians.³³

After the Hawaiian Islands were united under high chief Kamehameha in 1811 to form the Hawaiian Kingdom, of which he was the first monarch, these lessons were intentionally integrated into the new nation's political structure and foreign policy. Knowing how Western empires treated those peoples whom they apprehended as

³⁰ Haole is the Hawaiian word for “foreign” or “foreigner,” but has come to specifically refer to white Americans.

³¹ Chang, *The World and All the Things upon It*, 39.

³² Noenoe K. Silva, *Aloha Betrayed: Native Hawaiian Resistance to American Colonialism* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2004), 21.

³³ Chang, *The World and All the Things upon It*; James Revell Carr, *Hawaiian Music in Motion: Mariners, Missionaries, and Minstrels*, Music in American Life (Urbana, Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2014).

uncivilized, the Kingdom's leaders took evasive action. The first U.S. missionaries to Hawai'i in the 1820s claimed that Hawaiians were inherently sexually deviant and incapable of self-governance, which increased pressure on the Kingdom to make decisions that would undermine these assumptions.³⁴ Among these decisions were the breaking of the Hawaiian 'ai kapu (food kapu) system, the official adoption of written language, Western-style education, Christian norms of gender and sexuality that differed significantly from Kanaka Maoli systems, and the writing of a constitution and a set of laws in 1840 that were, according to Silva, "of recognizably European type."³⁵ These policy decisions demonstrate that Kanaka Maoli had been consistently evading colonial apprehension even in the earliest historical moments of U.S.-Hawai'i relations.

The Hawaiian Kingdom successfully gained international recognition from global powers including the United States, France, and Britain as a result of deliberate acts of statecraft and diplomacy.³⁶ However, the Kingdom's leadership repeatedly faced Western colonial encroachment throughout the nineteenth century. Hawai'i's advantageous geographical position and climatological conditions were simultaneously a source of power and danger for the Kingdom. Hawai'i's land was increasingly valuable for the purposes of agricultural production, especially for the cultivation of sugarcane. Hawai'i's nineteenth-century monarchs and ali'i consistently sought to make policy decisions that they believed would protect Hawaiian independence against foreign threat. Many of these policies aimed to do so through the elevation of Hawai'i's global economic and political power.³⁷

³⁴ Silva, *Aloha Betrayed*, 37.

³⁵ Silva, 36.

³⁶ Silva, 37; Kauanui, *Hawaiian Blood*, 26.

³⁷ See Silva, *Aloha Betrayed*.

After the privatization of land through the Māhele of 1848 and the signing of the Reciprocity Treaty of 1875, which eliminated trade tariffs on goods exchanged between the United States and Hawai‘i, haole-owned companies turned sugar into Hawai‘i’s single most profitable industry. The rising demand for Hawai‘i sugar led to the arrival of thousands of agricultural workers from distant places including Japan, China, Portugal, and the Philippines, who were brought to Hawai‘i by planters to work on their sugar plantations.³⁸ The close proximity of many ethnic groups living and working together on sugar plantations facilitated the development of Hawai‘i pidgin, a language which is still widely spoken in Hawai‘i to this day, as well as some of the most recognizable elements of Hawaiian culture. The ‘ukulele and kīkā kila (Hawaiian steel guitar), for instance, are both nineteenth-century Hawaiian adaptations of Portuguese and Madeiran stringed instruments.³⁹

In response to these economic and cultural changes, Kanaka Maoli leaders came to recognize the need to emphatically declare their belief in a “Hawai‘i for Hawaiians.”⁴⁰ During the reign of King Kalākaua (1874 to 1891) the monarch focused on demonstrating and inspiring Kanaka Maoli cultural pride to counteract Western hegemony. Scholarship on this historical period in U.S.-Hawai‘i relations ranges from more critical to very sympathetic when retrospectively evaluating those policy decisions, including the 1848 Māhele and the 1875 Reciprocity Treaty, that ultimately resulted in an enhanced

³⁸ See Gary Y. Okihiro, *Pineapple Culture: A History of the Tropical and Temperate Zones*, The California World History Library 10 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009); Ronald T Takaki, *Pau Hana: Plantation Life and Labor in Hawaii, 1835-1920* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1984).

³⁹ See John William Troutman, *Kīkā Kila: How the Hawaiian Steel Guitar Changed the Sound of Modern Music* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2016); Jim Tranquada and John King, *The ‘Ukulele: A History* (Honolulu: University of Hawai‘i Press, 2012).

⁴⁰ Silva, *Aloha Betrayed*, 90.

economy at the expense of Hawaiians.⁴¹ Regardless of intent, it is clear that evading dominant colonial apprehensions that cast Hawai‘i as uncultured or incapable of competing with Western empires was of utmost importance to Hawaiian royalty.

Public assertions of Hawaiian sovereignty and cultural pride under King Kalākaua empowered Kanaka Maoli in ways that directly threatened what Silva has termed the “haole oligarchy.”⁴² The sugar industry had aggregated its wealth around the “Big Five,” a group of corporations controlled by white families and investors that included the descendants of missionaries, many of whom held positions in Kalākaua’s court. This group of haole capitalists were intent on achieving the U.S. annexation of Hawai‘i as well as eventual statehood as a way of establishing their financial security. Try as they might, the annexationists were consistently met with strong opposition from the monarchy and Kanaka Maoli citizens, who still far outnumbered haole.⁴³

When King Kalākaua refused to cede Pu‘uloa (Pearl Harbor) in exchange for a renewal of the Reciprocity Treaty in 1885, it became clear to the white elites that they would have to gain further political power. In 1887, a group of white men forced the king at gunpoint to sign what would become known as the Bayonet Constitution, a document which would strip the monarch of much of their executive power and disenfranchise many Kanaka Maoli.⁴⁴ Hawaiians swiftly rose up in protest and formed political organizations that fought for the constitution’s reversal.⁴⁵ Having rendered their minority

⁴¹ See Kauanui, *Hawaiian Blood*.

⁴² Silva, *Aloha Betrayed*, 122.

⁴³ Saranillio, *Unsustainable Empire*, 35, 32.

⁴⁴ Jonathan Kamakawiwo‘ole Osorio, *Dismembering Lāhui: A History of the Hawaiian Nation to 1887* (Honolulu: University of Hawai‘i Press, 2002), 240; Saranillio, *Unsustainable Empire*, 36.

⁴⁵ The first of these groups, Hui Kālai‘āina, worked within the existing system of government to demand that Hawaiian independence be preserved. Others disagreed with this approach. In 1889, ali‘i Robert Kalanihiapo Wilcox of Maui led his own armed group to force the government to reverse the Bayonet Constitution, but the Wilcox Rebellion ended in forced surrender. See Silva, *Aloha Betrayed*, 128.

status inconsequential and limited the power of the monarchy, the white elite moved quickly to seize political control.

After the death of King Kalākaua and the coronation of his sister Queen Lili‘uokalani in 1891, who was especially vocal in opposition to annexation and in her support of a new constitution, it became clear that the white elite were in danger of missing their opportunity.⁴⁶ On January 17, 1893, the day after Lili‘uokalani proposed a new constitution, a group of annexationists conspired with the U.S. Minister to the Hawaiian Kingdom to send military troops in support of a coup d’état. Without the knowledge of the U.S. federal government, a group of white elites calling themselves a provisional government entered and occupied the Ali‘iolani Hale building accompanied by American soldiers. Lili‘uokalani protested immediately but eventually agreed to surrender in order to avoid bloodshed and with confidence that her friend President Cleveland would recognize the coup as illegal. After receiving letters of protest and an official report from U.S. Commissioner James H. Blount that Kanaka Maoli largely favored Lili‘uokalani’s reinstatement, Cleveland concluded that the overthrow was unlawful but refused to take further direct action to assist in Lili‘uokalani’s reinstatement.⁴⁷

As Kanaka Maoli groups continued to organize widespread protests against the provisional government, American missionary Sanford B. Dole declared himself governor and moved to submit a treaty of annexation to the United States.⁴⁸ Recognizing

⁴⁶ Silva, 129.

⁴⁷ Silva, 130–34.

⁴⁸ The first attempt in 1893 ended in failure. When Cleveland received the treaty of annexation from Dole, he refused to accept it based on his understanding that the majority of the Hawaiian people did not acknowledge his authority. See Silva, 134.

that their success rested on shifting U.S. public opinion of the overthrow, the haole elite initiated a propaganda campaign across the United States that appealed to long-standing dominant colonial apprehensions of Hawaiians as inherently uncivilized.⁴⁹ For several years following the failed treaty, the annexationists vigorously campaigned to change the narrative of the overthrow into one in which Lili‘uokalani was a violent savage who was heroically contained by white revolutionaries.⁵⁰

Kanaka Maoli political organizations were unwavering in their protests against annexation and the provisional government, who had continued to circumvent democratic processes to bolster their fraudulent authority in Hawai‘i. Lili‘uokalani’s attempts to secure assistance from the United States were accompanied by countless letters and petitions with thousands of signatures from Kanaka Maoli.⁵¹ These declarations sought to undermine the apprehension of Hawaiians advanced by the white annexationists, and they did succeed to some extent. When the annexationists submitted a treaty of annexation in 1898, taking advantage of the impending Spanish-American War and Hawai‘i’s powerful position near the Philippines, various national newspapers in the United States published articles calling the overthrow of Lili‘uokalani a shameful crime.⁵²

Despite these successes, the haole elite were able to secure support in Congress. Seizing the war with Spain as an opportune moment, annexationist lawmakers passed the 1898 treaty of annexation was by simple majority, bypassing the usual procedure that

⁴⁹ Saranillio, *Unsustainable Empire*, 12, 32.

⁵⁰ This media campaign also fueled contemporary racism and xenophobia by warning audiences that Hawai‘i’s large Asian immigrant population could assist Japan in seizing Hawai‘i in order to mount an attack on Americans if the United States did not secure the islands first. See Saranillio, 58–59, 65.

⁵¹ See Silva, *Aloha Betrayed*.

⁵² Thomas A. Bailey, “The United States and Hawaii during the Spanish-American War,” *The American Historical Review* 36, no. 3 (April 1931): 552, <https://doi.org/10.2307/1837915>; Silva, *Aloha Betrayed*, 160; Saranillio, *Unsustainable Empire*, 65.

required a referendum in Hawai‘i and a much larger two-thirds majority.⁵³ By 1900, Congress had also passed Hawai‘i’s Organic Act, establishing the islands as an unincorporated territory that was deemed eligible for U.S. statehood.⁵⁴ Immediately, and over the first several decades of the twentieth century, the haole-controlled Territorial Government of Hawai‘i immediately set its sights on statehood, which had always been the end goal.

Although Hawai‘i’s status as a territory eliminated foreign trade tariffs with the U.S., sugar planters and producers — and increasingly, pineapple planters, after Sanford Dole’s cousin James Dole arrived in Hawai‘i to begin his own business venture — still faced challenges that those businesses in the continental U.S. did not. Through the 1934 Sugar Act, for instance, the federal government imposed a quota on imported sugar from U.S. territories, which caused a major economic downturn for the Big Five. The new generation of haole in Hawai‘i, like their annexationist forebearers, knew the value of public opinion, but they were faced with the monumental challenge of trying to transform the dominant apprehension that their predecessors had been instrumental in fortifying. One of the first concerted attempts to convince the United States to grant Hawai‘i statehood in 1935 failed after a House subcommittee determined that Hawai‘i had too high a non-white population — especially of Japanese descent — to be considered American.⁵⁵ After World War II, haole statehood proponents would capitalize on the heroism of Japanese-American veterans in order to spread a message that appealed to a postwar politics of liberal inclusion: Hawai‘i is ideally American *because of* its racial

⁵³ Silva, *Aloha Betrayed*, 180; Saranillio, *Unsustainable Empire*, 65.

⁵⁴ Sarah Miller-Davenport, *Gateway State: Hawai‘i and the Cultural Transformation of American Empire* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2019), 23.

⁵⁵ Miller-Davenport, 24.

diversity.⁵⁶ It was this message that ultimately led to Hawai‘i’s statehood in 1959, and Hawai‘i continues to be imagined as a multicultural paradise in our present.

The active political presence of Kanaka Maoli would prove to be a continuous threat to these statehood-era logics. After annexation, Kanaka Maoli evaded apprehension both actively and inherently, because their continued presence as Indigenous peoples was a testament to the haole oligarchy’s narrative of legitimacy and their claim that there was positive consensus in Hawai‘i regarding U.S. settler colonialism. Throughout the early twentieth century, Kanaka Maoli were far from complacent about the illegal occupation of the Hawaiian Kingdom and continued to advocate for restoring their sovereignty.

For the first few decades of the twentieth century, Hawaiian political leaders focused their attention on gaining representation in the Territorial Government and appealing to the U.S. federal government to advocate for their communities, especially those of the working classes who found themselves more and more marginalized in their own lands, especially by the Big Five.⁵⁷ Hawaiian cultural practitioners and performers were especially active advocates for Kanaka Maoli, using to their advantage the rise of the mass-culture in industrialized America, as well as the increased American consumer demand for access to the culture of Hawai‘i, which they apprehended as their new territorial acquisition. American desires to consume and experience Hawaiian music and performance gave Kanaka Maoli practitioners an avenue through which to assert their continued presence and pride in their lāhui (nation, society).⁵⁸

⁵⁶ See Saranillio, *Unsustainable Empire*; Miller-Davenport, *Gateway State*.

⁵⁷ Kauanui, *Hawaiian Blood*.

⁵⁸ See Adria Imada, “Hawaiians on Tour: Hula Circuits through the American Empire,” *American Quarterly* 56, no. 1 (2004): 111–49; Troutman, *Kīkā Kīla*.

With the end of World War II and the emergence of the historical moment of statehood, apprehensions of Hawai‘i as a U.S. state and Hawaiians as Americans were consistently asserted and reinforced across many levels of U.S. social and political life. The sugar industry’s dominance was eventually overpowered in the twentieth century by the tourism industry, which was instrumental in forwarding settler colonial logics that bolstered pro-statehood sentiments.⁵⁹ In this dissertation, I evaluate the historical moment of statehood as one within which sites of cultural production in the United States played a significant role in facilitating and mediating the rise to dominance of a certain apprehension of Hawai‘i and Hawaiians. This statehood-era knowledge formation aimed to contain the threat of Indigenous presence and made commonsense the emergent idea that the United States’ continued occupation of Kanaka Maoli land could be justified by the need to uphold the American values of democracy and equality.

Extant statehood-era histories of U.S.-Hawai‘i relations have focused primarily on state policy and legal negotiations, and cultural histories of Hawai‘i in the twentieth century have necessarily attended to representatives and direct representations of Hawai‘i and Hawaiians. It is the purpose of this project to add another dimension to our understanding of the history of U.S.-Hawai‘i relations by considering the ways in which settler colonial governance and Indigenous politics can be understood as tangible within sites of cultural production that misrepresent Hawai‘i, Kanaka Maoli, or Indigenous Hawaiian knowledge.

Moreover, scholarship on the twentieth-century history of U.S.-Hawai‘i relations has been especially attentive to exposing the political, social, economic, and cultural

⁵⁹ See Cristina Bacchilega, *Legendary Hawai‘i and the Politics of Place: Tradition, Translation, and Tourism* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006).

“Americanization” of Hawai‘i.⁶⁰ Building upon this groundbreaking work, this dissertation advocates the equal importance of analyzing the “Hawaiianization” of the United States — the integration of Hawaiian cultural knowledge and people into American social and cultural life — as a pernicious strategy of American settler colonialism that has often gone overlooked in the study U.S.-Hawai‘i history. This dissertation argues for the necessity of historicizing certain settler colonial understandings about the U.S.-Hawai‘i relationship that have entered our common sense such that they appear in our everyday lives and are uncritically perpetuated. Ultimately, I suggest that unsettling colonial apprehension is a necessary foundation for imagining an affinity-based politics of decolonization that spans distance and difference.

(Settler) Colonialism and Imperialism

The use of the terms “occupation” or “colonialism” to describe the political relationship between the United States and Hawai‘i has been the subject of debate among Hawai‘i’s scholars and activists for decades.⁶¹ Many have asserted that Hawai‘i is not a U.S. colony, but rather an occupied nation, because the overthrow of the Hawaiian Kingdom was an unlawful act. As such, they argue in favor of a political strategy that seeks full restoration of the Hawaiian Kingdom by claiming that the U.S. has been an illegal occupying force since the late nineteenth century.⁶² Defining Hawai‘i as an

⁶⁰ See Delia Malia Caparoso Konzett, *Hollywood’s Hawaii: Race, Nation, and War*, War Culture (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 2017); Angela S. Krattiger, “Hawai‘i’s Cold War: American Empire and the 50th State” (Dissertation, Mānoa, University of Hawai‘i, 2013); Miller-Davenport, *Gateway State*; Saranillio, *Unsustainable Empire*.

⁶¹ Saranillio, *Unsustainable Empire*, 8–9; J. Kēhaulani Kauanui, *Paradoxes of Hawaiian Sovereignty: Land, Sex, and the Colonial Politics of State Nationalism* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2018).

⁶² For a historical account how “occupation” and “colonization” came to be distinguished in Hawaiian political thought, see Kūhiō Vogeler, “Outside Shangri La: Colonization and the U.S. Occupation of

occupied nation rather than a colony further suggests that there is historical precedent for eventual withdrawal, as seen in the case of the U.S. occupation of Japan after World War II. This continues to be the position of many Kānaka Maoli and allied activists, sometimes self-identifying as “Hawaiian Kingdom nationals,” who reject the use of the words “colony” and “Indigenous” to describe Hawai‘i and Hawaiians respectively.⁶³

On the other side of this debate are a significant number of scholars who problematize an uncritical acceptance of narrow legal definitions of colonialism. If one understands colonialism more broadly as a structure and process of political, social, and cultural domination enacted by a nation for the purposes of extracting land, labor, consumer markets, commodities, and other resources to gain global imperial power, it is arguable that Kanaka Maoli have been enduring colonial conditions since the early nineteenth century. It is most often the case that these scholars use the more specific “settler colonialism,” a term developed by Patrick Wolfe to describe a form of ongoing colonial governance present in contemporary Australia, the United States, and Israel-Palestine. Wolfe argued that settler colonialism can be distinguished from other forms of colonialism — ones that are primarily focused on the extraction of labor and resources — because it prioritizes the permanent settlement and theft of land as well as the total elimination and replacement of Indigenous lifeways with those of the colonial regime.⁶⁴

Defenders of (settler) colonial and Indigenous critique contend that these analytics allow for greater solidarity between Hawai‘i’s independence movement and other

Hawai‘i,” in *A Nation Rising: Hawaiian Movements for Life, Land, and Sovereignty*, by Noelani Goodyear-Ka‘ōpua, Ikaika Hussey, and Erin Kahunawaika‘ala Wright, 2014, 252–66.

⁶³ See Kauanui, *Paradoxes of Hawaiian Sovereignty*.

⁶⁴ Patrick Wolfe, “Settler Colonialism and the Elimination of the Native,” *Journal of Genocide Research* 8, no. 4 (December 2006): 387–409, <https://doi.org/10.1080/14623520601056240>.

Indigenous struggles for decolonization as well as ways to imagine possibilities for achieving self-determination beyond those that rely solely on state-sanctioned and legal avenues. J. Kēhaulani Kauanui argues that there is danger in solely relying on deoccupation as a political strategy. Restoring the Hawaiian Kingdom, for example, does not necessarily attend to those colonial impositions including Christianity, capitalism and land tenure practices, as well as Anglo-European conceptions of race, normative gender and sexuality, and even sovereignty that were strategically adopted by the Kingdom in the interest of gaining the respect and recognition of Western nations.⁶⁵ In a similar register, Dean Saranillio argues that occupation as a legal framework and settler colonialism as a “form of power” are not completely incommensurate analytics, and that they are equally productive when used together: “...if occupation answers the “what” question — What is Hawai‘i’s political relationship with the United States? — then settler colonialism answers the “how” question — How did the United States normalize the U.S. occupation of Hawai‘i?”⁶⁶ Both Kauanui and Saranillio have advocated a politics of decolonization for Hawai‘i that prioritizes a resurgence of Indigenous epistemologies and refuses colonial state recognition or inclusion.

Although I acknowledge the importance of critical inquiry around the use of certain terms as they enable the envisioning more just futures for Hawai‘i and Kanaka Maoli, the purpose of this work is not to argue for the salience of one political strategy over another. I do, however, assert that the use of the terms Indigenous, settler colonialism, and decolonization are necessary for this project insofar as they facilitate an understanding of apprehension, which I argue scaffolds the U.S. settler colonial project in

⁶⁵ Kauanui, *Paradoxes of Hawaiian Sovereignty*.

⁶⁶ Saranillio, *Unsustainable Empire*, 9.

Hawai'i. As such, I use "colonialism" or "settler colonialism," rather than "imperialism" or "empire," as a matter of contextual specificity and analytic precision.

The distinctions between the use of the terms "imperialism" and "colonialism" continue to be negotiated across many fields of thought. I draw upon the a definition presented by Edward Said: "'imperialism' means the practice, the theory, and the attitudes of a dominating metropolitan center ruling a distant territory; 'colonialism,' which is almost always a consequence of imperialism, is the implanting of settlements on distant territory."⁶⁷ From this definition, I understand imperialism as a state's work to expand the reach of its sovereignty and widen its global position of power, and colonialism as a form or specific mode of imperial practice marked by the gaining of access to and the maintenance of control over a land and its peoples.

I read Said's efforts to distinguish between these two categories of statecraft as motivated by his interest in demonstrating that although "direct colonialism has largely ended; imperialism...lingers where it has always been, in a kind of general cultural sphere as well as in specific political, ideological, economic, and social practices."⁶⁸ Said's reliance on the idea that "direct colonialism" is an imperial practice of the past limits the utility of his distinction beyond a certain point, but his theorization remains useful for understanding that colonialism is, arguably, always serving to empower an imperial state, but that not all imperial practice is colonial or based in establishing settlements.

This project's historical approach closely aligns with a growing body of historical literature within the field of the U.S. and the World, which emerged alongside the

⁶⁷ Edward W. Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (New York, N.Y.: Vintage Books, 1994), 9.

⁶⁸ Said, 9.

broader transnational turn in American Studies and U.S. history. The field has sought to foreground the importance of foreign affairs, transnational migration, cross-cultural relationships, and international diplomacy within the study of the past and present United States. As such, U.S. and the World scholarship has often focused on imperialism and colonialism as potentially generative frameworks for analyzing histories of American statecraft.

For many decades, discussion of historical American imperialism was largely confined to the 1890s and the historical moment of overseas territorial acquisition, but recent and innovative work has called this limited scope into question. Paul Kramer, for example, has argued that debates over semantics that are focused exclusively on whether or not to define the United States as an empire have impeded historical inquiry and reinforced American exceptionalism. Kramer advocates, instead, for a focus on the imperial as “a category of analysis, not a kind of entity, something to think with more than think about.”⁶⁹ Understanding the imperial as an analytic allows for a focus on global power and relationships between the U.S. and other peoples within the study of American history. Building upon Kramer’s approach, Sarah Miller-Davenport’s work on Hawai‘i statehood and Cold War U.S. imperialism emphasizes “the centrality of empire in U.S. history from at least the era of Manifest Destiny onward.”⁷⁰ This dissertation contributes to this vital discussion by arguing that the imperial as an analytic must also attend to the specificities of certain spatiotemporal contexts. In the case of the statehood-era relationship between the U.S. and Hawai‘i, it is crucial to consider the analytics of

⁶⁹ Paul A. Kramer, “Power and Connection: Imperial Histories of the United States in the World,” *The American Historical Review* 116, no. 5 (December 2011): 1350, <https://doi.org/10.1086/ahr.116.5.1348>.

⁷⁰ Miller-Davenport, *Gateway State*, 10.

settler colonialism, decolonization, and indigeneity alongside those of empire and imperialism.

As an analytic, settler colonialism allows for a targeted critique of certain historical conditions and strategies of rule that fall under the broader analytic of colonialism, but are not universally present in every colonial context, especially the logic of elimination and the permanent settlement of territory. Wolfe theorizes “the elimination of the native” as “the organizing principle of settler colonial society rather than a one-off (and superseded) occurrence.”⁷¹ Eliminary policies, practices, and structures are always designed to destroy native social, political, economic, cultural structures in order to replace them with those of the colonial regime. Elimination as a concept is able to attend to the ways in which seemingly distinct strategies, including coercive assimilation, mass murder, and forced migration, can all be understood as serving the central genocidal purpose of sustaining the colonial regime’s project of permanent settlement. Kauanui asserts concisely that the settler colonial project seeks to “eliminate the Native *as Native*” such that the colonial regime putatively replaces the Indigenous peoples as the de facto sovereign power within a territory.⁷² Importantly, the settler colonial project is always vulnerable and never complete, even as the colonial regime seeks to apprehend it as such, because of what Kauanui calls *enduring indigeneity*.⁷³ The continued presence of Indigenous peoples and assertions of Indigenous sovereignty inherently undermines the legitimacy of settler land claims. For this reason, settler colonialism as an analytic

⁷¹ Wolfe, “Settler Colonialism,” 388.

⁷² Kauanui, *Paradoxes of Hawaiian Sovereignty*, 9.

⁷³ J. Kehaulani Kauanui, “‘A Structure, Not an Event’: Settler Colonialism and Enduring Indigeneity,” *Lateral* 5, no. 1 (May 2016), <http://csalateral.org/issue/5-1/forum-alt-humanities-settler-colonialism-enduring-indigeneity-kauanui/>.

facilitates an understanding of indigeneity as a legitimate threat to the colonial state's harmful and most fundamental logics and structural supports.

Historical Method: Indigeneity, Genealogy, Relationality

Although a theorization and critique of colonial apprehension is central to this project, it is also focused on how such an intellectual endeavor can further a politics of decolonization that prioritizes the resurgence of Indigenous lifeways and knowledge. Relatedly, this project is founded upon the knowledge that U.S. American settler colonialism cannot be adequately understood without considering indigeneity. Indigenous studies scholars and critical Indigenous theorists have long advocated for the need to center the lives, experiences, and political actions of Indigenous peoples within histories and theories of U.S. colonialism. Among the most formative works on this topic is Chickasaw scholar Jodi Byrd's *The Transit of Empire: Indigenous Critiques of Colonialism*, a text that brings to light the ways in which historical and ongoing U.S. imperial and colonial projects have repeatedly reinscribed ideas of "Indianness" onto native populations across time and space in North America, the Pacific, or the Middle East.⁷⁴ Using a vast archive of historical evidence, Byrd shows that the making of Indigenous subjects that are "always already naturalized as internal, colonized, defeated" has served as the logical foundation for countless acts of U.S. imperial or colonial domination.⁷⁵ Identifying indigeneity as a condition of possibility for U.S. empire, Byrd asserts that "[I]ndigenous peoples must be central to any theorizations of the conditions

⁷⁴ Jodi A. Byrd, *The Transit of Empire: Indigenous Critiques of Colonialism* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2011).

⁷⁵ Byrd, 171.

of post coloniality, empire, and death-dealing regimes that arise out of indigenous lands."⁷⁶ Challenging scholars of (post)colonialism and empire who have ignored indigeneity in their work, Byrd emphasizes that U.S. imperial or colonial histories are inextricable from the histories and experiences of the Indigenous peoples upon whose lands the empire was built.

As it applies to the work of cultural analysis, I would add that any discussion of the representation and appropriation of Indigenous knowledge must do more than just identify colonial logics within texts. As Byrd rightly points out, colonial conditions arise from the theft of Indigenous land and the dispossession of Indigenous peoples who are forced to continue to live under these conditions. Therefore, any critical analysis of colonial culture should address the presence of Indigenous peoples as the central “problem” with which this culture is always forced to contend in order to maintain the logical basis for the regime’s domination. This dissertation takes up Byrd’s call by foregrounding the historically specific presence and decolonial politics of Kanaka Maoli within my analyses of American cultural formations that mediate and facilitate the colonial apprehension of Hawai‘i and Hawaiians.

This dissertation’s method is further shaped by an interdisciplinary and genealogical approach to historical analysis. In *Politics Out of History*, Wendy Brown asserts that our contemporary political landscape requires approaches to understanding history that purposefully reorient our knowledge of the present. Among the approaches that Brown advocates is a genealogical politics based in both Nietzschean and Foucauldian thought. Brown emphasizes Nietzsche’s interest in questioning the fixity of

⁷⁶ Byrd, xiv.

present sociopolitical conditions by “unsettling what we think we know, defamiliarizing the familiar, defamiliarizing us with ourselves” in order to produce alternative ways of being and knowing.⁷⁷ Importantly, Brown specifies that Nietzsche understood the achievement of this work as predicated upon historical knowledge of the conditions from which our commonsense notions of the familiar are established.⁷⁸

Foucault’s reading of Nietzsche further emphasized the need to engage history as part of genealogy but took special care to warn against a preoccupation with “beginnings,” which are understood as emblematic of “traditional” history’s uncritical reliance on linear and progressive development. Rather than to claim that a condition of the present can be fully understood by identifying its fixed origin-point in the past, genealogy evaluates the contingent forces and conditions of the past in order to unsettle the common sense of the present. “[The] maxim, ‘always historicize,’” Brown asserts, “appears relatively modest next to Foucault’s ambition for genealogy, which might be summed up, *historicize everything*.”⁷⁹

Brown understands genealogy as a politically valuable approach to history, one that allows us to “call into question the most heavily naturalized features and encrusted relations of the present, to expose as a consequence of power what is ordinarily conceived as divinely, teleologically, or naturally ordained,” but Brown also emphasizes that genealogy “doesn’t tell us what is to be done, or even what is to be valued.”⁸⁰ Foucault saw the stakes of genealogy as necessarily disruptive *and* productive, but rather than to adopt the aim of conventional history — using the past to envision the inevitable

⁷⁷ Wendy Brown, *Politics out of History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001), 95.

⁷⁸ Brown, 97.

⁷⁹ Brown, 102.

⁸⁰ Brown, 118, 120.

shape of a singular future — Foucault advocated a genealogy that unearthed avenues of pursuit toward a number of future possibilities.⁸¹ However, because this project is attentive, specifically, to the settler colonial conditions of the present and to the presence and politics of Indigenous peoples, it is necessary to specify that my approach to historical genealogy is intentionally guided by the opening of possibilities toward futures that are decolonial.

Historical genealogy has been identified as particularly germane to the study of enduring (post)colonialism as an ever-shifting political, social, and epistemological formation. Ann Laura Stoler argues that scholars must reckon with the relationship between colonial pasts within the so-called “postcolonial” present. A genealogical approach, which Stoler identifies as “not an abstract, ‘theoretical’ program but a grounded enabling political methodology” offers a practical strategy for identifying the processes by which the “debris” of colonial pasts endure within our present.⁸² This type of work seeks not only to disrupt what we think we know, it also “[locates] those ‘tattered’ and ‘disorderly’ narratives that ‘reactivate’ alternative ways of knowing” beyond those that bolster colonial power.⁸³

Stoler identifies in the case of twenty-first-century France, for example, the presence of a repeated and celebratory claim among scholars of French history that the country’s colonial past that had long been “forgotten” was finally coming to light in the new millennium. This claim was widely accepted, Stoler observes, despite the fact that tangible evidence of France’s colonial violence in Algeria had been widely available for

⁸¹ Brown, 103–4.

⁸² Ann Laura Stoler, *Duress: Imperial Durabilities in Our Times* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2016), 23.

⁸³ Stoler, 251.

decades. These histories had not been forgotten but rather occluded, producing a condition that Stoler calls “colonial aphasia” marked, for instance, by the active ignorance of racism against Afro-French communities as a colonial condition of the present. The consequence of continued aphasia and denial, Stoler asserts, is the continued normalization of the conditions of “imperial duress,” or those “quotidian defamations of personhood inflected at an insistent pace, or punctuated, mercilessly, in non-verbal registers.”⁸⁴ The project of historical genealogy demands that such everyday processes of colonial occlusion and forms of violence are identified as practices of imperial domination. By offering an alternative way of knowing, historical genealogies of colonialism open up possibilities for envisioning emancipatory futures and ways of living beyond those sanctioned by imperial states.

Moving beyond Stoler’s focus on enduring (post)coloniality, I argue that a genealogical approach is also pertinent to the study of *settler* colonial contexts, including that of the U.S. and Hawai‘i. Settler colonialism’s reliance on normalizing the ongoing occupation of Indigenous land requires a critique that is attentive to and disruptive of those knowledges and ideas that seem objective and universal. The aims of historical genealogy align with the methodology for this project, which is based upon a foundational understanding that effective history both disrupts what we think we know and generates an alternative worldview. For the purposes of settler colonial critique, however, it is crucial that historical genealogy as a method is attentive to indigeneity. At the center of this project is a problem: the perpetual presence across time and space of a set of familiar and pernicious ideas that continue to mobilize and justify settler colonial

⁸⁴ Stoler, 8.

violence against Kanaka Maoli. I argue that these apprehensions endure because they are consistently reinforced across various sites of political-cultural production and integrated into commonsense knowledge.

A genealogical approach further guides this project's reliance on an archive of popular-cultural texts and formations as a lens through which to view settler colonial practices of governance and domination. This method is aligned with the interventions in recent decades within the historical study of American imperialism and colonialism that have emphasized the importance of considering the "culture" of U.S. empire. Amy Kaplan, for example, has argued that dominant U.S. culture and notions of national identity since the nineteenth century have been directly shaped by American imperial policies that negotiated boundaries between the domestic and the foreign.⁸⁵ In a different register, Christina Klein has emphasized the ways in which the imperial ideals that mobilized U.S. Cold War foreign intervention in Asia also infiltrated contemporary cultural production. Klein contends that Hollywood films, popular literature, and Broadway theatre productions served to educate the American public and garner support for U.S. imperial ventures.⁸⁶

"Colonial Apprehension" builds upon these approaches to historical analysis by contending that cultural production and consumption not only serve as sites of ideological dissemination but also as sites of mediation. The cultural texts and formations under examination in this dissertation make tangible the inherent ambiguities within American imperial and colonial logics, which Kaplan has described as the "anarchy of empire."

⁸⁵ Amy Kaplan, *The Anarchy of Empire in the Making of U.S. Culture* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2002).

⁸⁶ Christina Klein, *Cold War Orientalism: Asia in the Middlebrow Imagination, 1945-1961* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003).

Moreover, I argue that cultural production and consumption offered ambivalent resolutions to the social tensions generated by these logical inconsistencies, fortifying the durability of the colonial state formation. Ultimately, this project asserts that a fuller understanding of how U.S. imperialism and colonialism has endured into our present is only possible through a critical evaluation of a popular cultural archive.

This project's methodology is aligned with the work of historians who have broadened and nuanced our understanding of the American past by turning to archival sites and sources that often do not appear within presidential libraries, governmental archives, or museums. Scholars including Stoler, Linda Tuhiwai Smith, Jean O'Brien, and Noenoe Silva have argued that these traditional archival sites have been shaped by colonial and imperial projects.⁸⁷ Uncritically or solely relying upon this "colonial archive" to construct U.S. historical narratives necessarily leads to the privileging of colonial knowledge and Eurocentric perspectives. As an ever-growing body of innovative scholarship in U.S. history has demonstrated, it is only by turning to non-traditional sites and sources (e.g., oral histories, popular cultural texts and formations, or performances) that we can access a fuller and more precise account of the American past.⁸⁸ The archive of texts assembled for this project intentionally includes a wide variety of source material

⁸⁷ Ann Laura Stoler, "Colonial Archives and the Arts of Governance," *Archival Science* 2 (2002): 87–109; O'Brien, *Firsting and Lasting*; Silva, *Aloha Betrayed*; Noenoe K. Silva, *The Power of the Steel-Tipped Pen: Reconstructing Native Hawaiian Intellectual History* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2017); Linda Tuhiwai Smith, *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples*, 2nd ed. (London: Zed Books, 2012).

⁸⁸ See, for example, Hiroshi Kitamura, *Screening Enlightenment: Hollywood and the Cultural Reconstruction of Defeated Japan* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2017); Klein, *Cold War Orientalism*; Kristin L. Hoganson, *Consumers' Imperium: The Global Production of American Domesticity, 1865-1920* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2007); Adria Imada, *Aloha America: Hula Circuits Through the U.S. Empire* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2012); Andrew C. McKeivitt, *Consuming Japan: Popular Culture and the Globalizing of 1980s America*, Studies in United States Culture (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2017).

that does not appear in any state-sanctioned collection of records. I contend that many of the texts under examination in this dissertation gain political and analytic purchase precisely because they do not appear in the colonial archive and are, therefore, not easily legible as technologies of colonial governance. Genealogy as political method requires that we turn toward those sites of knowledge production that are easily accepted as banal and critically evaluate their social and political function. This project considers popular-cultural texts and formations to be among those objects most worthy of such critical evaluation.

My genealogical account of colonial apprehension further engages “relationality” —the fundamental entanglement of humans, non-humans, histories, and knowledge — over the production of universal prescriptive ideals. Relationality is not necessarily a concerted effort on the part of individuals to integrate different ways of thinking. Instead, it is a radical attention to those connections across time and space and between peoples, ecosystems, places, and knowledges that are intentionally denied by colonial regimes.⁸⁹ This dissertation draws upon a relational mode of analysis that considers the ways in which structures of cultural production and consumption in the United States during the

⁸⁹ For more on Indigenous relationality and/in interdisciplinary analysis and method, see: Rachel Yacaaʔal George and Sarah Marie Wiebe, “Fluid Decolonial Futures: Water as a Life, Ocean Citizenship and Seascape Relationality,” *New Political Science* 42, no. 4 (October 1, 2020): 498–520; Kim TallBear and Angela Willey, “Introduction: Critical Relationality: Queer, Indigenous, and Multispecies Belonging Beyond Settler Sex & Nature,” *Imaginations: Journal of Cross-Cultural Image Studies/Revue d’études Interculturelle de l’image* 10, no. 1 (July 18, 2019); Rebecca Macklin, “Unsettling Fictions: Relationality as Decolonial Method in Native American and South African Literatures,” *Ariel: A Review of International English Literature* 51, no. 2–3 (2020): 27–55; Malissa Phung, “Asian-Indigenous Relationalities: Literary Gestures of Respect and Gratitude,” *Canadian Literature*, no. 227 (2015): 56–72, 201; Michelle A. Lelièvre et al., “Bridging Indigenous Studies and Archaeology Through Relationality? Collaborative Research on the Chignecto Peninsula, Mi’kma’ki,” *The American Indian Quarterly* 44, no. 2 (2020): 171–95; Aileen Moreton-Robinson, “Relationality: A Key Presupposition of an Indigenous Social Research Paradigm,” in *Sources and Methods in Indigenous Studies*, ed. Chris Andersen and Jean M. O’Brien (London ; New York: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, 2017), 69–77; Walter Mignolo and Catherine E. Walsh, *On Decoloniality: Concepts, Analytics, Praxis*, *On Decoloniality* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2018).

postwar period allowed U.S. Americans to negotiate, mediate, and enforce colonial apprehensions of Hawai‘i and Hawaiians across distance and regardless of any personal connection to the islands.

Relationality demands that these seemingly unintelligible connections between places and peoples that might be separated by great distances are not only acknowledged as consequential but questioned and critically evaluated. Manu Vimalassery, Juliana Hu Pegues, and Alyosha Goldstein have argued that failure to reckon with such relationships “is not simply a matter of collective amnesia or omission” but a form of active ignorance or “colonial unknowing.”⁹⁰ They further advocate a greater attention to “the articulations, practices, and consequences of this colonial insistence on epistemic mastery and refusal of heterogeneous ways of knowing otherwise, as well as...the co-constitutive dynamics and contingencies that appear to be unintelligible under such conditions.”⁹¹ I theorize colonial apprehension as a concept that speaks not only to the ways in which colonial regimes desperately aim to erase Indigenous ways of knowing but also *replace* them with actively produced forms of colonial knowledge that seek to contain perceived threats to the state’s imagined sovereignty. My analysis finds that it is the ever-tenuous colonial regime that is forced to contend with the Indigenous, decolonial, and relational, which always manage to evade categorization and containment. By engaging a genealogy of colonial apprehension, I do not necessarily seek to expose something hidden as much as I hope to draw critical attention to those entanglements across distance and difference that shape everyday life under settler colonialism.

⁹⁰ Vimalassery, Pegues, and Goldstein, “Introduction: On Colonial Unknowing.”

⁹¹ Vimalassery, Pegues, and Goldstein.

Chapter Overview

This dissertation is composed of three case studies, each of which examines a ubiquitous cultural formation that (mis)represented Hawai‘i, Hawaiians, or Hawaiian knowledge and emerged or rose to dominance during the historical moment of Hawai‘i statehood. In each case study, I interrogate the ways in which the cultural formation in question negotiated, mediated, or facilitated a historically specific mode of settler colonial apprehension.

The first chapter, “Making American Surf Culture: The Occlusion of Indigeneity as Apprehension in *Gidget* (1959),” focuses on the question of Indigenous erasure and cultural appropriation. Taking the work of Ann Laura Stoler as my point of departure, I propose that the emergence of mainstream American surf culture in the late 1950s and early 1960s is emblematic of the ways in which the “occlusion” of Hawaiian indigeneity functioned as a mode of colonial apprehension. Mainstream American surfing was inspired by he‘e nalu, an Indigenous cultural knowledge that served an important sociopolitical role in Kanaka Maoli society for generations prior to Western encounter. The “surfing craze” of the mid-twentieth century transformed public perceptions of surfing from what was generally considered an exotic Native Hawaiian practice undertaken as part of a thrilling tourist experience in Hawai‘i into an American pastime associated with young white men in Southern California.

Among the texts credited with catalyzing this shift is the Hollywood film *Gidget*, directed by Paul Wendkos and produced by Columbia Pictures in 1959, the same year in which Hawai‘i was declared a state. I situate *Gidget* within its historical moment, which was also marked by the civil rights movement, the Cold War, and an emergent youth

counterculture. These concurrent historical events mobilized the rise to dominance of a liberal politics of inclusion with which the colonial regime was forced to contend. I argue that *Gidget* apprehended Hawai‘i and Hawaiians by establishing surfing as a signifier of Kanaka Maoli social pathology and, therefore, as a potential threat to the American status quo. Rather than to discourage upstanding white youth from surfing entirely, *Gidget* purposefully occluded surfing’s indigeneity behind the rhetorical veil of inclusionary liberalism. The film constructed a respectable U.S. American form of surfing, I contend, by dismissing Kanaka Maoli lifeways as inherently dangerous and inviable.

In the second chapter, “Apprehensive Staging: Tiki Culture and the Fantasy of White Inclusion,” I interrogate tiki culture: an aesthetic style and genre of entertainment that staged an imagined Hawaiian atmosphere within U.S. American homes and commercial establishments. This cultural formation emerged in the early twentieth century but saw its height of popularity from the 1950s through the 1970s. The chapter focuses on a specific tiki-cultural strategy of *atmospheric staging*, through which an idealized and embodied experience of settler colonial Hawai‘i was constructed. Through analysis of tiki-cultural texts and objects, I argue that the iterative (re)production of these stagings reified a fantasy of white inclusion in Hawai‘i, one marked by an expectation among white Americans that their presence would be unconditionally celebrated by Hawai‘i’s Indigenous people and racialized residents.

Although fantastic, the experience of Hawai‘i staged by tiki culture was purposefully authenticated with the aid of the tourism industry, which actively sought to replicate the tiki-cultural atmosphere within Hawai‘i. The findings of my analysis contradict twenty-first-century commentators who have argued that tiki culture has

always been and continues to be a purposefully inauthentic representation of Polynesian culture, a claim they insist is indicative of the formation's playful innocence. This chapter concludes that understanding tiki-cultural staging as a mode of apprehension aids in drawing attention to the entanglements of ongoing histories of settler colonial violences against Kanaka Maoli with seemingly banal forms of cultural production. This tiki-cultural genealogy demonstrates that apprehension as fantasy-making can have violent material consequences.

The third and final case study, "Apprehending Kanaka Maoli Rage: Decolonial Structures of Feeling in Hawai'i and Affective Correction in *Hawaii Five-O*," turns from questions of settler colonial occlusion and inclusion to those of "correction." I examine a historical moment that is often referred to as the Hawaiian sovereignty movement: a series of organized protests and grassroots initiatives led by Kanaka Maoli activists and cultural practitioners that gained significant traction in the 1970s. Concurrent to this Indigenous movement was the emergence of the police procedural drama as a popular subgenre of primetime television. I argue that *Hawaii Five-O* advanced an apprehension of Hawaiians that criminalized and corrected Kanaka Maoli anger and dissent.

More specifically, this chapter focuses on the ways in which the Hawaiian sovereignty movement was animated by what I term a *decolonial structure of feeling* in Hawai'i during the 1970s through 1990s. This affective register of lived experience was marked by ways of feeling otherwise that directly contradicted the apprehension of Hawaiian affect emblemized by *Hawaii Five-O*. I conclude by turning to the work of Kanaka Maoli sovereignty activist and scholar Haunani-Kay Trask, who articulated and embodied a shared and politicized way of feeling angry that was explicitly Indigenous

and decolonial. Even as *Hawaii Five-O* and the settler state represented Kanaka Maoli anger as exceptional — the futile insolence of certain individuals — Trask refused to comply with the settler colonial correction of Kanaka Maoli rage.

This dissertation, as a whole, foregrounds the many ways in which the U.S. settler colonial regime has apprehended Kanaka Maoli and Hawai‘i. Building on scholarship that has focused on policy and lawmaking, I intentionally interrogate the historical and ongoing ways in which sites of cultural production and consumption facilitate colonial apprehension. I call attention to apprehension as a particularly pernicious strategy that can be (sometimes unwittingly) perpetuated by individuals and institutions regardless of their proximity or level of attachment to Hawai‘i. Gone unquestioned and unhistoricized, these visions for the relationship between Hawai‘i and the U.S. continue to mobilize persistent acts and structures of violence against Kanaka Maoli. This dissertation engages a genealogical method in an effort to trouble our current colonial common sense and to open up possibilities for further critique as well as broader and more ethical decolonial alliances.

Apprehension, as a conceptual framework, aids in understanding the scope of colonial knowledge production. One can see how far the ripples of colonial apprehension reach when a concerted effort is made to observe where they wash ashore: a bamboo-covered restaurant named “Aloha” in Virginia Beach, a twenty-foot mural of legendary Hawaiian surfer Duke Kahanamoku at the Jersey Shore, and countless “hula girls” adorning car dashboards across the world. Colonial apprehension is made tangible in these quotidian scenes as well as during global pandemics, in courtrooms and legislative sessions as much as in homes, restaurants, and on film and television. It is crucial to

understand these sites and moments of knowledge production as entangled with countless others across time and space. This project demands that colonial apprehension is necessarily called into question and refused by non-natives and non-Hawaiians as part of an ethics of decolonial solidarity with Indigenous peoples that necessarily bridges distance as well as difference.

CHAPTER 1

MAKING AMERICAN SURF CULTURE: THE OCCLUSION OF INDIGENEITY AS APPREHENSION IN *GIDGET* (1959)

In anticipation of the debut of surfing as an athletic event in the 2020 Tokyo Olympics, the Hawai‘i state legislature proposed a measure in early 2019 that would establish a temporary State Commission on Surfing. The version of the bill enrolled to Governor David Ige proposed the allocation of public funds through the Commission among programs that promote surfing’s “exclusive connection” to Hawai‘i, the history of which the legislature insisted “many people are unaware.”⁹² This assertion of the *exclusive* right to claim surfing would have been especially important to the state of Hawai‘i due to the formidable competition posed by the state of California, which had just passed a bill a few months prior declaring surfing the official state sport. California’s law acknowledged that surfing was “imported into California from indigenous Hawaii,” but that the state’s claim to the sport was legitimized by the role of Californians in modernizing surfing in the twentieth century.⁹³ Although Hawai‘i’s bill did not explicitly mention California as competition, it deliberately referred to surfing as “the state sport of Hawaii,” which had been made official in 1998, and added rather pointedly that the state’s number of annual surfers was “the second-most out of any state in the country.”⁹⁴ The states of Hawai‘i and California rely heavily on the tourism industry, and surfing (especially at the competitive and professional levels) is recognized in both states as a

⁹² S.B. 1469, 2019 Leg., Reg. Sess. § 2-1 (Haw. 2019) (as introduced by Senate, Jan. 24, 2019).

⁹³ A.B. 1782, 2018 Leg., Reg. Sess. § 424-7 (Cal. 2018) (as introduced by Assembly, Jan. 18, 2018).

⁹⁴ S.B. 1469, 2019 Leg., Reg. Sess. § 2-1 (Haw. 2019) (as introduced by Senate, Jan. 24, 2019).

major economic boon.⁹⁵ The Surfing Commission bill made clear that the increased “global recognition of the sport” brought about by the Tokyo Olympics necessitated intentional action to secure surfing’s association with Hawai‘i.

Despite the Hawai‘i legislature’s interest in legitimizing the state’s claim to surfing in comparison to California, the bill notably lacks any specific mention of Kanaka Maoli, even though the sport the world now knows as surfing began as he‘e nalu (literally “wave sliding”): an Indigenous Hawaiian oceanic knowledge. The version submitted to Hawai‘i’s House of Representatives by the Senate on March 5, 2019 briefly amended the language to include an acknowledgement that surfing is, specifically, a “native Hawaiian cultural practice,” but this addition was removed for an unspecified reason by the House in a subsequent version.⁹⁶ The excision of this sole reference to surfing’s indigeneity disregarded several letters of testimony submitted by the Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA), a board of trustees elected to represent Kanaka Maoli in the State government, that emphasized the “distinct Native Hawaiian cultural heritage of the sport” as well as the period of surfing’s “marked decline in the 19th century as the Hawaiian population collapsed from foreign diseases and as missionaries discouraged native traditions.”⁹⁷ The legislature’s deliberate avoidance of an ostensibly innocuous act of recognition, which

⁹⁵ See Jeff Hawe, “Surf Competition Pumps Millions into Oahu Economy,” *Hawaii Business Magazine*, December 8, 2017, <https://www.hawaiiibusiness.com/surf-competition-pumps-millions-into-oahu-economy/>; “Surf’s up in California, Where It’s Now the Official Sport,” *AP News*, August 20, 2018, <https://apnews.com/article/1696f4e6927e4ba5a1003a8157e751d1>.

⁹⁶ S.B. 1459, 2019 Leg., Reg. Sess. § 2-1 (Haw. 2019) (as amended and passed by Senate on March 1, 2019); H.R. 1459, § 2-1 (Haw. 2019) (as amended and passed by House of Representatives on Apr. 3, 2019).

⁹⁷ *Relating to the State Surfing Commission: Hearing on S.B. 1459 Before S. Comm. on Energy, Econ. Dev., and Tourism*, 2019 Leg., Reg. Sess. (Haw. 2019) (statement of Office of Hawaiian Affairs, Feb. 4, 2019); *Relating to the State Surfing Commission: Hearing on S.B. 1459 Before H. Comm. on Labor and Pub. Emp’t*, 2019 Leg., Reg. Sess. (Haw. 2019) (statement of Office of Hawaiian Affairs, Mar. 19, 2019); *Relating to the State Surfing Commission: Hearing on S.B. 1459 Before H. Comm. on Fin.*, 2019 Leg., Reg. Sess. (Haw. 2019) (statement of Office of Hawaiian Affairs, Mar. 29, 2019).

would have only bolstered the state's exclusive claim to surfing, is demonstrative of the level at which Kanaka Maoli are perceived as a threat to colonial authority in Hawai'i.

In this particular case, the colonial governing apparatus across two states asserted separate claims to Hawaiian knowledge, but both of these claims pre-required the forced severing of surfing from its indigeneity. For California, this involved distinguishing the modern form of surfing to which the state was laying claim from the surfing of the Indigenous Hawaiian past, while the state of Hawai'i erased all overt references to surfing's indigeneity altogether. I draw attention to this particular case as just one among countless moments that have formed around a surf-cultural genealogy of colonial apprehension. This chapter engages this genealogy in order to interrogate and unsettle a persistent mode of apprehension — the occlusion of indigeneity — through examination of an especially notable moment in surfing's history that coincided with Hawai'i statehood.

I argue in this chapter that surfing's transformation in the dominant public imaginary from an ancient Hawaiian practice into a modern and respectable American pastime facilitated and fortified the colonial apprehension of Hawai'i as the "50th state." My analysis of the Hollywood surf film *Gidget* (1959) proposes that surfing, like Hawai'i, was apprehended as American during the historical moment of statehood through the occlusion of Kanaka Maoli indigeneity.

First, I contend that the postwar white youth rebellion to which surfing became inextricably tied was based in an embrace of an imagined Hawaiian indigeneity. I turn to an analysis of *Gidget*, the film that has been credited with catalyzing this surf-cultural turn, in order to identify the ways in which Hawaiian indigeneity is distorted and

occluded in ways that contain surfing's perceived threat to the U.S. American status quo. Through a comparative analysis of *Gidget* and the novel upon which it was based, I contend that both texts relied on colonial notions of Hawaiian social pathology. I find that the novel ultimately minimizes surfing's danger, while the film conceives of surfing's attachments to indigeneity as a far more serious threat to U.S. American life. In response, the filmmakers presented a resolution: a respectable and modern form of surfing that appeared to be fully severed from its Hawaiian indigeneity. This maneuver is achieved by appealing to a settler colonial temporality that relegated Indigenous lifeways to the impossible-to-recover past. This chapter concludes with a discussion of surfing's counterculture, which sought to reject *Gidget's* mainstream form of surfing in the 1960s and 1970s. Nevertheless, countercultural surfers continued to fortify the colonial apprehension of Kanaka Maoli in order to assert their perceived entitlement to Indigenous knowledges and lands.

Postwar Surfing's Occlusion and the Colonial Politics of White Rebellion

Within the historiography of surfing, the year 1959 — the same year Hawai'i was admitted as a state in the union — is given particular emphasis as a moment of transformation. It was in this year that Columbia Pictures released *Gidget*, a Hollywood film that is often recognized as the originator of the mainstream surf film genre as well as a major catalyst for surfing's global popularization.⁹⁸ *Gidget's* role in transforming surf culture is well recognized within surfing scholarship and literature as a text that widened surfing's appeal (especially to young white women) and enabled the production of a

⁹⁸ Paul Wendkos, *Gidget* (Columbia Pictures, 1959).

“new” surf-cultural formation with ties to California rather than Hawai‘i. Scott Laderman, for example, periodizes twentieth-century surf history into two halves, arguing that “the first half...was marked by the revitalization and growth of Hawaiian surf culture,” due in large part to the efforts of Kanaka Maoli practitioners, including the infamous surfer Duke Kahanamoku, who travelled the world giving surfing demonstrations as diplomats and advocates for the Hawaiian people.⁹⁹ In contrast, the years following World War II saw what Laderman characterizes as the beginnings of a distinct surf-historical period. Laderman further posits that the tone for this postwar surf culture was set by *Gidget* and the subsequent Hollywood surf films of the 1960s that “appropriated surfing” and declared “Southern California as the preemptive center of the surfing universe.”¹⁰⁰ In Laderman’s account, the surf film is conceived of as a uniquely transformative cultural form from which a new U.S. American “version” or “phase” of surfing was born that was defined, in large part, by its total disassociation with Hawai‘i and Hawaiians.

Similar efforts to distinguish post-*Gidget* surfing from other iterations of the practice appear in Krista Comer’s *Surfer Girls in the New World Order*, an analysis of global surf culture’s entanglements with the international politics of place and gender. Comer makes even more explicit *Gidget*’s accountability for this moment of transformation when she describes the release of the film as causing a “flashpoint of change, practically overnight,” after which surfing’s earlier, and in Comer’s view, more equitable “Hawaiian-derived gender formation” gave way to “gendered power struggles,

⁹⁹ Scott Laderman, *Empire in Waves: A Political History of Surfing* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2014), 43.

¹⁰⁰ Laderman, 42.

[and] a kind of leering anger at women in the water.”¹⁰¹ Both Laderman and Comer deploy *Gidget* as a moment of periodization to emphasize that the specific object of critique for their work is surfing’s postwar formation — what is alternately referred to as “commercial,” “modern,” or “global” surfing — rather than earlier iterations that were more explicitly attached to Hawaiian surf culture.

This scholarly assertion is also mirrored in popular surfing narratives, including William Finnegan’s best-selling memoir, *Barbarian Days*, which describes the years following the film’s release as “the *Gidget* days,” after which he recalls that Malibu beach (the setting for the film) became “the center ring of the surfing circus” and was “ridiculously crowded.”¹⁰² Finnegan contrasts his experience as a surfer in California after *Gidget*’s release with his earlier life surfing in Hawai‘i, which he describes with an almost spiritual reverence. Many of the pre-*Gidget* surfers whom Finnegan remembers with admiration are either Native Hawaiian practitioners or American surfers with direct ties to Hawai‘i. “Big Bill Beckett,” for example, was a white American who “surfed...played the ukulele...[and] had gotten married in Hawaii.”¹⁰³

Although it is undeniable that American surf culture is appropriative and saw a significant transformation in the late 1950s and early 1960s, there is a contradiction between my own reading of *Gidget* and the repeated efforts of many surfers and surfing scholars to cast the film as having created a surfing culture that became entirely detached from Hawai‘i and Hawaiians. To be clear, I do not entirely disagree with these observations. The film does erase Kanaka Maoli practitioners, actors, and characters, and

¹⁰¹ Krista Comer, *Surfer Girls in the New World Order* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2010), 35–36.

¹⁰² William Finnegan, *Barbarian Days: A Surfing Life* (New York: Penguin Books, 2015), 88.

¹⁰³ Finnegan, 60.

without any acknowledgement that the practice is Hawaiian in origin, it is difficult to refute that *Gidget*'s surfing is cultural appropriation. However, solely relying on the analytic of appropriation or erasure elides the many ways in which Hawai'i and Hawaiians are always "present" in any surf-cultural object or text. Said another way, surfing remains a Kanaka Maoli knowledge regardless of the extent to which that truth is overtly acknowledged or represented. By understanding surfing's apparent divorce from Hawaiian indigeneity as a historically-contingent mode of colonial apprehension, my analysis acknowledges the simultaneous erasure *and* presence of indigeneity within the postwar U.S. American surf-cultural formation as a condition of its coloniality.

This assertion is intended to amplify and build upon critiques by Kanaka Maoli surfers and scholars who have long recognized American surf culture's reliance on a distorted and imagined Hawaiian-ness even as it has forcibly removed surfing from its Indigenous political and epistemological context. Isaiah Helekunihi Walker argues in his history of Kanaka Maoli surfing that "haole [foreign, American] surf culture has continued to grow an identity based on invented notions of what it means to be Hawaiian... While much of this American surf-culture identity used Hollywood films like *Gidget* as their Hawaiian cultural informants, it is clear that they were not interested in authenticity."¹⁰⁴ Similarly, Karin Amimoto Ingersoll writes that the commercial surfing industry that emerged as part of postwar U.S. American surf culture has appealed to consumers by "leaning on a social, political, and spiritual Hawaiian activity and transforming it into a sporting mission to demand an experience of the exotic, the

¹⁰⁴ Isaiah Helekunihi Walker, *Waves of Resistance: Surfing and History in Twentieth-Century Hawai'i* (Honolulu, Hawai'i: University of Hawai'i Press, 2011), 40.

‘frontier,’ and the authentic.”¹⁰⁵ In a similar way to Comer and Laderman, Ingersoll and Walker underscore the differences between Kanaka Maoli he‘e nalu and American surfing, but they stop short of suggesting that Western surfing and the global surfing industry has detached itself entirely from Hawaiian culture. Instead, Ingersoll and Walker emphasize that American surf culture has intentionally leaned upon and been informed by an imagined Hawaiian-ness in its transformation of an Indigenous knowledge into an American pastime.

Ingersoll’s and Walker’s interpretations suggest that American surf culture formed through the *sublation* of Kanaka Maoli and American settler colonial epistemologies, defined as “the process by which the conflict between two opposed or contrasting things or ideas is resolved by the emergence of a new idea, which both preserves and transcends them.”¹⁰⁶ The “transcendence” in this case speaks to American surf culture’s transformation of a Kanaka Maoli knowledge into one that necessarily apprehended or contained the threat posed by enduring indigeneity and Indigenous sovereignty as its condition of possibility. Surf-cultural sublation can be understood as serving an eliminatory function as part of the U.S. settler colonial project: American surf culture aimed to destroy and replace the Kanaka Maoli knowledge of he‘e nalu with one that better supported colonial logics.¹⁰⁷

The threat posed by Hawaiian he‘e nalu practitioners has taken a number of forms since the early nineteenth century. Prior to the arrival of Westerners to Hawai‘i, he‘e nalu served a significant social and political function in Kanaka Maoli society. An individual’s

¹⁰⁵ Karin Amimoto Ingersoll, *Waves of Knowing: A Seascape Epistemology* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2016), 43.

¹⁰⁶ “Sublation, n.,” in *OED Online* (Oxford University Press, June 2020).

¹⁰⁷ Wolfe, “Settler Colonialism,” 388.

he‘e nalu prowess was evidence of their mana (sacred power) and their personal relationship to nā akua (the deities). He‘e nalu appears frequently in Hawaiian mo‘olelo (histories) as an embodied knowledge that aided in determining one’s social, political, and spiritual status. Walker’s account identifies consistent evidence in the historical record that Kanaka Maoli surfers, even after Western encounter, continued to practice he‘e nalu in open defiance of the missionaries, who sought to cast the practice as uncivilized. Moreover, into and throughout the twentieth century, Hawaiian surfers often served as advocates for Kanaka Maoli and took on prominent political leadership roles in activism against the colonial state and in defense of Kanaka Maoli sovereignty. Hui O He‘e Nalu was one such group founded in the 1970s, which included infamous Hawaiian surfer Eddie Aikau, and was dedicated to fighting against the professional surfing industry and preserving and protecting the knowledge of he‘e nalu for future generations of Kanaka Maoli.¹⁰⁸

Taking a somewhat different approach, Ingersoll proposes that the political potential of he‘e nalu in our present stretches beyond its capacity to serve as a vehicle for direct activism and defiance. Kanaka Maoli approaches to surfing as practice are rooted in a non-Western ontoepistemology. Even the language of Western surfing — “‘ripping,’ ‘shredding,’ and ‘killing’ waves” — is incompatible with Indigenous Kanaka Maoli oceanic knowledges, which have emphasized a reciprocal and genealogical relationship of respect between nā kanaka (people, humans) and ka moana (the ocean).¹⁰⁹ To Ingersoll, he‘e nalu is not only a practice but part of an empowering movement of Indigenous epistemological resurgence — a “knowledge system,” “literacy,” and

¹⁰⁸ Walker, *Waves of Resistance*.

¹⁰⁹ Ingersoll, *Waves of Knowing*, 69.

“approach to knowing” — that undermines the Western colonial commonsense by offering a viable, decolonial alternative. In other words, he‘e nalu empowers Kanaka Maoli to “know otherwise” in ways that inherently subvert the purportedly de facto authority of settler colonial knowledge systems.¹¹⁰

In my reading of *Gidget*’s coloniality, I propose that the inherent threat of surfing’s indigeneity was apprehended through *occlusion*. I take the work of Ann Laura Stoler as my point of departure. Stoler defines colonial occlusion as “acts of obstruction — of categories, concepts, and ways of knowing that disable linkages to imperial practice and often go by other names.”¹¹¹ For Stoler, excavating the occluded histories of empire offers a challenge to the enduring imperial formation and a more textured understanding of colonial durabilities in the present. Although Stoler’s observations of occlusionary acts are specific to the (post)colonial context of the French empire, I find that occlusion is also useful for describing how cultural production has maintained U.S. *settler* colonialism in Hawai‘i. I contend that mainstream U.S. American surf culture, as emblemized by *Gidget*, occluded Kanaka Maoli indigeneity by repeatedly conjuring and denigrating the Native Hawaiian surfer-subject while also failing to name it as such. In so doing, surfing was (re)conceived by the film as a practice that could be appropriated by white U.S. American youth only because it was imagined to be extricable from its dangerous attachments to indigeneity. Said another way, the *superficial appearance* of Indigenous disappearance is at the very center of postwar American surfing’s apprehensive function.

Understanding why surfing, in particular, was subjected to this occlusive mode of apprehension requires situating it within the cultural politics of its historical moment. In

¹¹⁰ Ingersoll, *Waves of Knowing*.

¹¹¹ Stoler, *Duress*, 10.

short, surfing's ties to rebellion were inextricably entangled with the emulation of an imagined Hawaiian-ness. By the postwar years, surfing had become a significant threat to the status quo, and neutralizing that threat also required apprehending Hawai'i and Kanaka Maoli. Grace Elizabeth Hale has categorized this post-World War II period, more generally, as one in which marginalized groups were seen as having a more authentic and expressive lived experience than white Americans. Hale has described this "romance of the outsider" as especially captivating for white, middle-class youth who felt oppressed by the status quo of earlier generations and desired a lifestyle that was more emotionally and spiritually fulfilling. Seeking a "depth of meaning and feeling," Hale argues, white middle-class youth identified with and drew upon the cultural resources of the other, especially Black Americans and the working class, in an effort to "cut themselves free of their own social origins and their own histories."¹¹²

In the 1950s and 1960s, the romanticization of and identification with outsiders came to be especially appealing to postwar white youth who, unlike their Depression-era parents, were coming of age during a time of economic abundance. Joel Dinerstein has argued that these changing socio-economic conditions led postwar youth to prioritize emotional expression in rejection of their parents' tendency to single-mindedly focus on securing material success.¹¹³ Postwar white youth who felt repressed and alienated by the status quo set by earlier generations began to directly identify with peoples who were racialized, oppressed, foreign, and marginalized, who they believed had achieved a meaningful and emotionally fulfilling life, even in the face of adversity. To Hale, this

¹¹² Grace Elizabeth Hale, *A Nation of Outsiders: How the White Middle Class Fell in Love with Rebellion in Postwar America* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 13.

¹¹³ Joel Dinerstein, *The Origins of Cool in Postwar America* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2017).

conception was one that emerged in articulation with increased access to media representations of non-white peoples and cultures.¹¹⁴ Moreover, previously white locales were becoming more multiracial due to a steep rise in non-white migration, especially in cities. White Americans had greater opportunities to engage with those who were different from them, which seemed to result in both increased interracial acceptance and conflict. Neighborhoods and schools became key battlegrounds over the struggle for desegregation, but media industries were also forced to contend with racial tension. Black consumers, especially, demanded inclusion and representation, but cultural producers feared that conceding would alienate their white audiences and corporate sponsors.¹¹⁵

For a significant number of postwar white youth who rejected the values of their parents, interracial encounters in public spaces and through media provided a cultural language for expressing their feelings of alienation and emotional repression. Well-recognized examples include Elvis Presley and Bob Dylan, who appropriated the sound and imagined attitudes of Black musicians and became representatives of white youth rebellion and counterculture. The emulation of African Americans was, undoubtedly, the dominant mode of outsider romance for white youth after World War II.¹¹⁶ I propose, however, that the popularization of postwar surfing culture and the emulation of Hawaiians can also be understood as part of the same cultural movement.

Even before the second World War, surfing had been a practice embraced by white Americans seeking out models for alternative ways of life and connections with non-Western cultures. Timothy J. Cooley's historical study of American surfing and

¹¹⁴ Hale, *A Nation of Outsiders*.

¹¹⁵ See Matthew F. Delmont, *The Nicest Kids in Town: American Bandstand, Rock "n" Roll, and the Struggle for Civil Rights in 1950s Philadelphia* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2016).

¹¹⁶ Hale, *A Nation of Outsiders*.

music examines a series of photographs from the late 1930s and early 1940s depicting white men and women playing ‘ukulele and mimicking hula performance on the beach at San Onofre, California. Cooley claims that, for these early California practitioners, “surfing was still considered inherently Hawaiian.”¹¹⁷ Through ethnographic research, Cooley further determined that “before World War II, the music at San Onofre was 98 to 99 percent Hawaiian...[white surfers] actively cultivated Hawaiian-language songs, and also learned how to dance a little hula. Thus, even while haoles were appropriating Hawaiian cultural practices...the San Onofre group still conceived of those practices as Hawaiian.”¹¹⁸ Arguably, these early practitioners in California were less self-identified “surfers” than they were generally embodying an imagined Hawaiian-ness. Surfing appears to be just one of many practices, including playing ‘ukulele and performing hula, that allowed white American youth to gain access to an imagined Hawaiian lifestyle.

The way of life that inspired white youth in the 1930s and 1940s was, in large part, drawn from an image that was actively constructed by haoles to apprehend Kanaka Maoli in the years following U.S. annexation in 1898. By the early twentieth century, white annexationists in Hawai‘i had successfully convinced the United States federal government to overlook the illegality of the 1893 overthrow and to recognize the provisional government. Securing that control over Hawai‘i, however, was another matter entirely. Kanaka Maoli leaders and political actors were persistent in their public advocacy. Moreover, and despite their control over the territorial government, white haoles were still outnumbered by Hawaiians and non-white residents in Hawai‘i. The colonial regime fully recognized the threat posed by their minority status and worked

¹¹⁷ Timothy J. Cooley, *Surfing about Music* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2014), 33.

¹¹⁸ Cooley, 34.

desperately to contain it by attempting to attract as many white American settlers to the islands as possible. In service of this mission, the white elite mounted a wide propaganda campaign and invested heavily in the burgeoning tourism industry throughout the early decades of the twentieth century. Their goal was to solidify a certain apprehension of Hawai‘i as a place that welcomed visitors and offered potential residents a way of life free from the pressures of the modern and newly industrialized United States.¹¹⁹

By the 1920s and 1930s, surfing had become a cornerstone of Hawai‘i’s tourism industry, due in large part to the work of Alexander Hume Ford, a white journalist from South Carolina who had settled in Honolulu in 1907. Ford had witnessed and become captivated by Hawaiian surfers at Waikīkī and O‘ahu’s North Shore and came to believe that surfing could attract white visitors and potential residents to the islands. In 1908, Ford founded the Outrigger Canoe Club, which taught surfing exclusively to white elites who could pay their annual membership fee. Soon, surfing emerged as a site of significant contestation between Hawaiians and haole. In retaliation to white encroachment and seeking to take advantage of surfing’s appeal to foreigners for their own ends, a group of Hawaiian surfers founded a competing club: Hui Nalu. The hui (club, organization) included such prominent practitioners as Duke Kahanamoku, and provided white visitors with a more “authentic” Hawaiian surfing experience than Outrigger could offer.¹²⁰

Surfing competitions — and sometimes physical altercations — between white and Hawaiian surfers were a common occurrence in early twentieth-century Hawai‘i. Ford worked to gain control over the tourists’ new demand for surfing experiences.

¹¹⁹ See Saranillio, *Unsustainable Empire*.

¹²⁰ Walker, *Waves of Resistance*.

Putting his experience as a journalist to use, Ford established *Mid-Pacific*, a tourism promotion magazine. The first issue in 1911 featured a cover image of a Hawaiian surfer atop a wave and many of the issues of *Mid-Pacific* that followed also foregrounded surfing. Hawaiian practitioners, too, used tourists' fascination with surfing as a way to secure an income independent from the Big Five sugar corporations and plantation labor.¹²¹ In the 1920s and 1930s, as Kahanamoku gained world-wide fame as a master surfer, U.S. Americans were also consuming a wide variety of Hawaiian cultural products at a fever pitch. Hawaiian music records and Hollywood films such as *Waikiki Wedding* (1937) were in high demand. Additionally, technological developments in transportation resulted in faster and less expensive steamship travel in the 1930s, allowing greater numbers of tourists to visit the islands or, at least, feel that a vacation to Hawai'i might be a reasonable aspiration.¹²²

Even for middle- and working-class families during the Great Depression, the vacation became thoroughly integrated into the American Dream as a symbol of upward mobility. Increased accessibility to automobile-based tourism and the normalization of paid vacation time during the interwar years allowed working Americans to fold travel more easily into their lives. Moreover, publications such as *National Geographic Magazine* that represented far-away places, peoples, and cultures — including those of Hawai'i — helped to satisfy Americans' desire to vicariously tour the globe. Even during the Depression, the number *National Geographic* subscriptions exceeded one million.¹²³

¹²¹ Walker.

¹²² See DeSoto Brown, "Beautiful, Romantic Hawaii: How the Fantasy Image Came to Be," *The Journal of Decorative and Propaganda Arts* 20 (1994): 252–71.

¹²³ Catherine Lutz and Jane Lou Collins, *Reading National Geographic* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993), 33.

With the help of the mass culture industry, nearly every American in the interwar years had access to a vivid and detailed image of surfing as part of a Hawai'i vacation. That image, however, was widely appealing because it was markedly exotic and foreign.

In the years following the second World War, surfing came to be seen by growing groups of young white rebels as less of a hobby and more of a lifestyle. Many extant narratives of surfing history only briefly mention Kanaka Maoli and the practice's Hawaiian origins before establishing the late 1940s as the originating moment for surfing as we now know it. In these years, small groups of American surfer rebels (the vast majority of whom were young white men) began to spend their days surfing the beaches of southern California. Perhaps the most prominent group in surf-historical memory is the crew at Malibu Beach, which grew in numbers and local prominence throughout the 1950s and eventually included Kathy "Gidget" Kohner Zuckerman. As a teenager, Zuckerman lived with her middle-class family in Brentwood, California, and first encountered the Malibu surfers in 1956. "It was a most alluring lifestyle, especially to a fifteen-year-old girl," Zuckerman recounted in 2001. "They were boys who lived on the beach (literally a shack on the sand) ... I was amused and fascinated with these handsome young surfers and their love and pure devotion to riding the waves at Malibu."¹²⁴ Zuckerman's experiences with these surfer rebels that would later inspire the Hollywood film and an ostensibly "new age" of surfing history.

In my reading of both the 1957 novel and 1959 film adaptation of *Gidget*, I argue that the white surfing "lifestyle" at Malibu undermined the postwar status quo specifically by emulating long-standing colonial notions of Hawaiian pathology: the

¹²⁴ Kathy Kohner Zuckerman, "Foreword," in *Gidget: The Little Girl with Big Ideas*, Berkeley Trade Paperback Edition (New York: Berkley Books, 2001), viii.

abandonment of productive work for a life of leisure, the rejection of a conventional heteronormative family for sexual deviance, and a spiritual reverence for nature and the non-human as a way of denouncing modernity and industrialization. Both the novel and the film, I contend, were produced with two key aims in mind. The first of these aims was to identify the forms of social danger posed by the rebellious surfing lifestyle, and the second was to better understand, explain, and contain the perceived threat of surf culture's social pathology to innocent white youth. Through comparative analysis, I argue that both the novel and film iterations of the *Gidget* narrative rely on the "surf bum" archetype to occlude colonial notions of Indigenous Hawaiian pathology and to offer an apprehension that would resolve the postwar sociocultural anxieties of white, middle-class Americans.

Occluding Hawaiian Indigeneity and the Surf Bum Archetype

Gidget is not often discussed in terms of its attachment to Hawaiian-ness, due in large part to its exclusively white cast of characters and southern California setting. However, I propose that the hit film relies on an occluded distortion of Hawaiian indigeneity, particularly in its construction of the character Kahuna: the archetypal "surf bum" and the leader of the Malibu surfers. An immediately obvious indicator of the character's distorted Hawaiian-ness is his nickname, which is mistranslated in a later scene to mean "big chief in Hawaiian." The term kahuna in 'Ōlelo Hawai'i (Hawaiian language) is more accurately considered an equivalent to the English word "priest," and is a title given to spiritual leaders or to experts in a given profession or practice.¹²⁵

¹²⁵ Mary Kawena Pukui and Samuel H. Elbert, "Kahuna," in *Hawaiian Dictionary: Hawaiian-English, English-Hawaiian* (Honolulu, Hawai'i: University of Hawaii Press, 1986).

Kahuna is introduced in an early scene to the film's teenage protagonist, Francine Lawrence, after she becomes enchanted with the surfer group. To gain the acceptance of the young men, many of whom are much older than her, Francine gathers funds to buy her first surfboard from the Malibu crew, earning her the privilege of receiving her nickname, "Gidget," and meeting Kahuna.

Gidget learns that Kahuna has chosen to live in a makeshift, thatched-roof hut on the beach until the end of summer when he plans to "follow the sun" to "either [Peru] or Hawai'i." When Kahuna notices that Gidget is confused, he elaborates: "I'm a surf bum. You know, ride the waves, eat, sleep. Not a care in the world." He holds a large seashell up to Gidget's ear: "The sea's left its whisper in there. That's the secret to the whole thing." This initial encounter between Gidget and Kahuna is the first mention of the surf bum, and although the moniker is not used frequently throughout the film, this initial description attaches an archetypical designation to Kahuna's values, attitude, behavior, and lifestyle. These defining characteristics of Kahuna's surf bum identity are consistently foregrounded throughout *Gidget* as simultaneously attractive and dangerous.

In Kahuna's introduction scene, Gidget is thoroughly bewildered by Kahuna's easy rejection of the middle-class lifestyle that she takes as given. Gidget's first question to Kahuna is what he does for work, to which he replies that he "tried that once" as an Air Force pilot during the Korean War. "There were too many hours and rules and regulations," Kahuna explains. "Nobody ever consulted me about what flight I was in the mood for." Here the film interprets and represents surf bums as part of the larger postwar white American youth culture. Kahuna's rebellion is marked by his rejection of the

dominant values of earlier generations including the moral imperative to participate in productive work.

Strikingly, every tenet of Kahuna's life of purported freedom echoes long-standing colonial apprehension of Kanaka Maoli knowledge and lifeways. His choice to abandon work for a life of leisure and his sexually deviant rejection of a conventional heteronormative family are both notions of Native Hawaiian abnormality constructed by Westerners in nineteenth-century Hawai'i to explain away failed attempts at colonial coercion. Missionaries and plantation owners wrote and reported extensively on Kanaka Maoli citizens of the Hawaiian Kingdom who refused to abandon what they saw as deviant sexual relations and unproductive leisure activities, including hula and he'e nalu, for plantation wage labor and heteronormative kinship. In response to this dissent, the haole claimed that Hawaiians were inherently and pathologically lazy and sexually perverse.¹²⁶ These ideas bolstered the dominant colonial apprehension of Hawaiians as "unfit for civilization." The white elite asserted that the armed overthrow of the Hawaiian Kingdom in 1893 was justified, because Hawai'i required the benevolent assistance of the United States to bring its people out of the savage past and into modernity.¹²⁷

Following the rise of Hawai'i's tourism industry in the early twentieth century, those same pathologies were repurposed to convince white Americans that a visit to the islands would give them temporary access to the "Hawaiian life" of complete leisure. These conceptions had come to be especially associated with the Waikīkī Beachboys, a group of Kanaka Maoli men who were affiliated with Hui Nalu, the Hawaiian competitor to Ford's Outrigger Canoe Club. The Beachboys acted as independent surfing instructors,

¹²⁶ See Silva, *Aloha Betrayed*.

¹²⁷ See Saranillio, *Unsustainable Empire*.

sold concessions, and offered canoe rides to visitors.¹²⁸ This intentional labor on the part of Hawaiians was regularly misrepresented by American cultural producers as a rejection of modernity and commitment to a life of leisure and hospitality.¹²⁹ Certain Beachboys were also well known for engaging in sexual relationships with white women while in their employ, leading some haole visitors to accuse the men of prostitution.¹³⁰ Such racialized apprehensions of Kanaka Maoli, reinscripted to benefit colonial governments and industries, also captured the imaginations of young white rebels looking to buck the status quo.

These popularized images of Beachboys and the imagined Hawaiian lifestyle had clearly informed the filmmakers' construction of Kahuna, but the character's emulation of a distorted Hawaiian-ness, specifically, is not disclosed. Instead, Kahuna's primitive lifestyle is categorized as that of a "surf bum." The primitivism of the surf bum lifestyle is central to way in which *Gidget* identifies postwar youth rebellion as a threat to respectable Americans and their way of life. As the film's narrative progresses, Kahuna's emulation of an imagined Hawaiian lifestyle is revealed to be impossible to maintain without causing irrevocable harm to himself and those who revere him.

Catalyzed by Gidget's arrival on the scene and her willingness to embrace Kahuna despite their differences, his confident façade gradually falls away to reveal a lonely man meant to be pitied rather than idolized. Kahuna's convictions are initially shaken by the death of Fly Boy, his pet bird and sole companion, in response to which

¹²⁸ See Walker, *Waves of Resistance*.

¹²⁹ One notable example of this form of representation is the film *Blue Hawaii*, in which a group of Hawaiian men are depicted as wholly dedicated to surfing, playing music, and lounging on the beach with the film's protagonist Chad (Elvis Presley). (Norman Taurog, *Blue Hawaii* [Paramount Pictures, 1961].)

¹³⁰ Walker, *Waves of Resistance*, 72.

Gidget expresses her sympathy through self-deprecation, praising Kahuna's comparative strength and noting that her own weakness prevents her as living as independently.

Kahuna does not respond to Gidget but is visibly distressed by her admiration of a lifestyle that has suddenly brought him unexpected pain. In a subsequent scene, Kahuna has returned to his hut to contemplate his ideological crisis when Moondoggie, who in the film is represented as Kahuna's protege, arrives in high spirits. Moondoggie shares with his hero that he has decided to drop out of college to follow Kahuna abroad.

Remaining ignorant of Kahuna's bad mood, Moondoggie fantasizes about his new future. Gesturing to a generic tribal mask hanging from the wall of Kahuna's hut, Moondoggie imagines visiting "the island of Kaua'i [to] see the very place where the natives presented this to their Great Kahuna." Suddenly, Kahuna rises in anger to tear the mask from Moondoggie's hands. "I bought it in Acapulco for twenty cruddy pesos," he admits, seething with apparent shame and fury.

In these scenes, Kahuna is forced to confront the failure of his surf bum lifestyle to protect him from a confrontation with the universal truth of mortality, grief over which is further amplified by guilt over his culpability for the inevitable suffering of his innocent converts. When Moondoggie assumed that Kahuna's mask had been a gift, presented by Kanaka Maoli to their honored guest, he is met with another inescapable truth. The object in question is revealed to be the product of modernity rather than a primitive past: a mass-produced souvenir purchased by a tourist in urban Acapulco. In these scenes, *Gidget* envisions the surf bum fighting against the irreversible current of modernization in pursuit of a primitive fantasy, the promises of which are cast as the temporally aberrant object of desire. This narrative turn conjured by *Gidget* can be best

described as a representation of what Lauren Berlant has termed *cruel optimism*: “a relation of attachment to compromised conditions of possibility whose realization is discovered either to be impossible, sheer fantasy, or *too* possible, and toxic.”¹³¹

In contrast to the film’s broader critique, which identifies the life of the surf bum as a path to personal failure and social dissolution, the novel upon which the film was based is far less pessimistic about the potential consequences of postwar youth rebellion. The novel, titled *Gidget: The Little Girl with Big Ideas*, was written and published in 1957 by Kathy “Gidget” Kohner Zuckerman’s father Frederick Kohner as a reflection of his paternal observations of his daughter’s experiences with the surfers at Malibu beach. In a recent reprint of the novel, surfer Deanne Stillman writes in an introduction that there may have been several young men living in the hut and that it became a “legendary” part of Malibu’s landscape: “[the shack’s] very mention among surfers, especially those who surfed Malibu in the fifties, conjures a mythology that forever binds the tribe.”¹³²

Stillman’s use of the word “tribe” to describe the group is notable. Through repeated references to Indigenous people, Stillman seems to endow Zuckerman and the Malibu group, and surfing in general, with an imagined form of pan-Indian mystical authenticity. Stillman remarks that “Malibu was named by the Chumash Indians ten thousand years ago,” describes the first surfboard Zuckerman ever purchased as being decorated with an image of a totem pole and observes that “Kathy was listed as number seven of the twenty-five most important surfers of the century...not too far below Duke

¹³¹ Lauren Gail Berlant, *Cruel Optimism* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2011), 24.

¹³² Deanne Stillman, “Introduction,” in *Gidget: The Little Girl with Big Ideas*, Berkeley Trade Paperback Edition (New York: Berkley Books, 2001), xiii.

Kahanamoku, adored Hawaiian father of modern surfing.”¹³³ She concludes her

introduction with an assertion:

Were it not for Frederick Kohner...the secrets of Malibu would have been lost to memory, to the endless surf, to the ancient Chumash whose spirits are said to patrol the waters, whose counsel and appeasement is sought by those who yearn for a return to the era when it was just a small band of compadres who surfed here by day and made bonfires by night, talking in hushed tones of bitchen [sic] surf and all the waves that were sure to come, all the briny wonders that would unveil themselves in their own sweet time to those who wanted to see, and to see again¹³⁴

Stillman conceives of surfers as possessing a special connection to an imagined and extinct native, which has granted special access to a lost time and space for those who “yearn” and “want to see.” But this serene spiritualism stands in stark contrast with the novel’s representation of surfers.

Film-Gidget is naive and innocent, while novel-Gidget is brash, hyper-sexual, and rebellious. Even before Gidget meets the surfers, she openly disparages and mocks her parents and teachers and is concerned about her “bosom,” which she notes is “there all right, and it sure looks good when I’m undressed, but I have a hard time making it count in a sweater or such.”¹³⁵ In the novel, Gidget’s interest in the Malibu surfers is as much about a desire to be around young and attractive men as it is about learning to surf. Her first encounter with the Malibu group is when Moondoggie rescues her from drowning. When he pulls her from the water onto his surfboard, the two engage in derisive banter:

“Hey, Shorty, what’re you doing out here,”
He griped me.
“What do you think I’m doing,” I said, “looking for some seagull eggs?”¹³⁶

¹³³ Stillman, xii, xiii, xvii.

¹³⁴ Stillman, xviii.

¹³⁵ Frederick Kohner, *Gidget: The Little Girl with Big Ideas*, Berkeley Trade Paperback Edition (New York: Berkley Books, 1957), 10.

¹³⁶ Kohner, 14.

Gidget is immediately attracted to Moondoggie, who she describes as a “gorgeous six-foot-two” and as having “a damn good build.”¹³⁷ When he brings her back to shore on the surfboard, she is exhilarated as much by her encounter with an attractive young man as she is by the thrill of riding her first wave. Even the language Gidget uses to describe the bodily experience of surfing becomes tangled with that of sexual desire: “Boards were nothing new to me. I’ve been skiing for years and I’ve done some waterskiing too. But this was different. I don’t want to sound corny but my heart went flippity-flop and I got all hot inside just thinking of it.”¹³⁸

The novel’s central tension concerns the question of whether or not surf culture is a site of sexualized danger or merely a harmless way for postwar teenagers to express and experiment with their burgeoning sexuality. Although written from Gidget’s perspective, it is clear that these are the questions of a concerned parent. Kohner’s anxious paternal voice is tangible throughout the novel as that of the character Paul, who is Gidget’s father. This anxiety is especially palpable in the few scenes involving Gidget’s brother-in-law, Larry, who works as a psychiatrist. As Gidget spends more and more time with the group of young male surfers, Paul sends Larry to have a conversation with his daughter to determine whether or not she has been having sex. When Gidget meets with Larry, she slowly catches on to the purpose of the discussion and joyfully tortures her nervous brother-in-law by suggesting she may have gone “all the way” with Moondoggie.¹³⁹ When she finally lets Larry in on the joke, he is relieved “over [her] well-preserved virginity.”¹⁴⁰

¹³⁷ Kohner, 16.

¹³⁸ Kohner, 17.

¹³⁹ Kohner, 71.

¹⁴⁰ Kohner, 77.

When Larry calls Paul to report back, Gidget secretly listens in on their conversation. She overhears Larry assuring Paul that her interest in surfing is “quite harmless...and just the normal pattern” of teenage development. Larry further advises him to allow his daughter to go to the beach to surf with the young men, since “[s]he feels at home there [and surfing] bolsters her self confidence.” Paul is unconvinced and expresses his fear that Gidget will have sex, to which Larry replies that “[i]t’s normal to be curious.” Paul retorts with mounting anger that his daughter, as an American, is not so much curious but “obsessed” with sex.¹⁴¹ Like Frederick Kohner, who had left Nazi Germany in 1936 after receiving his Ph.D. from the University of Vienna and beginning a screenwriting career in Berlin, Paul is represented as a highly educated intellectual and described in the book as “only a naturalized citizen,” though the details of the character’s early life are not disclosed.¹⁴² Convinced that his daughter has become the victim of a culture of American sexual pathology, Paul reads to Larry a quote by sociologist Pitirim Sorokin: “Americans are victims of a sex mania as malignant as cancer and as socially menacing as communism...[O]ur civilization has become so preoccupied with sex that it oozes from all pores of American life.”¹⁴³

These scenes suggest that Kohner has written from his daughter’s perspective in an attempt to empathize with and intellectually understand her desire to commune with the Malibu surfers. It is through writing this novel that Kohner appears to soothe his own anxieties, as an immigrant as well as a father, about his American child’s coming-of-age. Throughout the narrative, Kohner envisions his daughter in potentially dangerous

¹⁴¹ Kohner, 77.

¹⁴² Kohner, 23.

¹⁴³ Kohner, 78.

situations with older men, but she always manages to stay safe, either because she or the man involved makes the “correct” choice. In one scene, Moondoggie calls Gidget and asks her to come out with him that evening. During the outing, Moondoggie takes her to the beach and begins to kiss her, but she stops him: “Maybe I was too scared or he was too frantic. It felt like he wanted to prove something to himself or as if he were trying to see how far I would let it go...how gettable I was. I struggled and freed myself. ‘Please,’ I said. ‘Let’s not lose our heads.’”¹⁴⁴ Although Moondoggie is initially frustrated, Gidget’s choice to resist having sex with him on the date seems to convince him to treat her with greater respect, and he becomes more and more protective of Gidget as the novel progresses.

In another instance, Gidget falls asleep alone in Kahoona’s hut — his name in the novel is a misspelling of the Hawaiian word — and wakes up in the middle of the night to find Kahoona has returned. She suddenly feels uncomfortable: “I got frightened, naturally. Let’s say I’d fall asleep. He might rape me...I could scream, but who would hear me?”¹⁴⁵ She also considers the possibility that she might want to have sex with Kahoona and thinks, “maybe I would wake up in the morning and I would have become a woman overnight.”¹⁴⁶ She makes a rash decision to ask Kahoona to join her in bed but is instantly filled with fear. As Kahoona lies down next to the young girl and embraces her, Gidget suddenly realizes that the intimacy feels surprisingly familial. Kahoona advises her not to rush into having sex, and that when she does choose to do so, “it’ll be right. This isn’t.” Gidget feels a sense of peace as Kahoona kisses her, and she observes that he

¹⁴⁴ Kohner, 96.

¹⁴⁵ Kohner, 139.

¹⁴⁶ Kohner, 140.

has “kissed [her] like a father. Different from [Moondoggie]. Tender.”¹⁴⁷ Through writing these scenes, it appears that Kohner imagines — or at least is attempting to convince himself — that he has raised his daughter to be responsible and to make the right choices, or in situations when she is in potential danger, to have the sense to trust the right men to protect her in her father’s stead. The resolution to Kohner’s parental anxieties takes the form of a liberal belief in the power of individual choice, a message that would reemerge in his novel’s film adaptation.

Gidget: The Little Girl with Big Ideas, at its core, is a performance of paternal self-assurance and an examination of the author’s familial and personal concerns. In contrast, the film adaptation widens its critique, offering a resolution to broader and historically specific U.S. American sociocultural anxieties. The film deemphasizes sexuality and softens the protagonist’s rebellious edge. Gidget, the film character, is strikingly different from the sarcastic cigarette-smoking teen of the novel. Instead, the film features a young woman who is thoroughly sweet and entirely uninterested in attracting men — a characteristic that she explains at several points in the film makes her feel alienated from other girls at her school. These changes appear to have had the effect of widening the appeal of the *Gidget* story for mainstream audiences and may have also been a way to correct the novel’s perceived romanticization of teenage rebellion. Critics and fans have hailed the novel’s Gidget as a female version of Holden Caulfield, the aggressive teenage iconoclast of J.D. Salinger’s 1951 novel, *The Catcher in the Rye*, widely recognized as having inspired an entire generation of young white non-

¹⁴⁷ Kohner, 142.

conformists.¹⁴⁸ In apparent recognition of the social threat this form of youth culture posed, the filmmakers purposefully transformed Gidget into a white outsider who has ultimately decided to remain compliant with the status quo, allowing both would-be rebels and more conservative viewers to see themselves represented. In doing so, the film presents an alternative resolution to what Hale describes as the “incompatible yearnings for self-determination and emotional and social connection” that she argues was at the center of postwar political culture in the United States.¹⁴⁹

In order to manage this transformation of *Gidget* the filmmakers not only changed the attitude of the protagonist but also challenged surfing’s normalized association with delinquency, a foundational part of surf culture, which I argue relied on colonial notions of Hawaiian pathology. The novel overtly suggests that the Malibu surfers are familiar with Hawaiian surf culture and have identified with Hawaiians. During Gidget’s first encounter with the surfers at Malibu, she asks how much it would cost for her to purchase a surfboard. The board maker, Stinky, suggests that he could refurbish “a Wili Wili,” referring to a board made from the wood from the wiliwili tree used for many generations by Kanaka Maoli to construct surfboards and canoes.¹⁵⁰ The novel’s representation of Kahoona is also far more explicit about the direct correlation between his authority at

¹⁴⁸ Deanne Stillman describes *Gidget* as “a long-lost *Catcher in the Rye* for girls.” (Deanne Stillman, “Introduction,” in *Gidget: The Little Girl with Big Ideas*, Berkeley Trade Paperback Edition [New York: Berkley Books, 2001].) Rosanne Welch claims that this comparison had also been made by contemporary book critics. (Rosanne Welch, “The Surprisingly Girl Empowering Read... GIDGET,” Medium, *Mindful Media* [blog], June 29, 2015, <https://medium.com/mindful-l-media/the-surprisingly-girl-empowering-read-gidget-ab1b00158e09>.) Ilana Nash suggests that Kohner may have drawn directly from *Catcher* when he wrote *Gidget*, noting that a line from *Gidget*, “those damn falsies that stick out all over the place” is almost identical to a line from *Catcher*: “those damn falsies that point all over the place.” (Ilana Nash, *American Sweethearts: Teenage Girls in Twentieth-Century Popular Culture* [Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2006], 244.)

¹⁴⁹ Hale, *A Nation of Outsiders*, 6.

¹⁵⁰ Mary Kawena Pukui and Samuel H. Elbert, “Wiliwili,” in *Hawaiian Dictionary: Hawaiian-English, English-Hawaiian* (Honolulu, Hawai‘i: University of Hawaii Press, 1986).

Malibu and his ability to match the surfing prowess of Kanaka Maoli practitioners in Hawai‘i. “We are all sort of seasonal surf-bums,” a surfer nicknamed Lord Gallo explains to Gidget, “but [Kahoona] is the real article. He’s been around from Peru to Nanakali...Do you know that he’s the only guy besides Duke Kahanamoku who came in on Zero break [a wave formation unique to Hawai‘i] without spilling?”¹⁵¹ Kahoona’s proximity to and experience with Kahanamoku is further emphasized in a later scene when Gidget is discussing the surfers with her mother. Expressing her admiration for Kahoona, she explains that “[h]e’s been surfing with the Duke at Makaha,” a famous surf spot on the island of O‘ahu.¹⁵² The film, in contrast, relies on implicit signifiers or distorted abstractions of Hawaiian-ness conjured only to pathologize the surf bum lifestyle. Unlike Kohner’s novel, which conceives of surfing as an uncivilized but ultimately harmless way of experimenting with sexuality and expressing normal adolescent rebellion, the film purposefully departs from the novel by marking surfing’s attachments to an imagined Hawaiian indigeneity as a serious threat to young white Americans.

Kohner’s novel offers a fairly simple resolution to his personal anxieties, one that ultimately minimized surfing’s real threat. The film, on the other hand, forwards a grander vision for a form of surfing that could be embraced without threatening the social fabric of America’s white middle-class. To do so, however, *Gidget* had to present a respectable form of surfing that occluded (but appeared to be fully severed from) its

¹⁵¹ Kohner, *Gidget: The Little Girl with Big Ideas*, 41.

¹⁵² Kohner, 59.

Hawaiian indigeneity, a maneuver that the film achieves by appealing to a settler colonial temporality.

Settler Time and Indigenous Temporal Aberrance in Gidget

For many Kānaka Maoli, he‘e nalu remains less a sport or even a cultural practice than what Ingersoll has described as a “political language” that provides Hawaiians with a collective means of “knowing the past, and thus a way of understanding ... the present within that context.”¹⁵³ Walker likewise expresses he‘e nalu’s attachments to Indigenous temporality when he writes that “Hawaiian surfers [approach] their present and future while looking back toward their past.”¹⁵⁴ Understood in this way, he‘e nalu is not an ancient tradition to which Kanaka Maoli stubbornly cling, but a decolonizing act that provides a means for collective empowerment through the integration of Indigenous pasts, presents, and futures. Such embodied Indigenous knowledges are particularly potent technologies of endurance against the pressures of what Mark Rifkin has termed *settler time*: “notions, narratives, and experiences of temporality that de facto normalize non-native presence.”¹⁵⁵ Dominant U.S. American historical narratives, Rifkin argues, conceive of Native peoples as relics: holdovers from a past that must necessarily disappear to make way for an inevitably modern and democratic future. These accounts are accepted as objective truths inasmuch as settler time “appears as if it were a singular neutral medium into which to transpose varied experiences of becoming, such that they

¹⁵³ Ingersoll, *Waves of Knowing*, 91, 10.

¹⁵⁴ Walker, *Waves of Resistance*, 4.

¹⁵⁵ Mark Rifkin, *Beyond Settler Time: Temporal Sovereignty and Indigenous Self-Determination* (Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 2017), 9.

all can be measured and related through reference to an underlying ‘real’ continuity — a linear, integrated, universal unfolding.”¹⁵⁶

Mobilizing Rifkin’s critique of colonial temporalities against the colonial politics effected by U.S. American surf culture, *Gidget* can be illustrated as a surf-cultural text that enforces settler time in its construction of a modern surfing practice as fundamentally distinct from he‘e nalu. Following the logic of *Gidget*’s temporal politics, the enduring refusal of Kanaka Maoli to abandon their Indigenous knowledges and structures of relation appears to be motivated by the same futile insolence as Kahuna’s attempts to defy the truth of time’s one-way trajectory. However, the film’s equation of Kanaka Maoli lifeways with surf bum escapism is predicated upon the notion that Indigenous and non-native peoples occupy a singular frame of temporal reference. Rifkin has critiqued this presumption of temporal “coevalness,” contending that Indigenous experiences of temporality cannot be reduced to, and are often incommensurate with, non-native frameworks. Settler time enforces the strict and distinct sequentiality of the past, present, and future, whereas Rifkin’s analysis of Native texts suggests that Indigenous peoples often experience an overlapping and multiplicitous sense of temporal continuity. Rifkin contends that Indigenous lifeways are, therefore, “chronologically discontinuous forms of knowledge, experience, memory, extrahuman force, and relationship that can be realized in the now ... in ways that are potentially transformative, individually and collectively.”¹⁵⁷

¹⁵⁶ Rifkin, 19.

¹⁵⁷ Rifkin, 178.

Rifkin's theorization is supported by Walker's and Ingersoll's description of surfing as an embodied knowledge through which Kanaka Maoli can access Indigenous pasts within the present that generate imaginative possibilities for collectively empowered futures. *Gidget*'s adherence to settler time ultimately casts Hawaiian lifeways as impossible in the modern American present, but the film avoids naming or overtly representing the Native Hawaiian subject, choosing instead to obscure it within the surf bum archetype.

In *Gidget*'s climactic scenes, which take place during the surfers' "luau" at Malibu beach, Kahuna is forced to choose between maintaining his surf bum persona or setting aside his pride to protect his young followers. When Gidget anxiously attempts to initiate a sexual encounter with Kahuna in an effort to prove her maturity and to make Moondoggie jealous, Kahuna nearly acquiesces before pushing her away, barely resisting the urge to assault her. Gidget runs from the scene as Moondoggie arrives, assuming the worst and looking to start a physical altercation. When Kahuna refuses to return his blows, Moondoggie retreats, and Kahuna calls him a "square [who] never did belong" in the surf bum life, insulting him in an attempt to deter Moondoggie from following in Kahuna's footsteps. After Moondoggie has left, Kahuna holds up a seashell — an object earlier established as representing the surf bum's attachment to the ocean. He speaks aloud the shell, "you just lost a customer," conveying his relief over having prevented the fall of another young person down his path of destruction.

In the film's final moments, Gidget has learned her lesson and has finally given in to her parents' attempts to set her up on a blind date with an unseen character referred to throughout the film as Jeffrey Matthews, the respectable son of a local businessman. To

her surprise, when Jeffrey arrives at her door for their date, he is revealed to have been Moondoggie all along. After telling her he has decided to stay enrolled in college, Moondoggie and Gidget head to the beach for their date, where they find Kahuna dismantling his beach hut. Gidget picks up an employee identification card from the sand that reads, “Burt Vail,” revealing Kahuna’s true name. Kahuna confirms that he has taken a job as a commercial airline pilot and warmly thanks Gidget for inspiring him to change.

The narrative’s resolution celebrates the three protagonists’ return to civilized life, but *Gidget* stops short of casting surfing as a source of inherent danger. Instead, it is the surf bum’s imagined indigeneity — his chosen attachment to primitivism and temporal aberrance — that poses the social threat. Gidget’s embrace of surfing as an outsider’s cultural practice enables not only her moral superiority but also Kahuna’s and Moondoggie’s decision to follow her lead. In this way, the film endorses a politics of inclusionary liberalism, marked by the belief that the path toward a utopian and harmonious democracy is paved by the conscious political choices made by individual Americans to embrace outsiders as equals. Although the film seems to promote an inclusionary politics based in reciprocity — Gidget and Moondoggie have learned just as important a lesson from Kahuna as he has from them — the film’s model for relationships between respectable U.S. Americans and outsiders maintains a fundamental paternalism. The Americans possess a unique moral superiority to which the outsiders must be encouraged to aspire. Surfing, as Kohner’s novel also asserts, is understood to be merely a vehicle for facilitating liberal-inclusionary relationships and is, therefore is imagined to be able to take on an air of respectability when performed by a civilized practitioner. *Gidget*, in using the surf bum as a representational replacement for the

Native Hawaiian, and, moreover, by advocating for the severing of surfing from the surf bum lifestyle, envisions the detachment of the practice from its distorted Indigenous context as a prerequisite for its embrace by U.S. Americans. The film's inclusionary liberalism serves to obscure its reliance on the imperial logics of temporality and Native social pathology.

Surfing After Gidget

Although *Gidget's* detachment of surfing from an imagined Indigenous pathology seemed successful — it did make surfing accessible to less-rebellious Americans — the earlier surfer subculture that was the object of *Gidget's* critique also transformed. More specifically, surfing's non-conformists doubled down on their embrace of a distorted indigeneity to distinguish themselves from those that had rejected it. Sociologists Nick Ford and David Brown identify this American surfing counterculture of the 1960s as “soul surfing,” a version of surf culture that rejected the professionalization and commercialization of mainstream surfing and instead emphasized “the values of spirituality, aesthetics and the quest for inner peace and authenticity.”¹⁵⁸ However, this description by Ford and Brown begs the question: Whose spirituality and aesthetics were of value, and to what measure of authenticity did they aspire?

Later surf films such as *The Endless Summer* (Bruce Brown, 1966) and *Pacific Vibrations* (John Severson, 1970) capture the ways in which a rejection of mainstream surfing and the status quo did not necessarily immunize soul surfers from their adherence to the same forms of colonial apprehension that I have identified within *Gidget*. In both

¹⁵⁸ Nick Ford and David Brown, *Surfing and Social Theory: Experience, Embodiment and Narrative of the Dream Glide* (London; New York: Routledge, 2006), 30.

of these films, all overt visual representations of Kanaka Maoli are erased, even though both feature scenes shot on location in Hawai‘i. The white, male protagonists make surfing pilgrimages to the islands and idealize the freedoms afforded by the aberrant temporality that they purport to experience on the islands. For Bruce Brown and his cohort, Hawai‘i is the “land of the endless summer,” and for Bill Hamilton (a Californian surfer featured in *Pacific Vibrations*), settling in Hawai‘i has afforded him the opportunity to “stay one step ahead of The Man’s progress.”¹⁵⁹

Soul surfers, including Brown and Hamilton, moved beyond the appropriation of the Indigenous knowledge of he‘e nalu to that of a distorted Hawaiian subjectivity, a putative identification with primitivist apprehensions of Kanaka Maoli that were accompanied, in many cases, with a claimed entitlement to the temporary and permanent occupation of Indigenous land. Mobilized by both mainstream and counter-cultural surfing’s colonial occlusion, Hawai‘i in the 1960s and 1970s saw an incredible influx of both groups of American surfers, and the colonial state generally benefited from the surfers’ presence regardless of their distinct motivations. The mainstream surfers stayed in resorts and were content to purchase a highly standardized Hawai‘i getaway. This more conventional form of surfing tourism was mirrored in the hit sequel *Gidget Goes Hawaiian* (1961), most of which takes place in and around the haole-owned Royal Hawaiian Hotel in Honolulu.¹⁶⁰ The soul surfers, however, chased what they saw as a more authentic experience by choosing to live on the beach or in communal apartments for several months. This type of surfer-tourist became so common in the 1960s and

¹⁵⁹ Bruce Brown, *The Endless Summer* (Cinema V, 1966); John Severson, *Pacific Vibrations* (American International Pictures, 1970).

¹⁶⁰ Paul Wendkos, *Gidget Goes Hawaiian* (Columbia Pictures, 1961).

1970s, especially during the summer months, that specialized events and visitors' guides emerged to cater to them directly.

Among these guides was a free periodical titled *Sunbums*, produced by a group of young, mostly haole residents of Honolulu. *Sunbums* was funded through the selling of advertising space to local businesses as well as large corporations, including United Airlines, who were looking to appeal to a young audience. The front cover of the first issue from 1969 featured a large psychedelic print of a surfer's silhouette and a subheading that read "your guide to summer fun/[H]awaii" which made clear at first glance that the soul surfer crowd was the intended audience. On the first pages of each issue, the editors specified that "Sunbums is distributed free on the 1st and 15th of each month as a service to the visitors and residents of the 50th state." The placement of "visitors" before "residents" appears intentional. Every issue from the summer of 1969 contained an introduction to the publication titled "...whats going here? [sic]" in which the editors stated their mission:

Based on the theory that if you're alive and breathing, then you want to do things, real things. In Hawaii there are things to do and see, besides ride a tour bus and memorize the inside of your hotel room. We're going to show you that Hawaii is a paradise, just like the travel agencies say, but we're talking about a young, active, exciting, inexpensive, fun, and incredibly romantic paradise... Sunbums is a publication devoted, really devoted, to disclosing the true merits of Hawaii: Places that aren't on the maps; beer parlors and restaurants with the best prices, food, and atmosphere; things to do in the surf, sun, and sand; anything and everything a generation of sunbums needs to know to groove on Hawaii. We want you to have fun, fall in love, make friends, and get a good tan. But most of all, when you finally board the plane that leaves Hawaii, we want you to be full of Hawaii and glad you came.¹⁶¹ (original emphasis)

¹⁶¹ "Whats Going Here," *Sunbums* 1, no. 1 (Honolulu, Hawai'i: Sunbums Enterprises, May 1969): 4, University of Hawai'i Mānoa, Hawaiian/Pacific Library.

Sunbums served as an instructional tourists' guide that capitalized on the desires of visitors who wanted to distinguish themselves from the crowd while still adhering to forms of colonial apprehension that occluded indigeneity and contributed to the tourism industry.

A large part of that apprehension for younger visitors appeared to be the achievement of a temporary "local" experience, a construction bolstered by *Sunbums* editors who asserted their own local-ness and their willingness to share insider knowledge with those visitors who were committed to playing the part. The 1960s and 1970s in Hawai'i saw increased attention to the idea of "local culture" as a term to describe those who saw themselves as neither haole nor Kanaka Maoli. In 1979 Eric Yamamoto, then a student at the University of Hawai'i, Mānoa, published one of the earliest studies of the local identity formation in an article titled "The Significance of Local." Yamamoto observed that the use of the term had shifted in the mid-1960s from "[nothing] more than a label for distinguishing island people from mainlanders" to one that described a "culture and identification."¹⁶² Through ethnographic study, Yamamoto determined that "local" in its emergent post-statehood usage referred to "a composite of ethnic cultures, emerging in reaction to domination by Western institutions and culture, composed of people of Hawaii with community value-orientations."¹⁶³ However, as Yamamoto further suggested, the flattening of difference into localism did not "delve into the political implications of cultural interaction: which culture dominates; which culture

¹⁶² Eric Yamamoto, "The Significance of Local," *Social Process in Hawaii* 27 (1979): 102.

¹⁶³ Yamamoto, 105.

changes the most; how much is sharing, how much is imposition; what kinds of interethnic and intraethnic attitudes are developed from these interactions.”¹⁶⁴

In a 1980 article, anthropologist Jonathan Y. Okamura expanded upon Yamamoto’s work by arguing that this emergent statehood-era localism had an impact, more specifically, on the ways white residents of Hawai‘i articulated their positionality as “local haole” or kama‘āina (native born). These white residents refuted the narrower and longer-standing use of “local” as a stand in for “non-white” and asserted their localness “by virtue of birth and upbringing in Hawaii, personal orientation, or long residence.”¹⁶⁵ It is this iteration of localism that appears most prominently throughout *Sunbums*. The editors and writers consistently emphasized and encouraged young visitors to buy from local establishments and to act in a certain way. However, these suggestions were not pitched as ethical or political commitments, but rather as choices that would yield a positive return. Buying from small businesses and avoiding resorts was touted as a way to save money. Conducting oneself in a certain way granted special access to a more authentic experience of local culture: “Look around, get out of Waikiki, talk to people...local people are friendly to people who talk straight. An honest interest will give you a good hour of rappin’ time...don’t be afraid to ask questions...and above all, even though you’re paying your way, remember you are guests in another’s home, and act accordingly...be polite, it will be returned two-fold.”¹⁶⁶ Notably, writers rarely if ever mentioned the presence of Native Hawaiians except in the past tense, when narrating

¹⁶⁴ Yamamoto, 103.

¹⁶⁵ Jonathan Y. Okamura, “Aloha Kanaka Ke Aloha ‘Aina: Local Culture and Society in Hawaii,” *Amerasia Journal* 7, no. 2 (1980): 128.

¹⁶⁶ Jan Maddox, “of shoes and ships & sealing wax...” *Sunbums* 1, no. 1 (Honolulu, Hawai‘i: Sunbums Enterprises, May 1969): 3, University of Hawai‘i Mānoa, Hawaiian/Pacific Library.

ancient Hawaiian “legends,” for example. They chose, instead, to occlude Indigenous people and knowledge within the homogenizing “local culture” category.

Okamura further asserted in his 1980 article that many of the interpersonal commitments and values assigned to “local culture” in Hawai‘i, including even-temperedness, hospitality, humility, generosity, and loyalty were primarily drawn from long-standing Kanaka Maoli social principles, such as *aloha kanaka* (Okamura’s translation is “love for the people”), or from colonial “positive stereotypic perceptions of Hawaiians.”¹⁶⁷ These occlusionary apprehensions of Indigenous Hawaiians are implicitly asserted throughout *Sunbums*, instantiated in a recurring section titled “Local Folk,” which often featured stories about Kanaka Maoli as well as newly arrived haole residents who were equally praised for their love of Hawai‘i and their dedication to local culture. In a Local Folk article on Kanaka Maoli musician Dick Jensen, for example, the writers do not mention that he is Kanaka Maoli and refer to him, instead, as simply “Dick Jensen, local boy.”¹⁶⁸ This tendency to occlude indigeneity behind liberal inclusionary localism extended to representations of surfing and surfers in *Sunbums*. Nearly every article on surfing in the newspaper featured haole surfers and surf shop owners who were sometimes referred to as “island boys.” “Hawaii’s own,” or were otherwise assumed to be local.¹⁶⁹ Discussions of surfing’s connection to Native Hawaiians were few and far

¹⁶⁷ Okamura, “Aloha Kanaka Ke Aloha ‘Aina: Local Culture and Society in Hawaii,” 122, 128. Okamura, 122, 128.

¹⁶⁸ Pam Bradley “Local Folk: Has Success Spoiled Dick Jensen” *Sunbums* 1, no. 2 (Honolulu, Hawai‘i: Sunbums Enterprises, June 1969): 13, University of Hawai‘i Mānoa, Hawaiian/Pacific Library.

¹⁶⁹ Ryan Dotson, “Surfing Seen” *Sunbums* 1, no. 1 (Honolulu, Hawai‘i: Sunbums Enterprises, May 1969): 10, University of Hawai‘i Mānoa, Hawaiian/Pacific Library; “Summertime with Fred Hemmings” *Sunbums* 1, no. 3 (Honolulu, Hawai‘i: Sunbums Enterprises, June 1969): 14, University of Hawai‘i Mānoa, Hawaiian/Pacific Library.

between, and when Kanaka Maoli were mentioned, they were only noted as being as responsible for the “early stages in development of the sport.”¹⁷⁰

This chapter identifies occlusion as a mode of colonial apprehension that operated within both mainstream and countercultural iterations of postwar American surfing. Although a proposal for a more ethical non-native surfing practice is outside the scope of this dissertation, it is clear that any such avenue will require practitioners to refuse the occlusion of Kanaka Maoli indigeneity that is historically entangled with surf culture. Without critical appraisal of surf-culture’s genealogy of colonial apprehension, non-native surfers will continue (inadvertently or not) to reinforce harmful settler colonial logics that are occluded by those liberal-inclusionary notions that facilitated Hawai‘i’s public acceptance as the 50th state.

In Chapter Two, I revisit similar colonial conceptions of authenticity to those raised in my discussion of surfing’s counterculture to consider a concurrently emergent cultural formation. Tiki culture, like soul surfing, authenticated an imagined Hawaiian-ness. In contrast, however, tiki culture’s mode of colonial apprehension, which I argue staged an imagined “atmosphere” of Hawai‘i within white and tourist spaces, was wholly compliant with the status quo of the postwar period.

¹⁷⁰ John Campbell, “Body Surfing” *Sunbums* 1, no. 3 (Honolulu, Hawai‘i: Sunbums Enterprises, June, 1969): 12, University of Hawai‘i Mānoa, Hawaiian/Pacific Library.

CHAPTER 2

APPREHENSIVE STAGING: TIKI CULTURE AND THE FANTASY OF WHITE INCLUSION

On January 25, 1989, the *New York Times* reported that the Trader Vic's restaurant at Manhattan's Plaza Hotel would be shutting its doors for good under new management. The hotel's new owner, real-estate executive Donald J. Trump, justified his decision by announcing that the restaurant had "gotten tacky," and that he would be replacing the Trader Vic's with a health club in order to transform the Plaza into a five-star establishment and attract a new generation of elite clientele. The Plaza location had opened in 1965, at a time when Trader Vic's and other so-called "Polynesian" themed restaurants were considered the height of chic and consistently attracted the era's highest-powered customers. Richard M. Nixon had named Trader Vic's among his favorite places to dine in New York and was quoted in the 1989 *New York Times* article as being "very sorry to see it close."¹⁷¹

The shuttering of Trader Vic's at the Plaza appeared to mark the end of an era emblemized by a cultural formation to which I refer throughout this chapter as "tiki culture." This ubiquitous cultural formation of aesthetic design and entertainment was most directly inspired by Hawai'i but drew upon a staggering variety of cultural referents from the Pacific and Asia to the Caribbean. Tiki culture emerged as early as the 1930s and rose to high-culture dominance by the 1950s as American interest in Hawai'i statehood skyrocketed. Over time, the association between tiki culture and the postwar years has become so familiar that any given 1950s or '60s period piece of film or television can be expected to include affluent white Americans drinking elaborate rum

¹⁷¹"Trump to Close a 'Tacky' Trader Vic's," *The New York Times*, January 25, 1989.

cocktails, wearing leis and aloha shirts, or visiting a Hawai‘i resort or luau party.¹⁷² By the 1980s, however, what had once been a symbol of luxury suddenly represented a dated nouveau riche gaudiness at best and low-class kitsch at worst. For Trump, who desperately sought acceptance into the New York aristocracy but lacked a powerful family lineage, tiki would have been anathema to his intended public image.

Somewhat ironically, the cultural moment that Trump had intentionally aided in bringing to a close has seen a resurgence during his rise to political power. The tiki bar, for example, has become a significant subject of commentary in the wake of what appears to be its twenty-first-century revival. During Trump’s presidency new tiki bars popped up across the country, including The Polynesian in Times Square, which had a grand opening in 2018 that drew a long queue of eager customers in aloha shirts.¹⁷³ Both Trumpism and the tiki-cultural revival seem to indicate a rising popular interest in postwar nostalgia within our current moment. After taking office in 2016, Trump specifically identified the 1950s (the decade of his early childhood) as the last time in which he believed America was “great.”¹⁷⁴ As evidenced by the widespread nature of tiki culture’s popularity in the twenty-first century, this desire to romanticize and resuscitate

¹⁷² Throughout this discussion, I use “luau” rather than “lū‘au” when I am referring to the American appropriation of an Indigenous knowledge. I use “lū‘au” only when I am referring to the Kanaka Maoli practice, even though the terms ‘aha‘āina (literally, eating gathering) or pā‘ina (a family or community party) are also used to refer to these events in Hawai‘i. (Adria Imada, “The Army Learns to Luau: Imperial Hospitality and Military Photography in Hawai‘i,” *The Contemporary Pacific* 20, no. 2 (2008): 330, <https://doi.org/10.1353/cp.0.0001>.)

¹⁷³ Kara Newman, “A New Golden Age for the Tiki Bar,” *The Atlantic*, June 5, 2018, <https://www.theatlantic.com/business/archive/2018/06/a-new-golden-age-for-the-tiki-bar/562025/>.

¹⁷⁴ Gregory Krieg, “Donald Trump Reveals When He Thinks America Was Great,” *CNN*, March 28, 2016, <https://www.cnn.com/2016/03/26/politics/donald-trump-when-america-was-great/index.html>.; This conception of the postwar period has been examined in depth by historians of the postwar and Cold War United States. See Elaine Tyler May, *Homeward Bound: American Families in the Cold War Era*, Fully rev. and updated 20th anniversary ed (New York, NY: Basic Books, 2008); Lynn Spigel, *Welcome to the Dreamhouse: Popular Media and Postwar Suburbs* (Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 2001).

postwar life appears to be characteristic of but not unique to Trump's followers. However, as with all nostalgic cultural movements, certain facets of the postwar past have been intentionally deemphasized in its reimagining. In the case of tiki culture, the formation's categorization as postwar "Americana" seems to deny its fundamental attachments — albeit in the form of fantastical misrepresentation — to Oceania and Indigenous Pasifika knowledges. Within tiki-cultural restaurants, for example, Kanaka Maoli foodways such as pūpū and kālua pork are often rebranded as postwar American cuisine. Tiki culture's American-ness has also been used as a defense by its practitioners, who insist that the formation's inauthenticity minimizes its potential for harm to the people of Oceania. In the words of one tiki bar owner responding to the question of cultural appropriation: "[tiki is] three steps removed from anything actually Polynesian...it's more about re-creating a piece of Americana, of that 1950s, 1960s style."¹⁷⁵

It is true that tiki culture fails to accurately represent Oceania, but this should not lead to false assumptions that the formation has not had any material consequences for Oceania's Indigenous people. A full understanding of tiki culture's sociopolitical significance, therefore, is not possible without a critical evaluation of its articulations with indigeneity and U.S. American settler colonialism. By turning to tiki culture as a site of colonial apprehension, my analysis moves beyond questions of representational authenticity in order to ask how the formation contributed to the production and authentication of settler colonial knowledge.

¹⁷⁵ Maanvi Singh, "Let's Talk Tiki Bars: Harmless Fun Or Exploitation?," *National Public Radio*, September 7, 2016, <https://www.npr.org/sections/thesalt/2016/09/07/492974870/lets-talk-tiki-bars-harmless-fun-or-exploitation>.

This chapter identifies one specific form of apprehension as well as a strategy by which that form was (re)produced and (re)iterated by tiki culture. First, I address ways in which tiki culture fortified what I term the fantasy of white inclusion, which apprehended Hawai‘i as a place wherein the presence of white Americans would be unconditionally celebrated by a multiracial population. Over time, I argue that this colonial knowledge has allowed Americans to imagine Hawai‘i as the 50th state just as easily as tiki culture’s purposeful misrepresentation of Hawai‘i could be recategorized as Americana. My critical evaluation of tiki culture’s historical genealogy illustrates that both seemingly commonsense certainties have facilitated the continued denial of Kanaka Maoli sovereignty and U.S. settler colonialism in Hawai‘i.

This chapter begins with a brief explanation of my use of the term “tiki culture.” Next, I examine what has widely been understood by tiki culture’s fans and commentators as the formation’s singular originating moment: the opening of the restaurant Don the Beachcomber in Hollywood by Don Ernest Beaumont Gantt in the early 1930s.¹⁷⁶ By the late twentieth century, establishments that utilized a similar Polynesia-inspired decorative and entertainment style had become recognizable as “tiki bars,” a reference to these establishments’ eventual and common usage of “tiki idol” objects and imagery. Sven Kirsten, an independent scholar, filmmaker, and tiki culture enthusiast, has asserted that Don the Beachcomber became the “blueprint for all future

¹⁷⁶ There remains some dispute among tiki culture’s historical narrators about the exact date in which Gantt built and opened his original location on North McCadden Place, Hollywood. Most use either 1933 or 1934. For at least the first few years after opening, Gantt’s restaurant was called the “Beachcomber Cafe.” He quickly changed the name to “Don the Beachcomber” after his personal moniker, but it is unclear when the name was officially changed. Throughout this chapter, I have chosen to consistently refer to the establishment as Don the Beachcomber. Similarly, I have chosen to use the name “Don Gantt” throughout the chapter rather than “Donn Beach,” which was his chosen name later in his life. This choice is an effort to maintain consistency and to avoid confusion between Gantt as an historical actor and “Don the Beachcomber,” which was both the name of the bar as well as Gantt’s “character” or persona.

Polynesian bars.”¹⁷⁷ Although many commentators, including Kirsten, agree that tiki culture drew upon residual cultural forms that engaged Pacific Island settings and imagery such as Hollywood films, novels, and modern art, the emergence of the “tiki bar” has generally been assigned special narrative meaning as tiki culture’s seedbed.

By looking closely and critically at this retroactively identified moment of origin, I argue one can better understand how tiki culture coalesced around certain ideas and strategies of knowledge production. Specifically, I contend in this section that Gantt’s “early” tiki culture was emblematic of a persistent strategy of apprehension that I am calling *atmospheric staging*. My aim is not to make claims about whether the opening of Don the Beachcomber was tiki culture’s site of genesis. Rather, I seek to reframe this historical moment as one in which a commodifiable and reproducible experiential form emerged.

My analysis of Don the Beachcomber situates Gantt’s early tiki-cultural production in its historical moment. I argue that Gantt intentionally and carefully designed an experience for his patrons that appealed to historically specific desires among white, middle-class consumers for barely dangerous interracial encounters, cross-cultural experiences, and semi-educational entertainment. I further contend that Gantt’s success with his audience was largely the result of selective cultural representation that foregrounded certain racialized peoples and places over others, especially Hawai‘i, Kanaka Maoli, and Hawai‘i’s Asian residents. My analysis contests the popular dismissive notion that tiki-cultural production has always been defined by purposefully inauthentic cultural representation. Instead, I propose that Gantt’s business model was

¹⁷⁷ Sven A. Kirsten, *Tiki Pop: America Imagines Its Own Polynesian Paradise* (Köln: Taschen, 2014), 139.

premised upon purposefully *authenticating* a fantasy of white inclusion, which apprehended Hawai‘i as a multicultural utopia in which the presence of white visitors would be unconditionally celebrated. Gantt was further committed, I argue, to representing what *he saw* as an authentic representation of a disappearing Kanaka Maoli culture.

I conclude my discussion of Don the Beachcomber by contending that Gantt established a persistent mode or strategy of apprehension that relied on the staging of sociospatial *atmospheres*. These atmospheric stagings offered an idealized and immersive simulation of Hawai‘i for white, middle-to-upper-class U.S. Americans that contributed to an apprehension of the islands as a place wherein white Americans could see themselves as welcomed and included community members rather than outsiders. Through an iterative process over several decades and across countless commercial and domestic spaces in the United States and Hawai‘i, these tiki-cultural atmospheric stagings contributed to the calcification of this statehood-era apprehension. By turning to the metaphor of the stage, I argue that tiki culture made use of material and visual design and technologies of environmental and relational simulation in order to construct spaces wherein an aspirational drama of postwar U.S.-Hawai‘i encounter could be endlessly (re)performed. The resulting tiki spaces served as the literal staging grounds for negotiating and authenticating the ideal white American experience in statehood-era Hawai‘i.

The second analytic section of this chapter considers the post-World War II period, during which the foundation for atmospheric staging as apprehension in early tiki culture expanded beyond specific commercial franchises. Postwar tiki culture came to be

recognizable as a distinct cultural formation signified by such images as tiki idol sculptures, hula girls, aloha shirts, and elaborate rum cocktails. It was also during this time period that tiki culture's atmospheric stagings were "modernized," reproduced in domestic spaces, and exported to Hawai'i via the tourism industry. My analysis of tiki-cultural apartment complexes, home décor, and backyard luaus focuses on the ways in which the tiki atmosphere, popularized within bars like Don the Beachcomber and Trader Vic's, were transformed into an imagined and idealized "Hawaiian" lifestyle rather than a temporary respite from American middle-class modernity. Lastly, I examine the ways in which the Hawai'i tourism industry adopted and exported tiki culture to Hawai'i, with a particular focus on the haole-owned and O'ahu-based Dole Pineapple Company.

Ultimately, I contend that tiki culture functioned as colonial apprehension by authenticating a fantasy of white inclusion in Hawai'i. Tiki's practitioners transformed and assembled both Indigenous and non-native material and cultural knowledge to produce spaces situated between reality and fantasy. These spaces further modeled a settler colonial vision for how the "real" Hawai'i should feel, look, sound, smell, and taste. I conclude this chapter with a discussion of how tiki culture has historically been (and continues to be) a valuable technology of settler colonial governance in Hawai'i. More specifically, I propose that tiki culture apprehended Hawai'i as a place that celebrated the presence white Americans by staging this fantasy of white inclusion within commercial and domestic spaces across the United States. As the tourism industry in Hawai'i moved to meet white Americans' tiki-cultural expectations, Kanaka Maoli and other residents of Hawai'i consistently subverted them, exposing the ambivalence of the settler colonial project, and undermining its logics.

Understanding tiki culture as a site of colonial knowledge production wherein Hawai‘i and Kanaka Maoli were apprehended (categorized, defined, and contained) sheds much-needed light on the material consequences of embodied and commodified fantasy-making. I turn to the metaphor of the stage in order to propose that tiki culture has designed a fantastic yet achievable vision for white Americans’ inclusion into post-statehood Hawai‘i.¹⁷⁸ The close examination of tiki culture’s genealogy presented in this chapter offers valuable insight into how the atmospheric staging of settler colonial fantasies of white inclusion has had violent material consequences for Kanaka Maoli.

Tiki Culture and Staging

Although the word “tiki” appears in several Indigenous languages across Oceania, the Western use of the term has roots in the language and culture of the Māori of Aotearoa (New Zealand). In Māori cosmology, Tiki is the name of “the first man created on earth, sometimes the creator of man,” but is also used as a common noun signifying a “carved figure” or “image.”¹⁷⁹ Tiki is not necessarily a type of art object, but rather the symbol of the human figure — sometimes a specific person or deity — that can be represented in a number of different forms. The earliest written use of the term by Europeans was in the journal of Captain James Cook in 1777: “They [sc. the Maoris] had brought many Articles of Trade such as Ahoos, green Images called Tigis, Stone Adzes

¹⁷⁸ The iterative reproducibility of tiki-cultural staging enabled these spaces to shape what Sara Ahmed has described as a “point of orientation” for white Americans seeking to establish their relationship to Hawai‘i. See Sara Ahmed, “A Phenomenology of Whiteness,” *Feminist Theory* 8, no. 2 (August 2007): 149–68, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1464700107078139>.

¹⁷⁹ Edward Tregear, “Tiki,” in *Maori-Polynesian Comparative Dictionary* (Wellington: Lyon and Blair, 1891); Bruce Biggs, “Tiki,” in *English-Maori, Maori-English Dictionary* (Auckland: Auckland University Press, 2012).

&c.”¹⁸⁰ Cook refers to Tigis (tiki) as a specific kind of carved object made of pounamu (greenstone) and worn around the neck. In the Māori language, however, neck ornaments are more generally referred to as “hei,” and those that depict a human are “hei[-]tiki.”¹⁸¹ Wood carvings can also depict tiki, such as those adorning “a post marking a portion of ground made *tapu* [sacred, under restriction]” or “the carved figure on the gable-end of a house.”¹⁸² Māori and Kanaka Maoli share sociocultural similarities as well as a significant language cognate relationship.¹⁸³ As such, Hawaiians also practice figure carving, but the resulting objects are called “ki‘i” rather than “tiki.”¹⁸⁴ I revisit and discuss contemporary Hawaiian kālai ki‘i (ki‘i carving) in the conclusion of this dissertation.

The word tiki was very rarely encountered by Westerners, outside of anthropological observations of Oceania and by museum collectors, until the early twentieth century.¹⁸⁵ During the 1940s and 1950s, the term came to be commonly and inaccurately used to describe any vaguely “primitive” or “Polynesian” carved sculpture representing the human form. The reduction of the tiki image to representations of the human head, rather than any representation of the human form, appears to have resulted from the popular conflation of Māori tiki with the mo‘ai of Rapa Nui (Easter Island).¹⁸⁶ It

¹⁸⁰ “Tiki, n.,” in *OED Online* (Oxford University Press, n.d.), accessed July 3, 2021.

¹⁸¹ Hare Hongi, “On the Greenstone ‘Tiki’: What the Emblem Signifies,” *The Journal of Polynesian Society* 27 (1918); Tregear, “Tiki”; Biggs, “Tiki.”

¹⁸² Tregear, “Tiki.”

¹⁸³ Albert J. Schutz, *The Voices of Eden: A History of Hawaiian Language Studies* (Honolulu: University of Hawai‘i Press, 1994), 331–35.

¹⁸⁴ Tregear, “Tiki”; Catharine Lo Griffin, “Hewing to Tradition,” *Hana Hou*, December 2018, <https://hanahou.com/21.6/hewing-to-tradition>.

¹⁸⁵ For more on Americans’ earliest encounters with Maori art and cultural objects, see Jennifer Wagelie “Maori Art in America: The Display and Collection History of Maori Art in the United States, 1802-2006”

¹⁸⁶ Sven A. Kirsten, *The Book of Tiki: The Cult of Polynesian Pop in Fifties America* (Köln: Taschen, 2003), 40.

was not until after the 1950s that “tiki” came to be used as a general modifier or descriptor “[o]f, pertaining to, or in the style of the tropical islands of the South Pacific.”¹⁸⁷ The terms “tiki bar,” “tiki style,” or “tiki culture” were not commonly used until the late twentieth century in order to retroactively identify and define objects, an aesthetic, and a formation that had fallen, by that point, into the realm of kitsch.¹⁸⁸

By drawing attention to what I am referring to as “tiki culture,” my interest is in a critical evaluation of both the emergence of a set of objects and sites of production in time and space as well as the ways those objects and sites have been assigned meaning *ex post facto*. I intentionally use “tiki culture” rather than the capitalized “Tiki culture,” because “Tiki” in the written Māori language is typically only capitalized when referring to a personal name, especially that of the sacred figure.¹⁸⁹

I have also intentionally decided to use this term over other common descriptors. Commentators have sometimes chosen to limit their use of the “tiki” descriptor to those objects and sites that explicitly foreground the so-called “tiki idol” image. When referring to the broader formation of Pacific-inspired popular culture (e.g., surf culture and musical genres like “Exotica”) writers have often chosen to use terms such as “Polynesian Pop” instead of tiki culture.¹⁹⁰ Terms like “Polynesian Pop” also serve to emphasize what is seen as the fundamental difference between the American cultural formation and the cultural traditions of actual “Polynesian” people. In his book *Tiki Road Trip*, for example,

¹⁸⁷ Kirsten, 40.

¹⁸⁸ See Kirsten, *The Book of Tiki*; “Tiki, n.”

¹⁸⁹ John C. Moorfield, ed., “Tiki,” in *Te Aka Online Māori Dictionary*, accessed March 20, 2020, <https://maoridictionary.co.nz/search?idiom=&phrase=&proverb=&loan=&histLoanWords=&keywords=tiki>.

¹⁹⁰ See Kirsten, *The Book of Tiki*; James Teitelbaum, *Tiki Road Trip: A Guide to Tiki Culture in North America* (Santa Monica, CA: Santa Monica Press, 2007), <http://www.vlebooks.com/vleweb/product/openreader?id=none&isbn=9781595809148>.

James Teitelbaum defines “Polynesian Pop” as “a design aesthetic that symbolizes an idealized way of life.” This statement is made in order to assert that “the Tiki we’re dealing with is something different” from the culture of Kanaka Maoli, Māori, or Rapa Nui, a difference that Teitelbaum deploys as evidence of tiki culture’s harmlessness.¹⁹¹

I avoid using “Polynesian Pop” as a descriptor for a number of reasons. I have already described how painting tiki culture as innocently inauthentic tends to efface the ways in which the formation has strategically coopted and sought to replace Indigenous places and ways of knowing. I am also resistant to it because it makes easy use of a racialized category. Maile Arvin has written in her book *Possessing Polynesians* that Polynesia is not a place as much as a Western scientific project of racial categorization that facilitated the settler colonial (dis)possession of Indigenous land and knowledge.¹⁹² Moreover, although my focus is on the ways in which tiki culture produced colonial knowledge of Hawai‘i and Kanaka Maoli, the broader cultural formation drew upon cultural referents from beyond the region that Westerners have called Polynesia. Ultimately, I chose to use the term “tiki culture” in order to situate my critique within the language of the ongoing public discussions over the “tiki revival” and, more importantly, to draw direct connections between my work at that of Indigenous critics of tiki.

Arvin, for example, briefly focuses on postwar and twenty-first-century tiki culture in *Possessing Polynesians*. Arvin suggests that tiki culture is a tangible manifestation of “Polynesia” as a project of racial categorization because it is so often the dominant image that represents Polynesian culture in the popular imaginary. She further argues that the ubiquitous presence of tiki-cultural objects is “undeniably tied to the

¹⁹¹ Teitelbaum, *Tiki Road Trip*, 10.

¹⁹² See Arvin, *Possessing Polynesians*.

history of colonial images of Hawai‘i as an idyllic vacation destination for white Americans — that is, of Hawai‘i as white possession.”¹⁹³ I fully agree with this assessment and seek to elaborate on Arvin’s observations. I argue in this chapter that tiki culture functions as both a representative image of a settler colonial Hawai‘i and as a key technology of settler colonial knowledge production. In other words, this chapter proposes that tiki culture shaped the settler colonial project in Hawai‘i as much as it was shaped by it.¹⁹⁴

Another notable Indigenous critic of tiki culture is Samoan artist Daniel Taulapapa McMullin, who argues that what they term “tiki kitsch” has replaced Polynesian art and bodies within the Western imaginary, altering “form and meaning into abject commodities,” and producing mythologies that mask Western failure.¹⁹⁵ McMullin further argues that tiki kitsch has faded, but that its mythologies have lingered into the present, requiring that we further examine both Indigenous art and Western appropriative kitsch so that we might better understand its “misperception, change, and meaning.”¹⁹⁶

This chapter both aligns with McMullin’s critique and takes up their call to action. Although I do not object to the term “tiki kitsch” as theorized by McMullin, I have chosen to use the term “tiki culture” for the purposes of this project. This choice is one made in the interest of accurately referring to the objects of my analysis, which are tiki cultural productions that include but are not limited to those that would be considered kitsch. In Clement Greenberg’s “Avant Garde and Kitsch,” (1939) the word kitsch is

¹⁹³ Arvin, 15.

¹⁹⁴ See also Lisa Kahaleole Hall, “‘Hawaiian at Heart’ and Other Fictions,” *The Contemporary Pacific* 17, no. 2 (2005): 404–13.

¹⁹⁵ Daniel McMullin, “Tiki Kitsch, American Appropriation, and the Disappearance of the Pacific Islander Body,” *LUX* 2, no. 1 (2013): 2, <https://doi.org/10.5642/lux.201301.21>.

¹⁹⁶ McMullin, 4–5.

deployed in order to offer a generalized critique of mass and popular culture during the early twentieth century. Greenberg further describes kitsch as industrialized, universalizing, watered-down, and a cheap simulation of “genuine” culture, which is only good for making money.¹⁹⁷ There are, undoubtedly, many objects and sites of tiki culture that fit that description, especially tiki-cultural productions from the late-twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Nevertheless, there are many tiki-cultural sites and objects from the early and mid-twentieth century that would be categorized as part of “high culture,” and which are also examined within this chapter.

Regardless of its function as high culture or kitsch, I argue in this chapter that tiki culture, as a cultural formation, coalesces around the historical and ongoing production of an experiential form, one achieved by the strategic “staging” of an imagined Hawai‘i. There are four meanings of “staging” that are most pertinent to this discussion. First, staging serves an *imaginative* function. This is most obvious in the theatrical context. The staging of a play, by making tangible the setting and scenery within which its actors move and its narrative unfolds, situates both the performers and the audience within the imagined “world” of the drama. Moreover, staging in the imaginative sense can refer to the simulation of potential futurities. When a real-estate agent stages a house with furniture and décor and the smell of baking cookies, prospective buyers are better able to imagine it as a site of their future belonging.

Second, staging is also an act of spatial *containment*. The stage brackets the space of a performance or an operation, as in a play or a battle, within which the staged events will take place. In this sense, staging always requires the construction of an imagined

¹⁹⁷ Clement Greenberg, “Avant-Garde and Kitsch,” *Partisan Review* 6, no. 5 (1939).

boundary between “on stage” and “off stage,” or that which is understood as part of the staged events versus what is not. Third, a stage can be used to describe an act or project of temporal *partitioning*. A stage, in this context, is understood to be one part of a larger whole and a definable moment within a longer period or iterative process: a stage of life, for example, or one stage of a complex military operation. And, finally, staging refers to the installation of physical and architectural *support*, as in the construction of temporary scaffolding on a building or of permanent design features that hold the weight of a larger structure.

The stage metaphor draws attention to how tiki culture has apprehended Hawai‘i by iteratively constructing bounded spatiotemporal “theaters” of operation that scaffolded colonial ways of knowing and facilitated the envisioning of settler colonial futurities. Staging’s familiar association with theater further serves the purpose of emphasizing tiki culture’s reliance on material design, technologies of simulation, and on the enactment of social and relational “roles” — audience and performer, guest and host — to be embodied by practitioners while they occupy the tiki-cultural space. These spaces are also deliberately constructed to generate and authenticate a specific experience for its (white, middle-to-upper-class, American) participants.

Importantly, by referring to tiki culture as a form of staging, I seek to foreground rather than minimize the formation’s productive power. The idea of tiki-cultural theatricality is often uncritically evoked in order to dismiss legitimate critiques about the tiki culture’s attachments to racism and (settler) colonialism. Sven Kirsten has described tiki as “just an idealization,” “make-believe,” and a place to “playfully indulge.”¹⁹⁸

¹⁹⁸ Sven A. Kirsten, “Foreword,” in *Tiki Road Trip: A Guide to Tiki Culture in North America* (Santa Monica, CA: Santa Monica Press, 2003), 8.

Kirsten uses these assertions to argue for the need to rescue tiki culture, which he sees as having “fallen victim to changes in taste and political correctness.”¹⁹⁹ Kirsten’s message is clear: tiki culture is pure fantasy and, therefore, is incapable of causing harm in the “real world.” Although I do not necessarily disagree with the assertion that tiki culture traffics in idealizations, I do take issue with the ways in which that notion is used to deny tiki culture’s consequences for the Indigenous peoples of Oceania. I further refute the idea that fantasy-making can ever be fully contained within a single productive space such that the fantasy ideal never influences the world “off stage.” I understand tiki culture to be a formation that relied on staging to (re)produce an ever-shifting set of fantastic ideals that were deliberately presented as aspirational and realizable in the world.²⁰⁰

Don the Beachcomber

After leaving his hometown of New Orleans to spend many years adventuring in the Pacific, entrepreneur Don Gantt founded the first Don the Beachcomber bar and restaurant on North McCadden Place, Hollywood, in the early 1930s. His design of the Don the Beachcomber experience, which became recognizable as tiki-cultural only after years of iterative reproduction, managed to appeal to a number of prevailing white

¹⁹⁹ Kirsten, 9.

²⁰⁰ This tendency has also been identified in other contexts. Jasbir Puar in *Terrorist Assemblages*, for example, has observed that public commentary following the publication in 2004 of graphic photographs depicting torture at Abu Ghraib prison tended to describe the images and acts of violence as staged or theatrical. These assertions recategorized images of torture as innocent play and, as Puar argues, “[effaced] the power dynamics of occupation, war, and empire, and...neatly trivialized something into next to nothing.” (110) To be clear, I am not attempting to draw an easy comparison between the images of violent humiliation at Abu Ghraib to tiki-cultural production. By drawing attention to Puar’s analysis, I aim to highlight the ways in which my discussion of tiki culture contributes to a broader body of knowledge about the unique power of staged phenomena. I would argue that staging functions as a particularly powerful discursive mode precisely because the perceived harm or sociopolitical consequence of a staged act can be so easily dismissed by classifying it as theatrical. (Jasbir K. Puar, *Terrorist Assemblages: Homonationalism in Queer Times* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2017).)

middle-class American desires for barely-dangerous interracial and cross-cultural experiences.²⁰¹ When Gantt opened his original Hollywood location, Los Angeles was in the midst of a bar boom in reaction to the repeal of Prohibition.²⁰² Gantt's apparent aims were not simply to satisfy a growing demand for lawful liquor consumption, as dozens of other proprietors had done in 1930s Los Angeles, but to reappropriate and capitalize on Prohibition-era popular associations between alcohol and racialized criminality.

In the years leading up to the opening of Don the Beachcomber, debates around alcohol consumption in the United States had been profoundly shaped by contemporary racism, xenophobia, and nativism.²⁰³ The Anti-Saloon League, a powerful early-twentieth-century lobbying group, ran anti-liquor campaigns across the country that purposefully attributed drunken immorality to working class immigrants. Cities with ethnically diverse populations were often the target of "dry crusades," and Los Angeles was no exception.²⁰⁴ In 1910, anti-liquor advocates successfully pushed the Los Angeles City Council to enact the Gandier Act, an ordinance that limited the presence of saloons

²⁰¹ I extend my gratitude to Katherine Cartwright for engaging in valuable discussion with me about dominant U.S. American conceptions of empire, race, and citizenship during the interwar years.

²⁰² Shawn Schwaller, "Under a Plastic Palm: Pacific Island Myths and Realities in Twentieth Century Metropolitan Los Angeles" (Dissertation, Claremont University, 2015), 142.

²⁰³ Scholarship on race formation and racialization in the 1920s and 1930s has typically characterized this period as one in which race was more dominantly conceived of in terms of skin color. The anti-colonial movement that emerged out of World War I also led to the reassertion by "white" nations of a racial hierarchy. In the United States, this manifested in the resurgence of the Klu Klux Klan, a rise in race riots, and the 1917 and 1924 immigration acts that specifically limited migration from Asia. For more general discussion of dominant early-twentieth-century conceptions race as they articulated with contemporary U.S. American imperial and colonial projects see Matthew Pratt Guterl, *The Color of Race in America, 1900-1940* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001); Emily S. Rosenberg, "World War I, Wilsonianism, and Challenges to U.S. Empire," *Diplomatic History* 38, no. 4 (September 1, 2014): 852–63, <https://doi.org/10.1093/dh/dhu034>; Christopher Capozzola, "Legacies for Citizenship: Pinpointing Americans during and after World War I," in *Beyond 1917: The United States and the Global Legacies of the Great War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017); Ericka Lee, *The Making of Asian America: A History* (New York: Simon & Shuster Paperbacks, 2015); Paul A. Kramer, *The Blood of Government: Race, Empire, the United States, and the Philippines* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2006), *The Blood of Government*.

²⁰⁴ Michael A. Lerner, *Dry Manhattan: Prohibition in New York City* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2007).

to just three districts, the largest of which was the predominantly Mexican neighborhood of Sonoratown. Proponents of the Gandier Act had relied upon racist notions that Mexican community saloons were the breeding grounds of drunken immorality and stoked fears that the opening of saloons in white residential and business areas would spread this plague. The following decade-long spatial containment of alcohol consumption in Los Angeles within predominantly Mexican districts served to strengthen race-based over-policing as well as public perceptions that crime and intoxication was endemic to Mexican communities. After federal Prohibition went into effect in 1920, Mexicans in Los Angeles were more likely to be arrested on alcohol-related charges than for any other reason.²⁰⁵

Gantt began to sell alcohol at Don the Beachcomber in Hollywood within a year after the official end of federal Prohibition in 1933 and in the wake of this long and racist campaign. Many other white proprietors of post-Prohibition bars chose to distance their businesses from prevailing associations between drinking and racialized criminality through the exclusion and by emphasizing white respectability. Gantt, however, purposefully situated himself and his establishment in the liminal space between total respectability and outright lawlessness.

In the first years of Gantt's business, he struggled with (or, perhaps, avoided) propriety. Gantt received some unsavory publicity when he was arrested in 1934 for selling liquor by the glass, which violated the California State Liquor Control Act. In the report, Don the Beachcomber was playfully described as a "'Pee-wee' Resort" with an

²⁰⁵ Nick Bravo, "Spinning the Bottle: Ethnic Mexicans and Alcohol in Prohibition Era Greater Los Angeles" (Dissertation, University of California, Irvine, 2011), 65–66.

“artificial beach setting in a tiny establishment.”²⁰⁶ Relative to the size of the venue, Gantt appeared to have been successful, even in his first year of business and at the height of the economic depression. At the time of the raid, there had been thirty-four patrons (including the plainclothes police officer) packed into a room “only 22 feet long [with a] 20-foot bar.”²⁰⁷

Evidence of his early popularity during a time of financial hardship for many Americans further indicates that the Don the Beachcomber experience satisfied certain prevailing public desires. Early-twentieth-century Americans had a documented interest in consuming foreign goods, cultures, and experiences. It is likely, therefore, that Gantt’s success had much to do with how he provided access to the imagined space that historian Kristen Hoganson has termed the “consumers’ imperium,” through which white middle-class and wealthy Americans sought out foreign goods and experiences “as an act of imperial buy-in.”²⁰⁸

Gantt’s contribution to the consumers’ imperium is further evidenced by another instance of unfavorable media attention for Don the Beachcomber. In 1938 the *Daily News* reported an incident of violent assault in which two patrons had beaten Gantt and his wife with a “Filipino war club” that was, presumably, among the many artifacts and objects he was known to have displayed at the restaurant.²⁰⁹ The object’s classification as “Filipino” further confirms that Gantt was attentive to contemporary racial politics and public interest in U.S. imperial and colonial territories.

²⁰⁶ “Managers and Waiters Face Liquor Counts,” *Los Angeles Evening Citizen News*, September 1, 1934, 9.

²⁰⁷ “Managers and Waiters Face Liquor Counts.”

²⁰⁸ Hoganson, *Consumers’ Imperium*, 11.

²⁰⁹ “\$104,000 Asked for Alleged Beating,” *Daily News*, February 23, 1938.

After decades of debate and negotiation, the Philippine Commonwealth and Independence Act had been enacted in 1934, initiating a decade-long transition period during which the Philippines was gradually transformed from an American colony into an independent nation. Concurrent to this highly publicized and propagandized historical moment was a steady rise in Filipino migration to the United States and Hawai‘i. After the exclusion of many Asian migrant groups in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, demand for foreign agricultural labor in Hawai‘i and the west coast of the United States skyrocketed. Unlike Japanese, Chinese, and other ethnic groups from Asia, U.S. immigration law had deemed Filipinos culturally assimilable and, therefore, worthy of conditional inclusion. By the early 1930s, Hawai‘i had tens of thousands of Filipino residents. Filipino migrants to west coast cities, including Los Angeles, had also established robust diasporic communities.²¹⁰ These early-twentieth-century developments were met with racist and nativist violence against Filipino migrants but also with a particular orientalist fascination with the Philippines among Americans.²¹¹ Gantt’s display of the “war club” at this time of public interest in the Philippines is illustrative of the intentionality with which he staged cross-cultural and interracial encounters for patrons to *Don the Beachcomber*.

Notably, Gantt seemed to purposefully represent the cultures of racialized peoples who could be perceived as safe and interesting by his white patrons while deliberately avoiding overt representations of those who were consistently criminalized. Gantt’s

²¹⁰ Kramer, *The Blood of Government: Race, Empire, the United States, and the Philippines*, 397–98.

²¹¹ For analysis of anti-Filipino racism and nativism see Kramer, 402–18. For orientalist fascinations and desires to consume Filipino goods see Hoganson, *Consumers’ Imperium*, 95–97; David Brody, *Visualizing American Empire: Orientalism and Imperialism in the Philippines* (Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press, 2010). See also Vernadette Vicuña Gonzalez, *Securing Paradise: Tourism and Militarism in Hawai‘i and the Philippines* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2013).

choice of rum as the Beachcomber Cafe's signature liquor, for example, was demonstrative of his interest in evoking a barely dangerous interracial encounter for his patrons. During federal Prohibition, rum produced and smuggled by ship into the United States from the Caribbean was a valuable commodity. Rum was increasingly a beverage consumed during luxurious and exotic vacations, as American tourists flocked to places like Havana, where rum was a central part of the tourist's experience.²¹² As a result, rum had garnered associations with daring foreign adventure and hedonism, which closely aligned with Gantt's intention for Don the Beachcomber.

Importantly, Gantt's focus on foreign and exotic cultural representation seemed to purposefully foreground the Pacific Islands and east Asia rather than the Caribbean, references to which were occluded and rebranded to fit a "Polynesian" or "neo-Oriental" theme.²¹³ In contrast, signifiers of Mexico were noticeably absent, despite (or, more likely, precisely because of) the prominence of Mexican culture and access to imported commodities from Mexico within Los Angeles. Mexican tequila, for example, would likely have been far cheaper and easier for Gantt to access than Caribbean rum, but tequila had gained a poor reputation as a symbol of Mexican drunkenness and social deviance in Prohibition-era southern California.²¹⁴ It is apparent that Gantt was interested in selling his patrons a form of sumptuous exoticism and barely racialized difference emblemized, specifically, by the safely distant and near-whiteness of Polynesia.

²¹² Lisa Lindquist Dorr, *A Thousand Thirsty Beaches: Smuggling Alcohol from Cuba to the South during Prohibition* (Durham, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2021), 5.

²¹³ George Ross, "New York Spotlights," *The Long Beach Sun*, August 8, 1938.

²¹⁴ Marie Sarita Gaytán, "Drinking Difference: Race, Consumption, and Alcohol Prohibition in Mexico and the United States," *Ethnicities* 14, no. 3 (June 2014): 452, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1468796813484442>.

By the 1930s, when Gantt went into business, the idea that Polynesians were an “almost-white” race had begun to gain wider acceptance in the United States and Europe. Throughout the nineteenth century, white scholars of race had argued that Polynesians — a term invented by Europeans to describe the peoples of the southern and eastern-most region of the Pacific Islands — had much in common with that of the ancient Greeks. Therefore, many imagined that Polynesians and white Europeans likely had shared “Aryan heritage,” but that the former society had “degenerated” over time, while the latter had become even more civilized.²¹⁵ Maile Arvin has argued that European and American settlers used this idea of shared heritage to justify settler colonialism in Polynesia. “Because Polynesians were [imagined to be] degenerated versions of Aryans,” Arvin contends, Europeans and Americans envisioned themselves as being predestined to claim Polynesian land as well as having a duty to “elevate Polynesians into the enlightened civilization they were always meant to become.”²¹⁶

With the emergence of the field of eugenics in the early twentieth century, anthropologists published what they saw as biological evidence to confirm the idea that Polynesians were almost white and, therefore, that they could be improved through strategic intra- and interracial reproduction. As a result of these publications, the idealization of the “[p]art Hawaiian” as “the ‘almost Caucasian’ Polynesian type [with an] assumed ability to assimilate into whiteness” rose to dominance in the public imagination.²¹⁷ It is possible that this familiarity with Polynesian racialization

²¹⁵ Arvin, *Possessing Polynesians*, 46.

²¹⁶ Arvin, 66.

²¹⁷ Arvin, 94. For additional analysis on scientific racism and racially mixed Hawaiians see Kauanui, *Hawaiian Blood*.

significantly contributed to Gantt's success with white consumers at Don the Beachcomber.

It is clear, however, that Gantt was not as much interested in representing Native Polynesian cultures as he was in shaping a specific kind of multicultural experience that he associated with visiting Polynesia. For example, during a time when Asian Americans and migrants faced discrimination and racial violence in the United States, Don the Beachcomber primarily served Chinese-inspired food prepared by Chinese American executive chef Moy Bow Lum, also known as Eddie Lee.²¹⁸ This culinary influence was so overt that the press in Don the Beachcomber's early years sometimes referred to the establishment as a "Chinese restaurant."²¹⁹ Gantt also intentionally hired Asian American bartenders, servers, and kitchen staff. Eventually, Gantt also installed a window into the kitchen so that patrons could watch the cooking process, which further added a sense of safety and intimacy to the interracial encounter.²²⁰

By the early 1940s, the dominant descriptive language for Don the Beachcomber shifted more definitively to "Hawaiian," "Polynesian," or "South Seas," which was conceived of as encompassing all of tiki's many cultural influences. The blatant mixing of Native Pacific Islander and Asian cultural referents in early tiki culture has been interpreted by twenty-first-century commentators as evidence that tiki's originators (and, therefore, all tiki practitioners that followed) were purposefully producing inauthentic

²¹⁸ Lois Dwan, "Roundabout," *Los Angeles Times*, March 30, 1969, 615. For history of anti-Chinese discrimination and Chinese American experience in the 1930s see Estelle T. Lau, *Paper Families: Identity, Immigration Administration, and Chinese Exclusion*, Politics, History, and Culture (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2006); Evelyn Nakano Glenn, *Unequal Freedom: How Race and Gender Shaped American Citizenship and Labor* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004).

²¹⁹ Toni Harding, "My Trip to California," *Dixon Evening Telegraph*, October 28, 1941, 6.

²²⁰ Schwaller, "Under a Plastic Palm," 136–37.

representations of Polynesia. Commentator James Teitelbaum has written, for example, that pre-World War II tiki culture deployed a “pan-Oceanic decor [that] recognized no boundaries,” and “fused together” many different cultural art forms “into a new mainland hybrid.”²²¹ Teitelbaum concluded that tiki culture “wasn’t about authenticity, it was about escapism,” and “[a]s long as it was exotic, it fit.”²²² My interpretation contests these assertions when it comes to Don the Beachcomber. I would agree that Gantt was largely uninterested in accurately representing the cultural knowledge of any single group of Indigenous Polynesian people. I do contend, however, that Gantt appears to be committed to staging what *he saw* as an authentic representation of Hawai‘i’s idealized multiculturalism at Don the Beachcomber.

Gantt’s interest in Hawai‘i was fairly explicit and he quickly came to be recognized by the public as an expert on Hawai‘i culture. Among his first appearances in the historical record is in a 1934 article from the *Hollywood Citizen* about a “Hawaiian dinner dance” at the elite Riverside Breakfast Club. Gantt, to whom the reporter referred only as “Don, the Beachcomber,” acted as “master of ceremonies in the Little Grass Shack” where a reception was held prior to a dinner of “kaukau,” taro root, and poi.²²³ Gantt had, famously, done quite a bit of traveling throughout the Pacific in his early life and claimed to have spent significant time in Hawai‘i. Historian Shawn Schwaller has concluded that Gantt’s interest in featuring Chinese cuisine at Don the Beachcomber was

²²¹ Teitelbaum, *Tiki Road Trip*, 12.

²²² Teitelbaum, 12.

²²³ Jane Jackson, “Society and Clubs,” *Hollywood Citizen-News*, October 5, 1934. The word “kaukau” is not actually a Hawaiian cuisine. The only Hawaiian-English dictionary that includes a definition of “kaukau” as it is used to describe food is in Lorrin Andrews’s *A Dictionary of the Hawaiian Language* (1865): “*Kaukau* is said to be a corruption of a Chinese word, and signifies to eat, to drink. It is used by foreigners in conversing with natives, and by natives conversing with foreigners.”

largely inspired by his experiences in Honolulu’s Chinatown.²²⁴ Gantt presumably visited Hawai‘i many times during the 1920s and 1930s, at a time when Asians made up more than 60 percent of the total population.²²⁵ To Gantt, then, Asian culture would have been easily conflated with a Polynesian theme, even though Asia and Polynesia are distinct geographic and cultural regions.

Furthermore, when Gantt visited the islands in the 1920s and 1930s, a persistent myth was emerging that Hawai‘i was a place wherein people of different races — especially Asians and white Americans — cohabitated without conflict.²²⁶ In 1924, American missionaries affiliated with the YMCA recruited sociologists at the University of Chicago to conduct the 1924 Survey of Race Relations in the West Coast of the United States as well as Hawai‘i. Their goal was to produce research on the experiences of non-white residents of these regions, with a focus on those of Chinese and Japanese descent,

²²⁴ Schwaller, “Under a Plastic Palm,” 130.

²²⁵ Although “Asian” was not recognized as a racial category by the U.S. Census Bureau at the time, the 1930 decennial census recorded the total number of “Chinese,” “Japanese,” “Korean” and “Filipino” Hawai‘i residents in both 1920 and 1930. The individuals within these four categories totaled 62 percent of the total population of Hawai‘i in 1920 and 64 percent in 1930. Chinese residents, more specifically, made up 9.2 percent of the total population of Hawai‘i in 1920 and 7.4 percent in 1930. Within Honolulu, where Gantt was reported to have learned about Chinese cuisine, Chinese residents made up 16.1 percent of the district’s population in 1920 and 14.1 percent in 1930. These numbers do not include those individuals with Asian ancestry who may have been racially categorized within the “Asiatic Hawaiian” or “Other Races” groups. (U.S. Census Bureau, “Population—Hawaii,” 1930, table 2, “Race, Nativity, and Sex, for the Territory and For Hilo and Honolulu: 1930, 1920, and 1910,” 48, accessed May 20, 2021, <https://www2.census.gov/prod2/decennial/documents/00476569ch3.pdf>)

²²⁶ There is endless historical evidence to contradict the myth that Hawai‘i is wholly racially harmonious. Among the most famous instances of interracial violence and conflict in Hawai‘i was the 1932 Massie Trial in which a group of Hawaiian and Asian men were accused of raping a white woman named Thalia Massie. When the men were not found guilty of the crime by way of a mistrial, a group of white Americans kidnapped and murdered Joe Kahahawai, who was one of the accused. The trial and murder were highly publicized both in Hawai‘i and the United States. Commentators have often referred to Kahahawai as Hawai‘i’s Emmett Till. For more on the Massie Trial see David E. Stannard, *Honor Killing: Race, Rape, and Clarence Darrow’s Spectacular Last Case* (New York: Penguin Books, 2006); Judy Rohrer, *Staking Claim: Settler Colonialism and Racialization in Hawai‘i* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2016), 93–96; Michael P. Farris, *A Death in the Islands: The Unwritten Law and the Last Trial of Clarence Darrow* (New York, NY: Skyhorse Publishing, 2016).

that would inform national policy and bolster racial harmony.²²⁷ The researchers' reports described Hawai'i as having achieved peaceful coexistence between races via assimilation and suggested that the islands could serve as a model of success for the United States. When the Survey of Race Relations failed to prevent the 1924 Asian Exclusion Act, the team of researchers and missionaries refocused their attention, instead, on Hawai'i as the "ideal meeting ground for racial harmony."²²⁸

In 1926, missionaries affiliated with the Survey of Race Relations opened the Institute of Pacific Relations and the East-West Institute in Honolulu to promote unity between the nations and races of the "Orient" and "Occident."²²⁹ Inspired by the Survey's findings, 1920s Hawai'i also became a hotbed of research on interracial tolerance by sociologists from the University of Hawai'i and the University of Chicago who largely focused on the white and Asian population while ignoring the presence of Kanaka Maoli or falsely claiming that they were disappearing.²³⁰ By the 1930s, Hawai'i's pro-statehood elites had begun propagandizing and disseminating this research to the public in an effort to assuage white Americans' racist fears about granting full citizenship to Hawai'i's non-white residents, especially those of Asian descent. These missionaries, sociologists, and pro-statehood elites were instrumental in advancing early liberal-multicultural ideas about Hawai'i in the U.S. during the 1920s and 1930s that would eventually inspire strong public support among Americans for Hawai'i's admission to the union.²³¹

Although the apprehension of Hawai'i as a utopic cultural melting pot did not rise to

²²⁷ Henry Yu, *Thinking Orientals: Migration, Contact, and Exoticism in Modern America* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 20.

²²⁸ Yu, 81.

²²⁹ Yu, 80.

²³⁰ Yu, 82; Saranillio, *Unsustainable Empire*, 81.

²³¹ Saranillio, *Unsustainable Empire*, 85.

dominance in the U.S. until after World War II, it seems likely that Gantt would have encountered this emergent idea during his visits to Hawai‘i during the 1920s and 1930s. His intentional foregrounding of Asian culture at his “Polynesian” restaurant further suggests his familiarity with and embrace of the contemporary liberal-multicultural ideals represented by Hawai‘i.

As Gantt rose to the height of his prominence in the early 1940s, incentivizing others to emulate his business model, he seemed to further foreground his purported familiarity with Kanaka Maoli knowledge in order to authenticate his unique “expertise” on Hawai‘i. Although Don the Beachcomber was never overtly marketed as “Hawaiian,” it was Gantt’s focus on a supposedly authentic representation of Hawaiian culture that seemed to set him apart from competitors like Trader Vic’s. Gantt began to use (sloppily translated) Hawaiian phrases in Don the Beachcomber advertisements. A 1946 ad reads “‘Lawa Hana Keiamanwa! [sic]” accompanied with an English translation: “Enough work now!”²³² Additionally, Gantt’s height of popularity in the late 1940s coincided with the emergent postwar “Hawai‘i craze.” Gantt was celebrated by both local and national presses for hosting extravagant “luaus...done with appropriate Hawaiian ceremonies” for celebrity guests at his estate.²³³ After World War II, during which he served in the U.S. military managing military rest camps for American pilots in Europe, Gantt also opened a

²³² Although misspelled, this phrase appears to be a literal translation of the Hawaiian words lawa (enough, sufficient), hana (work, labor, task, or service), and kēia manawa (now). “Lawa Hana Keiamanwa (Advertisement),” *The Hollywood Reporter*, April 29, 1946.

²³³ “Party Theme Hawaiian,” *The Valley Times*, June 24, 1946; “Inside Hollywood,” *The Daily News*, September 27, 1947.

Don the Beachcomber location in Honolulu for which he was heralded for “[rising] in Hawaii circles” and praised as a “pillar of Hawaii’s ‘uplift’ group.”²³⁴

Over the first twenty years of his career as a restaurateur, in contrast to the assertions made by commentators that tiki culture had always been willfully inauthentic, Gantt appealed to consumers’ heightened interests in barely dangerous interracial encounters emblemized by a supposedly more “authentic” representation of Hawai‘i. I contend that the many strategies that Gantt used to appeal to historically-specific white and middle-class desires — his choice of rum as his signature liquor, the primitivist display of artifacts like the Filipino war club, the featuring of Chinese cuisine, and the hosting of “authentic” luaus — all contributed to the staging of an atmosphere in which white patrons could imagine themselves as a celebrated part of Hawai‘i’s settler colonial society.

Atmospheric Staging as a Strategy of Colonial Apprehension

Conceiving of Gantt’s production of Don the Beachcomber as staging allows for a generative point of entry into understanding the dominant postwar tiki-cultural formation’s epistemological function. The most significant way in which Gantt deployed staging as a strategy of apprehension was through the imaginative production of both a hyper-realistic physical “set” as well as believable social roles that were embodied and performed by Gantt and his employees. Gantt quite literally turned Don the Beachcomber into a staged drama in which patrons were transported into a nearly real place with nearly

²³⁴ Robert C. Ruark, “Would-Be Beachcomber Rises in Hawaii Circles,” *El Paso Herald-Post*, December 22, 1949; Robert C. Ruark, “Don Beach-Comber Is Pillar of Hawaii’s ‘Uplift’ Group,” *Lubbock Evening Journal*, December 26, 1949.

real people. Based on Gantt's specific attachments to Hawai'i, I argue that Don the Beachcomber can be understood as staging an imagined and idealized Hawai'i, complete with "actors" who played the role of imagined and idealized Hawai'i residents.

By the late 1930s, Gantt had quickly transformed the design of the Hollywood Don the Beachcomber from a simple beach hut into a fully realized set that was complete with tropical plants and artifacts from his travels. As such, Don the Beachcomber was staged to be similar to a natural history museum, which were popular attractions in the early twentieth century.²³⁵ In order to add to the immersive experience, Gantt also added special effects, including a machine that dripped water on the roof to produce the sound of falling rain.²³⁶

Gantt's unique commitment to immersive realism earned him special acclaim. One reviewer from 1941 wrote with excitement that "it 'rains' for about five minutes every fifteen minutes. It seems so real that a couple of men ran out to roll their car windows up."²³⁷ Similarly, in a 1937 article published in the *Sydney Morning Herald* a visitor to Don the Beachcomber from Australia named Molly Grey described the bar as

²³⁵ Victoria Cain, "'Attraction, Attention, and Desire': Consumer Culture as Pedagogical Paradigm in Museums in the United States, 1900-1930," *Paedagogica Historica* 48, no. 5 (October 2012): 745-69, <https://doi.org/10.1080/00309230.2012.667422>. Gantt offered his patrons access to objects he had collected from his travels abroad and, therefore, the privilege of satisfying their curiosities about far-away places, cultures, and peoples. This form of semi-educational and anthropological entertainment would not have been wholly unfamiliar to upper- and middle-class white Americans in the early twentieth century who flocked to World's Fairs, bought recorded "world" music and "race records," and voraciously read *National Geographic* magazine. See Michael Denning, *Noise Uprising: The Audiopolitics of a World Musical Revolution* (London ; Brooklyn, NY: Verso, 2015); Lutz and Collins, *Reading National Geographic*; Robert W. Rydell, *All the World's a Fair: Visions of Empire at American International Expositions, 1876 - 1916* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002).

²³⁶ Kirsten, *The Book of Tiki*, 70.

²³⁷ Harding, "My Trip to California."

“the most original” that she had seen during her trip to Los Angeles. The setting was further described by Grey as having:

dim lights, rough shack of bamboo, and old driftwood; palms, huge bunches of bananas hanging here and there, coral and seaweed for effect, soft Hawaiian music in [the] distance, weird light slanting through open beams in [the] ceiling. Don himself [was dressed] in old slacks with a lei round his neck.²³⁸

As the report from Grey suggests, Gantt’s embodiment of the character Don the Beachcomber was also an integral part of the staging.

Early in his career, Gantt had begun to officially go by the name “Donn Beach,” in response to the frequency with which patrons confused his name with the name of the establishment. The line that separated “Donn Beach” and the character Don the Beachcomber was often blurred. Although, to some degree, he seemed to want to distinguish himself from the character by spelling his first name “Donn” rather than “Don” and by taking the surname “Beach” instead of “Beachcomber,” Gantt was nearly always referred to as “Don the Beachcomber” by the press, and he did not appear to go to great lengths to make corrections.

As the embodiment of the Don the Beachcomber character, Gantt played the role of the generous host as well as cultural educator and lifestyle guru. Much like the postwar white American surfers discussed in chapter one, Gantt’s chosen lifestyle was one that he modeled on what was assumed to be “Hawaiian”: a life of full leisure and jet-setting adventure, a desire to avoid work, deprioritize family, and reject the modern, urban, and industrialized in favor of the “primitive” and “natural.” However, as Gantt was from an earlier generation, he did not have the access to the mass-cultural representations of

²³⁸ Molly Grey, “A Budget from Hollywood: Sydney Visitor,” *The Sydney Morning Herald*, September 9, 1937.

Hawai'i and Hawaiians that postwar youth would. As such, Gantt's "Hawaiian" lifestyle was drawn from what appeared to be a conglomeration of first-hand experiences he had had as a visitor to Hawai'i as well as residual Western literary tropes.

The "beachcomber" figure, for example, with which Gantt clearly identified, was a Western literary figure popularized in Victorian-era British fiction and specifically associated with the "South Pacific." Literary scholar Michelle Elleray argues that the British beachcomber was "a counterweight to the construction of Captain James Cook's legacy" as the upstanding imperial explorer of the Pacific Islands who maintained ideas of strict racial difference between Europeans and natives.²³⁹ In contrast to the Captain Cook figure, the beachcomber was "morally dissolute, sexually promiscuous, and an absconder from the values of British civilization generally."²⁴⁰ Beachcomber narratives typically centered around a white male character who had become marooned in the South Pacific and eventually found himself abandoning Western civility and embracing the idealized culture and lifestyle of the native group with which he had made contact. Although the beachcomber had roots in British literature, the archetype was also adopted by American writers. Figures such as the hero of Herman Melville's *Typee* (1846) and *Omoo* (1847) were emblematic of the American beachcomber archetype, which also reappeared in popular twentieth-century texts such as Charles Nordhoff and James Norman Hall's *Mutiny on the Bounty* (1932), James Michener's *Tales of the South Pacific* (1947), and Thor Heyerdahl's *Kon-Tiki* (1948).

²³⁹ Michelle Elleray, "Crossing the Beach: A Victorian Tale Adrift in the Pacific," *Victorian Studies* 47, no. 2 (2005): 164.

²⁴⁰ Elleray, 164.

Gantt's identification with the beachcomber archetype was quite literal. He publicly displayed certificates at his restaurant that demonstrated his membership in an organization called the "Beach-Combers of the South Seas," which seemed to function as an institutional affiliation that authenticated his authority on the region.²⁴¹ His purported expertise as a Pacific Islands adventurer was clearly accepted and widely recognized in Hollywood. In 1941, for example, Gantt was invited to head the production of a series of high-budget travelogues filmed in the Pacific.²⁴² Despite the fact that he often promoted himself as having broader knowledge about the entire Pacific region, his performance was almost always attached, more specifically, to Hawai'i. Throughout Gantt's rise to prominence as "Don the Beachcomber," he was known to wear ragged clothes as well as a new fresh-flower lei every day, which were directly imported from Hawai'i at exorbitant cost.²⁴³

When Gantt entered the stage in full character as Don the Beachcomber, his role was always to model and teach others about Hawaiian culture as well as how to live a supposedly authentic "Hawaiian" lifestyle. In the 1940s, he frequently threw extravagant "luaus" at his restaurant and at his home. At these events, he took seriously the role of Hawaiian culture expert and guide, requiring all of his high-powered guests to wear "sarongs and other native costumes," eat Hawaiian (rather than Chinese) food, and listen

²⁴¹ Kirsten, *The Book of Tiki*, 74.

²⁴² "South Seas Travelogs," *The Hollywood Reporter*, December 5, 1941.

²⁴³ *The Honolulu Advertiser*, April 5, 1938. Gantt began wearing this costume as early as 1934, when his restaurant had first opened. It was rumored that Gantt had spent "\$7,800 on flowers" in his first four years of business. See also Harold Heffernan, "Dressing-Up Wave Hits Hollywood," *St. Louis Globe-Democrat*, December 14, 1937; Grey, "A Budget from Hollywood: Sydney Visitor."

to music played by “[a] native orchestra.”²⁴⁴ Unlike other educational-entertainment formations of the early twentieth century that sought to represent Hawai‘i and other foreign cultures — natural history museums, popular anthropological publications, and World’s Fairs — Gantt’s strategy of staging sought to provide a completely immersive and total-sensory experience for his audience. The boundary between audience and performance was blurred. Visitors were invited to play a role, too, — that of the celebrated guest — so that they could experience more than observe what it might be like to visit Hawai‘i.

By setting an elaborate and hyper-realistic stage upon which he deliberately played cultural expert and host, Gantt built a space that simulated the affective experience of an imagined Hawai‘i that was exotic, multicultural, and most importantly, always celebrated the presence of white and affluent Americans. In order to evoke this form of experience, I argue that Gantt deployed a strategy of staging that was specifically attentive to the *atmospheric* experience. My deployment of the atmospheric as part of my analysis of tiki culture is based not only on the relevance of extant theorizing but also on the frequency with which the word “atmosphere” was used as descriptive language by twentieth-century tiki-cultural producers and commentators. Restaurant reviews and marketing materials for Don the Beachcomber and other tiki-cultural commercial spaces consistently used such phrases as “authentic Polynesian atmosphere,” “South Seas atmosphere,” “exotic atmosphere,” and so on.²⁴⁵

²⁴⁴“Party Theme Hawaiian.” The menu for this particular luau, hosted at Gantt’s Encino home in 1946, included a striking number of Hawaiian dishes with their Hawaiian names included. Kanaka Maoli food was very rarely served in tiki-cultural restaurants. They tended to feature more familiar Asian cuisines, as Gantt did in his typical menu at Don the Beachcomber.

²⁴⁵ Kirsten, *The Book of Tiki*, 34, 51, 72–73; Kirsten, *Tiki Pop*, 109.

Jan Slaby understands atmospheres as phenomena that “are manifest as tangible, forceful, qualitative ‘presences’ in experiential space” that exist “everywhere” without the need for prior and “explicit reflection and conceptualisation” on the part of any individual.²⁴⁶ Weather, for example, is an atmospheric phenomenon, because, in Slaby’s words, “we’re always *in* a ‘weather’” whether we intentionally choose to be or not.²⁴⁷ However, Slaby warns against conceiving of atmosphere as an authoritative force of nature to which we are forced to succumb. One can sometimes observe the presence of an atmosphere — “the jubilation of the party, the tension of the meeting, the enthusiasm of a crowd” — without finding oneself overcome with that jubilation, tension, or enthusiasm by simply entering into the experiential space.²⁴⁸ Therefore, Slaby suggests, atmospheres should be conceived of as “a type of *affordance*: prepared occasions for affective engagement, for absorption and attunement” with which we *can* (rather than must) engage.²⁴⁹ Said slightly differently, atmospheres do not *cause* an experience, but rather *can* encourage or make possible a certain form of experience. I take from Slaby’s theorization an understanding that atmospheres are experienced spatially and affectively but not automatically or inevitably.

Importantly, I also conceive of atmosphere as a phenomenon that is not experienced universally nor entirely subjectively. Angelika Krebs has argued that atmosphere cannot be reduced to the affective states or “moods” of individuals. Krebs distinguishes between “moods” as psychological states of individual human beings and

²⁴⁶ Jan Slaby, “Atmospheres – Schmitz, Massumi and Beyond,” in *Music as Atmosphere: Collective Feelings and Affective Sounds*, ed. Friedlind Riedel and Juha Torvinen (New York, NY: Routledge, 2019), 274, <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780815358718>.

²⁴⁷ Slaby, 274.

²⁴⁸ Slaby, 275.

²⁴⁹ Slaby, 275.

“atmospheres” as moods that are socially “*shared* among human beings” (original emphasis) or that “inhere” in the “character” of spaces such as landscapes and buildings.²⁵⁰ Spatial atmospheres are not universally experienced in the same way by every individual, but, as Krebs writes, they are also “not merely subjective phenomena, even if subjective factors like personal memories and personal moods also play a role” in the experience of a space.²⁵¹ Moreover, in certain spaces — Krebs discusses natural landscapes and architectural spaces — atmosphere can be experienced as a kind of “resonance,” which Harmut Rosa has described as a “response relation” between nonhuman space and human recipient, or between humans in a shared space. Krebs further argues that resonance with an atmosphere can “make us feel at home,” which I interpret to mean a sense of belonging.²⁵² Atmosphere, in other words, can invite us to have an individualized affective experience and to situate ourselves in relation to the space and to others with whom we share it.

Although neither Slaby nor Krebs explicitly discusses the ways in which atmospheres might be purposefully constructed through design, I contend that the concept of “atmosphere” is helpful for understanding how tiki-cultural spaces might (re)produce colonial knowledge that apprehends Hawai‘i and Hawaiians. I argue that Don the Beachcomber intentionally staged an atmosphere that sought to represent that of an imagined and idealized Hawai‘i. Within Gantt’s staging, patrons could relate to one another, to Gantt-as-Don, and to the experiential space in ways that invited a sense of belonging both within Don the Beachcomber as well as in an imagined Hawai‘i.

²⁵⁰ Angelika Krebs, “Stimmung: From Mood to Atmosphere,” *Philosophia* 45, no. 4 (December 2017): 1420, 1422, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11406-017-9890-4>.

²⁵¹ Krebs, 1423.

²⁵² Krebs, 1429.

Beyond the set-dressing and embodied performances, the Don the Beachcomber restaurant also functioned as a “stage” in the sense that it both spatially contained and temporally partitioned the imaginative production. Gantt’s staged Hawai‘i atmosphere was attractive, in large part, because it was special and granted access to an experience that was generally inaccessible to the white middle-class patrons who were Gantt’s primary customers in the 1930s and 1940s. The experience of Don the Beachcomber began when customers entered Gantt’s staged space and ended when they left.

Nevertheless, there was always the sense that the “real” Hawai‘i was out there, just beyond easy reach, but that the next best thing to an actual Hawai‘i vacation was to enter the atmospheric space of Don the Beachcomber. In this sense, a visit to Gantt’s version of Hawai‘i was just one stage of a longer and inevitable temporal progression that would end with an actual visit to the islands. Don the Beachcomber was always conceived of as a (very close but ultimately inadequate) stand-in for the “real thing,” which could temporarily satisfy one’s desire for the Hawai‘i experience until the next vacation. Those who dreamed of a cosmopolitan life of adventure could simulate the experience of such a lifestyle at will by visiting Gantt-as-Don, who appeared to be embodied proof that one could live a “Hawaiian” lifestyle full time.

Gantt’s deployment of staging as temporal partitioning was even more noticeable after he opened a Don the Beachcomber location in Honolulu after World War II. Fans of the original Don the Beachcomber locations in Hollywood, as well as the newer ones in Chicago and New York City, could expect to experience the staged atmosphere of Don the Beachcomber when they visited Hawai‘i. As such, Gantt’s tiki-cultural production directly scaffolded the settler colonial project in Hawai‘i as the atmosphere gained

authenticity, because it no longer purported to be a simulation, but rather a recognizable and “real” part of Honolulu’s built landscape.

Gantt set his sights on Waikīkī early in his career. He visited Honolulu in 1936 and was welcomed by the city’s residents as, in the words of one reporter for the *Honolulu Star-Bulletin*, the “number one kane [man]” at the famous Beachcomber Club in L.A.”²⁵³ In 1937, Gantt visited Honolulu again, this time to scout locations “for a local Beachcombers’ club.”²⁵⁴ At first, he struggled to convince the white elite of Honolulu to accept the idea of a Hawai‘i Don the Beachcomber location. When Gantt filed an application for a liquor license with the city of Honolulu, a group of thirty-seven “Waikiki property owners” organized a protest to express concerns that Don the Beachcomber might ““throw the area open to other businesses of a similar nature.””²⁵⁵ Gantt ultimately withdrew his application for the license and sought out a new location “outside of the Waikiki apartment and residential area.”²⁵⁶

It took Gantt until the late 1940s, after World War II, to finally open the Waikīkī Don the Beachcomber across the street from the famous Royal Hawaiian Hotel. Gantt’s fans in the United States were thrilled by his return to the islands as the resolution to the long-standing Don the Beachcomber narrative. Robert C. Ruark, a reporter in Texas, expressed excitement that Gantt would finally get to “come home to comb his beloved

²⁵³ *Honolulu Star-Bulletin*, May 28, 1936; *Honolulu Star-Bulletin*, June 6, 1936.

²⁵⁴ *Honolulu Star-Bulletin*, October 8, 1937.

²⁵⁵ “Home Owners Hit Liquor Permit Bid,” *Honolulu Star-Bulletin*, May 18, 1938.“

²⁵⁶ *Honolulu Advertiser*, May 21, 1938.

beaches” and to “teach the natives how to be Polynesians.”²⁵⁷ Ruark described the feeling of a visit to the Waikīkī Don the Beachcomber with awe:

On moonlit nights the impression is that one is loose at a pig-killing festival in Tahiti. When Don throws a luau, authentic Hawaiian prayers are said over the pig, and Don is something of a sight himself in a 25-year-old battered linen jacket...sarong, boars tooth necklace, with a male lei around his shoulders and a battered kona sombrero perched on his head ... His music is authentic. He has revived interest here in the classic hula...²⁵⁸

Ruark’s description of the restaurant celebrated the supposed authenticity of the setting. This authenticity, however, was not a representation of what Honolulu had become, but rather, an imagined version of what Hawai‘i had once been:

[Don the Beachcomber] is the first striking thing Honolulu has offered the tourists that would convince them they have actually arrived in the romantic South Pacific. It is a shrewd approximation of what they thought they ought to find...²⁵⁹

Gantt had been credited not just with representing Hawai‘i authentically, but with reviving a certain long-lost and expected kind of authenticity. Gantt’s own position on this is made most clear in an interview given to reporter Ernie Deane in 1953. When Gantt was asked his opinion on Hawai‘i statehood, his response was as follows:

So far as [Gantt] and his business are concerned, he said, he would prefer that some sort of monarchy be reestablished. In his opinion this would lend more enchantment to Hawaii for travelers and vacationists...Such a thing being out of the question, Don indicated that he would prefer that Hawaii remain a territory...He noted in passing that the original Hawaiian race is diminishing and that with this development Hawaii loses some of its romance.²⁶⁰

Even as Gantt advocated for the preservation of an “old Hawai‘i,” his key role in shaping the postwar tiki-cultural tourism industry in Honolulu perpetuated what Adria

²⁵⁷ Ruark, “Would-Be Beachcomber Rises in Hawaii Circles.”

²⁵⁸ Ruark.

²⁵⁹ Ruark.

²⁶⁰ Ernie Deane, “The Way It Seems to Me,” *The Mexia Daily News*, April 21, 1953.

Imada has termed “settler colonial nostalgia” and directly supported the settler colonial project.²⁶¹ In the 1950s, Gantt relocated to Honolulu permanently, transferring all control over the Don the Beachcomber franchise to his ex-wife. In 1957, he opened the International Market Place in Waikīkī, a complex of nightclubs, restaurants, and stores all designed with his signature staged atmosphere of a multicultural and primitive paradise for white tourists. There were small “villages” made to represent “Japan, Korea, China, and the South Seas,” a literal stage for “Polynesian dancers,” and an enormous banyan tree in the center of the complex.²⁶² At Don the Beachcomber and the International Market Place, postwar Hawai‘i could fulfill the experiential expectation set by Gantt’s tiki-cultural production, thereby setting a new standard for “authenticity.” Staged productions of tiki-cultural atmosphere ultimately functioned to apprehend Hawai‘i and Hawaiians as a white visitors’ paradise in which Kanaka Maoli would shower tourists with unconditional “aloha.”

This tiki-cultural strategy of apprehension that I am calling *atmospheric staging* continued to operate as the primary and defining mode of knowledge production through which the postwar tiki-cultural formation apprehended Hawai‘i and Hawaiians. In what follows, I contend that postwar tiki culture rose to dominance through both its domestication — its entrance into white, middle-class home life — as well as its exportation — its infiltration of Hawai‘i via the tourism industry — in ways that directly benefitted the statehood-era settler colonial project.

²⁶¹ Adria Imada, “‘Aloha 'Oe’: Settler-Colonial Nostalgia and the Genealogy of a Love Song,” ed. Patrick Wolfe, *American Indian Culture and Research Journal* 37, no. 2 (January 2013): 35–52, <https://doi.org/10.17953/aicr.37.2.c4x497167lx48183>.

²⁶² Davis Thompson, “The Rise, Fall and Rebirth of Waikīkī’s International Market Place,” *Honolulu Magazine*, December 3, 2013, <https://www.honolulumagazine.com/the-rise-fall-and-rebirth-of-waikikis-international-market-place/>.

Trader Vic's and Postwar Tiki Culture

The rise to dominance of Hawai'i-inspired popular cultural production in the U.S. following World War II also contributed to a wide-spread demand for tiki-cultural experiences and entertainment. Along with the prominence of Hawai'i in the public imaginary, the pre-war association between tiki and Hawai'i, specifically, was further solidified. According to Sven Kirsten, the most significant shift in tiki-cultural production after World War II was the adoption of the "tiki idol" image as the metonymic symbol of the cultural formation as a whole. Pre-World War II "Polynesian," "Hawaiian," or "South Seas" bars and restaurants such as Don the Beachcomber rarely used the tiki-figure motif as part of their staging. Kirsten asserts that it was not until the mid-1950s that "a Tiki was employed as a logo, serving as an entrance guardian, appearing as an icon on the menu and matchbooks, and assuming the form of mugs and salt and pepper shakers" at tiki-cultural establishments.²⁶³ It was the prevalence of this tiki-figure motif that eventually inspired the retroactive naming of tiki culture as such.

Another significant transformation in tiki-cultural production during the postwar period was the formation's proper acceptance as high culture. To be sure, Gantt's Don the Beachcomber locations often drew elite patrons and he frequently hosted celebrity guests at his private "luau" events, but Gantt explicitly and implicitly communicated his interest in appealing to a wider audience.²⁶⁴ Kirsten argues that Victor Bergeron, the founder of

²⁶³ Kirsten, *The Book of Tiki*, 47. Kirsten suggests that the tiki-figures designed by Alec Yuill-Thornton in the early 1950s for Tiki Bob's and Stephen Crane's Luau restaurants likely catalyzed the wide-spread use of this imagery.

²⁶⁴ Gantt's early marketing materials for Don the Beachcomber stated that he aimed to be "host to diplomat and beachcomber, prince and pirate." (Kirsten, *Tiki Pop*, 141.) Moreover, Gantt's "Don the Beachcomber" costume of ragged clothing more implicitly suggested that he was interested in avoiding elitism.

the Trader Vic's franchise, was largely responsible for tiki culture's high-class transformation.²⁶⁵ Bergeron had opened a restaurant called Hinky Dinks in Oakland in the early 1930s, at the same time that Gantt founded Don the Beachcomber. It is thought that Bergeron rebranded his establishment as Trader Vic's in the 1940s, only after visiting Don the Beachcomber and other popular tiki-cultural restaurants in Los Angeles.²⁶⁶ Bergeron's first Trader Vic's location in Oakland was similar to the Hollywood Don the Beachcomber, in that it was "little more than a shack...[filled] with fishing nets, bamboo poles, glass floats, giant clamshells, paddles, and other nautical junk."²⁶⁷ By the late 1940s, Bergeron had already begun to expand Trader Vic's into a franchise and opened at least eight additional locations across the United States during the 1950s.

Although Trader Vic's, like Don the Beachcomber, served Chinese-inspired food, Bergeron was far more intentional about shaping his cuisine to appeal to the discerning palate of America's white elite. As I have argued above, Gantt's intention was to provide his guests with what *he saw* as an authentic encounter with an idealized, multicultural, and disappearing vision of Hawai'i. When it came to food, this often meant that Gantt always prioritized this "authenticity," even if it meant that guests might be uncomfortable. News reports on Gantt's private luaus, for example, remarked that guests were shocked and thrilled to encounter a menu of "Hawaiian food, including many

²⁶⁵ Kirsten, *The Book of Tiki*, 84.

²⁶⁶ Kirsten, 84; Teitelbaum, *Tiki Road Trip*, 97.

²⁶⁷ Teitelbaum, *Tiki Road Trip*, 97.

delicacies rarely served on the mainland,” including “broiled dried squid (he[‘]e pulehu) with red salt” and “kukui nuts...and limu [seaweed].”²⁶⁸

Whereas Gantt’s menu was emblematic of his romantic attitude toward what he saw as the authentic “South Seas,” Bergeron seemed to have a far more cynical and business-oriented relationship to the Pacific Islands. In a 1961 *Time* magazine interview, Bergeron was asked to reflect on his success by commenting on “his preference for South Sea atmosphere rather than culinary authenticity,” to which Bergeron replied: “How are you going to make a pig in the ground in your restaurant? ... Furthermore, you can’t eat real Polynesian food. It’s the most horrible junk I’ve ever tasted.”²⁶⁹ The *Time* article further described Bergeron’s menu items — “Bongo Soup, Javanese Sate and Bah-Mee” — as Americanized “inventions” that were served alongside French-inspired dishes rebranded to fit his Pacific theme. When asked why he had chosen not to promote his French food, Bergeron responded: “Why should I? ... I can make so much more money off the grass.”²⁷⁰

Bergeron’s callous disinterest in representational authenticity ultimately made him a much more successful capitalist entrepreneur than Gantt. Bergeron only made decisions that served his bottom line and appealed to an elite business class, which meant that Trader Vic’s was among the only tiki bar franchises to survive into the twenty-first century. Don the Beachcomber, on the other hand, had largely disappeared long before

²⁶⁸ “Party Theme Hawaiian.”

²⁶⁹ “Modern Living: Polynesia at Dinnertime,” *Time*, March 31, 1961, <http://content.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,872226,00.html>.

²⁷⁰ “Modern Living: Polynesia at Dinnertime.”

Gantt's death in Honolulu in 1989.²⁷¹ It was Bergeron's explicitly stated attitude toward representational authenticity, rather than Gantt's, that eventually has become widely (and uncritically) accepted as the norm for tiki-cultural production, more generally. I would dispute this conception by arguing that Bergeron adopted the strategy of atmospheric staging from Gantt as a method of authenticating his representation, even while avoiding cultural accuracy. To be sure, Bergeron rarely ever expressed an explicit interest in representing Hawai'i and preferred to make broad generalizations about "Polynesia" when describing his restaurants' cultural referents. However, Bergeron's deployment of a strategy of atmospheric staging similar to Gantt's, who *was* specifically attached to Hawai'i, meant that, ultimately, Trader Vic's reiterated the staged fantasy of white inclusion in Hawai'i that had been produced at Don the Beachcomber.

The key difference between Gantt's and Bergeron's atmospheric staging of Hawai'i was that Don the Beachcomber foregrounded a settler colonial nostalgia while Trader Vic's emphasized a settler colonial modernity. For example, although Bergeron and Gantt both used ethnographic objects as part of their atmospheric stagings, Bergeron presented his expensive and imported artifacts from the Pacific Islands as "primitive" art objects. Gantt's supposedly foreign objects, in comparison, were displayed as souvenirs that Gantt had gathered on his solitary adventures in the South Seas. Bergeron also dismissed the Indigenous preparation of kalua pork in the underground imu, whereas Gantt saw himself as a protector of exotic Kanaka Maoli culinary lifeways that were, in his mind, in danger of disappearing entirely. Nevertheless, Bergeron reproduced a version of this dish at Trader Vic's by serving whole roast pigs that were prepared in a specially

²⁷¹ Teitelbaum, *Tiki Road Trip*, 343.

designed modern oven.²⁷² Like Gantt, Bergeron also hired Asian American chefs and waitstaff as a way to stage an atmosphere of safe interracial encounter and multiculturalism. Bergeron's servers, however, were dressed in black silk uniforms and were often students recruits from the University of California, who Bergeron could be sure had the intellect and poise to advise his patrons about foreign menu items.²⁷³

Bergeron's strategies of atmospheric staging contributed to the colonial apprehension of Hawai'i as a *modern* place wherein the presence of elite white Americans would be unconditionally celebrated by a hospitable, well-educated, and multiracial cast of characters. It was this modernized tiki culture that would quickly expand beyond the space of the tiki bar and rise to dominance after World War II. The (re)production of tiki-cultural atmospheric stagings in white middle-and-upper-class homes as well as in Hawai'i by the tourism industry served to scaffold broader statehood-era colonial knowledge about Kanaka Maoli and shape white Americans' expectations for a certain Hawai'i experience. I argue here that this particular function of postwar tiki culture was enabled by the concurrent operations of domestication and exportation, which solidified tiki-cultural production as a powerful and enduring technology of colonial apprehension into our present.

Domesticating and Exporting Tiki Culture

Tiki culture directly shaped and was shaped by what Tereisa Teaiwa theorized as "militourism," or the mutually beneficial entanglements of the military and the tourism

²⁷² Schwaller, "Under a Plastic Palm," 138.

²⁷³ Schwaller, 135, 138–39.

industry in service of a settler colonial project.²⁷⁴ During World War II, governance of Hawai‘i was seized by the U.S. military, and the islands were used as a place of rest for American servicemen deployed to the Pacific and Asia. Due to decades of settler colonial knowledge production, of which early tiki culture was a significant part, the servicemen arrived in the islands expecting to be welcomed and celebrated by Hawai‘i’s subservient and racialized residents. Instead, they found a highly militarized Hawai‘i wracked by racial tension and violence between non-white residents and mostly white soldiers.²⁷⁵ In an effort to restore faith in the mythic fantasy of white inclusion in Hawai‘i, the military began to regularly organize “luaus” for the troops at which Hawaiian women (or Asian women playing Hawaiians) would meet soldiers’ expectations by playing the role of gracious host.

However, lū‘au in Hawai‘i were rarely ever events at which the “host” and “guest” roles were strictly maintained, nor were they so strictly gendered or racialized. According to Adria Imada, the word “luau” is an Americanization of the ‘Ōlelo Hawai‘i term “lū‘au,” which emerged in Hawai‘i during the nineteenth century to describe communal feasts. Lū‘au first appears in the English-language historical record in 1827, just a few years after the arrival of the first Protestant missionaries from New England to the Kingdom of Hawai‘i. A British naval captain’s logs describe a gathering hosted by King Kamehameha III for both Hawaiian ali‘i and their Western visitors at which taro leaves, called lū‘au, were served with meat. The British captain identified the 1827

²⁷⁴ See Teresia Teaiwa, “Reflections on Militourism, US Imperialism, and American Studies,” *American Quarterly* 68, no. 3 (2016): 847–53; Teresia Teaiwa, “Militarism, Tourism, and the Native: Articulations in Oceania” (Dissertation, Santa Cruz, California, University of California, Santa Cruz, 2001); Gonzalez, *Securing Paradise*.

²⁷⁵ Imada, “The Army Learns to Luau,” 336; Imada, *Aloha America*, 222.

gathering as a “leuhow,” confusing the name of the taro leaves for the name of the event at which they were served. Throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, lū‘au became the term widely used in Hawai‘i and the U.S. to describe formal celebratory gatherings between Hawaiians, or Hawai‘i residents, and Euro-American visitors and tourists.²⁷⁶ The *de facto* assumption that a luau featured Hawaiian hosts and white guests, Imada contends, was largely normalized by the military in Hawai‘i during World War II.²⁷⁷ As such, the luaus designed by the U.S. military had much more in common with tiki-cultural stagings than they did with Hawaiian lū‘au. Along with the arrival of tiki bars such as Don the Beachcomber to Hawai‘i after the war, I argue that the militarized luau represents one of the earliest instances of tiki culture’s exportation from the United States and Hawai‘i.

The domestication of tiki culture was also entangled with wartime militourism. Americans at home during the war were presented with tiki-cultural and militouristic atmospheric stagings of Hawai‘i in the form of military-produced films and photographs of white servicemen enjoying luaus and hula performances. By the war’s end, these tiki-cultural and militouristic productions had further authenticated the fantasy of white inclusion in Hawai‘i. One aspect of this fantasy is what Imada calls an “imagined relationship... [of] imperial hospitality” in which “an uneven relationship between Natives and outsiders [was transformed] into one that appears mutually edifying and consensual.”²⁷⁸ By using the term *inclusion*, however, I am arguing that postwar tiki-cultural knowledge production facilitated not only an expectation of hospitality in

²⁷⁶ Imada, “The Army Learns to Luau,” 330, 348; Imada, *Aloha America*, 215.

²⁷⁷ Imada, “The Army Learns to Luau,” 332.

²⁷⁸ Imada, 341.

Hawai‘i but also one of white *belonging*. Through domestication, the tiki-cultural staged atmosphere of an imagined Hawai‘i became a holistic lifestyle that was understood to be compatible with middle-class white modernity rather than imagined as a temporary primitivist escape from a modern world.

Among the most recognizable ways in which tiki culture was domesticated was through cosmopolitan consumption by white middle-class women. In Sarah Miller-Davenport’s political and cultural history of Hawai‘i statehood within the United States, she argues that backyard luaus, tiki bars, and Hawai‘i-inspired fashions were a means for privileged white women consumers to “challenge the norms of postwar femininity and assert their racial liberalism.”²⁷⁹ Through the purchasing of Hawai‘i-themed commodities, women consumers could assert their transformation into sexually liberated and worldly citizens by aligning themselves with the postwar liberal ideals of multiculturalism and diversity. As such, Miller-Davenport’s analysis suggests that white middle-class homes did not function as purely “private” spaces, because they also served as the public tiki-cultural stages for statehood-era colonial apprehensions of Hawai‘i. Sarah Miller-Davenport further asserts that existing analyses of the ways in which Hawai‘i was consumed in America has focused too exclusively on the primitivist male gaze. In fact, she argues, women were the “main consumers of Hawai‘i” and were instrumental in solidifying notions of Hawai‘i’s modernity.²⁸⁰ My analysis elaborates on that of Miller-Davenport by focusing on how white women’s consumption of Hawai‘i via tiki culture not only asserted their worldliness but also their apprehension of Hawai‘i and Hawaiians. Women consumers staged a tiki-cultural “Hawaiian” atmosphere in their

²⁷⁹ Miller-Davenport, *Gateway State*, 147.

²⁸⁰ Miller-Davenport, 148.

homes while also adopting what they imagined to be a “Hawaiian” lifestyle but was actually a colonial apprehension of Kanaka Maoli subjectivity. Therefore, white women consumers directly contributed to the iterative (re)production of a fantasy of white inclusion in Hawai‘i. This post-war tiki cultural drama solidified a settler colonial way of knowing, one in which white Americans believed themselves to be entitled to belonging in Hawai‘i. This apprehension, I argue, was buttressed by the tiki-cultural knowledge that fed into the myth that white Americans would be unconditionally welcomed and embraced by Hawai‘i’s residents.

As I describe above in my analysis of Bergeron and Trader Vic’s, postwar tiki culture moved away from the settler colonial nostalgia of earlier tiki-cultural production, but as a broader cultural formation, it continued to stage atmospheric representations of an idealized experience of Hawai‘i. In the postwar period, this idealized experience was one in which any white American — not only certain “experts,” such as Gantt or Bergeron — could adopt the role of the “Hawaiian” host within the tiki-cultural drama. During the 1950s and 1960s, the housewife increasingly played the role of cultural educator within white middle-class families that wanted to align themselves with a Cold War politics of liberal inclusion. As the widely recognized bastion of multiculturalism and interracial harmony, Hawai‘i became the predominant model for those who wanted to endorse these ideals through emulation.²⁸¹ When white women were first seeking out resources for learning this “Hawaiian” lifestyle, they most frequently turned to trusted tiki-cultural producers who had spent decades authenticating their stagings and representations of Hawai‘i. Victor Bergeron, for example, published his first of many

²⁸¹ Miller-Davenport, *Gateway State*. t

tiki-cultural cookbooks as early as 1946.²⁸² Even after “Hawaiian” cooking and entertainment guides became widely available to consumers, publishers regularly sought out Bergeron’s endorsement to authenticate their information. In the 1959 *Holiday Cookbook* produced by *Better Homes and Gardens*, the luau guide is accompanied by a color photograph of Victor Bergeron inspecting a Hawai‘i-inspired spread.²⁸³

By Hawai‘i statehood in 1959, demand for Hawai‘i-style entertaining, cooking, and décor had propelled wider production of tiki-cultural guides and commodities for middle-class cosmopolitan housewives. In a *Washington Post* article titled “Luau Comes to Mainland,” journalist Elinor Lee observes:

Hawaii – even a few years ago – seemed a very far away island to most Americans. Its name conjured up mental pictures of a tropical island with grass skirted maidens doing the hula, beach combers doing nothing, and everyone wearing leis and playing ukuleles while they feasted on roast pig and poi fresh coconuts and pineapples. Now all this has been changed. Hawaii is our newest state. And even those of us who have never been lucky enough to visit the tropical islands want to know more about its people, places and food.²⁸⁴

Lee’s assessment aligns with what I consider to be the shift from a settler colonial nostalgia to a liberal notion of Hawai‘i’s modernity within tiki-cultural production. After statehood, this transformation is also accompanied by a new sense of American ownership over tiki-cultural production as well as Hawai‘i and Hawaiian culture. Lee goes on to describe what she calls a “mainlander style luau”:

A mainlander style luau is colorful, casual and fun to give... [T]he lei — a garland of fresh flowers, [is a] symbol of love and friendship in our upcoming newest state. Both leis and luaus (feasts) are popular with kamaaina (old timers) and malininis [sic] (newcomers) to the Islands, and the mainlander style luau

²⁸² *Trader Vic’s Book of Food and Drink* (New York, NY: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1946).

²⁸³ Amy Reddinger, “Eating ‘Local’: The Politics of Post-Statehood Hawaiian Cookbooks,” *Nordic Journal of English Studies* 9, no. 3 (September 1, 2010): 200, <https://doi.org/10.35360/njes.230>.

²⁸⁴ Elinor Lee, “Luau Comes to Mainland: Mainlander Style Luau Is Festive Fare for May,” *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, April 30, 1959.

pictured includes all the trimmings. The delicately flavored entree is chicken South Seas served atop an easy-to-do coconut rice pilaf. Peach-pecan ambrosia goes with the main dish. Desserts, other than coconut cake which is traditional, are “mainlander” variations of the coconut theme...²⁸⁵

Lee emphasizes that this form of luau is largely not “traditional,” but rather in a “mainland” style. This appropriative transformation of Hawaiian cultural practices into American ones mirrors the imagined absorption of Hawai‘i into the United States and is, I argue, a distinguishing feature of postwar tiki culture.

Notably, Kanaka Maoli and Hawaiian knowledge (Hawaiian language, lei, and lū‘au) are only referenced implicitly or in passing within this and many other tiki-cultural texts from the statehood era. Noting that most cuisine promoted as “Hawaiian” during the 1950s and 1960s was actually Asian, Miller-Davenport argues that this was “part of [a] broader erasure of Native Hawaiians in postwar narratives of Hawai‘i as ‘bridge to Asia.’”²⁸⁶ I agree with this assessment, but I would also argue that it is crucial to understand how this erasure functioned, specifically, within postwar tiki culture as a strategy of colonial apprehension. For example, it is true that the food of postwar tiki culture was not Kanaka Maoli cuisine, but the mythical “Hawaiian host” figure was ever-present, and tiki-cultural stagings nearly always incorporated misused or misrepresented Kanaka Maoli knowledge of some kind. Another article by Lee from 1968, for example, described a luau party hosted at the home of Captain Robert F. Peterson for his teenage daughter Cheryl, who was explicitly represented as playing the role of Hawaiian host:

The teen-age hostess wore a Hawaiian holoku (princess dress with train) more formal than the traditional muumu. With an orchid tucked into her long, dark hair,

²⁸⁵ Lee.

²⁸⁶ Miller-Davenport, *Gateway State*, 152.

and a carnation lei around her neck, Cheryl looked the part of a native Island beauty about to greet her guests with ‘[aloha] nui’ (a great big aloha to you!).²⁸⁷

The Petersons, Lee explains, had lived in Hawai‘i during Captain Peterson’s tour of duty, authenticating their supposed knowledge of Hawaiian customs. I argue that Kanaka Maoli are not only erased in this tiki-cultural staging but also *replaced* by white Americans embodying an imaged Hawaiian subjectivity. Another common trope in home luaus was to eat food while seated on the ground or with one’s fingers. In a 1953 issue of *Good Housekeeping*, Carol Brock, the magazine’s “Institute Hostess Editor” encouraged housewives to set up finger-food on the floor with plenty of water bowls and paper napkins for a more hygienic “mainland” adaptation of the luau, reinforcing harmful colonial notions of Kanaka Maoli primitivism.²⁸⁸ Tiki-cultural stagings nearly always required the presence of an imagined “Hawaiian” situated within Western civilized modernity in order to authenticate the atmosphere of the production.

The staging of such atmospheres within homes rather than at commercial establishments significantly shifted the ways in which tiki-cultural production apprehended Hawai‘i and Hawaiians. By taking on the role of the Hawaiian host to welcome guests into a Hawai‘i-inspired home, white Americans staged a settler colonial fantasy in which they could not only be celebrated haole guests to Hawai‘i but also might replace or join Kanaka Maoli as potential “Hawaiian” hosts.

This fantasy of white inclusion in Hawai‘i is even more evident within homes and apartment complexes that had been deliberately designed in the authenticated “modern” tiki style. Décor that mimicked the aesthetics of popularized postwar tiki bars could be

²⁸⁷ Elinor Lee, “Hello Summer Welcome Sun and Luau Fun,” *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, June 13, 1968.

²⁸⁸ Carol Brock, “Hawaiian Luau,” *Good Housekeeping*, August 1953.

more and more easily incorporated into American homes. Wealthier families seeking out a tiki design style for their home interiors could turn to specialized artists and artisans such as Robert van Oosting and Leroy Schmaltz. In 1956, van Oosting and Schmaltz founded Oceanic Arts, which became a prominent supplier of sculptures, art objects, and décor for restaurants, movie studios, interior designers, and elite private consumers.²⁸⁹ Once interior design companies such as Ritts Co. and Witco popularized rattan furniture and other tiki-inspired interior décor, even middle-class families could adopt a modern tiki style for their homes by visiting local and regional furniture chains or department stores.²⁹⁰ In advertising, this form of consumption and home design was often explicitly stated as a way to adopt a modern “Hawaiian” lifestyle. In just one instance, Breuner’s Furniture in Oakland advertised a several-weeks-long event in 1959 at which customers could visit the store to learn about “a wonderful way of life in ‘living Hawaiian,’” with the disclaimer that Breuner’s was not “urging you to ‘go native’ (as we’d like to).”²⁹¹

Concurrently, tiki-style apartment complexes emerged across the country to appeal to individuals and families seeking to live the imagined “Hawaiian” lifestyle full-time. Many of these apartments were architecturally similar to tiki bars that used an A-frame structure and peaked roofs, thatching, or bamboo to mimic the Indigenous architectural styles of Oceania.²⁹² The “tiki idol” image was, predictably, a common motif, but many of these complexes also used landscaping to recreate Hawai‘i’s natural scenery. Moreover, these tiki-cultural apartments, just like the tiki bars upon which they

²⁸⁹ Kirsten, *Tiki Pop*, 519.

²⁹⁰ Kirsten, 547–48. Although this décor aesthetic was adopted by those living respectable suburban lifestyles, it was also popularly associated with celebrities such as Elvis Presley and Hugh Hefner, who used the exoticism of tiki culture to represent their attachments to a “savage” masculinity and sexuality.

²⁹¹ “Live Hawaiian: It’s a Way of Life (Advertisement),” *Oakland Tribune*, June 26, 1959.

²⁹² Kirsten, *Tiki Pop*, 460.

were based, frequently promoted an imagined “Hawaiian” lifestyle for their tenants that matched the aesthetic design. One such complex declared in its brochure that “you too can live like a king in this Polynesian wonderland.” Another, called Polynesian Village apartments in Playa del Rey, California, advertised that their complex was “made of carved Tiki gods and concrete block, lush tropical plantings and cascading waterfalls,” but also encouraged residents to “[t]hrow some gardenias in the two pools, get into a muu-muu, serve up the poi, and you’ve got Diamond Head in Playa del Rey.”²⁹³ These domestic spaces were permanent tiki-cultural stagings that blurred the boundary between fantasy and reality. I argue that these iterative (re)productions served to normalize and romanticize colonial knowledge and the permanent occupation of Hawai‘i, regardless of whether tenants, homeowners, or luau-goers actually chose to move to the islands.

Importantly, much of the domestication of tiki culture within the postwar United States was facilitated by capitalist settler colonial institutions in Hawai‘i who aimed to profit from white American desires for tiki-cultural atmospheres. The exportation of tiki culture to Hawai‘i articulated with its domestication within the United States such that both operations shaped and were shaped by the other in support of the U.S. settler colonial project. This is particularly evident in the case of the Dole Pineapple Company, which became one of the most prominent Hawai‘i-based tiki-cultural producers in the postwar period.

The Dole Pineapple Co. was founded as the Hawaiian Pineapple Company in 1901 by James Drummond Dole. James Dole was the cousin of Sanford B. Dole, a member of the haole elite who directly participated in the unlawful overthrow of the

²⁹³ Kirsten, 481.

Hawaiian Kingdom and served as Hawai‘i’s first territorial governor. Castle & Cooke, one of the Hawai‘i-based sugar corporations that made up the “Big Five,” became the majority shareholder in James Dole’s company during the Great Depression. This transfer of power allowed Dole to purchase the entirety of the island of Lana‘i for plantations and solidified the entanglement of Dole Pineapple with the settler colonial capitalist oligarchy in Hawai‘i.²⁹⁴ Throughout the twentieth century, Dole faced several labor strikes from exploited plantation and cannery workers in Hawai‘i even as the company gained a glowing reputation within the United States for helping to modernize the territory.²⁹⁵

During the 1950s through 1970s, the height of tiki culture’s popularity, Dole Pineapple produced numerous brochures for American housewives on the “mainland,” instructing them on how to throw “Hawaiian” luaus and parties. The large majority of these brochures were written by Patricia Collier, Dole’s “Home Economist.” Collier produced instructional materials for Dole for several decades beginning in the early 1950s. Her purported expertise was always authenticated by her knowledge of Hawai‘i, but unlike tiki-cultural producers such as Gantt, Collier’s authoritative voice was authenticated by her affiliation with Dole rather than any explicit personal attachment to the islands. Collier never mentions whether she lives or has lived in Hawai‘i, though it is implied through her employment with a corporation that had long represented Hawai‘i in the public imaginary.

Collier’s instructions emphasized the atmospheric staging of Hawai‘i above all else. The food always seemed secondary, despite the fact that she was representing a food

²⁹⁴ Sascha Scott, “Georgia O’Keefe’s Hawai‘i?: Decolonizing the History of American Modernism,” *American Art* 34, no. 2 (2020): 34, 36; Okihiro, *Pineapple Culture*, 135, 150–51.

²⁹⁵ Okihiro, *Pineapple Culture*, 143.

manufacturer and that the majority of the booklets and pamphlets she produced were made up of recipes that required the use of Dole products. This appears to have been a marketing strategy by which Dole masked its advertising as educational material. In one such booklet titled “A Dole Hawaiian Luau,” Collier began with a page-long description of the luau’s cultural significance and key characteristics. As was common in postwar tiki-cultural production, Collier distinguished an “authentic Polynesian luau” from the “mainland” luau. The latter, which was Collier’s intended focus, foregrounded multiculturalism while deemphasizing Kanaka Maoli culinary practices. She argues that shrimp tempura, for example, would be just as appropriate as poi for a “Hawaiian” luau, because it was “a dish brought to the islands by the Japanese.”²⁹⁶ Above all, Collier insisted:

the most important aspect of a Luau is a relaxed atmosphere. Create it with decorations and costumes in the tropical manner...aloha shirts for the men and casual shift-style dresses or muumuus for the women...guests and attendants alike. ...Green plants or foliage massed at the back of the buffet table or in corners of the room will help create a tropical atmosphere...²⁹⁷

Collier’s guides to tiki-cultural atmospheric staging, authenticated by her association with a recognizable Hawai‘i-based brand, focused on selling not just pineapple, but Hawai‘i itself as a place wherein residents were perpetually relaxed and surrounded by lush untouched foliage. An important part of Collier’s guide to staging, as was the case in so many tiki-cultural productions, was the mimicry of an imagined Hawaiian by white luau-goers. Collier’s pamphlets nearly always contained information about mainland or haole-owned companies that were affiliated with Dole from which consumers could purchase

²⁹⁶ “A Dole Hawaiian Luau” (Booklet, 1973), 2, Dole Collection, Cabinet 2, Drawer 4, Folder 10, University of Hawai‘i, Mānoa, Hamilton Library.

²⁹⁷ “A Dole Hawaiian Luau.”

“Hawaiian” lei, foliage, and tiki-cultural décor. One pamphlet, titled “Hawaiian Parties Indoor and Out,” also included a detailed glossary of Hawaiian language words and phrases as well as a pronunciation guide so that hosts and guests could more fully adopt an imagined Hawaiian subjectivity as part of the staged production.²⁹⁸ Consumers, Collier implied, could play Hawaiian in order to experience a “mainland” simulation of such an atmosphere anywhere. However, one had to visit in person to access an “authentic” Hawai‘i fantasy, one which always seemed to be waiting to embrace white Americans as fellow “Hawaiians.”

The apprehension of Hawai‘i presented by Collier was one that was emblemized by the presence of the Dole Pineapple Company. In “Hawaiian Parties Indoor and Out,” Collier describes the Hawai‘i scene that visitors could expect to find upon arrival: “The Dole pineapple fields stretch to encompass an entire island in the Hawaiian chain — and then some, filling the air with a sun-sweet aroma and dripping with juicy sweetness as they make their way to the cannery.”²⁹⁹ Collier consistently represented Dole as an integral part of an authentic Hawai‘i atmosphere even as the corporation functioned as a key agent in the settler colonial capitalist economy and militourism industry.

After World War II, Dole capitalized upon the growing tourism industry by offering guided tours of their O‘ahu plantations and Honolulu cannery.³⁰⁰ To promote their tourism endeavors, Dole produced short films and travelogues about Hawai‘i that were distributed widely within the United States. One short film titled “Treasure Islands,”

²⁹⁸ “Hawaiian Parties Indoor and Out” (Booklet, 1973), 9, Dole Collection, Cabinet 2, Drawer 4, Folder 10, University of Hawai‘i, Mānoa, Hamilton Library.

²⁹⁹ “Hawaiian Parties Indoor and Out.”

³⁰⁰ Reception Room Booklets (n.d.), Dole Collection, Cabinet 2, Drawer 1, Folder 29A, University of Hawai‘i, Mānoa, Hamilton Library.

created by Dole’s marketing department in 1948, was designed as an educational tool “suitable for...Junior & Sr. High Schools, Colleges, [and] all types of adult organizations.” According to a distribution flyer, which insisted that “[n]o story of Hawaii would be complete without a visit to the pineapple plantation,” the film depicted “the story of the amazing pineapple industry” as well as “native Hawaiians” performing hula and hosting luau.³⁰¹ 1950s reception room booklets from Dole’s Honolulu Cannery suggest that the tours foregrounded workplace safety, joyful racialized workers, and modern production methods in an effort to obscure labor exploitation and build Dole brand loyalty among American tourists to Hawai‘i. Importantly, visitors to the cannery were encouraged to stop by the welcome desk to pick up Patricia Collier’s tiki-cultural luau guides and recipe books to take home with them. Dole’s engagement with tourists both incorporated and authenticated a tiki-cultural apprehension of Hawai‘i as a modern and multicultural paradise where even industrial capitalism was commensurate with an atmosphere of perpetual relaxation and an embrace of white American presence.

Although Dole certainly contributed to both the domestication and exportation of tiki culture after World War II, the adoption of tiki-cultural stagings by the tourism industry was a far broader phenomenon. The popularity and decades-long authentication of tiki culture within the United States — and, increasingly, in Hawai‘i as Don the Beachcomber, Trader Vic’s, and many other tiki chains opened locations in Honolulu — led tourists to expect a tiki-cultural atmosphere when they arrived in Hawai‘i. The tourism industry quickly moved to meet and capitalize upon these expectations. Several major cruise ship and air travel companies incorporated tiki-cultural food and drink

³⁰¹ Flyer (n.d.), Dole Collection, Cabinet 2, Drawer 4, Folder 14, University of Hawai‘i, Mānoa, Hamilton Library.

offerings into their menus so that tourists could experience the staged atmosphere before they even arrived in Hawai‘i.³⁰² Matson Lines, the predominant cruise ship company for travel to and from Hawai‘i to the U.S. west coast, ran an advertising campaign in the early 1960s with an endorsement from Victor Bergeron. The ad also featured photographs of Bergeron in an aloha shirt enjoying tiki-cultural food and drink with other lei-wearing passengers on a Matson cruise ship.³⁰³

Architectural development in Honolulu’s tourism districts during the 1950s and 1960s also started to apply an American tiki-style aesthetic. One notable example was in the design of the Ala Moana Center (1959) near Waikīkī, which was built to resemble a regional U.S. shopping mall that would be familiar to American tourists. In an analysis of postwar architectural design in Honolulu, Kelema Moses asserts that “[t]he Ala Moana Center’s environment perpetuated the image of Honolulu as a Pacific island city guided by American social and economic mores... [by providing] spaces and services for Americans who were in search of the ‘exotic,’ but who desired the comforts of a Western lifestyle.”³⁰⁴ This image was achieved by adhering to a postwar tiki-cultural aesthetic that combined modernist design elements with artwork and decorative motifs signifying both Hawaiian and Asian cultures.³⁰⁵ Moses concludes that this design style was understood to

³⁰² It is evident from postwar tourist ephemera that items such as mai tais were offered by the major travel companies during flights and steamship travel to Hawai‘i. Sven Kirsten has written that Victor Bergeron had been “approached to act as food consultant for United Airlines and the hotels of the Matson steamship line,” but Bergeron’s direct involvement in Matson’s and United’s food offerings is unverified. (Kirsten, *The Book of Tiki*, 91.)

³⁰³ “Trader Vic’s for Matson (Advertisement),” *The San Bernardino County Sun*, July 8, 1962. For discussion of the aloha shirt’s entanglements with militourism see Christen Tsuyuko Sasaki, “Threads of Empire: Militourism and the Aloha Wear Industry in Hawai‘i,” *American Quarterly* 68, no. 3 (2016): 643–67.

³⁰⁴ Kelema Lee Moses, “Kingdom, Territory, State: An Architectural Narrative of Honolulu, Hawai‘i (1882-1994)” (Dissertation, The Pennsylvania State University, 2015), 163. Moses, 163

³⁰⁵ Moses, 165, 169.

be particularly appealing to American tourists and potential new residents “because it cohered with trends in national popular culture.”³⁰⁶

By the 1970s, the tiki-cultural atmospheric staging of Hawai‘i had arguably become the Hawai‘i militourism industry’s single most important technology of apprehension. The fantasy of white inclusion that tiki culture had iteratively produced over many decades had come to be authenticated as part of a statehood-era colonial apprehension of Hawai‘i. When postwar Americans were exposed to representations of Hawai‘i within the United States, the large majority of were *only* given access to tiki culture. This staging purported to be a representation of a real Hawai‘i that was modernized, multicultural, and hospitable to haole. Over time, those same white Americans arrived in Hawai‘i having experienced a tiki-cultural cruise ship or flight and would go straight to their tiki-cultural resort, eat at tiki bars and restaurants, and shop at tiki-style shopping centers before returning home. Despite what twenty-first-century commentators have asserted, this analysis demonstrates that tiki culture was actively *authenticated* by the militourism industry to serve the settler colonial project in Hawai‘i, even if it was not an *authentic representation* of Kanaka Maoli knowledge and culture. I argue that this authenticated colonial knowledge, iteratively (re)produced in homes, restaurants, media, and by Hawai‘i tourism, solidified a commonsense knowledge among white Americans that they were entitled to inclusion and belonging in Hawai‘i.

Fantasies of Inclusion and Settler Colonial Violence

³⁰⁶ Moses, 170.

For Kanaka Maoli, the consequences of tiki-cultural staging and the fantasy of white inclusion in Hawai‘i have been violent and material. As a technology of apprehension, tiki culture’s deployment by the militourism industry facilitated the post-statehood rush of white tourism and settlement to Hawai‘i. Noelani Goodyear-Ka‘ōpua has written that this influx of American settlers and visitors led to the development of new hotels and resort complexes as well as the expansion of luxury and suburban residential areas. Much of this development displaced Indigenous, racialized, and working-class communities in Hawai‘i.

Despite the many ways in which tiki culture’s vision for Hawai‘i had been purposefully authenticated by the settler colonial governing apparatus, it inevitably failed to obscure the fact that many Kanaka Maoli and multi-ethnic communities in Hawai‘i openly rejected the settler colonial “modern” lifestyle and directly challenged the authority and benevolence of tiki-cultural producers. For instance, hospitality workers and Dole pineapple’s mostly non-white laborers regularly went on strike and protested exploitative and unsafe working conditions during the postwar period.³⁰⁷ These labor demonstrations publicly contradicted tiki-cultural falsehoods about Hawai‘i’s happy racialized workers advanced by the tourism industry and Dole’s cannery and plantation tours. Furthermore, in stark contrast to the mythic “Hawaiian” lifestyle that had been constructed by tiki culture, many communities had been, in Goodyear-Ka‘ōpua’s words,

³⁰⁷ Saranillio, *Unsustainable Empire*, 207–8; Hōkūlani K. Aikau and Vernadette Vicuña Gonzalez, eds., *Detours: A Decolonial Guide to Hawai‘i* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2019), 288–89. See, also, the many scrapbooks in the Dole Archives at the University of Hawai‘i, Mānoa, Hawaiian and Pacific Collection for countless Hawai‘i-based newspaper clippings of strikes and worker protests.

actually living “‘Hawaiian style,’ relying on land-based subsistence practices like fishing, gathering, and farming.”³⁰⁸

Throughout the 1970s, ‘80s, and ‘90s, communities living in such places as Kalama Valley, Waiāhole, and Waikāne in O‘ahu faced forced evictions and the disastrous effects of water diversion by luxury housing and tourism developers. Kanaka Maoli and non-native allied residents rose up to contest this theft of land as well as the violent elimination of Indigenous lifeways. Within this movement for Hawaiian sovereignty, the resurgence of Kanaka Maoli knowledge and cultural practices was understood to be intrinsically tied to struggles over land and water.³⁰⁹ As Kanaka Maoli sovereignty activist and scholar Haunani-Kay Trask wrote in 1991:

Tourists flock to my Native land for escape, but they are escaping into a state of mind while participating in the destruction of a host people in a Native place. ... Burdened with commodification of our culture and exploitation of our people, Hawaiians exist in an occupied country whose hostage people are forced to witness (and, for many, to participate in) our own collective humiliation as tourist artifacts for the First World³¹⁰

Throughout the late twentieth century, Trask and her fellow Kanaka Maoli and non-native sovereignty activists consistently organized protests in public places such as Waikīkī, ‘Iolani Palace, and the Hawai‘i state capitol building in downtown Honolulu. I would argue this action was particularly subversive because it directly confronted American tourists with a distinctly non-tiki-cultural Hawai‘i. Sovereignty activists who openly criticized tourism and tourists inherently undermined the fantasy of white

³⁰⁸ Noelani Goodyear-Ka‘ōpua, “Introduction,” in *A Nation Rising: Hawaiian Movements for Life, Land, and Sovereignty*, ed. Noelani Goodyear-Ka‘ōpua, Ikaika Hussey, and Erin Kahunawaika‘ala Wright, 2014, 7.

³⁰⁹ Goodyear-Ka‘ōpua, 9.

³¹⁰ Haunani-Kay Trask, “Lovely Hula Lands: Corporate Tourism and the Prostitution of Hawaiian Culture,” *Border/Lines* 23 (Winter 1992/1991): 23.

inclusion in Hawai‘i. The authenticity of the tiki-cultural atmospheric staging, which promised that the presence of white Americans would be unconditionally celebrated by Hawai‘i’s multiracial populace, could not hold up to the reality of anti-tourism protests led by Hawaiians and Hawai‘i residents.

As Judy Rohrer has argued, the ever-growing strength of the Hawaiian sovereignty and decolonization movements have been met with violent rage from haole in Hawai‘i who believed they had an equal claim to belonging. White American residents, many of whom had moved to Hawai‘i post-statehood to pursue the tiki-cultural promises of white inclusion, recognized the dissonance between those expectations and the reality with which they were presented.³¹¹ As one visitor to Hawai‘i wrote in a popular travel blog post from 2007 titled “(My Experience of) Racism in Hawaii”:

“Hawaii is...a very multicultural place, as recorded in all the guidebooks and evidenced on the streets. So I figured I’d feel right at home [as a white woman]. Not so.”³¹² The presence of Kanaka Maoli and claims of Indigenous belonging expose the ambivalence that is a central facet of colonial apprehension, as I argue throughout this dissertation. The inevitable failure of colonial logics is a consistent challenge to settler common sense knowledge. In response, haole residents and tourists have frequently sought to reiterate and reinforce the fantasy of white inclusion by deploying claims of “reverse racism” and embodying a position of victimization.³¹³

³¹¹ Rohrer, *Staking Claim*.

³¹² Nora Dunn, “(My Experience of) Racism in Hawaii,” Blog, *The Professional Hobo: Travelling Full-Time in a Financially Sustainable Way* (blog), 2021 2007, <https://www.theprofessionalhobo.com/racism/>.

³¹³ For more on settler victimization see Eve Tuck and K. Wayne Yang, “Decolonization Is Not a Metaphor,” *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education & Society* 1, no. 1 (2012): 1–40; Elisabeth Paquette, “Reconciliation and Cultural Genocide: A Critique of Liberal Multicultural Strategies of Innocence,” *Hypatia* 35, no. 1 (2020): 143–60; Elena Ruíz, “Cultural Gaslighting,” *Hypatia* 35, no. 4 (2020): 687–713; Sonja Thomas, “Cowboys and Indians: Indian Priests in Rural Montana,” *WSQ: Women’s Studies Quarterly* 47, no. 1–2 (2019): 110–31.

Despite the durability of these structures of violence, Kanaka Maoli have historically and consistently subverted and undermined the logics and common sense of colonial apprehension. In Chapter 3, I examine post-statehood and the Hawaiian sovereignty movement more closely as an historical moment wherein Kanaka Maoli took decolonial action in response to the correction of their dissent.

CHAPTER 3

APPREHENDING KANAKA MAOLI RAGE: DECOLONIAL STRUCTURES OF FEELING IN HAWAI‘I AND AFFECTIVE CORRECTION IN *HAWAII FIVE-O*

On July 17, 2019, police arrested a group of thirty-three kūpuna (elders) who had formed a blockade across the access road leading to the sacred mountain Mauna a Wākea (Mauna Kea). The arrests of the kūpuna occurred just one week after leaders of the Protect Mauna Kea movement called on Kanaka Maoli and non-Hawaiian allies to gather and form a pu‘uhonua (place of refuge) at Pu‘uhuluhulu, a hill at the base of the mountain, to protect the site from desecration by the impending construction of the Thirty Meter Telescope (TMT). As the kūpuna were removed — many were physically lifted and carried away by law enforcement — hundreds of their fellow kia‘i (protectors) of the mauna (mountain) bore witness in grief and pain. Many of them chanted and sang in Hawaiian.³¹⁴

Given the peaceful conduct of the protectors, the settler state’s response to the kia‘i appeared inordinate and excessive. Dozens of law enforcement agents from multiple municipalities and governmental institutions across the state of Hawai‘i descended on the pu‘uhonua dressed in riot gear. Ilima Long described July 17th as “the largest law enforcement operation in the history of Hawai‘i to come down on Hawaiians, short of the U.S. military actually landing Navy and Marine officers to overthrow our government.”³¹⁵ After the arrests of kūpuna failed to disperse the kia‘i, Governor David Ige announced an emergency proclamation granting law enforcement “increased

³¹⁴ Marie Alohalani Brown, “Aloha Wale Mauna Kea, Aloha Wale Ku‘u Po‘e Hoapili Kia‘i Ma Ke Anuanu,” *Biography* 43, no. 3 (2020): 582–87.

³¹⁵ Mikey Inouye, *Like a Mighty Wave: A Maunakea Film*, 2019, <https://youtu.be/4J3ZCzHMMPQ>.

flexibility and authority to close more areas and restrict access on Mauna Kea...[and] allow law enforcement to improve its management of the site and surrounding areas and ensure public safety.”³¹⁶

Although emergency declarations are supposed to be reserved for “natural disasters and situations of extreme peril,” Governor Ige justified his response by arguing that the protest was an “unsafe situation.”³¹⁷ At a press conference, Ige claimed without evidence that the camp at the pu‘uhonua was disorganized, unsanitary, and rife with alcohol and drug use.³¹⁸ Reporters and state officials who visited the camp easily contested Ige’s claim, noting that there was a set of guidelines for proper conduct, as well as medical care, properly maintained bathroom facilities, and a system for disposing of trash and recycling. Heidi Tsuneyoshi, a Honolulu City councilwoman, reported that alcohol, drugs, and smoking were also strictly prohibited in the pu‘uhonua.³¹⁹ Ige’s attempt to apprehend the Mauna Kea protectors as unclean and disorganized failed to hold to up to scrutiny.

The settler state further relied on weak claims that the kia‘i were unreasonable, dangerous, and volatile. Governor Ige’s proclamation described his authority to declare a state of emergency “in order to protect the health, safety, and welfare of the people,

³¹⁶ Ryan Prior and Chris Boyette, “Protesters Arrested at Hawaii’s Mauna Kea for Blocking Construction of the Thirty-Meter Telescope,” *CNN*, July 17, 2019, <https://www.cnn.com/2019/07/17/us/mauna-kea-arrests-telescope-protests-trnd/index.html>.

³¹⁷ Anne Keala Kelly, “Mauna Kea Is Only Latest Thing They Want to Take, ‘We Will Not Give It to Them,’” *Indian Country Today*, July 21, 2019, <https://indiancountrytoday.com/news/mauna-kea-is-only-latest-thing-they-want-to-take-we-will-not-give-it-to-them>.

³¹⁸ Healani Sonoda-Pale, a kia‘i, noted the familiarity of these kinds of charges: “When I heard him say that we’re dirty, and how we are not keeping our pu‘uhonua clean, I thought, wow, he’s going to have to come up with better racist tropes than the dirty Hawaiian...[b]ecause we’ve been called that since even before my parents were kids.” Kelly.

³¹⁹ Dakin Andone, Sarah Jorgensen, and Polo Sandoval, “‘This Is Our Last Stand.’ Protesters on Mauna Kea Dig in Their Heels,” *CNN*, July 22, 2019, <https://www.cnn.com/2019/07/21/us/hawaii-mauna-kea-protests/index.html>.

ensure the execution of the law, and suppress or prevent lawless violence, riot, the forcible obstruction of the execution of the laws, *or because there exists a reasonable apprehension thereof*” (emphasis added).³²⁰ The proclamation presented the obstruction of traffic as a “volatile situation” and claimed that statements by kia‘i that “they are prepared to do everything they can to prevent the construction of the Thirty Meter Telescope” justified a “reasonable apprehension” of “imminent danger.”³²¹ The state’s apprehension of the protectors as violent and dangerous contrasted sharply with the undeniable reality of life at the pu‘uhonua. Kia‘i spent their days on the Mauna caring for one another, holding ceremonies, and cultivating Hawaiian knowledge through the establishment of Pu‘uhuluhulu University.³²²

As the demonstration stretched on over many months, the settler state seemed to change its strategy, hoping to agitate the kia‘i into feeling and behaving as expected. In September 2019, one officer was recorded spreading misinformation about the alleged presence of police informants within the camp, and another officer used a power saw to destroy a Hawaiian flag in front of a group of kia‘i. Over the course of ten days in September, law enforcement also increased police presence, set up a sobriety checkpoint next to the pu‘uhonua, flew helicopters at low-level above the camp, and shined high beams at kūpuna in the middle of the night.³²³ In a press release, kia‘i denounced these actions as “unethical law enforcement tactics to harass, intimidate and vilify Maunakea

³²⁰ David Y. Ige, “Emergency Proclamation: Mauna Kea,” July 17, 2019, <https://governor.hawaii.gov/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/1907086-Mauna-Kea.pdf>.

³²¹ Ige.

³²² See <https://puuhuluhulu.com/learn/university>

³²³ “Press Statement from Pu‘uhonua o Pu‘uhuluhulu: State of Hawai‘i May Be Waging an Unethical Campaign to Agitate and Intimidate Maunakea Protectors” (Pu‘uhonua o Pu‘uhuluhulu, September 17, 2019), <https://puuhuluhulu.com/s/Press-Statement-91719-Google-Docs.pdf>.

protectors, incite fear in our communities, and escalate tensions in the Pu‘uhonua.”³²⁴

The kia‘i not only refused to comply with the state’s demands, but also with the colonial apprehension of their conduct and affect: “These actions are possibly being employed to create a false pretext for the use of force on our peaceful protectors at Pu‘uhuluhulu. However, they only serve to strengthen our resolve and commitment to Kapu Aloha [principles for respectful behavior], peaceful, non-violent conduct.”³²⁵

The efforts of Governor Ige and law enforcement against kia‘i are emblematic of the ways in which the state has sought to apprehend Kanaka Maoli activists as socially and emotionally disordered. In earlier chapters, I have argued that the settler colonial state and its agents have relied on both the occlusion of Hawaiian indigeneity and the inclusion of white U.S. Americans to advance and authenticate an apprehension of Hawaiians and Hawai‘i as unequivocally part of the United States. This chapter attends more intently to the question of colonial apprehension’s defensive function: how have movements for Hawaiian sovereignty and decolonization challenged the post-statehood apprehension of Hawai‘i, and how has the settler colonial state sought to contend with those challenges? I argue that the state has pursued a persistent strategy of affective *correction*, which I theorize as the production of colonial knowledge that criminalizes Indigenous and decolonial ways of feeling in order to justify state violence.

The successes of the kia‘i at Pu‘uhuluhulu further demonstrate the ways in which Kanaka Maoli political action has consistently undermined the colonial apprehension of Indigenous affect by foregrounding relational and decolonial ways of feeling. The 2019 movement to protect Mauna a Wākea is part of a long genealogy of struggle. Among the

³²⁴ “Press Statement.”

³²⁵ “Press Statement.”

kūpuna arrested in July 2019, for instance, there were individuals who had been fighting to protect Mauna a Wākea for many years, and some had even been involved in movements for Hawaiian sovereignty since the 1970s.³²⁶ Many of the younger kia'i were also the decedents of those who had been leaders in these earlier movements and had grown up in the struggle.³²⁷ In this chapter I present an account of the Hawaiian sovereignty movement since the 1970s that emphasizes its groundedness in what I am calling a *decolonial structure of feeling*: a way of feeling otherwise made tangible through the affective acts of Kanaka Maoli political actors that continues to sustain Kanaka Maoli political action into the present day.³²⁸

To demonstrate the decolonial power of Kanaka Maoli ways of feeling, I analyze the police procedural television program *Hawaii Five-O*: a cultural formation that emerged concurrently and, I argue, in contest with the Hawaiian sovereignty movement. My reading of *Hawaii Five-O* suggests that the show advanced an apprehension of 1970s Hawaiians as angry yet containable threats to the settler colonial social order. As such, I suggest that *Hawaii Five-O* illustrates how contemporary Kanaka Maoli anger in response to dispossession and colonial violence was actively *corrected* for a mainstream white American audience and to better serve settler colonial logics.

³²⁶ Inouye, *Like a Mighty Wave*.

³²⁷ Brown, "Aloha Wale Mauna Kea, Aloha Wale Ku'u Po'e Hoapili Kia'i Ma Ke Anuanu."

³²⁸ The Hawaiian sovereignty movement eludes easy periodization. To say that such a movement "began" at any given point in time might falsely suggest that Kanaka Maoli only started to defend their sovereignty at this point. To uncritically conceive of the political movement in this way would fail to account for the long history of Kanaka Maoli political struggle against U.S. settler colonialism. In this chapter, I examine a politico-cultural moment from the 1970s through the present that is often referred to as the Hawaiian sovereignty movement. However, I understand this historical moment to be one of many that coalesces around a genealogy of Kanaka Maoli political action stretching from the nineteenth century into the present.

The final analytic section of this chapter turns to the life and legacy of Kanaka Maoli scholar, artist and activist Haunani-Kay Trask and her articulation of a decolonial structure of feeling. More specifically, I argue that Trask embodied an affective formation that I refer to as aloha rage: a collective and politicized way of feeling angry that explicitly refused to comply with the settler colonial conception of Kanaka Maoli anger emblemized by *Hawaii Five-O*. I conclude by returning to the decolonial action at Pu‘uhuluhulu and the embrace by *kia‘i* of aloha rage as articulated through the principles of Kapu Aloha.

Decolonial Structures of Feeling

My use of the term “structure of feeling” draws from the work of Raymond Williams and José Esteban Muñoz. In “Film and the Dramatic Tradition,” Williams conceives of the “structure of feeling” of a given historical context as the underlying “living experience of the time,” the “complex whole” of cultural life that was made up of but not reducible to individual imaginative or productive acts.³²⁹ This concept is foundational to Williams’s approach to the study of culture. He emphasizes the ways in which imaginative domains of cultural production both shape and are shaped by social and material conditions.³³⁰ Importantly, Williams’ cultural theory also advances the notion that cultural formations are always unfixed and “in process.”³³¹ As such, Williams

³²⁹ Raymond Williams, “Film in the Dramatic Tradition,” in *Preface to Film*, by Michael Orrom and Raymond Williams (London: Film Drama, 1954), 21; Stuart Middleton, “Raymond Williams’s ‘Structure of Feeling’ and the Problem of Democratic Values in Britain, 1938-1961,” *Modern Intellectual History* 17, no. 4 (December 2020): 1149.

³³⁰ Caroline Levine, “Raymond Williams, Marxism and Literature (1977),” *Public Culture* 32, no. 2 (May 1, 2020): 428.

³³¹ Raymond L. Williams, *Marxism and Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), 132.

saw marginalized and oppositional groups — his focus was the British working class — as empowered to transform hegemonic cultural meanings and values. The structure of feeling concept allowed Williams to gesture toward the “affective elements of consciousness and relationships” that, alongside material conditions, produce ever-shifting sociocultural formations.³³² To Williams these “affective elements” function “as a ‘structure’: as a set, with specific internal relations, at once interlocking and in tension.”³³³ However, as Sianne Ngai has argued, Williams does not necessarily consider actual emotions in his theorization of structures of feeling:

Williams’ “structures of feeling” cannot be equated with what we ordinarily think of as emotional qualities, since the former are defined as formations that are still in process and barely semanticized, while the latter have distinct histories and come heavily saturated with cultural meanings and value. ... [H]is primary aim is to mobilize an entire affective register, *in* its entirety, and *as* a register, in order to enlarge the scope and definition of materialist analysis.³³⁴

Williams’s structures of feeling concept facilitates our understanding of culture as lived experience, as both social and personal, and as always in process, but his theorization alone cannot address the work of specific feelings or even affect itself in shaping sociocultural experience.

Taking Williams’s conceptual turn as a starting point, Muñoz expands upon structures of feeling in his essay “Feeling Brown” as a way to discuss “affiliations and identifications” among and between marginalized peoples. “What unites and consolidates oppositional groups,” Muñoz argues, “is not simply the fact of identity but the way in which they perform affect, especially in relation to an official ‘national affect’ that is

³³² Williams, 132.

³³³ Williams, 132.

³³⁴ Sianne Ngai, *Ugly Feelings* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2007), 360.

aligned with a hegemonic class.”³³⁵ To Muñoz, whiteness coalesces around the performance of a certain way of feeling — “feeling white” — a mode with which racialized people are expected to comply.³³⁶ To perform a different mode of feeling, then, refuses that mandate. Muñoz turns, specifically, to “Latina/o performance,” which he argues “theatricalizes a certain mode of ‘feeling brown.’”³³⁷ Ethnic, racialized, and other marginalized groups are potentially unified by shared structures of feeling that are distinct from hegemonic feeling-ways.

Muñoz and Williams both emphasize that structures of feeling can be made tangible in the form of individual acts. For Williams, such acts are emblemized by the production of art objects: “The structure of feeling lies deeply embedded in our lives; it cannot be merely extracted and summarized; it is perhaps only in art — and this is the importance of art — that it can be realized, and communicated, as a whole experience.”³³⁸ For Muñoz, acts of performance (broadly conceived) not only make structures of feeling tangible, but also generate, strengthen, and politicize them. Individual performances of “brown” and queer affect, Muñoz contends, build “new models of relationality and interconnectedness” within communities bound by affective ties: “shared vibes and structures of feeling assemble utopia.”³³⁹ Moreover, Muñoz emphasizes that these structures of feeling are specifically counter-hegemonic, because they are “predicated on a break from the structuring logic of white normativity.”³⁴⁰

³³⁵ José Esteban Muñoz, “Feeling Brown: Ethnicity and Affect in Ricardo Bracho’s ‘The Sweetest Hangover (And Other STDs),’” *Theatre Journal* 52, no. 1 (March 2000): 68.

³³⁶ Muñoz, 69.

³³⁷ Muñoz, 68.

³³⁸ Williams, “Film in the Dramatic Tradition,” 54.

³³⁹ Muñoz, “Feeling Brown,” 75.

³⁴⁰ Muñoz, 76.

I use Williams's and Muñoz's theories regarding structures of feeling to magnify the ways in which the Hawaiian sovereignty movement generated a social experience and way of being that undermined the structuring logics of settler colonialism and, therefore, coalesced around a specifically *decolonial* structure of feeling. In the mid-1970s Hawaiian activists seeking to disrupt the U.S. military's use of Kaho'olawe island for their bombardment exercises began to center the Kanaka Maoli knowledge of aloha 'āina (love of the land). This turn enunciated relational feeling more explicitly within Hawai'i land struggles. Mary Tuti Baker argues:

The occupation of Kaho'olawe began as a movement to stop the bombing on the island but grew into a larger movement to return Hawaiians to the land. [George] Helm and other leaders in the movement saw the power that practicing aloha 'āina could have beyond the movement to protect Kaho'olawe. Aloha 'āina could also be a tool to heal the broader trauma of cultural loss and displacement faced by Kānaka.³⁴¹

Baker suggests that the movement for Kaho'olawe prioritized a *land-based* practice of shared emotional healing in which Kanaka Maoli could experience feeling both collectively (as a people) as well as *with* the land. Recalling his first visit to the bomb-scarred island of Kaho'olawe in the 1970s, Kanaka Maoli activist Noa Emmett Aluli described the experience in an interview with Jonathan Kamakawiwo'ole Osorio: "We really felt pain. We really felt that the island was bleeding into the ocean."³⁴² Importantly, I conceive of this empathetic feeling-with as distinct from a sympathetic feeling-for. Aluli repeats that the pain and the bleeding of Kaho'olawe were "really felt" rather than imagined or metaphorical.

³⁴¹ Mary L. Baker, "Ho'oulu 'Āina: Embodied Aloha 'Āina Enacting Indigenous Futurities" (Dissertation, University of Hawai'i at Mānoa, 2018), 54.

³⁴² Cited in Jonathan Kamakawiwo'ole Osorio, "Hawaiian Souls: The Movement to Stop the U.S. Military Bombing of Kaho'olawe," in *A Nation Rising: Hawaiian Movements for Life, Land, and Sovereignty*, by Noelani Goodyear-Ka'ōpua, Ikaika Hussey, and Erin Kahunawaika'ala Wright, 2014, 144.

As I propose as part of this chapter's conclusion, aloha 'āina articulated a *decolonial* structure of feeling not just because it inspired oppositional political action, but also because it broke from hegemonic colonial affective mandates. In the section that follows, I turn my attention to the affective formation of anger, specifically, in order to illustrate how feeling-ways function as sites of contestation. Kanaka Maoli forms of collective and politicized anger, I contend, refused and undermined dominant settler colonial apprehensions of Kanaka Maoli as happy, passive, and grateful for U.S. American presence. I argue that *Hawaii Five-O* — as one part of the colonial knowledge-making apparatus — responded to these challenges through a strategic mode of apprehension that I refer to as *correction* — the disciplinary reframing of decolonial ways of feeling — in an attempt to bring Kanaka Maoli back into compliance with the settler colonial social order.

Police Procedural Television as Colonial Apprehension

Police procedural narratives are generally understood as a post-World War II sub-genre within the broader category of “detective fiction” or the “crime drama.” The sub-genre is primarily marked by its evocation of a documentary style that prioritizes accuracy of representation. A focus on “procedure” — the day-to-day experiences of police officers and detectives — is emblematic of the sub-genre's interest in approximating reality.³⁴³ Moreover, the police procedural often focuses as much, if not more, on representing law enforcement as it does on criminals and crime. The sub-genre, therefore, has many similarities to the “hard-boiled” or “noir” narratives that were

³⁴³ Michael Arntfield, “TVPD: The Generational Diegetics of the Police Procedural on American Television,” *Canadian Review of American Studies* 41, no. 1 (March 2011): 76.

dominant genres of the earlier twentieth century: its focus is the police hero, like the private eye, who is typically an austere man committed to enacting justice in a cruel world. The police procedural departs from noir, however, in that the hero typically operates within the bounds of the law, thereby adding to the sense of realism.³⁴⁴

Although police procedural narratives also appear in popular literature and film, the sub-genre is most associated with serialized television. Many scholars identify NBC's *Dragnet*, which ran from 1951-1959 and then again from 1967-1970, as the program that popularized the now-ubiquitous television genre.³⁴⁵ *Dragnet's* austere protagonist, Sergeant Joe Friday of the Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD), was frequently depicted doing such mundane tasks as completing paperwork. Friday was played by the series director, producer, and writer Jack Webb, who had prepared for his role by accompanying and observing real LAPD officers on patrol. Webb sought to represent what he saw as the realities of contemporary policing in Los Angeles by focusing on topical issues as well as the standard practices and technologies used by the LAPD during the 1950s and 1960s. Importantly, *Dragnet* focused not just on a sense of procedural accuracy but also on presenting law enforcement in a positive light during a time period in which police-community relations in Los Angeles were tense as a result of LAPD corruption and racism.³⁴⁶ The program bolstered the reputation of the LAPD to such a degree that the department used *Dragnet* as a recruitment tool into the 1980s.³⁴⁷

³⁴⁴ J. Madison Davis, "He Do the Police in Different Voices: The Rise of the Police Procedural," *World Literature Today* 86, no. 1 (2012): 10.

³⁴⁵ See Arntfield, "TVPD"; Davis, "He Do the Police in Different Voices."

³⁴⁶ Arntfield, "TVPD," 78–80.

³⁴⁷ Arntfield, 78.

The successes of *Dragnet* opened the door for a number of primetime television series that sought to similarly represent contemporary policing and crime in Los Angeles (*77 Sunset Strip*) as well as other cities, including Miami (*Surfside 6*) and New Orleans (*Bourbon Street Beat*).³⁴⁸ Warner Bros.'s *Hawaiian Eye* (ABC, 1959-1963) was the first of these programs to choose Honolulu as its setting. *Hawaiian Eye* combined elements of earlier crime drama genres — its characters were members of a private detective agency rather than a police department — alongside the near-realism of the emergent police procedural sub-genre. The show's producers aimed to accurately depict Hawai'i's ethnic diversity, its booming tourism industry, and its ties to the U.S. military. *Hawaiian Eye*'s air of authenticity was bolstered in large part by its references to real places in Honolulu. The fictional *Hawaiian Eye* agency, for example, operated out of the real-life *Hawaiian Village Hotel*.³⁴⁹ The show also represented Kanaka Maoli culture as well as topical issues in Hawai'i, knowledge about which the producers often solicited from Doug Mossman: a Kanaka Maoli actor in the show's main cast.³⁵⁰

Although *Hawaiian Eye* was fairly well received, the show was cancelled after four years, leaving an unfulfilled demand among U.S. American audiences for Hawai'i on television. This gave rise to *Hawaii Five-O* (1968-1980), which was a prime-time series that much more closely aligned with the police procedural form and ran for twelve seasons (with nearly 300 episodes) on CBS.³⁵¹ Like *Dragnet*, *Hawaiian Eye*, and many other police procedural dramas, *Hawaii Five-O* pursued a documentary-inspired style by

³⁴⁸ Peter Joseph Olulua Britos, "Symbols, Myth and TV in Hawai'i: *Hawaiian Eye*, *Hawaii Five-0* and *Magnum P.I.*, *The First Cycle*" (dissertation, University of Southern California, 2001), 20, 29.

³⁴⁹ Britos, 20.

³⁵⁰ Britos, 38–40.

³⁵¹ Ed Rampell, "Hawaii Five-O: A Case Study in Haole-Wood Agitprop," *Television Quarterly* 33, no. 1 (2002): 77.

situating the show's narrative within an actual time and place. However, *Hawaii Five-O* sought to distinguish itself from *Hawaiian Eye*, which filmed on a sound stage in California, by spending exorbitant funds to film on location in Hawai'i as a way of enhancing the show's perceived realism.³⁵² Just the pilot for *Hawaii Five-O*, which took the form of a two-hour feature-length film, cost \$750,000 to produce, and the regular episodes could cost anywhere from \$250,000 to \$500,000 each.³⁵³ The high cost of putative authenticity appeared to have been worthwhile for the show's producers. *Hawaii Five-O* eventually accrued an international fanbase, received eleven Emmy award nominations, and became the longest continuously-running police procedural television series.³⁵⁴

Early promotion of *Hawaii Five-O* consistently relegated the themes of policing and crime to the background and, instead, emphasized that the show was uniquely Hawai'i-based rather than Hollywood-made. The producers chose, for instance, to host the premier of the pilot film at Honolulu's Royal Theater rather than in a typical Hollywood venue.³⁵⁵ Promotional news articles reported that the show was "filmed entirely in Hawaii," and invited audiences to tune in to see the "island scenery" in full color.³⁵⁶ During its twelve-year run, the show's production was based in Honolulu at

³⁵² Karen Rhodes, *Booking Hawaii Five-O: An Episode Guide and Critical History of the 1968-1980 Television Detective Series* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Company, Inc, 2007), 7; Britos, "Symbols, Myth and TV in Hawai'i," 52.

³⁵³ Brian Faucette and Ben Bethell, "Hawaii Five-O (CBS, 1968-80)," in *Cop Shows: A Critical History of Police Dramas on Television*, by Roger Sabin, Ronald Wilson, and Linda Speidel (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Company, Inc., Publishers, 2015), 67, 71.

³⁵⁴ Rhodes, *Booking Hawaii Five-O*, 254; Rampell, "Hawaii Five-O: A Case Study," 77; "Hawaii Five-O: Awards & Nominations" (Television Academy), accessed February 9, 2022, <https://www.emmys.com/shows/hawaii-five-o>.

³⁵⁵ Faucette and Bethell, "Hawaii Five-O (CBS, 1968-80)," 67.

³⁵⁶ Edgar Penton, "Island Scenery Enhances CBS's 'Hawaii Five-O,'" *Ogden Standard-Examiner*, October 20, 1968.

various sets and sound-stages that were often built exclusively for *Hawaii Five-O*.³⁵⁷ The cast, too, were made to seem fully situated in Hawai‘i. The show’s lead actor, Jack Lord, conducted his promotional interviews from Honolulu rather than California. Viewers were also promised that the large majority of both speaking roles and extras in the cast were made up of “the real faces of Hawaii...with its ethnic mixture [of] Hawaiians, Polynesians, Japanese, Chinese, Filipinos, Koreans, Portugese [sic] and all possible combinations, as well as Caucasians.”³⁵⁸

The producers of *Hawaii Five-O* seemed to understand that the program’s primary selling point was not necessarily the drama of crime and punishment, but rather its purportedly accurate documentation of everyday life in Hawai‘i. In other words, *Hawaii Five-O* was far more “procedural” than it was a “police” drama. Crime was merely the vehicle by which audiences were made to feel that they were seeing the “ugly” side of Hawai‘i — the show’s creator, Leonard Freeman, described the central theme of *Hawaii Five-O* as “man’s evil amid the beauty of paradise” — until the heroic police restored order and the viewer’s sense of security.³⁵⁹ Even so, *Hawaii Five-O* took great efforts to ingratiate itself with the police force it portrayed. The show’s producers carefully cultivated an amicable relationship with the Honolulu Police Department (HPD) and often cast actual officers to play roles on the show.³⁶⁰ Although the main characters of *Hawaii Five-O* work within the fictional “Hawaii State Police” — Hawai‘i does not

³⁵⁷ Notably, one of the show’s main sets for its first season in 1968 was on the vast estate of Henry J. Kaiser, the founder of the Kaiser Hawaii Kai Development Corporation that partnered with the Bishop Estate to displace residents of Kalama Valley in 1970. This event catalyzed an anti-eviction struggle that is widely considered to have given rise to the contemporary and ongoing Hawaiian sovereignty movement. (“Hawaii Five-O Gets a Break,” *The Gastonia Gazette*, October 13, 1968.)

³⁵⁸ Penton, “Island Scenery Enhances CBS’s ‘Hawaii Five-O.’”

³⁵⁹ Cited in Faucette and Bethell, “Hawaii Five-O (CBS, 1968-80),” 71.

³⁶⁰ Rhodes, *Booking Hawaii Five-O*, 7.

have a statewide police force — HPD officers and detectives often appeared as supporting characters throughout the show, suggesting that this was likely a functional change rather than an attempt to distance the show from the real HPD. A state-wide rather than municipal jurisdiction allowed Steve McGarrett (Jack Lord) and his team to chase criminals anywhere in Hawai‘i, opening up more narrative possibilities and a wider variety of potential settings for episodes.³⁶¹

This chapter focuses specifically on *Hawaii Five-O* because of its apparent interest in representing contemporary Hawai‘i in ways that directly benefitted the settler state. *Hawaii Five-O* was widely celebrated by state officials and industry leaders for injecting millions of production dollars per year into Hawai‘i’s economy.³⁶² After the first successful seasons of the program, Jack Lord was awarded the title of “Hawaii Salesman of the Year” by a group of Honolulu elites for his role in marketing Hawai‘i to tourists, investors, and potential residents.³⁶³ The show’s interest in bolstering Hawai‘i tourism was decidedly self-serving: if the value of the *Hawaii Five-O* was predicated on its perceived representational authenticity, one achieved in large part by filming on-location, the producers required the support of the settler state and the tourism industry to gain access to those locations. In addition to monetary and promotional contributions, I would also argue that the show’s production further scaffolded settler state power by (re)producing and authenticating a colonial apprehension of contemporary Kanaka Maoli political action for a mainstream U.S. American audience.

³⁶¹ Rhodes, 91. This change also functioned (intentionally or not) to consistently call attention to Hawai‘i’s statehood.

³⁶² Faucette and Bethell, “Hawaii Five-O (CBS, 1968-80),” 71.

³⁶³ Rhodes, *Booking Hawaii Five-O*, 128, 73.

Hawaii Five-O often seemed to draw direct inspiration from local politics, public figures, and topical issues in contemporary Hawai‘i, including those related to land development and the dispossession of Kanaka Maoli. As such, this chapter understands *Hawaii Five-O* as a site of colonial apprehension that was situated in and directly responded to the particular political conditions of Hawai‘i in the late 1960s and 1970s. More specifically, my analysis of *Hawaii Five-O* focuses on how the show apprehended the concurrent rise of the Hawaiian sovereignty movement by strategically correcting Kanaka Maoli anger.

Affective Correction in Hawaii Five-O

In the year leading up to the first seasons of *Hawaii Five-O*, land reform and Hawaiian “uplift” were hot-button issues in the islands. Prominent Kanaka Maoli public figures, such as Reverend Abraham K. Akaka, were active and public advocates for Hawaiian communities facing increased poverty and dispossession. In 1967 Akaka frequently wrote editorials and was featured in Honolulu news reports about the impending Hawaii Land Reform Act and his strong opposition to its passing. Akaka pleaded with legislators to listen to Hawaiians and consider how the land reform bill might harm them.³⁶⁴ He also delivered and published sermons directed to Kanaka Maoli audiences about the need to “face the challenges of change” and to honor “[o]ur alii — including Pauahi, Lunalilo, Kapiolani, Kamehameha III and others — [who] sought to prepare their people for creative confrontations with their changing environment.”³⁶⁵

³⁶⁴ “Land Bills Criticized by Akaka,” *The Honolulu Advertiser*, April 6, 1967; “Akaka Asks Delay of Land Reform Bill,” *Honolulu Star-Bulletin*, April 24, 1967; “Akaka Again Raps Land Bill,” *The Honolulu Advertiser*, May 1, 1967.

³⁶⁵ Abraham K. Akaka, “Challenge and the Hawaiian,” *Honolulu Star-Bulletin*, September 5, 1968.

Alongside debates over the land reform bill, there was also public discord in Hawai‘i over other development projects at places such as Diamond Head³⁶⁶ as well as the increased crime rate³⁶⁷ and an alleged rise in hostility toward haole.³⁶⁸

The first season of *Hawaii Five-O* began its run at the end of September 1968 with two episodes that are indicative of the show’s putative vision of contemporary Hawai‘i. In episode one, titled “Full Fathom Five,”³⁶⁹ the opening scenes depict three wealthy white Americans — a man and two women — drinking champagne in the middle of the ocean aboard a boat emblazoned with the name “Aloha Baby.” One of the women coos about the beauty of the Hawai‘i sky before suddenly falling dead, having apparently been poisoned by her companions, Victor and Nora Reese (Kevin McCarthy and Louise Troy). After cruelly remarking to Nora about how “boring” their victim had been, Victor swiftly removes the boat’s “Aloha Baby” name plate to cover their tracks. The couple unceremoniously stuffs the corpse into a barrel to toss overboard and then returns to the deck to admire the scenery again.

As an introduction to *Hawaii Five-O*, these scenes manipulate the prevailing apprehension of Hawai‘i as a place of peace and beauty, counterposing the playful “Aloha Baby” mood with a grisly murder. The tension of this first episode hinges on the question of security: is modern Hawai‘i really a safe place, or is “aloha” simply a façade that leaves naive Americans open to danger? Following the title sequence — an action-

³⁶⁶ Bill Cook, “Some Want a City Park...Others Want to Build,” *The Honolulu Advertiser*, December 13, 1967.

³⁶⁷ Robert Riley, “Youths Commit Half of Serious Crimes in State,” *The Honolulu Advertiser*, August 11, 1967.

³⁶⁸ “‘Cooling’ Violence,” *The Honolulu Advertiser*, September 27, 1967.

³⁶⁹ *Hawaii Five-O*, Season 1, episode 1, “Full Fathom Five,” directed by Richard Benedict, written by Ken Kolb, aired September 26, 1968, on CBS.

filled montage that includes giant crashing waves and a hula performer's exposed midriff set to the now-famous upbeat theme song — the audience is introduced to the Five-O officers. A suited American man climbs the steps of 'Iolani Palace and asks the Palace Guard stationed at the door to direct him to the office of Steve McGarrett (Jack Lord). We meet McGarrett and his multiracial team in that office, the set for which includes a strategically placed window through which the Palace grounds are clearly visible. The suited man introduces himself as the attorney for a missing woman, and we learn that this case is another in a series of missing rich American widows who have recently and mysteriously disappeared in Hawai'i.

As the narrative progresses, it becomes evident that the producers intentionally packed as many recognizable Honolulu places into the episode as possible, especially those that a tourist might see on vacation to Hawai'i. The killers from the opening scenes are shown in front of the Honolulu International Airport, where Victor bids Nora farewell in search of his next victim from the continent. The background actors are mostly well-dressed white extras playing lei-wearing travelers. Next, McGarrett leaves 'Iolani Palace in search of his friend the governor of Hawai'i (Richard Denning), whom he finds eating lunch under a tree across the street, near the statue of King Kamehameha. After hearing the report about the missing women from McGarrett, the governor encourages him to find them at any cost: "Two million guests per year come through here. We invite them, and we're responsible for their safety." This message, accompanied by the gratuitous display of Honolulu's most recognizable sites, demonstrates *Hawaii Five-O's* fundamental commitment to reassuring its target audience of eager American tourists: with glittering modernization comes crime and danger, but the settler state would shield them by any

means necessary. Sure enough, after an undercover sting operation aboard a luxury cruise ship traveling from California to Honolulu, Five-O catches Victor in the act of attempted murder, kills him in a dramatic shoot out, and restores putative peace to the islands.

If the first episode functioned to reassure white, middle-class viewers of the settler state's commitment to their safety, episode two titled "Strangers in Our Own Land,"³⁷⁰ sought to address the Hawaiian question: do Native Hawaiians resent U.S. American presence and modernization? "Strangers" begins, predictably, with a murder. This time, both the victim and the murderer are Hawaiian rather than white tourists. A mysterious young man hands an older man a briefcase through the window of his cab at the Hawaii International Airport, and the bag explodes as the young man escapes. The murder victim is Commissioner Nathan Manu (Lord Kaulili), a Hawaiian politician who had been supporting modernization and land development. McGarrett speaks to Manu's best friend — a tiki-bar owner named Benny Kalua (Simon Oakland) — and discovers that Manu and Kalua had often been in conflict. Kalua shares with McGarrett that he had grown up with Manu in Waikīkī before it had been developed, and that they had both loved the land. When Manu started working with the developers, Kalua was angry and heartbroken. Woefully, Kalua remarks to McGarrett that "there's an old Hawaiian saying...that one day we shall be strangers in our own land." He recalls telling Manu: "You turned against your people, against your land. Like a traitor."

Kalua's insight helps McGarrett to gain clarity about why the young Hawaiian man might have had a motive to murder a fellow Hawaiian, but it also carefully apprehends Hawaiians' opposition to land development for a white American audience.

³⁷⁰ *Hawaii Five-O*, season 1, episode 2, "Strangers in Our Own Land," directed by Herschel Daugherty, teleplay by John Kneubuhl and Herman Groves, story by John Kneubuhl, aired October 3, 1968, on CBS.

In much the same way as “Full Fathom Five,” “Strangers” introduces a point of tension early in the episode that is expected to be resolved, but in this case, *Hawaii Five-O* is careful to position viewers as innocent observers who are not directly implicated in the conflict. The issue of land dispossession, the show seems to insist, is not a fight between Hawaiians and Americans, but rather one between Hawaiians who are anti-development and anyone who is pro-development, regardless of their race.

Turning his investigation to the murderer, McGarrett is able to identify the young suspect as Tommy Kapali, a Vietnam war veteran who lives with his mother in a run-down neighborhood near Honolulu. Tommy’s mother, Mrs. Kapali, is played by the famous Hawaiian comedic performer Hilo Hattie. Speaking in Hawai‘i pidgin, Mrs. Kapali tearfully explains to McGarrett that Tommy works at a construction site for the real-estate developer David Milner (Paul Kent) but that he had been “sick in the head” for a long time and had recently gone missing. She begs McGarrett not to hurt her son. Ominously, he responds: “We’ll try not to.”

In these scenes, the doting mother Mrs. Kapali reveals her son Tommy to be a tragic figure and a victim of his circumstances rather than a vicious murderer. To further cast Tommy as the object of the audience’s pity, the show introduces the developer, Mr. Milner, as a cruel and uncaring man whose disdain for Tommy appears to have pushed him toward his breaking point. At Tommy’s workplace — a construction site for a “low cost housing” residential area named “Hawaii Hou Village” (New Hawaii Village) — McGarrett learns from Milner that Tommy had recently been fired for “shooting his mouth off” about how they were destroying land that “belonged to them.” When McGarrett suggests that Tommy was likely defending Native Hawaiians, Milner is

dismissive: “I’ve heard all that. You’ve got to stop treating these Hawaiians like children.” He insists that the development makes the land “work for them” and provides Hawaiians with jobs.

McGarrett, now sympathetic to Tommy’s plight, continues to track Tommy’s whereabouts, but he is too late. He discovers that Tommy has hung himself in an old shed on another Milner construction site before McGarrett could bring him in for questioning. Despite the apparent resolution of the case, McGarrett is suspicious that the hanging was a covered-up homicide. He traces new evidence back to Benny Kalua, who is revealed to have taken advantage of Tommy and used him to murder Commissioner Manu. In the final scenes, we see Kalua at the construction site holding Milner at gunpoint. Kalua delivers a monologue about his innocence and his belief that the people “turning this island into a concrete jungle” had been Manu’s true murderers. Kalua describes his intent to bury Milner underneath the “concrete boxes” into which he had been forcing Hawaiians. Milner calls him “insane,” and Kalua knocks Milner unconscious with his gun. As Kalua climbs aboard a bulldozer and starts driving it toward Milner’s body, intending to run him over, McGarrett and his team appear. McGarrett shoots Kalua in the arm, causing the bulldozer to veer off into a shack filled with explosives, which detonate and kill Kalua in an enormous cloud of fire. The episode’s final line is delivered by Five-O’s Hawaiian detective Kono Kalakaua (Zulu) as the team looks out over the Honolulu skyline: “Look at that. One day we’ll be strangers in our own land.”

Hawaii Five-O’s representation of Hawaiians in “Strangers” apprehends Kanaka Maoli anger in response to land development as a kind of madness that drives certain individuals to act irrationally and violently, especially against one another. Despite his

death in the episode's opening scenes, Commissioner Manu functions as the silenced voice of reason. His purportedly noble attempts to work with developers from within the state political system are contrasted with Tommy Kapali's and Benny Kalua's insane retaliatory rage as well as Milner's cruel disdain for Hawaiians. The viewer, positioned as a sympathetic observer, is guided to see Tommy the traumatized military veteran and impoverished Mrs. Kapali as victimized innocents and to condemn the misguided cynicism of Kalua and Milner. McGarrett's simultaneous sympathy for Tommy and his adherence to the institutional justice system seems to model for the white American audience a way to relate to Hawaiians that appears both kind and reasoned. Nevertheless, McGarrett's compassion is paternalistic and strictly limited by his allegiances to the state. As he suggests to Mrs. Kapali, McGarrett can "try" to avoid hurting her son, but he is unwilling to let his desire to be merciful supersede his primary objective to contain a criminal threat.³⁷¹

Taken together, "Full Fathom Five" and "Strangers in Our Own Land" orient viewers to *Hawaii Five-O*'s priorities and its moral code, but even in these earliest episodes, I contend that the show actively sought to apprehend 1960s Hawai'i by offering representational corrections of contemporary social unrest. *Hawaii Five-O* garners credibility by seeming to divulge that late-1960s Hawai'i was not free from crime,

³⁷¹ It is worth noting that the story for "Strangers in Our Own Land" was originally written by Samoan writer John Kneubuhl, who lived in Hawai'i for many years and spent most of his literary career writing for stage and film. Kneubuhl's work consistently includes empathetic portrayals of Pacific Islander characters and tends to be critical of Westernization. Stanley Orr's analysis of the episode argues that Kneubuhl's intentions for "Strangers in Our Own Land" were potentially subversive and could be considered "postcolonial critique." (919) However, as Orr recognizes, Kneubuhl shares teleplay credit for the episode with Herman Groves, who "revised Kneubuhl's original draft of the teleplay" to an unknown degree. (917) In my analysis I avoid evaluating Kneubuhl's original intentions and, instead, focus on the final iteration of the episode as it speaks to *Hawaii Five-O*'s apprehension of Hawai'i and Hawaiians. (Stanley Orr, "'Strangers in Our Own Land': John Kneubuhl, Modern Drama, and 'Hawai'i Five-O,'" *American Quarterly* 67, no. 3 (September 2015): 913–36.)

violence, and strife, but paints these realities as the regrettable yet inevitable symptoms of modernization. Hawaiians' opposition to their continued dispossession and the desecration of their land is, likewise, reframed as a violent and irrational rage induced by poverty, military trauma, and rapid societal change. Moreover, the show is careful to reinforce white U.S. Americans' sense of security and belonging in Hawai'i. "Full Fathom Five" promises viewers that their presence and enjoyment in Hawai'i is a high priority to the settler state, while "Strangers" distances white U.S. Americans from the contentious issue of land development and Hawaiian dispossession, obscuring the fact that tourists are directly implicated in this settler colonial violence. As such, *Hawaii Five-O* aided the settler state and the tourism industry by offering a *corrected* representation of contemporary life in Hawai'i. These corrections prepared viewer-tourists to apprehend the islands "problems" as distanced, unavoidable, and non-threatening exceptions to the forcefully maintained and peaceful norm.

Over its first two seasons, *Hawaii Five-O*'s representations of Kanaka Maoli and Hawaiian issues maintained the framework set in "Strangers" by focusing on Hawaiian crimes committed against other Hawaiians, especially those involving land development and Hawaiians' attachments to the pre-colonial past. The final episode of season one, titled "The Big Kahuna,"³⁷² depicts another instance of Hawaiian-on-Hawaiian crime and another haole developer villain. Similarly, the only Hawaiian-centered episode in season two, "King Kamehameha Blues,"³⁷³ depicts a group of college students who steal King Kamehameha's feather cloak from the Bishop Museum. Five-O recovers the cloak by

³⁷² *Hawaii Five-O*, season 1, episode 23, "The Big Kahuna," teleplay by Gil Ralston and Norman Hudis, story by Leonard Freeman, aired March 19, 1969, on CBS.

³⁷³ *Hawaii Five-O*, season 2, episode 8, "The King Kamehameha Blues," directed by Barry Shear, written by Robert Hamner, aired November 12, 1969, on CBS.

sending Kono, their only Hawaiian detective, to appeal to the only Hawaiian college student in the group to return the object out of respect for his people. This mold was tangibly broken in the third season (1970-1971), which coincided with the anti-eviction struggle at Kalama Valley and, I argue, sought to correct the heightened visibility of Hawaiian anger in response to colonial violence.

In June of 1970, residents of Kalama Valley, O‘ahu, began to fight against their forced eviction by the Bishop Estate and the Kaiser Hawaii Kai Development Corporation, which were seeking to turn the farmland into a suburban residential area. This development project — just one of many during the post-statehood period — facilitated a shift in Hawai‘i’s economy away from agricultural production and toward tourism and the selling of land for commercial and residential use. Throughout the 1950s and 1960s, it had become nearly impossible for the large majority of Hawai‘i’s residents to find affordable housing, and Kanaka Maoli suffered disproportionately from low income, unemployment, and incarceration.³⁷⁴

For the 150 families living in Kalama in 1970, most of whom were Hawaiian, this eviction notice was the final straw. Many of the residents had only recently been displaced from their ancestral or familial lands to farming valleys, such as Kalama.³⁷⁵ These valleys were among the last remaining areas in Hawai‘i where, in Noelani Goodyear-Ka‘ōpua’s words, communities could live “‘Hawaiian style,’ relying on land-based subsistence practices like fishing, gathering, and farming.”³⁷⁶ Having requested and been denied relocation assistance from the Bishop Estate, many families had nowhere

³⁷⁴ Haunani-Kay Trask, “The Birth of the Modern Hawaiian Movement: Kalama Valley, O‘ahu,” *The Hawaiian Journal of History* 21 (1987): 127–28.

³⁷⁵ Trask, 128.

³⁷⁶ Goodyear-Ka‘ōpua, “Introduction,” 7.

else to go. They chose to stay and fight rather than abandon a way of life that had sustained them for generations.³⁷⁷

News of the Kalama residents' willingness to take on one of Hawai'i's largest landowners quickly spread to activist groups across O'ahu. Student activists at the University of Hawai'i, the radical leftist group Kaimukī Collective, and the political organization Youth Action were among the earliest supporters of the Kalama residents.³⁷⁸ In a key turning point, several of these supporters, including Youth Action leader John Witeck, were arrested for obstructing the bulldozing of a house in Kalama.³⁷⁹ This arrest, Witeck later recounted, "made us more determined to organize oppositions to the evictions."³⁸⁰ By July of 1970, activists had formed the Kōkua Kalama Committee (KKC), an organization established to support the Kalama residents.³⁸¹ The members of the KKC were Hawaiians as well as non-Hawaiian "locals": a term that, during the 1960s and 1970s, was widely used in Hawai'i to distinguish non-white residents from white haole and tourists.³⁸² Despite some activists' efforts to emphasize the concerns of "locals" rather than those of just Hawaiians, early reports on the struggle at Kalama Valley seemed to associate the movement, specifically, with Kanaka Maoli anger against haole developers and outsiders.³⁸³

³⁷⁷ Gary T. Kubota, *Hawaii Stories of Change: Kokua Hawaii Oral History Project*, 2018, 295.

³⁷⁸ Trask, "The Birth of the Modern Hawaiian Movement," 132, 135; Kubota, *Hawaii Stories of Change*, 103.

³⁷⁹ Trask, "The Birth of the Modern Hawaiian Movement," 134; Kubota, *Hawaii Stories of Change*, 103.

³⁸⁰ Kubota, *Hawaii Stories of Change*, 103.

³⁸¹ Trask, "The Birth of the Modern Hawaiian Movement," 133.

³⁸² Trask, 136. For more on contemporary conceptions of Hawai'i localism see Yamamoto, "The Significance of Local"; Okamura, "Aloha Kanaka Ke Aloha 'Aina: Local Culture and Society in Hawaii"; Haunani-Kay Trask, "Settlers of Color and 'Immigrant' Hegemony," *Amerasia Journal* 26, no. 2 (2000): 1–24.

³⁸³ See, for example: Phil Mayer, "Valley of Discontent," *Honolulu Star-Bulletin*, June 27, 1970; "Kokua Kalama Committee Is Organized," *Honolulu Star-Bulletin*, July 8, 1970.

In December of 1970, five months after the start of the Kalamā Valley protests, *Hawaii Five-O* aired an episode titled “Paniolo,”³⁸⁴ a Hawaiian word meaning “cowboy.” The episode’s narrative centers around a Kanaka Maoli character named Frank Kuakua (Frank Silvera), a paniolo and rancher on Maui who is refusing to sell his land to the white real estate agent Lester Cronin (Bill Bigelow). In the first scenes, Cronin arrives at Frank’s ranch, demanding that the land be sold to him before it is forcibly taken. In a fit of rage, Frank physically shoves Cronin away while shouting: “No haole [is] gonna take my land from me. Nobody! Never!” Stumbling backward, Cronin hits the back of his head and falls dead.

The remainder of the episode unfolds as a typical police-procedural narrative. Frank evades the murder investigation by McGarrett first by visiting his daughter and asking her to corroborate a false alibi. His daughter tearfully begs Frank to sell his land and turn himself into the police. Furious again, Frank shouts that she married “a haole” and has now started to “think like him.” He continues: “I’m fighting for my land. I was born there. My father was. His father was. You were. You’re gonna have to kill me to get my land away from me!” Frank’s daughter emerges in this scene as a distinctly respectable Hawaiian character in comparison to her father. She appears to embrace and attest to a vision of Hawai‘i as a racially harmonious and modern American place wherein Hawaiian women can marry haole men and live a comfortable suburban lifestyle. Frank, in comparison, is presented as an intolerant and childish brute clinging stubbornly to a bygone past.

³⁸⁴ *Hawaii Five-O*, season 3, episode 15, “Paniolo,” directed by Michael O’Herlihy, written by Ed Adamson, aired December 30, 1970, on CBS.

After McGarrett identifies him as the primary suspect in Cronin's murder, Frank attempts to flee into the mountains of Maui on horseback with Five-O in hot pursuit. In the final scenes, McGarrett and his officers have Frank cornered in an armed face off.

Attempting to convince Frank to give up, McGarrett insists:

I understand how it is with you. I understand how it is with your people. I know it's your land and I'm ashamed what's being done here in the name of progress, but we can't turn back the clock. Frank, I can't promise you that you can keep your ranch or any part of it, but I can promise you a fair trial and a recommendation for leniency. You have a daughter and a grandson who love you. You have so much to live for. But what you're looking for up here is gone. It's pau [finished].

Frank is furious and resolute. He shoots McGarrett in the arm with his rifle, and the officers return fire and kill Frank.

“Paniolo” reflects a two notable shifts in the way *Hawaii Five-O* corrected Hawaiian anger for their white American audience. First, Frank's anger is directed toward “haole” in general rather than toward traitorous Hawaiians or even developers. A character with this level of explicit anti-haole sentiment was rare for *Hawaii Five-O*. Second, “Paniolo” focuses on Frank's obstinance, resentment, and desperation, rather than to continue to represent Kanaka Maoli rage in the form of violent insanity. Cronin's death is depicted as accidental, but it is still presented as a consequence of Frank's furious refusal to see reason and his inability to control his rage. Frank's own death is also painstakingly illustrated as a tragedy that could have been prevented if Frank had, like his daughter, chosen to accept what *Hawaii Five-O* sees as the inevitable trajectory of settler colonial progress. In contrast to the characters Benny Kalua and Tommy Kapali in “Strangers in Our Own Land,” Frank's downfall is conceived of as an unwillingness to give in, rather than a desire to exact vengeance or retribution. These shifts seem to

correlate with the particular threats to the settler colonial social order posed by the concurrent Kalama Valley anti-eviction struggle.

Frank's plight mirrors that of the Kalama Valley anti-eviction activists and residents in a number of ways. The character's anti-haole sentiment, for instance, seems to be a simplification of public statements by supporters of the Kalama Valley residents that openly criticized "haoles," "Mainlanders," and those who were "pushing Hawaiians away from their homeland...[and] their whole way of life."³⁸⁵ Frank is also of a similar age to the Kalama Valley residents, such as Moose Lui and George Santos, who were particularly outspoken about their unwillingness to "leave [their] homes...neighbors and traditions and lifestyle."³⁸⁶ Even Frank's willingness to die for his cause parallels the sentiments expressed by some Kōkua Hawai'i activists that they would "fight and even die" for their people.³⁸⁷ Given these similarities, the marked shifts in *Hawaii Five-O*'s depictions of Hawaiian characters from the first to the third season, as well as the show's interest in documenting contemporary life in Hawai'i, Frank appears to function as a metonymic representation of growing Hawaiian dissent, especially at Kalama Valley.

Despite these similarities, there are also some notable differences between Frank's narrative and the Kalama Valley struggle that offer insight into how the episode functioned to apprehend contemporary dissent in Hawai'i for a white American audience. For instance, *Hawaii Five-O* chose Maui rather than O'ahu as the setting for "Paniolo," even though filming on Maui cost the show thousands of additional dollars and posed

³⁸⁵ Larry Jones, "Concerned Locals Work for Peace," *Honolulu Star-Bulletin*, August 2, 1970; "Kokua Kalama Committee Is Organized."

³⁸⁶ "The Kalama Valley Controversy," *The Honolulu Advertiser*, July 9, 1970.

³⁸⁷ "May 11: Bishop Estate Finally Forces the Police to Move on Kalama," *Huli*, May 1971, 5, University of Hawai'i, Mānoa, Hamilton Library, Hawaiian Collection.

significant logistical challenges.³⁸⁸ The movement for Kalama Valley was particularly visible and impactful because of the valley's proximity to Honolulu and its disruption of access to many of O'ahu's popular tourist destinations. By situating Frank and most of the episode's events in a rural and remote area of Maui, *Hawaii Five-O* paints Hawaiian dissent as something distant and isolated.

The fight for Kalama Valley was also a collective struggle against elite haole business interests, and their protection of the valley was a carefully organized tactic of disruption. Frank, on the other hand, appears as a solitary dissident making rash decisions driven by fear and rage. Even Frank's daughter, who is also Hawaiian, cannot understand why he will not simply sell his land. In a similar register, the anti-eviction movement was decidedly a multiethnic coalition, but "Paniolo" focuses its attention exclusively on one Hawaiian's seemingly unreasonable anger directed toward haole. As a result, Frank's refusal, and the broader movement for which he appears to stand in, is made to seem futile and innocuous. These selective similarities and differences, I propose, correct Hawaiian anger as well as the perceived gravity of the protests at Kalama Valley.

Importantly, *Hawaii Five-O*'s strategic correction of Kanaka Maoli political action also directly served the interests of the colonial state. *Hawaii Five-O*'s support of contemporary Honolulu police interests, for example, is demonstrated by the notable absence of Kono — the Hawaiian detective who often serves as the voice of reason in similar episodes — in the episode "Paniolo." Kono's omission from this particular narrative is telling because he is typically included in Hawaiian-centered episodes for the sole purpose of "saving" other Kanaka Maoli characters. In "The Big Kahuna," Kono's

³⁸⁸ Rhodes, *Booking Hawaii Five-O*, 244.

intervention and expertise on Hawaiian “mythology” prevents an older Kanaka Maoli man from being unjustly committed to a psychiatric hospital. Similarly, in “King Kamehameha Blues,” Kono protects a Hawaiian college student from the same consequences as his non-Hawaiian peers by convincing him to cooperate with the police and return King Kamehameha’s cloak to the Bishop Museum.

However, in episodes that end in the tragic deaths of Hawaiians at the hands of police, Kono barely participates. In “Strangers” Kono only appears to call Tommy Kapali a “dumb Hawaiian” and deliver a melancholy final line about Honolulu’s modernization. In “Paniolo,” his presence is entirely erased. I interpret Kono’s selective absence as illustrative of *Hawaii Five-O*’s interest in projecting an image of community-oriented policing in Hawai‘i by avoiding representations of Hawaiian law enforcement enacting violence against their own communities.

This kind of careful portrayal aligns closely with the contemporary interests of the settler state and the Honolulu Police Department. In a 1969 article in the *Honolulu Star-Bulletin* about the upcoming replacement of Honolulu police chief Dan Liu, then Attorney General Ramsey Clark described his vision for police-community relations:

The policeman is the most important man in the United States today...He has got to maintain social stability and he has got to live among a people who all too frequently see him as the only symbol of a law largely foreign in their view to their lives...The relationship of the police to a community is the most important law-enforcement problem of this and the next several decades. Police-community relations mean the totality of the attitudes between police and the people they serve...Police have to be able to relate to all segments of our society, and all segments of our society have to know that the police serve them. With this, we can maintain stability.³⁸⁹

³⁸⁹ “After Dan Liu,” *Honolulu Star-Bulletin*, May 11, 1969.

Hawaii Five-O's work to solidify this image of a community-oriented police force would have been all the more valuable to the settler state with the emergence of the Kalama Valley eviction struggle and the Hawaiian sovereignty movement. Activists often directly contradicted this conception of the HPD by appealing to the “local cops” who were tasked with arresting Kalama residents and their supporters. In Kōkua Hawai‘i’s self-published newspaper, *Huli*, leaders made the following statement:

Kokua Hawaii realizes that local cops are caught in a situation where they have to choose between the interests of their own people and a job that they get paid for to feed their families. Ever since the time the haoles brought in slave labor from China, Japan, the Philippines, Portugal, Korea, Puerto Rico, and Samoa to work the plantations and to dance for the tourists, they have turned Local People against each other. They call this divide and conquer. They split Local People up — put some in uniforms and put some in jails so that we can’t get together to fight the real enemies of the Local People.

We want the Local cops and guards to know that we are their brothers and sisters and that someday they will have to choose between us and their haole bosses.³⁹⁰

By removing Kono from the “Paniolo” narrative, *Hawaii Five-O* avoided having to acknowledge the ways in which law enforcement was actively facilitating intracommunal violence, especially at Kalama Valley. Moreover, by ensuring that Kono was absent, Frank was made to appear especially prejudiced against the all-haole police force. His generalized rage toward haoles, the show seemed to insist, prevented Frank from trusting the benevolent McGarrett and made his demise inevitable. Therefore, I propose that “Paniolo” prepared viewers who might encounter the struggle at Kalama Valley to apprehend it as a futile demonstration of intolerance that rejected the peace-making benevolence of the police and welcomed unnecessary tragedy.

Ultimately, *Hawaii Five-O* functioned to correct Kanaka Maoli anger on-screen, because organized Hawaiian dissent posed a legitimate off-screen threat to colonial

³⁹⁰ “May 11,” 4.

institutions — especially the HPD and the tourism industry — upon which the show relied for its success. I argue that the show’s producers aimed to correct what was already emerging among Hawaiian activists as a decolonial structure of feeling — a social experience and relational way of being otherwise — by representing Hawaiian anger over dispossession as the result of personal prejudices and the criminalized emotional dysfunction of certain individuals. These corrected representations of Kanaka Maoli anger prepared white American visitors to apprehend Hawaiian political action as controllable and exceptional rather than a growing collective movement that directly and publicly implicated them in colonial violence. Despite the efforts of the settler state and its agents, the Hawaiian sovereignty movement continued to build power in the years that followed by refusing to hide their rage and embracing Indigenous ways of feeling.

Aloha Rage and the Legacy of Haunani-Kay Trask

As the Kalama Valley struggle stretched through 1970 and into 1971, the Kōkua Kalama Committee generated a wide network of support from local and haole activists and eventually changed the organization’s name to Kōkua Hawai‘i to reflect the group’s intention to grow and support additional land-based struggles across the islands.³⁹¹ However, the anti-eviction movement still largely self-identified as a “local” and working-class movement and did not necessarily distinguish between Hawaiian and non-Hawaiian politics. As the years passed and the movement grew, a specifically Hawaiian movement emerged from the seedbed of the Kalama Valley struggle. As Kanaka Maoli scholar and activist Haunani-Kay Trask observed in her 1987 account of this

³⁹¹ Trask, “The Birth of the Modern Hawaiian Movement,” 139, 142.

transformation: “In the beginning of [the 1970s], the rallying cry was ‘land for local people, not tourists.’ By 1976, the language of protest had changed from English to Hawaiian, with emphasis on the native relationship to land.”³⁹²

The emergence of the Hawaiian sovereignty movement out of localized anti-eviction struggles, however, was less of a dramatic split and more of a gradual centering by Hawaiian organizers on “native” political issues, which were distinguished from those of non-Hawaiian locals.³⁹³ As early as 1970, Hawaiian KKC members compiled and disseminated critical accounts of the overthrow of the Hawaiian Kingdom and the Big Five with a focus on violence against Kanaka Maoli, and in the first Hawaiian-led conversations within the KKC, the language of colonialism and decolonization was already taking shape.³⁹⁴ Even when the group re-organized as Kōkua Hawai‘i, Kanaka Maoli language and culture remained front and center. For instance, the slogan for Kōkua Hawai‘i was the Hawaiian word “Huli!” (overturn) and was often accompanied by an image of a pōhaku ku‘i ‘ai (poi pounding stone). Although some non-Hawaiian supporters were frustrated by the centering of Kanaka Maoli perspectives and organizers, a significant number of locals and haole remained dedicated and active allies in the fight for Hawaiian sovereignty and cultural resurgence.³⁹⁵

Hawaiian movement activists extended their fight against evictions to include those at the Waiāhole and Waikāne valleys in 1974. This particular struggle, however, was oriented not just around fighting against developers but also for the resurgence of

³⁹² Trask, 126.

³⁹³ Trask, 146.

³⁹⁴ See “Hawaiians Rap,” *Hawaii Free People’s Press*, August 1970, University of Hawai‘i, Mānoa, Hamilton Library, Hawaiian Collection; Trask, “The Birth of the Modern Hawaiian Movement,” 139.

³⁹⁵ See Goodyear-Ka‘ōpua, “Introduction,” 23–28.

distinctly Hawaiian lifeways. As Jacqueline Lasky writes in an account of the movement: “While the residents and tenants of Waiāhole-Waikāne were resisting what they didn’t want — rampant sub/urbanization and tourist development — taro farmers in Waiāhole were concurrently working toward what they did want: reinvigorated Native Hawaiian cultural practices in a sustainable and just Hawai‘i.”³⁹⁶ In what Lasky refers to as the “Taro Movement,” Hawaiian as well as non-Hawaiian families living in and around Waiāhole joined together to cultivate taro using methods that had sustained Kanaka Maoli and Hawai‘i for generations. The celebration and sharing of Kanaka Maoli cultural knowledge based on a sacred relationship to ‘āina (land and water) became an integral part of the Hawaiian sovereignty movement.³⁹⁷

The centering of Indigenous knowledge within Hawaiian political action and land-based struggles became especially tangible during the movement to defend the island of Kaho‘olawe: a site of spiritual significance for Kanaka Maoli. For decades, the Navy had maintained control of the island as a site for bombardment exercises, but during the Vietnam War, the number of these explosive maneuvers had escalated significantly. The county council for the neighboring island of Maui had become particularly frustrated about how the bombardment of Kaho‘olawe was disrupting tourism and development. Unrest among politicians grew even more after the county’s mayor, Elmer Cravalho, discovered a several-hundred-pound undetonated naval explosive near his home in 1969. The few efforts on the part of state actors to wrest control of the island away from the Navy and back to the state were unsuccessful, and by

³⁹⁶ Jacqueline Lasky, “Waiāhole-Waikāne,” in *A Nation Rising: Hawaiian Movements for Life, Land, and Sovereignty*, by Noelani Goodyear-Ka‘ōpua, Ikaika Hussey, and Erin Kahunawaika‘ala Wright, 2014, 60.

³⁹⁷ Lasky, 60.

the mid-1970s, Kaho‘olawe had become scarred by bombings and littered with waste material and undetonated explosives.³⁹⁸

Although political figures in Hawai‘i were primarily concerned about how the bombing of Kaho‘olawe was affecting the economy and the safety of their constituents, Kanaka Maoli communities were more interested in restoring the island’s use by Hawaiians as a site for Indigenous cultural practices. In 1976, a small group of Hawaiian activists managed to slip past the Navy and reach Kaho‘olawe, where they were shocked to see the devastation of the island first-hand. The bombings had left deep scars in the landscape and had damaged many of the island’s shrines and heiau (temples) that had been sacred to Hawaiians for generations. This painful experience moved Kanaka Maoli activists Walter Ritte, Emmett Aluli, and George Helm to form Protect Kaho‘olawe ‘Ohana (PKO), an organization that was committed to both ending the bombings and restoring the connection between Hawaiians and the sacred island.³⁹⁹ It was in PKO that the Hawaiian knowledge of aloha ‘āina (love for the land), which had been an integral part of the anti-annexation struggle in the nineteenth century, reemerged as a guiding principle for Kanaka Maoli political action, distinguishing the organization from others that were focused on securing reparations, policy changes, or recognition from the state.⁴⁰⁰ PKO organized multiple “occupations” of Kaho‘olawe in which they would bring Hawaiian activists, kāhuna (priests, spiritual leaders), and kūpuna (elders) to the island.

³⁹⁸ Osorio, “Hawaiian Souls: The Movement to Stop the U.S. Military Bombing of Kaho‘olawe,” 139–40.

³⁹⁹ Osorio, 144–45.

⁴⁰⁰ Osorio, 146; Silva, *Aloha Betrayed*, 130–31.

During these demonstrations, PKO confronted and disrupted the Navy's operations while also putting aloha 'āina into practice through ceremonies to restore the mana (sacred power) of the island.⁴⁰¹ Although the principle of aloha 'āina resists easy definition, Jonathan Kamakawiwo'ole Osorio's description is demonstrative of its power as an orienting philosophy for Kanaka Maoli political and social life in 1970s Hawai'i:

Aloha 'Āina was even more revolutionary than the dialectic. It challenged not only one's notions of economics and history but one's sense of place in the universe as well. It questioned Western assumptions of individuality and placed the community of humans on an equal plane with the rest of nature. Finally, it gave credence to spiritual values that Hawaiians, conditioned by a century of Christianity and rationalism, had come to doubt.⁴⁰²

Osorio suggests that aloha 'āina is a fundamentally decolonial way of being because it has the potential to challenge every aspect of Western settler colonial life from economic, historical, and spiritual knowledge to the values of individualism and rationalism.

By 1980, the Hawaiian movement had explicitly become a wide-spread fight for Kanaka Maoli self-determination, autonomy, sovereignty, nationalism, and cultural resurgence guided by aloha 'āina.⁴⁰³ This brief narration of the movement's emergence demonstrates not only a shift in political aims and principles, but also, I argue, a shift in politicized ways of feeling. Among the countless lessons to be gleaned from this history is how Kanaka Maoli activists, by organizing around an Indigenous ontoepistemological foundation, cultivated a decolonial structure of feeling which refused to comply with the apprehension of Kanaka Maoli affect emblemized by *Hawaii Five-O*.

⁴⁰¹ Osorio, "Hawaiian Souls: The Movement to Stop the U.S. Military Bombing of Kaho'olawe," 148.

⁴⁰² Osorio, 150.

⁴⁰³ Trask, "The Birth of the Modern Hawaiian Movement," 127.

In the 1980s, Haunani-Kay Trask became one of the Hawaiian sovereignty movement's most prominent leaders. In one memorable speech from 1985, Trask offered her insight on the relationship between Kanaka Maoli culture and politics:

Our culture can't just be ornamental and recreational. That's what Waikiki is. Our culture has to be the core of our resistance, the core of our anger, the core of our mana [divine power]. That's what culture is for.⁴⁰⁴

This speech serves as just one of many instances in which Trask spoke or wrote on the place of affect — particularly anger — in the movement for Hawai'i independence. Specifically, Trask tends to emphasize the collectivity of Kanaka Maoli rage. In the 1985 speech, she repeatedly uses the first-person plural possessive — “our culture . . . our resistance . . . our anger . . . our mana” — asserting a personal statement of shared feeling as Kanaka Maoli knowledge. I read Trask's statement as one demonstrative of what Muñoz called “affective difference” or “the ways in which various historically coherent groups ‘feel’ differently and navigate the material world on a different emotional register.”⁴⁰⁵

In a similar way to Trask, Audre Lorde's 1981 essay “The Uses of Anger” articulates the anger of “women of [c]olor” as a “well-stocked arsenal” and “a powerful source of energy serving progress and change.”⁴⁰⁶ Lorde goes on to contrast this form of anger with what she calls “hatred”:

[I]t is not *our anger* which makes me caution you to lock your doors at night, and not to wander the streets of Hartford alone. It is the hatred which lurks in those streets. . . . This hatred and our anger are very different. Hatred is the fury of those who do not share our goals, and its object is death and destruction. Anger is the grief of distortions between peers, and its object is change. (Emphasis added)⁴⁰⁷

⁴⁰⁴ *Journey to Justice: A Conversation with Haunani-Kay Trask*, 1985, <https://vimeo.com/39644495>.

⁴⁰⁵ Muñoz, “Feeling Brown,” 70.

⁴⁰⁶ Audre Lorde, “The Uses of Anger,” *Women's Studies Quarterly* 25, no. 1 (1997): 280.

⁴⁰⁷ Lorde, 282.

If hatred exists to destroy, Lorde, like Trask, understood that anger was a potentially unifying mode of feeling that could be politicized and shared in order to transform social and material conditions. However, Trask departs from and expands upon Lorde's theorization of anger by conceiving of Kanaka Maoli rage as not only collective and oppositional but also explicitly decolonial. In her treatises on the violences of the tourism industry in Hawai'i, Trask refused to comply with the apprehension and disciplining of Kanaka Maoli affect by the settler colonial state:

Most Americans have come to believe that Hawai'i is...the sweet and sunny land of palm trees and hula-hula girls. Increasing numbers of us not only oppose this predatory view of my native land and culture, we angrily and resolutely defy it. ... No matter what Americans believe, most of us in the colonies do not feel grateful that our country was stolen along with our citizenship, our lands, and our independent place among the family of nations. We are not happy natives. ...we have started on a path of decolonization.⁴⁰⁸

Trask asserts that Americans who come to Hawai'i expecting to find "sweet," "happy," and "grateful" Kānaka Maoli will find themselves, instead, within a decolonial structure of feeling built upon aloha rage. Moreover, in her 1985 speech, Trask conceives of anger as a shared resource or knowledge that is categorically similar to culture and mana. This form of anger is distinct from dominant and Eurocentric ways of thinking about emotions as individual states of feeling. This difference can be illustrated, for example, by contrasting Trask's statement about "our anger" to more commonly used phrases: "I am angry" or even "we are angry." Whereas "our anger" suggests that anger is something communally held, "we are angry" conjures an image of a group of distinct individuals, each of whom are experiencing their own state of anger. Trask's conception of rage is similar to Kanaka Maoli ways of understanding 'āina (land) as communally held, a

⁴⁰⁸ Haunani-Kay Trask, "Tourist, Stay Home: Native Hawaiians Want Their Land Back," *The Progressive* 57, no. 7 (July 1993).

conception which is distinct from the Western notion of land as a commodity that can be privately owned. Kanaka Maoli ways of understanding of anger, like those of ‘āina, have been consistently obscured and delegitimized as part of the settler colonial project in Hawai‘i.⁴⁰⁹

In a similar register, Trask advanced a form of anger that was not only compatible with, but also an intrinsic part of the Kanaka Maoli knowledge of aloha ‘āina. In her 1997 essay “Writing in Captivity,” Trask wrote that her “opposition to the strangulation of my people and culture is interwoven with a celebration of the magnificence of our nation: the beauty of our delicate islands, the intricate relationship between our emotional ties to each other as Hawaiians and our emotional tie to the land.”⁴¹⁰ Although she does not use the term aloha ‘āina in this particular text, Trask’s description of the emotional relationality (among Kanaka Maoli as well as with the land) closely aligns with the affective dimensions of aloha ‘āina articulated by the Kanaka Maoli protectors of Kaho‘olawe in the 1970s. After describing the historical and ongoing losses felt by the Hawaiian people, Trask turns to what I read as a theorization of the relationship between aloha (‘āina) and rage:

Out of this ferocious suffering comes rage and an insistent desire to tell the cruel truths about Hawai‘i...rage is entangled with rapture, with spiritual and emotional possession by the beauty of our islands...In my work, writing is both de-colonization and re-creation...for our people, writing is part of an encompassing Hawaiian cultural expression: exposé and celebration at one and the same time; *a furious, but nurturing aloha for Hawai‘i.*⁴¹¹ (Emphasis added)

⁴⁰⁹ See Kauanui, *Hawaiian Blood*.

⁴¹⁰ Haunani-Kay Trask, “Writing in Captivity: Poetry in a Time of De-colonization,” *Wasafiri* 12, no. 25 (March 1997): 42.

⁴¹¹ Trask, 43.

Trask articulates aloha as a relational way of feeling and being that can be simultaneously “furious” and “nurturing,” and can allow for rage as an animating force for truth-telling alongside “rapture” and “celebration” for her people and islands. Writing, to Trask, is a performance of aloha as Hawaiian affect that is both disruptive and restorative. As such, Trask’s embodied theorization of aloha rage can be understood as part of her lifelong commitment to a politics of decolonization and the resurgence of Kanaka Maoli knowledge.

After the passing of Haunani-Kay Trask on July 3rd, 2021, her Kanaka Maoli community celebrated her decolonial affective practice of aloha rage, even as mainstream American news outlets continued to apprehend her anger as a personality trait rather than a political practice.⁴¹² As Trisha Kēhaulani Watson wrote in *Honolulu Civil Beat*:

She gave people the courage to speak and the inspiration to act. Anger was not a flaw, but an obligation in response to long-standing injustice. It was also a necessity for a nation that was in deep, deep pain. She created safe spaces for Hawaiians to be hurt about their history, and on the other side of that hurt was grief — and healing. For as much as people perceived her to be simply angry, the truth is that she was a tremendously kind, smart and funny person to be around.⁴¹³

Watson articulates the ways in which anger, for Trask, was an obligatory mode of relational feeling. It was not only an appropriate response to the unjust treatment of Kanaka Maoli, but also one that was necessary for healing and grieving. Watson reminds us that Trask’s embodiment of aloha rage could not be equated with other simplified conceptions of anger as a character flaw or as incompatible with kindness, intelligence, or

⁴¹² For mainstream American reporting see Annabelle Williams, “Haunani-Kay Trask, Champion of Native Rights in Hawaii, Dies at 71,” *New York Times*, July 9, 2021, <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/07/09/us/haunani-kay-trask-dead.html>.

⁴¹³ Trisha Kēhaulani Watson, “The Passing of Haunani-Kay Trask and the Uplifting of a Nation,” *Honolulu Civil Beat*, July 4, 2021, <https://www.civilbeat.org/2021/07/trisha-kehaulani-watson-the-passing-of-haunani-kay-trask-and-the-uplifting-of-a-nation/>.

humor. Trask articulated for Kanaka Maoli and for those fighting for liberation around the world a way of feeling angry together and with the land.

Aloha rage as a mode of decolonial feeling continues to mobilize the contemporary Kanaka Maoli decolonization struggle and, therefore, offers important lessons for ongoing social justice movements that are seeking to build oppositional practices and guiding principles that are decolonial, sustainable, and restorative. The movement to protect Mauna a Wākea, for example, is guided by the Kanaka Maoli knowledge of Kapu Aloha. In a video produced by Pu‘uhonua Pu‘uhululu University, Pua Case, a *kia‘i*, describes Kapu Aloha as a commitment to “interconnect, honor, have reverence, have respect” among humans, but also with sacred spaces.⁴¹⁴ *Kia‘i* Andre Perez adds that Kapu Aloha is the “discipline [that guides] how we conduct ourselves [and] how we engage with people in ways that are rooted in dignity and humanity.”⁴¹⁵ Case and Perez further emphasize that principles and values guided by Kapu Aloha are always in process and can hold a unique meaning for every individual or group.

In one working document created by the Kanaka Maoli activist organization Mauna Kea Anaina Hou, a statement on anger is included as a central principle of Kapu Aloha: “Choose to redirect anger in righteous, non-violent, and peaceful actions in a collective way. Anger is a normal human response to injustice and Kapu Aloha gives us a way to seek justice in non-violent ways.”⁴¹⁶ I interpret this principle as one that advances the politicized affective practice of aloha rage that Trask also embodied throughout her

⁴¹⁴ *Kapu Aloha: A Guiding, Transformational, and Liberating Force*, 2019, <https://youtu.be/AX7kTOHNjYU>.

⁴¹⁵ *Kapu Aloha*.

⁴¹⁶ Mauna Kea Anaina Hou, “Kapu Aloha,” September 24, 2019, <https://maunakeaanainahou.org/kapu-aloha/>.

life. In a similar way to Trask, Mauna Kea Anaina Hou conceives of anger as an appropriate feeling that can be intentionally (re)directed and collectively shared. Anger is also understood as a feeling that is compatible with aloha, righteousness, and peace and cannot be equated with violence.

The many articulations of Kapu Aloha principles and values also illustrate how the intergenerational Kanaka Maoli struggle for independence and decolonization has been shaped by and cultivated within a decolonial structure of feeling. The Kanaka Maoli histories and practices examined in this chapter exemplify a politics of decolonization that refuses settler colonial state recognition and apprehension and prioritizes the resurgence of Indigenous epistemologies. Furthermore, Kanaka Maoli movements have embraced affective difference and intentionally pursued principles of conduct and oppositional practices that are guided by Indigenous knowledge. Haunani-Kay Trask teaches that anger must be understood as having a number of distinct modes, some of which reinforce Eurocentric, white-supremacist, and liberal-multiculturalist politics while others articulate a decolonial structure of feeling. Ultimately, Trask aids us in imagining sustainable and imaginative ways of feeling otherwise.

CONCLUSION

By critically examining surfing, tiki culture, and police procedural television, *Colonial Apprehension* not only identifies the existence of settler colonial knowledge, but also contends that it is historically contingent and has been actively (re)produced and enforced within Americans' everyday lives. In Chapter 1, I described how surf culture — the emergence of which bolstered the concurrent settler colonial imposition of Hawai'i statehood in 1959 — occluded the formation's attachments to Hawaiian indigeneity in order to co-opt Kanaka Maoli knowledge as an American practice. Chapter 2 critiqued present-day dismissive assertions that tiki culture has always been harmless to Hawaiians. I demonstrated that the formation manifested and authenticated a staged atmosphere of post-statehood Hawai'i that directly served the settler colonial state and its tourism industry. I argued in Chapter 3 that the police procedural television program *Hawaii Five-O*, in service of Hawai'i's militourism industry, strategically corrected and criminalized Kanaka Maoli rage over colonial violence and dispossession in the 1970s.

In each of these studies, I have sought to unsettle forms of settler colonial knowledge that appear, in our present, to be ahistorical, unquestionable, and common sense. The notion that Hawai'i is part of the United States for instance, would have been a controversial position among Americans just a few generations ago, but has since come to be seen as an unequivocal truth. This dissertation further contends that popular cultural formations go largely unnoticed as sites wherein this settler colonial knowledge is generated and enforced because of their seeming banality or declarations of good intentions by their producers and consumers. Kanaka Maoli critiques and condemnations of colonial erasure and cultural appropriation tend to be swiftly suppressed by unfounded

claims that the American producers and consumers of surf culture, tiki culture, and *Hawaii Five-O* are celebrating Hawai‘i and its people.

Enabled by an ongoing genealogy of apprehension, solidified forms of settler colonial knowledge continue to reverberate in our present, sometimes in unexpected places. In August 2017, white supremacists marched through the campus of the University of Virginia in Charlottesville to protest the removal of a Confederate monument. As they chanted “you will not replace us” and “white lives matter,” the white nationalist and neo-Nazi group circled the darkened campus wielding flaming “tiki torches”: outdoor home-decor items that emerged as part of postwar American tiki culture’s domestication.⁴¹⁷

The torches were an immediate focus in the press coverage of the events in Charlottesville. In a CNN news report, journalist Paul P. Murphy made note of “the irony of the tiki-lit demonstration” and that the torches, “known primarily for their South Pacific ambience,” lent a “distinctly but likely unintentional Polynesian aura to a white nationalist group’s march.”⁴¹⁸ A *New York Times* article observed with fascination that the “innocuous” torches “known primarily for their presence at family barbecues, poolside cabanas, lush resort grounds and Pacific-island themed restaurants, were now lighting the way for racists.”⁴¹⁹ In another report from *Vox* a photograph from the event that was captioned: “[t]he protesters carried tiki torches — yes, there is some irony here

⁴¹⁷ Zach Schonbrun, “Tarnished by Charlottesville, Tiki Torch Company Tries to Move On,” *The New York Times*, August 20, 2017, <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/08/20/business/media/charlottesville-tiki-torch-company.html>; German Lopez, “The Most Striking Photos from the White Supremacist Charlottesville Protests,” *Vox*, August 12, 2017, <https://www.vox.com/identities/2017/8/12/16138244/charlottesville-protests-photos>.

⁴¹⁸ Paul P. Murphy, “White Nationalists Use Tiki Torches to Light up Charlottesville March,” *CNN*, August 14, 2017, <https://www.cnn.com/2017/08/12/us/white-nationalists-tiki-torch-march-trnd/index.html>.

⁴¹⁹ Schonbrun, “Tarnished by Charlottesville.”

— as they marched to the University of Virginia.”⁴²⁰ Presumably, the “irony” was that an object apprehended as a symbol of hospitality and peaceful relaxation might accompany an act of hatred and violence.

In the wake of the events at Charlottesville, The Tiki Brand — responsible for originally developing tiki torches in the mid-twentieth century — leaned heavily on settler colonial forms of knowledge as it condemned the use of its products by white supremacists. The company states on their website that the “original bamboo torch” was meant to facilitate “an escape from daily life and a beacon for social gatherings...a carefree space where friends and family are welcome, but cares are not allowed...[and] a sanctuary where you can relax, reconnect and rekindle your spirit.”⁴²¹ In a *New York Times* article, a brand ambassador stated: “We do not support their message or the use of our products in this way...Our products are designed to enhance backyard gatherings and to help family and friends connect with each other at home in their yard...We will continue to reinforce that Tiki Brand products are to be enjoyed by friends and family outdoors in a loving environment.”⁴²² In their marketing and in their statement following the violence at Charlottesville, Tiki Brand occludes its attachments to a distorted Hawaiian indigeneity by actively avoiding all mention of Polynesia, the Pacific, or Hawai‘i. Nevertheless, these statements draw on tiki-cultural notions of the Pacific as place of perpetual relaxation as well as histories of affective correction that apprehended Pacific Islanders as unconditionally “loving” and hospitable to outsiders.

⁴²⁰ Lopez, “Striking Photos.”

⁴²¹ See <https://www.tikibrand.com/customer-service/about>

⁴²² Schonbrun, “Tarnished by Charlottesville.”

Despite the brand's apparent efforts to obscure its connection to now-tacky tiki culture and, thus, its participation in the colonial apprehension of the Pacific and its Indigenous peoples and cultures, Americans were quick to use the torches as a vehicle for mockery. Republican senator Orrin Hatch of Utah tweeted that "[t]heir tiki torches may be fueled by citronella but their ideas are fueled by hate."⁴²³ Another social media user, mistakenly identifying the torches as "Polynesian" objects, tweeted a captioned photograph of the white supremacists: "when you have to use a [P]olynesian cultural product (tiki torches) to defend and assert white supremacy."⁴²⁴ The tweet's text included an emoji of an upside-down smiling face, which popularly conveys sarcasm, resignation, or foolishness.⁴²⁵ The deployment of tiki-cultural objects by white nationalist groups certainly evokes settler colonialism's inextricability from white supremacy, but the subsequent public focus on and mockery of the use of these objects further demonstrates how the ripples of colonial apprehension can often wash ashore in veiled ways. The dark humor and mocking dismissal in these tweets, I argue, is only possible because of the genealogy of colonial apprehension presented in this dissertation.

The genealogy of colonial apprehension that stretches into our present is also forced to contend with a genealogy of enduring Kanaka Maoli indigeneity. I have argued throughout this dissertation that colonial apprehension consistently aims *and fails* to contend with Indigenous sovereignty, cultural resurgence, and political movements in Hawai'i. In Chapter 1, I emphasized that the Kanaka Maoli practice of he'e nalu, since

⁴²³ Murphy, "White Nationalists Use Tiki Torches."

⁴²⁴ Murphy.

⁴²⁵ Mehak Anwar and Siena Gagliano, "9 Creative Ways To Use The Upside Down Face Emoji," *Bustle*, July 7, 2021, <https://www.bustle.com/life/137625-5-ways-to-use-the-upside-down-face-emoji-because-it-can-indicate-so-much-more>.

the nineteenth century, has facilitated the maintenance of Indigenous culture and sovereignty in Hawai‘i, which undermined the settler colonial apprehension of Hawaiians as a passive and vanishing people. In our present, Kanaka Maoli continue to cultivate the Indigenous practice of he‘e nalu alongside many other forms of Hawaiian oceanic knowledge.

Rejecting the historic and continued apprehension of he‘e nalu by American surf-cultural producers, Kanaka Maoli practitioners have worked to create alternative spaces for the surfing community in Hawai‘i that foreground Indigenous knowledge. After losing corporate sponsorships in 2016, the Eddie Aikau Big Wave Invitational surfing contest at Waimea Bay — colloquially called “The Eddie” — was reorganized in 2019 by a coalition of Hawaiian political and cultural organizations.⁴²⁶ The Eddie’s 2019 revival was both a celebration of the life and legacy of legendary Hawaiian surfer Eddie Aikau but also a reclamation of Indigenous knowledge. The event opened with ceremonial protocol — oli (chant), blowing pū (conch shells), and pule (prayers) — conducted by Hawaiian students and the crew of the Hōkūle‘a voyaging canoe. The contestants in The Eddie participated in the ceremony, received lei, and then shared mana‘o (meditative commemoration) in the bay.⁴²⁷ In contrast to other surfing competitions in Hawai‘i and around the world that privileged Western notions of individualistic athleticism and mastery, the organizers of and participants in The Eddie recognized he‘e nalu as a form of oceanic knowledge, one informed by Kanaka Maoli genealogy and relationality. As just one part of a widespread cultural resurgence movement, present-day practitioners of

⁴²⁶ Sterling Wong, “‘The Eddie’ Will Go,” *Ka Wai Ola*, January 21, 2019, <https://kawaiola.news/cover/the-eddie-will-go/>.

⁴²⁷ Wong.

he‘e nalu evade apprehension, thereby undermining notions of Native disappearance and cultural assimilation that form the logical foundation of settler colonial rule.

Chapter 2 and 3 presented another set of narratives within an ever-failing genealogy of colonial apprehension. I argued that tiki culture — through strategies of staging, domestication, and exportation — aimed to replace but, ultimately, could not contend with enduring indigeneity and dissent in Hawai‘i. The tiki-cultural militourism industry insisted that Hawaiians and Hawai‘i’s racialized residents were modernized American citizens who unconditionally celebrated the presence of white settlers. The settler state and cultural producers, including the creators of *Hawaii Five-O* worked in tandem to apprehend Hawaiian anger and refusal as the criminal exception to the tiki-cultural rule. Despite their best efforts to draw Americans’ attention to a staged post-statehood Hawai‘i, the persistence of Indigenous lifeways as well as visible demonstrations of dissent during the post-statehood period eroded the fantasy of white inclusion and the perceived authenticity of the tiki-cultural atmosphere.

As part of the ongoing history of Hawaiian decolonization and sovereignty movements narrated in Chapter 3, a politics of Indigenous cultural resurgence played a key role in undermining the apprehension of Hawaiian culture. At the height of tiki culture’s popularity in the 1960s, Kanaka Maoli activists and practitioners partnered with the National Park Service to create twenty carved wood ki‘i — the Hawaiian cognate of the Māori word “tiki” — for public display at Pu‘uhonua o Hōnaunau National Historic

Park on Hawai‘i island.⁴²⁸ The ki‘i, which have been restored and replaced several times since the 1960s, continue to stand watch over the pu‘uhonua to this day.⁴²⁹

American tiki-cultural carvings drew on a range of cultural referents and mocked or ignored the sacred significance of the objects to the people of Oceania. In contrast, the ki‘i at Pu‘uhonua o Hōnaunau were intentionally inspired by those made by kālai ki‘i (master ki‘i carvers) during the reign of Kamehameha I in the early nineteenth century.⁴³⁰ These ki‘i represent the akua (deities) Kū, Kāne, Kanaloa, or Lono and were typically created to facilitate a connection between Kanaka Maoli and their ancestors as well as to mark sacred spaces in a heiau (temple).⁴³¹ Although their teachers were not physically present, the twentieth-century ki‘i carvers accessed the Indigenous knowledge of the kālai ki‘i across time in much the same way as the cultural practice had been sustained for many generations. Kalena K. Blakemore describes this Indigenous learning process as one through which “kālai ki‘i gained their knowledge and skills through genealogical connections that transferred specialized cultural practices and traditions.”⁴³² In the twenty-first century, Kanaka Maoli and Māori practitioner-activists collaborate, learn, and teach together to pass along the practice of tiki/ki‘i carving to the next generation.⁴³³ The mere presence of ki‘i in public spaces in Hawai‘i contradicts the supposed authenticity of the “tikis” at bars and resorts, but, even more importantly, the survival of

⁴²⁸ Kalena K. Blakemore, “Nā Ki‘i Lā‘au, the Gods and Guardians at Pu‘uhonua O Hōnaunau National Historical Park, South Kona, Hawai‘i” (Thesis, Hilo, Hawai‘i, University of Hawai‘i at Hilo, 2017), 8; Tregear, “Tiki,” 110.

⁴²⁹ Blakemore, “Nā Ki‘i Lā‘au.”

⁴³⁰ Blakemore, 7.

⁴³¹ Griffin, “Hewing to Tradition.”

⁴³² Blakemore, “Nā Ki‘i Lā‘au,” 2.

⁴³³ Griffin, “Hewing to Tradition.”

Indigenous practices ensures the continued failure of a settler colonial project that aims to destroy and replace Kanaka Maoli knowledge with that of the settler society.

By describing how colonial apprehension functions as well as how it fails to contend with enduring indigeneity and Indigenous sovereignty in Hawai‘i, this dissertation opens imaginative possibilities for a broader ethics of non-native solidarity with Indigenous peoples and decolonization struggles that necessarily bridges distance and difference. There is a wide and ever-growing body of vibrant scholarship on questions of allyship between Kanaka Maoli and non-native communities in Hawai‘i. Some of this work has addressed the need for haole accountability to and allyship with Hawaiians.⁴³⁴ More recently, there have also been contributions that have explored Black experience in Hawai‘i, especially in relation to other non-native racialized communities as well as Kanaka Maoli indigeneity.⁴³⁵ However, the most significant portion of this literature has sought to explicate the complex dynamics between Asian residents — Hawai‘i’s racial majority — and Kanaka Maoli.

Many scholars and activists recognize Haunani-Kay Trask’s article “Settlers of Color and ‘Immigrant’ Hegemony: ‘Locals’ in Hawai‘i” published in the year 2000, as a groundbreaking contribution to the study of how localism — the flattening of difference in Hawai‘i into a color-blind “local” and “non-local” binary — has undermined Kanaka Maoli political struggles.⁴³⁶ Trask argues that haole are not the only group that have maintained settler colonialism in Hawai‘i at the expense of Indigenous Hawaiians. She

⁴³⁴ See Judy Rohrer, *Haoles in Hawai‘i*, Race and Ethnicity in Hawai‘i (Honolulu: University of Hawai‘i Press, 2010); Rohrer, *Staking Claim*; Keiko Ohnuma, “Local Haole - A Contradiction in Terms? The Dilemma of Being White, Born and Raised in Hawai‘i.,” *Cultural Values* 6, no. 3 (July 2002): 273–85.

⁴³⁵ See Akiemi Green, *The Pōpolo Project*, <https://www.thepopoloproject.org>; Nitasha Tamar Sharma, *Hawai‘i Is My Haven: Race and Indigeneity in the Black Pacific* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2021).

⁴³⁶ Trask, “Settlers of Color.”

observes that Asian American politicians, such as Daniel Inouye, have participated in settler state governance and that Asian communities have often reproduced “anti-Hawaiian sentiment.”⁴³⁷ Trask warns against the adoption of “colonial ideology” by Asian residents of Hawai‘i, namely “the assertion of a ‘local nation’ . . . that Asians, too, have a nation in Hawai‘i” as well as the idea that “we are all immigrants.”⁴³⁸ These sorts of “settler claims,” Trask contends, facilitated the increased political empowerment of Asian Americans — understood as a form of putative justice for a long history of Asian labor exploitation, racism, and marginalization in Hawai‘i — but was “made possible by the continued national oppression of Hawaiians, particularly the theft of our lands and the crushing of our independence.”⁴³⁹

In the years since the publication of Trask’s “Settlers of Color,” scholars in Hawai‘i have elaborated on her critique to produce theoretical and historical studies of “Asian settler colonialism,” which Candace Fujikane defines as “a constellation of the colonial ideologies and practices of Asian settlers who currently support the broader structure of the U.S. settler state.”⁴⁴⁰ The study of Asian settler colonialism in Hawai‘i has been accompanied by both Native Hawaiian and Asian scholarship on the particularities of Asian-Kanaka Maoli relations and forms of solidarity. Kanaka Maoli scholar and activist Noelani Goodyear-Ka‘ōpua theorized the kuleana (responsibility) of a “settler aloha ‘āina” (settler who loves the land) in her 2013 book *The Seeds We Planted:*

⁴³⁷ Trask, 4, 7.

⁴³⁸ Trask, 4, 7.

⁴³⁹ Trask, 4.

⁴⁴⁰ Candace Fujikane and Jonathan Y. Okamura, eds., *Asian Settler Colonialism: From Local Governance to the Habits of Everyday Life in Hawai‘i* (Honolulu: University of Hawai‘i Press, 2008), 6.

A settler aloha ‘āina can take responsibility for and develop attachment to lands upon which they reside when actively supporting Kānaka Maoli who have been alienated from ancestral lands to reestablish those connections and also helping to rebuild Indigenous structures that allow for the transformation of settler colonial relations.⁴⁴¹

Fujikane, Dean Saranillio, and many other Asian scholars with familial connections to Hawai‘i have committed to further theorizing and practicing modes of political organizing built on settler aloha ‘āina.⁴⁴² Saranillio advocates an “affinity-based politics that creatively orchestrates interdependency” between non-native people and Kanaka Maoli in pursuit of decolonization and Indigenous cultural resurgence in Hawai‘i.⁴⁴³

Fujikane presents a similar vision:

Although ‘Ōiwi [Kanaka Maoli] have a genealogical connection to the land that others do not, all people who live in Hawai‘i have the kuleana and the capacity to grow aloha ‘āina and to take on the responsibilities of caring for these celebrated and sacred places in Hawai‘i. ... ‘Ōiwi opened up a space for settlers and others not kama‘āina [born in Hawai‘i] to their places to join them in struggle based on their shared affinities, their shared commitments to aloha ‘āina.⁴⁴⁴

This important body of scholarship has focused on theorizing a politics of affinity or solidarity for non-Hawaiian people who reside in Hawai‘i or have familial ties to the islands and who seek to live more ethically with the land and to fight for decolonization alongside Kanaka Maoli. However, there is still much to be said about how an affinity-based politics of decolonization can bridge distance as well as difference. What is the responsibility of non-Hawaiians who live in North America, who are not kama‘āina, and do not hold any familial ties to the islands?

⁴⁴¹ Noelani Goodyear-Ka‘ōpua, *The Seeds We Planted: Portraits of a Native Hawaiian Charter School* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2013), 154.

⁴⁴² See, for example, Candace Fujikane, *Mapping Abundance for a Planetary Future: Kanaka Maoli and Critical Settler Cartographies in Hawai‘i* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2021); Saranillio, *Unsustainable Empire*; Fujikane and Okamura, *Asian Settler Colonialism*.

⁴⁴³ Saranillio, *Unsustainable Empire*, 25.

⁴⁴⁴ Candace Fujikane, “Mapping Wonder in the Māui Mo‘olelo on the Mo‘o‘āina,” *Marvels & Tales* 30, no. 1 (2016): 63, 65.

My genealogical account of colonial apprehension and enduring Kanaka Maoli indigeneity illuminates how even those of us without any attachments to Hawai‘i are implicated in its history and its continued colonization. My aim, as a daughter of the transpacific diaspora, and a minoritized, racialized, and non-Hawaiian researcher, is not to influence the work of settler aloha ‘āina or the Indigenous-led decolonization and sovereignty movement in Hawai‘i. Rather, I propose that every non-Hawaiian living under American settler colonialism has an ethical responsibility to Hawai‘i and Kanaka Maoli. *Colonial Apprehension* opens up further explorations of an affinity-based politics of decolonization across distance and difference, but this dissertation does not seek to offer a definitive political proposal or ethical framework. I intend for these questions to form the foundation upon which I might build future research. However, and in conclusion, I do contend that non-Hawaiians can and must refuse to apprehend. At an absolute *minimum*, non-Hawaiians must consistently refuse to uncritically consume and claim true knowledge of Hawai‘i, Kanaka Maoli, and Hawaiian culture. We can, for instance, remember to be humble visitors and gracious guests rather than mindless tourist-consumers.⁴⁴⁵ We can also refuse to travel to Indigenous places during a global pandemic.

Refusing apprehension is a necessary foundation rather than a destination when it comes to understanding how non-natives can engage in ethical solidarity with Indigenous people in pursuit of decolonization. As this dissertation has taken shape, I have been confronted by copious evidence that colonial apprehension does not only scaffold the settler colonial project in Hawai‘i and the Pacific, but also those in Turtle Island and

⁴⁴⁵ See Aikau and Gonzalez, *Detours*.

beyond. Apprehension, as a persistent and pernicious form of colonial knowledge production, is largely propelled by our unintentionality and inattention. My hope is that this work encourages other non-Hawaiians and non-natives to walk more intentionally and attentively through our shared world and among our relations.

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