

Empire's Imagination: Race, Settler Colonialism, and Indigeneity in 'Local' Hawai'i Narratives

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Abstract

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My dissertation, "Empire's Imagination: Race, Settler Colonialism, and Indigeneity in 'Local' Hawai'i Narratives," addresses the history of U.S. empire in Hawai'i, arguing that empire persists into the present through the structuring of contemporary literary representations of Asian migrants and Kanaka Maoli, the Indigenous population. This project intervenes into postcolonial studies, American studies, and ethnic studies as I rely on the optic of U.S. empire to reveal the concurrent processes of Asian and Indigenous racialization historically and in cultural memory. Through a comparative approach to Asian American studies and Indigenous studies, I demonstrate how Hawai'i operates as an opportunity to reckon with the determinative force of U.S. empire in the imaginative realm of aesthetic production. Contrary to the belief that contemporary literature's imaginative force can transcend or repair the violence of U.S. empire restoring voice to those whom empire violated, I theorize the desire for literary representation as

a legacy of empire. Furthermore, I argue for a more contradictory understanding of contemporary literature, one in which the history of U.S. empire remains coercive and determinative. By examining narratives about and by Hawai‘i based writers, commonly referred to as “local” writing, I argue that “local” writing often functions as a “resolution” to the past. While it makes visible the history of empire through the stories it tells, “local” writing often positions itself as evidence of contemporary Hawai‘i as a multicultural paradise of universal belonging. Yet, I demonstrate how “local” writing can only “resolve” the violence of empire by perpetuating the erasure of Kanaka Maoli colonization in the present. I argue the genre of “local” writing both critiques and perpetuates the violence of Indigenous dispossession and liberal racial formation. This leads me to also argue for the limitations of literary narrative to reconcile or resist the violences of U.S. empire. Thus, “local” writing produces Asian migrants as “local” subjects, substitutes for Kanaka Maoli, in order to maintain U.S. settler colonial hegemony.

My dissertation examines specific flashpoints of U.S. empire in Hawai‘i in the 19th and 20th century with post-2000 literary and cultural production that reimagines these moments. Together, these cultural texts demonstrate the possibilities and limitations of “local” fiction to reckon with the history of colonization and its legacies in the colonial present. Thus, in order to resist the paradigm of U.S. empire and to reimagine alternatives to colonized spaces, I propose the possibility of a material politics that accounts for how imperial epistemologies constitute the realm of the historical and literary imaginaries. In refusing to collapse Kanaka Maoli and Asian settler into a false political and racial equivalence, I instead argue for the necessity of reorienting the figure of the “local” Asian settler reveals the continuation of U.S. nationalist and imperialist knowledge production in the present. This relationality between history and narrative conveys how imaginative practices undergo continual colonization. This situates my project at the

juncture of settler colonialism, racial capitalism, and ethnic studies where my theoretical interventions identify how Hawai'i's history and literary production reveals the limits of current Asian American and postcolonial studies. Thus, my project calls for alternative strategies of decolonization where the aesthetic imagination becomes a material site of decolonizing politics. As such, I theorize how this form of decolonial and anti-imperial politics needs to account for how the imaginative realm is structured by the history of U.S. empire.

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**FOR MY PARENTS,
DR. RICHARD DAY AND TERRY DAY,
FOR ALWAYS BELIEVING IN ME**

Introduction

“An Island in the Middle of the Pacific.” The Politics of Belonging and Where to Begin

My dissertation, “Empire’s Imagination: Race, Settler Colonialism, and Indigeneity in ‘Local’ Hawai‘i Narratives,” intervenes into the scholarly discussions around the legacies of U.S. empire through an analysis of the real and imagined location of Hawai‘i as a multiracial paradise distinct from continental racial formations. This relational analysis between Asian American studies and postcolonial studies serves as a critique of these fields where Hawai‘i is often used as an example of U.S. benevolent colonialism in the Pacific, a counterpoint to dominant Asian immigration narratives, and as a metonym for Oceania. For my project, I establish the premise that colonialism is not a historical event from the past to be reconciled through cultural production. Instead, I situate how U.S. empire mediates and organizes cultural memory, specifically through literature. This occurs through the structuring of the “local” Asian that does the epistemological work to continually reframe the past in a way that obscures the violences of U.S. empire. The premise of Asian Americans not as a minority, but as a dominant racial group has been key to the making of this utopian vision of a multiracial American society. I demonstrate how literary narratives, commonly referred to as “local” writing by and about Hawai‘i-based writers, engage the politics of racial formation of Kanaka Maoli, the Indigenous peoples of Hawai‘i, and the multitude of Asian immigrants now settled on the Islands.¹ I argue

¹ Chadwick Allen emphasizes how “Indigenous” is “with a capital I” (xii), where he advocates for the relational and “globally-based paradigm of Indigenous studies” that sometimes comes into question with United States-based Indigenous formations (xxi). Taiāikae Alfred and Jeff Corntassel also explain, “Indigenous is an identity constructed, shaped and lived in the politicized context of contemporary colonialism. The communities, clans, nations and tribes we call Indigenous peoples are just that: Indigenous to the lands they inhabit, in contrast to and in contention with the colonial societies and states that have spread out from Europe and other centres of empire. It is this oppositional, place-based existence, along with the consciousness of being in struggle against the dispossessing and demeaning fact of colonization by foreign peoples, that fundamentally distinguishes Indigenous peoples from other peoples of the world” (597). In their explication, Alfred and Corntassel highlight how Indigeneity evokes a particular political position as existent through colonialism. As such, I follow in Allen, Alfred, Corntassel, and Glenn Coulthard’s scholarship and also capitalize Indigenous throughout my project.

these narratives reveal one of the contradictions of settler colonialism in Hawai‘i where Asian settlers are celebrated as assimilated “local” citizens only through the constant erasure of Kanaka Maoli.² As such, my dissertation inquires: how does contemporary fiction by “local” Kanaka Maoli, Asian-immigrant descendants and westerners imagine Hawai‘i by revealing the continued legacies of U.S. imperialism?

In order to address this complex question, I rely on a multi-faceted analysis of Asian settlers, Kanaka Maoli, and the construction of the “local” to demonstrate how literature functions to make visible the legacies of U.S. empire and settler colonialism in Hawai‘i. I argue the genre of “local” writing both perpetuates and critiques the continued violence of Indigenous dispossession and liberal racial formation. Relying on theories from Asian American studies, postcolonial studies, Indigenous studies, and literary studies, this project refuses to collapse Kanaka Maoli and Asian settler into a false political and racial equivalence, but instead proposes that reorienting the figure of the “local” Asian settler reveals the continuation of U.S. nationalist and imperialist epistemologies into the present. Through reframing Asian American studies with Indigenous studies, I develop a comparative analysis that investigates the intersection of

² I use “Kanaka Maoli” to refer to the Indigenous peoples of Hawai‘i. In line with Noenoe Silva and Kehaulani Kuanui, I build off “Kanaka Maoli” as it was “seen frequently in the nineteenth-century Hawaiian-language newspapers. ‘Kanaka’ means ‘person,’ and ‘maoli’ means ‘real; true; original; indigeneous’...kanaka denotes the singular or the category, while kānaka is the plural” (Silva 2; Kuanui xii). Noelani Goodyear-Ka‘ōpua also explains how the significance of identifying through the Hawaiian language “disrupts the racialized, U.S. legal definition of ‘native Hawaiian,’ which uses blood quantum measurements that do not emerge from Hawaiian culture” (2). In refusal of western colonial determinations of Indigeneity, Goodyear-Ka‘ōpua emphasizes ancestral terms and language as a way to situate native subjectivity. As such, she explains how the terms “‘Kanaka Maoli,’ ‘Kanaka ‘Ōiwi,’ or simply ‘Kanaka,’ ‘Maoli,’ or ‘‘Ōiwi,’ to refer to the autochthonous people of the Hawaiian archipelago – the original people who emerged from this place. These terms indicate our genealogical relationship to the lands and waters of our islands and distinguish us from other residents” (2). As such, I use “Kanaka Maoli” throughout this project. Related, I am in line with Indigenous scholars like Chadwick Allen and Noenoe Silva who do not identify Hawaiian or Indigenous languages in italics unless used in the original text. Allen explains, “I engage English and Indigenous languages on equal terms, outside the binaries familiar/exotic or domestic/foreign” (xxx; Silva 13). In terms of variations of spellings and capitalization for Hawaiian words, I also follow how the original texts and authors used them, even if they are not in line with my practice, which is primarily based off of Mary Kawena Pukui’s dictionary as well as other Kanaka Maoli scholars.

historical events of U.S. empire in Hawai‘i from the 19th and 20th century with post-2000 novels. I build out a genealogy of how U.S. empire functions and organizes Asian and Indigenous racial formation historically through the possibilities and limitations of literary culture. This derives from my concept of “imaginative apparatuses of empire,” which works as my method of interpreting the ways in which the cultural memory of Hawai‘i and the U.S. nation remember and reconstruct a shared past through history and literature. As a result, the stakes for my project address the necessity of decolonizing Pacific spaces and cultural production to begin the process of undoing the violences of settler colonialism under the regime of racial (neo)liberalism. Thus, my dissertation reveals how the history of U.S. empire and settler colonialism continue to structure the current literary imaginaries of “local” writing in Hawai‘i. This recognition of the pervasive power of imperial epistemologies not only on the historical colonial archive, but also on cultural production is critical for theorizing an alternative decolonial politics premised on literary narratives. By suturing together Indigenous studies with Asian American studies, my dissertation develops a relational analytic that reorients both fields in order to reckon with how U.S. empire continues to function for the nation-state and racializing difference. The necessity of interrogating the position of cultural memory is equally vital in order to recognize the subversive and powerful ways that imperialism and colonialism shape our aesthetic imaginaries.

While my dissertation situates historical flashpoints of U.S. empire with contemporary literature, the stakes of cultural memory and the politics of Hawai‘i are made explicit through a recent series of events surrounding Trump’s revised travel ban in March 2017. I turn to this illustrative example in order to illuminate the relevancy of both Hawai‘i as a site of continuing colonial and liberal racial formation as well as the pervasive substitution of “localness” for both Kanaka Maoli and Asian migrant. This contemporary example involved the executive branch of

the government, the federal court, and an array of individuals on Twitter responding to the various legal decisions. On March 15, 2017, the hashtag “boycottHawaii” began trending on Twitter from Trump supporters in retaliation to Hawai‘i Judge Derrick K. Watson’s block of the president’s revised travel ban. *The New York Times* reported that Judge Watson argued the ban was about religious discrimination against Muslims by stating, “The illogic of the Government’s contentions is palpable. The notion that one can demonstrate animus toward any group of people only by targeting all of them at once is fundamentally flawed.” This explicit rebuke of Trump’s travel ban resulted in a flurry of outraged responses on social media through Twitter. Hawai‘i was the first state to sue over the revised travel ban and the state’s complaint asked Judge Watson to block the revised executive order 13769.³ While Judge Watson’s block was monumental in refusing to support Trump’s revised ban as it was an explicit form of discrimination, the outpouring of #boycottHawaii exemplifies the contemporary ignorance around the U.S. and Hawai‘i’s long colonial and imperial history.⁴ Attorney General Doug Chin’s critique of the ban draws attention to the history of racial and geographical exclusionary legislation that has consistently informed U.S. empire. Chin states that the revised travel ban was “‘antithetical to Hawaii’s state identity and spirit’ in a court filing, likening it to the Chinese Exclusion Act and the internment of Japanese Americans during World War II” (Burns). Here,

³ This revised ban continued to restrict immigration for 90 days from six of the original seven countries, removing Iraq, but leaving Iran, Somalia, Sudan, Yemen, Syria and Libya (Thrush), where visa and green card holders from all six countries will still be allowed entry (BBC). The White House Press Release on March 6, 2017 entitled, “Executive Order Protecting the Nation from Terrorist Entry into the United States,” states in section IV, “Executive Order 13769 did not provide a basis for discriminating for or against members of any particular religion. While that order allowed for prioritization of refugee claims from members of persecuted religious minority groups, that priority applied to refugees from every nation, including those in which Islam is a minority religion, and it applied to minority sects within a religion. That order was not motivated by animus toward any religion, but was instead intended to protect the ability of religious minorities -- whoever they are and wherever they reside -- to avail themselves of the USRAP in light of their particular challenges and circumstances.”

⁴ Alexander Burns for *The New York Times* describes how Judge Watson denounced the travel ban for how a “‘reasonable, objective viewer,’ would view even the new order as ‘issued with a purpose to disfavor a particular religion, in spite of its stated, religiously neutral purpose.’”

the clear historical genealogy of U.S. racialized exclusion is explicitly linked to the current president's revised travel ban and the state of Hawai'i's opposition to it.

This context incited a trending Twitter hashtag #boycottHawaii where Trump supporters, and proponents of the revised travel ban, advocated boycotting any travel plans to Hawai'i as an economic sign of dissent. A range of tweets emphasized changing travel plans like Wendy who tweeted, “#boycotthawaii I was talking my kids and Grandkids to Hawaii. Just canceled @gohawaii your judge threatens our safety.” This tweet emphasizes both the idea of personal safety from perceived immigration threats and the necessity of the tourist economy for Hawai'i. Other responses were more inflammatory in assuming that Hawai'i's geographical distance from the continental United States was related to a lack of national connection.



Figure 1: Screenshot

Schuyler tweets, “Hawaii, what do you know? You were 5,000 miles away from 9/11. You run your little world and let the grownups run the mainland.” This accusation demonstrates a complete lack of knowledge about World War II and the attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941. Schuyler's tweet belies his own ignorance of World War II as well as imitates a condescending colonialist tone. In other tweets, individuals offered conspiracy theories, called

for threats against Judge Watson, and echoed desires for an economic boycott. While it might not appear completely unexpected to see the proliferation of tweets by individuals on the continental United States, the response or trolling of these initial boycott calls are indicative of the continued erasure of the colonization of Kanaka Maoli and the celebration of a “local” affiliation that does the work of (Asian) settler colonialism.

Hawai‘i’s response to #boycottHawaii arguably garnered more media attention than the initial call to boycott and exemplifies the conflation of “local” for Asian settler, while also reflecting an elision of U.S. empire and Indigeneity. Stephanie McNeal for *Buzzfeed* summarizes how the trolling hashtags indicate, “Most people said that if Trump supporters didn’t want to come to Hawaii anymore, that was fine with them.” Tweets also pointed out the erroneous statement that Schuyler made regarding Hawai‘i being attacked. Still, the tweets highlighted a “local” insider rhetoric that often collapsed a sense of belonging to Hawai‘i as a residential and geographical one; this narrative continues to erase U.S. colonization of Kanaka Maoli.



Figure 1.2: Screenshot

Above, sierra tweets, “Hawaii locals when we see #boycottHawaii trending. Yesss, please cancel your trips. We won’t miss your racist and colonial attitudes.” By celebrating the boycott, sierra identifies how Hawaii “locals” do not want Trump supporters who have “racist and colonial

attitudes.” Through this accusation of “colonial attitudes,” sierra exemplifies the problematic elision of U.S. colonization of Hawai‘i by projecting continental Trump and travel ban advocates as proponents of colonialism. This misreading, whether conscious or not, of who constitutes the “locals” and who displays “colonial attitudes” is precisely the intersection that my dissertation picks up on. In this phrasing of “Hawai‘i locals,” sierra seems to be referring to the residents of Hawai‘i with no recognition of the different histories of Kanaka Maoli, Asian migrants, or westerners. Instead, she generalizes the population as all being part of an inclusive “local” group. Even more concerning is the association of colonialism with the continental United States without any awareness of Hawai‘i’s own colonial history. As a result, sierra’s tweet could arguably be considered as uninformed as the #boycottHawaii supporters. Here, the distinction is exclusively on insiders as residents and outsiders as those not from Hawai‘i. This upholds the assumption of the multiracial population of Hawai‘i that continues to dismiss Indigenous land dispossession and the problematics of Asian settler hegemony as “local” belonging.

Still, there were some tweets that lambasted the elision of U.S. colonialism. Princess T tweets, “#BoycottHawaii WE DIDNT WANT YOU COMING HERE IN THE FIRST PLACE?? WHILE UR AT IT, HOW BOUT GIVING US SOME OF OUR SOVEREIGNTY BACK? MAHALO!” In this example, the glaring history of U.S. empire is eviscerated through a reaction to #boycottHawaii and simultaneously advocates for Indigenous sovereignty. Princess T asserts the violent history between the U.S. and Hawai‘i through the impetus of continental complaints against the president’s anti-Muslim ban. Even the strategic employment of “mahalo,” thank you, at the end of the tweet is intentionally placed as one of the most recognizable Hawaiian words used by westerners. Instead, Princess T includes “mahalo” as a way to assert an Indigenous context for the word. Still, the discourse of “locals” as residents persisted in tweets that

emphasized “more for us” without indicating who was included in “us” and was often coupled with beach photos that inevitably promoted the “paradisiacal” image of Hawai‘i. Consequently, this entire situation from the block of the travel ban as being in conflict with the “spirit” of Hawai‘i, as a reference to the “Aloha State,” to the social media trolling indicates the public discourse surrounding the history of U.S. empire and the Islands.⁵ The trending of #boycottHawaii embodies the intersection of settler colonial claims to belonging through the “local” classification. This makes visible how the “local” operates to celebrate both assimilated (Asian) Americans and the culture of “aloha,” while simultaneously obscuring Kanaka Maoli colonization and land dispossession. The conflicting tweets from all sides, both the initial boycotters and the responders, exemplify the present need to examine how Hawai‘i embodies U.S. racial formation through the production of the “local” as Asian settler and through the continued elision of Indigeneity. Through a comparative racialization and relational analysis of Kanaka Maoli and Asian migrants, my dissertation asserts how cultural memory operates as the site that defines, reproduces, and ruptures these racial formations.

In consideration of the concrete political and social stakes of my project, I utilized how Trump’s revised travel ban, Judge Watson’s block of it, and the subsequent Twitter boycott and response embodies the current cultural discourse around Hawai‘i. The #boycottHawaii movement demonstrates the perpetual elision of U.S. empire in Hawai‘i, elevates the claim to locality as a substitute for Indigeneity, and generally reflects an overall lack of awareness of cultural and racial tensions.⁶ Instead, “localness” in Hawai‘i is supposedly understood as a claim

⁵ Stephanie Nohelani Teves emphasizes how aloha operates as an ideology that functions both for Kanaka Maoli and for the state. Teves explains, “The state of Hawai‘i has been integral in this process by appropriating and co-opting aloha to quiet dissent and police Kānaka Maoli behavior. By perpetuating the myth of the ‘Aloha State,’ the local governance prioritizes a false sense of belonging among Hawaii’s multicultural population at the expenses of Kānaka Maoli sovereignty claims” (710).

⁶ Chadwick Allen discusses “locality” for Indigenous studies where the difficulty of building both a global comparative analysis with distinct locations is a constant tension in the field. Allen explains how the value of the

to belonging through multicultural diversity, where the state depends on a tourist economy, which continually occludes U.S. colonialism. Consequently, the confluence of the rhetoric and expectations of Hawai‘i are where my project intervenes into both the cultural, political, and historical representations of racial formation of Kanaka Maoli and the descendants of Asian migrants. My dissertation rethinks this process as a mode of current colonial governmentality through the rise of positioning Asian Americans as complicit in the erasure of U.S. empire. By “colonial governmentality,” I am referring to the forms of state and national power that perpetuate the continued colonial occupation of Hawai‘i, the dispossession of Kanaka Maoli, and the problematic category of “local” that rescripts Asian immigration as one of geographical and cultural belonging. This form of governmentality shores up the perception of Hawai‘i as the ideal diverse state and is evidenced through the recent #boycottHawaii tweets.

As such, I shift the geographical orientation of Asian American studies to the Pacific, not as a supplement to continental formations or as the ideal multicultural location, but to locate transpacific migration and labor as an optic into comparative U.S. racialization. I demonstrate how Hawai‘i operates as an opportunity to reckon with the determinative force of U.S. empire in narrative form. My turn to literary production is to examine the persistence and work of empire through the ways in which cultural memory mediates U.S. empire. This argument situates literature as the optimal site of cultural memory as opposed to the historical archive or sociological inquiry. Building off Astrid Erll and Ann Rigney’s work on cultural memory, I utilize their explanation of how “literature has three roles to play in the production of cultural memory. These roles comprise how 1) literature acts as a medium of remembrance, 2) an object

“local” comes through “specific, distinct traditions and communities” (xiii). This, of course, is a different form of locality than my project, but it is important to establish the differences. As Hawai‘i’s “local” does refer to a specific history and community, but I am positioning it as a particular formation in the 20th century and not as a general geographical marker.

of remembrance, and 3) for observing the production of cultural memory” (112). This indicates the various opportunities for literature to operate as forms of cultural memory. I connect these modes of cultural memory with the politics of minority literature. Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari discuss how minority literature is inherently political in how it attends to relations of national power and the structure of national subjectivity (16). Therefore, literary production offers an analytic into the concrete material histories of relational racialization where cultural memory provides access to non-archival epistemologies and ways of navigating the discursive realm. With the understanding of how literature operates as a form of cultural memory, my project deconstructs the expectations of the relationship between history and literature. Contrary to the belief that contemporary literature can transcend or repair the violence of U.S. empire by restoring voice to those whom empire violated, I theorize the desire and production of literary representation as legacies of empire. This means that even the impetus for literature to rectify the historical violence of empire is itself indicative of the power of imperial epistemologies. This undermines the phenomenon known as “writing back” or against the dominant discourse that literature has often provided. Instead, I argue for a more contradictory understanding of contemporary literature, one in which the history of U.S. empire remains coercive and determinative. But, I also suggest how literature makes the structuring of U.S. empire visible. Therefore, my dissertation makes two overall claims: 1) that literature is not exclusively a salve to the violent histories of U.S. empire and is regulated by those same imperial epistemologies and 2) Hawai‘i offers a site of analysis to understand how Asian American migration and racialization intersect with Indigeneity to uphold the U.S. nation-state and where cultural memory reconstructs the colonial past to make visible the colonial present.

Asian American Studies and Settler Colonialism Overview

My project, which focuses on Hawai‘i, enters the conversation of Asian American studies by often being the example of achievable national belonging through the discourse of liberal multiculturalism. Consequently, the location and culture of Hawai‘i is often referenced as the ideal multi-ethnic population that stands out as exceptional for Asian American studies. Arguably, in the past decade, Asian American Studies has been grappling with the necessary influence and context of U.S. imperialism, the Pacific, and questions of Indigenous populations in relation to and in conversation with the field. I locate my project at the intersection of U.S. empire, mobility, and migration where questions of relational racialization require thinking through how the moment of national inclusion demands a reckoning with the social orders and structures that uphold belonging. This is where my project is situated: where Hawai‘i is not singularly representative of successful Asian inclusion into the nation-state, but as an optic into relational racialization where Asian migration intersects with Indigeneity. This project’s stakes explicitly reorient Asian American studies and its relationship to the Pacific in an alternative way where even though Hawai‘i still becomes exceptionalized, it is not the definitive stand-in for the Pacific. The combination of Indigeneity and Asian American studies under the rubric of empire allows for an intervention in multiple fields including but not limited to comparative ethnic studies, American studies, postcolonial studies, and literary studies, all which have been demanding for alternative ways to decenter the nationalist immigrant assimilation narratives that have dominated these fields.

In order to situate my project’s intervention into Asian American studies, I emphasize the field’s original political and social justice aims to consider how my dissertation engages these questions through a sustained focus on Hawai‘i. The emergence of Asian American studies and

concurrently ethnic studies rose out of student protests in the 1970s, particular San Francisco State and University of California at Berkeley, demanding for academic attention to the particular histories and oppressions of minority groups. Coming off the heels of social and political activism from the Civil Rights movement, the Vietnam War protests, and others in the 1960s and 1970s, students demanded courses and histories in Asian American and ethnic studies at the university level. As such, the field developed to meet a university-centered interest in history and narratives around minority experiences, often grounded in essentialist conceptions of identity. In building out the history and culture of Asian American studies, Ronald Takaki, Sucheng Chan, and Gary Okihiro laid the foundation for thinking through the various types of motivations of Asian migration to the U.S. and its need for labor. Takaki's work resonates in his emphasis on the pan-ethnic solidarity of the category of "Asian American" as an all-inclusive movement, defined by different "waves" of migration, where the move towards national belonging and inclusion is achievable. This era also critiques the "model minority" myth that Asian Americans are capable of upward mobility without state aid and indicates the U.S.'s structure of racial hierarches as intersecting with blackness, whiteness, and "ethnic groups." The persistence of the "model minority" myth embodies the tensions between historical racial exclusion and obtaining citizenship that deliberately forgets the necessity and constitutive nature of Asian labor. Consequently, the institutionalization of Asian American studies programs can be categorized through the chronological standard periodization of Asian migration, hierarchies of ethnic groups, the violences of racial exclusion, and the overemphasis on national belonging.

Within this recognition of Asian American studies, critical scholars began to emphasize the centering of migration as critical in seeing how labor movements were connected to capitalism. This begins to shift the dominant focus away from national inclusion/exclusion and

subject-citizen formation to a recognition of the centrality of global empire to Asian migrant labor. Chan notes how “Asian international migration was part of a larger, global phenomenon: the movement of workers, capital, and technology across national boundaries to enable entrepreneurs to exploit natural resources in more and more parts of the world” (4). Framing the flows of immigration as a direct result of the development of capitalism and market resources, Chan highlights the international and economic factors as the driving forces behind Asian immigration. This serves to critique the dominant narratives of Asian American studies that focused in possible integration into the U.S. nation-state through citizenship. Here, Chan acknowledges the global context of racial capitalism and empire that motivated migrant labor.

To build off of Chan’s reorienting to the field, Gary Okihiro calls into question the field’s extensive focus and celebration of East Asian immigration through Chinese and Japanese histories, and later Korean, above and over South Asian and Filipino experiences. Okihiro’s *Margins and Mainstreams* in 1994 demands how the field needs:

to widen considerably the canvas of Asian American history, which hitherto was deemed to have begun in the mid-nineteenth century and in California. Further, I[he] write[s] against a widely held and persistent view that Asians were like European immigrants, as opposed to Africans or Latinos, in that they chose to leave the homelands and sojourn in America for the opportunities of the West. The when and where of Asian American history, I[he] insists, are of an ancient vintage and of a global scale, and they situate Asians with Africans and Latinos along the margins. (xi)

In refuting the persistent narratives that liken the history of immigration as equivalent between Europeans and Asians, Okihiro emphasizes the capitalist conditions of labor that specifically heralded Asian immigration. Importantly, this also reorients the supposed geographical “starting”

point of the field from 19th century in California to the initial Asian figure in European consciousness back to 4th century B.C. with an emphasis on European imperialism, exploration, and trade that brought the west to the east. This not only radically decenters the nation-state, but also the drive towards citizenship as the exclusive narrative of the field. Okiihiro subsequently insists on centralizing gender and sexuality in an intersectional analysis needed by Asian American Studies as it has primarily highlighted masculine heterosexual labor and experiences.

Similarly, Moon-Ho Jung has demonstrated that Asian American studies is defined by a particular historiography that privileges the West Coast as the primary site of Asian migration. In order to resituate the field's emphasis on transpacific geography, Jung focuses on the archive of "coolie" labor to the American South and globally through sugar plantation labor in the 19th century. Jung's insistence on reframing the sites of Asian migration has a profound effect on understanding Asian racialization as a negotiation of whiteness, blackness, and Asian "coolie" as well as contextualizing migration and mobility to U.S. empire and capitalism. Jung rotates the focus of Asian American studies towards the American South and narrates Asian American history through that of global labor migration instead of a perceived linear and trajectory from "immigrant" to assimilation.

Continuing in Okiihiro and Jung's trajectory of reorienting the geographical focus of the field, Lisa Lowe's *Immigrant Acts* argues for reckoning with the contradictions of U.S. citizenship through the racialization and regulation of Asians through legal exclusion and historical alienation as tied to labor migration. As such, Lowe heralds the argument of the consistent failure of assimilation where the Asian "is always seen as an immigrant, as the 'foreigner-within'" (*Immigrant* 6). Furthermore, Lowe demonstrates how a materialist critique of citizenship situates the centrality of Asian immigration as "fundamental to understanding the

racialized foundations of both the emergence of the United States as a nation and the development of American capitalism” (*Immigrant* ix). Lowe conveys how the cultural work of citizenship expresses the contradictions of nation formation and the development of capitalism through Asian (immigrant) labor. Thus, Lowe’s focus on the figure of Asian immigrant in legal and cultural history also demonstrates a broader critique of American capitalism that suggests connections to other racial formations. Broadening the history of racialized and oppressed groups, Lowe provides an intervention into the isolating and problematic racial binaries that often serve to divide and continue to support the (white) dominant nation-state. This extends then to not only African Americans, Latino/as, and Indigenous populations, but also forces the field to consider the wider ramifications of U.S. imperialism. In some ways, Lowe builds off of Okihiro’s insistence on the false binary between Asian and African as bolstering white supremacy. As Okihiro reveals the complex pitting of races against each other in service of maintaining the dominant status quo of “whiteness,” he repeats the phrase, “We are a kindred people, African and Asian Americans” (*Margins* 34, 60) in an informal way that insists on parallel histories of colonization, oppression, labor, and racism. Lowe is less explicit in her critique of the culpability of the U.S. nation-state in perpetuating racial antagonisms between various minority groups, but still her incisive analysis displaces the universality of assimilation into citizenship which transcends the specificity of Asian racial formation. While Lowe and Okihiro are not representative of the dominant field, their critical work emphasizes the role of U.S. imperialism, racial coalition through a critique of the nation-state, intersectional analyses, and how to move out of a focus on legitimizing a predominantly male, heterosexual, and eastern Asian focus.

This background is precisely where the deconstruction of the Asian American as representative of the subject position of national citizen becomes a point of critique for the field and eventually addresses how my project extends this inquiry to emphasize how U.S. empire organizes Asian American studies. Kandice Chuh in her 2003 *Imagine Otherwise* explicitly calls for alternative directions in the field that decenter the nationalist narrative that centers on an immigration to assimilation trajectory.⁷ Calling attention to the dominance of subject-based national narratives, Chuh argues for a radical restructuring of the nation-state's centrality and its related focus on individual subject narratives. This offers a critique of essentialist identity politics where even the term "Asian American" highlights the ties to nation and its identitarian stakes. Chuh asserts how the field has been based around the nation-state as the "preeminent unit of global organization" and promotes the turn towards transnationalism because it recognizes "contemporary flows of capital and information that seemingly find national borders irrelevant and 'patriotic' loyalties displaced from nation-states to differently configured collectivities" (3). In supporting a turn towards transnationalism, Chuh's work builds off Okihiro and Lowe's critical attention to the necessity of empire and the demands of capital as part of Asian racialization and migration. Chuh's incisive critiques of Asian American studies develop out of the relationship of critiquing the subject as indicative of the epistemological power of the nation-state. As such, her call for thinking through structures of power that narrate and limit the field become clearer through the contradictory paradigm of multiculturalism that:

⁷ Chuh cites Michael Omi and Dana Takagi's observations of a split in the field through the proliferation of post-modern approaches that interrogate master narratives in their article "Thinking Theory in Asian American Studies." Omi and Takagi observe the field division occurring between "historians and social scientists who vigorously defend concepts of 'social structure,'" and on the other are literary and cultural studies intellectuals who, heavily influenced by postmodern thought, privilege 'discursive practices'" (xi). This highlights the divisions within the field that point to a lack of "a radical theory of social transformation" (Omi & Takagi xii) and how this transcends into the relationship between theory and method and how this translates to a political project. This essay helps to delineate some of the internal conflicts in the field that Chuh and other scholars attempt to ameliorate through critiques of subject-based narratives and the dominance of nation-state paradigms.

attempts to retain a liberal conception of subjectivity while simultaneously to take seriously radical critiques of precisely the liberal subject. In doing so, it occludes and effaces the historicity of racism and the deep-rootedness of racialization as a technology through which the United States, also contradictorily, has perpetuated a self-stylization as the achievement of the universalist Enlightenment values of equality and liberty. (6)

Here, Chuh critiques how Asian American studies has seemingly become a project of liberal multiculturalism and demands that the field be critical of this process and even the term “Asian American.” Through an argument of the descriptive nature of the term, especially with the drive to include “Pacific” in the title as an attempt at inclusivity, Chuh conveys how “‘Asian American’ and its various permutations in this sense serves as a positivist identity category: correcting the term’s inaccuracies indicates an understanding of the nature of language as referential, and of identity as more than less stable. This ‘Asian American’ in effect implies a normative subject” (21). By calling into question the terminology itself, Chuh deploys a necessary critique of an essentialist racial category and begins the conceptual shift towards metaphor that destabilizes the normalizing impulse of the subject-driven focus of the field. This also attempts to move the field away from assimilation into the nation-state as the ideal goal and articulates how, like Lowe, cultural production becomes the site for resistance once disaggregated from the narrative of identity. Chuh clarifies how “the naturalized affiliation of territory with identity has been coopted and deployed to advance Asian Americanist efforts to contest anti-Asian racism in the U.S. frames” (110). This radical move allows for Chuh to critique the ahistorical tendencies of “Asian American” as a static essentialist identity. While perhaps not sustainable in the long-run, this revision allows for Chuh to undermine the nation-state basis of the field and identify critiques of how to advance beyond immigrant to assimilation

trajectories. This also forces a shift in analysis to think about the complex location of Hawai'i as a focus on the Pacific has been encouraged through economic agreements and a belated recognition of the persisting dominance of continent-based analysis.

Prior to addressing the complicated addition of the Pacific in both the terminology of “Asian Pacific American,” as a particular census-driven and economic push, I turn to Grace Hong’s 2006 *The Ruptures of American Capital* as indicative of a radical centering of global capitalism over nationalism the continued driving force behind (gendered) and racial labor. Hong’s work extensively builds off of Okihiro, Lowe, and Chuh’s critiques of the nationalist-driven emphasis of the field. Developing a trajectory that moves out of a nation-based and assimilation-oriented narrative, Hong asserts how difference “becomes articulated as a kind of commodification” as “capital reproduces itself through racialized and gendered difference” (xxiii). For Hong, this means that the ruptures and crises of 20th century capital is marked through women of color feminist practice and racialized immigrant women’s cultures. Hong identifies how these sites “emerge as the return of the repressed of capital, naming the erasures at the very moment of articulation” (xxiv). Similar to Lowe, the centrality of a materialist critique of culture offers opportunities to investigate the machinations of capitalism and the demands for wage labor on various racialized and gendered bodies. Hong situates her analysis not as demonstrative of Asian American studies, but as a critique of the U.S. nation-state and capitalism that often is present in the field.

This genealogy of Asian American studies demonstrates how scholars have critiqued the centrality of the U.S. nation-state to structure narratives that follow an immigration to assimilation trajectory. In attempting to center U.S. empire, capitalism, and the figure, as opposed to an essentialist identity, of “Asian American,” I demonstrate how Asian American

studies has engaged with these theoretical, historical, and material concerns in order to move away from marking the move to citizenship as the hallmark of identitarian achievement. As a result, my survey of the field and subsequently, my dissertation picks up on the particular focus on empire where capitalist demands for cheap labor created the condition of Asian migration, racialization, and gendering for the nation-state. In other words, reorienting the field to the ways in which U.S. empire and racial capitalism organize Asian American studies is part of the crucial intervention my dissertation makes. Even further, part of the work that my project strives to do is to restructure the field of Asian American studies by not simply using Hawai'i and the Pacific as additives, but as a way of thinking more broadly about the locations of empire and the comparative differentials of (Asian) racialized labor. Another way to frame my project is to comparatively think through Asian American studies and Indigenous studies where U.S. empire organizes the study of colonialism and Asian immigration. This also works to undo metanarratives of nationalism and universalized expectations of citizenship through assimilation. Consequently, this project falls in line with Chuh's argument for a subjectless discourse where narratives provide "the conceptual space to prioritize difference by foregrounding the discursive constructedness of subjectivity" (9). Instead of aiming for universality and a static subject position, Chuh's call for the representative nature of "Asian American" offers an analytic into the differentials of subject-making and irresolution.

Chuh's specific chapter on Hawai'i helps clarify what is at stake in deconstructing the field's emphasis on the subject and how her turn to postcolonialism allows for a substantive engagement with the politics of Asian American studies and the U.S. nation. Chuh explains:

I reestablish the limitations of discourse and politics framed by the paradigms of space and subjectivity made available through the form of the nation-state...within the context

of Hawaiian history and politics. In doing so, I demonstrate how the ‘postcolonial’ as an analytic critiques the borders of Asian American studies in such a way as to identify how Asian Americanist discourse might resist transformation into a depoliticized instrument of hegemonic nationalist pedagogy. (14)

Importantly, Chuh’s sustained analysis of the critique of how “Asian American” operates within a nationalist epistemology seems only possible within the context of Hawai’i where the legacies of U.S. empire are simultaneously visible and made invisible. Chuh’s critique of the ways multiculturalism obscures the centering of the Asian American subject as embroiled in and part of hegemonic nationalist epistemology is precisely the juncture that my project builds off of and extends by explicitly bringing Indigeneity together with Asian racial formation. Through a relational analysis between Indigenous and Asian racialization, I argue how U.S. empire continues to organize not only a colonial past, but also the present condition that persists through multiculturalism, state-power, and the structuring of literary imaginaries. What also noticeably is illuminated through this conjoined analytic is how settler colonialism operates to differentiate the modes of power inflicted unevenly on Kanaka Maoli and Asian Americans.

In bringing out the question of settler colonialism as simultaneously informing the landscape of Asian American studies as well as Indigenous studies, I situate how this has been framed both on the continent and how it has been taken up in regards to Hawai’i. Through reflecting on the genealogy of Asian American studies, I demonstrate the influence of settler colonialism and its related focus on Asian settler colonialism in Hawai’i to bolster the necessity for an alternative optic into these dynamics. As Glenn Coulthard explains:

A settler-colonial relationship is one characterized by a particular form of *domination*; that is, it is a relationship where power – in this case, interrelated, discursive, and

nondiscursive facets of economic, gendered, racial, and state power – has been structured into a relatively secure or sedimented set of hierarchical social relations that continue to facilitate the *dispossession* of Indigenous peoples of their lands and self-determining authority. (7)

Importantly, Coulthard highlights the necessity of how domination occurs through social relations as well as economic, state-based, and political structures that maintain and reinforce the oppression of Indigenous population. This is crucial in Coulthard’s emphasis on the relationship of Indigeneity to land as central to dispossession and disavowal of sovereignty. By identifying the crucial valuation of land, Coulthard and Patrick Wolfe demonstrate how settler colonialism operates through the desire for land, which together is necessary to understand in relationship to Asian settler colonialism. Wolfe reiterates Coulthard’s point by stating, “Whatever settlers may say – and they generally have a lot to say – the primary motive [of settler-colonialism] is not race (or religion, ethnicity, grade of civilization, etc.) but access to territory. Territoriality is settler colonialism’s specific, irreducible element” (388). The centrality of land for Wolfe is at the heart of settler colonialism and builds out what is arguably the west’s mandate of Manifest Destiny to discover and gain access to land. In this explication, territoriality is not seen as land, but as areas that advance the nation and presumably will be utilized as private property for individual and commercial usage. Importantly, the questions over Indigeneity addressed throughout this project are only sharpened through tracking the processes of remaking racial labor (read: Asian immigrant) into a supposedly geographically “local” population. The issue of land dispossession and its material and epistemological platform for settler colonialism makes clearer the trajectory of Asian immigrant to settler to local hegemony. I also point out its emphasis in how my chapters explicitly or implicitly deal with the question of ‘āina, land, and the ways in which racial

capitalism restructured relationships to ‘āina for Kanaka Maoli and Asian migrants. I argue for reckoning with how racial capitalism and U.S. empire undergird the differentiated processes of racialization for Kanaka Maoli and for the Asian immigrant who becomes “local” and how this can be also configured through a relationship to land

The Emergence of the “Local:” You Kno You One Local Wen...

The intersection of U.S. empire, settler colonialism, and Indigeneity require some broad explanation regarding the term “local” in Hawai‘i as a distinct category with its own history. The identitarian subject category of the “local” became a rallying call in the mid 20th century as a multiracial coalitional position forged out of plantation workers including Chinese, Japanese, Filipino, Korean, and others to strike against the haole (white) elite plantation owners and businessmen. As such, the “local” embodied interracial labor movements and centered a working-class solidarity. Jonathan Okamura explains how the term re-emerges in the 1960s, post-statehood, when the boom in land development by perceived “outside” investors reignited the term as a way to think inclusively about Hawai‘i’s population. Articulated as a pan-ethnic identity, the “local” reflected a claim to Hawai‘i as originating through migration and plantation labor and the sharing of the mixture of languages that became the lingua franca – known as Hawai‘i Creole English or pidgin. This “local” category derived out of multi-racial labor struggles continues to be celebrated as a form of cultural membership. However, the “local” is more complicated in how what it claims a sense of belonging that is used as equal to or a replacement for Kanaka Maoli. As such, the “local” indicates legitimate belonging on colonized land and contributes to the erasure of both Indigeneity and Asian migrant labor.

In calling for recognition of the “local” in the 1970s, this movement emerged concurrent to other social activism on the U.S. continent and evokes the national turn to culture, specifically

novels, and the university to produce official discourses on race.⁸ This turn to cultural memory demonstrates how the “local” becomes coopted from an interracial labor rallying call to doing the work of liberal multiculturalism by erasing racialized and colonial struggles. As such, Jodie Melamed’s study on how literature produces racial discourses helps clarify this process.

Melamed suggests how liberal and literary multiculturalism “produce and police national culture, its terms for social solidarity, and the requirements for cultural citizenship” (16). In other words, narrative becomes a strategy to maintain national cultural access and inclusion. Melamed conveys how liberal multiculturalism as emergent in post-1964 to the mid-1990’s and subsequently neoliberal multiculturalism in the 1990’s – the present operate through the medium of literary production as a reinforcement of national social orders. This influence is important to recognize in the self-advocacy of a multicultural “local” literary genre that demands attention through these the rationalities of liberal multiculturalism and is being incorporated into neoliberalism. Not only does the “local” work as a label to legitimize cultural production, but it also resonates in the creation of particularized subjects. Therefore, under a neoliberal rationality the combination of a “local” category with literary production produces a viable and recognizable national citizen that shores up the continued erasure of U.S. empire the Kanaka Maoli land dispossession.

Marxism and Literary Production

While briefly mentioned in the beginning of my introduction, I now explicate why a Marxist reading of literature is necessary for negotiating the relationship between cultural production and history. What my project does is not only implement a Marxist reading of texts,

⁸ Rob Wilson identifies how this genre needs to be recognized as “emerging in the late 1970s and 1980s, after the fact of Hawaiian statehood, that comprises an affirmation of ethnic heritage and regional ground and expresses minor languages of indigenous and subnational difference – the literary local” (22). This “literary local” is expressly tied to U.S. statehood as cementing a recognition of non-Kanaka Maoli experiences and narratives.

but also suggests a theory about the literary imaginary where both the historical archive and aesthetic production are produced through the lens of U.S. empire. In other words, the archive and literature are both susceptible to interpretation as they both hold the potential to critique social relations. Therefore, Hawai'i "local" literature operates as an optic into the regulation and resistance to U.S. imperial epistemologies and social relations. This builds off Marxist approaches to narrative where I demonstrate how cultural production is organized by its material context and elucidates the interventions possible through aesthetic imagination. However, part of my method for my dissertation hinges on recognizing the ways in which literature becomes a strategy for imperial and neoliberal knowledge production. In this delineation of how literature is not exclusively free to imagine outside of the boundaries of U.S. empire, I develop what strategies of rupture are available within the novel form while maintaining the limitations as produced concurrently by the coalescing of U.S. colonialism into the present, often maintained and reinforced by neoliberalism and the figure of "local" Asian as Asian settler. In order to negotiate the ways in which literature operates from a Marxist perspective, I lay out critical points that undergird where the value of narrative comes from and how the literary imaginary can also be coopted through the persistence of colonialism and reframed as supporting the liberal and neoliberal apparatuses of differences.⁹

This project begins with the premise of seeing literature as expressions of the historical developments in national and imperial imaginaries for how they operate in conjunction with shifting literary formations. In particular, I am invested in Marxist approaches to aesthetics that

⁹ I use neoliberalism in how Foucault sees the production of social and cultural norms. Foucault suggests how this leads to "an optimization of systems of difference" (260). The emphasis of a neoliberal social order predicated on practices of normalization reveals how race is instrumentalized and leads to an incorporation of multicultural difference. Therefore, Roderick Ferguson's emphasis on how neoliberal power "has negotiated and incorporated difference [and] it has also developed and deployed a calculus by which to determine the specific critical and ruptural capacities of these forms of difference" (163). This investigates how neoliberalism promotes a reification of identities through difference where certain positions are incorporated and others are disavowed.

elucidate the intimate relationships between culture, economy, and literature. Raymond Williams in *Culture and Society* emphasizes how “Marxists should logically use ‘culture’ in the sense of a whole way of life, a general social process” (282). This concept can be extended to Grace Hong’s assertion of the critical role of women of color feminism and cultural production. Hong explains that racialized immigrant women’s culture “seize[s] the imaginative function of literature and culture for different ends, revealing and intervening in not the dynamics of power that subtends the production of knowledge. Culture thus has a mutually constitutive, rather than a deterministic, relationship to capital” (xxiv). Hong’s context is based on a particular body of racialized and gendered aesthetic production, but works as a model in thinking through how to approach cultural production as providing insight into the workings of capital, power, and narrative representation. Also of importance is how Hong situates the necessity of an intimate relationship to capitalism as offering a particularly constitutive role in literary representation. I rely on Raymond Williams’s discussion of culture and how literature operates as a “social and historical category” to find “finding new means, new forms, and then new definitions of a changing consciousness” (*Marxism* 54), I situate the value of cultural production as offering these methods of negotiating belonging and the racialized, gendered subject within moments of nation-building and imperial expansion. It is also crucial to emphasize Williams’ concept of cultural production as “structures of feeling” where the necessity of the presentness can be found in literature as “inalienable elements of a social material process” (*Marxism* 133). This social form is not only integral to the historical context of literary production, but also identifies the presence of sociality in aesthetic representation. In other words, the critical role of literature derives from how it is produced in a particular social and historical context that informs the texts.

In the concrete manifestation of culture in literary form, the recognition of the work of ideology and the social structure indicate how narrative operates as a critical site of analysis. This is particularly relevant in Louis Althusser's emphasis that "what is represented in ideology is therefore not the system of the real relations which govern the existence of individuals, but the imaginary relation of those individuals to the real relations in which they live" (165). This allows for the mediation between the material conditions of production and the imagined constitution and creation of the subject. In this way, ideology for Althusser creates and produces "subjects among individuals (it recruits them all), or 'transforms' the individuals into subjects (it transforms them all) by that very precise operation which I have called interpellation or hailing" (174). In this formulation, Althusser continues that "individuals are always-already subjects," which demonstrates how Ideology State Apparatuses contribute to the reproduction of the relations of production in service of the ideology of the ruling class (181-183). Thinking through the process of interpellation of the subject to ideology and state power helps to contextualize the value and potential in literary representation as put forward by Williams and Hong. In reckoning with how ideology through Ideological State Apparatuses creates subjects who under the appearance of freedom "accept his [their] own subjection," Althusser demonstrates how "the State and its Apparatuses only have meaning from the point of view of the class struggle, as an apparatus of class struggle ensuring class oppression and guaranteeing the conditions of exploitation and its reproduction" (184). In foregrounding class struggle as the focal point of the combined roles of state power, Ideological State Apparatuses, and culture where narrative becomes a crucial site of struggle and possibilities for social classes. As such, narrative has the opportunity to reveal how ideology informs social relations as both determinative and resistant to the governing apparatuses of state power.

Viewing cultural production in this way, as tied to social consciousness and class struggle, emphasizes the value of literature as the way to mediate social and conscious engagement with national and imperial discourses. To build out a historically grounded approach of the relationship of aesthetics, culture, and capitalism, I turn to Walter Benjamin's discussion of the changing role of the author and art within class struggle and modernity as it helps form a political project. In other words, Benjamin's turn to how novels negotiate the historical and political context is precisely why they matter and how I present this project as grounded in a reading of the materialist production of aesthetics. In "The Author as Producer," Benjamin argues the necessity of looking at literary technique where the texts are "accessible to immediate social, and therefore materialist analysis" (87). In explaining how literary technique as opposed to form or genre is crucial to "find forms appropriate to the literary energy of our time. Novels did not always exist in the past, nor must they always exist in the future" (Benjamin 89). This suggestion that literary genres are not universal to varying contexts of social conditions is part of how Benjamin foregrounds that the content of bourgeois texts can include "an astonishing amount of revolutionary themes without every seriously putting into question its own continued existence of that of the class which owns it" (Benjamin 94). This leads Benjamin to propose how other genres might be more effective in utilizing literary technique for political projects. The role of the author then requires "the demand to think, to reflect upon his position in the production process. We can be sure that such thinking, in the writers who matter – that is to say the best technicians in their particular branches of the trade – will sooner or later lead them to confirm very soberly their solidarity with the proletariat" (101). In situating the author as a producer and thus acknowledging the context of capitalism, Benjamin considers how the techniques for information allow for the author's own recognition as being part of the production and provides

opportunities for a proletarian revolution. Benjamin's critique of the intellectual and author as produced by the bourgeois class opens up a new position for the author as well as addresses how technology plays a role in art.]

In marking the post-WWII era, George Lukacs examines how the novel form operates and can be problematic in its navigation of temporality. Lukacs describes how the aesthetic form as a genre "establishes a fluctuating yet firm balance between becoming and being; as the idea of becoming, it becomes a state. Thus, the novel, by transforming itself into a normative being of becoming, surmounts itself" (73). In this explanation, the novel vacillates between a simultaneous process of being and becoming a state where the transformation occurs as it completes. This contradiction for Lukacs particularly revolves around the abstract structure that emerges through this process and how the individual in the novel can become self-contained. Marking the centrality of time, Lukacs continues, "In the novel, meaning is separated from life, and hence the essential from the temporal; we might almost say that the entire inner action of the novel is nothing but a struggle against the power of time" (122). This separates the novel from other forms that do not conform to time and exist as essential. As such, the novel is "the only art form which includes time among its constitutive principles" and this shows how novel creates its own experience of time where inner action of the novel is a struggle against the power of time (99). The temporality of the novel becomes significant to my reading practice because of the self-containment quality that both refracts U.S. empire and can remain static according to its own temporal logics. In other words, I utilize Lukacs' discussion of the temporal order of the novel as informing how I link this form of cultural memory in relationship to the imperial logics that organize Hawai'i's "local" texts.

Similarly, Walter Benjamin in “The Storyteller: Reflections on the Works of Nikolai Leskov” uses the idea of temporality to think about the quest for the meaning of life in a novel as on different historical coordinates of time and written life. Benjamin emphasizes the novel’s significance as not “because it presents someone else’s fate to us, perhaps didactically, but because this stranger’s fate by virtue of the flame which consumes it yields us the warmth which we never draw from our own fate” and in other words, the reader will share the experience of death through characters (101). Taking Lukacs and Benjamin together, the novel is distinct in its relation to temporality where the form allows for a concurrent status of in the process and already arrived, thus making it a viable site subject to its historical and social context. As such, this lays out my premise for the necessity of examining literary production as it is both produced through and makes visible its historical, social, and political emergence. A Marxist reckoning with the materiality of texts allows for an acknowledgment of the specificity of the production of novels as not atemporal nor universal, but as political projects that develop often from the author’s own recognition of producing materials. For my project, this particular role of literature is reflective of and developed through social, historical, and political relations. Yet, I trouble this positioning of literature as seen through U.S. empire in Hawai‘i where the contemporary literary imaginary is emblematic of both the colonial past and the celebration of neoliberal difference.

Post-2000 Novels and Archive Selection

Consequently, in the selection of post-2000 novels as the literary archive for my project, I demonstrate how contemporary narratives continue to be defined, produced, and structured through imperial and colonial epistemologies. If Lukacs and Benjamin’s readings of how the novel is related temporally and historically is through its context of production, then my dissertation challenges this premise where post-2000 texts would be expected to imagine a more

complex fictional world for Kanaka Maoli and Asian-migrant descendants in Hawai‘i. The expectation perhaps might extend further back to post-statehood aesthetic production as acknowledging the colonial history of the U.S. in Hawai‘i, but as I mentioned earlier, the emergence of the “local” was concurrent with the Hawaiian Renaissance in the 1970s. In other words, I mark these two cultural formations that celebrate Indigeneity and valorize Asian migrant histories and plantation labor as intentional separate. This arguably continues the epistemological assumed binary between Kanaka Maoli and Asian migrants through the unique celebration of difference. Still, I emphasize the expectation that post-2000 published novels would aesthetically engage the proliferation of developing sovereignty movements, environmental justice activism, the attention to Asian settler colonialism, as well as the election of President Obama that catapulted the multicultural ideal of Hawai‘i back into the spotlight.

Arguably, even the 1993 U.S. Apology Resolution would have been a catalyst in the fomentation of not only sovereignty activism, but also would have had impact on the cultural production. As J. Kēhaulani Kauanui documents, this resolution occurred a century after the illegal overthrow of the Hawaiian monarch where “the U.S. government apologized to the Hawaiian people for its complicity” in this dispossession (190). This apology did not allow for any settlement over land claims and could be seen as an empty gesture that takes symbolic responsibility for history without any concrete actions. Thus, the quest for political sovereignty for Kanaka Maoli organized around two main groups: for decolonization and for de-occupation. Decolonization is a political process organized by the United Nations which would restore “a range of governing models, including restoration of a constitutional monarchy, a parliament, or a bicameral legislation” (Kauanui 189). A de-occupation approach “contest[s] all reconciliation efforts made by the United States...de-occupation advocates declare their status as nationals who

care *already* independent” (Kauanui 192). This distinction is particularly salient in the de-occupation movement’s rejection of the Apology Resolution as well as utilizing political strategies for sovereignty. These two generalized groups that are mobilizing for Hawaiian sovereignty are part of the emerging visibility around U.S. colonial history in the 1990s. This activism would arguably affect the production of cultural memory directly given a Marxist approach to the formation of literary texts.

In consideration of the 1990s sovereignty movements, both the legal case of *Rice v. Cayetano* and the Akaka bill of 2000 become critical flashpoints in reckoning with sovereignty as a decolonial or de-occupation movement that explicitly legislates what it means to be “local,” “Indigenous,” and non-Indigenous. 2000 operates as a flashpoint in the legal and political intersection over Kanaka Maoli recognition and federal acknowledgment of U.S. colonialism in Hawai‘i. As such, in the case of *Rice v. Cayetano* in February 2000, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in favor of “Harold F. Rice, a fourth-generation resident of Hawai‘i, who argued that his having being denied the right to vote in the Office of Hawaiian Affairs [OHA] trustee elections violated both the Fourteenth and Fifteen amendments of the U.S. Constitution” (Kauanui 178). Importantly, voting for the OHA trustees had been restricted to those defined with “50-percent or more Hawaiian blood quantum” (Kauanui 178). Therefore, this ruling legislated how this voting requirement discriminated by race and violated voting rights. This highly contentious decision directly relates to the colonial requirement of blood quantum as indicative and adjudicated by a western notion of Indigeneity. Ruling in favor of Rice ushered in other related court cases (*Carroll v. Cayetano*, *Arakaki v. Lingle*) and set the precedent for the Akaka Bill later in 2000 that would give Kanaka Maoli federal recognition akin to American Indians (Kauanui 184). As such, the Akaka bill faced controversy because of the way federal recognition “undermines the

full sovereignty claim” (Kauanui 184). Part of this comes from how interpellating Kanaka Maoli into a western U.S.-based definition of Indigenous is through a colonial measurement that does not acknowledge Hawai‘i as its own nation.

The question of federal recognition is a contentious one and many Indigenous scholars have critiqued the process as an extension of colonial domination. Glenn Coulthard elaborates how a politics of recognition “refer[s] to the new expansive range of recognition-based models of liberal pluralism that seek to ‘reconcile’ Indigenous assertions of nationhood with settler-state sovereignty via the accommodation of Indigenous identity claims with some form of renewed legal and political relationship with the Canadian state” (3). While Coulthard’s critique of the politics of recognition is specific to Canada, the argument that recognition is part of the liberal state’s negotiation of Indigeneity is applicable in considering Kanaka Maoli conflict over the Akaka bill. Consequently, this overview of federal and state public challenges to the racial and legal formation of Kanaka Maoli in relationship to claims to sovereignty and rights to land, the 1990s and 2000s generally brought visibility to these struggles.

I lay out these events that inform the mid-1990s to the 2000s in order to emphasize the high visibility of Indigenous agitation for sovereignty and political recognition, where the coalescing of the settler-state with Asian ‘local’ hegemony is made visible. In other words, post-2000 texts that reimagine historical flashpoints from the 19th and 20th century do so in a post-U.S. Apology Resolution and Akaka bill proposal context. As such, I enter this dissertation background suggesting how the literary texts, as Lukacs and Benjamin argue, are expected to be organized around the context of production and the authorial containment with the strategies to imagine beyond the history. However, I identify how these contemporary de-occupation and decolonization factions and activism for Kanaka Maoli sovereignty disappear in the literary

texts. Perhaps intentionally ignored in the emphasis on adding Kanaka Maoli voices to the archive through literature, I maintain that the post-2000 aesthetic production would be expected to have literary and historical imaginaries that are not regulated by U.S. empire. Instead, the realization of how U.S. empire organizes and polices literary production is precisely in line with the project of liberal racial orders as Jodie Melamed theorizes.

Overview of the Dissertation

This project investigates historical flashpoints from the 19th and 20th century with post-2000 novels that reimagine these moments. I emphasize the necessity of orienting the focus of Asian American studies to Hawai‘i in order to think through the intersection of immigration and Indigeneity by centering U.S. empire. By situating how U.S. empire organizes the study of colonialism and immigration, contemporary Hawai‘i literature testifies to the continued conflation of Indigeneity, Asian American or Asian settler, “local,” and national belonging in cultural memory. An optic of U.S. empire opens up a comparative racialization between Asian American studies and Indigenous studies where Hawai‘i is a site of knowledge production as well as geographical location that allows for the negotiation of the intersection of colonialism and racialized migration. Each chapter focuses on a different set of historical occurrences that reveal the workings of U.S. empire, where I demonstrate how “local” literature embodies the transposition of these historical events. As such, “local” literature becomes a heuristic into the negotiation of the colonial epistemologies that inform the literary imaginary. By a “site of reckoning,” I assert how these literary novels reveal the contradictions of U.S. empire as a historical and literary formation. I position each chapter around a particular historical event that exemplifies the centrality of imperial and colonial knowledge production in relationship to Indigeneity and Asian migration. In turn, I argue how “local” literature deals with the historical

and literary imaginaries that uphold and consider the possibilities of relational racialization by addressing how these texts produce and resist the intelligibility of U.S. empire.

My first chapter begins with the 1848 Mahele where I treat the radical restructuring of ‘āina, land, to private property with Kauī Hart Hemmings’ 2007 *The Descendants*. I argue that the novel and the protagonist can only conceive of ‘āina from a western heteropatriachal perspective as a romanticized static object to be owned. This chapter asks how does land privatization through the Mahele of 1848 operate as a historical flashpoint in U.S. imperial interests in Hawai’i that continues to resonate through contemporary literary fiction? This question embodies the dual focus of my project broadly and isolates it in this chapter by specifically identifying the shift to the privatization of ‘āina as crucial in the history of U.S. imperialism in Hawai’i. Importantly, I show how the shift to private property and ownership of land demarcates the elision of Kanaka Maoli genealogical and communal relationships to ‘āina. Thus, historical and literary accounts of this radical restructuring of a cultural system would need to account for the ideological and epistemological shifts that occurred under western influence’s demands for land ownership. Hemmings’ novel is premised on the history of Indigenous land dispossession through the King family’s inherited land, which offers the narrative multiple opportunities to engage the material context for this history. As such, I weave together Kanaka Maoli and western historiographies of the Mahele and land rights to provide some of this crucial documentation of the political and economic rationales and consequences of land division. I identify how historical accounts open up the erasure of Indigenous history found prominently in the novel; and conversely, show how the novel makes visible the totalizing colonial and liberal dominant epistemologies through the elision and parroting of western masculinist capitalist perspectives of land. In other words, the protagonist Matt King’s narration of his familial history

and relationship to land is premised on his position as almost the ideal western subject: part-white heterosexual male who values the ownership and power over his property. Erasing his own part-Kanaka Maoli subjectivity, King insists on romanticizing his Indigenous ancestor that led to his inheritance of land, where he can only conceptualize the land from a position of ownership.

Chapter 2 analyzes the 1865 Act to Prevent the Spread of Leprosy that mandated isolation and created a colony on Moloka‘i for those suspected of having leprosy. I pair this colonial archive with Alan Brennert’s 2003 *Moloka‘i* where the Indigenous point of view only narrates a sentimental portrayal of the tragedy of leprosy; still, Brennert’s novel does identify Kanaka Maoli resistance to segregation through including mea kōkua, voluntary helpers, as integral parts of the colony. This chapter asks: how does the colonial historical archive of leprosy segregation influence and limit the literary narrations of the same past? In laying out the relationship between history and literary production, this question demands a recognition of the incompleteness of the colonial archive of leprosy policy and management of Kalaupapa. I argue how the colonial archive operates as the regulative foreclosure of literary imagination. This particular question suggests the constitutive power of history on aesthetic production where both rely on interpretive frameworks that produce epistemological knowledge. In other words, neither history nor narrative can escape the colonial parameters of historical construction wherein the erasure of Kanaka Maoli in the archive continues even in contemporary historical fiction. Through a dual analysis of the colonial archive of leprosy and its retelling of mandatory segregation in Brennert’s *Moloka‘i*, I offer two main ways of answering this question. First, I focus on how the Board of Health’s records narrate and interpret the figure of mea kōkua, voluntary helpers to patients exiled to Moloka‘i. Through assessing the possibilities and limits of the archive, I explore the regulation and contradictory position of mea kōkua who embody the

impossibility of segregation tactics and show the incompatibility of western strategies of disease control with Kanaka Maoli values of family and illness. Then, I suggest the representation of *mea kōkua*, as reluctantly accepted by the Board of Health, operate as visible presence of the failure of isolation policies that provides an optic into the narrative contradictions in *Moloka'i* and the archive. This chapter testifies to the conjoined historical and literary imaginaries as being determined by U.S. empire.

Chapter 3 address how Milton Murayama's 2008 *Dying in a Strange Land* and Cecily Wong's 2015 *Diamond Head* narrate the histories of Japanese and Chinese migration to Hawai'i. This chapter inquires: how does the figure of the Asian immigrant function to produce an assimilated Asian settler capable of claiming a grounded "local" affiliation to Hawai'i in place of Kanaka Maoli? Pairing inter-generational familial sagas with the concrete history of immigration, I observe the production of Asian "migrant" into "local" settler belonging through Milton Murayama's *Dying in a Strange Land* and Cecily Wong's *Diamond Head*. I argue that these novels demonstrate how the literary imaginary works through demonstrating the limits and possibilities of aesthetic production to imagine outside of the history of U.S. empire. I pair these novels with the histories of Asian immigration that identify capitalism's demand for cheap labor. As with my previous chapters, I suture these histories of Asian immigration to literary representations that do a majority of the epistemological work of documenting the process of subject-making from Asian immigrant to settler the becomes identified as "local" to Hawai'i. What emerges then is how a history of racial capitalism both informs and escapes these texts in order to support an assimilation trajectory that remakes Asian immigrants into ideal potential U.S. citizen subjects.

Chapter 4 utilizes the optic and site of U.S. militarism through ongoing struggles over environmental resources, perceived “vagrants,” and the use of Makūa Valley on O‘ahu in order to bring together issues discussed in the previous chapters such as ‘āina, alternative kinship and colonial tactics of adjudicating life and death, and the question of an alternative “local” affiliation as not subject to Asian settler hegemony. This chapter asks: how does U.S. militarization impact decolonial politics and engage a potential alternative coalitional politics for Kanaka Maoli and Asian settlers? In this last chapter, I demonstrate how U.S. militarism operates as an imperial presence and force in the contemporary moment where decades of anti-militarism protests against training exercises, environmental damage, and destruction of cultural sites in Mākua Valley effectively convey the ongoing violence of colonialism in Hawai‘i. Through a combination of the history of the U.S. military in Mākua Valley with the various evictions of beach encampments and rhetoric of “national security,” I argue how these struggles are precisely the opportunity for a decolonial politics that engage the “local” as its own grounded praxis and practice. I pair this with Kiana Davenport’s *House of Many Gods* that momentarily ruptures the imperial epistemologies through imagining an alternative depiction of the widely publicized 1996 Mākua Beach eviction. I theorize a possible reading practice of insurgent Indigeneity that operates in how I interpret Davenport’s narrative where decolonial political power comes through both self-reflexively playing up colonial tropes of Indigeneity and then building out a reliance on Kanaka Maoli belief systems as the counternarrative to the neoliberal (and still colonial) state. Even as the novel predictably returns to the archive of the eviction, its extended scene of Indigenous genealogy to ‘āina offers a potential strategy of resistance.

In the coda, I briefly examine contemporary slam poetry by Youth Speaks Hawai‘i, the global network of street artists in Pow Wow Hawai‘i, and the community organization of Mele

Murals. I posit how slam poetry and graffiti murals are alternatives to “local” literature, formally employing different temporal parameters for connecting past and present colonial forces.

Together, these cultural texts demonstrate the possibilities and limitations of “local” fiction to reckon with the history of colonization and its legacies in the colonial present. Thus, in order to resist the paradigm of U.S. empire and to reimagine alternatives to colonized spaces, I propose the necessity of a politics that accounts for how imperial epistemologies constitute the imaginative realm of literary production.

In consideration of alternative public mediums and genres that engage a decolonial position, I briefly return to the controversy around Judge Watson’s repeal of Trump’s travel ban in regards to the Twitter response with #boycottHawaii tweets. While I consider Tweets mini texts that offer a discussion of the continuing elision of Kanaka Maoli colonization as well as the capitalist demands for Asian migrant labor, I move to the most recent example in this discussion from Attorney General Jeff Sessions on April 20, 2017. In criticizing Judge Watson’s decision to overturn the travel ban, Sessions expressed, “I really am amazed that a judge sitting on an island in the Pacific can issue an order that stops the president of the United States from what appears to be clearly his statutory and Constitutional power.” This blatantly dismissive and ignorant comment by the recently appointed Attorney General only serves to further inflame and reveal the problematic ways in which Hawai‘i is still historicized and imagined in public and fictional discourses. Sessions either intentionally trivializes Hawai‘i by only referring to the state, and occupied colony, as “an island in the Pacific,” or seems unsure whether Hawai‘i is a state at all. As Aaron Blake at *The Washington Post* comments, this type of dismissal “will earn you the pleasure of apologizing to an entire state. We’ll start the countdown clock.” His colleague Gene Park disparagingly points out the colonialist rhetoric in Sessions’ belittling statement:

You, the federal-tax-paying, patriotic residents of Hawaii, should not have an equal say when it comes to American governance. But we will conduct a hostile overthrow of your Hawaiian Kingdom, a sovereign government created by the native people of Hawaii, a kingdom whose palace had working electricity before even the White House and Buckingham Palace.

Here, the colonial apparatus of governance and power is laid bare and Park openly confronts the historical reality of the illegal overthrow of the Hawaiian Kingdom. In a magnified and perhaps more revealing component to the #boycottHawaii battle, Sessions' nationally-televised ignorant remarks are being heatedly contested and rejected. Yes, Twitter exploded with responses as well, but I point out how in the short time that I started this introduction with the March events surrounding Judge Watson and #boycottHawaii, Sessions managed to launch Hawai'i back into the center of a national discussion. Perhaps this speaks more clearly to the political and cultural stakes of my project through these consistent examples surrounding public discourse around Hawai'i. Of particular interest is the varying responses to Sessions' disparaging comments that, much in the vein of #boycottHawaii, run the gamut of reproducing Asian settler hegemony through the rhetoric of diversity and patriotism to exclusively referencing the attack on Pearl Harbor and the national internment of Japanese Americans. What has become evident in these discussions is what appears to be a wider awareness of the illegal overthrow of the Hawaiian Kingdom in 1893, even as this is used more as a static fact of the past and not the current lived conditions for Kanaka Maoli. In other words, this continuing trend of dismissing Hawai'i as inconsequential to the continental nation persists in the enduring myths surrounding the 50th state; my project insists on calling attention to this colonial and imperial history that evades even the current Attorney General's conceptions of Hawai'i.

To return to the question of the medium of Twitter as the site and optic into these debates, and Twitter exploded after Sessions' comments as well, it becomes clear that the temporality of Twitter, its immediacy, and dialogic structure of directly responding to another user might also offer insight into the public nature of the conversation as well as its both lasting digital record and its limited structure. This Twitter debacle is one immediate example of how U.S. empire continues to occlude both Kanaka Maoli dispossession and the conditions of migrant labor while also showing how "local" hegemony as Asian settler forms of belonging also operate. The political ramifications of these online clashes inform the critical stakes of my project where the necessity of reckoning with both Indigeneity and Asian migration under U.S. empire continues to inform our present understanding. #BoycottHawaii and Sessions' public disparagement and ignorance about Hawai'i are just a few of many examples of contemporary misunderstandings about the persistence of colonial violence in Hawai'i, which my dissertation directly confronts and demands the creation of an alternative decolonial and anti-imperial politics.

Chapter 1:

The 1848 Mahele and *The Descendants*: Imagining the Past and Future of the ‘Āina

My project’s genealogy of historical flashpoints of U.S. empire that interrogate the complex processes of Indigenous and Asian migrant racial formation starts with an emphasis on Kanaka Maoli relationships to ‘āina, land, and the violent revolution from communal land tenure to western proprietary ownership. Since my project hinges on a relational analysis of Indigeneity and Asian migration, I start with the earliest historical juncture that establishes colonial dominance. Consequently, I open with the 1848 Mahele and the privatization of ‘āina as one of the critical moments of U.S. empire in Hawai‘i.¹⁰ This drastic alteration of land ownership effectively restructured Kanaka Maoli ways of life through this initial dispossession of ‘āina and eventually, sovereignty in 1893. Arguably, the intimate connection between ‘āina and sovereignty would suggest that the loss of ‘āina was the initial action that led to the overthrow of the Hawaiian Kingdom. Through the reorganization of ‘āina as property subject to private ownership, this chapter demonstrates how ‘āina becomes a crucial optic into the intersection of colonial desires for resources, attaining capitalist goods, and the production of a migrant multi-racial labor force; the current iteration of ‘āina being organized by federal, state, and military occupation. Therefore, the necessity of ‘āina both historically and in the present moment permeates the historical archive and mediate the literary imaginary of contemporary literature. Given that my project argues for how cultural memory is similarly regulated by U.S. empire as

¹⁰ This event is commonly referred to as “The Great Mahele,” but in line with Kanaka Maoli scholars like Samuel Kamakau, Lilikalā Kame‘eleihiwa, Jonathon Osorio, and Noenoe Silva, I have chosen to call it “The Mahele” as that is the title of the actual book that contains all these land divisions. While in 1958, Jon Chinen emphasizes both names with “these divisions have been called ‘*The Mahele*’ or ‘*The Great Mahele*’” (20), Indigenous scholars’ insistence on referring to this as “The Mahele” indicates a stance on the effects of this event. There are other scholars who do use the phrase “The Great Mahele,” as it suits their purposes.

the historical imaginary, I establish how this can be made visible through the legislation and events surrounding the 1848 Mahele with Kauai Hart Hemmings' 2007 novel, *The Descendants*.

In order to demonstrate the centrality of U.S. empire as a present conditionality, I identify how 'āina functions throughout the historical archive as a site of colonial dispossession. I then pair this history with a post-2000 novel that narrates the continued importance of 'āina as an object and optic into contemporary Kanaka Maoli struggles. More specifically, in identifying the crucial historical position of 'āina as intimately tied to Indigenous sovereignty as well as producing the conditions for migrant plantation labor, I argue that Hemming's *The Descendants* operates as a site of reckoning over the western capitalist and heteropatriarchal representations of land. I maintain that the persistence of the colonial condition of the present is largely a struggle over the loss of 'āina, as it is understood in radically different ways from western notions of property to Indigenous relations of reciprocity. As such, this chapter identifies the historical position of 'āina and how "local" literature mediates and reveals the colonial contradictions in the legal structuring of land. Therefore, this chapter examines how *The Descendants* engages the fraught history of Kanaka Maoli land rights as an extension of the history of land dispossession marked through the 1848 Mahele. I suggest the violent colonial and imperial history of Hawai'i shapes the aesthetic boundaries of the fictional representation of the King family and their land inheritance in contemporary Hawai'i.

Given that my project and chapter is both a historical and literary argument, I emphasize how 'āina becomes the site and optic into the colonial and imperial crises of historical reckoning with Indigeneity and Asian migration. Reading the ways in which historical racial violences persist in *The Descendants*, I argue how the erasure of land dispossession and Kanaka Maoli vitality testifies to the problematic epistemological violence that also derives from the rendering of 'āina

as private property in a western capitalist definition. In other words, the loss of ‘āina functions as an effect of colonialism that is obscured in *The Descendants*. The historical trajectory of land dispossession also includes the Kuleana Act of 1850 that granted tenants the ability to own titles to their lands.¹¹ Together, this history of land transformation from Kanaka Maoli communal subsistence to western private property is critical in reckoning with the historical violences of colonialism and imperialism. This history emerges as the background for Hemming’s contemporary novel that attempts to sift through these complex legislative and political pivots that continue to deprive Kānaka Maoli of ancestral land rights. In other words, only through the historical loss of ‘āina does the novel’s elision of colonialism and land dispossession become apparent. While Hemmings’ novel does grapple with the pervasive images of Hawai‘i as paradise, I suggest that the representations of land inheritance, capitalist profit, and private property bound up in the protagonist Matt King’s choice over a buyer for his family’s land are explicitly heteropatriarchal and unwittingly demonstrates the absence of Kanaka Maoli paradigms of knowledge and the relationship to ‘āina. Instead, the novel positions the family’s critical land sale as only rendered viable through western masculine capitalist notions of private property, ownership, and inheritance, thus eliminating the possibility of imagining outside of these paradigms. As a result, the novel embodies the problematics of historical reckoning with Indigeneity in Hawai‘i where land becomes the gendered symbol of the symptoms of colonial and imperial violence. Consequently, I suggest that the literary framework reaches its limits in this historical mediation of ‘āina, but propose that it also offers the opportunity to stage these incoherent reckonings. While Hemmings’ relies on the marital struggles of King to influence his

¹¹ As Linda Parker points out, the Kuleana Act of 1850 was for commoners to establish their claims to land they currently lived on and cultivated and as such, where 13,1514 claims were presented. However, in 1855 “the land commission approved only 9,337 kuleana grants” (110). The ramifications of the Kuleana Act will be discussed in conjunction with the Mahele later in the chapter (See Osorio, Levy, and Cannelora).

ultimate decision, the options themselves are foreclosed within the structures of western capitalist domination that include an ethics of liberal guilt towards this history of colonial violence. This chapter argues how the history of the 1848 Mahele structures the context of *The Descendants* where ‘āina makes visible the limitations of the literary imagination to critique colonial and imperial violences enacted through the transition to capitalism and private property. *The Descendants* and the history of land division and dispossession operate as my first example in my project of how pairing contemporary literature with the historical archive reveals the persistence of U.S. dominance over Kanaka Maoli and the complex state of racial relations.

This chapter centers on how ‘āina becomes the symbol and material optic into the erasure of the colonial history of Kanaka Maoli land dispossession and its continued elision in literary narratives. Using significant mid-19th century events surrounding and including the 1848 Mahele and the subsequent Kuleana Act of 1850, I position the critical role of land as instrumental in permanent alterations to Kanaka Maoli cultural, political, and economic ways of life. Through this understanding of the colonial violence of land dispossession, I suture how *The Descendants* imagines this history to jointly reckon with these legacies. Specifically, the Mahele’s change of forms of ownership and the relationship to land did not just implement notions of private property, but also altered an entire system of Kanaka Maoli cosmology. Still, Indigenous historians emphasize how the privatization of land “was a foreign solution to the problem of managing lands increasingly emptied of people” (Osorio 44). As a result, Noenoe Silva argues how ultimately “the main beneficiaries of the mahele were the haole [white] advisors and some *ali‘i nui* [ruling chiefs]. [Hawaiian historian] Kame‘eleihiwa has documented the large acquisitions of land by those advisors who were architects of both the mahele and the subsequent body of private property law in Hawai‘i” (43). This testifies to how the division of land is often

linked to the subsequent increase in power of western foreigners in Hawai'i in the 19th century and is heralded as a watershed event. Given that this is the recognized historical interpretation of events, it is not a new argument to assess the Mahele nor to attribute the privatization of land as a crucial moment in land dispossession and western dominance in the Hawaiian Kingdom.

However, I analyze this pivotal historical event with its contemporary iteration in Hemmings' novel to demonstrate how history illuminates the boundaries of literary representation.

Furthermore, the inability for the novel to fictively imagine out of western capitalist notions of private property and liberalism indicate the persistence of colonial and imperial epistemologies.

I argue that Hemmings' novel attempts to confront, but ultimately cannot overcome the fraught history of Kanaka Maoli land rights through the King family's racial and cultural history as "local haoles," an identity category that exemplifies the mixture of Caucasian ancestry with Indigenous. In Hemmings' often sentimental portrayal of land-rights and the protagonist's parallel conundrum over his family's responsibility to the land as a part Kanaka Maoli, the narrative's desire to offer alternative insights into the history of land dispossession and capitalist commercial development is consistently undermined through Matt King's ignorance and self-narration of his Indigenous history. Even further, the blunt ambivalence over the question of the family's land indicates the impossibility of representing these intertwined issues of private property, racial and cultural responsibility, and the encroaching capitalist tourist industry. What is revealed through Hemmings' protagonist is the impossibility and the invisibility of any land ownership opportunity that is not mired in western paradigms of private property and capitalism. Hemmings' novel struggles to imagine out of the boundaries of a violent and often erased history saturated by U.S. empire and colonialism. *The Descendants* offers limited insight into the possibilities for a Kanaka Maoli cultural narrative that does not simply embody a sentimental

appropriation of land dispossession and Indigenous subject-formation. Still, I emphasize the power of historical epistemologies on literary narratives where Hemmings' representation of contemporary land-rights struggles, tourism, and a hybrid racial and cultural population become foreclosed in the potential to imagine alternatives.

My central questions for this chapter revolve around the history of Kanaka Maoli land dispossession in relationship to its narrative representation of masculine inheritance in Hemming's novel. This chapter queries: How does Hemmings' *The Descendants* attempt and ultimately fail to engage the history of Kanaka Maoli land rights issues by focusing on romance over 'āina? Furthermore, in building out the chapter's usage of the history of the 1848 Mahele in relationship to contemporary land rights issues, I also investigate how does land privatization through the Mahele of 1848 operate as a historical flashpoint in U.S. imperial interests in Hawai'i that continue to resonate through contemporary literary fiction?? While my focus is not broadly on the U.S.'s relationship to Indigenous continental land dispossession, the stakes of this chapter are rooted in reckoning with U.S. empire and Indigeneity where Hawai'i's history intersects with American Indian interests. I question how Hemmings' novel, which initially purports to take up a critique of the popularized exoticized images of Hawai'i, still ends up offering only recognizable forms of agency, subjectivity, and social relationships as encoded in western ideology. This means that actual imagined possibilities of decolonization through both literature and the material relationships to land for Kanaka Maoli are scripted through the legacies of colonialism and its present iterations. These questions jointly raise the necessity of examining novels that are praised for their ability to undo the images of a celebrated paradise and give voices to Kanaka Maoli, when they are still grounded in and narrated by the histories they attempt to undermine. Consequently, the stakes of this project and chapter are imbued in the

relationship between history and cultural production where the persistence of imperial tropes transform and emerge to mildly critique components of Hawai‘i and its racial categories, but still persist in being rooted in western paradigms of individuality and ownership.

Hemmings’ novel debuted to positive praise centered around the stark emotional turmoil of a seemingly blessed family in Hawai‘i and this acclaim only gained momentum with the film adaptation by Alexander Payne in 2011, where audiences celebrated the “accurate” cinematic portrayal of modern Hawaiian life starring George Clooney as the part-Kanaka Maoli protagonist, Matt King.¹² Unsurprisingly in terms of the range of audience and draw of celebrity performances, the film received outstanding reviews along with five Academy Award nominations whereas “the novel garnered only modest commercial support” (Ryan). This distinction acknowledges the discrepancy of mass audience appeal for the film and how the novel failed to achieve the same universal acclaim. Yet, the novel still contributed to modern Hawai‘i “local” fiction as the *San Francisco Chronicle* praises how “Hemmings explores the emotional terrain of grief, promising something far more fulfilling than paradise at its end.” Deploying “paradise” as a limited achievement taps into the ways that Hawai‘i’s paradisiacal representation has persisted through the years and suggests that a focus on grief and familial struggles deepens an understanding of the Islands. In a similar review for the *New York Times*, Joanna Kavenna observes how the emotional domestic trauma does not saturate the novel as “Hemmings is a determinedly unsentimental writer, and she manages her hazardous subject matter — all of it ripe for strenuous melodrama — in a dry, understated way, subverting her

¹² While this chapter and project is focused on literary narratives as embodying the foreclosure of aesthetic imagination, there is a fruitful analysis to be done regarding filmic representations of Hawai‘i in conjunction with the flourishing industry for filming and through popular television shows like *Lost* and *Hawaii 5-O* and how they handle cinematic portrayals that both intersect and deviate from the focus of this particular project. I have also begun to address the question of Hemmings’ novel and its film adaptation in my article, “Land and Love in *The Descendants*.”

characters without reducing them utterly.” Kavenna praises how the novel ruthlessly avoids falling prey to the theatrics of sentiment, where the protagonist wrestles with the uncomfortable gaze of privilege. Still, the review identifies the ambivalent sentiment of the family dramatics in conjunction with King’s hyperawareness of his own history that is continuously interpreted as responsibility and accident. Still, Hemmings promotes the realistic portrayal of her novel in an interview with Tim Ryan for *Hawaii Film and Video*. Ryan asks about the Hawaiian history component as a personal one versus a broad one and Hemmings responds, “As for its Hawaiian texture, I wanted to write a book that showed something different about Hawaii and respected the atmosphere of the Hawaii I know and people know—the Hawaii that people live in today.” While the careful political rhetorical choices of Hemmings’ answer warrants merit, the continued question of what is “different about Hawaii” and why that particular Hawaiian history is so crucial gets obscured even here. In representing “real life,” it is clear that Hemmings engages the problematic of the one-dimensional celebration of Hawai‘i as synonymous with harmonious (racial) paradise. But what this chapter works to make apparent is how even in fictionally showcasing “real life” in Hawai‘i, the available aesthetics remain dominated by U.S. imperialism and the subtle workings of multicultural racialization.

One clear example of how *The Descendants* attempts to reckon with the colonial and imperial violences of the historical dispossession of ‘āina is through King’s interpretation of his inheritance and position as Kanaka Maoli in contrast to his Latina maid. This establishes how King’s perspective is narrated through a simultaneous awareness of the material violence of colonial and capitalist histories and a limited awareness of his own part-Indigenous subject position. In King’s explication, the confluence of capitalist private property with a critique of the historical conditions that made this possible testify to the befuddling representation of these

histories. In other words, King's attempt to articulate his Indigenous history that translates into his current wealth is mired in multiple waves of racial and colonial oppression where his only avenue is an affective apology for this past. Towards the beginning of the novel, King reflects on the family's Mexican nanny, Esther, and how this brings awareness to his own privilege. He thinks, "It's just that the idea of her, a Mexican nanny, doesn't sit right with me...I don't like spending the money on someone to care for my kid. It also makes me feel like some kind of colonist to have Esther around...she's the sassy Mexican maid, sitcom-ish and wise" (Hemmings 22). Only through Esther's presence as indicative of racialized migrant labor does King acknowledge his own positionality even as he expresses discomfort with the comforts of class. The correlation of feeling like a colonist is said in jest, but ultimately pokes at King's simultaneously ambivalent, but consciousness about what it means to employ a nanny as a Kanaka Maoli; the implication of perpetuating colonial and capitalist violence upon female labor is apparent in King's explanation. Therefore, King's recognition of Esther as a racialized and gendered worker whose labor is utilized by his family is limited by a refusal to acknowledge the violent U.S. colonization of his ancestors. In fact, the awkwardness King feels is the sole indication of how he can interpret his position. This also suggests the problematic history of how Esther's existence in the King household is indicative of a continuing racial domination that intersects with the dispossession of Kanaka Maoli land and sovereignty, even as King himself is in a relational mode of power over Esther.

Further complicating the intersection of continuing colonial and imperial violence is how King describes Esther as not only racialized labor, but how she also simultaneously acts out a Latina caricature. This heightened stereotype bolsters the conflicting temporalities of western capitalism where abstracted racial labor enacts the cultural scripts that neutralize and erase both

Esther and King's conditions of possibility. The descriptors of Esther reflect racial stereotypes that King acknowledges are problematic; yet, he cannot even take responsibility over his participation in perpetuating these racialized images. As a result, the indecision and lack of concrete awareness over Esther's position in the King family is representative of King's perspectives on his Kanaka Maoli history and relationship to land. By acknowledging the complexity of colonial histories, racial oppression, and land dispossession surrounding King's life, King excuses awareness as being enough of an engagement with his history. King's ambivalent acceptance of his circumstances is what makes him not only incapable of action, but is also indicative of the limits of imagining out of the structured colonial history of Hawai'i. This is evidenced in how King only conceptualizes of his Indigeneity through a relational racialization with Esther where the concrete histories of colonial and capitalist violence are made uncomfortably visible but irresolvable.

'Āina Not Private Property

In order to demonstrate how Hemmings' novel organizes the loss of 'āina as colonial erasure, I examine how historians have argued for the recognition of the critical differences between Kanaka Maoli relationships to 'āina and western capitalist notions of property. In King's accounting of his "colonialist" position, the intersection of land dispossession and material colonial violence needs to be historically delineated in order to recognize how *The Descendants* reflects these processes. Addressing the historical and narrative interpretations of 'āina testify to how the two engage the limitations of both genres. In other words, the historical accounts open up the erasure of Indigenous history found prominently in the novel; and conversely, the novel makes evident how totalizing the colonial and liberal dominant epistemologies operate through this elision and parroting of western capitalist perspectives of

land. Through the history of the Mahele of 1848 along with the Kuleana Act of 1850 as dealing with land division, I establish how the relationship between Kanaka Maoli and ‘āina exists as the foundation of a way of life that cannot be separated by the concept of property rights. As such, the genealogical and collectivity of ‘āina is put in contradistinction with Marx’s conception of capitalist private property. Indigenous scholars like Noenoe Silva, Lilikalā Kame’eleihwa, Jonathon Osorio, Katrina-Ann Kapa’anaokaloakeola Nakoa Oliveria, and others have established how cosmogonic genealogy provides the foundation for Kanaka Maoli conceptions of place, space, land, and overall existence. Oliveria explains how the historical accounts or mo’olelo of cosmogonic genealogies “form the foundation for a kanaka geography, illuminating the genealogical connection that Kanaka share with the ‘aina (land; that which feeds)” (1). This highlights the integral relationship between ‘āina and Kanaka Maoli as premised on their simultaneous origins. Oliveria continues, “The genealogical relationship between the land, humankind, and the gods... Pono [harmony or balance] is also exemplified by the pairing of ocean and land creatures that solidifies the bond between the land and the sea and their interdependence with one another. The *Kumulipo* [most well-known cosmogonic genealogy] is also a history of interrelatedness – all plants, animals, kanaka, and akua [gods] are genealogically connected” (4). Here, Oliveria explains not only the definitive relational existence of all living creatures, but also shows how pono operates for Kanaka Maoli. What the *Kumulipo* highlights is a lack of hierarchal value placed among ‘āina, creatures, humans, and gods and how each element is crucial to maintain pono even if the akua were responsible for the creation of ‘āina. This is a cultural and ecological system that operates on coexistence that essentially could continue with or without humans. In other words, this cosmology drastically positions humans differently from western capitalism and this perspective exemplifies the radical shift that occurs

with the colonial implementation of private property. As such, dominant historical interpretations of the Mahele often focus on the positive progress achieved from a “primitive” Indigenous worldview to the implementation of western liberal rights and private property.

In establishing the genealogy of Kanaka Maoli as defined through ‘āina, it becomes explicit how land is not identified as an object or as static, but as an integral element of Indigenous ways of life. This is how Indigenous historians attempt to undo the dominant colonial historiographies by demonstrating the drastic differences in relationships to ‘āina to support a critique of the totalizing changes wrought by the Mahele. And, ultimately, any instances of recognition of Kanaka Maoli genealogy and relationship to ‘āina is lost and rescripted under western property relations in *The Descendants* and King’s own understanding of his past. Importantly, Kame’eleihiwa demonstrates how ownership in a capitalist sense of property would be translated for a Kanaka Maoli relationship to ‘āina:

It was the *Akua*, of Gods, who had made the ‘*Aina*; if anyone, it was the *Akua* who owned the ‘*Aina*. Moreover, having been born of the *Akua*, the ‘*Aina* is itself an *Akua*. In Native Hawaiian culture, if an *Akua* cannot be owned, then one cannot buy and sell an *Akua*, such as the ‘*Aina*, unless the rules surrounding *Akua*, or the symbolic meaning of ‘*Aina*, are changed. (10)

This explicitly shows how if western land ownership was directly applied to Kanaka Maoli genealogy, then it would mean that the *akua* would be the sole owner of ‘āina. But, what Kame’eleihiwa demonstrates is the impossibility of owning land within a Kanaka Maoli cosmology since it would be equivalent to *akua* and thus, would have its own agency to “self-own.” Consequently, Kame’eleihiwa conveys a necessity for foreigners to change Kanaka Maoli

ideologies and value systems in order to make land ownership possible as the framework of capitalist private property was inconceivable and incompatible for their worldview and system.

Instead of land as a potential for profit and as embodying the abstraction of labor, the everyday care of ‘āina rested on Kanaka Maoli classes of chiefs, land stewards, and commoners with the idea of pono being exemplified in all social relations. Kame‘eleihiwa explains how “a reciprocal relationship was maintained: the *Ali‘i Nui* kept the ‘*Aina* fertile and the *Akua* appeased; the *maka‘ainana* fed and clothed the *Ali‘i Nui*” (26). Regardless of class, the care for the ‘āina was integral to sustain life and while the use of “productive” is used, it is meant as a reference of working the land to create pono and not exclusively in reaping maximum benefits for profit. Kanaka Maoli historian Samuel Kamakau interprets how these social relations linked the king to land since “the ‘*Aina* was ruled through the *aupuni* (government or kingdom) and all ‘*Aina* accrued to the *mana* [power] of the *Mo‘i* [king]” (29). While this relational dynamic initially seems to differ from the idea of interconnectedness, Kamakau demonstrates the central role of the ‘āina to the functioning of the kingdom. Importantly, the accruing of the king’s mana through the ‘āina is also relational in that the mō‘ī was responsible for the land.¹³ What this explication of the reciprocal social relations between ‘āina and Kanaka Maoli does is define how land cultivation operated prior to foreign restructuring. Through these Kanaka Maoli historians, a narrative of pono and collective land tenure emerges in opposition to western capitalist property notions where the possibility of these perspectives is diluted in *The Descendants* even as they inform the entire context for King’s ownership of land.

¹³ The political role of ‘āina also has its own place within Kanaka Maoli daily life that indicates its own power within the system that still does not subscribe to western notions of property. As Kame‘eleihiwa conveys how “control of the ‘*Aina* was not only the essence of sovereignty, but the correct distribution of ‘*Aina* was the first political act of a new *Mo‘i* and the key to ensuring *Malama ‘Aina* [care or love of the land] ... If the *Mo‘i* failed in his duty to *Malama ‘Aina*, he would be killed and replaced by another, more astute *Ali‘i Nui*” (56). As such, this shows that the mō‘ī was responsible for the ‘āina and subsequently, the ‘āina was the livelihood of the kingdom and where power could be accrued.

Indigenous Critiques of Marx and Proprietary Ownership

To clarify how the privatization of land operates, I build on a Marxist critique of western property, which allows for an understanding of how the restructuring of 'āina for Kanaka Maoli involves the erasure of colonialism through proprietary ownership and resource-based profits. This loss of 'āina for Kanaka Maoli is historically mirrored in how *The Descendants* participates in and is indicative of the perpetuation of a Hawai'i whose history has been narrated through the erasure of colonialism and imperialism. In other words, the literary erasure of Kanaka Maoli relationality to 'āina resembles the history of dispossession where the related loss of Indigenous land requires a Marxist critique. This alteration of 'āina into private property and ownership in a capitalist system determines the restructuring of familial and 'āina relations that *The Descendants* exemplifies. As such, I build out and unpack how the abstraction of property from land and the restructuring of the relations with 'āina hinge on the contentious process and premise of the extraction of resources. This unpacking demands an account and critique of how Marx's thesis of property simultaneously disavows how land operates for Indigenous populations while also not acknowledging how the abstraction of land does not occur exclusively through possession. Consequently, I suggest that Marx's account of private property and his explication of primitive accumulation fails to acknowledge the violences of colonialism and imperialism as he attempts to write off pre-capitalist systems of production.

In other words, I scrutinize the teleology of Marx's development of property relations and capitalism. This means that not only do I take issue with the linearity of Marx's explication, but read this as a refusal to confront the history of colonialism and imperialism as ongoing or occurring concurrently as propriety ownership comes into being. Through the recognition of how Marx's account of pre-capitalist modes of subsistence living becomes transformed into

ownership and profit, I argue how *The Descendants* exemplifies the conflation of extraction of land through ownership as equivalent to Kanaka Maoli reciprocity through land. To clarify, I am identifying how a Marxist reading and critique of the transformation of primitive accumulation to private property is through both the abstraction of resources and the extraction of profit. This process can be understood in the ways in which King describes and romanticizes ownership of his inherited land and the process of cultural preservation as indicative of a capitalist perspective on proprietary ownership.

Therefore, Marx's delineation of the genealogy of property relations articulates a particular kind of claim of legitimate ownership that enacts a violent material relation to individuals already present and engaged with the land. This occurs through both Marx's temporality of capitalism and through the process of the abstraction of labor. Marx explains the linear development of capitalism by posing how primitive accumulation "is nothing else than the historical process of divorcing the producer from the means of production. It appears as 'primitive' because it forms the pre-history of capital, and of the mode of production corresponding to capital" (*Capital* 875). Here, the emphasis on primitive accumulation is a precursor to capital and thus, beholden to a temporality of assumed progress. This indicates a disavowal of the continuation of colonialism and imperialism through capitalism that is demonstrated in *The Descendants*. More specifically, the process of abstraction becomes a site of contention in the ongoing history of colonialism and imperialism where Marx demonstrates the how this process occurs between the worker and mode of production. Through abstracting labor from the worker, Marx theorizes a social as well as economic transformation that emphasizes the capacity of labor from worker and reduces a means of subsistence to capital. This abstraction of land or subsistence living to property under capitalism is also understood as a social relation of

the mode of production of capitalism. With the abstraction of labor power from the worker, I also situate how the site of extraction is where *The Descendants* reveals the impossibility of separating primitive accumulation and ongoing colonialism that Marx temporally establishes as a pre-cursor to capitalism. This particular abstraction of labor is contradictory to Kanaka Maoli familial relations to ‘āina which places it arguably in a different category than “subsistence living” as stated in Marx. Even further, restructuring the social relations of producer from means of production is incommensurate with Kanaka Maoli cosmology with ‘āina. In other words, Marx’s articulation of property as the private ownership of the means of production as an example of the fragmentation of social labor appears contradictory to the familial Indigenous relations to ‘āina. Thus, it is through both the failure to account for ongoing colonialism and imperialism in capitalism and the process of abstraction and extraction through social labor and ‘āina that I am critiquing and then demonstrating how the novel fails to reconcile this contradiction. Therefore, *The Descendants* upholds a capitalist form of the sociality property ownership as relevant for Kanaka Maoli preservation that indicates an erasure of colonialism and its material violences.

Indigenous scholars, Glenn Coulthard and Leanne Simpson, similarly contest Marx’s progressive explanation of private property relations. I build off their critiques in order to navigate how Kanaka Maoli relationships to ‘āina center on ontological and genealogical belonging. In other words, the Mahele did not simply encourage a capitalist development out of a mode of primitive accumulation; instead, these two systems of relations to land were radically and epistemologically organized differently. This matters in understanding how *The Descendants* merely refracts the assumption made by Marx in narrating a conflict between land as an Indigenous mode of primitive accumulation, but still operating under capitalist ownership.

Coulthard and Simpson explain, “Marx’s thesis on primitive accumulation must be stripped of its rigidly *temporal* character; that is, rather than posit primitive accumulation as some historically situated event that sets the stage for the development of the capitalist mode of production, we should see it as an ongoing practice of dispossession that never ceases to structure capitalist and colonial social relations in the present” (251).¹⁴ This conveys how the continuation of colonialism and by extension, imperialism, manifest in the present where Indigenous relations to land persist within capitalist social and economic modes of production and are not temporally distinct. This critique of the temporality of primitive accumulation and capitalism supports how I establish the erasure of colonialism historically and within the literary account, where *The Descendants* imagines land ownership through a linear progression and not from an Indigenous position. Even further, Coulthard and Simpson critique not only the temporality of Marx’s thesis, but also point out that “while it is appropriate to view primitive accumulation as the condition of possibility for the development and ongoing reproduction of capitalism, it is not so to posit it as a *necessary* condition for developing the forms of critical consciousness and associated modes of life that ought to inform the construction of its alternatives” (252). Similar to the question of developmental progress, Coulthard and Simpson establish the problem with the “*normative development*” (252) of Marx’s thesis that relies on linear temporality as well as a universalizing narrative of progression. Consequently, the critique of Marx and the necessity of Marxism to establish the intelligibility of *The Descendants* develops through the elision of the concurrent modes of production as primitive accumulation and capitalism that are not discrete events.

¹⁴ Related, Aileen Moreton-Robinson asserts how for Indigenous peoples in Australia the description of a pot-colonial existence is false. Moreton-Robinson explains how “because our relation to land, what I conceptualize as an ontological belonging, is omnipresent, and continues to unsettled non-Indigenous belonging based on illegal dispossession” (4). This suggests how Indigenous relationality to land fundamentally challenges notions of western belonging and place. While not directly a critique of Marx’s temporality of capitalism, Moreton-Robinson echoes Coulthard and Simpson’s critiques of the persistence of colonialism and of the ontological, not pre-capitalist, relationship to land.

Furthermore, I question whether primitive accumulation can even be correlated with Kanaka Maoli ontological relationships to ‘āina, where the western discourse of capitalism fails to understand this dynamic.

Through an explication of the temporal limits of Marx’s critique of capitalist proprietary ownership, I build out a dual recognition of the dismissal of Indigenous conceptions of land as not defined by the abstraction of labor power and the mode of production, and the ways in which colonial and imperial dominance restructure these social relations. Unwittingly, *The Descendants*’ representation of the abstraction of land into possession and profit embodies my critique of Marx’s linear development of primitive accumulation as pre-capitalist where King’s land sale is the focal point of the entire state. Even further, King’s available decisions for the land is only rendered through an understanding of private property as an abstraction of land and labor. Thus, this chapter critiques Marx’s conception of primitive accumulation as a prior to capitalism where the ongoing dispossession and abstraction of land continues for Indigenous populations through how *The Descendants* upholds Marx’s teleology of primitive accumulation in King’s narration of ownership of the land. Thus, the novel itself disavows Kanaka Maoli ontological and genealogical relationships to ‘āina that cannot be measured by through a mode of Marx’s primitive accumulation defined through feudalism or serfdom.

In a related albeit different critique of Marx, Lisa Lowe argues how Marx’s abstraction of labor and production does not account for racialized and gendered difference where the type of labor is quantified and qualified unevenly. Lowe further develops how, for Marx, the abstraction of labor is determinative of the restructuring of social relations. This adds to the necessity of centering the persistence of colonial and imperial violences through capital social relations in that Marx’s use of private property adheres to only a particular limited western universalized

history. Lowe observes the instrumental role of property to capitalist citizenship where she explains how “For Marx, ‘political emancipation’ of the *citizen* permits the reproduction of capitalist social relations and the relations of production. Marx’s critique unmask the political state as the apotheosis of the property system in capitalist nations and points to the need for a critique of citizenship and ‘rights’ defined as the right to property or, in effect, the right of the capitalist to exploit” (*Immigrant* 25). What Lowe conveys is how the right to private property is integral to citizenship and indicative of capitalist social and economic relations. Still, Lowe’s premise is on a full transition to capitalism where the critique comes through the differentials of migrant labor. In showing the limits of Marx’s understanding of property, citizenship, and labor through racial immigrant labor, Lowe, in line with Coulthard and Simpson, underscores how “Marx remains committed to Enlightenment universalisms through which we can neither account for the specificity of racialized Asian immigrant labor within the U.S. economy nor of the role of colonialism and imperialism in the emergence of the political nation” (*Immigrant* 28). Layering the additional critique of Marx’s failure to account for a multitude of racialized labor further bolsters how Lowe acknowledges the ongoing history of colonialism and imperialism. Thus, *The Descendants*’ preoccupation with land as an object to be owned in the sense of private property and the protagonist’s reckoning with its romantic inheritance highlights the elision of the continued colonial and imperial violences of capitalism. Consequently, the novel uncomfortably upholds the epistemological violence of colonialism and imperialism through the dispossession of Indigenous land and the abstract logics of liberalism for capitalist accumulation; this allows for a Marxist critique of *The Descendants* where the loss of ‘āina becomes the optic and articulation of the erasure of colonialism and Indigenous ontological relationships to ‘āina.

In laying out the history of the Mahele with a critique of private property, I demonstrate not only the subversive undoing of Kanaka Maoli life through changes in ‘āina, but also the particular ways these developments have been narrated as necessary, productive, and beneficial to Kanaka Maoli. Linda Parker explains how the working of the land was a crucial aspect for Kanaka Maoli where “the right to use land and water continued only as long as both resources were utilized. If a commoner stopped cultivating his land or produced insufficient food, the ali‘i revoked the tenant’s tenure and removed him from the land” (10). Again, the emphasis here is on the productivity of the land itself and the maka’āinana’s communal utilization of the resources of the land as a way to evaluate how effectively it was used for cultivation of crops. This is not to be confused with abstracting profit from the land under the capitalist formulation of labor and production even as the working of the land is the requirement of a tenant. What differs here is that the tenants are not simply working to provide profit for their land steward or for their ali‘i, but that their labor also sustains their own families and exists as part of the framework of collaborative existence. As such, this emphasizes how maka’āinana developed a “familial bond with the ‘*aina*” through working the land that perpetuates the genealogical relationship between Kanaka Maoli and ‘*aina*” (Stover 7). Consequently, ‘āina does not exclusively exist as a cosmology of Indigenous beliefs, but is the everyday livelihood of the people.

More importantly, the concept of ownership of land hinges on the cultivation of it and not through western notions of private property.¹⁵ Evoking the foundation of the *Kumulipo*, Kame‘eleihiwa provides an example of western capitalist ideas into Kanaka Maoli culture through a familial metaphor where “buying and selling ‘*Aina* created by the *Akua* was even like

¹⁵ Kame‘eleihiwa emphasizes how “‘*Aina* was not to be bought or sold, in the Western sense, only given from one *Ali‘i Nui* to another with *aloha*” (97) as an important difference prior to the Mahele. Importantly, Kame‘eleihiwa distinctly explains where and when land begins to be sold for waiwai or personal gain in 1827 through the bequeathing of ‘*Aina* to various chosen chiefs and not simply up to the *mō‘ī*’s discretion (96).

selling one's grandmother, as Papa-hanau-moku was a grandmother to the Hawaiian race. It was most inappropriate behavior, particularly for an *Ali'i Nui*, and yet *Ali'i Nui* were increasingly losing control of all the 'Aina in the event of an overthrow of the Hawaiian government by some foreign power" (33). Despite the sort of dramatics around selling one's grandmother as equivalent to 'āina, Kame'elehiwa argues for an interpretation of a distinct Kanaka Maoli genealogical relationship to land in order to show the disparity between belief systems. What this establishes for historians invested in Indigenous alternative accounts of colonialism is how the relationship of 'āina to Kanaka Maoli is one defined by cosmology and perpetuated through cultivation and familial bonds. These historians offer a critique of the encroaching western influence of regarding land as property for individual profit; they also argue how this implementation unravels Indigenous belief systems through redefining this crucial relationship to 'āina and community. As such, the construction of historiographies by Kanaka Maoli historians are also subject to interpretation in order to excavate Indigenous voices and to undermine the dominant colonial and imperial renderings of land dispossession.

The Descendants and King's "Right to Property"

Similarly, the interpretive framing of the Mahele and land dispossession is represented in *The Descendants* where the erasure of colonialism persists even in King's narration of his own history. King renders his land inheritance as the happy circumstance of a romance between his Kanaka Maoli and haole ancestors falling in love. Relying on a sense of individual entitlement and liberal guilt over this history, King's explanation of the past serves as enough in his acknowledgment. The litany of historical exploitation of Indigenous and racialized labor that constitute King's situation is exactly what is addressed superficially in the novel. In the rendering of his personal inheritance of land, Hemmings portrays King's lack of agency in the

past and present. This seemingly ambivalent acceptance reads as both naïve and absurd given his family's prominence and wealth, where willfully ignoring a history of colonization and land dispossession is neutralized in King's own admission of guilt. King explains:

I have inheritance issues. I belong to one of those Hawaii families who make money off of luck and dead people. My great-grandmother happened to be a princess. A small monarchy decided what land was theirs, and she came into a lot of it. My great-grandfather, a haole businessman, was doing pretty well himself. He was a good land speculator, a good banker. All of their descendants, sugar plantation descendants and so on, are still benefiting from these old transactions. We sit back and watch as the past unfurls millions into our laps. (Hemmings 22)

In the categorization of "inheritance issues," King immediately undermines the seriousness of his predicament as his family profited from the Mahele of 1848, an event responsible for the general dispossession of land from Kanaka Maoli and the destruction of an ontological relationship with 'āina. King's tone both advances his position as feeling guilty about his unique privilege while also negating this admission of violent history for the majority of Kanaka Maoli since only a small margin of ali'i became successful off the transformation of 'āina to private property. This also eclipses any genealogical or familial social relationship to 'āina that also was restructured through the restructuring of "land." Attributing his wealth to "luck and dead people," King erases the lived experiences of his ancestors as well as neutralizes any colonial and imperial responsibilities of western influence in Hawai'i in the 19th century. This dismissal, while entertaining in terms of his blasé tone for character development, identifies the challenges of reckoning with the history of U.S. imperialism in Hawai'i as it suggests a universal lack of

agency regarding crucial economic and political decisions. This also exemplifies the erasure of colonialism and substitutes it with a focus on the capitalist fortunes of proprietary ownership.

In attributing making money off “luck and dead people,” King constructs a liberal capitalist interpretation of history that occludes colonial dispossession of ‘āina and claims that his family accidentally stumbled upon wealth. The reference to “a small monarchy determined what land was theirs” is a historical reference to the Mahele in how some of the ali‘i had more control over the divisions. Still, this articulation is formulated through proprietary ownership where the material violence of removing Kanaka Maoli from a reciprocal and communal relationship with ‘āina is ignored. Kame‘eleihiwa argues that while the mō‘ī and ali‘i agreed to the Mahele, it was done with the intent that they were “sharing the Land and, by extension, sharing their control of the sovereignty of Hawaii, with their *maka‘ainana*, rather than ‘dividing’ the Land in the *Mahele*” (9). While this is the interpretation Kame‘eleihiwa puts forward, she theorizes how “To the extent that ‘*Aina* constituted collateral, the *Ali‘i Nui* could, after the *Mahele*, buy their way into the capitalist system, and perhaps realize the capitalist dream: great tracts of ‘*Aina* could mean wealth beyond measure” (12). Still within the suggestion that ali‘i were conscious of the full ramifications of the Mahele would assume that capitalist concepts of private property had been explicitly explained. It is precisely this position that Hemmings’ portrays through King’s description of the past. This is clearly not to say that certain ali‘i did not benefit from land divisions, as they did, but the generalizing made by King highlights only one fraction of the broad cultural, political, and economic changes wrought by the Mahele.

The assumption could be made then that King’s self-interest is simply reflected in his narration of the past, but since King is also invested in sharing his guilt over the millions reaped off of this transaction, the conclusion is messier. In other words, King attempts to erase the full

history of land dispossession and colonialism by crediting his inheritance to both fate and scheming royals. Even further, the ruse of romance obscures the violence of the Mahele. As King continues, he celebrates the fortune of his great-grandmother being borne into royalty and to inherit familial wealth even in the early 20th century as a result of the actions of the Mahele. Similarly, his great-grandfather is celebrated as crafty businessman who succeeded in not only marrying into Kanaka Maoli royalty but a family with land to profit from. This shrewd nature is not explicitly stated as a romantic endeavor, but it can be inferred that a “land speculator” would be conscious of the potential to gain access to ‘āina through intermarriage; here, romance operates jointly with capitalist profit to occlude the historical dispossession of ‘āina.

Finally, in tying in the entire litany of ancestors, King clarifies and ultimately celebrates how his family’s investment in ‘āina has been for purely capitalist purposes that include the history of missionaries to sugar plantation owners. What is left unsaid in this list of ancestors is how both missionaries and sugar plantations relied on tactics of domination vis a vis colonization and dominance over Indigenous and migrant labor. This is precisely the critique I make regarding Marx’s conception of the abstraction of labor under capitalism and how this does not account for both continuing colonial conditions under capitalist relations for Kanaka Maoli as well as the added component of immigrant Asian labor. Here, Coulthard, Simpson, and Lowe’s critiques about the continual disavowal of Indigenous oppression and the differential of racial labor are made concrete in Hemmings’ fiction; in fact, King’s predicament is the exact manifestation of the failures of western capitalism to account for Indigeneity and migrant labor. King’s guilty secret that his wealth is built on the backs of Kanaka Maoli, his ancestors, and racial migrant labor only wields power in that he admits the entitled “lucky nature” of his fate. Suggesting that King’s immediate lineage from his grandfather to him does not utilize the money

made off the trust fails to acquit him of contributing to a particular interpretation of land dispossession history. Admitting some culpability and feeling conflicted over this past does not negate the violences of colonization and imperialism even as King's presentation of his "inheritance issues" attempts to elicit empathy from the reader.

King continues to dwell on his inherited status as he critiques his relatives who passively accept a fortune partially from the Hawaiian monarchy, but he fails to engage this obscured colonial history beyond his individual admission of limited guilt. Hemmings situates the complexity of land issues and racialized familial histories through King's guilty conscience as the only avenue of historical reckoning. In this sense, King turns to the interracial marriage between his great-grandmother and great-grandfather as exemplary, where romance triumphed over all obstacles in order to eliminate critiques over legitimate land ownership. While intermarriage was never legally prohibited in Hawai'i, the status of mixed race individuals become explicitly intertwined with American classifications of citizenship in terms of claims to land and sovereignty. J. Kēhaulani Kauanui's work on the logics of the blood quantum classification as defining Native Hawaiian identity reveals the intersection of quantifiable blood ancestry and legitimate land ownership. Kauanui situates how the Hawaiian Homes Commission Act of 1920 required proof of being 50% Hawaiian (later amended in 1997 to 25%) in order to be eligible for the United States Congress's allotment of "200,000 acres of land" to Kanaka Maoli. Kauanui emphasize that while this legislation was initially "intended to encourage the revitalization of a particular Hawaiian demographic, the act simultaneously created a class of people who could no longer qualify for the land that constitutes the Hawaiian Home Lands territory" (3). This parsing of definable Indigeneity, Kauanui argues, dismisses social epistemologies of kinship and "undermine[d] Kanaka Maoli sovereignty claims – by not only

explicitly limiting the number who could lay claim to the land but also reframing the Native connection to land” (9). Kauanui’s analysis links the colonial legacies of land dispossession with the literal making of “Hawaiianess” through tying proof of blood to land rights. In these tumultuous legal and political struggles over land dispossession, eligibility, and production of Kanaka Maoli identity, it becomes clear how King as a multiracial inheritor of Indigenous land, embodies the friction between American classifications of race and individual rights to land and Kanaka Maoli genealogy with a communal relationship to land.

King’s own celebration of his familial history further bolsters the liberal argument of highlighting his ancestor’s supposed romance over any claims to ‘āina and sovereignty. Marking the same time period as the Hawaiian Homes Commission, Hemmings deliberately situates how King further erases his own Indigenous ancestry in the fraught history of land dispossession.

While looking at offers for his family’s inherited land, King ruminates:

I even try to decipher documents and letters from 1920, imagining what two people I’ve never met would want. The princess, the last in the royal lineage. My great-grandfather, that frisky white boy. What a scandal they must have caused. What fun they must have had. What love and ambition! What do you want, lovebirds, you rebels? What do you want... (Hemmings 41)

Here, King valorizes his ancestors and their supposed romance as he attempts to predict what the “lovebirds” would want done with the land. By identifying the year as 1920, Hemmings places this romance at the center of land struggles and conflict over the establishment of the Hawaiian Homes Commission and its use of blood quantum logic as Kauanui has analyzed. Through not only King’s claim to the princess as being part of the last ali‘i, but also having ownership of ‘āina, the emphasis on access to land is highlighted as part of the romance. Furthermore,

positioning the princess as “the last in the royal lineage” suggests the ephemeral nature of Indigeneity as dying out and the eventual presumed downfall of Kanaka Maoli sovereignty.

Importantly, the requirement of Kanaka Maoli blood at a 50-percent level is indicated through King’s lineage as he explicitly states his ancestral investment in access to land and Indigeneity through the assumed romance of intermarriage. Kauanui argues not only how “the requirement of having to prove eligibility based on blood quantum in order to secure a lease to Hawaiian Home Lands has led many Kanaka Maoli to see ‘50 percent’ as the authenticating criterion for Hawaiian identity,” but also this means that “over 20,000 ‘Native Hawaiians’ remain on the waiting list” for Hawaiian Home Lands lease since 1921 (4). As a result, Kauanui draws out the colonial racial classification of proving Indigenous lineage as the gatekeeper to access to ‘āina as defined by a particularly western notion of private property. Kauanui effectively shows how relying on colonial racial logics of blood “undercuts indigenous Hawaiian epistemologies that define identity on the basis of one’s kinship and genealogy” (3). This is demonstrated in King’s own discussion of genealogy as one couched in biological ancestry over Kanaka Maoli cosmology. Furthermore, Kauanui provides the historical context where qualifying for Indigeneity equated to access to land, which is implied through the King family.

Yet, King seems to exclusively see the emotional quality to his great-grandparents’ marriage and celebrates their affair as a romantic endeavor. This guise of the romance of his ancestors masks the material violences of colonial blood logics and the continued dispossession of land. Even more revealing is how King alludes to the sexual allure of this intermarriage through his admiration of the “frisky white boy” of a great-grandfather who implicitly was successful in luring the princess. Still, King highlights the romantic nature of their affair as it was a “scandal” and made out of “love and ambition,” and although he does not quite correlate

ambition to land ownership, the suggestion remains. Interchanging “lovebirds” with “rebels,” King’s enthusiasm for this affair reveals how it obscures access to Kanaka Maoli ‘āina at a critical historical moment derived from the Mahele. Yet, King cannot or chooses not to reckon with the longer historical trajectory of land dispossession leading to the Hawaiian Homesteads Act of 1920 and instead, takes comfort in his ancestors’ romantic affair. King could have thought through the precarity of his great-grandmother’s position as the last in her royal lineage and how she might have been forced into marriage as way to preserve an existing relationship with ‘āina. But, in simply heralding their marriage as rebellious because of the mixing of races and classes, King erases his great-grandmother’s Kanaka Maoli history and supplants it with admiration for the audacity of his great-grandfather to court her. This testifies to the intertwining of liberal notions of affect overcoming and erasing the colonial and imperial violent histories of land dispossession through the rhetoric of romance. What King’s self-narration reveals is the internalization of these colonial knowledges of the history of land rights as a western capitalist and liberal phenomenon.

The Ruse of Romance and Legislating Land

King’s rendering of intermarriage as an accident of rebellion positions the narrative’s stance on Indigenous history as one where the elision of sovereignty is repeatedly reinforced through this ruse of ancestral “romance.” In other words, the inability to describe the marriage between Princess Kekipi and a haole businessman as calculated, transactional, or even within the frame of Indigenous land dispossession testifies to the desire to use romance as a substitute for the violences of colonialism.¹⁶ Historically, this is most clearly demonstrated in the 1840

¹⁶ While the focus of this chapter is primarily on the centrality of land, marriage and family intermittently arise as being fruitful areas for analysis particularly through questions of gender and colonialism. See Anne McClintock, Ann Kaplan, and Vicente L. Rafael for further references on the roles of gender, marriage, and love under imperialism.

Constitution, which emphasizes the centrality of private property by claiming all land is not owned by any individual. King essentially invokes this history and associated legislation by discounting the strategies used to alter land tenure systems in the 19th century and yet, his disavowal of this past is through the celebration of romance. What the 1840 Constitution does then is reveal the explicit legal moves made to prepare for the 1848 Mahele and clearly articulates the object-making process of land as not simply belonging to anyone, but also evacuating its cultural, economic, and political position. The constitution states:

KAMEHAMEHA I, was the founder of the kingdom, and to him belonged all the land from one end of the Islands to the other, though it was not his own private property. It belonged to the chiefs and people in common, of whom Kamehameha I was the head, and had the management of the landed property. Wherefore, there was not formerly, and is not now any person who could or can convey away the smallest portion of land without the consent of the one who had, or has the direction of the kingdom. (Achui 9)

Importantly, this suggests that while Kamehameha I was the sovereign leader and manager of the land, it was not explicitly his private land. Instead the legislation establishes only that both he or the current mō'ī has interest in the land as well as his subjects. If anything, this rhetoric can be interpreted as an appeasement to foreign influence by dismissing the claim of Kamehameha's ownership of the land, but the clear objective is to open up the possibility of ownership through the mō'ī's consent. Louis Cannelora identifies a notable difference where "this was the first acknowledgment by a Hawaii sovereign that his subjects had some proprietary interest in the land. But the constitution provided no means by which the undivided interests of the king, the chiefs and the common people in the same land could be separated, nor did it establish any procedure under which the people could acquire fee title to land" (6). Cannelora highlights the

absence of any procedure since this constitution operated as an appeasement towards both American and British pressure to articulate a declaration of rights (Daws 107).¹⁷ As such, Cannelora's argument rests on the position where the vested interest in 'āina as the potential of ownership is advanced.

In a contrasting interpretation of the 1840 constitution, Kame'eiehiwa references the preexisting legislation leading up to the constitution as part of a larger objective to disempower Kanaka Maoli. Kame'eiehiwa explains, "The primary purpose of the 1839 Declaration of Rights (as well as the 1840 and 1842 constitutions) was to restrict the authority of the *Mo'i, Ali'i Nui*, and *konoiki* [land steward] over the *maka'ainana* and to provide protection of property, so that each class might have equal opportunity to enrich themselves" (174). By linking these pieces of legislation, Kame'eiehiwa scaffolds how they all work to simultaneously limit the power of Kanaka Maoli over 'āina. This theory exposes the falsity of the purported legislation to create a more egalitarian class system where the commoners might gain access to 'āina and subsequently, power over the cultivation of land. Demarcating this subtle liberal rhetoric, Kame'eiehiwa argues how foreign influence in the constitution begins the move towards the promise of "equal rights" that would allow for the seemingly equalize of sale of property, even as it actually violently implemented western notions of private ownership.¹⁸ Stover connects these two pieces of legislation directly through the centrality of 'āina where "according to the 1840 Constitution, the *Mo'i, Ali'i*, and *maka'ainana* all held undivided interest in the 'aina. The purpose of the 1848

¹⁷ The 1839 Declaration of Rights is often discussed in conjunction with the subsequent 1840 Constitution. Louis Cannelora describes, "The opening shot in the 'peaceful revolution' consisted of the so-called Declaration of Rights published on June 7, 1839. The language of this document was nebulous and vague, nonetheless represents the first formal acknowledgment that those inferior to the sovereign had certain basic rights. Property rights, as yet undefined, were afforded some degree of recognition..." (5).

¹⁸ Neil Levy further emphasizes, "The constitution also attempted to deal with two areas of conflict between Hawaiians and Westerners: attempts by chiefs to vest land rights in Westerners without the approval of the crown, and attempts by Westerners, who had received land rights from the king, to transfer those interests to other foreigners without the king's permission" (851).

Mahele was to identify and separate this interest” (58). In showing how the constitution establishes a shared investment in ‘āina, Stover argues how access to ‘āina was determined through the separation of Kanaka Maoli by class. Under the guise of liberal “equal rights for all,” the Constitution claimed to be about equality when it was to allow foreign access to land for profit. These articles of legislation create the foundation for the Mahele through the dual objectives of disregarding Kanaka Maoli ontological relationships to ‘āina and opening up ‘āina for proprietary ownership and profit. As discussed earlier in this section, Indigenous scholars have argued how the precision of legislation rhetoric disavows the authority of the mō‘ī and related royalty in favor for maka‘āinana access to land. Whereas non-Indigenous (read: western) scholars interpreted the legislation leading up to the Mahele as promoting the liberal ideal of equal access to ownership. This interpretation explicitly undermines Kanaka Maoli cosmology and familial relationships with ‘āina. These varying narratives collide in *The Descendants* in terms of how King repeatedly attempts to imagine his ancestors and their world in comparison to his contemporary relatives. King’s disregard for his Indigenous history and the violent changes around land usage and ownership reflect his ignorance over how this past affects his present; this occlusion is particularly emphasized in how the imagined romance of the princess and businessmen obscure the material violence of colonialism and land dispossession.

Throughout Hemmings’ novel, King reflects on the history of his family and his relatives in order to reckon with his choice about the land-sale. Earlier in this chapter, I emphasized how King tends to attribute his position of land ownership and wealth to luck and the romantic intermarriage of his great-grandparents. Through his consistent self-erasure of land dispossession and colonial violences, King’s failure to reckon with his colonial and Indigenous history is shown time and time again. This is what encapsulates the confounding position of the novel

where King cannot escape the colonial and imperial histories informing his own. Encountering his relatives on Kaua‘i, King critiques his family, “I think of our bloodline’s progression. Our missionary ancestors came to the islands and told the Hawaiians to put on some clothes, work hard, and stop hula dancing. They make some business deals on the way, buying an island for ten grand, or marrying a princess and inheriting and now their descendants don’t work” (Hemmings 157). Significantly, King focuses on his haole side of the family as colonizing Kanaka Maoli. Then, he only brings in his great-grandmother at the end of the list of his history and she is simply identified as a “princess,” with no other identifiers. Yet, he blatantly erases half of his familial background by focusing on the “bloodline,” which echoes Kauanui’s discussion of colonial blood logics. As such, King stakes his claim to missionaries who by his own admission contributed to the colonization of the Islands while inculcating Kanaka Maoli with both Puritan and western capitalist work ethics. Haphazardly striking business arrangements and entering into “illicit” marriages, King chalks up his bloodline as a series of unplanned events that seem to have no consequences for the Indigenous population. Perhaps King is merely joking in his listing, but this mocking of how his family rose to prominence is still steeped in land dispossession, cultural and linguistic oppression, and the violences of colonialism and imperialism. Still, King expresses his uneasiness about his cousins who “all look the same,” and whose “sole purpose in life is to have fun” as they do not have to work, but simply profit off their ancestors’ land in a purely capitalist way (Hemmings 157). King critiques his relatives for their lack of awareness of familial history and their carefree privileged existence, but his own sense of history is almost equally bereft. The sole difference for King is his repeated meditation on the consciousness that a version of history does exist even as he subscribes to accident and the luck of his privilege. What this continuously shows is the impossibility for King to interpret

beyond the minimal acknowledgements of his Indigenous and missionary ancestors and how this informs his current relationship to ‘āina for sale. This example also tangentially connects to not simply the Mahele, but also the Kuleana Act of 1850 that combined the opportunity for maka‘āinana to purchase their own land in conjunction with foreigners also finally having access to ownership. The subsequent legislations combined are what allowed King’s family to inherit their land and become the version that he critiques for not having to work and not knowing their own continued participation in colonial history.

Historically, the move towards the privatization of land and the Mahele of 1848 derives out of conflicts between foreigners’ demands for access to land and the refusal of Kanaka Maoli, particularly the ali‘i nui, to acquiesce to these foreigners’ petitions.¹⁹ In order to lay out the historical interpretations of these events and how *The Descendants* narrates them, I highlight how the creation of the Board of Commissioners to Quiet Land Titles (Land Commission) in 1846 effectively aided the efforts for land reform to usher in the official Mahele in 1848. Marking the myriad of steps in the transition to privatized land highlights the magnitude of this political, social, and economic change that is repeatedly erased in Hemmings’ narrative. This reveals how *The Descendants* struggles to historically reckon with its own background for land ownership and King’s inability to acknowledge any of these historical events, even obliquely.

¹⁹ While not directly related to this chapter’s focus on land, the international recognition of Hawai‘i’s independence in 1843 following the prior ceding of the Islands to the British earlier that year is critical to recognize. La Ho‘iho‘i Ea or Restoration day was celebrated on November 28, 1843 after approval from Britain, France, and the U.S. where this recognition allowed for the kingdom’s independence. Noenoe Silva suggests that then “it was in response to foreign aggression...that the mō‘ī and ali‘i nui changed their ways of government by adopting a constitution on which European and American types of laws could be based and by adhering to international norms of nation-statehood. These moves were made with the goal of preserving sovereignty” (37). Importantly, the acknowledgment of Hawai‘i’s internationally recognized independence coalesced with the Kingdom’s assertion of their legitimacy through adapting to western forms of governance. Regardless of the sort of ethical nature of the effects of U.S. empire, these distinct changes politically testify to the complexity of foreign influence on the mō‘ī and how to strategize within new adopted systems of governance and economics.

Notably, the process of the Mahele essentially took place incrementally over a five-year process that Kame‘eleihiwa explains begins with the Board of Commissioners and the actual signing of the *Buke Mahele* (collection of all the land division) in 1848 (209). Importantly, this Board was created after “maka‘ainana had been sending petitions to the legislature warning the government not to sell lands to foreigners” (Osorio 45). While perhaps not the only example of disagreement among Kanaka Maoli, Osorio identifies this instance as contributing to the formation of the Board of Commissioners to Quiet Land Titles. Since one of the key contentions was the issue of land-sale to foreigners, this Board was charged with the intent of determining how land ownership might look through the transition of communal ‘āina to private property. Specifically, the Board was to figure out how to deal with the establishment proclaimed in the 1840 Constitution that all land was managed by the mō‘ī, but not deemed his private property.²⁰ Holding a similar perspective as Osorio, Canelora explains that foreigners struggled to obtain access to land due to:

the fact that the King and the chiefs or konohikis, and in most cases the common people, all held undivided and undefined rights in the same land. Since there was no precedent for, or procedure under which these rights could be separated, it was theoretically impossible to acquire a clear title to land except through the instrumentality of a conveyance in which the King, the landlord and the tenant all joined as grantors. (12)

This lack of clarity around direct ownership of lands made it impossible for foreigners to even attempt to purchase land.

Given the communal responsibility for ‘āina fell under the various classes of Kanaka Maoli where the mō‘ī tended to the overall stewardship of the land, this could not be correlated

²⁰ The Board was constituted of five members with William Richards in charge, the other members were Attorney General John Ricord, Nobles John Papa ‘I‘I, J.W. Kanehoa and Representative Zorabella Ka‘auwai (Osorio 48).

with a western sense of direct ownership and the commodified nature of the land. Consequently, the Board of Commissioners would be in charge of “final ascertainment or rejection of all claims of private individuals, whether natives or foreigners, to any landed property acquired prior to the passage of this Act” (Article IV, Sec. 1). This declaration allows for the adjudication of land, which ultimately will decide the legitimacy of land claims, but also will determine the amount of “vested rights in the land” between the three classes of government, lord or ali‘i, and tenant or maka‘ainana (Article IV, Sec. 1). This conveys the interest in what would be considered a legal and binding division of land. The wording of the Land Commission’s principles clearly indicates a western critique of Kanaka Maoli class systems where the document suggests that “great evils have existed down to the present moment...that several different classes of persons had undivided rights to the same lands...In such cases, lords or persons of superior power or rank have generally been the oppressors” (Article IV, Sec I). These principles establish the current system of land tenure and collective cultivation as allowing for the oppression of lesser chiefs and the commoners. The document then moves to suggest “it was found necessary to adopt a new system for ascertaining rights and new measure for protecting those rights when ascertained, and to accomplish this object the Land Commission was formed” (Article IV, Sec. 1). Through the premise of liberal ideals of freedom for all social classes, these principles implemented change in the political and economic system in order to “protect those rights” gleaned from the 1839 Bill of Rights and 1840 Constitution. In assessing the objectives of the Land Commission, I argue that this reveals the rhetorical strategies employed in transforming ‘āina into a concrete object of ownership through emphasizing universal rights for maka‘āinana as a justification towards “rights” protection.

Indigenous and non-Indigenous historians have both explicated how the formation of the Land Commission is essentially credited with implementing western notions of freedom and equal individual rights. Whether this credit is positive or negative depends on the historiography, but what is agreed upon is how the Land Commission asserted the necessity of private property and liberal rights. This reading of the rhetoric behind the Land Commission is essential to understand how the narrative of universal rights becomes the operating strategy for land dispossession. In reflecting on the rhetorical tactics imbued in these liberal principles, Lisa Lowe is useful in understanding how this can be seen as an injection of liberal ideologies of freedom into the colonial archive. In *The Intimacies of Four Continents*, Lowe theorizes how the archive “mediates the imperatives of the state [and] subsumes colonial violence within narratives of modern reason and progress” (2). What this means in relationship to the colonial context of Hawai‘i and Indigeneity is the ways in which Lowe identifies how teleological modes of development overlay and subsume the violences in the past. Under the guise of liberal democracy and progress, the colonial archive bolsters the political, economic, and social transformation of the Indigenous population. Here, the principles of the Land Commission are understood in proximity to colonized nations where the rhetoric of the promise of freedom undergirds the dispossession of Indigenous land, agency, and ways of life. In other words, marking the move to land division is couched under the terms of civilization and individualism that will be purportedly beneficial for the Hawaiian Kingdom.

Liberal “Progress,” The Land Commission, and Keeping the Land

While chattel slavery is clearly a different context of power relations, embodied value, and dominance, Saidiya Hartman’s work on the relations under slavery to Reconstruction are productive in considering the contradictory dynamic of emancipatory promises of freedom and

individualism. To suture Hartman's concepts within the context of Hawai'i allows for an assessment of the implementation of a capitalist social and economic system that makes itself visible in the colonial archive through the 1839 Bill of Rights, 1840 Constitution, 1843 international recognition resolution, and the 1848 Mahele. While a slightly unwieldy grouping of theoretical interpretative modes, this chapter conceives of an analytic to intervene into the historical archive that accounts for colonial and imperial domination under the guise of liberal and civilizing discourses, while also accounting for Indigeneity. As such, Hartman's work on slavery and the perceived failure of Reconstruction lends itself to reckoning with narratives of progress as a colonial strategy to uphold the promise of liberal freedom. Hartman proposes how the acknowledgment of individuality through the "humanity of the slave" is simultaneously an oppressive notion and shrouded in the ruse of the liberal narrative of freedom (4). Through slavery and Reconstruction, Hartman examines the "limits of emancipation, the ambiguous legacy of universalism, the exclusion constitutive of liberalism, and the blameworthiness of the freed individual" (6). In analyzing how these components jointly operate, Hartman proposes how "emancipation appears less the grand event of liberation than a point of transition between modes of servitude and racial subjection" (6). In correlating liberation as a transition to "modes of servitude and racial subjection," Hartman interrogates how freedom masks new forms of oppression. This means the assumed emancipation of Reconstruction was less radical in eradicating oppression as it actually heralded a new racial hierarchy. What this means for Hawai'i's colonial archive of land dispossession is how the move from Indigenous ways of life to western-influenced capitalism embodies these same promises of progress and individualism, which shrouds the ongoing violent process of colonization.

In *The Descendants*, King narrates Hawai‘i’s history as a narrative of liberal progress that is only tempered by his sentimental desire to recapture an Indigenous past. In other words, King’s reflection on what ‘āina was prior to capitalist development is rendered under the abstract possessive logics of liberalism for capitalist accumulation. In viewing his family’s land on Hanalei, Kaua‘i, King observes, “I see the taro plantation [lo‘i] below, warming in the sun. I imagine the valley doesn’t look much different than it did a hundred years ago. The ocean beyond is dark blue, and as we approach the bottom of the hill, the stretch of beach unfolds before us. *Look*, I almost say again, because I have this urge to make sure they’re [his daughters] seeing what will no longer be in our name” (Hemmings 161). Waxing nostalgic about a lo‘i patch, King promotes an idealized temporal scheme that collapses the past and present, where the Kanaka Maoli way of life has remained static and untouched by history. In King’s intimate desire for a non-violent colonial and imperial past, he renders this scene as idyllic, pastoral, and a symbol of a forgotten history. This alone is problematic in the symbolic weight placed on the lo‘i as embodying one lasting relic of Kanaka Maoli culture and economy. Even further, the lo‘i takes on a static representation of Indigenous culture which devalues the cultivation and sustenance of taro for the community.²¹ But, this is not exclusively an imagined desire for a purportedly Indigenous past. In fact, King’s reflection is framed through the impetus of selling the land and the changing of property ownership. With the suggestion that the land “will no longer be in our name,” King feels compelled to force his daughters, his descendants, to take note of an ever-disappearing past through capitalist notions of private property ownership. Yet,

²¹ Hōkūlani Aikau discusses the vitality of restoring lo‘i kalo, wetland taro) where she wanted “to join a project committed to making the ‘āina (land; that which feeds) momona (abundant) once again” (2). This material practice exemplifies the centrality of a reciprocal relationship to ‘āina that is not acknowledged in King’s lament.

this awareness only comes out of valorizing possessive ownership and sale under a capitalist economy that allows King to have the majority vote on the future of his family's land.

Through the emphasis on a familial ownership of land, King embodies exactly what the principles of the Board of Commissioners worked to promote in the 19th century. The foreign influence surrounding equal rights as the impetus for land policies becomes clearer where the guise of freedom insidiously works to undermine and overthrow Kanaka Maoli genealogical and cultural relationships to 'āina. As a result, King's perspective on land is exclusively through capitalist and colonial land ownership and based on the desire to reclaim a pastoral version of the past scrubbed clean of any violent dispossession and colonial legacies. King's relationship to land embodies and refracts the language of both the principles of the Land Commission as well as the liberal rationale of providing land opportunities to the maka'āinana. What is remarkable about the Board of Commissioners' subtle rhetoric is how Hawai'i, as a non-colonized place in the mid-nineteenth century, testifies to both colonial tactics used elsewhere and as already being framed as exceptional; in other words, the liberal promises of freedom bestowed to the maka'āinana are couched in the demise and dispossession of Indigenous 'āina and ways of being. As such, Silva suggests that the simplified version of the Board's work revolved around "conceiv[ing] a plan in which the konohiki (consisting of all ali'i under the mō'ī) would pay commutation fees to extinguish the mō'ī's interest in their lands, and eventually receive a fee-simple title" (41)²². This structure would open up the process from general Kanaka Maoli land investment to breaking up the konohiki and ali'i's stewardship of land, requiring the mō'ī to relinquish control over these areas. Importantly, this provides the practical steps towards the Mahele and land division and all under the premise of allowing access of lands for purchase for

²² Noenoe Silva does not capitalize "mō'ī" whereas Jonathan Osorio and Lilikalā Kame'eleihiwa do. According to Mary Kawena Pukui's comprehensive Hawaiian dictionary, "mō'ī" is not capitalized (251).

the previously oppressed commoners. The principles continue to echo the rhetoric of liberalism in how the adoption of these ideas are considered beneficial for the commoners and as a direct result of foreign influence. Citing the values gleaned from foreigners, the “Principles Adopted by Land Commission 1846-47” declares, “The Hawaiian rulers have learned by experience, that regard must be had to the immutable law of property, in things real, as lands, and in things personal, as chattels; that the well-being of their country must essentially depend upon the proper development of their internal resources...they perceive by contact with foreign nations” (6; qtd. in Van Dyke 389-390). Establishing the value of “the immutable law of property” asserts the assumption that Kanaka Maoli have suddenly come to a realization about the necessity and value of western capitalist notions of ownership over land. This statement declares that the kingdom desires to develop and reap economic profit from ‘āina.

By immediately invoking the foundation of capitalist concepts of ownership and its basis in individuality, the Land Commission reveals its own western influences, even as the Hawaiian government was struggling with and against these concepts. In Marx’s “On the Jewish Question,” he delineates how the relationship of individual rights to liberty can be seen through the right to property. Even in this correlation, Marx identifies the intrinsic nature of liberty and freedom to private property and it is this rhetoric that organizes the Land Commission’s Principles. Marx explains, “The right of man to property is, therefore, the right to enjoy one’s property and to dispose of it at one’s discretion, without regard to other men, independently of society, the right of self-interest. This individual liberty and its application form the basis of civil society. It makes every man seen in other men not the realization of his own freedom, but the *barrier* to it” (“Jewish” 12). In correlating the right to liberty to as the right to property, Marx demonstrates the centrality of western democracy and how this condition is based on the equal

notions of freedom and ability to “enjoy” and “dispose” of property. Explaining this relationality between men as foreclosed through property and liberty highlights how capitalism and liberalism hinge on valuing the individual over the collective. Jodie Melamed’s analysis of Marx further conveys how “The state/property bind organizes capitalist democracy so that political equality ensures conditions of actual inequality by insulating public private material life and grounding the legitimacy of the state in its guarantee of capitalist property relations” (245).²³ As such, this reveals how the “barrier” between men that Marx asserts is the condition of existence, where private property is as central as individual freedom. These ideas are immediately visible through the Land Commission’s principles where the language of capitalist private property intersects with liberal democratic ideals. These principles state that the Hawaiian government is “desirous to conform themselves in the main to such a civilized state of things, now that they have come to be a nation in the understanding of older and more enlightened governments” (qtd. in 6; Kuykendall 282). In explicit acknowledgment of normative western governance, the Land Commission deploys the rhetoric of “civilized” to not only distinguish the missionary and colonial perspectives on the assumed savageness of Kanaka Maoli, but also sutures this idea to western rational democracy. This explanation lays the groundwork for the implied necessity of the Mahele in order to maintain independence in the wake of the 1843 Resolution Act. In

²³ Melamed uses the idea of a “bind” in reference to how Alys Weinbaum articulates the race/reproduction bind. Weinbaum defines how “this conceptual unit, rather than either of its parts alone, organizes the modern episteme – the complex of discourses that characterize the modern historical epoch, expressing and subtending its conflicts around meaning production within the United States and within the larger transatlantic context that has been shaped by the race/reproduction bind that simultaneously characterizes it” (5). This ideological concept organizes for Weinbaum the mutually dependent relationship between race and reproduction, Melamed builds off this concept to consider the democracy and property bind “which asserts the inseparability of the political emancipation of citizens and the apotheosis of private property rights, and the individual/rights bind, which expresses that individuals and not collectives are the proper bearers of (constitutional and human) rights” (188). Even as Melamed is thinking through liberalism in the 20th century, the centrality of property and individual rights is productive in how to pull apart the western capitalist notions of property that infiltrate the discourses in Hawai‘i around land.

compliance with western capitalist ideology and to uphold democracy, the move towards land division embodies the appearance of liberal progress.

One might argue that these adopted principles were a strategic move on the Hawaiian Kingdom's part where the mō'ī could direct some of his attention to his people within the crush of foreign influence. Regardless of perceived coercion or accommodation though, the language employed in the Land Commission's principles speaks to the ways in which it is couched in western modes of individualism and property rights. John Chinen importantly points out how the Land Commission's job was to review existing claims of land when:

during the first few years after its creation, the Land Commission handled claims mainly for leasehold interests, with only a handful of natives filing claims for lands in fee simple. It was after the completion of *The Great Mahele* of 1848, followed by the passage of the Act of July 10, 1850, authorizing the sale of lands in fee simple to resident aliens, and the passage of the Act of August 6, 1850, authorizing the award of *kuleanas* to native tenants, that the Land Commission was able to truly distinguish itself. (12)

Thus, even though the principles heralded the necessary move towards private property as one dependent on a civilizing and democratizing objective, its material purpose lay in assessing what land claims could be legitimized prior to the full changes in land ownership. In other words, these principles merely established the precedent to move towards the subsequent legislative land changes and few Kanaka Maoli submitted land claims prior to the 1848 division. As such, the Land Commission authorized existing rights to land and did not have the power to distribute land to anyone new. Yet, Robert Stauffer suggests that the Land Commission's principles were influential since "The *Principles* of the commission were ostensibly designed to weaken the land-controlling *ali'i* for the benefit of the American-dominated government and perceived

benefit of the *maka‘ainana*. The early beneficiaries, however, were almost exclusively Haole. Few *maka‘ainana* and almost no *ali‘i* were participating in the process” (15). Similar to other historians of the Mahele, Stauffer notes which groups were targeted to lessen their power, notably the *ali‘i*, and those who seemed positioned to succeed, westerners. Still, the breakdown of land claims and determining responsibility for *ali‘i* versus *maka‘āinana* is inherently complex in the varying individual agendas of each actor. I acknowledge that while these systemic changes may be labeled as a revolution in Kame‘eleihiwa’s perspective, this was not a one-sided event.

I mark this distinction since the confluence of factors often narrate the Mahele through the binary of either complete theft of land from an Indigenous perspective or the colonial western interpretation that celebrates the privatization of land as a move towards capitalism and democracy. This position is particularly in line with Jonathan Osorio’s observation how the Mahele is often rendered in terms of the fault of colonialism or the *ali‘i*. Osorio states:

No one disagrees that the privatization of lands proved to be disastrous for Maka‘ainana, yet the focus of every study...has been to try and establish the principal responsibility for its failure. Because missionary advisors who designed the land division intended to destroy the independence between *konohiki* and Maka‘ainana in the first place, the Mahele was hardly a failure at all...only the eventual removal of Native Hawaiian tenant rights made the Mahele the economic disaster that it was for the *kanaka*. (45)²⁴

Importantly, Osorio intends to disavow the narrative of blame for the Mahele and supplants this with framing what constitutes failure through the change in tenant rights to ‘āina. Osorio also

²⁴ Robert Stauffer identifies the extent of change in land tenure with the 1850 Kuleana Act as opposed to the Mahele: ...the victory of the West’s land-tenure revolution occurred when the high *ali‘i* finally gave up the traditional system and their ‘feudal’ claims to the people’s labor in 1850 with the passage of the Kuleana Act. Thus, the *ali‘i* track of the Great Mahele did not end with the divisions among the high *ali‘i*, the monarch, and the government in early March 1848. Instead the 1850 Kuleana Act represented part of this track, a mahele or division between two classes, the *ahupua‘a* landlords and their former tenants, the *maka‘ainana*. (66)

highlights the inability of the Mahele to bring about a particular rupture between the land stewards and the commoners, thus resisting one of the intentions behind the progression towards a capitalist economic system. This chapter contends that critical attention to the narrations of the colonial archive surrounding the Mahele not only support an argument about the dominance of this past, but also critically inform a reading of *The Descendants* that employs ambivalence over this complicated revolution of Kanaka Maoli political, economic, and cultural systems.

What is essential about this particular period from the late 1830s to the 1850s is how the entire structure of government, economy, genealogy, and social relations were changed through foreign influence, aided by the dramatic population decline that continued throughout the century.²⁵ In other words, the Mahele and its rupture of Indigenous relationships to ‘āina was absolutely grounded in a series of political and social upheavals. Combining the centrality of private property with capitalism, the Land Commission principles enmesh these ideals with the discourse of civilized enlightenment as the hallmark of western liberal democracy. Following the establishment and ratification of the Land Commission’s principles, the specifics of the Mahele were outlined under the dual objectives of democratizing access to land for the maka‘āinana and allowing foreign ownership of land as a commodity. Purportedly opening up access to land beyond the mō‘ī and ali‘i, the division of land embodied the exact contradictions in changes to the political, economic, and cultural system. Historians have constructed interpretations of the objectives beyond the Mahele and how they intersected with foreign influence, but ultimately, this chapter recognizes the impossibility of any “universal” narrative and instead, engages with the possibilities available as all are subject to individual interpretations based on intended argument.

²⁵ The following chapter focuses on the Indigenous population decline through disease and the colonial management of Hansen’s disease known then as leprosy.

For example, Kame‘eleihiwa acknowledges these parameters in her attempt to recount this history and how the Mahele operated as a radical change in cultural structure by accounting for Kanaka Maoli agency. Kame‘eleihiwa emphasizes how “It was the *Mo‘i*, the King, in concert with the *Ali‘i Nui*, the High Chiefs, who decided to agree to the Western demands for private ownership of Land... the 1848 *Mahele* was a revolution. It affected all classes of Hawaiians, from the highest *Ali‘i* to the least important *maka‘ainana*, and it was meant to sever forever the traditional relationship between Hawaiians and their ‘*Aina*” (7, 10). Importantly, for Kame‘eleihiwa, these decisions around land division rested in the hands of the elite where the pressure for foreigners to gain access to land is highlighted. Marking the change from communal land tenure to private property as a “revolution” is especially significant in how this act contributed to the dramatic social changes for Kanaka Maoli. Emphasizing a dramatic break does dilute an analysis of the land division as decipherable only as complete dispossession through one crucial legislative decision amidst a decade overrun with radical changes to Kanaka Maoli ways of life. Still, I pick up this incisive historical interpretation as it applies more generally to the stark transitions required of entire systems of Indigenous knowing and living.

In specific terminology, the 1848 Mahele through its explanation in the Land Commission principles and later in the actual legislation of the Mahele revolved around dividing the land into three categories. This is explicitly shown through Indigenous historiographies that demonstrate not only the impetus for land division, but also how ‘*āina* was explicitly parceled out and how it affected the population. Directly highlighting the broad generalizations King makes about this land inheritance as pure luck and romance, Kanaka Maoli historians argue for the particularities involved in these land divisions. Kame‘eleihiwa notes how “The most important of these Land Commission proposals was that the ‘*Aina* should be divided into equal

thirds, one share each for the government, the *Ali'i* and the *maka'ainana*. Hence everyone who received a piece of *'Aina* was to pay one-third value of his or her *'Aina* to the government as a commutation fee, thereby satisfying the government's interest in the *'Aina*" (211). These three divisions meant that the mō'i divided his lands "into two parts: the larger section became government lands, and the smaller part remained private lands or Crown lands" (Parker 109). For the ali'i and konohiki, Parker clarifies, "Individually 245 chiefs or konohiki divided their lands with the king...To abrogate the government's share, the chiefs had to relinquish a portion of their lands to the government for commutation of the interest or one-third of the value of the unimproved lands" 109).²⁶ Here, the specifics of the Mahele's effect on the assumed landholders is made clearer. The intent behind these divisions was purportedly for the "prosperity of our Kingdom and the proper physical, mental and moral improvement of our people" (W. Alexander 113). Similarly, Kame'elehiwa explicates, "The publicly stated purpose of the *Mahele* was to create a body of landed commoners who would excel and prosper by means of their small farms. This was how, in Judd's and Richards' vision, Hawaii would ultimately achieve capitalist success. The *Mahele* then, with its transformation of the traditional land tenure system, was to allow Hawaiians of all classes to realize the capitalist promise of great wealth through proper use of *'aina*" (297). Importantly, both Alexander writing in the late 19th century and Kanaka Maoli historian Kame'elehiwa in the late 20th century emphasize what the public objective of the land division(s) was supposedly about: empowering the maka'āinana with access

²⁶ Osorio describes in greater detail how "Mo'i Kauikeaouli officially ended the chiefs' and king's portion of the Mahele by separating his own interests as a konohiki from the king's interest as the head of the kingdom, willingly giving up nearly one million acres to the government – close to half of the lands he claimed – and thus claiming fee-simple to the remainder. The chiefs were informed that by extinguishing the government's one-third interest in the lands they claimed with a commutation fee of one-third the value of their lands, they would be awarded fee-simple title to their awards..." (45). This explains how Kauikeaouli willingly ceded his land to government lands and kept only half as his own as king. Furthermore, by paying the commutation fee to the government, the ali'i would be then given property rights to their land under this new political system.

to the land and equal opportunity. This intent attempted to mask the other purpose: to allow foreigners access to land ownership for economic purposes and investment.

This specific parceling of ‘āina elucidates how King’s great-grandmother still possessed such a large amount of land in 1920 since the novel suggests she inherited it from a line of ali‘i nui involved in the land division. Without building out the specifics, Hemmings positions the King family as part of the miniscule percentage who profited from the Mahele. As Kame‘eleihiwa accounts on the signatures on the *Buke Mahele* in the first three months of 1848, the 252 people were divided into the following categories: 10 ali‘i nui, 24 kaukau ali‘i [lesser chiefs], and 218 konohiki. Of the 252 individuals, there were 229 Hawaiians, 18 hapa-hawaiians, 3 Tahitians, and 2 whites. The latter two categories of foreigners were treated as *konohiki*” (227). Importantly, the minimal number of ali‘i nui seem to suggest that King’s ancestors fell into this category as they received the most amount of ‘āina, but still could have been lesser chiefs to inherit a significant acreage. This definitively sheds light on King’s inheritance through Kame‘eleihiwa’s careful culling of the historical archive in determining the breakdown of land division among the elite classes. King’s own sense of family interest promotes his royal lineage, but still fails to recognize both the uniqueness of his inheritance and its inherent colonial violence. This is not to say that I am critiquing those few ali‘i nui who were allowed to keep some of their ‘āina entrusted to their care since every single one of them had to relinquish lands as a result of the Mahele. To divide Kanaka Maoli by class in terms of ‘āina, while noteworthy for certain arguments, loses the focus of ‘āina is the optic into this history of colonial violence where changing the system to private property undermined an entire way of life. Yes, while some ali‘i nui were allowed to “keep” some ‘āina, the overall erasure of this history persists and

is represented in *The Descendants* in a myriad of complex ways that reveal the limits of a historical reckoning with Indigenous land dispossession.

As a mixed-race, wealthy male, King's limited ability for self-critique of his own privilege exemplifies the impossibility of confronting the violence of colonialism and imperialism that produce his positionality. The contradictions in how King mocks privilege without an understanding of his own dispossessed and convoluted relationship to the past is revealed as he recounts:

My cousin's grandfather, a lover of water sports, was the founder of this club one hundred years ago. He leased the beach-front property from the estate of the queen for ten dollars a year. In the lobby, next to a picture of Duke Kahanamoku, a plaque reads, LET THIS BE A PLACE WHERE MAN MAY COMMUNE WITH THE SUN AND SAND AND SEA, WHERE GOOD FELLOWSHIP AND ALOHA PREVAIL, AND WHERE THE SPORTS OF OLD HAWAI'I SHALL ALWAYS HAVE A HOME. Today anyone can commune with sun and sand and sea at a starting price of fifteen thousand dollars, monthly dues, and an initiation process that tends to blackball those with unfavorable pedigrees. (Hemmings 63)

In listing out the history of the club founder, King proves he actually is aware of his own Indigenous past by emphasizing the importance of renowned Kanaka Maoli waterman, Duke Kahanamoku. However, this veneration of Duke Kahanamoku is overlaid with the affordability of leasing 'āina a century ago, which produces an uneasy tension between Indigenous land dispossession and a celebration of a cultural icon. Clearly, King recounts this history of his cousin's grandfather to point out the contradictions in a country club established on the premise of violent land appropriation while continuing to promote "aloha" and "old Hawai'i" comradeship.

In other words, the hypocritical explanation of the club and its commemorative plaque is precisely representative of Indigenous land dispossession and the limited valuation of Kanaka Maoli individuals and sports. This becomes more apparent through King's sardonic comment on how the club attempts to uphold the founder's legend by speaking to elite states of members that not only comes with a price tag, but also is premised on reputation. Here, King seems to be entirely conscious and critical of the violence in both capitalist appropriation of land and its continued profiting on purchasing elite beach access. However, this critique is premised on the recognition that King's family not only belongs, but is responsible for its founding and perpetuation of privilege. King's own version of history is explicitly conveyed with an awareness of its embedded critique and yet, he is unable to extend this analysis to the Princess Kekipi and his great-grandfather and their land inheritance. This example embodies the inherent contradiction and latent critiques in King's narration of self and history where the historical reckoning hits its limit of accountability.

King intermittently shifts between claiming his heritage as a part-Kanaka Maoli and part-haole wealthy individual and feeling guilt over his own privilege to foreground the centrality of 'āina. This ethical dilemma is not unwarranted in the sense that King exists as the only relative savvy enough to be the majority shareholder in his family's land sale. The question of the land-sale is indicative of how to view what responsibilities King has to his descendants and ancestors. King reflects on his position, "Maybe I feel a bit guilty, having so much control. Why me? Why does so much depend on me? And what did the people before me do in order for me to have so much. Maybe I subscribe to the idea that behind every great fortune is a great crime" (13). King's guilt results in his position as the majority voter, 1/8 of the trust in comparison to the others' 1/24, in his family's inheritance of what he sees as an undeserved legacy. Hemmings

alludes to the convoluted history of King's ancestors through a discussion of "fortune and crime" that implies a recognition of the "fortune" of the land trust with the "crime" of the elision of Kanaka Maoli relationships to that land. This opening statement posits and then rejects that the family's history of land ownership is precisely a crime of land dispossession with its own violent history; this continues to demonstrate how King erases the historical context for his land ownership. The rhetoric of "accidental" fortune should be highlighted as "criminal," but once King acknowledges the structure of land dispossession, he is unable to advance the critique. The best King can do is to articulate how misfortune has led to his privileged position.

King's eventual choice to keep the land and not sell for immediate profit and commercial development reflects a complicated conscious ethical move to perform a responsible, in a liberal sense of the continued violence of colonialism, act for Kanaka Maoli and 'āina. Or at least, in the rendering of his choice, he cites the history of land ownership as one simultaneously indebted to the legacy of his great-grandmother and of his own selfish objectives; neither of these motives acknowledge the material violence of colonialism through land dispossession. These seemingly contradictory rationales to keep the land embody the violence of empire built into King's current position of ownership King desires to honor the princess, but dismisses her own wishes that "she wanted the land to be used to fund a school for children of Hawaiian descent. This was her spoken wish that she failed to put into a contract" (Hemmings 229). Even as King is "thinking of the princess," his immediate reaction is to refuse to fulfill her desires to educate Kanaka Maoli (Hemmings 229). This rejection is also couched in the lack of a written will or contract that would have obligated King and his family to follow her requests that explicitly engage the futurity of Kanaka Maoli. Commenting on his great-grandmother's wishes, King states, "I have no interest in this wish, in a Hawaiian-only school. There are already a few of them, and they're

completely elitist, not to mention unconstitutional” (Hemmings 229). This judgement about existing Kanaka Maoli only schools is both an argument about class and a questionable critique about the legality of them. The “unconstitutional” label implies that King feels the schools are discriminatory against non-Indigenous children.

Even further, this critique reveals the violences of empire where the descendant of Kanaka Maoli ali‘i disavows the value of education for his own people in favor of a western democratic ideal of equality. Importantly, Hemmings is directly referring Kamehameha School as an example of this elitist and unconstitutional institution.²⁷ The suggestion of the discriminatory practices in Kanaka Maoli exclusive admissions ignores the educational violences enacted against the Indigenous population in the 20th century. Standard English was enforced and strictly implemented in school as a particular colonial tactic. While language will be discussed more fully in chapter 3, the simultaneous historical disavowal of Hawaiian as well as Hawai‘i Creole English derived from multi-racial labor populations on the plantations testify the uncomfortable use of “unconstitutional” that King employs.²⁸ Ultimately, despite attributing the refusal to sell the land to his great-grandmother, King has his own intentions for the land that are not aligned with education for Kanaka Maoli. As a result, King’s appreciation for the land derives from his own self-interest as a masculinist capitalist drive to succeed on his own terms instead of agreeing to any of the buyers advocating for resorts, tourist attractions, and overall investments.

²⁷ Kamehameha Schools is a preparatory school whose admission is based off Indigenous ancestry as stated by the will of Bernice Pauahi Bishop whose intent was to educate Kanaka Maoli children and began in 1887. One might make the assumption that the legacy and will of Bernice Pauahi Bishop inspired how Hemmings depicts King’s great-grandmother’s own will to perpetuate the education of Kanaka Maoli.

²⁸ Dennis Kawaharada points out in *The Hawaii Herald* that Standard English was ruled mandatory in public school classrooms above and over both Hawaiian and Hawai‘i Creole English.

Instead, King's decision stems from an inherited colonial perspective that embodies the liberal masculine tropes of saving the past through an acknowledgment of a cultural and racial mixing of identities. King explains:

But now I find myself not wanting to give it up – the land, the lush relic of our tribe, the dead. The last Hawaiian-owned land will be lost, and I will have something to do with it. Even though we don't look Hawaiian, even though our constant recombining has erased the evidence of our ethnicity, sharpening our flat faces, straightening our kinky hair, even though we act like haoles, going to private schools and clubs and not having a good command of pidgin English, my girls and I are Hawaiian and this land is ours. (229-230)

In the descriptions of the land, King highlights the symbolic components where 'āina is a the "lush relic of our tribe" which praises its innate value as a symbol of Indigenous history. But, this is problematic because King describes 'āina as a static object of the past associated with death, and the ending of Indigenous sovereignty. In this representation, 'āina has lost its Indigenous valuation as the source of creation and its genealogical relationship to Kanaka Maoli that held pono for a way of life. Instead, King's own rendering of 'āina eerily evokes a colonialist sentimental position where the land exists as a tribute to an always already lost past and by simply staking a claim to hold onto the land, King shores up his role as savior. Even further, King makes the definitive claim to the land as "ours" in a way that mimics capitalist notions of private property. Instead of an Indigenous perspective that would recognize the collective and reciprocal relationship to 'āina, King invokes proprietary ownership as belonging to exclusively to his family through the possessive, "ours." King's coming in as the masculine "savior" of Hawaiian-owned land reads as strangely self-colonizing and repetitive of the violences of empire which he purportedly is resisting through keeping the land. In other words,

King's hero narrative is emblematic of a heteropatriarchal liberal mode of sustained colonial material violence premised on a restructuring of Indigenous ontological relations 'āina.

Even further, King continues to belabor his decision by analyzing his motivations to unsurprisingly conclude that his nuclear family's inheritance supersede any larger collective investment in Kanaka Maoli education. In response to his cousin's inquiry about the actual reason he is choosing not to sell the land, King mediates on his choice of what he could say:

The princess, I think. My ancestors, but no, that's not it entirely. That's what I want the reason to be, but there are other, less dignified ones: Revenge. Selfishness. A desire to see my daughters have the land. Let them make decisions about it. A desire to hold on, pass down, clutch something that was given to me. I don't want Brian [the man his wife had an affair with] to have a part of it. I don't want his sons to have it. I don't want their history to mix with mine. Kekipi rebelled, and so will I. (230)

Here, King continues to demonstrate the tensions between a desire to live up to his ancestors and his perceived responsibility to 'āina as a Kanaka Maoli and his own individual interests. He confesses that the reason lies in wanting his daughters to own and inherit the land; The repetitiveness of "hold on" and "have" the land indicates a particular western notion of property relations with some form of primogeniture. King claims the land as his own since it was "given to me" as a familial inheritance and as such, he feels the responsibility to pass it down to his own descendants. Citing that he selfishly does not wish the object of wife's affair nor his sons to have control, he explains he does not "want their history to mix with mine." Thus, King makes a claim for his legitimate ownership of the land which can only be legible through the history of the Mahele and western capitalist ideals of property and inheritance. But King renders this noble act as preserving his Kanaka Maoli cultural ties to 'āina and for the benefit of his Kanaka Maoli

ancestors. In correlating King's strategic move to keep the land for his own blood-related descendants, he categorizes this choice as an act of rebellion that mirrors his great-grandmother's marriage to a haole man. This wildly misguided analogy misreads Kekipi's rebellion as individual choice to pursue romance as opposed to a strategic calculation in the face of complete land dispossession.

Further inculcating King's choice with colonial issues of blood quantum as the sole marker of Indigeneity and the complexity around intermarriage and land inheritance, this decision is ultimately heralded as a grand act of saving the 'āina for Kanaka Maoli. However, the difficulties with liberal capitalist ideologies is the way that this "saving of the land" positions King as successful and attentive to Indigenous values. Instead, this revelation of keeping the land for his own children notably in contrast to Brian Speer's is explicitly grounded in western notions of property. Land as described by King is still a static object to be owned and exploited for his particular family even as it is couched as a responsibility to the history. In thinking through how King comes to this conclusion, Glen Coulthard and Leanne Simpson's essay "Grounded Normativity/Place-Based Solidarity," helps to demonstrate how the novel fails to imagine what an Indigenous ethical framework might look like even in literary texts. Coulthard and Simpson suggest how "grounded normativity" operates through "Indigenous place-based practices and associated forms of knowledge" where "our relationship to land itself generates the processes, practices, and knowledges that inform our political systems" (254). In this theoretical conception, Indigeneity operates through land and place based practices and informs all subsequent interactions and ideas. What *The Descendants* captures so subtly is the attempt to reclaim what could be called Coulthard and Simpson's grounded normativity, but actually ends up repeating a capitalist liberal script of 'āina as property and familial lineage even as the attempt

to reimagine Indigenous relationships to land. King states, “This is our responsibility... We’re Hawaiian – it’s a miracle we own this much of Hawaii. Why let some haole [Brian Speer] swoop it up? We’ve been careless” (Hemmings 230). This valorizes the rhetoric of ownership as more significant and demanding protection over confronting the history of the Mahele, the violences of land dispossession, and reflecting on his ancestor’s limited choices.

The glossing over Indigenous land privatization and alteration of fundamental cosmology is exemplified through King’s use of the “miracle” of land ownership. Similar to his previous delusions around the luck and accidental fortunes of his family, King credits a mysterious force for his privilege. This “miracle” attempts to absolve King from any culpability and operates as a strategy to occlude the colonial history that informs the novel. This also unbelievable event seems to divest land ownership and dispossession entirely from the material history and contexts of the current state of Kanaka Maoli sovereignty under continued U.S. colonial occupation. The other option of the “miracle” lends itself to the lack of agency of any actors regarding how the land has not only stayed in the family but as King recounts earlier in the novel how “the past unfurls millions into our laps” (Hemmings 29). Opting out of any responsibility towards the history of Indigenous land dispossession and ownership, King abdicates the material conditions that has allowed for his family to inherit and profit from this past. In choosing to keep the ‘āina for his descendants, King conceptualizes land as an object of capitalist property and justifies his actions as honoring of his Kanaka Maoli heritage. In this configuration, Hemmings manages to effectively demonstrate the impossibility of imagining a grounded normativity that is premised on Indigenous place-based relationships and knowledge through literary narrative. King remains caught in the liberalist rhetoric of assumed responsibility for the land that can only conceive of it

as static and an object from an erased Indigenous history where he becomes the purveyor of dispossessed 'āina.

In building out the historical context of the Mahele of 1848 and its surrounding relevant legislation and events that coincided to bring about the monumental shift from communal land tenure to a capitalist system of private property, this chapter has demonstrated the complexity of this history of land dispossession that led to a complete revolution in Kanaka Maoli politics, economy, and social relations. I relied on excavating how the political upheaval around the Mahele narrates a larger history of western influence on the mō'ī and legislative body. Understanding how the Mahele occurred, its ramifications, and the subsequent Kuleana Act of 1850 contribute to building out an Indigenous history of cultural dispossession and highlights the magnitude of a rapidly changing way of life for Kanaka Maoli. Ultimately, the historical critique of this chapter involves refuting the dilution of the Mahele as a unique and isolated act where the divisions between ali'i and konohiki are pitted as class hierarchies against maka'āinana; at the same time, the pervasive use of liberal rhetoric of universal access to land ownership underscores the strategies and belief of westerners to enact this new capitalist system on Kanaka Maoli. In assessing the conflicting turns of *The Descendants*, I argue how the overlap of pointed critiques of the legacy of U.S. imperialism and racial formation are constantly overlaid with the juxtaposition of ambivalence over Kanaka Maoli land dispossession and the uncomfortable position of privilege afforded King. The tensions throughout the novel between overt critique and nuanced reflections on the past ultimately unravel the potential for the novel to imagine out of liberal celebrations of difference. King's moments of introspection, while at times incisive on Hawai'i's complicated historical, political, and social position, are predominately narrated through tenants of individualism, liberalism, masculinity, and an irrevocably lost Indigenous past

that is reminiscent of the colonial and imperial legacies in the Islands. In other words, King is motivated by his self-interests and yet, still makes what is seen as the liberal ethical choice around 'āina in the hopes to atone for the atrocities of the past: a perfectly liberal multicultural solution to a situation that perpetuates the erasure of colonization and demands decolonization and inventive narratives.

This chapter functions as the initial flashpoint of U.S. empire in my project's genealogy of pairing critical historical moments with post-2000 novels. My chapters are organized chronologically by historical events and are broadly linked through sites that make visible the ways U.S. empire functions through the management of Indigeneity and Asian migration. I begin with the Mahele because of its emphatic rupture of Kanaka Maoli ontological relationships to 'āina through the privatization of land. 'Āina operates as persistent center of gravity throughout my project as each chapter returns or reorients how 'āina is valued, positioned, and altered through Indigeneity, migrant labor, and nation-state occupation. I establish with this first chapter an example of my method of suturing the historical imaginary through the colonial archive with its attempted contemporary literary representation in novels. In examining how U.S. imperial and colonial epistemologies enforce the aesthetic production, I argue how this mirroring of historical and literary imaginaries testifies to the dominance of a colonial present.

Chapter 2:
Imagining the Leper: The Colonial Archive's Regulation of Fiction

Given that my last chapter established the relationality between the history of land dispossession through the 1848 Mahele and its literary representation in *The Descendants*, this chapter extends my dissertation's focus on the ways U.S. empire organizes both the colonial historical archive and contemporary literary narrative. In developing how Hawai'i functions as an optic into the concurrent racial formation of Kanaka Maoli and Asian migrants, I now identify more concretely how interpretative frames shape historical archives in addition to regulating literature. My second chapter moves to the mid 19th century and focuses on the management of disease as a colonial strategy that displaces Kanaka Maoli and exemplifies both the limitations of the historical archive and the literary imaginary. This chapter obliquely is invested in 'āina and kinship given that mandatory segregation of those accused of being diseased displaced and restructured primarily Indigenous families and communities. In examining the incomplete and fragmented colonial archive of the Board of Health, this chapter theorizes the simultaneous emergence of the historical and literary imaginary. As such, I establish the overlapping modes knowledge production in how U.S. empire organizes both historical and literary imaginaries. This develops my project's critique of the mode of "local" literary narratives to rupture the dominance of U.S. colonial and imperial epistemologies.

In 1865, Lot Kapuāiwa (Kamehameha V) passed the Act to Prevent the Spread of Leprosy in Hawai'i which established the forcible removal of individuals suspected of having leprosy to the Makanalua peninsula on the island of Moloka'i- the settlement was first in Kalawao and then moved to Kalaupapa.²⁹ This legislation gave power to the recently organized

²⁹ Leprosy is also known as Hansen's Disease but in the nineteenth century was also referred to in Hawai'i as "ma'i pake," "ma'i ali'i," "ma'i lepera" (Inglis XIII). I use the English term "leprosy" throughout this chapter as that is how it was termed in English. The term "leper" is a difficult term as it is often immediately associated with

western-dominated Board of Health to adjudicate the quarantine of those afflicted with leprosy. In short, thousands suffered from leprosy both those segregated to Moloka‘i and those who were not. Between 1866 and 1915, approximately 9,696 people were diagnosed with leprosy with over 90% being Kanaka Maoli (Mouritz 165; Inglis 35). Mandatory segregation policy displaced individuals who had to leave their homes, families, and ‘āina. As such, the history of leprosy segregation operates as a productive optic into how Kanaka Maoli were subjected to and resisted these colonial strategies through demanding recognition of alternative kinship structures through the implementation of *mea kōkua*, voluntary helpers to patients, to the settlement on Moloka‘i. This chapter pairs the historical archive of the Board of Health with Alan Brennert’s 2003 novel, *Moloka‘i*, which retells these events. I argue that Brennert’s novel uncomfortably represents the desire for an authentic historical narrative attentive to Kanaka Maoli experiences of segregation, but repeatedly fails in how the very narrative structure is regulated by this colonial past. I identify both the figure of the “leper” and *mea kōkua*, as marking the limits of colonial-mandated isolation. Historically, this means *mea kōkua* existed as the critical limit of the Board of Health’s capacity to regulate leprosy where the archive includes records of these helpers despite the policy for absolute segregation. In terms of the novel, Brennert’s portrayal of Kanaka Maoli leper patients, *mea kōkua*, and family members is sentimental, pitiable, and subject to colonial bureaucratic policies; they accept their fates as banished or being separated from loved ones without resistance. Consequently, this chapter is invested in the critical recognition of the necessity of historical interpretive work in the incomplete archives of leprosy segregation in

historical stigma. As a result, I am in line with Ron Amundson and Akira Ruddle-Miyamoto in my use of the term as only in direct quotation from sources. Amundson and Ruddle-Miyamoto emphasize how not only does the term “leper” have derogatory connotations, but can be correlated with racial epithets and they state, “We strongly condemn the academic argument that the term ‘leper’ is useful in conveying social context” (“Wholesome” 2). As such, I do refer to “leper patients” or some formulation that does not only identify individuals in the derogatory terminology of “leper.”

Hawai‘i. As such, the sheer force of the colonial archive enacts the regulative foreclosure of literary imagination in *Moloka‘i*. This raises the following questions: How do the limits of the historical archive of leprosy impose themselves on the literary narrative? How does one fictively imagine when the parameters of the literary are bounded by a fragmented, and subject to interpretation, historical archive? How might this relationship between literature and the historical archive allow for an emergent philosophy of history as one constantly subjected to interpretation?

Similar to my first chapter, I position the relationship between the historical and literary imaginary as inherently connected through the necessity of interpretation. As a result, this chapter examines how the disciplinary modes of history and literature reveal the regimes of power at work in engaging the past. In line with Lisa Lowe’s recent work in *The Intimacies of the Four Continents*, I build off how she theorizes that “history and historical knowledge often fix and determine the relationship of the past to the present, and the structure and meaning it attributes to the past also determines what may be imagined as possible, now and in the future” (138). This articulation of history as producing the parameters for “what may be imagined” is crucial in how to reconcile the determinative power of the past. Lowe posits how historical knowledge produces, rather than merely describes, the conditions of possibility for fictive narratives. In this sense, Lowe poses a critique of history that echoes Walter Benjamin’s “Theses on the Philosophy of History” where he questions the universality of historicism. Benjamin suggests, “materialistic historiography, on the other hand, is based on a constructive principle” and how the historian “establishes a conception of the present as the ‘time of now’” (263). Undoing conceptions of an existing universal history is fundamental to this chapter’s argument about the construction of historiography as it pertains to leprosy in Hawai‘i. Lowe contextualizes

Benjamin's work in how she "thus turn[s] to consider philosophies of history, in order to consider the predicament for 'decolonizing' historical narratives and the task of comprehending not simply the past and present, but the complicated demands of providing for the history" (*Intimacies* 139). Lowe emphasizes the problematic juncture of history and narrative where the colonial archives demand interpretation that cannot be readily untangled from its colonial production. This means epistemological knowledge produced through history not only ascribes a set of meanings to the past, but also sets up the limitations of achieving a universal history. In order to build out how this operates in the Board of Health archives of leprosy segregation with Brennert's novel, I start with key legislation regarding leprosy as well as pointing out the incomplete condition of the archive that ultimately requires interpretative framing.

Beginning with the fragmented Board of Health archive in the second half of the 19th century is necessary in order to layout the impossibility of an objective or universal history of leprosy in Hawai'i. Historically, this chapter starts with the Leprosy Act of 1865 that mandates the segregation of individuals with leprosy and goes through the 1890 amended legislative rulings to regulate *mea kōkua*, while also including reports and correspondences into the early 20th century that partially document these experiences. These two critical legislative acts exemplify the incoherence over *mea kōkua* who voluntarily accompanied family members to Moloka'i to support and take care of them; the western-dominated Board of Health enforced isolation policies, but did not anticipate the emergence of these helpers.³⁰ The presence and

³⁰ Inglis emphasizes how "a Board of Health was organized by Kauikeaouli [Kamehameha III] in 1850 and charged with the prevention and cure of epidemic disease. Although leprosy had been present in the islands from the beginnings of his reign [1825], no mention of the disease appears in official records prior to his death in 1854" (33). Despite the formation of the Board of Health in 1850, it is only until April 1863 when Dr. William Hillebrand "brought attention to the number of cases of leprosy presenting themselves to his clinic at Queen's" (Inglis 49). Amongst the perceived lack in attention to leprosy, the Board of Health's first president was Dr. Ferdinand Hutchinson along with Dr. William Hillebrand, Godfrey Rhodes, T.C. Heuck, and William P. Kamakau (Moblo, *Defmation* 105). This demonstrates the initial dominance of western influence within the very composition of the board.

visibility of *mea kōkua* confound western perceptions of disease and stigma as well as kinship structures. This is evidenced through their fragmented presence in the Board of Health archives.

Instead of analyzing western writers who visited Hawai‘i and the leprosy settlement on Moloka‘i like Robert Louis Stevenson, Mark Twain, and Jack London, this chapter treats recent fiction by Alan Brennert with a reading of the colonial archive. Analyzing a 2003 novel in relationship to the historical archive reveals the continued foreclosures of aesthetic imagination. In other words, the novel demarcates the production of epistemological knowledge as determined through history, where literary production is not separate. Often in western historical and cultural lore, the common narrative features Father Damien, who emerges from the tragically rendered tale of leprosy in the Islands as savior, Catholic and Caucasian, amidst the diseased Kanaka Maoli. This Father Damien myth becomes the exemplary narrative around leprosy in Hawai‘i through its exclusive celebration of sacrifice. As such, Brennert approaches his historical narrative through a focus on Kanaka Maoli characters and attempts to fictively produce a novel that incorporates multiple experiences of leprosy. In thinking through the relationship between history and literature, it is necessary to consider how contemporary historians like Kerri Inglis work to provide other narratives of the colonial archive that read as resistance, accommodation, and recounting a more multi-faceted history. One crucial example comes through attempting to undo some of the mythologizing of Father Damien myth where Inglis points out, “This singular focus has often overshadowed and obscured the experience of thousands of *Kanaka Maoli*. Instead, Father Damien...could be viewed as a *mea kōkua* (helper) to those who suffered from leprosy – one of many who went to the Kalawao and Kalaupapa leprosy settlements to assist those in need. Indeed, the stories of the *mea kōkua* also need to be told” (5). Inglis emphasizes the necessity of the perspective of Kanaka Maoli who experienced the violence of segregation

and being identified as a “leper.” Inglis’ emphasis on the telling of mea kōkua stories as well as the detrimental effects of the mythologizing of Father Damien’s experience indicates the very absence of Kanaka Maoli in the narrative histories.

Furthermore, Inglis points out that the dominance of the myth of Father Damien is problematic in his position as savior and sacrificial saint. But, she also extends this exalted role by identifying him as mea kōkua to the patients. This raises the question of how labeling Father Damien as a mea kōkua generalizes the particular Kanaka Maoli cultural role for voluntary family members as caretakers. Inglis suggests that mea kōkua could also be extended to the kama‘āina already residing on Moloka‘i, which is strictly an interpretive move on her part as a historian. While I am not necessarily disagreeing with this potential classification, this example highlights the function of the historian as an interpreter of the archive. This also raises the question of how racial and cultural affiliations of mea kōkua can be collapsed into a general helper in a similar process of how the term “leper” erases other racial and cultural markers. Inglis’ narration of Father Damien reveals her application of an Indigenous term to a westerner, which demonstrates how the role of a historian is not to simply piece together a particular history. Thus, historians can suggest the parallels between a Kanaka Maoli role and a Catholic priest as a mode of historical interpretation. Overall, the history of the mea kōkua has been repeatedly included in leprosy histories and collections, but only through limited references. I position how mea kōkua illuminate an inconsistent narrative of isolation, segregation, and civil death throughout the colonial archive. Likewise, Brennert’s historical epic does not focus on mea kōkua, but only through minor characters and as part of the segregation apparatus while also continuing to mythologize the western taboo of the stigma of leprosy.

The suturing of the administrative archive with the fiction demonstrates the intimate relationship of how the historical not only informs, but also regulates the literary narrative. In this sense, one might argue that Brennert at least attempts to include the *mea kōkua* in a fictional account. Yet, what I read is how the novel's repeated attempts to "offer something different" or beyond the scope of the colonial archive and liberal cultural production, repeatedly fails. This failure derives from the foreclosure of the literary imagination through the colonial archive that dictates the potential for representation of patients, segregation tactics, and *mea kōkua*. While Brennert utilizes a vast range of characters that represent all facets of the segregationist apparatus including *mea kōkua*, his fictive rendering still fails to provide a salient optic into the uncontrollable elements the Board of Health and the policing of leprosy encountered. Even as the existence of *mea kōkua* along represents the undoing of total isolation legislation and confounds the westernized approaches to disease, Brennert's novel is unable to imagine subjects that create a history beyond what the archive demonstrates. This means that *mea kōkua* as historical figures and caretakers of patients exist as a critical limit of the Board of Health's capacity to regulate leprosy. This exists as the first prong of the chapter's argument, which takes up the colonial archive to reckon with the contradictory and mark of segregation failure; this is a way to read the archive. The second prong of the argument then establishes how Brennert's historical novel attempts to provide a multi-faceted fictive version of leprosy segregation and exile that includes the unstable and potentially resistant figure of the *mea kōkua*, where Brennert's literary representation cannot escape the conditions of the historical archive.

Distributing Social Death

This chapter ruminates on two main components of how leprosy provides a prescient optic into the critical modalities of making racial subjects and quantifying bodies as socially

viable and socially dead through the colonial archive. The practices of isolation and segregation on the part of the government, a combination of Kanaka Maoli monarchy and U.S. colonial advisors, demonstrate the attempts to make and define what counts as racialized labels that are eligible for life or death and thus attempt to structure the Islands' population in racial hierarchies. Orlando Patterson in *Slavery and Social Death: A Comparative Study* analyzes the concept of "social death" as a mode of relationships of power over the enslaved body. Patterson develops the idea of natal alienation where "this alienation of the slave from all formal, legally enforceable ties of 'blood,' and from any attachment to groups or localities other than those chosen for him by the master" as way to describe "the slave's social death, [as] the outward conception of his natal alienation" (8). This explains how severing any forms of biological, racial, and social bonds allows for this type of death which Patterson then defines, "*slavery is the permanent, violent domination of natively alienated and generally dishonored persons*" (13). In using this concept of producing socially-dead subjects through the power embodied in natal alienation, I argue how it can be applied to the forced segregation of those afflicted with leprosy. Clearly the modalities of power involved in the master-slave dialectic are different from the isolation of leprosy patients Moloka'i as instituted by governmental legislation and enforcement. However, the application of social death to the banishment of lepers helps distinguish the severity of segregation as a sentencing. One of the differences lies in how segregation legislation attempted to alienate "the slave from all formal, legally enforceable ties of 'blood,' and from any attachment to groups or localities other than those chosen for him by the master" (Patterson 8). Leprosy segregation does formally threaten a civil death through incarceration and banishment from one's community. Furthermore, individuals were isolated by others accused of being diseased as managed and enforced by the government (read "the master"). However, the very existence of mea kōkua

explicitly subverts this key component. In other words, the allowance of family members to accompany their sick loved ones is in explicit violation of not only segregation policy, but also in the undoing of social bonds. Yet, the inconsistencies and fragmented policies surrounding *mea kōkua* operates as an optic into the fraught political period surrounding the management of disease and Kanaka Maoli within the frame of U.S. interests in Hawai‘i.

The historical period from 1865 to the early 20th century is especially pertinent in assessing how legislative, scientific, and cultural strategies are employed through the influence of U.S. imperialism as leprosy segregation begins prior to the overthrow of the Hawaiian Kingdom and through statehood. One way to frame the isolation policy of leprosy is to consider the sentencing of social death as a tactic to rupture Indigenous community and kinship. This is not to say that individuals were simply “healthy” or “diseased,” and neither of these labels erase racial identifiers, but that the classification of leprosy allows for the negotiation and the rewriting of a racial landscape previously organized by “native” and “foreigner.” An extension of this previous categorization opens up the excavation of not only the problematics with attempting to institute a western and biomedical form of calculating citizenship through health, but also reveals how the policing and organizing and policing of bodies repeatedly fails. By failing, I mean that each segregation or isolationist or strategy to incur social death, is met with not only resistance, but also from the impossibility of imposing complete control of invented differences. These repeated failures in the strategies of racialized social control particularly come through in the legislative and cultural handling of the role of the *mea kōkua*. The lengths the Board of Health, prior to the overthrow of the Hawaiian Kingdom in 1893, went to regiment, control, and legislate *mea kōkua* is indicative of not only a collision of Kanaka Maoli and western ideas of disease and community, but also contingent on American economic and political interests in Hawai‘i.

Historical Interpretations and the Colonial Archive

What emerges in a combined introspection of the incompleteness of total segregation of leprosy patients on Moloka‘i is a recognition of how the influence of western ideas of disease and contamination through the Board of Health and later in the territorial government of Hawai‘i infiltrated the management and legislating of the primarily Kanaka Maoli patients. This history of segregation also testifies to the fragmented Board of Health archive in terms of how leprosy patients enter the record and through what classification as well as how mea kōkua were quantified and qualified. In other words, investigating how mea kōkua were defined, controlled, and rejected from Moloka‘i reveals the negotiating of racial categories and the literal making and defining of Indigeneity through civil death (disease). This historical archive, thanks to recent leprosy scholars like Pennie Moblo and Kerri Inglis in conjunction with Kanaka Maoli work by Noenoe Silva and J. Kēhaulani Kaunau, has provided invaluable contributions in reckoning not only with the mythological interpretation of Father Damien’s savior narrative at Kalaupapa, but also the pervasive Americanized perspective on colonial disease. These scholars approach leprosy from the perspectives of anthropology, public health, history, and political science to assess the narratives within the colonial archive as well as producing their own constructed interpretations. This is a crucial part of this chapter’s contention in terms of the epistemological work of the archive and of narrative history. Moblo and Inglis in particular dedicate their copious amounts of research to develop arguments that piece together interpretations of Kanaka Maoli accommodation and resistance in leper patients. In keeping in mind what Ann Stoler argues in *Haunted by Empire*, there is a need to connect the framework of empire to the formation the nation-state. Stoler states the necessity “to acknowledge colonial state projects without writing histories shaped only by state-bound archival production, state legal preoccupations, and realized

state projects” (14). The difficulty with recognizing the colonial archive of leprosy stems from the contradictory ways in which the U.S.’s colonization of Hawai‘i is depicted. This makes the interpretation of the colonial archive more complicated for historians who must search for the records of Kanaka Maoli and then produce an interpretation based on limited documents.

Subaltern Studies and in particular, Gayatri Spivak’s reading of strategic essentialism in centralizing the figure of the subaltern is productive in recognizing how historians have interpreted the leprosy archive to produce narratives of resistance. Again, this chapter is not critiquing the work of leprosy scholars or the discipline of history, but is arguing how the limitations of the colonial archive and the historical objective to narrate Kanaka Maoli experiences also manifests in the foreclosures of the literary imaginary. Spivak’s “Deconstructing Historiography” explains how “the sophisticated vocabulary of much contemporary historiography *successfully* shields this cognitive *failure* and that this success-in-failure, this sanctioned ignorance, is inseparable from colonial domination” (199). This points out how the narratives of history often operate in ways that continue to function within colonial frames of power. Spivak targets nationalist historiography as defining the parameters within colonial archives. Leprosy historians do not fall into this critique though as they are advocating for Indigenous perspectives and are in line with Subaltern Studies in seeking to unearth the voices erased in the colonial archive. Spivak invokes how strategic essentialism operates as an attempt “to retrieve the subaltern consciousness as the attempt to undo a historiographic metalepsis and ‘situate’ the effect of the subject as subaltern. I would read it, then, as a *strategic* use of positive essentialism in a scrupulously visible political interest” (“Deconstructing” 205). Through supporting an intentional use of positive essentialism, Spivak identifies how locating subaltern consciousness for political interest can be effective. Spivak elaborates on how positive

essentialism might operate for Subaltern Studies by “their very insistence upon the subaltern as the subject to history that the group acts out such translating back, an interventionist strategy that is only partially unwitting” (“Deconstructing” 205). Here, Spivak clarifies how placing the subaltern as the subject (instead of object, obsolete, or background) of history is an essentialist move that also operates as a crucial intervention.

Spivak demonstrates how the role of the historians recalling the subaltern into a colonial archive is never complete and to read this process as a strategy distances how recuperating subalternity could be misconstrued as always in support of elite historiography. Even more salient for this project though is Spivak’s insistence that Subaltern Studies can “never be proper to ‘subaltern consciousness;’ that it can never be continuous with the subaltern’s situational and uneven entry into political... hegemony as content of an after-the-fact description. This is the always asymmetrical relationship between the interpretation and transformation of the world...” (“Deconstructing” 208). What this conveys is how the relationship of Subaltern Studies’ recovery of subaltern consciousness is always belated and can never be concurrent with the history, despite the intent to bring the figure of the subaltern into dominant (colonial) historiography. As a result, the reliance on strategic essentialism contextualizes the work of the historian in interpreting the colonial archive to make visible the subaltern. Furthermore, Spivak marks how the historian or theorist’s role of interpretation is grounded in producing narratives that centralize the subaltern and thus, reach their limits in the colonial archive.

The work of historians and anthropologists provides critical insights into the machinations of governance, political and economic investments of Americans in Hawai‘i, and in excavating the testimonials from leper patients and providing voices to those who experienced the violences of segregation. In their work, they could be seen as relying on strategic

essentialism to make visible Kanaka Maoli leper patients' experiences separate and distinct from the colonial archive. In Inglis' opening, she explicitly states this "is a story about disease, but more important it is a story about the people who contracted that disease – their connectedness to one another, to their families, to their islands, and to their nation – and how leprosy came to affect those connections and daily lives" (1). This opening declares the narrative at work in Inglis' history of leprosy and how to "recover Hawaiian voices" (back cover). In other words, Inglis sets out to recuperate and bring to light Kanaka Maoli perspectives as she develops a story of resistance to mandatory segregation that reveals the stakes of her work. Similarly, Anwei Law's *Kalaupapa: A Collective Memory* recreates leprosy history through oral histories, archival documents, and testimonies. Law's objective is "to bring those voices back into the history of Kalaupapa, the history of Hawaii and the history of the world... This book strives to enable people to define themselves and their experiences, in their own words" (xiii). Directly relying on oral history, Law's work reconstructs Kanaka Maoli experiences of leprosy segregation and offers what is arguably a more complete and reliable alternative account of the management of the disease and its effects on people. In this sense, Law offers individual interpretative histories in support of an overall retelling of leprosy history. Pennie Moblo's anthropological approach in her dissertation *Defamation by Disease* also parallels the desire to recover and present the history of the Kanaka Maoli leper population in contrast to the American dominant archive. Moblo states her goal is not simply to "discover a 'hidden' history of Hawaiians... [but also] to examine how the way history is written has made Damien a hero of mythic proportions" (vii). Moblo's work differs slightly in how she articulates the necessity of critiquing and recognizing how history as mode of power itself produces Father Damien as a hero.

Ultimately, I read these critical works on leprosy history as producing interpretations that suit the work's objective whether it is recovery of Indigenous history or to critique the process of myth making of Father Damien. In other words, these histories are not descriptive of the archive or what is invisible or fragmented in it, but these critics interpret the archive to create stories about leprosy. What is missing in these studies on Hawai'i and leprosy, and arguably what seems to be absent in the larger studies on leprosy, is recognition of the role of narrative in these interpretations. Furthermore, the work of contemporary fiction that engages these histories of colonization and disease is directly impacted by the epistemologies created through these alternative histories. It is this chapter's contention the historical work on leprosy in Hawai'i premised on interpretation that utilizes a form of strategic essentialism by centering and validating Kanaka Maoli experiences. Thus, this chapter argues for how present-day historical narratives of disease segregation are regulated through these historical accounts and limit the literary imaginary of leprosy experiences.

Disease as a Method of Colonial Control

Tracking how disease is defined, controlled, and employed as a justification for segregation is by no means groundbreaking in colonized spaces and has been demonstrated in post-colonial and subaltern studies where disease works as an optic into governmental regimes of power. The U.S.'s imperial conquests of the Philippines and Hawai'i echo British Empire in India for instance and the tactics of disease control reflect concerns with population and hygiene abroad and on the continent in urban enclaves. What the structure of disease in Hawai'i offers is a way into reckoning with how bodies were historically organized and racialized under evaluative methods during a politically contentious time between Hawaiian sovereignty and the American overthrow of the monarchy. Leprosy segregation occurs as straddling this particularly

fraught period and therefore sheds light on U.S. imperial interests and racializing tactics prior to annexing Hawai‘i as a territory. In comparison to U.S. imperial interests abroad, a federal (read: national) leprosarium was established in Louisiana in 1921 and offers insight into the national containment of the disease. Comparing the differing isolationist policies is productive in how Hawai‘i approached segregation of those diseased as racialized and required full exile to a colony. In contrast, Louisiana’s sanatorium represented isolation, but still existed within relevant distance to community and social bonds despite the stigma of disease. While the comparative analysis between these two locations has been astutely analyzed in Michelle Moran’s *Colonizing Leprosy*, the U.S.’s shifting development of leprosariums as tied to imperial, scientific, and religious ideologies in the colony of Hawai‘i as well as the mainland are productive in how implementing public health regimes were intimately part of empire. Through the rubric of “healthy” versus “diseased,” the quantifying of bodies under a form of biomedical viability exposes the production of Kanaka Maoli as diseased under U.S. imperial influence in the Hawaiian monarchy. Moran argues, “Political and medical officials used medical surveys, inspections, and examinations – as well as medical reports that quantified data and defined research – to create a Hawaiian ‘leper’ during the late 1800s that could be controlled and contained” (7). This supports how the combination of imperial objectives coalesced with medical and public health practices to devise a new label that was both stigmatized as diseased and racialized. Moran’s argument hinges on the interpretation of the racial categorization of the figure of the leper. If anything, the public health perspective in this study differs from the historical in how Moran’s comparative interpretive histories allows for the clarification of scientific and racial terms at tactics of U.S. empire.

Given the majority of exiled leprosy patients were classified as Hawaiian or “part-Hawaiian,” the western (considered synonymous with the Board of Health’s) tendency was to equivocate Kanaka Maoli with diseased and to narrate the projected demise of the Indigenous population as related to American economic and political interests in annexation. What can be seen through the contested subject role of Kanaka Maoli mea kōkua is not simply the refusal to accept western ideas of family, care-giving, and disease, but how these conflicts were regulated, revised, and negotiated under the Board of Health and through the superintendents at the settlement as well as how various western religious workers reacted through moralizing impulses. Tony Gould in *A Disease Apart: Leprosy in the Modern World* demonstrates the intimate connection between leprosy and morality:

Leprosy is certainly not the only disease to have a moral dimension, equating illness with punishment for sins committed in this or past lives, but its symbiotic relationship with Christianity in both medieval and modern times has exacerbated that general tendency and transformed a physical ailment into a moral condition. This has meant that, arguing backwards from effect to cause rather than vice versa, leprosy has been frequently characterized as ‘dirty’ and ‘venereal.’ (11)

This pernicious and pervasive debate on the moral dimensions of leprosy infiltrated the Board of Health’s regulations and adjudication of the disease in an approach similar to British India. Importantly, Gould demonstrates how leprosy “became an imperial danger” through colonial activity, western theories of contagion, and microbial science with Christian morality. The imperial component is critical in understanding both the colonial archive itself as well as the historiographies interpreting the U.S.’s interests in isolating Kanaka Maoli with leprosy.

Investigating the classification, management, and policing of leprosy and the segregation legislation demands attention to the political fraught period of Hawai‘i. As RDK Herman points out, the advent of leprosy in the 19th century heralded changes of “the privatization of land, the change to a plantation economy, and the steady weakening of Hawaiian rule under the guise of democratization, all serving Western colonization” (319). In these various economic, cultural, and political shifts, Herman identifies how “sickness and depopulation facilitated these changes by providing the substance for a racial discourse distinguishing Hawaiians as biologically as well as psychologically and morally inferior to the growing white (haole) presence in the islands” (319). Connecting the ravaging of effects of foreign diseases on Kanaka Maoli to emergent racial discourses, Herman astutely builds the foundation for how this project engages with the shifting racial categorization of subjects in Hawai‘i as inherently imperialist and colonialist. Herman continues to demonstrate how leprosy “was not a clearly defined medical reality at the time of its impact on the Hawaiian Islands. Rather it was an imagination – a discursive figment that bore little connection to its physical manifestation” (321). This develops the distinction between the production of knowledge around leprosy and more broadly on disease where the management and segregation of subjects hinge on “a discursive figment.” In line with Michel Foucault’s discussion of leprosy in *Madness and Civilization*, the idea and symbolic weight of the leper infiltrates into Hawai‘i’s mode of segregation. Foucault writes of the regression of leprosy in Europe in the 16th century where “the values and images attached to the figure of the leper as well as the meaning of his exclusion, the social importance of that insistent and fearful figure was not driven off without first being inscribed within a sacred circle” (*Madness* 6). This conveys the power of the leper as a divisive and stigmatized category subject to exclusion and one that hinges on demanding social death.

Similarly, Jane Buckingham's work on colonial South India's management of leprosy relies on this medieval trajectory of the leper that Foucault emphasizes and contributes to how Patterson's "social death" of racialized bodies is applicable to the making of the figure of the Indigenous leper. However, Buckingham argues that despite Foucault's discussion of the social exclusion of the leper, "leprosy sufferers in colonial South India, despite their small number, had at least the power of resistance and, to a lesser extent, negotiation" (20). Arguing for the agency and possibility of leper patients in colonial South India synchs up to both Inglis and Silva's work that testifies to the self-determination and production of Kanaka Maoli communities on Moloka'i despite the repeated attempts of the Board of Health and the territorial government to banish and erase them. In other words, Inglis and Silva produce narratives of Indigenous resistance as a method of reading the archive. Related, the consorted efforts of mea kōkua and kama'āina and their integral assistance speak to a form of resistance and possible coalitions that were aggressively legislated and undermined. The prevalence of narratives of resistance in the colonial archive demonstrates the employment of positive strategic essentialism Spivak articulates in how to center the subaltern (read: Indigenous leper) as the focus of history.

By examining how a contemporary novel mimics historical interpretations, I read the references of mea kōkua in *Moloka'i* as an entry point into the nuanced landscape of colonial archive and its intersections with the fictional imaginings of narrative that attempts, but ultimately cannot overcome its colonial context. In other words, the historical past is the regulative limit of fictive imagination, and so a 2003 novel becomes subjected to the boundaries of these existing leprosy histories and the colonial archive. This observation that contemporary fiction mirrors a colonial archive is not a new phenomenon and consequently, this is why I rely on Subaltern Studies to help mediate how to think through cultural production about subaltern

figures like the *mea kōkua* in Hawai‘i and how the marking of authorship as about these subjects instead of by these subjects articulates some of these complexities of colonial cultural domination and its legacies. Following Antonio Gramsci’s assertion that “the history of subaltern social groups is necessarily fragmented and episodic” (54-55), I posit a reading method of the colonial archive with contemporary fiction that works to show the persistent disruption reinscribing of leprosy patients and *mea kōkua* figures through American imperialism. Gramsci emphasizes the challenges of writing subaltern groups’ histories and emphasizes how “Subaltern groups are always subject to the activity of ruling groups, even when they rebel and rise up: only ‘permanent’ victory breaks their subordination, and that not immediately” (55). Here, the idea of complete victory still seems impermanent where the constant cyclical subordination of subaltern groups is endless. Gramsci conveys how a subaltern victory can “only be demonstrated when a historical cycle is complete and this cycle culminates in a success” (55). If this is the case, then the question remains what constitutes a historical cycle and whether Kanaka Maoli and specifically *mea kōkua* can be visible through the perspective of 21st century narratives. Related, how might the contemporary historical novel continue to perpetuate the positive strategic essentialism found in the historiographies in centralizing the figure of the leper.

Paradoxically, the emergence of the *mea kōkua* in contemporary narratives complicates Gramsci’s discussion of the cyclical nature of subaltern histories resulting in a form of success. What Brennert’s novel shows and what this chapter argues is that the historical cycle perpetuates itself and permeates into fictive imagination where success is understood through the limitations of the historical archive. Thus, this is a disciplinary question where subaltern (in this case the layered figures of Kanaka Maoli who acted as *mea kōkua*) histories condition the imaginative possibilities of historical fiction. This raises the issues of the validity of the colonial archive and

the stakes of attempting to interrupt and unsettle dominant history to engage with the subaltern through fiction. This chapter contends that the historical novel repeatedly fails to overcome the archive. Consequently, I argue how this starts to undermine subaltern history as rendered by Subaltern Studies. Dipesh Chakrabarty states, “the practice of subaltern history aims to take history, the code, to its limits in order to make its unworking visible” (58). Chakrabarty demonstrates how subaltern history challenges the temporal chronology of history as a colonial one and articulates the extent to which subaltern histories can undo and unmake the narrative of dominant history. Taking this approach with Spivak’s strategic essentialism, the limits of the colonial archive appear to be in centralizing of the figure of the subaltern. To extend this argument is to suggest that making the “unworking visible” of dominant history is actually impossible because of the necessity of interpretations of the archive as well as the epistemologies created through these subaltern histories. In other words, this is not a viable strategy, but without any universal history, the persistent objective to do justice to colonized histories winds up often proliferating alternatives that produce their own narratives. Consequently, I am raising questions about how cultural narrative works within a historical framing of U.S. imperialism that is attentive to the proliferation of subaltern histories as well as the colonial ones.

Reading Method as a Philosophy of History of the Present

By shifting the focus to 21st century literature, my reading method is invested in how the literary novel operates in relationship to the colonial archive. This is not a recovery of the past or a suggestion for how to re-read the archive in hopes of unearthing Kanaka Maoli figures or representation. Instead, contemporary fiction complicates the historical archive and I place my emphasis on how to reckon with the structures of the colonial past as still imprinting the fictional imaginings. Given part of my argument is historical, I return to *The Intimacies of the Four*

Continents, where Lowe explains the concept of the history of the present which “refuses the simple recovery of the past and troubles the givenness of the present formation. It is not a historical reconstruction that explains or justifies our present, but a critical project that would both expose the constructedness of the past, and release the present from the dictates of that former construction” (136). This idea marks the connectivity of a particular past as informing the construction of the present and for my purposes, the present context of the production of literature. To “release the present from the dictates of that former construction” operates as a lofty goal for literary narratives whereas Lowe’s primary analysis rests in excavating the colonial archive for what is hidden, fragmented, or interrupted. But my emphasis is on how her temporal scope remains in the past and in the historical archive. Importantly, she recognizes “the fundamental role of historical narrative in both the reception of the past, and the understanding of our present...history and historical knowledge often fix and determine the relationship of the past to the present, and the structure and meaning it attributes to the past also determines what may be imagined as possible, now and in the future” (*Intimacies* 138). This conveys the complicated terrain of the historical narrative as constantly mediating the past and being mediated by it. Lowe suggests how questioning the fundamental construction of the narrative as historical can allow for the visibility of the mechanisms that bring the (colonial or imperial) past into the present. Furthermore, Lowe describes how “my readings of the past unsettle and recast the dominant histories we receive of liberal modernity” (*Intimacies* 137). This establishes how Lowe encounters the historical archive as an “unsettling” process that is not concerned with digging up the past and re-narrating it. Instead, Lowe’s archival work destabilizes the dominant, often colonial and imperial, historical narratives without necessarily offering a revised version(s). This approach informs how I read the Board of Health documents on leprosy

segregation with Alan Brennert's contemporary novel that attempts re-imagines the various positions of individuals affected by the disease. In this sense, I am utilizing Lowe's historical premise as well as developing it to think through contemporary literature's relationship to its past as opposed to culling the historical archive for obscured figures.

My method for reckoning with the historical constraints that construct Brennert's modern narrative builds off of Lowe's theorizing of how history operates as a mode of analysis. Lowe writes, "A philosophy of history that would not merely substitute another national subject within the same formal master narrative must create an analytic that interrogates European coloniality, epistemology, and philosophy of history" (139). Here, Lowe offers insight into the tendency to simply replace or substitute a "national subject" in dominant histories. Instead, she attempts to interrupt these narratives of liberal modernity that require a cohesive subject. This is useful in thinking about the genre of historical fiction and how this chapter argues that Brennert's *Moloka'i* essentially repeats the dominant constructs of colonial history. Or in Lowe's phrasing, the novel works to substitute the history of leprosy in Hawai'i through additional national subjects who even as Kanaka Maoli characters, still operate within the bounds of a western sentimental framework. Essentially, I take up Lowe's history of the present and elaborate on how it is not simply a product of the historical archive and the figures erased and dismissed in there including the mea kōkua, but also how this trajectory operates in contemporary fiction. In suturing the historical archive to fictive imaginings of the archive, I suggest the visibility of the colonial ideologies of creating racialized categories eligible for life or death in the tactics of leprosy segregation. Furthermore, the sentimentality and collective tragedy of the Kanaka Maoli leper is paired with the incomprehensible mea kōkua in Brennert's novel that makes legible the persistence of American colonial legacies in the present.

In considering Lowe's idea of the "history of the present," Linda Hutcheon's concept of historiographic metafiction in *The Poetics of Postmodernism* informs my theoretical method of reading Brennert's contemporary novel as intimately interconnected to the colonial archive. To consider a narrative theory of contemporary historical fiction poses some difficult questions in how to situate the turn towards the past as demanding alternative representation. Hutcheon's work on postmodernism and the novel is invaluable as it lends itself to the critique of the historical novel where metafiction comes out of a particular history. Hutcheon's discussion of postmodern fiction as historiographic fiction provides an optic into the seemingly one-dimensional sentimentality of Brennert's novel that sets out to reimagine the multitude of individuals involved in leprosy segregation. Building off of Lowe's approach to the colonial archive with Hutcheon's model provides a productive framework for considering Brennert's capitalization on the history of leprosy. However, this chapter still faces the problematic paradigm of essentially being trapped in the limitations of history, even as Brennert insists on a multitude of Kanaka Maoli characters, historical documents, and spanning a century more of time. Postmodernism becomes a useful analytic to think through *Moloka 'i* and the ways it destabilizes the boundaries of historical fact and fiction. Defining the concept of "historiographic metafiction," Hutcheon argues is "intensely self-reflexive and yet paradoxically also lays claim to historical events and personages" (5). The idea of this postmodern paradox is indicative of how to navigate the imbrication of historiography and narrative where Hutcheon emphasizes the contradictory components in the genre of the novel.

The paradox of "claiming history" is indicative of an intensely conscious mode of production that cannot escape the need to center and narrativize history. This is a useful concept in order to comprehend the regulative limits on the literary through the historical. Hutcheon

elaborates how historiographic metafiction “incorporates all three of these domains: it is, its theoretical self-awareness of history and fiction as human constructs (historiographic metafiction) is made the grounds for its rethinking and reworking of the forms and contents of the past” (5). Instrumental to this chapter’s argument is the emphasis on how both history and fiction are “human constructs,” thus erasing any sense of a universal past that can attend to the components of subaltern or alternative history. The interpretative human factor is always present and as such, the disciplines can easily impact each other. Related, the constructed nature of history and literature also addresses the paradigm of postmodernism as a lack of universal or a “decentralized community” (12). This redefines the historical novel to disavow a total recuperation with the past; there is no uniform past nor is there a uniform social body and each engagement with leprosy history for instance will be subjected to construction. Instead, Hutcheon suggests, “To re-write or to re-present the past in fiction and in history, is, in both cases to open it up to the present, to prevent it from being conclusive and teleological” (110). This refusal of authentic history manifests in how fiction cannot come to any resolution; the writing is also self-reflexive and this self-consciousness derives from its form.

To build off Hutcheon’s historiographic metafiction and Lowe’s history of the present offers an optic into the contradictions of Brennert’s novel that emphatically desires to recuperate the colonial archive of leprosy and questions the truths of segregation policies; in this sense, Brennert’s novel could be classified as historiographic metafiction, but this chapter relies on how the melodramatic representations and the figuring of the already socially dead leper patients concurrently undermine the narrative as “intensely self-reflexive” (Hutcheon 5). However, Brennert’s reliance on historical events, documents, and engagement with historiography through fiction and relying on a child Kanaka Maoli protagonist who is can be categorized as one of the

“ex-centrics, the marginalized, the peripheral figures of fictional history” as indicative of postmodern narratives (Hutcheon 114). This show how Brenner’s *Moloka‘i* mirrors tropes of historiographic metafiction and assists in navigating the narrative impasses of conflict among what the text imagines as alternative histories as it simultaneously reproduces the colonial ideological structures it is attempting to call into question. Hutcheon’s explication of how postmodernism both theorizes and practices the incongruities between historiography and fiction including critiques of both fields. Consequently, this chapter reads *Moloka‘i* through the overlay of how the colonial archive acknowledges intermittently the figure of the mea kōkua in conjunction with a framework of historiographic metafiction that embodies the contradictions and possibilities available.

Kama‘āina and Mea Kōkua in the Board of Health Archives

While this chapter thinks through the figure of the mea kōkua as offering a productive optic into both the colonial archive of leprosy segregation as well as its literary iteration in *Moloka‘i*, the local (kama‘āina) residents are another group of individuals often erased historically and within the narratives constructed about the past. In other words, their absence in the archive has been recovered in selected accounts by historians searching for alternative modes of existence under exile. There are specific mentions of the initial residents in the Board of Health documents, but primarily as potential sources of income in buying out their property for the settlement. Their participation and crucial assistance to leper patients especially in the 1860’s -1870’s is testament to their pivotal roles and yet, their overall lack of existence in the record exemplifies how the Board of Health disregarded and discounted them. Law documents how when the first patients arrived in 1866, “There was no doctor to treat them, no hospital to house them... What they did find were kama‘aina, the original residents of Kalaupapa, Makanalua,

Kalawao, and Waikolu Valley, who were willing to help them, it being the custom of the Hawaiian people to help those who were sick” (11). This testifies to the lack of preparation on Moloka‘i by the Board of Health created the consorted effort of kama‘āina and mea kōkua to assist and take care of the leper patients. Yet, the sheer rhetoric of the 1865 Act to Prevent Leprosy emphasizes the necessity of segregation where Section 3 states, “The Board of Health or its agents, are authorized and empowered to cause to be isolated or confined, in some place or places for that purpose provided, all leprosy patients” as well as Section 4’s emphasis on “to send to a place of isolation” all patients. In other words, the necessity for isolation is highlighted in the legislation, but the practicality of complete segregation was not possible.

Even with the kama‘āina’s invaluable help with resources, Law uses narratives and testimonials from the Board of Health archive to demonstrate how ill-prepared the colony was on Moloka‘i. Law includes a letter from Kahauliko in 1866 requesting, “Because there is no store about this place that we know of . . . [we] beg of you . . . some clothing for our families, for all of these persons have come with us and will die for us” (11). This directly references how mea kōkua were willing to “die for us,” even under the Board of Health’s mandate of isolation. Also of importance is the complete lack of infrastructure and supplies in place for the exiled lepers and their mea kōkua; in other words, the sentencing to Moloka‘i suggested not only social death, but also imminent physical death. In terms of population statistics, Law states from J.N. Loe, “By October 1, 1866, a total of 101 men and 41 women had been left at Kalawao. There were also at least 22 mea kōkua living with them” (47). In a subsequent letter to the Board of Health, Law explains how Kahauliko “described how some of the kama‘āina were willing to become kōkua for them” (11), thus the grouping of non-incarcerated Kanaka Maoli at the settlement with voluntary residents. Law highlights the culmination of non-leprosy individuals, presumably

Kanaka Maoli, choosing to help and thus, contributing to the resistance against the Board of Health's mandate. Crucial to acknowledging the Board of Health records is the overall quantifying and qualifying of bodies sent to Moloka'i and designations of "leper" as separate from "kōkua." This points to the eventual necessity of acknowledging the category of mea kōkua as separate from patients with leprosy. Yet, the institutional requirements to assess, define, and calculate bodies at the settlement forces the distinctions. This also reveals the collapsing borders of segregation between who the Board of Health incarcerated as diseased and who they allowed to be identified as "diseased and something else," that required an official register of mea kōkua.

What becomes difficult to document, especially in the earlier years of the settlement, is the records of individuals in terms of classification as patient or mea kōkua as well as any additional information on either subject. The 1866 first official patient ledgers consist simply of first names and coordinated numbers without any notations. Presumably, the mea kōkua were not clearly documented in those first two years.³¹ Only in 1868 does a ledger begin and is exclusively for mea kōkua. The period of 1866 to 1929 testify to the incomplete record-keeping of mea kōkua with noticeable absences when the U.S. provisional government prevented them from going to the settlement (Inglis 73)³². In the ledgers of mea kōkua, the Board of Health documents the specifics of sex, age, nationality, date of arrival, last place of residence, and who each individual is a "kokua to," along with some space for additional notes. This ledger is

³¹ Anwei Law describes the first group of patients on January 6, 1866 who "were the first of an estimated eight thousand people" and emphasizes how there was a "small boy [who] was one of four or five family members on board the *Warwick* [the schooner] that day. They were the first in a long line of mea kōkua – people who helped, people who comforted, people who resisted the isolation policies by refusing to allow those who were sick to be sent away alone" (3). This not only identifies that several mea kōkua went with the first group of patients, but also attributes their role as definitively rebellious.

³² The changing numbers of mea kōkua entering the settlement each year changes where there is only one documented for 1868, 1871, 1875, 1876, then two in 1879 and minimal increases per year including four in 1881 and nine in 1883. What this suggests is an inconsistency in how many mea kōkua were permitted each year and raises questions on how the Board of Health selected helpers to join their loved ones.

officially called the *Record of Inmates (sic) at Kalaupapa – 1868-1899* and on the inside pages is titled “Kokuas Allowed by the Board of Health at the Leper Settlement, Moloka‘i.” This testifies to the acceptance and existence of mea kōkua even under the policy of absolute segregation. The title alone reveals the necessity of the Board of Health demonstrating their supposed regulation of mea kōkua “allowed” within the mandate of isolation. Furthermore, there are two main different ledgers of the mea kōkua registries that reveal inconsistencies in the record for one and missing in the other. Ultimately, both the *Record of Inmates (sic) at Kalaupapa – 1868-1899* and *Kalawao Kokuas 1868 to 1929* demonstrate the complicated nature of registries when the official settlement on the Makanalua peninsula included the initial community in Kalawao on the eastern side and later in the early 20th century moved to the western side in Kalaupapa. Still, it remains unclear whether there are complete population ledgers that include mea kōkua dating back to 1866, since these were only compiled in January 1892 by the secretary of the Board of Health, Charles Wilcox.³³

This fragmented record keeping again testifies to a lapse in how mea kōkua were visibly acknowledged, but perhaps not always detailed in ledgers and vice versa. These records include a designation of “leper” or “kōkua” are identified as well as notations regarding travel, marriage status, children, and lines through entries that seem to signify the death of the individual. A key component in the ledger is the two columns that state “Employed by Board of Health” and “Allowed rations.” The cataloging of subjects at the settlement reveal the Board of Health’s contradictory objectives of wanting to implement absolute segregation, while also acknowledging the necessity of mea kōkua (and initially kama‘āina) for the infrastructure of the

³³ After the 1892 compilation by Wilcox, there are also four other entries in the registry that read “Revised and corrected up to” and include dates from January 31, 1893 to April 28, 1899 without indication of which entries were corrected.

settlement. As a result, mea kōkua became an unstable variable in segregation policy. The inconsistencies in which mea kōkua received rations as well as those working to support the Board of Health demonstrate the murkiness of segregation legislation and practical application. To add to these contradictions, the specific numbers and records for the first two decades of the settlement are inconsistent. Settlement doctor Dr. AA. Mouritz from 1884-1887 further emphasizes how “the records kept of segregation, both at Kalihi and the Leper Settlement, in the early periods of its enforcement are very imperfect” and mentions an example of how vessels that transported leper patients never entered passenger names (166). Dr. Mouritz identifies the inaccuracies in the Board of Health records and this is apparent in any attempt to document the mea kōkua. Consequently, mea kōkua exist in official registers, contributed necessary labor to the settlement, and yet, their existence confounded western ideas of disease, stigma, and segregation tactics.

Mea Kōkua: Visible, Invisible, and Subject to Regulation

The visibility of mea kōkua in the colonial archive of Board of Health correspondences, reports, letters, petitions, transportation requests, and ledgers along with legislative acts fades in and out intermittently with scattered references and explicit governance of these helpers. Clearly, the initial years at the Moloka‘i settlement demanded assistance from local residents on the Makanalua peninsula as well as voluntary mea kōkua. In F.W. Hutchinson’s Presidential Report of the Board of Health to the Legislative Assembly in 1868, he emphasizes the lack of food and resources on Moloka‘i, the patients’ requests for a hospital and a female nurse, as well as stating how “husbands of diseased women...are allowed, at their own request, to reside with their wives, rations and clothing being issued to them in the same quantities and at the same times as to the lepers themselves” (47). This inclusion specifically marks husbands as not being diseased and

implies their presence derives from accompanying “diseased women,” and so they are mea kōkua without being identified as such. This is important both in how mea kōkua appear in the archive and how Hutchinson categorizes these husbands by being non-diseased. What is also crucial is how these men took on roles of resident enforcement that makes them eligible to supplies and clothing rations as “the lepers themselves.” Hutchinson’s rhetoric testifies to the value of mea kōkua and equates them to patients, even as he is referencing a non-existent category for segregation at the settlement. This 1898 report also raises the question of “social death” for spouses where “the idea that perhaps divorces should be granted on the grounds of leprosy and that those who had leprosy should be regarded as ‘civilly dead’” (Law 25). Here, the actual question of social death that Patterson theorized in regards to chattel slavery is made concrete in the suggestion of dissolving marriages and subjecting them to the Board of Health regulations. However, Hutchinson continues later in his report to specify, “Whenever wives, husbands, or patients have expressed a desire to accompany their relations, the Board has not thought it would be justified in refusing the application” (48). Hutchinson’s phrasing indicates how he not only defers decision-making over these petitions by referencing the “Board,” but also conveys an unwillingness to find the means to justify refusing these applications. Relaying the implication of the continuing denial to refuse mea kōkua, Hutchinson presents the Board’s support of the supposedly total isolation of leper patients while allowing the accompaniment of helpers. Thus, the figure of the mea kōkua enters the presidential report as a refusal to deny requests as opposed to advocating for helpers.

In understanding how the position of mea kōkua exists as visible in the Board of Health archives, but also resists segregation policies, it is productive to briefly consider the changes over regulations of voluntary helpers after the first decade of the settlement’s existence. The

documentation of eligibility of mea kōkua for rations highlights the Board of Health's incoherence over reasons for accompanying loved ones as indicative of Indigenous values of family care-giving. In other words, Inglis explains how the western stigma of leprosy was not applicable and "to ask Native Hawaiians to remove loved ones from their society...was beyond foreign. In the minds of Kanaka Maoli, to kokua was to help; to the haole, kokua, hiding, resisting, were all seen as forms of disregard for a threatening, loathsome disease" (86)³⁴. Consequently, the category of mea kōkua alone confounded the Board of Health and related medical officials in charge of the settlement. Historians Inglis and Law both argue how mea kōkua exemplify Indigenous resistance to the Board of Health's segregation policies. This speaks to both the question of interpreting the historical archive for a narrative of resistance and what the archive itself offers to corroborate this interpretation. The commitment of mea kōkua to their loved ones and the necessity of their help in the settlement simultaneously reveal the multiple failures of isolation. Despite the lack of complete records of mea kōkua, Law indicates that the initial settlement on January 6, 1866 included "four or five family members" (3) even though the Board of Health registry indicates the official mea kōkua as Hoolimakani entering the settlement on August 22, 1868. This suggests two years of undocumented and non-sanctioned mea kōkua at the settlement and Inglis also emphasizes the discrepancy among the Board of Health records. Inglis compares the 203 "officially listed as mea kōkua by 1889. Yet records also show that many more 'unofficial' mea kōkua could be found at the settlement and throughout the peninsula" (86). Based off of Inglis' own research, she theorizes, "It is believed that some four to

³⁴ Akira Ruddle-Miyamoto and Ron Amundson elaborate in "Holier than Thou: Stigma and the Kokuas of the Kalaupapa Settlement" how "By failing to be disgusted by leprosy Native Hawaiians proved their inferiority. Their susceptibility to disease and their un-Western (i.e. unenlightened or uncivilized or immoral) ways of dealing with disease were often spun into paternalistic arguments by foreigners and used to delegitimize the Native Hawaiian sovereignty. The Moloka'i kokuas, and Native Hawaiians in general, were viciously stigmatized for their willingness to associate with and care for those with leprosy" (5).

five hundred mea kōkua went to Makanalua by 1900” (87). Regardless of estimated numbers, it is clear that the Board of Health of Records are incomplete and any official suggestion of numbers is unavailable as the category of mea kōkua was both documented and erased.

In order to demonstrate the lack of coherence around mea kōkua, the Board of Health officials and doctors offered various standpoints on the value of the helpers, which often reflected the political affiliations of the board members. Ruddle-Miyamoto and Amundson emphasize how “it was recognized, after all, that the settlement simply could not run without the kokuas. But as the size and the expense of the settlement increased, the Board of Health wanted to reduce the costs” (6). The distinction of mea kōkua receiving rations from the Board of Health became a central point as it involved a material cost of these unforeseen necessary, but unwanted subjects of the settlement. In an article documenting King Kalakaua’s visit in April 18, 1874 with Board of Health officials and Monsieur Ballieu, the French Commissioner, the journalist extensively documents the conditions of the settlement emphasizing the structure of the hospital, the amount of food rationed for each patient, and dramatizes the “loathsome creatures, in which it was hard to recognize anything human.” The quantity of food allotted per patient is crucial as the article simultaneously commends the efforts of the settlement to enact order over leprosy, but continuously dehumanizes the patients. Even further, the *Pacific Commercial Advertiser* condemns mea kōkua as the one systemic flaw for their drain on supplies:

This is the presence in the valley of some 184 of the original inhabitants, who are not lepers. These are known as ‘kokua,’ or assistants, but their principal occupation appears to consist in assisting the lepers to consume their rations. They do little or no work, will not improve the opportunity afforded to raise taro to sell to the Board; pasture their animals ad libitum on the government land; live on the lepers; are the authors of evil reports, and are a bad lot generally.

Describing mea kōkua as being lazy and not contributing to the settlement operate as the article's point of contention. The sardonic suggestion that the mea kōkua's "principal occupation" is ration consumption demonstrates the Board of Health and associated western officials' concern over the allotment supplies. Furthermore, the narration of this visit was published in an English-language newspaper, which suggests a western audience. Even the definition of kōkua as "assistants" as opposed to "helpers" testifies to the intended readership that would be supportive of a "special act of Parliament" to remove the mea kōkua. In *The Colony*, John Tayman's dramatic rendering of the history of Kalaupapa, he also shows the contradictions in categorizing the eligibility of mea kōkua for rations. Board of Health records differentiated between "leper" and "kōkua" in order to justify how to allocate supplies and "because kokuas were not patients, the board did not consider them to be their responsibility" (42).³⁵ Thus, the categorical distinction allows for a disavowal of necessary food and materials for survival in the settlement by elevating the "leper" over mea kōkua as worthy as of being kept alive.

This demonstrates how mea kōkua, as voluntary helpers, exist as exceeding the parameters of segregation policy and therefore were not eligible for the Board of Health's limited resources, even as they were essential contributors to the settlement. Dr. Mouritz dramatically narrates the potentially manipulative behavior of mea kōkua by accusing them of coming to the settlement exclusively to gain access to rations. J.R. Musick reports in his 1898 *Hawaii: Our New Possession* that "...some of the natives, I have been told, are anxious to be declared lepers

³⁵ Tayman's work exemplifies the interpretive mode of historical narrative in how *The Colony* seeks to tell the story of leprosy from an Indigenous perspective and *The New York Times* praised for how his "noble account makes you [the reader] want to stand and applaud" since he "has brought to light the profound dignity of his patients" (Roach). Importantly, a few months after Roach's review was published, *The New York Times* ran a follow-up that cited the critiques by "former patients, some Hawaii historians and the state's lawmakers and governor" (Wilson). Most telling is how Mr. Tayman was "saddened" by the patients' reactions and says, "I never saw it as a story that belonged to a specific culture, any more than I saw it as a Hawaiian story...I just sort of saw it as an American story more than anything else" (Wilson). This statement demonstrates Tayman's lack of understanding of the history of colonization in Hawai'i as well as supporting the national narrative of the "American" quality of the Islands.

and sent to Molokai, where they will be supported at the expense of the Government” (93). This operates as another example of the western perspective that Kanaka Maoli desire to help their loved ones to exploit access to rations. The justification of mea kōkua seems to operate as both an inability to understand Kanaka Maoli values of family and care-giving as well as need to target a reason for the lack of supplies and funding to the settlement.³⁶ Along with journalists, Dr. Mouritz also discusses the “Ethical Phases of Hawaiian Leprosy” with international bacteriologists Dr. Robert Koch and Dr. Walter Brinckerhoff and explains, “In order to lead a lazy, free from care existence, many kokuas, or helpers, are willing to become lepers at the Molokai Reservation; try to imitate the signs for leprosy by burning their skins, rubbing in irritating substances, and by other traumatic means, desire to be placed on the list as lepers in order to get their daily food free” (58). Similar to the description in the *Pacific Commercial Advertiser*, Dr. Mouritz alleges how mea kōkua strategized to avoid working in order to receive daily rations as this is the only western way to rationalize the choice to voluntarily go to the settlement. However, Dr. Mouritz’s own position is tenuous at best in his suggestion of how mea kōkua imitated leprosy as he unethically performed various medical experiments on lepers during his time at the settlement.³⁷ As Ruddle-Miyamoto and Amundson demonstrate, “Only by alleging that the kokuas actually wanted to be infected with leprosy in order to get free handouts,

³⁶ “The motive for spreading these rumors is pretty clearly to defend the generosity of the government program of segregation. The allegation was that the government was so generous to the exiles, and Hawaiians are so indolent, that many of them would rather have leprosy and live off the government than work for a living. Coming third-hand from travelers who spoke only with local Westerners, and contradicting the voluminous records of Hawaiian resistance to the exile laws, these claims have little weight” (Amundson and Ruddle-Miyamoto, "Wholesome" 5).

³⁷ Mouritz states, “Thirty years ago the Leper settlement on Molokai maintained abundance of healthy kokuas, all ready and willing to be experimented on by inoculation, serums, or any other means likely to develop leprosy; the artificially made lepers hoping to obtain board and lodging, for the remainder of their lives; being listed as lepers – a livelihood, and existence without working being provided by the Board of Health” (140). This seems to be Mouritz’s justification of ethical experimentation that the mea kōkua desired to be categorized as lepers in order to live off the Board of Health rations. Mouritz continues to suggest that mea kōkua “pestered and annoyed daily with requests to examine purposely caused lesions” and then worked to experiment on 15 kokuas various inoculation trials (141).

could Mouritz defend himself against the charge of medical malpractice” (“Wholesome” 6).

While not the central idea around the visibility of mea kōkua, the use of medical experimentation emerges as significant. This is another example of the contradictory historical existence of these subjects; they are legible in the colonial and medical archives and yet, simultaneously disavowed for their contributions to both realms.

The conflicting positions on the productive use of mea kōkua as well as their implied drain on Board of Health rations continues with changes in the Hawaiian monarchy and standpoints on the effectiveness of segregation. Moblo demonstrates how the succession of Lunalilo as King in 1873 instituted segregation policy changes:

Lunalilo...intended to enforce the laws of segregation passed nearly a decade earlier; 487 people with leprosy were sent to Kalaupapa in 1873, nearly doubling the population. One of Humphreys’ [settlement superintendent] first assignments was to expel ten mea kōkua to make room for the new arrivals, and additional evictions followed as the settlement became more crowded and rations had to be stretched further. (“Intercession” 33-34)

Again, the primary concern over the settlement does not appear to be remotely about patient care, but about the distribution of rations and the cost of supplies. As such, the investment in mea kōkua is perceived as an expense and becomes the default expendable category given their perceived drain on resources and their lack of official capacity as participating in the settlement. Superintendent of the Settlement from 1866-1897, R. W. Meyer acknowledged this change in perspective on mea kōkua in his 1886 report to the Board of Health. He notes how after Lunalilo ascended, “Segregation was held by the new Board to be the only means of arresting the progress of the disease, and the most energetic efforts were made to affect the isolation of lepers, and without regard to person. Lepers were no longer allowed to take their wives or husbands with

them” (qtd. in Mouritz 270). This demonstrates the policy of exclusion of *mea kōkua* and seemingly acknowledges how “energetic efforts” went into complete isolation, but does not necessarily explain the success of the measures. In contradiction to this previous statement, Meyer still points that *mea kōkua* at the settlement “are absolutely necessary to live” (273). This further emphasizes the inherent contradictions in the Board of Health’s isolation policies and its allowance of *mea kōkua*. Law also documents how the increase in leprosy patients coincided with the purchase of *kama‘āina* lands and seemed to affect the *mea kōkua* population. Law theorizes, “It seems possible that these ‘new’ *kōkua* were the *kama‘āina* of Kalaupapa, who had devised a way to sell their land but remain on it, at the same time helping their friends who were sick” (65). This suggestion operates as an optic of collaborative resistance against the Board of Health policies and offers the mobility between the position of *mea kōkua* and *kama‘āina*. Yet, it is difficult to make the interpretative claim for resistance when the impulse to *kōkua* is based off of care for loved ones and not explicitly to subvert the Board of Health policies. Still, this points out the inaccuracies of the archive that does not document these transitions.³⁸

In assessing the Board of Health and settlement physicians’ reports, I demonstrate how the late 1800’s offer insight into the continually changing regulations of *mea kōkua* through differing opinions of officials that complicate the perception of *mea kōkua* roles. Previously, Dr. Mouritz’s accounts accused *mea kōkua* of volunteering to help out of selfish impulses to reap the benefits of rations. In contrast, the first settlement physician in 1879, Dr. Emerson in the latter report to the Board of the Health in 1882 illuminates the necessity of *mea kōkua* to the settlement and echoes sentiments from Superintendent R. W. Meyer’s 1886 account to the Board of Health,

³⁸ Also troubling is that the Board of Health *kōkua* register still lists nine admitted officially documented *kōkuas* in 1873, zero for 1874, two for 1875, and one for 1876 (Board of Health records; Kalawao *Kokuas* 1868-1929). The numbers seemingly reflect a change in admitted *kōkua* petitions, but no actual complete rejection of *kōkua* petitions.

thus demonstrating official support. Emerson states, “The kokuas are an indispensable arm of service at the settlement. Without them it would be a very difficult task to carry on the establishment...this important class of people supply hands and feet for the leper when his own give out.” Dr. Emerson echoes the absolute need for meā kōkua to keep the maintenance of the settlement and advocates for them as a distinct class; while unstated in the report, there is a subtle indication that Dr. Emerson suggests the Board of Health is indebted to the assistance from the meā kōkua. Similarly, in 1884 Queen Kapiolani visited the settlement and had Princess Liliu‘okalani write up a report to King Kalakaua that addressed both the critical labor role of meā kōkua as well as the issues of ration shortages. Liliu‘okalani writes, “Many of the patients have kokuas to prepare their food for them, otherwise they would go without food, and sometimes do, and die in starvation...If the government intends to keep us [patients] here, let the Board of Health be instructed to exercise a better care over our wants” (300). Liliu‘okalani appeals to the emotions of the Board of Health as well as shaming their lack of efforts to care for the patients they have incarcerated. Liliu‘okalani calls out the necessity of the Board of Health to maintain care of the subjects they demanded be segregated.

However, the criticism around the presence of meā kōkua at the settlement seems to increase after the initial two decades of segregation practice. Two legislations are noteworthy in how they address the regulation of meā kōkua at the settlement, thus visibly acknowledging their presence and subjecting them to the authority of the Board of Health. W.G. Ashley, secretary of the Board of Health documents on January 8, 1889 that kōkuas “shall perform for the Board of Health gratis, one day’s labor of 9 hours, in each week; and said kokuas shall also perform such other labor and service as may be required by the Board of Health, when requested so to do by the Superintendent of the Leper Settlement, for which services they shall be paid such wages as

deemed fair and just by the Board of Health.” Submitting mea kōkua to weekly labor and at the discretion of the superintendent interpellates them into the system of segregation and Board of Health policies. The other new regulation further subjects mea kōkua to the governance of the Board of Health where “any kokua disobeying the orders of the Superintendent of the Leper Settlement or any Rule of the Board of Health, shall be liable to expulsion from the Settlement.” This unquestionably officiates how the Board of Health wants to regulate mea kōkua and force them to abide by their policies with the threat of being forced to leave. These amendments both demonstrate the necessity of mea kōkua labor and how the Board of Health, twenty years after the beginning of segregation, strategizes to capitalize on their participation at the settlement. Requiring labor and subjective duties under the threat of expulsion reveals the tactics of the Board of Health to discipline this category that consistently undermine isolation policies and the authority of the Board.

The second legislation involves King Kalakaua’s 1890 amendments to the 1865 Act to Prevent Leprosy and expands upon the 1889 regulations to explicitly articulate the roles of mea kōkua as entirely regulated by the authority of the Board of Health. In Chapter LXXIX, the act states the necessity to “define the duties to be performed” by mea kōkua and that these obligations “be distinctly provided for by law.” This suggests the need for bureaucratic control over mea kōkua as the unstable variable in segregation tactics; unwittingly, the failure of total isolation practices is both blamed on the emergence of mea kōkua and relies on their assistance for the continuation of the settlement. The Act is only three sections, but lays out the obligations of mea kōkua in terms of labor, wages, and rations as the concerns. Section 2 of the act states:

The duties to be performed by the Kokuas of the lepers shall be that each Kokua must take care of the leper or lepers that he went there to assist, and to go and get and prepare

in a suitable manner all food and other supplies that are furnished by the Government to the lepers, and attend to the clothing and other things that would contribute to the comfort of the lepers whose Kokuas they are. And said Kokuas shall also perform such labor and service as maybe be required by the Board of Health when requested to do so by the Superintendent of the Leper Settlement, for which services they shall be paid such wages as are deemed fair and just by the Board of Health, such wages to be not less than fifty cents per diem. And any Kokua refusing to perform such labor as above stated or who shall violate any rule or regulation of the Board of Health shall be liable on eviction before a Police Magistrate or District Judge to expulsion from the settlement.

This Act is an expansion of the 1889 Board of Health agreement as it stipulates the exact care and support of the leper patients including responsibility for food preparation and rations. The extension of punishment for mea kōkua who violate settlement rules includes a “conviction” from either the police or the justice system; this implicitly turns mea kōkua into voluntary prisoners of the settlement. The threat of legally-sanctioned conviction and expulsion from the settlement demonstrates the official acknowledgment of mea kōkua as necessary, but also requiring containment and regulation. This reflects how the emergence of an unknown category out of segregation destabilizes the system of isolation and threatens the Board of Health’s ability to enforce their laws. Perhaps even more indicative is that it takes fifteen years of mandatory segregation for the Board of Health to come to an agreement on first the persistent existence of mea kōkua and their integral role in the sustainment of the settlement. Tis move to legally identify mea kōkua duties produces them as legible subjects to be officially regulated.

In analyzing the trajectory of mea kōkua in the Board of Health archives, I suggest that this subject position unwittingly emerges through the mandatory segregation of leper patients,

subverted the policies of absolute isolation, and operates as an optic into the conflicting legislation and practices of the Moloka‘i settlement. One of the key contentions with mea kōkua at the settlement was based on the suggestion by some westerners that voluntary helpers were exploiting the allotted supplies. The focus on rations also indicates the only tangible way Board of Health officials could lodge a complaint against the violation of segregation policies as well as reconciling Indigenous values of family over a fear of contagion. Still, the kōkua registers and petitions in the Board of Health archives indicate a lack of cohesive perspective on how to handle the voluntary helpers. Even after enacting the 1890 stipulations over mea kōkua, the political climate and the illegal 1893 overthrow of Queen Lili‘uokalani by “a handful of U.S. identified politicians and businessmen” directly affected segregation policies (Silva 129).³⁹ The correlations between political struggles and leprosy policies came to the forefront after the overthrow of the Queen and Moblo emphasizes how the provisional government “commenced with the escalation of ‘Missionary’ values including ideological changes regarding leprosy. It was a shift from tolerance through segregation, to one of elimination” (*Defamation* 208). This shift in segregation approaches can thus be linked to the U.S.’s involvement. Inglis elaborates increased regulations involved the provisional government’s concern:

...with more efficient measures regarding the arrest and exile of those with the disease, but they also sought to remove the many mea kōkua from Kalawao and Kalaupapa. Seen as a threat to containing the disease and as a drain on the Board of Health’s funding to the

³⁹ Noenoe Silva explicitly explains prior to the 1893 overthrow that the 1887 Bayonet Constitution forced onto King Kalakaua “created an oligarchy of the haole planters and businessmen. This was accomplished by destroying the executive powers of the sovereign, and giving those powers to the cabinet” (128). Jonathon Osorio elaborates how “For haole, it meant not only an enhanced representation in the legislature and control of the executive, it also retrieved their ability to define the nation and their membership in it” (240).

settlement, the mea kōkua were perhaps also still looked upon by the haole establishment as an affront to Western medical and civil sensibilities. (165)

Western legislators' continued incoherence about Indigenous ideologies regarding disease, stigma, and care-giving gives merit to the inherent subversive role of mea kōkua. Still, the increase in segregation tactics targeted the removal of mea kōkua and denial of petitions remains in conflict with the Board of Health's archive that continued to include acceptance of petitions and additional mea kōkua. The register does note an increase in 1889 with 13 official mea kōkua, only one in 1890, and zero admitted until 1896. Still, even with six years of rejected mea kōkua petitions, the legal component never forbids mea kōkua and after 1896, mea kōkua reappear in the register. Ultimately, the Board of Records archives and related legislation testify to utter lack of comprehension over mea kōkua and the repeated failures of segregation policies and rules on these subjects whose very existence resists the western framework of disease, stigma, and forced Kanaka Maoli separation.

Yet, even as I have analyzed the Board of Health archives and the critical work accomplished by historians and anthropologists including Kerri Inglis, Anwei Law, Pennie Moblo, and RDK Herman, I emphasize how they exclusively interpret the colonial record according to their own stakes and objectives. In other words, these scholars are invested in the reconciliation of the colonial archive and recuperating the lived existence of incarcerated leper patients, mea kōkua, settlement physicians, religiously-affiliated helpers, and the alternative histories that can be unearthed from the archives and utilized in service of an Indigenous-centered history. The historical and anthropological disciplinary aims demand the reading of the colonial archive and the Board of Health documents and require an archaeological approach that pieces the fragments of leper patients, mea kōkua, and other participants in the segregation

policies in order to provide alternative perspectives to reveal constructed narratives of those silenced by western colonial history. Clearly these histories are needed and help to do the work of resisting the past and current state of U.S. colonization in Hawai‘i; the pervasive Father Damien ideology as Moblo describes in collusion with U.S.’s overthrow of the Hawaiian Kingdom exist to silence Kanaka Maoli history of leprosy segregation.⁴⁰ Furthermore, it is precisely the regulations and Board of Health’s attempt to control the disease that allows for insight into the limitations of the colonial archive and the impossibility to maintain any type of purely isolated community. Hawai‘i leprosy scholars invested in public health, global health policy, and post-colonial investments in assessing the colonial and imperial histories of segregation and isolation tactics produce an entire field invested in reading and promoting interpretations of the governance of disease. The subjective nature of these histories is crucial in regulating the boundaries of fictive imaginings where both the construction of history and narrative testify to the regimes of power involved in these processes.

Moloka‘i and its Literary Imaginary

Brennert’s *Moloka‘i* focuses on a wide range of characters throughout the young protagonist’s entire process of incarceration as leprosy patient from being held in Kalihi hospital on O‘ahu to being banished to Kalaupapa and after her release when she returns to Oahu as the book spans almost 200 years. As a historical saga, Brennert’s novel has seemingly dual objectives in providing an alternative and personalized Kanaka Maoli experience of leprosy through Rachel as well as simultaneously accounting for Indigenous perspectives on U.S. interests in Hawai‘i. The historical trajectory of the novel would suggest the aesthetic possibilities of imagining beyond and out of dominant histories as Brennert includes the

⁴⁰ See Moblo, Pennie. "Blessed Damien of Moloka‘i: The Critical Analysis of Contemporary Myth." *Ethnohistory* 44.4 (1997): 691-726. Web.

multitudes of individuals involved in the implementation and perpetuation of the settlement from physician doctors, superintendents, Father Damien as well as other missionaries, kama‘āina, and mea kōkua. Even though Brennert introduces the settlement with a mea kōkua and immediately allows for the visibility of this role, the novel mirrors the centering of Kanaka Maoli in historiographies. In other words, the depiction of mea kōkua is produced through the recovery and restoration of an Indigenous figure to narrative. This means Brennert is inherently limited in how to imagine a literary representation of leprosy that goes beyond the fragmented archive itself and the interpretations of that history. Inclusion of mea kōkua and a focus on Kanaka Maoli leprosy experiences are merely demonstrations of the boundaries of the historical limit of imagination. Interspersing a minor character as a mea kōkua does demonstrate Brennert’s commitment to “tell the story of the ordinary people who had to make such heartbreaking sacrifices” (2005), but is still meshed in the call towards a sentimental tragic portrayal of this history. By having a mea kōkua, Haleloa, greet the young protagonist Rachel at the landing dock at the settlement, Brennert immediately provides representation that both legitimizes these individuals and demonstrates the conflicts over them. Haleloa is introduced as Pono’s friends as well as being a “*kahuna lapa‘au* – a healer” (Brennert 60). This ostensibly is a different designation than a mea kōkua who could have been a kahuna, but was never documented in the Board of Health records as such as it further exceeded the western classification system.

Identifying Haleloa as a kahuna operates on two conflicting levels where Brennert seems to want to elevate her Indigenous knowledge as well as potentially conflating two terms. A “kahuna lapa‘au” means a medical practitioner and specifies a particular form of medical experience where as a “mea kōkua” is understood as a helper. Keri Inglis explains how Kamehameha the V merged western scientific beliefs with “the establishment of the Papa Ola

Hawai‘i (Hawaiian Board of Health) in 1868 and the licensing of kahuna lapa‘au (medical practitioners)” (79). Inglis states that the kahuna lapa‘au were primarily intended to provide medical care to Kanaka Maoli outside of urban areas, but this licensing and ordering of medical practice stands out in the aftermath of the Act of Leprosy in 1865. The influx of foreign diseases and the beginning of segregation policy form the background for the emergence of kahuna lapa‘au. Inglis also suggests how Kanaka Maoli “resisted the isolation policy...Some resisted the authorities by encouraging patients to refuse prescribed medicines and instead rely upon God, or upon the abilities of kahuna la‘au lapa‘au” (100). Classifying the work of licensed Indigenous medical practitioners as resistance adds another category of individuals that emerge as intimately associated with western disease and control. Inglis also documents how “many kahuna lau‘au lapa‘au expressed their desire to share their knowledge and to care for the diseased...many received permission from the Board of Health to treat leprosy patients, though most were in Honolulu” (172-173). In identifying the subversive status of kahuna lau‘au lapa‘au (medical practitioner who specializes in the use of plants), Inglis emphasizes their assistance at holding centers and hospitals, but not at the Moloka‘i settlement.

Yet, in the 1886 Proceedings of the Hawaiian Legislative Assembly, the settlement superintendent Ambrose Hutchinson was asked about Dr. Mouritz’s work and how there were issues with kahunas on Moloka‘i. Hutchinson is asked if there are kahuna at the settlement and he responds, “Kahunas! Yes; nearly everybody is a kahuna” (375). While this Hutchinson description is limited, it does demonstrate the real possibility of his lack of distinction between mea kōkua and kahuna lau‘au. This incoherence around perhaps the classification of mea kōkua as only a helper instead of medical practitioner can be understood in the register of kōkuas as not designating any medical background. However, it is crucial to note how segregation policies

over leprosy often reflected the political climate and the growing power of the businessmen involved in the 1887 Bayonet Constitution. Jonathon Osorio emphasizes how in 1890 “dominated by the haole Reform party members, the legislature steadily divested itself anything appearing to support the native culture. Within the first two weeks of the session the legislature abolished...the Hawaiian Board of Health” (249). While this chapter’s overall aim is not to meticulously trace out the intersections of the fraught politics between and among Kanaka Maoli and American businessmen, the entire leprosy policy of segregation was subject to this legislature. The Hawaiian Board of Health certified kahuna lau‘au and demonstrated a compromise of regulating Kanaka Maoli medical practitioners as legitimate enough to assist with foreign-brought disease. Yet, it only lasted for 22 years and its disappearance was directly tied to foreign political and economic investment in Hawai‘i. This background contextualizes how to interpret Haleloa as a “kahuna lau‘au” over a mea kōkua and the conflation of the terms suggests the ambivalence over the specific term that is mirrored in the archive’s confusion.

Brennert’s inclusion of mea kōkua as a possible equivalent of kahuna lau‘au is exactly a demonstration of the Board of Health, reports on the settlement, and even Inglis’ interpretation of these figures; they exist in the archive and become central to narratives of history and representation in the literary realm. Even if Brennert’s intent is to use Haleloa as indicative of the narrative of mea kōkua, this aesthetic representation is regulated through the colonial archive. Haleloa explains how she came to the settlement, “Since eighteen hundred and seventy. My husband, Keo, was a leper, and I came to take care of him. By the time he died, I had the disease myself” (Brennert 63). This trajectory initially starts off as coming to kōkua her husband, but Haleloa ends up with leprosy as well and continues live at the settlement for another 23 years. She does not identify herself as a kahuna lau‘au nor a mea kōkua and when asked about being a

kahuna, she simply acknowledges that she tries to help sick people. This self-narrative reflects the ledgers of mea kōkua who accompanied one loved one and then continued to stay at the settlement. In this sense, Brennert is picking up on the records of mea kōkua who voluntarily stayed, remarried, or at least found other individuals to kōkua. While initially, Haleloa's story might seem an alternative to the colonial archive, Brennert is actually just reproducing an example found throughout the kōkua ledgers in the Board of Health records. Chronologically, it is possible that she was certified within the first two years of the Hawaiian Board of Health as a kahuna lau'au, but what is more significant is how role of helping as conflating the two categories in service of assisting the settlement. Ultimately, Haleloa's position can be read as both mea kōkua and kahuna lau'au; Brennert is less invested in the particular value in differentiating these roles similar to westerners in the 19th century trying to identify the roles of individuals at the settlement.

What becomes clear is how Brennert's historical narrative depicts Haleloa as ambiguously either or both mea kōkua and kahuna lau'au. Haleloa's representation in the literary landscape does not imagine itself out of the constraints of the Board of Health ledgers nor the regulations regarding mea kōkua. Instead, Brennert adds in a marginalized figure from the archive and potentially the most transgressive through a mea kōkua, but is unable to convey much depth to her character. Consequently, this can be read as a replication of mea kōkua from the archival ledgers where the fictional representation is equally limited. This is a key shortcoming of narrative for Brennert and indicates the epistemological work of the history as a mode of regulation of the literary possibilities. Hutcheon's discussion of the work of the historiographic metafiction helps isolate the relationship between history and literature with a discussion of how "novels whose self-reflexivity works in conjunction with their seeming

opposite (historical reference) in order to reveal both the limits and powers of historical knowledge. To challenge history or its writing is not to deny it either” (223). In connecting this idea to *Moloka‘i*, Brennert’s self-reflexivity occurs through the mirroring of the kōkua ledgers in Haleloa’s narrative of her role on the settlement. This example works to show the limits of history in its reliance on incomplete and colonial records while simultaneously reflecting the epistemology of historical knowledge in Brennert’s replication of the archive. These subtle nuances appear contradictory, but they highlight the constructed quality of both the past and the literary while also highlighting the regulative component of history on aesthetic representation.

Brennert’s representation of mea kōkua extends to the process of application as Rachel’s parents consider their options when she is sentenced to exile and continues to raise questions about the limits of fictional representation as structured through its related history. Ultimately, the demonstration of familial love and Indigenous kinship in wanting to kōkua their daughter could be argued is enough to add to destabilize the dominant colonial archive. However, the desire for individuals to kōkua versus the reality of the situation of accompanying their daughter does not provide any new insights into the structure of kōkua petitions. Brennert explains, “In the end, the bleak truth was that neither of them could go, even if the government allowed it, which, as Ko‘olau could have told them, increasingly did not. The only consolation –more consolation than many a family had – was that Pono [her uncle] was already on Moloka‘i” (53). Building out the complications of being able to financially kōkua Rachel as well as the Board of Health’s restrictions, Brennert laments the tragedy of isolation policies that forcibly separated families.

As a result, Brennert capitalizes on the familial grief and heartbreak involved in legislative segregation, but can only describe how the parents are unable to even write a petition to kōkua. In looking at the Board of Health’s petitions to kōkua, the documents follow standard

rhetoric that simply state, “By the order of the Board of health, the bearer _____ has permission to go to the Leper Settlement as kokua to _____, a leper at the said Settlement, and to remain there with _____, subject to the rules and regulations of the Board governing the Leper Settlement” (BOH Outgoing Letters Volume 3). Without any explanation for the acceptance of a kōkua, the documents follow a particular genre. Similarly, the rejections also employ the same format along the lines of, “Your petition to go the Leper Settlement, as kokua to your wife/husband/child _____, was laid before the Board of Health at a meeting held this day, and after due consideration, the same was denied” (BOH Outgoing Letters Volume 5). Similar to the rhetoric used in kōkua acceptance letters, the standard rejection states no concrete reasons for the denial of the petition. This lack of explanation and the identical structure of the two types of forms continues to emphasize the bureaucratic nature of the Board of Health whose priority is purely administrative and financial. Not only do the responses to petitions foreclose an understanding of the procedural steps of acceptance or denial, but they also reveal the automatic function of governmental power. The colonial archive simply does not contain all the information or rationales behind decisions about kōkua, and so that information is not documented. Given that Rachel’s parents ultimately decide not to even petition to kōkua her, Brennert has no opportunity to imagine what sort of letter they would write to plead their case. This forecloses the potential for Brennert’s literary imaginary to rupture the historical archive. An obvious assumption would be that this would allow Brennert to build off an actual petition from the Board of Health’s incoming letters and utilize the Hawaiian language. Or Brennert could create a new petition that is produced not through the colonial archive, but through fictive imagination. Including the Board of Health’s presumable denial of the petition would also have allowed Brennert to innovate beyond the limited format of the rejections. However, Brennert’s

novel is unable to imagine out of the bureaucratic structure of the Board of Health and the regulations of individuals as either administrative entities or as tragic parents. These boundaries of aesthetic production are made visible in these subtle ways that can easily be misread as simply playing up the lamentable situation of the Kalamas who cannot afford to consider petitioning to kōkua their daughter. What the Board of Health records help make visible is how the narrative itself is epistemologically narrated by the regulations of the historical fragmented narrative; this does also reveal itself in the sentimentality of the loss of Rachel to the settlement.

In looking at the Board of Health's petitions for mea kōkua, the documents follow standard rhetoric from petitioners with names and individual intended to kōkua. Similarly, the rejections are without any explanation (Board of Health Outgoing Letters Vol. 3). This lack of reasoning and the identical structure of the forms exemplifies the bureaucratic nature of the Board of Health adjudicating mea kōkua as well as once again, documenting the acceptance of kōkua. Law's work highlights some kōkua petitions including Jonathan Napela's 1873 request: "I do humbly petition the Board of Health in their kindly parental affection to consent that I live with my wedded wife, as a kokua, for these reasons" (81). Here, the appeal to the supposed benevolence of the Board of Health is made clear in Napela's reference as a "parental affection." This subservience is because Napela had been made assistant superintendent when his wife was sent to the Settlement, but was discharged because he "had given rations to the mea kōkua," (Law 77). Napela had to petition the Board of Health to stay on as a mea kōkua and was granted permission. Still, this historical example signifies two key points: 1) Napela was a respected Mormon and a descendant of ali'i who worked for the Board of Health. 2) His negligence was a result of resource allocation to mea kōkua. Thus, Napela was a noted figure and visible in the

archive, but his attention to the necessity of *mea kōkua* brought him down, even as he chose to continue to make Kalaupapa his home within exile.

Given the imbrication of the historical narrative with the literary one, the reference to Ko‘olau in relationship to the Kalamas’ inability to petition to *kōkua* demonstrates Brennert’s attention to the history of resistance to enforced leprosy segregation. In 1892, Kalauiko‘olau, also known as Ko‘olau, refused to go to Moloka‘i unless his family could accompany him as *mea kōkua* where the governmental search for him “was the embodiment of the new government’s [the overthrow of the Hawaiian monarchy by a group of American businessmen] intolerance for Hawaiian agency” (Inglis 91). Ko‘olau operates simultaneously as a key figure of resistance to segregation policies, as read by Inglis and other historians, as well as exemplifying western fears of rebellious Kanaka Maoli who were dangerous. Brennert uses Ko‘olau as a negative example for the Kalamas to lament their helplessness against the Board of Health, which perpetuates these western interpretations of the resistance of Ko‘olau to submit to Sheriff Stolz’s authority. Brennert writes how Stolz “flatly refused [to allow his family to *kōkua* him], despite the fact that there was a long custom of allowing healthy spouses (though not children) to go to Moloka‘i as *kokuas* – helpers” (51). This historical example of resistance to the Board of Health operates as Brennert’s introduction of the idea of *mea kōkua*. Emphasizing the violence that occurred later when Ko‘olau killed Sheriff Stolz, Brennert capitalizes upon the western fears of Indigenous resistance. Thus, the novel uses Ko‘olau as a warning for the Kalamas and as historical testimony to the impossibility of resistance. Brennert essentially reiterates the same ideology of the Board of Health. This example is also indicative of not simply Brennert’s reliance on the past, but also how history forcefully provides the parameters of his literary representation. The novel merely defines *mea kōkua* and uses history as a justification for the

probability of denial of the Kalama's application to become *mea kōkua*. The "bleak truth" Brennert narrates is the probable rejection of their petition given the inconsistency and lack of explanation around these requests. This representation is thus limited in its depiction of the sorrow families experienced on the sentencing of loved ones to social death; this occurs in a way that is unable to move beyond the dramatic "revolt" of Ko'olau. Brennert reconstructs the past as according to historical records and overlays the events with a sense of accepted defeat without finding alternative ways to aesthetically imagine these figures or events.

Importantly, Brennert contextualizes this section on Ko'olau's failed resistance with events leading to the overthrow of Queen Lili'uokalani and its aftermath. This seems as though the novel is invested in providing a critical lens into imagining the impact on leprosy segregation and individual Kanaka Maoli experiences, but the historical documentation is overlaid in sentimentalism and pathos. To provide the historicizing of Ko'olau's story does allow for these political connections since Inglis argues how this "was not simply against the 1865 law to isolate those suffering from leprosy that would take loved ones from their families and homes, they were also demonstrating their resistance against the newly formed provisional government and all it stood for (i.e., the aspirations of conspiring foreigners" (94-95). Intimately connecting segregation resistance to the political landscape, Inglis successfully interrogates the colonial dominant history of leprosy policy. She continues, "Concerned with annexation of the Hawaiian Islands by the United States, the provisional government promoted a strict observance of the isolation policy...the hunt for Kaluaiko'olau and his family was the embodiment of the new government's intolerance for Hawaiian agency" (95). Emphasizing the need to suppress leprosy and any Kanaka Maoli resistance, Inglis argues how to jointly consider the two as exemplifying the dominance of American interests.

In this sense, this chapter is not arguing that historical analysis of the colonial archive is necessarily more persuasive in connecting Indigenous resistance to leprosy segregation tactics, but that Brennert's explicitly and well-intentioned historical novel struggles to convey its position. Furthermore, the heavy-handed sentiment reads as a lament for the demise of the Hawaiian Kingdom as unrecoverable. Henry's heartbroken response to the inability for either parent to apply to kōkua Rachel testifies to the novel's inescapable fixation with tragedy. Brennert writes, "He [Henry] wept inconsolably, mourning a girl still alive, wishing that his skin would erupt in hideous sores so that he might yet accompany her to Moloka'i" (53-55). The suggestion of "mourning a girl still alive" exemplifies how incarceration meant social death and how a father can be preemptively grieving the loss of his daughter. This sentiment concurrently indicates the emotional consequences of segregation and the heartbreaking toll on families. Yet, this unbearable grief also reads as hyperbolic in the extreme desire for Henry to contract leprosy himself and comes through the description of "hideous sores." It is not that his daughter has "hideous sores," but that he defiantly wishes to have the visible identifying elements of the disease. What this focus on skin lesions reveals is the novel's limitations for understanding the disease from a non-western or Indigenous perspective. Instead, Brennert plays up the western fears of skin lesions as the visible horror of the illness. Even as characters express the tragedy of isolation and the loss of a child, the overblown theatrics and western fixation on physical identifiers of disease as stigma interrupt the narrative potential for Kanaka Maoli perspectives.

Brennert infuses his narrative with a sense of stylized loss especially in his first mention of leprosy in order to add to create a sense of inarticulate grief that adds to the dramatizing of the history and continuously is in line with historiographies centered on the recuperation of Kanaka Maoli to the past. The use of a child's perspective allows Brennert to situate his audience in what

appears a more empathetic position to feel the magnitude of horror and sorrow Rachel experiences. As a result, the narrative plays on the reader's emotions to reckon with the trauma of the isolation policy while also maintaining an aura of foreignness to the processes. This distance between characters and disease evokes Priscilla Wald's arguments on how contagion narratives "promote or mitigate the stigmatizing of individuals, groups, populations, locales (regional and global), behaviors, and lifestyles and they change economies" (3). Wald emphasizes the influence of these accounts of disease and their effects on how infections are socially understood as well as scientifically and fictionally through repeated plot development and rhetorical devices that mark outbreaks. She points out how a repeated trope involves "the metamorphosis of infected people into superspreaders is a convention...in which human carriers rhetorically (or, in some of the fiction, literally) bring the virus to life" (4). This demonstrates the power invested in the outbreak narrative and how individuals, characters or actual patients, disseminate disease and social consequences. While Hawai'i's history with leprosy and isolationist policy does not historically fall in Wald's scope of her study, Brennert's contemporary 2003 novel does. Wald points out how the outbreak narratives "register the influence of earlier accounts of plagues and theories of contagion, contemporary scientific explanations and concerns...[and] are critiques of socioeconomic inequities and titillating tales of apocalyptic struggles with primordial earth demons...and hopeful tales of timeless renewal" (10). This conveys how Wald marks the historical and cultural trajectory of contagion narratives and how they play into repeated themes of a contextualized fight between representative "good" and "evil" that dramatizes each side. In this sense, the production of disease develops out of a culmination of social order, morality, and science. The literary iterations capitalize on the

disorder disease brings and allows for the “hopeful tales of timeless renewal” that Brennert’s *Moloka‘i* aptly upholds.

The opening of Brennert’s novel immediately testifies to the contradictory nature of the social death that accompanied segregation as well as demonstrating the incoherence around the policies regulating isolation. Rachel and her parents are at Honolulu Harbor when:

...as though someone were taking their secret thoughts, their hidden grief, and vocalizing it, there came – from the pier immediately ahead – a terrible, anguished wail. It was not one voice but many, a chorus of lament; and as the cry died away, another promptly began, rising and falling like the wind. It was, Henry and Dorothy both knew, not merely a wail but a word: *auwe*, Hawaiian for ‘alas.’ *Auwe! Auwwayy! (Alas!).* (16)

Brennert describes the mysterious collective “chorus of lament” that is likened to a funeral. Importantly, Brennert focuses on the visceral sounds of the wailing, “rising and falling like the wind” in order to emphasize the consistency of loss. Brennert’s demonstration of grief is not only mysterious for Rachel, but more importantly also tries to capture the magnitude of a collective social death coming from leper patients being sent away to Moloka‘i. Brennert continues:

Moored off Pier 10 was a small, decrepit interisland steamer, the *Moloka‘i*. A distraught crowd, sighing their mournful dirge as a procession of others – young and old, men and women, predominantly Hawaiians and Chinese – were herded by Chinese onto the old cattle boat. (16)

Similar to the first mention of the leper patients, Brennert paints a dismal image of the individuals regulated to the “decrepit” boat. Brennert is heavy handed in his descriptions that speak to the complete social death and forced isolation of these people. One of the key elements in this introduction to those afflicted with leprosy and the trauma of isolation is how Brennert

includes the double layers of witnessing through the crowd and the Kalama family. The mournful goodbyes coupled with the repetition of wailing enact what Cathy Caruth identifies as the need to "...bear witness to a past that was never fully experienced as it occurred [and] that is not yet fully owned" (151). Here, Brennert can be seen as demonstrating this form of witnessing and marking of the painful separation of individuals with leprosy sentenced to social death. The idea that this history of leprosy "was never fully experienced as it occurred" does not mean that Kanaka Maoli were emotionally immune to these events, but that the imperial archive and narrative prevents the full acknowledgment of this trauma. Consequently, Brennert's 21st century novel attempts to imagine and "bear witness" to this elided history of loss.

The Kalama family serves as observers and participants to the stigmatization of these individuals condemned with leprosy. Elizabeth Freeman explains that "what has not entered the historical records, and what is not yet culturally legible, is often encountered in embodied, non-rational forms: as ghosts, scars, gods" (159). As a result, Freeman's discussion of ghosts could be read in the level of grief of the crowd and how this form of social death is given historical legibility through Brennert's narrative. In this sense, the culturally illegible is embodied in the muted experiences of leprosy patients and the violence of separation policies that demanded the social death of individuals as Brennert observes how "the crowd that mourned for them as though they were already dead" (17). This conveys the extreme sentencing to death with their families already viewing them as dead. In the proclamation of being sent to Moloka'i, Freeman's concepts of how ghostliness allows for the entrance into the historical archive of what is disavowed gives credibility to Brennert's narrative attempts to witness these events. These processes do not show up in the colonial archive beyond statistics, valuation, and surveillance, and so Brennert's novel imagines how to represent these losses and emotional violence through

these haunting laments. Brennert seemingly gives representation to what Inglis describes as “ma‘i ho‘oka‘awale ‘ohana, or the disease that separates family,” which she emphasizes how “Native Hawaiians did not name the disease for what it physically did to their bodies, but rather for what it did do to their ‘ohana [family]” (35). Inglis effectively demonstrates not only the difference from Kanaka Maoli perceptions on disease from westerners, but also highlights the critical consequence of leprosy as that which separates family and thus, is the cause for suffering. In Brennert’s reliance on the haunting ghostliness of laments, his representation of leprosy gives space to the magnitude of grief inflicted by segregation, but also simultaneously capitalizes on the spectacle of stigma and mystery enshrouding the individuals being sent away.

While Brennert’s novel ostensibly imagines the experiences of individuals suffering from leprosy and portrays the experience of forced segregation, it is also highly invested in the political and cultural changes in Hawai‘i from 1891 – 1970. The culmination of historical saga rift with U.S. involvement and overthrow of the Hawaiian monarchy along with changing segregation policies, racial paradigms, global economic and military interests, and conceivably almost a century of events flood the historical archive and literary narrative. Through reckoning with the figure of mea kōkua as represented and fractured in the Board of Health archives, I demonstrated how historians have read the incomplete colonial records and the ways in which mea kōkua assisted in historical interpretations. This has allowed me to argue for the fiction of a universal history of leprosy segregation in the fractured Board of Health archives. Instead, the colonial archive is subject to narrative and the historical imaginary that can never capture an “authentic” or complete account. As such, mea kōkua offer an optic into both the production of this historical imaginary and Brennert’s literary imaginary to testify how both are organized by U.S. knowledge production. With the pretense of being a historical novel, Brennert establishes

the intent of telling an “alternative” and perhaps subalternized versions of the colonial archive that works to expose the machinations of imperialism, giving room to those oppressed and repressed fictional representation. However, the narrative itself regardless of intention, consistently pushes up against the parameters of its own history and cannot escape both the dramatization of events and the sentimentality of character portrayals. In other words, the literary imaginary mimics the limitations of the colonial archive in representing meā kōkua and an Indigenous account of leprosy segregation that does not echo sentimentalism and the perceived tragedy of certain social and material death. Here, U.S. empire functions explicitly in the Board of Health colonial archives and in the literary imaginary to exemplify the persistence of how knowledge production is bounded by interpretive modes.

Chapter 3: Producing ‘Local’ Settlers out of Asian ‘Migrants:’ The Process of Belonging through Labor and Love

Chapter three builds off the frameworks established in chapters one and two that demonstrated the ways U.S. empire organizes Indigeneity through land dispossession and the management of disease. This chapter extends and moves this discussion to examine the relational racialization of Asian migrants into “local” settlers as part of the project of U.S. imperialism. By developing this dissertation’s genealogy of how U.S. empire functions historically and through cultural memory, I mark how this chapter pivots to meditate on the construction of the category of the “local,” as derived out of the need for migrant racialized labor that often becomes the substitute for Kanaka Maoli. Through delineating how this subject-making process occurs and the inherent violences that obscure U.S. colonialism and racial capitalism, this chapter focuses on the second major component of my project’s argument where Hawai‘i operates as a site of comparative racialization between Indigeneity and Asian migrants. Since my first two chapters chronologically identified two historical flashpoints of U.S. empire in the 19th century in conjunction with Kanaka Maoli dispossession and social death, chapter three advances my argument through the 20th century and the mass importation of Asian labor. In suturing Asian migration with Asian settler colonialism and the making of the “local,” I argue for the necessary correlative analysis of U.S. empire’s mode of knowledge production through relational racialization. Even as this chapter appears to extensively mediate on Asian migration, this is equally relevant in establishing how imperial apparatuses shape historical and literary imaginaries. In particular, this chapter elucidates the collusion of U.S. imperial and liberal-state orders to produce the “local” as the presumed assimilated Asian migrant where the history of Kanaka Maoli dispossession and capitalist demands for labor are mutually erased to uphold the myth of multicultural harmony in Hawai‘i. Cultural memory through literary narrative, I

theorize, offers an opportunity to make visible how these violent processes are perpetuated and the strategies of refusal that can emerge within the confines of the literary imaginary.

This chapter argues that the literary imaginary is narrated through imperial epistemologies by examining how the presumption of Asian settler colonialism obscures the conditions of labor and migration for Asian immigration to Hawai‘i in the late 19th to mid-20th century. Asian settler colonialism offers a regulated form of Asian assimilation that continues to support U.S. imperial and national aims by erasing how the conditions of colonialism and racial capitalism structure the possibilities of and demand for Asian migrant labor. By engaging multi-generational familial narratives that convey this assumed trajectory from immigrant to “local” settler, I convey both how the literary object upholds this process and can make visible the structuring apparatuses of U.S. empire. In order to reckon with Asian settler colonialism as a particular condition of U.S. imperialism and its continuity in the present, I emphasize the conflation of the term “local” with Asian settler to identify the discursive differences in claiming a regional-specific affiliation and explicitly engaging the ongoing condition of settler colonialism. Importantly, I distinguish how Asian immigrant labor history to the U.S. is not equivalent to the colonization of Kanaka Maoli. Thus, this chapter demonstrates the ways in which reckoning with Asian immigration and Asian settler colonialism makes visible how colonial and imperial epistemologies continue to regulate Indigenous and non-Indigenous subjects. To develop a genealogy of Asian settler colonialism as both a condition and an optic into imperial knowledge production, I exemplify how contemporary Asian immigrant narratives embody the American dream of self-made success. This literary imaginary is constructed through promoting successful Asian assimilation that elides the history of racialized labor that required Asian migration. I suggest that this is part of what Jodie Melamed might frame as a

racial liberal order intent on substituting Asian settler with Kanaka Maoli to uphold U.S. imperial and nationalist conquest in Hawai‘i.⁴¹ I argue how multi-generational familial narratives mimic and deploy cultural familiarity with Hawai‘i as the foundation of belonging to achieve assimilation as evidence of not only Asian settler colonialism, but also the significant liberal state orders that secure this dominance.

My selected novels exemplify the assimilation process that produces the historical Asian immigrant into “local” settler where the awareness of labor history both informs and escapes the narratives. This slippage between acknowledgment and erasure are indicative of the continual regulated occlusion of plantation history as a racialized labor institution. This narrative erasure demonstrates a liberal U.S. epistemology that requires a forgetting of the interracial labor coalitions, labor strikes, and the material conditions of racial capitalism that required cheap labor. As such, Asian settler colonialism comes to serve as a historical condition that hinges on the erasure of labor history and operates as a strategy to read how these literary narratives represent the processes of desirable Asian assimilation. The first novel I treat is Milton Murayama’s 2008 *Dying in a Strange Land* about the Oyamas, a Japanese-American family. This novel is the closing book to his series that begins with his 1975 *All I Asking for is My Body*. I argue that the way in which U.S. empire constitutes the literary imaginary is through its self-erasure. In other words, I argue that *Dying in a Strange Land* makes U.S. empire manifest

⁴¹ Melamed explains how post World War II and the Cold war brought about “the first official U.S. antiracism, achieved this through the framework that conceived of racism as prejudice and promised to release liberal freedoms from racial restrictions by extending equal opportunity, possessive individualism, and cultural citizenship to African Americans” (10). Importantly, Melamed’s genealogy of how white supremacy is remade into various state-recognized U.S. antiracisms means that “liberal antiracisms have not theorized literature or reading. Instead, they have simply presumed that the antiracist values ascribed to literature are immanent in literary texts themselves. In this way, liberal antiracisms have manufactured their own transparency. Such displacement and transparency may be thought of as characteristic of liberal modes of instituting power, where norms confer legibility and illegibility and seem to operate uncoercively, apolitically and in private” (16). As such, this mode of operating is precisely the mechanism I view at work in these narratives that produce Asian settlers.

through its failure to render invisible the shifting demands of U.S. national and global events. The multi-generational plot documents the transition from working-class immigrant to Asian settler through the comparison between the two oldest sons, Tosh and Kiyoo, where each son embodies and fails to uphold a complete process of “Americanization” into Asian settler. What I mean by “fails” is that the novel as a whole is unable to produce a coherent narrative of assimilation into the national subject position. This is particularly evident in how both Tosh and Kiyoo’s experiences as they are overly narrated through local, national, and global political and social events that interrupt a presumed smooth transition into Asian settler dominance. Murayama’s intense focus on national and global historical events informs every narrative development that often overwhelm the reader with extraneous context. Through what appears to be a sustained meditation on character development, I convey how this is constantly interrupted by an emphasis on geopolitical context that impedes Tosh and Kiyoo’s interiority; this also interrupts the reader’s investment in a perceived Asian racialization process. Therefore, Murayama’s form of overemphasizing geopolitical events minimizes character investment and growth. I read this as revealing how the literary apparatus is constructed through U.S. empire and the possibilities of rupture where the literature reveals how the apparatus operates. What this means is that the novel is a medium of remembrance as well as being the medium for observing the production of cultural memory. Therefore, extraneous geopolitical events subvert a narrative focus on character interiority and development. This allows for momentary breaks in the text, which simultaneously exemplify how the novel reconstructs U.S. empire and reveals how this operates as a structuring apparatus.

In contrast, my second example is Cecily Wong’s 2015 *Diamond Head*, which I read as being about the production and maintenance of cultural memory and Asian settler colonialism

where the literary imaginary operates to sustain U.S. empire. In other words, Wong's novel is the object of remembrance of producing the supposedly successful transition from Asian migrant to Asian settler. Here, gender does the work of cultural memory and locating how the literary object becomes the site and study the ways in which historical consciousness figures differently in narrative form. In the cyclical and gendered trauma that spans generations of the Leong women, Wong portrays how obtaining normative gender as Asian "settlers," is both assumed and always irresolvable. The women are constantly deterred and delayed in achieving normative gender because of the inextricable impasse of U.S. empire. In other words, Wong's novel upholds the incorporation of Asian migrants as "local" settlers through restructuring linear temporality and through the attainment of perceived normative gender. To clarify, I argue that gender operates as the site of obscuring the violences of U.S. empire that are enacted upon the Leong women's migrant and gendered bodies. The traces of the imperial imaginary are eclipsed into the cyclical multi-generational gender trauma faced by the Leong women. *Diamond Head* reads as a conscious celebration of Asian settler colonialism and assimilation even as the gendered cycle of trauma belies the incompleteness of the process of making Asian settlers.

This chapter demonstrates how the literary imaginary is constructed through Asian settler colonialism's assimilatory relationship of belonging to the land and language that derives out of and forgets plantation labor history.⁴² I focus on the comparative failed self-formation of the brothers, Tosh and Kiyo in *Dying in a Strange Land*, as they navigate the assimilation processes through racial and linguistic accommodation in contrast to their mother, Sawa. Importantly,

⁴² Ku'ualoha Ho'omanawanui explicitly makes this point in her article, "'This Land is Your Land, This Land was My Land,'" where she argues for the differential of both language, Hawai'i Creole English or 'olelo Hawai'i (Hawaiian language) and how this sets up contrasting genealogies and histories, particularly in a relationship to land. I will build off her comparisons later in the chapter, but she importantly argues how "local" authors stake a "claim for a genealogical connection to Hawai'i" that is in direct contrast to Indigenous cultural beliefs and practices to 'āina (120).

Murayama's novel utilizes Hawai'i Creole English as an indication of the language learned on the plantation. Still, Murayama's novel most effectively brings to light precisely the ways in which the U.S. apparatus of empire operates through literary texts by making these structures of knowledge production legible. Similarly, *Diamond Head* embodies the differential of class and gender that testify to the uneven processes of assimilation where gaining normative gender displaces the histories of matrilineal trauma. Even further, both narratives gloss over or dismiss the material conditions of colonized Kanaka Maoli on whose land and culture Asian settlers carve out their place as ideal assimilated citizens of Hawai'i. The unevenness of interpellation into "Asian settler" status as participatory in settler colonialism is made visible especially through gender roles, romantic relationships, and the search for individuality that override the material conditions of labor, class, and familial obligations.

Thus, the main question this chapter asks is: How do novels as the object and site of cultural memory mediate the past in order to situate the figure of the Asian migrant as an Asian settler capable of claiming a grounded "local" affiliation to Hawai'i that allows access to national belonging in place of Kanaka Maoli? I argue that through the contrasting depictions of immigration history as differentiated by class and labor relations, these novels exemplify the possibilities of acknowledging the functioning power of colonial and imperial legacies in Asian racial formation. But, their formulaic mirroring of assimilation and "Americanization" also reflects the limitations of these novels to resist the structure of domination inherent in colonial and imperial economic, political, and social relations. Similar to the continuous dispossession of Kanaka Maoli land, life, and culture, this chapter moves its focus on the similar yet radically different machinations involved in the cultivation of Asian immigrant to settler and "local" citizen in Hawai'i that occurs through the erasure of labor history which informs multi-racial

coalitions, language, and culture. By neutralizing the material conditions of capitalism that demanded wage labor, the celebratory nature of Asian immigration to Hawai‘i problematically assumes the guise of “Indigenous” belonging and it is this juncture in which Wong and Murayama situate their narratives.

In building out the development of Asian settler colonialism and its various critiques, I emphasize how both the concept and the critics insist on the centrality of Indigenous land dispossession as well as the coalitional possibilities to dismantle the violences of U.S. colonialism and the liberal state. Asian settler colonialism emerged in 2008 after critiques of Asian American studies and the idea of the “local” as representative of a multiethnic population and culture in Hawai‘i. Candice Fujikane and Jonathan Okamura’s emphasis on the “political power to colonize” is the defining tenant of Asian settler colonialism (7). My project expands upon this by considering how Asian settler colonialism operates through literary narrative where imperial epistemologies structure the aesthetic imagination. In building off Kandice Chuh’s salient critique of a nationalist model of Asian American studies, I situate her call for a subjectless critique⁴³ as a crucial entry point into how Asian settler colonialism contributes to the continued disenfranchisement and land dispossession of Kanaka Maoli in Hawai‘i. Through reframing the import of racial capitalism and the conditions produced on the plantation through a relationship to land, this chapter offers a genealogy of Asian labor to the Islands where the process of producing Asian settlers occurs not only through political and economic advancement, but is also perpetuated through contemporary literary narratives. In other words, literature become the optic into how imperial epistemologies denote the parameters of literary imagination through both being the object of this process and demonstrating how empire organizes this

⁴³ Chuh argues for a subjectless discourse where narratives provide “the conceptual space to prioritize difference by foregrounding the discursive constructedness of subjectivity” (9).

process where the emphasis on celebrating Asian assimilation into Asian settler hegemony is the only aesthetic trajectory available.

Theorizing Asian Settler Colonialism

This chapter uses the phrase “Asian settler colonialism” to identify both a theoretical intervention into settler colonial studies as well as an optic that needs to be resituated historically as tied to racial capitalism and immigrant labor to Hawai‘i. For this chapter and project, Asian settler colonialism names the processes that obscure the violence of racial capitalism that required migrant labor. While Asian settler colonialism might be read as ignoring haole settler colonialism, I suggest that this particular framing remakes U.S. imperial histories through the articulation of Asian settler hegemony. Therefore, Asian settler colonialism can be read as derived from imperial epistemologies that attempt to obscure U.S. colonization of Kanaka Maoli as it produces Asian settlers divorced from their migrant labor histories. As such, Asian settler colonialism operates to name these imperial processes that contribute to a colonial present. On the other hand, I theorize that naming Asian settler colonialism and its genealogy requires an explicit engagement with the violence of racial capitalism that informs labor and racial relations. This conveys how the violence of capitalism is in the forgetting the conditions of colonial and imperial labor that become the material and symbolic representation of Asian hegemony. As such, I read Asian settler colonialism as a formation that identifies the process of obscuring capitalist colonialist violence. What is explicit in my use of Asian settler colonialism is both the awareness of it as a divisive term and the demand to center racialized labor as part of the violence that exists within capitalist formations. Thus, the choice to use Asian settler colonialism as opposed to Asian racialization or settler colonialism speaks to an already existing theory and body of scholarship. By situating this chapter in conversation with this area, I acknowledge the

contentiousness that arose around Asian settler colonialism in the late 1990s and 2000s. I reorient Asian settler colonialism as a methodological apparatus that makes visible its own investments in imperial epistemologies. Importantly, the condition and heuristic of Asian settler colonialism is made visible through contemporary assimilation multigenerational narratives.

In both being part of imperial ideologies that seek to secure a visible “local” Asian population as part of the U.S. nation as well as naming the formation that elides colonial history, Asian settler colonialism necessarily operates as both a condition and optic. In positioning Asian settler colonialism as the condition that elides Asian racialization through labor and capitalism, I consciously invoke the historical challenges of situating this as a historical formation and an analytic. By expanding how Asian settler colonialism is understood, I aim to historicize the conditions of racial capitalism that required the mass importation of Asian labor that eventually develops into a presumed Asian settler hegemony. This emphasizes a historical genealogy of immigration to assimilation where the naming of settler colonialism invokes both U.S. and Asian (or settlers of color) dominance over Kanaka Maoli. I invoke Ann Stoler’s theoretical and methodological discussions of colonial histories through recursion as “both a mode of history making and a mode of historical analysis...[that] surfaces in both what is regarded as imperial aftermath and what is discerned as active imperial forms” (*Duress* 32-33) as facilitating how to reckon with Asian settler colonialism. Stoler’s use of recursion is to assist her reading of the colonial present when “colonial entailments that cling – vitally active and activated – to the present conditions of people’s lives” (*Duress* 25). Here, Stoler disrupts the ways to read the colonial present as she calls for strategies to navigate colonial effects and the persistence of imperial logics. In a similar manner, I suggest Asian settler colonialism provides a potential disruption of imperial epistemologies in how it is both formed as part of this genealogy and is

also visible through assimilation multi-generational Asian literary narratives. Stoler emphasizes how genealogy can be treated as a “working strategy” that “insists one more than a refusal to search for distilled origins. It attends to differential histories” (*Duress* 23). In other words, genealogy operates as a methodology that attends to the disruptive and multiplicity of events where Asian settler colonialism can be utilized as both a condition of imperialism and its optic to make visible this formation. Attending to the genealogy of Asian settler colonialism raises questions about discursive formations. I turn to Foucault when he suggests in *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, the necessity of the “phenomena of rupture, of discontinuity” (4) as a way to situate discursive formations. Therefore, in thinking of epistemological acts and thresholds that “suspend continuous accumulation of knowledge...they are the displacements and transformation of concepts,” Foucault signals the flexibility required to think through the histories of disciplines and knowledge formation as transformative (*Archaeology* 4). In this rejection of linear history, Foucault emphasizes the temporal quality of progression that must be confronted. In thinking through Stoler and Foucault’s methodological interventions into discursive formation and engaging with a colonial present, my reframing of Asian settler colonialism builds off these concepts. Again, this situates Asian settler colonialism as having the mobility to displace how the colonial present manifests even as it is indicative of the continuation of imperial epistemologies.

In demonstrating how Asian settler colonialism acts as the sign of the perpetuation of imperial regimes of knowledge and as the potential to reveal how this framing occludes the colonial condition, I build off of Candice Fujikane and Jonathan Okamura’s instrumental work that responded to Haunani-Kay Trask’s critique of both the political, economic, and cultural “local” Asian dominance. Trask asserts, “Hawai’i is a society in which the indigenous culture

and people have been murdered, suppressed, or marginalized for the benefit of settlers who now dominate our islands. Injustices done against Native people, such as genocide, land dispossession, language banning, family disintegration, and cultural exploitation, are not part of this intrasettler discussion” (*From a Native* 25). Here, Trask deliberately does not name the various settlers who participate in the continued subjugation of Kanaka Maoli, but highlights how intrasettler civil rights ultimately reinforce U.S. colonialism and nationalism. Trask further explicates in a later essay, “Settlers of Color and ‘Immigrant’ Hegemony,” how “politically, the vehicle for Asian ascendancy is statehood...[where] for our Native people, Asian success proves to be but the latest elaboration of foreign hegemony” (47). In further developing her argument, Trask identifies the rise of Asian, in particular Japanese, Chinese, and Filipino dominance through statehood that opened up their access to political and economic power. Trask’s critique notably raises the issues of alternatives to haole settler colonialism as she suggests a second wave of Asian hegemony following statehood.

This assertion is what Fujikane and Okamura directly address in their 2008 collection, *Asian Settler Colonialism*, that accounts for what is rendered a historically specific iteration of settler colonialism. They explain, “Asian settler colonialism can be said to commence with the arrival of the first Asian laborers who entered into Hawai‘i under the auspices of the white sugar planters’ Royal Hawaiian agricultural Society and occupied Native lands through colonial processes at a time when it was already a nation under siege by Western colonial powers” (8). What Fujikane and Okamura make clear though is that despite the conditions of capitalism that required migrant labor, their focus is more on the colonial structure of the plantation economy and its relationship to U.S. imperial policy. In marking the historical capitalist relationship to imported Asian labor, Fujikane and Okamura demarcate Trask’s assertions of how the plantation

economy develops into political and economic hegemony post-statehood. This question of the historicity regarding Asian settler colonialism is embroiled in how to view periods of settler hegemony where Fujikane and Okamura identify Asian settlers as those who have the “political capacity to colonize Hawaiians,” which indicates a “structural distinction between Natives and settlers” (7, 6). Through the emphasis on a political power and differentiated hierarchies of power, Fujikane and Okamura insist on the centering of U.S. dominance where Asian settlers are deemed complicit in perpetuating the oppression of Kānaka Maoli. Importantly, I expand on these definitions of Asian settler colonialism through establishing its genealogy where the initial importation of labor is indicative of racial capitalism and transforms through statehood and a liberal racial regime. As such, I suture Fujikane and Okamura’s historical articulations of Asian settler colonialism as developing through a capitalist colonial process that later emerges through a nationalist Asian hegemony. Furthermore, identifying the trajectory of Asian settler colonialism fails to reckon with the continuity of colonialism, and so I demonstrate how Asian settler colonialism is also an optic into the workings of imperial forms of knowledge.

This position expands on Dean Saranillio’s statements about the effects of settler colonialism and the necessity of engaging white supremacy as informing Indigenous oppression. Saranillio emphasizes the importance of “not to argue over who is and is not a settler, but rather to question the political and pedagogical work that settler colonialism does to open one’s visual world to the material consequences of aligning oneself with the settler state” (282). In critiquing the U.S. settler state and obliquely the work of white supremacy, Saranillio reorients Asian settler colonialism as a project that engages the force of settler ideology as it manifests through a myriad of practices historically. Saranillio explains, “Settler colonialism describes a formation of power that helps us to understand how difference does not necessarily lead to ‘either/or’

analyses,” thereby opening up the restriction of categories prescribed by both a white and non-white binary and an “Indigenous and non-Indigenous one” (28). In establishing a necessary focus on how power operates through settler colonialism and the settler state, Saranillio emphasizes how identifying the machinations of power is crucial in order to reckon with oppression. This acknowledgment supports part of what I am proposing as the duality of Asian settler colonialism as a condition and heuristic into the operations of power as linked to imperial epistemologies. If, as Saranillio suggests, one of the values of settler colonialism is revealing how it historically shapes and frames relationships of power, then I expand on how Asian settler colonialism further provides insight into the unequal power relations between and among Kanaka Maoli and Asian Americans. Thus, my conception of Asian settler colonialism expands upon the work of Trask, Fujikane, Okamura, and Saranillio by reorienting the historical genealogy that demarcates its transformation into a liberal racial regime as a condition of racial capitalist colonialism.

In rendering Asian settler colonialism as a condition that indicates the continuity of imperial epistemologies, I examine how it simultaneously operates as an optic into its own workings through assimilation narratives that occur in multi-generational familial novels. This allows me to demonstrate the force of liberal multicultural rhetoric in service of the U.S. nation-state that organizes the epistemologies that inform and influence literary narratives. Jodie Melamed explains how “race-liberal orders have construed and calculated difference in ways that restrict the settlement of racial conflict to liberal political terrains that conceal material inequality” (xvi). As such, the role of liberal antiracisms and literary studies operate as “privileged apparatus for knowing difference” where they organize “the terms of representational existence for *race* and *difference*” (xvi). Reading Asian settler colonialism and its literary narrations through a liberal racial regime makes visible the epistemological work operating

through *Dying in a Strange Land* and *Diamond Head*. This position is placed in conjunction with the centrality of racial capitalism and U.S. empire as the driving forces behind the importation of Asian labor in the 19th century. Here, Asian settler colonialism operates as a historical formation that emerges concurrently with the oppression of Kanaka Maoli under western colonization.

What becomes obscured is the trajectory of the Asian settler colonialism as it manifests after the plantation era and becomes a political and economic force before and after statehood. To develop an iteration of Asian settler colonialism attentive to the demand of labor is to situate racial capitalism at the center of U.S. colonial and imperial interests, whose violence persist in the latest forms of liberal multiculturalism and settler colonialism. Historically, the relationship of labor, capitalism, and Asian migration as indicative of racial capitalism is discussed through the advent of chattel slavery and its manifestations of unfree labor as in the case of coolieism. To position the genealogy of Asian settler colonialism at the contradictions surrounding coolieism opens up the centrality of labor and racialization to this formation.

Racial Capitalism through Coolieism

As I have now established my theorizing and utilization of Asian settler colonialism as a condition of the transformation of colonial and imperial epistemologies and as the sign to make visible these connections, I focus on how racial capitalism requires a racialized labor structure that informs Asian settler colonialism. Through reckoning with coolieism as a historical condition that impacts an understanding of capitalism's racialized labor force, I situate how coolieism destabilizes the guise of Asian settler colonialism as predicated on a post-World War II political power to colonize. To forget the determinative relations of racialized labor under racial capitalism allows Asian settler colonialism to be premised as an ahistorical iteration of 20th century foreign hegemony. Instead, I convey how identifying coolieism historically undoes the

expectation of how Asian settler colonialism emerged. Coolieism, as exemplifying capitalism's production of racialized labor, destabilizes Asian settler colonialism because of how the history of unfree labor is erased and diluted into an assimilatory narrative of immigration to citizenship. A focus on the historical condition of coolieism forces a confrontation with the impetus of migrant labor as integral to capitalism and undermines the liberal ahistorical positioning of Asian settler colonialism as a new development post-statehood in 1959. Candice Fujikane and Jonathon Okamura have acknowledged the colonial context of Asian migrant labor to Hawai'i as the start of Asian settler colonialism. But, I build out how this operates through showing the centrality of racial capitalism through coolieism where the emphasis on labor and race is exemplified. By further developing the integral and inextricable relationship between coolieism and Asian settler colonialism, I theorize Asian settler colonialism as a colonial condition premised on the violence of racialized labor. This uses the historical moment of coolieism as a way to undo the liberal narratives of immigration to citizenship that only emphasize exclusionary legislation as barring Asian immigrants from the nation. Coolieism reorients the context of Asian settler colonialism to the global trade of capitalism and sets the precedent for exclusionary access to citizenship for Asian immigrants, thus delineating the necessity of unfree labor to support the economy. In detailing the destabilizing impact of coolieism on Asian settler colonialism, I unpack the processes of forgetting the required conditions of racialized labor that capitalism demands. In doing so, I suggest how this also narrates the perpetuation of violence through capitalist formations that is instantiated by coolieism and transfigures into Asian settler colonialism as both the sign and optic into its processes.

I use Cedric Robinson's explanation of racial capitalism to foreground my theorization of Asian settler colonialism and to convey the central focus on labor and racialization that

establishes coolieism. Robinson asserts, “The development, organization, and expansion of capitalist society pursued essentially racial directions, so too did social ideology. As a material force, then, it could be expected that racialism would inevitably permeate social structures emergent from capitalism. I have used the term ‘racial capitalism’ to refer to this development and to the subsequent structure as a historical agency” (2). In situating race at the center of capitalism, Robinson calls into question Marx’s dialectic of class struggle and the emergence of the bourgeoisie where capitalism appeared to be entirely different from its predecessors. Even as Marx accounts for both Indigenous and chattel slavery in *Capital Volume 1*, there is a notable difference between free workers in charge of their own labor power and those who do not have control over their own means of production. Marx explains that in primitive accumulation there is a major difference between slaves and free workers.⁴⁴ Marx conveys, “Free workers, in the double sense that they neither form part of the means of production themselves, as would be the case with slaves, serfs, etc., nor do they own the means of production, as would be the case with self-employed peasant proprietors. The free workers are therefore free from, unencumbered by, any means of production of their own” (874). By distinguishing free workers as a new and distinct class, Marx simultaneously explains how slaves and contract labor do not count as “workers” in a capitalist sense because of their inability to control and own their labor power.

Even though slaves and serfs were part of the prior historical moment of labor, Marx views their lack of means of control as not part of capitalism and relegates these individuals to primitive accumulation, the pre-history of capital. Marx elaborates by saying, “The immediate producer, the worker, could dispose of his own person only after he had ceased to be bound to

⁴⁴ In my first chapter, I explicated my critique of Marx in relationship to primitive accumulation and Indigenous labor. For migrant labor and Asian settler colonialism, I shift my critique as it is not engaging the alternative temporality and colonial condition for ‘āina and Kanaka Maoli. Still, I maintain my sustained critique of the disregard of both Indigenous and racialized migrant labor through racial capitalism.

the soil, and ceased to be the slave or serf or another person” (875). But, this dismisses the concurrent and not just previous existence of slaves and contract labor (racialized and otherwise) where colonialism is not separate from the onslaught of capitalism. Robinson takes up a critique of Marx by centering the integral role of slave labor to the development of capitalism and implicitly, contract labor. In situating race at the center of capitalism, Robinson calls into question Marx and Engels’s dialectic of class struggle with the emergence of the bourgeoisie where capitalism appeared to be entirely different from its predecessors. Instead, Robinson identifies racism and nationalism as the crucial factors in the creation of capitalism where “difference” already operated. Pointing to chattel slavery and the figure of the “negro,” Robinson explicates how “now the ideograph of Blacks came to signify a difference of species, an exploitable source of energy (labor power) both mindless to the organizational requirements of production and insensitive to the subhuman conditions of work” (82). As such, the quantifiable and qualitative mode of analysis become how the figure of the “negro” is reduced to labor power and productivity. In both Robinson’s critique of Marx and his centralizing of black labor to capitalism, he establishes an alternative understanding of capitalism that demands raced labor. This is precisely how coolieism enters into the fray of racial capitalism and thus, becomes paramount for understanding how it undermines the recognized “origins” of Asian settler colonialism as from the 20th century.

In rendering coolieism as troubling the grounds for the geographical and temporal roots of Asian settler colonialism, I build off Moon-Ho Jung’s instrumental work that also undoes the false assumption that coolieism was separate and distinct from U.S. Asian migration. Given that “Asian immigrants in the US were not coolies; coolies, it is generally presumed, were Asians coerced into migrating to and working in the Caribbean” (MH. 4), Jung demonstrates how

“coolie” became a racialized category separate from continental narratives of Asian immigration. This process of racializing coolies is testament to the ways in which capitalism demanded racialized labor and then worked to erase its conditions of existence. In other words, the narrative of free labor coincided with the end of chattel slavery and acted as a way to herald migratory and voluntary labor, even if coolieism was not actually what purported to be. As Jung explains, “Coolieism was once again hailed as a free alternative to enslaved labor, a civilizing mission that benefitted the coolies as much as anyone else. Second, the institution of coolieism was assailed for its inhumane conditions and its inferior human subjects...new contradictory positions” (MH. 68). Here, the contrasting definitions of coolieism is delineated where it appeared as a celebrated alternative to coerced labor, but still suffered from oppressive conditions that undermined the notion of free labor.

In reckoning with the production of coolieism as “free labor,” the process of racializing coolies serves to trouble what voluntary and coerced labor meant in order to separate Asian workers from chattel slavery. Jung suggests how “Coolies were a conglomeration of racial imaginings that emerged worldwide in the era of slave emancipation, a product of imagination rather than the imagined” (MH. 5). This supports the production of coolies as simultaneously embodying free labor while also being racialized as indentured work. Jung’s examination of the production of coolies as part of American imperialism that operates centrally as Asian racialization testifies to not only resituating Asian immigrant labor in Louisiana as opposed to the west coast, but also shows the production of “free” immigrant labor. Jung conveys, “Coolieism became inextricably linked with emancipation, but not even the highest aspirations of numerous inquiry commissions and reform measures could erase its roots in ‘slavery and ‘apprenticeship’” (MH. 16). In demonstrating the linkages between coolie labor and slavery,

Jung highlights the slippage of free and unfree work where coolies embodied the contradictions inherent in emancipation. This testifies to the ambiguous production of coolies as forced labor and the ideological differentiation between coolies and “Asian immigrants.”

By focusing on coolieism at the onset of Asian settler colonialism, I highlight the contradictions in unfree labor being made into “immigrant” labor. This not only supports how labor and race operate under racial capitalism, but also reveals the process of rendering coolie labor into immigrant labor is indicative of the sleight of hand that produces an erasure of the conditions of colonialist capital impulses. In other words, by remaking coolies into immigrant “free” labor, or at least the guise of free labor, Asian workers became synonymous with a discourse of freedom divorced from chattel slavery and colonial conditions of oppression. This is particularly historicized and problematized in Hawai‘i’s labor shortage and the demand for cheap labor. In building the genealogy of coolieism as an optic into U.S. imperialism and capitalism, Jung effectively sutures the demands of labor to the contradictions of freedom and (Asian) racialization. Thus, by turning to understanding Asian labor in Hawai‘i, Asian immigration became the sign of the racial logic of emancipation where Chinese labor became the “free and voluntary labor” of immigrants, proving they were not coolies (MH. Jung 37). This slippage of free and unfree persists in how the sign of immigrant eclipses the coerced nature of coolie labor. This critical juncture situates how coolieism becomes the forgotten linkages of racial capitalism to Asian settler colonialism.

In order to produce a reckoning with Asian settler colonialism, I build how coolieism is represented as oppositional to immigrant labor, even as this continues to blur the boundaries of free and coerced migratory work. The combination of forgetting and substituting immigrant for coolie encapsulates the contradictory impulse in Asian settler colonialism as both grounded in

the history of immigration and as a post-World War II rise in political dominance. Through my situating of how coolieism destabilizes the historicism of Asian settler colonialism, I reckon with how the substitution of immigrant remade and categorized Asian migrant labor to both Hawai‘i and the continent. This repositions the function of the immigrant as always already determined to elide the background of racial capitalism and the production of racialized labor.

Racial Capitalism and Asian Immigration to Hawai‘i

The background of Asian immigration to Hawai‘i as contract labor informs the familial dynamics of both novels and speaks to how the assimilation process into Asian settler colonialism demands a forgetting of this history. The history of sugar plantations and required imported labor both informs and is obscured in *Dying in a Strange Land* and *Diamond Head*. Thus, the context of contradictory migration legislation and social relations are crucial to reckon with how these histories are represented in the novels. Through recognition of the concrete demands of racial capitalism through labor, the beginning of mass importation of Asian bodies to work the sugar plantations exemplifies how western influence post-Mahele altered Hawai‘i’s land usage. As identified in the previous chapter, the overhaul of Kanaka Maoli genealogical and reciprocal relationships to ‘āina became subject to western property relations and private ownership. In conjunction with the complete dispossession of Indigenous communal relations with ‘āina, the Mahele and Kuleana Act opened up land for mass commodification in the shape of sugar plantations. This strategic move to private property not only irrevocably altered Kanaka Maoli livelihood, but also heralded the beginning of the sugar plantation era and the boom of capitalism that instigated the need for cheap labor. As Gavan Daws explains, “As early as 1850 the question of bringing immigrant laborers to the islands was taken up by the newly formed Royal Hawaiian Agricultural Society...the national legislature passed an act ‘For the

Government of Masters and Servants” (179) to start bringing in contract labor, specifically Chinese. This law legalized labor contracts under apprenticeships and indentured service where “contract laborers were marginalized despite the Act’s liberal provisions” (Sur 87-88). Legal scholar Wilma Sur identifies the types of contract labor in the legislation where “the Act explicitly distinguished between immigrant and indigenous labor, allowing ten-year contracts immigrants, while limiting indigenous labor to five years...it symbolized the prejudice against immigrant labor embedded in the law” (91). Surprisingly, the difference in the length of labor contracts is seen as being in favor towards Kanaka Maoli where a shorter contract for Sur reads as Asian immigrant prejudice. While this interpretation points out unequal labor contracts, it also reveals the continued desire for sustained foreign labor. Still, Sur analyzes the question of how indentured labor fared under this law that ostensibly granted “full protection of civil liberties” (90). This immediately raises the question of eligibility for civil rights legislation and access at the start of Asian contract labor to sugar plantations. As such, the Masters and Servants Act hones in on the complications over citizenship, subject-making, and the figure of Asian immigrant as particularly tied to free and unfree labor and the unspoken replacement of immigrant instead of coolie.⁴⁵ As a result, the capitalist demand for labor reinscribed the racial, economic, and political dynamics in Hawai‘i through the mass importation of “immigrant labor” as opposed to exclusively “coolie labor.” I mark how the opening of Hawai‘i to contract labor is correlated with racial formation and eligibility for citizenship and the production of the Asian

⁴⁵ Edward Beechert addresses how the Masters and Servants Act bound contract employees so that they “were entitled to the full protection of their civil liberties by the judicial system” (42). However, the question of penal punishment made the act more complex in how there were “constant complains throughout the period of indentured labor of persistent abuse and whippings by overseers...the worker had little recourse in cases of abuses” (49). Beechert shows that despite amendments to protect workers and their contracts, the legal position of Hawaii “before annexation placed workers in a category outside the law” (56). Again, the confusion over Hawai‘i statutes as separate from the United States arises and Beechert concludes how the increase in the plantation economy demanded that “by the end of Hawaiian independence, the contract labor law, despite frequent amendments designed to protect the rights of the worker, had evolved into a system of servitude” (57).

immigrant as semantically differentiated from the “coolie.” This historical context is crucial to the chapter’s genealogy of Asian immigration to settler through the demands of racial capitalism and then, as a liberal racial order.

In building out the relationship of racial capitalism as informing Asian settler colonialism through the multiple forms of labor required by global capitalism, I focus on the relationship of Indigenous and immigrant sources of work as Hawai‘i’s plantation economy developed in the 19th century. This necessary labor becomes the history that is minimized in the explication of Asian settler colonialism, where its demand is integral to global racial capitalism. Thus, the building of Hawai‘i’s plantation economy is directly a result of colonial appropriation of Indigenous land and the transition to private property. Noenoe Silva effectively explains how the Mahele and land division as discussed in the previous chapter was instrumental in the building of the plantation economy. The ability for the purchase of private property of land “led to foreigners being allowed to buy large tracts of land on which they built sugar plantations” (Silva 48). In consideration of the culture and economy of sugar plantations, the complete overhaul of communal reciprocal relationships between Kanaka Maoli and ‘āina transformed dramatically. Private property not only implemented western capitalist valuations of land, but opened up land for the production and profit of sugar. Noel Kent identifies the similarities in sugar plantation culture where they were generally noted for “a heavy concentration of political and economic power in the hands of those in control of the plantation apparatus, a sharply stratified class structure with a strong racial and/or cultural component, and a concentration on one export to the metropolitan areas of North American and Europe” (36). This explicates how sugar plantation economies often dominate both the realm of politics and the management of the migration of

cheap labor. Thus, the development of sugar plantations and the rise of imported labor is directly a consequence of the Mahele and the turn to a capitalist form of property and values.

Importantly, the sheer numbers of Asian immigrants in the 19th to 20th century makes visible the contradictions of eligibility for citizenship where the demand for labor unsettled the social and ethnic relations in both Hawai‘i and the continent. In suturing how Asian settler colonialism forgets the capitalist colonial conditions of existence, the emphasis on exclusionary legislations highlight the uneven processes of Asian racialization. In reference to the U.S., Ron Takaki identifies how “about one million people entered between the California gold rush of 1849 and the Immigration Act of 1924, which cut off immigration from Asian countries” (7). This offers a general idea of numbers entering the U.S. as primarily migrant labor, but more significantly Lisa Lowe indicates the numerous forms of legislative exclusion that simultaneously occurred with “the exclusion of Chinese in 1882, of Asian Indians in 1917, of Koreans and Japanese in 1924, and of Philippine immigrants in 1934. It [immigrant acts] names the series of Asian exclusion repeal acts passed between 1943 and 1952, which dramatically changed the status of immigrants of all origins, from ‘aliens ineligible to citizenship,’ to that of citizen” (*Immigrant* 7). These exclusionary acts affected Hawai‘i even prior to the overthrow of the Hawaiian kingdom where westerners became aware of the influx of Asian immigrants and questioned their racial and political dominance. Jonathan Osorio elaborates, “By 1876, it was apparent that the presence of ‘Asiatics’ threatened the haole [white] monopoly on many things: commerce, land ownership, influence, and even sexual access to the natives...” (176). Despite these fears, the demand for contract labor persisted even as “the kingdom had begun to import laborers at a time when the recruitment of plantation workers was under attack...the United States Congress passed an act in 1862 prohibiting American citizens from carrying on the coolie

trade” (Osorio 181). Still, in 1862 Hawai‘i was an independent monarchy operating from the benefit of American advisors, but not subject to their legislation. This contradiction in free and unfree labor regulation encapsulates the semantic sleight of hand required to simultaneously allow coolie labor and disavow it.

The complex entanglements of political and economic power westerners wielded in Hawai‘i only increased as the sugar plantation economy continued to expand and require a flourishing Asian labor force. In the development of labor and race relations in Hawai‘i, the shifting political power of the capitalist colonial aims of the western-dominated government demonstrate the integral role of Asian immigrants to sustain a plantation economy. After the formation of a Planters’ Society in 1864, there was a need for “the creation of a Bureau of Immigration to superintend the importation of foreign laborers and to promote and encourage the introduction of free immigrants from abroad” (Kuykendall 128). Focusing on the necessity of labor aided the implementation of the Reciprocity Treaty in 1876 where the U.S. allowed Hawaiian sugar to be duty-free (Daws 202). Given the effects of western disease on Kanaka Maoli, “the kingdom needed population as desperately as the plantations needed labor. In the period of the reciprocity treaty the government spent more than a million dollars encouraging immigration” (Daws 211). What this shows is the overlapping influences of capitalism’s demands for labor driving the economic value of Hawai‘i’s sugar where the planters “wanted immigrants to be servile labor” (Daws 211). The need to produce immigrants into servile labor was precisely a result of the continued economic dominance of sugar and once again further complicates the barometer of free and unfree labor. Even in considering the “threat” of Asian immigrants to Hawai‘i testifies to the uneasiness around haole dominance as a consequence of colonization. Importantly, the presence of Asian labor marks both the requirement of labor to

perpetuate and profit from the sugar plantations while simultaneously making visible the racial tensions building with the haole planters and businessmen dominating the political arena.⁴⁶

Importantly, the combined effects of Asian immigrant labor as impacting and determining social racialized relations is indicative of the driving force of racial capitalism as producing the demand for labor. The overarching economic necessity to continue the business interests of the sugar plantations depended on sufficient labor. Osorio emphasizes how:

that fact that terminating immigration was not seen to be an option demonstrates the power of the economic ‘prosperity’ over the other political social considerations...there is a grotesqueness about this image of an expanded sugar industry churning out produce and profits while the people dwindled away to nothing. (178)

Osorio aptly conveys the sheer force of the plantation system where the need for labor overrode the survival of Kanaka Maoli and the kingdom. In the coalescing of western businessmen’s investment in the sugar industry with political dominance, imported labor became the avenue to pursue these dual aims. Even as the question of the morality of contract labor continued, missionaries were embroiled in the transition to the plantation economy. Silva points out how missionaries “commanded a powerful influence over government officials and worked as government agents...they and others, using their positions of influence and their capital, bought land previously farmed by maka‘āinana or subsistence and turned their land into plantations for the production of the cash crop sugar” (51). Here, missionaries seemingly became one and the same with western investors and businessmen. Still, other administrators recognized the

⁴⁶ Daws elaborates, “The Anglo-Saxon planters and their Anglo-Saxon friends at the islands, Americans, Britishers, and Germans had no doubt that the future was theirs. . .it was unthinkable that immigrant laborers from the Orient should ever share political power. And although the Hawaiian could not be denied his place in the kingdom it seemed to the planters, looking at them, that the native was unfit to govern himself” (213). This emphasizes not only the complete dominance of the Anglo-Saxon planters, but demonstrates the colonial mentality regarding the “natives” as unfit for self-governance and political autonomy.

problems with contract labor, even if the economics of a cash crop was appealing. The first commissioner of labor, William Hillebrand states, “the difference between a coolie [contract laborer] and a slave is only one of degree, not of essence” (Kuykendall 186). Hillebrand’s insight condemns the lack of distinction between contract labor and chattel slavery. Silva reminds how “the planters were exerting pressure on the mō‘ī to assist them with their two most pressuring difficulties: selling their sugar duty-free in the United States and ensuring a supply of cheap labor. Both of these pressures presented threats to Hawaiian sovereignty” (47). In these combined objectives, Silva explains how trade relations with the U.S. opened the path to annexation where the capitalist profit of sugar drove political, economic, and social agendas of the planters to influence Kamehameha IV (Alexander Liholiho) and his policies with the U.S.

The position of Asian immigrants within the political and social schema of 19th century Hawai‘i becomes more complicated after annexation to the U.S. in 1898 where racial exclusion becomes concrete. Prior to annexation, the Bayonet Constitution of 1887 not only irrevocably altered the power of the king and Kanaka Maoli governance, but also addressed the position of Asian immigrants. Importantly, the forcibly signing of the constitution meant “nearly total termination of an executive power or royal authority. For haole, it meant not only an enhanced representation in the legislature and control of the executive, it also retrieved their ability to define the nation and membership in it” (Osorio 240). This demonstrates the complete removal of the power of the mō‘ī, king, and importantly, the giving of power to haole to legislate national membership. As Silva describes, “The Bayonet Constitution created an oligarchy for the haole planters and business men” (126; Kauanui 27), thus consolidating power in the legislative cabinet. Importantly, access for Kanaka Maoli was dependent on “property ownership as a requirement” for voting and “this qualification eliminated most Hawaiians since few owned

property” (Kauanui 94). Prior to the 1887 Bayonet Constitution, voting rights and citizenship had been afforded to Asian immigrants where many Chinese in particular whether after their labor contract expired or as a result of marriage to Kanaka Maoli women “chose citizenship, swearing allegiance to the Crown and committing their lives and fortunes to the young nation [of Hawai‘i]” (175). In other words, Asian immigrants obtained citizenship after working out their contracts on the plantation and occasionally as a result of inter-marriage. This access to citizenship in Hawai‘i differs from the continental United States where “up until 1870, American citizenship was granted exclusively to white male persons;⁴⁷ in 1870, men of African descent could become naturalized, but the bar to citizenship remained for Asian men until the repeal acts of 1943-1952” (Lowe, *Immigrant* 11). Importantly, the differentiation between access to citizenship in Hawai‘i until annexation remains a critical component of this discussion in both demonstrating how haole planters’ interests and Kanaka Maoli sovereignty intersected with questions of Asian naturalization. The Bayonet Constitution thus exists as the first instance where “democratic rights were determined by race in any Hawaiian constitution” (Osorio 244).⁴⁸ This is crucial in how the changing political legislation directly shapes racial categories and eligibility for both naturalization and access to voter participation. In effectively barring “Asiatics, regardless of citizenship” (Beechert 83), they were “entirely disenfranchised as ‘aliens’” (Kauanui 27), from access to the legislature, the government became ruled by a

⁴⁷ The 1790 Naturalization law designated only white (males) could be naturalized (Lowe, *Immigrant* 181). Charles Gordon elaborates on how this designation meant “the racial limitation was designed to exclude two categories: (1) chattel slaves, both Negro and White, and (2) Indians” (238). This changed with the Act of July 14, 1870 to include African descent. The Chinese Exclusion Act of May 6, 1882 “specifically prohibited...the naturalization of Chinese” (Gordon 239). While the specifics all the forms of racial exclusion are less of the focus of this chapter, it is crucial to recognize the particularities of racial legislation and restrictive citizenship policies.

⁴⁸ Kuykendall emphasizes how voting rights were “extended to resident foreigners of American or European birth or descent if they took an oath to support the constitution” (171). This acknowledges both the necessity of supporting the Bayonet Constitution as a prerequisite to voting eligibility and glosses over the loss of rights for Asian immigrants.

propertied elite of westerners where King Kālakaua acted as a figurehead. The documentation of the change of voting rights indicates not only the spread of American influence in Hawai‘i pre-annexation, but also the racializing of the population where Kanaka Maoli and westerners received access through a combination of concretized racial lines and property ownership.⁴⁹

In marking this legislative decision, the making of Asians as ineligible to citizenship becomes visible in Hawai‘i through creating the categories of Indigenous, white, and Asian, particularly at the end of the 19th century leading to the overthrow. I use J. Kēhaulani Kauanui’s salient observation of how post-annexation, “the racialization of Hawaiians were co-constructed in relation to Chinese and Japanese presence...both elite whites and Hawaiians framed the post-overthrow push to rehabilitate Kanaka Maoli in anti-Asian terms by contrasting Kanaka Maoli as U.S. citizens with the Chinese, and especially the Japanese, as ‘Aliens’” (19). Kauanui conveys how the joint racialization of Asians and Kanaka Maoli occurs through a structural relationship that reinforces U.S. dominance and white supremacy. Situating Asians as perineal outsiders, similar to rhetoric on the continent, allowed for claims of limited assimilation for Kanaka Maoli. Kauanui explains, “White Americans’ racialization of Chinese and Japanese as ‘aliens’ emerged in contrast to their racialization of Hawaiians as Native – a distinction focused on Kanaka Maoli as assimilable...” (75). This emphasizes the U.S.’s colonial relationship to the Indigenous population as a dominant yet benevolent one where Chinese and Japanese were outside the possibilities of the intended nation. Moon-Kie Jung explains in the early 20th century Hawai‘i:

workers struggled, with their employers and among themselves, over classifications like ‘coolie,’ ‘cheap labor,’ ‘citizen,’ ‘haole,’ and ‘American,’ defining what these categories

⁴⁹ While less pertinent to the question of eligibility, the Bayonet Constitution was enacted after “a group of Americans, British, and others banded together to overthrow the government in what has been called the Revolution of 1887. King Kālakaua was forced to accept a drastically revised constitution which reduced the monarchy to a figurehead and radically restructured the government” (Beechert 83).

meant and determining who belonged to them and how. Conceptualizing Portuguese, Japanese, Filipino, and other migrant laborers in racially disparate ways, haole capitalist set the initial terms of these struggles and wielded preponderant influence. (61)

This racial hierarchy resembles how Lowe describes, “the Asian immigrant –at odds with the cultural, racial, and linguistic forms of the nation – emerges in a site that defers and displaces the temporality of assimilation” (*Immigrant* 6). Thus, the Asian immigrant is positioned as outside and foreign from Kanaka Maoli. Consequently, the definitions of citizenship and permissible assimilation occur along the lines of U.S. dominance and subject to demands of capitalism.

Hawai‘i’s immigrant and labor history demonstrates how capitalism drove the necessity for migration and identifies how racialization coincides with an understanding of both class and U.S. nationalism post-annexation. The contradictions surrounding Asian immigrants mirror the larger global concerns of the U.S. as well as marking the production of a false binary between Asian and Kanaka Maoli that bolsters American hegemony. It is a false binary as I am not discounting Indigenous dispossession and colonization nor equating sovereignty with racialized contract labor. But in the centering of capitalism and national citizenship, the Asian immigrant offers an optic into the process of subject-making and the genealogy of Asian settler colonialism, which is also intimately tied into the production of Indigeneity. Balibar’s term “fictive ethnicity” is productive in considering the racial triangulation that comes through pre-and post-annexation of Hawai‘i as the territory grappled with the influx of “alien” Asian bodies. Balibar explains how the nation-state, or in this case, a U.S. territory “is a product a colonization” (89), thus demonstrating the centrality of colonization with capitalism. Consequently, Balibar lays out how fictive ethnicity is a “problem of internal hegemony” (96), where this construct accounts for the contradictory production of assumed universality out of difference. This also lays out a critique

of the myth of national origins where fictive ethnicity produces an assumed universal community that supports the nation. The objective of the nation then is “to produce people” since “no modern nation possesses a given ‘ethnic’ basis” (Balibar 93). This concept lays the foundation for reckoning with how race and language (and gender) became tools of alienation and division to articulate a unified citizenship. Balibar’s conception of how fictive ethnicity operates applies to both the production of Asian immigrant as alien to the territory of Hawai‘i, while simultaneously representing the Indigenous population as have potential for assimilation.

The contradictions inherent in the racial formation of Asians and Kanaka Maoli testify to the process of producing and upholding the nation by naturalizing a universal community. Still, the ideology of fictive ethnicity is not about total homogenization or removal of individuality for the sake of unity, but requires subjects and groups to have multiple layers or “internal” and “external frontiers” that enforce a national imaginative community (Balibar 95). This seems most applicable in consideration of the uneven racializing exclusionary legislations enacted by the U.S. against first Chinese migrants and then Japanese throughout the late 19th and early 20th century. Lowe notes the material effects of exclusion on Asian immigrant where “immigrants have been fundamental to the construction of the nation as a simulacrum of inclusiveness...[yet] a national memory haunts the conception of the Asian American, persisting beyond the repeal of actual laws prohibiting Asians from citizenship and sustained by wars in Asia, in which the Asian is always seen as an immigrant, as the ‘foreigner-within’” (*Immigrant* 5). Again, the paradoxical incorporation and exclusion of Asian immigrants testifies to how fictive ethnicity is premised on an internal hegemony that supports the nation. Thus, it is my contention that demonstrating the genealogy of Asian settler colonialism as centered in the historical and literary figure of “Asian immigrant” in Hawai‘i makes visible the continuity of fictive ethnicity and the

contradictions of capitalism's demand for racialized labor. Given this historical trajectory of immigration, exclusionary legislation, and iterations of assimilation, I now turn to the novels by Murayama and Wong to demonstrate the continuity of imperial imagination in the representation of this history through familial inter-generational sagas. These narratives imagine immigrant labor histories of both Japanese and Chinese families throughout the 20th century where the negotiation of subjects occur as dependent on the U.S.'s global interests as producing normative Asian settler identities.

Asian Settler Assimilation through Multi-Generation Familial Narrative

Milton Murayama's 2008 *Dying in a Strange Land* and Cecily Wong's 2015 *Diamond Head* testify to the range of aesthetic possibilities in producing narratives about Asian American assimilation through the continuous violent erasure of both Indigenous and immigrant labor history as the condition of Asian settler colonialism. I argue how these narratives jointly demonstrate the limits of reckoning with immigration history through distinct class and social relations structured through multi-generation familial sagas. Murayama's final novel on the Japanese American family, the Oyamas, exemplifies the uneven process of settler colonialism where the characters obtaining settler normativity while maintaining a consciousness of immigration history and labor movements through plantation life and the use of Hawai'i Creole English. In attending to the global geopolitical context on Asian assimilation processes, *Dying in a Strange Land* appears to capture the condition of settler colonialism where Murayama highlights not only plantation history, but also aesthetically accounts for the uneven process of producing a sense of belonging to Hawai'i. Relying on multi-generational perspectives, Murayama's novel struggles to simultaneously resist the Asian settler colonial erasures of the material conditions of immigrant labor and perform assimilation identities. In contrast, Wong's

Diamond Head offers a limited acknowledgment of immigration history is constantly being undermined by the emphasis on romance, intrigue, and familial secrets that entrap the female characters in a cyclical process of inherited trauma. *Diamond Head* exemplifies the necessary erasure of racialized labor history and offers an optic into the production of Asian settlers with normative gender as viable for U.S. citizenship. Even as *Dying in a Strange Land* operates to reveal how U.S. empire organizes the literary imaginary and structure of the narrative, the minimal ruptures of geopolitical context operate as the only method of resistance to a character-driven subject-focused form of assimilatory celebration. This chapter pairs these novels because they collaboratively deploy the boundaries of Asian settler colonialism through a sanitized history that assumes to celebrate the victorious multi-racial immigrant population as producing successful assimilation. In other words, read jointly *Dying in a Strange Land* and *Diamond Head* establish how cultural memory makes visible how U.S. empire structures literary representation as well as how cultural memory becomes the object and site of establishing U.S. empire.

Following three generations of Oyamas, *Dying in a Strange Land*, emphasizes inter-generational conflict through language usage, filial piety, and personal investment in labor strikes and as evidence of the uneven assimilation processes of the three generations. Murayama's first novel in the saga, *All I Asking for is My Body*, is often celebrated as the first literary use of Hawai'i Creole English (HCE), known colloquially as Pidgin. HCE evolved out of the need for a lingua franca on the plantation fields for migrant workers from China, Japan, Korea, Okinawa, the Philippines, Puerto Rico, and Portuguese along with Kanaka Maoli and westerners.⁵⁰ While developed as the language of communication on plantations, HCE is

⁵⁰ Takaki describes how "plantation managers wanted the immigrant laborers to be taught a functional spoken English" (167). This does not encompass the hierarchical component of developing an English-based mode of communication, but speaks to the functionality of it. Importantly, linguists distinguish between Hawai'i Pidgin

considered integral to Hawai‘i’s immigration history as it emerged out of necessity and then became the colloquial mode of communication. However, HCE was stigmatized as a working-class language and subordinate to Standard English which became instituted in 1927 for official English Standard Schools (Young 410). Young emphasizes that the necessity of Standard English education was explicitly tied to upholding American democratic ideals and the necessity of not “hurt[ing] Hawai‘i’s chances at statehood” (411). In this instance, post-overthrow politics of the territory of Hawai‘i were concerned with the viability of statehood where language become a primary marker of immigrant assimilation. As such, Standard English was implemented in schools even as HCE persisted.⁵¹ Importantly though, HCE was recognized as an official language of Hawai‘i in 2015 after the U.S. Census Bureau conducted a five-year study of around 325,000 residents about the language usage (Laddaran). Alia Wong for *The Atlantic* notes that “roughly 1,600 of the 327,00 bilingual survey respondents said they speak it.” Wong suggests the importance of validating HCE as it had to overcome the stigma that it “is a crass dialect for the lower classes and informal settings.” Here, the significance of federal acknowledgment of both the history and prevalence of HCE testifies to how Standard English operated as a colonizing tool for over a century.⁵² Even though HCE is not an Indigenous language, the controversy through the late 1980s surrounding its legitimacy and association with working class roots exemplifies colonial epistemologies. In the social usage of HCE, the literary

English as developed in the plantations and its process of creolization as the first language spoken by the second generation (Reinecke 16; Carr 171; See Sato 1991).

⁵¹ Eileen Tamura correlates the degradation of HCE as an American nativist trend and similar to Black English vernacular, Appalachian English, and Chicano English among others that are “rule governed as Standard English, but they have been associated with the lower classes and as a result have been stigmatized as inferior English” (433).

⁵² Given this chapter is focused on the genealogy of Asian immigrant to settler, I am less focused on the decline of the Hawaiian language. Importantly, in 1896 the new territory of Hawai‘i passed a law that instituted English as the medium and basis for instruction, thus marking “the beginning of generations of grandchildren immersed in the English language in school (Silva 144). Silva also emphasizes how the colonial government justified the loss of the Hawaiian language. However, remarkably the language “resisted effectively enough, more than one hundred years later, for the current revival” (145).

deployment of this language is often credited to Murayama and also heralded as the beginning of “local” literature.

Heralded as a “local” novel in 1975, Murayama’s first book on the Oyama family, *All I Asking for is My Body*, deliberately employed HCE, focused on plantation history, and gave voice to Asian immigrant experiences. This novel was published prior to the emergence of local” literature through Bamboo Ridge Press and the Talk Story Conference of 1978 that brought attention to “local” Asian immigrants. These literary events importantly also coincided with “the large-scale Hawaiian literary renaissance and cultural nationalist struggles of the 1970s and 1980s” (Wilson 131). As such, the literary “local” emerges as a distinct project from the revitalization of Hawaiian culture, arts, and language. This separation of projects identifies the continuation of U.S. colonial strategies that maintain a binary between Indigenous and Asian immigrant histories and political aims. Still, the strategic use of HCE offers “local” narratives an opportunity to develop its own literary device that acts as an optic into the material conditions of plantation life.

The praise surrounding *All I Asking for is My Body* and its unprecedented use of HCE indicates the magnitude of how language operates as a critical site for resisting forms of colonialism. Young explains how Murayama’s novel is “viewed as one of the landmarks texts in both Hawaiian and Asian American literature” (413) while Steve Sumida calls it a “local Hawai’i literary classic” (112). Wilson further explicates how Murayama’s “crafty use of pidgin English and Japanese/standard English and Japanese” offered a “loving yet scathing portrayal of the plantation community on Maui during the 1930s” (120). This range of praise for Murayama’s strategic and groundbreaking use of HCE along with other languages operates as a standard for “local” literature. Despite perhaps the problematic continued conflation of what it means to call

Murayama's work "Hawaiian" with its lack of Indigenous affiliation, this novel testifies to how the use of HCE is representative of a non-Indigenous subject formation under U.S. empire. Suzanne Romaine remarks on how "the use of HCE in local literature displaces the more powerful colonial language, standard English, from its privileged place at the center of mainstream as well as a literary discourse" (533). As a literary strategy then, HCE operates as mode of resistance against colonial epistemologies. Even as the 'ōlelo Hawai'i, Hawaiian language, demands its own attention, HCE in literature shifts the focus to authenticating a language that emerged out of plantation history.⁵³ What this suggests then is both the crucial usage of HCE to acknowledge its historical conditions of existence and its very real reflection of social relations in Murayama's first novel. Again, marking the lack of equivalence between HCE and 'ōlelo Hawai'i, the critical recognition of HCE is necessary in order to resist the dehistoricization and depoliticizing of immigrant history.

Given the historical context for Murayama's first novel in the Oyama saga, *Dying in a Strange Land* in 2008 appears to be a belated continuation of immigrant plantation narratives where strategically using Hawai'i Creole English to legitimize its existence is no longer essential. Even as *Dying in a Strange Land* persists in its performance of Asian immigrant to settler trajectory, the novel simultaneously emphasizes the global political and imperial context of the post-war period that affects how the characters understand their own subject positions. Spanning from World War II through 1986, the Oyama's drama centers around filial piety of the children, particularly Tosh and Kiyo, through paying off and incurring inherited familial debts as

⁵³ Romaine notes how the "State of Hawai'i did recognize a language co-official with English in 1978, that language was Hawaiian. In the same year, which was declared 'Year of the Hawaiian,' the State Department of Education initiated a pilot program taught through the medium of Hawaiian" (549). This acknowledges the joint emphasis on 'ōlelo Hawai'i through its official recognition and educational programs that further demonstrates the distinct movements around language and subject formation for Indigenous and "local."

well as demonstrating the uneven and ongoing processes of assimilation grounded in plantation labor. Kiyō's rise as an author is indicative of the limits of Asian assimilation where he remains conscious and critical of the colonialist capitalist conditions that produce his existence even as his success hinges on narrating this particular history. In contrast, Tosh moves from plantation laborer to successful architectural designer, Murayama depicts the ascent into Asian settler as the political power of the democratic party takes over. Combining Sawa (Mrs. Oyama), Tosh, and Kiyō's individual trajectories towards assimilation testifies to a production of Asian settler colonialism as the only narrative possibility to navigate the violent histories of immigration and Indigenous colonization. In other words, the Oyamas have no choice, but to resemble and reinforce Asian settler identities through a performance of assimilation that the narrative affords them. Still, Murayama insists on making visible the geopolitical contexts nationally and internationally as a function of the structuring power of U.S. empire. This allows for revealing how the text's literary apparatus is constructed through U.S. empire and the possibilities of rupture occur in the dominance of the geopolitical events that take precedence over interior character development. This allows for momentary breaks in the text, which simultaneously exemplify how the novel reconstructs U.S. empire and reveals how this operates as a structure.

Dying a Strange Land alternates perspectives between Sawa, Tosh, and Kiyō to develop a multi-generational perspective on the diasporic movements from Japan to Hawai'i and to the continental U.S. that demonstrate the uneven process of producing immigrant laborers into Asian settlers. Opening the novel from Sawa's perspective, Murayama begins with the end of World War II with her concerns for the wounded and her family in Japan after the dropping of the atomic bomb in Hiroshima. The immediate emphasis on filial piety is clear as Sawa questions why certain boys did not return to the plantation camp:

“Toshio, who had an opinion on everything, said, ‘You know why they’re not coming home? They tasted freedom, freedom from *oya kohkoh*’ (filial piety).

‘Don’t think you’ll have your parents forever,’ I rattled off an old proverb.

‘That’s what I mean. It’s freedom from debt. To the Japanese you owe your parents for life.’

We gave you life, I was going to say, but let him this time.” (1)

This interlude establishes through the use of language, the import of filial piety for Sawa and Tosh’s disdain for this lifelong obligation even as he appears to still uphold this value. Tosh pits filial piety, termed “*oya kohkoh*,” against freedom (read: American) where World War II veterans were able to escape their family obligations by embracing American individualism. Sawa’s inability to understand the desire of freedom for the *nisei*, second generation, who served is clear in her response with a Japanese proverb warning of parental deaths. This is further clarified when her second son, Kiyoo, returns from the war and then leaves. Tosh explains, “You know why he left? He was scared your *oya kohkoh* trapdoor would shut” (Murayama 2). In correlating filial piety with entrapment, Tosh mocks his mother’s lack of comprehension of why Kiyoo left. Sawa’s bafflement over this critique is made clear as she thinks, Tosh “was so strange, I had no comeback to the things he’d say” (Murayama 2). This incoherence not only recognizes the impact World War II had on particularly Japanese Americans both who served, who were interned, and those in Hawai‘i who faced discrimination, but also demonstrates the difference in *issei*, first-generation immigrants, and *nisei*.

While Sawa’s response stems out of anti-Japanese sentiments throughout the early 20th century, her inability to reckon with her son’s criticism testifies to the differences of values between generations and the uneven processes of assimilation as regulated by exclusionary

legislation. Historically, the 1924 Immigration Act “prohibited the entry of aliens ineligible to citizenship. Although they had not been named explicitly, the Japanese had been singled out for special discriminatory treatment, for the Chinese and Asian Indian had already been excluded by other legislation” (Takaki 209). In light of this legislation, the *issei*, faced different issues than the *nisei* where distinctions were drawn between the two. Sucheng Chan explains, “Most *Issei* thought of themselves as sojourners, but they considered the *nisei* to be Americans” (111). This directly affected issues of education, language, and citizenship where *nisei* claimed dual citizenship as born in the United States via American law, but that “according to Japanese law, anyone born of a Japanese father, regardless of where the birth took place, was a Japanese citizen” (Cheng 112). Anti-Japanese groups critiqued this loophole that allowed Japanese allegiance and a “1924 amendment to the Japanese Nationality Act finally abolished Japanese citizenship based on paternal descent for all *Nisei*” (Cheng 112). Incidentally, this legislation coincided with the U.S.’s immigration act that prevented *issei* from naturalizing. Moon-Kie Jung emphasizes how “From the mid-1920s onward, the primary target of the Americanization movement shifted from the *issei* to the *nisei*. If the *issei*’s anti-Americanism was taken for granted by the haole elite, the *nisei*’s national allegiance appeared more pliable,” thus encouraging the “*nisei* citizen population away from class conflict and toward assimilationist politics” (94-95). Jung’s analysis of Hawai‘i’s racial politics isolate the focus on swaying *nisei* towards U.S. ideals and encouraging assimilation which demands the separation of them from their parents’ generation. Murayama builds out the differences in assimilation through Tosh and Kiyo’s perspectives on their demonstrations of filial piety and their processes of “success” as individuals that differ from their mother’s understanding of identity and obligation.

From an initial discussion of familial obligations, Murayama rapidly turns to the historic 1946 plantation strike that affects the Oyamas and situates the fomenting of the inter-ethnic labor class in Hawai‘i. This historical emphasis is characteristic of Murayama’s attention to the context surrounding the Oyama’s experiences and testifies to his focus on documenting labor history even as it becomes the impetus for Asian settler identity formation. In other words, this establishes how I read the visibility of the literary apparatus as being informed by U.S. empire. The overemphasis and vigilance attending to geopolitical events often overshadows any substantial character development or investment even though the narrative is expressly invested in Asian settler processes. While the 1909⁵⁴ or 1920⁵⁵ strikes receive attention in the previous novels, the 1946 stands out as an anchor for *Dying in a Strange Land* and historically through its bringing together of a united inter-ethnic working class. Given Murayama’s focus on Japanese American experiences and starting with the 1946 strike for his novel, it is clear that he assumes an understanding of the previous strikes. Both the 1909 and 1920 strikes helped demonstrate the vast racial divides and a critique of the planter oligarchy. Notably, Gary Okihiro identifies how the 1920 strike meant the “planters and territorial government both employed racism to isolate and weaken the Japanese, identifying white supremacy with the national interest. They launched a national campaign to reintroduce Chinese migrant labor, hoping to rid themselves of the

⁵⁴ Gary Okihiro notes how this strike “constained the seeds of a truly revolutionary idea because the democratization of the islands – Hawaii’s Americanization – would ring an end to the ‘plutocratic’ rule of the propertied class” (55). Importantly, the planters emphasized the singularity of the Japanese community but Okihiro points out that “the 1909 strike was a Japanese strike because the Japanese constituted more than 60 percent of the total plantation workforce and were among the lowest paid of all ethnic and racial groups employed there” (56). In the statistical breakdown of the immigrant workforce, the Japanese dominance worried the planter oligarchy and occurred directly after the 1908 Gentlemen’s Act that “essentially cut off further labor migration from Japan” (Okihiro 60).

⁵⁵ Moon-Kie Jung notes the differences with the 1920 strike that began with “2,600 Filipino sugar plantation workers and 300 Puerto Rican and Spanish workers walked off their jobs” and then due to some confusion over racially-divided scheduled strikes, “The Federation of Japanese Labor reluctantly joined the strike” (70). Importantly, this added up to about “77 percent of the plantation workforce on Oahu” (71) who were striking for better wages and living conditions.

Japanese” (81). This strategic employment of racism and nationalism pits the Japanese against the Chinese to uphold white dominance even as the demographics of Hawai‘i placed the majority of the population as non-white. These intentional divisions also became visible in “how the haole planters and the larger public conceived of Japanese and Filipino workers in racially dissimilar terms” (MK. Jung 87).⁵⁶ In other words, the Japanese strike was narrated as an example of Japan’s threat as a world power and played on “the public’s preexisting fear of an imperialist takeover” whereas Filipino workers “were portrayed as the misled followers of the Japanese, even though the Filipino workers had been more eager to go out on strike and did so before Japanese workers” (MK. Jung 88-89). This offers a racialized explanation where Filipinos were seen in a colonial perspective whereas the Japanese were considered an alien threat. As such, World War II brought about the fears of yellow peril of the Japanese even as Hawai‘i needed the continuation of Japanese labor. Okihiro explains how “White supremacy, as expressed in a concerted movement against the ‘Japanese menace,’ was a unifying ideology and practice that held together the sometimes disparate interests of white workers, planters, the territorial government, and the military” (270). In situating the dominance of white supremacy as ensuring both territorial politics, labor relations, and the questions of internment during wartime, Okihiro identifies how integral Japanese labor was even under martial law and internment. Thus, the end of World War II saw a relaxation over martial law in 1943 in Hawai‘i and a pointed attempt to restrict unions and collective labor organizing.

Historians including Gavan Daws, Ralph Kuykendall, Thomas Kemper Hitch, and Edward Beechert all identify the crucial influence of the International Longshoreman and

⁵⁶ Jung points out how Filipinos were racialized in a similar manner to Hawaiians where “the divergent beliefs occasioned by U.S. colonialism that Hawaiians were childlike, unmanly, benign and that Filipinos were childlike, unmanly, but malign were rooted in different modes of colonial incorporation” (MK. 85). Still, Filipinos became “the new ‘cheap’ labor in Hawai‘i,” particularly given the Philippines was a U.S. territory.

Warehouseman's Union (ILWU) in organizing labor along interracial lines to implement changes to the plantation system and the Democratic party. World War II and martial law brought about "labor suppression [where] to foment discontent among workers [would make] ...them receptive to the ILWU's subsequent organizing campaign" (MK. Jung 137; see Daws 362). Thus, even though anti-Japanese sentiments were amplified throughout World War II, the workers were ready to strike by the end of the war. Beechert explains how the ILWU organized field workers and obtained an industrywide contract with thirty-three of the thirty-four sugar plantations in 1945 and "the union was now an establishing bargaining agent for the sugar workers" (295). Importantly, the ILWU also included the economic power of Hawai'i through both sugar and pineapple industries as well as the docks and warehouses (Hitch 160). This lays out the background for the 1946 strike where the ILWU was incredibly powerful where a "viable working-class ideology in Hawai'i had to deal with existing racial divisions...[where] the ILWU/CIO [Congress of Industrial Organizations] movement's class ideology rearticulated race" (MK. Jung 146). Jung identifies how interracialism did not simply ignore racial divisions among workers, nor did class erase these racial tensions. Instead, the discourse of leaders, organizers, and workers was advanced through Communist beliefs and through a critique of capitalist social relations as deliberately organizing around race and creating racial hierarchies (MK. Jung 149). This awareness of the planters' exploitation of workers through a "divide and rule" mentality that promoted racial divisions clarified how the strategies worked through separate camps and using racial groups to settle unrest. Still, Jung points out that this narrative of divide and rule where "the ILWU embodied the workers' interracial historical destiny that had too long been thwarted by the employers' racist opposition" where class and race were both central to the ideology of the union (MK. 164). In other words, the historical accuracy of each

racially divisive strategy of the planters was less crucial than developing a narrative for the workers to rally behind where race and class intersected. This lays out the background of the 1946 strike that Murayama demarcates at the beginning of the novel as heralding the end of World War II and the return of the nisei veterans.

Murayama's announcement of the 1946 strike is understated and exemplifies the narrative's pattern of de-emphasizing, but also including all of the historical events that shape the Oyama family members. By "de-emphasizing" these events, I argue that Murayama's mass inclusion of all possible events politically and socially in Hawai'i, the continental United States, and abroad are all equally introduced as occurring, but not singularly significant for the characters. This makes legible the imperial epistemological structures of the literary apparatus, where the force of U.S. empire takes precedence over producing sustained interior character development for any of the Oyamas. Following a story about a nisei's attempted suicide after World War II, Sawa narrates, "Soon we dropped everything to prepare for the strike...the union would provide rations of bread, rice, sugar and milk" (3). This indicates the preparation going into the strike and the ILWU's involvement with their members. Sawa continues to explain in a factual manner:

Twenty-six plantations went on strike on September 1, 1946. The Filipinos and Japanese were united now. There was nobody to dump our belongings onto 'Government Road.' Hideo Tsuda, who'd returned a war hero a year ago, was now called a 'scab.' The Christian strikers boycotted the Methodist Church because Hideo's older brother was also a *luna* [overseer] and pillar of the church. At Kahana Grade School the Takeshita brothers yelled at the children of the *lunas*, 'yo' faddah one scab, you all scab!' (3).

Including a range of details unrelated to the Oyamas, Sawa explains the reactions to strikebreakers through boycotts and the children being singled out for teasing. While Sawa does note the interconnections between Filipinos and Japanese laborers instead of the previous racially-divided strikes, she observes this as factual but inconsequential point. In other words, Sawa's list of contextual yet unimportant for her family's details serve to exemplify how the text forces engagement with details divorced from interior character development. Still, the antagonism of the children of the overseers not only exemplifies the use of HCE, but also shows the communal effort of the strike. But, ultimately these descriptions just lay out extraneous details that are less connected to the Oyamas, a characteristic throughout the novel. The magnitude of the strike is essential in displaying the ILWU's influence where "28,000 workers [that] shut down 33 plantations" (Chan 172; Kuykendall 283; Kent 135).⁵⁷ It remains a bit unclear as to why Murayama only cites twenty-six plantations on strike given his genre of both fictionalized autobiography and historical fiction. Still, the magnitude of the strike is almost downplayed in Murayama's selection of twenty-six plantations instead of the thirty three out of thirty-four. As Beechert emphasizes how the ILWU organized workers through "mass picketing to discourage potential strikebreakers and to prevent supervisors from irrigating the cane fields" (300; MK. Jung 173). This unified effort is demonstrated in finding ways to provide food for families during the strike and communal effort that went into prolonging the strike.

In describing relevant components of the strike to the family, Sawa notes how her husband considered becoming a fisherman during the strike beyond simply providing food. Sawa informs Tosh of this potential career change of his father and Tosh "wrote in angry katakana: 'Bakatare! [stupid]... You're *koh-fukoh!*...' It was just like Toshio to call his own father

⁵⁷ Gavan Daws cites the numbers as smaller at "about twenty-one thousand workers on thirty-three plantations walked off the job" (363).

‘unfilial!’ Nobody else would think up such a thing!’ (4). In this exchange, Sawa notes with repeated surprise the disrespectful response from her oldest son’s reaction to his father wanting to become a fisherman. Sawa’s indignation at Tosh’s insults also indicate the difference in views on filial piety where Tosh sees this as adding to his own debt and obligation to the family. Still, Sawa’s confusion over Tosh exemplifies not only generational differences, but also Murayama’s unflinching reminders of the plantation context of the family. This is evident with the ending of the strike when Sawa unemotionally explains, “The workers went back to work on January 2. They’d won. The bosses could no longer yell at them or fire them on the spot. Father got a raise to \$158 a month from his previous \$105” (4). This simple explanation on one hand seems anticlimactic to what labor historians herald as a successful interracial industry-wide strike that also changed the dynamic of politics through the ILWU’s influence.⁵⁸ However, for Murayama this 1946 strike is just one of many events that inform their lives and Sawa’s perspective indicates how she observes both the events on the plantation and her lack of comprehension over Tosh’s critiques of filial piety as the most important. This issei perspective differs from Kiyō and Tosh’s concerns where the national, global, and “local Hawai‘i” events influence their sense of selves. Sawa’s point of view also demonstrates her strained relationship with her children as primarily a result of different views on filial piety where she struggles to understand the individual drive for freedom in Tosh and Kiyō.

Kiyō, also known by his English name, Morris, embodies the process of assimilation into Asian settler through becoming a writer and writing about his experiences as a nisei on the plantation. In other words, Kiyō’s success is framed through the production of a narrative on this

⁵⁸ Sucheng Chan notes how the ILWU’s successful strike also led to their entrance into politics “as a new working- and middle-class constituency emerged” (172). As a result, Democrats dominated local politics with “a large percentage of them of Japanese ancestry” (172). The change in politics indicates the growing dominance of Japanese Americans that will be later discussed in detail with Tosh’s transformation.

successful transformation into Asian settler. Kiyō's negotiation of Americanization is paired with global events including World War II, the Korean War, and the Civil Rights movement that both affect him and operate as his historical context, again with ambivalence over Kiyō's direct response to these events. Kiyō's trajectory is heavily influenced by western cultural production, civil rights, and student activism that force him to reflect on his own nisei experiences without blindly accepting the processes of American assimilation. Still, Murayama insists on demonstrating how the varied geopolitical and social events that occur around Kiyō all have the same amount of influence on him, which means arguably they are all extraneous to him. Kiyō comments on how New York's "newness was staggering. I saw my first play, *The Glass Menagerie*. Poor Tom. Amanda was 10 times more controlling than Mama. Besides, my debt was a tangible \$6000. I was free not only from family but also from work!" (14). Comparing the fictional play to his own family, Kiyō reflects on his emotional and financial familial obligations to conclude that the characters have it worse than he does. This comparison, while humorous, does not entirely lend itself as a positive reflection of Kiyō's inheritance of the family debt. However, this leads to his conclusion that he is finally free from his family by being in New York City and pursuing his education.

Still, the global context distracts Kiyō enough for Murayama to meditate on its effects, thus allowing for the apparatus of U.S. empire to become visible. Kiyō narrates the Tokyo trials regarding the Battle of Manila in World War II where the Japanese Imperial Army killed "thousands of Filipino civilians" (14) which "got [him] depressed all over again" (15). Even though Kiyō did not participate in this battle nor is he directly connected, the magnitude of violence haunts his self-formation as he attempts to assimilate. What this also calls attention to is how the violence of an unwitnessed event seemingly has equal effect on Kiyō; this directly

correlates with how U.S. empire functions to organize and dictate Kiyō's self-identity. Murayama's insistence on constantly emphasizing these international experiences of war and conflict is both to reveal the magnitude of a single battle and to also demonstrate its lack of pervasive influence as a whole on Kiyō. In other words, while Kiyō struggles with assimilation, this is impacted by the overall apparatuses of empire that order the novel's entire literary imaginary and cannot be isolated by one particular battle.

In consideration of Kiyō's subject formation as simultaneously a resistance to settler assimilation and part of this uneven process, I situate how this considers definitions from the Chicago school of sociology in the 1930s. Robert E. Park's idea of assimilation as an ethnicity paradigm is useful in analyzing how *Dying in a Strange Land* picks up on these ideas and both bolsters and resists them. Michael Omi and Howard Winnat explain how "Park's *race-relations cycle*, with its four stages of contact, conflict, accommodation, and assimilation" are foundational to consideration of "analyzing group relations and assessing a 'minority' group's progress along a fixed continuum" (10). For Park, the progress through this cycle would theoretically lead to complete integration of minority groups. This is precisely what an expected trajectory of Kiyō will incur: discovering his nisei identity as being American and assimilating through a celebratory novel that also documents this process. Stannard Lyman articulates that the race-relations cycle "was ideology too; for Park supposed that the end of the race relations cycle cleared the social arena in which an inevitable class struggle would take place" (16). This shows how the race-relations cycle emphasizes social relations over a biological transformation. In Lyman's critique of the race-relations cycle, he identifies how Park's work "suggested that a racial minority's adoption of the larger society's culture did not necessarily guarantee its acceptance into that society" (17). This particular point that national ideologies and cultural

values could still lead to isolation and strained social relations can be connected to Kiyō's uneven trajectory on the continental United States. In other words, assimilation models are being worked out through Kiyō and Tosh's experiences that reflect and complicate the stages developed by Park. In particular, Kiyō's constant bombardment by national social movements, political events, and U.S. wars abroad impeded any consistent subject formation; this is precisely where the workings of U.S. empire become visible in how the text hyper emphasizes these external details as subsuming the emphasis on Kiyō's interiority, or at least deferring it for an extended portion of the novel.

Kiyō continues to pursue his writing career and moves to D.C. to work for the Arms Force Security Agency to recruit translators amidst the Korean War where he further recognizes how his racial identity is always understood within the context of global politics. Even further, the seemingly significance and insignificance of these global wars abroad and national social movements testify to Kiyō's indiscriminate response to all these events. This means that micro racial aggressions are both insignificant parts of Kiyō's experiences and are responsible for implementing his self-formation. When Kiyō first moves to Georgetown, he describes the demographics of segregation in the area and recounts:

“An elderly white clerk at work, probably a GS-2, asked me in my first week, ‘What are you, racially speaking?’

‘I’m Japanese born in Hawai‘i. But I’ve been taken for Filipino and Chinese.’

‘No, not Chinese,’ she said.

‘Why not?’

‘They’re Commies,’ she snapped” (Murayama 30).

This interlude places Kiyō's subject position as determined by the U.S. relations with Asia and which country is deemed the foreign threat whereas less than a decade earlier, Japan had been the enemy. Kiyō's response also indicates the flexibility with racial identifiers where the emphasis is on being born in Hawai'i, but he can essentially fit the racial expectations of his interlocutors. The white clerk's response is representative of the dominant critiques of Chinese during the 1950s and is indicative of the fluidity of racial prejudice as part of national sentiment. As Moon-Kie Jung points out, assimilation often involves its "normative desirability" where "the formation of a unified nation unstratified and undivided by race and ethnicity" as the ideal (4). In this minimal exchange against the backdrop of black and white segregated neighborhoods, Kiyō's race becomes the mutable identifier that is subject to the U.S.'s global politics. Even as the normative desire for a "fictive ethnicity" which creates the formation of "a natural community, possessing of itself an identity of origins, culture, and interests which transcends individuals and social conditions" (Balibar 96). Despite Kiyō's statement, as long as he is not a "Commie Chinese," then he has the possibility of being interpellated into the national community, even if that inclusion is temporary. The continued framing of Asian exclusion pinpoints how "the figure of the Asian immigrant has served as a 'screen,' a phantasmatic site, on which the nation projects a series of condensed, complicated anxieties regarding external and internal threats to the mutable coherence of the national body" (Lowe, *Immigrant* 18). This description identifies the "unfixed liminality" (Lowe, *Immigrant* 19) of the figure of Asian immigrant where its specific positionality is in relationship to U.S. classification. In Kiyō's understated interaction with the clerk, this becomes evident and continues on as he finishes his novel that engages the global and racial politics of the 20th century. In other words, he recognizes

the “unfixed liminality” of the Asian immigrant subject to the U.S. nation-state where the position has been discursively and legally represented.

As Kiyoo finally finds narrative and liberal assimilatory success with his third novel, his consciousness of the Vietnam War, student strikes for ethnic studies, the rise of the Liberal Democratic party and economic treaties between the U.S. and Japan continue to interrupt his subjectivity and can be credited for the incompleteness of his supposed assumed interiority documented in his novel. Kiyoo’s racial consciousness is amplified in the sustained recognition of the institutional and systemic ways racism operates, even as it is unclear what external geopolitical events influenced him since the text illustrated as many as possible. This realization is exemplified in his work on a second novel titled *Indian, Indian*, which takes up Indigenous history and land dispossession where Kiyoo’s global awareness again prevents any complete assimilation as an ideal U.S. citizen. Murayama’s interconnections of oppressed peoples become evident as he writes:

At one point the narrator, a *hapa* [mixed race] Chiricahua Apache, mutters to himself, ‘Kill! Kill! Kill!’ ‘What triggered this outburst? There’s no provocation that we can detect...’ one [rejection] slip said. *What about the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo? Indian Genocide? African slavery? The victims live with it everyday. History to them is NOW. Amnesia is for conquerors and colonists! I don’t need no stupid provocation!* (86).

Here, Kiyoo acknowledges the blindness to U.S. Indigenous genocide as a segue way into his own manuscript that brings to the foreground the violent histories of the U.S. In listing examples of racialized minorities and notably not Asian immigrants, Kiyoo makes the claim for the lasting colonial present which his novel interrogates. Murayama layers the texts between Kiyoo’s

manuscript, the reviewers' rejection slips, and the novel documenting these events to make hyper visible how the imperial epistemologies operate through all these levels. The Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo references the end of the Mexican-American War in 1848 where Mexico ceded 525,000 acres of land to the U.S. Therefore, with the declaration "History to them is NOW," Kiyoo articulates the injustice of continued racial dispossession and oppression that stems from this treaty as well as prior to this ceding that informs the present. This descriptor can also be applied to Murayama's novel itself where the barrage of geopolitical events saturates any form of linear explanation of national acceptance. In listing examples of racialized minorities and notably not Asian immigrants, Kiyoo makes the claim for the lasting colonial present that his novel interrogates. The elision of Asian migration is intentional as Kiyoo identifies the long violent history of the U.S. that is tied to the subjugation and racialization of national subjects. Kiyoo overlays his novel's literary imaginary with the literary imaginary of *Dying in a Strange Land*. This doubling interrupts the aesthetic apparatus of Murayama and replaces it with Kiyoo's own critique; this critical moment allows for the visibility of U.S. empire where colonial violence informs Kiyoo's process of belonging. This explicitly disrupts the temporality of incorporation by forcing Kiyoo and the reader to confront what is the colonial present; thereby, preventing access to a state of ignorance, even momentarily. Even as Kiyoo attains a settler identity through writing, his consistent attention to nisei experiences keeps him in the liminal area of attending to U.S. histories of exclusion and racism even as he achieves a place of settler existence.

In contrast to Kiyoo, his older brother Tosh, whose American name is Steven, exemplifies the direct transition from being seen as an Asian immigrant to becoming part of the political and working Asian settler hegemony in Hawai'i. Murayama's pairing of these two brothers, out of

the seven siblings, reflects the spectrum of diasporic working-class Asian immigrant trajectories. Despite Kiyō's consistent and conscious efforts to recognize the visible interconnections of U.S. colonialism and imperialism, Tosh's worldview remains in the local politics of Hawai'i's plantation culture. Still, again and again Murayama insists that the focus of his narrative be on the contextual politics and global events that affect how both Kiyō and Tosh come to some sort of "assimilated" settler position. Perhaps, what can be discerned from the two brothers is both the constant intrusion of local, national, and global politics that take precedence over interior subject formation. Through this rupturing of the process of producing cultural memory and fully formed assimilated subjects, Murayama's emphasis on the literary apparatus continually draws attention to the ways the novel and subject's knowledge is produced through the regulatory frame of U.S. empire. Still, the contrast between the brothers does bring into relief the condition and development Asian settler colonialism. Tosh becomes a licensed architect without going to college shows his own upward progress that leads to involvement in Hawai'i's politics and the rise of the democratic party. Praising his own success, Tosh says, "Well, Ma. We finally made it outta the plantation,' I toast. I turn to the kids. 'You guys don't how lucky you are. I had to quit high school. I worked for Aoki Store when I was thirteen.' I shake my finger at Danny, 'If you flunk college, you goin' back to the plantation'" (Murayama 76). As he explains the differences to his children, the sansei, third generation, Tosh celebrates his journey from "plantation boy" to architect. Tosh's success is attributed to what can be seen as a rise in class status and the demonstrative increase in wealth and livelihood. This is overlaid though with the substantial union and Democratic party's politics that not only shape Tosh's business success, but influence the choices he makes for the project bids he works on. In other words, while Tosh appears to be

less affected by the geopolitical and cultural influences that organize Kiyo's trajectory, Tosh is equally dictated by the aims of the community's politics.

With Tosh's rise in socioeconomic class, his awareness of the power of the ILWU and the need to be involved in politics testifies to the production of Asian settler colonialism. After pitching a bid for a school contract, Tosh is visiting a Maui cane field and observes how, "The bosses cannot yell at the union workers no more, so they take it out on the *lunas*, especially the nisei *lunas*. Many are taking early retirement. Even with the union and the 'Revolution of '54,' things are the same. The Big 5 still own the land. The nisei politicians are just their middleman" (Murayama 81). In marking how the ILWU ensured certain plantation practices, Toshio points out how the overseers bear the brunt of abuse. Furthermore, Tosh laments that the power structure of the Big 5 still remains dominant in politics and business.

The Big 5 refers to the Republican politicians who owned all the plantations, which included Castle & Cooke, Alexander & Baldwin, American Factors, Theo H. Davies, and C. Brewer. Cooper and Daws explain, "Republican politics in Hawai'i was little less but the politics of business, big business. In fact, it was true enough to say that government in Hawai'i in Republican years functioned avowedly as an arm of" the Big Five (3). As such, the monopoly of business and government meant that "before the war [World War II] the Republicans virtually owned the territory" since the Republican party was "a white man's party" (Daws 364, 366). Consequently, Tosh identifies how the rise of the ILWU was in conjunction with supporting the Democratic Party. This led to the "Revolution of '54." This refers to the rise of Japanese American political power because "with their support the Democrats could win power...in 1954 they [Americans of Japanese ancestry] commanded one out of every two seats in the legislature, House and Senate alike. And 1954 was the first year in which the Democrats controlled the

legislature” (Daws 380). Therefore, the political power of Japanese Americans became intimately linked to the Democratic party and its support from the ILWU (Cooper and Daws 5).⁵⁹ Cooper and Daws explain, “There was no reason why plantation workers, East Asian immigrants and their children should vote for a party of plantation owners” (5). Yet, what Tosh suggests is that even with these monumental political changes, the Big 5 was still in control. This begins to build out the rise of particularly Japanese American economic and political power that Haunani-Kay Trask identifies where “politically, the vehicle for Asian ascendancy is statehood. As a majority of voters at mid-century, the Japanese and other Asians move into the middle class and eventually into seats of power in the legislature and the governor’s house. For our Native people, Asian success proves to be but the latest elaboration of foreign hegemony” (47). Through the rise to political party that eventually supplanted the Big 5 (haole) Republican party, Trask demonstrates how the dominance of Asians occurred above and in place of Indigeneity and sovereignty. Thus, the centrality of land and development becomes a way to redistribute the Big 5’s wealth and monopoly, which is represented in Tosh’s prominent rise as a “plantation boy” to notable architect as part of the dominance of Asian settler colonialism as a political, economic, and social formation that is responsible for Tosh’s success.

As Tosh’s success continues, Murayama contrasts his daughter’s perspective on “local” democratic politics to emphasize a multi-generational conflict where the monopoly of the ILWU is critiqued. Given that Tosh’s state contracts depend on the dominance of the Democrats and local-Asians, he notes that in the next election, “If Burns loses, I lose all my contacts” (Murayama 119), thus indicating the intersections of “local” politics and business. This also

⁵⁹ Cooper and Daws explain, “Whereas the Republican Party was dominated by *haoles* and supported by the ethnic Hawaiians, this new Democratic majority was made up of voters of many different ethnic backgrounds, with Local-Asians predominant” (5). Here, the questions of the racial political divisions become more cohesive.

testifies to a working-class consciousness embedded in Toshio's process of assimilation that marks his entrance into Asian settler hegemony as intimately connected to state politics in a way that is less explicit for Kiyo. Here again, the text's hyper attention to minute contextual descriptors operates for Tosh as determining his economic success; this still makes the organization of U.S. empire visible in how Tosh's supposed individual success is entirely tied up with the ILWU and the politics of the democratic party. Due to this intersection, Tosh argues with his daughter's support of Tom Gill running against Governor Burns. Tosh's defense of Burns embodies his nisei mentality through the continued support of the ILWU and the Democratic party as he tells his daughter:

“You don't know which side your bread is buttered on! Even a dog knows gratitude!”

‘That's what I don't like about the Burns machine. It makes a fetish out –’

‘It's not a machine. He's been in office only eight years. He- ‘

‘It's so Japanese. *On*, gratitude, IOU, indebtedness, obligation, loyalty, knowing which side

your bread – “

“Politics is quid pro quo.... Nobody but the ILWU could've challenged the plantations.

Without the ILWU and Burns, the Big 5 still be in charge.’

‘The Burns people are not interested in reform, they only want a bigger slice of the pie.’

‘The bigger the pie, the bigger the slice for everybody.’

‘The biggest slices for big business, big labor, and the AJAs’” (Murayama 121).

This conversation embodies a sansei, third generation, critique of the Burns Democrats that is essentially “too Japanese” in its cultural values of owing debts and focused on increasing “local” Asian business; essentially, Chrys's concerns are the mutually-reinforcing political power of this

form of liberalism. Through Chrys's perspective, Murayama is able to reveal elements of Asian settler hegemony through the "Asian" democrats' self-serving economic and political dominance. Even further, Chrys's perspective penetrates the overarching influence of local governance that pervades how Tosh understands his financial success.

In contrast, Tosh's view that the ILWU and Burns overthrew the oligarchy of the Big Five allows him to fully support their interests, which is invested in advancing the Japanese American and "local" business development. In this exchange, Murayama effectively inserts a critique of Asian settler colonialism through Chrys's awareness of self-interest and "big labor." In supporting Thomas P. Gill, Chrys picks the "liberal wing of the party" that while "sympathetic to the aims of organized labor, was against what it considered ILWU attempts to dictate to politicians who had union endorsement" (Cooper & Daws 168). Gill's faction remained critical of the intimate connections between the ILWU and Democratic party where the mode of favoritism and nepotism dominated. This exchange between Tosh and Chrys embodies the transformation of Asian immigrants and plantation workers into a "local" Asian political, economic, and social body. Murayama interjects a subtle critique of this process through a sansei perspective, unfamiliar with working on the plantations. Tosh clings to his self-made success that reflects an American ideal of individualism, which is at odds with his daughter's criticism of the nepotism and corruption of the party. In this seemingly innocuous conversation, Murayama engages the changing multi-generational dynamics where Tosh's response upholds the era of Asian settler dominance.

Tosh's rise to prominence from "plantation boy" to Asian settler is exemplified in how he takes command of the debts the family members owe him for supporting their parents. He writes in all capital letters, "TO THE OYAMAS. I HAVE ALL THE RECORDS OF PAPA'S

1965-1978. THERE WAS NO SOLID MONETARY SUPPORT UP TO 77...*THE BOTTOM LINE – ALL EXPENSE WAS ON ME!*” (Murayama 201). Tosh details the breakdown of monthly costs for taking care of their parents and explains to his siblings that he was the sole provider until their deaths. Inherent in this request for money from his siblings is a humble brag that he could afford supporting his parents. Murayama’s documentation of filial piety, intergenerational conflicts, and the uneven process of assimilation is representative of Asian settler colonialism. Still, this revelation is mired in Tosh’s own sense of self-importance and how the text has lingered on the historical and political context of the U.S. and Japan as a global power post World War II over developing Tosh’s character. Eiko Kosasa explains how “the Japanese settler community did not become successful within a ‘democratic’ and ‘egalitarian’ system but within a colonial one. Japanese are therefore not ‘immigrants’ in a ‘nation of immigrants,’ but settlers in a colony like all other foreigners and their descendants in the islands” (211). Here, Kosasa emphasizes that the rise of Japanese immigrants as settlers hinges on the colonized state of Hawai‘i, where marking their success is dependent on being part of the structure of settler colonialism. While this is part of what Murayama documents, I contend that the novel embodies the necessary elision of the conditions of labor for immigrants. In Asian settler colonialism’s forgetting of the capitalist colonial conditions that required migrant labor, I situate how *Dying in a Strange Land* documents this uneven elision of history. Here, the parameters for assimilation are dramatically structured through an over-emphasis on geopolitical context. In other words, Murayama’s novel seems to blur this line by taking up the inter-generational conflicts and focusing on the post-War events that essentially mark Tosh’s transition from “plantation boy” to Asian settler. As such, the trajectories of Tosh and Kiyō both embody the barometers of the assimilation processes where the comparative component between the two allows for an

acknowledgment of the process making of Asian settlers. Murayama's attention to social movements in the postwar era through plantation strikes, racial tensions, global wars, and national activism offer an engagement that puts pressure on the rise to political power of Asian settlers in Hawai'i, but does not undermine the eventual assimilation of these characters.

Diamond Head and the Cycle of Inherited Gender Trauma

In direct contrast to assimilation based off of upward class mobility and the rise of Asian settler dominance in Hawai'i, Cecily Wong's *Diamond Head* focuses on the inter-generational saga of the Leongs where normative gender regulates the immigrant to settler trajectory. Relying particularly on Chinese parable of the red string of fate, Wong's female characters' fates shift through romantic relationships as they become entangled in a gendered cycle of trauma as part of the disavowal of the history of migrant labor. Inherited gendered trauma becomes the mechanism through which characters transform into Asians settlers. Spanning from 1900 in China to 1964, Wong's novel alternates from an omniscient third person narrator to chapters from the perspectives of Lin Leong, her daughter-in-law Amy, her granddaughter Theresa, and her sister-in-law and housekeeper, Hong. These four women's histories and narratives are interspersed with an omniscient narrator to layer and temper what familial and individual secrets are being revealed and testify to how trauma persists through each generation. In this female-centered narrative, the parable of the red string of fate haunts each generation as the Leong's fortunes continue to rise as Frank Leong, the patriarch of the family who immigrates to Hawai'i, and his shipping business thrives, but eventually fails. The pairing of class divisions for Amy's working class background and Hong's servitude to the Leong family informs the women's secrets, but Wong's narrative relentlessly celebrates the general presentation of assimilatory success for the family. In comparison to Murayama's *Dying in a Strange Land*, the Wongs are plagued by

gendered expectations of marriage, domesticity, and performing the appearance of success.

Where *Diamond Head* finds the potential to rescript the assimilatory process of Asian settler colonialism comes through both Amy and Theresa's romantic discretions that resist the haunting parable of the red string through their ability to keep their own affairs secret. Still, Wong's intrigue of the wealthy Leong family serves primarily to support Asian settler dominance even through the title of the novel as the location of the Leong's estate. *Diamond Head*'s narrative celebrates the Leong's prosperity and influence in Hawai'i, even as the women inherit the trauma of performing normative gender through marriage that displace their individual histories. Therefore, the structures of empire regulate the possibilities of *Diamond Head* where histories of the plantation and working-class struggles are rendered in service of elevating the Leongs and perpetuating gendered trauma.

Relying on a third-person omniscient narrator allows Wong to include observations about the various Leong women which open up the female-centered perspective as determined by marriage and class status. In focusing what is arguably the domestic side of the performance of an immigration to assimilation process, I read *Diamond Head* as what might be considered a version of Ann McClintock's argument about imperialism and gender. McClintock identifies how "Domesticity denotes both a space (a geographic and architectural alignment) and a social relation to power. The cult of domesticity – far from being a universal fact of 'nature' – has a historical genealogy" (34). While McClintock considers the specific history of western imperialism, the focus on gender dynamics as integral to both colonizing powers and those colonized is apparent in Wong's narrative. Through the lens of domesticity, McClintock identifies how this social modality perpetuated imperial modernity and in particular affected Victorian England. Still, the particularity of immigration to Hawai'i with its own set of colonial

structures operates as an opportunity to engage gendered relations. Even in the differentiated set of relations of power in Hawai‘i at a seemingly belated historical moment from the onslaught of British and U.S. imperialism, the arrival of Asian immigrants entered into preexisting concepts of race, class, and gender subject to the U.S. and its political and imperial concerns. In other words, the ideology of domesticity belatedly emerges in Hawai‘i through the waves of migration of Asians and in their processes of perceived assimilation. Lisa Lowe’s argument about gender and labor emerges as relevant on the basis that “both the racialized gendered character of Asian immigrant labor within the emergence of U.S. capitalism and U.S. colonial modes of development and exploitation in Asia provide the basis for understanding that U.S. capital has historically accumulated and profited through the differentiation of labor rather than through its homogenization” (*Immigrant* 159). In centering the demand for labor to fulfill U.S. capitalism, Lowe emphasizes the gendered component of migrant labor as necessary for exploitation. As such, the racialized and gendered labor of the Leong women transcends the generations as they struggle to resolve the displacement of their histories in favor of normative gender identity.

Wong’s use of the parable of the red string of fate operates as the mechanism for securing gender normativity through marriage for the Leong women. Here, marriage becomes the avenue to escape poverty and displaces their individual familial immigrant histories, which raises challenges over this gendered representation of marriage as the sole option for these women. The parable of the red string enforces the continuity of cyclical trauma through the violence of necessary marriage that repeats through the generations. This begins with Lin and Hong, Frank’s sister-in-law, in China during the Boxer Rebellion at the turn of the 20th century. Wong highlights how oppressive the Chinese cultural system is towards Lin and Hong where the Leong men became their literal saviors through marriage. Hong explains, “A red string can never

break... a whole life, it can pass, while you are married to the wrong person, living with a knot... They are punishments for mistakes... These knots are passed, from mother to daughter, from a father to his son. So that the more you lose your way – as the knots gather, as they sprout, the harder you make it for your children to find love, and for theirs after them” (Wong 27). While this explanation is stated as a Chinese parable, Hong indicates the transference of romantic trauma through these “knots” in one’s fate that can include “an affair. A forced marriage. A concubine. A prostitute” (Wong 27). By signaling the constant perpetuation and increase in knots on the string, Wong foretells and condemns the Leong women to a matrilineal inheritance of trauma. As such, this form of trauma while seemingly only confined to realms of romance could be read as the perpetuation of gendered violence that follows the Leong women from China to Hawai‘i. This particular form of inherited and cyclical trauma indicates the valuation of gaining normative gender that displaces this history of romantic entanglements that are enmeshed in immigrating to Hawai‘i.

Through the string of fate’s continuity and inherited cycle of trauma, Jacqui Alexander suggests how a gendered temporal pattern could be a form of resistance to colonial and neo-colonial projects where temporality is reconfigured as nonlinear through racialization and heterosexualization (189, 191). Therefore, alternative forms of temporality offer a way into the histories of colonization, so that “not only is there no fixed past, but various technologies of timekeeping and various narrations of time can exist within the same temporality” (J. Alexander 191). Alexander identifies how narrations of temporality are normalized under colonial and neo-colonial circumstances. In identifying the concurrent temporalities through the paralleling of Amy and her daughter, Theresa, Wong demonstrates the parameters of resisting the colonial configurations of linear temporality. This is significant in considering the ways in which Wong’s

parable of the red string is both linear in its generational transference, but that it also transcends the temporal constraints of each woman. To suggest that the matrilineal temporality can deconstruct the “particular configurations of class, gender, racial and sexual antagonisms” in nation and state building (J. Alexander 195), opens up how Lin, Amy, Theresa, and Hong engage the politics of assuming normative gender through marriage. However, Wong insists on revealing damaging secrets of infidelity, concubines, threatened slavery, and date rape that haunt the women where the red string of fate appears exclusively to perpetuate historical gendered trauma that must be displaced through marriage and settler normativity.

In marrying to escape poverty, Lin and Amy simultaneously raise their own fortunes and those of their families, which testifies to the necessity of gaining normative gender at the expense of erasing their own histories of migrant labor and class. In consideration of the parallel temporalities of Lin and Amy, Lin observes:

I couldn't shake the feeling that we shared something, Amy and I. We were cut from a similar cloth, given a similar chance. In this girl, in my dress, I saw so much of myself.

The year was 1900 and I had just turned seventeen... every week, from as young as I can remember, my father would threaten to sell me...He said he would sell me to an old, filthy slave owner, to a man with six child concubines...he beat me into darkness. (Wong 184)

This “similar chance” Lin refers to is the opportunity to escape the conditions of poverty through marriage. Lin reflects on her own desperate situation with an abusive father who threatened to sell her into sexual slavery when Frank's marriage proposal saved her life. In Frank's revelation of his own abuse from his father to Lin, he explains, “The way you walk like your hip is healing from a break. I just – I couldn't leave you there, do you understand” (Wong 188). This explanation assumes the hero role of Frank to Lin while also paralleling their own experiences of

parental abuse. Importantly, Lin identifies a similar pattern of desperation in Amy whose working-class family is her own version of entrapment. This pairing of poverty and neglect testify to the repetition of gender trauma where the temporal constraints of Lin and Amy coalesce into what could be read as suffering from familial and class oppression. Despite Amy's engagement to a neighborhood boy, the offer from Lin to marry her son, Bohai, echoes Lin's martial salvation. Amy recognizes her chance to change the fate of both her family and herself:

I had been given a singular opportunity to create change – to combine my family's tarnished name with the most prominent household on Oahu; to bring my family some much-deserved, long-awaited happiness... Love was a luxury of the rich. They could afford to be wrong, they could change their minds as they wished. (Wong 171)

In Amy's realization of the economic and familial benefits of marrying into the Leongs, her own romantic desires become secondary and in a similar mode, run parallel to Lin's radical change in fortunes. Perhaps the suggestion that Amy's agency to control the fate of her family and secure prosperity could be read as a form of female empowerment except that this freedom is tied to marriage for status. In these examples, the parable of the red string seems misplaced since these are not necessarily arranged marriages, but they create knots in the lack of choice for both Lin and Amy and subsequently Amy's daughter, Theresa. In both Lin's forced marriage and Amy's marriage of necessity, their poverty determines the necessity of a wealthy marriage with masculine saviors offering a way out of misfortune. Yet, the secrecy and lies that underlies the family's affairs are passed on the generations, testifying not to an alternative temporality of resistance to trauma, but as the only manifestation of cyclical violence through marriage.

The culmination of the red string of fate and cyclical trauma manifests in Theresa's teenage pregnancy as a result of date rape and her forced marriage to uphold a sense of

“morality” and social status. Still, since Lauren Berlant elaborates, “Trauma detaches the subject from the historical present, sentencing its subjects to a terrifying suffusion of the past into something stuck in the subject that stands out ahistorically from the ordinary” (80). This links to both the temporality of the narrative’s organization and how the parallels between the three generations of Leong women engage a politics of trauma. Berlant’s suggestion of the ahistorical nature of trauma is indicative of Lin and Amy’s views of the practicality and necessity of their marriages, which they try to force upon Theresa. In other words, marriage without viable alternatives structures Theresa’s predicament, where historically the Leong women were required to marry their one option. While Theresa grew up privileged in her Diamond Head house and with the knowledge of her family’s fortune, her encounter with sexual violence operates as another iteration of the Leong women’s trauma. This leads to being forced into marriage with the father of the baby, Roy, almost akin to the lack of choices offered to Lin and Amy. Bohai and Amy insist on the marriage for social appearances and she responds, “Fine to marrying the bastard who stole my virginity while I was drunk – yes, that’s right! He just did it, and I had no idea what was going and I hate myself for it and now I guess you can both hate me too. *Fine* to spending the rest of my life with...the man I hate most in the entire world, the filthiest person I’ve ever met” (Wong 291). In identifying her sexual assault and accusing her parents of not allowing her any choice or future of her own design, perhaps Theresa is fleetingly able to resist the continuity of the violence of the marital cycle. She even pleads to her father, “What about red strings? What about my happiness – *my destined match*...He’s a knot, Maku; he’s a mistake. You’ll tie me to him for the rest of my life” (Wong 292). Using the parable of the red string, Theresa begs for the consideration of love and happiness in a similar manner to how Amy pleaded with her own mother about marrying for love over practicality. In the perpetuation

of knots in the red string of fate, Theresa is sentenced to marriage by her parents even though there is a suggestion by the end of the novel that she might not have to marry. Still, Wong's heavy-handed emphasis on the lack of agency of the Leong women is indicative the perpetuation of gendered violence where marriage occludes the material circumstances of poverty, abuse, and sexual assault.

Diamond Head demonstrates the prominent rise of the Leong family in Hawai'i and embodies the condition of Asian settler colonialism even as the family's wealth declines and the continuity of the matrilineal trauma endures throughout the generations. When Frank and Lin Leong immigrate to Hawai'i in 1914, they already are wealthy as Frank is the owner of a prominent shipping company. As such, their assimilation process was radically different from migrant laborers. Given that Chinese immigration had been excluded from 1882 on, the Leongs entered Hawai'i as part of the merchant class and distinct from the plantation workforce. Thus, Wong's narrative possibilities feature an upper-class immigrant story whose assimilation process is managed through economic power. Only Amy's family and brief references to her father's side testify to Hawai'i's migrant labor history. The displacement of Amy's migrant labor history occurs through her marriage into the Leongs where a rise in social class occludes her origins. This is indicative of how Asian settler colonialism demands normative gender that distances Amy's immigrant and labor history from the Leongs. Theresa narrates her mother's required, but never complete erasure of her past and explains, "The story of her life, the story of my family, of its ghosts, of its magnificent rise and decline – she locked it all away. She tried so hard to erase it" (Wong 95). The inability to fully erase Amy's labor history and poverty testifies to the impossibility for closure as assuming an Asian settler identity insists on obscuring the past, but it is never complete. As such, Theresa learns minimal details about her family and explains, "Little

is known about my Grandpa Chan's past, about his parents... his grandfather was one of the hundreds of Chinese men on board [the ship in 1862], a contract laborer headed for the sugarcane fields" (Wong 107). This immigrant history haunts Amy's family as Theresa narrates what is known about their financial status. These indications of working class labor history are shrouded in secrecy where Amy's escape to the privileged wealth of the Leongs is an act of erasing her labor immigrant past.

The erased history of Amy's parents contributes to the growing number of stories about the unsettled nature of familial secrets that pervade both sides of the families. Here, Theresa is only beginning to gain access and insight into her mother's history and in this sense, the Leong women are experiencing, in part, racial melancholia. David Eng explains:

If experiences of immigration, assimilation, and racialization in the United States are fundamentally determined through the forced relinquishing of lost but unspeakable Asian ideals and through foreclosed investments in an idealized whiteness, then we might justifiably describe racial melancholia as a normal everyday group experience... (121)

Perhaps the most striking element of Eng's explanation is the focus on how racial melancholia is "a normal everyday group experience" and is not focused on exceptional moments of trauma. In the cyclical nature of gendered violence through forced marriage, Lin, Amy, and Theresa, as well as the men, experience a form of mourning as a racialized experience where whiteness operates as an impossible ideal. Still, this concept becomes less clear in the loss of "unspeakable Asian ideals" as Wong portrays her female characters experiencing the continuation of heteropatriarchy through performing normative gender. Still, the gendered cycles of inherited violence lay question to the routinization of these experiences and puts pressure on the assimilation into Asian settler hegemony. In pairing the process of assimilation to the model minority myth, Viet

Ngyuen summarizes that this paradigm includes “a system of social values that prioritizes family education, and sacrifice...willing to accept their social position with gratitude...self-sacrifice rather than self-interest” (146). These descriptors include filial piety and suggest erroneously how these values indicate that “Asian Americans are able to raise themselves out of poverty without public assistance or special consideration” (Ninh 9). In actuality, the model minority myth is promoted in Wong’s *Diamond Head* even through their assorted family dramas and gendered violence. As such, the Leongs migrate to Hawai‘i, already wealthy and the heirs of a shipping industry, and continue to financially and socially succeed. Wong emphasizes that despite murder, concubines, a teenage pregnancy, and hidden marriages, the Leongs succeed in becoming one of the most prominent families in Oahu. In this achievement, the indiscretions and gendered violences placed upon the Leong women are ultimately seen as inconsequential because the Leongs are the bastion of the model minority and also claim dominance in Hawai‘i as Asian settlers.

Wong’s *Diamond Head* serves to exemplify the epitome of a successful transition of Asian immigrant to settler where in spite of personal and multigenerational trauma, the Leongs achieve prominence and financial success. While historical events like the Boxer Rebellion in China instigate the Leong’s migration to Hawai‘i and Pearl Harbor affects the family, these are less significant than the unveiling of familial secrets and the importance of class status. On one hand, one might argue that Wong’s *Diamond Head* offers an ideal representation of Hawai‘i, where Amy’s working class and plantation labor familial history is erased as she climbs up the social hierarchy and leaves behind the supposed shame of her class status and fanciful ideas of love. Instead, this testifies to the demand of displacing labor history to produce a successful Asian settler where marriage is the catalyst to achieve normative settler identity. As a result,

within Lin, Amy, and Theresa's romantic and social struggles, the perpetuation of marriage and wealth as the only avenues to self-formation and agency are the only possibilities for existence; the Leong women are trapped within the cycle of "knots in a red string" that Frank began years ago. Yet, the men do not carry the burden of these entanglements as Lin recalls Frank's fourteen-year-old concubine after his death. Wong writes:

It's Hailee [Frank's concubine] and I close my eyes again. When I open them, she's still there, lying in the pile of toxic sheets she died in. But now there's a red string around her neck and it's my fault. I know where it leads. It's Bohai in the shadow, the string extending from Hailee's neck to his, cutting into his flesh and tangling around his limbs...the string extends past my son to another shadow, and as I see Amy's face I begin to grow frantic tugging at the knots, but it only pulls the bodies together, the friction making them bleed. (226)

Here, the explicit interconnections of the trauma and inherited romantic entanglements become clear as beginning with Lin's purchase of Hailee, Frank's use of her as a concubine, and her sudden violent death. Lin conceptualizes the beginning of the red string's complications and extending not only to her son, but to Amy and presumably this continues on with Theresa's sexual assault and unwanted pregnancy.

Again, the women in the novel are responsible for the visions of the red string and end up embodying the violent consequences put into motion by Frank and Lin. Still, Lin repeatedly claims responsibility for Hailee because she "had given Frank a concubine...tangled her into our fate" (81), which reveals the pressure on her as a wife to conceive a child. Again, Lin is forced to perpetuate sexual violence on another woman or girl in this case in order to uphold the status of her marriage and her value as a wife. As such, Wong hovers on the edge of offering a gendered

representation of the inheritance of racialized matrilineal trauma where even the alternative of a queer temporality seems possible. From Lin's recognition of the intertwined transference of trauma, then Amy observes, "The tangles from one generation to the next, the mistakes passed from mother to daughter, the lies from father to son – it wasn't fate, who could call that fate? These things were within our control, outcomes not linked to our flesh, and all of us, every single one of us had, played a hand in this destiny" (255). The linkages of multi-generational inheritance are explicitly gendered, even as the mistakes are attributed to the female line. As such, the gendered lineage of cyclical trauma embodies the displacement of class and labor migration narratives in order to produce the assumption of cohesive settler identities. Yet, this cyclical nature is irresolvable as the narrative cannot absolve or erase the violence of capitalist colonialism. In staking claim over the agency of actions, Amy suggests that the perpetuation of familial secrets and violence came out of their own doing and not left up to fate. This could be read as a moment to reconcile and break the power of the parable of the red string and for the characters to own up to their choices. However, both Amy and Theresa are left to struggle with their own participation in these legacies as both responsible and subject to the inherited cycles of trauma. *Diamond Head* exemplifies how producing Asian settler identities comes through the occlusion of gendered marital sacrifices, working-class families, and immigrant histories. The cyclical nature of gendered violence through the parable of the red string of fate testifies to the disavowal of the matrilineal line's necessary marriages to uphold normative gender. In the representation of each generation, the women encounter the requirement of marriage as social uplift and obscure their familial secrets from the Leong household that capitalizes on their social status as indicative successful Asian settlers. Wong's *Diamond Head* demonstrates how a

narrative of Asian settler colonialism operates and how it relies on the elision of gendered trauma where the women mark the unevenness and incompleteness of assimilation.

In contrast to Murayama's incisive historical awareness that overrides individual character development, *Dying in a Strange Land*, *Diamond Head*'s consistent and insistent inability to engage the racial and social politics of assimilation and Asian settler hegemony through the representation of gendered oppression testifies to the limits of contemporary "local" writing. Both novels still subscribe to the ultimate success of Asian Americans in Hawai'i without developing an alternative relationship with Kanaka Maoli or to the U.S. demands for assimilation. To imagine out of the boundaries of U.S. empire, Murayama details the politics of Hawai'i and local governance, U.S. imperial wars with Korea and Vietnam, the Cold War and fears of Communism, along with domestic racial tensions, student protests, and the Civil Rights movement where the myriad of historical events operate constantly through Tosh and Kiyō's subject formation. These extraneous geopolitical moments rupture the cohesive trajectory of interior Asian settler formation and exemplify how the text makes visible the structuring apparatuses of U.S. empire. Still, these narratives reveal the genealogy of Asian settler colonialism and its ongoing structuring of the present through the limitations available to imagining outside or beyond these imperial epistemologies. Importantly, both novels testify to the possibilities of pushing the parameters of literary narrative, but individually they demonstrate where and how these borders are constructed and maintained. Relying on multigenerational familial sagas allow the authors to mark the transitions and production of "local" Asian settlers in Hawai'i. The unevenness and shortcomings of each novel rest on the impossibility to not conclude with the generalized achievement of the Oyamas and Leongs. In other words,

Murayama relies on the ruptures through the overemphasis on geopolitical events and U.S. wars in Asia that make visible the literary apparatus as organized by U.S. empire.

Murayama prioritizes these local, national, and international political and social events to displace full subject formation for both Tosh and Kiyō, even as they take on the assumed guise of Asian settler. This is in contrast to Wong's *Diamond Head* that becomes the object of U.S. empire in its "successful" portrayal of gendered settler normativity; the ruse in this achieved position for the Leong women is precisely that the process is never complete or resolved. The petty conflicts and inherited debts, secrets, and obligations saturate the narratives in service of supporting the figure of the "local" who is also in the process of becoming part of the Asian settler hegemony. The potential for *Diamond Head* to imagine outside of the western realm of assimilation and heteropatriarchal structures remains the most frustrating observation; this also succinctly testifies to the ways in which U.S. empire continues to structure and limit aesthetic imagination. Ultimately, the Oyamas and Leongs jointly become the barometers of Asian assimilation in Hawai'i where the narratives demonstrate the production of Asian settler colonialism in lieu of being capable of reckoning with Kanaka Maoli colonization, labor immigration and movements, and the violences that accompany these elisions. Thus, the "local" Asian settler is precisely the figure that is celebrated, continues to be produced and reproduced, and where the writing of this figure is representative of the power of U.S. empire in constructing narrative imaginaries.

Chapter 4: U.S. Militarism, Environmental Justice, Alternative Kinship, and the “House of Damaged Men”

Chapter three established this project’s essential and chronological move to examine the historical importation of Asian migrant laborers and the colonial and liberal processes that redefine these migrants into Asian settlers. Through tracing how multi-generational literary narratives simultaneously make visible the production of Asian settlers as well as the structure of U.S. imperial apparatuses on narrative, chapter three interrogated the stability of Asian settler colonialism. Given this project’s genealogy of U.S. empire in Hawai‘i operates on the premise of a relational racialization between Indigeneity and Asian migrants, chapter three explicated the conditions of migration as tied to racial capitalism. Through the intersection of colonialism and capitalism, chapter three argued how Asian migration operates under U.S. empire, where the turn to Asian settler subject formation and hegemony is intimately connected to maintaining Indigenous land dispossession and the ongoing condition of colonialism. Consequently, chapter four moves my project to think about the contemporary moment through the combination of ‘āina, occupation through militarism, and the possibilities of collaborative decolonial and anti-imperial politics. In order to imagine outside of imperial epistemologies, chapter four begins the process of recentering the “local” in an alternative genealogy grounded in material practice and Indigenous mo‘olelo, history. In other words, this project ends by posing the possibilities of a non-essentialist identity politics where the binary of Indigeneity and Asian “settler” can be disrupted and possibly reformed in a relationality that does not do the work to uphold U.S. empire and capitalism. This chapter returns to earlier concepts of ‘āina, alternative kinships, and collaborative organizing to examine them through anti-militarism activism and Kiana Davenport’s 2006 *House of Many Gods*. While this last chapter does not necessarily arrive at a

concrete resistance political ideology, it poses strategies present in a literary work that begins the deconstruction of the organizing apparatuses of empire.

Consequently, this chapter analyzes how Hawai‘i’s location has been a crucial position for the U.S. military and the influence of militarism as condition of colonial and imperial occupation. Through the optic of U.S. militarism as made visible in the environmental and community struggles over Mākua Valley and beach on O‘ahu, I demonstrate how cultural memory intersects with collaborative activism to provide opportunities for demilitarization and an Indigenous-derived politics grounded in social relations to ‘āina and community. I argue that Kiana Davenport’s 2006’s *House of Many Gods* exemplifies the potential resistant power of Kanaka Maoli cosmology through the June 18, 1996 beach eviction as well as utilizing western tropes of “natives” to advance a critique of U.S. militarism. This novel operates to demonstrate the potential for narrative to engage the imperial historical imaginary where Davenport subtly offers strategies of literary resistance through developing what I am calling a reading practice of “insurgent Indigeneity.” This form of resistance operates simultaneously as upholding colonial temporal logics of assumed “nativeness,” while utilizing presumed Indigenous cosmology as the site of disruption. Still, the dominance of the literary imaginary remains conflicted in its hyper-support of western exploitation of the exotic and enigmatic nature of Indigenous belief systems. This chapter pairs the ongoing struggles over the U.S. Army’s use of Mākua Valley for live-fire practice, bombing, and training exercises throughout the 20th and 21st century with Davenport’s fictive version that takes up an explicit critique of these activities. I read *House of Many Gods* as not simply criticizing military occupation, but also how the novel explores ruptures of the colonial reading frame through Indigenous insurgency. In other words, the text’s representation

of resistance is simultaneously capitalizing on exoticized tropes as well as providing a revelation of the emergent possibilities for a decolonial and demilitarized politics.

Through both strategic bases and training grounds, the U.S. military's presence in Hawai'i and the Pacific are indicative of the histories of imperialism that continue in the present. U.S. militarism exists as integral to contemporary Hawai'i's economy, politics, and social relations. As such, the combination of occupation of 'āina along with the use of it for testing and training sites testify to the continued violences of U.S. imperialism. This chapter explicates how militarism in Hawai'i offers a concrete way to interrogate the continuity of colonialism and imperialism. Examining how U.S. empire persists through the vast presence of military in Hawai'i provides a way to engage the violence of colonialism as it operates post-statehood. Keith Camacho and Setsu Shigematsu argue in *Militarized Currents* that the Pacific is where "militarization [operates] as an *extension of colonialism* and its gendered and racialized processes from the late 20th century to the 21st century" and is indicative of the "residual/ongoing effects of colonial subordination" (xv). Camacho and Shigematsu's assertion of how militarism operates as a colonial technology frames how the Pacific is "a region simultaneously commodified and exploited for its visible militarist and tourist value yet ultimately made invisible in human diversity and complexity –[and] that warrants our interrogation of normalizing structures of authority and governance and our foregrounding of indigenous forms of contestation and survival" (xxx). In situating the Pacific as not only exploited for militarist value, but also suggesting how militarism extends the violence of colonialism, this chapter picks up this critique for Hawai'i as an optic into this ongoing violent process. The continued presence of military presence in economic, political, and land-ownership roles indicates its influence and domination over gendered and racialized subjects. Not only are Kanaka Maoli affected, but this

chapter also contends with the broad ramifications of U.S. militarism on the land and communities in Hawai‘i. Brian Ireland documents that including military personnel and veterans, “the military-connected population comprises approximately 15 percent of Hawaii’s total population” (xiii). In addition to the 161 military installations in Hawai‘i, the military controls 236,303 acres (Kajihiro, "Overview"; Albertini 7). As such the dominance of the military in Hawai‘i can be understood as the extension of U.S. empire, especially through Indigenous land conflict. Thus, this chapter asks how does reckoning with military occupation and resistance to testing grounds and bombing throughout the 20th and 21st century engage an alternative politics that relies on Indigenous belief systems? How does U.S. military violence make visible racialized and gendered subject formation through discounting Kanaka Maoli communities and their genealogical relationship to ‘āina? How does U.S. militarization impact decolonial politics and engage a potential alternative coalitional politics for Kanaka Maoli and Asian settlers?

Consequently, this chapter interrogates how 20th and 21st century militarization of Hawai‘i, while beginning in the early 19th century, encapsulates the colonial present and makes visible the ways in which activism has operated to combat the violences of training and target practice in the Islands. In deliberating on the interconnections between land dispossession and militarization, the historical genealogy of U.S. empire develops as dependent on the perpetuation of a capitalist economy and through the justification of national security. In the post-war period, the coalescing of the Democratic Party bolstered through the ILWU efforts of labor organizing contributed to the departure from a plantation economy. Kyle Kajihiro emphasizes, “By the 1940s, military spending had overtaken sugar and pineapple to become the largest source of revenue for the islands” (“Militarizing” 174). As such, this chapter brings together the previous chapters’ foci on imperial tactics of health, land dispossession, colonial violence on Kanaka

Maoli, and the reshaping of political dominance through Asian settlers post-World War II. In positioning militarism, as always part of and in support of U.S. imperialism, this chapter argues how the history of the U.S. military and its continued presence in the Islands offers an optic into forms of resistance through coalitional organizing and Kanaka Maoli cosmology.

On a broader scope, this chapter expands upon demilitarization in the Pacific and the long and violent history of nuclear testing and damage inflicted on primarily Indigenous populations. To examine Hawai‘i’s location as politically strategic and perpetuating colonial violence allows for an engagement with a reckoning of contemporary militarism and its constant erasure of violence even as the military is a highly visible presence. This chapter builds off questions of land dispossession, familial separation, and the intimate racialized social relations that are erased and subjugated to national security under U.S. militarism. As such, Davenport’s *House of Many Gods* engages a critique of militarism in Hawai‘i, the Pacific, and all the way to Russia. Through this global perspective on the harmful effects of nuclear radiation on individuals and on the environment, Davenport’s narrative offers insight into strategies of resistance to militarism. Simultaneously, as argued in the previous chapters, the limits of fictional imagining emerge in how the anti-militarism activism often is replaced with both a sentimental love story and an uncomfortably exoticizing colonial gaze towards Kanaka Maoli. Still, I read how the self-reflexive deployment of these colonial tropes are precisely where the text begins to rupture the U.S. imperial epistemologies that structure it. Furthermore, the novel insists on the global connections of military violence and the effects on communities where Davenport is able to develop a conscious anti-imperial and demilitarized agenda.

Despite the novel’s overblown love story, Davenport effectively demonstrates the devastating effects of militarization on the bodies and psyches of Kanaka Maoli veterans, Mākua

Valley itself, and on the residents. As such, the trauma of wars abroad and in military participation are mirrored in the destruction of Mākuā Valley. In pairing the effects of globalization and U.S. imperialism through nuclear arms testing across the Pacific, the continental United States, and Russia, Davenport links the harmful effects of militarization on multiple populations and communities. This global awareness remains centrally focused on the Wai‘anae coast of Oahu, but permeates as an international concern where the U.S. among other global powers are guilty of perpetuating forms of harm for the sake of military dominance. Engaging in Indigenous activism and reflecting on the violent consequences of U.S. wars, *House of Many Gods* interweaves Kanaka Maoli cosmology and spirituality as offering the potential to create a decolonial and antimilitarism politics. While imperfect and incomplete, Davenport’s narrative begins to wrangle with imagining beyond the historical limitations of colonial knowledge. Even as the over-arching love story extends to a trip to Russia complete with the horror of “new Moscow,” Davenport attempts to critique global militarization. The “redemptive power of love” echoes the falsity of the previous chapter’s critiques to imagine out of colonial histories, but this chapter argues that Davenport’s narrative ruptures within itself momentarily to indicate the possibility of resistance. Arguably, this chapter deviates from the previous ones in how it argues for more possibilities where contemporary literature reckons with colonial epistemologies even as it repeatedly fails to complete that process. Still, the optic of militarism intersects with how U.S. imperial epistemologies inform contemporary Hawai‘i’s politics, economics, and cultural production. Through examining the historical genealogy of U.S. militarism in Hawai‘i with its 20th century establishment of target practices in the Islands with Davenport’s *House of Many Gods*, this chapter interrogates the environmental impact of U.S. militarism as it affects Kanaka Maoli and “local” populations. The limitations of fiction through

Davenport's *House of Many Gods* is indicative of the pervasive power of U.S. empire to influence institutional power where militarism combines with narratives of "national security."

Foregrounding the historical genealogy of the U.S. military and Mākua Valley (and beach), Davenport's *House of Many Gods* recounts the June 1996 Army and Department of Land and Natural Resources eviction of the non-permanent encampment at Mākua Beach. The centrality of numerous state-sanctioned removals of communities at Mākua Beach throughout the 20th century testify to the combined resources of the state government and the U.S. military's continued usage of the area for target practice and in the name of removing predominantly Kanaka Maoli "squatters." Through a focus on Mākua valley historically and in Davenport's *House of Many Gods*, this chapter demonstrates how state power and militarism become visible through a coalescing of national security, national population of citizens, poverty, Indigenous relations to 'āina disavowed by the state, and making of 'ohana that does not reflect a western sense of the nuclear family. How Davenport's novel attempts to imagine beyond the historical eviction is what makes her novel worthwhile as she tries to bring the kupuna's power and Indigenous spirituality into the novel. There are numerous other sites and activism across the Islands that have garnered attention for water rights, anti-eviction movements, and protesting military uses including but certainly not limited to Protect Kaho'olawe 'Ohana (PKO), Kalama Valley, Protect Waiāhole-Waikāne, Wao Kele O Puna on the Hawai'i Island, and the latest Mauna a Wākea struggles with the Thirty Meter Telescope project.⁶⁰ This chapter's focus on Mākua Valley is necessary because of the sustained and continued contestations over unexploded

⁶⁰ Noelani Goodyear-Ka'ōpua summarizes some of these various land struggles. Kalama Valley involved eviction struggles against the Bishop Estate where the community organized around "the irony that an institution founded for Native Hawaiian students [Bishop Estate] by a Hawaiian ali'i (chief) was evicting Hawaiians and other local framers in order to build high-priced suburban homes that most Kanaka could not afford" (8). This led to the formation of Kōkua Hawai'i that supported various other land struggles over water rights, eviction, and military occupation for PKO and Protect Waiāhole-Waikāne (Goodyear-Ka'ōpua 9).

military ordnance, the beach as a sanctuary or pu‘uhonua for both Kanaka Maoli and other community members, and the ways in which state and federal regulations of poverty, Indigeneity, family and community with attention to ‘āina bring these imperial technologies into focus. Furthermore, Davenport’s fictional interpretation of the 1996 eviction offers testament to how literary imaginaries can subtly resist the power of colonial epistemologies that narrates these histories.

Ceded Lands, Contestations over ‘Āina, and U.S. Imperial Dominance

While Davenport’s *House of Many Gods* focuses primarily on the activism surrounding Mākua Valley in the 1970s-1990s as a site of U.S. military bombing practices and contamination, the U.S.’s strategic Pacific interests began in the 19th century pre-overthrow of the Hawaiian monarchy in 1893. In briefly establishing the viability of Hawai‘i as a U.S. navy and military stronghold, I identify the interconnections between land demands and military power that persist today. U.S. militarism sutures this project’s previous chapters through this optic in consideration of ‘āina, familial (‘ohana) ties, and the clashing Kanaka Maoli ideologies with western ones. The emphasis on land dispossession for the benefit of the state is central to this chapter’s understanding how the U.S. military becomes dominant. Sheryl Miyahira explains:

On August 12, 1898, the Republic of Hawaii ceded sovereignty to the United States, together with absolute title to approximately 1,750,000 acres of government and crown lands constituting is public domain. Under Hawaii’s Organic Act,⁶¹ these ‘ceded lands’ – the public lands (and properties) transferred to the United States without compensation at

⁶¹ The Organic Act of 1900 “establish[es] Hawaii’s territorial government, confirmed cession of public lands effected by the Joint Resolution and provided the promised ‘special laws’ for their administration. In empowering the territorial government to administer the lands, however, the Act also clarified Congress’ intent to treat Hawaii’s lands as an adjunct to rather than an integral part of federal domain” (Miyahira 119). The Joint Resolution’s prescription was that in general “the ceded lands proceeds by used ‘solely for the benefit of the inhabitants of the Hawaiian Islands for educational and other purpose’” (Miyahira 145).

annexation – were given a special trust status...upon Hawaii’s admission to statehood in 1959, the federal government relinquished title to most of these lands to the new state.

(101-102)

As such, these “ceded lands” take on a complicated place where the state acts as trustee with the charge to promote the well-being of Hawaiians with the suggestion for the return of these lands with statehood (Miyahira 126). John Van Dyke explains further how the complications partially came from the lumping together of Crown Lands with Public lands. Van Dyke conveys, “Under the Republic of Hawaii and during the territorial and statehood periods, the Kingdom’s Government and Crown lands were joined together and managed simply as the Ceded Lands or the Public Lands Trust” (9). This conflation is because the Crown Lands “were originally part of the personal domain of Kamehameha III and evolved into a resource designed to support the Hawaiian monarchs, who embodied the Native Hawaiian culture and spirit” (Van Dyke 9). In contrast, the Government lands were designed for the general public needs. As such, the Crown Lands have particular significance with Kanaka Maoli. In noting the ways in which the territorial age affected the Crown Lands and questions of ownership, Van Dyke details how by the end of the territorial period, prior to statehood, these lands had been divided further. Van Dyke writes:

...when Hawaii became a state, a total of 227,972 acres had been ‘set aside’ by federal pronouncements for national parks (on the islands of Maui and Hawaii) and another 59,106 acres had been set aside for other purposes, mostly for military installations. The federal government had purchased 28,235 acres from the Public Lands and was using another 117,413 acres of these lands under licenses from the Territory. (220; see Miyahira 131)⁶²

⁶² This breakdown of acreage does not include the 200,000 acres U.S. Congress allotted in the Hawaiian Homes Commission Act of 1920 to “be leased for residential, pastoral, and agricultural purposes by eligible ‘native

Importantly, Van Dyke emphasizes how the Public Lands, as a general grouping of both Government and the Crown Lands, were distributed to “other purposes” that essentially meant military installations. This division of Public Lands is crucial in understanding the focus on national parks and military purposes. This adds onto the military’s interest in developing Pearl River, now known as Pearl Harbor, into a military and commercial harbor (Van Dyke 125).⁶³

Even this breakdown of acreage suggests a majority was allocated to both military installations and the Defense department. Kyle Kajihiro explains that post-statehood, “approximately 30,000 acres that were returned to the State were immediately leased back to the military for sixty-five years...today 54 percent of military-held land, approximately 112,173 acres, is so-called ‘ceded land,’ commonly understood by Kanaka Maoli to be stolen land” (“Militarizing” 176). Consequently, the explicit role of the U.S. military and land ownership coalesces under statehood in 1959 even as the 20th century witnessed various military operations and training sites. Van Dyke echoes similar statistics for 2009 where “The Federal Government currently controls about 370,000 acres of the lands that were ceded to the United States at the time of annexation in 1898. More than 220,000 of these acres are in the national parks on Maui and the Big Island, and the rest are in Military bases scattered around the Islands...” (270). The

Hawaiians” (Kauanui 2). J. Kēhaulani Kauanui’s *Hawaiian Blood* explicitly investigates the colonial logics of blood quantum through eligibility for homesteading and for the Hawaiian Home Lands territory. Ultimately, Kauanui demonstrates how “blood quantum is a colonial project in the service of land alienation and dispossession” (194). The question of land ownership and land trust is also contentious as the Department of Hawaiian Home Lands discovered that “from 1900 to 1959, the [territorial] government sold over 13,000 acres of Hawaiian Home Lands that had not been properly identified as part of the land trust” (Kauanui 177). This broken trust further adds to the claimants not allotted their leases as well as demonstrating the complications of the territorial period to statehood regarding the management of land.

⁶³ Van Dyke further explains the interest in Pearl River in conjunction with the Bayonet Constitution of 1887 where “the reaction in the Kingdom to the inclusion of the Pearl River in the 1887 Supplemental Treaty was initially strongly negative, but as the political power moved from the Mō‘ī and the native leaders to those westerners supporting ties with the United States, a closer look was given to the Pearl River amendment to the Supplementary Convention” (125). The amendment eventually gave the U.S. the exclusive right to enter Pearl Harbor (Van Dyke 24). Thus, the U.S. military’s interest in Pearl Harbor is often cited as one of the concrete advances in the militarization of the Islands.

continued identification of national parks as distinct from military installations complicates what is defined as “public good” and for which populations. Clearly, the implication of the necessity of national parks as a form of preservation is viewed as distinct from the intent of the Crown Lands as designated for Kanaka Maoli and primarily for homesteading. As Noelani Goodyear-Ka‘ōpua aptly identifies in her introduction to *A Nation Rising*, the continuing battle over ceded lands is central to sovereignty. Goodyear-Ka‘ōpua explains the Office of Hawaiian Affairs and:

four individuals filed suit against the state of Hawai‘i, asking for an injunction against the state’s sale or swap of any lands within the Public Lands Trust until the issues of sovereignty and title over the Hawaiian national lands could be resolved. The case went all the way to the U.S. Supreme Court... In essence, the Court’s decision stated that despite U.S. Public Law 103-150 – the 1993 resolution in which the United States apologized to the Hawaiian people and acknowledged that the Hawaiian people and government never relinquished their sovereignty or national lands to the United States – the United States and state of Hawai‘i still had sovereign authority and absolute title to those stolen lands. (29)

This contentious decision in 2009 demonstrates the complexity around the ceded lands as part of the colonial overthrow of the Hawaiian Kingdom as well as the management of the Hawaiian Homelands under the territorial government and the eventual resolutions around statehood. In this brief explication of the conflict surrounding ceded lands, the centrality of ‘āina is irrefutable and the legacies of U.S. colonialism continue in the present through the dispossession of Kanaka Maoli land in service of political, economic, and strategic settler aims. The specific use of ‘āina for the U.S. military offers an optic into these intricacies of national security, Indigenous sovereignty, community building, and political autonomy.

In reckoning with how militarism operates as not simply an iteration of federal violence, but as also an ideological transformation, I turn to Cynthia Enloe's insightful discussion of the ongoing process of militarization that theorizes how I situate the colonial present of Hawai'i.

Enloe in *Maneuvers: The International Politics of Militarizing Women's Lives* explains:

Militarization is a step-by-step process by which a person or a thing gradually comes to be controlled by the military or comes to depend for its well-being on militaristic ideas.

The more militarization transforms an individual or a society, the more that individual or society comes to imagine military needs and militaristic presumptions to be not only valuable but also normal. Militarization, that is, involves cultural as well as institutional, ideological, and economic transformations. (3)

Importantly, Enloe emphasizes the totalizing structure of militarization that extends beyond the physical presence of the military and demonstrates the multifaceted institutions that reinforce and maintain the power structures of militarism. The description of a "step-by-step" process might misleadingly suggest a linear and one-time event, but I demonstrate the perpetual recurrence of militarization where the reinforcement of the societal and individual expectations come to inform the historical and contemporary understandings of Hawai'i as a militarized place. Enloe significantly explains the process of normalizing a militarized existence where the national and state political, economic, and ideological values are bound up in militarization.

In addressing the particularities of Hawai'i's long-standing history with the U.S. military, Vernadette Gonzalez's insights in *Securing Paradise*, helps to identify the ways militarism and tourism intersect and reinforce each other. Gonzalez identifies the logics of tourism and militarism where they "work together to produce gendered structures of feelings and formations of knowledge that are routinized into everyday life and are crucial to the practices and habits of

U.S. imperialism in the region” (4). Through emphasizing how gender and affect are produced through normalizing structures of militourism, Gonzalez delineates how U.S. empire narrates the imagining and concrete military occupations of Hawai‘i and throughout the Pacific. Gonzalez identifies how military and touristic interests align under the rhetoric of security where she emphasizes “the generative role played by masculinized and militarized desires for security in America’s broader imperial project...[means] *Paradise* is not a generic or static term – it specifically refers to an idea of passivity and penetrability engendered by imperialism as an alibi for domination...” (7). The necessity of security for Gonzalez enables the intersection of militarism and tourism where imperialism and colonialism persist through these structures. As Enloe suggests, the project of militarism is ever present and manifests materially, economically, politically, and ideologically; this is also precisely the process Gonzalez describes through the concept of militourism. Using Enloe and Gonzalez’s explications of militarism as an ongoing process that continues the colonial and imperial project, I build off their arguments on the intersection of militarism, social relations, ideology, and the presumed necessity of “security” as the foundation for this chapter’s engagement with the U.S. military’s use of Mākua Valley. This demonstrates how environmental racism and what Keith Miyake develops as the “racial environmental state” (IV) might be understood under militarism and the relationship to the Mākua Beach community as resistant to the political and economic production of space, land, and military violence.

Protect Kaho‘olawe ‘Ohana: Anti-Militarism Activism

Given the long history of the U.S.’s political, economic, and military interests in Hawai‘i throughout the 19th and 20th century, it remains unsurprising the range of military bases, training sites, and testing locations that were deemed imperative for national security. This section

focuses briefly on an overview of U.S. militarization of Hawai‘i and the initial justification of “national” security surrounding World War II. The increased presence of military and training sites coalesced around World War II and escalated through the Cold War. Ian Lind demonstrates, as Enloe and Gonzalez emphasized earlier, how U.S. militarism of Hawai‘i is dependent on conjoining military and civilian interests. Lind explains how the commercial interests in Pearl Harbor corresponded with the U.S.’s desire for a strategic position in the Pacific. The onslaught of World War II “brought dramatic changes to Hawaii. The effects of martial law, and of the war itself...[meant] The military was the center of a "military-industrial revolution" which dramatically altered the structure of Hawaiian society” (Lind 37). Through identifying how World War II forever changed military occupation of Hawai‘i, the increase in the presence and practice of the military occurred leading up to statehood.

The U.S. military’s bombing practices of the island of Kaho‘olawe are documented throughout the early 1960s where justification stemmed from preparation for the Vietnam War (Osorio 139). While I begin with the activism around anti-military protests of the bombing of Kaho‘olawe, this chapter is only invested in minimally laying out the background of grassroots organizing and the powerful influence of the Protect Kaho‘olawe ‘Ohana (PKO). PKO’s success impacted subsequent land and environmental protests of the military. PKO emerged out of the wide support of community members where the focus of their critique was on the U.S. military’s bombing practice of the island of Kaho‘olawe. Jonathan Osorio explicates how “protests over land were also a result of a new consciousness among Hawaiians that they had been subjugated by Western institutions” (141; Trask, *From a Native* 119). This particularly emerged in the development and urbanization of rural areas where “many Hawaiians [had been able] to maintain a semblance of traditional life” (Osorio 141). Out of this awareness of land dispossession, PKO

formed to organize community members around the sacredness of the island of Kaho‘olawe and the insistence on the living quality of the island for Kanaka Maoli (Osorio 149). In 1976 after extensively surveying the island, PKO filed lawsuits against the U.S. Navy on the basis that the land had ancestral significance for Kanaka Maoli and contained various cultural artifacts that would be damaged by the military training (Morales 21). The forensic proof of the archeological findings gathered some support from the more skeptical community that highlighted the divisions between and among perceptions of Indigeneity and Asian “settler” concerns. In 1977, PKO leader George Helm and fellow activist Kimo Mitchell went to deliver supplies to the activists camped out in protest on Kaho‘olawe. The two failed to find their friends and their boat scheduled to pick them never showed. George Helm and Kimo Mitchell disappeared and were presumed to be lost at sea (Morales 31). Accordingly, Stuart Coleman notes how “George Helm became a martyr to the cause of Hawaiian sovereignty” (183). Beyond Helm’s mysterious disappearance, his legacy exists as an inspiration to Indigenous activism and the commitment to ‘āina and resisting U.S. militarism. Protect Kaho‘olawe ‘Ohana eventually triumphed in 1981 when Kaho‘olawe was classified as a historical place, and in 1993, the U.S. government dissolved the use of weapon training and bomb practices on the island.

The Security State, Environmental Justice, and U.S. Militarism

The U.S. military’s use of Mākua Valley extends back to the 1920s and continues in the present, where the various strategic practice and target exercises are still opposed by Kanaka Maoli, environmental activists, and community members. This lengthy history of military presence both encapsulates the continual conflicts between the presence of U.S. military and the residents concerned over ‘āina and environmental justice. What the optic of U.S. militarism and anti-militarism activism makes visible one again is the nuances over the “local” as a

geographical category of community as opposed to the discursive work the “local” as Asian settler does. In other words, the continuation of demilitarization efforts exemplifies how the interconnections of settler colonialism and Indigeneity become most visible in the concrete and ideological violence of U.S. military domination over ‘āina and subjects. This chapter demonstrates how U.S. militarism in Mākua identifies the constitutive processes of land dispossession, concrete military violence, and the production of “beach occupiers” as vagrants in lieu of reckoning with the expansion of both the military complex and the real estate market pricing out community members. The intertwining of the duality of U.S. militarism and gentrification produces not only increased homelessness, but also how the state criminalizes beach dwellers as “squatters.” This indicates how the state conceptualizes Indigenous relations to ‘āina as both a chosen relationship to sustainable living and as a response to poverty created by the capitalist state. Through this incoherence of both the pervasive influence of U.S. militarism and the perpetuation of a capitalist racist state, Mākua Valley embodies the struggles around ‘āina, subsistence living, and a reorienting of the “local” as a grounded practice that could, at times, reposition residents who are linked by their communal living as an Indigenous praxis. I mark how Kiana Davenport’s *House of Many Gods* resists the guiding apparatus of U.S. empire’s historical archive, by rupturing the literary imaginary to innovate on the history of environmental activism and demilitarization efforts in Mākua Valley. In other words, the novel offers, momentarily, opportunities to make visible the literary imaginary by reimagining alternative outcomes to environmental justice while also critiquing the pervasive violence of the U.S. military on subjects.

Through situating how the U.S. military operates in Hawai‘i, the concepts of ecocolonialism and the racial environmental state are productive in developing an argument

where the literary imaginary both upholds these ideologies and makes visible how they operate. For this chapter, the production of narrative as cultural memory becomes the object of the history of colonization and ecocolonization in the *House of Many Gods* where the text both upholds the U.S. imperial and colonial apparatuses and ruptures them. Trisha Watson in her dissertation “Ho‘i Hou iā Papahānaumoku: A History of Ecocolonization in the Pu‘uhonua of Wai‘anae,” develops the theory of ecocolonization as it is specifically located in Hawai‘i. This theory of ecocolonization involves prioritizing Indigenous relationships to ‘āina where “ecocolonization focuses explicitly and exclusively on the relationship between the colonization of indigenous peoples and the colonization of the environment” (28). Watson demonstrates how ecocolonization thinks through both the social and environmental problems for current Indigenous communities. This concept is similar to Miyake’s concept of the environmental racial state where the continuity of ecocolonialism is reinforced by the institutional maintenance of racial capitalism. Miyake explains how environmental space is in conflict because of “the incorporation of liberal forms of official antiracism, distributive justice, and neoliberal capitalist environmental relations” (V)⁶⁴. This reveals how the “racial environmental state operates through the management of race and environment as both ideological concepts and material practices” (Miyake 32). In other words, racial capitalism maintains and orders these social relations. In situating both Watson and Miyake’s conceptions of the institutional development and maintenance over social, Indigenous, and environmental justice, I propose how ecocolonialism might operate as one mechanism of the environmental racial state as it erases the conditions of colonialism that interrupt the differing ideologies of relationships to land and sociality. Thus, the

⁶⁴ Miyake summarizes, “An environmental justice framework ...takes seriously the objective of social justice [by] thinking about environmental justice in terms of scholarship and praxis that counter-articulates various modes of social justice struggle in opposition to the historically and geographically specific modes of dominance that structure society, such as race, sexism, and capitalism” (27).

site of Mākua Valley through the optic of U.S. militarism organizes how the state is compliant and endorses a western mode of relationality and sociality with the land. This perpetuates the practice of racially differentiated space that upholds the U.S. military apparatus. I also posit how the U.S. military's occupation of Mākua Valley makes visible the interconnections of the destruction and violence of 'āina as well as family where kinship structures are linked through land. This is particularly salient through Davenport's *House of Many Gods* where the literary imaginary engages the intersection of the racial environmental state, the colonial and imperial apparatus of U.S. empire, kinship, and community activism.

In consideration of the genealogy of the racial liberal state as part of what Miyake deems the racial environmental state, I briefly emphasize how Foucault's discussion of the security state and militarization inform how the structures of power operate for this chapter. To reckon with a racial biopolitical state that is also conceptualized as an environmental one requires Jodie Melamed's delineation of racial liberal orders as indicative of the coalescing of liberal modes of power that organize race through state power. Through marking the genealogy of state power, Foucault examines the shift from sovereign power into the dissemination of securing subjects and the state through a militarized apparatus of disciplinary power. In Foucault's discussion of biopolitics and biopower, he suggests how the discourses of power are exemplified through the articulation of war as a relations of force model. As such, Foucault explains, "the historico-political discourse of war as putting forward a truth that 'functions as a weapon,' as speaking of a 'perspectival and strategic truth.' Discourse, knowledge, and truth, as well as relations of power, can be understood from within the strategic model" (*Security* xxi). This correlates the model of war to politics and suggests how a theory of governmentality is grounded in how "politics is the continuation of war by other means," where war is also the mechanism for ensuring social

relations (*Security* 45). Thus, the centrality of biopolitics perpetuates biological processes where “racism is inscribed as the basic mechanism of power” (Foucault, *Security* 254). Here, racism becomes entwined in social and political relations where the dissemination and regulation of power is now inextricable from race. This theory of governmental power as biopolitical and as rooted in racism informs the racial state, where the distribution of rights is mediated through state institutions and apparatuses.

In reckoning with Goldberg’s centralizing of race through state power, the development of state-sanctioned difference and the management of subjects is indicative of how the racial environmental state operates in Hawai‘i. Through explicating how state modes of domination operate, Goldberg explains, “Racial states, then, are states that historically become engaged in the constitution, maintenance, and management of whiteness...Racial states, in short, are states ultimately where whiteness rules” (195). This conveys how the racial state operates as the historical iteration of various forms of white supremacy that are grounded in colonization and Indigenous genocide, but also are broadly determined by capitalism. In other words, the shifting developments of the racial state are historically grounded on perpetuating whiteness through disavowing the racial conditions that enable and define white supremacy. One of the key elements of the racial state then is how racial capitalism operates as a global order as Melamed might suggest through insuring whiteness even as its conditions of possibility are situated in racialization. Melamed states:

By representing and assigning meaning to human identities, white supremacy made it possible to locate all human individuals and collectives within an emerging social order...As white supremacist codes and references entered into modernity’s cultural and epistemic systems – creating distinct repertoires of interpretation, representation,

evaluation, and description – they racialized Western knowledges, making the constitution of modernity as much a knowledge-based racial project as it was an economically and politically based one. (7)

Through demonstrating how white supremacy invests value within humans, Melamed identifies how this produces a modern social order where racial capitalism informs social relations, epistemological hierarchies, and becomes the modern racial state. With a focus on the post-World War II iterations of white supremacy, Melamed indicates how a “shift away from white supremacy toward formal antiracism has enabled liberal modes of instituting power to expand and intensify as putatively antiracist social norms have saturated more domains of social life and interpellated racialized subjects previously disciplined primarily through overt applications of force” (11). In other words, formal state antiracism social norms and modes of power suggest the erasure of racialization through a celebration of official knowledge, public policy, and valuation of difference as operating apolitically. This produces what Melamed views as race-liberal orders where the liberal racial state defines and regulates liberal-antiracist norms. To situate an extensive focus on the “environmental” mode of domination of the liberal state seems to identify a particular component of how state power operates and is predicated an interconnected institutionalized political, economic, and social relations. Consequently, Miyake’s concept of the racial environmental state is conducive to this chapter’s analysis of how U.S. militarism makes visible the conjoining forces of racialization, ecocolonialism, and racial capitalism. I choose not to preface the chapter’s theoretical conceit around Miyake’s term as I am focusing on how U.S. militarism operates as the heuristic and apparatus that conjoins environmental justice, racialization, real estate development that produces the “homeless resident,” and the interlocking effects of colonialism and capitalism in Mākua Valley.

Kanaka Maoli Mo'olelo of Mākua Valley

In order to establish a further precedent for Kanaka Maoli relationships to 'āina, it is important to briefly identify how Mākua Valley is a sacred place on the Leeward coast of O'ahu. This supports the conflicting Indigenous and western (read: the state) ideologies regarding land and how the material and epistemological violence of U.S. militarism operates in constant opposition to the struggles for 'āina and the valuation of a living relationship with Mākua Valley. Watson explains, "Mākua Valley in Wai'anae represents our parents; Mākua is a kinolau or physical body of the parents of all Hawaiians...Being Mākua enables this surrender of ourselves to the spirits that reside there...Mākua is sacred because of its history and because of the spirits that still reside there" (118, 124). Watson's explanation requires an acceptance of entirely non-western genealogical relationship to 'āina and the rootedness of Kanaka Maoli as a different system of land ownership from capitalist endeavors. Mary Kawena Pukui further defines how "Mākua" means "parent, any relative of the parents' generation" (230). Kajihiro summarizes how Mākua Valley is believed to be "one of the places where Papa and Wakea [mother] came together to create life on Earth" ("Overview" 7; Kelly 7). Kajihiro elaborates that there are a multitude of mo'olelo ka'ao (historical accounts) about Mākua which include how the Kāēnana cave used to be the home of a shark-man, Nanaue. Kajihiro explains that Nanaue "would enter the sea through an undersea passage and meet with the female mo'o (lizard/dragon spirit) of Ko'iahi Stream [in the valley] who would come down to the sea during heavy rains. The two would turn into beautiful human forms and make love on Pōhaku-kū-la'i-la'i in the crashing surf" ("Militarizing" 185; Kelly & Quintal 8-10). This historical account, among others, testifies to the proliferation of deities that met at locations in the valley, imbuing them with cultural value and historical significance.

The multitude of stories associated with Mākua Valley exemplify Kanaka Maoli ontological relationships to ‘āina that hinge on the recognition of various deities and cosmology associated with this location. Another well-known mo‘olelo involves Hi‘iaka, the deity and patron of hula whose sister is Pele, the volcano goddess. Mei-Singh recounts how “Pele sent Hi‘iaka across the islands to fetch Pele’s lover on the island of Kauai and equipped Hi‘iaka with supernatural strength and a lightening pā‘ū (skirt). On the journey, Hi‘iaka visited Mākua” (705). At this point, Hi‘iaka saves the life of a young girl after a shapeshifter, Pōhakuloa changed from a shark to a rock and attacked the girl. Hi‘iaka revives the girl and proclaims that the rock is actually a supernatural shapeshifter (Mei-Singh 705; “Militarizing” Miyake 184). What these mo‘olelo indicate is the various histories and narratives inform Kanaka Maoli understandings of ‘āina and sacred cosmologies. In articulating the interconnections of ‘āina and Indigenous paradigms, the mo‘olelo can be read as political formations that centralize Kanaka Maoli value systems and ways of living. ku‘ualoha ho‘omanawanui’s groundbreaking study, *Voices of Fire* argues for a Hawaiian literary nationalism that is present in mo‘olelo. ho‘omanawanui suggests how the Pele and Hi‘iaka mo‘olelo “asserted what I identify as a huluhia [chants about Pele that begin with the word ‘huluhia’ meaning overturned or a complete change] discourse of ‘ōiwi agency, one that continued to counter settler rhetoric claiming Hawai‘i for the United States and Hawaiians as Americans” (xxix). In asserting the political nature of mo‘olelo, ho‘omanawanui offers how a tradition of Kanaka Maoli nationalism and resistance can be seen through the histories grounded in ‘āina and the associated deities. Mei-Singh makes this correlation by suggesting how “mo‘olelo represent indigenous intellectual traditions invoking histories of dispossession” (705). This rendering of mo‘olelo as part of and indicative of a genealogy of Indigenous resistance intersects with how I am positioning U.S. militarism and literary

production with Indigenous knowledge. In other words, reckoning with the political persistence of mo‘olelo for Kanaka Maoli challenges colonial and settler notions of property, ownership, and land. I situate how mo‘olelo and Indigenous cosmologies conjoin with literary narrative to offers moments of resistance to the violence of U.S. militarism. Simultaneously, Mākua Valley also testifies to alternative kinship structures and community that combat a western capitalist urbanization that creates an increasing homeless community. Thus, I strategically invoke Indigenous counternarratives that reorient a relationship to ‘āina and U.S. militarism through establishing countercommunities or alternative communal living and subsistence groups.

History of the U.S. Military in Mākua Valley

The history of the U.S. military in Hawai‘i dates back prior to the overthrow of the Hawaiian Kingdom in 1893 and is directly tied into the division and privatization of land with the 1848 Mahele. Specifically, the U.S. military began using Mākua Valley in 1929 and remains an ongoing struggle. The complicated transition from communal relationships to ‘āina to private property, as detailed in chapter 1, are evidenced in Mākua Valley’s ownership and utilization. Marion Kelly and Nancy Aleck document in “A Brief Cultural History of Mākua Valley” that the Mahele of 1848 required claims to be submitted by Kanaka Maoli. Kelly and Aleck explain how “about 200 acres were eventually awarded to Hawaiian families...sixteen *kuleana* [land grants] were awarded in Mākua Valley in the 1850s. The rest remained Government Land that was leased out by the government to non-Kanaka Maoli for ranching” (4).⁶⁵ Accessing ancestral land for ranching and plantation development even prior to the overthrow is indicative of the economic and political transformations occurring at the time.⁶⁶ Importantly, renowned

⁶⁵ Kalamaoka ‘āina Niheu documents how “In the Mākua area, the Māhele Act resulted in the allocation of only twenty-four kuleana awards to twenty-one petitioners for a total of approximately two hundred acres” (162).

⁶⁶ While less related to the military occupation of Mākua Valley, it is important to note that two western ranching families were involved with ranching in the area. First, Samuel Andrews worked the land until 189 and then sold

anthropologist Marion Kelly conducted multiple surveys on the history and cultural importance of Mākua Valley and emphasizes the confluence of private property and industry post-Mahele as affecting Kanaka Maoli residents and stewards of the ‘āina.

As mentioned earlier in this project in chapter 1, the overthrow of the Hawaiian monarchy effectively altered land usage and ownership even further, particularly in regard to federal access and utilization of land. John Van Dyke lists multiple military installations throughout the Islands to emphasize the various forms of how ‘āina is used and delineates further the full cession of 1,800,000 acres of the combined crown, government, and public lands (270).⁶⁷ The emphasis on land acquisition as exclusively being subject to the United States ownership, without consent from the Hawaiian monarchy and through a completely different understanding of property rights, allows for the military and naval usage of the land. Hedy Hager explains, “Military presence in Makua valley dates back to 1929, when the Army acquired three parcels of land situated on the slopes of the valley where gun emplacements were built” (2; Kelly & Aleck 6). In the 1930s, the U.S. began to use Mākua for amphibious landings as part of war games (Kelly & Aleck 8). These first two usages of the valley are fairly innocuous in accessing the land, but indicate the types of training involved. More importantly, Haunani Ruelas observes, “Notices of condemnation were served to Mākua residents” in order to implement a specific type

his lease to Lincoln McCandless who became “a major landowner in Mākua Valley” and was known for “getting *kuleana* from native tenants” (Kelly and Aleck 4).

⁶⁷ The Newlands Resolution annexing the Hawaiian Islands in 1898 states in part: “Whereas the Government of the Republic of Hawaii having, in due form, signified its consent, in the manner provided by its constitution, to cede absolutely and without reserve to the United States of America all rights of sovereignty of whatsoever kind in and over the Hawaiian Islands and their dependencies, and also to cede and transfer to the United States the absolute fee and ownership of all public, Government, or Crown lands, public buildings or edifices, ports, harbors, **military equipment**, and all other public property of every kind and description belonging to the Government of the Hawaiian Islands, together with every right and appurtenance thereunto appertaining... The existing laws of the United States relative to public lands shall not apply to such lands in the Hawaiian Islands; but the Congress of the United States shall enact special laws for their management and disposition: Provided, that all revenue from or proceeds of the same, except as regards such part thereof as may be used or occupied for **the civil, military, or naval purposes of the United States**, or may be assigned for the use local government, shall be used solely for the benefit of the inhabitants of the Hawaiian Islands for educational and other public purposes” (emphasis added).

of guns known as howitzers which fire shells at high elevation (5). These notifications also were part of the process for valley residents to “turn over, or sell lands,” even though “no one...was paid for condemned parcels” (Kelly & Aleck 7-8). Therefore, this first interaction post-annexation regarding private property, military usage, and residents is indicative of the violent coalescing of colonial and military apparatus that persists throughout the present day.

The onset of World War II and the attack on Pearl Harbor (Pu‘uloa) in December of 1941 drastically altered the role of the military on O‘ahu. Martial law was implemented and the U.S. army took control of the entire western coast of the island, including Mākua Valley. Kelly and Aleck document that there were about 3,000 people living along this coast where it rapidly “transformed from a relatively peaceful cattle ranch into a busy garrison. The remaining *Kuleana* residents, the railroad workers and the McCandless Estate ranch were told to leave the valley” (8). This began the legal evictions of residents and citizens where their lands were condemned to be mandated for military use. Niheu explains, “...any remaining kuleana lands were seized for military training. All of the remaining residents...were ordered from the land, and the Mākua Military Reservation was created (164). This militarizing of Hawai‘i resulted in “military land holdings reached a peak of more than 600,000 acres in 1944, then dropped rapidly to about 250,000 in the immediate post-war period” (Lind 37). Despite the subsequent drop-off in land holdings post-world War II, this significant alteration persists through statehood and continues to support the influence of the military over Kānaka Maoli tenants and Mākua residents.

Conflicts between the territorial government and the federal government emerged during World War II and continued up to statehood over the control and access of Mākua Valley. The military damage to Mākua Valley in 1941 was documented in Kelly and Quintal’s 1977 report where “the destruction of buildings, wells, windmills, water troughs and reservoirs, as well as the

pipelines that brought fresh water from the mountain springs, eradicated vestiges of the historic period...the destruction of Makua Protestant Church and its community hall, was well the defacement or destruction of many of the tombstones” (71). The bombing and target practices destroyed the infrastructure of the settlement as well as communal locations. Kelly and Quintal interviewed numerous people with relationships to Mākua. One individual commented on how the government “don’t need that place for bombing. During the war-time they had to use it, but when it is peacetime again, they should change it back to the people” (73). This sentiment was echoed throughout other interviews as another resident emphasized how the government “didn’t need that land...look what they did, they desecrated Makua. It was sinful” (Kelly & Quintal 72). These testimonials identify two key components of anti-militarism dissent where the first issue deals with the confusion over the national need for the military’s presence and the other on an Indigenous relationship to ‘āina that can also be seen as an environmental justice argument.

These interviewees also echoed similar concerns the territorial government had about the sustained use of Mākua Valley for military purposes and highlights the conflict between national military interests and the locally-based population’s investments. *Environment Hawai‘i* notes the that history of the Army at Mākua Valley had a contentious relationship with the territorial government. This newsletter documents how the territorial Governor Ingram Stainback wrote in 1945 to General H.T. Burgin, the commanding officer of the Army’s Central Pacific Base command, concerned about the depletion of public lands where if “should this land be transferred, as you propose, it will take approximately fifty percent of the public lands now remaining on the island of O‘ahu under territorial control” (347). Once again, the question of public lands is under contest and the lengthy struggle is illuminated here between the Army and the territorial government. The U.S. Army repeatedly extended a Revocable Permit 200 that

allowed the military use of the valley during World War II and six months beyond. However, this permit was extended in 1945 and again in 1953 (Kelly & Aleck 9; *Environment Hawai'i*).⁶⁸ The War Department and Army insisted that a garrison was needed in Mākua and believed that all of the land should be occupied by the Army. Importantly, Kelly and Quintal's 1977 report documents how the original Revocable Permit 200 from 1942 "asked that the Army restore the premises to 'satisfactory' condition" (43). Given the numerous unexploded ordnance in the valley, the Army neglected the clean-up process it had agreed to initially. As such, the Army offered to create a compromise between military usage and public access. The Army explained that it would "allow the public limited access to the beach portion of the Makua area but did not change the jurisdictional status," meaning that the land was only available for military maneuvers (Kelly & Quintal 43). In other words, the Army would build a garrison in the valley, organize military live training, and then, allow limited public access to the beach. This continued through the Statehood Admission Act of 1959 that "allowed the Federal Government to reserve land for military purposes" (Kelly & Quintal 9). This precedence was the basis for President Lyndon B. Johnson's 1964 Executive Order that designed 3,236 acres of Mākua Valley to the Army (Kajihiro, *Militarizing*" 185). Furthermore, this Executive Order also offered a 65-year lease to the Army for an "additional 1,515 acres" of the lower valley for \$1.00 (Kajihiro, "Militarizing" 185; Kelly & Aleck 9). As a result, the Army gained control of over 4,000 acres of Mākua Valley for only dollar until 2029. The beach and coastal area were deemed for public trust and access to the State "except when training activities would present a danger" (Kelly & Aleck 9). This limited public access is partially what currently remains under contest along with

⁶⁸ Marion Kelly and Sidney Quintal's extensive first report on Mākua Valley from 1977 tenaciously documents how the Army wanted a long-term occupation in the area where on "August 22, 1945, Army officials asked the Territory's new Governor Stainback to issue an executive order to transfer total jurisdiction of Makua to the War Department (41).

what will happen when the Army's lease in 2029 ends. What remains evident in the various negotiations between the Army and first the territorial government and then the federal government is the insistence on the necessity of the valley for training purposes and military presence. World War II ushered in the era of the "military-industry" and began the rhetoric of territorial and then, national security as the rationale for occupation, a trope that recurs throughout militarism ideology. Statehood also marks the intersection of federal interests with military ones in securing and utilizing Mākua Valley.

After the 1964 Executive Order, Mākua Valley remained a location for the military which generated the earliest anti-militarism activism in the 1970s as a result of their training practices. Kelly and Quintal list the military activities as "troop maneuvers, the firing of rockets from helicopters in training actions, and the disposal of old ammunition" (45). This sparked the first forms of resistance to the military's occupation of the valley and Haunani Ruelas emphasizes that "the protests regarding land use at Mākua were first recorded in the local newspapers in 1971 [but] resistance efforts at Mākua were provided limited media exposure throughout the next two decades" (6). Ruelas' observations echo Kelly and Quintal's findings that exclusively come from personal interviews as opposed to extensive media coverage. Still, Kelly and Quintal's report does note the discovery of a settlement on the beach in 1976. They describe that inspectors from the Real Estate Utilization Report discovered "a small settlement of wooden shacks constructed by fisherman and local inhabitants" (47). The report does not elaborate on what sort of "local inhabitants" were living there nor does it explain what happened to them. The assumption from a later explication in 1983 is that these individuals were removed akin to others who had lived on the land prior to World War II. Watson documents how in 1983 the Department of Land and Natural Resources forcibly removed "the last Hawaiian tenants from

Mākua Valley. Stewards of the valley whose ancestral ties to that ‘āina dated back thousands of years” (146). Here, the removal extends beyond one isolated example of state and federal power through the perceived necessity of militarism continuing to enact a form of colonial violence on Kanaka Maoli, ‘āina, and possibly other local residents of other ethnicities. In this sense, the extraction of both people and resources in Mākua Valley is representative of the U.S. military industry complex as a proponent of the continued oppression and colonization of subjects.

While the extensive history of Mākua Valley and the U.S. military appears cohesive and linear, it is important to note the general lack of documentation of the 1970s protest. The 1970s, as mentioned earlier briefly, saw the resurgence of Kanaka Maoli cultural beliefs and practices through the Hawaiian Renaissance. This led to multiple anti-militarism movements and most visibly through Protect Kaho‘olawe ‘Ohana, as discussed. Thus, one might conclude that the media’s attention was primarily on the actions of PKO as well as the mysterious disappearance of George Helm and Kimo Mitchell. Still, Ruelas points out how Indigenous resistance and various collectives of Mākua Valley often utilized media and legal cases to garner public awareness. One of the crucial lawsuits derives out of the types of military training in operation in the valley. Kelly and Aleck updated the list of military activities in a 1997 report to emphasize the inclusion of “mortar and artillery fire, mustard gas and napalm use...[and] open burn and open detonation (OBOD) of old ammunition and other waste from military sites all over O‘ahu” (9). In particular, strategic practice with bombing and live fire training led to multiple fires that have been of concern to the community as they endanger cultural sites, endangered species, and human residents. This has instigated serious harm to the community and anti-militarism groups have often focused on this element as crucial for legal and public battles.

In building out a brief chronology of U.S. militarism in Mākua Valley, I emphasize how entwined U.S. imperial, political, and economic interests coincide with the presence of military on O‘ahu. Quite clearly, U.S. militarism serves to perpetuate the force of colonialism through the dispossession and desecration of ‘āina, cultural sites, and through the destruction of the reciprocal relationship to ‘āina. In the antimilitarism efforts and environmental activism around Mākua Valley from the 1990s to the mid-late 2000s, this chapter advocates how the violence of both militarism and capitalist development inadvertently produce alternatives communities, kinship, and strategies for activism. In particular, the potential for a decolonial and sustainable-living practice is both explored and rendered powerful in Kiana Davenport’s *House of Many Gods*. As such, this chapter ultimately offers the possibility to see both the literary imaginary and the political activism around Mākua Valley as finding momentary ruptures within the dominance of U.S. militarism and capitalism.

The House of “Damaged Men:” U.S. Militarism, Kinship, and Environmental Justice

Kiana Davenport’s 2006 *House of Many Gods* operates as testimony to the continued violence of U.S. militarism on subjects, both Kānaka Maoli and local residents, as well as the ‘āina, where the strategic deployment of Indigenous cosmology innovates on the narrative parameters established by the imperial epistemologies. Similar to the ways in which cultural memory can make visible the production of continued colonialism, *House of Many Gods* both takes up a critique of U.S. wars in Asia and its effects on mostly on Kānaka Maoli veterans, but also simultaneously operates as an optic into showing how the literary imaginary can enact its own resistance. Davenport employs two specific strategies where her text “fails” to subscribe and bolster the colonial enforcement of the necessity of militarism on the Wai‘anae coast and Mākua beach. *House of Many Gods* in these two ways almost mimics the expected move of “writing

back” to the media and state-sponsored histories of one of the many Mākua beach protests and evictions. In other words, Davenport re-narrates this history that departs from the official accounts and in doing so, capitalizing and builds out the strength of Kanaka Maoli cosmology and connections to ‘āina. This strategic essentialist move depends on both the acceptance of Indigenous value systems and the recognition of how Davenport intentionally manipulates the exotic appeal of this Indigenous relationality to temporality and ‘āina. Through a subversive balance between romanticizing the colonized subject and exceptionalizing Indigenous cosmology, Davenport’s text operates as a counternarrative and resistance to the conjoined violences of colonialism, U.S. militarism, militourism, and ecocolonialism. By capitalizing on the western expectations of an exotic relationality to ‘āina and mo‘olelo, Davenport frames her narrative and key moments of Indigenous activism as a form that almost appears as exploitation, but actually in confronting the fantasy of exoticism, she successfully captures alternative aesthetic possibilities. I identify this move as an insurgent Indigenous reading practice. This is not to be misread as an easy appropriation of the romantic and sentimental colonial perceptions of Indigeneity, but instead Davenport’s text experiments with the potential resistant openings through structuring her narrative around a Kanaka Maoli worldview. Still, *House of Many Gods* revolves around an epic international romance that often takes precedence over both the Indigenous counternarrative moves as well as the larger environmental justice and anti-nuclear critique that propels the relationship. Even with the redemptive power of love as the center of gravity for the novel, Davenport’s text pushes the literary imaginary to find ruptures to imagine Indigenous insurgence, even momentarily or as contextual framing. This chapter thus argues how U.S. militarism operates as the effective heuristic into ecocolonialism, homelessness, and the ways in which capitalism produces and reproduces Hawai‘i subjects. As such, the literary

imaginary in the *House of Many Gods* exceeds the parameters of a historical account of the poverty and “lawlessness” of the Wai‘anae Coast, as dramatically mirrored through radiation poisoning in Russia, by strategically deploying Indigenous insurgence and inventiveness.

Davenport’s novel capitalizes on performing a mythic overtone that erases distinct colonial temporal shifts of linearity, even as it generally proceeds chronologically as a way of immediately maneuvering how Indigeneity is strategically used as both reinforcing and deconstructing the colonial expectations. As such, the *House of Many Gods* relies on an omniscient third person narrator who alternates the focus of the narrative among Ana Kapakahi who was abandoned by her mother, Anahola, her mother, and Ana’s future romantic interest in Russia, Nikolai. Again, the novel’s attempt to connect Anahola and her lover’s research into radiation poisoning with Nikolai’s documentary on Russian nuclear testing as informing Ana’s political consciousness against military practice and bombing in Mākua is overreaching; ultimately, the novel relies on the melodramatic “timelessness” of love as a universal power. Still, it is the evocative intermittent chapter openings that encapsulate the duality of upholding a romanticized “native” perspective as well as testifying to an Indigenous ontological existence.

The novel’s chapters and section titles are both in Hawaiian and English, which arguably both establishes the exoticness of language and offers testimony to invoking and revitalizing a grounding in ‘āina. Davenport opens the novel with “Punahēle,” favored child, in 1964 on the Wai‘anae Coast that establishes rupture in a colonial temporality:

Morning, the air astonishingly clear. The sky so unblemished and wide, there is divinity in the light. Sun and heat already strong, the shapes of all things revealed...Here is the still life. The sudden, static poem of being...Life is not weary of these folks. They have held on to ancient rhythms in this world that was bequeathed to them. (3)

In this opening, the narrator emphasizes the spirituality of nature with “divinity” and suggests both that life is thriving and “static,” to conflate a chronological understanding of temporality. Yet, the narrator emphasizes a rootedness in a history or mo‘olelo of the world in order to emphasize Kanaka Maoli genealogical relationships to ‘āina. Still, the lyrical prose and over-exaggerated insights into how the light is revelatory can easily be read as dramatizing the expectation of the “primitive” or “exotic” descriptors. Yet, as the opening transitions into the actual narrative, the overhanded flowery and elegiac images dissipate into asserting the mo‘olelo of the coast. Davenport writes, “This was the wild place, the untutored place, where the Grand Tūtū of the coast, the rugged Wai‘anae Mountains, watched, over the generations. Here, thirty miles west of Honolulu, were the rough tribes of Waianae, native clans that spawned outcasts and felons” (4). In this transition, the emphasis becomes more grounded on the untamed landscape or the “uncivilized,” in a reference to colonial descriptors of natives, environment that is named the mother of the place. Still, the imagery of the primitive is extended to the “native tribes” who, like demons or creatures, “spawned outcasts and felons.” The contrast between the enigmatic and atemporal blending of history, environment, and human subjectivity is eviscerated through these harsh descriptors. In these first two opening paragraphs, the novel wavers in fulfilling stereotypical descriptors of a colonized people and land where the emphasis is on a lack of (western) civilization and a deep relationality with nature. However, Davenport purposely stages these contrasts between the peacefulness of being with ancestors and the present production of “outcasts and felons” as a pointed critique of the binary between these images. In other words, by addressing the inherent polarization of Kanaka Maoli representation, Davenport asserts this contrast at the start of her novel, even as they can be seen as reproducing and

capitalizing upon the exploitation of Indigenous cosmologies and the plight of the “impoverished” native.

In the continued description of Wai‘anae, Davenport overlays historical and cultural depictions of Indigenous ways of life including heiau, temples, fish ponds, spirits, and rituals with portraits of the community members as an inclusive group, wary of all outsiders, especially the military. The narrator describes:

Last holdout of pure-blood Hawaiians, it was the skill of Wai‘anae to keep outsiders out. Dark, husky local boys stalked foolhardy tourists at beach parks, vandalizing their rented cars. They ambushed soldiers venturing out from military bases...Homestead youngsters raised on Welfare, their lives were circumscribed by landlessness, poor education, drugs. Outsiders saw in them criminal intent, the wish to self-destruct, not looking deeper where the hunger for beauty lay. Not hearing the suck and lisp of dreams, despair, then resignation. Yet here was tribal confidence, a sense of deeply rooted blood, of elders standing behind them for now, for good, for always. (5)

The juxtaposition of the insider mindsight surrounding Wai‘anae with the elision of hope as tied to kinship is precisely how I read Davenport’s subtle subversion of what reads as stereotypical representations of Indigenous subjects. In other words, this is how I deploy a reading of insurgent Indigeneity. The demographics of Wai‘anae are reported in the “U.S. census for Waianae for 2011-2015” include a diversity of backgrounds with 30.6% as Kānaka Maoli and 44.8% as two more races with an unspecified quantity of part-Kānaka Maoli. Even more telling is that the census states that 29% of the population is living below the poverty level which is “double the percentage of O‘ahu residents as a whole” (Watson 17). As such, the stereotypes listed by Davenport are not hyperbolic and identify material conditions Wai‘anae residents face.

While the litany of failed institutions of education and landlessness as a product of the Mahele can be understood as a critique of the state, Davenport effectively centers the familial connection of “deeply rooted blood” as the social vitality of the community. The “tribal confidence” easily slips into glorifying of Kanaka Maoli as does the “wish to self-destruct,” but the sleight of hand that concretely grounds subjects to both their living and deceased elders and to the ‘āina is where the text innovates on the western expectations and appropriations of Indigeneity. Obviously, this is an extremely subtle reading of the opening of *House of Many Gods*, but I read how the text immediately shifts the center of gravity away from exclusively being a one dimensional sentimental and elegiac portrayal of life in Wai‘anae, where residents are doomed to impoverishment and exist as Indigenous stereotypes.

The immediate attention to poverty, crime, tourism, and the presence of the military identify how the text develops the intersections of these elements under the continuity of U.S. colonialism through essentially militourism. Vernadette Gonzalez explains how militourism involves the joint projects of tourism and militarism as “they enable overlapping projects of colonialism, developmentalism, and neoliberalism” that erase American imperialism in support of the “joint fictions of security and paradise that tourism and militarism coauthorize” (8). Gonzalez’s explication centers how the continuity of colonialism in the present, particularly in the Pacific, is through the constitutive institutions of tourism and militarism. In marking the production of imperial erasure, Gonzalez establishes a heuristic into how Davenport’s text makes visible the enforcement of these forms of capitalist violence. To further explicate, Laurel Meisingh summarizes, “The term *militourism* refers to the set of logics, imaginaries, and processes premised on advancing tourism and war preparation in places such as Hawai‘i. It enables supple forms of domination to mask and facilitate the brutality of militarism” (13). Taken together,

Gonzalez and Mei-Singh describe how militourism occludes both the history of U.S. empire as well as the continued occupation and violence of the military through the deployment of capitalist expansion. This collaborative manifestation of the tourist industry complex and the military industry complex is being worked out in Davenport's *House of Many Gods*, where she attempts to implement a latent Indigenous critique of these dominations.

While Davenport's *House of Many Gods* would not necessarily be read as insurgent or radical, the novel represents the challenges to operating within a western genre without wholly reproducing colonial logics. In this sense, the critique of the waves of U.S. wars abroad on Kanaka Maoli is an example of how pervasive the violence of U.S. militarism is on subjects, particularly Indigenous subjects, and also extends to the relationship with land. As Yang and Tuck identify in their discussion of settler colonialism, "land is remade into property and human relationships to land are restricted to the relationship of the owner to his property. Epistemological, ontological, and cosmological relationships to land are interred, indeed made pre-modern and backward" (5). Here, the "savage" component can be easily identified in the opening of *House of Many Gods*, but it is through the contrasting shifts of critique, sentimentality, and making visible the epistemological work of romanticizing the Indigenous where I read the decolonial possibilities for an alternative politics. Related, Melissa Forbis discusses the Zapatistas and their revolutionary politics of refusal of state recognition as a means of strategizing outside of colonial modes of domination. Forbis states, "By reclaiming and reconfiguring an indigenous identity through practice and struggle" and connecting to historical struggles, the Zapatistas create what could be defined as insurgent Indigeneity. To meld material praxis with the literary imaginary, I offer how the concrete activism surrounding Mākua Valley and beach could be read as a form of insurgent Indigeneity. This is identifiable through a reading

practice that can separate insurgent Indigeneity from colonial temporal logics. I also demonstrate how the term “Indigeneity” might be reconceptualized to think through a grounded practice that overrides a “blood claim” as legitimizing Kanaka Maoli belonging. Consequently, Davenport’s *House of Many Gods* offers two main modes for reckoning with U.S. militarism. The first is the continual criticism of U.S. militarism in Hawai‘i and globally through wars abroad and as promoting sustained violence and trauma. This is exemplified most explicitly through the various male elders in Ana’s house that operates as both a haven and as a hideout for these veterans. The second element of the novel that remains the most obscured, but offers the potential to produce resistant and insurgent narratives is through the tropes most often deployed to diminish Indigeneity. By a form of insurgent mimicry perhaps, I suggest that the *House of Many Gods* imitates and often successfully embodies a romanticized and exotic commodification of Indigeneity through its limited critique of U.S. militarism.⁶⁹ However, this process simultaneously offers a rupture of the imperial and colonial epistemologies that dictate the literary imaginary through invoking Kanaka Maoli cosmology and ‘āina-based resistance.

Through the more transparent critique of U.S. militarism that also translates as one example of alternative kinship structures, Davenport centers Ana’s household on her various cohabitants that embody the trauma of wars abroad as the context for her cousin’s trajectory

⁶⁹ I am invoking Homi Bhaba’s discussions of mimicry and mockery from *The Location of Culture* where he suggests, “It is from this area between mimicry and mockery, where the reforming, civilizing mission is threatened by the displacing gaze of its disciplinary double, that my instances of colonial imitation come. What they all share is a discursive process by which the excess or slippage produced by the *ambivalence* of mimicry (almost the same, *but not quite*) does not merely ‘rupture’ the discourse, but becomes transformed into an uncertainty which fixes the colonial subject as a ‘partial’ presence. By ‘partial’ I mean both ‘incomplete’ and ‘virtual’. It is as if the very emergence of the ‘colonial’ is dependent for its representation upon some strategic limitation or prohibition within the authoritative discourse itself. The success of colonial appropriation depends on a proliferation of inappropriate objects that ensure its strategic failure, so that mimicry is at once resemblance and menace” (123). Given that Davenport is a contemporary writer of the 21st century and not of a colonial period, I am not suggesting that what could be seen as “insurgent mimicry” is of the same caliber as colonial archival narratives. Instead, I am positing the possibility of seeing the literary example as a replication of both colonial expectations and Indigenous performance that produces slippage between the colonial discourse and an appropriation of this discourse.

from veteran to activist. The juxtaposition between the generations of men who served prior to the Vietnam War with Ana's cousin, Lopaka, exemplify how the text takes up the expectations of post-traumatic-stress-disorder as a result of war, but also exploits how this creates a new set of kinships among the household members. Davenport notably describes, "There were so many elders in the house, for years she [Ana] could not keep them straight" (6). Not only was the house filled with uncles, aunties, great-uncles, great-aunties, but at least four cousins all lived in the house. Davenport elaborates on Ana's household as intimately damaged by U.S. militarism:

Along with its tempestuous women, the big house was famous for its damaged men. Ana's great-grandfather had come home from World War I with his nose shot off...Great-uncle Ben, his son, came home from World war II without an arm. Ben's younger brother, Noah, returned from Korea silent as a grub. Their cousin, Tito, a champion swimmer, had been a diver for the U.S. Navy. Deep saturation dives, day after day, year after year, until nitrogen bubbles trapped in his bone marrow turned his bones to rotting croquet. Now wheel-chair bound... (7)

Through classifying the household with "damaged men," Davenport highlights the myriad of ways that this family (in all of its extended forms) has been affected by the violence of war and the U.S. military over and over again. Not discounting the description of "tempestuous women," which hints at a particularly gendered formation, the emphasis on masculine trauma as both psychological and embodied asserts a stringent critique of Indigenous bodies at the disposal of the military complex.

Including all three major wars abroad to this time frame, the narrator identifies how each war and variable "peace time" is enacted through one of the men in Ana's family. Through describing the festivities on Veterans Day, Davenport layers both the inherent damage these men

have incurred through U.S. militarism and simultaneously manipulates how this trauma is amplified to a point of subverting the initial descriptors. The narrator recounts:

There were other families, other vets. And sometimes they all came together, remembering war with fierce lyrics and metaphoric dazzle, as if peacetime were the nightmare. Once a year on Veterans Day, folks came from up and down the coast, bringing baskets of food. They sat watching veteran sons, and sons, and sons of sons, like people at a zoo. The damaged men would drink too much, strip off their clothes, and rave and dance with savage grace, while light hung in the space of a missing limb. Their mutilations glowed. Then they would wrestle their boar-hounds to the ground, play pitch and catch with great-grandpa's bronzed nose till everyone went home. (7)

Here, the narrator glorifies the veterans' experiences as they remember with "fierce lyrics" what seems like patriotic fervor and the desire for wartime. But, notably this act of commemoration is precisely grounded in community, kinship, and collectivity where arguably the joint processes of remembering war offers an alternative to assumed patriotism. With the unstated understanding that particularly Kanaka Maoli have little to no patriotism towards the colonizer, the U.S., this joining of remembrance could be read as alternative formation of solidarity. This is not to argue that a drunken gathering on Veterans Day should be read as Indigenous resistance or a call to sovereignty, but the text offers a possibility of thinking through what coalition might look like here. Even in the narrator's subversive description of "people at a zoo" and "savage grace," Davenport subtly utilizes western colonial tropes to amplify the assumed primitive nature of the veterans while also deploying an alternative imaginary. This subversive portrayal reveals itself through the humorous acknowledgment of turning the bronzed nose into a ball as well as thinking through the illuminations of the embodied lack of limbs and affect. These brief bursts of

humor indicate how the text negotiates space for transparency of sentimentality and playing with colonial tropes. Consequently, the house's "damaged men" operate as both producing a form of community that exemplifies the violence of U.S. militarism, but does so in a way that can also be read as a new form of collectivity culled from those experiences.

Ana's shift in perspective on her extended family of "damaged men" correlates with how the text develops a dual critique of U.S. militarism as a condition and necessity for a livable existence. Ana's Jewish classmate and first boyfriend, Tommy, is responsible for "awakening in her a deeper awareness of her damaged uncles, that fraternity of broken men" (Davenport 36). In framing her relatives as a "fraternity," Davenport identifies the gendered component of a coalition through traumatized masculinity. Gonzalez notes how U.S. militourism capitalized on "the romance of security through auxiliary fictions of pacification, liberation, multiculturalism, and statehood" that erases the violence of imperialism in Hawai'i and other Pacific locations (27). As such, these fictions are perpetuated through the guise of safety and security where the justification for military wars abroad is enforced. Under this assumption, Ana viewed her male relatives as unique in their experiences, but seemed less aware of their "damage." The narrator continues describing how Ana "stood in the center of the house and looked around. She had never known if it was patriotism or love of combat that drove the men in her family to volunteer for every year. And now each week Ana wrote letters to her cousin, Lopaka, recovering from bomb fragments that had shattered his leg in Vietnam" (Davenport 36). The uncertainty surrounding the motivations for enlisting in the military baffles Ana and indicates the obscuring of patriotic ideology as noted earlier. Even more revealing is how Davenport suggests a pattern or cycle ingrained in the men of her entire family as walking manifestations of the bodily and

psychic violence of the U.S. military. The latest casualty, Lopaka, stands out as the cycle persists with the Vietnam War.

In consideration of the choices made to enlist or be employed by the military, Davenport offers an ambivalent response given the perceived lack of agency between poverty and military violence. By situating military participation at the juncture of colonialism, poverty, and gender, the text poses the limited choices available for the men in Ana's extended family. The overarching issue of poverty is highlighted as Ana finally realizes, "*This is what we live on*, she thought. *Their military pensions, their veteran's disability checks*. Folks said her uncles had it made. No more grinding ninety-hour workweek, no more union dues. No need for food stamps, or Welfare" (Davenport 36). In coming to the understanding of how military service for the fraternity of damaged men supports the entire extended family, Ana identifies the necessity of financial stability with participating in the U.S. military. Including the community's perspective on the perceived luxury of not having to work, need welfare, or government handouts, Ana confronts the material conditions of poverty on the Wai'anae Coast. This raises questions about the limited or perhaps strategic choices made by the "broken" men where their only available options were a 90-hour work week and paying labor union dues or fighting for the colonizing country and enduring the visible and indelible scars of the military. Here, the reality of what constitutes agency becomes entwined with the conditions of the colonial present where the generations of men, including Lopaka, ostensibly were incapable of making "free choices." Gonzalez points out how for Hawai'i, "Statehood fictions and their patina (appearance) of inevitability encourage the amnesia of overthrow and displace it with the romantic narratives of security, military tragedy, duty and heroism" (34). Read together with the generations of Ana's male kin who participated in the military complex, I posit that they were interpellated into this

system that valorized security, heroism, and the military. The form of financial security exists in being able to support their extended family and entraps them into the capitalist military state. Even without internalizing an “aloha patriotism” (Gonzalez 222), the “damaged men” had to reckon with their economic circumstances where military service afforded necessary economic stability for the family. Enloe explains how national security after World War II became further entwined with both masculinity and globalization where “the more militarized the understanding of what national security is (and what it is not), the more likely it will be that the conversation about national security – and international security – will be a largely masculinized affair” (*Globalization* 40). The pervasive intersections of gender and militarism play out even in the framing of the “fraternity of broken men” as a particular masculine in-group linked by the violence of military and colonial occupation. Thus, Ana’s perceptions about the intersection of poverty, colonialism eclipsed by patriotism, and lack of agency trouble the text’s overt critique of the violence of U.S. militarism. In other words, Ana appears to be the only cognizant family member who can perceive these linkages whereas her male kin appear to be doomed to repeating the cycle of military violence as members of a “fraternity.” As a critique of U.S. militarism, Davenport’s text vacillates between being ambivalent over the limited choice of military participation and addressing the material colonial capitalist conditions that foreclose viable options for these men.

Lopaka’s transformation from “broken” veteran to environmental activist is indicative of both how the text innovates on the imperial epistemologies that regulate the narrative as well as provides a form of agency available to the generations of traumatized veterans. While the explicit critique of the ongoing violence of militarism persists throughout the novel, the turn to environmental and Indigenous activism not only displaces these traumas, but also allows for

connections to be made between the colonialist oppression of subjects and ‘āina. This becomes clear through how Davenport introduces a critique of the U.S. military’s bombing and target practice of Mākua Valley. Davenport writes:

Mākua, up near the tip of the Wai‘anae coast, had once been a beautiful mountain ridge overlooking the sea, a sacred place of temples and grave sites. For over twenty years the mountains and valley there had been so heavily gouged and gutted by bombs in Army war maneuvers, it had turned into a no-man’s land. (38)

In this explanation, the narrator develops the history of Mākua and its continual destruction through the Army’s training practices with an emphasis on the location’s sacred mo’olelo. *Environment Hawai‘i’s* 1992 newsletter asserts how Mākua Valley is home to one of the sixteen endangered tree snail species where the army has not “paid attention to the need to protect the stands of native forest that once covered the upper valley slopes and which are vital to the snail’s life cycle” (1). In addition to endangered forestry and tree snails, cultural sites and heiau are also prominent in the valley. In 1992, an “Archaeological reconnaissance survey of the Makua Military Reserve, MK-19” was conducted by BioSystems Analysis which reports that ten different historic sites, including pre-contact period, were discovered with “lithic artifacts, structure types, and the presence of a petroglyph” (Eble & Cleghorn 2). Among these listings, the report emphasizes that all cultural sites are subject to damage from military operations and that there is no plan to protect or manage these sites. Even further, *Environment Hawai‘i* lists numerous fishing shrines as well as “as many as three heiau [temples] were built in Mākua Valley” (3). Kajihiro adds that there are numerous other cultural sites as well as necessary fishing grounds for Kanaka Maoli and over 40 endangered species in the valley (“Militarizing” 184). Through this litany of legible cultural and historic sites as well as endangered native

species, the extent of damage the U.S. army has inflicted on the valley is extensive. Per a leading environmental advocacy group called Earth Justice, Mākua Valley “has been described by biologists as probably the greatest biological treasure in Hawai‘i. The valley is home to 45 federally listed plants and animal species, as well as hundreds of acres of designated critical habitat. However, a decades-long history of live-fire training and fires has left the endangered species barely clinging to survival.” With the intent of protecting endangered species, preserving Kanaka Maoli cultural sites and as a critique of reckless military training, Earth Justice filed a lawsuit for the activist group Mālama Mākua in December 2000 to challenge whether the U.S. Army had to prepare a comprehensive Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) under the National Environmental Protections Act.

Davenport’s narration of the duration of army practice is indicative of the ongoing destruction of the ‘āina, its resources, and its sacred history. Davenport links environmental justice activism s as following in the footsteps of other 1960s and 1970s student movements. Davenport writes, “Across the island, high-school and university students who had protested the war in Vietnam now demonstrated against the military’s continuing use of their homelands for war games. Every other weekend Ana watched students march down the highway carrying banners. GET OFF OUR ISLANDS. BOMB YOUR OWN BACKYARDS” (38). In specifically making connections between anti-Vietnam war protests with anti-militarism in Hawai‘i, the text insists on the global context of the army’s presence. Framing the protest around “their homelands,” the text fails to indicate whether the ownership of these lands is in reference to an Indigenous claim or a regional claim. Importantly, the local as a regional-specific location seems to be in question with the “local” as an Asian settler position. What also gets obscured here is who is “our” and who is “your,” if there is no discernable difference in national affiliation. I raise

these issues particularly in reference to the previous chapter that delineated how “local” often operates as a code for Asian settler, erasing Kānaka Maoli colonization. I read how *House of Many Gods* begins to offer how the “local” could be repurposed to think regionally and with Indigenous counternarratives.

In examining Lopaka’s experience as one of the fraternity of damaged men after Vietnam, Davenport utilizes his character’s political consciousness as indicative of a strategy to combat U.S. militarism through demilitarizing Mākuā Valley. In situating Lopaka’s transformation as a catalyst for the community’s activism, Davenport builds a collective movement out of the trauma and violence of the U.S. military. This bolsters her critique of U.S. militarism and also serves to link it with grounded communal practice as a demilitarizing strategy that has the potential to be read as a regional practice that reorients the “local.” Davenport describes how Lopaka “had come home from Vietnam a bitter man” (69). But, in an expected “American” way, Lopaka “took stock of his life and went into rehab...he had shocked his family by entering university on the GI Bill. Now he was preparing for law school” (70). This trajectory differs from his male relatives who remained “broken” and living off veteran disability checks. This is not to discredit the other relatives’ experiences of the U.S. military, but Davenport insists on highlighting how Lopaka takes action. In many respects, this narration seems to reflect an American “dream” narrative where Lopaka succeeds because of his sacrifices in Vietnam and how he is able to get access to an education through the GI Bill. What Davenport does with Lopaka though is to make him an agent of change for the community which simultaneously reinforces the power of individual “bootstraps” mentality, but also offers possibilities for leaders and communal organizing through taking advantage of the colonial system in place. Lopaka and Ana, both university educated, become the beacons of change in

how they confront the material consequences of the U.S. occupation at Mākua Valley. In one exchange between Lopaka and soldiers stationed at the end of the Wai‘anae Coast at Ka‘ena Point, Lopaka reveals, “These lands are our lands. You stole them from us. You’re storing nuclear weapons here. You’re testing bombs at Mākua. You think we’re stupid? We don’t know? ...You think this is what I fought for? To watch my homeland blown to bits?” (Davenport 74). Through these accusations, Lopaka references both the Mahele of 1848 as well as the military’s occupation of Mākua as a form of colonial dominance. Lopaka calls this land his “homeland” and once again, complicates how ‘āina is understood in terms of private property to be owned or as a genealogical and communal relationship. One might suggest that Lopaka is reproducing the capitalist mode of ownership because of his possessive language of “my,” but it could also be suggested that this is the only legible medium of communication with the soldiers. Still, this confrontation reveals the ongoing military destruction of Mākua Valley and Lopaka’s rise to leadership as he insists on confronting the soldiers.

Given the long-standing conflict with the U.S. military over Mākua Valley and beach from the 1970s on, various activist groups have emerged in opposition and with varying plans of action to take on federal government, state government, and military. The numerous beach evictions exemplify the multiple conflicts between the designation of a state park, a growing militourism industry in real estate, and an Indigenous return to subsistence living. Although there have been multiple iterations of activist groups regarding Mākua Beach and valley, the first one Marion Kelly and Nancy Aleck document is in 1983 with *Kōkua Mākua ‘Ohana*.⁷⁰ This group formed after Hurricane Iwa destroyed the homes of around 40 people living on the beach. Kelly

⁷⁰ Presumably, this name is inspired by the 1970’s Protect Kaho‘olawe ‘Ohana as well as other protests occurring with farmers in Kalama Valley and the Waiahole-Waikane farmer coalition, and the Sand Island/Mokauea struggle (Ruelas 6).

and Aleck report, “The State sent police, dogs, and machinery to stop them from rebuilding” (12). This led to six protesters from *Kōkua Mākua ‘Ohana* to be arrested in 1983 where they became known as “the Mākua Six” (12). Charged with “obstructing governmental operations,” the Mākua six “argued that the land belonged to the Hawaiian nation and that they had the right to exercise traditional and customary practices of subsistence, culture, and religion” (Kelly & Aleck 12). These arguments center the import of Kānaka Maoli relationships to ‘āina and operate as a critique of western private property notions of ownership as combined with state and military power. As Keith Miyake emphasizes, the utilization of Mākua Beach for small communities “without permanent structures...endured numerous evictions; many of these ‘houseless’ people turned to Mākua as a place of refuge, healing, peace, or pu‘uhonua” (139; Kajihiro, “Militarizing” 186). Here, the significance rests on how an Indigenous-based subsistence living became a place of sanctuary for displaced individuals. Miyake indicates the crucial formation of alternative kinship relationships in the face of the capitalist state.

Legal Actions against the U.S. Army and the Environmental Impact Statement

One of the main contentions surrounding the military use of Mākua Valley is its live-fire training as well as open burn and open detonation (OB/OD) of ammunition and military waste (Kelly & Aleck 9). Kajihiro documents how the army applied for the OB/OD permit in 1992, but “unbeknownst to the community until then, the army had conducted OB/OD activities in Mākua for many years without a permit” (“Militarizing” 186).⁷¹ Hager notes that community members protested this permit by “sending over 700 letters to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) voicing their opposition to the granting of the permit. Additionally, petitions calling for the Army

⁷¹ Marion Kelly and Sidney Quintal’s 1977 report states how the Army “fire[s] rockets and machine guns from helicopters while in flight at 500 ft. above the ground, and hover at 50 ft.... [as well as] get[ting] rid of about 150 to 200 tons of ordnance per year” (46).

to return Makua Valley to the state were sent to Hawaii's congressional delegation" (3). As a result of this petition, the EPA asked for community input on the Army's request for the OB/OD permit. This led to the formation of one of the main activist groups, Mālama Mākua in 1992 (Miyake 140; Ruelas 9). Mālama Mākua aims to "cease military training within the valley and to restore the land as maintaining cultural practices for traditional use" (9). In line with their mission, their other main contention for Mālama Mākua besides the OB/OD was the numerous brush fires started by the live-fire training. Ruelas documents that "from 1990 – to mid-1998 – over 270 fires were documented at Mākua" (6). Miyake explains how the "brush fires [were] triggered by artillery fire landing outside of designated areas, as well as controlled burns that escalated out of control became a relatively common occurrence" (140). These fires were less about community safety and civilian damage, but affected both Indigenous cultural sites and endangered or threatened species. *Environment Hawaii* reports that in 1990 the army conducted a site assessment and as such, "Makua Valley was contaminated with metal fragments and dust, and unexploded ordnance. More than 80 tons of toxic and hazardous chemicals and materials were burned each year... contamination of both ground water and surface was suspected" (5). Accordingly, the concerns over environmental and cultural destruction resonate as not simply an issue of historical and ecological preservation, but also over the prolonged material toxic and hazardous threats to communities.

In response to the issues regarding OB/OD and fires related to live-fire training, it is crucial to differentiate between the two types of environmental assessments available and the related legal disputes regarding the Army's lack of a comprehensive Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). Typically, as Miyake identifies, the EIS is an "administrative procedure to determine and publicly disseminate the potential environmental outcomes of a proposed project

or program” where the agency is in charge of excusing environmental reviews (6). Miyake also explains how the difference between an initial Environmental Assessment (EA) and the more comprehensive EIA where “if the lead agency is unsure of the extent of potential environmental impacts, they will first conduct an EA to determine whether the impacts are likely to be significant or extensive. If the EA finds no significant impacts, the EIS process is essentially concluded” (Miyake 7).⁷² The U.S. Army concluded that no EIS was needed despite both the findings of their EA that recorded visible damage to Mākua valley and its cultural sites. This is where the Mālama Mākua lawsuit focused its attention: demanding that a full EIS be conducted. A 1992 Archaeological reconnaissance Survey of Mākua Military Reserve was conducted by BioSystems Analysis to both identify and catalogue cultural artifacts. The field report documented ten sites with features of pre-contact artifacts and structures. Biosystems advised that “all of the cultural resources are subject to adverse effects due to on-going military operations at Makua Military Reservation; and (3) there is no cultural resource management plan to manage these resources” (3) This independent report indicates the necessity of preserving these cultural sites. The newly formed activist group, Mālama Mākua, “demanded that the army do an Environmental Impact Study (EIS) for all of its activities” (Kajihiro, "Militarizing" 186). Under the National Preservation Act (NHPA), the Environmental Impact Study has been critical for legal cases that engage Indigenous claims to ‘āina as well as for environmental justice (Kajihiro, “Militarizing” 152). While this first attempt was abandoned by the army according to Kajihiro, there was a 1994 Environmental Assessment for the development of an infantry platoon

⁷² Miyake emphasizes how the “EIA process forces state agencies to weigh alternative possibilities for achieving a policy or infrastructure objective, and through this deliberate process, address the ways that each possibility, along with the preferred alternative, address a broad and continually growing set of statutory and institutional objectives, ranging from the protection of endangered species to minimizing the release of toxins to ensuring that lower-income communities with larger non-white populations are not disproportionately impacted by harmful environmental conditions” (5).

battle course in the valley that concluded the area was already impacted by previous explosives and ordnance. Consequently, this proposal “recommended that a Finding of No Significant Impact (FNSI) be prepared and notice of availability of the EA and FNSI be given to the public by making it available in the State of Hawaii Department of Health, Office of Environmental Quality Control (OEQC) Bulletin” (7-1). Despite referencing both the 1977 study by Kelly Marion and Sidney Quintal as well as the 1992 BioSystems Analysis, this report still concludes that there would be no significant impact in developing this battle course since the existing structures would remain. Consequently, the emphasis on the necessity of a substantial EIS became the focus for Mākua Valley activism and the justification around an October 1998 lawsuit filed by Earthjustice Legal Demand Defense Fund. *House of Many Gods* primarily focuses on Mālama Mākua probably as a result of its wider publicity and association with Earthjustice’s lawsuit against the army. Still, Hui Mālama Mākua emerged as an organizing group that consisted of Mālama Mākua along with others to protest against the Army’s continued destruction of the valley.⁷³

In order to offer a brief history of the legal battles between Mālama Mākua and the Army, it is necessary to reckon with the legal contention over the necessity over completing an EIS as the basis for the case. The continued legal battles over Mākua Valley eventually culminated in an EA conducted in 2000 by Danny Harrelson and Mansour Zakikhani which suggested that groundwater was not affected by ordnance and ammunition training even as it did not address the run-off site (7).⁷⁴ Even though this EA was conducted, Hui Mālama argued that it

⁷³ Ruelas explains how Hui Mālama is a “larger group of loosely affiliated supporters of the movement to end the military use of Mākua. Their aim is to continue caring for the land by building relationships through ongoing cultural practices” (10).

⁷⁴ See Onyx Group’s *Draft Supplemental Environmental Assessment for Routine Training at Makua Valley, Makua Military Reservation, Hawaii*.

was a “flawed and incomplete environmental assessment (EA), which the community rejected” (Kajihiro, “Militarizing” 187).⁷⁵ An EA is less comprehensive than an EIS, which Mālama Mākua argued was essential to assess the damage to cultural sites, endangered species, and the potential contamination of groundwater and resources. Eventually, this refusal to submit to an EIS led to a temporary injunction against any military training at Mākua Valley for three years. In 2001, the *Los Angeles Times* reported how “only a quarter of the 4,000-acre valley has been surveyed because of the danger of unexploded ordnance.” Still, on May 15, 2001 the Army declared that it would resume its military training since their EA claimed it would not cause further harm to the environment or cultural species since they would reduce their activities (Essoyan). Earthjustice elaborates how the suit challenged “the Army’s refusal to prepare an EIS for proposed live-fire training at MMR and its claim that training would not significantly affect neighboring communities or the 45 endangered and threatened species and dozens of sacred and cultural sites at Makua” (2001). As a result, Judge Susan Oki Mollway “issued an order barring the U.S. Army from conducting live-fire training exercises” pending a decision on the necessity for the Army to prepare an EIS (Earthjustice 2001). It becomes clear that the central contention for the Army was actually producing a comprehensive EIS that would inevitably support the claims of Earthjustice.

These various events in 2001 became amplified with the 9/11 terrorist attacks where the claim of the necessity of national security and live-fire training became prominent. As seen earlier with World War II, the justification for protecting the nation against terrorist (or foreign)

⁷⁵ David Henken, one of the lawyers at Earthjustice explains in greater detail, “They issued a revised environmental assessment with yet another “Finding of No Significant Impact,” and they were so bold as to have taken their original document and stripped out of it any statements that could be interpreted as an admission by them of a potential for significant environmental effect.”

attacks takes precedence over the ongoing struggles over environmental justice. The 9/11 attacks changed the national climate towards the Army's target practice where the perceived threat of terrorism galvanized the perceived need for military practice. As such, the lawsuit came to an agreement where "the army was required to complete an EIS within three years, clean UXO [unexploded ordnance] from approximately a third of the valley surface, and allow cultural access at least twice a month" (Kajihiro, "Militarizing" 188). This settlement, according to David Henkin, "required that they [the Army] allow cultural access to Mākua's sacred sites" (Earthjustice 2012). Still, this agreement was contentious in its restrictions around cultural access as well as the decades of destruction and damage down to the valley. In more recent developments at Mākua, a 2016 lawsuit was filed by Earthjustice regarding a 2014 "blanket ban" that restricted complete access to Kanaka Maoli cultural sites. In a 2016 *Star Advertiser* article, the army "claimed it first needed to obtain clearance from historic preservations to cut grass on trails leading to cultural sites so that any unexploded ordnance could be avoided." While the technicalities of the lawsuit are not necessarily immediately relevant to this chapter, the ongoing legal and cultural struggles with the Army are certainly far from over despite various advancements in access to sacred sites.

While this litany of legal and cultural challenges seems endless, they do highlight the continued and pervasive military presence on the Waiʻanae Coast and the persistence on the necessity of national security as protection over those deemed as "citizens." Laurel Mei-Singh articulates this ongoing struggle in Hawaiʻi where the U.S. military "presents itself as an environmental steward despite the fact that it is the single largest polluter of the United States" (705-706). Thus, the representation of the U.S. military as protecting the environment comes into direct conflict with the ongoing Mākua battles. Ruelas observes, "The future of Mākua continues

to hang in the balance. Power struggles remain over the validity of differing claims to the land. The military lease ends in 2029, and live training has not occurred at Mākua since 2004 due to unfulfilled legal obligations” (8). This exemplifies the uncertainty regarding the relationship between the U.S. military and the Mākua community. Regardless of perceived resolved cultural issues and the promotion of preservation, the acceleration of global security concerns encroaches on these accomplishments. Therefore, it is through the imbrication of the imperial dominance of militarism with the rhetoric of security that perpetuates the violences on ‘āina and subjects.

“Vagrants” or Insurgent Indigeneity and the June 1996 Mākua Beach Eviction

In a related issue of state and military regulation and conflict is the contestation over perceived “vagrants” creating encampments at Mākua Beach. The state’s evictions of the beach prompted the community to organize in protest over these forcible removals as being indicative of the continuity of colonial, state, and military power. As such, I read the confluence of anti-militarism protesting of Mākua Valley as directly connected to the state-sanctioned evictions of alternative communities formed at the beach. I emphasize how these ephemeral beach communities create alternative kinship relationships that mark the necessity of Indigenous sociality to ‘āina and each other. Numerous documentation of “squatters” or non-permanent dwellers on Mākua Beach since the 1970s have consistently raised issues with the state and the U.S. Army. *Environment Hawai‘i* documents that the “beach area is owned by the state but is under lease to the Army. In fact, however, the beach area is rarely used by the Army, which instead confines almost all of its activities to the area mauka [on the mountain side] of the road” (3). This overlap in perceived ownership is governed by western notions of property and leasing where the beach’s occupants found shelter in creating a subsistence-based community. Kajihiro describes how the community had “grown to nearly two hundred people” and consisted of

“families who had been ravaged by the Western system and whose broken lives and families were healed by the ‘āina” (“Militarizing” 186). Here, Kajihiro identifies the conjoining violences of the “western system” as a colonial capitalist one where militarism operates as one sustained enforcer. Here, Mākua Beach becomes one location of refuge where alternative forms of kinship and community are possible. Watson links the development of the Mākua Beach community to the family unit where she states, “There is a relationship between military aggression against Hawaiians and the strain upon the Hawaiian family structure” (151). Here, the emphasis on being removed from hānau, ancestral lands, as a process of colonialism and militarism directly links to how leprosy segregation was implemented along with the effects of the Mahele. In both forms of removal, kinship to both ‘āina and extended family were dismissed under western notions of disease and proprietary ownership. Consequently, Mākua beach become a space to revitalize kinship and ontological relations with ‘āina, often as a counterpoint to the destruction wrought by western systems of ownership, capitalism, and militarism. Thus, it is through the intersection of Mākua Valley military protests with Mākua Beach alternative community formation where the possibilities of a decolonial and demilitarized politics emerge.

I turn to a crucial scene in the *House of Many Gods* that fictively imagined the widely publicized Mākua Beach eviction on June 16, 1996 in order to demonstrate how the literary imaginary capitalizes upon Indigenous cosmology to rupture the imperial apparatus that informs the narrative. In other words, this scene in the novel not only innovates on the actual beach eviction, but theorizes a decolonial and demilitarized politics through a turn to a geographically local community grounded in Kanaka Maoli spirituality. This I read as part of an insurgent Indigenous reading practice. To make clearer the momentary radicalism in the novel, I argue that the particular combination of “vagrancy” and anti-military efforts are precisely a refusal of the

spectrum of colonial militarism that is mutually enforced by federal and state power. Related, Mei-Singh expands on the notion of militourism with her phrase “carcel conservationism” which “describes the territorial compromise between grassroots efforts for environmental self-determination and state imperatives to control land and natural resources” (696). Mei-Singh uses this frame to consider how places like Mākua on the Wai‘anae Coast are regulated. Mei-Singh theorizes how the U.S. military and the state view “homeless people as *threats* to the state domination of land. As a result, these institutions employ conservation measures that partition land and living space with the stated aim of resource protection while in actuality criminalizing existing populations in order to displace them” (697). In reckoning with Mei-Singh’s theory of how vagrants, as produced by the capitalist colonial state and perpetuated through military occupation, embody “*threats* to the state domination of land,” I posit this contradictory slippage between being the result of the state and the threat to the state that makes visible these violent processes. By criminalizing “homelessness,” the state can effectively utilize narratives of the necessity of “national security” to create “safe communities” and “protect the family,” even as these systems obliterate Kanaka Maoli communal kinship. Again, in a disconcerting echo of leprosy segregation, the production of the “criminal” as in the case of leprosy patients or of a vagrant, the state attempts to ensure its own security. In other words, the targeting of vagrants as threatening to a western system of taxation, private property, and anti-Indigenous kinship reinforces the necessary violence of colonialism through militarism and state security.

Davenport capitalizes on the mass eviction of homeless people encamped on Mākua Beach in June 1996 as indicative of the coercive nature of state and military power, but importantly fictively imagines out of the history of this event. Mei-Singh reports how the population at the beach included “three hundred people, 83 percent” who were Kānaka Maoli.

What precipitated the eviction was the Department of Land and Natural Resources agreement with the Army to authorize control over the shoreline (Mei-Singh 710). Even as Davenport continues to trope on the exoticness of the Kanaka Maoli activists, she does this to magnify their presence and emphasize their collaboration. Davenport writes, “Outsiders called Hawaiians ‘golden-skinned,’ infused with sunlight, or wet from the sea, their skin appeared copper-colored, brass, or bronze. But in reality, they were brown, rich luscious brown...*we are water people. And we are tribal. We protect our bones worship our ākua [gods] and our ‘āina. The world sees this as backward*” (232). In this compacted list of descriptors that seem to exploit the bronzed and enigmatic “native,” Davenport also identifies the genealogy with ‘āina and kai, water, to valorize their cosmology. Through references to “outsiders” and the “world,” this passage critiques the western degradations of Kanaka Maoli cultural values and mo‘olelo through an overt celebration of what it means to be “tribal.” Clearly, this passage cannot be read as entirely unproblematic, but the emphasis on hyper-exploiting the expectations of Kanaka Maoli is done in service of promoting their presence and solidarity against the state and military force. In other words, this description plays with the colonial tropes of Indigeneity while also reframing the grounding in ‘āina and Kanaka cosmology.

In confronting the various forms of anti-riot and police presence, Davenport makes visible the inherent contradictions and violences produced by the colonial capitalist state on Indigenous bodies. The narrator describes how Ana:

stood paralyzed. Tactical-unit SWAT teams, state police, and high patrol. And almost every face, Hawaiian. Now half a dozen bulldozers made their way up to the highway.

The drivers, too, Hawaiian. The military and state were clever, pitting brother against

brother so that, to the outside world, there was the impression of total disunity amongst the people. (234)

Through acknowledging the violence of exploiting Kanaka Maoli law enforcement and state workers, the imagery of “brother against brother” serves as a visual reminder of the violence of militarism and state power. This intentional ethnic makeup of the law enforcement is precisely a tactic of the literary imaginary making visible the confluence of violence enacted on indigenous bodies. Still, this eviction was publicized through Gregg Kakesako’s article for the *Star-Bulletin* where he reports, “more than 100 state enforcement, police, National Guard, and Fire Department and other officials evicted the illegal beach community.” The extensive display of power indicates the level of perceived threat to the state that accompanied this settlement. Davenport extrapolates from this historical eviction by making the law enforcement explicitly Kānaka Maoli. Importantly, this visual representation of security as aided by Kanaka Maoli stuns Ana as well as indicates how this protest will be portrayed in western media: to show a lack of solidarity among Kanaka Maoli. Here, the intertwining of the security state and the military complex as interlocking colonial apparatuses manifest through these Indigenous law enforcers. The argument for the eviction depended on how the Department of Land and Natural Resources asserted that these “‘illegal occupants’ ...impeded beach access, and argued that the place is better used as a park” (Mei-Singh 710). As such, the rhetoric of “illegal” indicates a question of the threat to the state in the community’s lack of conformity to western systems of living and kinship. Still, Davenport captures the exploitation of Kanaka Maoli both through the depiction of exoticism and as purposely pitted against one another as enforcers of the militarized state and as threats or illegals or vagrants to the state.

In Davenport's literary imaginary, she includes how the stand-off between activists and law enforcement culminates in the surprising arrival of the grandmothers and great-grandmothers, as emblems of Indigenous cosmology, who call on upon a collective rising of individuals and 'āina. This explosive moment in *House of Many Gods* operates not necessarily as the climax of the narrative, but as the enactment of Indigenous solidarity and the strength of the community as a locally-grounded one. To develop an insurgent Indigenous reading practice, I offer how this event operates as recognizable from a colonial and liberal frame of "native customs," but simultaneously evokes an Indigenous counternarrative of temporality. While the protestors were documented as chanting, Davenport's account explodes the temporality of the moment by emphasizing how the 'āina and the people rise together in defiance for their culture and for environmental justice (Kakesako). Davenport describes the arrival of the tūtū:

The old women never spoke, they just stood there, wind lifting their hair and fluttering the [Hawaiian] flags as they stared at Mākua Valley, the desecrated bosom of their 'āina...one of the old women began to chant. A dirgelike chant that grew louder and louder, her voice vibrating until it seemed not a chant but a terrible portent echoing across the land... eyes resting on the valley, their voices slowly rose, deep, and terrible, like voices from the dead. (236)

This testifies to how the arrival of six powerful female elders call to their ancestors, the 'āina, as their voices came "from the dead," and immediately alter the temporality of the scene by disrupting colonial linear logics. Davenport once again tropes on the expectations of Indigenous spirituality as haunting and mysterious, but also does so in order to alter the archival record of this protest. Through capitalizing upon the performance of "native" mysticism, this scene operates according to colonial expectations of Indigeneity. However, in this depiction, I posit

how the text can also be read as disrupting the colonial temporal order; this is only legible from an Indigenous standpoint of cosmology though. As such, when these tūtū invoke the power of Kānaka Maoli ontology in order to protest not only the current eviction, but the long history of dispossession, violence, and colonialism, their resistance can only be read as insurgent outside of a colonial logic. This is amplified as Davenport describes how the women embody spiritual power as “one of the old woman raised her hand and pointed her finger at a cop. His eyelids fluttered, he seemed to sway, and dropped his arm, his truncheon useless at his side...all around the armed forces stood there dazed” (236). Here, Davenport displays the full influence the tūtū hold over everyone present and how their control comes from their gods. This form of power can only be legible as a full embodiment of colonial expectations of “nativism,” or as a form of insurgent Indigeneity where the gods can be accessed through connecting to ‘āina.

This display of Indigenous (and maternal) power highlights the potential for an alternative collective that maximizes Kanaka Maoli cosmologies, even as it overtly appears to play into the temporal order of colonial logic by dramatizing assumed spirituality. This insurgent Indigeneity derives out of a necessary reading practice that rearticulates the colonial frame and can recognize the Kanaka Maoli epistemologies as a mode of subversive power. The narrator continues to emphasize how the women call on various deities to protect the valley and to create a fleeting moment of understanding between those linked by ‘āina and community:

All along the troubled coast, everything was still. Brothers looked each other in the eye. Moments ago they were prepared to maim or kill. Now they just felt sleepy...and in that peace and quiet, come a voice. One so deep, so ancient and resounding even tūtū turned their heads, raising their arms as if surrendering. They listened and they heard....

‘Olaaa...Nā... ‘Iwi. ‘Olaaa...Nā... ‘Iwi” The bones survive. People moaned. The hair stood up on Ana’s arms. Sheriffs covered their genitals protectively. *Mākuā*, their Mother Earth, their parent was telling them she knew. She saw. How the people were offering their *aloha* [love], their *malama* [care]. (Davenport 237)

This supports how the power invoked by the tūtū is not simply confined to their ability to soothe and calm the police enforcement, but they also channeled the gods and their mother earth. For a colonial logic and liberal reading practice, this amplified Indigenous power would be understood as simply exoticizing and mystifying “native” practices. Instead, I read how this deploys an insurgent practice, only recognizable through a disregard of the colonial logics. Here, Davenport imagines Mother Earth responding to the chants and being audible to all present through repeating back “Ola Nā ‘Iwi,” or “the bones survive,” as the most powerful possible response to a threatening situation. Clearly, Davenport refuses a western ideology that would disavow the possibility of Mākuā chanting back to her people, but in her inclusion of this interlude, she argues for the potential of a decolonial politics grounded in Indigenous ontology. The response to this extraordinary spiritual moment is precisely how Davenport’s text navigates the possibilities for Indigenous community and solidarity. Through playing with how the text participates in the colonial tropes of Kanaka Maoli while simultaneously implementing a counternarrative of insurgency through those same Indigenous ontologies.

Davenport deviates from the historical events of the eviction, by extending the temporality of this transformative moment and invoking the power of Kanaka Maoli spirituality. Still, the text does not linger on this event as it quickly returns to the destruction of the beach. This locates the text back into a recognizable colonial temporal order where a liberal reading of the celebratory difference of Kanaka Maoli cosmology is legible as apolitical and without lasting

power. In other words, the rapid implementation of the beach eviction operates as a way to neutralize the previous Indigenous coalition with the gods. Still, Davenport commemorates the understanding is reached between the law enforcement officers and the activists as she describes, "...bulldozers resumed their destruction. Tents and shacks were razed, and some of the homeless were arrested for resisting. There minor scuffles, injuries. But on this day, folks felt victorious. They had risen up, the land had risen with them. And so, too, had their gods...Mākua had rallied. They had been granted progress, not slaughter" (237). In documenting the deliberate execution of the eviction, the text focuses on the dismantling of the community where d sixteen people were arrested, even after a seemingly transformative meeting of subjects and deities (Kajihiro, "Militarizing" 196). Still, the text turns to an optimistic note by demarcating how the people, the 'āina, and akua collectively resisted; this does not halt the eviction, but alludes to a revelation of the possibility of a coalition derived out of Kanaka Maoli cosmology. Even further complicating this literary interlude is how Davenport categorizes this moment as a granting of "progress" over slaughter, which eerily echoes a western sense of advancement. Thus, even as Davenport skillfully makes visible how to rupture the imperial apparatus through the literary imaginary, it quickly collapses into a questionable narrative that heralds a liberal sense of progress for Indigenous and environmental justice.

This chapter has demonstrated how *House of Many Gods* successfully utilizes literary narrative to imagine outside, even briefly, of the historical account of the June 18, 1996 beach eviction. Still, the question remains how this occurs within the boundaries of a limited form of cultural memory with restricted opportunities of resistance. I have posed how this event can be seen as deploying a potential insurgent Indigeneity that operates within the mode of colonial logic. Thus, if my previous chapters focused on the ways literary texts failed to aesthetically

imagine outside of imperial epistemologies, this text identifies the possibility for reckoning with the ways the colonial logic deploys a particular temporality organized by its own epistemology. As a result, I have offered how a recognition of the colonial temporal order can be disrupted through Indigenous cosmologies that would be misread as upholding the exoticism of native beliefs. In other words, Davenport's text circumvents the literary imaginary of U.S. empire by performing Indigeneity; this also rearticulates a decolonial and anti-imperial politics through playing with Kanaka Maoli cosmology. While not a definitive form of resistance, I have argued this is one strategy for literary texts to disrupt, even briefly, the colonial logics of Indigeneity and liberal reading practices. I offer how an insurgent Indigenous reading practice as self-reflexive in its deployment of operating within a colonial temporal order and strategically playing into the colonial tropes as it briefly rearticulates the frame. Perhaps one extended moment of a grounded opportunity for 'āina-based coalitional building is insufficient for a decolonial politics and Davenport's *House of Many Gods* simply proves the need for alternative modes of cultural memory. Yet, the optic of U.S. militarism continues to make visible the continuity of colonial and imperial institutions in how U.S. militarism enacts violence on 'āina and subjects where the figures of "homelessness" become the consequence and trace of these conjoining of forces.

Coda: Looking into the Horizon: Slam Poetry, Graffiti Murals, and Community Art

*Ua 'ola ka 'ōlelo mai ka paikū 'ana o nā pua
Our language survived through the passing of flowers
In 1896
The last reigning monarch of Hawaii,
Queen Lili'u'okalani was
Held prisoner in her own palace
Communication with the outside world was prohibited
Thus, newspapers were snuck into her room wrapped around flowers
For months, our Queen and her people wrote songs and stories
Hidden in Hawaiian,
So as to converse without the Overthrowing Provisional government knowing
It is because of this we know our history
"Kaona" Ittai Wong and Jamaica Osorio*

I open my coda with the beginning lines of “Kaona,” a slam poetry piece from 2008, by Ittai Wong (age 16) and Jamaica Osorio (age 18) from Hawai‘i as part of HBO's *Brave New Voices* series. To start with “Kaona,” which means hidden meaning, is both an acknowledgement of the work of this winning poem and performance as well as an opportunity to engage the politics of cultural memory that push beyond the boundaries of literary narrative. My project, “Empire’s Imagination: Race, Settler Colonialism, and Indigeneity in ‘Local’ Hawai‘i Narratives,” has examined how imperial epistemologies have structured both the historical and literary imaginary of the colonial archive and in post-2000 contemporary fiction. In reckoning with the ways U.S. empire has organized cultural memory through literary narrative, my dissertation has demonstrated how imperialism, colonialism, and settler colonialism persist in the present by determining the parameters of aesthetic imagination, with minimal opportunities for resistance. In order to extend my project beyond the form of literary narrative, I turn to alternative modes of cultural memory that have the potential to create a viable decolonial politics. These forms of cultural memory center a Kanaka Maoli genealogy and history and begin to rupture the liberal multicultural discourse that continue to emphasize Asian settlers as “local”

inhabitants. Consequently, this coda starts with Wong and Osorio's poem to explore how public performances and visual media have the political vitality to reframe colonial and imperial histories of the present.

In "Kaona," Wong and Osorio exemplify the powerful and ephemeral dynamics of slam poetry through both their performance and argument regarding Hawaiian history and language. Deriving out of the Youth Speaks Poetry competition for youth ages 13-19 in San Francisco, HBO picked up the show to offer a national platform and visibility for youth voices. In 2008, Wong and Osorio, along with William Giles (age 19) and Alaka'i Kotrys (age 16), won the national competition with pieces that eviscerated the myth of American multiculturalism in Hawai'i by focusing on the U.S. overthrow of the Hawaiian Kingdom. Creating a call for the vitality of Hawaiian language and history, "Kaona" both explores the violence of colonialism and asserts the necessity for Hawaiian sovereignty. Through a dynamic and chill-producing performance, Osorio and Wong alternate in Hawaiian and English to argue for the importance of the oral tradition and the ways in which culture persists through language. The overlay and simultaneity of Hawaiian and English culminate in the ending where Wong states, "Our language survived through the passing of flowers" as Osorio simultaneously chants, "Ua 'ola ka 'ōlelo mai ka paikū 'ana o nā pua" in the repetition of the first two lines of the poem. This juxtaposition magnifies the effect of not simply the message and kaona, but also demonstrates the power of the Hawaiian language for perpetuating sovereignty.

Importantly, this particular chant and poem reference and pay tribute to "Kaulana Na Pua," written by Ellen Keho'ohiwaokalani Wright Prendergast in January 1893. "Kaulana Na Pua" is a critical Indigenous song of resistance that utilized kaona to disseminate its radical meanings. Westerners simply understood this song to be innocuously about the flowers, "na

pua,” of Hawai‘i, when its kaona actually was about protesting the 1893 overthrow of Queen Lili‘okalani. Noenoe Silva explains how the song is also known as the “Mele Aloha ‘Āina” (song for the people who love the land), or “Mele ‘Ai Pōhaku” (Rock-eating song) ...this song is still sung by Kanaka Maoli today as a call to sovereignty” (135). In Osorio and Wong’s creative spoken performance, they capitalize upon the suggestiveness of resistance and resilience encoded in “Kaulana Na Pua” by producing their own poetry that upholds the genealogy of resistant performances through manipulating language. As such, this group of teenagers won the national competition utilizing a performance that valorized Kanaka Maoli history, critiqued U.S. colonization, and the violent suppression of the Hawaiian language, while creating their own innovation on cultural memory. Importantly, slam poetry as a performance subscribes to an alternate temporality where arguably the singular performance is not reproducible, even as it is being recorded and replayed on YouTube and disseminated digitally. This provides a stark contrast from the assumed permanence of fiction where the literary object remains static.

Temporality and Cultural Production

The performative nature of slam poetry differs in the ways that the original experience of witnessing and performing for Wong, Osorio, Giles, and Kotrys is always mediated through technology. Engaging an alternative form of temporality and distribution, I suggest that slam poetry dismantles the linear and static nature of literary production and this is precisely what allows for an experimentation with decolonial politics. In thinking of Walter Benjamin’s “The Reproduction of Art in the Digital Age,” I correlate his discussion of the temporality of art as productive in consideration of the simultaneous ephemeral nature of slam poetry and its continuous reproduction through digital technology. Benjamin notes how “even the most perfect reproduction of a work of art is lacking in one element: its presence in time and space, its unique

existence as the place where it happens to be. This unique existence of the work of art determined the history to which it was subject throughout the time of its existence” (220). Here, Benjamin meditates on the question of “aura” and authenticity where reproduction alters the assumed original presence of the object of art. While Benjamin’s essay focuses mainly on the transition from pictures to film and the relationship to the passive public, I build off his proposal in order to suggest how slam poetry alters the temporality and spatiality of the imperialistic logics of historical erasure. In other words, the performative component of slam poetry is identifiable both by the initial public performance as well as its reproduction and dissemination through digital recordings on blogs and websites. Whether this alters the aura and authenticity to the masses in the nature Benjamin suggests is perhaps not entirely what the process entails, but arguably the aura of the performance indefinitely changes through its various platforms. While I am not suggesting that authenticity is lost in the ways that Benjamin theorizes, I do note the comparative differences in the static nature of the novel as an object encased in its own temporal order and the multi-sensory and interactive experience of performance that is then reproduced and viewed in other formats and mediums. Through capitalizing on the performative quality beyond a written text, “Kaona” articulates a form of cultural memory that is both distinct in its original production and continues to be mediated through its proliferation of technology, where no singular experience can be exactly reproduced. This allows for a multiplicity of engagements with the performance and poem where the organizing epistemological structures are repeatedly ruptured through both content and context. In other words, the experience is always subtly changing and changed from the assumed original performance, which also allows room for debate on which performance counts. The work of Youth Speaks Hawai‘i also attributes value to the perspective and mindset of teenagers growing up under the rubric of American

exceptionalism, in a post-Obama presidency, under the assumption of post-racial color blindness, and the continued saturation of representations of Hawai‘i as paradise. To take a spoken word performance, performed repeatedly in various contexts, and to demand recognition through art, “Kaona” exemplifies a possibility to imagine outside of imperial epistemologies and literary narratives

I have briefly examined Osorio and Ittai’s “Kaona” for how it ruptures the temporality of literary production in its combination of poetry and multi-sensory performance. The politics of “Kaona” are not simply limited to the poem’s literal and figurative meanings, but also in the reproduction and dissemination of the recording of the initial and other performances. In the multiple versions of “Kaona,” the performance alters through the quality of recording, the location of performance, and the quality and tenor of the individual performers; even further, the audience reactions vary and change the dynamics of the performance. Here, the mutability and circulation of “Kaona” produces its own logics of existence and arguably, can transcend the colonial and settler colonial apparatus that I have demonstrated often controls the parameters of literary aesthetic production. “Kaona” is just one example of how to reorient the ways in which cultural memory can resist imperial epistemologies and invoke an Indigenous-derived politics. This is not to say that a decolonial Indigenous politics can only be found in a public and performative format, but this offers one strategy that captures an intersection of grounded politics that renarrates both Kanaka Maoli and localness as a conscious form of community expression. While the use of language and critique of the overthrow of the Hawaiian Kingdom is explicit in “Kaona,” the collaboration between the teenagers is indicative of a possibility for rethinking localness and what it means to claim “local” not as exemplifying Asian settler colonialism, but as a rootedness in the ‘āina and its Indigenous history.

As such, slam poetry organizations like Youth Speaks Hawai‘i and Pacific Tongues, among others, demonstrate the need for alternative genres beyond the novel. These opportunities, I argue, are sites of unmediated and deregulated spaces like open-mic nights and performance venues that allow for an experience of the “local” as not legitimized by the nation-state and a particular racialized history of the Islands. Perhaps the national platform of HBO does not immediately lend itself to a completely unmediated space, but the performative quality of slam poetry renegotiates how cultural memory is performed and recognized. Thus, the work of youth poets of various racial histories is one area that seems to be able to negotiate agency and political vitality that has been evacuated in other cultural production explicitly caught up in neoliberal national investments. In other words, the deregulated spaces of performative poetry are a form of cultural decolonial politics and have the potential to redefine how the “local” has been utilized to bolster Asian settler colonialism and liberal multiculturalism.

In closing this project, I have turned to modes of cultural memory that have emerged in the past decade such as youth slam poetry, public graffiti festivals, and community-based mural production. In building off my last chapter that worked to find an Indigenous-derived communal decolonial politics through narrative, I suggest that Hawai‘i’s surprising proliferation of other mediums of cultural production resist imperial epistemologies and the “local” liberal multiculturalism apparent throughout the novels previously discussed in my four chapters. In other words, this project concludes with an exploration of alternative forms that are not explicitly organized through linear temporality and the spatial containment of colonialism and literary production. I have emphasized how the conflation of “local” and Asian settler with Kanaka Maoli supports the pervasive power of liberal multiculturalism that continues to erase U.S. imperialism and colonialism. In pairing four historical flashpoints of U.S. empire that make

visible the intersecting logics of imperialism and settler colonialism with post-2000 novels, I have argued how literary and historical imaginaries are continually organized through U.S. empire. In identifying the resistance strategies available within the novel form, I theorize how different texts embodied the processes of U.S. empire as well as those that made the structures of empire themselves legible.

Public Graffiti Murals: Neoliberalism Again or Emergent Insurgent Indigeneity?

I end with two community graffiti art projects in Honolulu, POW! WOW! Hawai‘i and Mele Murals, as examples of other public forms of cultural memory that engage in a collaborative decolonial politics as sites of resistance. In some ways, reconfiguring the temporal formation of public murals through the medium of graffiti alters the expectation of a classification of the type of art that is valorized. Pow Wow Hawai‘i, founded by two Hawaii-based artists Kamea Hadar and Jasper Wong in 2009, has transformed both the architecture of Kaka‘ako in Honolulu, Hawai‘i and become a global movement, bringing international artists together. Per their website’s description, the inspiration beyond their name derives from Indigenous terminology where “POW! – it’s the impact that art has on a person” and “WOW! – it’s [the] reaction that art has on a viewer” and “Together they form POW WOW, which is a Native American term that describes a gathering that celebrates culture, music, and art.” Through Hadar and Wong’s explanation, I draw attention to the social relationship art and the public that the organization makes liberal claims towards Indigeneity. Still, the explicit uncritical use of “Pow Wow” as an Indigenous cultural event raises concerns, particularly in a location such as Hawai‘i where the difficulties of Kanaka Maoli sovereignty and Asian settler colonialism seem to be continually erased through uncritical appropriation. Arguably POW! WOW! Hawai‘i’s international fame and media attention has placed this form of art in the spotlight where graffiti

becomes a valorized expression of community art as opposed to being criminalized. The national and global focus on the rapid development of POW! WOW! has meant that they have already led festivals and events in Japan, “Taiwan, Long Beach, Israel, Singapore, Jamaica, Washington D.C., Guam, New Zealand, and Germany” among others since they started eight years ago. In NBC’s show, “Self-Starters,” Pow! Wow! is described as a “global network of artists” that revolve around a week-long event in Hawai‘i in February where over “a hundred international and local artists” come together to paint murals and create art as a community. As a result, the work of these artists has transformed the aesthetic architecture of Kaka‘ako where *The Huffington Post* in 2014 quotes founder Jasper Wong saying that “the festival is about “beautifying a neighborhood, a neighborhood through art.” Through these multiple aims, it is clear that POW! WOW! aims to center its art festival as a collaborative project invested in bringing individuals and artists together through a material production of creative cultural memory. Importantly, Wong identifies how the annual event aims to “beautify” a neighborhood in Honolulu, which establishes the significance of locally-centered movements while raising issues regarding this qualification.

Still, as invigorating and as popular as the festival has become over the past eight years, I want to caution an open celebration of what presents itself as either an apolitical project or an ambivalent one that ultimately reinforces the narrative of liberal multiculturalism in Hawai‘i. In other words, the lack of a consciousness about how these murals operate in the public space reflects not simply a disinterest, but it unobtrusively continues to erase Kanaka Maoli dispossession and upholds the nation-state. Even further, the organization’s name and mission seems to directly reinforce a neoliberal appropriation of Indigeneity that erases the colonial conditions that produce the present context of Hawai‘i. One might argue that the multiple murals

about and by Indigenous artists might be enough to combat the pervasive strategies of continued colonialism and a celebration of diverse difference. However, I maintain that this uncertainty over how to understand the public, the community, and POW! WOW!’s work is precisely where the potential of a decolonial and grounded politics remains questionable. The ephemeral nature of these murals still offer an opportunity to organize a politics around the lack of permanence of art where the annual festival repaints over all the pieces of art and starts over again.⁷⁶ Still, I point to the below mural by Kamea Hadar of former President Obama as indicative of the uncritical valorization of a liberal multicultural narrative of diversity and inclusion persists.



Figure 2.1: Picture taken by author on September 19, 2016.

Painted in May 2016, Hadar entitles this piece “Hapa” to “promote racial equality” and states on his Instagram caption, “‘Hapa’ literally means ‘part’ or ‘half’ in Hawaiian and refers to people like @barackobama (and myself) who are of mixed ancestry.” The image of Obama includes his 2008 speech on racial equality with the lines, “We may have different stories but we

⁷⁶ Hadar and Wong explained at their 2016 opening night talk, “Culture and Cocktails,” how when they started the festival, they simply asked business owners if they could paint their walls with the understanding that if the owner disliked the mural, they could paint over it at any point. This speaks to the impermanence of the murals both from intent and then the timeline of the one year adds to the instability of the static nature of these pieces.

have common hopes, we may not look the same and we might not have come from the same place, but we all want to move in the same direction – towards a better future for our children and grandchildren.” While Hadar works to equivocate racial equality with mixed race with attention towards being part-Kanaka Maoli (or assuming a part Indigenous background), the continued celebratory nature of diversity and liberal multiculturalism is evident. Again, this is not to necessarily critique the ways in which former President Obama’s speech operated, but to demonstrate the production of an apolitical or exclusively liberal politics through the works of these graffiti murals. Ultimately, I am foregrounding the political possibilities of community art and graffiti where the proliferation of media and global attention to POW! WOW! offers the potential to resist renarrating the liberal diverse narratives of Hawai‘i. But, the coda insists on remaining skeptical over the politics and cultural work of POW! WOW!

An example of a collaboration of graffiti murals that does account for the politics of sovereignty and ultimately appears to put into practice a praxis of grounded communal decolonial work is Mele Murals. Founded under the 2010 Estria foundation by Estria Miyashiro and Jeremy LaTrasse, this nonprofit strives “to create social change through the creation of art” by focusing on producing art in “public spaces locally and globally with artists, youths, educators, and activists in order to raise awareness and inspire action in the movement to resolve human and environmental issues” (Estria.org). In the very founding of this nonprofit company, it is evident that Miyashiro and LaTrasse organize their efforts around implementing change through community art. While the concept of “human issues” is still vague, the underlying potential politics is highlighted in a way that is either unacknowledged or overlooked in POW! WOW! While the Estria Foundation as a whole is grounded in organizing and collaborating around community issues, I turn specifically to their project, Mele Murals, as a potential model

of a practice and praxis of decolonial politics where cultural memory is a material practice. Mele Murals was proposed as a pilot in 2013 and was implemented in 2014 across all the Islands.

Estria.org describes Mele Murals as a:

youth development, arts education, cultural preservation, and community-building project. Local artists, youth, and other members of communities spanning the eight major islands of Hawai`i create a series of large-scale outdoor murals focusing on Hawaiian lyrics (mele) that explore mo`olelo `āina (stories of place) and cultural and historical heritage. Local artists, youth, and other members of the communities of the eight major islands of Hawai`i create a series of large-scale outdoor murals focusing on Hawaiian lyrics (mele) that explore the mo`olelo `āina (stories of place) and cultural and historical heritage.

In basing the project on education and community-building through learning the mo`olelo `āina, Mele Murals is explicitly rooted in Kanaka Maoli cosmology that values recognizing cultural history and belonging. This objective identifies a process that engages a decolonial practice and praxis through inter-generational collaboration and access to historical and cultural history that results in producing cultural memory through murals. Furthermore, the elaborate goals and detailed process for each mural significantly include a vast range of community engagement and multi-modal educational platforms, where the experience of learning the Indigenous storytelling tradition and understanding the mo`olelo is necessary for participation. In other words, participation demands education and engagement with Kanaka Maoli cosmology without any liberal qualification of essentialist identity politics. Estria.org lays out the step-step by process:

Each of the murals will follow a process that includes the following:

- Arts-interested youth, potential advisors, and organizations are identified and encouraged to participate.
- Teams of community leaders, artists, students, and musicians are assembled.
- Youth form a Halau Paheona (mural club) at their school or community center, and begin organizing their mural.
- Haumana (students) participate in online art assignments on edmodo.com.
- Students with support from the Estria Foundation team secure a permissioned wall and gather community support.
- Cultural practitioners ground and ask the land and ancestors what should be painted.
- Instructors from Papaku no Kameha‘ikana teach the youth how to write and say an oli (chant) about the subject matter.
- An advisory group of Hawaiian music experts, and cultural practitioners help to pair lyrics to the subject matter.
- Workshops are held on the song’s history, on how the mele relates to the place, and on the muralism process.
- Haumana ground and receive ideas for the mural.
- A sketch of the mural is developed by team of artists based on the workshop dialogue and incorporating some of the lyrics.
- The team grounds and asks if the sketch is pono (just, proper) before painting.
- The mural location and team are blessed by a kahu (priest).
- The mural is painted by artists together with youth.
- The mural is unveiled at a community celebration.
- Youth muralists who have completed murals become Mele Murals docents and

stewards, and mentors to future youth muralists.

- The entire process is documented through photography, film, social media, and published materials.
- Surveys are taken and reviewed to gauge program's success. Changes are incorporated to improve effectiveness.
- The completed Mele Murals series provides opportunities for ongoing education, cultural tourism, and community development.

This extremely strategic process identifies the multifaceted components that highlight a multi-generational education experience, where the entire mural process demands full participation from the youth. In structuring the muralism process as intimately tied to community and Indigenous history, Mele Murals offers a decolonial politics that is rooted in 'āina and collaboration. While the practice and praxis of Mele Murals derives out of Kanaka Maoli genealogy, practice, and oli, the participants themselves become the “stewards” of this process; this allows for a refusal of essentialist identity politics as the only avenue of connection. Therefore, leadership emerges through the grounded praxis of Mele Murals and is learned through concrete participation.

Mele Murals demands a political and cultural engagement with the history of Hawai'i as informing the present and through this collaborative communal project offers a radical politics. Noelani Goodyear-Ka'ōpua's recent work on Hawaiian movements to “protect and revitalize lands, histories, language, spiritual, and economic practices” is particularly relevant in understanding how Mele Murals operates as a practice and politics (2). Goodyear-Ka'ōpua emphasizes the necessity of “ea,” as referencing political independence as well as meaning “life,” in order to suggest “Ea can be seen as both a concept and a diverse set of practices that

make land primary over government, while not dismissing the importance of autonomous governing structures to a people's health and well-being" (2). This use of *ea* centralizes Kanaka Maoli relationships to 'āina as "a sacred connection requiring dutiful, nurturing care" (Goodyear-Ka'ōpua 7). This approach to Hawaiian sovereignty focuses on a grounded praxis that rotates around 'āina and demands the collaboration and engagement of Kanaka Maoli and settlers, as not differentiating between western and Asian settlers (Goodyear-Ka'ōpua 30). In considering the strategic work of Mele Murals, I posit that the community education and collaboration involved in understanding the *mo'olelo* of locations and invoking the process of producing a graffiti mural is precisely one version of enacting *Ea*. While less explicit in Goodyear-Ka'ōpua's explanation, Mele Murals advocates for the experience of muralism as a process of communal decolonization and material cultural practice. Hōkūlani K. Aikau emphasizes how decolonization involves a "reli[ance] on Indigenous ontologies...it is through restoring our relationships with the 'āina, and I would add the ocean, that we can begin to imagine the impossible, a wholly new governance system that is not reliant on heteropatriarchy, white supremacy, or capitalism" (658-659). In this declaration of how to restore and centralize 'āina, Mele Murals exemplifies both an Indigenous ontology as well as embodies a form of sovereignty or *ea*.⁷⁷ Both Aikau and Goodyear-Ka'ōpua implicitly posit how a material practice for decolonial politics ruptures the Indigenous/settler binary that U.S. empire has continually reproduced. Thus, Mele Murals, which has completed 20 projects across the Islands since 2014, is indicative of the possibilities of a decolonial material

⁷⁷ *Mele Murals* became a documentary in 2016 and follows the artists Estria Miyamoto and John Hina's work in the communities and using graffiti art as a format for change and activism. The film is directed by Tad Nakamura and focuses on the personal and communal changes enacted through muralism and how to connect with a contemporary Kanaka Maoli politics and subjectivity. The documentary includes personal looks at Miyamoto and Hina's own sense of decolonial practice and praxis through the community and work they exemplify through making murals.

practice that is structured through Kanaka Maoli ontologies and advocates for a coalition of Indigenous and settlers, (read “local”), as a community.



Figure 2.2 & 2.3: The two images are from Mele Murals’ 20th piece at Stevenson Middle School, completed on December 2, 2016. Figure 2.2 indicates the community effort behind the mural both in process and completed and disseminated on Instagram.

The emergence of spoken word poetry and particularly the youth-driven participation is a concrete strategy for an alternative decolonial politics that challenges the liberal normativity of celebrated multicultural difference. By being grounded in forms of cultural memory that are performative and collaborative, Youth Speaks Hawai’i and specifically Osorio and Wong’s “Kaona” interrogates the comparative racialization and Americanization (cultural domination) of Hawai’i that begins to unravel how the “local” as Asian settler has repeatedly worked to silence the racial and political histories of Kanaka Maoli and Asian migration. Attending to the Indigenous emphasis on oral chant, spoken word poets tap into a genre that embodies Kanaka Maoli vitality and political agency. Importantly, slam poetry’s use of Hawaiian interspersed through English demands recognition of the colonial domination of language itself. In my turn to POW! WOW! and Mele Murals, I examined how the public production of murals demonstrates the collective and ephemeral nature of the pieces. These modes of cultural production still operate within the frameworks of U.S. multiculturalism and the foreclosure of narratives, but

begin to articulate what might be politically viable for community and coalition. Clearly, Mele Murals offers a more radical and decolonial material practice and praxis through its innovative centering of ‘āina, community, multi-generational participants, and the concrete experience of collaborative graffiti muralism. As such, these alternative modes of cultural memory organize the possibility of moving beyond the restrictions on the literary imaginary present in the novels discussed throughout this project.

In closing, this project has argued how the legacies of U.S. empire continue to simultaneously neutralize Kanaka Maoli political agency and elide Asian migrant labor history through the production of literary narratives. As such, this coda proposes that a turn to alternative modes of cultural memory like the genre of spoken word and community graffiti murals might offer a potent confrontation with the violent aesthetic structures of U.S. empire. Given my project’s concerns over the intersection of Indigeneity and Asian migration, I interrogate how Hawai‘i operates as a site and analytic into a relational racialization that hinges on the power of U.S. empire to persist in cultural memory. By situating how U.S. empire organizes the study of colonialism and Asian immigration, contemporary Hawai‘i literature makes visible the conflation of Indigeneity and “local” Asian into an assumed national belonging. Through delineating a genealogy of how U.S. empire is reproduced in contemporary narratives, I explicate how both the historical and literary imaginaries are configured through a continued elision of colonialism and racialized migrant labor. I have read literary works in conjunction with historical flashpoints of U.S. empire from the 19th and 20th century to demonstrate the ways in which settler colonialism is not merely a system of ongoing land thefts and modes of economic extraction, but also as a regime that operates in the domain of subjectivity and cultural memory.

As my project pursues critical Asian American studies, I emphasize how there is the vital possibility to interrogate cultural memory and the neoliberal material violences that continue to regulate U.S. racial formation and its history of colonialism and imperialism. I posit that this is an opportunity to connect the history of the violence of racialization of Asians to struggles around both U.S. empire and the persistence of settler colonialism /resistance of the claims of the Indigenous sovereignties occurring at the moment. From demilitarization activism in the Pacific to the protests against the North Dakota Access Pipeline (NODAPL) and struggles over global water rights as well as legislative conflicts over “refugees,” the concrete political and cultural stakes involved around addressing both Indigeneity and racialized migration is inescapable for the nation-state. My dissertation advances the explicit need to reorient the current neoliberal racial order that adjudicates the elision the violence of colonialism and U.S. racial formation as quantifiable and celebratory difference. In particular, I posit how Asian American studies, through the optic of Hawai‘i as a site of decolonial possibilities, provides a reframing of how racialized difference is produced and maintained for settler hegemony. Consequently, this allows for a widening and opportunity in Asian American activism studies to think about relational racialization especially since this field is interdisciplinary and a political project. Given that my project expands upon the fields of comparative ethnic studies, American studies, post-colonial studies, and literary studies, I maintain that reckoning with how the coercive legacies of imperial and colonial epistemologies that regulate the complicity of Asian migrants with settler colonialism through liberal multiculturalism is precisely the intersection for decolonial and anti-neoliberalism politics. By concluding with the turn to community graffiti murals and slam poetry, I theorize the potential sites to create an alternative politics that ruptures the parameters of U.S. empire and neoliberal multiculturalism. The demand for alternative and innovative

intersectional politics seems vitally important under our current administration, where previous strategies of rationality and liberalism seem to be untenable. As such, I maintain that it is only through a combined acknowledgment of the persistence of colonialism and settler colonialism with Asian migration does the U.S.'s latest targeted immigration restrictions of Muslims from specific countries become visible as part of a long history of the U.S. exclusionary and racialized exclusion. In other words, the possibilities of alternative frameworks that strategize Indigeneity with Asian racialization are precisely applicable to negotiating and resisting the racism, misogyny, xenophobia, homophobia, transphobia, Islamophobia, and anti-immigrant sentiments coupled with the rhetoric of fear that are being explicitly promoted under this administration.

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